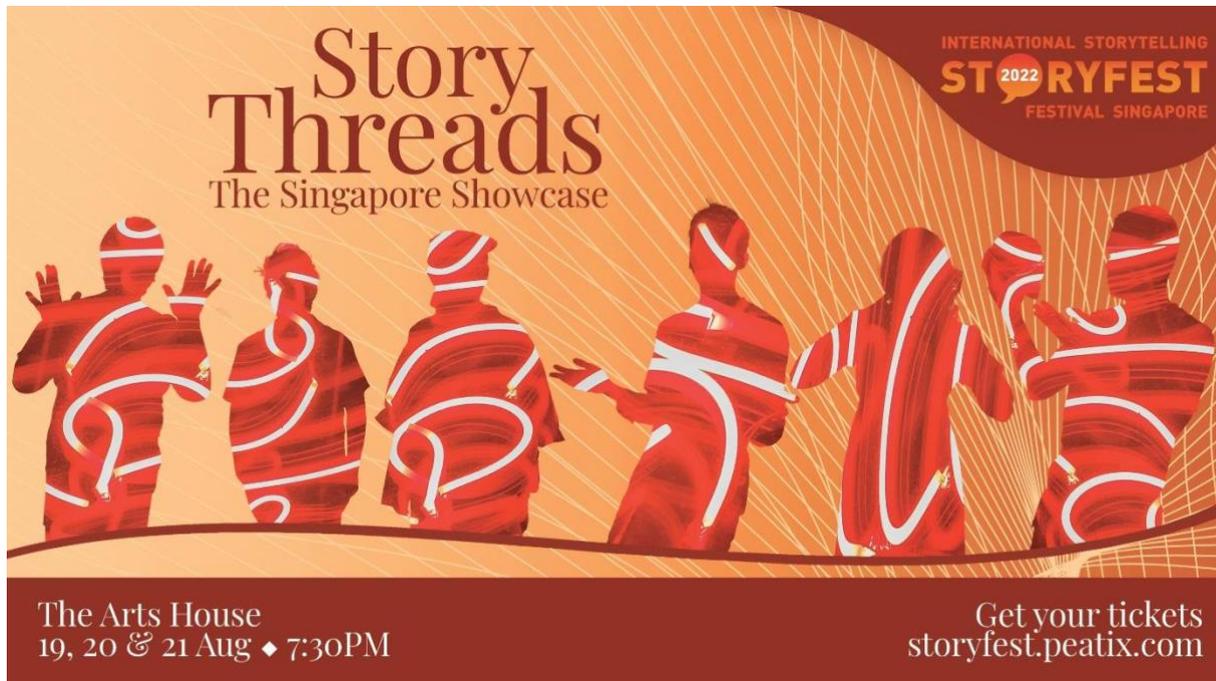


For Immediate Release

***Story Threads: The Singapore Showcase* reconnects audiences to the unique thrills of listening to stories in person.**



Story Threads: The Singapore Showcase invites audiences to get caught in a web of captivating tales woven by Singapore-based storytellers at the top of their game.

29 July 2022 – Presented by The Storytelling Centre Limited (TSCL) and Arts House Limited (AHL) **StoryFest** is bringing six storytellers from varied backgrounds together for ***Story Threads: The Singapore Showcase***, to finally reacquaint audiences with the much-missed oral tradition where teller, listener and story all live and breathe within the same space. From Friday, 19 to Sunday, 21 August 2022 at The Arts House, *The Singapore Showcase* alumni **Verena Tay**, **Stephanie Dogfoot**, **Hafiz Rashid**, and **Melizarani T. Selva** will be joined by newcomers **Daryl Qilin Yam** and **Wesley Leon Aroozoo**, and each will be working their magic to enthral audiences with tales of love, loss, legend, and lore. At this much awaited in-person storytelling session, audiences can get to:

- Revisit the urban legend of *kepala anjing* (dog head) and unearth bone-chilling superstitions
- Rediscover the Chinese creation myth of *Nu Wa* as a tale of selflessness, patience and nurturing
- Unravel the heartbreaking Javanese legend of the *truntum* motif through a revelatory interpretation of batik
- Listen in as the goddess of shadows, *Chaya Devi*, talks to her infant about his destiny as *Shani Deva*, god of karma
- Trace the symbolism of the visiting butterfly through personal memory and ancient lore
- Join a canine family's journey through the rabies outbreak of the late 1800s

Extending the experience from the physical sessions, excerpts of the six stories will be available digitally on the **StoryFest** YouTube channel from 22 August 2022 till March 2023.

