

Centre 42 (SG) and Five Arts Centre (KL) present

# ARE YOU GAME, Sau(dara)?

A double-bill of new works  
inspired by Leow Puay Tin's *Three Children*

Riding INTO The jungle!

Ride, Ride, Ride ...



8 - 10 March 2019  
Centre 42 Black Box

*Sau(dara)*  
By Bhumi Collective

*Are You Game?*  
By Fasyali Fadzly

# ABOUT THREE CHILDREN

*Three Children* — written by Malaysian playwright Leow Puay Tin — is about three grown-up siblings who return to their childhood home on Kappan Road, Melaka, to confront their past. Eschewing a linear narrative, the three characters, as well as a narrator, race through a series of children's songs, games and sketches.



Actors Lok Meng Chue, Claire Wong and Loong Seng Oon in the 1992 production of *Three Children*. (Image: Five Arts Centre.)

In 1988, *Three Children* was staged in Singapore in a directorial collaboration between Theatreworks' artistic director Ong Keng Sen and Five Arts Centre's founder Krishen Jit. After three months of training and devising, *Three Children* opened on 11 November 1988 at the Drama Centre on

Fort Canning Hill. Critics lauded the groundbreaking production, calling it "inspired" and "a dramatic masterpiece". *Three Children* returned as a touring production in 1992, travelling to Singapore, Malaysia and Japan.

Head to [centre42.sg/about-three-children](http://centre42.sg/about-three-children) to learn more.

## ARE YOU GAME, Sau(dara)?

*Are You Game, Sau(dara)?* is a set of two original works created by artists from Singapore and Malaysia, in response to *Three Children*.

Why contemporary responses to *Three Children* instead of a restaging of the play? This project was intended to draw the attention of a new generation of artists to a landmark play in both nations' history, as well as provide an opportunity for them to create something more relevant for themselves and their milieu. Like the 1988 production, each team spent months devising their respective works, drawing from the text of *Three Children*, as well as their personal histories and artistic practices.

*Are You Game, Sau(dara)?* is also a Singapore-Malaysia collaboration in the spirit of the 1988 production, with Centre 42 and Five Arts Centre joining forces to support and present this double-bill on both sides of the Causeway.

*Are You Game, Sau(dara)?* was first presented at Kotak, Five Arts Centre in Kuala Lumpur from 1 to 3 March 2019.

# Sau(dara)

BY BHUMI COLLECTIVE



Four women discover that even in their twenties, growing up female and Malay in Singapore means that you'll never truly be grown up. To navigate the winds of change, they replay games they used to play and songs they used to sing. Four friends relive stories of themselves and others like them. Of growing up, growing older, of growing apart and growing (none the) wiser, *Sau(dara)* is a tempestuous retrospective of womanhood. A work-in-progress version of the work was presented under Centre 42's The Vault programme in 2018.

Director	Soultari Amin Farid
Dramaturg	Grace Lee-Khoo
Performers	Lyn Hanis Rezuan Suryana Norddin Nurul Farahani Syafiqah 'Adha Sallehin
Producer	Iffah Idi
Executive Producer	Mohamad Shaifulbahri

**W**hen I was first asked to do a performance response for Three Children as part of its 30th anniversary in 2018, I was worried that its reputation may affect how I approach the work.

*But a close reading of the script proved to be quite therapeutic in some sense. I felt transported to moments in my childhood, memories with my grandparents in our kampung at Melaka and as a mischievous boy exploring my neighbourhood in Simei.*

*Devising this artistic response has been quite an adventure. The work has evolved greatly from its October 2018 showing at Centre 42. We welcomed two additional members to the team, Nurul Farahani as a new collaborator and Grace Lee-Khoo as dramaturg.*

*Bringing four great female collaborators with great expertise in the various disciplines of theatre, traditional dance and music has been truly a dream!*

