

# EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE



## PRESIDENT'S YOUNG TALENTS 2018

4 OCT 2018 – 27 JAN 2019  
SAM AT 8Q

Upper Secondary & Junior College

## INTRODUCTION

This Education Resource Guide has been produced by Singapore Art Museum (SAM) in collaboration with artist-educator Adrian Tan to support the exhibition *President's Young Talents* for 2018. This is an exhibition in which promising young artist from Singapore are selected and commissioned to create and present a new work in SAM.

Inaugurated by SAM in 2011, the *President's Young Talents* stand out from other art awards as the only mentoring and commissioning exhibition programme in Singapore. An independent committee nominates a group of local artists below 35 years for the award and members of this committee are also mentors for each finalist artists.

This guide is intended to assist school students and teachers of the upper secondary and junior college levels. We also encourage parents, community groups or gallery staff to use the information, guiding questions and activities in this resource.

### This guide offers:

- Insights into the artists and the ideas behind their work of art.
- Images and information on the artworks.
- Guiding Questions for the viewing and discussion on the art works (adapted from *Let's Talk About Art* by Singapore Teachers' Academy for the aRTs).
- Suggested Activities for further exploration.

The guide is also available online at:

<https://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/learn/resource-center> with images that can be downloaded or projected in class. The images are to be used for educational purposes only.

## HOW TO USE THIS EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDE

### For Teachers and Students

The guide is designed to provide enrichment and promote deeper understanding of key learning areas in the Visual Arts as well as other cross-disciplinary subjects. There is scope for teachers to build this resource into their existing programmes or develop it as a stand-alone enrichment or elective module.

### Pre-viewing planning

Before visiting *President's Young Talents*, it is recommended that your students explore and discuss some of the themes and ideas in the exhibition. As part of the guide, we have included selected images from the exhibition and relevant information on [THE ARTIST], [THE IDEA], and [THE ARTWORK] together with some [KEY WORDS] that you may use before, during or after the museum visit.

We also strongly encourage educators to visit the show, read the guide and explore artists or artworks that are most relevant to your learners. For more information on the exhibition and scheduling a visit for your learners, please visit <http://www.singaporeartmuseum.sg/education>

### For Parents, Community Groups or Gallery Staff

This guide can be used to assist or accompany self-directed visits to *President's Young Talents*. You can explore the guiding questions or carry out the suggested activities in the gallery. Further to this you can build on your experiences of the exhibition by carrying out the activities back in your home, community or gallery setting.

**ZARINA MUHAMMAD**

**CHEN YANYUN**

**DEBBIE DING**

**CHONG WEIXIN**

**HILMI JOHANDI**

**Teachers' Tip:** What is interesting about the exhibition title? Did the title spark your learners' curiosity? Talk about why you chose the exhibition as a learning journey to enable your learners to understand more about contemporary art.

## Zarina Muhammad

### [THE ARTIST]

Zarina Muhammad (b. 1982, Singapore) is an artist, educator and writer whose practice is deeply entwined with her decade-long multidisciplinary research on the shapeshifting forms and cultural translations pertaining to Southeast Asian ritual magic and its mythological roots. In the various incarnations of her work, she is particularly interested in the broader contexts of myth-making, gender-based archetypes, and the region's tenuous and tentative relationship to mysticism and the immaterial against the dynamics of global modernity.

She has presented her work in Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and Thailand. She lives and works in Singapore.



### [THE IDEA]

Before even stepping into the exhibition space on the first floor gallery, your gaze is met by a curious figure. This figure watches as you enter the art installation. This figure is a *penunggu*: a guardian of the gate or a watchman; he is said to be the protector of this space. The work, *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold* takes this being, and its role as protector and charts out a space that traverses beyond the physical.

Inspired by the idea of the cosmos and three domains of Heaven, Earth and the Underworld, the art installation is laid out as three distinct divisions. Bukit Larangan, Bras Basah, as well as Kallang and the coastal areas of Singapore are referred to by the hills, land, and sea respectively. Within each designation is a selection of material objects and items – such as spirit houses, offering jars, videos and 40 effigies – that reflects and responds to the history, culture and memory of the zones they are housed in. These objects act as coordinates to map the histories and paths that the spirits of these realms may have resided and roamed in.

Alongside the physical components in the gallery are a series of talks, performances and performance-lectures by the artist and academics, musicians and arts practitioners, that activate and intervene into the space and narratives of the work. These interventions provide different perspectives, readings, and modes to encounter the artwork.

Historic and mythic, *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold* draws from archives, interviews, poetry, and texts to create room for conversations about the narratives that remain forgotten, untold, unheard, un-sensed. It proposes, in the artist's words, "to de/re-narrate entangled speculative histories, invite counterpoints, and extend potentialities and possible antidotes to our culture of forgetting [...] by moving beyond the single narrative of place".

**Key Words:** Installation Art, Performance Art, Cultural History, Memory, Southeast Asia, Imagination



[THE ARTWORK]

*Pragmatic Prayers for  
the Kala at the  
Threshold*

2018

Bamboo,  
sandalwood, clay,  
stone, turmeric  
powder, sandalwood  
powder, saffron, nine  
grains and spices,  
rose water, incense,  
glass jars and paper  
Dimensions variable

Collection of the  
Artist  
Singapore Art  
Museum commission



[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

### Guiding Questions

Discuss/describe what you see.

1. Can you identify the materials used in the art installation? Describe what you observe in the space, considering your senses. [*sight, touch, smell, and sound*].
2. Take a closer look at the individually crafted object. Do you know where the material for the object comes from and how it is processed?
3. What are the colours, form and textures that you observe in the object or object(s) and why has the artist chosen to use this form/material? Would the meaning change if she used another form/material? [*Why and Why Not?*]

### ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS

- **What do you think?**  
What do you think the artist is trying to show?
- **Why do you think that?**  
Why do you think the artist wants to show that?
- **How do you know this?**  
What are the signs or clues that shows you that is what the artist wants to show?
- **Can you tell me more?**
- **What questions do you still have?**

### CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE

- *Think about what you see in the artwork.*  
Figurines – effigies  
Incense sticks  
Statue of a man.
- *How are the ideas and information in the artwork connected to what you already knew?*  
Incense sticks → prayers  
Guardian with weapon.
- *What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking about the artwork?*  
Figurines with nails, incense sticks...  
Guardian is protecting us.
- *After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?*  
Why do people pray?  
Why do they pray?

### FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

According to art critic Terry Barrett, an artwork is an expressive object, and it is always “about something”. Interpret *sft crsh ctrl* using [SUBJECT MATTER+MEDIUM+FORM+CONTEXT=MEANING]

**Teacher's Tip:** Share each group's interpretation in class, discussion to be centered on the multiple meanings of the artwork, where the context in which a work of art is made or viewed can form rich discussions!

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

Observe the way the gallery space is divided into three distinct divisions of hills, land and sea. Describe how the space changes as you walk through it from right to left. *[Observe the use of materials, sensory displays and technology in creating this change]*

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Consider, do you have a favourite part of the art installation? Which is it and why do you like it?

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This artwork is inspired by the ritual of praying, reflect on and write briefly about an issue or a situation that you prayed for.

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The artist observes cultural practices in the region and how our traditional practices have changed over time, just as how our regional cities have changed over centuries. Can you remember any objects or practices that you recall from your past? Why is this significant to you?

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### IN CLASS ACTIVITY: REFLECTION

Think about the title of *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold* which contains the word “prayers”.

1. What do people pray about and why do they pray?
2. Brainstorm in groups on what “prayer” means to you. Share your ideas.
3. In our everyday life, discuss what other people pray for, and the forms that these prayers have taken. *[For example, the postures in prayer, the places where one prays in and the sounds, sight and smell produced during prayer.]*

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY]

## Worksheet

Paint or Draw out the object/object(s) in the space provided and write down two questions you would like to ask the artist about her artwork [You can adapt your questions from ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS].

