

Playeum presents their sixth hands-on exhibition

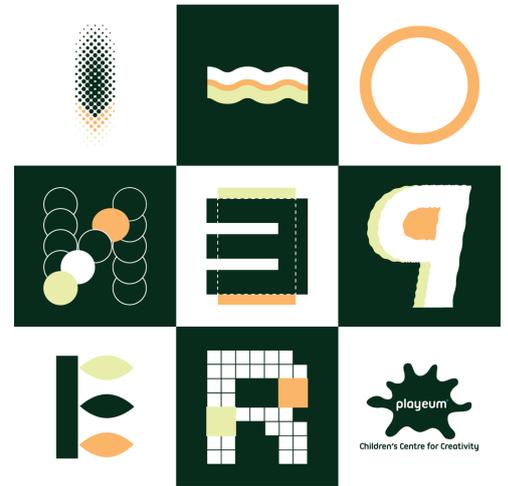
I-Opener: Play with the Senses

1 June 2019* to 26 April 2020
*(Soft launch from 14-31 May)

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At the start of this millennium, with the rapid technological advances and globalisation, play, the arts and creativity will become the new classroom learning. This includes all forms of artistic and aesthetic communication, and the opportunities for technology to give a voice to disenfranchised communities.

Dr. Esther Joosa
Consultant Director of Pedagogy, Playeum

WELCOME

Playeum, Singapore's Children's Centre for Creativity, welcomes you to its sixth hands-on, artful play exhibition titled *I-Opener: Play with the Senses*.

The exhibition is set to run from 1 June 2019 to 26 April 2020. With the soft launch from 14 May onwards, this exhibition marks Playeum's 10th anniversary of its vision and mission to champion play, the arts and creativity as a central space in the lives of children and their adults.

INTRODUCTION

ADDRESS BY CHARLOTTE GOH, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PLAYEUM

As the current Executive Director, I am proud to present this exhibition *I-Opener* and its two co-curators; Director of Operations, Imran Mohamad and Consultant Director of Pedagogy, Dr. Esther Joosa. I am also proud of a dedicated core team and playmakers, together with whom Playeum draws on future-directed, innovative and creative-play based pedagogies and practices.

Before addressing the exhibition further, it gives me great pleasure to share with you the journey of Playeum, and to witness the opening of this new and unique exhibition. In 2009, co-founders Sumitra Pasupathy and Jennifer Loh founded Playeum. The development of its artistic and education vision and mission was led by leading Australian early childhood museum educator and academic, Dr. Barbara Piscitelli. Over the past 10 years, Playeum has established itself as a local leader in play. The first of its kind, a dedicated creative space for children, provides ample opportunities for innovative pedagogies and the development of visions. Currently, Playeum contributes to dialogues about changes in mindsets where play, the arts and creativity in education takes on a holistic and life-wide approach that has its foundation in early childhood and in which children are empowered and recognised for their agency.

The Children's Centre for Creativity is a mission-based, non-profit venture and an IPC charity that collaborates with like-minded organisations and is supported by community and corporate partners. For this exhibition, the support of the National Arts Council, Cultural Matching Fund and HP Inc. is pivotal in the exhibition and nurturing creative practice. HP's Graphics Solutions Business (GSB) has the industry's leading portfolio of digital solutions, delivering on a diverse set of printing possibilities. By showcasing what is possible to print, GSB provides new creative and infinite playful ideas to infuse the arts in education and design.



In a world where learning increasingly takes place through hands-on experiences, children need technology innovation that drives new ways of learning, inspires creativity and sparks connections. We are pleased to collaborate with Playeum to show how print can bring forth transformative learning experiences for Singapore's next generation workforce of inventors, creators and leaders. 

Ronnie Lee,
Singapore Managing Director, HP Inc.

Playeum is dedicated towards the value of play, the arts and creative activity, and committed to serving all children. Playeum's Play-It-Forward initiative and high-touch programmes invites individuals and companies to contribute towards high-quality programming specially designed to serve disadvantaged groups, including facilitating visits to the Children's Centre for Creativity.

With Playeum's International Research Advisory Network (PIRAN), Playeum has established a research arm. Our current research based play programme *Giving Tuesdays: Open Minds, Open Doors* has welcomed children with disabilities and their parents. Two research papers have been accepted during a major upcoming international disability conference in Glasgow.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION: I-OPENER

I-Opener features the aesthetic and sensory play-worlds co-curated and co-created by artists with a disability. It invites children aged 1 to 12 to explore their senses through play and the arts. It highlights the importance of sight, touch and hearing in a child's discovery of the world and holistic development, that includes aesthetic awareness, artistic engagement and active participation. The exhibition is co-curated and produced by Playeum's Creative Directors, Imran Mohamad and Dr. Esther Joosa. Together, they brought the artists' designs and inspirations for children exploring a carefully designed artful play space. The exhibition is enhanced with opportunities for research on children's play, artistic discovery and creation. With support from technical artist, Din Chan, their innovative direction will see the exhibition utilising repurposed materials to transform the totality of the space and provide a complete sensory exploration.