*The original script allowed my collaborators to tap into their intimate experiences and share some of their stories growing up. I for one felt the script made me think about the experiences of girls and women particularly their roles as mothers and in managing the household. The conversations about womanhood also gave each other glimpses into the lives of my collaborators as minority artists in Singapore.*

*I am grateful to Centre 42 for giving Bhumi Collective this opportunity to reflect upon this iconic work and provide a contemporary response to it. Most of all, we are grateful that we found creative collaborators who were gracious and generous with their stories.*

**SOULTARI AMIN FARID**  
Director



DIRECTOR

**Sultari Amin Farid** is the joint artistic director of Bhumi Collective and he identifies himself as choreographer, arts educator and researcher. His artistic works and research interests are aimed at questioning and challenging normative notions of identity which includes class, ethnicity and gender.



DRAMATURG

**Grace Lee-Khoo** is the Founder and Creative Development Director of Access Path Productions. A UK-trained applied theatre practitioner, she completed her Master's Degree in Applied Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2016 and now works internationally as a producer, director, dramaturg, performer, researcher and educator.



PERFORMER

**Nurul Farahani** is a Malay dancer and member of Malay dance group, DIAN Dancers. She has also choreographed with the group. She strives to become a dancer who is versatile and knowledgeable in various dance genres and arts disciplines. When she is not wearing her dancing shoes, she works full-time in the government sector, applying the skills from her Diploma in Real Estate Business.



PERFORMER

**Suryana Norddin** is a freelance theatre practitioner and singer. She started out in theatre in 2011 with Malay theatre company, Teater Kami, and has performed various roles, from production manager to playwright. In 2013, Suryana joined traditional Malay music ensemble Nobat Kota Singa as a singer; she has since also sung solo. She also does marketing for The Audio Music Group (TAMG).



PERFORMER

**Lyn Hanis Rezuan** started Traditional Malay Dance at 13 at Teck Whye Secondary School with dance instructor Fathurahman Said. In 2011, she enrolled in Jakarta Institute of The Arts for the Bachelor's Degree in Performing Arts (Dance) course. Currently, Lyn explores choreography in both traditional and contemporary Asian dance, hoping to fuse the old and new to create a new identity.



PERFORMER

**Syafiqah 'Adha Sallehin** is a composer, musician and an arts educator with a Bachelor's degree in Music Composition (with Honours) and Masters of Music from Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. Syafiqah is passionate about ethnic music and is a practicing traditional Malay music accordionist and an angklung instructor in schools. As an artist, she enjoys collaborating with artists of various disciplines.

**Bhumi Collective** is a multidisciplinary performing arts company based in Singapore. The company is a point of convergence for artists embracing intercultural, intersectional and transnational practices to address, explore and are curious about deconstruction, disruption and decolonisation. *Bhumi*, meaning earth/soil in both Sanskrit and Malay, reflects a belief that human potential and diversity is fertile ground for collaborative art-making in a borderless world. Bhumi has made dance, theatre and music collaborations on projects presented at platforms such as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Singapore International Festival of Music.

**Website:** [bhumicollective.com](http://bhumicollective.com)  
**Facebook/Instagram:** @bhumicollective

# INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORS

The directors of both works, Soultari Amin Farid and Fasyali Fadzly, met with BFM89.9 presenter Sharmilla Ganesan to chat about *Are You Game*, *Sau(dara)?*. Below are transcribed excerpts from the interview, edited for length and clarity. To listen to the full interview, head to [bit.ly/AYGSinterview](https://bit.ly/AYGSinterview).

\* \* \*

## What sort of stories or themes are you exploring in your work?

Fasyali: When I first read [*Three Children*], I felt that this script captured the playfulness of the three kids. I wanted to have that in my play— the playfulness. But again, when I read it, it's not just about that; it's talking about memory and identity. So, I'm responding to those themes in the work. There's a scene I remember that is very strong for me — the grandmother giving a picture of her family to the kids. And I think that was a very, very monumental scene for me. So, I tried to explore my understanding of memory and identity and how actually memory shapes our identity.

