

Contemplating life's exit with new meaning

BOTH SIDES, NOW - an immersive arts experience at a hospital that gets people thinking and talking about living and dying

18 November 2013. Singapore

1. In a first-ever, the **Lien Foundation** and **ACM Foundation** are inviting people to pause, ponder and participate in an intimate exploration of what living and dying means to them.
2. **BOTH SIDES, NOW**, is an immersive arts experience designed to ***create awareness, encourage reflection and provoke end-of-life conversations*** among healthcare professionals, caregivers and the general public. Commissioned by the Lien Foundation and ACM Foundation, presented by ArtsWok and Drama Box in collaboration with Alexandra Health and supported by the National Arts Council and Arts Fund, **BOTH SIDES, NOW** takes place from now till 8 December at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. This is the first time an arts-based civic engagement approach is being used for end-of-life education.
3. Through artworks that include installations, short films, animation, outdoor theatre and public dialogue, **BOTH SIDES, NOW** creates a shared space for people to reflect on end-of-life issues (see highlights in annex). Being able to talk openly, with trust and respect, about death and dying can result in greater clarity about end-of-life wishes and informed decisions on the type, quality and place of care for the last days.

Empowered by 'die-logues'

4. On why the Foundations are behind this unusual undertaking, Mr Lee Poh Wah, Chief Executive Officer of the Lien Foundation said, "It is important to create healthy dialogues about death and dying so as to build informed, supportive and resilient communities. We are embracing the Arts as a channel for the public and healthcare professionals to express and clarify their thoughts and feelings about the fragility of life, mortality and loss. A hospital provides a pertinent stage as it embodies life's great dramas and dilemmas, our hopes and fears, and our capacity for courage and compassion."

5. Mr Ang Ziqian, Founder of ACM Foundation, added, “Society here is fearful of talking, or even thinking, about death. However, it is important that we all have the talk of a lifetime with our loved ones. Discussion opens up life’s lessons, the discovery of personal meaning and importance, giving us a greater appreciation of life. As we look at the start and end of life, there is strength to be gained from the exercise of reflection and responses to living and dying.”

The Arts as a channel

6. “Death clarifies life,” said Mr Kok Heng Leun, Artistic Director of BOTH SIDES, NOW. “Thinking about death can remind us of how we want to live and what is important to us. The Arts can create that safe space and neutral forum for deep reflection and enriching interactions to take place. By engaging people not just intellectually but also emotionally and spiritually in a communal setting, we hope to encourage people to give voice to what is often silent and to take comfort in knowing they don’t have to deal with these matters alone.”
7. Presented in English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil, BOTH SIDES, NOW hopes to reach out to audiences of all ages and ethnicities. Volunteer facilitators, some of them senior citizens, have also been roped in to guide the audience to enter the experience more fully.

The Hospital – where living and dying matters

8. BOTH SIDES, NOW brings conversations on end-of-life matters to a place where patients and caregivers interact daily with medical professionals, allowing discussions on these important matters to occur in a casual, non-intimidating environment. It is also a platform for medical professionals and caregivers to address their personal concerns and reflect on lessons learnt from the dying.
9. Dr Wong Sweet Fun, Senior Consultant, Geriatric Medicine, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital said, “Saying goodbye should be a positive and memorable event. It should be a time to tie up loose ends and enable those left behind to carry on with cherished memories.”

Appreciating BOTH SIDES, NOW

10. The films and stories presented in BOTH SIDES, NOW were drawn from research and interviews with 50 patients, caregivers and medical professionals. Participants learn about healthcare professionals' personal encounters with death and what these have taught them about living. They were also invited to take part in straight-talking sessions with speakers from all walks of life who share their unique perspectives on the topic of living and dying. Other highlights include a short film by award-winning Singapore director, Anthony Chen, an outdoor theatre performance by the pond and community songs of loss and of hope.

11. Filmmaker Jasmine Ng said, "What struck us when we were speaking with the healthcare workers, caregivers and patients on death was how it led to many other matters that we do not immediately think about when considering end-of-life issues. Their stories ground our artwork in reality and help us realise that at the end of life, there is so much to learn about living."

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ABOUT THE LIEN FOUNDATION

www.lienfoundation.org

The Lien Foundation is a Singapore philanthropic house noted for its model of radical philanthropy. It breaks new ground by investing in innovative solutions, convening strategic partnerships and catalysing action on social and environmental challenges. The Foundation seeks to foster exemplary early childhood education, excellence in eldercare and effective environmental sustainability in water and sanitation.

In its mission to advance eldercare, the Foundation advocates better care of the dying. One of its flagship programmes, the Life Before Death initiative, was first conceived in 2006 to create greater public awareness about end-of-life issues in Singapore. It sought to de-stigmatise death and dying by spurring various 'die-logues' with the use of social media, art, films and photography and advocacy through research. Creative projects such as the Happy Coffins, the Last Outfit and the Obitchery got people to confront their own mortality in unconventional ways.

