ADN Re/View Vol 3 Discussion

Presented by Asian Dramaturgs' Network
Organised by Centre 42

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[00:00:00]
Charlene Rajendran
So welcome to Asian Dramaturgs' Network. Many of you are familiar with ADN, have been there from the beginning, and some of you are new to it. So very briefly ADN began in 2016 when Founding Director Lim How Ngean, who's here with us, started a series of symposiums, meetings, workshops and conferences to think about what this thing the dramaturg is and what is dramaturgical thinking in the Asia Pacific region.

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Charlene Rajendran
Since then, we've had these various events and thanks to Centre 42 who is our host and our home, these events were all documented. They are available online as well on the website and you'll see videos of all the various discussions and symposia. And then they were transcribed and from that material, we felt it was important to mine what was available, and put together these three volumes ADN Re/View Volume One, Volume Two, Volume Three, of which a team of co-editors: myself, Daniel Teo — Daniel wave — Chong Gua Khee — wave — and Dominic Nah who's not here because he's at class this evening. We looked through the material, we worked on it in different ways, and we produced these three online publication with a very, very, very, very cooperative, delightful, inspired and patient designer Huang Suhuai who took on our crazy ideas and worked with us and was very patient with change of mind, asking for a little bit more and we really want to say a big thank you to Suhuai for working with us on this.

[00:01:48]
Charlene Rajendran
So as part of these online publication events, as it was since ADN has not been able to meet for the last two and a half years, the last time we met was in 2019 when we had a conference as part of the Singapore International Festival of Arts — we've had online discussions. So we had one after Volume One and one after Volume Two. And this one is after Volume Three, which came out last month. But we're not just looking at Volume Three, we're looking more holistically in a way at this idea of the online publication and what it means to make resources available and what it means to build resources. And we're very glad to have two guests who are very much part of ADN. But guest for today in that they will provide stirring discussion for us to then take on and discuss with as well, and that is Janet Pillai and

David Pledger. I will introduce them more fully in a minute. Both of them have contributed to ADN Re/View very significantly. In Volume Two, Janet's keynote from 2019 is featured and published. And in Volume Three, David's keynote from 2018 in Adelaide is also published. David, of course, is featured also in Volume One and Volume Two because he has been part of the ADN discussions since 2016. And so his notion of operating systems, for example, comes up in Volume One and then concentric circles and other things comes up in Volume Three.

[00:03:28]
Charlene Rajendran
Before I go on to introducing our two guests in more detail, I want to just say a little bit about the structure of today's online discussion. So you have a sense of what's coming up and how we'd like to invite you to participate and be part of this discussion. So for the first 20 minutes, I'm going to be talking with David and Janet about their views on ADN. All three volumes or a particular volume depending on what they choose to talk about, and ideas about publication and developing resources for dramaturgy in the Asia Pacific. And then we open the dialogue for everyone to participate and so we're not calling it a QnA specifically, because it's not about Question and Answer in that sense, but more really inviting your perspective — some of you have read some of ADN Re/View perhaps, have been to ADN events or have your own experiences in relation to dramaturgy or dramaturgs. And then after that, we go on to the second part of the discussion where I will talk with David and Janet about their own provocations for dramaturgical thinking and dramaturgy in their current practice at the moment, what they're thinking about what they're doing, and ideas maybe about how this can inform approaches to a pandemic or endemic related performance making and thinking or, you know, both of them have been talking about cultural dramaturgy, social dramaturgy, political dramaturgy almost.

[00:05:03]
Charlene Rajendran
And then from there, we move on to another open dialogue. So there are in a sense two phases of the dialogue, both of which involve space for you to participate. Now, another dimension is the chat, the chat function, which everyone has access to, will also be used as a space for you to comment on and Gua Khee and Daniel will provide provocations. Sometimes they will put you onto links if they feel those are relevant. And you're welcome to use that as well. If you think of a project or an idea, please use the chat as well because that becomes a resource and a way for people to engage while some conversations are going on. And then we wrap up and we go from there, and we hope that works for you. Okay.

[00:05:47]
Charlene Rajendran
Okay, so let me start by now getting into the discussion, and first, introducing Janet and David a little bit more in detail for those of you who don't already know them. Janet Pillai is a researcher, scholar and arts practitioner in Malaysia whose interests lie in the field of arts and culture, education, as well as research and publication. And Janet has worked for most of her career as a young people's theatre director focused on collaborative and integrated arts processes, before moving into community based arts and cultural sustainability. She's a member of Five Arts Centre Malaysia, and there are many other

Five Arts people here today, I'm happy, to say a dynamic collective of arts, artists, activists and producers dedicated to generating alternative art forms and images in the contemporary art landscape. Janet began her career in the teaching and practice of children's theatre in the 1970s. And I was one of those children. Her pioneering work involved collaborations with Malaysian performing artists and the young participants, resulting in more than 25 major productions, and an online resource that I would ask you to look at because it's a really exciting resource called Arts Education Archive, Malaysia. In 2007, Janet founded Arts Ed, a nonprofit organisation in Penang, which provides place-based culture education for young people. And while in Penang, Janet served as Associate Professor at the Department of Performing Arts in University Science Malaysia until 2013. Now she is an independent researcher and consultant in the area of cultural mapping, community engagement, and arts and cultural education. Her work entails research training, programming with various organisations and institutions from universities, NGOs, local government agencies, artists and planners: people who are interested in community engaged projects and place revitalisation through the arts. She's authored five books, numerous articles on arts, culture and heritage education and cultural mapping, and contributes as an expert resource person in regional organisations such as UNESCO Bangkok and APCIEU Korea. That's Janet Pillai. Well, that's some of Janet Pillai.

[00:08:09]
Charlene Rajendran
David Pledger is an award winning contemporary artist, curator, producer, writer, thinker, who works within and between the performing visual and media arts in Australia, Asia, and Europe. And his live performances, installations, interactive artworks, documentaries, digital art, ideas and discursive events have been presented in books, journals, magazines, as well as museums, galleries, art centres, as well as a city carpark, an abandoned stables, a suburban house, hotels in Surfers Paradise, a Slovenian film studio, and the Australian Institute of Sport. His views on tennis you can ask him about later. His work is notable for engaging the public in productive and provocative ways. And from his initial practice, which is live performance, he's developed cross disciplinary dramaturgy, in which a central platform is primarily about engaging with artists across platforms and working with experts from social, scientific, academic and philanthropic fields. And his keynote alludes to some of this in volume three if you read it. So the practice interests include the body, the politics of power, the digital realm and public space. He is founding artistic director of a company called Not Yet It's Difficult (NYID) which is one of Australia's seminal interdisciplinary arts outfits. And his current projects include David Pledger Is Running For Office (2016 and ongoing) serial performance work contesting the space between artists and public office, which if you haven't seen any, I'd encourage you to look at what's available online. He's a recipient of many awards, grants commissions, and his curatorial practice focuses on creating these optimal conditions for artistic production that generate provocative questions. It's currently curator of something called ANAT Spectra 2022: Multiplicity, which is an artistic and discursive platform, inspired by the intersection of art, science and technology, which he might talk about later. That's David Pledger. Part of David Pledger. Welcome to you as well.

[00:10:25]
Charlene Rajendran

Okay, so let's get the conversation going. Thank you both for being willing to respond to ADN Re/View. And so without further ado, that's what I'm going to ask you to do. And maybe we'll start with David and then move on to Janet, your thoughts on ADN Re/View and how you read it, what you think of it, and what else you think it might lead on. Over to you, David.

