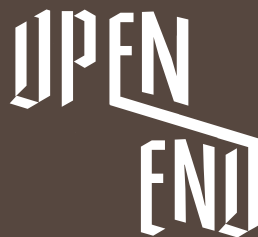


RESONATE

RE-TRACE

RE-READ

THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE



RESONATE, RE-READ AND RE-TRACE
THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE



RESONATE, RE-READ AND RE-TRACE THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE

explores the legacy of Singapore's first independent contemporary arts space, THE SUBSTATION, with artworks that critically respond to archival materials that chronicle its administration, exhibitions and programmes from 1990 to 2021. In 2021, SHE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE was added to NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE'S ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE to further the Gallery's curatorial vision: to present and reflexively (re)write the art histories of Singapore and Southeast Asia. More than a collection of images, documents, artefacts and paraphernalia, the Rotunda Library & Archive is a site where different voices and shared perspectives are presented, and new narratives and connections can be forged, as with projects like OPEN END.

ACTIVATING THE ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE

What is an ARCHIVE? In its most essential form, it is a collection or a repository of objects, such as images, documents, artefacts, paraphernalia, oral recordings and digital and analogue files. NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE'S ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE as a public archive^① maintains a role in featuring 'voices and shared perspectives from domains of art history, artistic and curatorial practice, and digital humanities'. In building partnerships with artists, artist estates, communities and institutions in Singapore and Southeast Asia to digitising archival materials, one of the highlights has been THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE. Without the public archive, we suffer a collective amnesia, reinforcing Hal Foster's idea that the archival impulse is driven by a paranoid desire to fill the gaps within cultural memory. Thus OPEN END^② is a site-specific intervention in the Gallery that explores this balance of power inherent in the public archive, exemplifying efforts undertaken to restore thousands of records that have been stashed away in boxes for decades.

This ongoing inquiry, rooted in Adrian Tan's research into archival practices and the documentation of Singapore art, explores how the form of an archive, be it a private or public collection, is not in itself history. Rather, there is a necessity to carve out points or perspectives from which history, and its retelling can then emerge powerfully.

Featured in this exhibition are works by Chong Li-Chuan and Ulrich Lau as well as a text-based work by Adrian Tan from his ongoing research, developed based on photographs, files, exhibition ephemera and email correspondences from THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE's collection of materials from 1991 to 2021. Opening the boxes from the Archive was not merely an act of preservation but a catalyst for recollection, nostalgia and critical reflection. Guided by the intention to forge new narratives from the archival materials, the artists and curator engaged with the archival materials as sources for creative and collaborative exploration in transforming the gallery's ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE space into a site of excavation and reinvention.

① National Gallery Singapore's Rotunda Library & Archive collection holds over 20,000 physical and digital items, including publications, exhibition catalogues, ephemera and digital archives, made possible through donations, publication exchanges with art institutions in the region, and partnerships with the estates of Southeast Asian artists and art spaces.

② The title of this exhibition harks back to *OPEN ENDS: A Documentation Exhibition of Performance Art* in Singapore, which was presented in 2001 at the substation as part of the multidisciplinary festival, . Resurfacing open ends to trace the exhibited images, objects and videos documenting the range of performance art practised by Singaporean artists was the starting point of this project.

One of the primary motivations behind the exhibition open ends is to address this pressing need for the documentation and discussion of performance art in Singapore. However, as the title itself suggests, the exhibition is not intended as a definitive representation. On the contrary, it is meant as a preliminary survey, and is merely the beginning of what should continue as an open-ended process.

—Amanda Heng, Lee Weng Choy, Susie Lingham, Matthew Ngui and Audrey Wong, 2001^③

AN OPEN-ENDED PROCESS

Starting in 2023, the project OPEN END began with a series of interviews with artists, artistic directors and audiences of the art centre as part of ethnographic research into how THE SUBSTATION influenced and reflected the identities, expressions and narratives of the individuals and groups that engaged with and in it. By delving into the rich history of THE SUBSTATION, reviewing historical documents, past exhibitions, performances and any available records or publications that chronicles its activities over the years, OPEN END aims to produce a more detailed and nuanced portrayal of the old electrical Substation's role and evolution as a cultural incubator.



© Adrian Tan

③ Taken from: Open Ends: A Documentation Exhibition of Performance Art in Singapore

④ Patrick D. Flores, "To De-file," Ctrl+P Journal of Contemporary Art no. 19 (December 2019): 14. Salvage anthropology refers to the practice of collecting and documenting in view of the impending extinction of a people or culture.

⑤ Ibid.



Artists Ang Song-Ming and Chong Li-Chuan look on as The Substation archives are unboxed.

© Adrian Tan

Central to this project is the creation of new artworks that both reimagine and respond to the existing archive, each offering critical interpretations of and insight into the enduring impact of THE SUBSTATION on our cultural landscape. This iterative process of artistic engagement and archival exploration speaks to and is reflective of THE SUBSTATION's role in fostering creative expression and cultural identity. The creative outcomes contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of THE SUBSTATION beyond nostalgic remembrance. In keeping with this approach, the artists in OPEN END use archival materials to animate personal and collective histories, re-narrating THE SUBSTATION's past and in the process invoking the [art] forms of THE SUBSTATION viscerally.