Amin: When I first read *Three Children*, the scene that best spoke to me was the scene about the mother having to give away her baby. Because she needed to live, she has many other children. And she had got an *angpao* of \$5. And that was very interesting for me and also for my collaborators. And also, because I wanted to look into the experiences of women in particular, I got four female artists from different disciplines to work together with me in this piece. And it just so happened that they are Malay, and we are the minority in Singapore. So, our experiences as Malay, Muslim, and for them, women artists, I feel that this is a voice that needs to be heard. So, that's the reason why "dara" [Malay for "young ladies"] is in parentheses, because it is about them.

## *Three Children* was written in a very different time. How has your contemporary perspective shaped the way you responded to the play?

Amin: My experience as somebody of a minority race in Singapore, while reading [*Three Children*], I found it very relatable. Especially since it's about a Chinese community living in Malaysia. And so I wanted to bring out the experience of the minority.

While reading the play, it brought me back to moments and times

when I had fun playing with my own childhood mates. And because we live in flats, [my collaborators and I] recalled some of the games that we'd play, when we would run from the first storey to the tenth, and we would search for our friends and make use of the whole building. These are moments which I recalled with my collaborators.

Fasyali: The most important thing that I asked myself was: How can I archive this play, and in the performative way?

The original text talks a lot about poverty and coming from the majority [in Malaysia] — Malay, Muslim, men... So, when I looked at *Are You Game?*, I needed my actors to jump in with their stories as well. Like one of the actors is from Sarawak, mixed Bidayuh and Chinese. It's a very interesting story from her. Where does she position herself in contemporary Malaysia? And also, one of the actors is quarter Chinese, quarter Indian, quarter Malay and quarter Javanese. In doing [*Are You Game?*], we not only asked ourselves about the identities of the characters in that play, but also wanted to recreate these identities in this performance.

And we also asked how our memory of creating this production can shape the identity, form and structure of the performance.

## How have the two teams from Malaysia and Singapore collaborated?

Fasyali: When [Amin and I] met, we had a discussion. And I also watched some clips [of *Sau(dara)*] that he sent me. I found it very interesting because it's a dance person's response. Because I'm a theatre person, so I wanted to challenge myself to create something different. That's why the first initial thought was the game. Our first discussion really shaped my thinking process.

Amin: Fasyali and I had a discussion when he was in Singapore presenting his own work. I enjoyed very much that he is focusing a lot on playing. When he talked about games and how he was going to make an interactive play, I thought, I should challenge myself too. But how? So from that discussion and also watching some of his rehearsal videos, it helped me to see what else I can do.

So, we didn't really work collaboratively in that sense — we were working on our own. But I think we have had a few discussions together since and we were very happy to share our experiences and the sort of things that we're trying to do. And it's that sense of openness that we have towards each other that I think has influenced each other's work.



# ARE YOU GAME?

BY FASYALI FADZLY



*Are You Game?* is a devised piece that revolves around the idea of memories and identity as seen through a contemporary Malaysian lens. This work-in-progress response to the play *Three Children* is semi-interactive, and seeks to playfully engage with audiences.

Director	Fasyali Fadzly
Performers	Ali Alasri Darynn Wee Hannan Barakbah
Visual Designer	Bryan Cheng
Lighting Designer	Syamsul Azhar
Stage Manager	Karyn Tan
Producers	Hoe Hui Ting June Tan

A lot of questions ran through my head when I said yes to this project. How can I archive *Three Children* in the form of a theatrical performance? How to respond to this phenomenal work which I have never watched? What do I want to keep from the original play and why? Should I create something I am not familiar with?

Creating *Are You Game?* is a unique process compared to my other plays. I was encouraged to work with artists I have never worked with. I knew all my actors beforehand, but not like my other projects in which I had already built a relationship with them over the years. For this project, it was really creating everything from scratch. I met my actors and we started researching together.

