



# On Death and Dying: Vital Signs for a Healthy Civic Dialogue

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### SUMMARY

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This case study is interested in understanding how the arts can contribute towards civic dialogue in Singapore, especially concerning sensitive or taboo topics. Through the discussion of *Both Sides, Now*, a multi-year arts-based community engagement project on end-of-life issues produced by Drama Box and ArtsWok Collaborative, this case study shares what healthy civic dialogue can be, as well as the conditions necessary for this to happen.

## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

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**Civic dialogue specifically refers to “dialogue about civic issues, policies, or decisions of consequence to people’s lives, communities, and society... The focus of civic dialogue is not about the process of dialogue itself. Nor is its intent solely therapeutic or to nurture personal growth. Rather, civic dialogue addresses a matter of civic importance to the dialogue participants.” [1]**  
~ Animating Democracy

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In this definition, the crux of civic dialogue is not so much in the outcome, the dialogue or even the process, but in the very act of addressing a matter of civic importance.

In a 2014 survey on Death Attitudes in Singapore, commissioned by the Lien Foundation, a majority (71%) of respondents saw the need for a national conversation on death and dying. With the financial, social and emotional costs associated with end-of-life (EOL), increased efforts to raise public awareness about EOL issues and advance care planning is urgently needed.

The 2015 Quality of Death Index report by the Economist Intelligence Unit revealed that while Singapore is strong in quality and affordability of palliative care, it is weak in the area of community engagement. Another notable challenge is that facilitating people’s acceptance of death and dying as a normal part of one’s life cycle entails a cultural shift towards the understanding and embracing of our mortality.



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[1] "Civic Dialogue," *Animating Democracy*, last accessed 14 June 2018, <http://animatingdemocracy.org/terms/civic-dialogue>.

## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE



*Both Sides, Now* (BSN), an arts-based community engagement project produced by arts companies, Drama Box and ArtsWok Collaborative attempts to fill the gap by providing an engagement and dialogic platform for the public to build awareness but also explore their attitudes and behaviours towards end-of-life (EOL) issues, and also in relation to significant others. They are further encouraged to take concrete steps to improve their circumstances.

Presented to the public since 2013, BSN has been successful in connecting with, and communicating with the public through its various community editions largely because of an experiential approach that does not

shy away from a potentially taboo topic such as death and dying, and in place a creative, imaginative and safe space is provided for deep reflection, connection with others (sometimes with strangers like our volunteers or other audiences), and rich conversations and dialogue to occur. It is through the process of conversing that one gains greater clarity on the issue, which also serves as a “rehearsal” on how to have that conversation on our EOL wishes and plans with those who matter to us.

**This case study aims to unpack how an arts-based approach is crucial in aiding the process of civic dialogue on a sensitive topic. What are the specific conditions that facilitate meaningful civic dialogue?**

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## THE STORY OF BOTH SIDES, NOW

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It was January 2017 and the creative team for *Both Sides, Now* (BSN) had just concluded their kickoff meeting for the latest edition (2017-2019) of the arts-based community engagement project that seeks to normalise conversations on end-of-life (EOL) issues. Creative team meetings involving the artists and producers of ArtsWok Collaborative and Drama Box, as well as other independent artists often went on at length, with intense discussions revisiting intent, principles and methodology. This time was no exception. With the third edition, the team was expanding further and delving deeper into the geographical communities. They were experimenting with things that had not been done before. There were no field guides for this work. They could only interrogate their processes, adapt to the community, then refine their roadmap.

Back in 2013, BSN was first held in the compounds of Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. It was primarily a multi-disciplinary immersive arts experience that engaged the public in contemplating, confronting and conversing with, and about issues of death and dying. The second edition in 2014 was held in outdoor, public spaces in Khatib and Toa Payoh. In both of those editions, there were public art installations and programmes that were held over a span of a few weeks. Through participatory art, music and soundscapes, film, photography, puppetry, forum theatre, talks and workshops, audiences were invited to engage in conversations about EOL. A full listing of the artworks, performances and programmes can be found in Annex A.

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From 2014-2016, the puppetry performance *The Wind Came Home*, toured a total of 50 Senior Activity and Care Centres. Through their fieldwork, the team found Singaporeans lacking in EOL awareness and discovered a need for communities to be involved in EOL conversations. [2] It was for that reason that the 2017-2019 edition, took the shape of a long-term project focusing on building relationships and mobilising resources within the specific communities of Telok Blangah and Chong Pang.

