

UAS Arts
Education
Symposium
2025

The
Work
of Art
Now

Practices and Pedagogies in Southeast Asia

5 April 2025

Lee Foundation Theatre

NAFA Campus 3

Symposium Programme

09:15 REGISTRATION

10:00 OPENING REMARKS

Kwok Kian Woon

Vice-Chancellor, University of the Arts Singapore

10:15 KEYNOTE 1

THE WORK OF ART IN THE AGE OF GENOCIDE

T. Sasitharan

Director and Co-Founder of Intercultural Theatre Institute

11:00 PANEL DISCUSSION 1: PEDAGOGY

12:30 *Lunch Break*

13:30 KEYNOTE 2

THE SLOW RENDER: RESEARCH IN THE PARACHRONIC CONTEMPORARY

David Teh

Associate Professor, National University of Singapore;

Convenor, NUS Visual Arts and Cultures Major;

Co-Artistic Director, Thailand Biennale Phuket 2025

14:15 PANEL DISCUSSION 2: PRACTICE

15:45 CLOSING REMARKS & ROUNDTABLE

16:30 NETWORKING SESSION

Jazz performance by LASALLE BA (Hons) Music Students:

Kenji Nakano (Bass)

Justin Ng (Saxophone)

Grace Lee (Piano)

17:30 END

Symposium Speakers

Opening Remarks



Kwok Kian Woon

Vice-Chancellor, UAS

Professor Kwok Kian Woon (PhD, University of California at Berkeley) is Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Arts Singapore. He is also an Emeritus Professor at the Nanyang Technological University, where he had served as Professor of Sociology and in several pioneering roles over two decades. His vocation has encompassed teaching, research, academic leadership, and intellectual engagement in civil society and the public sector. His writings and public presentations have covered central themes such as ethics and politics; history and memory; the nation state and civil society; mental health and wellbeing; and culture and the arts. His last keynote address, *Arts Education in the Service of a Broken Humanity on a Fragile Planet* was delivered at the International Drama/Theatre and Education Association Congress, Beijing, in July 2024.

Keynote 1

The Work of Art in the Age of Genocide



Credit: Bernie Ng

T. Sasitharan

Director and Co-Founder of Intercultural Theatre Institute

T. Sasitharan, known as Sasi, is a theatre worker and artistic leader in Singapore whose ideas have shaped global theatre education. With over 45 years of experience, he has worked as an actor, director, dramaturge, teacher, and champion of artists. Sasi is the Co-Founder and Director of the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI), a practice-based, full-time actor training conservatory. Established in 2000 with the late Kuo Pao Kun, ITI has produced award-winning film actors, community-oriented artists and educators.

Previously, Sasi was the Artistic Director of The Substation, Singapore's first independent arts centre (1995–2000). He was also a Theatre and Visual Arts critic for *The Straits Times* (1988–1995) and lectured in Philosophy at the National University of Singapore (NUS) (1983–1988). A regular speaker at international conferences, he has authored numerous articles.

He received the Cultural Medallion (2012), Singapore's highest award for artists, the Harvard Club of Singapore Fellow Award and the FASS Distinguished Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award from NUS.

Panel 1

Pedagogy



Credit: Michelle Mantel



Wendy Chua

Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Design for Social Futures, LASALLE

Wendy Chua is an interdisciplinary design researcher, curator and educator. As a design anthropologist, she mediates across disciplines and sectors to negotiate new forms of design and art-science practices in response to social issues and climate-related precarities.

Through her practice, Forest & Whale, Wendy has lived and worked in Singapore, Buenos Aires, London and Berlin, using design as a catalyst for social and planetary change. She has designed products, services and museum experiences that redefine modern living, from homeware objects and furniture systems to new models of care in ageing societies.

A recipient of the prestigious P*DA award (Singapore) and the Good Design Award (Japan), her work has been exhibited globally. She was named one of Prestige Singapore's 40 Under 40 in 2024. Selected for the 2024 EU STARTS artist residency (ReSilence), she is currently collaborating with marine microbiologists on climate-related projects to be exhibited internationally in 2025.

