

Esplanade Presents

The Studios 2023

Jul – Sep 2023

www.esplanade.com/thestudios



The Studios turns 20 this year.

Over the last two decades, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's *The Studios* has been a space for inspiration, innovation, and imagination. We have presented an eclectic collection of more than 160 productions that has asked artists and audiences to reconsider possibilities in contemporary theatre and performance. We have heard stories that invite us to reflect on the human condition and what it means to live. We have had the privilege of meeting so many artists and audience members who have grown along with the season, many of whom have become firm collaborators and colleagues.

What next then? After 20 years, what role does *The Studios* play in the Singapore theatre scene? In what ways can the season evolve and respond to a wildly different world? What do we want to talk about and how do we want to talk about it? How does our physical infrastructure at Esplanade shift the programming of the season? It has been an exciting few years of research, reflection, brainstorming and prioritisation as we think about the possibilities ahead. What firmly remains, however, is our commitment to enable and collaborate with performance and theatre-makers to create work that challenges our notions of what art can be and do.

From 2023, *The Studios* will be expanding.

At the most fundamental level, the season is moving beyond its intimate home in the Esplanade Theatre Studio to include presentations in the recently opened Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade, opening up the possibilities for art-making and performance. This shift is mirrored in the expansion of the geography of the programming, inviting both Singapore-based and international artists to congregate in these spaces and exchange ideas, perspectives and stories—an ever more essential dialogue in an increasingly insular and polarised world.

Once started, this exchange and dialogue has the potential and momentum to continue beyond the venue's physical confines. The suite of companion programmes that are presented alongside the performances are an invitation to deepen our engagement with the artistic work and the issues raised. They are designed to engage not just the intellect, but our senses and emotions, taking advantage of the myriad ways that people process and access information. Through these interactions, we hope that *The Studios* can become a space where we are provoked to think, make sense of and hopefully, make good of our collective human experience at this time.

2023 – 2025: Land

Our overarching theme for the next three years of *The Studios* is **Land** and it emerged in the simplest of ways. As the Singtel Waterfront Theatre was being built, we found photos of the Marina Bay area that showed how dramatically the landscape here had changed over the last 20 years. Between this visual reminder and the current local and global discourse, it felt urgent and fitting to look at land as our thematic focus for the next three editions.

Land is immediate and tactile. It is simultaneously our physical landscape and a symbol of our sense of identity and belonging. It encompasses a vast number of today's pertinent issues, including global development, climate change, land rights, displacement and migration, duty of care and responsibility to our environment and the people around us. Yet, it is deeply intimate and personal, drawing our attention to our roots and history while inviting us to think about the future and what we have to do.

For 2023, we turn our lens inwards and examine our relationship with land under the specific theme of **Landings**. How much do we know about the land on which we reside—its history, its natural character? What does it mean to us, and to what extent do we understand what we are trying to protect or preserve, particularly in Singapore where urban re-development is analogous to progress? What is the cost of this progress and what do we give up or have we given up, in order to move ahead?

Taking place from 28 Jul to 3 Sep 2023, the six productions and the accompanying companion programmes in our 2023 season are a starting point to examine some of these complex questions. For this, we are ever privileged and grateful to build this conversation with **Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere, The Necessary Stage, Joel Tan, Tan Shou Chen, Robert Zhao**, as well as **Dr Natalie Pang, Yong Ding Li, Esmonde Luo**, and **Centre 42**.

And to everyone who has joined us over the last two decades, thank you for your support and trust. It means the world to us and we are incredibly excited to start this new chapter with you.

Lynn Yang

Producer, The Esplanade Co Ltd

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on [Esplanade Offstage](#), an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, and the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2019 and 2022. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-dog Friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](https://www.esplanade.com) for more information.

~ End ~

Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

For more information, please contact:

Koh Sian Eng
Senior Manager, Marketing (Communications & Content)
The Esplanade Co Ltd
Email: ksianeng@esplanade.com

Jeanne Toh
Manager, Arts Marketing
The Esplanade Co Ltd
Email: tjeanne@esplanade.com

Annexe

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The Studios

Jul – Sep 2023

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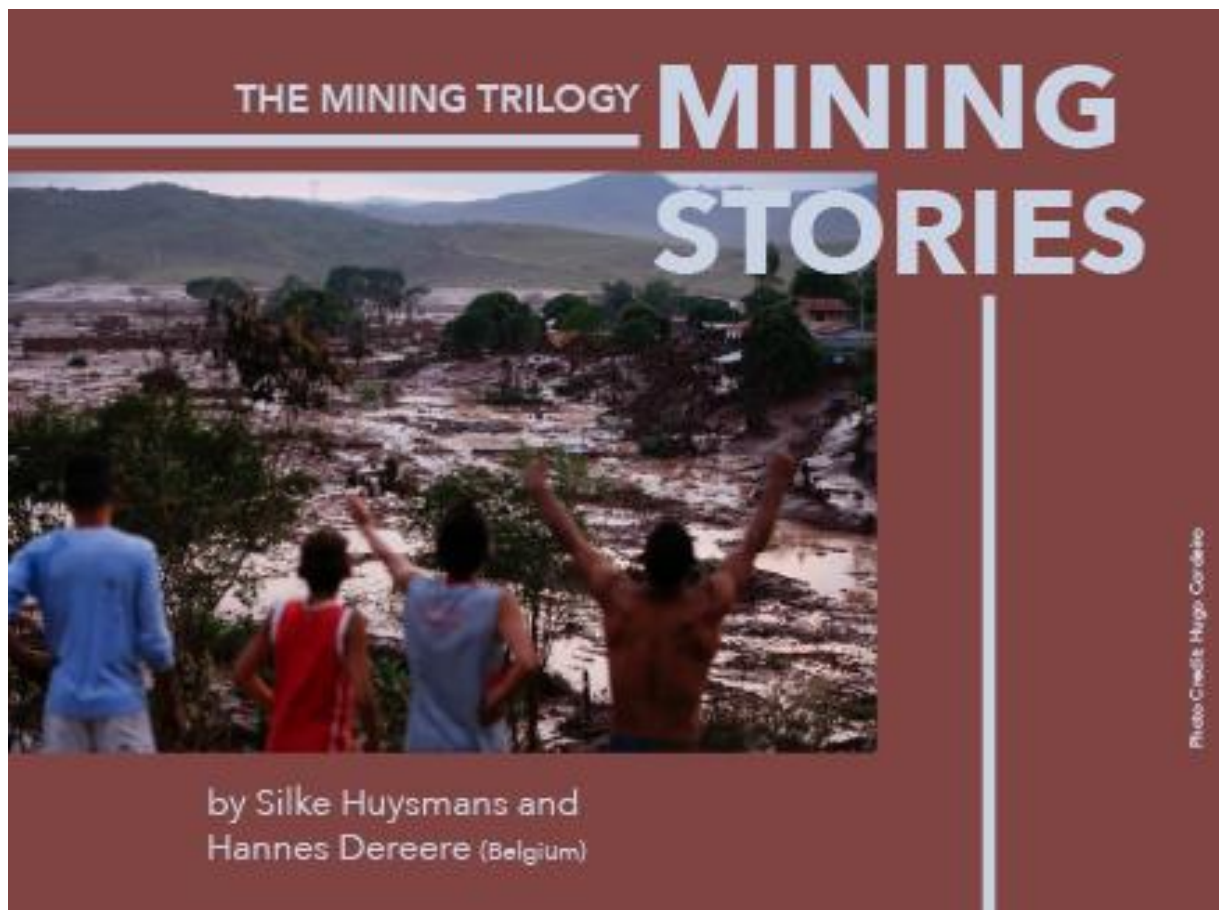
Eclectic, genre-bending and running the gamut from neo-realism to experimental, *The Studios* features works that challenge the boundaries in theatre and performance. It is interested in contemporary artists, ideas and expressions, and offers a space for dialogue and reflection on the questions that matter to us today.

