

Small-Group Conversation: Enhancing Social Collaboration through Creative Approaches

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Program Curated by Janet Pillai, assisted by Foo Wei Meng



January 2023



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
About Delta X: <i>Conversations and Collaboration</i>	3
Program Structure	4
Case-studies: Socially Engaged Arts Experiments	5
Blocked Waters in the City by Thanupon Yindee (Golf)	5
Home: Socially Engaged Arts with Slum Community in Yangon Khin Thethar Latt (Nora)	9
Impact Assessment of Arts and Environment Festival (2019 & 2020) by Sinath Sous	13
Program Reflection	15
$\Delta X = X \text{ Final} - X \text{ Initial}$: Reflection on Socially Engaged Arts	15
#my ΔX : Program Evaluation and Feedback	16
Next Steps	18
Interactions with Singaporean Cultural Practitioners	20
One-on-one Conversations with Singaporean Participants	
- Golf & Su-Lin	20
- Sinath & Sunitha	21
- Nora & Dahlia	22
Sharing Session with DramaBox	24
Conclusion	25
Acknowledgements	26

INTRODUCTION

About Delta X: *Conversations and Collaborations*

Jointly organised by Mekong Cultural Hub and the British Council, Delta X is a follow-up Program to the SEAD (SEAD) Fellowship. Exclusively for SEAD alumni, the Program aims to grant participants the opportunity to work closely with experienced arts and culture participants from the Southeast Asia region, as well as to network and connect with other generations of SEAD fellows.

The Program structure consists of four stages: *Connections and Common Ground*, *Curating our Conversations*, *Convening* and finally *The Meeting Point*. Three experienced cultural practitioners (curators) developed topic-specific discussion groups and participating alumni were invited to join any of the groups. This report focuses on the experiences of the group under the curatorial guidance of Janet Pillai, assisted by Foo Wei Meng, and the journey of the group through the *Convening* and *Meeting Point* portion of the Program.

Three SEAD alumni joined this group– Khin Thethar Latt (Nora), a multimedia conceptual artist and documentary filmmaker based in Yangon; Sinath Sous, an arts festival organiser and project coordinator from Phnom Penh; and Thanupon Yindee (Golf), a director, actor and dancer based in Chiang Mai.



1: A group selfie of the curators and participants. Photo taken from Sinath's social media.
From left to right: Sinath Sous, Foo Wei Meng, Janet Pillai, Khin Thethar Latt (Nora) and Thanupon Yindee (Golf).

The topic of discussion for this group was, '**Enhancing Social Collaboration through Creative Approaches.**' Led by Janet Pillai and assisted by Foo Wei Meng, the aim of this discussion group was to take a deeper look at socially-engaged arts by investigating topics such as framing a project, tools for social engagement and collaboration, building conviviality, empathy, consensus, common values and co-working.

Program Structure

Starting in April 2022, and held over a period of nine months, discussions were conducted online every two weeks. As a start, participants were introduced to examples of Socially Engaged Art projects in Southeast Asia through readings and discussions, before moving on to sharing more about their own practice and the challenges that they face with their groundwork.

Subsequently, three guest speakers from the region made presentations: Sumiko Kumakura, Dean of the Graduate School of Global Arts at Tokyo University of the Arts; Kok Heng Leun, a prominent theatre director and educator from Singapore and Vorapoj Osathapiratana, director of Dinsorse Creative Group, an independent organization focused on developing socially responsible projects centred around communities. These sessions saw the guest speakers sharing case studies and speaking about the principles of their own practice.

Sessions from June to July were focused on ideating and planning for a Socially Engaged Arts 'experiment' to be implemented by each participant from August to September in their own country. Subsequent sessions after September were focused on the sharing of the outcomes of their respective experiments and the preparation for presenting their project outcomes during Meeting Point 2022.

Finally, the Program concluded with an in-person reflection session, held in Singapore, where the three participants also had the opportunity to speak to their Singaporean counterparts as well as attend a sharing session with DramaBox, a local theatre company.

CASE STUDIES: SOCIALLY ENGAGED ARTS EXPERIMENTS

As part of the Program, the three participating alumni were required to plan and execute a socially engaged arts experiment. The following is a summary of their three different projects.