Susie Lingham

Independent artist, Curator, and Educator

Dr Susie Lingham is an interdisciplinary thinker, artist, writer, and curator. Her work synthesises ideas across the humanities and sciences, focusing on the nature of mind. Appointed Creative Director of the Singapore Biennale 2016, *An Atlas of Mirrors*, Susie was Director of the Singapore Art Museum (2013–2016), where she reshaped its vision, curatorial direction and acquisition strategy. She curated 13 exhibitions, including *After Utopia: Revisiting the Ideal in Asian Contemporary Art* (2015) and *5 Stars: Art Reflects on Peace, Justice, Equality, Democracy and Progress* (2015/16).

Before this, she was Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University (2009–2013). Susie has a DPhil in Literature, Religion and Philosophy from the University of Sussex (UK) and has taught at universities and art colleges in Australia, Singapore and the UK. She was conferred the Distinguished Alumni Medal 2014 by the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore.



Riduan Zalani

***Co-Founder and Artistic Director,
Nadi Singapura***

Riduan Zalani is one of Singapore's most prominent artists, versatile in producing and performing various drums and percussions. He is also the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Nadi Singapura: a relentless ensemble that is determined to etch their brand of traditional Malay drums and music performance in the hearts and minds of people.

For his courage and resilience in putting Singapore on the global world music scene and his dedicated efforts in developing the local Malay music scene, Mr Muhammad Riduan Bin Zalani was conferred the Young Artist Award 2015, Singapore Youth Award 2013 and the ASEAN Youth Award 2013.



Shahrin Johry

Founder, Under the Bridge Collective

Shahrin Johry, a National Arts Council Postgraduate Scholarship recipient, holds a Master of Arts in Dance, Politics and Sociology from Roehampton University, UK (2019), and a Bachelor of Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts (2012). His works embody a range of cultural influences, from Bharathanatyam (under the tutelage of Kavitha Krishan) to Javanese, Balinese, Urban, Ballet, and Contemporary dance. Since 2007, he has been the principal dancer and assistant choreographer at Maya Dance Theatre. Shahrin has choreographed and performed in works such as *The Conference* (2012–2016), *Sweet Lips* (2014), *KA* (2017), *Re: Path* (2018), *A Phase in the Sun* (2020), *Re:Memori* (2021), and *Under the Bridge Series: Social Constructs* (2022). In 2019, he founded the Under the Bridge collective, focusing on interculturalism, hybridity, and social issues, using the arts as a vehicle for positive social impact.

Moderator



Woo Yen Yen

Programme Leader, MA Arts Pedagogy and Practice, LASALLE

Dr Woo Yen Yen leads the MA Arts Pedagogy and Practice Programme at LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore. Beyond academia, she is a creative force in festivals, media and technology. She is the founding festival director of *Kampung Halloween*, a collaborative platform for independent artists supported by the National Arts Council. She directed the award-winning film, *Singapore Dreaming*, and founded *Dim Sum Warriors*, a bilingual comics series and edtech start-up.

Her work has been featured on Netflix, HBO, the App Store, Google Play Store, Singapore Airlines, Tokyo International Film Festival, San Sebastian International Film Festival, Smithsonian Institution, Brooklyn Museum of Art, and the National Museum of Singapore. Her academic writings were published in *Educational Researcher*, *The Oxford Handbook of Methods for Public Scholarship*, and *Arts-Based Research in Education*. Her current practice-based research focuses on sonic narratives and memories.



Michael Tan Koon Boon

Dean, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Research Division, NAFA

Michael's training in art and design, humanities, and social science has resulted in a growing track record of interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral creative health research collaborations with colleagues within and outside of academia to interrogate, imagine and transform the culture of care through creativity.

As a leading creative health researcher, practitioner, and advocate in Singapore, Michael's contributions include the State of Arts and Health Development in Singapore and numerous cross-sectoral/discipline collaborations with stakeholders such as the Agency for Integrated Care, National Arts Council, and Duke-NUS Medical School.

He is currently working with a team of eminent international colleagues in arts and health on the WHO Lancet Global Series. Michael's ongoing inquiries include mental health, end of life, disability, arts in medicine, and critical pedagogy.

Keynote 2

The Slow Render: Research in the Parachronic Contemporary



Credit: Alex Davies

David Teh

*Associate Professor, National University of Singapore
Convenor, NUS Visual Arts and Cultures Major
Co-Artistic Director, Thailand Biennale Phuket 2025*

David Teh is a curator and Associate Professor at the National University of Singapore, researching contemporary art's histories in Asia. His curatorial projects have included *Unreal Asia* (55. Internationale Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen, 2009), *Misfits: Pages from a Loose-leaf Modernity* (HKW Berlin, 2017), *Returns* (12th Gwangju Biennale, 2018) and the 17th Istanbul Biennial (2022). David is currently Co-Artistic Director of the 4th Thailand Biennale (Phuket, 2025).

