ADN Ongoing Online: Durational & Digital Dramaturgy

Presented by Asian Dramaturgs' Network
Organised by Centre 42

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[00:00:00]
Lim How Ngean
Hello, everyone, I hope everyone can hear me. Good afternoon, and welcome to the Asian Dramaturgs' Network Event Series for 2021 and 2022. The Asian Dramaturgs' Network, ADN, is formed with the intent of mapping and networking the region's dramaturgical experience and knowledge. At ADN we have been collaborating with Centre 42, Singapore, and we've held our symposiums in Singapore since 2016. But we've also been around the region with gatherings of dramaturgs, performance makers, arts educators in the Asia Pacific region, and we have actually met in Japan, Australia and Indonesia, for symposiums, conferences, and even laboratory workshops for dramaturgy. This is all in conjunction with Centre 42 Singapore, who is our principal organising partner for ADN. For today, we have another series. We have another online event, a special one, where it's entitled "Ongoing Online: Durational and Digital Dramaturgy. The durational and the digital in performing arts today has been continuing to grow as even when the world is entering into another period of the coronavirus, which is the endemic period, and where I think we're starting to again experience mobility freedoms of travelling around the world. But having said that, are we still going to continue looking at digital performance as a very reliable source of viewing. So we are diving today into the notions of durational dramaturgy in a digital context. Specifically looking at a previous performance that was held or rather it was actually organised by Esplanade Singapore Theatres on the Bay called 14 which is a 5 hour dance performance with multiple locations. This special event was conceptualised by Taiwan-based Chen Wu-Kang and Sun Ruey Horng and today they joined us with Shawn Chua — who is also Singapore based — to talk a bit about this particular performance. What is special about this event again like I said, is that it brings together the digital and the durational, something that we have only begun to actually explore, perhaps in the later part of the pandemic, when we were more fluent with technology, especially digital technology, and obviously getting into grips with digital dramaturgy. For this particular event, I'm very happy and we're very fortunate to have actually Dramaturg Dr. Cheng Nien Yuan joining us, who will be the main moderator with Chen Wu-Kang, Sun Ruey Horng and Shawn Chua. I will now just very quickly introduce Nien to all of you who will then take the show away. Nien is a Singaporean performance scholar, educator and dramaturg. She completed her PhD in theatre and performance studies in the University of Sydney in 2020. Her work involves the politics and poetics of storytelling in the digital age. Since the pandemic, she has been a dramaturg for several works of digital theatre, including Who's There in 2020. That is quite an amazing piece of landmark digital theatre. There's also the Unbecoming

in 2021 for Theatreworks N.O.W festival. Her research has been published on Critical Stages, Studies in Theatre and Performance, and Performance Paradigm. Nien is currently researching intercultural acting pedagogy at the Intercultural Theatre Institute in Singapore. Without further ado, I'd like to pass this over to Nien. Take it away, Nien.

[00:04:52]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Thank you so much, How Ngean. And hello, everyone, I hope you're enjoying your Saturday so far. It is my great pleasure today to moderate this roundtable discussion of 14. And the title of this piece stems from the number of days typically mandated for self-isolation. And as theatres themselves have remained in a period of semi isolation, the artists behind 14 are finding new ways for audiences to experience dance in a state of what I like to call "Alone Togetherness". And I had the privilege to catch 14 post hoc this week in preparation for this session, and instantly the day after I received the secret link to the recording of the show, I tested positive for COVID-19. So that was how I experienced the show. In isolation, in bed, drifting in and out of consciousness. And one of the best ways I think, to experience the show, but we can talk more about the audience thing later. So but without further ado, let me introduce our speakers today, who will talk to us about the event for about 35 minutes before we open it up to a roundtable discussion, and a Q&A for the rest of the session including for our Facebook live viewers. And just a reminder as well, for Wu-Kang and Ruey at any point, if they need to speak in Chinese or Mandarin, we will all chip in and try and translate for everyone. And as long as we just want a comfortable casual conversation about your work. I hope I don't embarrass my half Taiwanese heritage. Okay. Chen Wu-Kang is a Taiwanese dancer and a choreographer. In 2001, Wu-Kang danced with Ballet Tech and Peridance and became the soloist starting a long term collaboration with choreographer Eliot Feld. In 2004, he co-founded HORSE Dance Theatre as an artistic director. And in 2011, he began collaborating with artists in different fields. His recent works include Dances for Wu-Kang Chen in 2020, which was the recipient of the 2021 Taishin Performing Arts Award, and online streaming works such as "Thank You So Much For Your Time" in 2019. And "Thank You For Staying Home" in 2021. And of course, 14 in 2021.

[00:06:56]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Sun Ruey Horng is a video designer and director creating original works internationally since 2008. And he's known for creating large scale performative multimedia environments which interact with human perception, memories and uncanny experiences in our daily lives. He is the recipient of the 2020 Lucille Lortel Awards for his projection design in the "Headlands" produced by Lincoln Center Theater, and his design works have been presented in a multitude of renowned spaces including Broadway, Guggenheim, La MaMa and National Taichung Theatre, among others. Ruey was visiting artists at the Bennington College and on faculty at Taipei National University of the Arts. And last but not least, on this panel we have Shawn Chua, who was dramaturg for the Singaporean contingency of this work. And we can talk more about that later, and is based in Singapore he is engaged with embodied archives, Uncanny Personhoods and the participatory frameworks of play. He has presented his research at the Asian Dramaturgs' Network, the substation and performance studies International. And his works have been presented at the Singapore International Festival arts, Singapore Art Week and the Esplanade. Shawn is a recipient of the National Arts Council Scholarship, and he holds an MA in

performance studies at the Tisch School of the Arts in New York University. He has served on the OSI Future Advisory Board, or FAB and has lectured at Singapore Management University and LASALLE College of the Arts. Away to you gentlemen.

[00:08:29]
Chen Wu-Kang
Well, since you say I can speak Chinese, it's really tempting. I would probably just jump in right away in my fluent Chinese. Hey, Ray, how are we going to start sharing this slide? So I'll pass it to you, Ray, right now.

[00:08:58]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Pass it to me.

[00:09:00]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, you go right ahead and I'll follow.

[00:09:16]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Okay, we're going to talk about 14. 14 is — Wu-Kang and I, we've been collaborating for the past few years. And then when COVID hit, everything changed. So we started to have this idea because everything was closed, and also the theatre was closed. And we have lost our jobs in a moment. So we talked about how beautiful these empty theatres are, and we should do something for the theatres. So that's how we came up with this idea. How about we have performers doing solos in the theatre by themselves. So that's our initial idea. What happened next? Oh, and then we had an opportunity, an invitation from the National Theatre Taipei, they asked us to propose a digital show to them. So then we came up with this idea of this solo marathon, in one theatre, it's only in National Theatre Taipei with 14-minute solos, 14 hours in total. So that includes 56 performers. And then the COVID situation in Taipei got better, and then the theatre started to open up, then our project — we couldn't do it anymore. So then, what happened next was, we did our own mini version at HORSE, in the rehearsal room at HORSE in June 2020. It was a one hour show, a mini version, we had eight performers. We learnt a lot from that process. And then a year after we, I guess Wu-Kang got this opportunity to connect with Esplanade.

