

7	<p>Panel Discussion on “The Impact of the Arts on Spaces, People and Communities”</p> <p><u>Panellists</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr Belinda Yuen, Professorial Fellow, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, Singapore University of Technology and Science (SUTD) 2. Dr Felicia Low, Director, Community Cultural Development 3. Dr Michael Thaddeus Tan, Assistant Professor, School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University (NTU) 4. Ms Natalie Alexandra Tse, Executive Director, SAtheCollective <p><u>Facilitator</u></p> <p>Mr Kenneth Kwok, Assistant Chief Executive (Planning & Engagement), NAC</p>
7.1	<p><u>Introductions by Panellists</u></p>
7.1.1	<p>Dr Belinda Yuen shared a 2017 pilot study conducted at the Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities, SUTD, which aimed to understand the global landscape of studies on visual art and ageing. From the literature review, it was found that there were only 234 journal articles on arts and ageing from 1982 to 2016, of which only about a quarter were on visual art; the majority were on non-visual art forms. Most of the research studies from the Americas and Europe were empirical studies, and Dr Yuen noted an increase in studies on arts and ageing over the years in these regions. Within the Asia-Pacific region, she noted rising Chinese scholarship in recent years.</p>
7.1.2	<p>The literature review for Singapore was broadened to include theses and dissertations, but even so, there was a smaller pool of journal articles in Singapore as compared to other countries, with more studies on music and dance. While Singapore saw a rise of publications on this topic from 1996 - 2005, there was a dip after 2005. Singapore was the only country that had a decline in publications during that period.</p>
7.1.3	<p>Dr Yuen highlighted the various positive effects of art on ageing – engaging in visual arts practice could increase social engagement, improve psychological health and self-esteem. She cited a study in 2017, where older visitors to National Gallery Singapore were surveyed on their views towards viewing art and making art:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. While the majority of the visitors surveyed agreed that visual arts was for everyone and anyone could view art, only about half thought that anyone could make art. b. Most visitors surveyed agreed that viewing art made them feel happier, entertained, inspired and fulfilled. It was also observed that older survey respondents tended to feel happier viewing art, while younger survey respondents tended to feel more fulfilled when doing so.

7.1.4	<p>Dr Michael Tan contextualised arts and culture research to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Researching on the arts; b. Researching with the arts; and c. The arts as a research process
7.1.5	<p>As a researcher who was also an artist by training, he shared that the inquiry and imagining of what the arts could do in the context of care and society inspired him in his work, especially in arts and ageing, as well as chronic health conditions.</p>
7.1.6	<p>Dr Tan emphasised the importance of taking time to establish common language between different sectors, and acknowledged the involvement of multiple agencies and partners in effecting systemic change, especially when investigating the effects of the arts on health and well-being. He affirmed recent developments, such as a pilot artist-in-residency programme in which NAC and the Agency for Integrated Care came together to introduce artists to nursing homes, advocate through exhibitions, and initiate capability building efforts, including toolkits. As an artist-researcher, Dr Tan believed that building reflexivity into practice is an ongoing process.</p>
7.1.7	<p>Dr Felicia Low shared that her research interests as an arts educator were to grow the significance of the arts beyond grades, and understand how to articulate the value of the arts to different people. Given that the arts were perceived differently by people of different socio-economic profiles, she felt that there could be more conversations on class differences. Through her current research project on developing a person-centred framework for arts engagement, she would like to investigate how the arts met individuals' needs in a developed and sustained way, and across different sectors.</p>
7.1.8	<p>Ms Natalie Alexandra Tse introduced her work as a musician, educator and researcher. She shared that her academic interest in music and early childhood education was nurtured through her ongoing postgraduate studies at NIE, as well as her involvement in creating works for babies through Little Creatures by SA. On a personal note, she added that her identity as a young mother, performing alongside her husband, also an arts practitioner, had further motivated her research. As an artist and academic herself, she encouraged interested arts practitioners to pursue research in their areas of practice as these different roles had helped her become a better artist and performer.</p>
7.1.9	<p>Ms Tse's research interests were in understanding the process of giving infants (18 months and below) agency as co-performers, and understanding these young audiences' relationships with adults (e.g. parents, artists, technical crew) in arts spaces. She observed that there were few performances in Singapore that catered to this age range, and even fewer focused on sonic experiences. Also, she felt that arts spaces could be more inclusive to young audiences.</p>

