

# 72-13



Image by Dinh Q. Lê



## Diaspora

TheatreWorks / Ong Keng Sen  
Official Cultural Performance of Singapore 2006  
18 – 21 September 2006, Esplanade Concert Hall

Conceived, written and directed by Ong Keng Sen  
Video Installation by Choy Ka Fai and Daniel Hartnett  
Electronic Composition by Toru Yamanaka

In collaboration with Ariani Darmawan, Zai Kuning, Dinh Q. Le, Navin Rawanchaikul, Tintin Wulia  
And the Singapore Chinese Orchestra conducted by Maestro Tsung Yeh

In performance with Koh Boon Pin, Janice Koh, Lim Kay Tong, Nora Samosir  
And Rindu Malam (Gambang Kromong Orchestra)

Set Design: Gordana Svilar, Light Design: Scott Zelinski, Sound Design: Micha Melani

Commissioned by



Singapore 2006



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A sweeping, panoramic docu-performance based on the Chinese saying "To Seek a better life by crossing the Four Seas", *Diaspora* explores memory, migration, assimilation, the triumph of human spirit in time and space.

"Every night I would hear them going to the butchery, the butchery of humans. The trucks would pass by my house, four trucks and that's only in front of my house. Other places I don't know."

"So what was on the trucks, live people or dead people?"

"Live people to be killed, to be butchered."

"So how were they killed?"

"Some were shot, some had their heads chopped off."





## Conversations on Diaspora

Providing an insight into *Diaspora* as well as the work of various artists in the production, 72-13 presents a series of conversations to introduce audiences to the work and the research for this new production.

Free admission to all sessions which are held at 72-13. Please call (65) 67377213 to reserve a seat

### 4 August 2006, 8pm

Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen opens the series of talks and introduces the thinking and directions behind this new work, *Diaspora*. Delving into the materials gathered from research trips to cities including Mumbai, Los Angeles, Chiang Mai, New York City, Ho Chi Minh City, Bali, Jakarta, the Riau Islands, Ong presents an overview of this new work.

"The sea nomads don't talk to the mind, they speak with the spirit of the person. When they tell a story, it is to the listener's subconscious. They do not trust the memories of the brain. Learning by the mind is not their way. In the boat, half awake, half asleep, they talk to you, you are in a dream. They get inside you even if you don't understand the story. You listen, you forget. Then suddenly one day, you will remember."

As told by  
Zai Kuning to Ong



# 11 August 2006, 8pm

Talk by Dinh Q. Le

A Vietnamese-American visual artist currently living and working from Ho Chi Minh City, Dinh Q. Le arrived in the West Coast USA, as one of the boat people, a refugee. Educated in Los Angeles and New York City, he is a highly reputable American artist who decided to return to his roots and work in his homeland as an artist. His work has been shown all over the world including major biennales such as the Venice Biennale, the upcoming Asia Pacific Triennale and the Gwangju Biennale. He was recently given a solo mid-career retrospective at Asia Society New York.

"When my family escaped from Vietnam we left everything behind, including our family photographs. It was as if we had erased our past. I hoped to find some of my photographs when I came back to Vietnam. I went to a second-hand store that sold photographs but I never found any of them. I began to collect other people's photos because it was a way of getting closer to my family. The photographs came to represent the lives we had before and during the war, a way for me to reclaim what was lost. This was a time when the world only saw images of death in Vietnam but we did have a life there then. I actually have some very fond memories from the years during the war."

Dinh Q. Le





18 August 2006, 8pm

Screening of *Dragons Beget Dragons*  
Discussion with film maker Ariani Darmawan follows

It all began at the end of 2001 when Ariani Darmawan, stumbled upon a CD *Music from The Outskirts of Jakarta*. It was something she had never heard before, strange and altogether fascinating.



Her curiosity grew deeper as she discovered the history to the music. To this day, Gambang Kromong is known as the only adaptive-culture of the Chinese-Indonesians, or "Tionghoa Peranakan", as they are popularly referred to, literally meaning Indonesian-bred Chinese. Aside from Darmawan's own personal interest as a Tionghoa Peranakan herself, she felt obliged to share whatever information she had with the public about the existence of this hybrid-culture, complete with its rich historical background. She poses: "How much does one know about one's culture, and moreover, one's self?"

After centuries of living in Indonesia, Chinese-Indonesians are still depicted as estranged from the rest of Indonesian society. Rigid racial stereotypes have been firmly attached to them, as a result of various political interests, not to mention the drive of the Chinese themselves to retain certain cultural purities and their heritage intact.

Gambang Kromong teaches us the survival of a culture; it opens itself up to other cultures, all the while retaining its unique identity.

Ariani Darmawan is a film-maker, writer, and a video artist residing and working in Bandung, Indonesia. Her films are often taking themes of power, identity, collaborating images and texts. She participated in many national and international festivals such as: Film Festival Indonesia, Rotterdam International Film Festival, Los Angeles Film Festival, and Rencontres Internationales Paris-Berlin. In 2004 she was invited by Theatreworks to participate in The Flying Circus Project and early 2006 in the Gang Festival, Sydney, 2006.

*Anak Naga Beranak Naga (Dragons beget Dragons)* is her fifth film and is her first long documentary work.