[00:11:58]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, Iris called and Faith jumped in.

[00:12:01]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Yeah. And they asked us to consider doing another version. And then we just stopped to think about how to do this? And then they said, maybe we can try to cross country cross venues. It was wild. So we started to talk about how we do this? And that's why we came up with what you're currently seeing on

this page. We're thinking about using the Internet to connect all the satellites, meaning all the venues internationally. And we have cameras to be our digital eyes to look through to witness what happens in the theatres. And then so what you can see here, the main stage meaning the stage in each venue, and then we have artists, cameras, and commentators all witnessing the moment. And then we have internet transmitting and double channelling back and forth to Taipei and also sending back to the commentators so they can commentate while we're watching the performance, and everything's sent back to the HORSE, and then goes to the website. So that's our main technical theory. And then next page, this is sort of the snapshots of the show. Wu-Kang, do you want to talk about the commentators?

[00:14:10]
Chen Wu-Kang
So all this started from our friendship between me and Ray. Because in the beginning, we got to know each other and we realised, oh, we both like watching basketball games. And then we started to collaborate. But we don't want to work for each other, we want to work together. So we start to build this relationship of sort of decentralised / not serving each other kind of relationship. And we bring this relationship to every project that we build together. So also, we use this method in this work as well. So the commentator part, in our mini version, we find an anthropologist to commentate the whole performance. And we think that really went very well. It has a very therapeutic feeling hearing the performers and watching what's happening, and a different aspect of commenting. So we want to extend that into this. And as you can see, we have five screens showing the commentator and they can all be controlled separately. So it really depends on what language you speak, and you can turn the volume up or down and you can adjust them. And for myself, my personal choice is to put everything to the loudest and to test my ear how I received information. And strangely because we think that in most digital performances, it's so hard to focus. And we keep getting distracted all the time. So we wanted to put all the extraction possible into the frame. So keep the audience or spectator on the other side of the computer very busy listening to this language and comparing the different languages if you know both. And comparing the information with what you see at that moment. And sometimes you realise, oh, I'm not, I'm not really interested in their point of view, and I value my point of view more. And so this thought process is what interests us. That's why we really enjoyed having this comment and they did a wonderful performance. It's like the Olympics, because somehow they have this angle of — what shall I say? — When their performer is performing, it's like their home game. So the commentator will really have the sparks and try their best to tell you how good Italian is, how good they are. And when it's Taiwan's turn how good they are, and Indonesia the same. So this competitive feeling really keeps it very exciting.

[00:18:04]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Okay. And there's one thing I want to share during the process because it's cross country. So, because it's cross country, and that everybody was working remotely at our home. So the strategies become so crucial, like how do we work together, but not together. So, Wu-Kang and I just started to think about maybe we should just develop this structure that it's almost like a guideline or a handbook that we could pass to everybody working on this production, and everyone can produce. So we call this thing an artistic outline. And that includes all the 12345678 categories, starting from the partners, we start to try to explain what's going to happen because only Wu-Kang and I can kind of know how the website's

gonna be, but it's so abstract. Because we are in the process, we're still designing the website and also working on this outline. So this is almost like our Bibles that we can share with all the partners. And then starting from the presenting partners, we describe what is 14 and the next categories, notes for dramaturgs, and then notes for artists. Because we give the freedom to each venue, they will choose their dramaturgs and dramaturgs will help us to pick the artists because in each venue, it has its own arc, it has its own theory, why they choose their artists, and how to make sense across all the performances. And then we have notes for the commentators, like what you should do and what you should avoid. Basically, they can do whatever. They just witness and chat. And then the next categories, the cameras, because this is important because it's almost like a gift. A gift to the performers, we want to give them space, we want to give them a mental space even. So they can take ownership of the theatre. So during the show, during each solo, there's nobody behind the cameras or there's no crew around the performance. The performance is performing is a real solo. Authentic solo in this big theatre. And between each solos we call these interludes. And we call this gaze in theatre so we ask each venue to shoot 4 interlude videos pre-recorded and the topic is gazing theatre so they can just pick whatever they think we can contemplate.

[00:22:14]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Yeah, and then the next one, the endings, the solo bowing. This one's also pre-recorded. Yeah, we're imagining maybe at the end, we can do this. A special bowing moment, which turned out pretty cool, I think. And then we describe the website. What the website might look like. There's multiple windows, the mainstage will be switched between venues and the commentators are always with the audience, but the audience gets to control the website. We built all the functions, all the buttons on and off, so they have the freedom to control. So, this artistic outline was so important for us and also for everyone else, all the partners or performers. And then I want to show some photos from backstage. This one was the control room. So all the signals were sent in from all five countries to Taipei in this control centre, and then we will send the signal back to each country because the commentator has to see it live so they can keep commenting. So that makes it so complex. And then this diagram on the right side, we were chatting with the vendor there.

[00:24:03]
Chen Wu-Kang
And it was the first day.

[00:24:05]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Yeah, it was the first day we approached them and the guy was so smart. He just got our idea and then he was trying to explain to us how we could do it. Yeah, just a mesmerising moment. Next one, Yeah. It was so fun because it's like we had endless meetings at our home and then the show happened. It's almost unreal. I never work in theatre this way. Because Wu-Kang and I — only the HORSE team got together at the very last week when everyone else was in tech in their theatres so yeah, just want to share this. I think this was our last slide. Wu-Kang do you have anything else to share?

[00:25:09]

Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, and it's strange right? Because usually you decide what to do but in this process we have to learn to decide not to do and not to interfere and on the other side the collaborating partner or artists they're also learning how to take control.

[00:26:19]
Chen Wu-Kang
So each layer has responsibility to generate material and we as HORSE team, we need to learn how not to interfere and how to open spaces. But in the beginning, all the collaborating artists continue to ask us for more guidance, because in the beginning it feels like oh we are the boss. We are going to tell you what to do. And so it also shows the relationship, the local art, performing arts environment, how things will come together. Like the theatre and they have money. They find artists and they gather the artists they like and they gather the dramaturg they like and the commentator they like and they assemble. And those who are not involved are well, too bad. But it shows this power structure which during the process, we just enjoy observing these small things. Yeah. And thank you for inviting us. Thank you for inviting us to put this discussion together so me and Ray and Shawn can get together once again and talk about it and try to recall all that small excitement. Thank you.

[00:28:09]
Nien Yuan Cheng
That's fabulous. Thank you so much for sharing. That answered quite a few questions that I already had. But I think for now, maybe I just want to share screen for the audience. Just to give them a taste of what it would have been like, because there's some components on the screen as well, that are very interesting. So for example, like the rolling comments, also, from the audience. Could you, yeah, maybe later, we can talk a little bit more about that. Let's move on to Shawn first or maybe now maybe now just say a few words about that comment section? Yeah. Ray or Wu-Kang?

