

SUBLIME MONSTERS
-AND-
VIRTUAL CHILDREN

Brian Galloway, Tan



Presented by

HEARTWORKS

72-13

A performance within an installation, *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children* explores how rituals, both public and personal, shape and transform experiences and perceptions. Playful and surreal, *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children* is a contemporary performance that combines film, theatre and performance art.

Made in collaboration with composer Phillip Tan, designer Vince Ong and lighting designer Ian Tan and featuring performers Neo Swee Lin, Karen Tan, Faizal Abdullah, Ellison Tan and Nadia Rahman.

An Interview with the Artist

By Ng Hui Hsien for TheatreWorks

Can you tell us what inspired you to do a work on rituals?

When I was young, I used to be fascinated and terrified of certain events that my family brought me to experience like street processions in Chinatown or the Chinese New Year. I remember seeing gigantic floats of animals and large comical puppets of people and animals, and it was really traumatic and inspiring at the same time. And I also remember when my great-grandmother died, they shut down almost the whole city for the procession to the cemetery and I recall seeing hundreds of mourners.

These events were quite magical and surreal, where you witness an endless stream of people and creatures that were quite monumental yet transient at the same time; it's almost like the experience of lucid dreaming. When I started working on large spectacles myself, like for NDP and YGG, I realized I was creating these experiences for other people, and when you see thousands of people crying, or feeling poetic, you realize that these events have the power to shape and transform people's experience and perception of life.

Can you elaborate on how your role as the Director of Film and Visual Effects for Singapore's National Day Parade in 2009 and 2011 informed *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children*?

It has given me insights to how our nation constructs our national identity. As Singaporeans, we have this pathological obsession with identity, which can be very irritating and adolescent. Especially when we simplify our own histories and behave like this economic miracle we are living now is some kind of utopian ideal. That said, I am quite a pacifistic person, even though it's quite old-fashioned to be one in a globalised world. There are certain aspects of life here in this tiny island that are still worth celebrating.

So has working on *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children* given you new insights about your identity as Singaporean? Art functions like a kind of prism with which we can understand certain structures and frameworks we live in. I think it's no secret that much of modern Singapore's identity roots on trauma and a feeling of lack, which instead of being healed, has been perpetuated to keep a certain narrative going. One cannot help but feel that it is politically motivated on one level. But life isn't so simple and we have to continually dig deeper to understand ourselves more.

Can you tell us more about the forms of rituals?

I see the term "rituals" in this piece very loosely. I'm basically referring to any public or private event or behavior that is repeated consciously or unconsciously, which can range from grand spectacular events like the National Day Parade, to simple birthday parties which we all celebrate. The procession is the most common public form in Asia. If you look at most rituals in Southeast Asia, you will see a train of men and images. We see it in Chiang, funerals, morning assembly in schools and in the military display in the NDP.

So I'm collating and documenting the rituals that I've experienced for this work by cutting, pasting and mixing these different forms like a collage to the point the original forms are dissolved to their essential elements, emotions and energies. They may totally become unrecognisable but something new comes out of it. It's all about experimenting and creating my own weird but truthful Frankenstein.

You created a short animation that is also titled *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children* while studying in CalArts. Are these two projects related?

This new piece is a kind of extension and a deeper exploration of what my original creative impulse was. I used to create in a cyclical pattern, and tend to revisit certain themes and concepts, and it seems that this latest work was started back in my student days but I always felt that it was never really complete. I felt the time is just right to start it again.

Your last show at 72-13 was *Signs, Omens and Beliefs of Faith in 2007*. How does it feel to return to this space and exhibit *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children*?

I'm pretty excited because it has been 7 years since I've worked in the space, and I'm in such a different state of mind now. I've always measured the freedom and trust that Tay Tong and Kong Sen has given to me and other artists, and this time it's even more exciting for me because I'm also going to work with many other actors, artists and designers to create this piece.

