

SCHOOL OF ARTS PRESS



SUNWAY UNIVERSITY | FEBRUARY 2021



ABOUT US

The School of Arts at Sunway University offers a variety of disciplines, ranging from Advertising and Public Relations to Design, Architecture, Film Production, Theatre and Music.

School of Arts Press (SOAP) is Sunway University's School of Arts monthly newsletter in which we highlight and provide information on student and staff achievements, past events as well as a notification platform for upcoming events.

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS

In this month's issue, SOAP highlights upcoming events in March, reflections of student and staff members on their CNY celebrations, artworks from our new series; ART:UNLIMITED, and more!


School of Arts Press —

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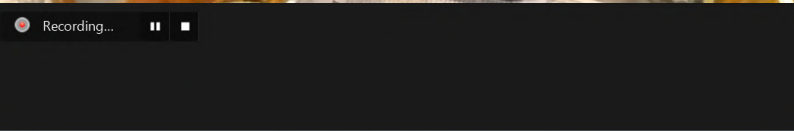
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ILABS LEADERSHIP TEAM



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Sunway Group
Director, Sunway iLabs



Eleanor Choong

Head, iLabs Ventures,
FutureX Farm



Karen Lau

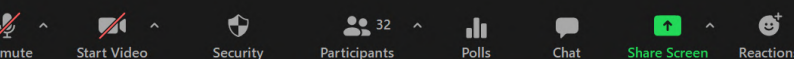
Head, iLabs Foundry



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Head, FutureX Talent

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Aiman

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

As I write this, the first Malaysians are being vaccinated!

Of course, you already knew that, but I believe it is worth commenting on. There is a certain scent of hope in the air as we go about our daily MCO activities.

It really feels like springtime feels in those parts of the world that experience four seasons.

In the meantime, another Lunar New Year came and went, this time under a full MCO. I hope you will enjoy the personal reflections on this from our students and staff in the pages below.



Professor Donald Bowyer
Dean of School of Arts

FEBRUARY 2021

SCHOOL OF ARTS PRESS

HAPPY CHINESE *New Year*

SCHOOL OF ARTS
WISHES YOU A SAFE
AND JOYOUS CNY!

UPCOMING EVENTS IN MARCH



SUNWAY-LANCASTER JOINT SYMPOSIUM:

In Celebration of Lancaster University and Sunway
University 15th Anniversary of Partnership

Future Cities
Research Institute

Lancaster
University



SUNWAY
UNIVERSITY



LANCASTER'S FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
AND SUNWAY'S SCHOOL OF ARTS JOINT SYMPOSIUM

19th March 2021 | 5pm – 7.30pm

Photo Source: Sunway University School of Arts

In September 2021, Lancaster University and Sunway University will celebrate the 15th anniversary of their partnership. To celebrate this milestone, Lancaster's Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Sunway's School of Arts will be organising a symposium around the theme of their joint Future Cities Research Institute: Sustainable Cities, Liveable Cities, and Digital Cities.

This event will be held on Microsoft Teams and is open to all staff and students of Lancaster and Sunway Universities. If you are interested in attending, please sign up [here](#) and contact Rosie Kennedy (r.kennedy2@lancaster.ac.uk) to get the link.

CALL FOR PAPER:

International Conference on Material Culture at Sunway (ICMC 2021)



Sunway University's School of Arts is organising the first International Conference on Material Culture (ICMC), with the theme: "Things in Daily Life, Life of Things in the East. Past and Present", on 20-21 October 2021.

ICMC was conceived in January 2021 as the first of its kind to be held locally and internationally that focuses on Asian and Southeast Asian material culture. The main objective of ICMC is to serve as a platform for researchers and scholars from academia, along with creators and artists from the industry, to share their research ideas and creations revolving around Asian and Southeast Asian material culture. Through ICMC, we hope to form alliances towards developing and exploring new knowledge and creative approaches that will benefit mankind and humanity, and contribute to Planet Health.

The conference this year aims to provide a better understanding of past and present societies through objects that are no longer used or whose "life" is endangered by new modern lifestyles. We also aim to reconstruct the vision and perception of time through the use of objects, that is: routines; the idea of rapid or progressive obsolescence; phenomena such as "ageing" or travelling things; the different life cycles from the making to the "death" of objects (manufacturing, use/reuse, meaning in society, destruction etc.); the crystallisation of some objects in the memory of some individuals through emotions and feelings.