[00:29:00]
Chen Wu-Kang
Oh, Ray, Ray, [in Mandarin: you speak, I speak, you speak, you speak ok]

[00:29:05]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
The commenting thing was, I guess the story was coming from our mini version we did, because we danced last time we did, we had six cameras. And then we just think about maybe we shouldn't do the editing ourselves, we should give the freedom to — we should make it so chaotic so the audience couldn't handle it. So we just opened up six different channels on the internet. So including Facebook, on Instagram, and YouTube, all kinds and with all different contents, but it's simultaneously happening together. And then we had a chat room open up in Google. So the audience, they can chat with us in the backroom in our green room, and also on chat they can leave messages. But it turned out to be almost too much for the audience because they need to handle too many things at the same time. So that's why for 14, we decided we should make an interface which will make it a little bit easier for the audience. So they can get as much as possible, but also they can focus. So that's why we have this commenting thing. This wording thing, comment happens. We will try to build this. From our side, we

can also feed information, but also the audience, they can also say things which might happen, it might have been something because performance can see it live. So it might happen to them, they might respond to it. So this is how we develop this exchange of ideas between the audience and performance in cyberspace.

[00:31:14]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, right. I mean, it's also a wonderful way of being together, I suppose. And being together with the other audience members. And I mean, when I was watching this alone, really alone, because it was over already. It was nice to see the little ghosts of the previous audience members kind of commenting. Some of them have very funny comments.

[00:31:42]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Did you try to type because it works.

[00:31:46]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Okay. Well, I'll try right now. Testing testing. I'm not a robot.

[00:31:54]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Hope it works.

[00:31:56]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Oh, it doesn't work.

[00:32:00]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Yeah, it usually takes a little bit of time.

[00:32:03]
Nien Yuan Cheng
On time. I see. No, I didn't go to the sad extent of trying to comment by myself into this void. And then yeah, as they were talking about the commentators this is yet one of my favorite parts of the show. Of course, I was listening to Charlene a lot, of course, because she's a good friend of mine, Singaporean. But I was also listening to everybody else, and they all have very different styles of commenting so it was really great. Anything else that we might have missed? Anything else we might have missed from this interface?

[00:33:02]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
That's the main page. Yeah,

[00:33:03]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Right, right. I see. Okay. Yeah, maybe we can speak a little bit more later on. But for now, why not move on to Shawn.

[00:33:15]
Shawn Chua
Hey, thanks so much for inviting me as well. I think like what Wu-Kang said earlier. It's so interesting to think about the work again after this span of time since the work was out, right? Because I think the project was so ambitious on so many skills but also where the different kinds of countries came in, we didn't have a lot of lead time also, right. So a lot of the kind of discovery was happening simultaneously, right? A lot of us weren't really sure what the infrastructure of the website might look like, how would the different pieces come together? A lot of it was just a lot of trust also. But also trying to figure out what the language of the performance was with each other. Because on one hand, while the score was very clear, in terms of what the parameters of each of the different modules were, there were also different kinds of interpretations and nuances that only became clearer when we were iterating. And trying different things with each other and seeing how some of those pieces come together.

[00:34:31]
Shawn Chua
So yeah, I have a little bit of a presentation. Let me just share that. So this might help to at least put some images. So what I'll be doing is I'll be focusing on the slideshow. Okay. Can everyone see the screen well? Okay. So what I'll be doing is, so I'm Shawn, I'm one of the dramaturgs as we've heard earlier, and 14 is essentially a kind of meta structure, right? Within that meta structure, there are five different kinds of contingents. One of which is the Singapore contingent, and I'm the dramaturg for the Singapore contingent, there's a dramaturg attached to each of these four other contingents. And what I was doing is I worked very closely with the four artists — which I will talk about a bit later — with Esplanade, with the filmmaker Zhong Wei, as well as the light designer, Genevieve, as we kind of put this work together. And what you're seeing on screen right now, is actually what the performers are seeing, right. So actually like there is that countdown timer within the estimate that they have to sort of get a sense of exactly when the performance is meant to be wrapped up, because I think Wu-Kang and Ray made it very clear that they were very strict with the 14 minutes, right. Well, at the 14th minute, it will cut, so this was kind of a prompt for some of the performance. And so actually, what I'm showing you is kind of like not really what the audience is seeing, but kind of behind the scenes a little bit. So for the Singapore side, we were working with four artists. Well, the first one you're seeing in front is Sandhya's performance. So the four artists we had were Sandhya, Hasyimah — this is Hasyimah, this is Rizman and Daniel Kok. And when I was talking to each of the artists I think what was very interesting was - so remember this was at a time in the pandemic this was in September right where I think things were still very uncertain they were kind of like opening closing, opening again like there was a lot of uncertainty for many of these artists, we haven't actually stepped into like the Esplanade theatre and just for a while right and remember this is the Esplanade, the huge Esplanade theatre, not the black box, right? So I remember one of the first —

[00:37:20]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Oh, no, did we lose Shawn?

[00:37:33]
Shawn Chua
Oh, sorry. Where did you lose me?

[00:37:34]
Lim How Ngean
Something about this time of the pandemic, right?

[00:37:38]
Shawn Chua
Yeah, we're talking about uncertainty and instability. So I think that was very performative. So this is a time of pandemic where there's not a lot of uncertainty. We didn't know when things were opening or closing. And for many of these artists, they haven't been in the theatre for a long time. Right. And remember, this is the Esplanade theatre. Right? So not the black box. But the big experience. Yes. So one of the first questions we're talking about is actually, what is our relationship with this specific theatre, with this specific space? And while I think a lot of us were kind of romanticising about this kind of beautiful forlorn theatres that have been abandoned during the time of pandemic, I think there were also lots of questions about actually, because these four artists, they're all independent practitioners where, to be honest, like, most of us wouldn't have access to that huge Esplanade theatre. So ironically, if there wasn't COVID the opportunity to even use that space, right? Might not have been there. So there was that question of like, Is this even like a space? Like, is this really home? Right? It might feel almost like a symbolic sense, but in a specific relationship, I think, you know, someone like Rizman, or Daniel might have entered that space more than a decade or so ago, right. And when the space was first opened, I think the first question is just navigating actually, what is our ambivalence with the space? And because of that, I think each of the artists were occupying very interesting kinds of interventions into the space itself, right. So for Sandhya, she decided to go with a very, very minutiae of the feet, tapping on her training as an Odissi dancer, for example. So the first shot, you know, we see of Sandia is now she's coming from the seats in the audience, right, and just like the first half of the 14 minutes, it's just like the kind of micro movements of the feet before she comes up, and we see this kind of very presentational performance, right? I think Sandhya's is the most presentational whereas, like when we had Hasyimah, right, who recently gave birth, and she was experimenting with the bengkong, which is something that you wrap around your body after childbirth, right? So with Hashem, we talked a lot about what it means to rehabilitate the body, but by extension to rehabilitate the species of the theatre after this long absence. So if you look at the image that Hasyimah was working with, this staircase is actually in one of the wings of the theatre. So you can see that kind of bengkong like draping around the space, right? And so we were really thinking about what does it mean to think about the theatre as the kind of body right that we were wrapping around and so that was the kind of extension and radiation that she was experimenting with, and trying to feel that space and her energy with that space was almost spiritual, ritualistic, almost. With a kind of gravitas in which was moving through and conducting the space. And for Rizman, Rizman was staying in the dressing room. Because

we were talking about how actually, for most performances, ironically spend most time in the dressing room than on the stage itself, right? So the dressing room as this space of intimacy. And Rizman was experimenting a lot with the breath, right? That starts to become this something else that animates the space, and experimenting with all these kinds of infinity mirrors and projections within the space itself. And, of course, I believe Daniels came all the way at the end. We started with a very presentational work with Sandhya's and with Daniel's. And actually the whole process of working with Daniel was an interesting one as well, because he was coming back from I think it was Ireland at that time. And so he didn't have the VTL thing available so a lot of the kind of correspondence was happening during his 14 day hotel quarantine. Right so there's a meta-meta layer to this in which he was putting his piece together. And so with Daniel's piece, it was a very campy, very energetic one that completely deconstructed the space of the theatre. He was running around all the way from the very very end of the backstage all the way into the audience. So that kind of entire disorientation of space itself.

