

PRESS RELEASE

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NUS Centre For the Arts marks the Singapore Bicentennial with two new productions

Singapore, Thursday, 1 August — NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA) is celebrating the Singapore Bicentennial with two new productions from the creative minds of award-winning theatre director Edith Podesta and up-and-coming artist Sean Cham.

As a gift to the nation, both of these events are offered free with registration.

Staged in the heart of Singapore's oldest institution of learning, CFA sought to commission new works that spoke to the concepts of identity that permeate the bicentennial commemoration: how our past has shaped who we are as a nation, and what we aspire to contribute to the world in the future.

The Last Gap traces the February 1942 battle that was fought on the former Pasir Panjang Ridge, which is now the NUS Kent Ridge campus. Guests will be guided through various sites that mark the final battle, before the Allied surrender and occupation by Japanese forces. This unique participatory learning journey invites audiences to reconsider and reclaim their 'war memory', and its meaning for themselves.



"I am grateful to be part of CFA's Bicentennial programming, and to be given the opportunity to create new work," says Sean Cham. "The wonderful resources and support from the

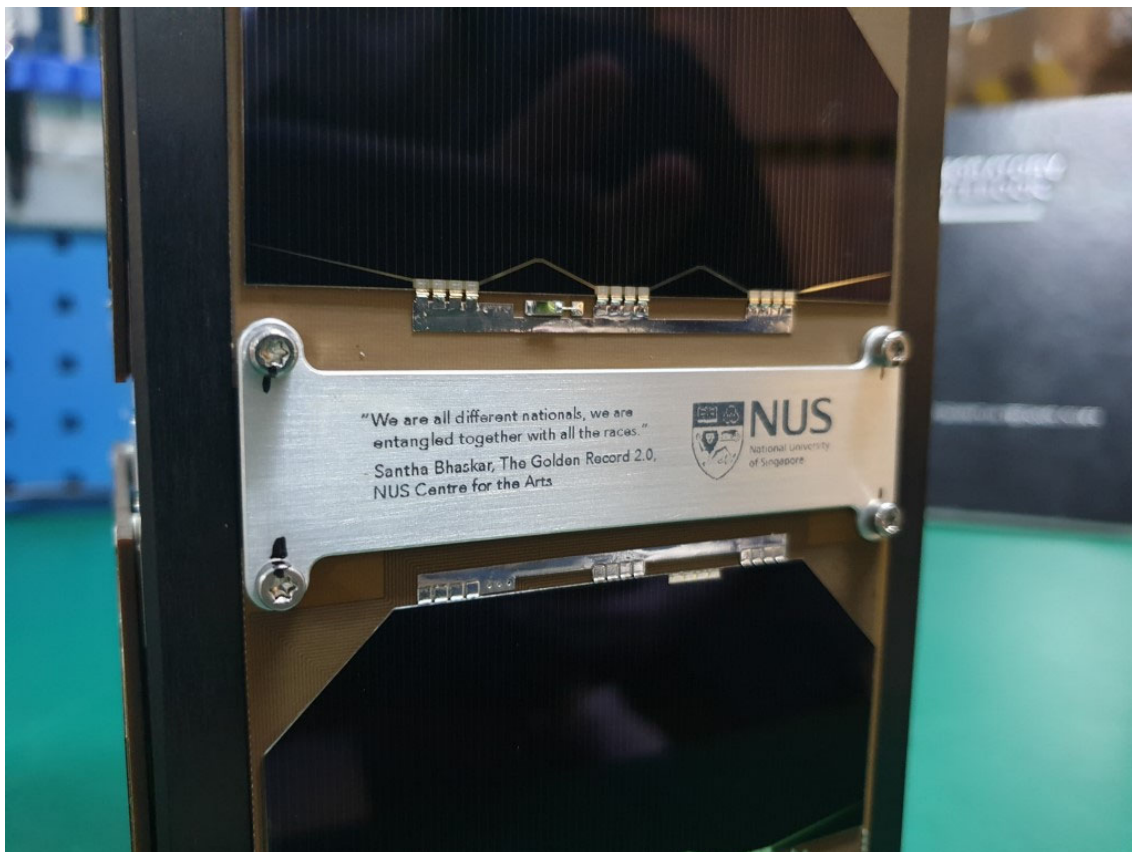
Centre For the Arts has allowed a fresh graduate like myself to experiment and push boundaries; to create and mould the piece to its fullest potential.”

Turning the focus forward, Edith Podesta’s *The Golden Record 3.0* draws from numerous voices in NUS and beyond to unpack our nation’s personality and determine what we should broadcast to the stars. Performed by NUS Stage, the production is the final iteration of the *Golden Record* series which was inspired by the Voyages’ golden records sent into space carrying a microcosm of earth’s voices in the 1970s.

“This project is really about understanding identity” says Director Edith Podesta. “Attempting to distil the collective experiences and personalities of a nation forces you to look at the ideas we coalesce behind, where we differ, and how these voices come together as a unique population.”

“NUS is an ideal environment to pose these questions. It is a meeting point between vast knowledge and experience, and youthful enthusiasm.”

