

a very
certain one
and if deeming
from an askew
perspective,
somewhat
slanted yet still
quite fetching

My position as an artist is observer and presenter of truth. I seek to notice the unnoticed and to draw attention to the things that are overlooked.

There are many stories and secrets in the quiet still moments. There is clarity and purity in silence.

My task as an artist is to go beyond the art, to go beyond the craft and to bring people back to the hidden truth that lies in the heart of man.

The longing for completeness and wholeness.

The longing to return home.

My position as an artist is to challenge the perception of viewer how they look at art in their own way. The process of information extraction by which people select, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into meaningful and clear picture of the world. We think we listen what other people say, but do we hear all of that or we hear only what we really want to hear? Do we see the world that is there or we see only what we really want to see? So my position is to communicate and question the public through my work the perception of art.

Art allows me to engage the world comprehensively. When I make art, I first observe and question, before emerging with an idea that I seek to express in the most creative and effective way that I can. In this process, I learn more about the world, but even more about the way I think. Art is the tool I use to question my boundaries. Art is the mirror I see myself and how much I have grown. There is a lot of fun and hard work in the making of a piece of art. I make art primarily for my own joy and satisfaction.

What draws me to art-making is also the chance of sharing my questions and ideas with the audience. This turns the often lonely act of art-making into one that contributes to society and appeals to higher orders of reasoning and spirituality. I am not so bold as to think I can change the world with my art, but I like to believe I can perhaps capture a heart, or change a mind, and that will make a difference.

I started as a video-artist and later turned to more traditional media because of the spontaneity and ease with working with them. Today, the tools of making art have expanded to all of the realms of industrial production, from digital new media to biotechnologies. Specialized knowledge domains such as Medicine, Finance and IT have become the seeds of new ideas for Art-making. Art and Architecture and the various forms of Fine and Applied Arts, are interplayed in one continuum.

I consider myself blessed to be in the position of a multi-disciplinary artist at an exciting age. It is good fortune that my working experience and training have allowed me to get started in many of these areas of questioning and modes of production. Areas that I have been exploring are the economical and effective presentation of tissue cultures as small organic sculptures and the use of financial models to make Art. These investigations have taken me to consult with new people, such as the researchers at laboratories and the executives at the monetary authorities, and motivated me to acquire new knowledge and skills.

I believe Art has made me a better person - more enlightened, humble, and compassionate. I do not feel that I have become more powerful or stronger. Art has enabled me to see the world more clearly, and discern the intricate relationships of Life.

My position
as an artist is
informed by
the fact that
I am neither
the beginning
nor the end
of anything.

It has been a decade since I laid claim to being an artist (see "Artist since"), and never had a single day been the same, living as an artist that is, or to live amongst people who believe that I am an artist. Perhaps, at least to my mind, the claim itself is only a point of departure. I am, hopefully without connotations of "New Age", constantly in a state of "becoming" yet when push comes to shove, and I had to stake a claim on that identity to the general public, it is with much apprehension and anxiety that I say I am a composer. Typically, a question I get in response to that would be "what kind of music do you write"? In earnest, I would declare that I am somewhat of a "sonic artist" and in that capacity, what I do in terms of organising sound and orchestrating forces that make sound, does not necessarily culminate in what we might call "music". It may seem as if I was avoiding the original question. But the diversionary method adopted here, is to highlight the difference between the claim, the assumptions we hold dear about a certain type of claim, and the sorts of associations we make thereafter, e.g. after experiencing a composition by someone who claimed to be wearing this hat or that. Hence to reflect upon my artist production, I would say it has broadly and deeply been, and continues to be about identity formation tarrying with the very possibility of composing, or making compositions, for whatever that is worth: socially, culturally, artistically etc. At the same time, to live with the notion of uncertainty that is a tenant of what we might consider a composite. My position as an artist, I feel, is that of a public interlocutor, seeking out the conversations to be had between "art" and "philosophy" in hope of that human society at large will gain something from engaging in a critical discourse that analyses our aesthetic experiences, individual, shared, or otherwise.

When I was 10, my mummy asked me what I wanted to do with my life. I told her I wanted to be an artist and she shook her head. She said, “artists don’t usually create anything tangible, much less of any economic value. Even when they do, it’s only one in a million. More often than not, artists fail. Sometimes when they do, the world incur their wrath. Think Hitler. Egoistical and self-centred, they tend to make very poor humanitarians. Think Picasso. Fame and fortune, if and when they come, are usually attained only posthumously. Your living years of being an artist tend to be one that is misunderstood, belittled and frown upon. In short, it will be a living hell.”

20 years later, I am a working artist. To date, I have yet to create an awe-inspiring piece of work that would change the world. More people would have watched an episode of the World’s Funniest Animal on cable than the total number of people who have seen my work. Nobody reads the reviews written about my work. When and if they do, the negatives comments tend to stick in their minds better than the good ones. When I see other artists make it and are being celebrated by media and the community, I get jealous and spiteful. In my head, I count down the days they would fall from grace and die in obscurity. I am neither famous nor rich. At best, I’m nice and polite on the surface, but certainly not kind by anyone’s standards. I’m still living with my parents and they cook and wash for me. My friends think I’m still a kid. Reviewing my work, I doubt they would attain any significant value even after I had passed on. I am just one of many like my kind, to be buried and forgotten in the shifting sands of time.

And I absolutely love it. I feel more human with each progressing year of mistakes, failures and unfulfilled goals and dreams. Through the pits and falls, I feel I could make a closer step to understanding what makes us vulnerable, angry, regret, envious, happy and sad. What I do is not rocket science, but yet it takes a lifetime to master, because the truths to be found tend to be brutally honest and the emotional wounds that come with it raw and damning. And try as I might, I would, or never capture even, just a glimpse or a fraction of what these truths might be in my work.

Mummy is half-right. It hurts being an artist but at least I’m richer from it.

"We must always re-think about the reality that we accept without questioning."

My personal drive as an artist comes from a deep desire to express oneself in a society of massive dictatorial information. In our ever-changing landscape of time, space and cultures, I seek to communicate, with relevance to our contemporary world, in multiple perspectives.

Fundamentally, my role as an artist is based on the concept of the construction of "spaces" for communications, and interactions between peoples, cultures and ideologies.

By creating spaces, I often like to create an experience for the audience/viewer to reflect and react to our contemporary conditions. Central to my art-making process is the idea of altering time and space as means of creating possibilities for dialogue, thus its possibilities for meaning.

I am engaged in different aspects of art practice. In addition to producing artworks, I am involved in organizing art events, building on networks and discourses, teaching, writing, programme development, advocacy, management, research and so on, depending on the situation.

I think it's necessary to find and build on the continuity and points of dialogue between art, culture and other 'compartmentalised' parts of contemporary life and society. I would like to evolve the visual arts language and also the 'language' used to discuss art, so that it can communicate more openly with other forms of speech and language, and connect more tangibly with other forms of experiences in our daily lives. This goes against much of the 'mystification' of art experience that is being produced by art systems today.

I find that much of our 'inherited' and by-now systemised modes and models of cultural production and performance do not respond to our specific needs as individuals and as different forms of organised society. I have initiated a project called Bureau of Cultural Interconnectivity (BCI) in order to point out such areas of disfunction/ misalignment/ discrepancies whether in policy, education, ways and systems of art production and circulation, etc., which have created certain local symptoms, and to advocate and work towards the re-mobilisation and re-distribution of resources so as to address the situations (for more details, visit www.ifima.net).

In my collaborative practice with Jay Koh (begun since year 2000; during which we still maintain our individual practices), we have been developing ways to extend and expand the engagement between art with other sectors of society; to engage not just with the participants of our art projects, but also with agencies of power and meta-structures in a given site, so as to open up ways of seeing and knowing, and to generate responses from multiple directions. For this we take on diverse roles in order to respond to the different contingencies and negotiate with social-political structures on site. Our projects often involve dialogue, interaction and collaboration with people from different segments of local communities. After a sufficient period of research and relationship building, we conceive of appropriate actions in response to each site.

We are expanding the understanding of aesthetics to include the act of visualizing/ 'knowing' our lives and engaging the individual's creativity in responding to others and structures that interact with our daily lives. These can be observed through points such as senses of 'self' and 'others', of place, community, history; group dynamics, patterns of interaction and collaboration, individual and collective learning; encounters between local and foreign knowledge and practices; trust, conflict, contestations, synthesis, resonance, among others.

Defining aspects of our practice that represents our position:

- Participative and collaborative
- Transfer of knowledge
- Promote criticality & self-organisation
- Creative actions from multiple directions
- Sustained performative roles within life systems
- Ethics of interaction and communication

To be
honest,
I am not
too
sure.

As a performer-playwright, my desire is to constantly explore new ways of thinking, feeling and doing things through self-confrontation in my creations. My written works are often motivated by deep emotional encounters – not necessarily autobiographical but certainly of a heartfelt truth – and by confronting myself through this process, I hope to be able to understand the makings of the human condition and present these findings before an audience, that they too may experience the splashes of realisation that would open their perceptions to a richer life.

Having been largely involved in theatre, I have also become recently drawn towards artistic collaborations with practitioners beyond the stage. As much as it is important to hone one's own craft and strive to be an all-rounder of an artist, it is perhaps even more meaningful to see the world through another's eyes by engaging in creative projects outside of one's medium. After all, art is very much about putting oneself in another's shoes and all art-forms are certainly interrelated. As an artist, I find it crucial to always be in a state of transition and exchange with my surroundings – one's audience, one's collaborators, one's own perceptions and methodologies – to bring about creative fissions and deeper understanding amidst society at large. If nothing else, being a theatre practitioner has proven to me that transformation is at the heart of all great drama and life itself.

I believe the personal is always the political, that in addressing the problems and issues faced by an individual, one inevitably questions the problems and issues faced by society. In uncovering my inner workings through a performance or creative journey, I hope that the effort will somehow produce a reflection of the concerns in the world around me. As such, I also believe that the journey is often far more important than the destination, that asking the question is more important than finding the answer, that by taking care of the means, the end – or perhaps there never is one? - would eventually take care of itself. It follows then that as an artist, I focus very much on the process and try to approach my practice with an openness of spirit, an instinctive response to play and experimentation, to keep asking more questions than any answer could suffice, and in so doing, convey to others a fuller and more receptive appreciation of life beyond my immediate existence.

Above all else, I believe in telling a good story, one that is as intellectually accessible as it is emotionally compelling for audiences. And to never ever stop exploring just what it means to be a human being.

Currently, my focus is on performance practice research. I'm researching into traditional asian performative and training systems, particularly that of martial arts and kathakali, looking at the possibilities of translating these systems into a framework for contemporary performance. The research is looking at creating a practice or guidelines that can be used by a group of performers to create within or outside of the notion of 'theatre'.

My past works explored how the surrounding social/psychical environment affects the individual or a community. However, these past works seem to me now, to merely distinguish a particular presentation style that I am inclined to as a performer.

Over the past 2 years, I have been engaging myself in dialogue with artists of various disciplines with the intention of creating collaborative work. And to create a platform for an understanding of the various practices that exist.

On another level, I have also positioned myself and my work within the community, using theatre as therapy and as activity for marginalised and latch-key youths. This has added a fresh dimension to my work thus causing me to readdress the notion of performance practice.

‘Satan, being thus confined to a vagabond, wandering, unsettled condition, is without any certain abode; for though he has, in consequence of his angelic nature, a kind of empire in the liquid waste or air, yet this is certainly part of his punishment, that he is... without any fixed place, or space, allowed him to rest the sole of his foot upon’ - Daniel Defoe, *History of the Devil*

‘I'm a connoisseur of roads. I've been tasting roads my whole life. This road will never end. It probably goes all around the world.’ - Mike Waters, *My Own Private Idaho*

I strive to create work that is engaging, entertaining and relevant. I am influenced by pop-culture, classical texts, music from all genres, the Bible, film, poetry and art. The work is non-linear, alternative and often has an art-installation feel about it. Recurring themes are identity, religion, family and the complexities of modern life. I strive to create a unique theatrical experience for the audience. The visual dynamic and soundscape are as important to me as the text. I go through lengths to source for the right costumes and props because i believe that the art is in the finest details. The choice and combination of performers is vital. I often combine performance/visual artists with theatre actors. So far the diferent energies have come together very effectively. I also strive to create work that is honest and meaningful. I cannot separate who i am from the art that i create. I want to be responsible and real. If the work is irreverant, I also try to find the heart. If it is experimental, I also try to find its meaning.

To
create.



My position as an artist is to offer unvoiced stories to provoke or tempt fresh thought and insight into hidden lives and submerged histories. To produce my work I take experience of the world and hide away with it, stealing time and space to allow for the transformation of that experience into art. In my work I anticipate a Singaporean sensibility in my reader, an assumed understanding or lack of understanding of Singaporean idiosyncrasy, and so avoid explication. I hope that readers discover a new perspective on the world through my work.

My position as an Artist:

I have been involved in the Singapore art scene since 1989. I have been trying to obtain a certain amount of recognition through the years that I have been practising even when I was a student studying in Western Australia and when I was working in Malaysia as a full-time lecturer.

My position as an artist now is working on my solo work and being involved in organizations and multi-disciplinary projects either working collaboratively with individuals or with a group of artists. Fusion Strength is one on going project involves exchanges between local and foreign artists touring around the region. Hoping for possibilities of opportunities for artistic dialogues between the participating artists, groups and organizers and possibly future collaborations after. I see collaboration with artists bringing individuals together.

I see myself as someone who represents the Singapore art scene and as member of art organizations (i.e Plastique Kinetic Worms, The Artists Village, APAD) .

My productions place the emphasis on the artist's position as an individual working predominantly with collaborations and dealing with identity, cultural and social political issues.

I have been maintaining a blog to record events, archive photos informing other artists and the public of art events.

I believe that I have become an artist through and from understanding the position of other art practitioners that I have met, admire and worked with through the years.