[00:42:25]
Shawn Chua
I think we talked a little bit about the commentators already. So for us, we had Charlene, of course, who was our commentator. And I think what was very interesting was how each of the commentators were bringing very different kinds of energies to watch the way in which they're talking about the performance. Like, for example, I remember Susan was kind of very diligently and rotating every single part of the performance. Whereas I remembered the documentation for Taiwan was so candid, right? And she was eating and she was commenting in such a lively way. It's almost as if you're watching a Variety TV show, for example. And with Charlene, we had lots of conversations about storytelling and oral traditions of storytelling. And remember, we were talking about how in older kinds of oral traditions it's always about the kind of long durational time. That kind of cyclical repetitions that are happening right. Now, what are the kind of rhythms of speaking and talking how does information lag. So we're playing with those kinds of cadences. And I remembered one of the things was also like to give space to silence as well, right. To give space to show that which cannot be communicated. So not to kind of overwrite the performance with the speaking but to think about how the speaking becomes a kind of partner with what we're seeing on stage as well. So I think one of the kind of metaphors that we were playing with was also what if we think about the commentators as a kind of chorus leader, right? Like if we think about the kind of dramaturgy of Greek tragedies, right, and so these commentators are there kind of guiding and initiating us as the spectators, right? Who is trying to make sense of what is the kind of performative context of this experiment, and they are there to kind of walk us through and what was really interesting is that because we had five, it wasn't just a singular voice either. That as the audience, you had the kind of agency to permutate with these five, either kind of alternating or cross cutting them and feeling which are the kind of affinities with which commentators you were feeling with each of those performances. I think at this point, I kind of wanted to take a step back, right, because I think that the frame that was posed to me was to think about the digital and the durational. And I remember what is a durational performance?

[00:45:03]
Shawn Chua

And I was thinking about whether I would necessarily consider 14 a durational performance. And so here, I kind of am very much inspired by dance scholar André Lepecki, in thinking about durational performance, right? So for him, he talks about how duration is not time extended. Actually, duration has little to do with extension or other spatial references. Duration endures a profound transformation, in which time is no longer measured, assessed, inserted into an economy, but it's felt. So here Lepecki is inspired by Henri Bergson in thinking about duration, and where duration is not about...I think oftentimes when we say this is a durational piece of art, we think about it as a very long performance right. As an extended period longer than the usual performative parameters of time that we are used to, right. So anything that's more than an hour and a half or two hours of performance, for example. Oftentimes, that's the way in which it circulates, but I think Lepecki's intervention here is to think about how actually something can be a second, and that could be profoundly durational. Right? And because for him to think the durational is to exceed the kind of chrono-normativity, right, in which time is usually disciplined of the 30 minutes of the other one and half hours, etc. And so with the way in which he's thinking about durational art and durational performances, it's about that quality in which that kind of measured time is dissolved to allow for a different kind of way in which time is felt liberated from chrono-normativity.

[00:46:50]
Shawn Chua
So if I apply that kind of lens or frame to think about a work like 14 It's very interesting, because on one hand, the 14 minutes is so exact within within 14, right like that, that is the whole perimeter of the work, that the measurement of time is so specific, but at the same time, it is because it's precisely because it is meant to echo that kind of 14 day duration, that kind of durational quality of the quarantine right, in which you know, how are we inhabiting that time, that kind of counting down or is it that within that very strict parameters we are free to experiment with a different kind of rhythm of creation, of thinking about the work etc. So on one hand, there is that kind of form parameter. But I think to me, what is the most, the most durational aspect of the work? And to me, what I consider actually might be the protagonist of the work is actually the commentators, because they're the ones who are sitting there, right for that five hours. Of course, we said that they could eat, they could rest and all of the and some of them did, right. But at the same time, their presence was still with us for those five hours. Right. And so I remembered Charlene sharing a little bit about being sensitive to the energy as well, and kind of leaning into the moments of exhaustion for example, or when a work really pulls her or not, right. And so for me, like, there was something that was fascinating about that layer, in terms of how in some ways, as an audience, I was almost like rooting for the commentators as well as they introduce us to a different way of thinking about — not a kind of focus time in which like, you have to be fully present or whatever — but like, how do you accompany a work with these varying degrees of focus, distraction, and all of that. Which then I think maybe leads me a little bit to the sense of the digital. The question that I was considering then is what are the kind of different registers of duration and the digital that's happening within a work like this, right? Because there's also the kind of durational quality. Like, I think about time and duration, on film versus performance was also something that we were discussing a lot about, right? Like, I remember one of the conversations I had with Zhong Wei when we were trying to find different kinds of ways of framing the work. I think my provocation to him was to think about not to turn dance into film, but to think about how the film becomes deformed by the dance as well. Right? So what that also meant was that, for example, having to unlearn as a film maker, for him, it's always about the

cuts, right? Like after a few moments, we have to keep sustaining the audience's energies by cutting to different shots. Whereas I think, for us, we're thinking about how do we sustain the integrity of that presence, that likeness, can we hold that for a little bit longer than is usually comfortable for a kind of filmic form, for example. So there is that kind of degree of thinking about duration, but then there's also the degree of thinking about what is duration, or focus or presence mean in a digital space, where our attention is often perforated by all these other things that are happening, right? Like a WhatsApp message that's coming in right now or checking my email or someone walking in the back, how do we not deny those kinds of presence back the kind of pull that and acknowledge that as the kind of basis and paradigm of thinking of this presence and co-sharing of time and space? And in many ways, that's not new, right? Because I'm thinking about the kind of like Wayang performances that are very long, right? That are durational that you can kind of step away for a while, come back, you're kind of talking to someone, as you're watching the work, you know. That actually this kind of being in a black box, being very quiet, watching a thing with full focus for one and a half hours. I mean, that is actually what is abnormal, actually, right? That's actually quite a recent kind of intervention in itself. So I mean these are some of the questions that are kind of mulling in my head as I'm revisiting and thinking about the work within these parameters of thinking about duration and digital, I think I'm just going to stop here for now. I'm sure we can unpack or chat about some of these things together. But yeah, that's me.

