

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Can we find “Common Ground”?

The third experiment on how to run an arts centre

26 January 2017, Singapore – The Substation is proud to support *A Common Ground*, a slate of programmes conceptualised by The Co-op. Following *SURVEY: Space, Sharing, Haunting* by Post-Museum in September 2016 and *A Home for the Arts* in November 2016, *A Common Ground* is the third of three radical experiments on offer during the 2016 / 2017 season *Is That All There Is?* by The Substation.

The Co-op is a cooperative group formed via an open call as the final phase of the three-part experiment *Is That All There Is?*, an initiative designed to reinvent Singapore’s first and oldest contemporary art space. The Co-op invites a diverse range of participants to be stakeholders and co-authors of the site for one month. This cooperative group determines their own terms of engagement as to how they will work together, make decisions, resolve conflicts, and collectively work to develop and implement a programme at The Substation in February 2017.

The Co-op is comprised of 14 members: Annusia Balan, Ailin Chin, Jerrold Chong, Faiz Bin Zohri, Danielle Hong, Anna Kishore, Karen Lam Xueling, Shaiful Risan, Sharmini Aphrodite, Stephen Shukaitis, Tan Liting, Wu Jun Han, Daryl Qilin Yam, and Selene Yap.

Tan Liting, theatre practitioner and The Co-op member, describes the cooperative model as a challenging approach towards programming for an arts centre: “The Co-op has been an exercise in managing the expectations of diverse views, and as much as we have struggled through, it has also been rewarding watching negotiations and dynamics unfold within The Substation. We’re looking forward to see how such a model can continue on even after this experiment.”

A Common Ground

Through *A Common Ground*, The Co-op investigates the act of “commoning,” the creation of a space in which all resources are shared with the means of developing social processes. Experimental at its core, the main objective of *A Common Ground* is to produce a series of

programmes that examine and interrogate the feasibility of establishing a commons in Singapore. *A Common Ground* is a month-long inquiry that will be examined through four anchor programmes.

These anchor programmes include: a translation project titled *Berita Harian Panas-Panas*; a recording project titled *Something To Say*; the on-site construction of an *Off-Grid Autonomous Water System*; and a ticketed concert named *togethertogather*.

a) Berita Harian Panas-Panas

Berita Harian Panas-Panas is a communal translation project in which articles from Singapore's national Malay-language daily are translated to English for a non-Malay speaking audience. Through these translations, BHPP wishes to open up space to discuss the nature and implications of the narratives that arise from the articles' scope, angle and presentation of its subjects. By making transparent the subjectivities present in the news and how it shapes the narratives we tell ourselves, it hopes to encourage critical scrutiny of news reporting and its role in meaning-making.

Berita Harian Panas-Panas is a project that will primarily manifest as a Facebook page, on which both articles and its translations are published on a regular basis. It will also physically manifest in The Substation's Gallery as an ever-growing and ever-changing month-long exhibition, designed and curated by The Co-op.

b) Something To Say

Something To Say is a project that seeks to record stories, gossip, songs and poems about the everyday; *Something To Say* seeks to engage people in a conversation about life, the way we live it, and what matters to us the most.

Something To Say in particular is eager to collect narratives from members of the public as a means of mapping a vernacular landscape of Singapore, culminating in a publicly accessible and continually expanding resource of audio recordings containing hidden knowledge and inside information about our neighbourhoods and the people that occupy them.

To facilitate this project, The Substation's Box Office will be set up with recording equipment, managed by members of The Co-op. Members of the public are then invited to make appointments to schedule a recording session in which anything goes; although each session will be moderated by a member of The Co-op, participants are encouraged to speak as freely and creatively as possible.

c) Off-Grid Autonomous Water System

When talking about an autonomous art space, discussions tend to be about creating independent frameworks to creating, curating or funding. Maybe an autonomous art space can also be a space that is independent of grid infrastructure.

The *Off-Grid Autonomous Water System* is a crowd-built water collection and cleansing system that engages with "commoning" natural resources for all. It will be split into three units designed to collect, filtrate, and act as a social space within The Substation. It will be located on the third floor of The Substation.

The project is expected to be an ongoing process: it will commence in February 2017 and undergo construction via public workshops over the rest of the month, allowing all who enter *A Common Ground* to witness and participate in the construction and development of the *Off-Grid Autonomous Water System*.

d) togethertothertogether

togethertothertogether is a day-long concert featuring a line-up of bands that showcases the diversity of music practiced and played in Singapore today.

Organised by The Co-op with the intention of "commoning" music culture, the line-up promises to traverse the boundaries between the demographic and stylistic enclaves that separate the music community, with the hopes of uniting its diverse pool of musicians and their respective devotees under the roof of The Substation.

togethertothertogether is a ticketed event that will take place at The Substation's theatre on 18 Feb, 3pm-10pm. The featured bands are: 777, Flame of the Forest, Hell Low Trio, Radigals, Rudra, Sawayaka Yonkumi. Tickets are \$10 and sold at the door.

Listing Information

A Common Ground

Date: 7 – 26 February 2017, free to attend

Times: Tues – Sun 11:00AM - 7:00PM

Closed Mondays

Opening Party: 9 February 2017, 7:00PM - 9.30PM

Venue: The Substation, 45 Armenian Street Singapore 179936

For more details on specific events and activities by The Co-op, visit <http://theco-op.space> or email theco-op@substation.org

For more about *Is That All there Is?*, visit <http://www.substation.org/>

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