The project would continue to be commissioned by Lien Foundation and Ang Chin Moh Foundation, funders since the first edition, and supported by Tote Board and Agency for Integrated Care. Coming on board were new partners to help create inroads to the community - locally based organisations like Montfort Care and Wellness Kampung (a partnership between Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, People's Association and St. Luke's Eldercare). The range of programmes would be expanded to include regular community engagement productions and participatory arts activities, talks and workshops, arts workshops involving seniors and building the local capacity to keep the conversations going.



The creative team asked themselves fundamental questions about what they were doing, what they could do better, and how could these civic dialogues - programmes and conversations about a social issue brought into the heartlands encouraging public participation, mobilisation of community organisations, bringing stakeholders across sectors into a common conversation - be deepened and sustained.

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[2] To know more about the perceptions of Singaporeans towards death and the local landscape on EOL issues, read Blackbox Research, *Death Attitudes Survey 2014*, 8 April 2014 <http://tinyurl.com/zr68fw9> and Economist Intelligence Unit, *Quality of Death Index 2015*, October 2015, <http://www.qualityofdeath.org/>

## CATALYSING CULTURAL SHIFTS THROUGH ARTS-BASED CIVIC DIALOGUE

Discussing EOL matters in Asian societies like Singapore and making plans in advance has generally not been practiced till more recently where more focus and attention has been given to promote its importance. This reluctance has been due to a combination of cultural factors such as superstition, not wanting to appear disrespectful, assuming these decisions are the responsibility of one's children as well as emotional factors due to the weightiness of the topic. Other reasons include a lack of awareness of the questions that need to be reflected on and the plans that need to be made.

Lee Poh Wah, CEO of Lien Foundation believes that the arts have a special role to play in facilitating that cultural shift. He said: "We believe that the arts can provide subtle languages & experiences on challenging topics that are difficult to put into everyday conversations. They can make the topic of death and dying more palatable and persuasive, giving meaning and dignity to our mortality. In a way, we are using arts to help people explore their own thoughts and feelings about change, mortality and loss."

“

**...ART IS NEEDED AND IS IMPORTANT IN SOCIETY BECAUSE IT CAN HELP YOU ACCESS ANOTHER REALITY AND IMAGINATION. IT'S COMPLEX. IT SPEAKS TO BOTH THE INTELLECT AND THE EMOTION.”**

**- KOK HENG LEUN,  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF  
DRAMABOX**





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## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

Beyond simply raising awareness about the issue, the team behind BSN wanted to push the envelope and initiate a process where action could be taken. Inviting dialogue on this issue was a way to help the public internalise facts and knowledge, understand their rights and responsibilities, and subsequently take action to express their end-of-life wishes. Some of these options include going through the Advance Care Planning (ACP) process, bringing that dialogue to their loved ones, and attending talks and workshops. [3]

Charlene Rajendran, the dramaturg of the project said: "If someone says that they want to do ACP, that is already a recognition of power. That person is already saying that they want the power to decide and that they want to do something to make sure that it is in place. They are recognising that it gives them an opportunity to have their voice recognised."



She added that for change to occur, deep shifts need to take place either in attitudes, understanding or beliefs. "Most people know that they have got to be prepared about getting old. Awareness simply means you know about what can be done. But what's stopping you from doing it demands a dialogue," she said.

In line with that objective, one principle that the creative team followed closely when designing and conceptualising the artworks was to weave in a "call and response" approach in the artworks. As such, **artworks were incomplete, dialogic, participatory, and often posed as questions that invited responses.** The team believed that the process needed to be non-prescriptive and non-didactic. The call with a question was not about finding a solution or communicating a message. It was an invitation to ask how much more we needed to know.



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[3] Advance Care Planning (ACP) is for everyone, regardless of age or state of health. ACP conversations allow you to discuss, reflect and decide on your health care based on your personal values. This gives your loved ones the assurance and peace of mind that they are fulfilling your wishes. Share the gift of love with your loved ones. For more information, visit [www.livingmatters.sg](http://www.livingmatters.sg)



**This “call and response” strategy is integral to cultivating critical thinking skills that are necessary for civic dialogue to happen.**

Kok Heng Leun, the Artistic Director of the project described the power of this criticality. “When they begin asking questions about what they will do to ensure that their life is of quality, when people learn what it means to live well, it is about the values that they live by;”

he said. “When human beings have that kind of criticality, we will start to think about how we are using our resources, how we have been living our lives, how we have been making meaning... That’s why art is needed and is important in society because it can help you access another reality and imagination. It’s complex. It speaks to both the intellect and the emotion.”

## Catalysing Cultural Shifts through Arts-Based Civic Dialogue

For social change to occur, deep shifts need to take place either in attitudes, understanding or beliefs.