[00:51:45]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Thank you so much, Shawn. I literally wrote in my notes that the commentators were the most durational aspects of this durational performance and they are the constant presence throughout the show and we watch them watching. We watch them becoming stiff, fidgeting, stretching, hunching over. It's a fascinating disjunct from what we are seeing with the dancers. And we see also the commentators' attention tuning in and out, sometimes looking at the phones, like you're talking about. Someone's going for dinner and going to go into the toilet and things like that. And it's a wonderful thing to watch, actually. And it's also a wonderful kind of reflection as to what attending to a digital show, especially a durational one usually means. People can easily tab in and tab out literally. And so I, for one, was very delighted when the Taiwanese commentator, when Daniel Kok came on, and she just started standing up and started dancing, she's like, "I've got this mic, I've got this wire but I don't care, I'm just gonna dance, who cares? The theatre is your playground." And it was great. It's something particularly unique about the digital age. The idea of watching someone watch something, even if it's yourself. I'm currently watching myself. It's something very particular about zoom in that sense. We are very used to watching a copy of ourselves, but as an audience member to watch another audience member. I mean, I also think about things like YouTube reaction videos, right? This kind of commentating also reminded me of that. And I was wondering if — I wish the commentators were here — I was wondering what kind of prep do they have to go through for this performance? Did they have to rehearse? I don't know. Shawn. Do you know if Charlene had to rehearse for her besides your own dialogues with her.

[00:53:55]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah. So I think what was interesting was because we did have a few runs. Right. And I think for Susan, I think she was almost like there for all the runs, right. And the Thai commentator, Pawit, he was

there for a lot of it as well. I think for Charlene, I think we were quite deliberate about, okay, let's only bring her in when necessary, right. So I think we did a bit of the tech stuff. But then I think I wanted her to kind of just respond to the works fresh and live eye as she was seeing it. So in terms of rehearsal, I don't think there was much of that. But I think there were lots of conversations about — Yeah, I think a lot of conversations were dwelling more in the realm of what does it mean to think about storytelling, right? As a kind of medium and then what kind of bodily prep that requires? What kind of foods are really around the area? How do you adjust the space such that the light isn't like shining to her eyes for five hours. And it was those kinds of considerations that we're playing with?

[00:55:06]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. When she was like, "Oh, what is your body doing now?" because I was worried for her body. I was like, you're sitting for so long, Charlene, are you okay? Yeah, and she said, "What's your body doing now?" And now my body is pretty bad at the moment. I mean, I have COVID so it was really nice to have that dialogue. Yeah, just as I'm watching the show.

[00:55:33]
Shawn Chua
What was very affirming also was because I think the brief from Ray and Wu-Kang was very generous for the commentators as well. It's like you can take a break, you can eat, you can rest, you can etc. And I think oftentimes as audience members, we — especially people who have been used to going to performances pre-COVID — we are very prone to being very harsh on ourselves, right? I keep seeing people or hearing people talk about how guilty they feel for being like bad audience right for not being able to pay attention to the work or having to constantly just to get through like a one and a half hour recording you have to split it over like six sittings, etc. And I think by watching these commentators being very distracted, not fully present in that usual way in which we imagined the kind of contract an audience needs to have with the performance that kind of gave, it felt like it gave the audience permission also, right and affirm that actually, it's fine. Wherever you are at, that's okay.

[00:56:37]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. Okay, so Shawn has given us a very detailed rundown of at least the Singaporean contingent as a dramaturg within a specific contingent. But I'm interested in overall because dramaturgy is a lot about sequencing, right? What comes one after the other. And so how did you all decide as directors of the show, how did you decide which performance came next or the sequence of the performance. I know Daniel Kok is like "of course, that's the end, that's the finale" but yeah, how did that happen?

[00:57:20]
Chen Wu-Kang
No...Pure luck. It was pure luck, because we didn't get to see it before a few days before the show.

[00:00:00]
Nien Yuan Cheng

So it's purely random, this sequence.

[00:57:31]
Chen Wu-Kang
No, no, no, no, no, we got some information from dramaturg, knowing what the performer is going to do, or in some performances we saw before we decided. But a lot of the performances, we didn't get to see it. And we had to make the decision through just the information dramaturgs provide us. So we just randomly and we got lucky. Daniel Kok was the last.

[00:58:06]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, I mean, it was a wonderful - for those of you who don't know, I mean, he just came out, guns blazing. I want to see if I can show a little bit of it just a little.

[00:58:19]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, can you all see? Oh, wait.

[00:58:30]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah, even the Taiwanese commentator was like, yeah, of course, he's the finish and what a way to end, you know. Yeah. So that was why I was wondering, how did you all decide how to sequence? So really, it was just all based on textual information that you got.

[00:58:56]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
I can say a little bit. So we had five rehearsals. I say, rehearsals, meaning with all tech stuff ready. And we had total five. And the first three was just figuring out the technical issues. So we didn't really rehearse anything. So until the last two weeks, on the HORSE team we could, and also for everyone else, can actually see what's happening besides their own country. So before then, I guess we only got the written descriptions from each venue, each dramaturg saying what they might want to do for each other. So it's a gamble. We just sit down, and then we just figure out what we talked through, oh, maybe this year, maybe Rizman could be the intermission. We'd try to put him in the middle. And then maybe someone can be in the beginning? Maybe Daniel, maybe he could be the end. So we got lucky.

[01:00:07]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, because we got lucky. And also, I remember, in the beginning, we also asked each dramaturg to give us some suggestion, if he thinks that this piece should stay in the middle or towards the end or after intermission, they do suggest. So that information helps.

[01:00:32]
Nien Yuan Cheng

Yeah. I see. I see. Yeah. Shawn, did you want to add something about that sequencing? Or what did you suggest? Yeah.

[01:00:04]
Shawn Chua
So I think for us, the arc was quite clear, actually. So we decided we wanted to play with Sandhya's very presentational performance near the start. And then you know, you're kind of almost moving through the stage right? So we start in the audience seat, you go up to the stage, and then you go to the wings, and then we were seeing that actually Rizman's will be good as an intermission, right? Because you're going backstage, right? And it's almost like the relationship between that space and the stage is not spatially obvious. And then kind of rounding of with Daniel's that brings us back into the audience area. And because of that order, as well, there were certain decisions about the frames, right. Because initially I think in Sandhya's one we did want to kind of review the theatre space, but later on, we decided maybe we can reveal the space in Daniel's piece, right? So with Sandhya's one we keep it tight, to the proscenium arc, but not so much that the audience side of the space itself so there was a kind of graduated review of an initiation into the space.

[01:01:58]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Right, right. Thank you so much. Oh, by the way, as moderator I suppose I have the responsibility of saying that please put in your questions in the chat at any point you like. And also for the Facebook live audience. Please also just comment wherever you are and the Centre 42 team will communicate your questions to us. So yes, it's not just me asking questions over here. How Ngean can also jump on any point. And yeah, about Sandhya's piece? Yes, it was very spectacular. It was like kind of theatre magic at some point, but then I also really liked how it cut to the interlude, which is just like, bang. Okay, that's just house lights on. Yeah, it's just yeah. So that was a really nice transition actually. Okay, so my next question is about when you transpose a performance into a digital space. My friend, the artist Jevon Chandra always likes to say, everything becomes multimedia. You know, if you're a dancer, you know, if you are an actor, you're a stage manager, whatever. Doesn't matter what role you are, in my experience, everybody, including dramaturg, everybody has to become an expert in multimedia, or a kind of a multimedia artist, even a film director. Everybody needs to understand framing camera angles, technological affordances, you know, directing themselves in some way. And in 14 you see a little bit of that, you see a lot of dancers directing themselves, I suppose, framing themselves. Do you think this is the future on being an artist in a post-pandemic age? That these kinds of skills and knowledge are now necessary to become an artist, a dancer or dramaturg? Doesn't matter what role you play? Yeah. Wu-Kang you can speak in Chinese!

