

PRESS RELEASE
For Immediate Release



Local independent theatre-makers take centre stage at Late-Night Texting 2019

Centre 42's annual **Late-Night Texting** returns on 30 and 31 August 2019 bringing together exciting new works by some of Singapore's emerging independent theatre collectives and practitioners. Held in conjunction with the Singapore Night Festival, the blue house on Waterloo Street will be brimming with over 25 bite-sized theatre performances, entirely free admission over two nights.

Company Manager of Centre 42, Ms. Ma Yanling says, "Late-Night Texting has always showcased exciting new writing and a wide range of short-form performance formats from next-generation theatre-makers. This year is especially exciting because many of the presenting artists are shining a spotlight on invisible narratives and issues close to their hearts. While international acts might draw big crowds, we believe Late-Night Texting will treat audiences to daring, diverse and very relatable works made right here in Singapore."

Kitchen Masala is the debut collection of new works by Singapore's first Indian theatre collective Brown Voices. Founding member Grace Kalaiselvi says, "The Indian voice is missing. In a lot of plays, you'll see the Chinese culture and Malay culture in it, but never the Indian culture. So how else can [Indian culture] be represented if we don't write it ourselves?" Brown Voices will feature stories about family and relationships centred on the Singaporean Indian identity.

Zee Wong's ***The Women Before Me*** is a play that explores art and sexual assault. "I wrote "The Women Before Me" because of how perturbed I was by the pervasiveness — and to a certain extent, normalisation — of violence against women in Singapore, and around the world," says Zee. "Seeing the groundswell about these issues made me feel like it was okay to speak up, to question, to be angry about the way things were."

Late-Night Texting also provides a rare opportunity for Singaporeans to witness the development and growth of local theatre works. Tan Liting's *Pretty Butch x 不男不女*, exploring gender and sexuality, was developed over two years in Centre 42's Boiler Room incubation programme. The play made its debut in 2017 at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, and an updated version was translated and presented in Mandarin at the Taipei Arts Festival the following year. This Mandarin script will premiere in Singapore as a dramatised reading at Late-Night Texting 2019.

In a follow-up to their debut work in 2018, the collective ATTEMPTS returns with *Dating Sim (Beta)*, a participatory theatrical experience that takes the form of an interactive dating simulation game come to life, allowing the audience a closer examination of modern dating and relationships. "Having a resource like Centre 42 is important for independent artists like me, as they built a relationship with me and allowed me to develop my work. Beyond having a space to work, they've built a community where we can interact with fellow artists in the same space and do more experimental work," says Rei Poh, Director and Facilitator of ATTEMPTS.

Main Tulis Group and Pink Gajah Theatre are just two of many theatre collectives that have called Centre 42 home. They will take over the front courtyard of 42 Waterloo Street, transforming it into an outdoor setting for *Verso/Recto*, where each group will respond to poetry by Southeast Asian writers, using their own distinctive performative styles that blend text, music and movement.

Fans of Singaporean theatre classics can also enjoy seeing crowd favourites like *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *Undercover* and *One Year Back Home* make a return at LNT2019, but reinterpreted in a contemporary context as *@thisisemeraldgirl*, *Understudy* and *Gossip GRLs* by three young teams of NUS Theatre Studies students and alumni. These three works were previously presented in Centre 42's The Vault series.

Perennial crowd favourites **BooksActually** return with their pop-up store – The World's Loneliest Bookstore – of local texts and **Coffee Bandits** food truck will help spice up the atmosphere.

Late-Night Texting has proven popular with the general public, with over 14,000 people attending the last three editions. With a fresh batch of exciting text-based performances, and the collective involvement of over 50 creators and artists, Late-Night Texting 2019 is set to be a celebration of independent Singapore theatre under the stars.

Late Night Texting 2019 takes place on 30-31 Aug 2019 at 42 Waterloo Street from 7pm till late. See Annex A for programme details and artist lineup.



Late-Night Texting 2018. Photo Credit: Centre 42

For interview opportunities and any other media enquiries, please contact:

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About Late-Night Texting

Late-Night Texting is held in conjunction with BrasBasah.Bugis Precinct's Singapore Night Festival in August each year. Started in 2016, this annual project emerged from young artists wanting a platform to stage short performances that are fun for both performers and audiences. Late-Night Texting has since become a showcase of text-based works by emerging theatre groups, independent collectives and artists, reaching out to old and new audiences.

About Centre 42

Centre 42 is a non-profit organisation with IPC status committed to the creation, documentation and promotion of texts and writings for the Singapore stage. We incubate original writing for production development; provide space for artists and new work creation; and develop a functional archive documenting the histories and processes of Singapore theatre. Centre 42 is developed in collaboration with the National Arts Council, and officially opened in 2014. Find out more at: www.centre42.sg

Centre 42 is running a year-long fundraiser to help the Singapore Theatre Scene grow. Find out more about how you can help us to [Grow the Cloud](#).

Annex A

Late-Night Texting 2019

Programme Synopses & Artist Profiles

Updated details can be found at centre42.sg/lnt2019/

ROOM TO BREATHE

By C42 Boiler Room Playwrights

30 & 31 Aug, 60min dramatised readings @ C42 Black Box

- 30 Aug, 7.00pm – *The Women Before Me* by written by Zee Wong
- 31 Aug, 7.00pm – *Pretty Butch x 不男不女* by written and directed by Tan Liting

Room to Breathe is a series of dramatised readings of two full-length works birthed from Centre 42's playwriting incubation programme Boiler Room:

The Women Before Me by Zee Wong is a play that explores art and sexual assault. The read will be directed by Ellison Tan. This dramatised read will be the first time that this text will be presented to an audience after over two years of incubation.

