



*SCHOOL OF ARTS
PRESS*

SUNWAY UNIVERSITY | MAY 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 the various achievements of SOA students & staff, reflections of two students on their Hari Raya celebrations, Life After SOA featuring Bernard Yap and more!

School of Arts Press —

Advisor/Editor: Elizabeth Edwin
(Public Engagement Coordinator)

Writers: Tan Yin Bei & Qarlene Rishiqa

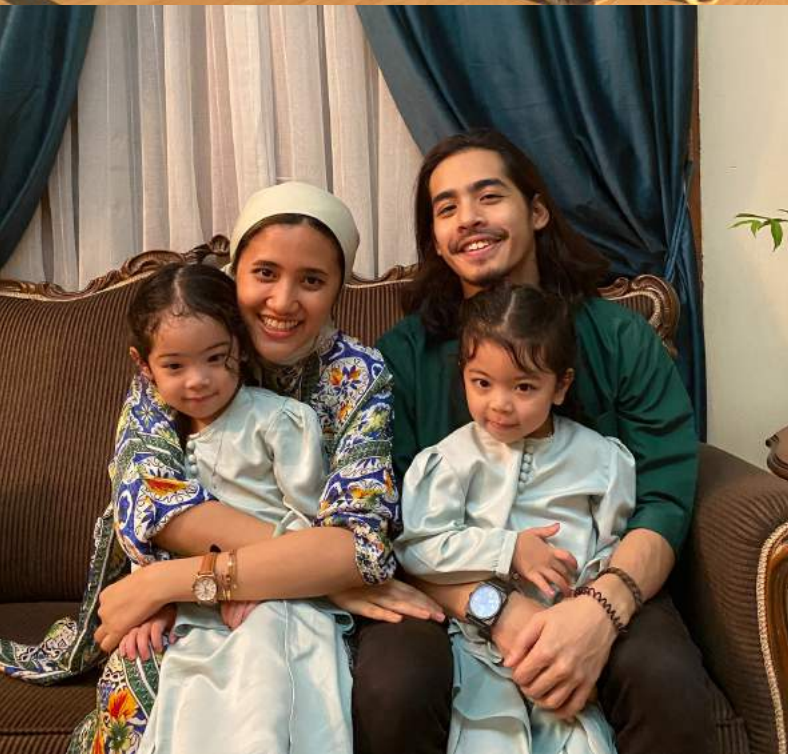
Design: Tan Yin Bei & Qarlene Rishiqa

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MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Another lockdown...

For the creative people who make up the students and staff of the School of Arts, these words are no longer so terrifying. We have discovered that it is possible to create meaningful works under lockdown conditions. Read below for stories about how our talented cadre of creators have expanded their artistic vision.

Please forward this email to anyone who would be interested in receiving a monthly review of upcoming events and past successes in the SOA. Links to subscribe or unsubscribe are included in the email.



Professor Donald Bowyer
Dean of School of Arts



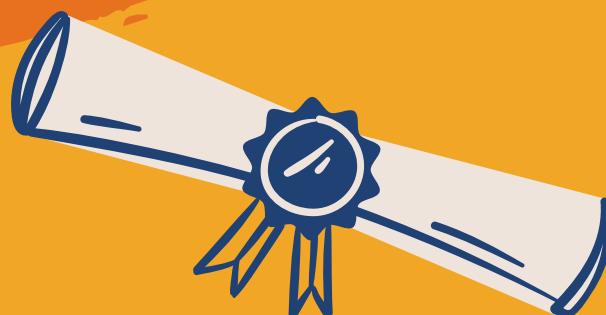
CONGRATULATIONS SOA GRADUATES!

IT FINALLY HAPPENED:



The School of Arts would like to congratulate all the graduates from
July 2020 and February 2021!

Wishing you all a successful journey ahead!

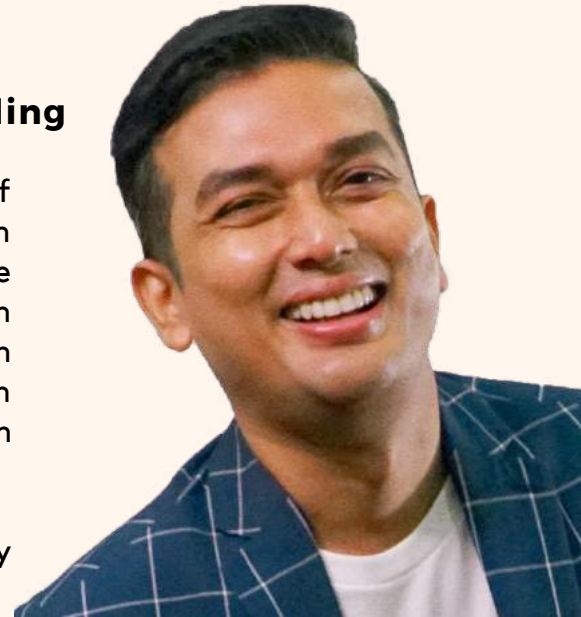


WELCOME NEW SOA FACULTY MEMBERS!