We invite researchers to explore the following themes:

1. Utilitarian Objects
2. Moving Objects
3. Playful Objects
4. Objects Through Time(s)

The full call for paper and submission guidelines can be found at:

[International Conference on Material Culture \(ICMC\) 2021 | Sunway University](https://university.sunway.edu.my/icmc2021)

Submission deadline: 20th April 2021

ENGAGING PUBLIC RELATIONS YEAR 2 STUDENTS IN PROBLEM- BASED LEARNING PROJECT

By Dr. Catherine Lee

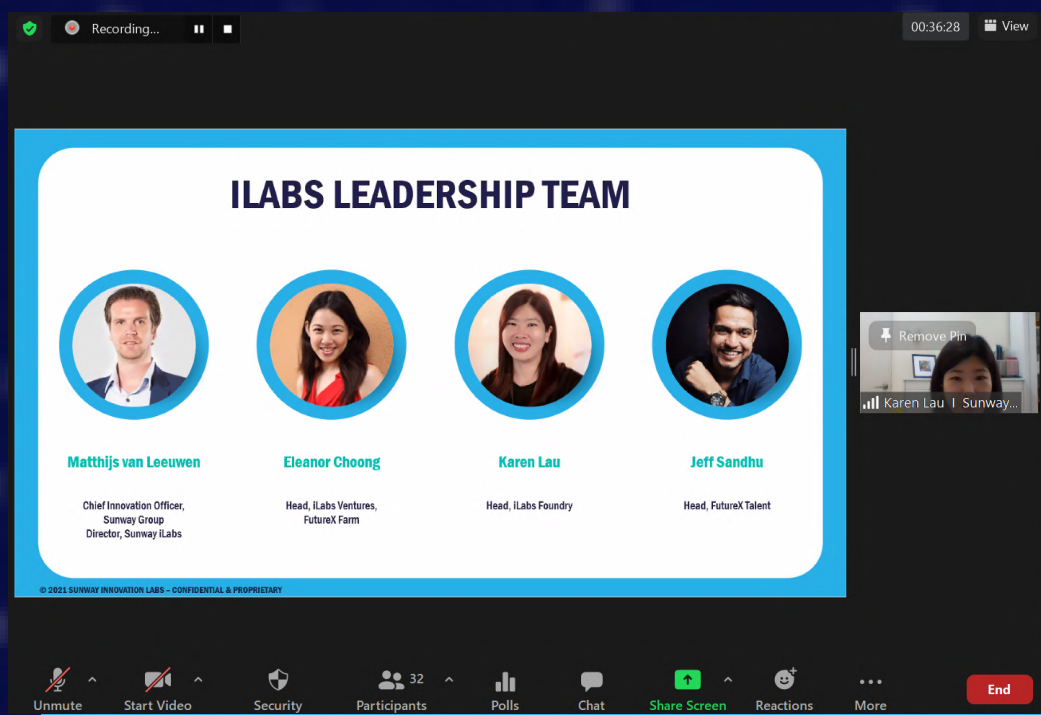


Photo Source: Dr Catherine Lee

The Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Communication offered by the Department of Communication (DoC), School of Arts, Sunway University is an exciting communication programme designed to produce industry employable graduates in the fields of public relations, corporate communication and advertising. This programme enables students to reinforce their knowledge learnt in the classroom through project-based learning, extending the learning beyond the classroom setting.

Dr. Catherine Lee, a senior lecturer at DoC, has incorporated project-based learning, a student-centred approach in her teaching. This approach involves groups of students working to solve real-world problems, which helps to strengthen students' teamwork, communication, and research skills, as well as sharpen their critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.

Through problem-based learning, students can investigate real-world problems, analyse the situation using research, and engage in critical thinking to brainstorm a list of unique problem-solving solutions for the industry clients.

A group of 25 students who are taking "Issues and Crisis Communication" this semester under Ms. Serena Leow had the opportunity to actively engage in solving an industry partner's organisational issues. The collaboration was led by Dr. Catherine. On February 1st, Ms. Karen Lau and her team from Sunway iLabs met up with students in the Issues & Crisis Communication class for a briefing session via Zoom prior to starting the project.

Students had the opportunity to engage with Sunway iLabs in discovering issues that the organisation is facing in order to propose solutions in a group project. The session started with a 40-minute presentation by Ms. Lau on the roles, functions, and key activities of Sunway iLabs. It ended with a question-and-answer session for students to better understand the challenges that the client is facing.

