

Arts Picks

Ong Sor Fern Senior Culture Correspondent recommends



FREE BOOKS FROM ETHOS

If you want a diverse sampler of Singapore writing, check out home-grown publisher Ethos Books' website. The veteran indie publisher has put up six free e-books, slender but wide-ranging volumes featuring the works of eight writers.

If you are in the mood for verse, try *Some Say, A Tapir* (left), which contains three poetry cycles by Alfian Sa'at, Christine Chia and Yong Shu Hoong.

For two irreverent takes on the life of William Farquhar, Singapore's overshadowed First Resident, check out Joshua Ip's *Farquhar* (below, left), a snarkily contemporary free verse retelling of his life in various voices; and Colin Goh's *The Bonnie, Bonnie Banks Of Singapura* (bottom, left), which the author self-deprecatingly describes as "satirical doggerel".

Goh was arguably the first writer to immortalise an alternative view of the Raffles-Farquhar myth in *TalkingCock The Movie* (2002), so his pop culture cred is legit.

Neil Humphreys – whose comic Raffles takedown, *Why Our Great Leader Was Not So Great And Not Much Of A Leader*, is part of this e-book series – played Raffles in Goh's movie.

Those inclined towards science fiction can opt for Gwee Li Sui's *2719*, which imagines seven scenarios for Singapore over 700 years, or Desmond Kon's philosophical musings in *Found Texts Of The AAI Anon, Circa 3119*. Eight Lyric Essays, told from the point of view of an artificial intelligence.

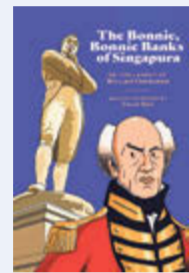
The books come with some beautiful work from artists, ranging from illustrations to photographs.

I have a minor quibble with some odd text layouts. Those who are not tech-savvy might also struggle with the plethora of formats offered in the zipped download.

But hey, free books.

WHERE: Ethos Books' website PRICE: Free

INFO: str.sg/JQRm



PHOTOS:
KIRSTEN TAN,
HEMAN CHONG,
TALIESIN/
INSTAGRAM

OBJECTIFS FILM LIBRARY

Visual arts space Objectifs has built an online platform for its library of South-east Asian short films.

Film buffs can rent works by Singapore directors such as Boo Junfeng's 2009 *Tanjong Rhu* and Kirsten Tan's 2007 *Come* (above).

Last year's Young Artist Award winner Tan Wei Keong's quirky and surreal collages of live action,

stop-motion and hand-drawn animations are also available.

The collection includes works from regional film-makers such as Indonesia's Makbul Mubarak and Thailand's Pimpaka Towira – most of the works are not available elsewhere.

In conjunction with the library, Objectifs is organising a series of film club events which currently are held on video-conferencing

platform Zoom.

To date, these events have featured Kirsten Tan and Tan Wei Keong talking about their works.

Follow Objectifs on its social media channels for updates on upcoming events.

WHERE: str.sg/JAgh
ADMISSION: US\$1.50 (S\$2.10)
for 72-hour access to each short film
INFO: str.sg/JAg7



AMBIENT WALKING

"All art is documentation," says concept artist Heman Chong.

During the circuit breaker period, the 43-year-old has shot 20 new videos for his Ambient Walking channel. The videos, lasting from 30 minutes to more than an hour each, are shot on his Osmo Pocket camera. They are point-of-view shots of environments, with only ambient noise as the soundtrack.

"I see them as historically important documents of our shared urban fabric during the Covid-19 crisis," Chong says.

It is surreal to see Changi Airport's

Terminal 2, which closed on May 1, deserted and abnormally silent in his almost-80-minute video.

But earlier videos, such as the library series and some of the mall walks, are strangely nostalgic and comforting, filled with people going about their daily routines. They are a reminder of a lost era.

And in the case of the Liang Court videos and those of Rochor Complex post-demolition, they are records of lost or soon-to-be-lost buildings.

Chong plans his walks before each shoot: "Every single walk is a walk that has memories associated with it.

Recording the walk is a way of externalising my memories."

He admits he is "learning on the go" as he has no training in film. "Some of the older walks are faster because I didn't quite know what I was doing then."

The videos might not be polished, but they are resonating with people. His daily channel views have been reaching about 1,000, "double of what it was in January".

Tune in for a soothing dose of nostalgia and escape during these uncertain times.

WHERE: str.sg/JgSH
ADMISSION: Free

VIRTUAL VISITS OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S WORKS

Tour some of architect Frank Lloyd Wright's creations on Instagram using the hashtag #wrightvirtualvisits.

Twelve Wright sites are posting short video clips every week under this initiative by the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation and Unity Temple Restoration Foundation.

The quality of the virtual visits are erratic, some with jerky camerawork and others with dodgy sound.

Fallingwater, indubitably the most famous building, gets an appallingly brief video. You do not even get to see the interior, just the external driveway approach and porch, although the exterior stone wall is a beautiful echo of the rugged hillside setting.

Talesin offers a nice six-minute tour of Wright's studio and you get to see more of the interior, complete with a Japanese print (right) as well as quirky geometric windows and shutters tucked into odd corners of the high angled roof.

The same plywood floor lamp in the studio pops up in the Willey house living room. Dining rooms are the focus of the Westcott House and Talesin West tours.