Pretty Butch x 不男不女 by Tan Liting is a play about masculine people. Featuring five different characters who are neither manly or womanly enough, it takes a look at the pressures of society's gender expectations on everyday people. The script was developed over two years and made its debut in 2017. An updated version of the play was translated and presented in Mandarin at the Taipei Arts Festival the following year.

DOUBLE TAKES

By C42 Vault artists

30 & 31 Aug, 3 x 30min performances each day @ C42 Black Box

- 9pm – *@thisisemeraldgirl*
- 10pm – *Understudy*
- 11pm – *Gossip GRLs*

Double Takes features three 30-minute excerpts responding to iconic plays from the last three decades of Singapore theatre, developed by next-generation theatre-makers from the NUS Theatre Studies community:

@thisisemeraldgirl is an adaption of Stella Kon's much-loved play *Emily of Emerald Hill* (1982). It combines new writing and multimedia with the iconic original text and imagines what life would be like for the titular matriarch's great granddaughter, a social media influencer living in Emily's mansion today. *@thisisemeraldgirl* was created by Eugene Koh, Lee Shu Yu, Sarah Amalina Bte Rosbe and performed by Brenda Tan.

Understudy is set 22 years after the events of Tan Tarn How's political satire *Undercover* (1993) where three spies from a National Intelligence Agency attempted to infiltrate a charitable organisation. The sequel sees the original characters reunite, each with a new protege in tow. Conceived by Robin Loon and written by seven writers from NUS Thespis.

Gossip GRLs is a farce that examines the support staff of Grassroots Leaders (GRLs), inspired by the political environment of Robert Yeo's *One Year Back Home* (1980). The performance follows the misadventures of a new volunteer joining the chaotic and competitive world of grassroots leadership. *Gossip GRLs* was conceived by the graduating cohort of NUS TS 2019: Cherie Ho, Chermaine Cham, Chimene Khoo, Michelle Simon Hariff and Tricia Ding.

KITCHEN MASALA

By Brown Voices

30 & 31 Aug, 4 x 30min performances each day @ C42 Rehearsal Studio

Singapore Indian narratives take centre stage in **Kitchen Masala**, a series of 10-minute plays that feature stories about family and relationships centred on the Singaporean Indian identity inspired by the writers' own personal experiences.

Brown Voices is Singapore's first collective of Indian theatre-practitioners who have organised themselves as a small community to support, encourage and help each other write good quality scripts, telling and performing Indian narratives. The artists presenting works at LNT2019 are Jaisilan Sathiasilan, Grace Kalaiselvi, Nandabalan Panneerselvam, Vithya d/o Subramaniam and Hasisha d/o Muhamad Nazir.

VERSO/RECTO

By Main Tulis Group & Pink Gajah Theatre

30 & 31 Aug, 4 x 30min performances each day @ C42 Front Courtyard

Verso/Recto is a double-bill of performative responses to three poems by Southeast Asian writers. See how Main Tulis Group and Pink Gajah Theatre's distinctive styles breathe life into these works. The poems curated by BooksActually are *A Few Ways To Eat The City Raw* by Ko Ko Thett (Myanmar), *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down* by Lee Jing Jing (Singapore) and *From Argentine Tango: Observations While Dancing (Part 6)* by Mong-Lan (Vietnam)

Main Tulis Group is a writers' circle for Malay playwrights of various ages who create work in English and Malay, looking to produce more original writing for the stage. Birthed in 2016, they have called C42 their home base since. The writers presenting works at Late-Night Texting 2019 are Nabilah Said, Hazwan Norly, Adib Kosnan, Raimi Safari, Farhanah Diyanah and Nessa Anwar.

Pink Gajah Theatre focuses on the unconventional and shining spotlights on subjects often overlooked by mass society. Pink Gajah tells emotional stories that resonate and move, questioning human social structures and the way we interact with our environments. Pink Gajah believes in the potency of theatre-making: theatre is cathartic, healing and meditative. Artists involved for Late-Night Texting 2019 are Sharda Harrison, Sean Harrison, Mei Yin, Sonia Kwek and Lian Sutton.

DATING SIM (BETA)

By ATTEMPTS

30 & 31 Aug, 3 x 30min performances each day @ C42 Meeting Room

Dating Sim (Beta) is a participatory theatrical experience that takes the form of an interactive dating simulation game come to life, allowing the audience a closer examination of their agency and prejudices in modern dating and relationships.

ATTEMPTS is a collective founded by Rei Poh that aims to engage and provoke, transforming audience into players, using participatory performances while providing a playground for like-minded artists to come on board to play and create their journey. They first debuted in 2018 at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival with *Attempts: Singapore*, a project developed in residence at Centre 42.

THE WORLD'S LONELIEST BOOKSTORE

By BooksActually
30 & 31 Aug, C42 Library

BooksActually is an independent bookstore specialising in Literature. This is their fourth year of partnership with Late-Night Texting. They will transform the C42 Library into The World's Loneliest Bookstore (WLB), presenting Singapore and Southeast Asian texts. Hear from WLB's owner herself, in a late-night story-telling session, about her journey as one of the 4,169 survivors left on earth after the freak solar flare decimated Earth's population.

COFFEE BANDITS

30 & 31 Aug, C42 Courtyard

Coffee Bandits is Singapore's only coffee specialty food truck. Besides coffee, they serve food and pride themselves on great service. They have been staunch supporters of Late Night Texting since its very first edition and will continue to refuel hungry audiences this year.



Late-Night Texting 2018. Photo Credit: Centre 42