Questions for artist

Object

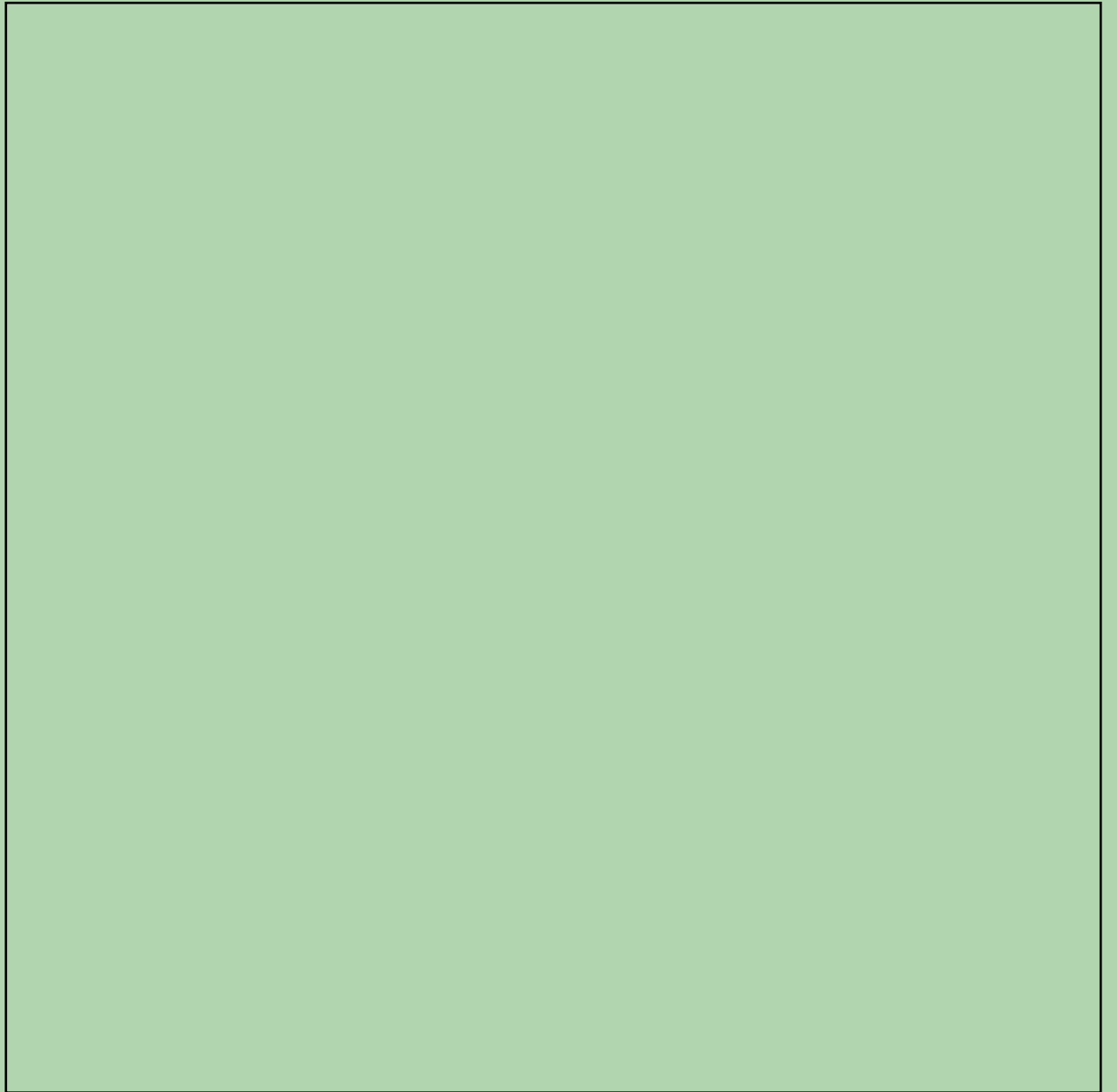
[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/ JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

### Create

For her artwork, the artists often used everyday materials found locally. Choose a theme for your favourite space. Think about the different emotions related to your chosen theme and what the space might look like.

- Create this space using 2D materials like newspaper or magazine cut-outs, photographs or drawings OR digital images.
- Collect any materials and images you may need. Create your background first. Then you can add in the objects, details and annotate the sound or atmosphere you wish to create.
- Think about how the images are placed next to one another, considering how this creates a distinct or unique atmosphere  
*[Teachers to facilitate teaching of photo editing software and students' presentation of ideas in class!]*



[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### Create

Generate a list of story-telling genres. For example, romance, horror, science fiction, comedy or mystery, etc.

- Divide yourselves into smaller groups of three.
- Each group to choose a genre and write a **collaborative** story.
- The story should include a first-person narrative and some performative elements.
- Develop the characters in the story fully, each story should have a conflict and a resolution.
- Importantly, include at least three objects or details from the artist's installation.

Using the artist's work as your inspiration, think about the artist's installation as the setting for a movie, play or a story.

- What stories would you imagine to be unfolding in your installation environment?
- If this artwork is the ... of a story, what might happen next?
- Write a 500 word short story and read it out in class!

*if this artwork were the **BEGINNING** of a story, what might happen next?*

*If this artwork were the **MIDDLE** of a story, what might have happened before?*

*If this artwork is the **END** of a story, what might the story be about?*

- **BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END]**

**Teachers' Tip:** For the group performances, you can make it into a competition and get students to evaluate their peer's creativity and spontaneity. The various interpretations can be recorded archived for future lessons.



## Further Exploration

### THE ARTIST

<https://www.lasalle.edu.sg/about/academics/zarina-muhammad>

### THE ARTWORK

<https://www.brasbasahbugis.sg/whats-on/programmes/a-performance-lecture-by-zarina-muhammad>

### INTERVIEWS

<https://www.aware.org.sg/2012/02/sugar-spice-women-talk-about-girlhood/>

### NOTABLE EXHIBITION/EVENT

<http://ntu.ccasingapore.org/events/exhibition-detour-flowers-bloodlines-lecture-performance-artist-zarina-muhammad-collaboration-choreographer-stefania-rossetti/>

### *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold*

2018

Bamboo, sandalwood, clay, stone, turmeric powder,  
sandalwood powder, saffron, nine grains and spices,  
rose water, incense, glass jars and paper

Dimensions variable





## Chen Yanyun

### [THE ARTIST]

Yanyun Chen (b. 1986, Singapore) is a visual artist and lecturer at Yale-NUS College. Her drawing practice deconstructs our role as witness-of-decay – depicting wilting flowers as a manifestation of time passing; researching nudity embroiled in historical spectacles and censorship; investigating the fictions and operations of etymology; and reading scars on skin. Grounded in stories and philosophical readings, her works incorporate a blend of classical Eastern and Western drawing techniques.

Chen is a PhD candidate at The European Graduate School in Switzerland/Malta, where she obtained her Masters in Communications. She has trained in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Singapore and Sweden, and was awarded the Special Jury Prize at the 15th Japan Media Arts Festival (2012). Her published works include *50 Drawing Exercises*, *Tracing Etymology: Origin and Time*; *Monsters and Demons* and *It's Fiction*. She manages illustration and animation studio *Piplatchka*, and co-founded *Delere Press*. She lives and works in Singapore.



### [THE IDEA]

Keloid is a scar forms as a result of an overgrowth of tissue at the site of a healed skin injury. Unlike most scars that lighten or minimise over time, keloids may continue to darken and grow. *The scars that write us* adopts the keloid as its reference and offers a narrative on wounds and scars, and those that bear them.

Entering into a dark, quietened space – a visitor's first encounter with *The scars that write us* by Yanyun Chen is perceived rather than seen, evoking a sense of anticipation, curiosity, and uncertainty for what lies ahead, obscured.

The work unfolds in three types of spatial experiences: near, far, and wide. The installation endeavours to provide a space of contemplation for those who live with the ordeal of scars – the physical, and otherwise.