[00:10:51]
David Pledger

Thanks, Charlene. Lovely to be here in this Zoom room with everybody and see some familiar faces I haven't seen for a long time in person. I should say I am zooming in from the lands of the Boonwurrung people of the Kulin nation here in the city of Nam, Melbourne, Australia. And I acknowledge and pay my respects to elder's present, emerging and future. Yeah, I think one of the things that I feel that when I look at the three volumes of the ADN Re/View, firstly, I think hadn't seen it before. I hadn't seen something like that before. Where there was such a comprehensive trajectory about the concept, the philosophy, the cultural politics and artistic dimensions of dramaturgy. And I think that's absolutely desperately needed. I am refreshed and always have been by the work of ADN and reminded by — when I looked through the Re/View — of the kind of positioning of the whole project in Asia and acknowledging that in some of the works, I think one of the editorial notice the whole idea of Asia and being Asian is constantly questioned.

[00:12:33]
David Pledger

And actually I wouldn't even say it's a gap. I think, actually, what's interesting is that dramaturgy has really been sort of so Eurocentric, that so many of the conversations that are needed to be had have not been able to be had. And so the idea that it's porous and fluid, and contested and unresolved and evolving, is present through the three volumes. And so what it feels to me is, and I'm going to make a little point in a second about this, but what it feels to me is that there's a new provocation in play around the ideas and that those provocations are born out of cultural and artistic and political dimensions. I often feel at the moment that art is either one of two things. It's either a tool or a product. And my feeling is that it's a tool because it's often instrumentalised through government policy. And it's a product because it's been commercialised through a kind of overriding financial system that is steeped in reducing everything to a financial unit and this is part of the neoliberal project. What art is to me at its most subversive at the moment is process. Because process is very, very difficult to concretise. You can't turn it into a commodity, because the minute you kind of grab it and get your hands on it, it sort of disappears on you straightaway. So it's very hard to make something of it that you can kind of sell or turn into a tool. And so when I was going through the three volumes, I sort of was reminded that, actually, in the way in which those volumes are constructed, the whole thing is a process, and that there's a strong dramaturgy in the editorial approach, that takes me past the third volume into a whole set of questions, which I think is fundamental for any dramaturgical process, that you develop a better set of questions than the one that you started with. And for me, that's where I get to at the end of the third volume, I get to a better set of questions, and the one real ones we all started with five years ago.

[00:14:59]
Charlene Rajendran

Thank you, David. You know, it's so true with what you're saying about the process of these volumes, because earlier, I was saying that we couldn't have gotten to Volume Three without Volume One and Two. And we found our way through. And this is the team of co-editors, by having those conversations and trying things out. And once Volume One came out, it had a particular presence and they kind of spoke to us in a particular way. And then it moved on, moved on from there. Volume One, of course, was focused on the idea of 'mapping' which informed the main title of the first ADN event and then Volume Two was 'tracing' and Volume Three was 'framing'. And these are of course, processes familiar to people involved in dramaturgical thinking into dramaturgs. But yeah, this idea of publication as a process is something I think that we can return to in a bit, but I'm going to turn now to Janet. Janet, your responses, please.

[00:16:04]
Janet Pillai
I was a bit overwhelmed reading these heavy three e-zines which I kind of like pick and choose throughout the year. I was just looking at particular articles or particular sections of it. But to read all three was really heavy. For me, what was exciting about the three volumes was that it gives you a very expansionary view of dramaturgy because it covers so many dimensions and context. In terms of language, culture, geography, disciplines, different professionals within the performing arts talking. Even different works from the point of view of different works that were performed. So, I think it's only when you overlay all these articles, which was somehow either achieved to some extent by the annotation in the e-volumes. So the annotations were, whether they were little comments or a reflective statement or a Q&A by some panel. It was one kind of overlay, which really helps you to kind of contextualise what you're reading or even look for some kind of disagreement or resistance or some nodal connection. But I think when you read the three e-zines together, you actually get a kind of what we call in cultural mapping, mapping overlay, where we kind of map different layers of a space. And then we overlay the geographical maps on the baseline map. And it's the overlay that actually reveals that dramaturgy, it reveals a very lateral and expansionary understanding of dramaturgy, so that we don't see dramaturgy as something that is so easily boxed. It's not so easily boxed. There is no one definition.

[00:18:33]
Janet Pillai
And I think it's really important that ADN keeps this very lateral view of dramaturgy. You know, how would you retain and not let academics start to define it clearly. And I think one of the reasons why — because this project actually went over a few years. And it's interesting that the people who spoke and their ages was also very revealing. I mean, the people who talked about dramaturgy, whether they were performers or you know, famous directors or whatever. I think that even the historical approach to their historical approach to dramaturgy was really different. And I think that was it Rustom, who mentioned that it's such an evolving art, that the socio political context of your theatre practice actually makes you look at dramaturgy differently, or practise it differently. So I think the form of theatre, the social historical context of theatre as it changes, and depending on which kind of practice you're in, or who was your guru, you actually have a different view, or different way of using dramaturgy. And that, for me, was interesting. Reading all the many people who were talking about dramaturgy. The other thing that

interested me was people giving names to dramaturgy. You know so I use what's like dialogical participatory, then David used words like artistic, cultural, social dramaturgy, and then there's Daniel's, you know, 'quantum time travel gravitational dramaturgy'. And I think these words are very important, because they allow the practitioner to have a reflection on what is dramaturgy, but giving it a name, by which they understand it. And this kind of diversity of understanding of the term is very interesting for me. Having been in academia for a long time, I'm really not into this kind of, you know, no more lah. No more of giving things kind of a very clear, four sided kind of definition.

[00:21:10]
Janet Pillai
I wasn't sure whether ADN wanted to really focus on performance as in the performative art, because there was a bit of deviation into dramaturgy outside of the arts. I mean, there was mention, most of it was in the performing arts. But I was also curious why there were no references to visual artists, or even more to other other forms of art. And that's something I would have wanted to see more in the three Re/View. But maybe that intention was to focus on that. But the reason why I say this is because the dramaturgy of performance is a very 3D kind of art. Framing. And to actually frame dramaturgy for an ensemble is really tough. But when a visual artist is working by themselves, with a computer or something, if it's a graphic artist, dramaturgy becomes completely different, it takes on a different kind of trajectory, a different kind of process. So, I was just curious about it, although there was a lot of mention of working with technology, but I'll come to that in a while. It's just not the same, working in 2D and 3D is very different. Working in performance with human bodies is really different from working with other forms of visual arts or even music that is interfaced with technology. So, that's kind of different. And I wanted to see more of that I thought.

[00:23:03]
Janet Pillai
I was very interested in the articles actually, especially by the keynote speakers, and sometimes by reviewers, about the importance of structure. So they use words like architecture, skeleton and David's term 'operating systems'. This kind of architecture, which is required in dramaturgy, to create a discursive space for dialogue or for discussion or for argument, is very interesting for me. Because I'm thinking about dramaturgy outside of the arts, where, as a politician, or as a social butterfly, I want to dramaturg my performance. And actually, I don't really create my own structure, I'm using a kind of a social structure to do it.

[00:24:14]
Janet Pillai
And I'm using a kind of, how do I say, be the people who are calling the shots are actually the public. Whereas in a lot of the articles there was mentioned that the scene comes actually from the artists rather than from the public. And I found that interesting. And this made me think of David, your idea of concentric circles, who is at the centre. Is it the public? You know, calling the shots? And then the dramaturg starts working? Or is it the public that calls the shots. So this movement from centre to periphery back to centre?

[00:24:56]
Janet Pillai
And I think Daniel's mention of the Sun and the Galaxy and the system, right? The system. And how important is that gravitational pool that holds the micro and the macro together? Because I'm very interested in micro dramaturgy, and then macro dramaturgy, but it also can refer to personal, artist versus public, it can also refer to how we move in terms of the limitations of the human body, and then the amazing permutations of technology. So how do we navigate this micro/macro kind of view? And I think all the three zines actually make you think about this. This movement that you have to constantly navigate between the micro and the macro. I think, yeah.