The Mining Trilogy: Mining Stories

by Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere (Belgium)

28 & 29 Jul 2023, Fri & Sat, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio



“...innovative staging that is both thought-provoking and emotionally resonant... It’s a timely show about being human in a world of global capitalism and capricious fate, without ever feeling like one: quite an accomplishment.” – *The Irish Times*

An aural tapestry of voices, each sharing their stories and perspective—what disaster strikes, what is remembered?

In November 2015, a dam containing toxic mining waste collapsed a few miles away from Belgium theatre artist Silke Huysmans' childhood home in the South of Brazil. A devastating flood of mud destroyed several villages below the dam. In the next couple of days, the poisonous sludge flowed into the river Rio Doce and eventually reached the Atlantic Ocean. The ecological impact and environmental pollution was the largest ever recorded.

Silke returned to her hometown in Brazil together with her partner Hannes to talk to people affected by the incident and get a grip on its immense consequences. Back in Belgium, they did additional interviews with experts from various fields of knowledge, amongst others a mining expert, an activism researcher and an economics professor.

Using field recordings from their conversations in Brazil and Belgium, *Mining Stories* brings together multiple perspectives on the impact of the disaster. Each of the speakers tell the story of the disaster from their own context, with their own nuances and points of interest.

Moving deftly around a performance space, Silke silently activates these audio field recordings alongside multimedia projections. Like a conductor, she brings together these personal stories interwoven into an hour-long orchestral work composed of voices. At its heart, this documentary theatre performance lays bare the ripples of impact from a singular environmental disaster, crossing topics of memory, politics, religion, and storytelling.

Mining Stories was selected for Circuit X (Belgium) in 2017 and was awarded the main prize at Zürcher Theaterspektakel (Switzerland) in 2018 with the jury stating that "Huysmans and Dereere rely on an impressive yet simple staging, with an honest, ethical statement with regard to eco-political topics and issues."

Mining Stories, *Pleasant Island*, and *Out of the Blue* are part of a trilogy by Belgium theatre artists, Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere, that explores our human relationship with mining.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in Portuguese, English & Dutch, with English subtitles.

Created by Silke Huysmans, Hannes Dereere

Performance Silke Huysmans

Dramaturgical Advice Dries Douibi

Technical Support Christoph Donse

Scenography Frédéric Aelterman, Luc Cools

Portuguese Transcriptions Luanda Casella, Miguel Cipriano

Production Kunstenwerkplaats Pianofabriek, Bâtard Festival

Co-Production KAAP

Supported by Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Sabam For Culture

Thanks to All Conversation Partners

About the Artists

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Ticket Price: \$38*^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$30*

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 11 – 28 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 15% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

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Tote Board Arts Grant

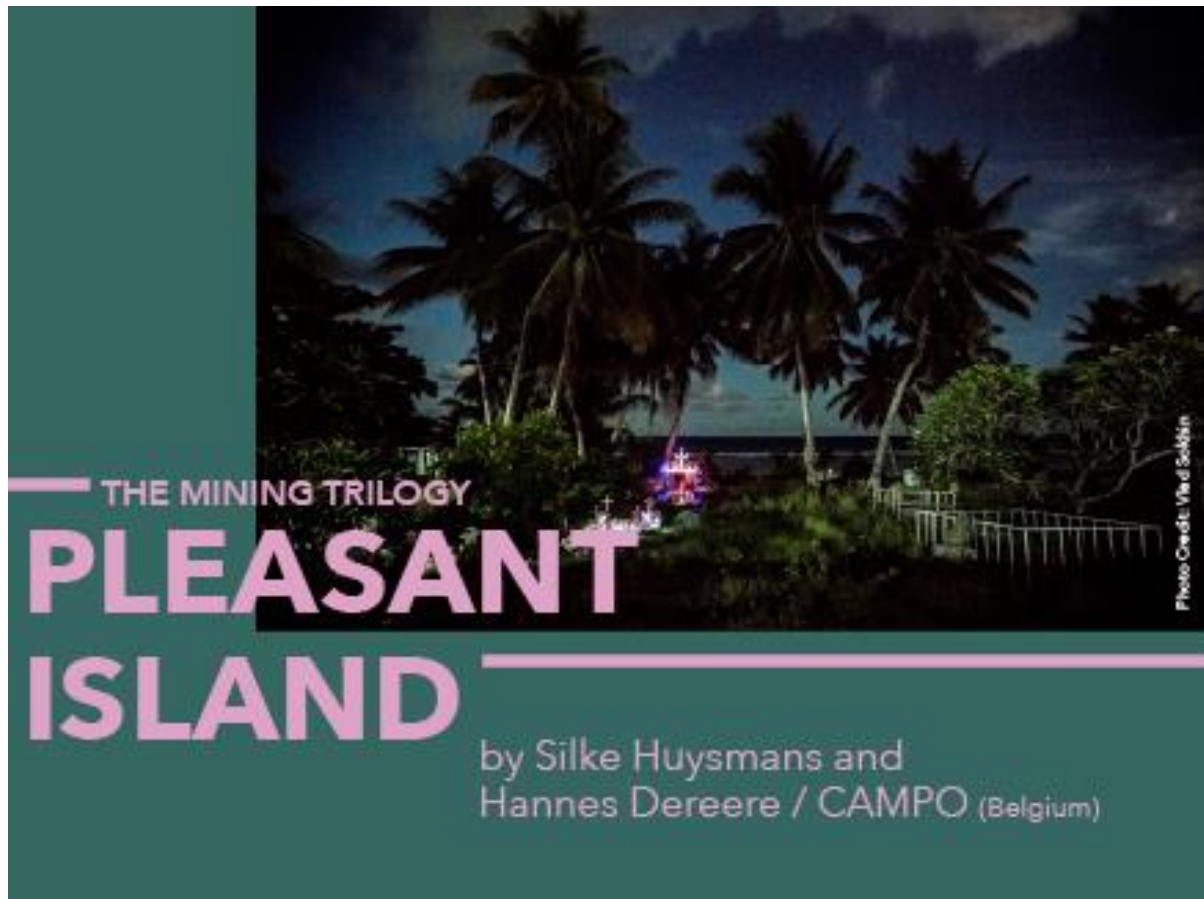
All Upper Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges/ Centralised Institute & ITEs may use the Tote Board Arts Grant to subsidise up to 50% of the programme cost.