Dr. Zuhaili, BA (Hons) in Advertising and Branding

Dr. Zuhaili is the latest addition to the Department of Communication faculty, primarily for the new BA (Hons) in Advertising and Branding degree programme. He graduated from Syracuse University with a degree in Advertising Creative and eventually joined McCann Erickson in New York. After eight years of interlude in New York City, Zuhaili returned to Malaysia to become an educational advocate and a creative consultant.

Zuhaili plays the organ and finds comfort in movies by Guillermo del Toro, Quentin Tarantino & Joko Anwar!



Elizabeth Edwin

Elizabeth was actually a student from the BA (Hons) Contemporary Music (Audio Technology) programme! After graduating in July 2020, she returned to the SOA with an administrative position as the Public Engagement Coordinator. She plays the piano and guitar, and in her spare time she enjoys dancing and watching TV sitcoms.



UPCOMING EVENT: AUXILIARY



'Auxiliary: The Sound of You' is a virtual music event organised by the students from the Department of Communication with the aim of showcasing the hidden musical talents from our very own Sunway Campus.

They have an amazing line-up of performers and even invited 2 guest performers!

Wanna know who they are? Stay tuned to their social media and look out for the announcement. You can stand a chance to win prizes during the event too!

'Our hidden talents need your support — big or small, every bit counts! Stay home, stay safe and stay healthy. They can't wait to see you "virtually" in June!

Date : 25th June 2021

Time : 8.00PM - 10.00PM

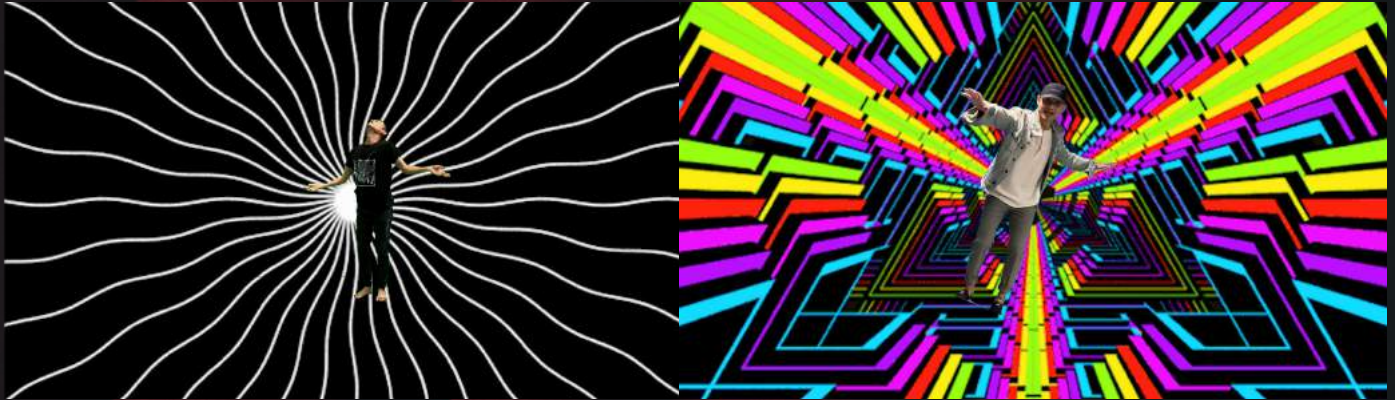
Platform : Live on Auxiliary's Facebook page

Join in on the fun by registering [here!](#)

For more information, check out Auxiliary's [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

OPPY & PROFESSOR COMMUNITAS

Written by Leow Puay Tin



Caption: Screen-grabs from 'Oppy & Professor Communitas' - pre-recorded scenes which served as flashbacks or the imagination & daydreams of the young artist 'Oppy', performed by Iefiz Alaudin

“There is no such thing as an impulsive artist!”

What happens when you finally meet the ‘wise’ teacher you have been looking for, but didn’t realise because all this time you have been actively looking for something else – for more freedom to express yourself as an artist? And you reject him as soon as you encounter him, because he is impatient, demanding, and sarcastic? He wants to make people like you, people in the arts and creative industries, think about what you are doing. So he asks probing questions about process (what, how, why) which turn out to be surprisingly difficult questions for people like you to answer because you believe that artistic freedom means being free and spontaneous. No way, refutes the professor. “There is no such thing as an impulsive artist!”

This conflict is at the heart of the story of *Oppy & Professor Communitas*, a new play by playwright Leow Puay Tin from the School of Arts, staged with collaborators from ASWARA and the Five Arts Centre and creative industry.

Oppy was recently staged live online on March 26th and 27th 2021, on the Cloud Theatre platform, a new outfit which provides

streaming and ticketing services for online screenings of films and performances.

