

Press Release- For Immediate Release

Lepaskan Sesalan

Public Arts Engagement on Living Well, and Leaving Well

21-24 Sept 2022 | 10 am-10 pm
Open to Public, Free Admission
(In English and Malay)

Presented by Drama Box & ArtsWok Collaborative
Website: bothsidesnow.sg
Facebook and Instagram: [@bothsidesnowsg](https://www.facebook.com/bothsidesnowsg)



***Both Sides, Now : Mengukir Harapan* is returning on September 21–24 with a fully-fledged community engagement at Heartbeat@Bedok Atrium!**

Headed by Leading Artists Adib Kosnan and Moli Mohter, alongside *Both Sides, Now* Artistic Director Kok Heng Leun, we continue to delve into issues surrounding the end-of-life with the Malay-Muslim community.

What is it that we want to say to someone we lost, but have never had the chance to? What if we knew when the last time we spent together with our loved ones would be? The last words shared with one another; the last meal eaten together... How would that change the way we talk, the way we treat one another?

Death leaves us with many questions, some go unanswered, and some develop into difficult emotions, such as regret, that we carry with us into the future. Contained in our theme *Lepaskan Sesalan* – which means to release your regrets, is our intention to investigate how one may process regrets, and perhaps avoid them in future by having conversations with our loved ones before it is too late.

Foundational to our shaping of these spaces is the idea of *Rewang*: in reference to the way in which Malay families and friends gather together to prepare for occasions, to lighten the burden of the hosts. Our Leading Artists Adib Kosnan and Moli Mohter explain this theme:

“In the past, we have seen our grandparents and parents ‘rewang’ to help in the preparation of a wedding or a *kenduri*. This idea contained in ‘rewang’, of getting together and helping one another, makes it a perfect metaphor for our goal of encouraging the community to get together and share their stories, in the hope that it will alleviate what might have been sitting heavy on their shoulders.”

Hence, we’ve worked together for several months with members of the community, from different backgrounds and generations, whose voices and stories may be heard through the resulting co-created works. In *Kembali*, co-created with dance company P7:ISMA, community elders from Montfort Care – GoodLife! Bedok will be reflecting on their life experiences and ageing through dance. Rainy, one of the elders, shares on how she has been able to express herself through this process:

“Whatever in our life that we cannot let out verbally, we can tell through our bodies in *Kembali*, through our movement and music. Personally, I went through a hard yet interesting life, and I want to show others through the dance that you are not alone. This has been an opportunity to participate and show my talents and share what I’ve gone through in a good way.”

Another response to loss, sourced from the community, will be found in the exhibition *of life and legacy*, in which community art-makers led by and together with multi-disciplinary artist dahlia osman, reflect on the lives lived of those they have lost, and their own so far, through various visual media. Participant Mahathir Rahim, who is attending the workshops with his wife, reflects on his experience:

“The art exercises during the *of life and legacy* workshop helped me realise there are times where we tend to assess or over-assess what the end-of-life could be for someone, while not talking about the facts of the situation. If I were to pass and someone were to arrange things for me, I would want them to know the facts of who I am and how I want to be remembered.”

In the same spirit of communality, the spatial design of the Heartbeat@Bedok Atrium will resemble familial abodes, shaped to create comfortable spaces in which people may feel at home to share and learn from one another about dealing with death and loss. While *Kata-Kata Kita* was mainly theatre-based, this year, visitors will be able to choose different ways to participate with an array of art processes: among them, the three interactive drama performances *Waktu*, *Sukar (Melepaskan)* *Mendakap Kenangan Forum Theatre*, and *DJ Dukacita*.

Waktu explores the regrets of a widow, Ayu, as she processes the recent death of her husband. Alongside her, audiences will be able to participate in her story through various activities. *Sukar (Melepaskan) - Mendakap Kenangan* continues the story of three siblings who were introduced last year in *Kata-Kata Kita*, but this time, audiences will be invited to intervene in their story with suggestions.

In continuation from last year as well, *DJ Dukacita* will return to read out letters by people who have lost loved ones, with invitations to the audience to join in. There will also be *Public Talks* held each day on all one needs to know about topics related to end-of-life such as Advance Care Planning, Legal Matters, Palliative Care and Muslim Funerals. Ending each day will be facilitated *Conversations* where the audience can share their perspectives, and related stories on what they have seen and heard during *Lepaskan Sesalan*.

All members of the public are welcome to join in any of our programmes. Admission is free, with programming largely in English, and Malay to some extent.

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Programme Lineup

Exhibition

of life and legacy 21-24 SEP

10 AM- 10 PM

An art installation by community art-makers and artist dahlia osman, who responded deeply to questions on love, loss, regrets and leaving well.

Join dahlia and the art-makers for a guided tour of the exhibition on 24 September, 2-3pm.