DETAILS OF THE DIFFERENT SPACES WITHIN THE EXHIBITION:

Clement Space is a sensorial interactive space designed, produced and created by **Dr. Dawn-joy Leong**, an autistic artist. In a time in which the world seems increasingly void of calm, her focus on white in her design allows children to explore their senses by feeling, interacting and changing the moveable elements.

Cavan Chang is an artist with Down syndrome. His **Cavan Scope** is an invitation for his audiences to enter his colourful world, and create a multitude of new collages by playing with his artworks. Children will traverse visually and explore the mysteries of sight and illusion through eye-tracking.

SOLScope is inspired by the two dimensional artwork of **Sol Pickens**, a young boy with autism. He makes his drawings come to life and transforms them into three-dimensional structures. In this space, children are invited to transfer their own two-dimensional works into three-dimensional playscapes.

Jo Devadason is a poet with Down syndrome and the voice behind **Poetree**, that can be found around the space. From an early age, she developed a love for books imaginary play and self-expression. Her poetry and wordplay gives voice to her views and perceptions of the exhibition.

Young audiences can further explore the following technological inventions and play areas created and designed by Din Chan, Imran Mohamad and Dr. Esther Joosa:

The Eye Track Painter

Create colourful collages by letting just your eyes roam.

Tyre Light Play Projection

Discover and play with shadows and light at this space.

Hologram Projector

Experiment and transform your artworks to 3D.

The Colour Cave

A sensory cave to further explore Cavan's colourful world with various textiles.

The Nook

A space where creative minds meet, set directions and create mindful collaborations.

The Maker Space

A space that will always remain core to Playeum and where children's innate creativity, critical thinking, communication and sensitivity to one's self and others manifests.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



DR. DAWN-JOY LEONG **I-OPENER: CLEMENT SPACE**

Dr. Dawn-joy Leong is an autistic artist, researcher and practitioner in the field of Autism, Neurodiversity and Multi-Art praxis. Dawn-joy's research examines Autistic Embodiment, with a focus on sensory-cognitive idiosyncrasy, bringing together neuroscience, psychology, empirical evidence from Autistic individuals, and her own autobiographical insights from lived-experience. Her material practice is a multi-art interdisciplinary approach in immersive mind-body experiences that includes elements of music, soundscape, video, photography, installation, narrative, poetry, and performance.

Her works have been performed and exhibited in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Australia and Singapore. She conducts lectures and workshops and is a specialist consultant in the Arts and Disability, Disability Leadership, Autism, Neurodiversity, and Multi-Art applications. Her field of consultation addresses mental health and wellbeing, life skills, creative thinking, learning strategies and advocacy of the identity of disabled persons.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



CAVAN CHANG

I-OPENER: CAVAN SCOPE

Cavan Chang, is a bubbly young man with Down Syndrome who likes interacting with people and with the arts. Since his early school days, being educated in special schools, visual art has been an important part of Cavan as it provides a medium for him to communicate and unleash his creativity.

Cavan's abstract painting and unique style gravitate his audience into his world of colours where his dream, inner emotions and imagination become visible. As a person, he is happy that he can inspire others through his passion, originality and involvements in the visual arts during his workshops.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



SOL PICKENS **I-OPENER: SOLSCAPE**

Sol, a 14-year-old boy is a self-taught visual artist. He was diagnosed with autism when he was 4 and at that time, had a hard time communicating with others. Since he was able to express himself only with limited words, his mother encouraged him to explore ways to express himself through the arts.

He mainly uses water-based pigment markers and fountain pens. His current designs feature inside the house, interior decoration of the rooms, cityscapes and landscapes of the world. His style is POP with vivid colours, precise details and a humorous form. He sees this world from a neuroatypical angle and expresses it in his own ways – for example, his rooms are drawn to become 3D when folding the four corners. Often, the image of the completed work is already in his mind even before the drawing begins.

ABOUT THE ARTIST



JO DEVADASON

I-OPENER: POETREE

Jo is an expressive young woman. Born with Down syndrome, she embraces life with positivity and happiness. Just as her sister, she was homeschooled and from an early age, they both developed a love for books, imaginary play and self-expression.

She is a self-taught poet and has a strong view about the world she lives in. Over the past two years, she decided that she would try her hand at poetry and has not stopped since, as she finds it gives her voice to her struggles & feelings.