[00:25:58]
Janet Pillai
Other than that, I think we're all familiar with - when I read about, you know, all the skills that were mentioned in three e-zines by different people. It's such a kind art. you know words like, research, observe, listen, call and answer. Be sensitive to interpersonal, intrapersonal, transcultural, be democratic. It's such a lovely kind of process which is really an antithesis to the mad, you know, capitalist world out there. I will talk later about capitalism and how David, I know you're very interested in algorithms, and how we use them in different ways, but we'll talk about that later. So that's my take from reading the three zines. It's really a rich hodge podge of stuff. If I can make just one critique, I couldn't tell the difference between 'framing', 'tracing' and 'mapping'.

[00:27:15]
Charlene Rajendran
Yeah, no, I thank you very much. There's a lot there for us to think about and respond to, I think, first, I will say that in Janet's keynote, she talks about this relationship between micro dramaturgy and macro dramaturgy and the importance of context very specifically, but also in her presentation, which isn't available in the e-zine, her final slide was of the politician of Malaysia's former prime minister and his wife, and how he stages himself in relation to this notion of a populist view and this question of the public and thing came up. David, I'm going to ask you to respond because I think a lot of that kind of is looking at some of the concepts that you're working with and referred to you directly. So, David.

[00:28:09]
David Pledger
Yes, very interesting. I think the what the one thing that really kind of caught me is that whole idea of personal to the public, and I started getting these constellation of images of different shapes and because I always think of a dramaturgy for each project as having a particular shape and I tried to find the shape and need to find the shape. Because if I can find the shape of it, then I can explain the kinetics of it. And if I can explain the kinetics of it then I can talk about momentum. And I think momentum is the key to making any project alive. And then you know, it allows you to find the structure, the architecture, the codes, to find what you might be looking for. So that kind of really tweaked a few things for me. One of the things I'm very interested in is this whole idea of curation in this process because a lot of my work at the moment is curatorial. I've sort of been very interested in that space.

You know, I've been working as a curator for a long time, but I don't come from the traditional background of curating. In fact, I really don't come from a traditional background of anything. And so it sort of suits me to be a curator, because a curator is a bit of a — it seems to me — to be a blank canvas that you might fill. Saying that, one of the things that I've started to think about curation is — and it relates a bit to what Janet was saying about where's the audience in these processes, and that if I've got these constellation of shapes of various dramaturgies that are kind of in the universe, and I look at mine. I think, what I feel like, when I kind of put a programme together with all the elements of concept, of people, of ideas, of the kind of alchemy of those things. For me, curation is the art of disappearing. So when I think about these concentric circles, it starts with me. And then what happens is, if I'm any good, what happens is that a kind of an autonomous, self-generating system is created, and the distribution of power in the process of creation is broad. And then there's this underlying ambition to adjust the operating system, the dramaturgy of this project for the benefit of the world. For the benefit of the many, so it's not heroic, it's post post. It actually, and I think, in some ways, and I've thought about this in sort of pedagogical frameworks as well. I've always found that the best teachers are the ones who make themselves redundant. And I think the process of curation and developing a dramaturgy for an event, which is what I do quite a bit, is actually making myself redundant in that process. To disappear. So then the thing has a life of its own. And if you, and again I'm reminded of a beautiful lesson that I was taught by a Yugambeh Elder, which is in the southeast part of Queensland. And Kyle Slabb is his name. And he taught me in one of my projects, in my curatorial projects, he said, only give knowledge to those that you know will understand and respect it.

[00:32:34]
David Pledger
And so that's sort of been a guiding principle in terms of who I collaborate with. So a project that I've got at the moment, I've got a curatorial circle around me, and I absolutely trust them with any knowledge that I might have. They will respect it and transform it. And I think in that process, the one who begins the process can then quite rightfully, disappear or become redundant, or see the thing being taken on and in that way, it reflects something of what I think is in one of Daniel's, in the editorial note number two, I think, which sort of really which Charlene has written, which really reflects around this whole idea of the democratic. And that actually, power influence is best experienced when it is distributed widely and wisely. And then when you get through them when you sort of understand how you might do that, as an artist who has the departure point for a project — for a process. That's when the whole question of the public becomes much easier to understand. Because actually, what you're creating in those concentric circles is an ever increasing set of publics.

[00:34:09]
Charlene Rajendran
Interesting how the ways in which these architectural images, the structural references, become, as you were saying, the starting points which disappear. While in other instances, they become defining and restrictive. So, a lot really depends on how one is using these terms, right. So Janet raised this question of how when words are offered, they can become either part of a hodgepodge part of an assemblage, part of interrelated lateral relationship, or they can become very insistent and imposing I suppose, and everything else on the spectrum. And what's interesting, listening to what both of you are saying about

the dramaturgies of ADN Re/View, and therefore the thinking that went into ADN is this kind of overlay. I mean, thanks, Janet, for that reference to mapping overlay in cultural mapping, and actually a way in which things kind of bleed into each other — one on top of the other or you know, in that overlap. But also as a dramaturg sometimes one is doing that. Providing a kind of layer of response, of question, or interaction of historical research or whatever. And then one is also semi-disappearing. You know, this absence, presence, listening, responding kind of dynamic is at work a lot. And I think, the challenge to understand what that means, in a current context, something we'll come to a little bit later on where the pandemic endemic situation means our regular modes of being present/absent have also changed. So then how do we take some of this dramaturgical thinking and work with it a little bit further? Janet, do you have any immediate responses before I open up to the wider group, because some of what David was saying about the public, I think in relation to what you were talking about in not just the micro-macro dramaturgy, but how context really matters? I mean, what is the public in context really makes a big difference?

[00:36:39]
Janet Pillai
I'm kind of interested in our current historical period and why the public matters so much. So you know, it's a response, of course, that we have lost power. You know, the public has completely lost power. So when Bharucha mentions how the dramaturg comes out, in this historical period, is a reaction to the fact that we have lost power. And we have to create architectural systems that actually make us — who could be powerful — make ourselves less powerful and give more room to the public. Or we can look at the conditions of society or ask the public to talk about the conditions of their society and then think of dramaturging something that addresses those conditions. So I think yeah, I'd rather keep that big picture of dramaturgy that will change according to the needs of the political pressures that we are feeling or the social pressures that we are undergoing. And we provide an alternative, I think. I mean, dramaturgy is a process that allows you to move, react or respond to that historical issue. That historical milieu.

[00:38:05]
Charlene Rajendran
Reminds me in terms of this becoming redundant or becoming invisible, of a nice essay by philosopher Jacques Rancière, called Ignorant Schoolmaster in which there is this challenge to the notion of what is good pedagogy and who's ignorances are being exploited in a certain kind of imposition, and what happens when that is reversed and the responsibility is thrown back in a different way and the role that one plays. Of course, the ignorance is a kind of performed, performative ignorance in a way rather than a willful ignorance. What happens then, of course, juxtaposing those two words together in a particular historical space also makes a difference.

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Charlene Rajendran
I want to open up now to responses from all of you, either in the chat or just raise your hand, and we'll ask you to speak. It can be a question, it can be a comment, it can be something that sparked interest in you that you'd like Janet and David to clarify, or any other responses, really. So we invite you to think

about that. But before that happens, I'm going to direct a question directly to How Ngean who's right here, with regards to what Janet was saying about why we didn't have more visual artists and people from that realm, right. Because I think that's something I would like to hear from you about How Ngean because there was dance dramaturgy, and eventually there was a little bit of veering away from just theatre. But yeah, please talk about that a bit.