For more details, please contact Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email boxoffice@esplanade.com.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

The Mining Trilogy: Pleasant Island by Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere / CAMPO (Belgium)

2 & 3 Aug 2023, Wed & Thu, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio



“It’s the genius of the editing that makes ‘Pleasant Island’ a hallucinatory document with an unprecedented form, between performance and documentary.” – *IO Gazette*

Encounter this modern-day parable, told through historical records, personal accounts and multimedia recordings, interwoven into a sequence informed by the language and aesthetics of digital culture.

Hidden in the Pacific Ocean lies the island of Nauru, once called Pleasant Island by European explorers. Although its size makes it one of the smallest nations in the world, its history is both large and significant. Nauru is often seen as a parable for our current world. The island was severely impacted by the effects of colonisation, capitalism, migration and ecological distress of which the consequences still linger today.

After the exhaustive exploitation of its natural resources, the island was left in economic and ecological ruins. Today, Nauru is most known for hosting Australian refugee detention centres in return for a large amount of Australian money. This sparked the government of Nauru to ban most journalists and researchers from entering the island in an effort to keep negative news from reaching the outside world. Meanwhile, the island risks being swallowed by the ocean as a result of the rising sea level. Theatre artists Silke and Hannes were exceptionally allowed to enter the island for a couple of weeks in the summer of 2018. In this post-

apocalyptic setting, they try to capture the historical, ecological and humanitarian exhaustion of the island, and by extension of our entire planet.

In *Pleasant Island*, Silke and Hannes use their personal smartphones to navigate the spectator through audio and images from their research on Nauru. How does one encounter the limitations of a world that is intent on endless growth? What idea of the future is left on Nauru, and the rest of the world?

Mining Stories, *Pleasant Island*, and *Out of the Blue* are part of a trilogy by Belgium theatre artists, Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere, that explores our human relationship with mining.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in English, with English subtitles.

By & With Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere

Dramaturge Dries Douibi

Sound Mixing Lieven Dousselaere

Technical Anne Meeussen & Piet Depoortere

Production CAMPO

Co-Production Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Spring Festival Utrecht, Beursschouwburg, Kunstenwerkplaats Pianofabriek, Veem House For Performance, Spielart & De Brakke Grond

Residencies Beursschouwburg, De Grote Post, KAAP, Kunstencentrum Buda, Kunstenwerkplaats Pianofabriek, STUK & Veem House For Performance, LOD

With The Support Of Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie & KAAP

Many Thanks To All Collocutors In Nauru

About the Artists

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Out of the Blue concludes the trilogy. In this final piece Silke and Hannes look at the future of mining. Through interviews and conversations, they sketch an in-depth portrait of an emerging industry: deep sea mining. The piece premiered at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in May 2022.

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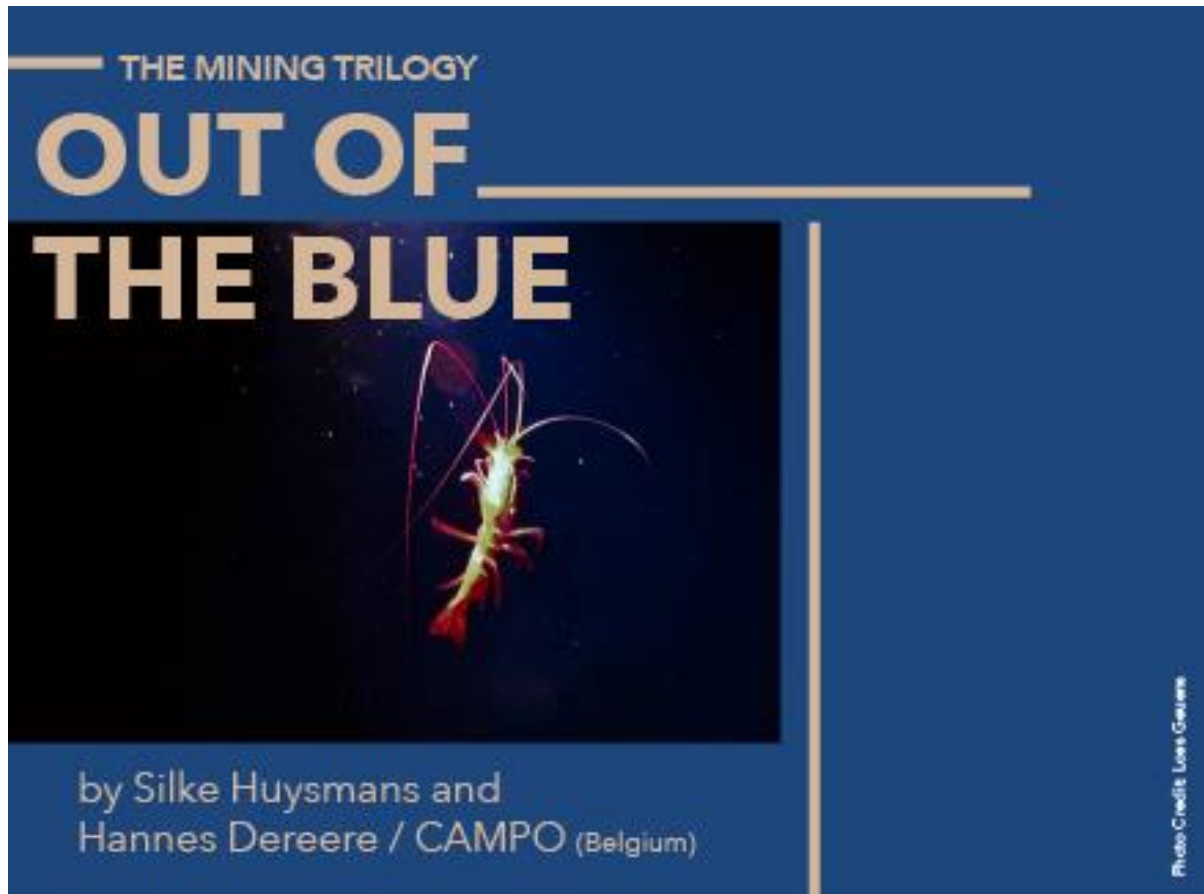
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Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

The Mining Trilogy: Out of the Blue by Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere / CAMPO (Belgium)

5 & 6 Aug 2023, Sat & Sun
Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio



"The brilliant form the artists have found, illuminate unknown territories both in the ocean and in ourselves, exposing a complexity that forces us to think" – *Springback Magazine*

As interviews, conversations and footage flash across a series of screens, an intimate portrait of a new industry emerges.