Blocked Waters in the City by Thanupon Yindee (Golf)

Golf's experiment saw him working with the residents in the Suthep district of Chiang Mai City. Located at the foot of Suthep mountain, an attractive tourist destination and economic hub in the region, residents of the district have been severely affected by floods that occur as often as five times a year. Collaborating with fellow artist Nontawat Machai, an artist with existing ties to the community there, the objective of his project was to empower the different demographics within the community to come together and brainstorm the flooding problem, utilizing creative arts and the theatre process as part of the process. The proposed solutions from the community would then be collected and presented to local authorities.

The project execution was broken down into four portions:

○ Research

The participant together with his collaborator spoke to people in the community to find out more about the flooding problem. They visited the different locations affected by the flood, such as the watershed area of the river, the waterways in the urban areas and the water sluice gate.



2: Photos from the participants' visit to the watershed section of the river (top left and right) and waterways in the urban areas (bottom left and right). Images taken from Golf's presentation of the project.

○ Mapping by the Youths

Workshops were conducted with the youth to map the affected areas. The youths were asked to locate their individual residence on the map before interviewing the older generation about the flood. They were also encouraged to propose their own solutions to this issue. Information gathered by the youth was transferred to a collective map and proposed solutions were documented.



3: School children taking part in the mapping exercise during the workshop (pictured left) and the worksheet used to facilitate this process (pictured right). Images taken from Golf's presentation of the project.

○ Mapping by Adult Citizens

A walkabout session in the community was organised for adult residents together with the artist team. Residents were able to share their flood-related experiences with one another. Adult residents also produced a collective map identifying flood issues and locations. They were exposed to some basic photography skills and their photo documentation was attached to the collective map. Participants were also asked to brainstorm short-term and long-term solutions. Some of the proposed short-term ideas included cleaning the existing waterways and creating a warning system. Long-term ideas included the building of a new waterway, the building of a small dam as well as creating various ways of easing water build-up.



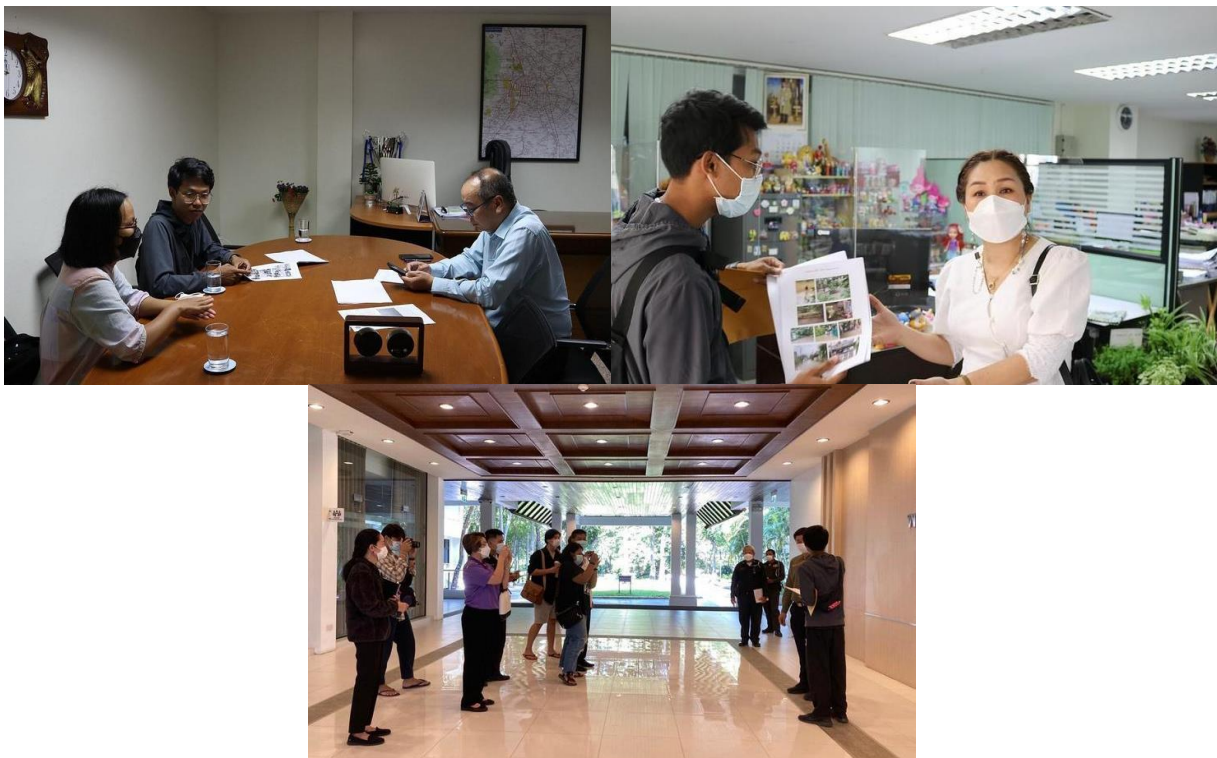
4: Photos taken during the walkabout session. Images on the left show the residents sharing about their experiences with the flood, particularly about the heights that the water levels reached during the floods. Images on the right show a close-up of the indications of the water levels. Images taken from Golf's presentation of the project.