The online performance of *Oppy* came about because of Covid-19 SOPs which forced the cancellation of two previous readings of the play in October and December last year. However, it came with a new set of challenges. Going online means having to use and deal with technology as well as the vagaries of our internet connection/s. Now, most of the online theatre performances that we have seen were actually pre-recorded and then screened. They were not performed in real time. But the playwright, producer (Mark Teh of the Five Arts Centre) and director (Fasyali Fadzly of ASWARA) decided to stay true to the live spirit of theatre nonetheless. The implementation was made possible by sleepless experimentations by the technical designer, Syamsul Azhar (one of our Diploma in Performing Arts graduates from 2006) on how to use Skype and Zoom and the free OBS app as an interface.

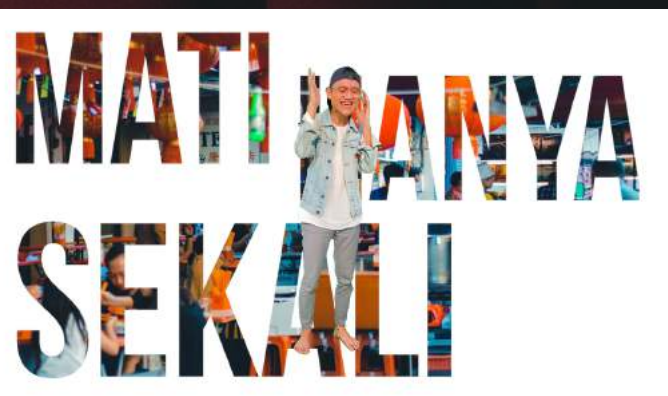
The burden also fell on the two actors performing *Oppy* and the Professor who had to find a way to act while seated in front of their laptops for nearly two hours, and the director who had to imagine how it would all turn out.

So not only was there a life-changing encounter between Oppy and the Professor in the play, behind-the-scenes there were many life-changing encounters between humans and the lo-fi technology and equipment they were using. As it turned out, 'Oppy' couldn't be 100% live. The production had to include pre-shot footage (using green screen) to present the inner world of Oppy through images and music, something that couldn't be accomplished if performed live given the limitations of the technology. Therefore, the production was about 70% live and 30% pre-recorded.

Among the unexpected benefits of making this online 'hybrid' theatre was the discovery of the still-untapped possibilities of using

simple and cheap technology to make theatre online despite the obvious limitations — this was exciting to people in the theatre scene, especially the younger theatre-makers. Another benefit was the possibility of reaching an audience virtually anywhere in the world. The three performances had people signing in from the US, Canada, UK, India, Singapore, Australia, Japan, and all over Malaysia, whereas a physical performance would only be seen by people in the Klang Valley.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the synopsis of the play, the background info, as well as the core team's biographies.



Caption: Screen-grabs from 'Oppy & Professor Communitas' - pre-recorded scenes which served as flashbacks or the imagination & daydreams of the young artist 'Oppy', performed by Iefiz Alaudin

Here are some photos on what was going on behind-the-scenes in the process of making the online 'hybrid' theatre. All credits go to the Five Arts Centre.



'Oppy & Professor Communitas' playwright Leow Puay Tin with director Fasyali Fadzly. Puay Tin is Assoc Prof at Dept of Film & Performing Arts, Sunway University & Fasyali is Dean of Theatre at ASWARA.



Rehearsals for 'Oppy & Professor Communitas' began in February 2021 with online readings of Leow Puay Tin's text via Zoom. As this was during the MCO, the entire team were working from their own homes.

While the production was conceived as an online live performance, several scenes were pre-recorded using green screen by multimedia designer & Dept of Film & Performing Arts part-time lecturer Syamsul Azhar.



Performers Iefiz Alaudin & Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri trying out possibilities for live performance at home with multimedia designer Syamsul Azhar, using a combination of different software including Zoom, Skype & OBS.

Director Fasyali Fadzly watching rehearsal from his home.



Performer Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri rehearsing in the role of Professor Communitas



Performer Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri rehearsing in the role of Professor Communita.

Performers Iefiz Alaudin & Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri finally meeting physically 10 days before the performance in Five Arts Centre in Taman Tun Dr. Ismail.



Stage manager Darynn Wee, multimedia designer Syamsul Azhar & director Fasyali Fadzly watching a run in a different room in Five Arts Centre.



Playwright Leow Puay Tin watching a full rehearsal of 'Oppy & Professor Communitas' in the Five Arts Centre studio.

Oppy & Professor Communitas

An online performance of a new play by leading playwright Leow Puay Tin.

Directed by Fasyali Fadzly.

Performed by Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri & Iefiz Alaudin.

Multimedia design by Syamsul Azhar.

Original music by Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri.

Did you know? Both Faiq Syazwan and Syamsul Azhar are our DPA students from 2006!



Dr Leow Puay Tin is an Associate Professor in the Department of Film and Performing Arts. Through writing, devising, and curation, she creates texts for performance that have been staged by prominent directors and theatre companies in Malaysia and Singapore. She has been the recipient of grants from the Asia Centre of Japan Foundation and the East-West Centre in the USA, and the UK Chevening Award.

CREATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES EXCHANGE



Photo Source: Eventbrite

The first joint PG seminar with Lancaster University was successfully held on Wednesday 12th May from 5pm-7pm, with over 30 attendees. It was co-organised by Dr. Jen Southern of Lancaster University.

