CREATIVE TRANSFORMATION EMBRACING OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

OCTOBER 2021

Quarterly Research Newsletter

Culture Academy SINGAPORE

CultureBYTES

Dear Readers,

Can culture be at the forefront of post-COVID-19 crisis recovery? The past two years have certainly been a challenging period for the cultural and creative sectors. It is not easy to accept that previous pathways of artmaking and cultural production may no longer be feasible. However, where there are challenges, there are also opportunities. As the articles, *Culture Shock: COVID-19 and the Cultural and Creative Sectors*, *Culture in the COVID-19 Recovery: Good for Your Wallet, Good for Resilience, and Good for You* highlight, digitalisation can be transformative in creating new forms of cultural experiences and business models; there is also great potential in embracing new crossovers with other sectors to drive future innovation. This issue sheds light on some of the difficulties faced by both individuals and organisations of the arts and heritage community, in adjusting to the new reality, and how they have adapted their practices, to become more resilient.

From all of us at Culture Academy Singapore

RESEARCH

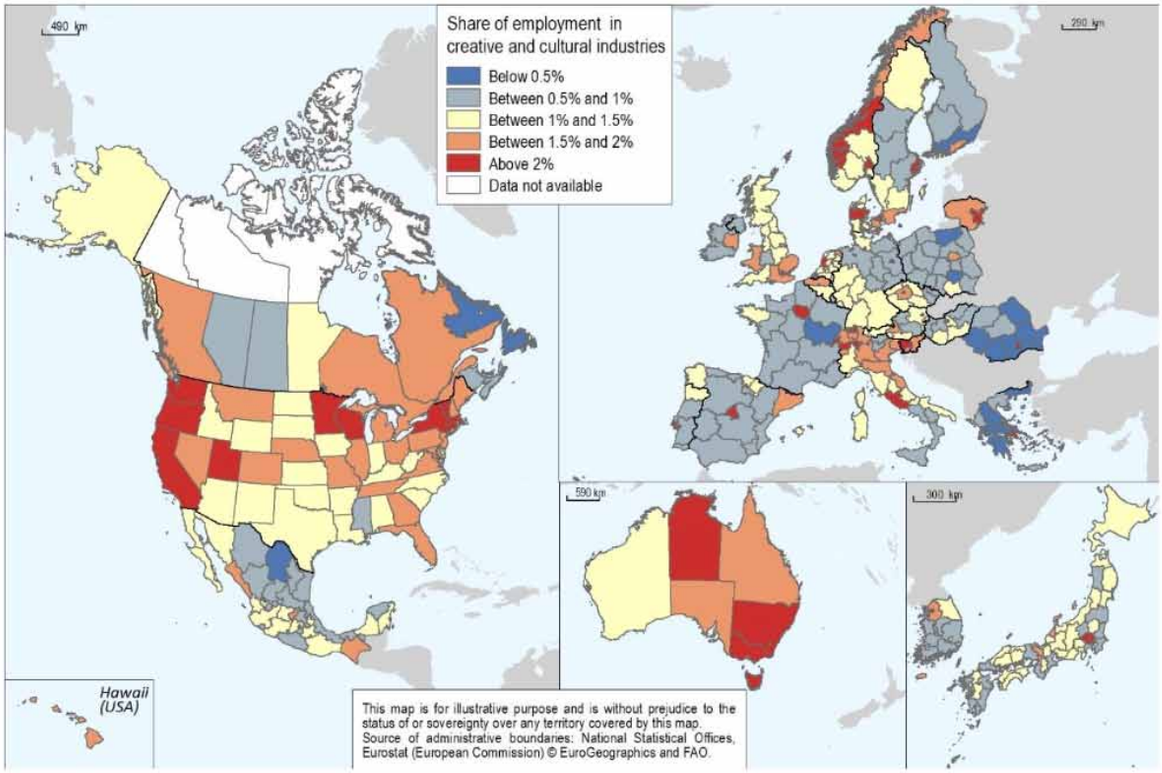
Report

Culture Shock: COVID-19 and the Cultural and Creative Sectors

OECD: Cultural and Creative Sectors – Innovation through Crossovers

Figure 3. Share of employment in creative and cultural sectors, TL2 regions

2017 or latest available year for OECD countries with data plus Romania



Across the OECD regions, the cultural and creative sectors were badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic exposed the structural fragility of some producers, especially those who operate on the margins of financial sustainability. As at September 2020, around 0.8 to 5.5% of jobs were at risk. These effects may have long-lasting effects, with the decline in investment affecting the production of cultural goods and services.