[00:39:53]
Lim How Ngean
First of all, thank you, David. And Janet, it was very enlightening and actually very good to hear that there was so much going on with what we've been doing, or what the editors have been doing with the Re/View. Just to go back to the question of why not involving visual artists. I would say that, probably it is a top down thing, meaning that because I was doing a lot of the proposals for convening of the panels and the discussions and the symposiums, I could only first draw from my own experience. And that experience was steeped in performance. In my later years, it was dance but before that it was theatre. And so that was always the first step for me. And then when we got into it a few years later, when we were trying to be more experimental or bold, or however you want to describe - ambitious, actually, we went into social and political already. There was always this thought at the back of my head, okay, so are we not going to tackle the idea of visual arts curation, but that was also because of my, again, I would say due to my own limitations in knowing actually the visual arts world and in my head, dramaturgy and curation, especially visual arts and performing arts dramaturgy, visual arts curation, the visual arts curatorial drive, seem to be always to do with collective works in an exhibition space, or a show of some sort. The word 'show' was always there, for whatever reason. So when it came to looking at visual artists, I was very uncertain how to then actually frame how visual artists go about producing, I would say, a body of works or a show, as opposed to curators, visual arts curators. And the approach where there is space, there is architecture, as Janet puts it. And that was always what I saw, but I couldn't see beyond the individual visual artists, who also dramaturg her body of works for a particular project, if you know what I mean. And that was, I guess, in a way, some sort of hurdle for me and to today, I'm still not sure how to approach that. And actually, from what Janet has been saying, it's sort of solidified what I've been thinking about. The fact that this thing about overlaying density, that could be a way in actually, of maybe we should start having conversation with visual artists. We started a little bit with Jompet, if you remember, she was the one that was in our latest conference, when he is actually a true blue visual artists co opted into the performance community because of his sculptural works. His installations that were then used for set designs in performances. So there could be a start. And it could be the future of different ADN iterations, I will definitely admit there is hesitation and perhaps limitation on what I know. Having said that there is just so much to even know within the performing arts realm, that I think ADN still has a lot to explore. But we bleed out and bleed in, we receive, we overlap into the visual arts world.

[00:44:22]
Lim How Ngean
And also on a very personal level. When I speak to visual artists, they are very fiercely protective of their world of creation of criticality. And I remember when I first mooted the idea of dramaturgy, or talking about dramaturgies in some of my visual aspects in Singapore, they will just look at me and go:

Isn't that another word for curation? Have you been looking at critical art theory? I think that's where it all came from. So I'm also a bit resistant that way towards that. Here we are saying that we're expanding, we're becoming quite inclusive, right, in the language we use and how we describe dramaturgy. I do find that in visual arts, the discipline of critical art theory is very steeped in and locked in that kind of academia that Janet was talking about just now.

[00:45:21]
Charlene Rajendran
Thanks, How Ngean. I think yeah, these questions about how far the dramaturgical spheres or circles extend and interconnect and overlap. Daniel highlighted one of the things we said in our editorial was that we might invite chefs and neurologists and marine biologists and shamanic healers to participate in future dialogues, because these intelligences emerge in our conversations, whether we like it or not. And they are part of how we interact. But how comfortable do we become? Or how willing are we to be uncomfortable with the languages therefore, and of course, language is a huge one, with not just the question of different disciplines, but literally different languages. The access to people and what they're thinking, based on the languages we do and do not speak, or are willing to speak and unwilling to speak or feel fearful of speaking or hearing even might become the questions that we need to ask as well.

[00:46:34]
Charlene Rajendran
Are there any questions?

[00:46:37]
Lim How Ngean
Yes, one more remark. And I just keep thinking about what Janet said about the public directing the performance. And that linking to quite a few times, there was mention of architecture, right? For me, that could be another way in where we look at actually design and architecture. I have a dear friend who is an architect, and whenever I talk to him about buildings, it's not just buildings, right? Because who inhabits the buildings, the people, there are two major types of buildings that we know of one, the private residences, and the ones made for public. And it's very interesting, listening to him talk about designing public buildings, because before anything is done, but to be fair, even in residential buildings, right - private residential buildings. It's always: what's it for? Who are the people inhabiting it? It's always for the people. And then there is this very detailed mapping, actually, of a choreographic exercise of how people are using the space in different spaces, not just inhabiting and using it, but moving from one space to another. We always think that architects dream up these designs first, but actually it goes back to the people. When I talked to Ian, my architect friend, he's always talking about, okay, who is living there? How are they using it? Who are the people? What ages are we talking about added physical disabilities we have to take into consideration for and if it's public, what kind of public are we talking about? And it goes into actual social, cultural and political realms of these communities whom they are designing for. And for me, that is even more interesting I feel. And I feel that there's something there about architectural design, industrial design, that perhaps they actually have a wider sense of how dramaturgy actually works.

[00:48:53]
Charlene Rajendran
I'm gonna ask if there are other questions. Anyone else who would like to make a comment or question? Because I know not everyone's got their cameras on, but you might want to just unmute yourself and ask a question.

[00:49:20]
Charlene Rajendran
Okay, then I'm going to pick up on this idea of how reading ADN Re/View and developing ways of thinking about resources, materials, spaces, frameworks, platforms, to encourage more questions, because both Janet and David said very heartening things about ADN Re/View, which is that you end up thinking of better questions than when you began. And it leads to a curiosity about the things that are not there. Rather than trying to be definitive, it's trying to work with this mixture of material and see how they relate to each other. And I guess I wanted to ask you both about this process of developing materials, developing resources, not necessarily in the form of publication that is limited to print, obviously, but what kinds of spaces, platforms, avenues should we be thinking about, can we be thinking about that exceed the usual book, journal kind of ways of presenting. Particularly now that we have more resources available to us in terms of not just technology in terms of the online technology, but perhaps, avenues of 3D type things, right. If we're thinking about the architecture of a city and mapping, we're having to think beyond 2D and 3D and maybe even 4D. Janet? David? Thoughts about resources, materials, how to make the discourses more available?

[00:51:16]
Janet Pillai
I'm a bit sceptical about books nowadays. I'm a bit sceptical about how books are written, how things are presented in this academic kind. So that's why I thought the ADN format, the whole thing: annotations, overlay, comments, drawing lines that connect nodes, is a kind of a democratic way of presenting a very lateral view of dramaturgy. I'm just curious whether it meets, you know, whether it should be kind of brought to — I think going that way is good. So maybe when you're looking at resources, maybe that's how the resources should go. In a very rhizomatic way, giving birth to new plants and all that. And that's how the internet works. I feel, maybe the internet works well, because of that. But we also don't want people to get latched to a rhizome, you know, or I'm only interested in dance dramaturgy and and I'm only interested in this particular view. So I think that the more difficult thing is how to get people to look at the wide view of what you are producing right now from your mapping. And I think what How Ngean mentioned about allowing the difficult conversation with visual artists about his curation — after all, not dramaturgy — to open up these new conversations. Because maybe we are in the age of conversations, rather than in the age of theory, theorising, and coming up with certain principles about certain things. Because I think the internet has changed the notion of theory. So, we may have to look at different ways in which we present resources now, and open up dangerous conversations or prickly conversations with people without having to worry about it.

[00:53:41]
David Pledger
I suppose one of the things that I've been curious about is — I love that thing that Daniel has just put up about will we invite chefs, neurologists, marine biologists. Personally, I like that sort of trajectory out of artistic practice. Always keeping in mind artistic practice. And taking the language of artistic practice into those other spaces. I really liked that and I want to put a coda on this that says it means there's a certain amount of work that needs to be done when you do that, which is to always have those propositions led by artistic conversations. So that you don't instrumentalise. You don't basically say, you know what I was saying before, you don't, 'Oh, here's a process. What are the neurologists thinking about it?' I think we really don't want to be going down that path at all, because that tree's already dead. Okay, so plenty of people have tried that. And I see it in the work I'm doing at the moment, I just see arts get stymied by going into other spaces outside the arts. Unless at the centre of each step they take, there is the condition that you must talk about the intrinsic value of the art. Because if you lose that, then you're sort of doing an architecture project and a design project and you're doing a science project and technology project. You're just kind of going. Yeah, so it's artistic because we get an artist involved. That happens all the time, we have to be very careful about that. I took my PhD from School of Architecture and Design. When I was in that school, I talked a lot about dramaturgy. And most people understood exactly what I was — most people understood the territory that I was covering when I was talking about dramaturgy, especially when I would turn it to using ideas like operating systems, concentric circles. You know, these are kind of graphic visual ideas. They're algorithmic, they speak to the algorithmic, they each touch on different parts of the human mind. And to a degree, the emotional landscape of the human. And so, in that way, I feel like that is where the natural sort of movement for the ADN project is to actually allow itself to go into those spaces. And at some point, we will meet the visual arts. But it doesn't need to be core to what the project is. But I think the project's already begun, it's already started. It's already on its way. And at some point along the way, it might be around the visual arts. And I understand the comparison between curation and dramaturgy. I think they're different things because they're certainly different operating systems. I won't get too bogged down in that one.