This is why Both Sides, Now's artworks take on the form of...

### Call and Response



The artworks are:



Incomplete



Participatory



Dialogic



Posed as questions

These 4 points are integral to cultivating critical thinking skills that are necessary for civic dialogue to happen

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## CREATING THE CONDITIONS FOR CIVIC DIALOGUE

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So what is dialogue? According to Daniel Yankelovich, author of *The Magic of Dialogue*, three qualities of dialogue distinguish it from debate or discussion: [4]

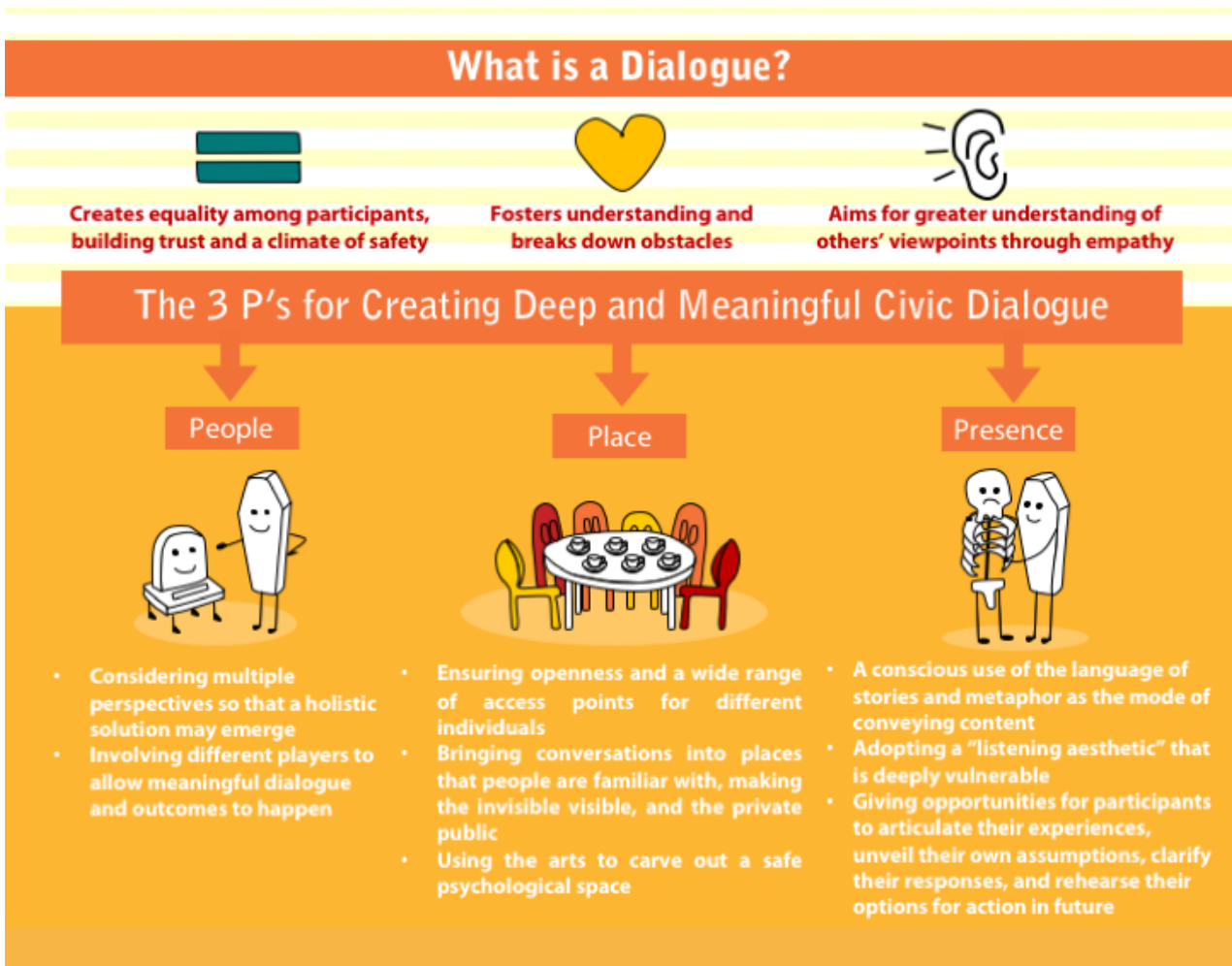
- Dialogue seeks to **create equality among participants**. Certain conditions can be created to even the playing field for participants with various levels of information about the issue, experience in public forums, real or perceived positions of power or authority and help build the trust and climate of **safety for deep dialogue**
- Dialogue allows **assumptions to be brought out into the open** and encourages participants to **suspend judgment in order to foster understanding and break down obstacles**
- Dialogue aims for a **greater understanding of others' viewpoints through empathy**. In dialogue, multiple perspectives are invited to the table and encouraged to be voiced



[4] Daniel Yankelovich, *The Magic of Dialogue* (New York : Simon & Schuster, c1999), p41-47.