We composed our performance together. We failed. We asked ourselves again. Tried again. Questioned again until we all agreed that this is what we wanted to show. We tried so hard to find ways to respond to this play. We want to put everything that was said in *Three Children* in our performance. But, it was impossible. This play is so big and overwhelming we cannot do that. *Are You Game?* really dragged me deep into a very challenging task and riddle.

While creating this work, I had this moment like if you play *Scrabble*, you have lot of high scoring alphabets, but you can't create any words out of it. I was in that moment a lot of times. I tried to get high marks, but forgot to just enjoy the beauty of the game, the beauty of the play.

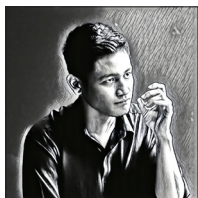
I hope you enjoy watching this play as much I enjoyed creating it. I can never get the right answer to all my questions and your curiosities. Therefore, I will keep asking the most important question to challenge myself: *Are you game, Fasyali?*

**FASYALI FADZLY**  
Director



DIRECTOR

**Fasyali Fadzly** is an educator, director, playwright and writer. As a writer and director, his works have been staged in Malaysia and overseas. He has also had theatre-related articles and reviews published locally and internationally. Fasyali is a researcher on the Malaysian theatre archive project, *My Art Memory Project*, and is a lecturer at The National of Arts, Culture and Heritage of Malaysia (ASWARA).



PERFORMER

**Ali Alasri** is a multidisciplinary artist and a part-time lecturer at the Diploma in Performing Arts programme in Sunway University. He has been involved in a diverse array of work in the Malaysian arts scene, including Mark Teh's *Something I Wrote* (2014), Faridah Merican's *Tragedi Hamlet* (2016), Arief Hamizan's *Api, Jangan Lupa Api* (2018) and *Sejuk Siang Hari* (2018).



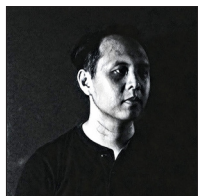
PERFORMER

**Darynn Wee** is an actor and production assistant in Five Arts Centre. She majored in Acting and Directing in Universiti Sains Malaysia. She has performed in *Monodrama: In Utero Pseudocyesis* (2014), *The Day I Met the Prince* (2015-2016), *Fragrance* (2017), and most recently *Atomic Jaya* (2018), playing Dr. Mary Yuen. Darynn has also been stage manager for *Gostan Forward* (2018) and *Tiga 3* (2018-2019).



PERFORMER

**Hannan Barakbah** is that bit of yellow every room needs. She has a degree in Architecture but has no idea what to do with it. She bricked her way back to theatre two years ago by joining the Theatre for Young People programme by The Actors Studio. She has performed as a dead flower, a dead girl, a girl befriending a ghost, and most recently, as an unfinished idea for an unfinished novel, rocking *Wayfarers* and a megaphone.



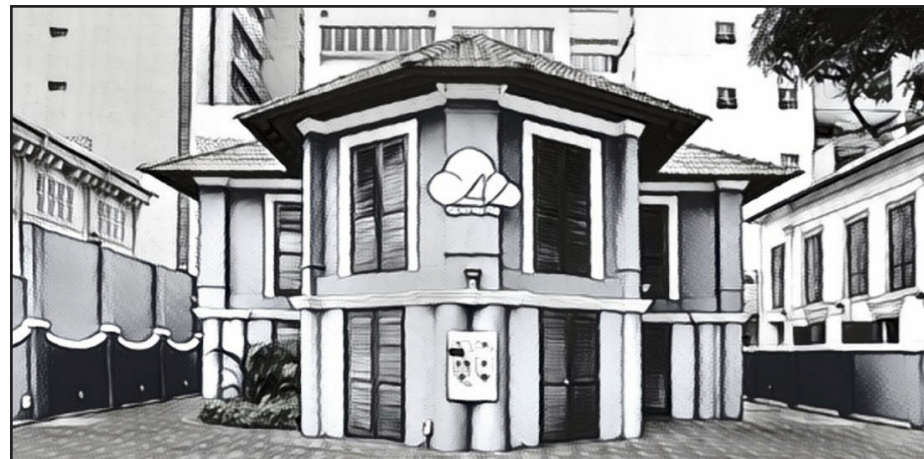
VISUAL DESIGNER

**Bryan Cheng** is a generalist— his works range from design and direction to videography and photography. He has worked on projects with PopTeeVee, #BetterCities, The Cooler Lumpur Festival, The Wknd and Think City. His recent works include *The Misinterpreted Futures of George Town: 2068; \*\*2080: A Technical Show*; *What The Faiq*; and a feature-length documentary.