[00:57:28]
David Pledger
So for me, I think it's a bit yes, and - So yes, a book. I don't mind books, I love books. I really do love books. I love having that thing in my hands. I can turn the pages. I just love that so much. It's one of the most beautiful things for me to be able to. I learn differently from a book than I do from online. But I think there's a yes, a book and what else do we do? And I think there are so many possibilities around things like multimedia essays. Commissioning multimedia essays out of one part of the archive that is already there. The sort of the ADN story that's already there. I like the kind of graphic interface or the annotations that Janet was talking about. I love the editorial notes that are sort of like contrapuntal offerings you get to. I'm reading the editorial notes while I'm checking to see that I make sense in my keynote and go oh, that's I get that. Oh, I understand myself better now that somebody's explaining it this way, and I kind of moved it around there. I feel like there's a sort of already a three dimensionality in that process that you've begun. And so I would encourage you to continue with that as a methodology, as a frame, as an image to work with. And in that, you can dive into certain parts of it and pull it out. And they can exist in different ways.

[00:59:08]
David Pledger
I don't want to kind of propose too much right now, because I really would like to think more deeply about what it might be. So I can put plenty of dumb ideas out there for you. But I won't, I won't do that today. But I think that the way in which it is building is provocative, and it's not like a book about dramaturgy that I've seen before which I usually don't get through because I sort of fall asleep because it's the same thing said over and over. What I liked about what's been offered up in those three volumes is there are multiple points of entry. And I really liked that. And I like it that they don't all agree with each other, and they don't all make sense. And they're all asking a different set of things and somebody is ripping up one line that's been picked up over here. I like that because what it does for me is — and I think it's really important in this world that we live in — it's sort of brain dancing. I love that kind of experience of brain dancing when I'm reading something and things don't make sense. And I really think at its basest level, dramaturgy should not make sense.

[01:00:23]
Charlene Rajendran
Illicit is another word that you've used. So you know, the illicit part of it. And blurry was another word that was used earlier. But this idea of brain dancing. Daniel has kindly put some of the ways in which we have played with the transcripts, annotations, arrows, other directional symbols, drawing sketches, and finally the editorial notes and the entire volume. I just should say that we are now going — we, meaning ADN — is going to move on into an ADN book project. And it will be a book. Some of us still love books. I still love books, I still have a partiality for books, no question about it. But what is involved in this book is going to be discussed as well. Peter Eckersall and I will co-edit and we have a team of what I would call 'bookmakers' at the moment because we don't know what this book is going to be about. It will draw from ADN Re/View. The co-editors are involved as well. But it's also a question as to what we want this book to be? And how will this book find a way to be and to participate in what's going on? Daniel, Gua Khee, do you want to say anything about ADN Re/View and your experience of being in it as well because you've contributed in different ways. Gua Khee, the last volume you were dealing with drawings and literally kind of manipulating the space very differently while Daniel took off into the galactic space as well. Daniel, Gua Khee, can I invite you to jump in and respond? They're waiting for each other. Daniel go first.

[01:02:25]
Daniel Teo
Well, for me, I think that's one of the things that especially with documenting the proceedings of ADN over the years is that how wide and varied the discussions have been and how they neatly and not so neatly connected to other fields and disciplines. I remember, we had a little bit of a critique where we were perhaps exploring dramaturgy to the point where we were crossing and blurring and losing conceptual boundaries. But I find also that I really do like the idea, David, about 'brain dancing'. And I like the idea of instead of moving towards making distinctions and differentiating things, that we look for similarities and connections, and I think that's what ADN does really well, even in places where people

think connections may not exist. It's just a roundabout way of me saying that I made my connections into space and the cosmos, in this volume. Whether people agree with it or not it's just an experiment, you can just try it out. And the frames do kind of align quite nicely across different disciplines. And then I think there's even more opportunity to go into that other discipline or this field of knowledge that we've not ventured to before and to see how it reverse applies back into performance. And then we might gain new insights in that way. So imagine now if we looked at astrology and space and how this applies into performance now it's like, oh wow, maybe now we can talk about — I think if you look at the way I've written it, if you look at time travelling, and use that frame in performance it's just like, okay, let's see that. Let's see how this works. But again, it's just about creating connections and opportunities to broaden knowledge, and more importantly to connect people that we never thought could connect. Yes. Gua Khee, over to you.

[01:04:39]
Chong Gua Khee
Thanks. I think my mind is going back to something that we brought up at the end of Volume One where we kind of proposed a framing of ourselves as editors as dramatugs instead. We were kind of dramaturging the text. And I think that kind of approach really pulled through the three volumes where we're trying to, in our own ways, understand the logic and structure and arguments that were being put forth by the different speakers. And I think part of what I found really interesting is also that we're grappling with these across time, right? That we're not grappling with these ideas at the moment at which the keynote or the panels were happening. We're kind of looking at it in retrospect. And on top of that, we're not even looking at the conferences chronologically. In each volume, we're kind of pulling things from different years, from different events. And the kind of juxtaposition of these different ideas was also something that I think Charlene was tending to. And I think the idea of what is interesting to recirculate, and what things do we want to contrast with each other is something that I am curious to think about more in the ADN book. Now that we've already done some of those juxtapositions, how much deeper do we want to go into those juxtapositions? Or what new things do you want to explore?

[01:06:20]
Chong Gua Khee
But yeah, like, what are the new things that are now emerging? Definitely around technology, right? The discourse now is so different from the panel that was looked at for Volume Three, and how do we grapple with the fact that by the time the ADN book is out, it will also be a thing of the past. That the conversation has moved on since then. I'm still also thinking about what Janet you were saying about: You can't really tell the difference between mapping and tracing and framing and I wonder if, in a way, they were more like internal logics and internal structures that the team created ourselves, right. And it's okay that it's invisible to the reader in the same way that the dramaturgy of a piece doesn't have to be immediately visible to the audience for there to have a sense of a logic or have a sense of the flow across them. Yeah, but I think just generally feeling like there's already a conversation that's happening across the three volumes. And what kinds of other prickly pears do we want to put out there with the ADN book? Yeah.

[01:07:49]

Charlene Rajendran

Yeah, especially in the age of prickly conversation. I like that phrase. Not just the age of conversation, but the age of prickly conversation. Marion, you have appeared, do you have a question?

[01:08:02]
Marion D'Cruz

Ah, no, I haven't. Yeah, a couple of a couple of comments. Yeah. First of all, I didn't get a chance to read the third one. I'm sorry. But, you know, the last couple of weeks have been kind of full on with work. But I found the first two zines very, very, very useful, like extremely useful for me. Especially because I'm kind of new to the dramaturgy as a formal art or discipline. And also because for the first time in my career, late, you know, I'm 68. So for the first time late in my career, I am working formally and informally at the same time with a real life dramaturg on the project that I'm working on, so it all kind of came together. So it's some, it's been very useful and, and very exciting. So I'm actually looking forward to reading the third zine. So that's the first point.

