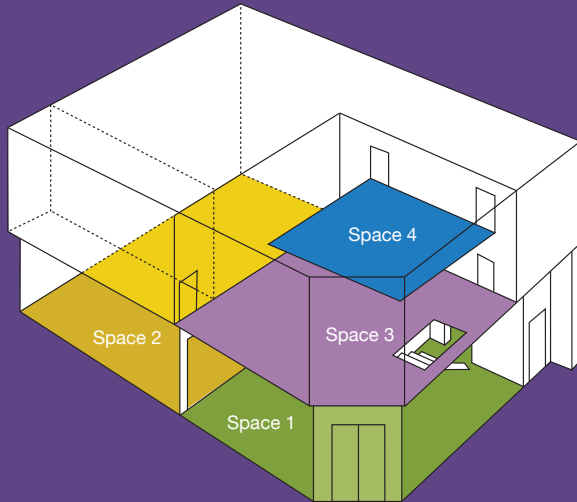


## About 72-13

A converted rice warehouse, 72-13 is the 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 foster collaborations, house residencies from creatives around the world and to encourage hybrid expressions from young Singaporeans. TheatreWorks, responding to the needs of contemporary Asia, has consciously created 72-13 to have a wider and a more inclusive agenda.

## Open Call

72-13 invites creatives to apply to hold once-off non-profit events in the space. TheatreWorks will provide the space free of charge barring technical charges. Please write to Tay Tong at [tworks@singnet.com.sg](mailto:tworks@singnet.com.sg) - curation process will apply.



**THEATREWORKS**

# 72-13



Image courtesy of **HERE**

TheatreWorks / 72-13 is the Associate Producer of **HERE**, Ho Tzu Nyen's new film that recently premiered at the 41st Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival 2009 in competition for the Camera d'Or. We supported **HERE** through our Creatives-in-Residence (CIR) programme that was established in 2006.

**HERE** reflects the CIR's objective to be an incubator, a platform for nurturing trans-disciplinary processes, an organic interface between arts and the creative industries; generating ideas, creative strategies as well as providing the necessary stimuli.

72-13 will present a talk by Tzu Nyen on **HERE** in relation to his engagement in the performing arts. The talk is on 20 June 2009 at 72-13.

*"...the experience of sitting through **HERE** in the cinema is quite unique - it feels like a live experience because of our rather peculiar use of sound. But also I believe the way in which I work with actors has a lot of connections to semi-improvisations, games, rules, etc..."*  
- Ho Tzu Nyen.

# HERE

with Ho Tzu Nyen  
by Ng Yi-Sheng

One of the most buzzed-about names in contemporary art in Singapore, Ho Tzu Nyen has piqued, entertained and infuriated his viewers since '03 with his installations, videos, performance lectures and grand opuses of anti-theatre (e.g. *Utama: Every Name in History is I* (various incarnations); *The King Lear Project* (various incarnations); *The Bohemian Rhapsody Project*; *The House of Memory*; *4 X 4: Episodes in Singapore Art*.)

Born of four production companies (Ho's Tzulogical Films, Borgia's Akanga Film Asia, Oak 3 and M'GO Films), the film also involves sound artist George Chua and sound engineer Charles Lee. It is largely financed by the Singapore-based Canadian company *gsmprjct'média* and stars Singapore's most visibly invisible actor (and visual artist), John Low.

## 1. Tell us about **HERE**. What's it about?

**HERE**, as its title suggests, is really about what it means to be 'here'. The characters being 'here' on screen, captured by a camera and forever alienated from the 'live' spectators. But the film is also about the spectators being 'here' in the cinema – their eyes open to the constant flux of images unfolding on the screen, and the whole of their bodies, a giant ear for sound vibrations. **HERE** is also a love story, and a story about the idea of '*Amor Fati*'. It is also a film about self-consciousness in its endemic form as self-awareness, but also self-consciousness in an atrophied state – paranoia.

There's a saying in the film business that if you can't sum up your film in a key punch line – you've got a problem. I'm happy to say that we seem to have this problem.