This new series is designed to bring together staff, students and researchers to share research methodologies in creative subjects. Sunway and Lancaster are international partner universities with significant postgraduate communities in the arts.

This series of seminars is designed to enable new international networks and relationships to form, through sharing research methodologies, practices and ideas. The first seminar includes talks by academic staff in Art and Design, the second in Film, and a final seminar in October will showcase postgraduate researchers and students from the MA and PhD programmes.

On 12th May, Dr. Christopher Boyco (LU), Mr. Travis Liew (SU) gave talks on methodologies in design, and Ms. Helen Guek (SU) and Dr. Sarah Casey (LU), on research and creative processes.

The second joint seminar in Film was held on Wednesday 26th May. Talks were given by Dr. Bruce Bennett (LU) and Dr. Adrian Lee (SU) on methodologies in filmmaking, while Dr. Dusan Petkovic (SU) and Dr. Maryam Ghorbankarimi (LU) spoke about research processes.

Comments from lecturers and student attendees:

"Organising this seminar with Dr Jen Southern was a very rewarding experience. By highlighting research methodologies and allowing postgraduate students to meet and ask the researchers questions, we demonstrated that the partnership between Lancaster University and Sunway University is a fruitful one, and one that makes for great exchanges, both from an academic and a human perspective. We look forward to continuing our collaboration next year." - **Prof. Sabine**

"Cross-pollination of ideas between research institutions is always a great initiative. When two research institutions have such a strong and long-standing partnership it only gets better. It was lovely to meet and chat with master and phd students from both universities!" - **Dr. Dusan**

"I found the seminar to be a great platform that allowed postgraduate students and fellow academics to better understand the research and research interests of one another. It was also a good platform to learn more about the various contexts in which these researches were conducted in, as well as learn about how research as well as filmmaking aren't exactly processes that are completely rigid, but could require some "at the moment" and "spur of the moment" forms of improvisation as well." - **Dr. Adrian**

"It was refreshing and a good experience to mingle with other post graduate students and academics from Lancaster, discussing ideas and dissecting them together. It was great to make new friends and an amazing networking opportunity on an international level." - **Azeem Shah**

"It was an inspiring and eye-opening experience for someone with my background in Performance and very little academic experience. It gave me the much-needed motivation to push forward with my own Creative Research at Sunway University." - **Jyotsna Prakash**

Click here for [Event Page 1](#) and [Event Page 2](#)

SURVIVAL

by Anbreene Bilkis Mungroo

I have been writing for as long as I can remember. As a child, it was always difficult for me to express myself verbally, therefore, I found an escape through writing. Ever since then, I have been expressing myself and escaping my difficulties by writing.

I used to get bullied a lot at school and went through a lot of psychological issues and family troubles. Art has always been a way to run away from my reality, whether in primary or secondary school. Whenever I felt pain, I would draw, sing, dance or write.

I started out writing prose and poetry but as time went by, my teachers started noticing a talent, whereby they guided me to improve even more.

I studied English literature up to O-levels and French Literature up to A-levels, in which I excelled. However, up till then, I had only written prose, poetry and short stories, none good enough to be published.

Survival started out as a journal. Initially it was supposed to be my personal diary, hence the journal writing style at the beginning. As I continued, a story started playing out in my head and I wrote it down. When I reviewed the first few pages, I realised that it felt like a story, and decided to keep on writing. I had no outline, no plan, I just made it up as I went.



SURVIVAL

"Settled in a foreign but vibrant country, Quesiyah spends her days juggling her life as a university student while also trying to get the cute guy in her class to notice her, determined to live the life she sees fit while ignoring the quiet and creeping unrest that reverberates throughout every corner of her city.

Yet, the arrival of an explosion that shakes the ground beneath her feet destroys the fragile illusion of peace that she had taken for granted. Knowing nothing else but normalcy, Quesiyah experiences desperation for the first time and struggles with the anxiety and desolation that comes with the need to survive."



“ **SURVIVAL is a very unique, different story. It is not the typical love novel.**

Nowadays, most platforms look for Werewolf or Vampire themed love stories as those are the most famous...

It took me about 3 months to finish it. Yet, it wasn't as good. That version had a lot of incoherence and mistakes but I did not care, I was proud of myself for doing that much. I decided to post it on Wattpad. I was not serious about publishing then, I just did it for fun.

After a while, one of my friends who is also a Mauritian and an experienced published author, Sarah Mungly, advised me that I take my publishing more seriously, and went on to email one of her publishing platforms, Webnovel, about me.

They then offered me a choice between a non-exclusive and an exclusive contract, from which I chose non-exclusive. I then went on to editing the book to make it more worth reading. The book from the first draft and now are very different, in terms of both story and grammar. Once it was worth publishing, I sent it to the platforms and got other offers for non-exclusive contracts.

SURVIVAL is a very unique, different story. It is not the typical love novel. Nowadays, most platforms look for Werewolf or Vampire themed love stories as those are the most famous, so many platforms first rejected my book. It took a while for me to actually get contracts and start signing. In the meantime, I had to deal with a lot of insecurities, lack of confidence and breakdowns, but when I got my contracts, I felt a lot more confident.