As curator Patrick Flores contends, there is a need to “de-file” the archive and “complexify the material that the archive implicates and isolates the material as if it were an ethnographic evidence of salvage anthropology.”^④ Aligned with this belief, OPEN END aims to activate a “discursive field of ideas and speculation; a node in the network, or a knot in the meshwork of other archives, and importantly explore a laboratory of thinking through and acting on the files of documentation.”^⑤ In other words, the exhibition also explores how archives, which have been built to order and preserve our sense of time and place, can be activated, re-opened, re-contextualised and—perhaps most crucially—disrupted to create a new sense of time. It is essential that in “de-filing” the archive, the logic and order by which the materials have been organised and presented are intentionally disturbed and disrupted. This process becomes an extension of the term “de-file” itself—literally taking the materials out of their boxes and folders, freeing them from their structured confines.

This first iteration of OPEN END at The Gallery's ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE is premised on three interconnected themes: resonate, re-read and re-trace. Artists, audiences, and artistic directors are reimaged within a site-specific installation that explores how history, documentation, and education can converge in an exhibition. Through this collaboration, the artists and curator work together to uncover how history can serve as material for contemporary artistic production. With each artist taking personal approaches to activating the archival material, both the works produced and points of connection with the archive are mediated by memory and personal identity. The privileging of subjective experience in this process of engagement presents endless possibilities for re-narrating the archive's content and thus endless potential for the creation of new meaning surrounding the collection. By leveraging on the tension between the contemporaneous and the archived, OPEN END realises a mode of “de-filing” THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE towards attaining an understanding of its critical and cultural importance.



Archivist Andy Koh shares the digital archives of The Substation with artist Chong Li-Chuan

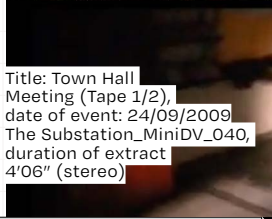
© Adrian Tan



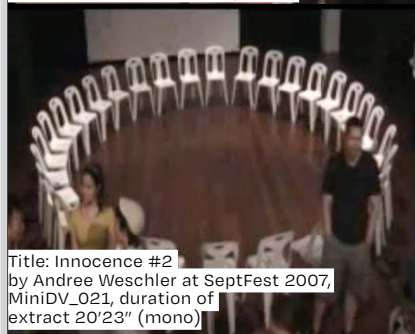
Title: The Substation
Associate Artist Seminar (I),
date of event: 14/03/2006
The Substation_MiniDV_018,
duration of extract
0'53" (stereo)



Title: Town Hall
Meeting (Tape 1/2),
date of event: 24/09/2009
The Substation_MiniDV_040,
duration of extract
4'06" (stereo)



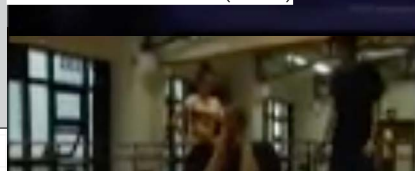
Title: Town Hall Meeting (Tape 2/2),
date of event: 24/09/2009
The Substation_MiniDV_041,
duration of extract 3'46" (stereo)



Title: Innocence #2
by Andree Weschler at SeptFest 2007,
MiniDV_021, duration of
extract 20'23" (mono)



Title: Town Hall Meeting (Tape 2/2),
date of event: 24/09/2009
The Substation_MiniDV_041,
duration of extract 3'46" (stereo)



Title: Night Festival 2010 at The Substation
(Camera 1, Tape 1),
date of event: 16/07/2010
The Substation_MiniDV_052,
duration of extract 0'08" (stereo)

Conversation with Artist Chong Li-Chuan
Wednesday 11 September 2024, 2:34 pm

The making of *Interstitial* [2024, duration: 20 minutes, digital audio, stereo] started with visiting THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE and discovering the recordings from the stacks of Mini DV tapes, which thankfully were mostly digitized, stored on an external hard disk, and annotated in a CSV document. I auditioned the content in search of moments in time and space [particularly those recorded on site at 45 Armenian Street] that perhaps would have been deemed sonically or historically insignificant in the conventional scholarship sense, but nonetheless, formed the interstices pertaining to the recorded material of performances, town hall meetings, talks and so on. Though it was fascinating to look at the visuals, recognising many familiar faces, and listen to speeches and discussions, those were not of particular interest to me in making this soundscape composition. The audio extracts I have chosen to work with captured the acoustic characteristics of the various spaces on THE SUBSTATION premise, including the pre-pedestrianised Armenian Street in front of the building. The following is a list of the Mini DV tapes that I have extracted from:

RESONATE

Sound as Material

The archive of THE SUBSTATION remains in silent repose as fragments are excavated and presented in the austere space of THE ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE, once part of the grand Former Supreme Court. Its quiet stillness stands in stark contrast to the bustling archival repository in the industrial estate at Tagore Lane, where the artists visited. There, the warehouse echoed with the sounds of rustling paper and the hum of analogue and digital storage devices.

