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ANNUAL REPORT

THE ARTGROUND



THE ARTGROUND

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## MISSION

To open minds, shape perspectives and serve as an open platform for the creation and design of original inspiring content for young audiences through close collaborative best practices with local and regional artists.

## OUR C.O.R.E. VALUES

In our endeavour to continue providing positive and meaningful arts experiences for young children in collaboration with artists, we have our C.O.R.E. values to guide us:

### CARE

We take care of one another, and help one another succeed in what we each do. Individual successes are the company's pride and achievements!

### OWNERSHIP

We make informed decisions by practising intrapreneurship and taking pride in what we do, as well as in continually looking for new ways of doing things better.

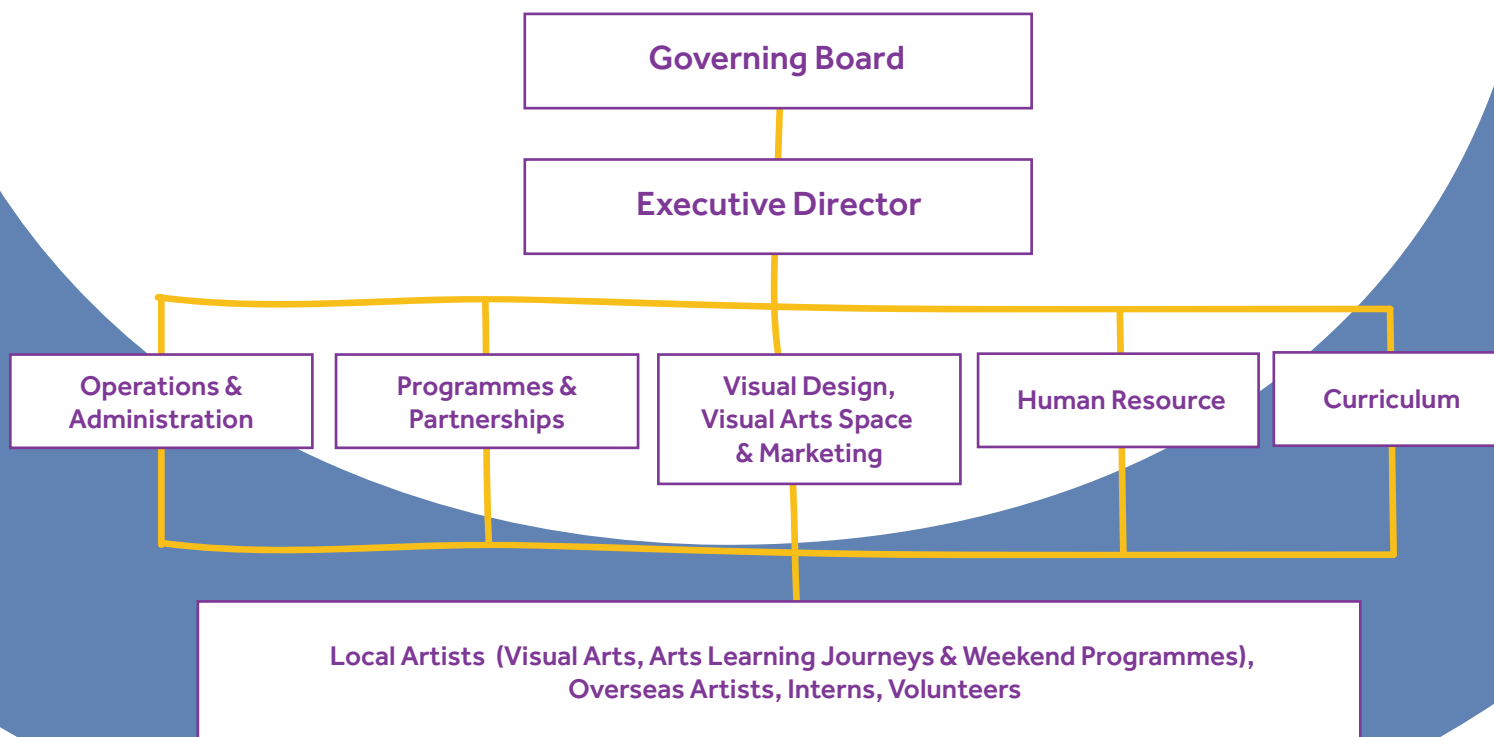
### RELEVANCE

As much as we are committed to developing local artists in Arts for Young Audiences (A4YA), we invest in our TAG team to ensure our relevance in the sector through our professional and personal development and growth.

### EFFICIENCY

We keep our processes seamless, and are resourceful with our time, finances and programming so that we provide the best possible experience for the children and artists.

# ORGANISATION CHART



## CORPORATE INFORMATION

*Board of Directors: Appointment from 28 August 2017 to 27 August 2020*

### Appointment dates for Board Members

**Poh Hwee Yen, Luanne**  
02/12/2016  
*Executive Director*

**Goh Jin Zhong, Ian**  
28/08/2017  
*Secretary*

**Wai Chun Yip (Thomas)**  
28/08/2017  
*Chairperson*

**Patricia Koh Ai Leng**  
28/08/2017  
*Member*

**Lim Siew Li (Lelaina)**  
28/08/2017  
*Treasurer*

**Yeo Sock Koon (Maggie)**  
21/02/2020  
*Member*

The Ground Co Limited (Registration No.: 201632916C), public company limited by guarantee, was registered under the Companies Act, Cap 50 on 2 December 2016.

It named the business The Artground (Registration No.: 53351458D), which was also registered on the same day. The business address is at 90 Goodman Road, Goodman Arts Centre, #01-40 Singapore 439053.

Four persons were appointed as Directors of the Company – Mr Wai Chun Yip (Thomas), Ms Lim Siew Li (Lelaina), Ms Poh Hwee Yen Luanne and Ms Yeo Sock Koon (Maggie), and they carry out all business at the Company’s Annual General Meetings and Extraordinary General Meetings, including the appointment of directors, adoption of accounts, and approval of resolutions. As a registered charity, The Ground Co Limited strives to align its governance practices with the principles set out in the refined Code of Governance issued by the Charity Council.

This report describes the Company’s activities and structures that were in place during the financial year ended 31 March 2020 which are in accordance with these principles. The Company submits the online Governance Evaluation checklist together with the audited accounts for the year.