My biggest contract yet is the one with Draft2Digital, where the book is sold on platforms as big as Barnes & Noble and Apple Books, and my book got 39,000 views on Webnovel. This is such a big achievement considering where I am coming from.

Click [here](#) to read Survival!

FRAGILITY EXHIBITION



Photo Source: Fragilità on YouTube

As part of the exhibition Fragility (an exhibition organised by Particle (Milan) Wei-Ling Gallery (KL) Assoc. Prof. Ken Feinstein was involved in two online discussions.

They are: **KALEIDOSCOPE | Episode 1 | Art and Empathy (6 May)** and **Fragility Talks 04 co-sponsored by Fondazione ICA Milano (25 March)**.

On 30th March, Prof Matthew Sansom was involved in another discussion: **Fragility Talks 06 also co-sponsored by the Fondazione ICA Milano**

On 18th March MA students Soo Kah Yee, June and Saifalla Walid Mhd Awad were part of the discussion: **A Students' Diary #3 - FRAGILITY OF LANGUAGE**

On 27th March, MA students Yusra Dadou and Melissa James were part of: **A Students' Diary #6 - FRAGILITY OF REALITY**

The student talks were done in cooperation with Culturit, a network of university students, professors and professionals in 12 Italian cities.

Information about the events including YouTube links can be found [here](#)



Dr Ken Feinstein is an Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Art, Design and Media. He is an artist, theorist, curator and writer. He has exhibited internationally, including solo exhibitions at the Chelsea Art Museum, New York; the Jogja Nasional Museum, Jogjakarta, Indonesia; group exhibitions at the Millennium Museum, Beijing; the National Visual Art Gallery, Malaysia; and the Museum of the World Ocean, Kaliningrad, Russia.

JOURNALISMISNOTACRIME:

Prosecution of Media & Journalists in Malaysia



The work of journalists in Malaysia becomes unnecessarily challenging as they face threats of persecution and prosecution on a daily basis — harassment, lawsuits, criminal investigations and much more simply for doing their job. On May 26th, Dr. Pauline Leong from the SOA's Department of Communication moderated the forum, #JournalismIsNotACrime: Prosecution of Media & Journalists in Malaysia.

The forum included brilliant speakers Ibrahim Sani (Astro AWANI), Zikri Kamarulzaman (Malaysiakini), Tashny Sukumaran and Shahirah Abd Hamid (Centre for Independent Journalism). Additionally, a talk was presented by Lily Jamaludin (Amnesty International Malaysia) on censorship and resistance as part of their Unsilenced Campaign.

Aside from highlighting the issues faced by journalists, the insightful discussion also emphasised on the importance of ensuring that the media is free to provide us with accurate, ethical and insightful news stories.

Weekend of Knowledge Evolution (WOKE) is an annual event organised by the Malaysian Institute for Debate & Public Speaking (MIDP) to create awareness and encourage constructive discourse on critical topics, while promoting freedom of speech and expression in Malaysia. This year, MIDP partnered with Malaysiakini, BFM Radio - The Business Station, Kumpulan Media Karangkraf, Institute of Journalists Malaysia, Geramm and Taylor's College.

Watch the full livestream [here](#).



Dr. Pauline Pooi Yin Leong is an Associate Professor in the Department of Communication. She has more than 15 years of teaching and academic experience in universities. She received her PhD in Political Communication from Monash University and her Master in Communication from Nanyang Technological University, where she also received the Pearson Education Gold Medal Award for Best Graduating Student.

PROFESSOR FREEMAN

Interviewed by The Edge Malaysia



Photo Source: The Edge Malaysia

Earlier this month, The Edge Malaysia published an article titled, 'Cover Story: Radio killed the video star'.

It featured insights from SOA's Head of the Department of Communication, Prof. Bradley Freeman! He talked about how media content has evolved over the years and gave his opinion on the live audio app 'Clubhouse' and audio podcasting.

To read the article, click [here](#).



Professor Bradley C Freeman is Professor and Head of the Department of Communication, School of Arts at Sunway University. Prior to this, he was Professor of Communication & Information Studies at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School for Communication at the American University in Dubai and Assistant Professor at the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

COV-EID WITH SOA

Hari Raya Aidilfitri or Eid is a festival celebrated by muslims around the world to mark the end of the month of Ramadan which is the fasting month.

Because celebrations this year were very different, we wanted to feature some experiences and stories that two students from SOA had in comparison to previous years.