[01:09:09]
Charlene Rajendran

Before you continue, can I just interrupt to give a little bit of perspective. When Marion talked about the first volume, because she was at the first volume online discussion, she talked about how she printed the first volume, and she wrote on it a lot of conteng, which is the Malay word for kind of like scribble. And whether you realise it or not, I think we kind of took off with conteng in Volume Two, and Volume Three. So you know, talk about an audience or a participant or a public kind of responding and kind of feeding this notion. So thank you, Marion, for that. I just wanted to point that out to you and to the others as well. Yeah, sorry. Your second comment?

[01:09:56]
Marion D'Cruz

Yeah, reading zine two was not so much fun because I didn't print it out. I didn't conteng. I had to conteng in my head. And zine one with all the contengs is now with Anne-James who is reading it and poor thing, she has to then focus on okay, why did you conteng here? Why did you underline here?

[01:10:18]
Charlene Rajendran

But that's overlaying. Now we know what it is: it's overlaying mapping.

[01:10:22]
Marion D'Cruz

Right. And on the first point, the real life dramaturg, whom I'm working with is Charlene. So that's another story. The second point was what Janet said. The age of conversations and prickly conversations. Yeah, I like that too, very much. I feel in the last two years, I have learnt more from conversations, whether formal or informal than I have learned from anything else. So I like that idea of conversations and how that might find its way into the future of ADN and into the book. And my third point would be, I think it would be interesting to have a messy book. I'm not sure what I mean by messy,

but it goes beyond conteng but a messy book and then thinking about okay, what is the most interesting book I've recently read, and I'm still reading is a graphic novel called Brazen: Rebel Ladies Who Rocked the World by Penelope Bagieu. It's an amazing book, and it's a graphic novel. So then I'm suddenly thinking, okay, if the book could be messy, and there could be parts of it, which are like a graphic novel. I feel dramaturgy is so messy in that way. It has so many sort of branches, and what we call in Malay: "cerita ranting", right, so you have the main spine, which is dramaturgy, and then you have all the different, like Janet said, what people are calling it and all these different tributaries that kind of go out. So that would be my sort of points. Thank you.

[01:12:42]
Charlene Rajendran
Thank you. I'm gonna move on to the next part of our dialogue, which is to ask Janet and David to talk about, perhaps some provocations from dramaturgical thinking or dramaturgy that emerge from their current practice, which we haven't asked them about. And that doesn't necessarily mean performance making but whatever it is, they're involved in, that then informs the way these ideas are emerging and links to the contemporary space in which we are trying to make sense of as well as offer some kind of structural cohesion, as well as play with the mess that exists. So yeah, can we move on to that Janet or David? Anyone? Janet, you are unmuted so I'll ask you first

[01:13:45]
Janet Pillai
I'm very interested in working with communities working with the public and I think David too in his long term project is actually doing that. For me, I'm a bit in a state of panic about dramaturgy, because I kind of have this weird fear. I would call it a fear. That dramaturgy plays a very important part in social mobilisation now. And the capitalists have embraced the environment of hyper media. And there's a mediatisation of culture that is happening. And that's really scary. I really feel as theatre people we are really lagging somewhere. And so they can compose and present culture to you in 2D, and they're using algorithmic dramaturgy to orchestrate structures for engagement, for response from the public. So they can steer choices, they can steer action through their algorithmic dramaturgy. So, I'm beginning to ask questions like, when I work with the public in community-engaged arts, so you know, community-based arts or even slightly political kind of events or social political. That means in a kind of intersection where social, political and aesthetics are coming together. We are like babies, you know. Because our systems, our operational systems, we are just starting to think in terms of operational systems like dramaturgy. That's a good word for you know, to use for dramaturgy. So, hence our dramaturgy actually, are we thinking operational systems? Or are we stuck in a very aesthetic type of dramaturgy or an artistic dramaturgy. So, how can our artistic dramaturgy move in tandem with cultural dramaturgy with social dramaturgy? And that's where as a practitioner in community-based arts, or socially-engaged arts, I'm kind of worried about how we're going to grow this area of dramaturgy, where all the aesthetic, the cultural and the social dramaturgy can move simultaneously, and have a kind of impact at a macro scale. I mean, what kind of alternatives can we provide when they're growing at such a rapid rate.

[01:17:07]

Charlene Rajendran

Now big questions and questioning the way in which we even think about the process, right, what is the assumptions about the process? And then what we do with the process. David?

[01:17:22]

David Pledger

Yeah, well I've been thinking about a lot of that stuff for a long time now. I love the way that you framed all that Janet. That's really super, and I kind of think it encapsulates the problem that live performance has been facing for the turn of the century really. I'll take that turn of the century, been going on for a long 20-30 years because there's been a sort of a shedding of live performance in the art and sort of attenuations of live performance from society for the last 30 years as a mediatisation of the world has kind of made our lives determined by a very new DNA. And so I would like to propose how it might be done. And I think there needs to be many, many attempts by many, many artists and many, many cultural operators to do this. Because this really was a problem that I faced last year with the event that I'm curating at the moment, which is called "Multiplicity", which is this sort of intersection of art, science and technology. And it was initially a live event that was going to go on in December of last year, a three day event. And you know, people were going to come from all around Australia. And there were five parts to the programme. One part was An Assembly for the Future, which is an online gathering of artists and technologists and scientists, and the general public. The second was an exhibition of visual arts exhibition. The third was a live performance programme. The fourth was an academic symposium. And the fifth was a moving image programme. Actually, I shouldn't say it was, because they are still the frame of that project. And the reason why it was interested in this kind of fractal or rhizomatic approach to developing this program really comes out of this sort of idea of concentric circles of dramaturgy, where I look at what the sort of the artistic dramaturgy, and then the cultural dramaturgy. And what I would call the dramaturgy, there's social to sort of distinguish it from that phrase social dramaturgy, which is not what I mean, when I'm talking about the dramaturgy of the social. So, in thinking about that, and having built projects around those three sorts of spaces where they both sort of resonate outwards, but they overlap. And they kind of operate as vectors as well. So they kind of wish that they should shift like tectonic plates a little bit. I was faced with the problem that the event was going to be cancelled because of the pandemic. So what did that mean? I mean, it was a problem that faced everybody around the world. And so I think that this was actually an opportunity, because in Australia, we have had this sort of phrase that we're going to go back to business as usual. Well, it's just a kind of a farce, there is no business as usual, we've now moved to a whole different kind of world. And that world is very much an opportunity for exactly the moment that you're talking about. Because what it asks us to do as people that work in the arts, whether or not it's live performance of the visual arts, is it asks us to develop a new field of aesthetics, where it's not live, or online, but it's both. That those spaces collapse, and that the language of one can be brought into the language of the other. And so rather than seeing that kind of hypermedia of the capitalism as being an obstacle, which it is, it definitely is not just an obstacle, it's a barrier. But actually looking at what it is because we created those elements, those aesthetics, we've all we created through the whole story of the arts before technology, appropriated all those things. So what do we already know in that space? Well, we know a lot of things about affect. We know a lot of things about the relationship between the three dimensional or the live and the two dimensional.

[01:22:09]
David Pledger
And so I started to develop a program whereby these five elements, these five kinds of elements, which all spoke to each other, I've recalibrated the whole thing as a limited series event. So it's like a television series. And there's five episodes in the television series. The first one is An Assembly for the Future live from Planet City 2029. It's an online digital gathering, with people from around the world, led by an artist, responded to by artists and scientists and technologists, and then developed and generating 10 artworks. The second one is an online exhibition, which is then sort of previewed by interviews with the artists. The third is a symposium called 36 Ideas to While Away the Winter. And the fourth is a moving image program called Future Culture, which is indigenous futures. And so each of those elements then are present in the kind of internet - what's called the Internet - I quite love that word, it sounds so old fashioned, you know, the internet, I do like it. And all of the elements in there. And so that's the rhizomatic things is happening in the sort of horizontal structure online. I take all of these elements, and they trickle down into this sort of vertically trickle down into this live event, which is the final episode, which happens over three days. So all the elements, the symposium, the live performance, so that the symposium, the assembly, the exhibition component. I then added to and cohered with a live performance programme that makes the whole event performative. And so what I wanted to try and do is to take the opportunity of this problem as being an opportunity and think, well, we just have to start from scratch. We can't write another book. These days, you can write a book, and you have to do all these other things. We have to think about the way in which we conceptualise, and make and create our artworks and the world of art in a way that we haven't done before. And what I am doing with this programme is one small, modest attempt to develop and contribute to a field of aesthetics that I think is going to be very significant over the next sort of 10-20 years.