A Singaporean artist seeking recognition in the 'local' and 'international' art world, wearing my nationality as a double-sided badge of pride and prejudice, whilst simultaneously transcending issues of 'cultural and individual identity' to create visually arresting, intellectually engaging works of art.

A thirty something Muslim woman of Malay/Chinese parentage, traveling between Singapore, Malacca and Jakarta, trying to do something with my life that hopefully will be worth mentioning to my future generations. Being alive, doing things and going places. I love strong opinions and raving debates. WHAT AM I SAYING ABOUT THE WORLD WITH MY ARTWORK? The world is beautiful and terrifying place full of happenings, events and conditions that require bold statements and strong commentary.

I see myself playing many roles of a artist, organizer, coordinator, curator, administrator, researcher, publicist, networker etc, connecting artists and non art professionals to art world. Learning from my work as an art administrator and art researcher and sharing the skills, knowledge and experiences that I have.

Gaining exposure to enhance my position within the art community. In terms of artistic production, collaborating with other artists from different backgrounds has given me much satisfaction. From understanding where they're coming from, their own art practice and the work that they're doing.

Upon serving compulsory National Service (army) in 1997, I received an invitation to helm an abandoned local Malay language theatre company. I accepted the invitation and went on to direct several of its major productions.

Although initially trained in sculpture, I have continually expanded my craft and created works independently via theatre, painting, performance and most recently, curatorial practice.

Intuitiveness is integral to my practice. I act on needs and I believe in being rooted to my motherland.

I am most interested in the contemporary conditions that make Southeast Asia today and its dynamic strategies for a global position.

My practice is an endeavour to harmonise my belief, action and intellectual quest into a coherent and critical practice.

i draw input mainly from discourses situated on theories and practices of Critical Theory, New French Theory and Cultural Studies, as well as from teachings and readings on Buddhism, Chinese classical literature and Chinese modern philosophy.

From these learnings and relearning, i have prioritised certain values as guidelines for my practice. i.e. criticality, integrity and honesty. With the limited resources available to me, i choose to be active in public and community spaces seeing these sites as the most constructive venues for interaction with members of the society.

Some examples of my work can be viewed in www.ifima.net

I must admit I have yet to successfully delineate my position as an artist in relation to others. Whether this is due to humility or laziness, I am equally undecided. It is a very tricky, possibly impudent exercise to loudly presume that an artist, at a personal level, has any tangible worth in society. Yet, your question above seems to be prodding me to venture a definition. Of course, I do feel obligated to provide a temporary answer (however inadequate) so that you, my dear audience, will pay any attention to me at all.

I have CHOSEN to call myself an artist; a self-styled role that essentially means nothing to anybody until the protagonist audaciously asks to be indulged. One thing all artists, good and bad ones, have in common is that no one ever appointed them.

You look at me from across the bar. I return your gaze and our eyes meet because I am bold enough. This boldness can also be translated as conceit. How dare I presume I was good enough for you? How dare I ask if you were good enough for me? But what is the alternative? Never meet you and go home alone?

The heart of the dance describes an encounter between a subject and his love-object. It is not clear (or not important) who the subject or what the love-object really is. In the case of the dancer and the dance, the subject and the love-object are interchangeable. The audience should also be implicated and led to consider this ambiguity at some point. The audience could even, by means of physiological projections, substitute the dancer or the dance.

The stage is an arena in which I have a battle with myself. Art is the weapon. I win as often as I lose. As a witness to this spectacle, you could boo or you could cheer. I only ask that you do not be indifferent towards me.

In other moments, I also think of my oeuvre as a means to have conversations with the heroes who have inspired me but whom I will never meet – Samuel Beckett, Francis Bacon, Leigh Bowery, Madonna, Calvin and Hobbes... to name just a few.

In my godless world, Being is necessarily more than an absurdity. Stasis, Fatalism and Inconsequence are not viable options. Through Art, I hope to be constantly compelled to articulate more clearly and be better informed. I want my ideas to be more sophisticated, my thoughts more rigorous, my heart wilder and wilder but my person more mature. Art will take me to different places, allow me to meet new friends, create opportunities for me to better understand just what the hell is going on.

After all that, my audience-lover and I might be ready to die.

Contemporary art practice exists on a tangent outside the course of everyday life. It has to, as its function in society acts as no more than a commentary. As to whether it wields any significant influence on its subject, would depend on the context and the receptiveness of the audience.

The root of my working methods come from a concept that tries to query the role of art, and to instigate a process that make use of a subject that is specific about that role, in the hope that the process could make sense of it and not just with literal meanings. It is to show, and not to tell about the concept. To show is to exhibit, to tell is to state, so my work as an artist is to (show) represent the concept and not merely present.

As an artist – an individual, it is not in consensus as how a position is defined that merits the stature of someone in contemporary art practice that is appropriate in the present society. But the position of the artist could be defined by the work that the artist does. A set of principles of work defines my practice, which defines my role as an artist, and thus my position as an artist. I would describe these in the following three areas.

Context

It is perhaps the most imperative purpose and function in contemporary art. It is also the purpose and function of the artist to realize and appropriate the content to the conditions of the moment (time), situation (space) and audience (ways of viewing) to the work of art. Contextualization is to make sense of a work of art to the contemporary conditions.

Object and Subject

The concept and the form – a cognitive perception that is visualized or realized through a symbiotic association, which connects what is being thought to what is being made. The association between the object (the aim) and the subject (the represented) can be illustrated with logic. Ways of viewing a work by associating the object to the subject with logical deduction and reasoning is then assimilated into the context.

Receptiveness of the Audience

The way the audience view a work of art has to be specific. The audience is coerced by invitation or ambushed into encountering the work. And come to acknowledge the objective of the work, by associating the object and the subject to the conditions of the context by logic, or reasoning or simply by looking.

From these, an artist's work is how a position is defined that merits the stature of someone in contemporary art practice, and is ultimately having the capacity to create work that is lacking in the present context.

MY POSITION AS AN ARTIST
(or "Future Tense")

No. I did not always see how things began,
and yet I could not avoid being distressed
by what I did see.

That I yet snatch a word or phrase
or two out of the fire
the way paper clutches ink,
may prove some comfort to me at the end.

That I sometimes lose enjoyment in
our morning walks, or a cocktail
in the evening, also leaves me
dispossessed. Things have not improved as long
as I can remember, and so it is unlikely
the outcome will be any good. Don't tell me otherwise.
Though I wouldn't say there is
nothing now that lifts my heart.
How it is now — redundant children,
politicians trading blows on TV, bad news
in real time — such events insist
that the end will arrive, and none too soon.
What we have made of the past can never be erased
but each of us, being practical, carries
what we can bear of it. Sometimes I wonder
if I can step away from it all; leave the future
behind as it comes home to us and
I write it, just now, with my very own hand.

When asking what my position as an artist is, I response that to “What is my role play as an artist” and “What art is about”. In my belief, an artist role play should not only questions about what he does not understand, but also to question on what he had understood. I question my doubts not only based on my knowledge, experience and thought, but what has been absent from the past.

The absent is an edit from the ‘Original’, or perhaps the ‘Truth’. History does tell lies.

What is art when art can be anything? Art cannot be anything without the present of the creator, which is the artist. As for me, I love to turn non-art into an art form. What’s the point of painting an image that is already represented as an art form?

People always looking for new things in the event of art making. When I look for something new, I look into the unknown.... To make the unknown becoming an art form is a beautiful process, and is not about looking at the beauty itself as an art. The process is a magic, but the end product is not.

Art is a lie that makes us realize the truth. The truth is the hidden inner self, and not about me as an artist. It doesn’t matter if I am an artist or not, is about your true feelings in your inner self. I cannot define that inner self. The inner-self is a voice from the heart, and is not a word from the dictionary. I am still searching the inner self, as well as my position.

As an artist, my position also questions me.... ‘Who am I’ and ‘where I am’. We all living in a self prefer ‘Box’. A ‘Box’ that tells us who we are and who our neighbors are. You can go from boxes to boxes. Even artist themselves go for their prefer boxes like visual, performance, music, literature, architect, etc. That changes my position as I going into different boxes. I enjoy living in that box called ‘Artist’, but sometimes I don’t.

I have secret boxes called ‘Heaven to me’.....

Asking me about my role play as an artist is as good as asking ‘Who am I?’
Am I ‘Pop Artist’? Am I doing Singapore art? Am I ‘Chinese’, Am I ‘cute or chubby?’
I prefer by asking me“Am I male”?

In my belief, I am not a ‘male’, neither am I a ‘female’ nor ‘gay, transvestite, or bi sexual, etc’.

Let’s put it this way, we all made up by a male, and a female. (To all the dearest mums and dads)

Well, if it is, I am a half male and half female, and we all are.

So why are we so confuse when we talk about identity.

The ‘Unknown’ sometimes ease the problem of seeking.

I enjoyed ‘Pop’ is because is nearer to heart, and it has a taste of humor.
It is easy to digest but never real.

The artist as transformer: Uneasy with things mediocre, agreeable and comfortable, the artist-transformer cries for joy before something beautiful as much as he does before something horrifying; chooses to misinterpret familiar meanings; wonders idealistically how to make good things happen better, differently; defines truth as something that has not yet been thought of, felt, done or seen; pushes ideas, emotions and materials to their next logical conclusions till they become something else; plays hard with rules whilst making new ones; looks forward to diversifying and intensifying life experiences, including walking the deepest of ravines and breathing the thinnest of mountain air; wrestles with time, with space, with truth, with life, with art, with other artists, and ultimately with himself; and finds ways to outdo himself everytime till he outdoes his influences, for that is the only way to continue the spirit of innovation, excellence and transformation.

I guess I've really been an artist all my life. I was drawing and painting from the moment I could hold a pencil. Since I was seven, all I wanted to be when I grew up was an artist. However, it took me 25 years, and several career paths to get there – at age 32, in the year 2000, I became a full-time artist. Now the occupation column in my passport finally says “artist”.

I work with memories. The work I do is very personal. As an artist, I use my emotions in my work, channeling my feelings through my art. It is the best therapy and produces the best work. It also creates a living memory of things that are close to my heart.

I am a storyteller, so my work is characterised by my strong narrative sense. I use traditional/classic Western children's literature (fairytales and nursery rhymes) as a platform, infuse them with my own thoughts and feelings, then create and develop my own characters and stories. Some works have a distinctively Asian flavour coming from my mixed heritage.

My favourite medium is oil on canvas, but since a near-fatal accident in 2004, I have been pouring heart and soul into a new series of pen and ink drawings on paper and canvas, works which have a more personal and introspective slant. They reflect my interest in things that might or might not be, things that are not solved for us. The solutions to these mysteries lie in a place that is close to us yet far away – our imagination. Each piece of my work represents a chapter in a story that is still unfolding - not necessarily in sequence, nor may it be the same story. There appear to be a different things going on, yet it is all somehow linked. When you eventually look at the collection as a whole, the connections are visible.

I think my work succeeds in creating emotion and stirs up thoughts and reactions in my audience. I bring a different meaning to the traditional tales that my audiences are familiar with. The work has impact on children as well as adults. Generally my work is about a lot of different things that affect me personally, even more so now than before - my encounters with life and love; hopes, fears, trials and tribulations; the search for happiness, joy, truth, justice; and a longing for adventure, heroism and perhaps even heaven. Unexplainable things.

I am beginning to find that my sentiments are universal. People have told me how much they can relate to my drawings.

There is no such thing as total artistic freedom of expression. The artist is still responsible for what he/she does. Expression has still to be understood, and there is no elite in art. My current position allows me to express myself as I would like to be understood, yet leaving room for the audience to develop their own ideas on the work or bring their own experience and background to it, leaving space for their own interpretation.

A farmer boy liked climbing the mountains. He found an eagle's nest filled with eggs and took one home. He was afraid his father would not allow him to keep it, so he hid it beneath a roosting hen. The eagle grew up in, as a chicken just like other chickens. It grew up thinking it would be a chicken amongst the other chickens. Sometime it shrieks out a distinct cry and stretches its wings quite unlike the other chickens. It grew up without learning how to use its wings to fly, not even knowing it could fly. It tried to lead a normal chickens life on the farm, but always felt something missing and was often uneasy.

One day the eagle felt, it could not stay and had to stray from the farm. It walked into the forest, towards the mountains. Then an eagle, flying in the sky, spied the eagle walking on the ground. The flying eagle felt disgusted that one of its own kind was walking. So it flew down and asked, "Why are you walking and not flying like other eagles?" "I am a chicken. How can I fly?" replied the walking eagle. "Nonsense!" said the flying one, "Climb on my back, I'll show you how to fly."

Up they went into the sky. At a great height, the eagle, who could only walk and has never flown in its life, suddenly got frightened and let go of the flying eagle's back. It fell down, spiralling and in fear started to flap his wings and suddenly found that it could fly.

As time passed, he learned the way of the open skies. Of course, this was not always easy.

Sometimes it flew too fast and high, injuring itself. Sometimes it flew too low and went back to walking. But it soon learned to fly like any other eagle. One day, it missed its friends from the farm and returned to the farm to see them. It tried to explain the ways of the open skies and share its adventures with the chickens.

Suddenly, the farm boy appeared from behind and grabbed the eagle by its two wings. The strong farm boy tried to pin the eagle down while the eagle struggled hard to break free... In a cold sweat, I woke from that dream knowing that it was a dream while I was dreaming it. Waking up from the dream, I found that I was still in a dream.

And when I awoke, I wondered if I was still in a dream of a man who was dreaming of me.

For I've lived thousands of lives and manifested thousands of selves and yet not of them was truly me. Not one was truly me, but is not the self the thing that make me be ?