[01:04:17]
Lim How Ngean
I want to hear from Wu-Kang because I'm jumping in right now, simply because we're talking about 14 but obviously, Wu-Kang as an artist, as a dance artists has been spending quite a bit of time thinking and, and actually even philosophising about what it means to dance in front of a camera, what it means to dance digitally. Like I said 14 for me was very layered, complex and rich experiment, whom he undertook with Ray but on his own, his musings, I think the thinking behind digital dance, online, live

digital dance also goes beyond 14, or perhaps 14 is the product of it after a long period of doing other stuff, which is why this question is very interesting. I would definitely like to hear from Wu-Kang, please.

[01:05:13]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yes, I think it's, there's an engine, there's a drive to survive. So this is the need to survive, and where is the resource and we jump in, and we study and during the process, and we gain the knowledge, and we gain the knowledge of understanding what we are lacking. And understanding that we can never compete in a digital performance, I mean, digital format, like Netflix, and it's during the pandemic, these three years, it's so clear that we will lose. We just leave really happily, because I think it's so so interesting that the performing arts in theatre is a very old tradition, right? I mean, of course, it's not Taiwan's tradition coming from Europe, or other countries, but this performing arts lively has a long history, not like digital performance. But we immerse ourselves in this culture, and we are preserved by the government. And we continue to evolve into a contemporary art or contemporary performing arts. But at the same time, the mainstream pop culture or movie and other medium are just exploding. And so this is the moment we get to meet at the same platform. And the wall, oh my god, no compete, no compete. And so it's very interesting for years. This will somehow help us to continue to think because I mean, luckily when we do work, we don't always have to tell a story. I think that's our advantage. That we still know there is some value even though they don't turn into money.

[01:08:04]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Oh, no.

[01:08:05]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
The numbers.

[01:08:07]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, viewing numbers. Yeah. Like any little beginner of YouTube has more viewers than 14 altogether. So there's no competition. But we are doing some other stuff we're doing. We're doing some other stuff. I just feel lucky that we get to work on this project. And I must say Faith and Iris at Esplanade are so smart. Very smart to putting this together. Because they have to pull a lot of stuff. And in the beginning, they have to push us. They have to push us, to ask us to expand our idea to collaborate with international collaborator, and how we changed the idea of 14. And including more people. Yeah, Lucky. Lucky, really.

[01:09:23]
Lim How Ngean
I've got another question, which I think Wu-Kang didn't quite expand on and maybe it was cheeky, naughty of him not to but he left a very strong impression on me what he said just now. I think for this particular event 14, there has been actually a lot of stress on or rather the emphasis is on the dramaturgs on dramaturgs and on dramaturgy, and I am quite sure I read it in Ray's presentation just

now where it said it did say something the fact that the dramaturgs were the one who chose the dancers, am I correct? Yeah. And then this was followed by what we can say just now where, because of this, it became almost a political commentary. Where, from where Wu-Kang and Ray were sitting, they could see who are the ones being chosen, who are the ones not being chosen. And this for me was strengthened by what Shawn said about his choice or his curatorial thrust of the Singapore dancers, of these dancers who may never see actually the main stage of a National Theatre like Esplanade, because of the kinds of work they do. And therefore also to reframe in a way, what they were doing. And again, it's almost— it's not almost — it is political. So, two things come to mind. One is that we actually see the dramaturg here, and I really would push the idea where you are not just looking at dramaturgs already, in this particular event 14, Ray and Wu-KangI think what you have been doing is you have been collaborating with curators. Right. You've been working with curators, with dance curators who have curated mini programs, right. You have not just one dancer, you have four dancers with four different programs, putting together what the traditional Western idea of dance concert is about. So you have dance concepts from each country being put together in a bigger dance concert of global scale, right. But these dance concerts from each country are actually curated by a dramaturg, no less, but still the work is I feel bigger. Because when we talk about dramaturgy there's always this idea of a particular project or particular performance. But here's the geometer having to look bigger and further and zoom out a bit more where they are looking at the big picture and I think kudos to both of you for actually putting or rather working with dramaturgs in that position, I think I will say I'm envious of Shawn, who's been involved in this because not many of us as dramaturgs get to curate special programs like this. And that's meta in so many ways already, right. And also then, the dramaturgy of this was in this pre-pandemic, ADN actually had a series of events where we were looking at dramaturgy of technology. And so to actually say that this event is called digital and durational. I feel that now I am lacking some insight. Also, I think it should be dramaturgy of technologies, because you're dealing with not technologies of just the body, as Shawn has so insightfully revealed to us in his own curatorial way of looking at the dancers. But the technologies also come from real hardware. We are talking about a grasp of the technicals that we've never had to before. Right before this, Nien was laughing at me because I still do not know how to blur my background for zoom. And here you have Ray just now giving that amazing slide of how things are working and how the movement of technicals are going to be. So for me, these two are very pertinent things that because of this event here, we are looking at the politics of such an event. Of who's being chosen, who's being represented, who's not being represented, and also then actually shedding light on the bigger ramifications of the bigger ideas of technology. Where I think Wu-Kang, you're right to say that with this kind of technological knowledge, we definitely are looking at competing with Netflix. Right. And this is a seed because it's interesting, you brought up Netflix, Netflix started as a video store.

[01:14:44]
Chen Wu-Kang
I used to rent them.

[01:14:45]
Lim How Ngean
There you go.

[01:14:46]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah when I was in New York, it's so interesting they got so big.

[01:14:56]
Lim How Ngean
Precisely. So we are talking about that. And again, going back to what Nien said about the future for the two of you, especially Ray and Wu-Kang. And Ray because of your technical knowledge. Where does 14 go? Or is there going to be another 14? Or what other kinds of potentiality of such an event as 14 can be done? Is a question that I would like to address the both of you also.

[01:15:20]
Nien Yuan Cheng
And just adding on to that not to waste what 14 was like, what is the archive or future of 14 going to be like?

[01:15:29]
Lim How Ngean
Absolutely.

[01:15:35]
Chen Wu-Kang
So hard, because this involves a lot of detail that we haven't discussed and addressed, such as copyrights. Because me and Ray, none of us owns 14. We only draw the outline, and all the content were developed by the artist and the footage, the angle was decided by another person so when it put together it became 14 and so we haven't really talked about it or decided what the copyright and for now we just have this secret link that we can sometimes lay in the night or during quarantine, just open it up to make sure that oh it was really there and it actually exists for now. And because we decided together on this website and some of my friends watched the show for five hours and at the end they just say, "where can I get this software?" That's all they wonder. They want to use this software for meeting and I don't know Ray, do you know the future of this project?

