



**Esplanade
Presents**

The Studios

THE MINING TRILOGY

MINING STORIES

28 & 29 Jul 2023
Fri & Sat, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio

by Silke Huysmans and
Hannes Dereere (Belgium)



Photo Credit: Hugo Cardoso



Photo Credit: Vlad Sokhin

PLEASANT ISLAND

2 & 3 Aug 2023
Wed & Thu, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio

by Silke Huysmans and
Hannes Dereere / CAMPO
(Belgium)

5 & 6 Aug 2023
Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio

by Silke Huysmans and
Hannes Dereere / CAMPO
(Belgium)



Photo Credit: Loes Geuens

OUT OF THE BLUE

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on *Esplanade Offstage*, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, and the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2019 and 2022. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-dog Friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit Esplanade.com for more information.

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SEASON MESSAGE

The Studios turns 20 this year.

Over the last two decades, Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay's *The Studios* has been a space for inspiration, innovation, and imagination. We have presented an eclectic collection of more than 160 productions that has asked artists and audiences to reconsider possibilities in contemporary theatre and performance. We have heard stories that invite us to reflect on the human condition and what it means to live. We have had the privilege of meeting so many artists and audience members who have grown along with the season, many of whom have become firm collaborators and colleagues.

What next then? After 20 years, what role does *The Studios* play in the Singapore theatre scene? In what ways can the season evolve and respond to a wildly different world? What do we want to talk about and how do we want to talk about it? How does our physical infrastructure at Esplanade shift the programming of the season? It has been an exciting few years of research, reflection, brainstorming and prioritisation as we think about the possibilities ahead. What firmly remains, however, is our commitment to enable and collaborate with performance and theatre-makers to create work that challenges our notions of what art can be and do.



From 2023, *The Studios* will be expanding.

At the most fundamental level, the season is moving beyond its intimate home in the Esplanade Theatre Studio to include presentations in the recently opened Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade, opening up the possibilities for art-making and performance. This shift is mirrored in the expansion of the geography of the programming, inviting both Singapore-based and international artists to congregate in these spaces and exchange ideas, perspectives and stories—an ever more essential dialogue in an increasingly insular and polarised world.

Once started, this exchange and dialogue has the potential and momentum to continue beyond the venue's physical confines. The suite of companion programmes that are presented alongside the performances are an invitation to deepen our engagement with the artistic work and the issues raised. They are designed to engage not just the intellect, but our senses and emotions, taking advantage of the myriad ways that people process and access information. Through these interactions, we hope that *The Studios* can become a space where we are provoked to think, make sense of and hopefully, make good of our collective human experience at this time.



2023 - 2025: Land

Our overarching theme for the next three years of *The Studios* is **Land** and it emerged in the simplest of ways. As the Singtel Waterfront Theatre was being built, we found photos of the Marina Bay area that showed how dramatically the landscape here had changed over the last 20 years. Between this visual reminder and the current local and global discourse, it felt urgent and fitting to look at land as our thematic focus for the next three editions.

Land is immediate and tactile. It is simultaneously our physical landscape and a symbol of our sense of identity and belonging. It encompasses a vast number of today's pertinent issues, including global development, climate change, land rights, displacement and migration, duty of care and responsibility to our environment and the people around us. Yet, it is deeply intimate and personal, drawing our attention to our roots and history while inviting us to think about the future and what we have to do.



For 2023, we turn our lens inwards and examine our relationship with land under the specific theme of **Landings**. How much do we know about the land on which we reside—its history, its natural character? What does it mean to us, and to what extent do we understand what we are trying to protect or preserve, particularly in Singapore where urban re-development is analogous to progress? What is the cost of this progress and what do we give up or have we given up, in order to move ahead?

Taking place from 28 Jul to 3 Sep 2023, the six productions and the accompanying companion programmes in our 2023 season are a starting point to examine some of these complex questions. For this, we are ever privileged and grateful to build this conversation with **Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere, The Necessary Stage, Joel Tan, Tan Shou Chen, Robert Zhao, as well as Dr Natalie Pang, Yong Ding Li, Esmonde Luo, Rachel Chin, and Danial Matin.**

And to everyone who has joined us over the last two decades, thank you for your support and trust. It means the world to us and we are incredibly excited to start this new chapter with you.