While THE SUBSTATION on Armenian Street, now obscured behind hoardings, is physically absent, its presence may be felt in the vibrant auditory memories that resonate within its archive and the persistent digital echoes on substation.org. This interplay of sound and silence, presence and absence defines the materiality of THE SUBSTATION's enduring narrative.

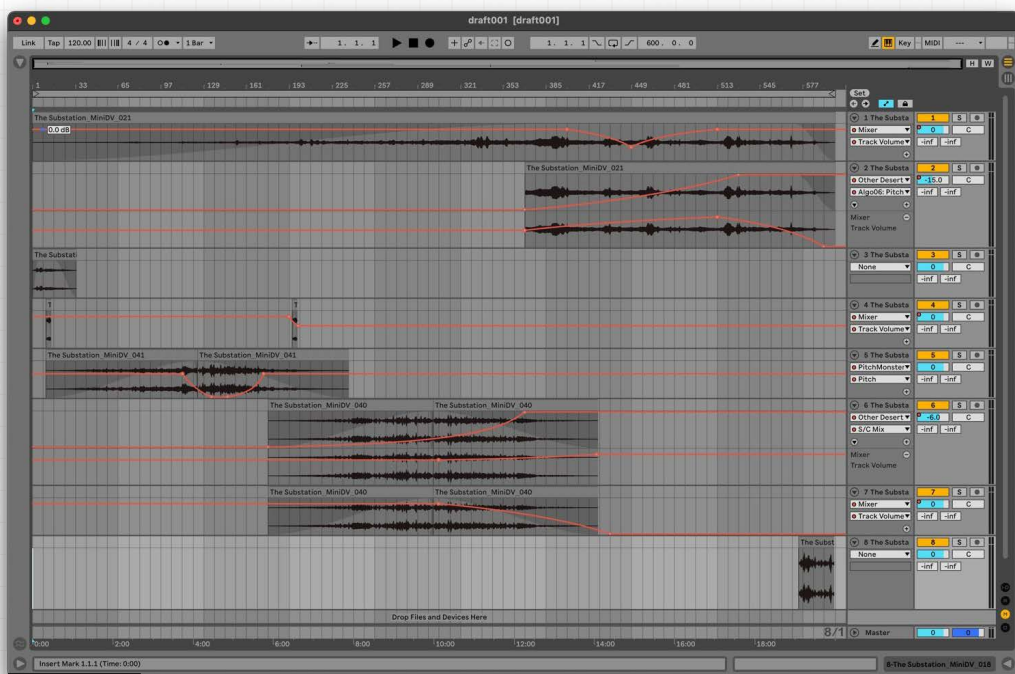
Amidst this tangible archive of THE SUBSTATION's past, nostalgia and melancholy are intertwined. Sound artist Chong Li-Chuan's memories—of events attended and spaces that once buzzed with creativity: the Guinness Theatre, the Garden, classrooms, dance studio and galleries, both curated and stripped bare—flooded back when he sifted through materials in the archive. As he listened to sounds, now classified and stored in the warehouse, he saw opportunities to craft an auditory experience that reflected THE SUBSTATION's significance within the cultural fabric.

Chong created *Interstitial* using audio snippets extracted from digitised MiniDV tapes, which captured moments at THE SUBSTATION during the 2000s. He focused on the incidental: the hushed murmurs of audiences; ambient chatter from events like the *Associate Artist Seminar* [2006] and the *Town Hall Meeting* [2009]; the immersive soundscapes of *SeptFest* [2005 and 2007] and *The Night Festival* [2010]. These sounds, often overlooked, comprise the auditory fabric of spaces where art and community converged.