I normally enjoy taking on an “involved yet detached” stance as an artist. Perhaps that allows me to be intimate and personal with the subjects, yet with an arm’s length distance, it is also objective and sane. The duality of the personal and the objective is very interesting for me, as it reveals an exciting tension and an undeniable underlying sensual quality in things. The everyday things, the subtle nuances of language and gestures, the surroundings that made us who we are, the narratives of modern creatures, the rapidity of time and all those in between, are the subjects (or playgrounds) I see myself seductively drawn. Certainly, how could we deny the attractive (and some revolting, but yet still attractive) quality of our modern existence but to use our bodies as vehicles of experiences, so attuned to those very flux of change?

The artist, the archaeologist, the scavenger, the voyeur, the cultural critic, the philosopher, the researcher, the scientist... - Perhaps I felt like a spliced up version of all these roles, a little fraction of everything. I sometimes harbour grand noble intentions of saving the world, but oftentimes they end up saving very little even of myself!

Making objects in clay and actions in performance art releases me from the burden of tradition, as both mediums has not tradition in Singapore.

i have the freedom to explore wide range of possibilities from various resources. This liberation provides for me the foundation of discovering an aperture where my creativity and personality can be developed within the search for a language and finding a voice in the mediums that i am working with. Both of these mediums allow me to transform ideas into things. My ideas are in a constant flux during and after the work process. The identity of things and images are also constantly changed, making layers of meanings. I find it important to capture visual tendency that could influence and stimulate the viewer's perception and imagination. At the moment, i am more interested in providing ideas, ideas that ask more questions than providing answers. As an artist i try to bridge the boundary of giver and receiver of meanings, the exotic and the banal, sensual and erotic, the private and public and other opposites that create tension within the boundaries of our social and political realm.

As an art practitioner, I often see the need to be the scorner who turns disrupter of our platitudes, clichés and comfortable habits of thoughts, perception, and taste. This is to the degree of overturning this belief once it is a personal habit or style of mine, or established as instructions, as the popular principles, available in textbooks. This is to say, if now every art student is taught to be the next avant-garde, then I think I would start reassessing the whole ideology behind. I say this from the perspective of one who had given up, or was given up by, secondary school mathematics, an instrument of instructional rationalism.

Secondly, I hope to be the point of excessiveness in the system: the wasteful pouring of the toast to the heaven on to the earth, the slaying of goats in many religious rituals, the roasted wild boar of every Asterix's festival, the act of sacrificing a man on the top of the Aztec Step Pyramid. I said 'hope' because I know it is very hard to truly realise it. And it is hard because one has to overcome the fear of *death*, our fear of *no tomorrow*. The importance of being excessive, which is the luxury of drunkenness with no regards to tomorrow, lies in its role as the antithesis to all the production values and principles of all branches of utilitarianism. These values seem inherent in us however moulded only a fraction of our being – like for instance, the notion of survival instinct in Darwinism. Because a man who survived is, a man feminised, living on to carry on the cowardice that induces fights with further opportunities for death. Excessiveness, a kind of *death wish*, is the wish to undermine the chances of trite appropriation by the institutions and the creative industries. Art, despite the need for industriousness in its practitioner, ideally should not be in the service of any industry, any form of production, any form of power when it is a power itself. Nonetheless, art is a form of production, but it has to realise its role as a required excess production that negates the values of those other products that are deemed negative. Art, if it were a product at all, in this sense, would be a contradictory product.

Acknowledging my role as the producer of social or cultural excess, allows me to embrace a perpetuate state of contradiction (at least during my art practice, when my other roles in life disallow) which hinders the stiffening conclusion that everyone with utilitarian thirst requires in order to move on. Conclusion, a single possibility, is acceptable in certain situations but always irritates me in a quasi-democratic framework.

In short, it is a belief of both the impenetrable fortress concretes, and the most formidable gun which fires bullet that pierces all surfaces. This refusal of synthesis, in a way, allows me the chance to overturn all of the above statement that represented only two hours of my whole existence.

Mi Fu, of the Sung period, was at Wu-wei when he one day saw a giant rock of extravagant ugliness. Overcome by emotion, he put on his ceremonial grab and prostrated to the rock, calling it his dear older brother.

Know your love and
lose it.

No position.

I was rather reluctant to answer the question initially, as what should have been voiced out by artists has already been said. Things are stagnant. Thus, I have been also silent for the past one year.

When I say 'stagnant', I am not referring to the 'figures' that are stagnant. Figures show that we have more arts groups, more 'artists', more arts events, more arts venues...

But promoting the idea of managing arts as business basically kills pure arts. And if one asks what is 'pure arts', I would say that the motivation of making that piece of arts sourced from the need to make a good quality artwork that could be appreciated by those who would want to appreciate it. It is not created out of its economic value. If we judge a piece of arts by the number of audiences that it can draw, we are implying that a pornographic/popular/commercial film has more artistic values than an art film that does not draw as many viewers.

I thought I have a certain level of position as an artist in past, but I stopped believing a year ago.

In Source Theatre's (IST) performances, which are rich in Asian elements, were performed to more than 5000 audiences in Europe during the last 7 years. The troupe has performed in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004. In 2007, In Source Theatre is again invited to a renowned International theatre festival in Europe. The mere reason why IST is invited to Europe year after year is that there is fabulous demand & support for such performances. International market is different from local market. IST does not succumb to the safe theatre-making formula of celebrity/good looking faces+ sex/violence/gay + straightforward story line that draws local audiences, but that does not mean that IST is not doing good theatre.

So, yes, I am not in a position to change things or to help in the development of arts here. Our views are often enveloped by businesses counterparts who manage arts or determine arts policies in Singapore.

The fight was over. There was no win/lose; there IS only a realization of my real position of an artist in Singapore.

Having said so, there is a confined area in Singapore that provides IST with considerable trust to do arts. IST is an Associate Artist Group of The Substation, which gives IST a significant level of position as an artist.

I am interested in articulating certain shared human experiences that fall between the cracks of verbal communication – either because they are so complex/subtle or invisible/”insignificant” because they are so commonplace – via a fluid and sentient language cognizable as much by the sensory body as by the cerebrum.

Curious about the way we implicitly (sometimes unconsciously) convey information to each other, I create situations that accentuate the physiological, psychological, and affective communication between people that is mutually perceived without the need or the possibility of being represented in words. Although this eloquent form of tacit communication can and does occur remotely, it is most evident and potent in face-to-face engagements where body language and facial expressions can also be read.¹ For this reason, I often directly address and engage with my audience by drawing them into immersive interactions.

This intuitive and reciprocal way of sharing and co-creating meaning that passes back and forth between people relies on our innate faculty of *empathy*. Empathy, defined as an unconscious ability to relate to others as a projection of our own conscious recollection of similar experiences, is a primitive and pre-reflective human capacity² that – transcending barriers such as language and culture – connects people.

In order to establish an empathic resonance with my audience, I often utilize existing contextual elements to bring attention to the fact that we are a very particular group of people in a very particular situation together. I try to listen to what this combination of factors has to say for itself: What are the possibilities within this specific context? Or, drawing from commonly-encountered human experiences, I count on my audience to be not only be intimately familiar with them, but to also resonate with others present by empathetic extension, through inference that they probably also know these experiences very well.

I am concerned with responding to each given context as immediately and appropriately as I am able to. By thoroughly acknowledging all the conditions surrounding my present state, I tap into what is “real” in that very moment. In this way, I connect with my audience – who are also currently living that reality – on a very rudimentary level, based on the realization that we are sharing in the (subjective) experience of this (objective) present reality. An understanding that is more perceptual and affective than conscious and conceptual, emerges from what Vivian Sobchack calls the collective embodied foundation of our subjective consciousness.³

These visceral and interactive dialogues between myself and my audience (and between the audience themselves) are a way to empathically explore certain intimate, yet unarticulated, themes surrounding our shared and often bewildering human condition.

¹ Shlien, J.. *Empathy in Psychotherapy: A vital mechanism? Yes. Therapist's conceit? All too often. By itself enough? No..* (Eds.) Bohart A.C. & Greenberg L.S.. *Empathy Reconsidered: New Directions in Psychotherapy*, Washington D.C. & London: American Psychological Association, 1997. p. 63-80.

² Bennett, M.J.. *The Empathetic Healer: An Endangered Species?* San Diego, New York, Boston, London, Sydney, Tokyo, Toronto: Academic Press, 2001. p. 33.

³ Sobchack, Vivian. *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2004. p. 28

I define my self as a space between things. The name Ma in Ma de Marma came to me during my teenage as the result of a collaborative practice with a childhood friend in which we would paint and work and imagine things as a One made of Two. Later, as my practice was becoming increasingly multidisciplinary, I began to say that I was working on the space between disciplines as opposed to within the field of any specific discipline. Shortly after, I learned on the occasion of a trip to Tokyo that the word Ma actually meant just that in Japanese culture. And it is precisely that space between things (the silence between two musical notes, the void between two elements of a pictorial composition, the transition between two poses of a Kabuki actor, etc...) that makes the true value of a work of art.

Art is a way to investigate the world we live in. It's as simple and complex as that. A happy corollary to that definition is how it absolves art from any need to be simplistic or complicated.

Art is of the world, just as life is of this world.

The world is interesting because it offers such a multiplicity of experiences, yet you feel you are always, only, ever, swimming on the surface. What is better: to enjoy the experience of the swim in the here and now, or to investigate what lies beneath this liminal surface, or to push yourself to discover the edges of the pool you are afloat in? They are all valid responses, singly or together, and the responses will vary and change, depending on how long you have been swimming.

To be an artist is to engage with all these queries in a way that is personally satisfying and honest – even if the engagement only results in more questions. Perhaps, especially, when it results in more questions.

Art isn't just one mode of expression – just as the hypothetical swim we've described can never be a finite series of experiences or choices.

Art is what emerges from negotiating a series of paired opposites such as product and process, intellect and emotion, concept and technique, inspiration and cynicism. It is too reductive to limit it to one or the other; and pretty pointless to claim higher value for one or the other.

If wrestling with that whole “what do I want to create and how and why” is what grounds the art in relevance, the physical process of artmaking in itself creates a meditative space, where for a while – not always – you don't need to justify your existence in the universe.

Art is a way of the world, just as living is a way of the world.

Right now, my theoretical position as an artist is generally located within the problematics of how painting is been make sense of and is been re/categorized in an ever-changing geographical sphere. As an artist working in Singapore, I often favored living in a place where its vaguely constructed history from various cultures would meant that I have a lot more freedom in terms of re/inventing my own imaginary historical bases for my art practice. In fact, engaging other histories and disciplines are often delightful interdisciplinary exercises as it serves the latter purpose. Often I wishfully think of such a situation as a sole premise for imaginary exercises of an image-maker but when it is put in perspective, an art practitioner that uses the workings of an 'insider' (local context) as means to negotiate with the other contextual platforms. This is my contextual position.

Given perspectives of Euramerican and Asian Contemporary painting discourses in my art learning, I mainly manipulate such painting languages to question for a position of where my painting practice is sited. Very often taking roles of an 'informant' at community level and a practice-based researcher in art institutions, I collect and reorganize ideas before deciding what painting languages to manipulate and how painting will operate in contexts per se. Sometimes it works, sometimes not.

Reproducer of the unseen within the context of a given community would be a job scope that I would subscribe to and as much, an obsessive player of painting.

Like most people in Singapore, I'm a pragmatist. I'm a writer because I'm good at it.

I didn't always know this. In school, when my compos were read aloud, I presumed it was because I was clever. I was ushered into a glorious government experiment called Gifted Education, staffed with self-driven teachers wielding scientific syllabi. All of us nine-year-old boys in blue shorts were told we were the cream of our nation, the Leaders of Tomorrow.

At 18, during military service, I began to grasp what a crock this was. Fumbling, snivelling and sinussy in the tall grasses, I was about as well-equipped to lead men to victory as a castrated squirrel. And I met magnificent, beautiful men, of less impressive educational qualifications, who were just manifestly better at strategic thinking and pushing other people to get off their backsides.

All I excelled in, really, was the written word in English. I was set to work checking the typos and dotting the i's in my unit documents. My most glorious moment was helping my Chief Clerk craft a letter, in her own voice, reprimanding the Sergeant-Major for suggesting she stand for the National Anthem. I couldn't claim the honour of oratory or groundbreaking ideas, but the burnish and seal of boilerplate was fair enough game, and on weekends I could string together poetry, win prizes even, gather hopes of joining the canon of Singapore poets who met for cocktails after their jobs in banks and lecture halls.

It's a bit more than a month since I quit my sweet-paying job in the civil service. I could claim it was because I hated being a pawn of an autocratic system, party to repression, and it'd be true. But more frankly, I was discovering how my real talents there lay in crafting minutes, prepping documents for supervisory signatures - the small satisfactions of a secretary who'd be paid less than half my salary.

Writing's a cheap, whorish trade and I like it. It feels sinfully good, cashing a cheque for a piece of work that no-one could have done better. And now as a freelancer I may frequently write about what I choose - trying to flush substance into the style, speaking the truth to the people or the powers that be.

I know more accomplished persons are right now shaking their heads at this passage, mumbling who the fuck does he think he is, calling himself a good writer when his voice is a mélange of purple prose and banal autobiography. No offence taken. I'm not the best writer in the community, not by a long shot; I must learn more, and write a volume of earthshattering literature to be tattooed on the backs of mummified spacemen bound in time capsules for distant stars.

But at present, I am content that I write and others are glad to read. My position? I am an all but empty vessel - no one, not even me, knows what lies on my bottom.

To free that
which is often
concealed by
convention or
hidden from
sight through
the processes
of engagement,
interaction and
collaboration.

i am interested in walking on faultlines.

i am interested in needs

and desires.

i need a mission

even though i know i can't change the world

i am interested in questions

i don't want to play some games

still learning about myself, still distilling, still desiring.

i love collaborating

although i breathe a sigh of relief when it is over.

several years ago, i was asked by an american artist, "do you have an independent stand? you are always engaging, responding to an imagined statement." a vestigial remnant of my coming from the margins. even when i am standing in the centre, i still retaliate from the wings. i am happy to continue as a d-i-y individual, making, labbing, researching, sustaining, networking, curating. this is the luxury which european artists do not partake in. in our part of the world, its great to take a holistic choice. lets collaborate with the infrastructure, lets leave a gap to be bridged sometime in the future, lets celebrate our individualisms. i believe in transparency and accountability, in the negative space which makes the positive space. art is private, art is not for everybody, art pretends to be egalitarian, art is the expression of niche communities which can sometimes, but only sometimes, be reconciled. i am not sure i make art but i do make something now and then.