LIGHTING DESIGNER

**Syamsul Azhar** is a lighting designer, videographer and performer. In 2011, he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Film and Digital Media from Deakin University. He is a regular collaborator with Mark Teh and Five Arts Centre. In 2017, Syamsul directed a team of designers and theatre practitioners in *\*\*2080: A Technical Show*.



## MARCH at CENTRE 42

**13 MARCH (WED), 8PM** | Hear from playwrights Pooja Nansi, Alfian Sa'at, Haresh Sharma, and Eleanor Wong at *Negotiating Difference in Singapore: Critical Concerns When Writing For Theatre*, co-hosted by Centre 42 and National Institute of Education (NIE). Register at [bit.ly/2T76KAA](https://bit.ly/2T76KAA)

**16 & 17 MARCH (SAT & SUN), 6PM** | Enjoy performances of local poetry at *re: VERSE 3.0 砸诗绘* (in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil), a multilingual showcase hosted by Poetry Festival Singapore and Buy SingLit. Get tickets at [bit.ly/2T6O2Jw](https://bit.ly/2T6O2Jw)

**22 MARCH (FRI), 8PM / 23 MARCH (SAT), 3PM** | Watch the updated version of *A Piece of Cake: A Dramatised Reading by Samantha Chia* at our Black Box. The work has been developed with support from Centre 42's Basement Workshop programme. Register at: [bit.ly/2H4sUMJ](https://bit.ly/2H4sUMJ)

**27 MARCH (WED), 8PM** | Also co-hosted by Centre 42 and NIE, *Negotiating Difference in Singapore: Critical Concerns When Directing For Theatre* features a panel of directors including Grace Kalaiselvi, Kok Heng Leun, Aidli Mosbit, and Alvin Tan. Register at [bit.ly/2IFD5JN](https://bit.ly/2IFD5JN)

**30 MARCH (SAT), 3.30PM** | The first pair of plays performed as part of the *First Act(s) Series* under Centre 42's Guest Room programme are *Twin Butterflies* by Clara Mok and *We Cannot Bring Money When We Die* by Christine Chia. To get invited to this exclusive sneak preview of brand new works, sign up for our mailing list at <https://bit.ly/2II19vW>

# ARE YOU GAME, Sau(dara)?

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**Centre 42** is a non-profit organisation committed to the creation, documentation and promotion of texts and writings for the Singapore stage. As a theatre development space, the Centre incubates original writing for production development, provides space for artists and new work creation, and develops a functional archive documenting the histories and processes of Singapore theatre. Centre 42 is developed in collaboration with the National Arts Council Singapore (NAC), and officially opened in 2014. It is currently supported by the NAC for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020.

**Website:** [centre42.sg](http://centre42.sg)

**Facebook/Instagram:** @centre42

**Five Arts Centre** is a dynamic collective of Malaysian artists and producers, dedicated to generating alternative art forms and images in the contemporary arts landscape. Since 1984, it has produced cutting edge performances in theatre, dance, music and young people's theatre, incorporating aspects of the visual and digital arts as well. The collective has performed and presented its work in Southeast Asia and beyond. Five Arts Centre has been at the forefront of creating experimental, interdisciplinary and intercultural work, and providing platforms for the next generation of arts practitioners.

**Website:** [fiveartscentre.org](http://fiveartscentre.org)

**Facebook/Instagram:** @fiveartscentre

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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