7.2	Q&A
7.2.1	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>A lot of the research being funded is towards applied programmes, workshops etc. How about more foundational theoretical development? There seems to be less focus on this?</i></p> <p>Dr Yuen: While empirical research was conducted, more could be done for these studies to also contribute to theory and help close the gap between theory and empirical research, of which Dr Felicia Low’s person-centred framework was one such instance.</p> <p>Dr Low: There was a need for better understanding of how to develop frameworks. Also, research findings should be accessible and relevant to arts practitioners.</p> <p>Dr Tan: There were complexities in equipping arts practitioners with skills that allowed them to evaluate, research, and theorise using data. This required very specific skills that might not appeal to many.</p>
7.2.2	<p>Dr Dawn-Joy Leong: <i>As an artist with autism, she enquired about the place of disability in arts discourse, which she felt should not be just within the social sector but also owned by the arts sector. She also wanted to find out about NAC’s support for disabled-led artistic practice and research.</i></p> <p>Dr Low: For her research with dementia patients in partnership with Changi General Hospital, she faced challenges at the journal publication stage as well. While the research findings included picture boards on how to get responses from dementia patients, only clinical data was considered for inclusion. Nonetheless, Dr Low added that she was interested to find out more about arts and disability and to work with artists with disabilities.</p> <p>Dr Tan: Agreeing that the area of arts and disability should be looked into, he emphasised the importance of reaching out to the relevant stakeholders when championing this cause.</p> <p>NAC: NAC was open to supporting strong research proposals in the area of arts and disability, including those led by people with disabilities. NAC would continue to encourage arts research in a variety of areas such as people with disabilities, but also seniors, etc.</p>
7.2.3	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>To Dr Yuen - what is your definition of art activities? How is playing mahjong an art activity? In the literature review, how is the term "art activities" defined? It seems to include gardening and physical games.</i></p> <p>Dr Yuen: The scope of the literature review took on a very broad definition of arts and culture activities; the use of arts and culture to enhance quality of life, health</p>

	<p>and wellbeing among older people. After-note: see Yuen and Kong (2018) Arts and Culture for Older People in Singapore: An Annotated Bibliography for more details.</p> <p>Ms Tse: The definition of what constituted an arts activity would differ across contexts, e.g. those for targeted segments like babies. Arts practitioners and researchers would need to be cognizant of that.</p>
7.2.4	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>To the panellists who have their own practices, what have been some rewarding points and challenges working with academics on research? How do we speak the same lingo?</i></p> <p>Dr Low: When working with academics, it would be important for arts practitioners to simply speak clearly, focus on their research objectives, and ensure rigour in their work, rather than worry about using the same language.</p> <p>Dr Tan: As a practitioner, it was a privilege to be able to connect with like-minded academics. Practitioners would need to take on a “salesperson” role to build their case and sell their research ideas. Such processes were typically challenging, especially when venturing into other sectors with different operating environments and cultures. However, cross-sectoral arts research was still important to validate the impact of the arts. To make the resulting research useful, it would be helpful to identify broader concepts, key words and case studies relevant to the operating context of target audiences, after ascertaining their readiness.</p> <p>Ms Tse: Apart from language differences, another common gripe among arts practitioners was that researchers needed to be more hands-on, rather than being caught up in discussions and theories. However, practitioners could also make their practice more reflective, for e.g. having a reflection segment at the end of a workshopping exercise to find out about issues and address them critically.</p> <p>Dr Yuen: As a researcher working with design firms, she felt there was room for different sectors to come together for collaborative research to better understand the complexity of issues and increase the relevance of our research. It was not always easy for researchers and practitioners alike to go beyond their own practices and disciplines. Two-way communication was important, along with establishing common goals for research collaboration.</p>
7.2.5	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>It is often asked that research lead to greater advocacy, whether to the non-arts stakeholders or the artist community. Do you think research findings are "packaged" well for these purposes?</i></p> <p>Dr Tan: Researchers should consider dissemination formats in ways that will speak to stakeholders and target audiences of the research.</p>