1. After taking classes on African-American culture at college in the United States, the ideal I have constructed and aspire towards is that of the artist as a shaman. In my imagination, the shaman is a conduit between the dead and the living, a keeper of collective memory and a prophet of things to come. While the shaman inhabits a position of marginality because of her powers, she also plays integral roles in community life – that of healer, medium, oral historian and moral guide. The artist is a marginal figure, and like the shaman that makes her simultaneously powerful and powerless (although in Singapore where economics and entertainment take precedence over the arts, the latter would seem to be more of the case). Living at the fringes of, and in between communities, the artist is in a position to understand the way realities are constructed, to empathize with and expose the subtle fictions we all weave in daily life. At the same time, by dabbling in fiction, the artist has the power to dream up what could be or could have been.

2. Last June, I attended a storytelling workshop where I worked on the Legend of Bukit Merah, a tale that has resonated with quite a number of young Singaporean artists as an allegory for the state's repression of creativity in the name of political control. While working on the story, I was surprised to find that the most important character to me was not the boy who saved the village from garfish attacks only to be assassinated by an insecure sultan. Instead, it was the mysterious old woman who appears after the boy's death to curse the act as evil, after which blood springs from the ground and stains the hill red as a testament to injustice. The artist, it seems to me, inhabits the same position as the old woman: she is powerless to interfere with political machinations, and can only bear witness to the crime, name it for what it is and memorialize the misdeed. When I think about the construction of the legend, the events up to the boy's death seem like they could actually have occurred and been recorded for posterity. The old woman's appearance, however, reads more like a storyteller's addition, fiction's way of righting the universe by showing that injustice does not go unnoticed, unpunished and unrecorded the way it often does in reality.

3. I want to do/ make work that connects and creates communities, that heals others and myself, that tells stories that might otherwise go untold. This doesn't mean I want to hold your hand, have you over for tea while we indulge our woes wrapped in pashmina ponchos – sometimes healing involves the darkness of a solitary cell in a rehabilitation center. In a culture of youtube, spa for everything from your hair to playwriting, and Darfur? Where's that? I want to know what it means to be ethical as an artist and as a human being, what it means to love thy neighbor, what it means to be whole.

Writers convene ideas in the space of language. It is the reader that determines the impact of this formal assemblage over time and distance. That is not to say that the author does nothing to influence the way his writing is received; indeed, one could argue this self-consciousness is all that differentiates a writer of skill from any other user of the medium of language. This is a truism, but especially poignant for the writer, whose artistic medium is also the common currency of every day communication, business, politics, fact and fiction. All writing is in a way found art. The primary challenge of the modern writer to my mind is to negotiate the different spaces in which language takes place, and never concede to any one; to surf the grey. I believe it is important for writers seeking to be artists, to go beyond purpose, to generate an experience beyond surface goals -- such as the impulse to edify, educate or entertain. It is not an easy task; our skills are sought after in journalism, speechmaking, advertising. So what differentiates the artist from the ad copywriter?

Writers deal in ideas, not physical books. I believe it is far more important to have readers than sales; issues of copyright and piracy, for instance, are problematic as a result. A book shared is a sale lost but a reader gained, an idea passed on. Our natural allies are libraries, not chain bookstores.

Perhaps this view is merely a poet's indulgence; after all the genre novelist is a professional manufacturer of page-turners for profit; the bestselling author is a highly choreographed, well coiffured role. But here is the crux for me: a writer's intelligence shapes writing, but what moves the writer's intelligence? Questions of integrity, spirit and purpose arise. "There is more truth in the act of writing," argues Russell Edson, "than in what is written." But you have to write to get at that truth, to generate that sense of inner motion, for me to consider it art.

This sense of inner motion is critical to the intellectual, spiritual and emotional health of a civilised human being. My deep fear as an artist and activist is that the trappings of literary culture may in fact stunt its development. For the past ten years I have attempted to help create an infrastructure for literary activity in Singapore -- publishers, readings, journals, anthologies, awards, tours and promotions. Acting as impresario, a convener of events, a gatherer of energies. I have not been without my successes in this regard. But these trappings can imprison as much as liberate. Have I created a culture beyond the market? Have we freed ourselves -- or merely deepened our debt -- to form, politics, agendas and expectations? Have these efforts to support the community been at the expense of my own art? I must have faith in the in the oblique, half-considered crannies of language, that an unseen equilibrium may be found. That it is an artist's duty to escape.

Ananatural Production is all about integrity and negotiation, with the goal of seduction rather than deceit and compromise.

Of course, a more detailed and scientific statement as to our positioning would require a presentation of the conceptualization and action strategy plan (which remains confidential) as well as marketing research and consumer reports of the long term development and potential of Ananatural Production. Here at AP we work hard to predict the use and exchange value of our output and construct the projects accordingly while maintaining the initial integrity, purity and clarity of the idea. The scale of the projects and the methods of communication are adjusted to the context in which we are working in to assure the greatest chance of growth, or what they would call in marketing “the stickiness” of the concepts. Based on our mission, each product is developed in the hopes of encouraging joys of collapse, contortion, fun, play and space saving, however, we are also well aware of the possible dangers, such as conceptual whim, frivolity and mediocrity, or physical injury and discomfort, and we take all possible measures to prevent such collapses.

Even with tight control, discipline and high quality production, the outcome of the projects can not be forecast until the actual audience interaction takes place. Questionnaires, testimonials and interviews are a great aid in mapping out to some extent the possible trajectory of a concept, however it remains speculative and suspended until the action manifests.

We must add that this positioning attempt was not meant as a corporate, marketing rant, though we do find a certain sincerity in the language and methodology applied that helps us reach out in a more populist, generous manner than the contemporary art discourse would allow. We believe that such a choice in itself reveals our position to some extent. AP aims to satisfy the populist consumer, but it also aims to inspire him or her be an educated consumer who compares prices, demands quality and innovation, seeks fearless interaction, intellectual challenges and is ready to engage and play!

Because I am geographically and culturally displaced, my location and my position have been impermanent. But it is also true that present circumstances, whatever they may be, always “impose” a position. Part of my job is to try to recognize, orient and take responsibility for this position.

Wherever we are, wherever we are headed, we enjoy the essential genetic elements of a position: nationality (roots); education and personal development; history (national, religious, medical...); geography. Of course, there are many other elements and details to consider when examining an artist’s sensibility. These four as the most basic and obvious.

As an artist, I have a responsibility to take a stand, to “strike a position,” like a boxer at the beginning of a boxing match. At the very same time, society takes a position in relation to me, the artist. Interestingly, it is very rare that society and artist take a joint, synchronized and unified stand towards one another.

In the communist country where I grew up, culture was organized, controlled and financed. In liberal and democratic environments, culture is free and mostly financed independently. By luck, I had the experience of living and practicing in both systems at various points in my life. Each system, I have observed, has its distinct advantages and shortcomings from the point of view of the artist.

The position of the artist in society is defined by relations of power (politics) and knowledge (culture).

As a citizen, I have a duty to be socially active, and take political positions when necessary. As an artist, because I am dealing with essential things that cannot be articulated or formulated, I must always carry with me a dose of worry and awareness that this could harm my work.

As an artist in a particular social setting, my position is already to a large extent determined, by the social and economic powers. The politics of information also plays a big role in assigning value and, with it, social position: for instance, the mainstream media around the world often compliments bad art while mocking risky, experimental and contemporary work.

I do find it curious that deep misunderstanding and lack of appreciation for contemporary art are not considered for what they are (a lack of knowledge) as would be the case for any other specialized field. Rather, ignorance is displayed with pride, and its barking promoters parade as the official advisers of authority. Singapore is no exception, and must also come to terms with this reality. Here is a metaphor: no one in their right mind would ever entrust the operating theater of Mount Elisabeth Hospital to me on weekends, even though that would certainly be a lovely, relaxing Sunday hobby for me. Similarly, I would not be allowed to practice in court as a lawyer, or at the animal hospital as a veterinarian. This is common sense: lack of knowledge can cause human (or animal) catastrophe! The same goes for art. We must realize that the promotion of bad art practice can cause serious intellectual harm, with permanent consequences on long-term cultural development.

So any answer to your important question is bound to be complicated and multifaceted. As an artist, I have always been wary of my position, and proud of my position. But as a Singaporean artist with a real stake in our cultural future, let me take a firm position! It is wonderful to watch so many resources being invested into culture in our country. But it is never enough to take comfort in the simple fact that “we are investing in culture.” It is absolutely necessary to invest smartly in the human capital of culture: the culture makers. This, of course, is a long term, strategic investment that bears no relationship whatsoever to entertainment!

Making art create my existence and as an artist, I try to connect with this society and also to look into it with a step back. Circles are circles but not all circles are the same. In recent years, I am trying to bring across the message of LOVE, PEACE AND CELEBRATION OF LIFE to the greater mass through my works.

I'm writing this for free, so I can't be an artist. I know a few artists – only a few – and am in awe of what they do; which is not necessarily to say I respect them. They are as flawed as the rest of us, and are oftentimes indulged to be more so. However, it is that capacity to disassociate the personality from the work that I admire most: and it is because of my inability to do that, that I do not count myself among them. I am a generalist. I'm interested in too great a diversity of things, so I find it hard to say "no". This has its benefits: you learn a lot, meet new people, see stuff – but producing great artworks is rarely one of them. This kind of "yes" is shot through with bad faith. You say it because you don't want to offend, because you'd quite like the opportunity to learn about this or that novel thing or because, let's face it, you'd like the money. I've got a family, you know.

Artists, on the other hand, say "no". Theirs is a process of gradual and sometimes obsessive renunciation, in order that what remains – the work – can affirm on its own terms: can say "yes" with absolute authority. I think this is why many of the works that remain with me give me less than I expect, rather than more. The merely fulfilling seldom satisfies for long. But sometimes you encounter a work that leaves you asking "is that it?", and then it slowly dawns on you that yes, it is – but that "it" is not what you thought it was, because it's not something you were ever able to *think* until now. Richard Maxwell's plays are, in my experience, a good example of this.

So why write this at all? Surely the noble thing would have been to recuse myself from this project at the outset. Maybe. But I'm interested to know what happens if I persist nonetheless. And what happens is this: I fail as an artist in order to achieve something else – as a writer, thinker, educator, activator. Mine is a critical practice that sometimes looks like art. The difference is, it invariably lacks the disinterest of the artwork. I retain a clammy claim to it. I take it personally.

This is why I'm simultaneously tickled and terrified by cantankerous old George Steiner. "Surely", he wrote of art criticism in *Real Presences* (1989), "there must be some licence under God for caring mediocrity". Tickled because our society values the second rate so highly, that I find myself valued merely for having ideas (after all, what are "meritocracy", "excellence", and "world class" if not fig-leaves on an ideology that exalts mediocrity?). Terrified, because the qualities I most admire in artworks now redound upon me personally. Artists are indemnified by their work against any number of political and social responsibilities that I am obliged to take seriously. I find myself taking positions – and actions – on little more than intellectual conviction. My "position as an artist" is one such. But the principled life is a half-life, at most: just look at how dogmatic my characterization of the artwork has to be for me to make this argument. So you can see that things are not as straightforward as I've suggested.

To call myself an artist has always seemed presumptuous, smacking of arrogance, for I was brought up to believe that it was a title conferred, rather than co-opted. To define my position as one leaves me tottering on even weaker ground, since 'position' carries connotations of the titular, of ranking, and of setting myself in relation to the world, the arts community and such. Putting my squeamishness aside has been an interesting exercise, and I think, in all honesty, I would regard my position as that of a mildly interesting interloper with an abhorrence of cool, and with a lamentable inability to take what I do too seriously. I am however, very serious about, (and quite good at), tilting at windmills, especially when it comes to the commodification of language and the posturing of those who regard themselves as the repositories of knowledge. From an almost deliberate sense of opting out, an almost perverse tendency to veer away from (and sometimes erratically collide with!) the hard edges of the art world, comes ambivalence and instability that is very liberating. There is a delicious state of uncertainty that is very heady, and I enjoy wallowing in the lopsided, the openly biased and non-objective opinions that dance on the fringes of critical perception.

Shouldering the inconveniences of an overactive but very biased conscience and an indiscriminate but erratic education, I've embraced the stuffiness of being regarded as an artist, only to escape in the terribly insular insider jokes of my work. My position I think, is one of constantly fending off the promptings of sensible behaviour by creating indefensible positions for myself. My work, I'm sorry to say, would stand better without me, a sad reflection on my inability to better wear the mantle of Artist.

Alas, we have sought
To define a nought

And all these thoughts
From a dot

Are mere musings

On the previously prescribed
Previously well described

For it matters not a bit
Not a whit nor a jot

Being sundry words
Merely words

Of my choosing

My position as an artist is such of a neo-exotic definition, no matter how hard I have tried being an artist, who is not defined by race or culture, by default I am known as a Malay/Muslim Contemporary Artist by the masses, and I am totally numbed by the whole concept because it does not matter much to me and my intention as an artist.

From another angle, I see myself as a mischief who makes art for self-healing after which I share it with the rest of the world, or I could be the joker who is constantly telling bad jokes. My position as an artist is not to change the world but to see my works change with the world like a constant re-invention or such.

The desire to create art creates the position of an artist for me. There was never a desire to be an artist, but always a desire to create. The desire to create stems from the fact that I am an extremely restless person and art presents an outlet or avenue to seeing my creations as cathartic products of this restlessness and discomfort. The desire to get the work out into the public is important for me as it reflects my position as one with perhaps a unique understanding of the environment that I come from, which an audience can relate to. My values, philosophies and intellect have also become so intrinsically entrenched in my art that it is hard to differentiate my position as a human being from an artist.