"We know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the bottom of the ocean." This statement is often heard when talking about the deep sea. Worldwide, only ten percent of the ocean floor has been mapped and explored. At a moment in history when the planet we live on seems to have been explored extensively, some places remain unstudied and untouched.

After their acclaimed performances *Mining Stories* and *Pleasant Island*, Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere present the final part of their trilogy on mining. This time, they focus on a completely new industry: deep sea mining. With resources on land becoming increasingly scarce and overexploited, mining companies turn towards the ocean.

In the spring of 2021, three ships gather on a remote patch of the Pacific Ocean. One of them belongs to the Belgian dredging company DEME-GSR. Four kilometres below the sea surface, their mining robot is scraping the seabed in search of metals. On another ship, an international

team of marine biologists and geologists keep a close watch on the operation. A third ship completes the fleet: on board the infamous Rainbow Warrior, Greenpeace activists protest against this potential future industry.

From their small apartment in Brussels, Silke and Hannes connect with the three ships through satellite. Each of the ships represents one pillar of the public debate: industry, science and activism. The piece is an attempt to capture a potentially pivotal moment in the history of the earth, juxtaposing myriad perspectives by presenting visual media and audio recordings side by side. How much deeper can mining companies dig, and what are we as humankind actually digging towards? What are the challenges and risks? What opportunities potentially lay ahead?

Out of the Blue premiered at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts on 19 May 2022.

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(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in English, with English subtitles.

By & With Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere

Dramaturgy Dries Douibi

Sound Mix Lieven Dousselaere

Outside Eye Pol Heyvaert

Technique korneel Coessens, Piet Depoortere, Koen Goossens & Babette Poncelet

Production CAMPO

Co-Production Bunker (Ljubljana), De Brakke Grond (Amsterdam), Noorderzon - Festival Of Performing Arts And Society (Groningen), Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zürich), Beursschouwburg & Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels), PACT Zollverein (Essen), Théâtre De La Ville (Paris) & Festival d'Automne À Paris (Paris)

Residencies Kunstenwerkplaats, Pilar, Bara142 (Toestand), De Grote Post, 30CC, GC De Markten & GC Felix Sohie

Special Thanks to John Childs, Henko De Stigter, Patricia Esquete, Iason-Zois Gazis, Jolien Goossens, Matthias Haeckel, An Lambrechts, Ted Nordhaus, Maureen Penjueli, Surabhi Ranganathan, Duygu Sevilgen, Joey Tau, Saskia Van Aalst, Kris Van Nijen, Vincent Van Quickenborne & Annemiek Vink

Thanks to All Conversation Partners & The People Who Helped With The Transcriptions

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In Conversation with Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere: Creating The Mining Trilogy

by Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere (Belgium)

6 Aug 2023, Sun, 4.30pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio



Curious about *The Mining Trilogy*? Join artists Silke and Hannes for a dialogue as they speak about the process of creating the three productions, their experiences during field research, as well as broader questions about the consequence of our actions and what our collective future will look like.

This is a companion programme to *The Mining Trilogy: Mining Stories, Pleasant Island and Out of the Blue*, running from 28 Jul – 6 Aug 2023 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

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(1hr, no intermission)
Conducted in English.

Free

The Mining Trilogy Workshop

by Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere (Belgium)

7 & 8 Aug 2023

- 7 Aug, Mon, 1pm – 6pm
 - 8 Aug, Tue, 10am – 1pm
- Esplanade Rehearsal Studio



Designed for performance-makers, arts students and practitioners, this two-day workshop by theatre artists Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere takes you through the creation *The Mining Trilogy*, with the artists speaking in-depth about their process, from the choice of subject matter to their methodology and approach towards documentary theatre.

Participants will also get to experience their methodology first-hand. Starting with a one-hour interview with one of the interviewees from *The Mining Trilogy*, participants are invited to ponder the aspects of the story that stood out the most to them, and to create a short documentary theatre presentation using audio-visual material sampled from the various sources.

Successful applicants will be contacted to purchase tickets for this workshop.

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Duration: 8hrs over two days.

Conducted in English.

Admission for ages 16 and above.

Ticket Price: \$60

Pre-registration is required.

An Esplanade Commission

Three Years in the Life and Death of Land by The Necessary Stage (Singapore)

5 – 13 Aug 2023, Sat – Sun

5 Aug, Sat, 8pm

6 Aug, Sun, 3pm

10 Aug, Thu, 8pm

11 Aug, Fri, 8pm

12 Aug, Sat, 3pm & 8pm

13 Aug, Sun, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



When Eric Lim returns home after studying abroad, he marries his long-time sweetheart and neighbour Shalini Mulchand. But a lot can happen in three years—especially when two families are united by love but divided by their pain.

First staged in 1994 as part of the Singapore Festival of Arts, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land* is about the Lims, the Mulchands, a ghost, a cat and three mosquitoes—one big family, trying hard to be happy.

Written and Directed by

Haresh Sharma

Performed by

Daisy Irani

Fahim Murshed

Ghafir Akbar
Joshua Lim
Julius Foo
Karen Tan
Nadya Zaheer
Rowena See
Sharul Channa
Siti Khalijah Zainal
Tan Guo Lian Sutton
Tan Rui Shan

Assistant Director

Deonn Yang

Composer/Music Director

Hossan Leong
Safuan Johari

Movement Director & Choreographer

Seong Hui Xuan

Lighting Designer

Genevieve Peck

Set Designer

Wong Chee Wai

About The Necessary Stage

Established in 1987, The Necessary Stage (TNS) is a non-profit theatre company with charity status. Its mission is to create challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind. TNS has the honour of being the only arts company in Singapore helmed by two Cultural Medallion recipients: Artistic Director and Founder Alvin Tan and Resident Playwright Haresh Sharma. The company is also the organiser and curator of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

TNS is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023.

For more information, visit necessary.org and tnsarchives.com.