25 August 2006, 8pm

Opening of New Painting Exhibition and  
Talk by Navin Rawanchaikul

Born of Indian origins, Navin Rawanchaikul grew up in Thailand. Now living and practising his art in two cities, Fukuoka and Chiang Mai, Rawanchaikul is embarking on a search for iNavins! in different parts of the world. This is the genesis of his Bollywood music video for the final performance at the Esplanade. Come to the special unveiling of the new painting by a Mumbai movie poster painter about "Who is Navin?"

Navin has exhibited all over the world including Palais de Tokyo in Paris, Hayward Gallery London, PS1 NYC, Sao Paulo Biennale, Sydney Biennale, Yokohama Triennale.

"Late one night, drinking alone in his Chiang Mai studio Navin Rawanchaikul, a lonesome son of Diaspora, and the product of a globalised world finds himself searching the internet for people who share his name. What he discovers is a veritable flood of Navins from curry chefs to rock bands to recent software from Sony. In one obscure search result, he finds an alluring phone number. The call he then makes sets him off on a world-wide adventure that will combine the creative possibilities of Navins from every corner of the planet and change the course of history! Or will it?"

Scenario of "Navins of Bollywood"

## Göteborg Dance & Theatre Festival

18 – 26 August 2006

[www.festival.goteborg.se](http://www.festival.goteborg.se)

Sweden's leading event focusing on contemporary performing arts from all over the world, the biennial Göteborg Dance & Theatre Festival, has invited TheatreWorks to be a strong presence in this year's festival, with two full productions and a laboratory.

Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen presents *Geisha, The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields* and leads an Open Lab. He has invited a host of artists including Tan Pin Pin (Singapore), Kettly Noel (Mali), Padmini Chettur (India), Amir Reza Koohestani (Iran) and a host of young Swedish artists (the 06) for the Open Lab. The lab will open with a public conversation between Belgian choreographer Alain Platel and Ong.

*The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields*







Geisha



# Göteborg Open Lab

## Myths and Memories

### Past, Present, Future Memory

The idea is to provide windows for the interested public into the creative process of artists who are making work which are engaged with the societies in which they live.

The Göteborg Open Lab, led by Ong Keng Sen, strives to communicate with the audience; to reveal the intricacies of individual choice, social engagement and cultural influence.

“Memory is a malleable space – it is fiction, it is a process of mythologising, it is remembering. In memory, continuities are excavated, disruptions are revealed, reinventions are organically created, secret histories are dislodged. Cultural memories, personal memories are actively being constructed – new hybrid identities celebrated!

The social-political fabric is perhaps an ambivalent weave of fragments of events past, slipping into the imagined, with dynamic interventions of the present. The past is intimately bound with the living process of creation, to remember is to retell, is to create. In that can be said to be the death of memory; memory is projected into the future by the action of remembering.

In Benin, the African kings who colluded with the Portuguese traders to sell their people insisted on the erasure of memory of the exported slaves. Before passing through the gate of no return to be sent to Brazil, the slaves had to walk around the tree of amnesia. In this way, without memory, the captured Africans would be perfect slaves, ready to absorb new identities. Crossing the Atlantic, displaced memories reclaimed in foreign sites ironically become seeds for new beginnings. For to remember is to mythologise, to subvert, to take the power to represent.”

Ong Keng Sen



## About 72-13

[www.72-13.com](http://www.72-13.com)

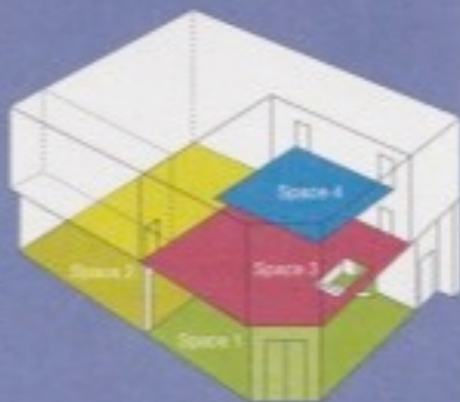
A converted rice warehouse, 72-13 is the new home of TheatreWorks ([www.theatreworks.org.sg](http://www.theatreworks.org.sg)). The space is flexible enough to be a gallery, a cinema and a theatre. Its primary purpose, through SCAN (Singapore Creative Arts Nucleus) and the ICAA (International Centre of Asian Arts), is to encourage collaborations, house residencies from creatives around the world and to encourage hybrid creative expressions from young Singaporeans. TheatreWorks, responding to the needs of the creative scene in Singapore, has consciously created 72-13 to have a wider and a more inclusive agenda.

This is the first year of the soft opening of 72-13.

## Open Call

72-13 invites creatives to apply to hold once-off non-profit events in the space. 72-13/TheatreWorks will provide the space free of charge barring technical charges.

The first open call event, *I have escaped even myself*, was held on 25 March 2006. Organised by sporesac (singapore sonic arts collective), it was an evening of experimental/sound art performance where local and global sound artists (Jazzkammer who had performed first in Singapore TheatreWorks) attempted to address the elusive nature of the self.



Please write to Tay Tong at [tworks@singnet.com.sg](mailto:tworks@singnet.com.sg). Curation process will apply.

Images by Dinh Q. Le, Ming, Navin Rawanchaikul, Ong Keng Sen, Tindin Wuika, William Struhs

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