**EXTERNAL AUDITOR**  
One Partnership PAC

**COMPANY SECRETARY**  
KC Corporate Solutions Pte Ltd

**PRINCIPAL BANKER**  
DBS Bank Limited

# GOVERNANCE

## *Board Meetings*

Board meetings are held on a quarterly basis to review the results and performance of the Company and its strategic plan. To facilitate attendance, Board meetings are scheduled at least a year ahead. At the last meeting of the financial year, the Board will also approve the annual budget for the following year. As part of good governance, key matters requiring decision are reserved for resolution at Board meetings to facilitate discussion, rather than by email circulation. The Chairperson ensures that Board meetings are held as and when necessary with optional meetings convened when there are pressing matters requiring the Board's consideration. The Secretary assists the Board with the preparation of meeting agenda, administers, attends and records minutes of Board proceedings in a timely manner to ensure good information flow within the Board.

## *Conflict of Interest*

The Company's constitution documents state that whenever a member of the Board in any way, directly or indirectly, has an interest in any transaction, project or matter, the member shall disclose the nature of his interest before the discussion and should not participate or vote on the matter. He should offer to withdraw from the meeting and the Board shall decide if this should be accepted.

Additionally, The Ground Co Limited also has in place a policy for conflicts of interest for the Board as well as for staff to ensure that all parties act independently and in the best interests of the Company and avoid ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest which may impede or compromise their responsibilities. As a general rule, they must not place themselves in a position where their duties and interests may possibly conflict, whether perceived or actual. Where a director or staff has personal interests that may conflict with his duties to the Company, he should make disclosure to the Company as soon as possible and obtain the approval of the Board or management. All directors and staff have to make an annual declaration that they have read and understood the policy and whether there are any present or potential conflicts.



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## THE ARTGROUND

90 Goodman Road,  
Goodman Arts Centre,  
Blk J, #01-40  
Singapore 439053

# GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS



## **Wai Chun Yip (Thomas)** *Chairperson*

Attendance for Board Meetings:  
4 out of 4

Age 42  
Appointed to the Board on 28 August 2017

**Workplace and Designation**  
National Gallery Singapore  
Chief People Officer

**Professional Commitments**  
Head of HR, Visual Arts Cluster  
Lead of Cop (HR), Museum Roundtable  
Non-Executive Director, Cups Media Pte Ltd  
Non-Executive Director, My Locker Laundry Pte Ltd

**Qualifications**  
Master of Business Administration (MBA), Dean List,  
Nanyang Technological University  
  
Master of Arts (Strategy & International Management),  
University of St Gallen, Switzerland  
  
Bachelor of Electrical & Electronic Engineering (Honors),  
Nanyang Technological University  
  
Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR),  
HR Certificate Institute  
  
Quality Selection Process – Gold Medal (QSP),  
Talent Plus Inc, USA

## **Lim Siew Li (Lelaina)** *Honorary Treasurer*

Age 59  
Appointed to the Board on 28 August 2017

**Workplace and Designation**  
Eu Yan Sang International Limited  
Group Chief Financial Officer

**Professional Commitments**  
Auditor, Farrer Holland Neighbourhood Committee  
Treasurer, Singapore Hockey Federation  
Hon. Treasurer, Football Association of Singapore  
Council Member, Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA)

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Accountancy  
National University of Singapore

**Professional Bodies**  
Fellow Member, Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA)  
Member, Singapore Institute of Directors (SID)



Attendance for Board Meetings:  
4 out of 4



**Goh Jin Zhong, Ian**  
*Honorary Secretary*

Age 32  
Appointed to the Board on 28 August 2017

**Workplace and Designation**  
The Alternative Campfire  
Leadership Catalyst and Coach

Attendance for Board Meetings:  
2 out of 4

**Qualifications**  
Bachelor of Arts, Psychology (Honors)  
National University of Singapore

**Patricia Koh Ai Leng**  
*Board Member*

Age 58  
Appointed to the Board on 28 August 2017

**Workplace and Designation**  
KK Women's and Children's Hospital  
Senior Medical Social Worker (Locum)

**Professional Commitments**  
Member, Board of Directors, Wesley Vineyard Childcare (WVC)

Secretary, Executive Committee, Association for Early Childhood Educators,  
Singapore (AECES)

Advisory panel member, Ground Up Initiative (GUI)

**Qualifications**  
Masters of Arts, Counseling  
Singapore Bible College  
  
Bachelor of Arts, Social Work  
National University of Singapore



Attendance for Board Meetings:  
3 out of 4





## Yeo Sock Koon (Maggie)

*Board Member*

Age 53

Appointed to the Board on 21 February 2020

### Workplace and Designation

Intraco Limited  
Chief Financial Officer

### Qualifications

Bachelor of Accountancy  
National University of Singapore

### Professional Bodies

Member, Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA)

Attendance for Board Meetings:  
1 out of 1

## Poh Hwee Yen, Luanne

*Executive Director and Board Member*

Age 41

Appointed to the Board on 28 August 2017

### Workplace and Designation

The Ground Co Ltd  
Executive Director

### Qualifications

Master of Education (Special Education)  
National Institute of Education

Bachelor of Creative Arts  
Macquarie University, Australia

### Professional Bodies

Member, Asian Theatre for Young Audiences Network  
Member, Golden Key Honour Society



Attendance for Board Meetings:  
4 out of 4

## FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

After fewer than three years of showcasing local and international artists to the public, the widening audience of The Artground here and abroad has been heartening. Despite the current coronavirus challenge, we are now entering an exciting phase; building on the rapport that has been established with our peers, partners and visitors. Our Artist-in-Residency Stan, presented a new production *Beam* with a team of local creative talents last year, bringing a beautiful story to our young audience and their families. We have also built on our partnership with the Malay Heritage Centre to present *Adventures in Nusantara*, and continued to develop our Singaporean artists incubation programme, *GroundBreakers*, enabling our young and inspiring local talents to play and test their ideas, partnering and supporting them to bring their ideas from conceptualisation to development and reality.



Children activity area in *Adventures of Nusantara* at Malay Heritage Centre



Children doing craft activity after *Beam* performance



Artist from Five Stones Theatre interacting with the audience

This highlights our role in promoting local artists to the wider community. This year, we saw four new works from three new collectives take root and blossom. They are *Tech Playground* by The Kueh Tutus (2nd time recipient), *Don't Starve* by Neo Yan Zong and Keryn Ng, *Outside* by Brocolily and *Oddsocks* by Five Stones Theatre. Beyond illuminating fresh perspectives, these partnerships reinforced our conviction in the quality of our local artists and growing interest for it in our community.

