

**BOTH
SIDES,
NOW**

2021 – 2022

Mengukir
Harapan

Media Contact

Kirin Heng
ArtsWok Collaborative
kirin@artswok.org

KATA-KATA KITA VARIETY SHOW

5 - 7 November 2021

Aliwal Arts Centre* and Online

Free-of-Charge

Presented in both English and Malay

***All live audiences are required to be fully vaccinated**

**Presented by Drama Box and
ArtsWok Collaborative**

Website: bothsidesnow.sg

Facebook and Instagram: [@bothsidesnowsg](https://www.facebook.com/bothsidesnowsg)



**PRESS RELEASE -
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BOTH SIDES, NOW, an arts-based community engagement project exploring what it means to live well, and leave well, co-presented by Drama Box and ArtsWok Collaborative since 2013, returns this November. This latest edition, **MENGUKIR HARAPAN**, is made with, and largely for the Malay-Muslim community in Singapore. *Mengukir Harapan* – ‘carving hope’ – represents our wish to create a culturally contextual, safe space in which the community can share their aspirations, wishes and challenges about not just death, but the journey leading up to it.

Adib Kosnan, one of two of our Leading Artists, shares:

We hope to open up conversations about the quality of life one desires when entering the end-of-life phase. This is something that is not talked about in the Malay-Muslim community as we are usually focused on the next phase of our journey, the afterlife. But what about the days before that, for ourselves and also for those we leave behind?

Mengukir Harapan is the result of a dedicated research process that took over one-and-a-half years. Our Creative Producer **Ngiam Su-Lin** reflects:

Having presented this project for the past 7 years with a primarily Chinese audience, we very much wanted to create more culturally relevant content and approaches for other ethnic communities, starting with the Malay community. We wanted a rigorous process for this, and to be informed by the community themselves. As such, we worked with a team of professional researchers to guide our process.

This included gathering information from experts in different fields, and stories from the community through 7 different engagement workshops with those aged 17 years old and above, meeting different demographics of the Malay-Muslim community to gain an understanding of generational perspectives on end-of-life, amongst others.

The Lead Advisor to the research team was **Dr Ad Maulod**, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Ageing, Research and Education, Duke-NUS Medical School. He shares:

We observed some resistance among members of the Malay-Muslim community to initiate end-of-life conversations with their loved ones. Children resist conversations about end-of-life to avoid offending parents while parents worry about children taking on the burden of additional responsibilities. This mutual misunderstanding is not due to a generational gap or loose family ties. Rather, strong bonds and deference towards elders among Malay-Muslim families make such conversations more difficult than anticipated.

This research process laid the foundations for **KATA-KATA KITA**, our variety show in November over three evenings. In the words of our Artistic Director, **Kok Heng Leun**:

We realise that the kind of dramatic context we're looking for as well as the findings of our research coincide. And that actually gives us a lot of confidence on developing the programme, turning the research into artistic work, creating the central questions that we need to engage with the audience.

Kata-Kata Kita takes form in a variety show owing to the special circumstances of the pandemic. Our other Leading Artist, **Moli Mohter**, who along with Adib Kosnan has been with us for previous editions of *Both Sides, Now*, explains:

Kata-Kata Kita, meaning 'our words', represents the stories of our community. Normally, we would hold a festival, with a bit of everything: music, theatre, discussions with audience members. As this year we will be going online, in addition to having limited live audiences, we landed on the variety show as the perfect format to have a range of – everything! – and be accessible online.

Hosted by popular personalities Hatta Said and Gloria Tan, our line-up includes **RADIO DUKACITA, PANTANG** and **SUKAR (MELEPASKAN)**. Alongside these, setting the ambiance will be live music by the gifted **Khairul Afwan**.

Since September, we have been collecting heartfelt letters from members of the public which they never had the chance to send to people whom they lost. Brought to life by the voice of **DJ Big**, their unspoken words may provide some form of catharsis, and hopefully comfort, for contributors and listeners alike. On the other hand, *Pantang* brings a light touch to the topic of funerals, with our actors entertaining scenarios such as the worst condolences messages ever received and what to wear for a funeral – or what not to. Our creative team expresses:

We hope to alleviate the resistance to having these conversations by acknowledging these issues in an entertaining and relatable manner.

