Bringing Arts Closer to Local Communities: Opportunities and Impacts on Community Bonding

Arts and Culture Nodes in the Heartlands of Singapore: Exploring Strategies, Spatial Opportunities and Impacts (Phase 2)

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Collaborators: National Arts Council (NAC), Rita Padawangi (ARI, NUS)
“to increase the range of arts touch points in the heartlands, where more Singaporeans can enjoy and engage with the arts regularly where they live and play” with the overall vision as “to develop an island-wide network of arts and cultural nodes in the heartlands.”

(National Arts Council of Singapore, 2011)
ARTS AND CULTURE NODES INITIATIVE

- Regional node
- Neighbourhood nodes
- Street-level pocket nodes

TOTAL: 25 nodes (by 2025)

GOAL

Beyond Formal Art Venues

(Image Source: NAC, Singapore)
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MOTIVATIONS
VALUES
BELIEFS
INTERESTS

DIVERSIFY

NOT INTERESTED IN THE ARTS

PATHS OF ENGAGEMENT
• FAMILY AND SOCIAL TIES
• ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS
• DIRECT RECRUITMENT
• DIRECT MARKETING

INTERESTED IN THE ARTS

STRUCTURE OF OPPORTUNITY
PROGRAMS AND EVENTS AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY:
• NUMBER
• DIVERSITY
• QUALITY
• ACCESSIBILITY

RESOURCES
• SKILLS
• FREE TIME
• MONEY

BROADEN

DO NOT PARTICIPATE

PARTICIPATE
EXPERIENCE

DEEPEN
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INTEREST IN ARTS AND CULTURE - SINGAPORE

significantly increased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Interested (%)</th>
<th>Not Interested (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NAC National population survey on the arts 2015

Diagram constructed by Top 2 and Bottom 2 scores.
Top 2 Boxes: "(1=Very Interested + 4= Quite Interested)"
Bottom 2 Boxes: "(1=Not Very Interested + 2= Not Quite Interested)"
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ARTS ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION - SINGAPORE

significantly increased

Source: NAC National population survey on the arts 2015
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MOTIVATION AND FOR ARTS ATTENDANCE - SINGAPORE

- Arts are enjoyable:
  - 2013: 59%
  - 2015: 54%

- Time with others:
  - 2013: 50%
  - 2015: 48%

- Happen to pass by:
  - 2013: 24%
  - 2015: 34%

- Not interested:
  - 2013: 4%
  - 2015: 34%

- Family commitments:
  - 2013: 28%
  - 2015: 26%

- No one to go with:
  - 2013: 7%
  - 2015: 16%

Source: NAC National population survey on the arts 2015
ARTS AND CULTURE FOCUSED COMMUNITY SPACES
and their role in Promoting Community Building, Social Interaction and Encouraging Arts Participation (Phase 1)
PI: Dr Cho Im Sik

SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES:
• To create a self-assessment toolkit to enable community art nodes to monitor their progress in terms of engaging the local residents.
• To produce an evaluation toolkit for the NAC to assess the effectiveness of their support in the establishment and growth of these community nodes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:
• How can the arts & culture spread beyond the city centre of Singapore to community spaces in the heartlands?
• How can “art & culture focused community spaces” in the heartlands promote community building, social interaction and arts participation?
• What type of spaces/places could promote arts and culture in the heartlands?
SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES:

- **PART 1: Arts and Space - Activating Spaces through Arts**
  - to review *art and culture strategies* to activate public space in local housing contexts
  - to investigate *spatial opportunities* of local neighbourhoods for bringing arts and culture activities into everyday life through *formal and informal venues*

- **PART 2: Impacts of Nodes Strategy**
  - to trace and measure *software/social and hardware/spatial impacts* of arts and culture initiatives

- **PART 3: Strengthening the Nodes Strategy**

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- How can spaces be activated through arts and culture? By what means, approaches and strategies?

- How can arts and culture be spread beyond the formal venues and integrated in different aspects of community living? What are the impacts and how are they measured?