Images courtesy of **HERE**



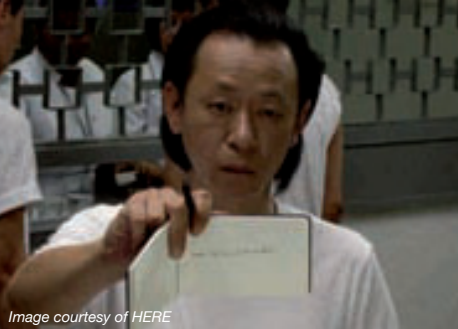


Image courtesy of HERE



Image courtesy of HERE



Image courtesy of HERE

### 2. Why did you, a visual artist, suddenly decide to create your first feature film?

Next to music, the cinema has always been my greatest love. I think I have wanted to make a film for a long time – but with **HERE**, all the correct conditions were in place – people, money, ideas...

### 3. What are the ideas, inspirations and influences behind **HERE**? Does it embody any specific theory or philosophy?

**HERE** is a coagulation of my interests over the last ten years – so it does not embody a specific theory. I am not sure that listing out my references here is interesting for anyone – but anyway here goes.

One of my main interests over the last few years has been the phenomenon of self-consciousness as a 'movie-in-the brain'. As the neurologist Antonio Damasio said, the fascinating thing about self-consciousness is how the brain also generates the sense that there is an owner and an observer for that movie.

Another key idea in the film is that of repetition (and differentiation). In **HERE**, this is tied to Friedrich Nietzsche's idea of 'Amor Fati' or love of fate – in which the test of an affirmative life is that of someone who is willing to live his life over and over again, without making a single change.

I should add that for me, the process of embodying a philosophical idea or theory into a work of art is justifiable only if it is open to mutation and distortion. To embody an idea is to give it mass, weight, clumsiness, awkwardness – to transform a concept into a sensation or an effect. Such a notion of embodiment is also what I am really interested in.

Other than that, **HERE** can also be understood as a recollection of fragments of my favourite films, paintings and music that have haunted me for a long time. I believe this practice introduces a different kind of duration into the film – the virtual time of remembering, which I think has to be related to my interests in a certain line of French philosophy stretching from Henri Bergson to Gilles Deleuze.

Last but not least, **HERE** is also a love story.

### 4. Could you tell us more about your cinematic inspirations?

In cinematic terms, I see **HERE** to be the result of my longtime fascination in what I hold as the two valid extremes of filmmaking, the first represented by the late works of Andrei Tarkovsky and the second by the late works of Jean-Luc Godard. I believe Tarkovsky's later films to be the perfection of an organic line of filmic possibilities, in which the durational experience of cinema has been sculpted into a kind of continuous and seamless unfolding. Godard on the other hand, represents all the possibilities of cinematic modernism – in which rhythm has become disjunctive, and the image is opened up on all sides, allowing it to engage in an instantaneous and critical dialogue with the world at large. But I should also add that the early films of Alain Resnais and Jacques Rivette were important to me in making this film, as were some of Alexander Sokurov's films.

Finally, I believe that every film should be about 'film-at-large' – or the history and future possibilities of film. In this way, **HERE** is inspired by what is inherently fascinating about the filmic process – how a spectator makes sense of images as well as the combinational process of attaching sounds to images. I think that because of the inherent 'humanistic' bias of vision over sound, film sound has not really been stretched as much as techniques in film images have been advanced. I would say that **HERE** is an attempt to translate some of my experiences with how sound is mixed in the 'live' performances of progressive bands such as OM and My Bloody Valentine, into film.

### 5. How did your CIR with 72-13 help in the creation of this project?

I believe that it is a testament to the foresight of the folks at 72-13 that they contributed funding support to **HERE** while staying clear of its production process. I am saying this because a film, by its economical infrastructure is subject to a host of complexities foreign to either the practice of the visual arts or theatre. The less interference we have from funding bodies, the more freedom we have in executing the project. I think that 72-13 was able to see that it was in the best interest of **HERE** to render help to us from a distance, and I am highly appreciative of that.