Connecting our local artists communities with the international artists communities remain important to their development. It is mission critical to set up platforms for our local talents to have meaningful and deep conversations with regional and international counterparts so that we can exchange best practices, further partnerships and generate new ideas. In May 2019, 10 local artists were selected to join our Programme Manager, Michelle Tan, to participate in the E.P.I.C. @ Edinburgh programme. Thanks to the support from the National Arts Council, the participants had a motivating experience and shared that the E.P.I.C. programme encouraged them to create and direct work in new dimensions. Michelle also observed that the E.P.I.C. programme had not only allowed for the artists to be inspired by the works they had seen and encouraged by other artists and festival organisers but also allowed for our local artists to connect more deeply, so much so that they have now formed a collective amongst themselves locally, working together to create and advocate for Arts for Young Audiences (A4YA).



After the performance *Tiger Tales* at E.P.I.C 2019

The Artground's mission to open minds and shape perspectives for the young through art is not a one-way conversation, but rather an evolving dialogue with our audience, communities, and partners whom we must respond to thoughtfully. Their feedback guides us in creating new and meaningful initiatives and programmes, which are made possible through the support of individuals and organisations who believe strongly in our cause.



Groundbreakers Artists performing in the arts space *Happy Homebodies*

Art has the power to affect us, and remind us of a person, place or feeling, and alter our perspectives. Families are now more familiar with art: we visit museums with our kids, go to art fairs, and primary school students are embarking their learning art journeys as part of their refreshed art education syllabus. Nonetheless, we need to journey on until art becomes a way of life, embedded even in our social conversations.



Artist conducting an Angklung Workshop during an Arts Learning Journey experience for schools

We envision a future where we talk about the artwork of our local talents in the same way we discuss our favourite restaurants; a future where we can turn to friends and discuss visual art spaces such as *Happy Homebodies* by Gracie Chai which has inspired numerous families through the idea of creativity at home.

I express my deepest appreciation to our partners and donors for the generous support that allows us to continue to provide a free access art space for children and their families; our volunteers and staff for their passion and dedication; and our visitors for bringing life to The Artground. Finally, I thank my fellow Board Members for their careful stewardship, and would like to take the opportunity to welcome our new Board Member, Maggie Yeo, to join our family at The Artground.

Chairman,  
*Thomas*



Chief Worm Luanne with her twin girls at *Baby Space*

## FROM THE CHIEF WORM...

For the past three years, The Artground has strived tirelessly to make good our vision, ***To let art do, what art does.*** This simple yet all-encompassing statement describes our unwavering belief that engaging in the arts, whether in the process of making or the experiencing of an artistic product, is simply enough to justify itself. We do not question the need for education or nutrition for young children, and we hope that the arts will share that notion as an essential need for the growth of a healthy child. And once we let art happen, its intangible benefits will outweigh any physical by-products we may create in the process.

With this faith, we have taken on the role to champion and lead the content creation and development of artistic practices in Arts for Young Audiences (A4YA). We do this by building diverse capabilities in the arts for young audiences with both our local and regional artists. We tap on our international network of artists to create capability development opportunities for our local artists in the A4YA scene. One of these projects include our work with Sensorium Theatre to develop and design inclusive artistic practice for our children with high support needs, in partnership with schools like Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore (CPAS) School and Asian Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) School that support these children. Again, here we believe that engaging in the arts will enrich the lives for these children whom we engaged with even if it is just for that afternoon.



Sensorium Theatre (Perth, Australia) during a performance of *Odysseya*

It was the second time that my class attended the session. This same group of students attended the production *Odyssey* last year. Objectively speaking, the variety and the quality of the props used had improved. It was more spacious and students were seated with more space between them.

Some of my students were very attentive to the play. Some lost their focus in between the session. Some preferred to simply listen to the play instead of watching it. The variety of sensory inputs really catered to the students' different sensory needs.

Overall, my students enjoyed the play. I would love to see more of such plays in CPAS. I will definitely recommend the parents to go to such plays if they are open to the public. It would be a great opportunity for the parents to learn more about their children.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Sensorium Team for putting up the play, and engaging my students.

Ms Joey Liaw, CPAS Teacher

On top of these sessions conducted by artists for the students, we also reach out by including the educators and caregivers' feedback in our creation process to ensure that these caregivers also understand and share some of these practices outside of the theatrical experiences. When we present performances that are inclusive and bring audiences of different abilities together, we are opening up the worldview of all our families and creating awareness and understanding as well.



Sensorium Theatre during *Odyssey* with Christian Outreach to the Handicapped



Engaging with audience in sensory play



Overall, it was an excellent and enriching experience for me as it allowed me to be in tune with my senses towards the materials and experiences provided. It also allowed me to be in tune with the other participants' senses when I was facilitating the experience to my fellow colleagues.

I was able to acknowledge my fellow colleagues' preferences and fears through their body language which in turn got me thinking about how to be a better facilitator of sensory experiences in class.

My biggest takeaway from the course is never assume that the material that you love (e.g. bubble wraps) is loved by everyone else. The duration of the course was just fine. It was fun, engaging, definitely not a sit-down kind of course!

Two thumbs up! I highly recommend the course to anyone and everyone!

Workshop feedback from Ms Joanna Chia, CPAS Teacher



GroundBreakers Pitch: Tech Playground by The Kueh Tutus



GroundBreakers Pitch: Artists Keryn Ng, Neo Yan Zong together with Luanne having a discussion at the Children's panel

In the past year, we welcomed **70,702** visitors into The Artground, and they attended **621** programmes by **86** local artists. We do not take these designed experiences lightly. Like a diligent ethnographer, we are always experimenting and examining our artistic practices to strengthen our programmes to maximise the impact of the arts on our young audiences.

*GroundBreakers* is a local artist incubation platform where artists who are selected by the Children's Panel get to rehearse, develop and trial their new ideas in The Artground's WhiteBox to develop child-centric presentations. Instead of merely rehearsing a piece of work, The Artground champions the practice of putting the child in the centre of the creation process to develop content that is age appropriate and relevant. Some of these ideas will go on to be presented by other venues/institutions, touch the hearts and tickle the minds of new young audiences.

