Media Release #2 – Film Fest
Cities Change. People die. Everything you know goes away.

The Substation presents

On the Block:
The Substation’s Film Fest Weekend

Singapore, 5 July 2018 — From Friday 27 July to Sunday 29 July, The Substation is presenting On the Block: The Substation’s Film Fest Weekend.

Comprising of four films from Brazil, Colombia, Germany, and China, the film programme is part of The Substation’s focus this year on how heritage and its discourse shape the city through conservation and nostalgia.

Curated by screenwriter and film producer Jeremy Chua, the films demonstrate how land and infrastructural changes affect people—our psychology, philosophy, and way of life. They remind us that the identity of community is inextricable from its environment.

The film weekend is a precursor to The Substation’s programmes in August that focus on the issue of conservation in Singapore, particularly with regard to en bloc and sites under threat.

Programme Description

The country’s landmarks are in peril. Modernist megastructures People’s Park and Golden Mile, structures of post-war aspiration and ideology, are on the chopping block.

In what can only be described as a chronic demolition complex, Singapore has altered its coast-and-sky lines, defaced and rezoned nature, redeveloped living spaces, and torn down inefficient ones—all to feed capitalism’s insatiable appetite.

Like a serpent eating its own tail, the legacies of countless landmarks have been eroded in exchange for upward mobility and tourist theme parks. Are structures with potential capital gain the only ones worth saving?

“Buildings from the past remind us of our Singaporean-ness or ‘heritage’—not in the overtired sense, nor to be confused with racial or cultural heritage, but an experienced and living claim to shared memories and shared ways of life. This is a more universal approach to consider how we are Singaporean, and what the commonalities are--other than being Chinese, Malay, Indian, or Other--of living here,” said Jeremy Chua.
Dr. Chua Ai Lin is the Executive Director of the Singapore Heritage Society and The Substation’s lead resident this year. She adds, “In Singapore, there is a tendency to disregard or forget about how architecture, design, and construction are part of our daily culture. I see a strong thematic connection between these films and my own exploration of the issues surrounding the Big Four en bloc discussion. The films show how our surroundings have a profound effect on our sense of identity, well-being, and connection to a place.”

Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Title(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, 27 July</td>
<td>7.15 – 10pm</td>
<td>#Aquarius [R21] - Brazil</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Opening film)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday, 28 July</td>
<td>4.30 – 6.30pm</td>
<td>Western [PG13] - Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.30 – 9pm</td>
<td>Land and Shade [PG] - Colombia</td>
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<tr>
<td>*Sunday, 29 July</td>
<td>11.30am – 9.15pm</td>
<td>#West of the Tracks [PG13] - China</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(11.30am – 2.30pm)</td>
<td>(Part I: Rust)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 – 6pm</td>
<td>Part II: Remnants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 – 9.15pm</td>
<td>Part III: Rails</td>
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*Wang Bing’s nine-hour opus, West of the Tracks, is a free screening that will take place in the SAD Bar. Ticket holders are welcome to wander in and out.

#Rating to be advised

Ticketing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Concession**</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>$12</td>
<td>$8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Season Pass*</td>
<td>$30</td>
<td>$20</td>
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*(Available until 15 July)*

*Comes with limited edition super special souvenir film kit
+ free flow tortilla chips from SAD bar


Information provided in this release is correct at the time of distribution and subject to change due to circumstances beyond the event organiser’s control. All films are subject to approval and classification by the Media Development Authority, Singapore.
More Information and Images

- For more information, visit citieschange.sg
- Images can be found here.
- #citieschangepeopledie #entheblock

Films

Aquarius by Kleber Mendonça Filho [Opening Film] [Rating to be Advised, likely R21]
2016 · Drama · 2h 26m
27 July, Friday, 7.15–10pm
Brazil