### 6. Would you like to make a comment on the state of visual arts and / or film in Singapore at the moment?

I think we are barely beginning. And the thing that we all need to do – is to recognise this as a fact. In general, I feel that our level of visual and audio culture is still quite primitive. As such, films are composed without taking into account the revolutions in visual thinking achieved through painting in the last few hundred years. Likewise, sound is deployed in the cinema in a manner that is deaf to developments in progressive music over the last one hundred years.

### 7. What projects do you envision for the future?

The next major 'visual arts' project that I am involved in is an adaptation of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. I am also working on a second feature film, called *Endless Day*.

**HERE** goes on commercial release at *The Picturehouse* from 25th June 2009.

For more information on the film, visit [www.herethefilm.com](http://www.herethefilm.com)

Ho's film, *EARTH*, was recently shown as part of *Invisible Room* in the Singapore Arts Festival 2009, a music performance by Singapore rock band the Observatory (*TheatreWorks* / 72-13's CIR in 2006).

# Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive: plugging Asia into the global circuit

The Asian Shakespeare Intercultural Archive or A-S-I-A, an initiative by the National University of Singapore (NUS) Theatre Studies Programme and brainchild of Associate Professor Yong Li Lan, will feature three major works of TheatreWorks' / 72-13's Artistic Director, Ong Keng Sen. Keng Sen's Shakespeare productions (Lear, Desdemona & Search:Hamlet) are arguably the most studied Asian intercultural Shakespeare works in the past decade. His extensive research in Asian intercultural performance will also be crucial in a spin-off of A-S-I-A called MAJOR ASIAN DIRECTORS. This spin-off archive will feature his pioneering and ground-breaking processes as an Asian director in the global circuit. Together with long time collaborator, Dr Robin Loon, Keng Sen will also act as a curator for MAJOR ASIAN DIRECTORS where he will interview, examine and 'exhibit' other Asian directors' work.

A-S-I-A is an ambitious web-based, multi-modal archive that promises to address the problems faced by intercultural performance researchers while pioneering a new model of intercultural research through digital archiving. A-S-I-A will feature online video-streaming of Asian intercultural Shakespeare productions. The archive will also have metadata breakdown of the productions to allow for easy searching and for comparative studies.

In addition, the archive will also have a researcher's workspace that allow members to customise data, video-clips to their research needs while plugging themselves into a network of researchers, practitioners and interested audience. A-S-I-A is an international collaboration between NUS; MIT, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US); Japanese Shakespeare Scholars Prof Michiko Suematsu and Prof Kaori Kobayashi; and Korean Shakespeare scholar-practitioner Lee Hyon U. A-S-I-A will be launched in the second half of 2009.

Images in the following pages are by:  
Japan Foundation Asia Center, Stig Stasig, Yuen Chee Wai, TheatreWorks (Singapore)