The initiative has since gone beyond Singapore. In 2010, the Foundation commissioned the first-ever global Quality of Death index ranking 40 countries on their provision of end-of-life care. In 2013, the Foundation launched the inaugural international Design for Death competition that presented innovations in deathcare for the future.

ABOUT ACM FOUNDATION

www.acmfoundation.sg

The ACM Foundation is an independent, non-profit organisation formed by Ang Chin Moh Casket in commemoration of its 100-year heritage. The Foundation aims to enhance the perception of death and bereavement among the public, uplift the deathcare profession with professional training and education, and advance philanthropy in this area. The ACM Foundation will also champion and preserve the heritage of funeral and bereavement services in Singapore.

ABOUT ARTSWOKwww.artswok.com | www.facebook.com/artswok

At ArtsWok, our vision is to see communities thrive.

We believe the secret sauce lies in evoking the creative potential of people through the arts so that they can freely imagine the solutions to their challenges.

It's about creating safe spaces for people to encounter difference, so that personal and social transformation can happen, which in turn strengthens community. Our work is about developing the capacity of artists as well as strengthening the ecosystem of interconnected stakeholders in the public, private and people sectors engaged in this field. We do this through consulting, providing training and networking opportunities, producing innovative arts programmes, as well as conducting research and advocacy.

ArtsWok is Huey Ko and Ngiam Su-Lin. Huey brings her training and experience in the fields of media and communications, film, international development, and public policy while Su-Lin's background is in theatre and drama-in-education, company management and producing, counseling, and community work.

ABOUT DRAMA BOX

Drama Box is a non-profit contemporary theatre company with charity status. Formed in 1990, it has since gained a respectable reputation for presenting works that raise social awareness and inculcate civic responsibility amongst Singaporeans. Our productions are fun and entertaining, yet thought provoking and reflective.

Drama Box's mission is to create, present and curate aesthetically compelling theatre with a broad social reach, through deep and intimate engagement. Our works engage dialogically with the people and their socio-political conditions. We want audience to be stimulated by the aesthetic experience, provoked to think about the issues presented, and to participate actively in our works as "Spect-Actors" or "Creators". Drama Box is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant 2012.

ABOUT ALEXANDRA HEALTHwww.ktph.com.sg

Alexandra Health offers multi-disciplinary and holistic care for the patient's total well-being. Established on 1 April 2008, Alexandra Health is a new healthcare cluster that currently manages the 570-bed Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Yishun. As part of an integrated healthcare system to serve the community in the north, Alexandra Health will also oversee the Yishun Community Hospital and a new medical centre located in the Admiralty Integrated Development in 2016.

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ANNEX

Details of BOTH SIDES, NOW

www.bothsidesnow.sg

16 November – 8 December 2013

Schedule

Title	Location	Day	Time
<p>Loss for Words</p> <p>This art installation prepares you to slow down and pay attention to your own thoughts and feelings.</p>	Various	Everyday	24 hours
<p>Entrances and Exits</p> <p>This installation creates a meditative soundscape. Enter into the private world of patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals who share how they face pain and loss, while remaining resilient.</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm
<p>Living Well, Leaving Well</p> <p>A series of animated short films that bring to life intimate stories told by healthcare professionals about their personal encounters with death, and what that has taught them about what it means to live.</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm
<p>Ah Ma...Then and Now</p> <p>Ah Ma is a story by Anthony Chen (winner of Camera d’Or 2013) of a family grieving the passing of their grandmother. In an accompanying documentary, the cast share how the making of the film has changed their attitudes towards death and dying.</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm
<p>Some Things Lost, Some Things Gained</p> <p>This short film invites you to listen to the musings of children to find new ways of looking at loss, and in the process to discover new sources of hope</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm

<p>Will-Not</p> <p>Draft your will and will-not. Think about what you want and what you do not want to see happen after you are gone.</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm
<p>Turn, Turn, Turn</p> <p>Make a pinwheel and write or draw on it the things that best reflect what gives meaning to your life.</p>	Main Foyer	Everyday	9.30am – 8pm
<p>What We Say When We Say...</p> <p>Death and dying need not be a taboo subject. In this straight-talking session, our speakers from all walks of life share stories, thoughts and ideas about the end of life.</p>	Main Foyer	Sat & Sun 16, 17, 23, 24, 30 November 1, 7, 8 December	4pm – 5pm
<p>Songs for Tomorrow</p> <p>Multi-media theatre performance by the pond and under the stars. Listen to stories and songs of loss and of hope.</p>	Boardwalk Or Main Foyer during wet weather	Fri & Sat 16, 22, 23, 29, 30 November 6, 7 December	6.30pm – 8pm