5: Photos taken during the brainstorming and mapping session with adults. Images taken from Golf's presentation of the project.

○ Sharing with stakeholders

The outcomes of the workshops conducted with the different demographics within the community, together with the solutions proposed, were then presented to local government agencies as well as to Chiang Mai university.



6: Photos taken during the process of sharing their project outcomes with the different stakeholders. From the provincial government (pictured top left), to the staff at the water management center (pictured right) and Chiang Mai University (bottom). Images taken from Golf's presentation of the project.

Reflection by Artist

Some of the challenges faced by Golf in this experiment included time management and the political sensitivity of the issue. Being a collaborative effort between Golf and another artist, the difference in working schedules was something that they had to work around. Additionally, the water management issue is a sensitive topic in local politics and if not handled delicately, could be perceived as criticising the provincial authorities. As such, the process of information gathering and sharing had to be treated carefully.

The experiment allowed Golf to experience the process of building trust with the community and how to position himself as a partner of the community. He also experienced how the community became engaged through the use of creative approaches. Golf sees potential in the expansion of the project and for more active engagement in future editions of the project.

Home: Socially Engaged Arts with Slum Community in Yangon Khin Thethar Latt (Nora)

Nora's experiment saw her working together with the slum community in Hlaing Thar Yar Township in Yangon. One of the most populated townships in the region, this slum community consists of people who first lost their homes to a natural disaster and subsequently lost their homes a second time due to the demolition of the slum area in 2021. The community has since been repatriated into social housing but now faces issues such as the loss of livelihood and social networks.

The objective of Nora's project was to map and understand the basic needs of the slum community utilising creative approaches. She collaborated with a non-governmental organization (NGO) with existing ties to the community. The community participants were brought to a communal space over a weekend and facilitated through a series of six exercises.



7: Photos of the community participants at the communal space, by Thida Soe, one of Nora's collaborators and co-facilitator in this project. Images are taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 1 – Storytelling using objects from daily life

Community participants were instructed to bring along an object of significance to them, something that was important to them when the demolition happened. This activity allowed participants to share their stories and experience of the demolition and provided them with an opportunity to reflect on what is important to them in their lives.



8: Photos of some of the objects the community participants brought along for the sharing session. Images taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 2 – Playing with clay

Community participants were given clay to sculpt. The response from the community was positive as it was a form of expressive play, and the medium of clay is familiar to them. The outcomes of their works were mainly objects that they were familiar with in their daily lives.



9: Photos of some of the outcomes of the playing with clay exercise. Images taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 3 – Group discussion and reflection

Led by facilitators, community participants were encouraged to share their problems with one another and brainstorm possible solutions to these problems as well as share ways of resilience. The activity gave the community the chance to speak out about their problems and potentially foster tighter bonds within the community as they learned about one another's struggles and discussed various solutions.



10: Photos of community participants during the group discussion and reflection. Photos by Thida Soe, taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 4 – Paper tearing

During this activity, participants from the community were asked to focus on emotions and feeling arising from their situation. They were given pieces of coloured paper and instructed to tear the paper to express these emotions. This activity was meant to be a form of catharsis for the participants, giving them a chance to release their stress and burdens.



11: Photos taken during the paper tearing exercise. Photos by Thida Soe, taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 5 – Painting on mini canvases

Participants from the community were given mini canvases, paint, and the instruction to express their emotions using colour. The response to this activity was less positive as the participants were less confident about their painting skills.



12: Photos of the participants painting on their canvases (images on the top row)), as well as some of the outcomes of this exercise (images on the bottom row). Photos by Thida Soe, taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

○ Exercise 6 – T-shirt painting

Participants from the community were given a plain t-shirt and instructed to draw their dream house. The exercise was meant to encourage and give hope to the participants on the possibility of rebuilding their homes again. Participants enjoyed this exercise including lots of details in their pictures with some even reproducing images of their previous homes.