[01:25:01]
Charlene Rajendran
Yeah, thanks, David. And Janet, because I think this challenge of the imagination, right, to really acknowledge the thought leadership that is involved, because it is artistic leadership, thought leadership, that takes on that responsibility of challenging but also then inventing and producing, creating, responding to with that sense of opportunity and a sense of crisis, which is very often seen as stultifying, in one sense, you know. If you have a crisis, it's supposed to be stultifying, fine, but it's not supposed to be stultifying if the imagination is seeking ways to engage. And also, I think the ethics of it is emerging in what you're talking about where there is responsibility in the use of resources, particularly now when resources are scarce and inequity is growing. So then one of the privileges we assume, and what is our accountability and responsibility to that I think that is part of the dramaturgical thinking. And what you said, David, about, we created the story. So the story, the narratives that are being perpetuated, and that are overwhelming, and that are being believed, I mean, to such a dangerous degree now. Not just because there is fake news, but because the mythifying is a dangerous mystifying, and one that is manipulative, via mediatisation. But also by a very conscious, I mean, the bots are doing it, but it's very conscious in the amount of resources available for that.

[01:26:42]
Charlene Rajendran
If I can ask you both to then now say a little bit about the ethics and the leadership that's involved, because very often, the artist is not seen as leader, the artist is not seen as the ethical role model in a way, unfortunately, and yet a lot of work is about raising these questions and grappling with these truths, untruths, injustices and what to do about them. The dilemma, the conflict, the pain, but also the opportunity.

[01:27:27]
Janet Pillai
Sorry, I was just going to mention that in zine three when I was reading what the producers have to say, yeah. I just felt that they were so curtailed by the system. You know, the whole funding system and the whole, the state and, you know, even spaces, etc. But yet they were talking about we want to make this alternative space, we want to make it but they can't free themselves from the pressure of resources. Of having to work with resources. And I think, David, because as long as we are tied to resources, and we feel that we need resources to move, I think the paradigm is wrong already. I feel that you know, because the other world — I want to call them the other world — the capitalist world, the commercial world, they are actually fighting to control resources as in material resources. And if artists cannot think beyond material resources, then we're never going to be free. And we're never going to develop this alternative paradigm.

[01:28:49]
David Pledger
Yeah, I really agree with you. One of the experiences I've had during the last couple of years in the pandemic is going online has really freed me of having to deal with venues, presenters, institutions, most things are much more on my own terms, or on the terms of the collaborating group that I work with. And the strength of that is in the networks that everybody brings to that space. One project we did which was An Assembly for the Future project. I mean, it had a reach of 350,000, people, got produced and got published in I don't know how many different books and articles and magazines, and it was lively, too. And it was, it was, you know, it was a small budget, you know, comparatively, but the reach was absolutely enormous. And the other thing that I found, really, to be profoundly moving was that our audience, it's one of the reasons why I really am quite committed to sort of looking at the intricacies of, you know, online aesthetics is, in Australia, for example, 10% of the population live with a disability. None of that 10% can get to a live performance before their pandemic. Most of that 10% — not all of them, but most of that 10% can actually join one of our online projects, and if you work out a way to make it engaging and enthralling, and for them to be like any other audience member to engage in the process. I mean, one of the great revelations was we work with a disability justice activist in the States. And Alice completely changed the way that we thought about an audience. And one of the great things about being online is that you can't get access to very many people who have never had access to you before. And that flattens things, you know, it basically flattens those hierarchical structures that have determined all kinds of politics that we're now kind of facing around identity, and those things actually become much more — they don't disappear, but they actually become exposed and people are able to

participate and contribute in a much more equal playing field. And that's what I love about the possibility that we have. And if you use the sort of the ethics of live performance, and I think in live performance, we tested our ethics many, many times. If you use the ethics in those spaces, and bring them to bear, in the sort of dual dimensions of live and online so that they talk to each other, then the possibilities of creating a revolution are much greater.

[01:32:11]
Charlene Rajendran
Yeah, I think that what you're saying about the flattening, and the reworking of comfort zones, right? The defaults in a way, because the default tends to make one hold on a little bit more tightly, perhaps, than one should. And yet, at the same time, recognising the wealth of what is already there. It's not to throw out the baby with the bathwater, but in a way, find the connections in the literacies, in the understanding, in the working principles that are at hand, but one is adaptability, which is a word that Janet used quite a lot in her keynote, the need to find that adaptive capacity or that adaptive intelligence, and rework the narrative as well. I think this is what emerges quite a lot in what you're saying. So I guess the question is then what's urgent, almost. What becomes the thing that should or could potentially create the disruption because of a sense of urgency that is compelling, a sense of conviction, and I think that's a collaborative thing. I don't expect it to be an answer that comes from one person in one moment, but really all the different pieces that come together in that way. Questions, thoughts, responses that emerge from this very rich range of possibilities that are coming up here? How Ngean, yeah?

[01:34:09]
Lim How Ngean
Yes, I just want to hark back on one term that was used. And it struck me that we actually don't really discuss it as dramaturgs a lot, or talk about it anyway. The idea of internal logic, I think it's something that we should talk about because it's actually in all our work. And with the e-zines, it made material the idea of the internal logic of the e-zines. As a thought I would really like to see this publication of ADN having its own internal logic, hence its own operating system actually. And this operating system should be in all its glory of overlapping, dense, messy even, to use that word that Marion was saying. But this internal logic is to me very interesting, because I find that the last few times that I have been trying to dramaturg online, that was my fallback question: what is the internal logic of this project I'm doing, simply because I could not be there physically, to be in the space of the performance process, or the performance making process. I had to literally think very hard, how to actually materialise what I'm actually seeing as abstract, if you know what I mean. Imagine you're watching a rehearsal on screen, right? And as dramaturg, and then in your head, you have to go, no, this is a live performance, and then the parameters of what's required of a live performance kicks in, but not quite, because I'm not physically feeling it. So one of my sensorial experiences I cut, and then I have to rely on this internal logic of then just working out the performance, where there is an internal logic that would reveal itself to the audience, actually. And I'm posing this as a question actually, to both David and Janet. How do we actually tap into accessing internal logics of your operating systems and the systems that you've been talking about? Janet, you've written a whole book about cultural mapping, which to me is actually then you accessing a kind of internal logic about cultural mappings, right?

[01:37:16]
Janet Pillai
Not sure what you mean by internal logic, because this is a kind of an area, which is also of interest to me, because, I think that dramaturgy, for it to be successful, as David says, if we keep to the language of the arts, and then move into neurology, or health, or politics, or whatever, we still want to, to make our language known. And we want to see from our our logic, but once you have an interface with a neurologist, he is using a completely different logic. It's like dancers who want to use technology, or they want to co-collaborate with technology when they're choreographing, without understanding that it's a completely different logic. It's not an opposition. It's just another type of logic. So if we don't understand that — and cultural mapping taught me that — every culture or every place has its own logic. And if we want to work in that interface, then like, if we want to work with politics, we have to understand the logic of politics. If we want to work with brain scientists we have to understand them. And that intersection between us and them is very important. That kind of exchange. I think through cultural mapping, I discovered that. But the other interesting point that I discovered about this different type of logic is when we bring planners or architects and they interface with a vernacular user of the site — you see, they want to plan for the site, but actually the user has been there for generations. The logic is completely different. And it takes them some time before they kind of understand each other, and kind of, oh, let me get into your head and then we get into your head and then ah, yeah, okay, now we can find a kind of a common ground for dialogue. And I think dramaturging that process of two types of logic coming together actually makes the work very deep. Helps this idea of intersectoral dramaturgy or interdisciplinary, if you want to call it inter — I mean, I'm hoping and waiting for the day when it's to be called trans- rather than inter- or cross-.