In this intimate installation, the visitor encounters a row of slim metal plates. Welded onto the metal surfaces are worm-like swells, akin to the array of forms that keloids usually take. Beneath these metal plates lie hand-written reflections of the scar owners. Moving on, we see life-sized sheets drawings of the artist's body before coming to the final section of the installation where a series of writings by Chen, in collaboration with writer Jeremy Fernando is written on the wall.

Of marks and scars, illnesses and injuries, mind and body, *The scars that write us* is an installation that speaks of the most personal of experiences that every individual holds.

**Key Words:** Drawing, Portraiture, Family, Memory, Body, Identity

[THE ARTWORK]

*The scars that write us*

2018

Charcoal, chalk, gold leaf,  
steel plates (set of 10) and steel  
sheets (set of 6)  
Steel plates 30 × 30 cm each;  
steel sheets 180 × 80 cm each

Collection of the Artist  
Singapore Art Museum  
Commission



[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Guiding Questions

1. **Discuss/describe** what you see when you walk through the art installation. Can you identify the materials used in creating the artwork?
2. What are the images, shapes, forms and textures that you observe in the artwork and what do they remind you of? [*What do you see? What do you think is going on? What does it make you wonder?* - **SEE, THINK, WONDER**]
3. **Observe** the way the gallery space requires you to walk through three sections from a dark corridor to the sections with charcoal drawings and ending with the wall with handwritten texts. Describe the feeling of this experience. [*Why are the spaces planned this way? What is the artist trying to get you to experience in her work?*]

REFER TO ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS

- **What do you think?**  
What do you think the artist is trying to show?
- **Why do you think that?**  
Why do you think the artist wants to show that?
- **How do you know this?**  
What are the signs that shows you that is what the artist wants to show?
- **Can you tell me more?**
- **What questions do you still have?**

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CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE

- *Think about what you see in the artwork.*  
What materials and art media are used and employed in the artwork?
- *How are the ideas and information in the artwork connected to what you already knew?*  
Scars → memories  
Body as a personal space.
- *What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking about the artwork?*  
Use of handwritten text...  
Writing as a form of remembering or forgetting.
- *After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?*  
How do people live with scars?  
What do scars represent?

FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

According to art critic Terry Barrett, an artwork is an expressive object, and it is always “about something”. Interpret *sft crsh ctrl* using [SUBJECT MATTER+MEDIUM+FORM+CONTEXT=MEANING]

**Teacher's Tip:** Share each group's interpretation in class, discussion to be centered on the multiple meanings of the artwork, where the context in which a work of art is made or viewed can form rich discussions!

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

Write down your reactions and responses to the artwork.

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**Consider**, do you have a favourite artwork in *The scars that write us*? Which is it and why do you like it? [*Is there something you used to think about...that has changed now? What is it? What made you change your mind? I USED TO THINK...BUT NOW I THINK...*]

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**Think** about the different emotions that you experienced when in the space of *The scars that write us*. [THINK-PAIR-SHARE] [*You may also consider how the artist used her own handwritten text in the work*]

**Share** your writing with your partner and ask these questions below. [*What do you think? Why do you think that? How do you know this? Can you tell me more? What questions do you still have? - ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS*]

3 You may choose to draw or map this out on a sheet of paper!

*The scars that write us* is an installation that “concerns marks and scars; illness and injury; mind and body; you and everyone”.

- In pairs, **describe** how the format of an art installation enables you to walk through different spaces to experience this.
- Why are the spaces planned this way? What is the artist trying to get you to experience through her work in relation to scars?

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### IN CLASS ACTIVITY: REFLECTION

**Think** about *The scars that write us* contains the word “scars”.

1. Aside from “scars” being a result from the biological process of wound repair in the skin, what other forms of scarring are there?
2. Brainstorm in groups on what “scars” mean to you. Share your ideas.
3. In our everyday life, **discuss** what have you been wounded by and been scarred by, what forms do these “scars” take.

[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### Create

In groups of threes, **write** a narrative short story inspired by *The scars that write us*. This will take the form of 3-5 acts, each act should be about 150 words.

**Act 1:** Write a beginning (about the past) on one piece of paper.

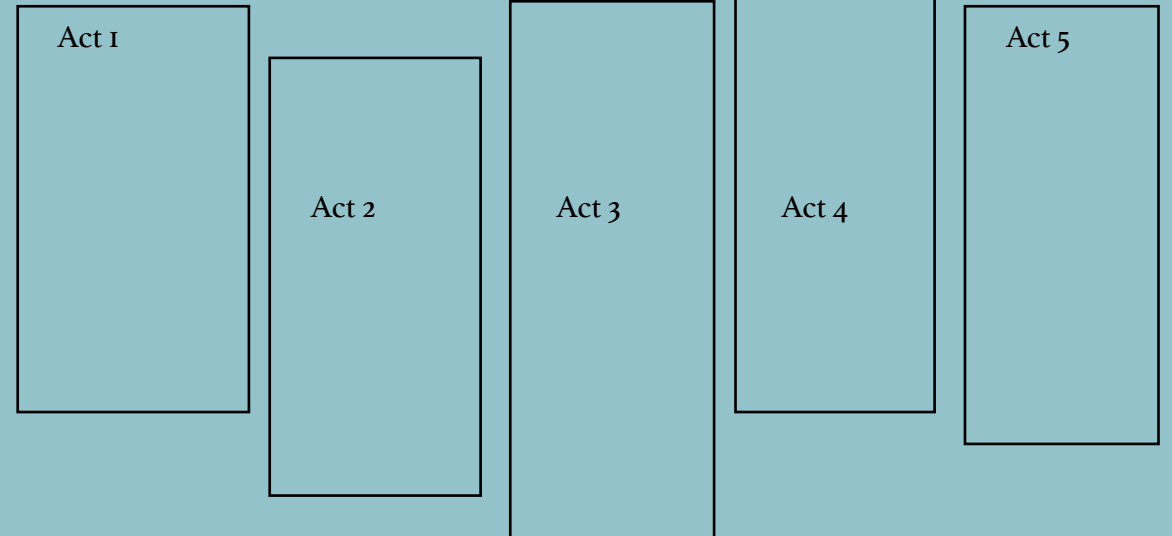
**Act 2:** Write a present (about the now) on another.

**Act 3:** Write a complication (can be in the past or present) on another.

**Act 4:** Write a resolution (of the present) on a third piece of paper.

**Act 5:** Write an end (of the future) on a third piece of paper.

**Teachers,** jumble up the story by shuffling the pieces of paper. This jumbled up story will be used as a script for a group performance. The improvised performance will form unique narratives that are open-ended with no clear beginning, end or middle.



**Teachers' Tip:** For the group performances, you can make it into a competition and get students to evaluate their peer's creativity and spontaneity. The various interpretations can be recorded archived for future lessons.



## Further Exploration

### THE ARTIST

<https://www.yanyunchendrawings.com/>

### THE ARTWORK

<https://www.yanyunchendrawings.com/drawings/>

### INTERVIEWS

<https://www.femalemag.com.sg/lifestyle/singapore-artist-yanyun-chens-still-life-drawings-are-hauntingly-beautiful/>