After this briefing session, students were asked to conduct in-depth interviews with the relevant stakeholders of Sunway iLabs. Engaging in gathering data through research will enable students to analyse the data and propose potential solutions to address Sunway iLabs' challenges.

Beyond enabling students to make sense and apply concepts learned in lectures, Dr. Catherine Lee's approach to student-centred, problem-based learning is likely to help students develop an understanding of their capabilities, skills and prospective career pathway in communication.



Photo Source: Dr Catherine Lee

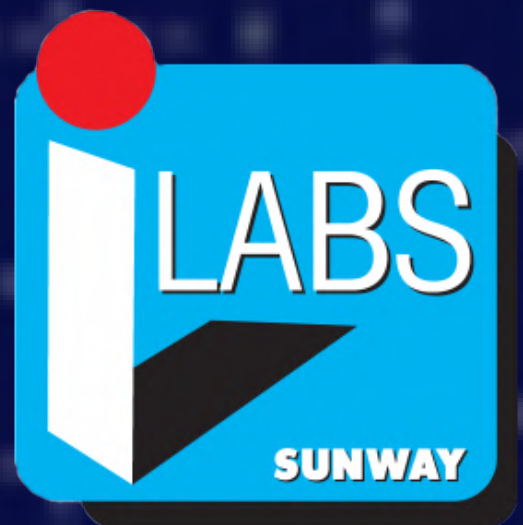


Photo Source: Sununway iLabs



Dr Catherine Lee is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Arts, Sunway University and has more than 19 years of teaching and research experience in higher education. She has published extensively in local and international peer-reviewed journals as well as presented at local and international conferences.

Chinese New Year in 2021

Chinese New Year, also known as the Lunar New Year is a festival that celebrates the beginning of the New Year according to the traditional Chinese Calendar.

Because of the pandemic, celebrations this year were very different as compared to the previous years. We reached out to individuals from SOA to share their CNY experiences.

OX YEAR SPRING FESTIVAL'S "NEW YEAR CUSTOMS"

By Woody Liew Vun Huang, Lecturer, Department of Communication



Photo Source: Woody Liew

Under the ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's Chinese Lunar New Year was destined to be different from previous years. Malaysia has not only cancelled the traditional New Year fair for decades, but the local government also urges people not to visit during the New Year or enjoy reunion dinner outside.

When the outbreak started last year, it was predicted that this year's Lunar New Year might be different. At that time, there was a little extravagant hope that the vaccine would be available soon. Judging from the current outbreak, "No New Year's visits are really the best blessing."

During the Lunar New Year Festival, it is our tradition to reunite and visit relatives and friends. However, this kind of gathering of people is what the infectious virus "likes" and is the enemy of the pandemic. Controlling the source of infection, cutting off the route of transmission, and protecting susceptible populations are the three principles of infectious disease prevention and control. In order to better "cut off the route of transmission" and curb the spread of pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus, it is necessary for us to temporarily let go of old traditions and form some "New Year customs".

Reduced visits and parties. The "warm and affectionate" gatherings and dinners in the traditional New Year customs may hide danger at this special moment. In order to better prevent and control the pandemic, various localities have cancelled temple fairs and movie screenings. Individuals may also wish to aggravate the "tradition", reduce New Year visits, gatherings, dinner parties, and use more non-contact methods. The coming days are long and very time-consuming, so you don't have to worry about it day and night.

Now that technology is very advanced, it is possible to connect multiple people. Even if the elders in the family do not, there are younger generations who can help them use video calls together. Moreover, there are now many applications for video calls for multiple connections. The parents in the family stay at home this year and do not go anywhere. If they really miss it, they can contact them via video call. Although the atmosphere is lacking, at least they can know that everyone is well.

Understand and tolerate each other. The sudden pandemic disrupted many people's plans for the Lunar New Year Festival and affected the mood of the festival to some extent. At this very moment, in order to stop the spread of the virus, it is necessary for everyone to maintain a peace of mind, understand and tolerate each other, and overcome difficulties together. When we take some "extraordinary measures", such as not visiting relatives and friends, wearing masks, or not shaking hands when meeting, we might as well give some explanations skillfully; and when we see others "like a big enemy" take some "extraordinary measures", or even "special protection measures", you might as well adopt an attitude of support, understanding, and tolerance.