About the Artist

A S'pore-born scholar, Brian graduated from California Institute of the Arts and is best known for his cutting-edge works in film, theatre and installation art. As a director, he has been involved in films such as *Lady 7*, *Phantom Factory* and *Invisible Children* which have earned international and won numerous awards. He has been involved in many significant projects such as Singapore Biennale, Shanghai World Expo, National Day Parade 2009 and 2011, as well as the inaugural Youth Olympic Games where he was the Multimedia Director. He was recently conferred the Young Artist Award in 2012. He is currently an Associate Artist with Cakes Theatrical Productions, a creative consultant with Pin and is represented by Eric Khoo's Zhao Wei Films.

Presenting Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children is part of TheatreWorks' intention to present innovative and engaging artists that will offer to the Singapore audience alternative viewpoints and perspectives to mainstream contemporary performance. We hope to be the bridge between innovative artists' expressions and the Singapore audiences. Our home, 72-13 acts as an incubator for artistic experiments by these artists.

Brian has collaborated with TheatreWorks in a number of productions and he was one of 72-13 Creative-in-Residence.

TheatreWorks (S) Ltd is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Grant for the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2016.

72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road, Singapore 239907

T: +65-67377213, F: +65-67377013, E: info@theatreworks.org.sg

Web: theatreworks.org.sg, www.72-13.com

SUBLIME MONSTERS
~AND~
VIRTUAL CHILDREN

By Sara Gottberg, PhD



BIOGRAPHIES

NEO SWEELIN: Actor

Neo Lin is an award-winning stage, film & tv actor. She has a law degree from NUS & a Diploma in Acting from the Royal Scottish Academy in Glasgow. She first worked with Brian Gothong Tan in Cakes Theatricals Debutal Pointe 4.44

KAREN TAN: Actor

Karen's first project with Brian Gothong Tan was his short film *Instable Children*, where he proved true the saying "still waters run deep". She has since worked on 2 other short films with him, as well as Cakes Theatricals' Debutal Pointe series, and 1.618. Karen would work on *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children* just for the title alone.

ELLESON YAN YUYANG: Actor

Tan Yuyang Ellison is a theatre studies graduate from the National University of Singapore. Since graduation, she has had the opportunity to work with Cakes Theatrical Productions, The Finger Players, Toy Factory, Theater Ensemble, The Theater Practice, to name a few. She is also an art and playwright, and has been mentored by Chang Ter Chien and Robin Luern. Her latest writing project was for *Formants in The Dark*, as part of The Arts House's 10th Anniversary. She has received other forms of training from ECNAD, Cakes Theatrical Productions, and has also trained in the Suzuki Method. Yuyang is also an apprentice of The Finger Players.

FAIZAL ABDULLAH: Actor

Faisal Abdullah is a full-time actor and theatre practitioner. He has worked with theatre companies such as ACO Theatrics, TheatreWorks, Cakes Theatrical Productions, Lo Joo Studios and Theater Ekamatra. Faisal is a member of the collective Hatch Theatrics and is currently serving as its Artistic Director. He will be directing the upcoming play *Di Manakah Zam Zamkah Yusuf Isahak?*

NADIA RAHMAN: Actor

Nadia's love for storytelling began on long train rides as a child when she would tell stories to other commuters. This curiosity of connecting with strangers led her to theatre where she continues to explore the human condition.

Nadia trained in the Acting programme at LASALLE, performing in plays directed by Faith Soderia (Memorabilia) and Natalia Herremidge (*Six Characters in Search of an Author*).

PHILIP TAN: Composer/Sound Designer

Philip Tan is a creative director, composer, music director, sound sculptor, performer, educator and a visual and performance art consultant. For the last 2 decades, Philip has dedicated his craft to wide range of work that are aesthetically adventurous and yet entertaining. He also ventures deeply into education and outreach. His work continues to be in high demand internationally. Previous works presented in Europe and the USA have garnered rave reviews. Philip also conceptualizes and spearheads large-scale multidisciplinary events including the opening and closing ceremony for Gardens By The Bay; Gardens Rhapsody Light and 48-around Sound Show; the 20th World Orchid Conference (*Olympus of Orchids*) and the recent 20th SEA Games Closing Ceremony Myanmar-Singapore Handover 2013.