Lynn Yang

Producer

The Esplanade Co Ltd

ARTISTS' MESSAGE

The three pieces of *The Mining Trilogy* were born out of an interest in where our resources come from. Everything around us exists of something, and this 'something' comes from somewhere. But where? And how? In *The Mining Trilogy*, we try to look into these questions and research the effect that mining has on the impacted landscapes and the people living within those landscapes.

The pieces are not meant to be a one-dimensional critique of mining, but an attempt or exercise in understanding: what does mining say about ourselves, about the way we organise our lives? What are the dynamics behind it? To get a better understanding, we spent the past eight years of our artistic practice talking to a broad range of people: activists, academics, politicians, neurologists, CEOs, priests, scientists, mining workers, risk managers, people affected by mining, among others.

These conversations are at the heart of *The Mining Trilogy*. Their perspectives, each with their own personal and unique view, are brought together on the theatre stage. In doing so, our work does not try to convince or persuade the audience of one opinion, but rather proposes to think along: what is the impact of mining? Is the way how mining exists today something I want for the future?

We are grateful for all the people we met and talked to in the frame of our research these past years, and who have contributed their ideas and voice to this trilogy. We kindly invite you—our audience—to take a seat and listen to these voices brought together on the theatre stage. Sometimes conflicting, sometimes intertwining, sometimes discordant, but always challenging.

Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

SILKE HUYSMANS & HANNES DEREERE



Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere are two Brussels-based makers who investigate the use of journalistic and documentary elements within theatre. Underlying their work is extensive field research that they use to shape their projects. Since 2016, they have been working on a trilogy involving long-term research on mining.

In 2016, the first part of the trilogy, ***Mining Stories***, premiered at the Bâtard Festival in Brussels. For this performance, Silke and Hannes returned to the place where she grew up in Brazil. In 2015, a dam burst flooded this place with toxic mining waste, causing one of the biggest ecological mining disasters in recent history.

In 2019, the second production ***Pleasant Island*** premiered at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels. In this performance, the island state Nauru holds up a mirror to the world. Once a paradise in the Pacific, the island is literally now at its water's edge after decades of colonisation and mining.

In their concluding piece, ***Out of the Blue***, Silke and Hannes look at the future of mining. Through interviews and conversations, they sketch an in-depth portrait of an emerging industry: deep sea mining. The piece premiered at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in May 2022.