His recent publications include essays on the work of *Rirkrit Tiravanija* (MoMA/PS1, 2023) and *Ho Tzu Nyen* (Afterall Journal, 2021) as well as two books, *Thai Art: Currencies of the Contemporary* (MIT Press, 2017) and *Artist-to-Artist: Independent Art Festivals in Chiang Mai 1992–98* for Afterall's *Exhibition Histories* series (2018).

Panel 2

Practice



Credit: Radhika Agarwal

Amitesh Grover

***Theatre Director and Professor,
National School of Drama, India***

Amitesh Grover is an award-winning artist and theatre director whose innovative work combines traditional and modern forms of theatre with a focus on audience experience. He is celebrated for using technology, multimedia, and physical theatre to create engaging and thought-provoking performances. He created India's first cyber-theatre play, *The Last Poet*, and his public art project *Velocity Pieces* received critical acclaim. One of the rare non-photographers to be commissioned by the Chennai Photo Biennale, he holds the honour of being commissioned by Australia's Sydney-based 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art. The *Hindustan Times* described his work as "bold new theatre," and his recent show *The Money Opera*, was called a "magnum opus". He has received awards including the Bismillah Khan National Award, MASH FICA Award, Charles Wallace Award (UK), Prohelvetia South Asian Artist Award (Switzerland), and several international residencies. He has created over 30 productions and artworks exhibited globally. Essays on his work appear in notable books on art and performance. Currently, he is a Professor at the National School of Drama, New Delhi, India.



Jeffrey Koh

***Associate Professor & Head of Design
Factory@SIT, Singapore Institute of
Technology***

Dr Jeffrey Koh is a transdisciplinary experiential designer who has worked on catwalk and fashion show designs for PRADA, advertising and gallery curation for KesselsKramer, and exhibition design for the Office for Metropolitan Architecture. He holds a BFA in Monumental Art from the Aki Academy of Art and Design, an MA in Creative Practice for Narrative Environments from Central Saint Martins College of Art & Design, and a PhD in Integrative Sciences & Engineering from the National University of Singapore. Jeffrey has peer-reviewed publications in computer science, engineering, and applied creativity, and holds patents in the United States, Japan and Singapore. Previously, he was a Peer of the Australia Council for the Arts, a Lecturer at the University of New South Wales and a Partner at Chemistry. Currently, he is an Advisory Board Member at Chemistry and Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Design, Associate Professor at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and Head of the Design Factory@SIT.



Joyce Bee Tuan Koh

Associate Dean (School of Interdisciplinary Arts), Faculty of Interdisciplinary Practices; Associate Dean (Technology and Sustainability Research), Research Division, NAFA

Award-winning composer Joyce Bee Tuan Koh writes concert music, collaborates in dance and theatre, and creates sound installations, multimedia productions, film music and sound design for extended reality. Versatile and interdisciplinary, her work is performed at International Computer Music Conferences, Biennale Musiques France, Sir Henry Wood Promenade UK, Melbourne Arts Festival and Singapore ArtScience Museum.

Her first public artwork, *A Micropolyphonic Stage*, consists of two blue benches shaped like a comma and an inverted comma, located by the Singapore River, is featured in the 'Benchmark' place-making project. Her publications include two piano works by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, UK. In 2027, she will play as a soloist on her sound installation-instrument, *Kohnomos*, with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group. In 2023, she was a laureate of the *Institut Français Cité Internationale des Arts Paris* programme.



Kok Heng Leun

Founder, Drama Box

Kok Heng Leun is a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and educator, known for his ability to engage the community on various issues through the arts and championing civic discourse across different segments of society. Awards he has received include the Young Artist Award, Cultural Fellowship, and Cultural Medallion. He served as a Nominated Member of Parliament (2016–2018) representing the arts sector. In 2024, he received an honorary doctorate from the National University of Tainan.

Moderator



Alecia Neo

Artist; Co-Founder, Brack

Alecia Neo's art practice unfolds primarily through photography, video installations and participatory workshops that address modes of radical hospitality and care. Her long-term artistic research, *Care Index*, explores diverse practices of care through dialogue, movement and collaborative practices. This project builds upon her earlier work, *Between Earth and Sky*, which was developed in collaboration with caregivers in Singapore.