StoryFest 2022: Story Threads

Story Threads: The Singapore Showcase is part of the 2022 edition of **StoryFest**, the annual international storytelling festival that celebrates and showcases a variety of styles, repertoire, and cultural arts presentations of storytelling from Singapore and around the world. Along the theme of *Story Threads*, **StoryFest** invites audiences to experience the in-person and invisible connections that bind us through the power of telling and listening to stories.

Sim Wan Hui, Director of Venue Programming at AHL, said, “As a co-presenter of StoryFest, AHL is pleased to support the art of storytelling and the efforts of our storytellers. After two challenging years of living digitally, we are glad that the Festival is returning to the intimate space of the Play Den at The Arts House, Singapore’s home to the literary arts. We look forward to experiencing the magic of storytelling in the company of other rapt listeners.”

Storytelling as a tradition relies on a three-way connection: much of storytelling relies on the nonverbal signals exchanged between the story, the teller, and the listener. Over the last two years, **StoryFest** has had to reimagine storytelling, and how to digitally present a tradition that has historically been live, without compromising its core values. After two successful online festivals, **StoryFest** aims to continue fostering connections through *Story Threads*. **StoryFest 2022** welcomes audiences in Singapore and from around the world to participate in listening to stories told across many months, spanning time zones, and presented through different mediums. This year, the Festival pays attention to the durational process of nurturing storytellers and creating stories, across time and space.

StoryFest’s Creative Producer, Kamini Ramachandran shared, “*Story Threads* takes a closer look at what it means to connect, in a period when our assumptions about contact have been tested time and again. Discover the ties that bind: across the globe, across generations and across mediums, with us. Despite not having had a tangible presence over the last two years, we hope that the stories we have told, and are yet to tell, will pull you in once again.”

More information on **StoryFest 2022** programmes can be found in Annex A.

For tickets and more information, visit <https://storyfestsg.com/2022>.

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Website: <https://storyfestsg.com/2022>

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About 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.

The Arts House is run and managed by Arts House Limited (AHL). AHL also presents the Singapore International Festival of Arts, and manages Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall, Drama Centre, Goodman Arts Centre, Aliwal Arts Centre and Stamford Arts Centre.

About Arts House Limited

Arts House Limited (AHL) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to enriching lives through the arts. AHL is the cultural place manager of Singapore's Civic District. It manages two key national monuments - The Arts House, a multidisciplinary arts centre with a focus on literary programming, and the Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall, a heritage building that is home to the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. It also runs performing arts space Drama Centre as well as three creative enclaves for artists, arts groups and creative businesses - the Goodman Arts Centre, Aliwal Arts Centre and Stamford Arts Centre.

AHL organises the Singapore International Festival of Arts – an annual pinnacle performing arts festival; as well as the Singapore Writers Festival – a multi-lingual festival presenting the world's leading literary talents. In addition, AHL manages Our Cultural Medallion Story – the showcase on Singapore's Cultural Medallion recipients at The Arts House.

AHL was set up in 11 December 2002 as a public company limited by guarantee under the National Arts Council and was officially renamed Arts House Limited on 19 March 2014. For more information, visit artshouselimited.sg

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.

StoryFest 2022 – Story Threads

Festival Commission: The Singapore Showcase



Photo credit: StoryFest Singapore

StoryFest is proud to commission six dynamic storytellers from varied backgrounds, working with the narrative in unique ways. Showcase alumni Verena Tay, Stephanie Dogfoot, Hafiz Rashid, and Melizarani T. Selva are joined by newcomers Daryl Qilin Yam and Wesley Leon Aroozoo in weaving tales of love, loss, legend and lore. *The Singapore Showcase*, a tapestry of six distinct tales performed by captivating word-weavers, delves into how we find our way through complex relationships with the world, whether tangible or otherwise.

Filmmaker Wesley Leon Aroozoo revisits the urban legend of the *kepala anjing* (dog head) and unearths superstitions that have chilled us to the bone. In the hands of storyteller Verena Tay, the Chinese creation myth of *Nu Wa* takes shape as a tale of selflessness, patience and nurturing. Unravel the heartbreaking Javanese legend of the *truntum* motif through Hafiz Rashid's interpretation of *batik*. Spoken word artist Melizarani T. Selva imagines the goddess of shadows, Chaya Devi, talking to her infant son and his destiny as Shani Deva, god of *karma*. The symbolism of the visiting butterfly is traced through personal memory and ancient lore by poet Daryl Qilin Yam. Wordsmith Stephanie Dogfoot shapeshifts alongside a canine family's journey during the rabies outbreak of the late 1800s.

Date: Friday, 19th August – Sunday, 21st August 2022

Time: 7:30pm – 9:30pm

Tickets: \$20

Duration: 120 mins with intermission

Venue: Play Den, The Arts House, 1 Old Parliament Ln, Singapore 179429

Website: <https://storyfest.peatix.com/>

Rating: Advisory (Some Disturbing Content). Suitable for adults 16 years and above.