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Following from these three points, the creative team sought to come up with a framework that would contain these qualities and serve as a roadmap for creating deep and meaningful civic dialogue as they embarked on plans for the third edition of BSN. Their review of what had worked well in the past few editions led them to a few insights that could be broadly classified as such:



**1. PEOPLE: BRINGING TOGETHER, AND BRIDGING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS**



End-of-Life as a civic issue is a complex topic that straddles multiple fields – healthcare, social, financial, spiritual, just to name a few. For example, a social worker from Montfort Care might understand the problems associated with EOL from its social implications, a healthcare worker would see the complexities from a health and caregiving perspective and an artist may see EOL in terms of the interrelationships and reflection on the human condition.

**Any holistic solution can only emerge when multiple perspectives have been**

**considered. The involvement of different players is therefore important for meaningful dialogue and outcomes to happen.**

From funders, to community partners, artists, production team, media and finally the public itself, the range of partners in this project meant that constant adaptation was happening; time and effort had to be put in continually to cultivate trust in the relationships.

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**“ INTERMEDIARIES ARE PROVIDING LEADERSHIP, AND A STEERING MECHANISM FOR FRAMING AND DIRECTION.”**

**- CHARLENE RAJENDRAN, DRAMATURG**

Artistic Director, Kok admitted that having an intermediary like ArtsWok to manage the interests and power dynamics of multiple stakeholders was critically important, especially since each had different motivations for getting involved even though their ends converged.

Dramaturg, Rajendran observed that a key function of the intermediary was to “translate the talk to the stakeholders” so that each party understood the concerns of the others. For example, while public engagement numbers are important for the project, stakeholders understood that this would not be at the expense of the engagement experience (some artworks could only be experienced, and invited participation in small numbers) and hence

quality of dialogue that ensued from a deeply reflective space created.

“Otherwise, there isn’t a conversation. Intermediaries are providing leadership, and a steering mechanism for framing and direction,” she said.

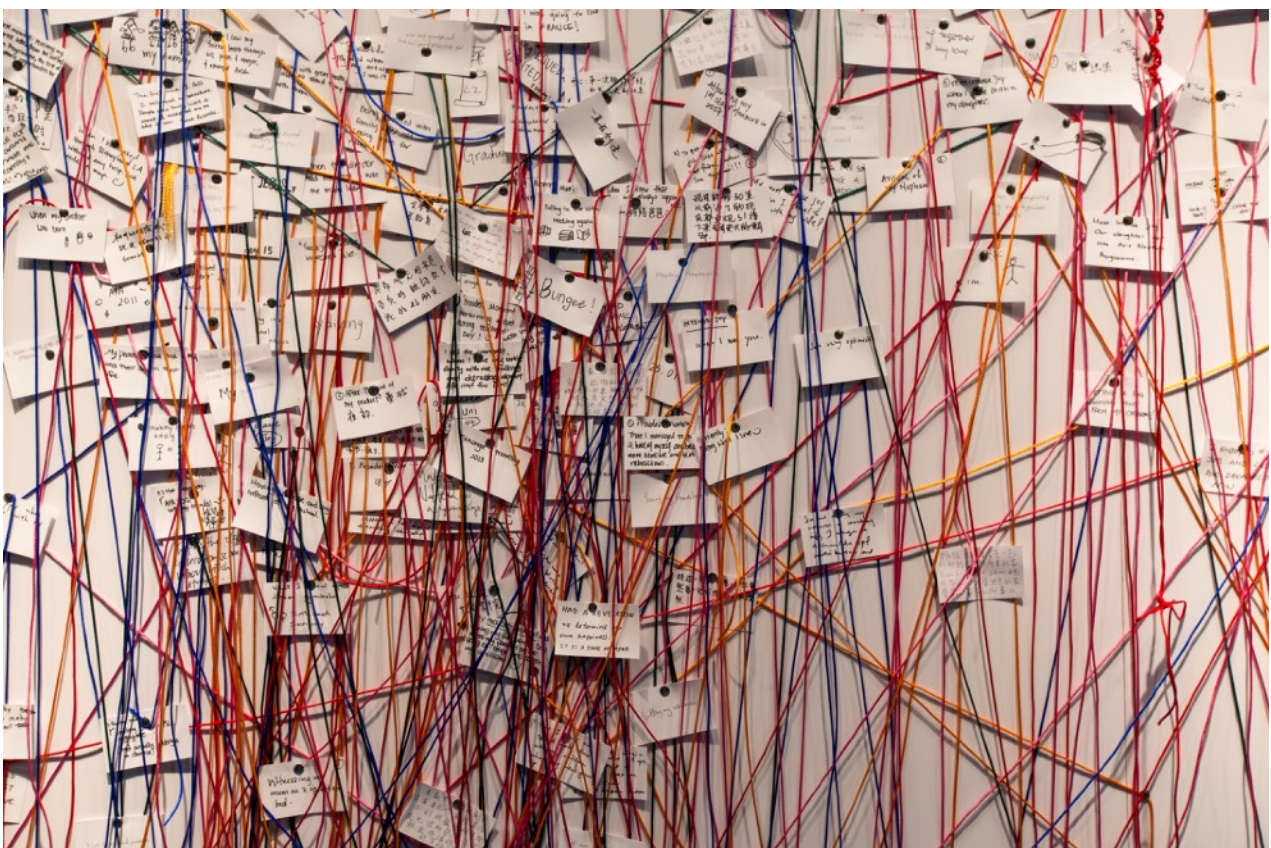
## 2. PLACE: CREATING INCLUSIVE SAFE SPACES, BOTH PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL, FOR DEEP DIALOGUE TO HAPPEN