Artists performing for Children's Panel



Children's Panel engaging with *New City: 新城* - a *GroundBreakers* proposal



The *GroundBreakers* initiative by The Artground was an absolute god-send for independent artists like me who does not have the support, infrastructure or resources of bigger companies. They gave us access to test audiences, funding and most importantly, a conducive environment in which to experiment. And because of that, *Oddsocks* has gone on to live a life outside of the incubation, with producers and organisations taking interest in it for the coming year.

For creating new work, especially in theatre for young audiences, the *GroundBreakers* initiative is absolutely essential. Not only to the growth of the team involved and the work, but also to the industry as a whole.

Isabella Chiam, *GroundBreakers* artist

Beyond just bringing our local artists and their works out of The Artground into other local stages, we are also vested in bringing our local artists into international festivals and onto the global stage. When we meet and network with artists of different cultural backgrounds and practices, we discover opportunities for personal and professional growth in our differences, and also in our similarities.



Designing and supporting an ecosystem of Arts for Young Audiences with all its relevant parts foregrounds what we do at The Artground. Like any other living organism, it requires constant care and commitment, and all our best efforts can come to naught if we are not consistently self-reflexive and diligent. Having said that, we have also been thankful for the umpteen surprises that come out of this organic nurturing process where incidental eureka moments happen. Indeed, we should just *Let art do, what art does*. In doing so, we will nurture both audiences and artists who are naturally curious, deeply reflective and socially progressive in the process.

Chief worm,  
*Luanne*

## THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

### **Programming**

No. of ticketed programmes - **361**

No. of ticketed attendance - **4158**

No. of non-ticketed programmes - **26**

No. of non-ticketed audiences (including all trials) - **313**

No. of Arts Learning Journeys - **246**

Total Arts Learning Journeys attendance - **6,930**

Total Visitorship - **70,702**

### **Community Engagement**

No. of Activities - **3**

No. of Participants - **230**

### **Others**

No. of volunteers - **34**

No. of invitations to participate in conferences/seminars/forums - **5**

No. of visits local and overseas - **5**

No. of trainees/interns - **7**

I had an amazing time volunteering at The Artground! The place and everyone I've met there have taught me so much. As we grow up, we kind of forget what it's like to be as fearless and innocent as children and being at The Artground has allowed me to reconnect with these and it's such a great experience.

Yap Wee Suan, Volunteer

## ABOUT THE ARTGROUND

THE ARTGROUND is nurtured and managed by The Ground Co Limited. Inspired by the poem *The 100 languages of children* by Loris Malaguzzi which refers to the many ways children have of expressing themselves, The Artground believes that a child is intrinsically curious and naturally creative.



Excerpt from

*The child is made of one hundred*

by Loris Malaguzzi

***The child is made of one hundred.  
The child has a hundred languages  
a hundred hands  
a hundred thoughts  
a hundred ways of thinking, of playing, of speaking.  
a hundred, always a hundred  
ways of listening, of marvelling, of loving  
a hundred joys for singing and understanding  
a hundred worlds to discover  
a hundred worlds to invent  
a hundred worlds to dream.  
The child has a hundred languages  
(and a hundred hundred hundred more.)***

# STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

We have translated our vision into a “4SA” Strategic Development Plan which is a continuous journey for us. The 4S are namely Society, Schools, Service and Seeding. These form the core basis of our target reach. The 4As are Availability, Arts Learning Journey, Accessibility for All and Artist Incubation which is genre agnostic. These form the basis of our development plans.



## **Availability**

These programmes are consistently available to the general public (society), enabling free access to the facilities, throughout the year. On top of that, The Artground also has scheduled weekday and weekend programming which involve admission fees to manage venue capacity.

## **Arts Learning Journey**

We welcome organised groups of school-going students, and homeschoolers to the arts centre on the weekdays. We work with educators to create age appropriate resource materials for these young learners, as well as pre/post programme materials for the teachers/carers.

On top of that, we actively seek to introduce skills development training programmes to equip and inspire the teachers to continue the arts engagement back in the classrooms. These programmes are conducted on-site at The Artground through artist-led workshops.



## **Accessibility**

We focus on introducing initiatives that encourage equitable opportunities and inclusive programmes that serves children with all abilities and needs. We do this by working with artists to develop specific programmes for the communities that support children with additional needs so that these children can have access to the arts that are appropriate and relevant.

These initiatives also allow the community to take a more active role in private philanthropy through platforms that support these programmes.

## **Artists Incubation**

We work with local artists to seed original new works at The Artground, as well as seek opportunities to create networking and capabilities development in the field of A4YA with our international partners. This is an investment into the local artistic eco-system and we are mindful that not all seeds will germinate. However, it is important that we provide the space for artists to try, and to imagine.

# ARTISTS' CAPABILITY AND DEVELOPMENTAL PLATFORMS

## *Inspiring our artists*

We want to inspire our community by supporting our local artists to do their very best works at The Artground. Our Artist-in-Residency Stan was able to present a new production *Beam* in May 2019 with a team of local creative team with our support.



*Beam* performance by *Tiny Feat*, helmed by Stan

Through this simple story of a young girl's friendship with *Beam*, a spotlight, the young audiences enjoyed the simple games of childhood. Through playing, we understand that children make meaning of their world and play toggles between structure and innovation as well as creativity. In the same way, we formalise our artists incubation support through our *GroundBreakers* programme. We allow these *GroundBreakers* artists to explore and rehearse their ideas in the WhiteBox without the pressure of a ticketed presentation. Within this open framework, they get the opportunity to showcase their works in trial sessions with the families who visit The Artground, and receive valuable feedback about their work in an ecosystem that supports and values their personal and professional growth and development.



Children making light craft after watching *Beam*

## A Safe Space for Artists to Experiment, Create and Discover

It is without a doubt that the provision of free physical space for rehearsals and trials stands out as one of the key benefits of the *GroundBreakers* programme that artists truly appreciate. The Artground is also one of the very few spaces in Singapore that allows artists the creative space and time to experiment and create works for young audiences without the burden of having a finalised product at the end of a designated timeline. The Artground space itself (specifically the WhiteBox and the Visual Arts Space) also serve as a frame and touch point for the germination of creative ideas from the artists, resulting in further experiments and creation.