Our *sandiwara*-style drama, *Sukar (Melepaskan)*, unfolds over three episodes and stars **Dalifah Shahril, Farez Najid, Izzul Irfan** and **R Chandran**. Three siblings grapple with the loss of their mother while caring for their father. Death, as we know, is inevitable. But what comes before, in navigating the hard parts of caregiving, inheritance and terminal illness? After each episode, there will be a live panel discussion with experts from the fields of law, palliative care, and social work.

Kata-Kata Kita will be presented online with a limited number of live audiences at Aliwal Arts Centre due to pandemic-related conditions. Yet we will be engaging with everyone else in new ways: people will be able to comment online – via the *Both Sides, Now* website and social media, and even contribute to the show in real-time. And beyond that, after the live shows, people will still be able to access our content online, and continue these conversations.

Next year, we hope to journey deeper with *Mengukir Harapan*, by engaging the community of Bedok. Here, we will be creating opportunities for more in-depth conversations about end-of-life, with initiatives such as arts workshops for members of the community, leading up to another arts engagement open to the public.

ABOUT BOTH SIDES, NOW: MENGUKIR HARAPAN

Both Sides, Now : Mengukir Harapan, the latest edition of *Both Sides, Now*, is an arts-based community engagement project exploring what it means to live well, and leave well.

Death is a part of life, impending and certain. Unfortunately, not many of us are willing to talk about it openly. What are our wishes and hopes while our hearts are still beating? How do we prepare for our final exit without losing our dignity? Are people who are closest and dearest to us ready to accept our sometimes painful, final decisions? Death does not discriminate.

When the time comes, will those we leave behind be prepared to take the step forward and carve out a new hope?

ABOUT KATA-KATA KITA VARIETY SHOW

This November, *Both Sides, Now : Mengukir Harapan* presents to you *Kata-Kata Kita*, a variety show on end-of-life conversations – suitable for all ages!

Hosted by popular personalities Gloria Tan and Hatta Said, the line-up includes *Pantang*, *Radio Dukacita*, and *Sukar (Melepaskan)*, a drama series that unfolds across 3 days. Audiences will be entertained while learning more about end-of-life topics, such as Advance Care Planning, Faraidh law, wills, grief and bereavement. We will round up each day with a live panel discussion with experts from different fields. Accompanied by live song performances by Khairul Afwan.

KATA-KATA KITA will be streamed live at bothsidesnow.sg
Limited tickets to catch the live show at Aliwal Arts Centre are available.

For more information on the programme line-up and ticketing, please visit bothsidesnow.sg

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PROGRAMME LINEUP

Sukar (Melepaskan)

5 – 7 November

8:45pm – 9pm

With panel discussion: 9pm – 9:50pm

Performed by: Dalifah Shahril, Farez

Najid, Izzul Irfan and R Chandran

Written and directed by: Adib Kosnan
and Moli Mohter



Sukar (Melepaskan) is a drama performance over 3 episodes about the lives of 3 siblings, who unexpectedly lost their mother years ago. They now have to care for their ailing father. The time has come to repay the kindness of the remaining parent who brought them up. Can the siblings agree?



Ep. 3 : Goodbye / Selamat Tinggal

5 November

8:45pm – 9:50pm

Azhar, Ashraf and Azura are faced with the duty of caregiving for ailing *bapak*. Who should be responsible – the eldest son who is busy with his career and family, the youngest who is eager but not independent enough, or the daughter who is a stay-at-home mum, because she is suitable, or because she is... a woman?

Followed by a panel discussion with Ms Halijah Jantan, Senior Nurse Manager/Senior Nurse Educator, St Andrew's Nursing Home (Taman Jurong).



Ep. 12 : Health Scare / Cuak

6 November

8:45pm – 9:50pm

Azura is faced with a health scare, at the same time as *bapak's* unstable health condition progresses. She is worried about her own health, the people she will leave behind and the responsibilities that no one can take over if she is the first to go. Is it time to think about her wishes, including what will happen to her social media account?

Followed by a panel discussion with Ms. Zahara Mahmood, Principal Social Worker, Singapore Muslim Women's Association (PPIS) Family Service Centre.