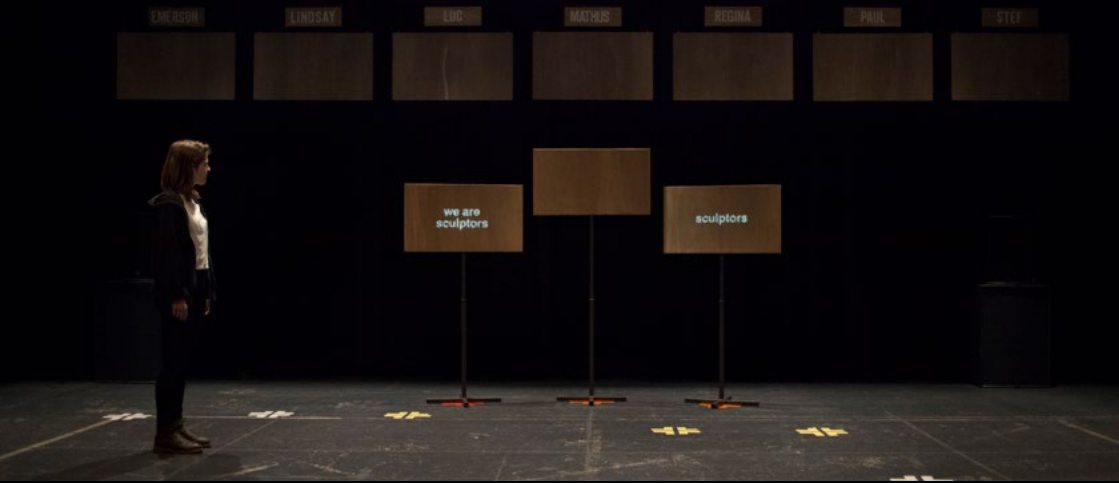
MINING STORIES

"...INNOVATIVE STAGING THAT IS BOTH THOUGHT-PROVOKING AND EMOTIONALLY RESONANT... IT'S A TIMELY SHOW ABOUT BEING HUMAN IN A WORLD OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND CAPRICIOUS FATE, WITHOUT EVER FEELING LIKE ONE: QUITE AN ACCOMPLISHMENT."

THE IRISH TIMES



SYNOPSIS



An aural tapestry of voices, each sharing their stories and perspective—what disaster strikes, what is remembered?

In November 2015, a dam containing toxic mining waste collapsed a few miles away from Belgium theatre artist Silke Huysmans' childhood home in the South of Brazil. A devastating flood of mud destroyed several villages below the dam. In the next couple of days, the poisonous sludge flowed into the river Rio Doce and eventually reached the Atlantic Ocean. The ecological impact and environmental pollution was the largest ever recorded.

Silke returned to her hometown in Brazil together with her partner Hannes to talk to people affected by the incident and get a grip on its immense consequences. Back in Belgium, they did additional interviews with experts from various fields of knowledge, amongst others a mining expert, an activism researcher and an economics professor.



Using field recordings from their conversations in Brazil and Belgium, *Mining Stories* brings together multiple perspectives on the impact of the disaster. Each of the speakers tell the story of the disaster from their own context, with their own nuances and points of interest.

Moving deftly around a performance space, Silke silently activates these audio field recordings alongside multimedia projections. Like a conductor, she brings together these personal stories interwoven into an hour-long orchestral work composed of voices. At its heart, this documentary theatre performance lays bare the ripples of impact from a singular environmental disaster, crossing topics of memory, politics, religion, and storytelling.

Mining Stories was selected for Circuit X (Belgium) in 2017 and was awarded the main prize at Zürcher Theaterspektakel (Switzerland) in 2018 with the jury stating that "Huysmans and Dereere rely on an impressive yet simple staging, with an honest, ethical statement with regard to eco-political topics and issues."

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in Portuguese, English & Dutch, with English subtitles.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

CREATED BY

Silke Huysmans,
Hannes Dereere

PRODUCTION

Kunstenwerkplaats Pianofabriek,
Bâtard Festival

PERFORMANCE

Silke Huysmans

CO-PRODUCTION

KAAP

DRAMATURGICAL ADVICE

Dries Douibi

SUPPORTED BY

Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie,
Sabam For Culture

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Christoph Donse

THANKS TO

All Conversation Partners

SCENOGRAPHY

Frédéric Aelterman,
Luc Cools

PORTUGUESE TRANSCRIPTIONS

Luanda Casella,
Miguel Cipriano



PLEASANT ISLAND

"IT'S THE GENIUS OF THE EDITING THAT MAKES *PLEASANT ISLAND* A HALLUCINATORY DOCUMENT WITH AN UNPRECEDENTED FORM, BETWEEN PERFORMANCE AND DOCUMENTARY."

IO GAZETTE



SYNOPSIS



Encounter this modern-day parable, told through historical records, personal accounts and multimedia recordings, interwoven into a sequence informed by the language and aesthetics of digital culture.

Hidden in the Pacific Ocean lies the island of Nauru, once called Pleasant Island by European explorers. Although its size makes it one of the smallest nations in the world, its history is both large and significant. Nauru is often seen as a parable for our current world. The island was severely impacted by the effects of colonisation, capitalism, migration and ecological distress of which the consequences still linger today.