The trials set-up at The Artground is another key component that the *GroundBreakers* artists find immensely helpful for them to test out, discover and refine their creative processes. Time, space and effort is deliberately set aside by The Artground team to assist artists in testing out their creative ideas, allowing for oral/written feedback from children, caregivers, The Artground team, other artists, and/or arts education specialists. These repeated trials (at the Artground and even out in preschools) serve to continually refine the artists' creative processes, with the aim to improve the quality of their creative outcomes. All the *GroundBreakers* artists agree that The Artground has provided a trusting and safe space that allows artists the freedom to take risks with their craft as a community. The programme has also facilitated artists' recognition of their own strengths and weaknesses as an artist yet provided opportunities for them to challenge these and re-think the possibilities of art-making for young audiences.

Lum, C.H. & Wong, J. (Eds.) (upcoming). *The Artground Ecology: Engaging Children in Arts and Play Experiences*. Singapore: Springer



*Groundbreakers Pitch: Puppet Parts* by Players Theatre & Players Workshop



New arts collective *UP Collective* performing *Snail*

This year, we saw four new works from the *GroundBreakers* programmes.

Brocolily performing *Outside*



The Artground has been a pillar of support from the start and they gave us land to plant our seed as a collective! We're also encouraged to take risks while creating even if the results are uncertain. It has been a very fruitful and rewarding learning journey and we're very grateful for the honest and warm guidance to be able to put up our original works! As the TAG team always says "Just try, you'll never know"!

*GroundBreakers* Artist, Brocolily

The Kueh Tutus performing *Tech Playground*



We actually treasured the feedback sessions we had after our trials. Thank you Luanne, Michelle, Kimi, and all TAG staff for mediating the feedback sessions, and also introducing us to various local and overseas artists. We gained a lot of valuable insights from these sessions. Most importantly, without The Artground, it would be extra challenging to find audiences to present/try our ideas, or to even find a space to explore and dive into our creative process. Thank you for your patience and support throughout the entire year.

*GroundBreakers* Artists,  
Keryn Ng and Neo Yan Zong



Artists Keryn Ng and Neo Yan Zong performing *Anything Goes!*

Often, artists with awesome creative ideas just need logistic support to let their ideas take centre stage. Therefore, we also support ad-hoc projects by local collectives to bridge that connection from concept to stage.

For instance, *Roly Poly Family* trialled the developmental phases of *The Basket*, a story inspired by local book *The Incredible Basket* by Quek Hong Shin.

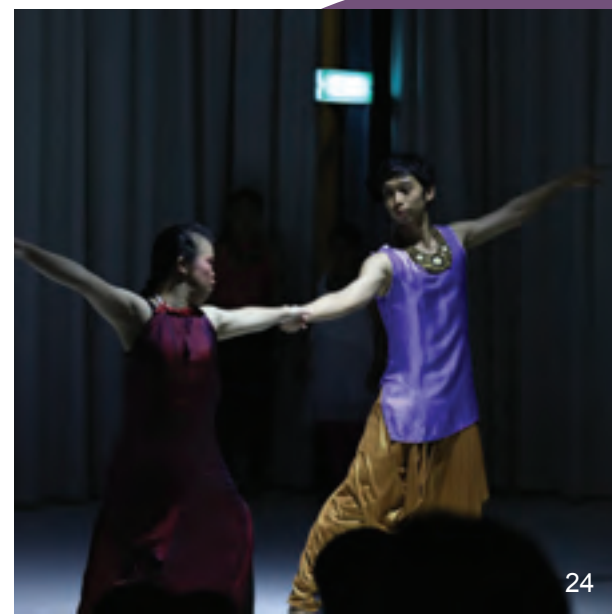


*Rolypoly Family performing Baskets*

We also supported the beginnings of a new collective, *Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC)* which is a division of *Maya Dance Theatre*. DADC is a community initiative by *Maya Dance Theatre* to create a co-existing space for persons with disabilities and art-makers, and we have engaged DADC dancers for both our weekend programmes as well as co-facilitators in our *Arts Learning Journeys'* dance programmes.



*DADC event Speaking with Hands at The Artground*





We are very appreciative of how supportive and welcoming the team at The Artground is in terms of walking alongside DADC to push for inclusivity in the arts. By creating a space where DADC's dancers can hone their skills as dance class facilitators and share their passion with children that enter the space, it gives a form of empowerment which enabled the dancers to hold their own as performers during the showcase in November 2019.

The Artground has since become a safe space for DADC's dancers who were no strangers to The Artground which has kept its doors open for persons of all abilities. By providing venue support for DADC's first full-length production, *Speaking with Hands* (in collaboration with Liz Lea from Canberra, Australia), TAG was instrumental in helping DADC share our practice and philosophy to inspire others to reimagine how disability arts can be perceived.

During the bump-in period, we also had the privilege of speaking to Sensorium Theatre from Perth, who were sharing the space in preparation for their shows. This allowed for an exchange of methodologies and approaches to creating works that are enriching for persons with special needs, while the dancers also got to share what they do with other practitioners.

TAG is a warm and accepting space which enables persons of all abilities to pursue their dreams - with DADC being able to hold our maiden production with venue support from TAG, it provided a springboard for more things to come.

Kavitha Krishnan (Artistic Director) and Subastian Tan (programme leader)  
DADC (community initiative by Maya Dance Theatre)



DADC showcase at The Artground



Diversity and inclusion are important conversations that we encourage and challenge our artists to have. Besides initiating art programmes locally with schools that support children with additional needs, we also believe it is important for our artists to have meaningful conversations with regional and international counterparts who have been delving in this arena and have relevant experiences and best practises to share, to enable us to leverage on their knowledge to make a better and more informed kickstart.

In May 2019, we selected 10 local artists to go on our E.P.I.C. @ Edinburgh programme. E.P.I.C. is a programme that The Artground organised, partially supported by the National Arts Council, to develop and leverage on The Artground's artistic networks of art-makers outside of Singapore. E.P.I.C stands for **Exposure**, **Participate**, **Innovate** and **Create**, and is targeted at local artists interested in develop their practice in work for young audiences (defined as from birth to 12 years).

The E.P.I.C. Edinburgh programme has definitely re-ignited an interest for me again to work with neuro diverse children and to engage in more collaborative works with other artists. Talks and discussions are underway, ongoing plans and discussions in executing some of those plans for existing and new upcoming pieces.