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Facebook at facebook.com/thenecessarystage

Twitter at twitter.com/tns_sg

Instagram at instagram.com/thenecessarystage

LinkedIn at linkedin.com/company/the-necessary-stage

About Haresh Sharma (Playwright & Director)

Haresh has been the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage (TNS) since 1990. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. To date, he has written more than 120 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for GCE 'N' and 'O' Levels.

Haresh has 13 publications of his plays, including *Trilogy*, *Shorts 1*, *Shorts 2*, *Don't Forget to Remember Me* and *Abuse Suxxx!!! and Other Plays*. His works have been translated into Malay, Mandarin, Greek and Italian. He was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* at the 2007, 2008 and 2009 The Straits Times Life

Theatre Awards respectively. In 2021, Haresh published *Reading the Room: A Playwright's Devising Journey*, which details his devising process developed over his career at TNS. Haresh also had the honour of having a selection of his works featured at Esplanade's first playwright-centred season at *The Studios* in 2017.

Haresh is the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region.

(2hrs 15mins, including 15mins intermission)
Performed in English, with creative captioning.
Advisory: Some mature content.

Ticket Price: \$45, \$55*^
Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$46*

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 11 – 28 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 15% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Available from 29 May, 9am.

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 10% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

Tote Board Arts Grant

All Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges/ Centralised Institute & ITEs may use the Tote Board Arts Grant to subsidise up to 50% of the programme cost.

For more details, please contact Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email boxoffice@esplanade.com.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

An Esplanade Commission

Mosaic

Written by Joel Tan, Directed by Tan Shou Chen (Singapore)

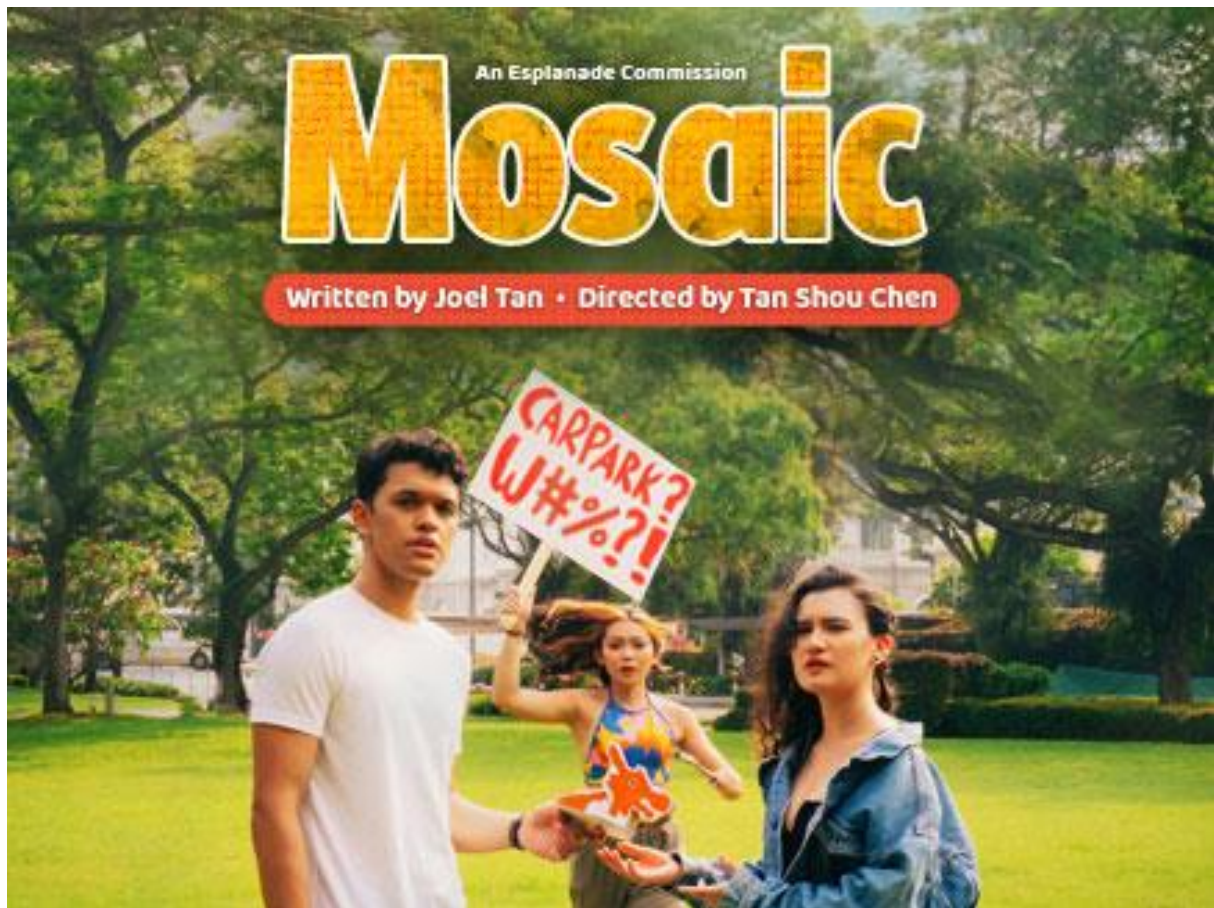
18 – 20 Aug 2023, Fri – Sun

Fri, 8pm

Sat, 3pm & 8pm

Sun, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



“...sharply critiques our obsession with the past, revealing its hollowness and contradictions... *Mosaic* is beautiful, admirably complex and disturbing. It offers no solutions to its crises, leaving viewers with a knot of angst in their chests.” — *The Straits Times*

An old playground in Ang Mo Kio is slated to be bulldozed. Three 20-something friends and a stranger gather to protest its demolition. What starts as a well-meaning but ill-conceived protest escalates quickly to a night of reckoning. Relationships are tested, convictions challenged and identities scrapped. Much like the playground itself, the lives of these four characters are sucked into an endless cycle of forgetting, destruction, loss and letting go.

An ode to the hang-ups and dramas of a generation coming of age, Joel Tan's *Mosaic* is a funny and witty look at the rose-tint of nostalgia and the uncertainty of change.

Mosaic was first produced and presented in 2013, and subsequently restaged in 2015 with a revised script. The Straits Times called it "joyful and heart-warming," while TODAY Online praised it as "vivid" and "beautifully rendered." Don't miss this fresh staging by Tan Shou

Chen, with sound design by weish and a brand new cast comprising bright talents from Singapore's next generation of actors.