13: Photos of the participants painting their shirts as well as some of the participants posing with their completed works. Photos by Thida Soe, taken from Nora's presentation of the project.

At the completion of the six exercises, the outcomes of each activity were put on display and participants were given the opportunity to walk around and look at one another's works.

Reflection by Artist

Nora expressed that initially, she had difficulty establishing trust with the community. Initially, the collaborating NGO did not understand the concept of socially engaged arts and the significance of using creative techniques to engage with the community.

However, through this experience, Nora pointed out that the experiment proved to the collaborators that art is an immersive medium and that through artistic practice, people are able to express their feelings truthfully. She also learned about the importance of having a safe and open space to conduct the exercise as it ensured that the participants were able to relax and open up to the facilitators. Nora also noted that she saw potential in expanding the project and working with the same community in the future.

Impact Assessment of Arts and Environment Festival (2019 & 2020) by Sinath Sous

Sinath has been managing an annual Arts and Environment Festival in Siem Reap; an event that aims to raise awareness of environmental issues and solutions to the general public through the arts. The theme of the festival for 2019 and 2020 was 'Plastic Waste Management' and consisted of a variety of activities, including night performances, creative workshops, an exhibition and music creation. The issue identified by Sinath was that there was no post-festival impact assessment, despite the event already being in its third edition.

As such, the objective of Sinath's experiment was to go back to the community and attempt to conduct an impact assessment of the festival through a combination of conventional and creative approaches. The results would then be used to plan and further improve the next edition of the festival. Sinath supervised 3 individuals from her former team who acted as designers and facilitators in the impact assessment exercise.

The assessment exercise was targeted at past participants of the festival, both adults and students. Feedback from adult participants was gathered through group discussion, interviews and drawing activities. Feedback from students was gathered through games, role play, interviews and drawing activities. Some interviews with student and adult participants were recorded on video.



14: Photos of the group discussion happening, as well as some of the outcomes of the interviews and drawing exercise. Photos by An Raksmeay and Nut, Sinath's collaborators in this project, taken from Sinath's presentation of the project.



15: Photo of students participating in the activities (pictured left) and a screenshot taken from the compilation of interviews (pictured right). Photo by An Raksemy, taken from Sinath's presentation of the project.

The feedback from the community was that the festival was fun and memorable for them and that they benefited from the different talks, workshops and performances, gaining new knowledge. However, the findings showed that there was little behavioural change in the adult community due to a lack of organization, planning and execution of action projects. Behaviour change among students happened when action projects were enforced by the student leaders or teachers.

Reflection of Artist

Sinath found that the use of creative approaches in the experiment was met with some resistance from the participants. The adult community particularly did not feel comfortable partaking in role play and playing games and were more responsive to conventional engagement methods such as group discussions and interviews. Students however were more responsive to creative approaches even if they had no formal training in acting or drawing. Additionally, Sinath realised that facilitators needed the training to be able to guide participants through creative activities.

PROGRAM REFLECTION:

In this segment of the Program, the three participating SEAD alumni, the curator and the assistant were able to have a live meet-up in Singapore to reflect on their nine-month journey. The aim of the reflection was to gauge the learning curve and self-transformation of participants over the period of the program. ΔX was used as a symbol to track the changes they experienced from the initial stage to the final stage.

$\Delta X = X \text{ Final} - X \text{ Initial}$: Reflection on Socially Engaged Arts



1: Janet and the participants mid-discussion

The first stage of the reflection session began with revisiting the definition, context and various components of Socially Engaged Arts. The reflection began with a discussion of the types of communities they have worked with in their respective countries. Participants were then asked to pick one of the communities and to visually map out a hypothetical project with the selected community.

They were led through the mapping process via a series of questions posed by the curator such as – who is your community, project objectives, potential project partners, how you would position yourself in the project, etc.

Participants documented their responses to questions posed by creating a 'visual map' using coloured paper, post-its, found objects etc. The process was interjected by smaller reflective questions and mini-discussions on the role of arts in community and the ethics of working in community.



2: Top-down and close-up photos of a visual map created in Stage 1. The circular piece of paper represents the community. The blues post-its on the floor represent the various roles played by the artist in the project and the coloured strips on the floor record the objectives of the project. The blue post-its on white cups represent stakeholders. Photos by Foo Wei Meng.