[01:17:26]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Still unclear. I think, first thing because we did 14 during pandemic. Now we're almost hitting the post pandemic. So that's why people were watching. I think that's one part. And next time it only belongs to internet, which means it belongs to nobody. Like, for example, because we did the show, and then we did this production, and we expect to have some feedbacks from whoever saw it, but I didn't really hear a lot from people. And also, I was trying to look up online, there's no critics, like, people didn't really write about this. It just, it's gone. It evaporates after the show, which makes me curious. Like, where does it belong? Like, because we build this venue, on the website, so the website becomes the home for this performance.

[01:18:41]
Chen Wu-Kang
I am sure that me and Ray, we invested a lot of time talking about the creativity of this project. Oh, how we have never seen this part, how we've never seen how they use this idea. And all that. But at the end, it feels some of my friend will consider "oh, it's just a platform." And we're like "Huh? Okay." You didn't create anything because other people create. So all these layers are still digesting.

[01:19:24]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Okay, thank you. Thank you so much for sharing this on Sunday. I can't believe nobody has critiqued. I really can't believe it, because this is just such a gigantuous project. But you're right, because I also only heard of it when How Ngean sent me the email about it. Shawn, you work with archives a lot? Do you have kind of an ideal vision for the future of 14?

[01:19:51]
Shawn Chua
Yeah, no, actually, there is one review in The Straits Times by Melissa Quek or at least one exists. Whether it covers the whole ambition of the project, I think that's an interesting question, right? Like, what is 14? Is it just about the specific works? Or is it about the infrastructure? Or is it about the process? Right, like, what are the parts that should be documented? And I think I'm just come back to that earlier point that Nien was sharing earlier, right, in terms of viewing the work after the performance itself. And so the thing, coming back to the digital and durational, for a lot of digital works, the performance is the archive, right, like the moment that is screened online that constitutes the artefact of the archive as well. Whereas in the past, when it's like natively live physical performance, then the recording becomes a kind of shadow of that, right? Whereas, like, in the paradigm when things are happening digitally, that is the work right? And I'm thinking about how, once the durational quality happens, we think about archives as a kind of durational performance, right? That maybe 14 doesn't end, after those five hours, maybe 14 continues every time like that. Like when Nien was watching it, it was still part of performance. She can still comment on it, she is still interacting with that community of other kinds of audiences reacting to it right? And I was just thinking, maybe all kinds of archives should include that kind of audience, reaction, audience co-presence in terms of how a work has been documented as well. So I think that that was one thing that came to my mind. And I think the other thing that I wanted to also offer was slightly in reference to an earlier question right about the competition between live performance and digital theatre, I think it's helpful maybe to also not think of it as a kind of zero sum game that we need to be in competition about, but rather, I don't even think that it's about trying to think about the transposition of the live into the digital. But I think the challenge or the invitation is for us as artists and performance makers to think about the digital and I think that the paradigm of the digital is also shifting as you're talking about right. Like the way in which it incurs into the physical augments those relationships in different ways. It's becoming more and more complex rather than a kind of binary to begin with. So what happens if we take this digital or hybrid spaces as a new starting point to trans-create our practices, to think about our works anew rather than to try to translate something physical to digital, right? I think if we think about it from the lens of the kind of transcreation. And to start from a very different kind of orienting context, it opens up very interesting possibilities and opportunities, as well, potentially. One can hope.

[01:23:01]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Thank you so much, Shawn. We do have one question from the audience from Max Yam. Hi, Max. Do we need to prepare, he says to create and perform in or for the metaverse? Anybody wants to tackle this question? How Ngean, do you know what the metaverse is?

[01:22:33]
Lim How Ngean
I was just about to say I think we need to unpack Metaverse a little bit of what it means to different people, different contexts and actually different platforms, right. Shawn was talking about a lot of things that were meta about 14. The whole exercise of putting together curators with an autonomy to choose dancers is already a meta-commentary on the work itself. And then to look at it from a Metaverse where we are looking at a world upon another world. So what are we unpacking here from 14? Is Max trying to say that 14 is a Metaverse in itself? Where there are many ways of performing it. Right, from dancer to cameramen to DOP to commentators. I'll stop here. Shawn, please.

[01:24:37]
Shawn Chua
Oh, yeah. Sorry. I think. Yeah. So I think just to unpack the metaverse, because I think that's also a word that is used a lot these days to mean very different things. Anything oftentimes when people say Metaverse, they're thinking about AR, VR or specific platforms, right? Whereas I think oftentimes, the way in which the metaverse is involved is it's more of a paradigm shift, it's a whole ecological shift, right? And the idea about the metaverse is that actually the distinction between the physical and the virtual will be like dissolved right. There is no kind of binary between the live or whatever, but how the virtual incurs into the physical and vice versa is a lot more complex and a lot more dense. Right. So I think the first thing to acknowledge is that the metaverse isn't here yet, right? Because I mean, we can see glimpses of it. But I think one way to read the question as a kind of provocation is to think about how, yes, you know, 14 might be a work that was circulating in a very different kind of economy of circulation when it's operating online, for sure. But it also has very inbuilt interesting infrastructures in there. The physical spaces are so right, in terms of the networks of relations that are being forged amongst the participants and other other infrastructure. That became very obvious was the technological infrastructures, right? The geopolitical technological infrastructures across different spaces. Yes, the parameters might be similar across for each of us, but like, it's very clear, like, which are the satellites where maybe like the lag becomes like almost an interesting aesthetic that incurs into the performance right, or that some of the performances had to be pre-recorded because of restrictions that were happening in Bangkok, for example, right, where all performances had to be count by a certain time. So I think it's very easy to think about the digital as this like flat homogeneous space, but I think we must remember that is never the case right as audiences that we still inhabit these spaces in very specific spaces for example and to think about how what does it mean to then make performances accessible? It becomes a very interesting question to consider also.

[01:26:58]
Nien Yuan Cheng

Yeah, I absolutely. This was exactly what I wanted to talk about. So Wu-Kang and Ray did you want to add anything because I was just struck by this one particular comment rolling through the screen in the performance, which was the glitches are reflections of the technical circumstances each city faces. Please embrace this creative reality. And it was a wonderful acknowledgement of the territory that comes with the digital. And we can, you know, we can talk about glitches as aesthetic elements, but beyond the idea of glitches being creative reality, I like to draw attention, like what Shawn said, to the possibility of it being the reality of political economy, right? It takes a lot of resources to mount a digital production, especially of this scale and of this quality. And at the same time, there is a huge and widening digital divide in Asia, especially. It's been quite obvious during the pandemic, in us as urbanised resource rich places like Singapore and Taiwan thrive in this era of digitalisation, in less urbanised spaces, with less digital infrastructure will be left behind. And what does it mean, when it comes to making art? You know, when it comes to transnational works there's always already an uneven distribution of resources, collaborating with people of different countries. But I suspect even more so for digital works, right. So if transnational digital performance is going to be the way forward in terms of performance collaboration, oh, yeah, you know, we save on plane fares and save on hotel fees, and all of that sort of stuff. But do countries like Singapore and Taiwan or places like that, first, have to firstly acknowledge this inequality? And secondly, how do we find ways? Do we have a responsibility to find ways to help artists in other kinds of places navigate this terrain? You know, did you have to experience this negotiation in 14? I think Shawn already hinted at it earlier. Yeah. I think we have to end with this question. Sorry. I think, yes, How Ngean messaged me. But yes, please comment on this and then we can wrap up

