

Report on SEMANGAT Project – A Creative Process on site-specific and immersive performance for film creation

SEMANGAT

WindRiver Productions with Impress Creative and Editorial conducted a creative process session on site-specific and immersive performance for film creation developed through a collaborative process involving Mixed-Media artists on the subject of Rice.

Due to the continued situation with the spread of COVID-19, and since MCO 2.0 announced on January 13, 2021 WindRiver Productions had to make major changes in the scheduling, timeline and the direction of the project. We were not certain when the MCO would be over and when we will be able to proceed our work since travel between districts and borders are not allowed. And since our project involve artists from Kuala Lumpur and Penang, we faced a challenge since the padi that we planted was already reaching its full cycle by the second week of February. The original plan of the project was to conduct the creative process between January 16 – 24, 2021 and to finalize the first cut film by 31 January 2021. But due to the MCO that was extended and that continued till February 18th right up till March 4th, we were unsure how to proceed or plan ahead by the time it was January 16. Mainly because the padi that we planted since October 27 is by then ready for the process of filming, and then its 90 days period would be in its full cycle to be harvested by the second week of February. We were racing against time and could not wait longer as our padi field was ready for harvest.

Due to the uncertainties of the MCO, on January 13 we decided that we will break our process into 2 sessions so that we don't involve so many persons and only those in the same district;

i) **Session 1** took place between February 15 – 21, to document and film a creative process with artists from Penang only with the padi right before it was drying up for harvest, resulting in a Video Art film to be completed with its final cut only by end of April 2021.

ii) **Session 2** is to conduct a creative process workshop performance with 1 artist from Penang and 2 from Kuala Lumpur participating on site as well as online and was recorded on March 7, and to be broadcast on March 13 and 14 on Youtube and Facebook channel with the harvested padi.

As this was conducted at a private land and kampong house situated at Yayasan Lestari Balik Pulau, in Penang thus the filming is done indoor and privately in the backyard where the padi is planted. We could not involve the community and audience engagement on site as planned as one of our outputs for the project. But we will have the film and documentary prepared and broadcast online for community and audiences viewing at a later stage.

Session 1 of the creative process was conducted between February 15 – 21 and involved 3 performing artist (Aida Redza, Lee Kien Faye and Theyvapaalan S. Jayaratnam), 1 Installation Artist (Lisa Foo), 1 Videographer (Goh Choon Ean) and Film Director (Andrew Han). We share the photos of the creative process on this link – <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1kbL5inQsvubmfisHKfDe8fWKHh4GhTjj> The footages of the documentation are compiled and edited into a 15 mins Video Art by our Film Director Andrew Han and it will fully be completed with the final cut by the end of April. When it is completed we will be uploading it on WindRiver Productions Youtube channel and Semangat Facebook page for wider viewing and will submit to Balai Seni Negara.

Session 2 which took place on March 7, 2021 with a creative process performance that was led by Aida Redza together with Ng Chor Guan (Composer) and Lisa Foo on site and through online. The session is recorded live by Goh Choon Ean (LUMA) which is then edited and uploaded on WindRiver Productions

Youtube channel and Semangat facebook page for public screening on March 13 and 14, 2021 at 8.00 pm. We attach the images of the creative process performance and the screening promo with this report.

During Session 1 and Session 2 of the creative process we explored the method of immersive theater to create a site-specific performance for film that is developed from studying the padi cycle of life and on the process of harvesting. Throughout the whole process we worked closely on site with the farmer Muhammad Alwi and the PAWE (Persatuan Aktivity Warga Emas) community members to devise and document the process of living with padi to inspire our ideas. Crossing mediums with Mixed media collaboration between music, installation art and video art is used to convey the message and reveal the inner 'spirit' of rice in all its manifestations.

As its name implies, the project takes a multidisciplinary, immersive and collaborative approach to revealing the inner 'spirit' of rice in all its manifestations: as a vital aspect of human nourishment, health and life; as a material and spiritual dimension of production (food) and reproduction (fertility); as a central feature of ecology and the environment; and as part of the realm of the sacred. Everywhere in Asia, rice is the subject of elaborate traditional rituals. The fields and storage granaries are considered sites of veneration. And many cultures honour the figure of the 'Rice Mother' who embodies and symbolises the centrality of rice to their very existence. Our process draws from these traditions which we transform in innovative, contemporary ways – thus mapping it out on site that the spirit of rice lives on, acknowledging that in many ways we are what we eat.

Due to the COVID-19, we were not able to present our workshop performance and process to more audiences or share widely with the community. This is in order for us to avoid unnecessary contact with the public and large gathering of audiences thus we decided to move it into 2 sessions and present our work online instead with plans to prepare a video art, documentary and book at a later stage

Feedback on the Grant

We appreciate Hai-O Arts and Culture Grant for supporting our project. Our project is a process based cross medium creative process collaboration work that requires us artists to meet together as collaborators so as to have hands on immersive process period to build our capacity and skills in the art of collaboration, and to network and promote, so as to research and develop our work to be presented for future touring possibilities or sharing at festivals or exhibitions. So every amount of support is very helpful for us for start-up and later for creation.

Thank you to Hai-O Arts and Culture Grant awarded to WindRiver Productions for enabling SEMANGAT to take place.

Impress Creative and Editorial
WindRiver Productions
Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio
present

Senangat: Restu Padi

Performance
Workshop

with
Aida Redza | Dance
Lisa Foo | Installation art
Ng Chor Guan | Music

Filming
by Goh Choon Ean

Sunday 7 March 2021 | 7.15 pm
Balik Pulau, Penang

Supported by

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penjana
Pelani Jana Semula Ekonomi-Negara



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Lighting Up Media & the Arts

221B
Media

Impress Creative and Editorial
WindRiver Productions
Ombak-Ombak ARTStudio
present

Senangat: Restu Padi

Performance Workshop

Film Screening
YouTube | Facebook

with

Aida Redza | Dance

Lisa Foo | Installation art

Ng Chor Guan | Music

Theyvapaalan S. Jayaratnam | Dance

Lee Kien Fei | Dance

Amira Farhana Binti Ahmad Hamidi | Voice

Documented by
Goh Choon Ean

Saturday 13 March and
Sunday 14 March 2021
8.00 pm

Supported by

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