### NOTABLE EXHIBITION/EVENT

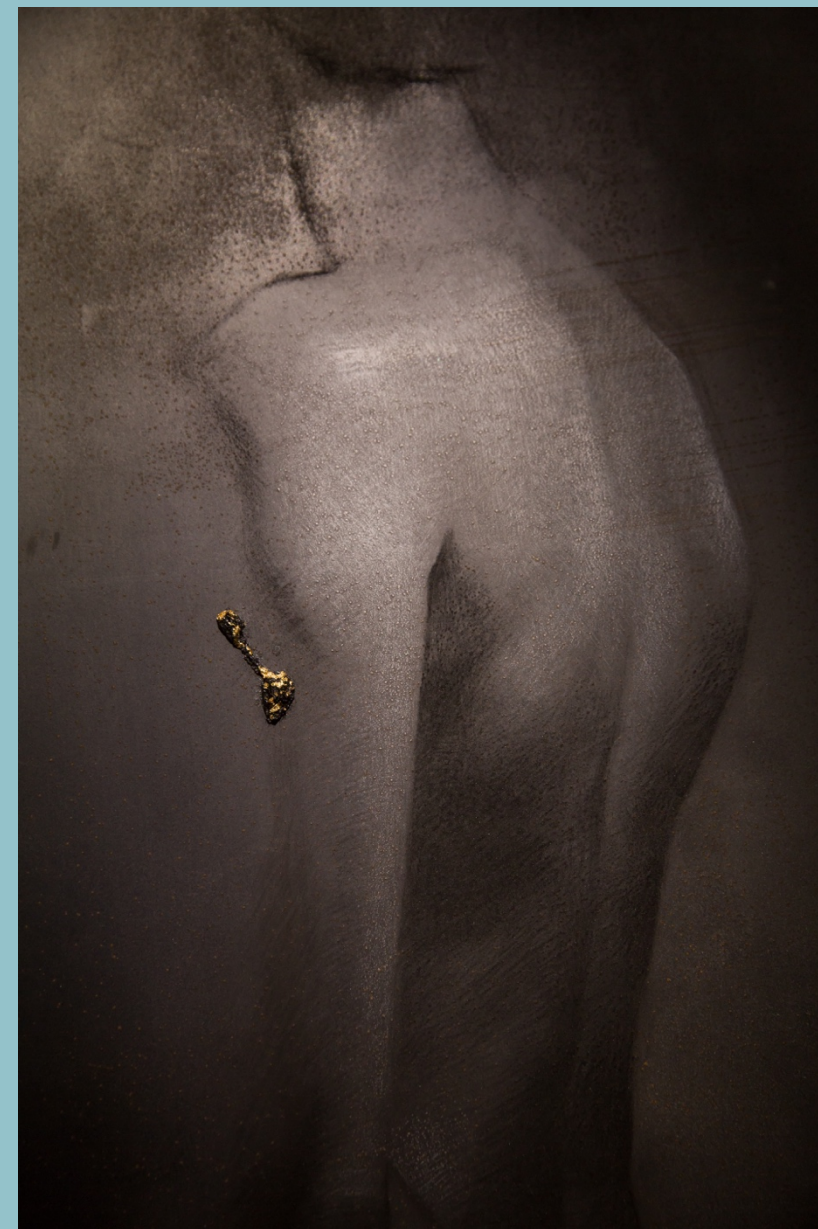
<https://www.straitstimes.com/lifestyle/arts/soil-and-scars-on-display-as-part-of-the-presidents-young-talents-2018-exhibition>



*The scars that write us*

2018

Charcoal, chalk, gold leaf, steel plates  
(set of 10) and steel sheets (set of 6)  
Steel plates 30 × 30 cm each; steel sheets  
180 × 80 cm each



## Debbie Ding

### [THE ARTIST]

Debbie Ding (DBBD.SG) (b. 1984, Singapore) is a visual artist and technologist who researches and explores technologies of perception through personal investigations and experimentation. She uses prototyping as a strategy for artistic production, and to iteratively explore potential dead-ends, in the pursuit of knowledge. This has led to a series of archive and map-based works under the moniker 'Singapore Psychogeographical Society', as well as computer-aided investigations into archaeological and historical finds.

Ding received a BA in English Literature from the National University of Singapore, and as a recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate), an MA in Design Interactions from the Royal College of Art, London. She has presented in Singapore at The Substation (2010, 2012, 2015, 2017), NUS Museum (2016), the Singapore Biennale (2016) and National Museum of Singapore (2017). She has exhibited her work internationally in France, Germany and the UK. She lives and works in Singapore.



### [THE IDEA]

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, soil is a 'biologically active, porous medium, that has developed in the uppermost layer of Earth's crust'. Yet what is soil? In *Soil Works*, Debbie Ding unearths and isolates units of the composite excavated from concealed areas under expressways, overhead bridges, road triangles, carparks – public spaces which are usually overlooked as one travels through Singapore – and proposes, in her words, “a series of artistic investigations into soil in Singapore and its visibility and invisibility”.

*Soil Works*, is presented in five parts: “Red Landscape”, “Home without a Shelter”, “Topsoil”, “Sand Weight”, and “Soil Column”. Each ‘station’ beckons the visitor to observe soil through a range of investigative approaches. “Red Landscape” comprises of a photo studio backdrop with a digitally rendered montage of the public housing imagery – featured on the Singapore 10 dollar note. In “Home without a Shelter”, Ding has fashioned a fabric design similar to a poncho, her own set of camouflage suits.

“Topsoil” is a fine layer of soil that has been scattered across a bed under infrared lights that are invisible to the human eye and can only be detected via a smart device. For “Sand Weight”, Ding has engineered an automated rotating device that will turn when it detects that sand has fallen through. Finally, “Soil Column” is a series of Winogradsky columns that serve as a means of studying the biogeochemical cycles of ecosystems. In all of the five stations, Ding has used soil from largely unnoticed areas around Singapore.

Through *Soil Works*, Ding considers the strategies of researching the physicality of soil in Singapore by highlighting both its perceptible and less perceivable qualities. In doing so, she destabilises the concept of the scientific laboratory by staging her own multi-station ‘testing’ gallery.

**Key Words:** Mapping, Installation Art, Land Art, Photography, Typography, National Identity



## [THE ARTWORK]

### *Soil Works*

2018

Mixed media installation

Residual granite soil, water, PTFE sealant, cellulose acetate film, Dura-Lar film (mylar and acetate mix), laser-cut acrylic, laser-cut MDF, acrylic paint, textile paint, waterproof nylon ripstop, PTFE tape, PVC vinyl print, aluminium alloy light stands, aluminium alloy tripods, heavy duty nylon sandbags, T5 LED light battens, colour film gels, IR LED strips, LED strips, LED drivers, Stepper motors, aluminium profiles, micro-controllers, mini breadboard, miscellaneous electronic components, CCTV cameras with varifocal lens, cork mannequin head, mannequin head mounts, field monitor, double articulating arm, aluminium alloy extension rods, wide angle LED light panels and glass columns  
Dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist  
Singapore Art Museum commission



[FOR UPPER SECONDARY]

## Guiding Questions

Discuss/describe what you see.

1. Can you identify the materials used in the art installation? Describe what you observe in the space, considering your senses. [*sight and sound*].
2. What are the colours, types of technology and forms/textures that you observe in the artwork and what do they remind you of? [*How is soil depicted in the artwork?*]
3. Do you know where the material for the object come from and how it is processed? [*Where is the material from? How is it made or grown?*]

REFER TO ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS

- **What do you think?**  
What do you think the artist is trying to show?
- **Why do you think that?**  
Why do you think the artist wants to show that?
- **How do you know this?**  
What are the signs that shows you that is what the artist wants to show?
- **Can you tell me more?**
- **What questions do you still have?**

CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE

- *Think about what you see in the artwork.*  
Laboratory – technology.  
Use of movement  
Machines and Nature.
- *How are the ideas and information in the artwork connected to what you already knew?*  
Soil → overlooked and often invisible  
Research into the physicality of soil.
- *What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking about the artwork?*  
Use infrared lights to detect “Topsoil”...  
Automated rotating device that will turn when it detects sand.
- *After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?*  
Why do scientists conduct experiments?  
What is the importance of soil?

FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

According to art critic Terry Barrett, an artwork is an expressive object, and it is always “about something”. Interpret *sft crsh ctrl* using [SUBJECT MATTER+MEDIUM+FORM+CONTEXT=MEANING]

**Teacher's Tip:** Share each group's interpretation in class, discussion to be centered on the multiple meanings of the artwork, where the context in which a work of art is made or viewed can form rich discussions!

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

*Soil Works* contains the work “soil”.