But it is not all doom and gloom. Notably, the sector has innovated rapidly through digitalisation. Crossovers between culture and other sectors, such as education or health, can drive future innovation. Cities and regions should thus take advantage of the creative potential of culture in the post-COVID recovery.

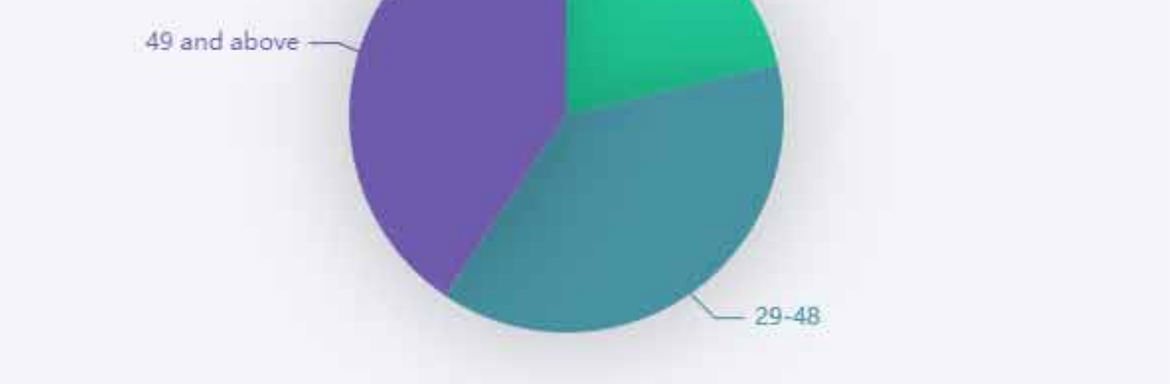
Find out more

Survey

Built Heritage Strengthens Solidarity

IPS working papers No 36: Survey on the perceptions of Singapore's built heritage and landmarks

by Natalie Pang, Seah Chia Shih Paveena and Wong Kwang Lin



How might memories, experiences and meaning shape the way we think about built heritage? This study found that, for any heritage site, respondents' perceptions of heritage are mediated by age, lived experiences, and the media. Hence, local actors such as academics, public intellectuals, civil society, storytellers and so on can participate in the place-making process by co-creating meanings for heritage sites. The authors also found the perceived value of heritage to be a persistent predictor of a sense of national identity. Thus, educating the public on the value and significance of built heritage is key to building a stronger sense of collective solidarity.

View the full infographic

Study

Good for Your Wallet, Good for Resilience, and Good for You

COVID-19 Recovery: Good for your wallet, Good for resilience, and Good for you

by Sameh Wahba (Global Director, Urban, Disaster Risk Management, Resilience and Land Global Practice, World Bank) , Ernesto Ottone R (Assistant Director-General for Culture of UNESCO)

There is reason to believe that the culture sector will be unique in the post-pandemic recovery with the acceleration of socio-economic recovery. First, culture is essential for social cohesion, a key ingredient in fostering resilience in post-crisis situations. Second, culture engenders well-being, particularly mental well-being – an often-overlooked factor in the recovery process. Thirdly, culture allows communities to deal with trauma and process reconciliation with the ravages of the pandemic. Fourth, culture has an amplification effect that ensures a more balanced recovery, by giving voice to marginalised communities.