This iteration follows the celebration of the successful inclusion of a quote, which was in the script from *The Golden Record 2.0*, from Cultural Medallion Recipient and NUS Indian Dance Artistic Director, Mrs Santha Bhaskar. This quote was engraved on a ‘mini golden record’ and was successfully launched to space on SpooQY-1 satellite by our partner, the Centre for Quantum Technologies.



The quote from *The Golden Record 2.0* staged by NUS Centre For the Arts is engraved onto an aluminium interstage panel. Image credit: Robert Bedington, Centre for Quantum Technologies, National University of Singapore

“Contributing to the Singapore Bicentennial Programme is a tremendous honour,” says CFA Director, Sharon Tan. “As our nation’s story is unique and can be interpreted from so many

perspectives, it is a fertile source of inspiration for our students and partners. The productions we have commissioned draw on events that have contributed to the Singapore we know today and, through research and inquiry, explore what that may mean for tomorrow.”

Tickets for both productions are now available, free with registration, via the links below.

The Last Gap

Written and performed by Sean Cham
Various times, 6-8 September 2019
UCC Dance Studio

[Registration here](#)

Once again working at intersections of visual art, performance, and situated practice, Sean Cham's *The Last Gap* is a participatory learning journey that examines Singapore's 'war memory' with an emphasis on the events that took place between the Allied and Japanese forces in February 1942 on Pasir Panjang Ridge, which is now NUS Kent Ridge Campus.

These events culminated in the surrender of the Allies and the beginning of 36 months of occupation by Japanese forces.

“Traces and signs of our colonial and imperial past have either been erased, or have gone through drastic adaptive reuse. What remains are bronze plaques commissioned by state agencies, and numerous museums and exhibitions to remember the war,” says the artist, describing his production as “a bid to remember, interrogate, and reclaim.”

Participants in the two-hour-long production will be guided through key locations, archives and exhibits from the conflict.

“*The Last Gap* isn't just about the war, it's about how we remember as individuals, as communities, as a state, and as a region,” says the artist. “It's about what we choose to include and exclude from our memories, and how we curate these memories as histories for future generations. I have been learning, unlearning, and relearning through my research, and I hope that participants can join me in this learning process together.”

Already regarded as one of Singapore's creative talents to watch, Sean's creative focus circles urban development, collective memory and historiography. His prior works include *This is Where* (M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2019), *First Storeys* (The Future of Our Pasts Festival 2019).

Having recently completed his studies at Yale-NUS College, *The Last Gap* will be Sean's final production before he moves to London to pursue a Master of Arts in Situated Practice at Bartlett School of Architecture.

The Last Gap is presented with thanks to the Yale-NUS College Fabrication Studios.

The Golden Record 3.0

Written and directed by Edith Podesta, performed by NUS Stage
7.30pm, 18 October 2019
UCC Theatre

[Registration here](#)

As Singapore marks the bicentennial year of Sir Stamford Raffles' landing, the question of how we see ourselves as a nation is brought to fore more prominently, provoking a re-evaluation of the narratives we create to project ourselves to others.

Completing a trilogy of original plays inspired by the 1977 launch of the Voyager I and II spacecraft that carried two golden records deep into space, *The Golden Record 3.0* re-examines how we represent Singapore to other beings and what that says about ourselves.

In a city-state that has had to constantly reinvent itself, is it possible to define what is Singaporean and leave a legacy when so much of our history and culture is already being forgotten?

Presented with the participation of key voices from Singapore's creative and academic worlds, *The Golden Record 3.0* is the culmination of two years of research and exploration involving people from across the stratum of Singapore's national identity.

Come and consider a nation's ambitions in time and space.

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About NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA)

Established in 1993, NUS Centre For the Arts is a vibrant space for the appreciation of the arts and nurturing of the creative and inquiring spirit. We support student engagement with the arts and the integration of the arts into the life of the University.

CFA includes the NUS Museum, NUS Baba House and a Talent and Development arm that oversees 21 student arts excellence groups. Through our myriad of programmes, practices, exhibitions, workshops and outreach, such as NUS Arts Festival and the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts, we enrich the university experience and contribute to the building of knowledge and transformation of students.

We also manage facilities such as the University Cultural Centre, with its 1700-seat Hall and 425-seat Theatre, and rehearsal spaces in Runme Shaw CFA Studios and University Town.

For more information, visit cfa.nus.edu.sg

About National University of Singapore (NUS)

A leading global university centred in Asia, the National University of Singapore is Singapore's flagship university, which offers a global approach to education and research, with a focus on Asian perspectives and expertise.

NUS has 17 faculties and schools across three campuses. Its transformative education includes a broad-based curriculum underscored by multidisciplinary courses and cross-faculty enrichment. Over 38,000 students from 100 countries enrich the community with their diverse social and cultural perspectives. NUS also strives to create a supportive and innovative environment to promote creative enterprise within its community.

NUS takes an integrated and multidisciplinary approach to research, working with partners from industry, government and academia, to address crucial and complex issues relevant to Asia and the world. Researchers in NUS' Schools and Faculties, 30 university-level research institutes and centres, and Research Centres of Excellence cover a wide range of themes including: energy, environmental and urban sustainability; treatment and prevention of diseases common among Asians; active ageing; advanced materials; risk management and resilience of financial systems. The University's latest research focus is to use data science, operations research and cybersecurity to support Singapore's Smart Nation initiative.

For more information on NUS, please visit www.nus.edu.sg