VINCE ONG CHOON HOE: Production designer

Vince Ong is a recipient of the Architectural Association School of Architecture London (AA) Scholarship and the DesignSingapore Scholarship. He left Singapore in 2003 to pursue Architecture in London and graduated with RIBA/AEB Part II (Royal Institute of British Architect/Architect Registration Board) in 2009. The former Foster+Partners architectural designer also worked for the award-winning WOHIA Architects upon his return to Singapore in 2011. He is currently Associate to the DesignSingapore Council and director/principal designer at EBCO Design by VVOCH which he founded in 2012.

VARIAN TAN: Technical Manager

2014 marks Varian's 10th year in the theatre industry.

Varian has been technically managed for include Spotlight Singapore's *Selamat in Cape Town* by the Arts House, Mark Chan's *Flight of the Job Bird*, (Singapore and Hong Kong) by OrangeDot Productions and Singapore Press Holdings' annual ChildAid Concert from 2010. He is also the technical director of Media Variants, a technical support company, which is one of the official vendors with Marina Bay Sands Theatre.

JAMES J. TAY: Producer

James is very focused on being working alongside Brian and the dedicated team of *Sublime Monsters and Virtual Children*. He thanks them for their companionship on this exciting and fun journey. He also thanks his family, partner, friends and colleagues at SODA for their unwavering support in his theatre aims.

HASLINA ISMAIL: Hair & Make Up

Haslina has been involved in the theatre and entertainment industry for more than 2 decades working on theatre productions, feature films, video and advertising print. She has worked with various theatre companies such as Singapore Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks, The Necessary Stage, Cakes Theatrical Productions and Purgatorium Productions to name a few. Her latest concluded project was with Ho Tan Nyan in *Ten Thousand Tigers*.

MORPHOSIS CONCEPTS: Costumes

Morphosis concepts, founded in 2004 by Moe Kasim, is one of Singapore's leading professional costume design & production companies, specializing in costume designs for theatre companies, event planners & stage performers. In 2008, the company opened its doors with a Costume Boutique, providing costume rental & design consultancy services. The company has also expanded its services in offering professional talents for all types of shows & events. Some of its works have been featured internationally, winning great acclaim in Aichi (Japan), Berlin (Germany), Cape Town (South Africa), New York (USA), Beijing & Shanghai (China), Seoul (S. Korea) & Moscow (Russia). Morphosis concepts' inspirational dress is to touch, transform & transcend ideas in the colourful world of costumes.



Director/ Artist:

Brian Gothoeng Tan

Producer:

James J. Tay

Actors:

Ellison Tan Yuyang
Faizal Abdullah
Karen Tan
Nadia Rahman
Neo Sweet Lin

Composer/Sound

Designer:
Philip Tan

Production Designer:
Vince Ong Choon Hoe

Lighting Designer:
Ian Tan

Technical Manager:
Varian Tan

Stage Manager:

Asst. Stage Manager:

Costumes by:

Hair & Makeup:

Production Crew:

Justina Khoo

Aryyati Binte Alias

Moepluosis Concepts

Haslina Jemali

Jeremy Koh

Kelvin Seah

Lau Hon Ming

Shaik Amir

Timmers Mitchell Shawn

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- The National Arts Council
- Mr Ong Keng Sen, Jay Yong, Soo Moi, Morvyn, Brendan, all staff and helpers from 72-13
- Stephanie Lee and Desmond Gay from Epson, for lending backdrops and giving all out to help us!
- Natalie Hounsells and Sharon Tang, Cake Theatrical Productions
- Jeremiah Choy, Orangedust Productions
- Mothar Kasim, Edmund Low and Chen Chee Meng for their generosity.
- Loh Jian Hao and Pan Yi Chang, Producers
- Huang Juyiwing, producer extraordinaire, for the treadmill
- Dr. Joe Yap, for your time and generosity.
- The Production would like to thank each & everyone who had helped us in one way or another but whose names we were not able to include at time of printing.

A Project Supported by
The Creation Centre

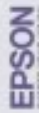


Presented by



72-13

Official Projective
Sponsor



Technical Support
by



Costumes by



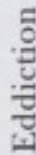
Design & Built by



Production Support
By



Official Photography



Official Videography