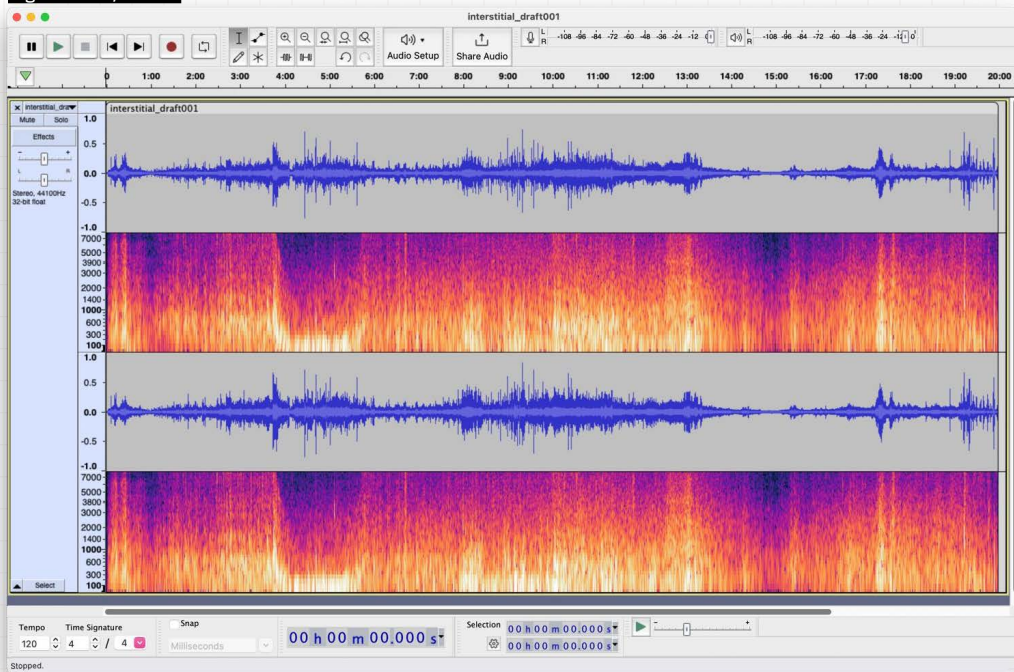
With *Interstitial*, Chong aims to honour these fleeting moments by weaving them into a continuous soundscape, which evokes the heartbeat of THE SUBSTATION—its echoes and reverberations that resonate with those who, like him, have witnessed its history. This work asserts the importance of archiving not just events but the intangible essence of collective experiences—cultural, social and personal. Paying tribute to a place that continues to inspire and connect, *Interstitial* applies anachronistic sounds to bridge the gap with the past in spite of the space's physical absence. Echoes of THE SUBSTATION from a bygone age reach across space and time, offering listeners a glimpse of its rich history.

Listen to *Interstitial*
by Chong Li-Chuan via this QR code





Chong Li-Chuan
 Interstitial
 2024
 Digital audio, 20 min



© Chong Li-chuan

RE-READ New Videos Tell the Story

To access memories of a space, we do not rely just on direct recollections; our memories are often mediated by and reconstructed through different forms of documentation, such as written texts, photographs and conversations with people who experienced the events. These artefacts and interactions serve as anchors or placeholders for our memories, shaping and sometimes even transforming our understanding of past spaces.

This mediation of memory is an essential part of the creative process for video art or video installations. Auditory, visual and textual materials are integrated into a dynamic and evocative retelling of events. By wielding the moving image as a narrative tool, stories embedded in texts can be brought to life, allowing viewers to re-engage with the memory of a space.

CASTING CALL [THE SUBSTATION Read-Through] is Ulrich Lau's attempt at re-reading curatorial texts and exhibition catalogues from THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE. Through a process of revisiting and re-editing video footage, Lau weaves together visual documentation, historical context and personal reflections to create new interpretations of texts after the exhibitions they were created for have ended. The otherwise gathered words in curatorial essays and catalogues are animated, allowing audiences to engage with the ideas embedded within them in a more whimsical and visceral way.



To develop *CASTING CALL [THE SUBSTATION Read-Through]*, Lau examined curatorial statements extracted from selected catalogues and pamphlets documenting exhibitions, performances, screenings and events hosted at THE SUBSTATION. Selected statements sourced from events such as *ETERNITY—2nd Experimental Film Forum 2011*, *Performance In Frames: Video Mobiles from FETTERFIELD—Singapore Performance Art Event 2012*, *Videology [2008]* and *Panoramic Imprint [2013]* underwent a “casting call” as well as fictionalisation and dramatisation. These scripts become the backbone of a series of casting calls, where actors and actresses from diverse backgrounds were invited to participate in table-readings. The documented recordings of these rehearsals are presented as four-channel videos, complemented by sound, cathode-ray tube broadcast monitors, studio headphones, media players and analogue-to-digital converters.

During these improvisation and script workshoping sessions, new interpretations of statements adapted from the archival texts arose, capturing how concepts and contexts have changing meanings, especially when perceived through a narrative lens. Viewers are also invited to reconsider the original events through these performative interpretations by browsing through the original materials. *CASTING CALL [THE SUBSTATION Read-Through]* thus contests the perceived gap between the past and present, and reflects the actively evolving nature of discourse surrounding art and its presentation. It challenges traditional modes of archival preservation by embracing the theatricality of memory and the interpretive potential of performance, ultimately offering a layered exploration of the intersection between documentation and narrativisation.

© Ulrich Lau

(D)IMG_4235



Casting Call [The Substation Read-Through]
Phase II

By

Ulrich Lau

Date: Jul 28, 2024

Timothy
Immanuel

SCENE HEADING
EXT. / INT.

7 orphology
8 employment & m/rae
Pause

self-made

Videology: a made-up word, meaning

"the study of how video or moving images

are made and understood".

↳ picture

↳ created

↳ script

↳ actor

CHARACTER

This exhibition aims to challenge the working and research

methods of five artists,

↳ showing

↳ enjoy

↳ summer specialty

↳ summer party

all of whom take a process-based approach to artmaking,

↳ creating

and who come from diverse artistic backgrounds:

① drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture

↳ specialization

② and installation art.