Ep. 156 : Money / Duit

7 November

8:45pm – 9:50pm

The siblings are trying to accept the reality that *bapak* has passed on. Azhar is anxious to carry out his responsibility as the oldest son, whereas Ashraf and Azura are taking their time to process *bapak's* demise. What were their father's preparations, before he let out his last breath? Why doesn't anyone know?

Followed by a panel discussion with Mr Mohammad Rizuan Bin Mohammad Yasin, Joint Managing Partner, Emerald Law.

Radio Dukacita

5 – 7 November
7:45pm – 8:15pm
Hosted by DJ Big

Radio Dukacita invites you to share your story of losing someone. Join DJ Big as he reads out intimate stories of loss and love; while reflecting on how the living cope with moving on. Surely, there are burning questions. Can we find the answers, or will we have to accept that we will never really know?



Pantang

5 – 7 November
8:15 – 8:45pm

Tongue-in-cheek fun with Hatta Said and Gloria Tan, as they improvise scenarios suggested by a live audience, such as the worst condolence message ever received, what to wear for a funeral – and what not to.

Music performance by Khairul Afwan

5 – 7 November
7:30pm, 9:50pm

Khairul Afwan will be singing and playing his guitar to a medley of English and Malay songs, and keeping you entertained during segments.



PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Time	5-Nov	6-Nov	7-Nov
7.30pm	Music Performance by Khairul Afwan		
7.35pm	Opening Segment		
7.45pm	Radio Dukacita		
8.15pm	Pantang		
8.45pm	Sukar (Melepaskan)		
	Ep 3: Goodbye / Selamat Tinggal	Ep 12: Health Scare / Cuak	Ep 156: Money / Duit
9.00pm	Panel Discussion		
	With Ms Halijah Jantan	With Ms Zahara Mahmood	With Mr Mohammad Rizuan Bin Mohammad Yasin
9.50pm	Music Performance by Khairul Afwan		

ABOUT BOTH SIDES, NOW

Both Sides, Now is an arts-based community engagement project that aims to create safe spaces and opportunities to explore end-of-life conversations, in hope that such discussions are normalised, and where individuals and families are supported in making informed decisions about living well and leaving well. This project is co-produced by Drama Box and ArtsWok Collaborative since 2013. This edition is supported by the Tote Board Community Health Fund (TBCHF).

PROFILES

Introducing the key members of our multi-disciplinary team of creatives, producers and researchers who have shaped the work of *Both Sides, Now: Mengukir Harapan*.

CREATIVE TEAM

Artistic Director
Kok Heng Leun, Drama Box

Heng Leun is a prominent figure in the Singapore arts scene, having built his artistic career over many decades as a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and educator. Heng Leun is known for his ability to engage the community on various issues through the arts, championing civil discourse across different segments of society. His explorations with multi-disciplinary engaged arts have produced works like *Project Mending Sky*, a series on environmental issues, *Both Sides, Now* a project that seeks to normalise end-of-life conversations and *It Won't Be Too Long*, which touched on the dynamics of space in Singapore. His most recent work *Tanah•Air 水•土: A Play In Two Parts* was about the dispossession of the indigenous Malays and Orang Seletar of Singapore. Heng Leun's contributions to the arts have landed him awards from the Singapore National Arts Council – the Young Artist Award in 2000 and Cultural Fellowship in 2014. He also served as a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2016 to 2018, representing the arts sector.

Leading Artists

Adib Kosnan

Adib is a theatre practitioner, and currently an Associate Artist with Checkpoint Theatre. He acts, writes and directs, and has worked with companies like Teater Kami, Teater Ekamatra, TheatreWorks, The Necessary Stage, Drama Box and Buds Theatre, among others.

He was recently awarded Best Supporting Actor at the *Life Theatre Awards 2020* for his role in *Angkat* by Nabilah Said and Noor Effendy Ibrahim, and was nominated in this same category for *0600* by Ground-Z0 in 2019. In 2018, his script *28.8* by Teater Kami was nominated for Best Original script.

He is also an arts educator and has mentored youths as part of *Tumpil Yang Tampil*, a theatre mentorship programme by Teater Kami. He has written, facilitated and directed numerous school assembly shows catering to a wide variety of levels from preschool to tertiary institutions. He is especially interested in improvisation and forum theatre as tools for creating awareness and enhancing communication.