After the exhaustive exploitation of its natural resources, the island was left in economic and ecologic ruins. Today, Nauru is most known for hosting Australian refugee detention centres in return for a large amount of Australian money. This sparked the government of Nauru to ban most journalists and researchers from entering the island in an effort to keep negative news from reaching the outside world. Meanwhile, the island risks being swallowed by the ocean as a result of the rising sea level. Theatre artists Silke and Hannes were exceptionally allowed to enter the island for a couple of weeks in the summer of 2018. In this post-apocalyptic setting, they try to capture the historical, ecological and humanitarian exhaustion of the island, and by extension of our entire planet.

In *Pleasant Island*, Silke and Hannes use their personal smartphones to navigate the spectator through audio and images from their research on Nauru. How does one encounter the limitations of a world that is intent on endless growth? What idea of the future is left on Nauru, and the rest of the world?

(1hr, no intermission)
Performed in English, with English subtitles.



Photo Credit: Shun Sato

PRODUCTION CREDITS

BY & WITH

Silke Huysmans &
Hannes Dereere

DRAMATURGE

Dries Douibi

SOUND MIXING

Lieven Dousselaere

TECHNICAL

Anne Meeussen &
Piet Depoortere

PRODUCTION

CAMPO

CO-PRODUCTION

Kunstenfestivaldesarts,
Spring Festival Utrecht,
Beursschouwburg,
Kunstenwerkplaats
Pianofabriek,
Veem House For Performance,
Spielart &
De Brakke Grond

RESIDENCIES

Beursschouwburg,
De Grote Post,
KAAP,
Kunstencentrum Buda,
Kunstenwerkplaats Pianofabriek,
STUK & Veem House For Performance,
LOD

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie &
KAAP

MANY THANKS TO

All Collocutors In Nauru



OUT OF _____ THE BLUE

"THE BRILLIANT FORM THE ARTISTS HAVE FOUND, ILLUMINATE UNKNOWN TERRITORIES BOTH IN THE OCEAN AND IN OURSELVES, EXPOSING A COMPLEXITY THAT FORCES US TO THINK"

SPRINGBACK MAGAZINE

It's not too late to
safeguard the hidden
treasures of the deep.



SYNOPSIS



We know so little about the deep ocean, that every new discovery comes with a hundred of new questions.



As interviews, conversations and footage flash across a series of screens, an intimate portrait of a new industry emerges.

“We know more about the surface of the moon than we do about the bottom of the ocean.” This statement is often heard when talking about the deep sea. Worldwide, only ten percent of the ocean floor has been mapped and explored. At a moment in history when the planet we live on seems to have been explored extensively, some places remain unstudied and untouched.

After their acclaimed performances *Mining Stories* and *Pleasant Island*, Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere present the final part of their trilogy on mining. This time, they focus on a completely new industry: deep sea mining. With resources on land becoming increasingly scarce and overexploited, mining companies turn towards the ocean.

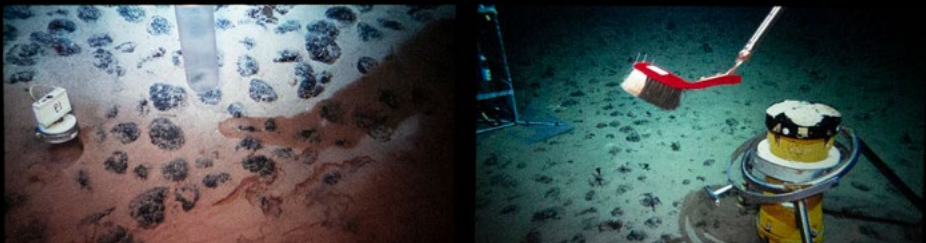
In the spring of 2021, three ships gather on a remote patch of the Pacific Ocean. One of them belongs to the Belgian dredging company DEME-GSR. Four kilometres below the sea surface, their mining robot is scraping the seabed in search of metals. On another ship, an international team of marine biologists and geologists keep a close watch on the operation. A third ship completes the fleet: on board the infamous *Rainbow Warrior*, Greenpeace activists protest against this potential future industry.