In general, participants were very engaged in this exercise. From the visual maps, the curator was able to assess the learning gained by the participant from the program. Talking through their maps participants revealed how and why they selected a community, how they framed objectives, identified stakeholders, and their rationale for selecting art mediums etc. One observation was that participants chose to work with communities they were already familiar with or communities in whom they had a personal or invested interest in.

Towards the end of this exercise, participants raised pertinent questions about the difference between collaboration and co-creation, power relations between artist and community, whose aesthetics, and the ethics of funding and co-ownership.

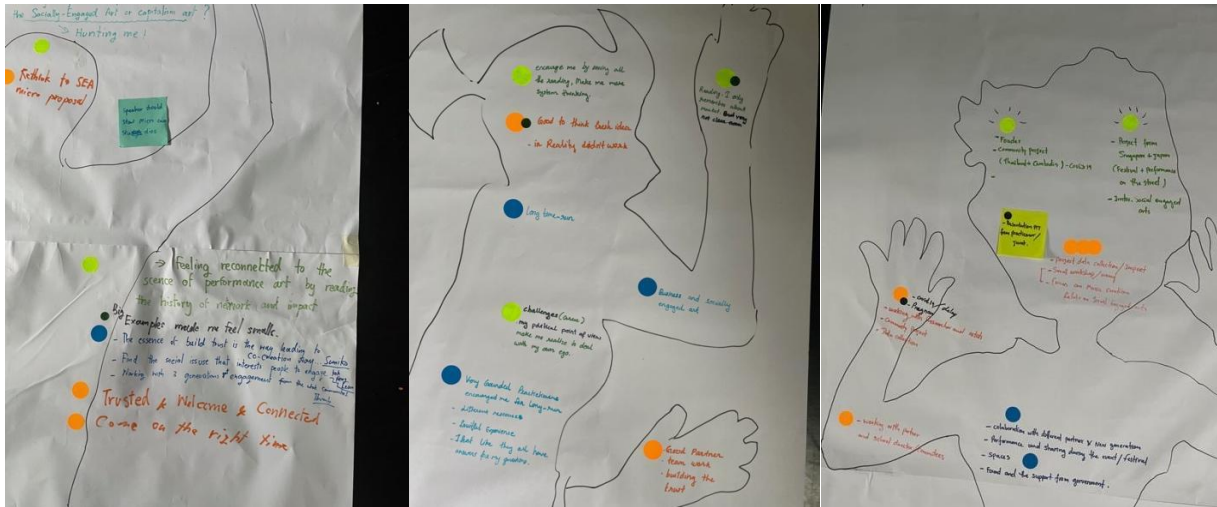
#myΔX: Program Evaluation and Feedback

The second stage of the reflection exercise required participants to reflect on the impact and learning gained from the 4 segments of the program, namely, Introduction to Socially Engaged Arts, Presentation by Guest Speakers, Practical Experiments and Public Sharing.



3: The 4 segments of the Program. Photo by Foo Wei Meng.

Participants traced life-sized outlines of their bodies and populated the portrait with coloured dots accompanied by notes; green dots representing learning from the introductory segment of the Program, blue dots representing learning from the guest speakers and orange dots representing learning from the practical experiments.



4: Close-ups of the reflection chart. Coloured dots placed on the head of the portrait represent cognitive learning, dots placed on the chest represent emotional impact while dots placed on the limbs represent learning from doing, while black dots represent feedback. Photos by Foo Wei Meng.

● Reflection on Segment 1: Introduction to Socially Engaged arts

The introduction consisted of readings and case studies on Socially Engaged Arts (SEA) in Southeast Asia. Participants indicated that while they gained some general awareness they were unable to get an in-depth understanding of concepts and processes. They also mentioned not being motivated to read through all the case studies. This could be due to either a language barrier or as mentioned by one of the participants a preference to learn through experience. Participants suggested that perhaps readings could be assigned piecemeal over the course of the Program instead of being shared all at once in the beginning.