	<p>Dr Low: When advocating arts research to non-arts stakeholders, the research pieces would have to ask critical questions, relate findings to today's social issues and demonstrate critical understanding of stakeholders' needs.</p> <p>Dr Yuen: Clear and compelling arguments supported by empirical evidence would strengthen arts research advocacy.</p> <p>Ms Tse: Improvements to one's own artistic performances could be a means of communicating one's research findings.</p> <p>Dr Stephanie Burridge (participant): There could be instances where research outcomes would not be pre-determined. Hence there should be space for different stakeholders to interpret and evaluate whatever outcomes emerge.</p>
7.2.6	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>There are so many possibilities for research initiatives in Singapore (elderly, mental health, education, community). How does the arts organisation balance out which would be a priority to focus on?</i></p> <p>Ms Tse: Given the commitment required to undertake research, researchers should embark on projects they had personal interest in.</p> <p>Dr Tan: Intrinsic motivation for specific research causes was an important stimulus.</p> <p>Dr Low: Research could be proposed in response to observed areas of lack and where opportunities arose.</p> <p>Dr Yuen: The question was what mattered most to the arts community and what research was relevant and useful. In the pursuit of contributing new knowledge, research could focus on addressing identified gaps, emerging challenges, and scientific opportunities.</p>
7.2.7	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>Does NAC only fund research on community practice? Academics are doing a lot of other interesting work in arts and new media. Why just community?</i></p> <p>NAC: Although the research pieces shared were in line with this year's symposium theme, NAC did not exclusively fund research on community practices. Different symposium themes in different years would reflect the range of NAC's priorities.</p>
7.2.8	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>How can we encourage artists to conceptualise their practice holistically, including research, teaching etc. instead of compartmentalising roles? What skills are needed?</i></p> <p>Dr Tan: A sense of reflexivity to think about issues from different lenses is important.</p>

	<p>Ms Tse: The different roles played could be viewed holistically. For instance, one could view teaching as a performance, and performances could spark further interest to research the reasons behind certain actions. Thinking critically was important, and artists needed to learn how to break down a research question or problem statement step-by-step.</p> <p>Dr Low: Artists needed to have a fluid sense of identity to examine how they could contribute to a particular space, playing different roles in different settings.</p>
	Q&A [Unanswered at the symposium]
7.2.9	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>(Dr Belinda Yuen) How long do these effects of viewing art (feeling happier, entertained, inspired, fulfilled) last? Would be interesting to take into account a temporal dimension.</i></p> <p>Dr Yuen: Thank you for the suggestion. This is a question we have planned to explore in the follow-on study.</p>
7.2.10	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>May the panellists comment on what the state of the inter-agency cooperation across sectors is like in Singapore today? The AIC-NAC connection is the right way forward. What else is there?</i></p> <p>NAC: More of such partnerships are emerging as the understanding of how the arts can contribute to different sectors continues to grow.</p>
7.2.11	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>How does the public access published arts research for Singapore?</i></p> <p>Dr Tan: The finalised version of my manuscripts are available to the public on my Researchgate account.</p> <p>NAC: The NAC Research portal on the NAC website is available as a public resource.</p>
7.2.12	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>To the practitioners/researchers on the panel, have there been research methodologies you have used that have encapsulated both aspects of your work?</i></p> <p>Dr Tan: In my practice/research, I combined qualitative Action Research and Case Studies methodologies to evaluate the effect of the arts activities as well as to reflect on my roles and responsibilities as a practitioner.</p>
7.2.13	<p>Pigeonhole: <i>We've talked about the different groups of people the arts impacts. But how can we measure impact in less quantitative ways that give due credit to art as a practice and also speak to funders?</i></p>