Florence Kuek, E.P.I.C. participant

As we continue to improve on our content design and development, the E.P.I.C. programme aims to nurture this desire to create works that are developmentally appropriate. The E.P.I.C. programme provides tiered levels of engagement for the artists centred in a geographical location/festival. The programme aims to spark new conceptual practices in order to develop original content that are relevant to our industry.



Performance at *Imagine* Festival in Edinburgh, as part of E.P.I.C, 2019



## ***Our aims and objectives for E.P.I.C.***

### ***Exposure***

To expose our local practitioners to a diverse range of presentations and content plausible for theatre for young audiences.

### ***Participate***

To create participatory platforms and masterclasses based on dramaturgical research and ideas for these practising artists to embody, which can enforce their devising practices in these areas. In addition to a strong practice in the elements of theatre, it is necessary to employ with pedagogical know-hows and early childhood developmental milestones to design a work that can engage and excite a young inquisitive mind.

### ***Innovate***

In designing a programme that combines theory, research-led practicum, and exchange programmes with emerging and practising A4YA artists, we hope to spark innovative ways of developing works that are relevant to our scene and audiences.

### ***Create***

We hope that the E.P.I.C. programme will inspire our artists to create works for young audiences that are ground-breaking and delightful.



Singapore artists participants attended a full day workshop conducted by Christine Devany from *Curious Seed* together with 5 other Scottish-based artists.

E.P.I.C. programme is definitely one of the most epic and great programmes that I've attended. It is not only about going to Edinburgh to watch the performances. It gave me the opportunity to meet international and local artists especially, and sharing of ideas and how we could work together in our future projects.

Having a like-minded and fun team helps us to connect and discuss possibilities of how the arts industry in Singapore can develop further from what we have seen, learnt and heard from our Scottish arts practitioners. It has really inspired me to develop my TYA works further and I'm planning to revamp some of my school programmes for next year.

The programme has taught and inspired me a lot too and I feel that by having conversations during the programme has given me the opportunity to be more equipped in engaging arts programmes for children.

Dalifa Chan, E.P.I.C. Participant



Singapore artists in a discussion with artists after performing *New Owner*



After the performance *Tiger Tales*



Before the performance *I wish I was a Mountain*



Curious Seed Workshop

Besides our *GroundBreakers* and E.P.I.C. Programmes, we also host overseas artists in residency programmes to support developmental ideas. In June 2019, we welcomed Australian artists, Alex Desebrock and Dan Goronszy, for two weeks for the INHEPI (International Network of Human Encounters in Performance and Installation) programme. INHEPI is a creative platform for artists to come together to seed, make and play with new ideas, allowing the ideas to then be trialled by children, to gather feedback from children, parents and artists as part of an on-going investigation and research process. The focus is not on a finished artistic product but an ongoing experiment and dialogue with different creative ideas, allowing for any emerging organic collaborative possibilities between artists to flourish beyond INHEPI. Alex was delighted that...

so much was seeded at the end... I just really wanted it to be valuable for all of them as well, not just for me and for making work, but the idea with INHEPI is it's not like that everyone has made something that they are interested in exploring further, or at least tools to weave in or at least ideas to develop. And I'm really proud and pleased that that's happened... everyone identified works that they felt had 'legs', like, could be developed further.

Alex Desebrock, Australian artist



TAG is a safe space for both artists and children to explore the arts, experiment and learn. They've been very supportive ever since art@homesg started doing workshops with them, and I jumped on the opportunity to be part of INHEPI. Even though this is also their first time hosting a workshop of such nature for artists, they've been extremely accommodating. They answered to our requests (for space, materials, logistics help, etc) to their best abilities, on top of their regular workload. Working with the The Artground team has always been a joy and I love their energy and passion.

Cherlyn Mark, Singaporean artist

Back on our homeland, we also actively seek ways to share our work with the general public as well as the education sector. In May 2019, The Artground was invited to speak at Singapore Repertory Theatre's launch of the Wolf Trapp Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts programme in Singapore. As the flagship education programme of Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts (USA), the programme believes that arts integration can inspire children with a lifelong love of learning and of the performing arts. The Artground was invited to share our practices during the launch of its Singapore programme to over 120 preschool educators. In July 2019, The Artground was invited to join the panel of speakers at the opening international panel for Singapore Art Museum Education Symposium, DEAR FUTURE, Museum Learning in the Digital Age.



Luanne sharing about The Artground during an education symposium

## INTERACTIVE VISUAL ARTS SPACE

### *Inspiring our local audiences through our visual arts exhibitions*

Our visual arts space is often our visitors' first and go-to space when they think of The Artground. This year, we welcomed **49,470** visitors for the following exhibitions. In describing our visual arts space, NIE remarked in their research study that The Artground's...



deliberate collaboration with emerging artists, or artists who have not created visual arts spaces for children previously, has not only provided opportunities for artists who are interested to explore this trajectory of creating works, it has also enabled a safe environment for artists to take risks with guidance and support from both The Artground and a ready group of audience. This form of experimentative collaboration benefits artists as the expertise from The Artground team complemented the artistic directions of the artmakers.

Lum, C.H. & Wong, J. (Eds.) (upcoming). *The Artground Ecology: Engaging Children in Arts and Play Experiences*. Singapore: Springer.

## Happy Homebodies by Gracie Chai

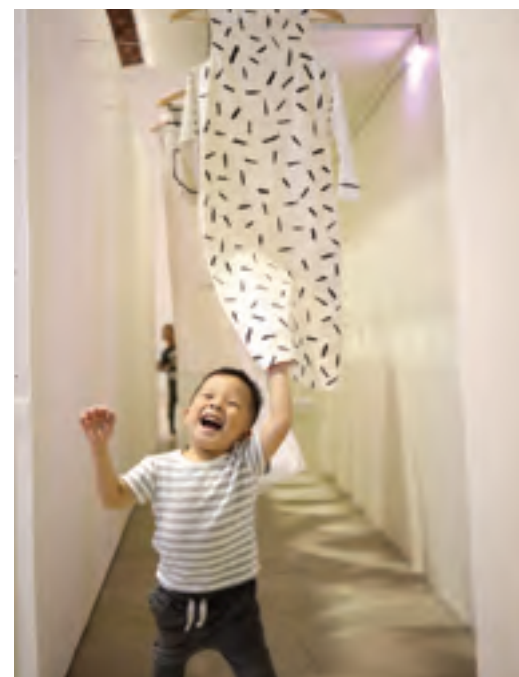
*Happy Homebodies* features creativity in the simplicity of everyday life. Make new discoveries about common objects at home which are beautifully transformed into an uncommon experience. Crawl through a washing machine, slide down a bed and jump into a laundry basket. The magic of this exploration is that it shows children new ways of looking at ordinary objects around us. From a simple dot to the intricate lines that characterise the different parts and objects in a house, journey through the little spaces which open up new possibilities for imagination and innovation!