Clara, a 65-year-old widow and retired music critic, born into a wealthy and traditional family in Recife, Brazil. She is the only remaining resident of the Aquarius, a 1940s, two-story building on the upmarket and seafront Avenida Boa Viagem. All the neighbouring apartments have been acquired by developers, who are determined to drive her out. This forces Clara, who has pledged to leave the Aquarius only upon her death, to become embroiled in a war of sorts with the company. While the tension and confrontation disturb her, they stir thoughts of her loved ones, her past, and her future. Released to controversy during the peak of Brazil’s crisis, the socio-political shambles of Recife serve as backdrop for a powerful and private rumination on one’s connection to place.
**Western by Valeska Grisebach [PG13]**

2017 · Drama · 2h 1m

28 July, Saturday, 4.30–6.30pm

Germany

A group of German workers sets off to a remote countryside in the border region between Bulgaria and Greece. This foreign land and its breathtaking landscape awaken the men's sense of adventure, but they are confronted with tension and mutual distrust. The stage is quickly set for a showdown when the men begin to compete for recognition and favour from the local villagers. Poised at a confluence of insular communities on the cusp of modernity, and how each must grapple with their own prejudices, cultural differences, and misapprehensions, in order to co-exist.
Alfonso is an old farmer who has returned home to tend to his son, who is gravely ill. He rediscovers his old house, where the woman who was once his wife still lives, with his daughter-in-law and grandson. The landscape that awaits him resembles a wasteland. Vast sugar cane plantations surround the house, producing perpetual clouds of ash. 17 years after abandoning them, Alfonso’s return confronts the economic and environmental turmoil faced by rural communities, as well as the fragility of family and home under threat.
West of the Tracks by Wang Bing [Rating to be advised, likely PG13]
2002 · Documentary · 9h 16m
29 July, Sunday, 11.30am–9.15pm
China

In his seminal, 9-hour opus, filmmaker Wang Bing documents the slow, inevitable death of an obsolete manufacturing system. Tie Xi is a massive industrial complex in northeastern China’s Shenyang province. Built during the Japanese occupation of China and restructured with Soviet support after World War II, it is the country’s oldest and largest manufacturing complex. From the post-war period to the 80s, the thriving factories employed more than a million workers, but like other state-run industries they began to collapse in the early 90s. Between 1999 and 2001, Wang meticulously filmed the lives of the last factory workers, a class of people once promised glory during the Chinese revolution. Now trapped by economic change, the workers become tragic heroes in this deeply moving modern epic.
Guest Producer

Jeremy Chua is a screenwriter and film producer based in Singapore and Paris. After graduating from the Puttnam School of Film at LASALLE College of the Arts in 2012 with the Academic Excellence Award, he became a frequent collaborator with Lowave Paris and Akanga Film Asia. He started producing and writing A Yellow Bird with Fran Borgia and K. Rajagopal, which was premiered in competition at Cannes Critics Week in 2016. An EAVE Ties That Bind graduate in 2013, he runs a film company, Potocol, for international co-productions. Other producing credits include Alfred Bauer Silver Bear winning A Lullaby to the Sorrowful Mystery by Lav Diaz (Berlinale 2016), Brotherhood by Pepe Diokno (Karlovy Vary IFF 2016), and A Family Tour by Ying Liang (Locarno IFF 2018).

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The Substation’s theme for 2018 is an exploration of how and why heritage is a political and emotional topic for the public.

This year The Substation will collaborate with artists, academics, and specialists whose works engage with and contribute to the complex conversations around heritage. Programmes explore heritage in its multifarious forms: from landmark architecture and national icons, to the everyday commodification of nostalgia.

The overarching theme is part of a 3-year curatorial direction for The Substation in examining the city. Through annual themes centred on artists and field specialists, The Substation expands, leads, and supports cultural conversations, engaging the public and exposing them to the full possibilities of contemporary art in shaping larger questions about Singapore.

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Instagram: @the_substation
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About The Substation

The Substation is Singapore’s first independent contemporary arts centre. Established in 1990 by the late Kuo Pao Kun, it is known for its pioneering and experimental arts programming. Over the years, The Substation has worked with some of Singapore’s most critically acclaimed artists, writers and intellectuals including Alvin Tan, Goh Boon Teck, Amanda Heng, Lee Wen and Kok Heng Leun. The Substation is a recipient of the National Arts Council’s Major Grant from April 2017–March 2020.

www.substation.org

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