[01:40:01]
Lim How Ngean
Thank you Janet. Actually, that's exactly what I'm trying to get at but not as intimately the idea that different logics, yeah.

[01:40:12]
Janet Pillai
And the journey is long you know, How Ngean, I feel it's a long journey.

[01:40:16]
Lim How Ngean
It is.

[01:40:18]
Lim How Ngean
But within say, a performance project, as opposed to rippling out to looking at what David was talking about dramaturgy of the social, and your work with the community. That's what I'm trying to get at, is that I think this thing about accessing internal logics, plural with different disciplines, forms, paradigms

is something that is a long process. But within just a contained performance project, there is also the internal logic. And that's my approach, in the last one year actually just sitting here by myself, with the screen going, okay, what exactly is this internal logic of this artist? Why is he doing that? Because maybe it's about learning to cope with the resource of just having to not only watch rehearsals online, but to carry out zoom conversations with the artists online, where we're limited to two hour blocks or something like that. And plus, we're no longer in a vacuum environment of a rehearsal studio.

[01:41:35]
Janet Pillai
And don't you think that's a journey? I mean, when I think about technology, and how many theatre people or dancers or you know, when we collaborated with visual artists who work with technology. When we started, it was really decorative for me. The technology was used in a decorative way. And then we couldn't understand what the hell they were doing, like you know right? So actually, the collaboration is not about us totally understanding technology. Collaboration is actually understanding, what is the logic of that technology? And how do we work with that kind of logic, or even someone who understands that logic, how do we work with that? I think it's something like what — David I don't know whether when you import algorithmic patterns, you know. That's what you're already beginning to do. I feel.

[01:42:37]
David Pledger
Yeah, it's so interesting that it's reminding me of a performance I directed. Must be almost 30 years ago, sort of like a big opening event for the Melbourne International Festival. And it was a big story for me and on the preview, it was Titus Andronicus in four languages. Okay. The first time we're on jury was heard in public forum for 123 years, and it was in Vietnamese, Italian, English and Woiwurrung. And on the preview, one of the actors broke their collarbone and couldn't go on. So I had to learn his role. And he was speaking speaking Italian so I'm half Italian. But I speak Italian very badly. But I had to go on in the opening night. And I understood it was such a brilliant thing for me to learn because I directed the whole production. And I saw the internal logic of that production as a director. And when I went and acted as one of 12 actors, I understood that that actor had his own internal logic throughout the whole performance. And then I understood well, if I've got an internal logic, and there's 12 internal logics there for just in the performance cast, and then the designer has it and the costume designer has it. And it was sort of a complete revelation. And then I sort of understood that it really depends on your point of view. Yeah, absolutely.

[01:44:19]
Charlene Rajendran
And, and I just want to highlight something Daniel's put on the chat, which is taken from Janet's keynote, which is the artist as dramaturg frames an art project, employing a dialogical, dramaturgical process that is able to draw the community into social interaction and enable them to negotiate and co-create. Projects are designed to create new solidarities between migrants and locals, rural and urban, young and old. But I think the idea of this moving conflagration of different elements, different entities, different units that combine differently, like a shifting mosaic in a way. But nonetheless, there

are certain inherent logics as well as disruptors of that logic, right? Because invariably, that's also exciting in the process of an art logic, which we're saying is important. The imaginative, the fictional, the open-endedness, and the non prescriptiveness, that make it compelling in a very sensuous way, and allow for them —the interface, let's say —with a neurologist or nuclear scientist, or marine biologist or a chef, to then find the intersection of the space in between. I think it's something that is very propelling, to think about these options, these opportunities and responsibilities as well, I now feel definitely a new kind of responsibility about this book, which I'm going to share with the team because it's certainly not all mine. But I really appreciate what has emerged as part of a kind of aspirational expression, but also digging into one's experience, the experience of ADN Re/View, and your reading of it, as well as the connections, the different dots, the different vectors that come together in different ways. I'm going to ask if there are comments or questions from our audience or co-participants at this point, before I ask David and Janet to kind of give us a final word, because I am aware of time. Yes, no. Anyone? Yeah, Marion.

[01:46:51]
Marion D'Cruz
I just want to say that question: what is urgent? It is very disturbing. That's all I have to say. I'm like, what is urgent, you know? And then I have like, 9 million things running through my head. And some are just so obvious and banal and I don't know.

[01:47:25]
Charlene Rajendran
I don't attempt to answer that question.

[01:47:28]
Marion D'Cruz
Yeah, no, it's just yeah, no. It's a really scary and important and heavy question that gives me palpitations.

[01:47:46]
David Pledger
I think what is most urgent is the principle and practice of care. I think if we maybe can start there, then we can make it a different world to the one that is being proposed at its ad infinitum, and which sometimes doesn't look like the one I inhabit and sometimes does. But I think the principle and practice of care is the most urgent thing for me.

[01:48:30]
Janet Pillai
I'm just going to take off from where David said. I think in this era, and you know, Marion's fear, I mean, my fear is really about how we are dealing with this pandemic as humans, and how we're actually causing it, and just making it really huge through our own actions. And also, climate change. For me, these are two very urgent things, the behaviour of humans during a pandemic, and the behaviour of humans towards the issue of climate change, the kind of stands that we are taking towards it. And

when I say we, I mean, you know, government, states, you know, everything. So, yeah, this statement on the caring. Caring about, about the environment, caring about another human being, in a social kind of manner. The kind of social responsibility, or environmental responsibility is really the big human condition that I think dramaturgy or artists have to address in the future. How will our cultural ways of thinking and doing actually impact our own human condition? And how are we going to change it to one of caring? Can social or cultural dramaturgy actually help to do this?

[01:50:14]
Marion D'Cruz
Yeah, I'm glad you brought that Janet, because that was the first thing that came into my head. Was climate change. That was the first thing and I went yeah.

[01:50:28]
Janet Pillai
And I think in order to do that dramaturgy - I mean, to attend to the urgent issues, dramaturgy has to move towards the trans-. Transdisciplinary, transcultural. We, I know, a lot of the papers were on intercultural, you know, cross cultural, but actually, these two urgent matters have moved us to a trans-level. And we have to start looking beyond our own notions of culture.

[01:51:02]
Charlene Rajendran
I think that's a good point at which to say there's a lot of work to be done. There's a lot of thinking to be done, there's a lot of caring to be done. And the space of shared reflection is so important. And this is what this has been, for me. It's a conversation. It's the age of conversation. But it's also a space in which the interactions and the possibilities of thinking together. Thank you all for being here. Thank you very much, Janet and David, for your generosity and provocation, as well as your continued work that makes it possible for this conversation to happen. Thank you, Centre 42 for making this happen as well. Yanling and the whole team. I know there's a wrap up slide, which I'll come to in a minute. But I also want to say thank you very much to Daniel and Gua Khee, and I'm missing Dominic. But the editorial team that has made the conversation happen as well. With regards to what is ADN doing next? Well, we've heard a little bit about the book. That's a long term project in the more immediate future. I'm going to hand it over to Yan Ling to talk about what else is upcoming for ADN and for Centre 42. Thank you very, very much, everyone. And I look forward to seeing you again soon in person or on screen, whatever the case may be. Yanling over to you.

[01:52:45]
Ma Yanling
Thank you. Thank you, Charlene. Thank you, Janet. Thank you, David. And thank you to the editors of ADN Re/View. It's been six months of actually just talking, thinking, writing, designing and producing them. But it's definitely a lot more time before that even started with digesting the material. So a huge thank you to the whole team for birthing this project. And we look forward to the next phase where we talk about the book.