I see no need to join art groups or societies, or have very close links with institutions or galleries because they will ultimately influence and dictate my practice. I do not believe in art being merely attitudes towards contemporary art practice or making art for artists or galleries. I am pretty much self-contained and prefer to operate from a personal vision, as I believe an artist should push his forms the way an athlete pushes his mind and body. That involves discipline, introspection and a lot of commitment. It is very self-indulgent though it should not be taken in a position of self-importance.

Art to some extent is elitist, no matter where you put it; not everyone understands it, not everyone is interested in it. Culture is not, and as artists we can create a culture of art. And it is never a more exciting time to be an artist than with the present millennium. I find Singapore, with her short history and rapid modernization, in a unique position of appropriation and amalgamation of different cultures and find myself in a perfect position of a cultural sponge. The contemporary artist is a schizophrenic and works in a fragmented manner. He is not a painter or video artist or musician but all of these. With globalization and rapid changes in technology in this information age, we are in an era where anyone can create or recycle history. Then on the other hand I find myself on the far side of modernism – an ultra modernist. I believe totally in process, modulation and realization. My works should be totally ambiguous but dense with meaning and they cannot be frivolous. They can be a lot of things but not without absoluteness. Kafka said that art is the axe that breaks the frozen sea within us. If I could be the handler of the axe or if I could make that impact on an audience, that would be great. If not, just getting the chance to practice and make a living of my art is already a privileged existence in this country.

My position as an artist is to constantly investigate anything that intrigues me. The subject matter need not necessarily be related to myself or the environment around me; it can just be an irrational thought or even a reminiscence from the past.

Through the medium of dance / movement, I aim to reflect on this self-initiated journey to arrive at different outcomes. I am not looking for the perfect answer or result; rather I am more interested in the process of searching for variables that arise through the course of action.

These investigations surface in different forms. Besides books and prints, watching the world around me with a mindful eye helps to sharpen my observation, awareness and approach to my art. In so doing, I want to create a dynamic dialogue, so that I can engage with others through my thoughts and (re)actions. These new discoveries are a means to project the myriad voices of expression that put forward facets of my conceptual ideas in my creation.

It is not unsurprising that my choreographic intention has always been to push my own boundaries (in all its forms). As a practitioner, I am often challenged by modes of expression. From ballet vocabulary to non-conformist deliveries, my interpretative would usually be an exposition of my exploration process.

Having said that, this 'researched' output can become subjective and totally personal in my presentation. Inevitably, this becomes a point of discussion when viewed by the receiving end – the audience. Be it through pre – or post performance talks, or reviews in print, I strongly believe that artists should play a part in shouldering the responsibilities to build an infrastructure for arts education within the community.

Again, I need to emphasise that this is not a process of convincing another party to agree with a specific conclusion or argument. Rather, this is important because it allows for the sharing of differing points of view about one's thoughts, learnings and experiences.

My pedagogical philosophy is simple and direct: we reap what we sow. On a brighter note, think far and the whole prospect of arts development in Singapore will benefit from the community at large.

I am small and microscopic as an artist but I am seen and known as a vibrant person. I make art for pleasure, for certain beliefs like progress and change and for channelling personal creative energy. I make music for the believe that all music gives good vibrations. Art in Singapore is hanging loose like clothes on a bamboo pole but it doesn't mean bad or good. It just is.

For me, it is when I am enriched by the values, attitudes and behaviours of a diverse range of cultures existing in a space over time. *Home* is where the interaction of cultures and subcultures take place, and where local and international influences confront and negotiate. These exchanges offer unique opportunities. *Home* is the starting point of all the allusions, parallels, comparisons, dialogues and fusions that help me attain universality in my works.

Having an anchor allows me to identify themes and issues intimately. I comfortably appropriate / distill and apply them as is. From the subjective knowledge of these intricacies, I confidently dialogue with other cultures less familiar to me. I can compare and contrast; note similarities, acknowledge differences and appreciate gaps. However, whilst *home* is a gravitational centre which other cultural knowledge orbit around, I am often humbled and enlightened when my world is a planet orbiting other centres.

I see myself digging a well, coming up occasionally to travel and returning to deepen it ... coming up again, traveling ... the cycle continues. The centre holds my world that continuously shifts with what I bring back to it. As the *home* changes, I'm also changed by it. So what I look for the next time I travel would be slightly different.

I value exchange and debate amongst artists, and dialogue between a work and the audience. I value accessibility and communication in a work to enable engagement with the complexities of the human condition. If there is a choice between making an artistic statement and provoking a thought by demolishing an adage or dismantling an established mental paradigm, I tend to opt for the latter. My interest is to explore various artistic strategies to ensure that the demolition is effective so that an epiphany or insight is achieved via the emotional, philosophical and/or visceral. For me aesthetics is not limited to visual beauty. It is more meaningful if it is a holistic experience.

What I find challenging is to know the range of audience responses to the strategies employed so that I can either refine how they are applied or opt for alternative devices. Therefore, feedback is essential to my process; it affords the artist the luxury to create, produce and present a whole work as an open document. Get feedback, mull over it, leave the work for some time, and return to the rehearsal process with re-writes. During creation, I enjoy the provisional temper of the phase.

As an artist I find it necessary to constantly be reflexive. Reflexivity is a good guiding tool, and is best applied when its presence is least noticed but its benefits experienced by the audience.

We often privilege western liberalism. How does the notion of respecting difference then come into play when we find ourselves so intolerant of people less liberal or radical than ourselves? If artists aim to expose societal hypocrisy, do we then apply the same scrutiny to ourselves? How then does that affect the work we create?

To generate power to draw attention - the power to let people listen to what you have to say. But it had been less of “what I have to say” when I had to keep the company afloat in its initial years. My focus was entirely in attracting audience and cultivating audience. I had my head down, with my vision fixed on theatre and not anywhere else.

But the Tsunami in 2004 made me lift my head. I began to see the change in human behaviours resulting to loss in customs, cultures, lives and destruction of the environment. I wondered what am I doing theatre for? For passion? But I don't feel this passion whenever I lift my head to see the world around me. For survival? I can always go do some other non-theatre related job for that. To change the world? The world IS changing and it has always been so what am I talking about?

Yes, I'm in the position where I am still pondering over my position as an artist. While pondering, I shall put in more of “what I have to say” in my productions. I would like to emphasize on the events around us, reflect on issues pertaining to the longevity of mother earth and keep my hope and faith on mankind alive.

Grace, Freedom, Fulfillment



It would be fair to say that my position as an artist has shifted quite a fair bit over the years, as the **(geographical and social) contexts** of my work shift, and as the **media and technology 'advance'**, and also, as I – as well as the **my body of work – age** ('mature' is a gentler word...).

AS THE SITE CHANGES, SO DOES ARTIST & ARTWORK

The issue of '**location**' forms the primary discourse of my work – **I enjoy throwing and locating (or rather dislocating) myself in various unfamiliar environments so as to be moved, overwhelmed, challenged, off-centred and smashed.** Similarly **my work, the bulk of which could be described as my responses to reality** (immediate, as well as the larger reality or *realities*, and in all malleable critical senses of the word) – also change. **As my locale changes, so does the theme, as well as tone and language (literal and metaphorical) of my work, as the work seeks to communicate to different groups of local audience.**

CLEVER ART FOR THE CLEVER ART –WORLD AUDIENCE

A good example demonstrating the **site-specificity** of my work could be seen in the work that I made in the mid-1990s. That was a **vibrant age - of the newly-enthroned Labour Party, bohemian-bourgeoisie -YBA London, and I was at the Slade School of Fine Art.** Understandably, the works that I was creating at that time was aimed at an audience-in-the-know, dealing with heavy themes as feminism and political injustice in a tone that was simultaneously **aggressive** and **liberally-soaked with irony** that also digs at the art world. My film **ALL CHANGE!!! (1998)** and **large hypertext m.u.d. (1997)** are examples of such work.

AS THE ARTWORK – AND ARTIST – MATURE...

Such **self-reflexivity and belligerence** was to be abandoned quite totally when I started to work in Tokyo. One couldn't possibly lend oneself to rudeness when in the house of a gentle host, more so if one cannot claim ownership the host's language. I also began to **use my work as a means to be engaged in discourse with– not spit at - my new audience** This is very clear in a large body of work **ISLANDHOPPING 2002-2005** created in Japan, **with a central metaphor of bridging our metaphorical / actual 'islands' by precisely examining our differences and conflicts.** But perhaps this was also a sign of my own **mellowness...**

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENT, SOCIAL STANDING & LABELS, AND THE VALUE OF A 'MEDIA ARTIST'

At a period of time when I worked with **video and 16mm film**, I was described as a '**filmmaker**'. When digital technologies became more accessible and film, in turn, more expensive, I began to work in digital video, and its hybrid forms (installation, projections, 'live' video with laptop etc). My **social labels** hence changed accordingly, into '**media artist**', or even better than that, '**new media artist**'. The last 5 years or so has been a profitable time to be labeled the latter here, with its image of something shiny, high-tech and glamorous, which is much in line with the national policy of turning this island into the global arts hub (reborn). However some remember some darker ages before this renaissance. It was reproach rather than applause that greeted me a decade ago when I shifted my practice in **fine art (painting and sculpture)** to '**new media**'...

RE: ADJUSTMENTS

Over the past 17 years I had been an **angsty 'creator' who wanted to change the world** (who didn't when you were 14?), to being a **cynical art student maneuvering in the (Western) art world, to one who seeks to make work to generate discourse (and possibly lead towards a process of re-conciliation)...**

I foresee other shifts in my position as I continue to grow and develop my work.

My position as an artist is really contingent because it's really influenced by so many factors in my life, some within my control, some beyond. My interest in art started at a young age but for me to become a professional artist took a long circuitous route, due to financial and social pressures. By professional here I mean, my having gone through rigorous training and taking my practice as more than just a past-time activity. At the same time, however, I do find that my practice sometimes have to take a back-seat to other more pressing demands of everyday life. To practice as a full-time artist to me is a privilege yet at the same time it paradoxically requires tremendous personal sacrifices, which I'm unable to make at this point in my life.

My position as an artist is fluid also in the sense of what it entails as practice. To be able to make art and show it was of paramount importance when I first started to practice. This was influenced as much by the desire to establish myself in the artworld, as by my passion for some of the feminist causes that are important to me, which I felt could be communicated through the practice. Today, my art making has slowed down while I pursue a more theoretical reflection and an organisational role. Are these still considered art practices? I hope to think so.

Finally, my position as an artist has been and will always be personal and political. It is and continues to be subjected as much by personal reflections and decisions, as by the larger social environment of family and the artworld.

An artist must find value in his medium; in my case, it is words.

Sometimes I think the medium chooses you - there have been poems that suddenly appear, quite effortlessly, almost as if they wrote themselves and the writer is no more than a conduit. But of course, other poems and practically all short stories are pure labour - think of endless adding and lopping of words, the reshaping of lines, the leaving-it-alone-to-ferment - all of which takes more time than one cares to admit.

I write to express a world, filtered through my lenses, mostly for a Singaporean readership. But it is not about self-expression per se or about capturing this nebulous notion of one's "feelings".

The best creative writing, whether poetry, prose or in theatre, can change the way we see things, and through that, the way we act, and through that, however tenuously it seems, the world itself. I have certainly aspired to this.

Of course there are also pragmatic realities like building readership and working with educators and government agencies to make Singapore-made literature is given its due place. This happens in many places, though in Singapore I think writers feel the challenges attendant to producing prose or poetry more keenly.

Singapore writers have to contend with the fact that readers of English language literature have a wealth of choices out there, and some, perhaps many of them, may have a prejudice and suspicion of works from their fellow citizens. That is sad. For surely if your countrymen do not find value in your words - words that to some extent were written for them - then surely it must be harder for people in the larger reading world to take notice?

That said, writers too here need to make sure their writing is good, that their craft and vision is one which intrigues, even compels, the reader to engage meaningfully.

When people ask what I do as an artist, it is sometimes hard for me to explain the totality of who I am. For the theatre, I write, act and direct. I tell stories. I teach voice and speech. I edit text. I produce and organise. In short, I am eclectic.

If there is one thematic thread in all I do, then I would simply say: Stories. In my journey through theatre over the last twenty years, I have worked and learnt from many people and tried various styles of theatre, thereby discovering that I am uncomfortable with deconstruction and dramatic theory, and that I lack the talent and showmanship for musical theatre. At the same time, the plays that I have written and the solo performances that I have developed (during 1997–98 at The Necessary Stage; and since 2000 largely with the support of The Substation) made me realise that:

I connect with stories the most; and

Simple, honest stories still have power in this day and age to help people understand and enjoy the world they live in.

Having the ability from early on to write/create stories, I decided not too long ago that I had to further develop my art of bringing stories alive. Hence recently, I have been exploring voice work and oral storytelling.

What sort of stories do I tell? Who do I tell for?

I can only tell stories that resonate deep within me. And I aspire to tell these stories in the most economical and concrete ways possible. So not for me the overt examination of big social issues or abstract ideas. So not for me the complexity of mega-productions or the glitz of grand visions to be materialised. So not for me the audience attracted to glamour, romance, sophistication or supreme artistry.

As far as I am aware of, I do not have a large following of supporters. Yet I believe that I have touched those people who have attended my productions/storytelling sessions, read my work or participated in my workshops at a fundamental level, enriching their lives and appreciation of themselves and the world around them.

And so, this is who I am as an artist today.

I am so often misunderstood to be an artist trying to do something different but really, I am just writing songs about how I feel. My intention was never to alienate the audience but rather to bring them with me into a world where they can be one with the music. Happy or sad, the experience will vary. But all songs have a unique healing property that works on some and not on others, maybe some days but not everyday. Why I chose to make music is purely out of my love for music and something that happened naturally when I was a child and it's something that I continue to do for various reasons. I love the recording media, I just simply love to record sounds. It is of course also very therapeutic to translate your feelings into songs - it is how I get through most days. And music is a vehicle I use to communicate with the rest of the world, to send a ripple through the waves, to generate a reaction. That, I guess, is my position as The Analog Girl - to generate a reaction.