↳ making

↳ writing

↳ see

③

↳ making

↳ making

PARENTHETICALS

↳ flow

↳ apply

↳ assembling

↳ previous position

The exhibition attempts to employ video in the place of,

or in conjunction with,

the artists' current methods.

↳ specific

Curated by Ulrich Lau.

↳ directed

An exhibition in The Substation's Open Call platform.

↳

A show

↳

invitation

An open invitation to show to the substation community

(B)IMG_4242

Casting Call [The Substation

Read-Through] Phase 02

The read-through of

"Videology" by Timothy

Immanuel on 28th July 2024



Call [The Substation
Read-Through]

Phase 04

Take

05

Lau

Day / Night Sync / Mos
Alan Gordon Enterprises Hollywood, CA 90038

RE-TRACE A Research into Texts

In *As Loose Ends, You Need Not Necessarily Pick Them Up*, archival emails, exhibition texts, and meeting minutes are extracted, magnified, and strung together as a new narrative. These fragments, once buried in administrative and bureaucratic layers of THE SUBSTATION's past, are now recomposed, recontextualised and elevated within the library's archival space. Positioned in often-overlooked spaces behind the rotunda's workstations, these golden texts follow the contours of the reading tables in creating a subtle, almost unnoticed, intervention—blurring the line between formal archive and ephemeral memory.

Adrian Tan's research into THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE has unearthed texts that has informed OPEN END both conceptually and thematically. What began with conversations with artists John Low, Matthew Ngui, artistic directors Lee Weng Choy and Audrey Wong evolved into a deeper exploration of the rich archival content from more than twenty years ago, delving deeper into the planning, discussions, and email exchanges that have come to shape the institution's history. These texts are not merely bureaucratic remnants; they echo the conversations, debates, and artistic exchanges that once animated THE SUBSTATION, both online and in physical spaces. One key correspondence was an email exchange between two artists which prompted a dialogue between what was once peripheral and what now stands as significant.

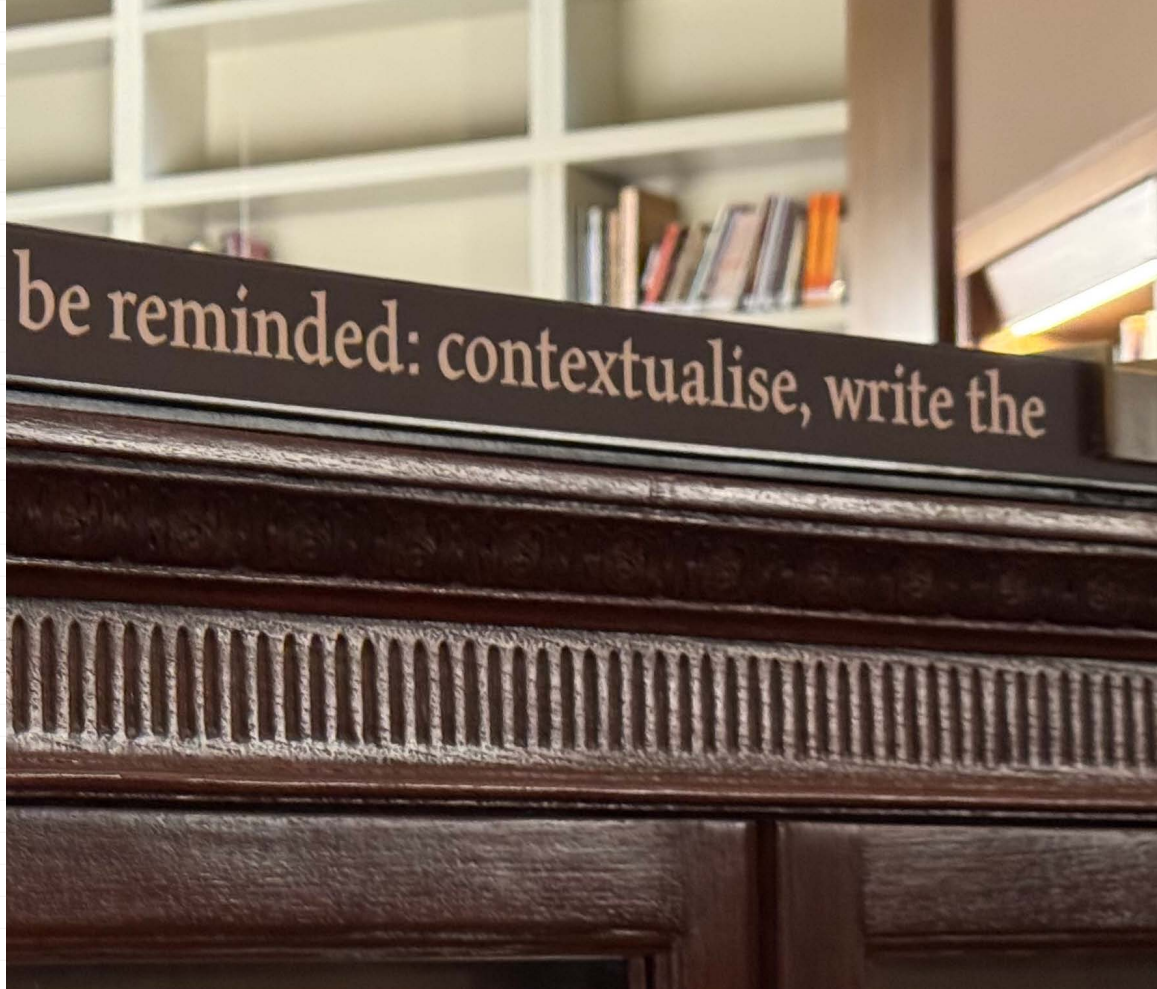
By transforming everyday emails and meeting notes into large-scale, glowing inscriptions, the work draws attention to the invisible labour and decisions that shaped THE SUBSTATION, ranging from email correspondences between organisers and artists for *Open Ends: A Documentation Exhibition of Performance Art in Singapore* (2001), notes from THE SUBSTATION's *Core Programmes* (2001), and texts from *Discipline the City* (2017). These fragments, once distant or forgotten, are now resurfaced and reconfigured, inviting contemplation and reflection on THE SUBSTATION's legacy and the conversations that shaped its artistic evolution.