From their small apartment in Brussels, Silke and Hannes connect with the three ships through satellite. Each of the ships represents one pillar of the public debate: industry, science and activism. The piece is an attempt to capture a potentially pivotal moment in the history of the earth, juxtaposing myriad perspectives by presenting visual media and audio recordings side by side. How much deeper can mining companies dig, and what are we as humankind actually digging towards? What are the challenges and risks? What opportunities potentially lay ahead?

Out of the Blue premiered at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts on 19 May 2022.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in English and Dutch, with English subtitles.



PRODUCTION CREDITS

BY & WITH

Silke Huysmans &
Hannes Dereere

DRAMATURGY

Dries Douibi

SOUND MIX

Lieven Dousselaere

OUTSIDE EYE

Pol Heyvaert

TECHNIQUE

Korneel Coessens,
Piet Depoortere,
Koen Goossens &
Babette Poncelet

PRODUCTION

CAMPO

SPECIAL THANKS TO

John Childs, Henko De Stigter, Patricia Esquete, Iason-Zois Gazis,
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Saskia Van Aalst, Kris Van Nijen, Vincent Van Quickenborne & Annemiek Vink

THANKS TO

All Conversation Partners & The People Who Helped With The Transcriptions

CO-PRODUCTION

Bunker (Ljubljana),
De Brakke Grond (Amsterdam),
Noorderzon - Festival Of Performing Arts
And Society (Groningen),
Zürcher Theater Spektakel (Zürich),
Beursschouwburg &
Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels),
PACT Zollverein (Essen),
Théâtre De La Ville (Paris) &
Festival d'Automne À Paris (Paris)

RESIDENCIES

Kunstenwerkplaats,
Pilar,
Bara142 (Toestand),
De Grote Post,
30CC,
GC De Markten &
GC Felix Sohie

ABOUT CAMPO ARTS CENTRE

CAMPO is a Ghent (Belgium) based arts centre with a diverse programme, ranging from theatre, dance and performance to festivals, neighbourhood kitchens and debates. They create performances which tour internationally, and support artists throughout their artistic process. One could see CAMPO as a toolbox for artists, a house that covers the whole spectrum of performing arts: research and development, production, touring and presentation.

CAMPO has three sites in Ghent to work and present: CAMPO nieuwoort, CAMPO victoria and THE BOMA, where there are always artists at work. CAMPO creates productions and work with artists such as Sarah Vanhee, Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere, Anna Franziska Jäger & Nathan Ooms, Lisa Vereertbrugghen, Julian Hetzel, Jaha Koo, Kim Noble, Kristien De Proost, Gosia Wdowik, amongst many others.



ART, LIES, _____ DOCUMENTARY

"We started out with theatre and just experimenting with documentary as one of the elements. In the end, it ended up taking over everything and the theatre kind of receded into the background.

There's this aura of objectivity that hangs around documenting something. In our work, we tried to do the exact opposite and show that it's very subjective."

HANNES DEREERE



*The Mining Trilogy duo and another featured artist from *The Studios 2023*, Robert Zhao, talk about their [documentary practices and how art can intervene meaningfully in pressing environmental issues](#). Only on *Esplanade Offstage*.*



LANDINGS

Don't miss these companion programmes
- an invitation to deepen engagement with the artistic works and the conversations raised in the season.



In Conversation with Silke Huysmans and Hannes Dereere: Creating The Mining Trilogy

Moderated by Nabilah Said

The creators of *The Mining Trilogy* share their creative process and experience with field research.

6 Aug, Sun, 4.30pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio

Free

The Mining Trilogy Workshop

by Silke Huysmans & Hannes Dereere

The creators of *The Mining Trilogy* speak in-depth about their creative process, guiding you through the creation of your own documentary theatre presentation in a hands-on session. Designed for performance-makers, arts students and practitioners. (8hrs over two days)
Admission for ages 16 and above.