ABOUT THE TECH CATALYST



DIN CHAN

TECH CATALYST FOR I-OPENER

Din is a graduate from Lasalle College of the Arts with a BA Degree in Fine Arts (2014) and holds an arts diploma in Communication Design. Over the years, he has built numerous installations, both in Singapore and in the region. As a prospective student in MA Arts Therapy, Din is interested in the effect of technology on art for those with limited abilities. His creation of the eye-tracker was inspired by the immobility of children with severe physical disabilities.

CURATION FOR PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS & OUTREACH BY CREATIVE DIRECTORS IMRAN MOHAMAD & DR. ESTHER JOOSA

“ Playeum, to us, is a place children can call home.

It is a place between home and school, where they can live their creative dreams, learn about others and engage with the arts. As co-curators and co-creators, we had the task to merge people, purpose and practice. Ours was a creative adventure and journey to engage with the artists, the children, Playeum's vision, the community outlook and the value of play and arts, but also about inclusive practice.

For both of us, this curation entailed a growing respect for the creative processes and the opportunities when entering the world of others, especially those who move away from mainstream views. The design by the artists and their influence on the spaces present an invitation to look at the world through a different lens, provide new and fresh ideas to world problems and gives opportunities for children to become co-creators and co-curators themselves.

The space is not a finished product. As with all community curation and co-creation, the onus is now to the children to add their voice to the exhibition. ”

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: IMRAN MOHAMAD



© Imran Mohamad



As Playeum's Director of Operations, my first thoughts on the designs apart from practicality were on the importance of *I-Opener* being able to create conversations on perspectives on new and novel ideas about play, the arts, and creativity. Building the exhibition, listening to the artists and fitting the designs within the various spaces, not only requires attention to Esther's direction in pedagogies, but also to the nearly 30,000 young visitors we receive yearly, and how our playmakers facilitate the play opportunities that this exhibition will present.

From the artists to designers and the suggestions of fabricators, every single person is in-sync with the clarity of directions that focus on the people, purpose and practice of artful play and its role in a future-driven education. 

CREATIVE DIRECTOR: DR. ESTHER JOOSA



|| In my current role as Consultant Director of Pedagogy and the co-curator of *I-Opener*, this exhibition is a process of merging creative practice, research and advocacy about the value of artful play practices. It brings focus to shape the identity of children and individuals with a disability as active citizens, meaning makers and contributors to the community. When I received my PhD from Nanyang Technological University about the visual arts and my in-situ work with individuals with Down syndrome, my first thoughts were on how to provide more opportunities on using the arts as a way to listen to the voices of people with a disability.

Working with Playeum, Imran and the many others involved in this exhibition, shows what is possible when taking on a collaborative approach. Each exhibit extends invitations to the children to welcome them to the world of the artist, to create and to become involved in the process of curation. The many creative influences on the spaces bring ideas not just for the artists' agency but also education and museum research. The designs of the artists, listening to them and their ideas, and the inclusion of creative technology provides infinite opportunities for dialogue and to create visions and ideas on artful play. ||

ABOUT PLAYEUM, CHILDREN'S CENTRE FOR CREATIVITY

PLAYEUM'S PEDAGOGY, TRAINING & OUTREACH

Playeum's focus is on designing pedagogies that embrace creativity, advocating for the arts and play, research and outreach. It provides innovative and creative opportunities for educational programmes, training, research and outreach. A key part of Playeum's wider mission is to establish a culture of meaningful and impactful play to create a balance in education. The curation of the exhibition drives at developing a strong play, art and inclusive research agenda and the psychology of space design. Play in the past was largely an activity that was attributed to children. Museums on the other hand were considered adult spaces. With this exhibition, Playeum provides a playful mix of art and play for the young and old.

The current line of training embraces the global shift in increasing demands for the combination of creativity, the arts and play as contributors. For the coming year, Manager for Learning and Engagement, Cheryl Gan has prepared a series of exciting workshops. Working directly with Dr. Esther Joosa as Consultant Director of Pedagogy, practicing artists and other content creators, Playeum presents a series of hands-on workshops for pre-school, primary school, special school teachers and parents.

Social outreach is integral to Playeum's vision and mission. Creative programme design involves play, the arts and STEAM. Understanding the community, setting out a common trajectory with stakeholders and programme evaluation is a major priority. *Giving Tuesdays: Open Minds, Open Doors* is our most recent programme. It supports open-ended, unstructured play of children with a disability. Playeum is constantly in search for community partners and is proud that over the past year, meaningful connections were developed with schools and care organisations with the support of National Council of Social Service (NCSS), Sage Foundation, ExxonMobil and Quantedge to name a few.

To find out more about Playeum, our social impact and community work, corporate involvement, trainings for educators/adults, space design, outreach, research and any interest in grants or funding, please connect with us.

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Children's Centre for Creativity