Gracie together with the children sliding down the gigantic bed slide



A child interacting with the kitchen area of *Happy Homebodies*



Gracie's son, Eden running through the closet area of *Happy Homebodies*



I'm very grateful for the opportunity I had to work with The Artground. Since first coming to know of this wonderful children's art space through the *Rolling@TAG* exhibition, I've started dreaming of what it would be like to work with them too, designing a play space for children.

Like serendipity, Jia En from The Artground has also had me on their radar as a future artist to approach. The working relationship we had was very pleasant, I could freely express my thoughts and there was always a healthy back and forth in exchange of ideas. The exhibition, I felt, was a great marriage of The Artground's experience they have gathered over the past installations prior to *Happy Homebodies* and with my own as a mum of two young children, all while not compromising on my sense of aesthetics.

My kids, though not outrightly, were also key contributors to the success of the exhibition, aside from being my muses, they too helped with the choosing of materials for the baby section. I could use their reactions to the texture and colours of the pieces I've selected as barometer for its effectiveness, akin to pre installation research. My kids make their own "Artground" with our duvets, bolsters and pillows as my firstborn calls it. I say to him half-jokingly, "perhaps one day you'll design a bedroom-inspired art space like mummy too for children!". He responded nonverbally with a starry wonder in his eyes — and that, I'll attribute it to the magic our experience with The Artground has impressed upon him.

Gracie Chai



A toddler engaging with the interactive structure made with household items



## The Curious Sky by Ng Fongyee

*The Curious Sky* is a multi-sensory arts space inspired by elements of the weather. We often talk about the weather, but have we ever truly experienced the full spectrum of what it can bring? Come and join us to sing in the rain, dance with the rainbow, hear the thunder rumble or simply look up for the endless possibilities *The Curious Sky* brings you.

The inspiration behind *The Curious Sky* and its Galaxy Edition was the innate curiosity in all children. Especially the children that I have worked with during my time with Superhero Me. During the artist residency in Superhero Me, I worked with kids with different needs using technology as a tool for creative expression. The experience shaped my practice and the way I experiment with technology. For *The Curious Sky* and its Galaxy Edition, including various tech elements was one way to enable children with different needs to experience play in their own way. The aim of using a combination of buttons, sensors, sounds and lights as interactive components is to construct an experience that can still be felt in full regardless of abilities.

Ng Fong Yee



In the *Igloo*, where children get to see a live projection of themselves superimposed with snow falling



I really am so thankful to The Artground for putting so much effort in coming up with different themes for each period. Every theme is tagged to an artist. This period's theme is *The Curious Sky - Galaxy Edition* by @afwhy The kids had a good time exploring the little nooks. Donya particularly enjoyed the reading corner and the chalkboard where she proudly writes D.

IG: cheeksymeeksy



Buttons that produce different notes when pressed



Baby Stage area suitable for children from birth - 36 months



GroundBreakers 2019 arts collective *Zip Zap Zoom* engaging the children in a Space Exploration

*The Curious Sky* was later refreshed and transformed into *The Curious Sky - Galaxy Edition*

## *Adventures from Nusantara at the Malay Heritage Centre*

In addition, we also worked with other cultural institutions such as Malay Heritage Centre to design *Adventures from Nusantara* to bring creative and experiential design experiences for families with young children throughout the island.

Traditional Malay House designed as a reading corner



Red slope with tunnel representing Bukit Merah



The Artground Team displayed a high level of commitment and professionalism during our course of planning, designing and setting up of MHC's "Adventures in Nusantara". I am glad to have worked with a knowledgeable and adaptable team for our very first children's space. The entire experience felt more like having a friend alongside you, working together to figure out any obstacles that came up.

Shereen Tan, Malay Heritage Centre



Versatile children activity area and toddler pool

*Crate it Up  
at Guoco Towers*



Guoco Towers approached The Artground to design a space that would support community building.

This colourful art structure catches your eye from afar and the versatile design allows for a place to chill and play, but could also conveniently be turned into a performance stage or audience seating for social events.

## CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

A huge population of our audiences come from schools on Arts Learning Journeys during the weekdays. For the past 12 months, we welcomed **6,930** students from **166** schools into The Artground for our Arts Learning Journeys and Traditional Arts Taster Programme for preschools. From as young as three months to kindergarten classes, preschools involved their infant care groups and attended our special programmes like *Baby Space* as well as engaged their kindergarten classes in our arts workshops.

It was very fun and engaging for the children. Using music is a very new and innovative way to engage the children just using dots and lines. Thank you very much for a fun and creative lesson.

My First Skool, Boon Lay CC



Let's Improvise with dots and lines by SAcollective



Bamboo Melodies by My Piano Room

The *Bamboo Melodies* workshop was very engaging and the trainer, Teacher Sharon, was very attentive towards the children by addressing the children by their names. It was an age appropriate workshop for 4 year olds and a good introductory lesson to Angklungs. We especially like that each child had an Angklung to play with.

Pat's Schoolhouse



Colours from the Garden by Cultivate Central

Through these programmes, we create opportunities for families, schools and children to create memories in these positive arts experiences.

Overall it was great. The activities were designed appropriately and suited to the developmental stage of the children. The activity was engaging and interesting as the children are able to explore and observe the different colours created by different types of plant. The facilitators showed great teamwork and were awesome with the children.

Shaws (Braddell)



Tales of Sang Kancil, Traditional Arts Taster Programme

We participated in the Traditional Arts Taster programme. Children were engaged and having fun during the lessons and performance.

Would be great if there were musical instruments for them to explore or music to dance to. Overall, still an awesome experience for the children.

Thank you very much! Kudos to the trainers/performers (especially mouse deer for the energy that she brings!)

Eshkol Valley



Contemporary dance, music and visual arts for babies?  
No wayyyy...! Today is an interesting, immersive  
experience for me. The Artground is having a Baby Space  
event, a multi-sensory installation designed for  
pre-walking babies.