1. Where do people normally find “soil” and what uses do they have?
2. Brainstorm in groups on what “soil” means to you and their physical qualities. Share your ideas.
3. In our everyday life, discuss how important soil is to our existence in relation to the “visible” and “invisible” importance it is to Singapore. [For example, without soil, *some* plants are unable to grow.] [Why? What are the reasons...? What is the purpose of...? What would change if...?]

- CREATIVE QUESTIONS]

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The artist researches into “the physicality of soil in Singapore by highlighting both its perceptible and undetectable qualities”, what are both these qualities?

- **Produce** a list of 5 of these qualities and share with the class. [*For example, where do we find soil and what use quality does it have?*]
- **Observe** how the artist has produced an art installation that resembles a scientific laboratory by staging her “multi-station ‘testing’ gallery”.
- **Describe** how the artist enabled the experience of the space to change from station to station. [*how does she achieve this? Has it been successfully created? In what ways are the spaces similar and in what ways are they different in depicting soil?*]

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[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

**Think** about the possible occupations related to *Soil Works*. Choose a character from the gallery and create their social media profile. What would the profile description be like? Write the following:

1. A short 50 word facebook or Instagram profile.
2. The first tweet, snap or facebook post.
3. Have the class guess what occupation and which industry he/she is in.

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### **Imagine**

Produce a short 100 word **personal information for a job application**. This document should enable students to practice writing using regular and irregular past tense forms in “formal writing”.

### **Personal Information**

[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

**Interview** elders from your family and ask them about their experiences of what made up their everyday experience of Singapore, e.g. walks in parks, playing chess in the void deck of their HDB and draw it in on the left (then).

Add a description below and do a [COMPARE & CONTRAST] between the elders' experience of "then" against your experience of everyday spaces "now"!

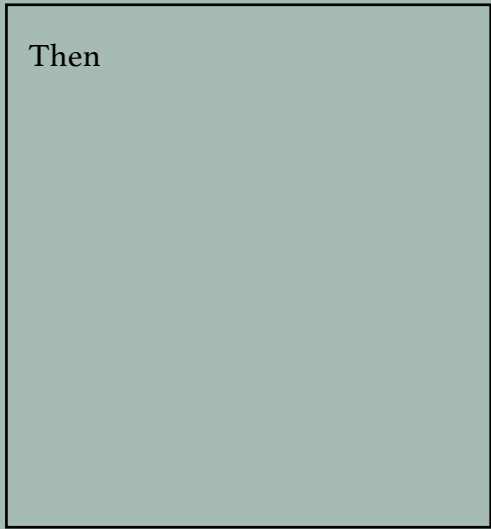
Then




Now



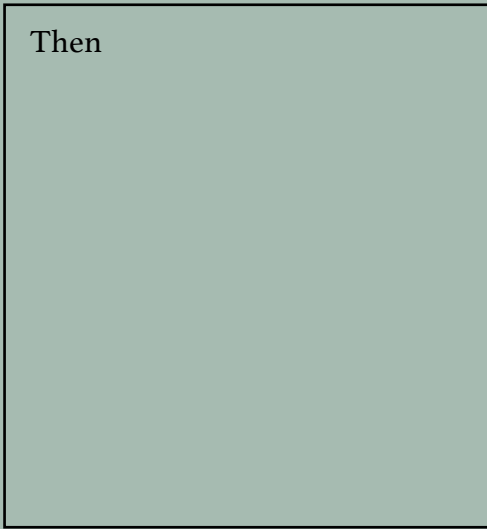
Then



Now



Then



Now



## Further Exploration

### THE ARTIST

<http://dbbd.sg/>

### THE ARTWORK

<http://dbbd.sg/works.php>

<http://openurbanism.blogspot.com/>

### INTERVIEWS

<https://www.zku-berlin.org/people/debbie-ding/>

### NOTABLE EXHIBITION/EVENT

<https://www.singaporebiennale.org/sb2016/debbie-ding.php>

[https://www.singaporebiennale.org/sb2016/pdf/artist-folios-pdf/Zone9\\_DebbieDing.pdf](https://www.singaporebiennale.org/sb2016/pdf/artist-folios-pdf/Zone9_DebbieDing.pdf)

### *Soil Works*

2018

Mixed media installation

Residual granite soil, water, PTFE sealant, cellulose acetate film, Dura-Lar film (mylar and acetate mix), laser-cut acrylic, laser-cut MDF, acrylic paint, textile paint, waterproof nylon ripstop, PTFE tape, PVC vinyl print, aluminium alloy light stands, aluminium alloy tripods, heavy duty nylon sandbags, T5 LED light battens, colour film gels, IR LED strips, LED strips, LED drivers, Stepper motors, aluminium profiles, micro-controllers, mini breadboard, miscellaneous electronic components, CCTV cameras with varifocal lens, cork mannequin head, mannequin head mounts, field monitor, double articulating arm, aluminium alloy extension rods, wide angle LED light panels and glass columns

Dimensions variable





## Weixin Quek Chong

### [THE ARTIST]

Weixin Quek Chong (b. 1988, Singapore) is a visual artist whose practice explores the materiality of human experience and existence, and the relationships between the digital, organic and aesthetic. The effects and methods of manipulating images across materials are core to her practice.

She received her MFA from the Royal College of Art in London with a specialisation in printmaking, and was a recipient of the NAC Overseas Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2012) and the Tan Ean Kiam Postgraduate Scholarship. Previously an artist-in-residence at the NTU Centre of Contemporary Art in Singapore, her works have been exhibited in Carrara, Istanbul, London, Paris, Santiago, Seoul, Taipei, Vienna and Yogyakarta. She lives and works in Singapore, the UK and Spain.



### [THE IDEA]

Shaped by the concept of the contingency plan, *sft crsh ctrl* by Weixin Quek Chong invites visitors to encounter a series of curious materials and range of objects that seem to evade straightforward understanding.

Inside the space of *sft crsh ctrl*, a softness and delicacy in colour and texture appears to bathe over the visitor; an assortment of pinks – from dusty rose to magenta – overlay silk, paper, latex, faux fur and other materials, suggesting a feeling of interiority and domesticity. Visitors will find themselves navigating through an assemblage of unusual tactile and sensorial articles such as flesh-toned latex folding screens that reveal as much as they conceal.

Other items include lengths of draped silk that carry the magnified details of scanned images of trapped dust, snakeskin and liquid silicon; whilst another set of objects are a series of compact single-board computer touch screens on which a series of looped videos feature the action of crumbling.

*sft crsh ctrl* thus unfolds, unfurls, suspends, and drapes in ways that challenge conventional understanding and expectation of materials. Its components signal a sense of precarity, tensions of resistance, and notions of non-occurrence. It is an installation of ‘surfaces’ as developed and explored through material form and transformation, and challenges the viewer to disengage from their instinct to rationalise. *sft crsh ctrl* guides the visitor towards feelings of unease and uncertainty, and in doing so reveals the complexity of being dependent on logic.

**Key Words:** Mapping, Installation Art, Land Art, Photography, Typography, National Identity



[THE ARTWORK]

*sft crsh ctrl*

2018

Silk twill, latex, wood, silicone,  
vinyl, faux fur, paper, screens,  
aluminium and stainless steel  
Dimensions variable

Collection of the Artist  
Singapore Art Museum  
commission



## Guiding Questions

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

Discuss/describe what you see.

1. Can you identify the materials used in the art installation? Describe what you observe in the space, considering your senses. [*sight, touch and sound*].
2. What is/are your favourite object or object(s) from the art installation? Why is that so?
3. Do you know where the material for the object comes from and how it is processed? [*Where is the material from? How is it made or grown?*]
4. What are the colours, forms and textures you observe in the object or objects and what do they remind you of? Describe why you like it, considering your five senses [*taste, sight, touch, smell, and sound*].