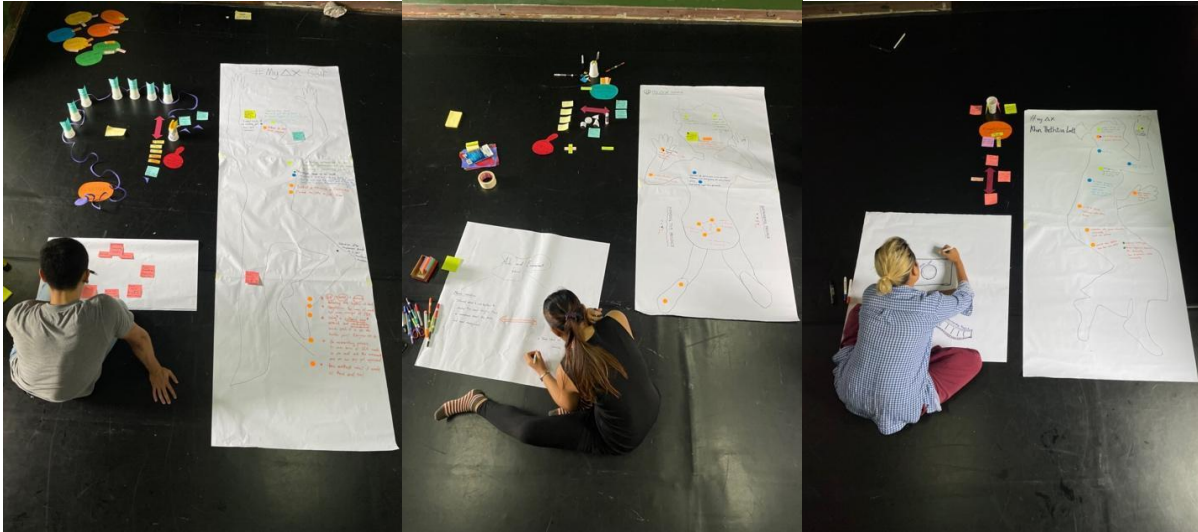
● Reflection on Segment 2: Lectures from Guest Speakers

The participants responded more positively to this segment which featured guest speakers presenting projects conducted in their own countries. Participants stated that they enjoyed listening to the talks and learned about the planning and execution of these projects, the thought process behind the projects, the personal philosophies of the speakers, and the differing scale of SEA projects. They admitted feeling a little overwhelmed by the larger-scale projects. At this point, the curator explained that the guest speakers were experienced practitioners who were able to plan and execute large-scale projects, while many new participants started projects on a much smaller scale.

● Reflection on Segment 3: Practical Experiments

Despite the fact that the 3 participants carried out their Practical Experiments in different countries with different communities on different issues, they came back with some similar learning points; the importance of communicating with different groups of people (members of the community, stakeholders and collaborators) and the importance of building trust with community. They also re-examined the effectiveness of the different activities they conducted as part of the experiment and reflected on some improvements they could make in the future, should they decide to continue with the projects.

In general, all the participants indicated that they would like to continue with the projects they had conducted in their practical experiment. Their next steps ranged from replicating the activity with a different set of participants from the same community i.e. “building reach” to working with the same group of participants but “building depth” through improving aspects of the project, particularly in the area of engagement with the community.



6: Photos of the participants with each of their charts from the different reflection exercises.
Photos by Foo Wei Meng.

The writer concludes that Reflection Exercise was very beneficial for both the participants and curators. While it allowed the curator to gauge the participants’ understanding of the Program and their learning throughout the nine months, the reflection allowed participants to process and internalise what they learned. Additionally, through the participants’ reflecting and sharing about their experiences at different points in the Program, the curators were able to step in and re-iterate important points, correct any misconceptions and have further discussions about issues brought up recently. This was particularly evident in the first portion of the reflection process, where participants had a different understanding or interpretation of the terms used by the curators (e.g. stakeholders versus communities), though this could also be due to the language barrier. The curators were also able to further explain how their different roles affected one another and the impact their decisions could have on the trajectory of such projects, allowing the participants to see how the responsibilities of their different roles function in the context of a socially engaged art project or in a socially engaged practice.

INTERACTIONS WITH SINGAPOREAN PRACTITIONERS

The trip to Singapore also included opportunities for the participants to interact with local practitioners. This consisted of a one-on-one session between each of the participants and a Singaporean counterpart, as well as an informal sharing session with Drama Box, a local theatre group.

One-on-One Conversations with Singaporean Participants

The curator arranged for participants to have conversation sessions with counterparts for a duration of about one and a half hours. Golf was paired with Ngiam Su-Lin, Sinath was paired with Sunitha Janamohan and Nora was paired with Dahlia Osman.