The Westcott House's dining room has a beautiful dining table incorporating then-new electric light fixtures, which look like Japanese



paper lanterns. Talesin West's video is a mini-documentary of the newly restored dining room and even has clips of the restoration process.

Great architecture porn to spend an afternoon drooling over.

WHERE: str.sg/JQae
ADMISSION: Free

Bookmark This! Ep 14: Pandemic novels for stay-home reading



ST PHOTOS: OLIVIA HO, TOH WEN LI

Need something to read while staying home during the coronavirus circuit breaker period? In the latest episode of this Straits Times literary podcast, journalists Olivia Ho (top) and Toh Wen Li (above) pick out some pandemic novels that may resonate with you, from Albert Camus' seminal *The Plague* to Emily St John Mandel's post-apocalyptic *Station Eleven*, as well as books by Singaporean authors Danielle Lim and Thea

Lim. Listen at str.sg/Jg79

Produced by: Olivia Ho, Toh Wen Li and Penelope Lee
Edited by: Penelope Lee

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ARTS

CONCERTS

Ding Yi Encore! Brings Back The Happy Times Of Happy Chinese New Year (2019)

Recorded in February last year, this concert features Mandarin tunes and pop music performed by home-grown young talent Jarrell Huang (2018 SPOP Sing! winner) and Bonnie Loo (2013 Campus Superstar winner). Ding Yi Music Company's pipa, guzheng and suona musicians also performed renditions of popular Chinese classics.

WHERE: Watch it at
www.facebook.com/dingyimusical

SSO Encore: A Nordic Journey – Sibelius & Nielsen

The concert features two works – Finnish composer Jean Sibelius' *Finlandia Op. 26* and Danish composer Carl Nielsen's *Symphony No. 3 Espansiva*. It was recorded live in July 2015 – the year marking the 150th birth anniversaries of both composers.

WHERE: Watch it at str.sg/Jffh
WHEN: Tomorrow, 7.30pm
INFO: str.sg/JYaq

THEATRE

Fatih – The Prince & The Drum (In Malay With English Subtitles)

The epic tale of trial and tribulation was told through Malay percussion, martial arts, dance, prose and song. The play featured a creative team from Singapore, Indonesia and Thailand, with an original story and music by Riduan Zalani and Nadi Singapura. It was originally presented at last year's Pesta Raya – Malay Festival of Arts.

WHERE: Watch it at
www.sistic.com.sg/events
WHEN: Sunday, 11am till May 31, 11.59pm
ADMISSION: Watch for free or pay for a ticket. Proceeds from ticket sales go to Nadi Singapura
INFO: str.sg/JARi

Wild@Home: Mama White Snake

For the first time in 30 years, Glen Goel returns to the Singapore stage in the title role, while theatre veteran Ivan Heng plays the Green Snake. Recorded live at the Drama Centre Theatre in December 2017, the production is directed by Pam Oei and written by Alfian Sa'at, with a score penned by Elaine Chan.

WHERE: Watch it at str.sg/JMqS
WHEN: Today, 7.30pm till June 7, 11.59pm
INFO: www.wildrice.com.sg

Online Screening Of Lim Boon Keng, The Musical

Musical Theatre Limited's 2019 musical based on Singapore pioneer Lim Boon Keng traces the ups and downs of his life, focusing on his attitudes towards education, society and love. It is penned by his great-granddaughter, playwright Stella Kon, who is also behind the monodrama *Emily Of Emerald Hill*. The cast includes actor Sebastian Tan as Dr Lim and Audrey Luo (nominated for Best Actress in this year's The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards) as his first wife Margaret.

WHERE: Watch it at str.sg/JARg
WHEN: Today, 8pm till May 29
INFO: www.facebook.com/MusicalTheatreLive

DANCE

From The Living Room: Oon Shu An With Ruby Jayaseelan

In this new online series commissioned by the National Arts Council, artists hold virtual performances in their homes. Here, interdisciplinary movement artist Ruby Jayaseelan searches for nature and elements within the body. She is an associate artist with performing arts group Teater Ekamatra. Oon Shu An is a stage and screen actress, whose notable roles include an ill-fated courtesan in Netflix drama *Marco Polo*.

WHERE: Watch it at

www.facebook.com/NACSingapore
WHEN: Today, 8pm

EXHIBITIONS (MUSEUMS)

The Move (Asian Civilisations Museum)

Find out what it takes to move a work of art between two museums and why artist Percy Carpenter's 1856 painting, titled *View Of Singapore From Mount Wallich*, is so important to the country.

WHERE: Watch it at str.sg/JARs
INFO: www.roots.sg

The Story Of Raffles

1819 is the year most famously associated with Sir Stamford Raffles. Watch this video to find out who he was before he set foot on Singapore soil and other nuggets of information about him.

WHERE: Watch it at str.sg/JARt
INFO: www.roots.sg

EXHIBITIONS (GALLERIES)

Online Art Exhibition By Life Art Society: A Date With Dawn

To bring art into every home during the circuit breaker period, Life Art Society presents an online art exhibition by the group's chairman, Professor Tan Khim Ser.

WHERE: Watch it at www.a-list.sg

OTHER ARTS EVENTS

SSOPlayOn! Conversations With The Artist: Andrew Litton

In this online event, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's principal percussionist Jon Fox hosts video conversations with artists from across the music world. His guest this week is the orchestra's principal guest conductor Andrew Litton.

WHERE: Watch it at
www.facebook.com/events
WHEN: Today, 7.30pm