REFER TO ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS

- **What do you think?**  
What do you think the artist is trying to show?
- **Why do you think that?**  
Why do you think the artist wants to show that?
- **How do you know this?**  
What are the signs that shows you that is what the artist wants to show?
- **Can you tell me more?**
- **What questions do you still have?**

## CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE

- *Think about what you see in the artwork.*  
Curious materials – softness and delicacy in colour and texture.  
An assortment of pinks  
silk, paper, latex, fur and other materials.
- *How are the ideas and information in the artwork connected to what you already knew?*  
Flesh-toned latex folding screen → reveal as much as conceal  
Looped videos feature the action of crumbling.
- *What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking about the artwork?*  
Scanned images of trapped dust, snakeskin and plastics...  
Assemblage of unusual tactile and sensorial objects.
- *After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?*  
Why are the materials and objects placed together in the installation?  
What is the artist trying to express?

## FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

According to art critic Terry Barrett, an artwork is an expressive object, and it is always “about something”. Interpret *sft crsh ctrl* using [SUBJECT MATTER+MEDIUM+FORM+CONTEXT=MEANING]

**Teacher's Tip:** Share each group's interpretation in class, discussion to be centered on the multiple meanings of the artwork, where the context in which a work of art is made or viewed can form rich discussions!

[FOR UPPER SECONDARY]

## Worksheet

**Consider**, do you have a favourite spot in the art installation? Which is it and why do you like it?

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**Think** about how you would like your favourite spot on earth to be like. What materials and objects would be used or placed there? Would you have a colour scheme for the place? What soundtrack or atmosphere would you want to create? What would you call this spot and where would it be located in your home or school?

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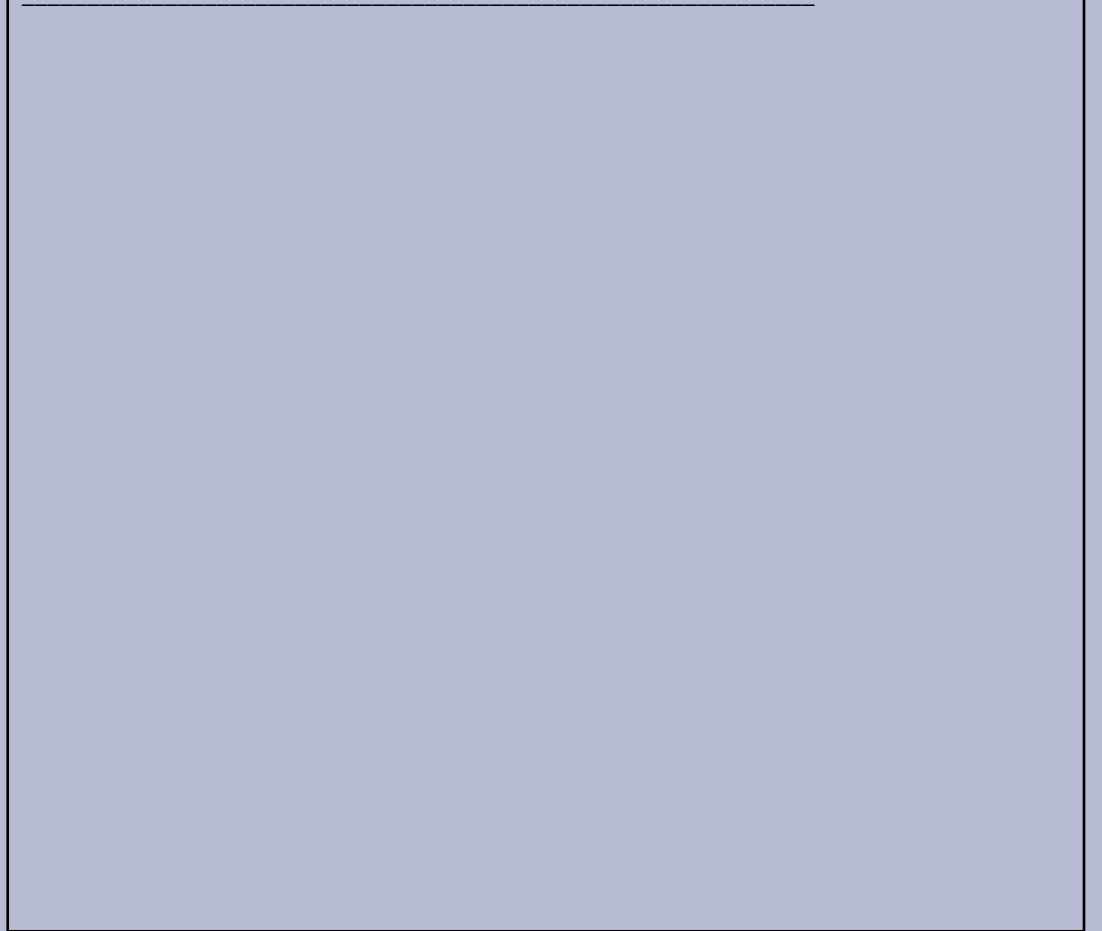
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**My Mood-board:**

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**Teachers Tip:** Tell students to collect any materials and images they may need to form a mood-board. Create your background first. Then you can add in the objects, details and annotate the atmosphere you wish to create. Think about how the images are placed next to one another, considering how this creates a “mood”.

[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

**Worksheet**

The artwork *sft crsh ctrl* consists of different materials, video imagery and writings forming an art installation. Look closely at each of the elements and answer these questions:

- 1. What materials and art media is used and employed in the artwork?
- 2. What do the images, forms and texture remind you of?
- 3. What new ideas did you get when you extend or broaden your thinking of the artwork? [CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE]

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The artist observes sensations created by materials and colours, just as how our sense of taste, touch and perceptions of our surrounding has changed over centuries. Can you remember any objects or “sensations” that you recall from your past? Why is this sensation special to you and why so?

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Installation art like *sft crsh ctrl* are examples of new forms of art. What questions would you ask the artist about her practice if you are given a chance to interview her? [You can adapt your questions from CREATIVE QUESTIONS]

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[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

### Create

Generate a list of art making materials & mediums. For example, oil paint, water colour, photography, sculpture, film and installation, etc.

- Divide into smaller groups of three for a debate.
- Each group to debate why their material and medium can be considered art.
- Have them think about what the artist in this gallery did, what their ideas and processes were, and what the viewer's responses might be.
- Have one group advocating for their material and medium as art, while the other group challenge this idea.
- Importantly, have each group come up with at least three "examples" from the artist's installation.

**Teachers' Tip:** Present and discuss each group's case. They can choose to perform, film or narrate it out. Are there similarities and differences? Were they common or recurring reasons chosen for why their material or medium can be considered art?



## Further Exploration

### THE ARTIST

<https://www.tropicalghosts.net/>

### THE ARTWORK

<https://www.tropicalghosts.net/sft-crsh-ctrl>

### INTERVIEWS

<https://fadmagazine.com/2015/09/09/interview-artist-weixin-chong/>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUYfcqH\\_eTk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUYfcqH_eTk)

### NOTABLE EXHIBITION/EVENT

<http://ntu.ccasingapore.org/residencies/weixin-chong/>

<http://ntu.ccasingapore.org/events/residencies-insights-dictation-with-weixin-chong/>



*sft crsh ctrl*  
2018

Silk twill, latex, wood, silicone, vinyl,  
faux fur, paper, screens, aluminium  
and stainless steel  
Dimensions variable

## Hilmi Johandi

### [THE ARTIST]

Hilmi Johandi (b. 1987, Singapore) primarily works with painting and explores interventions with different mediums that are associated within the domain of framing, fragmentation (deconstruction) and compression (reconstruction). His explorations set in the context of Singapore, range from the familiar to symbolic motifs. He composes and synthesises images from film, archival footages and photographs into a fragmented montage that hints at the social effects of rapid development, and the personal desires and contempt of those who embrace modernisation.

Hilmi has been involved in exhibitions in Japan, London, New York, Paris, Singapore and Thailand. He was a recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship (Postgraduate) (2017), LASALLE Scholarship (2017) and the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award. He lives and works in Singapore.