As loose ends, you need not necessarily pick them up

The City Wears You Out
Mailing lists! They are in a mess!
We, as writers, as researchers,
need not be reminded:
“Contextualise” –
write the work in its proper place,
perspective.
The city wears you out.
We owe it to the work,
to the artists,
but there is something else.
Beside this, the overbearing assumption
that could “only lead to inertia,”
open plazas masquerading as public space,
a sense of “something happening
at THE SUBSTATION, always.”

How do we see?
How do we analyse?
There is no singular context,
no one frame for work,
for history, for event.
A small, minute event, of little importance,
transformed to overbearing significance,
depending on its frame.
We need testimonies
from artists we’ve worked with
to help in publicity!
Mailing lists! They are in a mess!
Response to control,
to access, to the politics of space.
When we “re-read” an event,
how does it not slip?
How does it not destroy itself?
How does it continue, yet shift—
to new discursive positions?
Theoretical or not?
The city wears you out.
Project to the public:
“Something is happening at THE SUBSTATION,
always.”



© Adrian Tan

Its overbearing weight alludes
to the overwhelming difficulty
of engaging those texts.
Our impatience in its web,
for one text demands a hundred more.
Everyone knows where they should be.
The criteria is commitment,
artists in it for the long term.
Not a circuitous route,
but something else—
the beaten path,
where thinking is trapped.
The city wears you out.

Ideally, we post-mortem every event,
but time slips away.
Visual artists,
non-visual artists,
hold the image higher,
more intuitive, more rudimentary
than words.
These images transcend,
more than text can,
more than words can,
more than culture.
Housed within a former power station.
Everyone knows where they should be.
These images,
childlike, primitive—
I read them as purity, primordial,
representing the original intent.
The city wears you out.



ABOUT THE SUBSTATION

From the 1990s to 2000, action was taken by the state to create cultural activities in Singapore^⑥. Among the infrastructure built or modified from existing spaces to serve this purpose was a decommissioned Public Utilities Board (PUB) substation tucked away in Armenian Street, which was converted into a contemporary arts space, THE SUBSTATION, in 1990. As one of Singapore's first independent arts organisations, THE SUBSTATION made an impact on art in Singapore through its open-ended and experimental approach to programming, publications and artist residency programmes. It hosted a range of contemporary arts practices, from theatre and dance to film, music, literary arts and visual arts.

The project OPEN END takes us through some of the most formative years of THE SUBSTATION and offers a platform for new conversations about the development of the arts in Singapore.

⑥ With each policy implementation, from the 'Report of the Advisory Council on Culture' (1988) to the 'Renaissance City Reports' (2000; 2004; 2008), the possibilities for art and design have greatly increased with the city-state providing manifold support for the communal, educational, and spatial potentials of art (Tan, 2022).

RE-FRAMING OUR ARCHIVE: THE SUBSTATION story continues

Through Dr Adrian Tan's research in this project, we are able to look back on THE SUBSTATION's contribution to the arts landscape with new perspective and appreciation. More importantly, the exhibition's collaborators, Urich Lau and Chong Li-Chuan, give new life to the organisation's archive with the creation of new works that tell its story. This project embodies the spirit of THE SUBSTATION – to constantly reframe, redefine, reimagine, and of course, to make it happen.

THE SUBSTATION's materials and archive are located with the National Gallery Singapore's Rotunda Library & Archive and the National Library Board. The organisation's move out of its first home at 45 Armenian Street created a necessity for THE SUBSTATION to have its history documented, and most of all, to be available for researchers and experts. It's critical that the archives are not only preserved, but maintain their purpose. Through the lens of others, our history can be a part of something new.