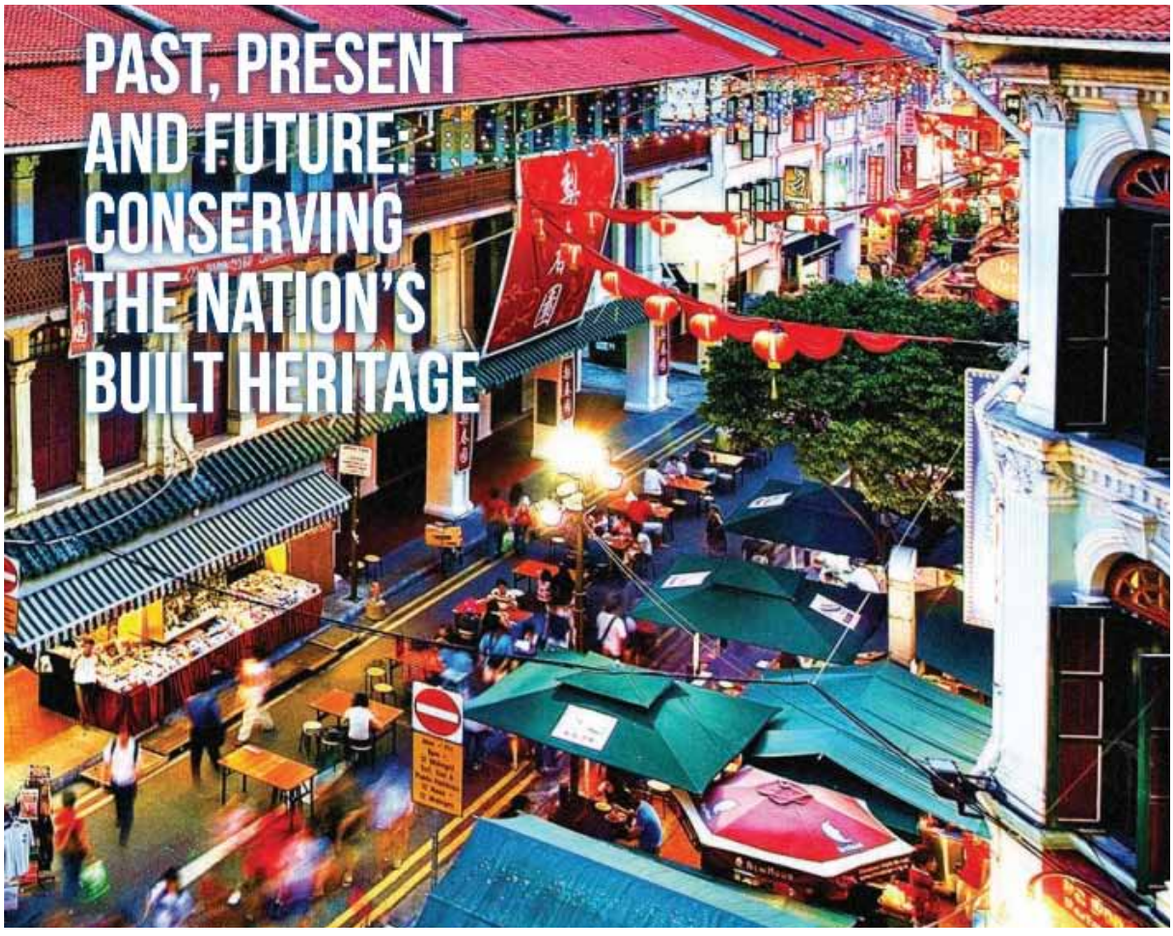
These ideas are based off the **CURE framework** (Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery) by the World Bank and UNESCO, which advocates for culture to be at the forefront of post-crisis recovery.

Find out more

Study

A City of Old and New: Conserving our Built Heritage

Urban System Studies – Past, Present and Future: Conserving the Nation's Built Heritage
by Centre for Liveable Cities



Singapore's diverse built heritage landscape is no accident; the mix of historic monuments, buildings and sites sitting alongside modern buildings is the outcome of foresight and innovation in integrated planning and dynamic urban governance. The Centre for Liveable Cities (CLC)'s Urban System Studies *Past, Present and Future: Conserving the Nation's Built Heritage* explains how this came to be. It presents an overview of Singapore's conservation efforts and highlights the key decisions, trade-offs, players and enabling factors that allowed for systematic innovations to make conservation an integral part of urban planning and development. Examples detailed in the book, such as the preservation of national monuments and conservation of old shophouses and historic districts, reflect key principles of planning and governance in turning the challenges of conservation into opportunities for the making of a vibrant and charming city.

Find out more

INTERVIEWS

Cultural Trailblazers

Cultural Leaders on cultural solutions
outside of the culture sector

New Opportunities

Ms Ye Shufang
Deputy Director (Learning), National Gallery Singapore

Ms Tamares Goh
Deputy Director (Audience Engagement), National Gallery Singapore

Culture Bytes interviewed Deputy Director for Learning of National Gallery Singapore, Ye Shufang, and Deputy Director for Audience Engagement, Tamares Goh, on how the phygital format creates new opportunities for engaging children in the post-pandemic normal.