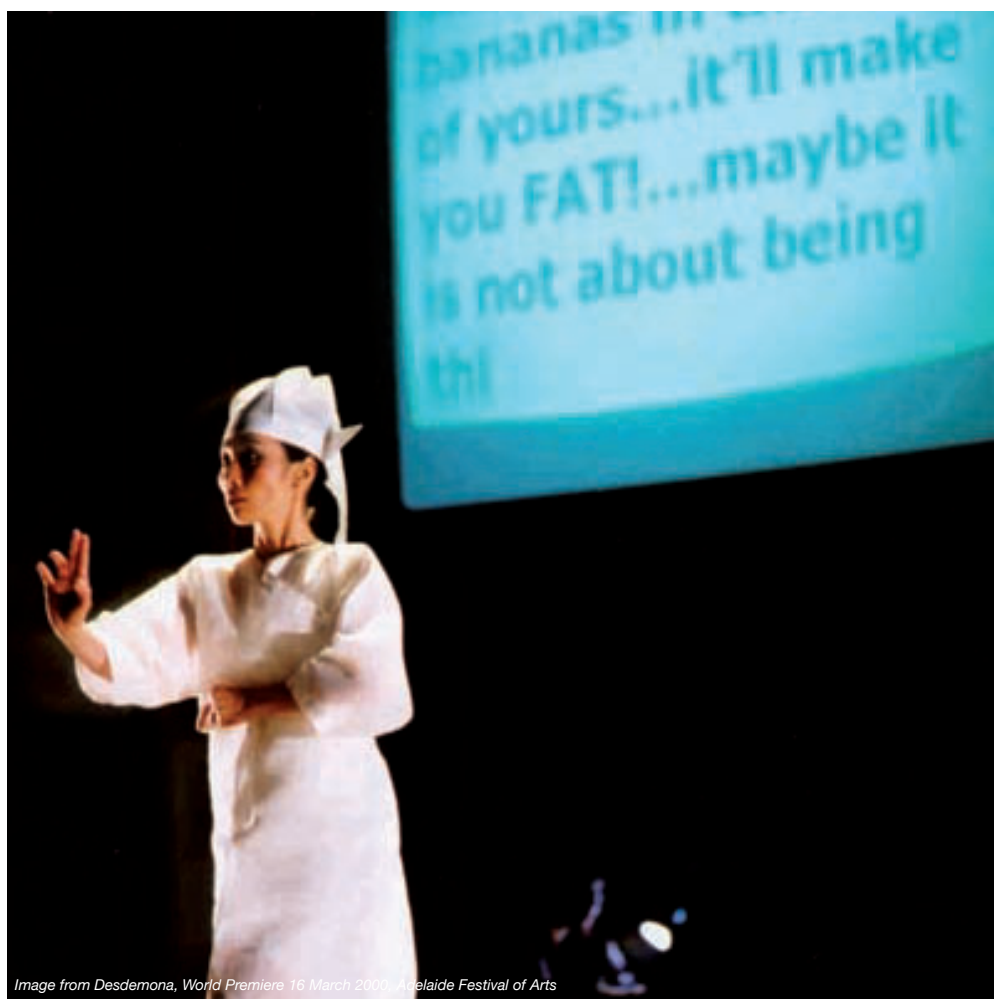


Image from Desdemona, World Premiere 16 March 2009, Melbourne Festival of Arts



# 72-13 catches up with Associate Professor Yong Li Lan to find out more about A-S-I-A.

## 1. Why is there a need for an archive like A-S-I-A?

Asian Shakespeare scholars have little opportunity to watch productions created by our neighbours, and are prevented by language barriers from sharing our research and concerns with each other. A-S-I-A will allow us to compare our uses for Shakespeare, and our approaches to adapting his plays. As an online archive, it will provide a major performance resource for interested audiences, practitioners and scholars not only in Asia but the United States, Australia as well as Europe. It will also open up pathways for us to make connections.

## 2. Why Shakespeare?

Shakespeare's plots and characters have a popular appeal that allow non-western performance a lot of scope for engagement: ghosts, murders, family struggles and idealised lovers. And while his poetry is difficult to deliver on the modern stage for contemporary audiences, it represents a high artistic value that is a challenge to other theatres. Shakespeare is at once the great western author whose 'universality' provokes an answer from us, and a circuit of trade along which artists and aesthetics circulate across the globe. The range of adaptation and performance strategies for Shakespeare in our region represents our ways of re-making our cultural histories, and our present identities.

## 3. What have been the challenges with setting up something like A-S-I-A?

The intercultural collaborative process of creating A-S-I-A has itself reflected the challenges that the archive aims to meet when it goes live: how can we pool our resources fairly without infringing on the propriety of ownership; how do we balance competing positions, such that we circulate rather than centralise – either in 'Shakespeare' or 'Asia'; how can A-S-I-A present and invite differing viewpoints?