Playwright: Joel Tan

Director: Tan Shou Chen

Performers: Coco Wang Ling, Irsyad Dawood, Andre Chong, Rebecca Ashley Dass

Set Designer: TK Hay

Costume Stylist: Yvette Ng

Lighting Designer: Alberta Wileo

Sound Artist: weish

Sound Designer & Engineer: Guo Ningru

Producer: Shridar Mani (The Public Space)

Production Manager: Cindy Yeong

Technical Manager: Kailash

Stage Manager: Celestine Wong

Assistant Stage Manager: Chong Wee Nee

Key Visual Design: Akbar Syadiq

About Joel Tan (Playwright)

Joel Tan is a Singaporean playwright based in London and Singapore. Recent works include *The Butterfly Lovers* (Victorian Opera/Wild Rice), *No Particular Order* (Theatre 503, *The Studios: TRIP* at Esplanade), shortlisted for the George Devine Award, *Tartuffe* (Wild Rice), *When The Daffodils* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Living Archive* (Royal Court); *Ghosts in the Blood* (Audible UK) and *Augmented Chinatown* (Chinese Arts Now). Upcoming work includes new plays with Wild Rice, the Royal Court, Headlong Theatre and the Almeida Theatre.

Joel also works inter-disciplinarily and has collaborated with visual artists, poets, musicians and dancers as a writer, director and dramaturg.

About Tan Shou Chen (Director)

Tan Shou Chen is a recognised theatremaker from Singapore with credits that spans acting and directing. Opera directing credits include Henry Purcell's *Dido* (The Opera People, 2023) and George Friederich Handel's *Alcina* (The Opera People, 2021) and *Orestes by Ifigenia* (Singapore International Festival of the Arts, 2019). Other directorial works include Tony Perez's *On North Diversion Road* (SMU Arts Festival, 2021); Joel Tan's *A Bird Calls You to Moscow* (Singapore International Festival of the Arts, 2020); *The Box (Seven Eight Musical Collective 2020; 13.13.13, (Theatreworks SG, 2018); Open Waters* (Bangkok Theatre Festival 2017, NAC Creation Grant) *MEDEA* (The Substation's *Director's Lab*, 2014); *Now Then Again* by Penny Penniston (NUS Arts Festival 2016); *Words and Music* (NUS Arts Festival 2015); *Mixed* (Theatrework's Community Tour, 2017) and *Makan Memories* (National Gallery opening festival, 2015).

Shou Chen is also an educator, teaching at NUS, SUSS and SMU.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Performed in English, no surtitles. Singapore Sign Language available on 19 Aug, 3pm.

Advisory 16: Some mature content and coarse language. Recommended for ages 16 and above.

Ticket Price: \$45, \$55*^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$46*

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 11 – 28 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 15% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Available from 29 May, 9am.

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 10% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

Tote Board Arts Grant

All Upper Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges/ Centralised Institute & ITEs may use the Tote Board Arts Grant to subsidise up to 50% of the programme cost.

For more details, please contact Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email boxoffice@esplanade.com.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

In Conversation with Haresh Sharma and Joel Tan: Restagings and Reflections

by Haresh Sharma and Joel Tan

Moderated by Charlene Rajendran (Singapore)

19 Aug 2023, Sun, 5pm

Esplanade Studio 219



In this dialogue, Haresh Sharma and Joel Tan will reflect on the process of having their works restaged, in conjunction with the restaging of their works at *The Studios 2023—Three Years in the Life and Death of Land* and *Mosaic* respectively. The two playwrights and theatremakers will discuss how they have seen the plays grow and on navigating the shifts in society and audiences over the years. Audience members are invited to listen to this dialogue, and will have the opportunity to ask their own questions as well.

This is a companion programme to *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land* (5 – 13 Aug 2023) and *Mosaic* (18 – 20 Aug 2023) at the Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

About the speakers

Haresh Sharma

Haresh has been the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage (TNS) since 1990. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. To date, he has written more than 120 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for GCE 'N' and 'O' Levels.

Haresh has 13 publications of his plays, including *Trilogy*, *Shorts 1*, *Shorts 2*, *Don't Forget to Remember Me* and *Abuse Suxxx!!! and Other Plays*. His works have been translated into Malay, Mandarin, Greek and Italian. He was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* at the 2007, 2008 and 2009 The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards respectively. In 2021, Haresh published *Reading the Room: A Playwright's Devising Journey*, which details his devising process developed over his career at TNS. Haresh also had the honour of having a selection of his works featured at Esplanade's first playwright-centred season at *The Studios* in 2017.

Haresh is the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region.

Joel Tan

Joel Tan is a Singaporean playwright based in London and Singapore. Recent works include *The Butterfly Lovers* (Victorian Opera/Wild Rice), *No Particular Order* (Theatre 503, *The Studios: TRIP* at Esplanade), shortlisted for the George Devine Award, *Tartuffe* (Wild Rice), *When The Daffodils* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Living Archive* (Royal Court); *Ghosts in the Blood* (Audible UK) and *Augmented Chinatown* (Chinese Arts Now). Upcoming work includes new plays with Wild Rice, the Royal Court, Headlong Theatre and the Almeida Theatre.

Joel also works inter-disciplinarily and has collaborated with visual artists, poets, musicians and dancers as a writer, director and dramaturg.

(1hr, no intermission)
Conducted in English.

Free, by registration

Registration will begin on 4 Aug 2023, Fri, 9am.

In Conversation: Memories, Nostalgia & Built Heritage by Dr Natalie Pang, Han Xuemei and Joel Tan (Singapore)

20 Aug 2023, Sun, 5pm
Esplanade Studio 219



All built heritage holds memories, and also has great potential to create and transmit new memories. Some of these memories manifest as nostalgia—a yearning to return to what is seen as favourable in the past.

But what does it mean to have memories and nostalgia towards built heritage and landmarks? In what contemporary ways are they transmitted, and what roles do they play in meaning-making and fostering a collective sense of identity?

This conversation will seek to untangle these themes, including public attitudes and perceptions towards built heritage and landmarks in Singapore. The audience will also be invited to consider their own personal biases, based on aesthetics, personal encounters, and the impact of civic engagement and social media.

This is a companion programme to *Mosaic* (18 – 20 Aug 2023) at the Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

About Dr Natalie Pang

Dr Natalie Pang is Deputy Head at the Communications and New Media Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at National University of Singapore, and University Librarian of NUS Libraries. She is also ExCo Member of the Singapore Heritage Society. Between 2017 – 2019, she worked on a project to understand public opinions and perceptions of built heritage and landmarks in Singapore.

About Han Xuemei

Han Xuemei (韩雪梅) is a theatre practitioner based in Singapore, and currently serves as the co-artistic director of theatre company Drama Box. She believes in socially engaged practice, and imagines the arts as an integral ingredient for beauty and hope in society. Her artistic practice involves designing experiences, spaces and conditions for people to exercise their right to be creative, disrupt routines and deconstruct paradigms. She has conceptualised, directed, designed and facilitated numerous performances including *Assembly* (2022), *FLOWERS* (2019), *The Gift* (2018) and *MISSING: The City of Lost Things* (2018)—multi-

disciplinary experiences that engage the audience in deeply visceral and personal ways. In 2021, she received the Young Artist Award, Singapore's highest award for young arts practitioners.