ANIS ANTASHA

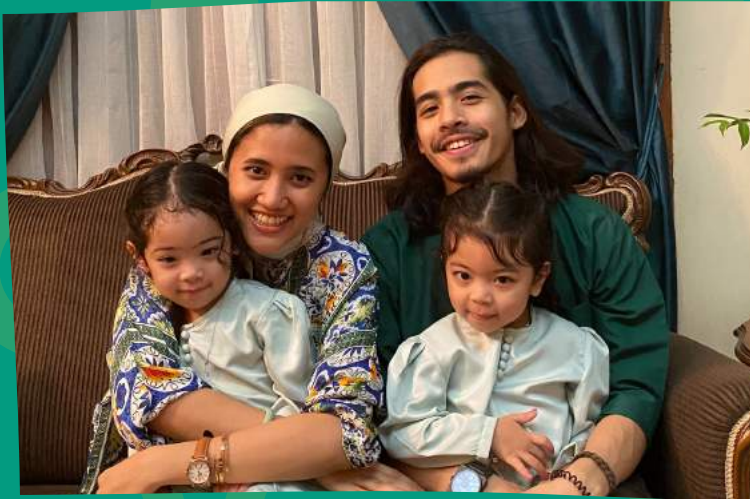
BA (Hons) in Communication



Raya this year was similar to last year but I found it was much sadder as most of my family members were unable to 'balik kampung' or come home. Honestly, we just kept on doing our usual routine that we normally do every raya, where the ladies would prepare the food while the men go to Raya prayers early in the morning.

After prayers were finished, everyone got ready in our own baju raya. Some of us wore new clothes while others reused old ones that haven't been worn in a long time. My family and I don't really coordinate our outfits to match each other, in fact we rarely wear clothes with the exact same colour or design.

After changing and getting ready, we feast together on the delicious food cooked by the women of the house. In Johor, we would usually serve our food according to our tradition which is always Nasi Briyani Johor as our main dish, Harissa (a mixture of meat and oats), Burasak+Lepat Lui (something like lemang but in a different shape and the way it is cooked and made is different) and Sambal Goreng Pengantin as our sides. We do eat lemang ketupat and others but our main meal would be the nasi (rice).



At night, the youngsters and the kids play with fireworks, pop pop and any explosives we could find. We basically had a war with the neighbours playing with the explosives as well.

As I'm getting older, I feel like celebrating raya in MCO style is actually quite peaceful and more serene unlike the raya celebration years before because it's a lot less hectic than what it used to be. Most importantly, I still get to celebrate it with my family, especially with my nieces and nephews who fortunately live in the same neighbourhood.



Photo Source: Anis Anatasha

Frankly speaking, if it wasn't for COVID, I would definitely have celebrated my eid celebration differently. I would have gone to visit all my relatives in Johor and would have even crossed the border to go visit my family members in Singapore. I really miss going into Singapore to visit my uncle in the morning and coming back to my other aunty's house in JB. It's something that not every Malaysian has the privilege of doing.

RAJA ADAM ISKANDAR

BA (Hons) in Digital Film Production



I celebrated Raya at home which has been very peculiar for me the past 2 years because my family and I are the ones going out and about on the first day! What was missing this year and last year was the chaotic nature of being around so many people, so this year was strictly boiled down to family in the household.

Although I feel there's a lot of things missing from my own definition of Raya, it is definitely necessary and we've made the most out of the situation at hand. We still dress up in Baju Melayu just to keep our Raya Spirits up after finishing a whole month of fasting.

Celebrations would have been very different if not for the national lockdown and the global pandemic. I'd go back to the normal ways of celebrating Raya which means meeting with as many people as we can and eating as much as we can and getting as much duit raya as possible! Hopefully in the next year we'll go all out crazy for Raya especially since we're aiming for herd immunity by the end of this year.



Photo Source: Raja Adam Iskandar

What's really eye opening for celebrating Raya this year and last year, is not going to the mosque, and having prayers at home is really refreshing for a change. What I really enjoyed is hearing the sermon from the man of the house, my father. He keeps it simple and current to what our family is going through and it's well explained, mentioning how the stories of the past keep repeating itself today and how it applies back at home. That is something I will never forget for the rest of my life, a truly blessed way to have a sermon after Aidilfitri prayers.

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.

2 FACED

LEANN NG, MALAYSIA

BA (Hons) in Communication



Growing up, I have always had a thing for makeup. Not just the regular daily ones, but also the ones you could call "Art." Extravaganza has always been my thing and I love it when people use different types of art to express their emotions or their thoughts, be it drawing, fashion, dancing, or even writing stories. These tools allow us to showcase who we are and how we feel, and it has always impressed me how much people can achieve just by releasing this artistic nature that originates from our mind and body.

I have also grown to love photography because of the aesthetic pictures and landscapes, both realistic and fantastical, that never fail to amaze me. But I'm still working on that.

I've decided to incorporate both makeup and editing to further enhance the concept of double-sided people. The photo shows the presence of good and evil in us. Like it or not, both of them reside in if not around each and every one of us and there is nothing you can do but embrace both. Acknowledge their existence but still be able to prevent one side from overtaking another. Embracing darkness doesn't mean that one is evil/bad, it could be similar to allowing yourself to grieve when you have to. But it also doesn't mean that you can commit crime though. All in all, find the balance between the two and be your true self.