- *Golf & Su-Lin*



7: Picture of Golf (pictured right) sharing his projects with Su-Lin (pictured left).
Photo taken by the writer.

Ngiam Su-Lin is the co-founder and Executive Director of ArtsWok Collaborative (hereafter known as 'ArtsWok'), an arts-based community development organization focused on bringing communities together through the use of arts approaches to broach thorny issues. Having been active in the Singapore arts scene for close to two decades, Su-Lin has experience in producing community theatre and festivals in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, as well as working with various organizations in incorporating arts processes and approaches in their programs, through the development and writing of training toolkits.

The conversation mainly revolved around the respective participants' backgrounds, the organizations that they are with currently, their practice and how it has progressed or changed over the years. They also briefly spoke about the arts scene in their respective countries and how it has evolved or is evolving.

One particular point that Su-Lin brought up in the conversation resonated with Golf a lot. On the topic of the role of the producer, Su-Lin mentioned that she sees the role as having infinite possibilities as compared to that of an actor in a theatre production.

While the actor is confined by the physical space of the theatre, the producer's responsibilities go beyond that and have the ability to make decisions that are more impactful to audiences. As such, she does not see producing as a mere job function but rather as an art form as well (she refers to it as "the art of producing" during the conversation). This resonated with Golf as he felt like he was "forced" to take on the role of a producer. However, after the conversation with Su-Lin, he felt as though he was seeing the role of a producer in a different light and was more excited about his project.

Another point she brought up was that the responsibilities of a producer working on regular theatre productions differs significantly from that of a producer working on community engagement projects. Producers working on the latter have a lot more factors to consider and often have to adapt to working in different environments with a wide variety of stakeholders and communities. This seemed to further encourage Golf and he mentioned that he was looking forward to the challenge.

- *Sinath & Sunitha*



8: Picture of Sinath (pictured left) and Sunitha (pictured right) mid-conversation. Photo taken by the writer.

Sunitha Janamohan has had an extensive career in the arts, having held many different roles from that of an arts manager, curator, producer, venue manager as well as a researcher. Currently, amidst many other projects, Sunitha is with Lasalle College of the Arts as the coordinator of ANCER, the Asia-Pacific Network of Cultural Education and Research.

Sinath and Sunitha's conversations spanned a wide range of topics, from sharing about each other's background and career progression to the state of the arts industry (the role that government policies have on the arts, how they use arts as a way to influence either outsiders' perception of the country or their citizens, the influence that foreign organizations have on the local arts scene through the grants that they offer) and issues related to art education in their respective countries. They also spoke about Sinath's new position in the grant-awarding arm of an organization as well as the processes and criteria required for grants, additionally discussing the origin of these funds and how it impacts the reporting process and metrics. This then led to conversations about how the availability of these grants affects artists (particularly in Cambodia where artists are starting to become reliant on grants and there is an issue with sustainability, where art groups are not able to operate on their own, without any external help) and how they work in turn to affect the direction of arts industry.

While their conversation did cover many different things, Sunitha did often bring back the topic to Sinath's role as a grant-giver and how her role gives her the opportunity to attempt to tackle some of the issues they had discussed. For example, on artists' overreliance on grants, Sunitha suggested having certain metrics as a requirement of the grant application process, or when the art groups are doing their impact assessments. She also stressed the importance of having very clear goals for what they wish to achieve with their grants and the importance of supporting projects that are clear and specific in what they hope to achieve.

- *Nora & Dahlia*



9: Photo of Nora (pictured left) and Dahlia (pictured right). Photo of Nora is taken from Mekong Cultural Hub (<https://www.mekongculturalhub.org/people/nora/>) while photo of Dahlia is taken from Plural Art Magazine (<https://pluralartmag.com/2019/06/15/e-is-for-etching/>)

Dahlia Osman is a multi-disciplinary artist and arts educator, whose practice in recent years, deals with the mapping and connection of self and its relationship with the world. Dahlia has had experience working overseas in places such as New York, Brunei, Japan and Australia. Back in Singapore, her work sees her conducting workshops at the National Gallery of Singapore, the Singapore Tyler Print Institute and producing commissioned works ranging from sculptures to murals and theatrical sets.

Dahlia and Nora's conversation mainly revolved around some questions Nora had for Dahlia and Dahlia's sharing of her process of conducting an art-making workshop with the Malay-Muslim community in Singapore, for *Both Sides, Now*, a community engagement project revolving around the topic of death. The questions that Nora had for Dahlia ranged from ones that were broader in nature (questions such as the issue of ownership in Socially Engaged Arts) to more personal ones (seeking advice on how one should introduce themselves to the community when conducting the project, on dealing with power dynamics amongst the community).