- **Maker of Mankind, Mender of Heaven** – by Verena Tay

“For eons, I dance through the land, my core-length tingling energy. Life shimmers, grows, dies, renews year after year. I am content.”

Peer into the mind of the creation goddess *Nu Wa*, as she fashions a world entirely from scratch. How much must she give of herself to sustain life? Join literary veteran Verena Tay, as she moulds a whole, wondrous, elaborate world in front of your eyes.

- **The Pattern of Love** - by Hafiz Rashid

“She continued gazing at the stars twinkling in the distance and took comfort knowing that there was still light even in a moonless night, just as there was hope even in the bleakest of circumstances.”

They say every image tells a story. In the batik tradition, visual and written motifs are bountiful, each holding their own narratives. Ever wondered how these symbols came to be? Let Hafiz Rashid transport you to Central Java, as he tells you the tale of *Ratu Kencana*, and how her undying love and devotion manifested in the *truntum* motif, to be honored for centuries to come.

- **Strays** - Stephanie Dogfoot

“She wished she could tell them what she knew. But foxes did not quite speak the same way as dogs. But it didn’t matter. They all knew. The cull had begun.”

What would you give up to save the ones you love most? In the late 1800s, a shape-shifting fox spirit collides head-on with the reality of the rabies outbreak. As she is forced to decide between her true identity, and saving the lives of her found family, find out what choices she makes in ‘Strays’, told by Stephanie Dogfoot.

- **What Used to Kill Us** – by Daryl Qilin Yam

“... heartbreak - it was still a terminal condition at the time.”

A lone butterfly in your home is said to signal the return of a lost loved one. But where did this belief come from? Daryl Qilin Yam has a theory about transformative tales, and it dates all the way back to the third century. Relive the classic story of ‘The Butterfly Lovers’ gently woven together with a personal tale about coming to terms with grief.

- **The Overhead** - by Wesley Leon Aroozoo

“You have to return it. It is meant to be buried. Or Kepala Anjing will punish you. Trust me. I tried...”

Have you seen the *Kepala Anjing*? The man with the dog’s head, who lurks at night in search of children to steal? In 1980s Singapore, children vanish without a trace, only to be found years later under bridge foundations. Let your spine be tingled, and senses heightened, in Wesley Leon Aroozoo’s ‘The Overhead’. Find out how one man goes on a search to dig up the truth behind a well-known urban legend ... what truths await him?

- **Sins I Have Yet to Commit** - by Melizarani T. Selva

“The suffering inside you contains my suffering and you will grow into solidified adult agony that no one will understand. Not even your imperfect mother.”

To be a mother is to give unyieldingly until there is nothing left to give. If that holds true, how does a mother of a god battle this spiral of baby blues? Witness Melizarani T. Selva as she reimagines the voice of *Chaya*, mother of the god of karma, Lord *Shani Deva*, in this tangled web of identity, generational trauma and motherhood.

Digital Stories

This year, **StoryFest** reconnects with our local and overseas audiences through both in-person and digital iterations of *The Singapore Showcase*. Catch our six storytellers tell bite-sized versions of their stories in these videos, specially curated for digital viewing.

Contemplate the modern-day implications of ancient and contemporary folklore as you listen to stories about things seen and unseen. Uncover the virtue of patience with Hafiz and Verena, navigate familial bonds with Daryl and Melizarani, and re-examine the birth of urban legends with Stephanie and Wesley. *The Singapore Showcase* delves into how we find our way through complex relationships with the world, whether tangible or otherwise.

The Singapore Showcase is a tapestry of six distinct tales performed by captivating word-weavers.

Get caught in the web of tales!

These videos will be available for free on the **StoryFest** YouTube channel until March 2023.

Maker of Mankind, Mender of Heaven – by Verena Tay
What Used to Kill Us – by Daryl Qilin Yam
Strays – by Stephanie Dogfoot
The Pattern of Love – by Hafiz Rashid
The Overhead – by Wesley Leon Aroozoo
Sins I Have Yet to Commit – by Melizarani T. Selva

Date: Monday, 22nd August 2022 – Friday, 31st March 2023

Tickets: Free

Venue: Online

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/StoryFestSingapore>

Story Talk

Welcome to *Story Talk*, a series of short interviews about the different facets of storytelling. Our **StoryFest** community has learned and grown from the global sharing of practice – and we hope to continue fostering these conversations with this online series. Join **StoryFest**'s Creative Producer, Kamini Ramachandran, as she speaks with Singapore artists working with different mediums of storytelling.

For storytellers, writers, poets and those who work with narratives, be inspired by these creative conversations. For producers and arts managers, these videos will support your understanding of the literary arts and its many modes of expression.