The BSN team was very much aware of the need to create a space where everyone who came through could find a point of entry and a space that could hold and accommodate varying opinions. “Civic dialogue is having the space to disagree but seeing the validity of disagreement,” said Rajendran.

Audiences who came for forum theatre piece, *Exit* had differing views and expressed opinions on how they would handle various crises in the play, sometimes in direct opposition to someone else’s approach. Importantly, they were provided the time and

space to elaborate on their views, and to understand where the other party was coming from. These became moments of learning and developing empathy for others listening in too.

From contemplative visual artworks to interactive theatre performances, BSN was multi-disciplinary and multi-sensory, offering different access points for people of different levels of readiness to encounter the topic. **This openness and range was an important consideration in the creation of an inclusive space.**





“

[PUBLIC SPACES CAN BE TRANSFORMED INTO] CONTAINERS FOR PEOPLE TO ENCOUNTER DIFFERENCE AND GENERATE ORGANIC EXCHANGES”

- NGIAM SU-LIN,  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
ARTSWOK



The choice to situate BSN in public spaces was also a conscious and intentional decision. **Utilising a public space brought the conversation right into places that people were familiar with.** Situating it in the heartlands and in community spaces like basketball courts and hawker centres conveyed a sense of openness and non-exclusivity. That sense of familiarity spelled safety and made the entry point accessible. The creative set up of the space to resemble a fair also had a disarming effect. The whole environment was designed to lubricate what would otherwise be a difficult subject.

On another level, bringing conversations into neighbourhoods and into civic squares highlighted a topic that was often shunned and kept under wraps - **it made the invisible visible, and the private public.** Co-Producer, Ngiam Su-Lin believes that with artful execution, public spaces can be

transformed into “containers for people to encounter difference and generate organic exchanges”.

Beyond the transformation of physical spaces, **the arts have the power to carve out a psychological space of safety.** Michelle Tan, a volunteer for BSN pointed out the paradoxical ability of the arts to both distance the self and deepen the experience of the encounter. “The arts enables audiences to first distance themselves from this heavy topic, to look at it from the outside, and through that process enter it in a deeper way,” she said. “By relating to a performed character on stage, for instance, I then find something of myself in that character, which I might not have discovered or articulated before. So in this sense I think the arts provides that necessary reflective space, and sparks off an organic process of self-discovery that is very different from a more pedantic approach, for example a lecture on end-of-life issues.”

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Echoing this point, Dr Wong Sweet Fun, Clinical Director (Population Health and Community Transformation) at Yishun Health observed that the arts could “recreate the emotive aspects of a situation without the person undergoing the trauma of the real situation.”

“In that moment of feeling, without the actual loss or hurt, conversations can be started, emotions can be expressed and discussed and personal narratives can be understood,” she said. “Addressing these narratives is where healing occurs. That’s how I think the arts can deepen the dialogue.”

