The Substation presents
Singapore Girl, or Heritage Deployed

Singapore, 26 Sept 2018 — From Saturday 6 October to Sunday 4 November, The Substation is presenting a programme titled Singapore Girl, or Heritage Deployed. It comprises an eclectic range of events: an interactive experience where visitors get to try our take on the famed Singapore Girl interview process, a runway show by drag queen Becca d’Bus, and a theatre variety show produced by well-known actress Tan Kheng Hua.

As the second chapter of The Substation’s current programme season on heritage, Singapore Girl, or Heritage Deployed brings together artists, academics, and field specialists in order to open up a conversation around the iconic Singapore Girl.

She is a quintessential example of deployed heritage, integral to Singapore’s postcolonial, nation-building narrative. As an internationally-marketed and renowned symbol of Asian hospitality, the Singapore Girl is an early instance and arguably the most successful example of how heritage (and fantasies of the Oriental Other) is packaged and exported to the rest of the world.

Singapore Girl, or Heritage Deployed is part of Cities change. People die. Everything you know goes away, which is The Substation’s year-long exploration of heritage in its multifarious forms: from landmark architecture and national icons, to the everyday commodification of nostalgia.

On the role the Singapore Girl plays in The Substation’s exploration of Singapore heritage, Artistic Director Alan Oei says, “Our last programmed looked at the issue of conservation, and the iconic modernist architecture that is under threat with En Bloc fever looming over all of us. The thrust of heritage conservation in the past has mostly focused on buildings and monuments. UNESCO World Heritage sites have demonstrably shown many countries how heritage can also be commodified and transformed into tourist attractions that have sometimes proven highly disruptive to the local economy. In other words, it’s double-edged. The same kind of complexity and ambiguity exists in the Singapore Girl who is much beloved, but also a flashpoint for feminism, objectification, and colonial hangovers.”

Of her theatre variety show, She’s A Great Way to Fly, Tan Kheng Hua says, “Unpacking the Singapore Girl is in line with us exploring the commodification of nostalgia in Singapore. And I’ve invited a medley of young and talented artists to come together for this rather offbeat and experimental variety show—conceptualised completely around the Singapore Girl. It sounded like great fun and indeed, it has been!"

And Becca d’Bus, who is taking on the iconic sarong kebaya—designed by Pierre Balmain in 1972—and producing the Not #BalmainArmy runway show for SAD: This Girl’s in Love with You; “You know when The Substation asks a very fat drag queen to think about the Singapore Girl, they’ve really taken to heart Kuo Pao Kun’s now over-quoted adage about failure. Who am I to refuse? Move over Kardashians, the Singapore Girl is the original #BalmainArmy, Olivier Rousteing¹ eat your heart out.”

¹ Rousteing is the current creative director of Balmain
## Summary of ‘Singapore Girl, or Heritage Deployed’

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ticketing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Girl &amp; the Chamber of Trials</td>
<td>Interactive Experience</td>
<td>6 October to 4 November</td>
<td>Thursday &amp; Friday 6 - 9pm, Saturday &amp; Sunday 3 - 9pm</td>
<td>Gallery</td>
<td>Free with limited slots. Book at: singaporegirlontrial.peatix.com</td>
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<td>and Tribulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Land of My Heart</td>
<td>Outdoor installation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are you? (Singapore Girl)</td>
<td>Panel discussion</td>
<td>6 October</td>
<td>6 - 7.30pm</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>Free. Register at: singaporegirlwho.peatix.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>I Am Not a Witch</td>
<td>Film Screening</td>
<td>6 October</td>
<td>8.30pm - 10.30pm</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>From $8. Peatix: notawitch.peatix.com</td>
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<td>SAD: This Girl’s in Love with You</td>
<td>Sub After Dark - after hours programme</td>
<td>13 October</td>
<td>8 - 11pm</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>From $15. Peatix: thisgirlsinlove.peatix.com</td>
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<td>She’s A Great Way To Fly</td>
<td>Theatre Variety Show</td>
<td>Thursday to Sunday 26 - 28 October &amp; 2 - 4 November</td>
<td>8pm - 9.30pm</td>
<td>Theatre</td>
<td>From $25. Peatix: greatwaytofly.peatix.com</td>
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INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCE

**Singapore Girl & the Chamber of Trials and Tribulations**

6 October to 4 November 2018
Thursday & Friday: 6 to 9pm
Saturday & Sunday: 3 to 9pm
Gallery
Free admission with reserved slots
Book slots at singaporegirlontrial.peatix.com

Part fuselage, part adventure course, and part exhibition, the gallery is transformed into an experience that explores the mythology constructed around the Singapore Girl. Adapting from the famed interview and training processes which prospective crew members endure—from Height & Articulation tests to Etiquette & Deportment standards, the interactive experience puts visitors through a gamut of tongue-in-cheek trials to see if they have what it takes to become a national icon.

After taking up the interview gauntlet, visitors will enter an exhibition that celebrates and deconstructs narratives of the Singapore Girl, and how embedded she has become in the national psyche. Through the stories of objects like vintage advertisements, hunted-for collectibles, and once-worn kebayas from both ex-crew members and and SQ fans, the power and pervasiveness of the Singapore Girl is commemorated.

