

MEDIA RELEASE

## VIRTUALLY SPEAKING: FOURTH EDITION OF STORYFEST GOES ONLINE IN JULY 2020



**Singapore, 26 June 2020** — As the world adapts to this new normal, delve into the world of imagination with *StoryFest Online 2020*. From 17 to 27 July 2020, The Storytelling Centre Limited and The Arts House will co-present the fourth installment of the annual storytelling festival virtually. Themed “The Heart of Story”, local storytellers ascend beyond the landscape and reach out across the digital space to take audiences on an odyssey into the essence of stories brought to life through the oral tradition.

Held at The Arts House every June, the 2020 edition will see *StoryFest* being presented as a series of videos that will be released on the [StoryFest website](https://www.storyfestsg.com) over the ten-day festival period. Originally expressed through live performance, *StoryFest Online 2020* explores how traditional art forms can interact with you virtually to reveal the authentic voices behind these spoken narratives. As these storytellers invite you into their world, listen closely and let your imagination open yourself up to the heart of their stories.

Master Storyteller and Creative Producer of StoryFest Kamini Ramachandran shares that “I first came up with the theme “The Heart of Story” with the intention of excavating the spirit of storytelling. What is it about stories that thrill and captivate us, and is there room in this crowded world to engage in active and imaginative listening? While the theme was decided long before the circuit-breaker, it is more resonant than ever as we adapt StoryFest into an online festival. *StoryFest Online 2020* is an opportunity to question how traditional art forms can retain its timeless essence even as it adopts other mediums, and how the virtual sphere can also be a space to connect more intimately to others and, ultimately, ourselves.”

### **Enriching your imagination through these timeless tales**

Featuring a diverse lineup of local storytellers and artists this year, enchanting tales emerge from places both familiar and unknown. In ***The Heart of Story: The Singapore Showcase***, five stories take us on a captivating journey through the passages of time. Ranging from the ancient annals of 'The Sejarah Melayu' to the archetype of the shapeshifting fox, these stories are drawn from mythologies, histories, and memories that exist between the recent past and primordial times. Bringing stories from farther afield are young storytellers with a penchant for the unpredictable. ***A Dance of Stories: The Young Storyteller's Showcase*** promises a voyage through the luscious jungles of the Indonesian peninsula to the scorching deserts of Persia where tales of magic horses, bewitched monkeys, and mischief abound.

For quieter adventures with your family, sit alongside the young storytellers and ***The Story Tree*** for a time of fantastical stories. With your imagination, catch a glimpse of children battling an invasion of swordfish or cheer on Momotaro, a peach-sized boy, as he fights against Japanese ogres. Listen closely and you might even discover the secret name of this magical tree! After experiencing all the excitement, the young storytellers would like to invite you to the Teddy Bear's annual **Story Picnic**. Meet Peter Rabbit, Little Red Hen, and the Teddy Bears themselves and indulge in their spread of hearty snacks as they share their stories with you.

### **Embark on a journey of self-discovery through the art of storytelling**

If these stories have inspired tales of your own, take a dive into the world of storytelling with Dr Nazry Bahwari. In ***Tales with Tails***, Dr. Bahrawi unpacks the use of animal figures in cultural lore and its relationship to the stories we tell today. From the pigs and horses that populate George Orwell's famous modern classic, *Animal Farm*, to majestic tigers that appear in Malay legends, let these animals enchant their way into your own timeless tale. As we move on from the world of folklore to reality, discover the fundamentals of a good narrative in ***How to Tell Personal Stories for a Story Slam*** as Anna Ong introduces the art of the Story Slam. Leave no guest unimpressed as you work the room at your next dinner party.

Join Chan Shu Yin and learn from how she demonstrates a meditative approach to personal narratives. ***Mandala Storytelling: Exploring Nature & Pyrography*** explores how the self, imagination, and introspection converge in the Mandala, a symbol of contemplation in many cultures around the world. Using the process of pyrography or wood-burning to make mandalas, Chan shows how engaging with nature can allow one to access a creative flow in conveying your story to the world.

Finally, discover the connection between puppets and storytelling in ***A Puppeteer's Journey*** with Frankie Malachi. Step into the world of puppetry inside Frankie Malachi's virtual puppet studio. With magical and delightful puppets on display, ranging from string puppets, to marionettes and ventriloquist puppets, learn more about Frankie's puppet making practice through this online video interview. Get a glimpse of some of his oldest and favourite puppets that have been with him for close to 30 years. Meet some unfinished puppets and moulds used to make them. Join us to experience the magic of puppets!

“We often think of storytelling as a kind of personal, even intimate connection: sitting up late at night with family, friends, or maybe fellow travellers, sharing. But stories are everywhere, informing all aspects of our lives: from our memories and desires to shared ideas that bind our world. The internet especially has been filled with stories from the beginning, and so the shift online for StoryFest 2020 - taken in light of COVID-19 - is one we take enthusiastically with our valued partner The Storytelling Centre Limited. Join us for enlightening and powerful stories from across Singapore, delivered to you online,” says Rupert Thomson, Head of Artistic Programmes at Arts House Limited.

For the complete list of programmes for *StoryFest Online*, please visit [storyfestsg.com](http://storyfestsg.com). Members of the public can also join the conversation at <https://www.facebook.com/storyfestsg> and <https://www.instagram.com/storyfestsg>.

#### **Event Details**

StoryFest Online 2020

Accessible online via [storyfestsg.com/online](http://storyfestsg.com/online)

Dates: 17 - 27 July 2020

Access to all videos are free.

For more images, please click [here](#).

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#### **The Arts House**

Occupying the almost 200-year-old building that was home to Singapore’s first parliament, The Arts House continues in the distinguished tradition of this gazetted national monument and now plays a key role in the country’s arts and creative scene. The Arts House at the Old Parliament, as it is affectionately referred to, promotes and presents multidisciplinary programmes and festivals within its elegant spaces. It focuses in particular on the literary arts, celebrating the works of written and spoken word artists from Singapore and beyond.



### **About Arts House Limited**

Arts House Limited (AHL) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to enriching lives through the arts. AHL runs The Arts House, a multidisciplinary arts centre with a focus on literary programming located in the heart of Singapore's Civic District; manages Goodman Arts Centre and Aliwal Arts Centre, two creative enclaves for artists, arts groups and creative businesses; and presents festivals through the arts centres. AHL presents the Singapore International Festival of Arts, the annual pinnacle celebration of performing arts in Singapore commissioned by National Arts Council.

AHL was set up in 11 December 2002 as a company limited by guarantee (CLG) under NAC and was formerly known as The Old Parliament House Limited. It was officially renamed Arts House Limited on 19 March 2014.

### **About The Storytelling Centre Limited**

The Storytelling Centre Limited is a non-profit organisation based in Singapore. Our core mission is to foster and advance the art of storytelling through performances, collaborations, artistic exchanges, mentorships, training and community outreach. The Storytelling Centre Limited firmly believes that stories are storehouses of Singapore's unique multidimensional legacy. The oral traditions of folktales, mythology, legends and fables are avenues for preserving, showcasing and developing Singapore's rich and diverse heritage. Our focus is on ensuring the sustainability of the art form by nurturing emerging Young Storytellers.

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