“

**[THE ARTS COULD] ... RECREATE THE EMOTIVE ASPECTS OF A SITUATION WITHOUT THE PERSON UNDERGOING THE TRAUMA OF THE REAL SITUATION.”**

**- DR WONG SWEET FUN,  
CLINICAL DIRECTOR  
(POPULATION HEALTH  
AND COMMUNITY  
TRANSFORMATION)**



### 3. PRESENCE : COMMUNICATING WITH EMPATHY

A dialogue involves a process of interaction that includes giving and receiving, talking and listening. Quality interaction happens when someone shares honestly, another listens with attention, and both parties are fully present during this encounter. This requires great vulnerability. **At the heart of this exchange is an invitation to engage in a deep connection.** The relational aspect of this work was always forefront and at the centre for the creative team when they were designing the participatory experience.

In BSN, there was a **conscious use of the language of stories and metaphor as the mode of conveying content.** Artworks articulated the stories of other people or invited the contribution of personal stories from the audience. Since content was driven by personal stories, Co-Producer, Ngiam believes that the dialogues were “anchored and grounded in experience which also meant that there were no right or wrong answers - all experiences are valid”.





Angie Cheong, the volunteer manager of BSN observed that similar experiences created resonance, which might compel others to share their personal stories, generating a trove of wisdom that is sourced from the community. “That sharing allows people to tap on the strategies that others already tried. It is important to share within the community because sometimes we do not have the answers,” she said.

On the other hand, the existence of dissonant points of view also has its value. Dramaturg, Rajendran said that this **acceptance of the validity of multiple perspectives is a prerequisite for good dialogue to happen, where there is a willingness to be honest and to confront what is uncomfortable.** “You need to be present and honest - to yourself first, then others. If you are not honest, there is no real dialogue, there is no investment because it is not critical to you,” she said. “The other aspect of dialogue is the ability to listen to

what people are saying, what is not being said, to what is being hidden. That element of dialogue is the most neglected.”

The need to listen was worked into many of the artworks and in the environment. A visitor will need to listen to themselves before responding to questions about the high and low points in their lives in participatory artwork, *Life Journey : Ups and Downs*, stories of others in short films such as *Living Well*, *Leaving Well* or *Some Things Lost, Some Things Gained*, read the responses of seniors in artwork, *Life Lessons*, or hear the opinions and interventions of others in forum theatre piece, *Exit*.

Artistic Director, Kok described this **“listening aesthetic” as one that is deeply vulnerable.** “Listening with empathy is being able to listen in such a way that allows your vulnerability to be responding to the subject. Deep listening needs to come to the point

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where you feel that same emotional vulnerability as that person. It is not just about feeling for that person, but how that feeling recalls your own vulnerability in the process.”

That guiding aesthetic undergirded the engagement in BSN. To that end, the volunteer-facilitators had a pivotal role to play. Training for these volunteers focused on vulnerable listening and facilitating the sharing of stories. **Dialogues with the volunteers had the function of helping people work through what they had encountered, unveiled their own assumptions, clarified their responses, and ultimately served as a platform where people rehearsed their options for action.** The volunteers calibrated their

interaction with individuals based on what they perceived to be the individual’s level of readiness and openness, acting as active touch-points that bridged engagement at many levels.

“Having volunteers goes back to the concept of conviviality,” said Co-Producer, Ngiam. “This is a relational project, so the relationships in space make a huge difference. There is the relationship of the self to the artwork. And then there’s the human relationships in the space – the embodied experience – which is also important. All that is facilitated through human contact, with the volunteers. Without them, it would have been a different project.”



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### THE NEXT PHASE

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Taking into account the insights from past editions, the BSN team embarked on the next phase of the project in 2017 – a three-year programme across two locations (Telok Blangah and Chong Pang) with predominantly elderly populations.

In this current edition, the project takes on a heightened community-centred, apart from arts-driven approach, with the objective of creating EOL-friendly communities where individuals and families are supported in making informed decisions about EOL plans.

This time, the longer-term engagement allows the opportunity to build relationships and mobilize resources within a defined community. Collaborating with community partners, building their capacity in engaging residents through creative approaches, and developing volunteer-facilitators from the communities the project is located in are crucial aspects of the new edition. As well, directly offering opportunities to residents to develop skills and approaches on EOL conversations and planning through arts-based workshops have been included into the project's focus areas.

As the BSN creative team and their partners carry out the process of implementation, a few additional questions are kept in mind:



- How can civic dialogue on EOL issues within a community be deepened over time, enabling real cultural shifts within that community?
- How can more community stakeholders e.g. shop-owners, interest groups etc. be involved in the dialogue, and even initiating these conversations with their networks?
- What are the roles of various community stakeholders within a place in sustaining dialogue on EOL issues, and spurring positive action?
- What kind of capacities and capabilities need to be put in place or developed in order for civic dialogue on EOL issues to continue in the community after the project comes to an end?