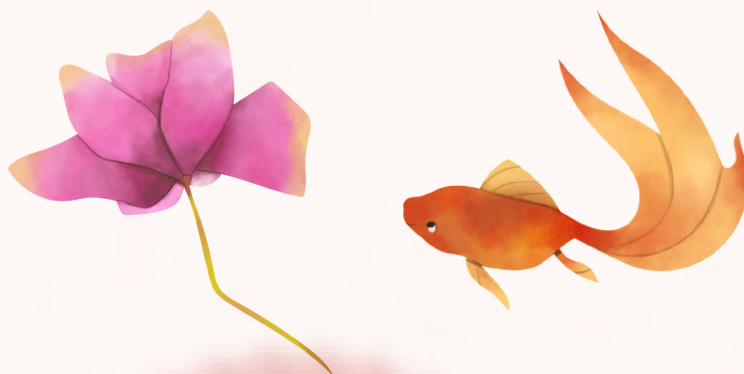
In extraordinary times, if you don't get together or have dinner, it's not that human feelings are weak, but life is supreme. Temporary "grief" is all for the sake of warmth forever.

It feels good for young people not to pay New Year's visits. For those who are older, New Year's visits may be an opportunity to meet once a year, but this year is really different. The whole world is ravaged by coronary disease. Therefore, for me very much agree with the "New Year's custom" of not to pay New Year's visits.

Although it is not possible to celebrate the New Year, you still have to have New Year decorations in your home, and you can still do things like changing lanterns and sticking couplets, and celebrate this year's Chinese New Year in the simplest case.

“ Safety and health are the most important thing. As long as you keep a healthy body, you can still visit the New Year next year. - Woody Liew

“平安健康最重要，只要留著健康的身体，明年还是可以拜年。” - 吾迪刘



A TARTY NEW YEAR

By Christine May Yong, Department of Film and Performing Arts

I think it goes without saying that Chinese New Year was a subdued affair for many of us this year. Touching base with my students on the Monday after the holidays, many revealed more or less similar sentiments I felt about this year's festivities—sadness about being apart, peppered with some boredom.

In many ways, this was not surprising; after all, if we were serious about wanting to keep infections from spiraling out of control, we just had to lay low. Thus, it came as a surprise when my Mum casually asked if we could think about making jam tarts in the lead up to Chinese New Year.

Making jam tarts—a delicacy made from pineapple jam and pastry—is a tradition within my family. It all started with my Mum; as a teenager she had eaten a pineapple tart and quickly became fixated about making them. Close to 40 years of experimentation (and many failures) later, we now have a jam tart recipe that is apparently delicious (I wouldn't know, since I hardly eat them due to the sheer volume we produce). Our family tarts are only made once a year just before Chinese New Year, and they are never for sale. Instead, they are given to family and close friends—who in turn fight epic battles over them. I've lost count of the number of times I've received near-hysterical messages of "[insert name of accused] ate all the tarts! I'm going to murder him/her!"



Photo Source: Christine - Jam filling duty and baked jam tarts.

I'm unable to recall when I started helping Mum with her yearly jam tart making tradition, but we know the process by heart. A week before the pastry is rolled out, Mum and I go pineapple hunting. Usually, we purchase anything between 15-20 pineapples, which will then be skinned, grated, and thrown into a huge pot to be made into jam. Jam making alone takes at least half a day.

A week later, our jam tart factory opens. Our roles are fixed; Mum will make the pastry, roll them out, and keep an eye on the baking tarts before sorting them into containers. On my part, I fill the jam and pop them into the oven. We make anything between 4-6kg of tarts over a full day! The pictures here give you an idea of what our factory looks like.



Photo Source: Christine - Pineapple jam is done!



Photo Source: Christine - Mum rolling out the pastry.



Photo Source: Christine - Jam tart factory setup!

While this year's celebrations have definitely been subdued, I look at these pictures with a sense of gratitude—gratitude that I have my Mum with me; gratitude that we have once again survived yet another year of tart-making; but more importantly, that despite the pandemic, we could still safely pass on a little joy to our loved ones thanks to our homemade babies.

I think that was my biggest takeaway for this year's Chinese New Year—that regardless of challenges, little semblances of tradition could—and will—continue.

I just hope those who did receive our tarts didn't end up killing anyone. That would defeat the purpose of this article, don't you think?

TAN YIN BEI

BA (Hons) in Communication



Photo Source: Yin Bei

As we are unable to travel back to my hometown this year due to the interstate travel ban, I celebrated Chinese New Year at home with my family instead. On New Year's Eve, we had a "reunion" dinner with a simple home cooked meal consisting of noodles, soup, stir fried vegetables, and of course, yee sang. To be honest, the most fun activity I did during CNY this year was playing cards with my family; nothing says family love like winning money from them!