Moli Mohter

Moli is a theatre practitioner whose vast experience spans between being an actor, educator, facilitator, as well as a writer and director.

Recently, she founded Makaia Arts in 2019 to tackle social issues pertinent to the Malay community. She has written, directed and produced memorable works such as *Penantian* in 2013 and *Sembelit Lagi* in 2012. As an actor-facilitator, she was part of forum theatre play – *Trick or Threat* by Drama Box, and through that was given an opportunity to tour to the World Forum Theatre Festival in Austria in 2009.

As an arts educator, she works with Buds Theatre, Teater Kami, and Drama Box to teach children and youth. She has also worked with youths-at-risk in Singapore Girls' Home, Singapore Boys' Home, and the Institute of Technical Education.

Creative Producer Ngiam Su-Lin, ArtsWok Collaborative

Su-Lin is the co-founder and Executive Director of ArtsWok Collaborative and has been active in the arts scene for close to two decades, specifically in the areas of education, community, creative producing and interdisciplinary collaborations. She has worked with various arts organisations before co-founding ArtsWok in 2013. Su-Lin has produced community theatre and festivals in collaboration with the public and private sectors, worked with numerous schools, social service, community and health organisations to incorporate arts processes and approaches into their programmes, including the development and writing of training toolkits. She has also developed, and facilitates capability development programmes and initiatives on arts-based community development. Su-Lin is also a trained counsellor, and believes that being human and fully alive is to be in life-giving relationships with self, and others, in community.

RESEARCH TEAM

Lead Advisor Dr Ad Maulod

Research Fellow, Duke-NUS Medical School, Centre for Ageing Research and Education

Ad Maulod is a cultural anthropologist and Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Ageing Research and Education, Duke-NUS Medical School, Singapore.

Ad trains and leads a team of qualitative researchers using culture-centred approaches to explore the key determinants of meaningful and healthy ageing in Singapore. Ad's research with older persons across different communities in Singapore examines the centrality of 'placemaking' in the development of age-in-place models in the community, particularly in the integration of care. Through a deeper engagement in these processes, Ad hopes to advance the development of research, policies and care-models that enhance health equity, social inclusion and community empowerment for older persons in Singapore.

CO-PRESENTERS AND PRODUCERS

Drama Box

Founded in 1990, Drama Box is a non-profit company known for creating theatre that inspires dialogue, reflection and change. A big part of Drama Box's work is in bringing theatre to the community so that everyone can have the means to access and participate. By shining a spotlight on marginalised narratives and making space for the communal contemplation of complex issues, they seek to tell stories that provoke a deeper understanding of Singapore's culture, history and identity.

Drama Box is a charity and Institution of Public Character (IPC) registered in Singapore, supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period of April 2020 to March 2023.

For more information, please visit dramabox.org

ArtsWok Collaborative

The work of ArtsWok Collaborative focuses on arts connecting communities by harnessing the power of the arts to create dialogue, invite social participation and build bridges across difference.

We work with multidisciplinary teams to design and implement innovative community-based arts programmes such as *Both Sides, Now*, an immersive arts experience that invites conversations about end-of-life issues, as well as *IPS Prism*, a civic-engagement piece which looked at governance in Singapore. In 2015, it launched the inaugural annual youth theatre festival *Peer Pleasure*, a platform for creative and open exchanges with young people through drama and dialogue. It developed and continues to facilitate *The Greenhouse Sessions*, a field-building initiative that catalyses learning through a community of practice as well as *The Greenhouse Lab*, an action-learning programme revolving around arts-based community development. It also conducts and shares research that builds legitimacy for the arts-based community development field. Our case studies and articles can be found on our website.

We are a charity and Institution of Public Character (IPC) registered in Singapore, supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period of April 2021 to March 2024.

For more information, please visit artswok.org

FUNDER

Tote Board Community Health Fund (TBCHF)

TBCHF is designed as a seed fund for social service agencies or non-profit organisations to pilot innovative Programmes for the Community Care sector. It supports projects that aim to provide better care and support for seniors and caregivers, those that seek to build capabilities within and among Community Care providers, and projects that address emerging areas and new priorities within the sector. For more information about TBCHF, click [here](#) or email tbchf@aic.sg