The team is looking forward to the learning and insights to be gained over these three years, hopefully contributing towards developing the nature, and quality of civic dialogue in Singapore.

For more information on Both Sides, Now, visit [www.bothsidesnow.sg](http://www.bothsidesnow.sg) and [www.fb.com/bothsidesnowsg](https://www.facebook.com/bothsidesnowsg) for live updates.

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## ANNEX A - LIST OF ARTWORKS

### Both Sides, Now – Living Well, Leaving Well (2013)

Wrap Video: <https://vimeo.com/98612041>

Artwork	Image / Link
<p><b>Loss for Words</b> Installation</p> <p>Thoughts unsaid, feelings unexpressed. What are our desires and fears, wishes and needs?</p> <p>This art installation prepares us to slow down and pay attention to our own thoughts and feelings. It invites us to be open to seeing what is happening around us with fresh eyes.</p>	
<p><b>Entrances &amp; Exits</b> Installation</p> <p>This installation invites us to enter and be taken on a contemplative journey within a meditative soundscape. Be guided by the thoughts of patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals who share how they cope with loss, life's challenges and what enables them to continue, move on and remain resilient.</p> <p>This installation invites you to exit and reflect on your own journey. What adds value to your life? What takes the value away?</p>	



***Living Well, Leaving Well***

Video Installation

A series of animated short films by local filmmakers that bring to life intimate stories told by healthcare professionals about their personal encounters with death, and what that has taught them about what it means to live.



<https://vimeo.com/bothsidesnowsg>

***AH MA REVISITED 2013***

Video Installation

Two short films, reel life meets real life.

Ah Ma, a film by Anthony Chen, tells the story of a family visiting their grandmother living out her last days in hospital, and the different ways in which each grieves her passing.

In Ah Ma Revisited 7 years on, filmmaker Jasmine Ng catches up with the cast and chats with them about their attitudes towards death and dying, documenting how these have evolved since the making of the film.



**Ah Ma Revisited by Jasmine Ng -**  
[vimeo.com/channels/bothsidesnowsg/  
86086794](https://vimeo.com/channels/bothsidesnowsg/86086794)

***Some Things Lost, Some Things Gained***

Video Installation

How do children deal with losing someone or something dear? How do they cope?

In this short film by filmmakers Nooraini Shah and Jasmine Ng, we invite you to listen to the musings of children. In taking on a childlike perspective, perhaps you too may find new ways of looking at loss and in the process, discover new sources of hope.



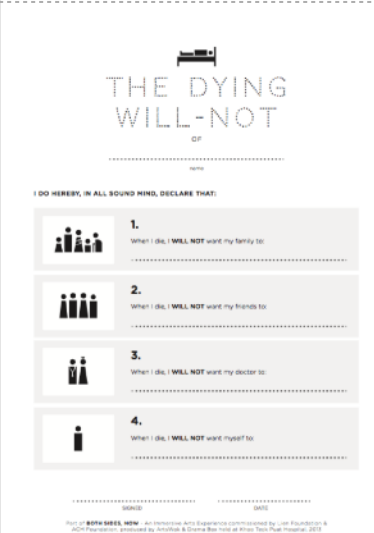
<https://vimeo.com/113474614>

***Will-Not***

Participatory Artwork

What would you like to leave behind for the ones you love? If you could pen down your wishes, what would they be?

In a slight twist to the conventional, we invite you to draft your Will and Will-Not. In thinking about not just what we want but also what we do not want to see happen when we are gone, we get insights into discovering what we truly value.



[http://www.bothsidesnow.sg/2013/pdf/131128\\_WILLNOTfinal.pdf](http://www.bothsidesnow.sg/2013/pdf/131128_WILLNOTfinal.pdf)

## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

### ***Turn, Turn, Turn***

#### Participatory Artwork

The pinwheel is a symbol of constant change. In the cycle of life, what do you hold on to, and what do you let go of? What will you remember, and what will you forget?

Make a pinwheel and write or draw on it the things that best reflect what gives meaning to your life.



### ***What We Say, When We Say...***

#### Talks

Death and dying need not be a taboo subject. In this straight talking session, our speakers from all walks of life share stories, thoughts and ideas about end-of-life. In facing our mortality, perhaps we may be reminded how we want to live and what is important to us.



### ***Songs for Tomorrow***

#### Verbatim Theatre

What happens if we strip away the roles that we play everyday in our lives and see one another as individuals with unique identities and stories to tell? What songs would we sing for each other?

Through material gathered from interviews with healthcare workers, caregivers and patients, this multimedia theatre performance recreates a day in their lives, surfacing their struggles and their hopes.