About Joel Tan

Joel Tan is a Singaporean playwright based in London and Singapore. Recent works include *The Butterfly Lovers* (Victorian Opera/Wild Rice), *No Particular Order* (Theatre 503, *The Studios: TRIP* at Esplanade), shortlisted for the George Devine Award, *Tartuffe* (Wild Rice), *When The Daffodils* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Living Archive* (Royal Court); *Ghosts in the Blood* (Audible UK) and *Augmented Chinatown* (Chinese Arts Now). Upcoming work includes new plays with Wild Rice, the Royal Court, Headlong Theatre and the Almeida Theatre.

Joel also works inter-disciplinarily and has collaborated with visual artists, poets, musicians and dancers as a writer, director and dramaturg.

(1hr, no intermission)
Conducted in English.

Free, by registration

Registration will begin on 4 Aug 2023, Fri, 9am.

No Spot of Ground – A Promenade Writing Workshop by Rachel Chin and Danial Matin (Singapore)

20 & 27 Aug, Sun, 2pm
Around Esplanade and the Marina Bay area



Part-scavenger hunt and part-writing workshop, *No Spot of Ground – A Promenade Writing Workshop* provides a space for you to excavate your own relationship with memory and forgetting through a series of guided explorations around Esplanade and Marina Bay.

Playwrights Rachel Chin and Danial Matin will lead participants through a series of exercises to create a short written work, be it poetry, prose or dramatic scene, that draws on their own memories and amnesia of spaces in Singapore.

No prior writing experience is required for these workshops. Participants are encouraged to bring along any writing device (pen and notebook, tablet or phone) and to dress comfortably for some walking.

Rachel Chin and Daniel Matin are currently writers with Centre 42's Playwright's Professional Development Residency, a long-form residency programme for early-career playwrights that prioritises writer development and advocacy for their work.

This is a companion programme to *Mosaic* (18 – 20 Aug 2023) at the Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

About Rachel Chin

Rachel Chin is a Malaysian-born actor-playwright based in Singapore. Her writing credits include *Adulthood* (Mewatch, Mediacorp); *Galatea: A Musical Fable* (MoreLife Theatre); *Galatea* (Theatre of Others Audio New Play Festival); *Expats Anonymous* (produced and developed with the Yale Cabaret – Cab 53); *the Sony Playeverything Show* (Playstation Asia, online); *Yeye* (LASALLE College of the Arts); and *Mama Says Don't Talk Back* (LASALLE Solo Festival).

About Danial Matin

Danial Matin (he/him) is interested in unearthing the instability of the interstitial, especially in relation to the personal, the historical, and the structural in/of Singapore. His recent accolades include *i can't, stop* for Bored Whale Theatre's fourplay (2022), radio play *Rolling with the Times* for The Second Breakfast Company's *Geylang Serai Trails* (2021), *Before You Go* (dir. Chong Gua Khee) as part of Playwrights Commune's Open Studio (2021), and an adaptation of selected short stories from Alfian Sa'at's *Corridor* for *re:VERSE 4.0* as part of #BuySingLit 2020 presented by Matter.Less.

(3hrs, no intermission.)

Conducted in English.

Admission for ages 13 and above.

Starting point: Esplanade Rehearsal Studio (Please meet at Esplanade Theatre Studio entrance, Level 4, 15 mins before start time)

Ticket Price: \$28

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

An Esplanade Commission

ALBIZIA – An Immersive Performance Installation
by Robert Zhao Renhui (Singapore)

31 Aug – 3 Sep 2023, Thu – Sun

Thu & Fri, 7.30pm

Sat & Sun, 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7.30pm & 9.30pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio



Albizia is an immersive performance installation created by artist Robert Zhao Renhui.

Videos, photography, and sound are woven into an immersive natural setting that recreates one of several secondary forests that fill Singapore's landscape. Through an artfully choreographed journey into this surreal and evocative space, audiences will experience stories of the vivid inter-species dramas that unfold deep inside our secondary forests.

Inspired by ecological research that reclaims these "second-tier forests" as precious opportunities to reimagine the future, *Albizia* invites us to consider the potential for life and regeneration in these forests on the margins of our island.

About Robert Zhao Renhui

Robert Zhao Renhui (b. 1983, Singapore) is a multi-disciplinary artist and the founder of the Institute of Critical Zoologists.

His artistic practice addresses humanity's relationship with nature, and is characterised by a longstanding interest in investigating sites defined by the conflation of wilderness and urbanisation.

<https://www.criticalzoologists.org/>

(1hr, no intermission)

In English, with English subtitles.

Advisory: Do dress comfortably as you are free to move around the space for the duration of the experience.

Ticket Price: \$38*^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$30*

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 11 – 28 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 15% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Available from 29 May, 9am.

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover *The Studios* Special: 10% savings

(Min. of 4 tickets, applicable across *The Mining Trilogy*, *Out of the Blue*, *Three Years in the Life and Death of Land*, *Mosaic* and *ALBIZIA*.)

Tote Board Arts Grant

All Upper Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges/ Centralised Institute & ITEs may use the Tote Board Arts Grant to subsidise up to 50% of the programme cost.

For more details, please contact Esplanade Box Office at 6828 8389 or email boxoffice@esplanade.com.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

Walking Tour with Esmonde Luo: An Introduction to local wild edibles

Conducted by Esmonde Luo (Singapore)

26 & 27 Aug 2023, Sat & Sun, 9am

Sungei Tengah countryside

Meeting point: Taxi stand outside Lot One Shoppers' Mall



In this walking tour of the Sungei Tengah countryside, nature enthusiast Esmonde Luo will be introducing the edible wild plants in Singapore. From fruit trees lining the road to wildflowers growing by the wayside, participants will discover their various medical and culinary uses, as well as sample prepared food made using the plants they have learnt about.

This is a companion programme to *Albizia* by Robert Zhao, running from 31 Aug – 3 Sep 2023 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

Advisories

- Please dress comfortably in long sleeves and trousers and wear walking shoes.
- This is a rain or shine programme and will only be cancelled in the event of heavy rain, thunder and lightning.
- Conditions may be slippery or muddy during or after rain. You will be required to walk on uneven ground and may encounter some stairs and slopes.
- Please note that samples of drink and food made from edible wild plants will be served during this programme. An ingredient list will be provided.
- Items we encourage you to bring with you:
 - A raincoat or umbrella in case of rain
 - Insect repellent
 - Drinking water

- Please arrive at the meeting point 30 minutes before the scheduled start time to register, fill in pre-event forms and visit the restroom.
- Latecomers will not be allowed to join the tour mid-way.
- More details about this programme will be sent to ticket holders on the week of the event.