SURROUNDED BY NATURE

HARRAJ SINGH A/L HARBANS SINGH, MALAYSIA

BA (Hons) in Interior Architecture



What is home? In addition to being a safe haven, it is a place that accommodates and extends all kinds of possibilities and happiness. The Biophilic Villa Interior Design reflects the concept of 'Surrounded by Nature'. It is designed to give the feel of a resort in the city. The brown and orange color scheme evokes stability, reliability and safety not without a hint of nostalgia and it fits in right with our desire to connect with nature.

By increasing conscious engagement and contact with nature, our love for and appreciation of nature is enlivened. Enlivened biophilia strengthens the bond with nature that we developed over the eons of human evolution. Living the biophilic way, personal identification with nature promotes our psycho-physiological fitness and well-being. When we find refreshment from a walk in nature, we are experiencing the effects of a biophilic enlivenment.

Based on personal experience, I find myself more productive and creative. This helps to reduce stress and make you calm. The basic element of Biophilia Design is natural light - plants and nature related finishes can be on the architectural elements or even loose furniture. Using natural materials like wood, clay, cork, rattan and wool is a simple way of bringing nature into your home and it adds depth and character through all different textures. Trust me, integrating the biophilia concept gives a huge impact to your life.

Check out more of Harraj's designs [here](#).

THE POWER OF ART, THE BEAUTY OF CREATIVITY

ANONYMOUS

We are different but alike,
Insignificant in nature but significant in spirit.

We all have something to show, something to
prove,
We all aim to be the best, but never strive to
lose.

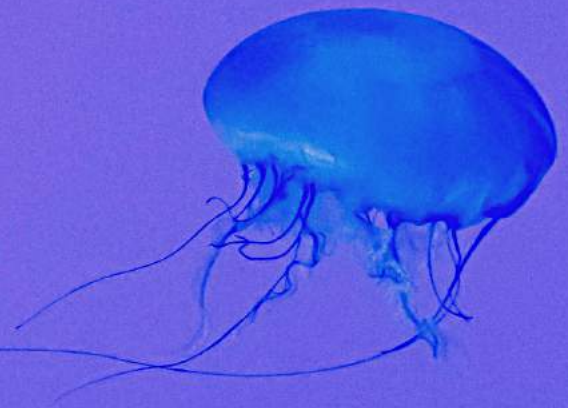
We dream and we inspire,
We dazzle and we delight.

We hope and we dream
In a world where we cannot.

Our imaginations are caught,
Our inspirations tangled.

A pen of promise,
A pencil of power,
A brush of brilliance,
A clay of comfort,
A dance of description,
An act of ability,
A melody of magic.

A heart of sensitivity,
A mind of sensibility,
The power of art lies within
The art of creativity.



LIFE AFTER SOA SERIES:
**Passion for
Design**

Featuring Bernard Yap





Bernard's recent sketch and a work in progress.

This month's issue of Life After SOA features Bernard Yap Goon Meng, a BA (Hons) Design Communication 2020 graduate. His time with Sunway actually began about six years ago when he enrolled in the Diploma in Graphic and Multimedia Design course.

"The SOA was nothing like it was back then, it wasn't even in the same place. It used to be this dingy, dimly-lit, messy yet creative space filled with studios of sorts and even a print-making studio that was covered in paint from the ceiling to the floors, just across from where Cafe Madeleine is." Eventually, Bernard pursued a Degree in Design Communication after finishing his diploma and at that point the SOA had shifted to where it is today; on the 9th floor of the Sunway University building.

Bernard's degree life at SOA was filled with some of his most eye-opening experiences and realisations, a large part of it was thanks to the "ever-nurturing" lecturers whom he met and cherished along the way.

He says, "They never stopped believing in me or my work and have always encouraged me to push the envelope, especially one of my biggest inspirations and motivators, Ms. Maslisa Zainuddin. Her ingenuity and endless knowledge in the field never ceases to amaze me."