> "With our current changing physical circumstances, young learners may miss the opportunity to visit a museum to experience original artworks face-to-face, engage in imaginative play and discussions, and interact with their peers."
>
> Ye Shufang

> "Artists and art administrators are leveraging on this shift to reimagine and redesign physical experiences, whilst including new possibilities brought about by the digital."
>
> Tamares Goh

Read the interview transcript

Future Technology

Mr Eugene Soh
Founder, Mind Palace, and Dude.sg

Culture Bytes interviewed Eugene Soh, Founder of Mind Palace, and Dude.sg to capture his thoughts on the future of VR for the culture sector, and his views on the use of VR technology to re-create heritage-like environments through crowdsourcing elements of social memory among his users.

"Artists are interested in exploring tech and they need experts like me to bring their vision to life. With tech more ingrained in the younger generation, its influence will grow not only in the arts but in all aspects of our lives."

Read the interview transcript

Innovative Strategies

Ms Jean Loo
Founder, Superhero Me

Culture Bytes interviewed Jean Loo, Co-Founder of Superhero Me, to learn about the unique challenges that they faced during the pandemic in engaging special needs and less privileged children as well as to uncover their strategies to sustain the art intervention initiatives and collaborations with artists.

"This question has been driving our work since COVID hit our shores and has pushed us to new ways of creative engagement. In a nutshell, we have significantly scaled down our programmes and refocused to capability building through talks, digital training –– and also being targeted about artist-child collaborations that we take on."

Read the interview transcript

The Future is Hybrid

Ms Audrey Lim
CEO and Co-founder, Take Back The Nights

Culture Bytes interviewed Audrey Lim, CEO and Co-founder of Take Back The Nights to capture her thoughts on how virtual reality platforms would continue in the post-pandemic normal.

"While nothing will ever replace attending a music event in person, I believe hybrid events will be a necessary part of the future for the next 5 years at least. Large internationally successful games like Fortnite and Animal Crossings are already experimenting with mounting music concerts within their platforms."

Read the interview transcript

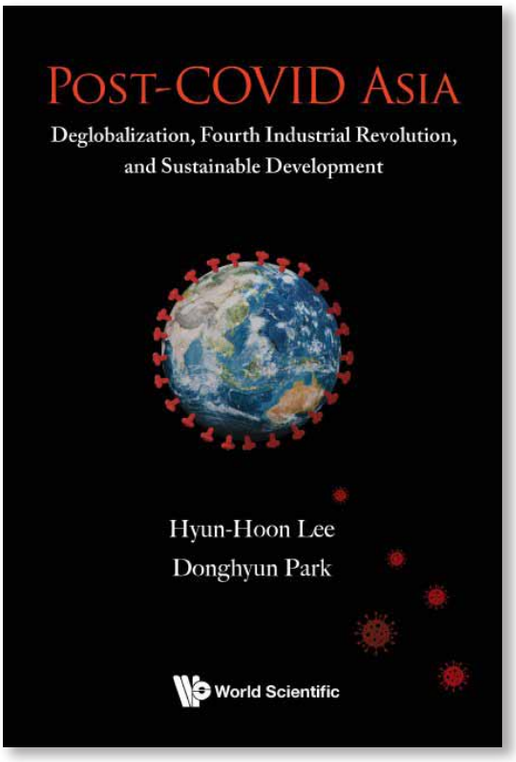
Rethinking Old Pathways

Mr Tan Boon Hui
Executive Director, Arts House Limited (AHL)

Culture Bytes interviewed Tan Boon Hui, Executive Director of Arts House Limited, to learn about his vision for Arts House Limited and his views on how the pandemic presents a window of opportunity for art and artists.

"I think the recent developments will encourage a rethink of how international arts productions or presentations can be done. Instead of shipping huge amounts of artworks, artists and associated goods and services halfway around the globe, it will encourage producers to think of how art could be produced at each location."

Read the interview transcript

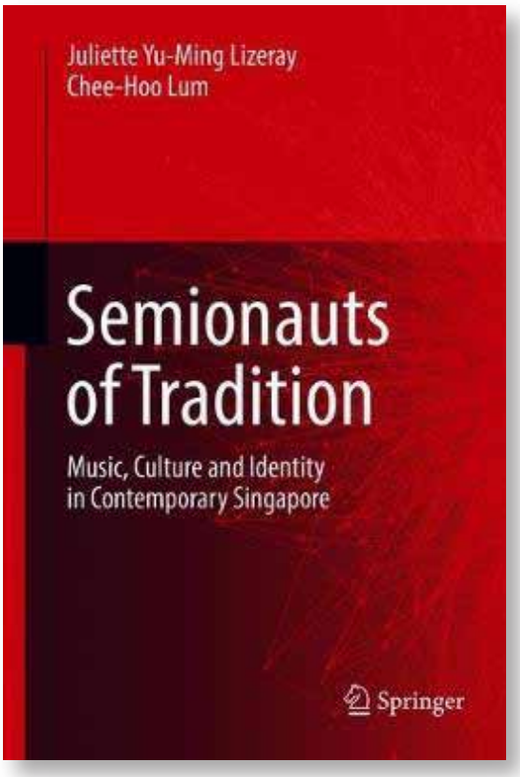


Hyun-Hoon Lee and Donghyun

Post-COVID Asia: Deglobalisation, Fourth Industrial Revolution and Sustainable Development

