

anGie Seah

Arguably, the most frequent question pitched at a contemporary artist nowadays is, who's your gallery? Rising Singaporean artist anGie Seah, however, replies to the contrary. No orthodox artist, anGie is driven to express herself in unconventional ways. With a confident smile she answers, "I have no gallery."

Pondering Singapore's size, short history and that it's a nation without a traditional culture, the ingredients for a thriving art scene appear to be lacking. Engaging with anGie, however, reveals a vigorous and diverse contemporary art scene with exciting prospects.

"Singapore is a small consumer driven nation, therefore the role of contemporary art is important in nurturing society," she says. "Art opens our mind and helps us to appreciate things from many perspectives. Art is essential in the healthy development of Singapore."

In 1988 the Singapore Government initiated the Advisory Council for Culture and Arts (ACCA); driven by the faith that art and culture are essential in developing a culturally vibrant society. The ACCA's Renaissance City Plans' vision to transform Singapore into a global city for the arts and culture has realised massive investment into art infrastructure that has succeeded in positioning Singapore as the new, booming art hub of Southeast Asia.

"Singapore is a place where people come and go, they often come to network," anGie says. "Therefore big art events, such as Art Stage Singapore (the premiere international art fair in Southeast Asia) enable people to gather here and this is an important role for Singapore. Even though Singapore is a small and young nation there it has a large and diverse population of artists. There are also many international artists that come and go leaving an imprint, all which help to characterize Singapore contemporary art. Perhaps because we are not as rooted in culture, as for example Indonesian artists, we tend to be flexible and dynamic. Singaporean artists are indeed world class."

"I am very lucky that I have received regular commissions that support my career." These are from art institutions such as museums and government agencies, colleges, art institutions, as well as overseas institutions that offer artist residencies and performance art programs.

"Sketching is my basic fundamental as it helps to generate my thoughts and develop my thinking process. I have worked on and off with clay over many years, it allows me to work in ways other mediums won't. I often construct 3 D models of my work. I love the tactile sensation, I find clay very grounding."

"I love the freedom when I create art, it is without limitations," says anGie who teaches part time at the La Salle College of the Arts.

Born in 1979 anGie, who's work fuses the genres of sketching, painting, installation, video, sound and performance received her Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree with Distinction RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) Australia in 2000 and was awarded an education bursary from the Singapore National Arts Council. This followed on after a Diploma in Visual Arts (Sculpture), LaSalle College of the Arts (SIA), Singapore in 1999. She since has been awarded a scholarship from the Goethe Institute Berlin in 2005.





anGie Seah 'Pocket your Fear', 2012, mixed media on paper, Image courtesy the artist



anGie seah, '1000 Screams' 2012, mixed media, Image courtesy the artist.



Emotions are like Weather 2012, mixed media on paper. Image courtesy the artist

“After I graduated I focussed on sculpture as I am always interested in the 3 D form. So to explore into performance art came naturally, yet it was also challenging for me. I am excited about using my voice and body actions along with objects to express my ideas, yet I am always wondering how to combine all of these together.”

“Performance art is not only about the moment because there is always something rather sacred, like a relic, left behind. Voice to me is like the spirit that comes from the inside out,” she explains. “I like to invent happenings that combine gestures with sound to create ritually infused works that are akin to installations with voice, echo, shadow, objects and bits and pieces.” anGie’s fascination in mysticism and sacred music increasing leads her to evoke the unseen and unexplainable aspects of the human experience that permeate everyday life into her works.

Singapore’s art infrastructure has evolved dramatically in the past decade boasting world class museums, national and international galleries and private museums, and numerous annual art fairs. It has also become a center for local and foreign art collectors and a thriving market that is also driven by powerful auction houses, galleries and collectors.

“I don’t like to think too much about the market as it may become a distraction. I want to learn and grow as an artist and therefore I have to think beyond this. Artists in Singapore are quite fortunate that we can access state of the art facilities and libraries to enhance our research.”

Since 1997 anGie has exhibited works, participated in artist residencies and in performance art festivals in 12 foreign countries, including Asia and Europe. For a decade she has been active in initiating art projects and workshops within communities in Singapore. One of anGie’s career highlights was participating in Singapore Biennale 2013 with “Conducting Memories” a sound interactive installation. Rather than using visual images, she utilizes pre programmed sound clips of voices, music and noises from nature and the surroundings as an auditory scrapbook, representing memories of her; aural cameos of everyday life in Singapore.

Using atmospheric sound she ignites the forgotten reflection of what has been lost, signifying the shifting ideological landscape of Singapore. A collaborative live performance with the female punk rock band Chicks On Speed and Francesca von Habsburg (TBA21) in the Australian Pavilion Party at Venice Biennale 2013 also capped off a landmark year. Currently anGie is fine tuning her latest creation, ‘From Shadow to Shaman’, a performance to be presented in April at the museum of Contemporary Art in Lyon, France.

Once labelled a “barren wasteland in terms of art and culture” Singapore may now define itself by its unique art and cultural infrastructure and pulsing modern international metropolis that inspire unique artists like anGie, who is increasingly gaining international attention, to make valuable contributions, not only to the development of Singaporean society, yet the development of contemporary culture in the blossoming Southeast Asian region.

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