Daddy was quite skeptical at first - how do babies like me  
appreciate arts? Obviously, I proved him wrong.

I was so mesmerised by the place and the dancers.  
I even tried to mimic them and dance along. That tickled  
my parents. I met new friends, interacted with them and  
the space too! #socialbutterfly

I think I have figured out what I love. Okay, mummy, you  
know where to bring me next time!

IG: nedynallygoghari





Besides just presentation of performances and workshops, we also strengthened our understanding of audience segments and behaviours through research with the National Institute of Education (NIE), Singapore, delving in a continual conversation to understand and evaluate our strengths and weaknesses. We also developed capabilities in audience engagement, facilitation, content creation for specific audience segments and strived to share these best practices in the sector and lead through example.



During an *Incredible Tales* storytelling session



As a result of this trust and openness in their artists, The Artground has arguably helped to pioneer a new approach to the art form of storytelling in Singapore. Prior to *Terrific Tales*, storytelling in Singapore had tended to take place on an ad-hoc basis, and was also typically programmed as a free event that is open to the public rather than being a ticketed work. Hence, The Artground's decision to programme *Terrific Tales* as a regular weekly session that audiences have to pay for is actually a major milestone for the storytelling scene in Singapore.



What The Artground has provided is something that I [Kamini] never had in my entire career, you know, this weekly, regular place to build your repertoire, to test your work, to hone your skills, to educate the public, the audience, to show them that a story told, like a song sung will always sound and feel different.

Kamini Ramachandran, Storyteller

For context, the lack of such a format in Singapore is not for the want of trying. Over the numerous years of Kamini's practice as a storyteller, she had proposed a residency-style model of storytelling to a number of major organisations as she believes that this model is crucial to growing the next generation of storytelling audience, but to no avail.

However, after *Terrific Tales* proved itself to be a "sustainable and successful model" (Interview, Kamini Ramachandran, 18 September 2018) that is popular with families, Gateway Theatre has notably set up the Gateway Kids Club *Once Upon A Time* storytelling sessions, which takes place three Saturdays in a month. Similarly, the family mall Cluny Court now also runs regular storytelling sessions each month. In both cases, these sessions are run by The Storytelling Centre.

Clearly, by committing to their artists' development in tandem with programming quality work, The Artground has had an impact beyond their own audiences, and has opened up new perspectives for artists and other organisations to further engage audiences in Singapore in fresh and exciting ways.

Lum, C.H. & Wong, J. (Eds.) (upcoming). *The Artground Ecology: Engaging Children in Arts and Play Experiences*. Singapore: Springer

Examples and anecdotes like these reflect The Artground's effort in creating meaningful community building experiences between artists and institutions.

Wanted to reach out to you to share with you that because of The Artground partnering with AWWA, and because it was you guys who connected all of us artists who were interested to create accessible works for Young Audiences, it was because of that, that Sub from MDT/DADC reached out to me to see if I would be interested to run a series of drama workshops for the DADC dancers (of course I said yes!)

Wanted to just express my gratitude to you and the TAG team, because it was really all of you who connected each of us artists together and opened up more opportunities for collaboration!

Ad-hoc response from Jeremy Leong, Singaporean artist

## POSITION SINGAPORE GLOBALLY

The Artground was invited to speak on the International Panel of Artistic Exchanges for Edinburgh International Children's Festival, In May 2019. Together with Starcatchers (UK) and PUSH+ (Scotland), we shared our practices about artists incubation together with our E.P.I.C. and *GroundBreakers* artist Melissa Quek. It was indeed an inspiring day for The Artground to be able to sit on the shoulders of giants as we shared our humble beginnings and fruits of labour from just two years of existence.



Michelle (last from right) and Melissa (second last from right) representing Singapore during a panel discussion at Edinburgh

We also proposed a bi-cultural inclusive project to the National Museum of Singapore (NMS) and have successfully been awarded the commission of producing the work *Welcome to the Forest* by Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) and NMS in 2019. *Welcome to the Forest* is a two-year project which results in an immersive installation designed for children with additional needs with the aim of residing within a permanent gallery in a museum for all families with typical and atypical developing children. The work has been developed with two special needs schools in Singapore, Asian Women Welfare Association (AWWA) School and Cerebral Palsy Alliance Singapore (CPAS) School and will have a work-in-progress presentation in NMS and Western Australia Museum in 2021.



Local artists and artists from Sensorium Theatre warming up during rehearsal



Crochet fruits as sensory props

On top of our daily operations, we have also conducted tours and met with various regional counterparts to share about our unique position as a children's arts centre as well as an incubator of content creation and professional development in A4YA sector.



Korean Arts and Culture Education Services



Seoul Arts Centre

Visited Museum of Contemporary Art Australia and had a sharing with Kids and Family Coordinator in the *Bella Room*, which is designed for people of all ages and disabilities to connect with contemporary art.



Tactile blankets for babies visiting the museum with their parents



Singapore International Foundation

## FINANCIALS

**\$ 1,435,610**  
*Income*

of which the Company received funds totalling  
**\$961,550.41**

made up of contributions from corporate entities and individuals through cash donations, Cultural Matching Fund, as well as grants from National Arts Council.

**\$ 1,352,821**  
*Expenditure*

# OUR HEARTFELT THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

I thoroughly enjoyed my time volunteering at The Artground!  
It was definitely a fulfilling experience for me.  
To be able to work with a team of loving and dedicated  
individuals, and being able to contribute my time and  
energy to the work, it was very worth it.  
Often, I was also invited to take part in the programmes  
and activities (ie. gardening, getting muddy with the worms)

It was very heartening because the team really made  
you feel like a part of a team and valued,  
which is something I appreciate very much.

Joeve Lio, Volunteer



The image features a white background with several large, colorful, abstract geometric shapes. A prominent red diagonal bar runs from the bottom left towards the top right. Other shapes include a blue arc in the top left, a teal bar in the top right, a yellow arc on the right edge, a green bar in the middle right, a purple arc in the bottom right, a light green bar in the bottom left, and an orange square on the left edge. The URL 'WWW.THEARTGROUND.COM.SG' is printed in a bold, black, sans-serif font, rotated 45 degrees counter-clockwise, and positioned across the red bar.

**WWW.THEARTGROUND.COM.SG**