Globalisation enabled Asian economies to emerge as a dynamic high-growth region. Post-COVID Asia warns that these Asian economies will be hard hit by the current deglobalisation. The author's key premise is that Asia must not just ride, but spearhead the technological revolution. More and better innovation fuelled by creativity will be key.

Find out more



Juliette Yu-Ming Lizeray and Chee-Hoo Lum

Semionauts of Tradition: Music, Culture and Identity in Contemporary Singapore

Semionauts of Tradition examines questions that arise in relation to creativity, identity and cultural change from the lens of contemporary musicians presently involved in redefining Asian musical traditions and notions of heritage in Singapore. Incorporating cultural studies, ethnomusicology, and anthropology, the book focuses on emerging millennial musicians and explores the complex and interwoven cultural, national, musical, and personal identifications in their discourse and music practice. It portrays how they form fluid, hybrid and counter-hegemonic forms of expression, representation and identity through their navigation of diverse cultural worlds, their incorporation of a myriad of elements into their own identities and music, and their contestations of preconceived notions of difference and tradition.

The authors shed light on the paradoxes within current thinking pertaining to 'multiracialism', 'racial harmony', the 'East/West divide' as well as 'tradition versus modernity', and offer alternative ways of comprehending identity, cultural change, and creativity in a highly diverse nation. The book discusses the range of opportunities for the soundscape in Singapore, and is a timely contribution of global discussions about 'multiculturalism from below' as well as musical, cultural and national identities in a postcolonial Southeast Asian setting, from the perspective of artists involved in creative meaning-making.

Find out more

RESOURCES

Joshua Tan

Tracie Pang

Nicola Mah

Rilla Melati Bahri

Lin Shiyun

Jolene Tan

Lee Ee Wurn

DIGITAL TRAINING AIDS
EPISODE 4

Audience Engagement

In the last series of 'Learn. Connect. Experience. @ Culture Academy', we focus on audience engagement strategies for arts and culture organisations in the new normal. To find out more on engaging and sustaining interest among different audience segments, we speak with various practitioners and organisations on the work that is being done across the sector.

Watch this now

In Conversation With

Mr Joe Ow
Mr Peter Tullin
Mr Syaheed MSBI

Monetising Arts and Culture in the Digital World

Watch this now

WEBINARS

Y-Lab

Y-Lab is a unique Art x Tech convergence product innovation lab housed in the National Gallery Singapore. It aims to co-create the future of cultural production and consumption in Singapore and beyond.

Visit the website now

How the Art and Culture Sector can leverage NFTs
An overview of Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTS) co-hosted by Zilliqa and Y-Lab.

The Art of A.I
How can the arts and culture industry leverage A.I. effectively?

Extended Reality
AR. VR. MR. ER. These technologies are everywhere as what used to be physical is now going virtual or phygital.

EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SINGAPORE

An Old New World: Digital Edition

The exhibition offers two modes of navigation – guided and self-exploratory. In the former, you will be taken on a specially curated exploration of featured artefacts and the surrounding showcases while listening to narrations by Curators Daniel Tham and Iskander Mydin, along the themes of Knowledge and Power and Seeing the Indigenous. Alternatively, you may also navigate the galleries at your own pace via the self-exploratory mode.

Visit the website now

INDIAN HERITAGE CENTRE

Sikhs in Singapore: A Story Untold Exhibition

Co-created by members of Singapore's Sikh community and the Indian Heritage Centre, *Sikhs in Singapore – A Story Untold* is presented in 3 parts – *Roots*, which tells the story of the origins of Singapore's Sikh community; *Settlement*, which brings together some exemplary narratives of Sikh migrants to Singapore; and *Contemporary Perspectives* which offers glimpses into the experiences of some contemporary Sikhs. A special e-resource is created for children from 7 years and above.

Find out more

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