- What indicates a successful arts and culture project/initiative in the heartlands?
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**Benefits of Arts**

**What Can Arts Do for Space?**
**What Can Space Do for Arts?**
**What Can Arts Do for Community?**

Framework for Understanding the Benefits of the Arts

**Instrumental benefits**
- Improved test scores
- Improved self-efficacy, learning skills, health
- Development of social capital
- Economic growth

**Private value**
- Captivation
- Expanded capacity for empathy

**Public value**
- Pleasure
- Cognitive growth
- Expression of communal meaning

**Intrinsic benefits**

**CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**
- Development of Cultural Artforms
- Showcase Auckland Cultures

**STRONG COMMUNITIES**
- Community Pride
- Involvement & Access
- Increase Social Cohesion

**EDUCATION & LEARNING**
- Self-Esteem & Positive Self-Image
- Development of Children & Youth

**STRONG ECONOMY**
- Attract Visitors
- Generate Employment Opportunities
- Support Business

RAND MG218-5.1

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WHAT CAN ARTS DO FOR SPACE AND COMMUNITY? - PLACEMAKING

THE BENEFITS OF GREAT PLACES

+ Visually pleasing
+ Generally stimulating
+ Sense of belonging
+ Greater security
+ Better environmental quality
+ Feeling of freedom

+ More walkable
+ Safe for pedestrians and bicyclists
+ Compatible with public transit
+ Reduces need for cars and parking
+ More efficient use of time and money
+ Greater connections between uses

+ Greater community organization
+ Sense of pride and volunteerism
+ Perpetuation of integrity and values
+ Less need for municipal control
+ Self-managing

+ Small-scale entrepreneurship
+ Economic development
+ Higher real estate values
+ Local ownership, local value
+ More desirable jobs
+ Greater tax revenue
+ Less need for municipal services

+ Increased physical activity
+ Access to fresh food
+ Greater security
+ Greater social inclusion
+ Enhanced environmental health

+ Improves sociability
+ More cultural exposure, interaction
+ Draws a diverse population
+ More women, elderly, children
+ Greater ethnic/cultural pluralism
+ Encourages community creativity

PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES
## Bringing Arts Closer to Local Communities: Opportunities and Impacts on Community Bonding

**What Can Arts Do for Space and Community? - Placemaking**

### Receptive

**Spectating**
Spectating is fundamentally an act of receiving a finished artistic product. It is therefore outside the realm of participatory arts practice.

### Participatory

**Enhanced Engagement**
Educational or “enrichment” programs may activate the creative mind, but for the most part do not involve creative expression on the part of the audience member.

**Crowd Sourcing**
Audience becomes activated in choosing or contributing towards an artistic product.
- Youth mosaics
- Photography contests
- An opera libretto comprised of Tweets
- Virtual choruses

**Co-Creation**
Audience members contribute something to an artistic experience curated by a professional artist.
- Participatory theater
- Pro/Am concerts
- Storytelling events
- Participatory public art

**Audience-As-Artist**
Audience members substantially take control of the artistic experience; focus shifts from the product to the process of creation.
- Public dances
- Community drawing contests

(Source: Brown et al., 2011)
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WHAT CAN SPACE DO FOR ARTS? – CULTURAL ECOLOGY

• informal art venues and other supporting spaces
• synergy between art, space and everyday life activities

Performance & Exhibition
Transportation stops
Heritage buildings
Cafes
Bars
Coffee shops
Shops
Markets
Streets
Plazas
Parks
Etc.

+ Work & Training
Under-utilized & vacant places
Existing industrial premises
Etc.

Policymakers and funders need to conceptualise a neighbourhood’s cultural ecology instead of focusing on one type of asset. (Stern and Pray, 2014)
The intensity of activities highly depends on the design quality of physical environment.

(Source: Jan Gehl, 2006)
3 key Urban Space Components:
**HARDWARE** – DESIGN VALUEs
**SOFTWARE** – USE & SOCIO-PERCEPTUAL VALUEs
**ORGWARE** – OPERATIONAL VALUEs

**PILOT STUDY: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES**

**STRENGTHS**
- Hardware
- Software
- Orgware

**WEAKNESSES**
- Hardware
- Software
- Orgware

**OPPORTUNITIES**
- Hardware
- Software
- Orgware

**THREATS**
- Hardware
- Software
- Orgware

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PILOT STUDY: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES

3 neighbourhood nodes

Kallang CC
Woodlands Regional Library
SAFRA Jurong

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PILOT STUDY: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES

2 pocket nodes

Tanglin Halt (Blk 88)  Bedok Town Square
Map Overlay

Illustration of Ian McHarg’s map overlay method, 1969 (Source: André et al., 2004, p. 263)
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PILOT STUDY: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Map Overlay

Filter 1:
GENERAL SPATIAL CONDITIONS

Filter 2:
LOCATIONAL CRITERIA

Filter 3:
CRITERIA FOR GOOD PUBLIC SPACE AND SUITABILITY FOR ARTS & CULTURE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES
Pilot Study: Spatial Opportunities

Step 1: Identify and Describe All Publicly Available Spaces

Filter 1

- Scale
- Shape
- Level of Enclosure
- Ground Surface

Tanglin Halt - My Community
STEP 2. TRACE OUT MOVEMENT PATTERNS AND IDENTIFY GATHERING SPACES