Considering how we are already so accustomed to lockdown life, celebrating CNY during these very odd times felt strangely normal to me. But that doesn't mean I don't miss visiting my extended family and friends — eating all the snacks, receiving *ang paos*, and immersing myself in the company of other humans other than well, myself. Despite the situation, I am so grateful to have been able to spend the festivities with my family (and my 3 pet dogs).

I'd like to end with a quote from one of my favourite authors/YouTube creators:

"There is hope, even when your brain tells you there isn't."
- John Green

**We will persevere
as always and light-
soaked days will
surely come soon!**

ERVIN LEONG

BA (Hons) in Digital Film Production

I think everyone adapted to the Chinese New Year celebrations very differently this year. Some friends of mine were unhappy to be stuck in one place while others were glad to skip the travelling as a whole.

For me personally, it was an eye opening experience to celebrate the festivities in my own home country as my family usually goes down south to Singapore every year during this time. While it does feel a little smaller and quieter, it was a very unique and memorable encounter, which is an upside in the less positive situation we are currently going through.

Aside from the regular mountains of oranges and expensive firework displays, there was nothing really out of the ordinary that my family and I did. However one odd point would be how weird it felt to have access to the internet during the New Year as my grandparents house in Singapore has no Wi-Fi connectivity. There would have been no way for me to access my social media accounts, which meant that I had more time to connect with external family members.



Photo Source: Ervin Leong

I'd say many of us took for granted the opportunity to have family gatherings and take trips across borders.

What was once a boring activity is now sought after for many of us during the holidays.

Most of us are pent up within our own homes, with some individuals not even being able to spend the holidays with immediate family.

This season definitely made me more appreciative towards how good things used to be. While it may take some time to go back to how it was, I'm grateful for the experiences I've had thus far.

ART : UNLIMITED

ART: UNLIMITED IS DESIGNED TO SHOWCASE THE ART MADE BY TALENTED MEMBERS OF THE SOA.

ART IS NOT CONFINED TO A CERTAIN STANDARD AS THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ITS CREATIONS AND

THIS MAY COME IN THE FORM OF PHOTOGRAPHY, PAINTINGS, POETRY AND MORE.

WE WELCOME ALL WORKS OF ART FOR THIS SECTION.

NEW NORMAL: 2020, 2021 AND COUNTING

by Syifa Fitri Dzikrina Firdausa, Indonesia
BA (Hons) in Interior Architecture



Ever since our "new normal" happened, we are all required to wear masks whenever we go out due to the global pandemic. Less than 18 months ago, there was barely anyone wearing a surgical face mask out in public but nowadays it's a rarity to be seen without one. Many of us thought it would be a temporary situation but little did we know that this practice will become part of our daily routine for the months and maybe even years to come. We have to carry on the 'fashion' of mask-wearing for the sake of our own health and safety.

THE ONG RED DAY

by Christopher Koh, Indonesia
BA (Hons) in Digital Film Production



Many of us, if not all, associate the colour red with Chinese New Year. It represents love, joy, passion and courage, among other things. To me, the colour red is what trademarks CNY as a holiday! While larger gatherings are prohibited and family reunions cancelled, it was amazing to experience the different ways people were making attempts to carry on traditions and celebrations. Seeing all the lights and decorations inspired me to capture how one colour can be reflected in various activities and environments.



THE BEAUTY OF MELANCHOLY

by Shevone Seow, Malaysia

BA (Hons) in Contemporary Music (Audio Technology)



Travelling is something I always look forward to, whether locally or overseas. It's a great way to make new memories and create lasting experiences in unknown territory. 2 years ago, I was fortunate enough to take a trip to China (pre-covid, haha) with some colleagues and friends to explore the different sights and sounds there. As someone who has music involved on both a professional and personal level, this unique organ stood out to me. Not just aesthetically, but in that large hall 'hiding' behind a grand piano, it had its own character and charm. Just by existing in the corner, it made me realise how beauty can be found through different forms of art in various ways.