About Esmonde Luo

What began as an interest in the natural world eventually developed into a fascination with the plants that grow in Singapore's wilds and their myriad uses—medicine, utility, and especially food. Discovering these lesser-known fruits and herbs and their potential for food felt like seeing his surroundings in a new light, and Esmonde was eager to share this sense of wonderment with others.

Since about 2010, Esmonde has been conducting foraging tours informally, bringing friends and small groups on rambles and camping trips. In 2019, he received his license as an Area Tour Guide and has since been sharing his experiences beyond his social circle.

(3hrs, no intermission.)

Conducted in English.

Admission for ages 13 and above. Participants below the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult (aged 18 and above). Each participant will be required to sign an indemnity form.

Ticket Price: \$60

The ticket booking system will close on 23 Aug, 11.59pm or when event has sold out, whichever earlier. Please book your tickets early.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

In Conversation: Urban Living & Secondary Forests

by Robert Zhao Renhui and Yong Ding Li (Singapore)

2 Sep 2023, Sat, 6.15pm
Esplanade Studio 219



In this conversation, artist Robert Zhao Renhui and experts in the fields of forest ecology and environmental studies introduce a spectrum of academic views and layperson perspectives on the value of secondary forests and living close to nature, featuring both scientific and philosophical arguments.

Presented in a conversational and accessible manner, the audience will have the opportunity to learn about concepts such as forest succession and natural heritage conservation, as well as be exposed to well-researched opposing viewpoints within the complex land issues that preoccupy land scarce Singapore.

This is a companion programme to *Albizia* by Robert Zhao, running from 31 Aug – 3 Sep 2023 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

About Robert Zhao Renhui

Robert Zhao Renhui (b. 1983, Singapore) is a multi-disciplinary artist and the founder of the Institute of Critical Zoologists.

His artistic practice addresses humanity's relationship with nature, and is characterised by a longstanding interest in investigating sites defined by the conflation of wilderness and urbanisation.

<https://www.criticalzoologists.org/>

About Yong Ding Li

Yong Ding Li is a conservation biologist with a particular interest in tropical rainforests and migratory birds. He currently coordinates BirdLife International's work on the conservation of migratory species in Asia. Ding Li obtained his doctorate from the Australian National

University where he studied birds and insect communities in woodland and farming landscapes. Ding Li has written several papers and seven books on the biodiversity of Asia and Australia, including the upcoming *Field Guide to the Birds of Singapore*. He draws and records natural sounds during his free time.

(1hr, no intermission.)
Conducted in English.

Free, by registration

Registration will begin on 18 Aug 2023, Fri, 9am.

Gillman Forest Nature Walk

Conducted by Robert Zhao Renhui & Yong Ding Li (Singapore)

9 & 10 Sep 2023, Sat & Sun, 7am

Meeting & Return Point: Block 22 Lock Road, Gillman Barracks, Singapore 108939



Much of the forest around Gillman Barracks did not exist 50 years ago, but nature has rapidly taken over what was once a military camp. Led by Robert Zhao Renhui and conservationist and ecologist Yong Ding Li, this nature walk through a part of Singapore's secondary woodland will introduce you to common plants and animal species that reside here.

Over the course of the walk, the guides will explain how tropical succession has allowed biodiversity to regain a foothold when places are left alone. In addition, Yong will share on bird and mammal species sighted in this woodland, including migratory bird species that have been documented in Robert's production, *Albizia*. The walk extends the discussion beyond *Albizia* and draws connections to broader narratives on the resilience of biodiversity.

This is a companion programme to *Albizia* by Robert Zhao, running from 31 Aug – 3 Sep 2023 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

Advisories:

- Please dress comfortably in long sleeves and trousers and wear walking shoes.
- This is a rain or shine programme and will only be cancelled in the event of heavy rain, thunder and lightning.

- Conditions may be slippery or muddy during or after rain. You will be required to walk on uneven ground and may encounter some stairs and slopes.
- Items we encourage you to bring with you:
 - A raincoat or umbrella in case of rain
 - Insect repellent
 - Drinking water
- Please arrive at the meeting point 30 minutes before the scheduled start time to register, fill in pre-event forms and visit the restroom.
- Latecomers will not be allowed to join the tour mid-way.
- More details about this programme will be sent to ticket holders on the week of the event.

About Robert Zhao Renhui

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(2hrs, no intermission.)

Conducted in English.

Admission for ages 13 and above. Participants below the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult (aged 18 and above). Each participant will be required to sign an indemnity form.

Ticket Price: \$25

The ticket booking system will close on 6 Sep, 11.59pm or when event has sold out, whichever earlier. Please book your tickets early.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.

Birdwatching at Choa Chu Kang

Conducted by Robert Zhao Renhui & Yong Ding Li (Singapore)

9 & 10 Sep 2023, Sat & Sun, 6.30pm

Meeting & Return Point: Block 431 Choa Chu Kang Avenue 4, S680431



Sundown at Choa Chu Kang in Singapore is marked by a massive flurry of parrots coming to roost. A phenomenon that has been observed by the British since the 1900s, large flocks of long-tailed parakeets have been flocking to Choa Chu Kang for the last decade.

This tour is an attempt to consider the long-tailed parakeet as one of the most successful species to form a symbiotic relationship with urban Singapore. A section of the tour focuses on the roosting of birds on trees in urban centres, reflecting the themes of co-existence found within the production, *Albizia*, where such phenomena are represented by videos and a soundscape.

This is a companion programme to *Albizia* by Robert Zhao, running from 31 Aug – 3 Sep 2023 at the Esplanade Theatre Studio. *The Studios* companion programmes are an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.

Advisories:

- Please dress comfortably in long sleeves and trousers.
- You will be required to walk short distances and may encounter some stairs and slopes. However, the activity mostly involves standing or sitting.
- You may wish to bring a raincoat or umbrella in case of rain.
- This is a rain or shine programme and will only be cancelled in the event of heavy rain, thunder and lightning.

- Please arrive at the meeting point 30 minutes before the scheduled start time to register and fill in pre-event forms. Please visit the restroom before arriving at the designated meeting point.
- More details about this programme will be sent to ticket holders on the week of the event.

About Robert Zhao Renhui

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(1hr, no intermission.)

Conducted in English.

Admission for ages 13 and above. Participants below the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult (aged 18 and above). Each participant will be required to sign an indemnity form.

Ticket Price: \$18

The ticket booking system will close on 6 Sep, 11.59pm or when event has sold out, whichever earlier. Please book your tickets early.

Tickets on sale from 11 May 2023, Thu, 9am onwards.