I stand looking upon a crowd of peers, elders and juniors, and I am at the junction of their gazes. Their eyes and mine don't always meet - the ground is uneven, they stand at different heights, they surround me above and below - but the situation already presumes an endless number of conversations, readings, contestations, responses, critiques, alignments, counters, friendships, courtships, relationships. I know some of them, but not all, and in many ways my position is meaningful if they see it so, and it is not if they see it as such. Art presumes a community of interpretation and this community exists in history.

There is however no purity to meaning. Nothing is entirely one thing or another, or more accurately, one thing only for long. Everything is gray. We are witnesses to varying degrees of entropy. This is not to say we cannot speak about better positions or different ones. We can speak also of lesser or greater intensities, and of positions that demand differing durations. Some positions are not meant to last, others demand a long span of attention. The taint of history leaves its mark. We cannot escape what passes between us. We can be contradicted by it.

This goes by many names - the political, for one. What matters most to me now is that we affect each other apart from ideas and arguments, and through our bodies to another moment. This moment cannot be described in terms of depth and surface, and as such cannot be archeologically excavated. This moment shares uncertain heritage with others, and displays a bastardly parentage. Its genealogy is fraught with errors and conjecture.

This moment comes to us with immediacy, sometimes with surprise. It stuns us. We are directly struck. We are susceptible to chance. I am not suggesting some obfuscating mysticism or spiritualism here. I am looking for the time that enjoins us long enough to compel action and disturb certainties, to affect the parts of our bodies that sense connections apart from touch.

Sometimes, a glance between strangers that fuses both with an unexpected familiarity and a shared basis for action. Sometimes, two clocks that strike the same beat. Think of a horizon as a mutual rendezvous. Sometimes I like to call this poetry. Sometimes, a room with shared history, yet you've never been. Think of a one-night stand as the basis for intimacy. Think of art.

I like to think that there is a way where we can make strong demands of each other. This goes by many names - friendship, for one. I like to think that sometimes where I stand with my friends and peers is where this moment is.

In the French novel *La Salle de Bain* by J-P Toussaint, the narrator sits in his bathtub to think. He mentions that there are two ways to look at the rain falling down, behind the window. The first way is to keep the eye fixed on any place and look at the succession of the rain; this way, resting for the mind, doesn't give any idea of the final destination of the movement.

The other way will ask for more flexibility of the sight. It involves following with the eyes, the fall of only one drop at a time, from its intrusion into the visual space until its final dispersion on the floor. As fast or as slow as the movement can appear, it will lead all bodies to stillness.

This story about drops is for me linked to the perception of art, or better said to my understanding of art.

Maybe art practices are like drops, raindrops rolling down a window, the question is how you look at them rolling down.

As simple as a drop

I have no high expectation of my own practice; I don't think my work can move people. Societies are settled down, rooted in our genetics. Rules are fixed, deeply anchored. Revolution only shakes and questions.

As violent as a drop

Sometimes just right after my performance I cry; I am disappointed that I could not reach I don't even know what. I feel that the castle is turning into dust just in front of me. Violent tears, each of them is like a knife cutting through my eyes to find its way.

As innocent as a drop

I am filled with wonder when I see the visitors coming to exhibitions, audience coming to see performances. What drives the audience to come and see while I prefer to hide myself in my studio? What drives artists to do their work? Maybe it is the innocence of faith.

I was taught, in my early days as a medical student, the importance of a good history – something I reacted to at first by thinking, “*that’s not even grammatically correct*”. As time passed and lessons got learned, though, I realized that everything it meant – a proper, thorough interview with the patient, a concerted effort to tell a story of health and disease; of life and death; of pain and discomfort and loss; of regeneration and birth and miracles, of taking the personal and private and somehow transposing it into something the world at large can learn from – made perfect sense. It was, and is, the way I write and create.

My position as an artist has always been hard-fought. In earlier, more foolish days, I struggled under the strain of trying to *be* a writer, with all the attendant exertions that implies. I read everything I could fall on, and then duly wrote poetry in aped pentameter and plays that ran in far-too-familiar arcs (all the better for success, I thought – they’ve done it once, why not again?). Every production I watched became an organ donor for my Next Big Idea – but like Shelley’s monster, invariably could not hold with no center of its own.

The fault was entirely my own, of course. I never believed my art could stand on its own. In the beginning, it probably couldn’t have, because I didn’t give it legs. I thought, in the insecurity of youth, that nobody would want to listen to what someone who cut up cadavers and learnt about malaria would have to say. I looked at my own academic pedigree and saw only equations and metabolic pathways, and felt the pang of not having learnt what I considered the proper language of Art. I had myself bound, and cracked the arches of my own feet.

I grew, thankfully. I came to see that there was no DMZ between my medicine and my writing, both my beloved. I found my patients’ lives enriching those of my characters; I saw that the truths I learnt about people in their times of vulnerability and strength started to become Themes and Ideas. And most importantly, I started to see that the depth of every single person’s internal life could really only be plumbed by someone who was willing to wade into uncomfortable rivers of blood and sweat and pus. I found my position as an artist.

I’ve tried, from that point on, to write honest plays and poems about what it is like to be human in a place like Singapore – not a political force, nor a repressed minority, nor a forgotten history – but a person. A person who, like all of us, is born into a life we have no part in choosing and is forced to make the best of. A person who loves and hates and grows old and sometimes grows wiser. A person who is, more often than not, forced to contend with the prospect of illness and death, and find out something about himself or herself from these horse-headed demons. I’ve tried to be truthful, above all.

My commercial debut came unexpectedly, but deliriously pleasantly so. I’ve chosen to take the positives from it: that it was a small story honestly told, and told to the best of my abilities, about people whose stories aren’t always heard (lonely fifty-something women, in the case of *Salsa Salsa Salsa*). The response, especially from maybe-lonely fifty-something women, was overwhelmingly positive: I’d told them their own stories, that they never thought were worth telling. It’s helped cement my own convictions of what my position as an artist are: of taking and making good histories – and turning them into good stories, well told.

I’m not sure I believe that art always heals – sometimes it’s the way it cuts and wounds that reminds us how powerful it is. But I do know that I’ll always write on the border of my two loves, and continue to ask questions we all ask ourselves when nobody’s watching.

When it occurs to me to remember that I am sometimes an artist, my position is usually one of ambivalence, skepticism, even cruelty. No, wait, I also mean wonder, hope and compassion. Then there are days when I believe all these words mean exactly the same thing without ambiguity.

I am called a poet – my helpless interpellation. It refers to how I respond to the world through metaphorical codes, analogies, enjambments, and wordplay, in sentences that hide other sentences within them at the same time. (I have seen the failure of many artists in controlling the variety of meanings generated by their work. I have tried not to be one of them.)

Now imagine a photograph of me that captures precisely the moment between a stiff, standing position and the subsequent act of turning, of walking away...

There are days when I delude myself into thinking that my position as an artist is separate from my position as an active, slightly immoral, and Machiavellian participant in social situations. In the latter, I believe that people around me deserve to be manipulated into seeing what I want them to see. In the former position, I subscribe to the potential for empathy and to a belief in the goodness of mankind. (This is dangerously fascistic when applied seriously in my real life.)

On a few good days, both positions overlap to form the alloy of my heart. On a few of these good days, poetry happens.

My position is always political, even though this might turn out to be unconscious.

I trust in the clarity of a poetic line and that time completes the poem, not the poet.

I trust in the sublime value of truth born out of internal conflict, and the courage to expose this struggle on the page through details of a private life. (By “expose”, I mean, and do not mean, “pornography”, as the latter becomes art by the intellect’s sleight of hand.)

There is a scene from a movie about Virginia Woolf, who is picking up a stone to let fall into her pocket before she steps into the river... If you replay that moment again and again without letting the film continue, you could be said to have stopped time in its tracks. This is also an analogy for my state of mind – its ceaseless hesitation, its resolute equivocation.

My position is the seesaw. The weight keeps shifting and shrinking on either side of the fulcrum. And the seesaw never leaves the playground.



not analysing meanings
or the question... my
position as an artist is...
to be in the in between
of things! the go
betweens, be between,
between between, the
betweenies. at least
personally, thats what it's
come to. for now,
anyway. outside inside.
backstage onstage. art &
commerce. asia europe.
where i'm from where i
am where i'm going.
follow me be with me
leave me.

My position as an artist is a very tenuous one. I am barging in as a an artist in a profession whose boundaries are nebulous, leaving behind my 'self' at times, and at other times exploiting and objectifying the notion of self in today's artspeak – to the extent that I am aware of being in existence. As an artist I am imposed the expectation that a work is subjected to contemporary art frameworks which I by a twist of irony impose myself through my writing, thinking and evaluating. By objectifying, I can articulate my position as an artist better, but is it truer? In very simple language within the context of art history, my position of an artist in Singapore is as one who came out of the 80s when a seedling of an arts school (LaSalleSIA) was started, who left Singapore to find refuge as a hermit-cum-painter in the Indonesian highlands in the late 80s, who subsequently returned and who continues to paint when newer forms like performance and installation and multi-media became popular, and therefore one who is wedged between the 70s generation and the 90s generation of artists, neither taking root in the 70s, nor embracing the 90s art, and struggling to find the right niche and the right means of expressing something that remains hovering just above the head. Today, I am finding my position as a working artist mixed up with other work in the arts, writing, teaching, curating and et cetera. My position as an artist is becoming something more elusive, more valuable, and more private.

It is to pursue an understanding of the links that make up the impeding broken landscape of matter and information. It is to acknowledge the disintegrated self within this landscape and how it locates and desires coherences within its momentary structures. I want the audience to be drawn to this facet of plurality and a sense of just losing it. I mean you cannot really lose it all can you? By allowing this as an end, perhaps, they can fulfill something beyond their everyday experience.

I am interested in painting and contemporary music forms as well as various associations of sound and incidental poetry. But it is with painting at this moment, that I find an interesting vehicle for my explorations within its perimeters of abstraction, sign and metaphor. Historically, it is clear that people seem to readily accept the given presence of the picture of a painting as structure and matter, providing an entry that allows me to constantly negate its frames and still get some inquisition from the public. Music and incidental sound ideas have informed the way I approach the ideas of painting, by this I do not mean descriptive tangents but rather, I believe these hybrid possibilities possess degrees of sensory and visual relationships that form parts of a puzzle, waiting to be fitted, allowing sound and matter to be used as further material to be explored and tempered with.

In the last three years, in light of a culturally awakened Singapore, the monster in the form of contemporary art history arrived 'suddenly' in the form of a highly compressed bubbling headspace. Although my time in my practice runs contrary to this fast growing labyrinth-like vessel of opportunities and ideas, I cannot help but realize that the sudden speed of this boosted web of knowledge wrestles with our human capacity to consume, making it an important point with regards to our incapacity and failure to make art that is quantifiable to a closure as an end. Something in itself that is challenging my own notion of frameworks and references.

But perhaps, these systems would be crucial to the way I understand the make up of our society and the opposing speeds of information that drives the community with the individual. Between the solitude needs of the individual and its link up of a community, the meeting and cross over of such references form the basic incidental inspirations to the way I perceive momentum and sensorium.

Eventually, regardless of my relationship to the state of art, all the above would be meaningless if no work is carried out. As an artist I have to make my art credible, which means to make-work and be critical of it. This value should reflect the conditions of my understanding of the way things come together and how they affect our cognition and memory.

In my artistic practice, I have continuously been responsible for founding and co-founding art initiatives. These include *Telawi Studios* (1997), *Footbridge to All Platforms* (1998), *Tie-jiang* (1998), *Danger Museum* (1998), *Spending Time with Raffles Club* (2000), *Rational Sky Pictures* (2001), *tsunamii.net* (2001), *p-10* (2004) and *The Wire* (2006).

It is in this act of 'founding' that I establish the fact that I am an artist who often collaborates and find strength in numbers by working in a collective. In that sense, I do not buy into the artist figure who struggles in his studio to create the ultimate artwork. Instead my practice involves the process of working with collectives, collaborations and negotiations.

Collectives or collaborative practices generate critique and question the legacy of the artist as an autonomous individual within modernist art. While in other areas like music and architecture, collective and collaborative work has long been accepted, in visual art, the loss of the individual artist is less desired, particularly under the operative conditions of capitalism.

However, the critique of the modernist system of art is an important aspect but not the only prevailing characteristic of collective and collaboration. It is equally important to point out that in collectives, individuals need reasons to come together for a common good or to develop something new. Similarly, these are my reason for forming collectives and I see this form of coming together as starting a process on broader social context.

From my work with these different collectives, it is clear that the medium is not an important factor and thus should not be a limiting factor. The different groups and activities which I am involved in forms an important part of my artistic practice. Although some of these groups seem to have very different agenda and produce different products, they are important elements for developing my practice and thoughts.

For more on collective and collaborative practice, see Enwezor, Okwui. "The Artist as Producer in Times of Crisis." *Empires, Ruins + Networks: The Transcultural Agenda*. Eds. Scott McQuire and Nikos Papastergiadis. Melbourne: Rivers Oram Press, 2006. 11-51.