LIFE AFTER SOA SERIES: Passion for Performing Arts

Featuring Aiman Aiman





FEBRUARY 2021

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Photo Source: Ross Stephenson

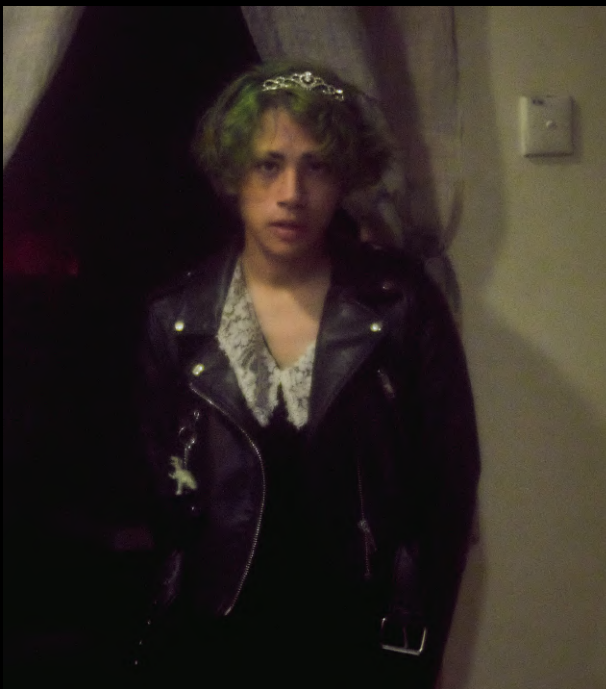


Photo Source: Jennifer Tan

This month's issue of Life After SOA features the phenomenal Aiman Aiman, a Diploma in Performing Arts 2019 graduate who has performed in various KLPAC (Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre) theatre work such as Brohemial, Rashomon, and T4YP Emergence: Love and Loss.

Aiman begins by talking about how he felt comfortable when he was pushed towards creative integrity again and again by every lecturer of his, "I think it helped that I came in with a head full of filmographic references, as well as this queer artistic instinct". He mentioned that it was all thanks to the work of his lecturers that grounded "this heady eighteen year old excitement". When asked to further explain what he meant, Aiman recalls an instance where Mark Teh, a lecturer that taught him Malaysian Arts and Culture, made him question the things he would say out loud. And in turn, this made Aiman become more aware of the things he says and to not be controversial just for the sake of it.

“

Sometimes, art is not the best excuse for bad behaviour, sometimes it's just that you have bad behaviour. - Aiman

”



Photo Source: Daniel Ng

Stating that "the diploma had its magic of choosing the right lecturers from every pocket of whatever murky mix of film and theatre", Aiman shares that he felt extremely lucky to have been able to work with Leow Puay Tin, a lecturer who mentored the students for his batch's Final Year Project. "She knew how to make sense of the student that I was, which ultimately is the biggest compliment".

One of the highlights of Aiman's diploma was his final year project, a piece entitled 'In-Vogueing Women', devised under the guided assistance of Puay Tin. The ten minute piece explored the mediation of western and local feminism, folklore, and movement

through the lens of a queer Malay boy body. Texts were sourced from Aiman's grandmother's recorded accounts of her life as a young girl, and was performed by Camillea Benjamin, Kyliesha Lam as well as himself. When describing the performance, he says, "It stood as a kaleidoscopic scene of vinyl pants, dancing to nothing, witchcraft and an observation of girlhood under the periodical context of British Malaya."

In his eyes, Puay Tin was a big believer in rationalising every and any idea that her students came up with — nothing was unfeasible or too preposterous. "I remember a moment in which we had to map out where our props would be on stage, and her asking me why I had placed them there, and mentioning how different our messages on stage would read if we placed our props differently". He believes that a lot of her students are thankful for Puay Tin's input — how she demanded a lot more from her students, as well as in their artistry, because he thinks Puay Tin simply saw her students as artists.



Photo Source: Eddie Tan

Currently Aiman is at home, in quarantine, and expresses his creativity through [Cempedak Collective](#), an online space where he uploads various forms of art together with Ho Lee Ching and Dawn Cheong. As the pace in which things are set in the arts scene has been brought to an unprecedented pause, he has roles and jobs that he is fixed to work on in the future once cultural and artistic events can go on. "A huge part of how these things happened was due to the help that I had in the SOA Career Management classes from Kelvin Wong" – who taught him how to handle things in the bustle of an artistic environment.

As for the future, he hopes to become a full-time artist and to direct his own theatre production very soon. "I hope to understand why I make the art I do". Additionally, Aiman also wants to learn how to play the guitar before he turns 22. However, his ultimate aspiring goal would be to keep doing what he wants to do in a place where the arts do not take second place.

Photo Source: Cempedak Collective



Photo Source: Ross Stephenson