### [THE IDEA]

*An Exposition* tells the story of the defunct ‘World(s)’ – New World, Great World and Gay World (formerly Happy World) – through fragments of material and memory. In the art installation, Hilmi Johandi uses the schemas of amusement parks to introduce audiences to an assemblage of fragmentary elements. In doing so, he attempts to establish a speculative dialogue that traces the systems of production, consumption, pleasures and entertainment of these ‘World(s)’.

*An Exposition* tells the story of these defunct ‘World(s)’ through fragments of material and memory. Visitors are welcomed into a space marked out by components that together appear to resemble a deconstructed theatrical set. These range from wooden sculptures constructed to resemble iconic structures in the ‘World(s)’ – such as the architectural elements of an entry facade and carnival ride – to silent animated videos that demonstrate the real-life function of these wooden props, and standees and mounted printed vinyls featuring images and scenes captured at the ‘World(s)’. The installation is immersive whilst reminding the viewer of the void that exists in the theatricality of set designs and amusement parks.

To the far end of the gallery is an elevated platform where the visitor is able to view the installation from a raised height and regard the installation as the artist does conceptually and visually – like a canvas on which to strategically place and compose objects and forms. In a presentation of decontextualised signs and symbols, *An Exposition* engages with the local history and collective memory of Singapore.

**Key Words:** Collective Memory, Installation Art, Appropriation, The Archive, re-imagined spaces, National Identity



[THE ARTWORK]

*An Exposition (Seeing the Void)*

2018

Oil on canvas, three-channel video, digital print on vinyl sticker mounted on wood, synthetic polymer paint, plywood and mild steel

Installation: dimensions variable; video: 16:9, colour, silent

Collection of the Artist  
Singapore Art Museum  
Commission



[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Guiding Questions

Discuss/describe what you see.

1. Can you identify the materials and type of iconography used in the artwork?
2. What are the colours, forms and types of shapes you observe in the artwork and what type of space does this remind you of? What space do you think the artist is trying to re-create?
3. Do you know where the material for the object comes from and how it is processed or made? [*Where is the material from? How is it crafted or fabricated?*]

REFER TO ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS

- **What do you think?**  
What do you think the artist is trying to show?
- **Why do you think that?**  
Why do you think the artist wants to show that?
- **How do you know this?**  
What are the signs that shows you that is what the artist wants to show?
- **Can you tell me more?**
- **What questions do you still have?**

CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE

- *Think about what you see in the artwork.*  
Materials – props and images  
Wooden Sculptures, Paintings  
Silent animated videos.
- *How are the ideas and information in the artwork connected to what you already knew?*  
Amusement parks → Entertainment, consumption and production.  
Set designs and architectural elements.
- *What new ideas did you get that extended or broadened your thinking about the artwork?*  
Void that exists in the experiences in amusement parks...  
Dialogue between audience and immersive space.
- *After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?*  
Why are the materials and objects placed together in the installation?  
What is the artist trying to express?

FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE TEACHERS

According to art critic Terry Barrett, an artwork is an expressive object, and it is always “about something”. Interpret *sft crsh ctrl* using [SUBJECT MATTER+MEDIUM+FORM+CONTEXT=MEANING]

**Teacher's Tip:** Share each group's interpretation in class, discussion to be centered on the multiple meanings of the artwork, where the context in which a work of art is made or viewed can form rich discussions!

[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## Worksheet

The artwork *An Exposition (Seeing the Void)* consists of oil paintings, videos and prints forming an art installation. Look closely at each of the elements and answer these questions:

1. What materials and art media were used and employed in the artwork?
2. What do the colours, forms and filmic scenes remind you of?
3. What new ideas did you get when you extend or broaden your thinking of the artwork? [CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE]

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Observe the way the gallery space is planned by the artist. Describe how the space gives you a different experience as you walk through it from right to left, ending off at the top of the elevated platform. [*In what ways are the spaces similar and in what ways are they different? What did you feel when you were in each space?*]

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[FOR UPPER SECONDARY]

## Worksheet

This artwork is developed from the artist's research into architectural spaces of theme parks that were patronised by people looking for entertainment, fun and play. Reflect on the artwork's observation of earlier modes of entertainment and amusement parks and write briefly about your idea of an entertainment park then. [*Where is this park? Why is it fun? What do you do there?*]

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The artist **observes** the change in how people consume entertainment and seek pleasure. Brainstorm in groups on what places like Universal Studios Singapore and Resorts World Sentosa mean to you.

1. What's going on in the artwork (to suggest this)?
2. What do you see (in such a place) that makes you say that?
3. What other information is there that supports the artist's observation of peoples' views on entertainment or consumption? [**WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?**] *Do share your ideas.*

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**Installation Art** like the *Exposition (Seeing the Void)* are examples of new forms of art. What questions would you ask the artist about her practice if you are given a chance to interview him?

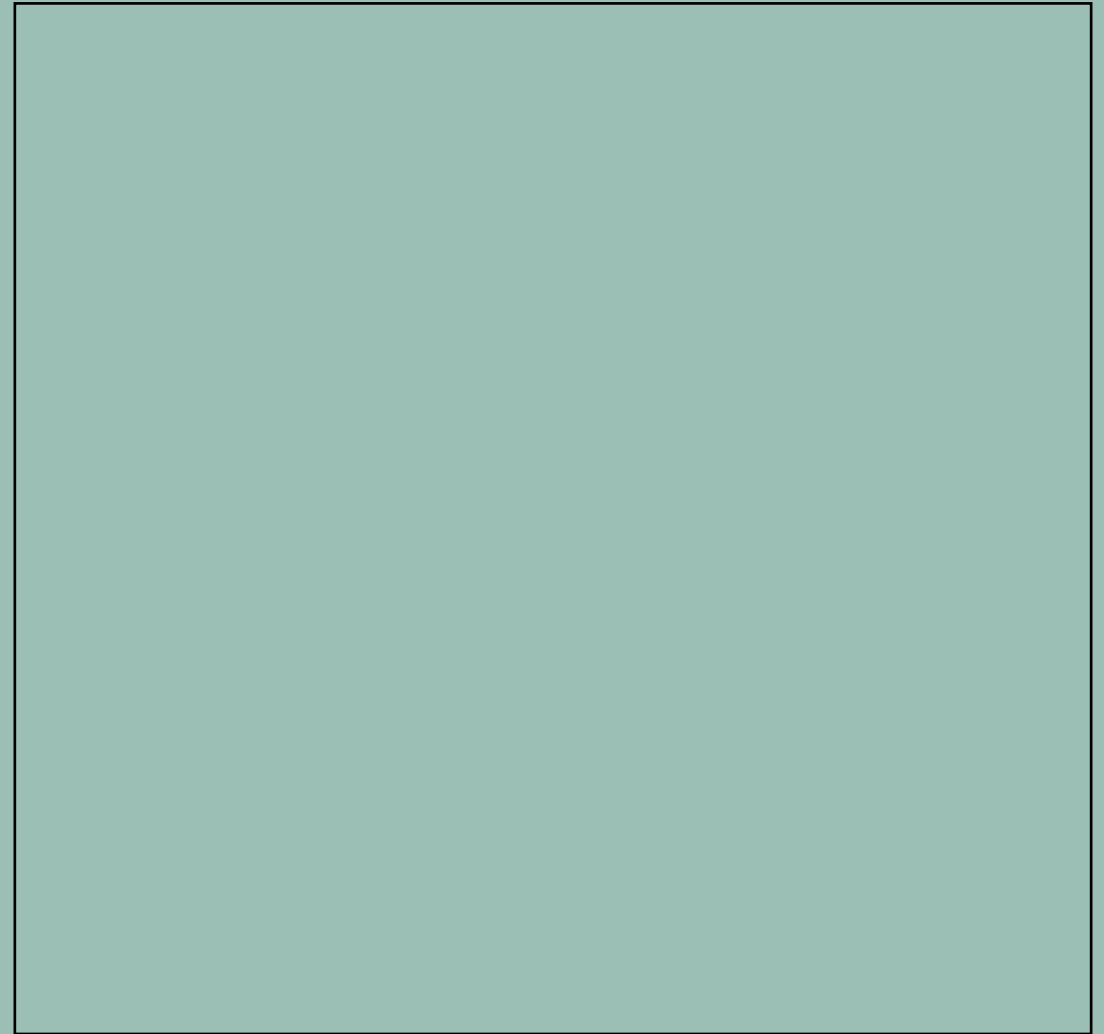
[FOR JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

**Consider** how the internet has taken over theme parks as a form of entertainment and changed the way you experience the world.