7 - 8 Aug, Mon - Tue
Mon, 1pm - 6pm | Tue, 10am - 1pm
Esplanade Rehearsal Studio

Ticket Price: \$60
Pre-registration is required.

[Find out more](#)

THANK YOU

for joining us at *The Studios 2023*.

Please take some time to share your
feedback with us. Thank you.



Complete the survey here





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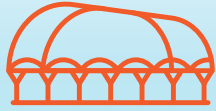
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Esplanade gives our heartfelt thanks

to our Esplanade partner, arts benefactor, donors and sponsors for believing in our vision to be a performing arts centre for everyone. They made all these possible!



2,976

activities took place at Esplanade.



1,891

Non-Ticketed



821

Ticketed

2,062,549

People attended our activities at the centre.



Non-Ticketed

379,989

Ticketed

72,756



465

Activities

7,522

Participants

We believe that everyone should be able to experience the joy of the arts, including children, youth, seniors, migrant workers and individuals with special needs. Our community engagement activities bring the arts to those in need.

*Figures for Esplanade's activities from Apr 2021 to Mar 2022.



Your contribution* will make a difference.

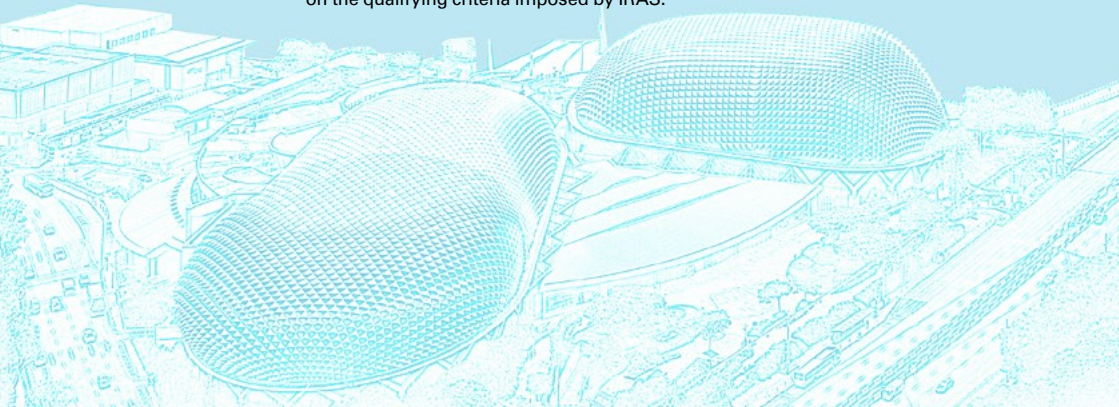
On behalf of the communities we serve, thank you!

Find out how you too can make a difference through the arts at Esplanade.

Donate at www.esplanade.com/donate

To find out more, email us at donations@esplanade.com or speak with us at 6828 8321.

Esplanade is a charity and an Institution of a Public Character. Your donation to us is matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cultural Matching Fund. Please note that the prevailing tax exemption scheme for donors and sponsors of Arts-Related Businesses will depend on the qualifying criteria imposed by IRAS.



With Gratitude

Esplanade –Theatres on the Bay is a charity, a not-for-profit organisation and Singapore's national performing arts centre.

We seek to entertain, engage, educate and inspire through the arts. We thank everyone who has helped us bring joy, inspiration and positive impact to Singaporeans from all walks of life by supporting the arts and Esplanade.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes especially to our Donors and Sponsors, for their steadfast belief in our mission and for their generous contributions.

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Join us in sharing the joy of the arts and help us reach more communities in need.

We believe that an experience with the arts is special and that with your generous support, more people will get a chance to enjoy the arts. Join us in sharing the joy of the arts and help us reach more communities in need.



Esplanade also receives grants from the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth, and support for its Community Programmes from the Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

“

I could just scroll through IG or TikTok but I thought why should I when I can do the same on Offstage? It makes me feel like I know more things. Great arts content, anytime, anywhere.

Highly recommend.

”

Totally Anonymous Person
(who is not related to www.esplanade.com/offstage)



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