Meanwhile, Dahlia did a pretty in-depth sharing on her project– from a sequential run-down of the workshop (the breakdown of the different segments of the months-long workshop, how were participants slowly introduced to the topic through telling stories through objects, the different art-making skills the participants were taught etc) to the thought process behind the different decisions that Dahlia made with regards to the workshop and also how she worked with her collaborators.

Dahlia's sharing did spark more questions from Nora, which led to conversations about the importance of communication and learning how to work in a group. This led to Dahlia sharing about why she decided to dive into community engagement projects. She saw how arts could be a form of communication and expression and how through Socially Engaged Arts projects, she could help give people this experience.

Dahlia mentioned that the building of connections with participants leads to participants' commitment to the project. She also stressed the importance of giving participants a sense of ownership, by letting participants decide and communicate what they would like to do and that this would empower participants to carry the project through on their own.

All in all, the participants mention that they believe that the session was useful because they were able to learn from someone who was more experienced than them, get some advice and even some sort of solution from them. However, the writer would like to point out that while their job roles and practices are similar, the context in which their practice takes place could be vastly different due to differences in how countries operate. As such, adopting the measures and solutions outright might not work and the participants would have to view the solutions as a possible option and learn to adapt them accordingly.

Overall, the writer believes that the participants did appreciate the opportunity to speak with their Singaporean counterparts and to have the opportunity to discuss the challenges that they face in their own individual practices and to learn from one another. Besides being a networking opportunity for them, the questions and issues raised during the reflection sessions with the curators were posed to these Singaporean participants as well, perhaps to get their take on these issues and get their opinion of possible solutions or methods of adapting. In some instances, their Singaporean counterparts were able to pose questions to these participants, which the writer believes aided them in further solidifying the concepts they have learnt, changing their perspective on matters or pushing them to think deeper.

Sharing Session with DramaBox



10: A picture of the informal sharing session with DramaBox. Photo taken by Foo Wei Meng.

The informal sharing session kickstarted with a round of self-introductions, followed by an introduction of the theatre company by one of the group's current co-artistic directors, Xuemei. They also shared about past projects, such as *GoLi – The Moving Theatre* as well as *IgnorLAND of its Loss*, a site-specific arts project on Dakota Crescent, one of the oldest housing estates in Singapore that has since been reclaimed by the government for redevelopment. This then led to questions from the Delta X participants, regarding how the group navigates issues such as funding, censorship and exit strategies with regard to their community-engaged projects (in which one of the group's producers, Jo, emphasized the importance of having communities see these projects as collaborations and subsequently taking ownership of these projects).

Towards the end, there was also a short discussion on socially engaged arts projects in Singapore as well as the need for a network of socially engaged cultural participants in the region, having realised that many of these participants currently work in silos but would benefit greatly from having a network to exchange ideas and collaborate with.

All in all, the writer feels that the sharing session with DramaBox was beneficial to the Delta X participants. Similar to their conversations with their Singaporean counterparts, each participant got to raise questions and seek solutions for issues that are specific to their existing role and practices, in addition to learning more about the Singapore arts scene.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the writer believes that the participants have experienced some form of change through attending this Program. If not some sort of change in perspective with regards to Socially Engaged Arts and the different concepts and theories in it, then at least an awareness of this form of art practice and the various projects that have taken place in Asia.

As with most Socially Engaged Arts projects, the impact of this Program might not be visible in the short term, particularly in the aspect of behavioural changes. The participants have shown in the reflection process that they do understand the concept of Socially Engaged Arts and the different concepts and approaches within it. However, awareness does not always translate over to behaviour change, and behaviour changes (or the lack thereof) might not be immediate. In general, the writer would suggest that the organisers follow up with the participants and try to track the development of their practice– be it through organising forums and panels for the alumni of the Delta X Program, or by having follow-up interviews or group discussions within the same group of participants and curators.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The DeltaX program (2022) was organised by MCH, for the alumni of the SEAD Program, which was co-created and co-funded by MCH and British Council.



Mekong Cultural Hub is a regional initiative of Living Arts International, a non-profit organization which believes the arts are at the heart of every vital society. Living Arts International's other initiatives include Cambodian Living Arts.



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