OUTDOOR INSTALLATION

**Land of My Heart**

6 October to 4 November 2018
Part of The Substation building facade

The *Land of My Heart* is a series of works by artist John Clang which re-appropriates the icon of the Singapore Girl to contemplate on vestiges of identity and personal memories encapsulated in nostalgic spaces of a rapidly evolving motherland.

Each frame embodies of three elements of time—the past, as captured by the handwritten extracts of Clang’s residual memories and conversations; the present, as depicted by the urban Singapore landscape in flux, and finally the eternal—the evergreen icon of the Singapore Girl who has outlasted all currents of change over the decades.

PANEL DISCUSSION

**Who Are You? (Singapore Girl)**

6 October
6 to 7.30pm
Theatre
Free admission
Register at singaporegirlwho.peatix.com

A panel of speakers from different fields, who have addressed the Singapore Girl in their research will share their perspectives and readings of her. Academic Dr. Simon Obendorf will speak from a perspective of gender politics, and how the Singapore Girl has been shaped according to the demands of the state; author Koh Buck Song will reflect on the value of the Singapore Girl as an ambassador for
brand Singapore; and artist John Clang will speak about her from the angle of nostalgia, and how she anchors us to a sense of national identity.

Speakers:

Dr. Simon Obendorf  
Koh Buck Song  
John Clang

Moderated by Alan Oei

FILM SCREENING

_I Am Not a Witch [PG]_

6 October  
8.30 to 10.30pm  
Theatre  
$12/$8 (Concession)  
Tickets: notawitch.peatix.com

A dark, satirical fairy tale about a little girl accused of being a witch. Shula (meaning 'to be uprooted' in Zambian) is a nine-year-old girl who has to make a choice: accept being branded and marketed as a witch by society, or to sever ties with tradition and be transformed into a goat.

A parable of magic and misogyny, superstition and social strictures in African culture, the film is an ironic take on how tradition shapes (and exploits) female iconology to form the perspectives of society at large. In the context of Singapore, the famed Singapore Girl is often exalted as a paradigm of Asian grace and beauty, and has been exported to this end, for close to 50 years. In this way, the film is one that ironises traditional views on gender and body politics in the context of a particular culture, to gesture at how these practises proliferate globally.

The first feature by Zambian-born, Welsh-raised director Rungano Nyoni, _I Am Not a Witch_ debuted at the Cannes Film Festival, and was selected recently as the British entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the 91st Academy Awards.

Includes a post-film conversation with Dr. Simon Obendorf.

View the trailer [here](#).
SAD PARTY

This Girl’s In Love With You

13 October
8 to 11pm
Theatre
$15/$25 (2 free drinks)
Tickets at thisgirlsinlove.peatix.com

We’re throwing a party in honour of the nation’s most famed icon, the Singapore Girl. Is she a problematic figure? Are her perfectly coiffed hair and cherry red lips still the paradigm of Asian hospitality, elegance, and beauty? Were they ever? We don’t know. But we’re celebrating her anyway.

From an alternative Balmain army led by Becca d’Bus, to a slew of performers and late-night confession-sessions with ex-crew members; come be draped in batik, sprinkled with glitter, and regaled by what it means to be a Singapore Body.

Becca d’Bus and Polina Korobova aka Glitter Queen will style guests for the night, and social media darling Preetipls will host, as well as debut her first single.

THEATRE VARIETY SHOW

She’s A Great Way To Fly

26 - 28 October
2 - 4 November
8pm
Theatre
$25/$30 (Afterparty at Timbre on 27 October & 3 November)
Tickets at greatwaytofly.peatix.com

Ladies & gentlemen, this is a test. How "Singapore" is the "Singapore Girl" the whole world knows and desires? How "Girl" is the "Singapore Girl" the whole world knows and desires? And why is she not a "Singapore Woman"? More importantly, will the kebaya hold up in the face of an inflight emergency? Is the slit high enough to send her down the aisle to save lives? A motley crew of artists tests this dress and ponders the brand’s success.

Keba-Yoga Flow
A performance sequence by Yen Then

Singa-relia
A dance interpretation by ScRach MarcS

Sarah
A film by André Chong and Lim Zeharn

Three Songs Which Should be On Air
Written by Joie Tan. Performed by Jana Ann & Joy Ng

The Kebaya 101
A costume performance Lecture by Leonard Choo
(Singapore) Girls
A play by Audrey Teong, Shirin Keshvani & Alysha Chandra

It's Like That
A performance lecture of SQ Girl portraits and essays by Jacqueline Chang

For more information and the latest updates, please attend our media preview on 5 Oct from 4 to 6pm.

Website: citieschange.sg
Facebook: @thesubstation
Instagram: @the_substation

High res and more information on programme partners can be found here.

Low res images

SAD: This Girl’s In Love With You
Singapore Girl & The Chamber of Trials and Tribulations

Tan Kheng Hua: She’s A Great Way To Fly
Singapore Girl & The Chamber of Trials and Tribulations
For media enquiries, please contact:

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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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