Interactive Performances

Sukar (Melepaskan) - Mendakap 21-24 SEP

Kenangan Forum Theatre

8.15 PM- 9.30 PM

Immerse yourself in the drama that unfolds among a family of three who faced different degrees of regret, after their father passed away. Help resolve the crisis so that all present can draw lessons on dealing with the process of bereavement.

To better appreciate this forum theatre, watch the back-story of this family here: bit.ly/bsnsukarmelepaskan or catch the screenings during *Lepaskan Sesalan*, every day at 11.30-12.30pm.

Written & Directed by Adib Kosnan
Performed by Dalifah Shahril, Farez Najid, Darren Guo and R Chandran



Waktu 21-24 SEP

10 AM, 1 PM, 3 PM, 6 PM, 8 PM

Reflect on the transience of time through story-telling while being guided to forge deeper connections with yourself or loved ones before it's too late.

Performed five times a day, accompanied with various activities.

Written & Directed by Moli Mohter
Performed by Suhaili Safari



DJ Dukacita 22 & 24 SEP

6.15 PM- 7 PM

DJ Big will read out poignant letters about loss from members of the public, and also explore the meaning of regrets as we attempt to let go of them. Audiences will also be invited to share their personal stories of loss to provide comfort, hope and inspiration.



Performance

Kembali **21 & 23 SEP**
6.15 PM- 7 PM

This performance embodies stories from elders in our Malay-Muslim community. As we approach our last breath, this is a collective gesture to reflect on actions and inactions in our relationships. Performed by elders from Montfort Care – GoodLife! Bedok and dance group, P7:1SMA through a process involving the mutual sharing of stories about asking for forgiveness, letting go of regrets and accepting loss.



Talks

Public Talks **21-24 SEP**
3.30 PM- 5 PM

These public talks on Advance Care Planning, Legal Matters, Palliative Care and Muslim Funerals, will help you navigate end-of-life care, death and dying.



Activities

Layang-Layang **21-24 SEP**
10 AM- 10 PM

Pen your thoughts of regret on a kite and let it go! Choose to exhibit your layang-layang or bring it home.



Conversations **21-24 SEP**
9.30 PM- 10 PM

End each day by being part of conversations facilitated by our trained volunteers that enable you to reflect and share your experiences during *Lepaskan Sesalan*, as well as related stories with other audience members.



21 Sep

22 Sep

23 Sep

24 Sep

ALL DAY

of life and legacy

ALL DAY

Layang-Layang

10.00 AM-
10.30 AM

Waktu 1: What If...

11.30 AM-
12.30 PM

Screening : Sukar (Melepaskan)

01.00 PM-
01.30 PM

Waktu 2: A Phone Call

02.00 PM-
03.00 PM

*of life and
legacy
Guided Tour*

03.00 PM-
03.30 PM

Waktu 3: Lepaskan Sesalan

03.30 PM-
05.00 PM

Public Talks

06.00 PM-
06.15 PM

Waktu 4: Selamat Hari Jadi

06.15 PM-
07.00 PM

Kembali

*DJ
Dukacita*

Kembali

*DJ
Dukacita*

08.00 PM-
08.15 PM

Waktu 5: Selamat Malam Sayang

08.15 PM-
09.30 PM

*Sukar (Melepaskan)–
Mendakap Kenangan Forum Theatre*

09.30 PM-
10.00 PM

Conversations

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), Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and ECCA Family Foundation.

Introducing the key members of our multi-disciplinary team of creatives, producers and artists 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 Artist

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.

Leading Artist

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.

Artists

dahlia osman, *of life and legacy*

dahlia osman is a versatile art educator with 28 years of experience designing curricula and teaching drawing, printmaking and sculpture for various age groups.

Alongside this, she is a multidisciplinary artist who examines neuroplasticity, her personal narrative and the wider connection between human relations and experiences. She has been commissioned to create public sculptures, as well as large charcoal drawings and murals for local museums and private residences. She has also collaborated with theatre companies on set design and fabrication for numerous productions. Her extensive work experiences include Japan, Jakarta, Brunei, Australia, New York (Tyler Graphics) and London (Antony Gormley Studio).

P7:ISMA, *Kembali*

Norhaizad Adam is a Malay dancer, dance artist, and performance maker who was born, raised, and currently living in Singapore. His works are interested in themes of morality and behaviorism in Malay culture within the context of post-colonialism and socio-political change. He reimagines and uses the Malay folk form as a strategy to navigate society's systemic structures and stereotypes. Currently, he is the Artistic Director of P7:ISMA, a dance performance company that hopes to shift the perspective of Malay identity through intimate and innovative performance experiences.

Hasyimah Harith is a Malay-Muslim female artist that has been trained in Malay folk dance. She performs, choreographs and teaches traditional Malay dance repertoires. Using her body as the starting point, Hasyimah works with the Malay identity and female sexuality, as a way to reclaim the agency over her body. Her working method involves strategies such as vulnerability, pleasure and confession. She advocates for a community-based practice that calls attention to co-authorship and solidarity at the heart of relationships.

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.