## 4. Tell us a few unique features of A-S-I-A

First, A-S-I-A will provide resources: online streaming of full performances, with scripts in English and Asian language translations; production, artistic, reception and contextual data for each production, structured by a data schema that allows comparative study and mapping of a specific aspect of a production. By combining local expertise with advanced technology, A-S-I-A also enables those resources to be used, shared, and grown: anyone with an internet connection can explore a wide range of interests in this field, make annotated clips, and interact with other members directly as well as through forums and webcasts.

## 5. How have you grappled with the technology behind A-S-I-A?

A-S-I-A's content and its technology cannot be separated, ultimately. The technology will transform the content by processing it, and thus I've needed to develop a clear sense of how the content can perform online, and what the different options can entail and imply. But while technology has evolved by leaps and bounds, institutional mechanisms and processes have yet to catch up, so the technological resources and expertise to realise the full potential of A-S-I-A have not been as readily sharable as the development of its materials.



Search: Hamlet (Performed at Kronborg Castle, Denmark)

## 6. Would this archive be relevant / useful to the layman?

We are designing different pathways to cater to varied entry levels into the archive materials. Some people may just want to watch the videos, and we expect the translated scripts to make the experience of watching as full as possible. A viewer could save their own clips from these performances – many of the productions contain memorable performative sequences. But we also hope that a layman would be prompted to find out more than programme notes (which will also be included) allow, and then links and prompts will lead him or her to follow that interest through to other performances, more information, and other members of the archive.

## 7. Tell us more about your relationship with Ong Keng Sen

We have a complementary match in our work, and so our relationship came about very naturally. I learnt a great deal about intercultural Asian Shakespeare performance by thinking about the problems which his productions raised. As a practitioner and a scholar who understands each other, Keng Sen and I echo each other's concerns, while always recognising that we have different working parameters and priorities. His experience and critical awareness will be a primary resource and force in the Major Directors' Archive, which, in turn, I hope will give him an appropriate scope and place to develop his leadership role in the interrogation and critique of intercultural performance.



Image from *Lear*, World Premiere 9 September 1997, Tokyo, Bunkamura Theatre Cocoon  
A Japan Foundation Asia Center production



Image from *Search:Hamlet*, World Premiere 16 August 2002,  
Kronborg Castle, Denmark



Image from *Desdemona*, World Premiere 16 March 2000,  
Adelaide Festival of Arts

**8. What is the importance of involving practitioners in a project like A-S-I-A?**

Practitioners create new bridges between Shakespeare scholars and audiences. Yet intercultural critique and practice have increasingly become strangers to one another, as the diversity and number of productions departs from the ideological and theoretical concerns of critics. The involvement of practitioners in A-S-I-A stands to close that gap, and to present a more accurate picture of the conflictual positions that are possibly inevitable in Asian Shakespeare.

**9. What in your opinion is intercultural performance?**

The term is currently used rather loosely, encompassing anything from a mixture of cultures in the cast to a more overt staging of disparate theatrical elements drawn from different cultures. I would say that it requires an interaction between the collective knowledge of cultures to be intrinsic to what is performed; and, as such, it implicates its audiences' own differing cultural positions in the performance. But I do hope that A-S-I-A will help us define the term and its uses more clearly.

**10. What are your hopes for A-S-I-A?**

I would hope that A-S-I-A will be the meeting ground for a more interactive community of practitioners, scholars and audiences of Asian Shakespeare, and that it will bring a vital growth to the Euro-American fields of Shakespeare performance and intercultural theatre studies, simply by providing the most apt resources.