**Create** a simple story-board with a narrative relating to the theme of *Seeing the Revolution* using a series of images from the internet (use the box on the left).

- Each group or pair can curate a selection of ten images from the internet that reflects the idea of revolution.
- The group is to explain why these images were chosen. The images can be from documentaries, news clips, films or bands or artworks etc.
- Develop a narrative or argument using these ten images and arrange them in a creative or logical order to reflect the idea of revolution.
- **Discuss** how they felt about the process of searching, selecting and curating the order of the story-board. Did it alter your perception of what a revolution is when it is done through the internet? *[Ask them how they searched for the images and relate to how they experience many facets of their lives through popular culture or digital technology.]*



**Teachers' Tip:** Present and discuss each group/pair's curated story-board. Are there similarities and differences? Were there common or recurring images chosen? What does this show about the internet and our usage of it?



[FOR UPPER SECONDARY/JUNIOR COLLEGE]

## BONUS ACTIVITY

**Consider**, do you have a favourite artwork in the whole exhibition? Which is it and why do you like it? Choose from:

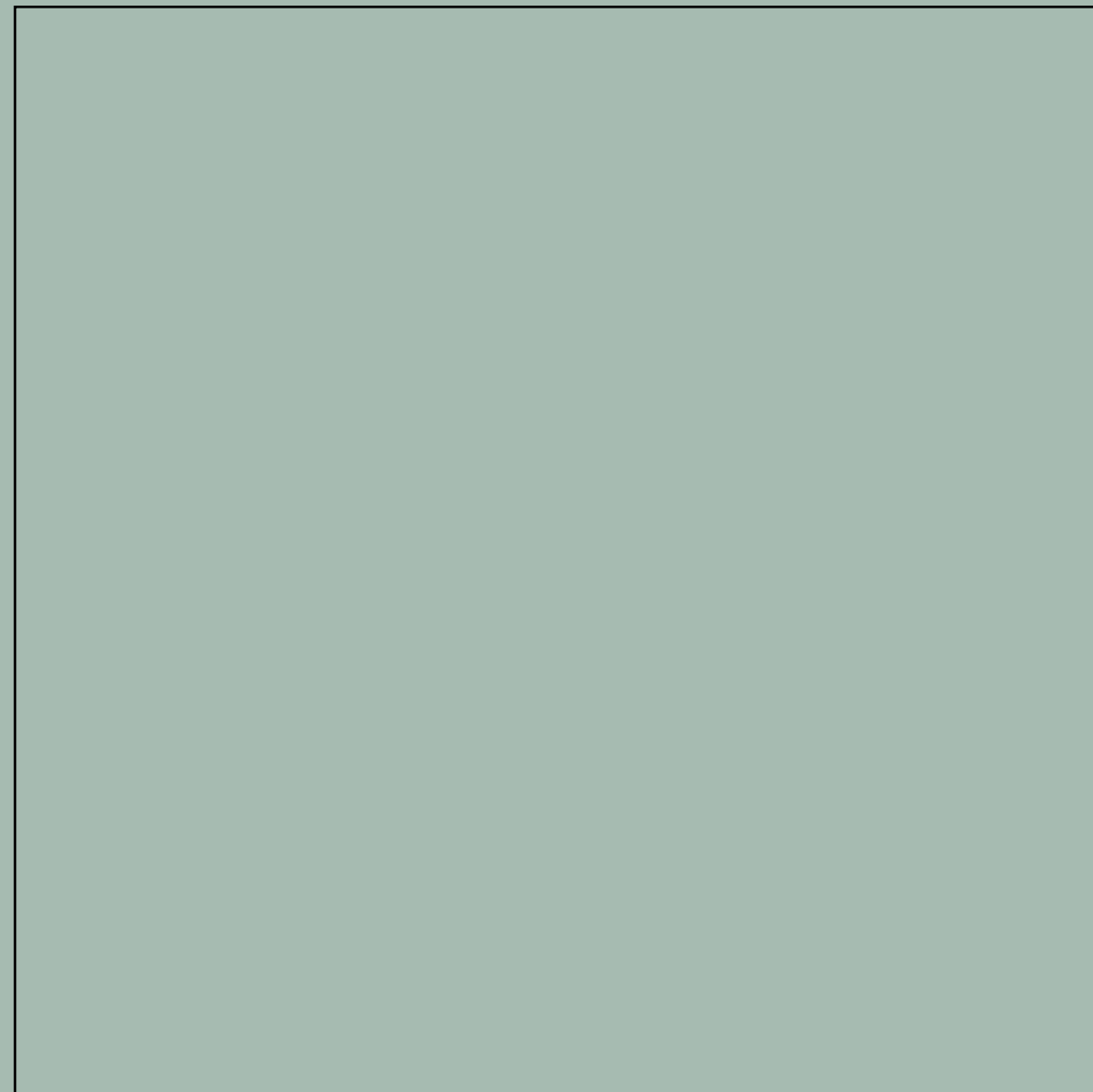
1. *Pragmatic Prayers for the Kala at the Threshold*
2. *The scars that write us*
3. *Soil Works 4*
4. *sft crsh ctrl*
5. *An Exposition (Seeing the Void)*

*[Are there any differences or similarities between these artworks? How are they similar or different? - COMPARE & CONTRAST]*

### Students' Tip:

- Look for similar and different shapes, colors, patterns, and media (what makes the installation?).
- What is the story in each artwork?
- Who are the main characters and how can you tell?
- What was the purpose of each object and how can you tell?

*[Examine the wall label to learn more!]*



## Further Exploration

### THE ARTIST

<http://www.hilmijohandi.com/>

### THE ARTWORK

<http://www.hilmijohandi.com/great-world-city.html>

### INTERVIEWS

<https://theartling.com/en/artzine/2014/6/18/interview-helm-johandi/>

<https://intersection.sg/interview-hilmi-johandi/>

### NOTABLE EXHIBITION/EVENT

<http://www.hilmijohandi.com/news/figment-of-film-adm-gallery-nanyang-technological-university-singapore>

#### *An Exposition (Seeing the Void)*

2018

Oil on canvas, three-channel video,  
digital print on vinyl sticker mounted  
on wood, synthetic polymer paint,  
plywood and mild steel

Installation: dimensions variable;  
video: 16:9, colour, silent



**[SEE, THINK, WONDER]**

What do you see?

What do you think is going on?

What does it make you wonder?

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**[ALBER'S 5 QUESTIONS]**

What do you think?

Why do you think that?

How do you know this?

Can you tell me more?

What questions do you still have?

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**[BEGINNING, MIDDLE, END]**

If this artwork were the **BEGINNING** of a story, what might happen next?

If this artwork were the **MIDDLE** of a story, what might have happened before?

If this artwork is the **END** of a story, what might the story be about?

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**[COMPARE & CONTRAST]**

Are there any similarities between these artworks? How are they similar?

Are there any differences between these artworks? How are they different?

**[I USED TO THINK...BUT NOW I THINK...]**

Is there something you used to think about the artwork that has changed now?

What is it? What made you change your mind?

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**[WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?]**

What's going on in the artwork?

What do you see that makes you say that?

What other information is there that supports what you say?

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**[CONNECT, EXTEND, CHALLENGE]**

Think about what you see in the artwork.

How are the ideas and information in the artwork *connected* to what you already knew?

What new ideas did you get that *extended* or broadened your thinking about the artwork?

What *challenges* or puzzles have come up in your mind from what you saw in the artwork?

After encountering the artwork, what do you find challenging or confusing for you to get your mind around? What questions, wonderings or puzzles do you now have?