Am I in a good position or a compromised position? Am I in a good bargaining position? I guess from the question, what my 'position' means in terms of practicing art is the ability to make decisions freely and have those decisions respected and to remain unchanged. But the term 'position' I feel, is relative. My position is constantly changing depending upon the company I am in; whether I am among students, colleagues, fellow artists, curators, potential clients, members of the public and art historians, critics. I suppose to clearly answer this question without getting too theoretical or boring would be to choose the most important company to which my 'position' is of any significance and that would be to my colleagues, fellow artists. But the question would ultimately come down to this: "What is my position in relation to (enter name of fellow artist here)?" so, perhaps, to every other artist, practicing or otherwise, the question might be "How do I compare myself to Ho Tzu Nyen?" for example, or "What does the public see when my works are next to David Chan's?" "Am I as unique as Rizman Putra in terms of stating my own identity?" "Am I as international as Heman Chong or Matthew Ngui?" Although these thoughts have certainly played in my mind, these questions should act as a catalyst to spur oneself on to produce works and to bear in mind the quality of one's own work. But if you're not into that sort of thing and prefer more concrete answers, I guess the best way would be to take the genetically-modified path of splicing different genes from different artists together into your own Frankenstein artist! But seriously, each artist should beat his / her own path through the wilderness of the unknown. That ultimately should be the position that artists take; to make one's own position and not have it imposed on him / her. Finally, I'd just like to add that this beating of paths could actually lead to something which the artist started with; coming full circle, feeling like beating a dead horse; well, if it does come to that, then at least we were kept busy while we were at it and depending on whether or not we achieved anything, at least we were kept from beating each other up.

Living in a country that places value on being the first, the best, the newest, the biggest...and regularly creates campaigns and committees to achieve such greatness; as a citizen and an artist, I try to find other measures of value and greatness through looking at the small, the common and the familiar.

As such, I try to create artworks, projects, environments where interaction, communication, gossip, chit-chat and musings – though not necessarily about art - may occur.

My response is shaped by the formative years I grew up in (born 1940 in Singapore) and the genres I practise (poetry, plays, fiction, a musical libretto and autobiography) .

A writer has two pulses, his own and his country in relation to the rest of the world. I am lucky that I have both, a country physically and imagined, called Singapore. I can choose a country but not the times that have nursed me. The tumult, from colonialism to postcolonialism to globalism explains partially the two pulses and the need to always feel both, the personal as well as the national/international. Times of great change produce uncertainty in the government's attitude towards art and artists and prompts the vigilant artist to guard his agenda and not allow it to be determined by others, least of all the State.

But at the same time the current government which has been in power since 1959 and which determines largely the environment in which I write, has provided the stability for the writing. And that is a boon. The great Filipino novelist F S Jose used to say that good writing could not emerge from a peaceful country (and he had Singapore in mind) as compared to his country, the Philippines, which provided more dramatic subjects. It is an arresting contention with which I cannot entirely agree with. One should be able to write well whether one writes in peacetime or wartime—as long as there is the engagement with the craft and the material.

I have said it before and it is worth repeating, given the speed of change in my country and globally, accurate reporting is essential, to begin with; but beyond recording, the artist has to interpret, he has to feel the two pulses, put his stamp of the flux and say, ' This is my take on things to which I have tried to be a truthful witness.'

The practice of a variety of genres complicates my position somewhat. I always maintained that the genre chooses me rather than the other way around and so when I found that I was not able to write poems to my satisfaction near the end of the eighties, playwriting claimed me. I was only later, after the staging of my second play *One Year Back Home* in 1980 that I realize what sort of a claim it was. Writing openly about politics in Singapore exposed me to censure as the censors can read plays which are realistically written. I did not heed the advice of Emily Dickinson who wrote ' Tell all the truth but tell it slant.' I could have written allegorically, as the late dramatist Kuo Pao Kun did, but persisted in my naturalism path & staged my third play *Changi* and nervously sat through opening night.

All went well, but years later, in 2006, there is still opposition from semi-governmental quarters. A suggestion to stage my *The Singapore Trilogy* in the 2006 Arts Festival was turned down after three years of talking, as the festival director cited 'constraints'. Constraints? What has changed since *One Year Back Home* opened in 1980 to controversial previews and reviews? Does it appear that the authorities are still afraid of writers?

Constraints seems a good word to use in my present position as a dramatist. I find great difficulty in getting my plays produced because I do not have a theatre group and cannot persuade anyone to stage my sixth play *My Bed is my Coffin* though I have showed it around. Artistic directors or directors refer to me politely as a veteran playwright and then ignore my plays.

But there are other opportunities if I am willing to grasp them. If one door closes, another opens. One of my favourites, W H Auden, primarily a poet, also wrote plays, libretto and essays. Unlike him, I will not migrate; like him, I am prepared to try new things and have just completed a libretto for a commissioned opera, about to complete the text for a musical and have started on my memoirs.

My position is, writing should stretch itself to embrace genres hitherto unexplored just as it sets its own agenda undeterred by lack of funds or censorship. I will go on writing as the middle-distance becomes the marathon, and as long as I can continue to enjoy it and the effort is, notwithstanding the constraints, rewarding. In a sense, all art is contention in varying degrees of intensity, and it is this which drives me to persist.

To be true to myself and create works that comes out from my heart, my soul, my whole being and hopefully, in its purest and most honest form. To have other people recognise this 'passion' in my works and thus inspire them to do things that they love and enjoy most in life. Seize the moment.

In my own view & perspective, I do respect myself for & usually one who practices what he/she preaches (in this case anyone who pursues towards his passion-calling), who : -

Not to see art as a potential art-army polishing skillful weapons to create havocs but approach art practice from different life perspectives & life experiences, sensitive to people's state of mind around. Not to abuse art and artists to benefit oneself. Not to be show-off of what you are capable of but rather make work beyond surface value & question your own intentions 1st before others. Not to be self-denial to be someone immersed into his own world & blame the society for everything gone wrong. Not to be someone who stop questioning the nature of reality. Not to criticize other artworks of their appearance as appearance is not worth sharing a critic. Not to question one's work of its references taken from any pioneers as all works project a concerns of this current time, though similarities might raise eyebrows. Not to demand originality but beware it might surface & be aware of them then. Not to forget one's responsibility to one's own integrity & be true. Not to project oneself as front-liner, trendsetter, politics-initiator/ instigator through art-making or hard-sell practitioner. Not to be too moralistic. Not to be self-doubt & selfish. Not to complain too much of what the society has done to its civilians when time is "doing good", as building-up of false pre-assumptions of a situation that might lead to revolution-change will arise to cause unease tensions within one body which might inflict into other weaker bodies, weak in the mental. Not to discuss senseless remedy which is unworkable, unfulfilling to the mind & unkind. Not to say too much, eat too much, spend too much, scream too much, make too much "statements" & "quotes", to avoid criticize for saying too much, eating too much, spending too much, screaming too much, making too much "statements" & "quotes" in one's work. Not to sell one's soul to exchange for pounds for frowns but be a soul of integrity & honesty. Not to make judgments before engaging oneself into a system of change & before getting judged, but one should embrace all pros & cons of what's happening around them constantly & reflect on it, so that one can never be called a numb or an ignorant. Not to be too selfless. Not to act what you don't preach & preach what you don't act. Not to demand an answer from others without questioning yourself first. Not to be disrespectful to your own voice. Not to stay unconscious for too long. Not to deny the need to stay awake every seconds for consistency of thought as losing it, is no joke at all. Not to be a follower but if one chooses to act like one is not a bad thing to do. Not to jelled mental with emotions as a crash-hit from this combination is a disastrous wonder.

Statuesque legs with stilettos
jut out of the B&W portfolio:
more bodies contorted
not by their own means
but the twisted psyche
of the photographer's
loitering camera.
Likewise the art
of journalism
is all about angling,
what's aligned in that
opening sentence.
Like other artists, the poet
tries to find his own position.
At a reading, the proximity
of his chair to the audience
means one thing; another
lies in the way
it tilts before the desk
where he hunches over
every morning.
Now what does the chair really
look like when it's empty?
Can more than one person
get on?
The relevant chair
The postmodernist chair
Let's repaint the surface
and watch it glow
Or destroy the chair
completely
to feed the furnace
Or splinter it into a hundred pencils
each scribbling in accordance
to its separate or duplicate memory -
except for one that always insists
on sketching out
the image of a chair
with legs fitted with stilettos
while yet another is still
hinging for the right angle.

Footnote: My position as an artist is to let my words speak on my behalf - at first glance, they don't always make sense to everyone, but I hope each individual is challenged to read beyond the lines to unravel the poet's heart and search his own for personal resonance. Incidentally, the first edition of my first book of poetry, *Isaac*, features an empty chair on its cover.

I want to ride my bicycle

All men are intellectuals, one can therefore say; but not all men have in the society the function of intellectuals. Those who do perform the intellectuals function in society, can be divided into two types: First, traditional intellectuals such as teachers, priest, and administrator who continue to do the same thing from generation to generation, and second, organic intellectuals who directly connected to classes or enterprises that used intellectuals to organized interests, gain more power, get more control. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in political economy, the organizer of a new culture, of a new legal system, etc

The organic intellectuals are actively involved in society, that is, they constantly struggle to change minds and expand markets: unlike priest and teacher, who seem more or less to remain in place, doing the same kind of work year in year out, organic intellectuals are always in the move, on the make and always think about new position for sexual activity.

There is a danger that the figure or image of the intellectuals might disappear in a mass details, and that the intellectual might become only another professional, or a figure in social trend as idiot, coward, bastard, cock sucker, optically molest their kids and who keep complaining that they want to quit their job and still remain there for more then 20 to 40 years and complaining had no time and to tired to sleep with his wife but once every 3 month appear in Bangkok taking 4 girls in his hotel room. God don't want to know what they do.

The independent artist and intellectual are among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things. That is why I am an independent artist and intellectual who is jobless, but regrettably I did not realize how many retard has surrounded the scene and far to many ugly unfuckable women in the visual art scene, unbearable complainer who could not differentiate between bitching, insulting and provocation and argument. for that reason I become multi-disciplinary artist because the pool of women for my aesthetic stimulation have to be big and wide and I hate performance artist or just artist who talk about freedom and democracy at 8 pm and by 10.30 pm they got horny and screw almost anything like any Chinese who eat anything.

These world of mass-art and mass-thought are increasingly geared to the demands of politics. That it is in politics that intellectual solidarity and effort must be centred. If the thinker does not relate himself to the value of truth in political struggle, he cannot responsibly cope with the whole of live experience. So they usually turn big, fat, sweaty ugly and completely useless mother fucker who like cockroach don't easily die. They fuck like pig and know only one position.

If im not mistaken im quoting Antonio Gramsci and Edward W Said and im not sure how I got mix-up with to many things perhaps because I have been watching non-stop pornography as a research concern human right, intellectuality, perversion, depression, social empowerment, feminism, womens right, best design dildo and condom, human trafficking, the transformation of a potential intellectual as an idiot. Horny gay and low self esteem noisy lesbian, priest molesting boys, priest with 10 wife, monk cutting his dick because its erected while he meditate, artist wanabe guru end up as salesman ah god I cant put down everything right now....but basically having nothing to gain or loose I am enjoying self contradiction and with a belief I live in a position which is invincible and untouchable.

I don't know if I am zai kuning right now and I don't know if hes always with me or not. but i know Im not as fuck as many that i thought who is fuck. So suck my cock!

date 1 12 06. time 10:57Pm. condition= Sober.
location- singapore

I think that being an artist you bear the responsibility to comment on the socio-political environment around you. As an artist, you have to contribute to the continuous discourse between the artists and the audience. I firmly believe that art should be a reflection of life experience, a means to voice the intangible and the tangible.

I believe that there is a universal truth in the human experience. Optimistic maybe, I naively believe that humanity is inherently good and we are all really just searching for a truth of experience in life. The bulk of art for me represents a search for truth of experience. A way of looking within ourselves and fleshing out the truths behind our experiences and to approach a sense of commonality between human experiences. How that search is manifested in a particular form of art is secondary. For me art becomes a “successful” enterprise on the part of the artist when the audience that perceives it is able to sympathize or at the very least empathize with the issues that are presented to him. The larger aim for me is of course that the audience, from being impacted by the sympathy or empathy evoked by the artist via the artwork; change his or her preconceived notions and ideas of social-political systems and structures, and subsequently his or her habits and behaviour. I somehow subscribe to the perhaps naïve notion that art is essential to quality living and art can be a means to change the world and change lives.

Of course this “change the world through art” dream happens in a more indirect, fluid way than overt politicking or social propaganda. Therein for me lies the beauty of making art – which is the ability of the human imagination to literally create physically on stage a surreal world that exists in the layers of our mind. To me, it is within these surreal layers that the actuality of human experience resides. The non-linear nothingness and absurdity of daily living can only be made sense of through the intangible subtleties that art can achieve by combining elements in particular ways.

One of the beauties of creating art lies a lot in the process rather than the end product and also via working in collaboration with other artists. It is through the work shopping of ideas that truths and perspectives previously unthought-of come about. It is from coincidences within the experimental stages that a lot of meaning can be made and discovered. For me one of the most important things in creating a successful work onstage would be a synergy within the various elements: the performers, the script, the multimedia and sound. This synergy can only be controlled to an extent because the energies flow differently with each live performance and with each space. Which is why theatre excites me so much – I love being part of a live dialogue with the audience be it as a writer, director, lighting designer, stage manager or even as a stage hand pushing a boat onstage.

What is your position as an artist?

74 unedited
responses from
artists in Singapore

Ang Song Ming	Jay Koh	Matthew Ngui	Paul Tan
Ang Sookoon	Daniel K.	Ong Keng Sen	Verena Tay
Namiko Chan-Takahashi	Ulrich Lau	Ruby Pan	The Analog Girl
Miguel Chew	Aaron Lee	Alvin Pang	Jason Wee
Chng Nai Wee	Justin Lee	Ana Prvacki	Andree Weschler
Heman Chong	Michael Lee	Milenko Prvacki	Wong Chen Seong
Chong Li-Chuan	Sandra Lee	Ben Puah	Cyril Wong
Chong Tze Chien	Lee Wen	Paul Rae	Ming Wong
Choy Ka Fai	Hazel Lim	Shubigi Rao	Susie Wong
Chu Chu Yuan	Jason Lim	Rizman Putra	Ian Woo
George Chua	Justin Loke	Jeremy Sharma	Tien Woon
Jocelyn Chua	John Low	Ricky Sim	Joshua Yang
Elizabeth de Rosa	Low Yuen Wei	Jacklyn Soo	Ye Shufang
Tan Guo Liang	Lynn Lu	Alvin Tan	Robert Yeo
Natalie Henedige	Gilles Massot	Tan Beng Tian	Yeo Shih Yun
Ho Tzu Nyen	Parvathi Nayar	Tan How Choon	Agnes Yit
Philip Jeyaretnam	Ng Joon Kiat	Tan Kai Syng	Yong Shu Hoong
Juliana Yasin	Ng Yi-Sheng	Margaret Tan	Zai Kuning
Khairuddin Hori			Zizi Azah Bte. Abdul Majid

24th September 2006

Invitation for project sent out via email

Dear ,

I would like to produce a modest text-only publication entitled "What is your position as an artist?". This is a closed invitation, so please do not circulate this email.