# 72-13: breeding ground for Creativity

We wish to thank the creative energy contributed to 72-13 by many of our colleagues from Singapore and around the world. They include:



Image from Search:Hamlet, World Premiere 16 August 2002, Kronborg Castle, Denmark

Aidil Alin Mosbit, Alex Abisheganaden, Alfian Sa'at, Andy Lim, Angkrit Ajchariyasophon, Anoli Perera, Ariani Darmawan, aspidistrally, Ashley Lim, Barbara Kruger, Benoit LaChambre, Bertrand Peret, Brian Gothong Tan, Bryan Tan, Caden Manson, Caroline Farmer, Caroline Fernandez, Cat Hope, Charles Lim, Charlotte Engelkes, Chay Yew, Cheong Sze Chen, Chong Li Chuan, Choy Ka Fai, Chua En Lai, Colin Seah, Contact Gonzo, CRITICA, Daisuke Muto, Daito Manabe, Darren Ng, David Subal, Deborah Pollard, Dinh Q. Le, DJ Spooky, Edwin Thumbboo, Em Theay, Emiliano Monaco, Esther Yap, Evan Tan, FARM, fFurious, Fly By Night, Francis Ng, Fred Frumberg, Fujimoto Takayuki (Kinsei), Future of Imagination 4, George Chua, Gerald Chew, Gojo Masanosuke, Grace Tan/kwodrent, Gridthiya Gaweewong, Hafiz, Ho Tzu Nyen, Hossan Leong, Indignation, Irene Ang, Janice Koh, Janos Fodor, Jason Lim, Jason Ong, Jazzkammer (Lasse Marhaug, John Hegre), Jean Ng, Jean Phan, Jeffrey Tan, Jeffrey Yue, Jeremiah Choy, Jerome Bel, Jiro Endo, Joavien Ng, Jonathan Seow, Juliana Yasin, Julie Atlas Muz, Junkflea, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Justin Hill, Kaffe Matthews, Kai Lam, Karen Kandel, Katarina Eisemann, Kaylene Tan, Keagan Kang, Ken Ikeda, Khairuddin Hori, Khoo Eng Tat, Kim Bun Thom, Kim Ngoc, Kineya Katsumatsu, KK Seet, Koh Boon Pin, Koji Hamai, Koosil-Ja, Kumar, Lee Wen, Li Xi An, Li Xie, Lim Hock Siang, Lim Kay Tong, Lim Suchen, Lim Woan Wen, Lise Nelleman, Liza Dalby, Lok Meng Chue, Luigi de Angellis, Ly Daravuth, Lynn Lu, Madame Patate, Mann Kosal, Margaret Shiu, Marko Peljhan, Meg Stuart, Melati Suryodarmo, Michikazu Matsune, Mitsushi Yanaihara, Mohd Fared Jainal, Mok Wei Wei, Momorobo, Muna Tseng, Musicians of the Globe, Myung Hee Cho, Naeem Mohaiemen, Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Dept of Theatre, Navin Rawanchaikul, Nelson Chia, Neo Swee Lin, Ng Yi-Sheng, Nibroll (Mikuni Yannaihara, Keisuke Takahashi), Nikko Zapata, Noor Effendy Ibrahim, Noorlinah Mohamed, Nora Samosir, Norico Sunayama, Northern Kunqu Opera Theatre, NS101, NTU Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information, Ong Keng Sen, Ovidia Yu, Patricia Toh, Pecha Kucha Singapore, Pichet Klunchun, Pop My Cherry, Quach Phong, Qu Xiao Song, Rachid Ouramdane, Rahayu Supanggah, Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta), Rich Streitmatter-Tran, Rindu Malam, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Rizman Putra, Robert Cianchi, Robin Loon, Rosita Ng, Royston Tan, Saikan Masnah, Sandrine Llouquet, Scott Zielinski, Serene Chen, Sharon Lim, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Sonny Lim, sporesac/Flux Us, Station House Opera, Stephane Cochard, Tadasu Takamine, Tam Vo Phi, Tan Pin Pin, Tan Suet Lee, The Analog Girl, The Observatory, Thomas Dunn, Thong Kim Ann, Tiffany Chung, Tintin Wulia, Torrance Goh, Toru Yamanaka, Tran Luong, Tsung Yeh, TVG: School of Thought, Vasan Sittihet, Vu Nhat Tan, Wei Chun Rong, X|Media|Lab Singapore, Yen, Yeo Yann Yann, Yuen Chee Wai, Zai Kuning, Zulkifie Mahmood