**FILTER 2**

- **MOVEMENT PATHS**
  - time of the day
- **GATHERING SPACES**
  - time of the day
  - age groups

Tanglin Halt - My Community
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CATEGORY A: Spaces near movement paths and stationary activity

CHARACTERISTICS: Close to MRT stations and amenities, like food courts and shopping centres

STRATEGY: Broadening and diversifying arts audience
PILOT STUDY: SPATIAL OPPORTUNITIES

CATEGORY B: Spaces near movement paths without stationary activity

CHARACTERISTICS: Spaces like some void decks, pavilions which residents pass by but are not next to amenities

STRATEGY: Art events can provide the software to encourage residents to pause and engage with the space - broadening
Pilot Study: Spatial Opportunities

Category C: Spaces away from major movement paths but have stationary activity

Characteristics: Community gathering spaces such as schools, CCs, basketball courts and playgrounds

Strategy: Art activity can be introduced to facilitate social bonding between users and deepen arts engagement
CATEGORY D: Spaces away from movement patterns and underutilized

CHARACTERISTICS: Spaces such as amphitheaters and roofs of car parks

STRATEGY: Art events can activate “white elephants” by providing software needed to bring more users into the space
STEP 3. CRITERIA FOR GOOD PUBLIC SPACE AND SUITABILITY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE EVENTS

FILTER 3

- ACCESSIBILITY
- SOCIABILITY
- SUITABILITY FOR THE ARTS
- FLEXIBILITY
- COMFORT & NOISE LEVEL
- MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY
- PRIMARY USES
- ACTIVITIES
Pilot Study: Impacts of Arts and Culture Nodes Strategy

Preliminary NACIA Framework

Neighbourhood Arts and Culture Impact Assessment

- What impacts?
- Impacts on whom?
- How to capture and measure?
- Short term vs long term impacts

What impacts?
- Spatial/environmental
- Social
- Economic

Impacts

Outcome (short-term impacts)

Change Mechanisms & Outputs

Arts engagement & Participation

Outcomes

Inputs

Hardware

Software

Orgware

- review/collect
- analyse
- shortlist
- refine
- validate
- finalise

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Pilot Study: Impacts of Arts and Culture Nodes Strategy

Neighbourhood Arts and Culture Impact Assessment

What?

Software: Social Impacts

Hardware: Spatial Impacts

How?

8 events
5 pop-ups
242 pilot surveys
5 FGDs with residents
1 FGD with node partners
3 Interviews with Key Community Members
+ Interviews with Artists

Spatial Analysis

SOFTWARE: Social Impacts

HARDWARE: Spatial Impacts

Spatial Analysis

Events
Pop-ups
Pilot Surveys
FGDs
FGD with Node Partners
Interviews
Interviews with Artists
"(...) it was actually the **music that attracted me to this place** (...) maybe doing it before certain festivals or every month kinda makes it quite interesting and makes the whole place more lively, I feel." [Kallang FGD, 21 Jan ’17]

"In a formal space (...) you don’t take note of who sits near you (...) but if it’s informal you’re like ‘who’s as busybody as me’." [Kallang FGD, 21 Jan ’17]

"It gives the children more of an eye-opening chance (...) I So yesterday kind of like a small concert they got to see strings, they got to see keyboards and then they will start to say ‘Hey Mum, I want to play that’." [Tanglin Halt FGD, 25 Feb ’17]
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On impacts and resilience:
Neighbourhood cultural ecology = soft infrastructure + hard infrastructure

Spaces for inspiration:
- Interest groups
- NPOs
- Residents
- Artists

Spaces for connectivity:
- Theatres
- Galleries
- Cafes
- Workspaces

Spaces for expression:
- Public spaces
- Streets

Bringing arts closer to local communities:
Opportunities and impacts on community bonding

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ON IMPACTS AND RESILIENCE:
NEIGHBOURHOOD CULTURAL ECOLOGY = SOFT INFRASTRUCTURE + HARD INFRASTRUCTURE

- INTEREST GROUPS
- RESIDENTS
- COMMERCIAL FIRMS
- ARTISTS
- NAC
- CCs
- HCAs
- RESIDENTS
- PLAZAS
- HAWKER'S CENTERS
- VOID DECKS
- AMPHITHEATRE
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ON IMPACTS AND RESILIENCE

• Community resilience requires **neighbour to neighbour reliance and strong network**
• Community art, public space and cultural facilities together help in building community cohesion

• **Understanding**: Community assets mapping – resources and skills
• **Infrastructure & vibrant neighbourhoods**: formal and informal arts and culture venues
• **Action & Initiative**: Community engagement and volunteerism
• **Collective vision** and partner network
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THANK YOU!