I am only collecting responses from artists from Singapore and on an invited basis.

This is a simple exercise that is designed to allow each of you to think about your current position that you take as an artist, to reflect upon your artistic production and its impact on your audience and the general public at large. The different entries will accumulate into a document that will function as an act of collaborative knowledge production in order to generate a new series of dialogue within this network.

Each of your responses will be given a page within the book, and I ask that you keep your response sharp and precise. This is not an exercise on irony or sarcasm nor am I asking you to comment about the state of things in today's world. All I am asking is for you to think and write down what you feel your position is, as an artist, within and beyond what you understand of it.

"What is your position as an artist?" will be launched by the end of 2007, as a platform of its own, that is to say : you are not part of my artwork, or any group exhibition. It is not an add-on component to any existing institutional project. It will be completely produced and funded by me alone. As a participant, you will receive a copy of this publication upon its production. The copyright for your text will be retained by you.

If it is possible, I would like to have a reply from you, immediately, just a small note to see if you are participating or not.

So, if you agree to participate in this publication, please fill in the following. Please note that the deadline for submission is the 31st of October 2006. But I would like to encourage you to do this quickly, in my experience, if such things get shelved for some time, then it never gets done.

Best regards,
Heman chong

INDEX

01

Full name : Ang Song Ming
Designation : Worrywart
Worrying since : Kindergarten 1
Website : www.circadiansongs.com

02

Full name : sookoon ang
Designation : artist
Artist since : don't know/remember

03

Full name : Namiko Chan Takahashi
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 1998
Website : www.namikochan.com

04

Full name: Miguel Chew Thong Seng
Designation: Visual artist,
Artist since: 1997

05

Full name : Chng Nai Wee
Organization (if any) : www.singaporeart.org
Designation : Multi-disciplinary artist
Artist since : 1989
Website : <http://www.biotechnics.org>

06

Full name : Heman Chong
Designation : Artist and curator
Artist since : 1997
Website : www.hemanchong.com

07

Full name : CHONG Li-Chuan
Designation : Composer, Sonic Artist
Artist since : 1996
Website : <http://www.angelfire.com/electronic/phase/>

08

Full name : Chong Tze Chien
Organization (if any) : The Finger Players
Designation : Theatre director/playwright
Artist since : 1999
Website : www.fingerplayers.com

09

Full name : Choy Ka Fai
Organization (if any) : Kill Your Television Artists Collective
Designation : New Media Artist/ Theatre director
Artist since : 2002
Website : www.ka5.info

10

Full name : Chu Chu Yuan (Zhu Ziyuan)
Organization (if any) : International Forum for InterMedia Art
Designation : Visual artist, cultural worker
Artist since : 1993
Website : www.ifima.net

11

Full name : George Chua
Organization (if any) : Associate artist of The Substation
Designation : Artist
Artist since : 1973
Website : www.georgechua.com/
www.thegenealogyproject.com

12

Full name : Jocelyn Chua Lay Hong
Designation : Performer-Playwright
Artist since : 2004

13

Full name : Elizabeth de Roza
Organization (if any) : Associate Artist (The Substation)
Designation : Theatre Artist
Artist since : 1996

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Full name : Tan Guo Liang
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 2000

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Full name: Natalie Henedige
Organization: CAKE Theatrical Productions
Designation: Artistic Director
Artist Since: 1998
Website: www.caketheatre.com

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Full name : Ho Tzu Nyen

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Full name : Philip Jeyaretnam
Organization (if any) : N/A
Designation : Novelist & short story writer
Artist since : 1985
Website : www.philipjeyaretnam.com

18

Full name : Juliana Yasin
Organization (if any) : The Artists Village /Plastique Kinetic Worms / APAD
Designation : Visual & Performance Artist
Artist since : 1989

19

Name : Khairuddin Hori
Organization : Wunderspaze
Designation : Artist / Curator
Artist Since : 1992
Website : <http://khaihori.blogspot.com/>

20

Full name : Jay Koh
Organization (if any) : IFIMA - International Forum for InterMedia Art; NICA, Yangon - Networking & Initiatives for Culture and the Arts; CityArts, Dublin
Designation : Multifaceted Artist, Founding Directors, Assoc. Director for Open Research Practice.
Artist since : 1990
Website :
<http://www.artstreammyanmar.net/cultural/nica/nica.htm>;
<http://www.ifima.net>; www.cityarts.ie

21

Full name : daniel k
Organization : diskodanny.com
Designation : Choreographer, Visual Artist
Artist since : 1997
website : www.diskodanny.com

22

Full name: Urich Lau Wai-Yuen
Designation: Visual artist
Artist since: 1997
Website: <http://studio19.4-all.org/>

23

Full name : Aaron Lee Soon Yong
Designation : poet
Artist since : 1986

24

Full name : Justin Lee Chee Kong
Designation: Life-time artist
Artist since : 1999
Website : www.justinleeck.com

25

Full name : Michael Lee Hong Hwee
Designation : Artist, writer, curator
Artist since : 1996
Website : www.michael.farm.sg

26

Full name: Sandra Lee
Designation: Visual Artist
Artist since: Full time since 2000
Website: sandraleestudio.com

27

Full name : LEE Wen
Organization (if any) :
Honorary member of Artists Village, Singapore,
Associate artist of The Substation, Singapore
Member, Command N, Tokyo
Since 2000, participating with Black Market International, (international performance art "group")
Artistic Director, "Future of Imagination", International Performance Art Event, Singapore
Designation : Visual artist
Artist since : 1980
<http://www.artsingapore.org/leewen/>

28

Full name : Hazel Lim
Organization (if any) : Lasalle-SIA College of the Arts
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 2003

29

Full name : Jason Lim
Designation : Visual artist
Artist since : 1992
Website : www.jason-lim.com

30

Full name: Justin Loke Kian Whee
Organization (if any): Member of art collective Vertical Submarine
Designation: Visual Artist
Artist since: 2004
Website: <http://verticalsubmarine.multiply.com/>

31

Full name : John Low
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 1991

32

Full name : Low Yuen Wei
Organization (if any) : In Source Theatre
Designation : Theatre Director/Performer
Artist since : 1992
Website : www.insourcetheatre.com

33

Full name : lynn charlotte lu
Organization (if any) : musashino art university, doctoral candidate (fine arts)
Designation : visual artist
Artist since : 1998
Website : <http://www.lynnlu.info/>

34

Full name : Gilles Massot aka Ma de Marma
Designation : harg!!!!!!!!!! those little boxes....!
Artist since : first show was in 1973. But maybe from day one or even before. My mum says that while she was expecting me, she was looking at an empty room of the house, and for no specific reason would say to herself: "that would be a nice studio for the child if he or she is an artist". But maybe it is that thought of her that induced the behaviour. Who knows?
Website : www.asimages.com

35

Full name : Parvathi Nayar
Designation : artist, writer
Artist since : birth
Website : www.parvathinayar.com

36

Full name : NG Joon Kiat
Designation : Visual Art practitioner
Artist since : 1996
Website : www.ngjoonkiat.com

37

Full name : Ng Yi-Sheng
Designation : Poet, playwright, freelancer
Artist since : 1998 (full-time since August 2006)
Website : lastboy.blogspot.com

38

Full name : Matthew Ngui
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 1989

39

Full name : ong keng sen
Organization (if any) : theatreworks, 72-13
Designation : artistic director??
Artist since : ok, i will not be cynical. 1988.
Website : www.theatreworks.org.sg / www.72-13.com

40

Full name: Ruby Pan Xuequn
Designation: Theatre practitioner (performer/ writer/ director)
Artist since: 2004

41

Full name : ALVIN PANG KHEE MENG
Organization (if any) : --- (former founding director of The Literary Centre; no longer assoc w that org)
Designation : Poet/Writer/Editor
Artist since : 1985 / 1st published 1990 / 1st book 1996
Website : www.verbosity.net

42

Full name : Ana Prvacki
Organization (if any) : Ananatural Production
Designation (Visual artist, theatre director, writer, etc) : CEO
Website : www.ananatural.com

43

Full name : Milenko Prvacki
Organization (if any) : LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts
Designation : (Uh !), Visual Artist, Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts
Artist since : 1975
Website : milenko.prvacki.com

44

Full name : BEN PUAH
Designation : Artist
Artist since : 1997
Website : www.playben.com www.benisrat.com
www.coloursoflife.com www.playnoise.com

45

Full name : Paul Rae
Organization (if any) : spell#7
Designation : Theatre director, writer
Website : www.spell7.net

46

Full name: Shubigi Rao
Designation: Visual artist, writer and part-time lecturer
Artist since: early nineties, approx.

47

Full name : Rizman Putra Ahmad Ali
Organization : Kill Your Television Art Collective
Designation : Visual Artist/Performer
Artist since : 1997
Website : www.killyourtelevision.info/
www.tendarkones.blogspot.com

48

Full name : Jeremy Sharma
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : Professionally since 1999
Website : www.thelacunasofgrace.com

49

Full name : Ricky Sim Seow Kiat
Organisation : Independent artist
& Associate Director of Moving Arts
Designation : Dance
Artist since : 1995
Website : www.moving-arts.net

50

Full name : Jacklyn Soo Meian
Designation : Visual Artist/Musician
Artist since : How shall I say this?
Website : www.jacklynsoo.farm.sg

51

Full name : Alvin Tan Cheong Kheng
Organization: The Necessary Stage
Designation: Founder and Artistic Director
Artist since : 1987
Websites : www.necessary.org / www.singaporefringe.com

52

Full name : TAN Beng Tian
Organization (if any) : The Finger Players Ltd
Designation : Artistic Director
Artist since : 1996
Website : www.fingerplayers.com

53

Full name : Tan How Choon
Organization (if any) : ECNAD Project Ltd
Designation : Dance Artist
Artist since : 1996
Website : www.ecnad.org

54

Full name : TAN KAI SYNG
Designation: Visual Artist
Artist since : 1989

55

Full name : Margaret Tan Ai Hua
Designation : Visual artist
Artist since : 1999
Website : <http://www.witas.org/artists/margetan/>

56

Full name : Paul Tan
Designation (Visual artist, theatre director, writer, etc) : Writer, poet.
Artist since : 1991? (since I am not a fulltime artist, it's hard to pin a date down; I have been writing since my late teens...:-)

57

Full name : TAY SIEW HUI VERENA
Organization (if any) : ASSOCIATE ARTIST, THE SUBSTATION
Designation : How to answer this? Please see text of essay about why...
Artist since : 1986

58

Full name : The Analog Girl
Designation : Musician
Artist since : 2002
Website : www.analog-girl.net

59

Full name : Jason Wee
Organization (if any) : Okno Gallery
Designation : Artist
Website : www.blurty.com/~jasonwee

60

Full name: Andree Weschler
Designation: Visual Artist
Artist since: 2000
Website: www.andree-weschler.com

61

Full name : Wong Chen Seong
Artist since : Commercially, 2006; at heart, since 1996

62

Full name : Cyril Wong
Designation : poet/vocalist
Artist since : 1977
Website : www.softblow.com

63

name: ming wong
artist since: 1971
website: www.mingwong.org

64

Full name : Susie Wong
Designation : visual
Artist since : 1987
Website : www.suwongart.com

65

Full name : Ian Woo
Designation : Visual Artist
Artist since : 1991

66

Full name : Woon Tien Wei
Organization (if any) : p-10, The Artists Village, Danger Museum and Server Foundation
Designation: visual artist
Artist since : 1998
Website : www.p-10.org
www.server-foundation.org
www.dangermuseum.com
www.tsunamii.net

67

Full name: Joshua Yang
Group: vertical submarine
Designation: Visual artist
Artist since: 2003
Website: verticalsubmarine.multiply.com

68

Full name : Ye Shufang
Organization : Lecturer and Programme Leader,
Postgraduate Studies, Faculty of Fine Arts,
LASALLE-SIA College of the Arts, Singapore.
Designation : Artist, educator
Artist since :1995

69

Full name : Robert Yeo
DESIGNATION : Writer
(poetry, drama, fiction, musical text & libretto);
ARTIST SINCE 1971:
if relevant: he teaches Creative Writing in the S'pore
Management University.

70

Full name : Yeo Shih Yun
Organization (if any) : instinc
Designation : visual artist
Artist since : 1999
Website : www.instinc.com

71

Full name : Yit Mun Khwan (Agnes)
Organization (if any) :
Member of The Artists Village Singapore since 1998
Designation : Installation & Performance Artist
/ Interior Designer
Artist since : 1998

72

Full name: Yong Shu Hoong
Designation (Visual artist, theatre director, writer, etc): Poet
Artist since: 1992
Website: www.yongshuhoong.com

73

Full name : Zai Kuning
Organization (if any) : pirate of Riau Archipelago
Designation : the left wing of lord Daeng Marewah
aka Captain Jack Sparrow.
Artist since : 1664
Website : zkuning.blogspot.com

74

Full name: Zizi Azah Bte. Abdul Majid
Designation: Playwright, theatre director
and lighting designer.
Artist since: Freelance theatre practitioner since 2000

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