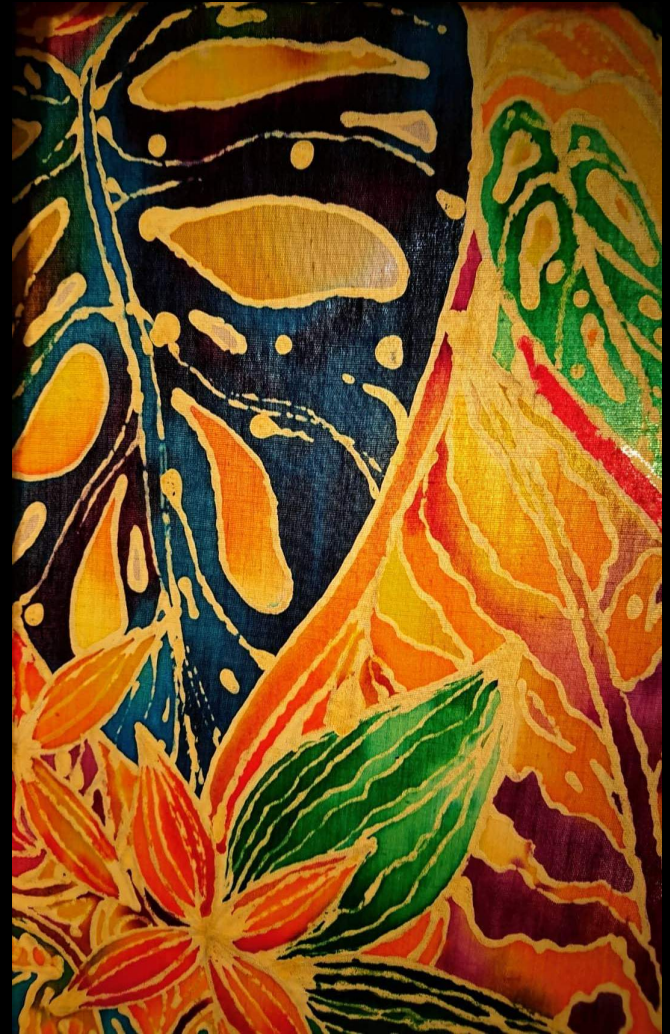


Bernard sketching in a cafe.

One could say that Bernard's time here has been more than eventful, or productive to say the least. "I have been paid to design logos, events and have also taken part in a number of competitions under Sunway, with one of my highlights being the time my team and I won first place in the AmBank Festive Greetings Competition of 2015/16, or the time I emceed alongside Krystabel Kok for DERIA", Bernard recalls enthusiastically. To expand the students' practical experiences, the faculty of the Design Communication course would organise multiple educational trips each year. And Bernard has had the wonderful opportunity of taking part in a handful of them – two of the most notable being trips to Taiwan and Thailand. In between lessons or during lessons, he would also spend a lot of time teaching and coaching his fellow classmates and juniors throughout, this led to his discovered passion for teaching as well.



Bernard doing henna as part of a charity carnival.



Handmade batik piece made by Bernard in 2018.

Bernard is currently working as a freelance graphic designer and illustrator. In fact, he had been juggling freelance work while studying full-time which was not an easy task and "entailed many sleepless nights and a lot of sacrifices." This relentless drive eventually took quite a toll on his health at one point, but he has learnt to take better care of himself and maintain a balance.

“

Looking back, there's still nothing I would change about what has happened. - Bernard

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ON MY WAY HOME
 >>>>>> 18 JUNE - 17 JULY
 THE ROAD TO RAYA >>>>>>

ON MY WAY HOME
 THE ROAD TO RAYA
 >>>>>> 18 JUNE - 17 JULY

WORKSHOPS
 WEEKENDS at 2:00pm
 First Floor in front of HAPPIKIDDO >

25 JUNE - Vintage Raya Stand-Up Card
 26 JUNE - Kebaya/Baju Melayu Craftmaking
 2 JULY - Ketupat Plushie
 3 JULY - Retro Vespa Stand-up Card

RAYA REDEMPTION
 18 JUNE - 10 JULY
 Spend RM150 at any outlet to redeem
 an exclusive Hari Raya Plate.

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CITTA

Key visual and another example of CITTA Mall's social media post Bernard designed in 2017.

Bernard has had many opportunities both locally and internationally, with his international clients located in the U.K., U.S., and even Australia. Some of his most notable jobs include the time he designed for the Raya festivities in two Malaysian shopping malls (1 Mont Kiara and CITTA Mall), designing origami papers for a U.K.-based company called Folded Square as part of a collection, designing the logo for an Australian badminton team, designing Christmas cards for an international maritime network called Wilhelmsen, and having many of his designs for McDonald's to be used across the country during his time interning on the McDonald's account at Leo Burnett.

His former lecturers and the syllabus itself have always put a large emphasis on raising students to be independent entrepreneurs, which he is profoundly grateful of. Time management is another crucial lesson he learned through his experiences in class and the number of times he got into trouble for it with his lecturers, especially when he was given some "very stern talks or lectures by multiple lecturers" out of concern for his future. That being said, an experience or lesson that truly stuck with him was during a class called Design Enterprise.

Bernard says that students were tasked with forming groups, building a product or service from scratch, establishing an enterprise and selling the products or services; all in under a mere three months. Well, problems arose when he and his group had to work with some "freeloaders who were actually trying to sabotage the group." They raised the issue to their lecturers after initially attempting to resolve it internally, to which they were told, "You have to do what you have to do to see the project through. It's unfortunate and I'm sorry you're going through this, but in the future you'll come across people like this in the workplace too and your client or boss isn't going to accept anything short of what you were supposed to deliver no matter what". That experience and advice from the lecturer fortified Bernard's resilience to strive above all challenges even harder.



Some of Bernard's favourite origami paper designs he made for the UK-based company, FoldedSquare.



Once he was done with his studies, Bernard was actually tempted to apply for jobs at some of the big agencies and firms. However, considering the circumstances that the pandemic brought about and after consulting a number of friends and ex-colleagues in the industry, he decided to focus on freelancing full-time for the time being. "This might sound a little far-fetched but I've always wanted to design cars as well and I hope I'll get the opportunity to." Despite the change of plans, he is still trying to work his way to the U.S. with the hopes that someday, he would be able to start and build up his own design firm!