She is the co-founder of Brack, an art collective and platform for socially engaged art and the Ubah Rumah Residency on Nikoi Island, Bintan. Active since 2014, her ongoing collaborations with disabled individuals and communities manifest as an arts platform, Unseen Art Initiatives. Alecia has been an artist-in-residence at diverse art institutions such as Bamboo Curtain Studio (Taipei), The Substation (Singapore), NTU CCA (Singapore) and UNIDEE in Biella, Italy. She received the National Arts Council's Young Artist Award (2016) and the National Youth Award Singapore (2019). She is an Associate Artist at Dance Nucleus, Singapore.



Francis Maravillas

Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Art Histories and Curatorial Practices: Asia and the World, LASALLE

Dr Francis Maravillas is Programme Leader, BA (Hons) Art Histories and Curatorial Practices: Asia and the World, and Senior Lecturer at LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore. His research interests lie in modern and contemporary Asian art, curatorial practices and exhibition histories, and socially engaged and performative practices in art. His current research focuses on the conjuncture of food, art and politics in the region. He is the lead co-editor of the book *Tastes of Justice: The Aesthetics and Politics of Food-Art Practices in Asia and Australia*, which will be published by Routledge in 2025. In 2019, he co-curated *Bruised Food: A Living Laboratory* exhibition at RMIT University Gallery, Melbourne. Francis was previously a board member of the 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, Australia.

Closing Remarks



Venka Purushoth- aman

Deputy President & Provost, LASALLE

Venka Purushothaman is Deputy President and Provost at LASALLE College of the Arts, University of the Arts Singapore and founder of the Asia-Pacific Network for Culture, Education and Research (ANCER). He is an award-winning art writer with a distinguished career in the arts and creative industries in Singapore. He speaks internationally on transformative art and design education and works to enable the development of cultural leaders in Southeast Asia. He is widely published and is currently editor of *ISSUE* art journal (Singapore), *AFTERALL* (London) and on the advisory board of Culture: Policy, Management and Entrepreneurship (Taipei).

Venka holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne and is a member of the Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art, (France/Singapore), Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts (UK), Fellow, Musashino Art University (Japan) and member of the International Cultural Relations Research Alliance of the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (Germany).



Chong Keng Hua

*Vice President (Academic) & Provost,
NAFA*

Chong Keng Hua is Vice President (Academic) and Provost of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Singapore, and Adjunct Professor at Singapore University of Technology and Design. A leading expert in social architecture, he has conducted extensive research in evidence-based design, participatory community design, nature placemaking, and healthy ageing. He has published widely on these topics, including *Creative Ageing Cities* (Routledge, 2018), *Second Beginnings* (Lien Foundation, 2018), and *Data-driven Smart Community Design* (Routledge, 2025). He has applied his research to design interventions, which have won multiple international awards. He served as Curator for the Singapore Pavilion at Seoul Biennale of Architecture and Urbanism (2017), Singapore Pavilion at Venice Biennale International Architecture Exhibition (2018), and as Festival Director for Singapore Architecture Festival (Archifest) (2020). For his contributions to education and community, he was awarded the Public Administration Medal (Bronze) (Pingat Pentadbiran Awam) by the Singapore Government in 2024.

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About the



The University of the Arts Singapore (UAS) is Singapore's first arts university nurturing a new generation of forward-looking artists, designers, educators, researchers, arts leaders and changemakers.

UAS is founded on an alliance of Singapore's leading arts institutions, LASALLE College of the Arts (LASALLE) and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA).

Located in the heart of the art and civic district, LASALLE and NAFA are distinguished by unique heritages, strong artistic traditions, and innovative teaching approaches. Our faculty and alumni have earned national recognition, including Cultural Medallions and Young Artist Awards, championing Singaporean creativity on the global stage.

UAS will further generate new artistic thinking and discourse by creatively combining teaching, practice, and research. Collaborating with arts communities and industry partners locally and internationally, our graduates will energise the cultural landscape and the creative economy. We will strengthen Singapore as a creative hub in Asia.

In August 2024, UAS welcomed its first cohort of undergraduate and postgraduate students from LASALLE and NAFA, with degrees conferred by UAS.



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