Everyone who has interacted with THE SUBSTATION has a story—about their experience, the artwork, and the people they've met—and invariably, the word “support” will always be used. Behind the scenes, the organisation's staff were always fighting for the artist, doing the hard work of applying for grants, photocopying flyers, carrying boxes, or selling tickets. Our archives celebrate both the artists as well as the organisation's staff, who together have become the foundation we stand on as we begin to write our next chapter.

Finally, THE SUBSTATION's shape continues to shift as our story continues. We are creating a new “space” through our incubator and development programmes that invest in the artistic process and connect artists from different disciplines and countries who believe that exploration and experimentation are central to the creative journey. When you come to a Substation programme, you will meet creatives working in all stages of their career, and what we will all have in common is the willingness to remain open to a world of possibilities.

Yuni Hadi
Chairperson, THE SUBSTATION

ABOUT THE CURATOR

ADRIAN TAN

Artist-Curator, Singapore

Adrian Tan (b. 1980) is an artist-curator whose curatorial and academic interests intersect in his body of research into art in public space(s), performance art and the contemporary art archive in Southeast Asia. His doctoral research *Making Art Public in Singapore* (2022) investigates how Tang Da Wu, The Artists Village and the archival practice of Koh Nguang How contributed to shaping public engagement with contemporary art in Singapore. Adrian's academic contributions include teaching and supervising across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU), NANYANG ACADEMY OF FINE ART (NAFA) and LASALLE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, coordinating modules in art history, museum studies, curatorial and design practice. He has upcoming work to be published in *Wacana Seni Journal of Arts Discourse* (2025), *Southeast of Now* (2025) and have in the past published in *Open Philosophy Journal*, *Platform: Journal of Theatre and Performing Arts*, and co-edited *'Questioning Museums: Art Institutions in Singapore* (2019) amongst others.

His curatorial projects include *GRAVITAS* (2020), *Got Your Name Or Not?* (2018), *1x1 Metre Space* for Singapore Art Week (2016), presenting art work and papers at international conferences in Singapore and Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Hongkong and UK. As the co-founder of The Artists Company (TAC), Adrian co-creates and collaborates with artists on independent projects and exhibitions where *OPEN END* (2024) is an outcome of a research and curatorial project with support from NTU CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ART (CCA), and co-presented by THE SUBSTATION and NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE (NGS)'s Rotunda Library & Archive as part of being one of two awardees of the 2024 Platform Projects Curatorial Award.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

CHONG LI-CHUAN

Sound Artist, Singapore

Chong Li-Chuan (b. 1975) is a Singaporean composer and sound artist who is passionate about philosophy, culture, and the arts.

He began his career as a composer and sound designer in the 1990s through collaborations with artists and performers working in various fields, including theatre, dance, filmmaking, and design.

His creative output includes music composition, sound design, field recording, soundscape composition, site-specific art, installations, free improvisation, and collaborative work exploring different modes of expression and the poetics of sound.

Li-Chuan has worked on projects in London, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and Singapore.

URICH LAU

Visual Artist, Singapore

Focusing on video art, photography and media art, Urich (b. 1975) has presented his works in Singapore and internationally including Argentina, Australia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, South Korea, Serbia, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, UK, US and Uzbekistan.

Urich's curatorial projects include Negentropic Fields at NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE (2020), SUPER-TRAJECTORY at TAINAN ART MUSEUM (2019) and ARTSCIENCE MUSEUM in Singapore (2020), Sim Lim Square Art Residency for the Singapore Art Week (2018), METAGRAPHY at DECK in Singapore (2017) and MEME Space in Taipei (2017), Seoul/Singapore Open Media Art Festival at GILLMAN BARRACKS in Singapore (2015) and TOTAL MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART in Seoul (2017), Videologue at INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS SINGAPORE (2012), and Videology at THE SUBSTATION in Singapore (2008).

Catalogue Design and Exhibition Branding

Zoning

The three works featured in the exhibition create distinct zones within the library, each representing different modes of “de-filing” the archive and challenging traditional notions of preservation and memory:

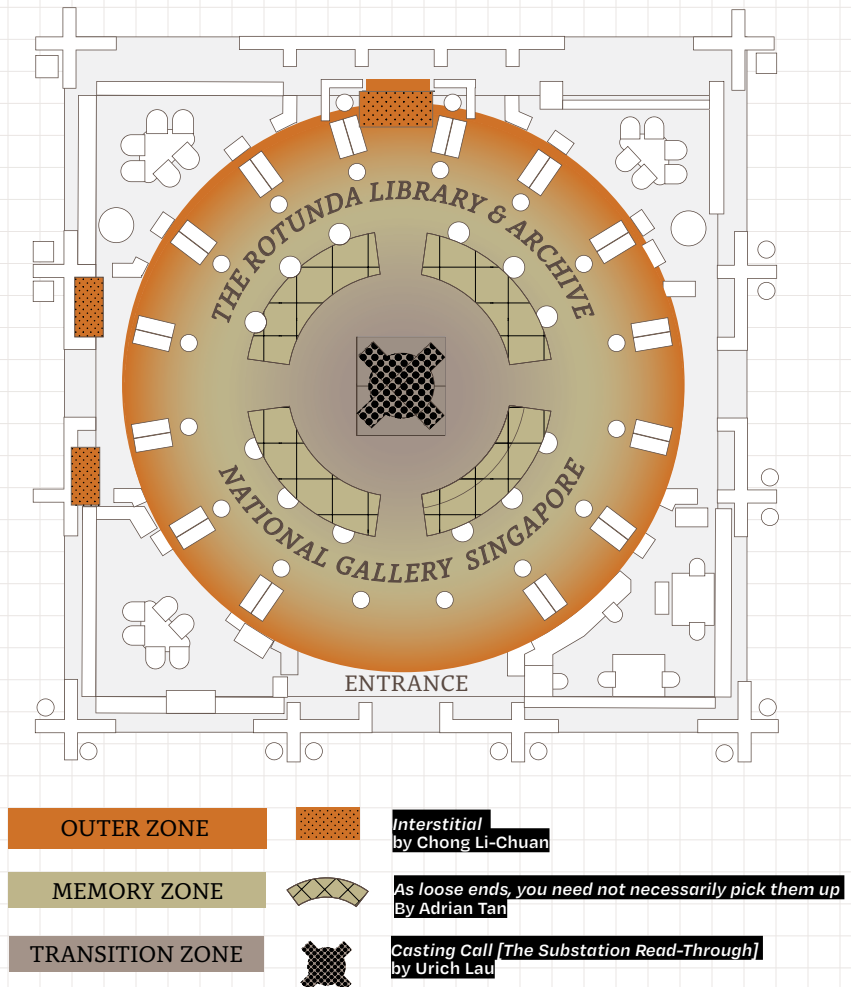
Outer Zone: Soundscapes that recall past moments at THE SUBSTATION represent Chong Li-Chuan’s exploration of overlooked or forgotten fragments of history and time.

Memory Zone: A line of text punctuating the space evoke nostalgia and highlight the passage of time, encouraging visitors to reflect on how memories are preserved and perceived.

Transition Zone: Videos, shifting from monochromatic to full colour, symbolise movement between static records within the archive and the dynamic human experience to question the boundaries between history and lived reality.

Each zone attends to the overarching theme of OPEN END, which emphasises re-examination and re-activation of archival materials.

Drawing inspiration from Wim Wender’s film, *Wings of Desire*, David Lee developed a design identity for the catalogue and exhibition that quietly transforms and energises the library space. The immersive environment created for the exhibition resonates with the film’s themes of observation, memory and quietude. Lee and artist-curator Adrian Tan collaboratively explored the unseen and unheard, co-creating a dialogic exhibition layout that bridges and contests accounts of the past and present.



OPEN END PROGRAMMES

EXHIBITION

4 Oct–4 Dec 2024 | 10am–12:30, 2–5pm
 ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE
 Free (closed on public holidays)

NATIONAL GALLERY OF SINGAPORE,
 1 St Andrew's Road, Singapore 178957
 Supreme Court Wing, Level 3,
 UOB Southeast Asia Gallery

CURATOR'S TALK

4 Oct, 1 Nov | 5pm
 ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE
 Free, registration required | 25 slots

Join curator Adrian Tan for a tour of OPEN END and explore how it reimagines the archive as a space for critical engagement instead of just storage and indexing. Learn how the artworks in the exhibition unveil the complexities behind archival materials, treating them as dynamic sources that invite new interpretations within the library space.

To register, please visit
bit.ly/openendcuratorstalk

LIVE PERFORMANCE

SOUNDS FROM/IN THE ARCHIVE & ARTIST PANEL WITH CURATOR

Sat 16 Nov | 2–4 pm
 ROTUNDA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE
 Free, registration required | 25 slots

SOUNDS FROM/IN THE ARCHIVE is a free improvisation session featuring visual artist Ulrich Lau and sonic artist Chong Li-Chuan. Ulrich will VJ using cathode ray tube (CRT) displays, while Li-Chuan live-mixes audio from THE SUBSTATION ARCHIVE, previously used in the installation Interstitial and Casting Call: THE SUBSTATION Read-Through. Both artists will be expanding the sonic tapestry on novelty synths and sound devices such as the Korg Monologue, Kaoss Pad, Monster Go-DJ, Teenage Engineering OP-1, Nintendo 3DS XL and Casio VL-1.

An artist panel will follow the performance, where curator Adrian Tan and the artists discuss how they navigated the challenges of reimagining the archive. They will share the creative strategies they developed, how they selected specific archival materials for their research, and the ideas they transformed the library space into a site of active interpretation and debate.

To register, please visit
bit.ly/openendartistpanel

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For more information
about OPEN END, visit
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