[01:29:32]
Shawn Chua
We can have a quick thing and then maybe that Wu-Kang and Ray can fit in some of the notes, right? Because, remember, in our conversations, one of the tips, I mean, of course, 14 is a lot about isolation, the solo, being alone. But through the process, we are so aware of how paradoxical that is, right? This is a work that is so ambitious, there's such a huge network of people. And to make that moment happen requires a whole team of people that we reveal in the kind of transitional photos, right. So on top of solo we talked a lot about the solidarities right? How can we think about solidarities across these spaces? How can we think about the kind of redistribution of resources I'm not sure anything maybe like I'm not so privy to the kind of producing side of things for example, like whether specific infrastructures or like Wi Fi devices were invested from I don't know Esplanade's side to support some of the other spaces but maybe Wu-Kang and Ray can share a little bit more about that

[01:30:43]
Lim How Ngean
Come on, Ray and Wu-Kang I'm sure there's a lot to be said about just trying to navigate.

[01:30:49]
Chen Wu-Kang
Yeah, we're just not sure who should start

[01:30:53]
Lim How Ngean
Just start. We are running out of time but we need to hear this.

[01:30:57]
Chen Wu-Kang
Oh yes this inequality it's so obvious right from the start. Just the Wi Fi. Just the basic Wi Fi. In Italy oh my god they don't have, they have very limited choice but that's what they need and so we need to find a solution for each different collaborating partner. And it reveals the inequality that we think...shocking we thought it should be very easy. Because it took us a very long time. A few meetings with our tech team to think oh, this is very common. This is very common machine that you can get and we even check on the internet. Oh, they do have it. But when we're in contact with them it's just so hard for them to get it. So yeah, it shows And I don't know. Ray, can you?

[01:32:40]
Sun Ruey Horng (Ray)
Too much to talk while it's...I just feel like there's no way of turning back. And yeah, it's still somehow mirroring the real life situation, because you need so much resources to pull this together. And we've been chosen by other people because we did something here, so I don't know, it's just, it still represents the...(chuckles)

[01:33:24]
Chen Wu-Kang
But no matter what I think we need to jump into digital, or at least set one foot in. It's like Bitcoin, all this digital stuff that or the metaverse, you may have your personal reason that you don't want to tap in, but you need to know. You need to know what it is. Know what it is that they're playing. And yeah, that just by gaining this knowledge, expand my understanding about the world that I didn't know exists.

[01:34:08]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yeah. Yeah, on one hand there's something so accessible about the digital so, so flat in its hierarchy, as you know, digital performance is accessible for people who are in wheelchairs, people who cannot afford babysitting, they can just go online and watch it. But yeah, there's something really freeing and accessible about digital performance. But there's also the other side on the production side of things. You need good camera, you need lots of production resources. And the reason why I asked is also is because I was in a panel the other day, organised by a Filipino theatre company, and seeing them try to survive; the drive to survive in this pandemic, using the digital, they are trying the best use of digital as well, but they just don't have the same resources and funding.

[01:35:16]
Chen Wu-Kang
I mean, we still don't have enough people doing it, I think, because we think it's irrelevant, this two worlds. But once more projects or more production are being created, we will know more samples, and

soon we'll find ways to do digital performance without spending any money. Yeah, hopefully. Like right now, like before, we are so used to seeing performances with real sets, like German opera, or Pina Bausch, like real sets. And later, we get to see like, no sets at all, and a company on tour with our tech people, and without even a manager, just the performers, the two of them with a laptop and they just tour everywhere. So I think soon, we as performers or creators...yeah, we'll find a way to tackle this. Yep.

[01:36:22]
Nien Yuan Cheng
Yep, absolutely. I think that's very, very well put. Paring it down, paring it down. And making it accessible eventually. Okay, I think we have to, we have to wrap up. It's 3:40. We are overtime. But thank you, thank you so so much for your time, and energy and, and sharing. It's very, very generous of all of you,

[01:36:49]
Chen Wu-Kang
So happy to be here.

[01:36:55]
Lim How Ngean
I just want to quickly again, thank Wu-Kang, Ray and Shawn, to share the experiences with 14. And very big thanks to Nien to moderate this particular session. Just one last word that I'd like to say is that this thing about inequality actually, if you look at it, even pre-pandemic, it's always been there. Whether it's technical, whether it's cultural, whether it's financial or political, right. We can even go on to argue who was the first one who got invited to, I don't know, the Edinburgh Festival, that in itself is already in an inequality. But that is where then for me the richness of performance comes from. It is because of that kind of inequalities that actually rich performances come from. And then how we deal with the inequalities and the lacks, as Wu-Kang puts it very succinctly, it's a matter of survival, how we want to survive. I know of Indonesian artists, for the last few years, who have turned back to becoming fishermen, and farmers. So there are ways I mean, they are still doing a bit of dancing here and there. But you know, there are ways of surviving. So these are different strategies that we're all trying out in solidarity is something that I think Shawn, rightly said, so that it has to be seen as an effort in solidarity. And for that, Wu-Kang and Ray I salute the two of you in doing this. And I really hope that you continue in other ways. Yeah, it's not just about dance. I want to stress that actually, this is about the technology. And when I say Technology, I do not mean hardware, I mean, not just hardware, but also in the thinking in the putting together everything. Thank you very much for this.

[01:38:52]
Lim How Ngean
And on this note, I would like to just wrap this session. And I'd like to thank everyone for staying back to listen, this is not the last one that we have. We have another one tomorrow, actually. This year has been an amazing year for us starting from last year where we had a series of E-Zines that were put out, based on all our conversations, conferences, symposiums, workshops, into publications, where we also had these panels to review these publications, which is in a way a trial for us to look at proper

publications for Asian Dramaturgs' Network's wealth of archives that we have amassed since 2016. And we also, if you go into our website, we have a little map to show where our dramaturgs have, or rather contributing dramaturgs and artists who have actually put their two cents into what it means to dramaturg or what it means to do dramaturgy in Asia. But more importantly, like I said, this is not the last of our series. We have one more tomorrow starting at 3pm Singapore Time called Translocal Connections: Introducing the Asian Performing Arts Lab (APAL), which is a special artists network in Berlin based in Berlin, where they look at different ways of doing residencies, which favours Asian artists. Yeah, and we also will be talking to the founder Ming, who is Singapore-born and his co-dramaturg I would say in putting together the residency program. Please join us tomorrow at 3pm. We'll be talking to Ming, his dramaturg. Dana and also Fezah Maznan from Singapore also who will be our provocateur. On that note again, let me thank Wu-Kang, Ray, Shawn, and Nien. Thank you so much. I think I'm going to bid goodbye. Good afternoon. Good evening. Good night to all of you. Thank you.