Story Talk is a free access online resource bank on a diverse range of storytelling related topics.

Date: Friday, 19th August 2022 onwards

Tickets: Free

Venue: Online

Website: <https://www.youtube.com/StoryFestSingapore>

The Singapore Showcase – Artists’ Profiles

NAME	PROFILE
 <p data-bbox="156 741 368 770">Daryl Qilin Yam</p>	<p data-bbox="480 398 1326 797">Daryl is a writer, editor and arts organiser. He is the author of the novella <i>Shantih Shantih Shantih</i> and the novel <i>Lovelier, Lonelier</i>, a finalist of the 2021 Epigram Books Fiction Prize. He co-founded the literary charity Sing Lit Station. His short fiction and poetry have appeared in publications such as the Berlin Quarterly, The Straits Times, Transnational Literature, and The Epigram Books Collection of Best New Singapore Short Stories. His first novel, <i>Kappa Quartet</i>, was selected by The Business Times as one of the best novels of the year, and described by QLRS as “[breaking] new ground in Singaporean writing... a shimmering and poignant novel, an immensely sympathetic and humane exploration of our existential condition.”</p>
 <p data-bbox="156 1182 325 1211">Hafiz Rashid</p>	<p data-bbox="480 840 1326 1238">Hafiz has been a volunteer museum docent at the Malay Heritage Centre since 2013. As a trained docent, he has conducted tours of MHC’s permanent and special exhibitions for members of the public, school groups, tourists as well as various community groups and he regularly receives commendations from visitors. He is interested in learning about the history, culture, folklore and languages of the Malay Archipelago (Nusantara) and uncovering their hidden stories. It is these unique stories that he shares when conducting his tours; the stories behind motifs, cultural practices, daily utterances – stories with deep links to the past. He also does storytelling at the public libraries, sharing stories from the Nusantara with the library patrons.</p>
 <p data-bbox="156 1646 411 1675">Melizarani T. Selva</p>	<p data-bbox="480 1281 1326 1680">Melizarani is a Malaysian writer and spoken word poet, with notable performances at ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival and TEDxGateway. Her first book, <i>Taboo</i> is a poetic interrogation of the Malaysian Indian identity. She co-founded ‘If Walls Could Talk: Poetry Open Mic’, the Malaysia National Poetry Slam, and co-published an anthology of 100 poems by 61 poets from Malaysia titled <i>When I Say Spoken, You Say Word!</i>. Her debut play, <i>Kudumbam</i>, was staged as part of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition winners showcase by TWorks Singapore. Her poems have been translated into French and Bahasa Malaysia. Presently, she serves as co-editor of ‘The Second Link’ - A Malaysia-Singapore Literary Anthology project.</p>
 <p data-bbox="156 2058 405 2087">Stephanie Dogfoot</p>	<p data-bbox="480 1722 1326 2080">Stephanie is a Singaporean writer, performer, and producer whose first poetry collection, <i>Roadkill for Beginners</i> (Math Paper Press, 2019) explores growing up, good times in strange places and strange times in good places. In 2020, with the support of the National Arts Council, she co-created a short film based on poems from the collection called <i>An Intermediate Guide to Roadkill</i>. She has won national poetry slams in Singapore and the UK and has been invited to perform her work in thirteen countries. The founder of a poetry night called <i>Spoke & Bird</i> and the co-founder of a comedy night called <i>Siao Char Bors Comedy</i>, Stephanie is inspired by mud and Southeast Asian wildlife.</p>



Verena Tay

Verena is a seasoned storyteller, theatre practitioner and writer. As an oral storyteller, Verena has delighted audiences in Asia, Europe, and North America with her unique way of bringing stories vocally and physically alive. She is driven to make traditional myths/tales/legends relevant for people today and has successfully coached adults to improve their storytelling craft. Verena has published four collections of plays and two short story anthologies. She has edited twelve volumes of short stories (including the popular Balik Kampung series) and conducted numerous creative writing workshops locally. She is currently completing her Ph.D. studies in Creative Writing with Swansea University.



Wesley Leon Aroozoo

Wesley is an educator and multi-disciplinary artist with 13 Little Pictures. His works span literary arts, film, and theatre, and have been nominated for the Epigram Books Fiction Prize, among others. He is the author of Bedok Reservoir, whose onstage adaptation was performed at the Goodman Arts Centre. A feature documentary companion to his second novella, I Want to Go Home, had its world premiere at the Busan International Film Festival, where he was nominated for the Mecenat award. The documentary was adapted as a multi-sensory exhibition by Mural Lingo for the Light to Night Festival. His latest novel, The Punkhawala and the Prostitute was presented at The Substation's interactive tour 'An Artist's Journey: You are Obviously in the Right Place'.