Excerpt at <https://vimeo.com/79865060>

## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

### Both Sides, Now – Living with Dying (2014)

**Wrap Video** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCao4AqTwsI&t=404s>

**Photo Album** - <https://goo.gl/prppof>

#### ***My Message to Death***

Participatory Artwork

Fully enjoying the gift of life includes facing the existence of death. If death were a person, what would you say? On your own, or in a group, write a message to death and share it with your photo, and pin it on the wall.



#### ***This is Not a Coffin***

Participatory Artwork

If you could design a coffin as a symbol of rest, what would it be?



#### ***Exit***

Forum Theatre

This interactive performance tells the story of two families struggling to cope as they confront illness and death. Could they have handled things better? Audience members are invited to stop the action, jump in and change the outcome of the play.



## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

### ***Dialogues***

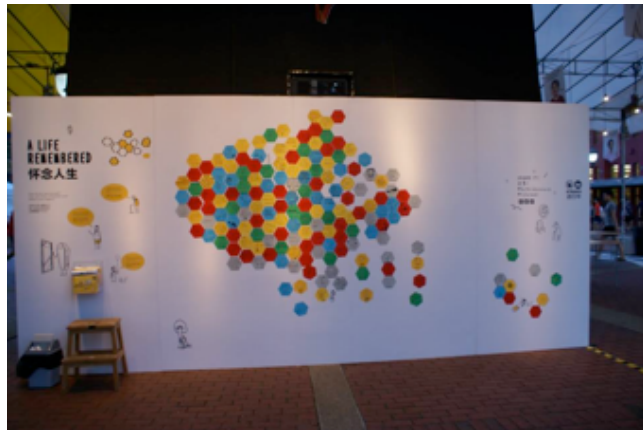
Join our speakers from different walks of life and hear them talk about end-of-life issues that concern you. From the practical to the personal, listen to their stories and insights. Get educated, be touched and begin action.



### ***A Life Remembered***

Participatory Artwork

Take stock of the trajectory of your life and imagine what your legacy will be. How would you like to leave your mark on this world? How do you see yourself? How will others remember you? What is your legacy?



### ***Time of our Lives***

Video installation

Is life measured in minutes or memories? In this video installation, read the body like a book to reveal the story of a life.



<https://vimeo.com/115042029>

## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

### ***Life Journeys: Up and Down***

#### Participatory Artwork

Chart the high and low points in your life. How have these events shaped your understanding about living? Where on the journey of highs and lows are you right now? When did you experience your (1) proudest moment (2) greatest disappointment (3) deepest sadness (4) most intense joy?



### ***The Wind Came Home***

#### Puppetry Performance

This puppetry performance, as seen through the eyes of a stray cat, tells the story of an elderly couple struggling to make difficult end-of-life choices. When Mr. Lim is diagnosed with cancer, he has to plan for the care of his wife who suffers from dementia as well as confront his own fears about dying.



### ***Community Conversations***

At the end of each day, sit around a table and have a chat with those around you on the topic of living with dying. We've got tea and snacks so let the conversations flow!



## ON DEATH AND DYING: VITAL SIGNS FOR A HEALTHY CIVIC DIALOGUE

### **Rest.Stop**

#### Participatory Artwork

A coffee shop, a living room, a coffin: immerse yourself in these different spaces and be prompted by voices and sounds to take on alternative perspectives when reflecting on dying.

Stop. Rest. Reflect.



### **Turn, Turn, Turn**

#### Participatory Artwork

At the end of your life, what will make it easier to accept death? Who or what will you hold on to and remember, and similarly, let go of and forget? Write or draw your answers on a pinwheel and let them blow in the wind.



### **Life Lessons**

#### Installation

What is the most important lesson Life has taught you? Seniors from our community answer the question. What would your answer be?



## ABOUT ARTSWOK COLLABORATIVE



The work of ArtsWok Collaborative focuses on arts connecting communities by harnessing the power of the arts to create dialogue, invite social participation and build bridges across difference.

ArtsWok Collaborative works with multidisciplinary teams to design and implement innovative community-based arts programmes such as ***BOTH SIDES, NOW***, an immersive arts experience that invites conversations about end-of-life issues, as well as ***IPS Prism***, a civic-engagement piece which looked at governance in Singapore. In 2015, it launched the inaugural annual youth theatre festival ***M1 Peer Pleasure***, a platform for creative and open exchanges with young people through drama and dialogue. It developed and continues to facilitate ***The Greenhouse Series***, a field-building initiative that catalyses learning through a community of practice and action-learning lab. It also conducts and shares research that builds legitimacy for the field of arts-based community development.

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