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ID 1412 | ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVATING NEIGHBOURHOOD PUBLIC SPACES: BRINGING ARTS TO THE HEARTLANDS OF SINGAPORE

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1 INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the National Arts Council (NAC) Singapore started an initiative of establishing the ‘Community Arts and Culture Nodes’ in Singapore’s heartlands that extend beyond the traditional art venues, such as museums, art galleries or theatres to incorporate various public spaces and facilities. The objectives of this initiative are to provide greater access to arts through regular quality arts programmes in the local housing neighbourhoods, to activate neighbourhood public spaces through arts and culture and to increase the opportunities for social interaction and community bonding. 25 of such nodes are envisioned to be established island-wide by 2025.

With reference to ‘Community Arts and Culture Nodes’ strategy, this paper discusses the capacities of five Singaporean neighbourhoods to create culturally rich and vibrant environments through unique art experiences and participation opportunities for the local residents. The key focus is the neighbourhood spatial opportunity analysis that involves mapping and assessing available neighbourhood spaces, their characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, as well as the symbiotic relationship between the quality and capacity of space design and programming in relation to arts and culture events and activities. The process and findings of neighbourhood analysis provide a guide for choosing the most suitable spaces for the arts as well as the strategies to activate community spaces through arts and culture activities.

1.1 WHAT CAN ARTS DO FOR SPACE AND COMMUNITY? - ARTS AND PLACEMAKING

The concept of placemaking has emerged as a response to the systematic destruction of human-friendly and community-centric spaces of the early 20th century. In a reaction to top-down planning, scholars and urban sociologists, since 1960s, began questioning how public space was appropriated (and by whom) and for what it was used (Gehl, 2010; Stern and Pray, 2014; Whyte, 1980). According to Silberg and colleagues (2013), the practice of placemaking concerns the deliberate shaping of an environment to facilitate social interaction, improve community’s quality of life, increase public engagement, boost civic pride and empower urban dwellers. In this view, public arts, which is defined as all work of art that is displayed or performed in the public realm, including community arts (Artscape, 2016a; Cartiere and Willis, 2008), is considered a particularly fruitful means of placemaking.

Art can be a powerful medium that informs our imagery of an area and this power to literally produce places is used differently in different geographical, economic and cultural contexts. Arts and culture strategies help to reveal and enhance the underlying identity, value and character of the physical and social form of a community (Soule et al., 2016).

1.2 WHAT CAN SPACE DO FOR THE ARTS? - CULTURAL ECOLOGY

According to Gehl (1987), the overall physical quality of urban space influences the type, nature, mode and frequency of activities occurring in that space. While for the 'necessary' activities (such as going to school or a bus stop, for instance), the design quality of space would not influence the use significantly, for 'optional' and 'social' activities (such as reading, resting or family gathering, for instance), well-designed conducive environment is often critical. The premise is that, since arts and cultural activities belong to optional or social activities, the design quality of urban space would be of great importance.

For the arts to make a significant difference in an urban neighbourhood, one needs to consider its entire cultural ecology rather than focusing on individual assets (Stern and Pray, 2014). An arts ecosystem refers to all 'hard' and 'soft' resources. 'Hard' infrastructure includes not only arts-related facilities, such as studios, exhibition halls or galleries, but also function rooms, workspaces, cafés, commercial spaces, streets and public spaces that provide critical social and economic spaces for interaction, production and promotion of arts activities (Artscape, 2016b; GovHK, 2015). These can be classified as: (a) arts-related spaces - spaces for performance and exhibition (art consumption); spaces for education and training (rehearsal); and spaces for arts production; and (b) supporting infrastructure - various public amenities; and good public space and spaces for interaction. These spaces, each infused with a mix of uses, meanings and experiences, play multiple roles as places of inspiration, connectivity and expression that make up the creative urban fabric.

'Soft' infrastructure refers to a blend of community, educational, recreational, cultural, entrepreneurial and entertainment institutions and non-profit organisations, their associated stakeholders (interest groups, cultural producers, artists, entrepreneurs and residents) and the formal and informal networks formed between them (Stern and Pray, 2014). Committed supporters, including fellow artists, local businesses, audiences, community groups, volunteers, residents' associations and politicians, are also essential for a successful and sustainable cultural scene. The concept of cultural ecology is, thus, particularly useful for understanding how to leverage the potential of clustering of creative resources and activities within an area. The presence of creative and cultural sector workers and businesses in a neighbourhood results in face-to-face networking and social exchange, which further facilitates collaboration, finding of markets and suppliers and cross-fertilisation between various stakeholders (Artscape, 2016b). The amount of informal arts activity in the neighbourhood significantly correlates to its stability and improvement and provides evidence of 'magnetisation' of the area (Taylor, 2008). The idea that neighbourhoods can be "magnetised" by participatory arts practices is powerful, and it appeals to civic leaders.

Therefore, to fully benefit from the presence of arts and culture in local communities, it is necessary to foster an environment that allows for exposure to the arts in many ways. In that sense, different publicly accessible spaces in a neighbourhood can serve the multiple spatial needs of cultural ecology.

1.3 ARTS AND CULTURE INITIATIVES IN SINGAPORE

According to the most recent 'National population survey on the arts' (2015), the number of Singaporeans expressing an overall interest in the arts has significantly increased since 2005. Moreover, both arts attendance and participation experienced their peaks in 2015. The survey also reveals that Singaporeans tend to attend art events and activities mainly because they find them enjoyable and as venues for spending time with others. Such positive findings might be related to recent trends in Singapore's arts and culture initiatives that reveal stronger intention to activate the neighbourhood spaces for better accessibility to arts within the community and encourage social interaction through arts. Such trends also align with the recent shift in Singapore's cultural context from focusing on the 'hardware' of art and culture to the 'heartware' through more community focused policies and programmes. Since 2010, the government has implemented the 'Framework for Arts Spaces' to support the changing needs of a growing and increasingly diverse arts sector, provide platforms where artists and arts groups can collaborate with each other and to

bring arts to the surrounding communities (NAC, 2016). The framework offers artists and arts groups a variety of accessible space options to practice, display and interact, as well as numerous financial incentive schemes.

In 2012, the 'Arts and Culture Strategic Review' (ACSR) was launched to chart a course for Singapore's cultural development till 2025. Since then, various community arts and cultural initiatives and programmes have been conducted intensively. The People's Association (PA) launched the 'PassionArts Movement' in 2012, with an aim to energise neighbourhoods across Singapore by carving out spaces for collaborations between professional artists, community talents and grassroots organisations. It also enables the residents to volunteer and actively contribute towards developing the arts in their community.

Also under ACSR, the NAC initiated the 'Community Arts and Culture Nodes' strategy to create a network of arts touch-points for the residents at their neighbourhoods, with regular activities and events occurring throughout the year. In order to sustain this initiative, NAC has partnered with various neighbourhood institutions, as well as non-profit organisations, and created a network of nodes at 3 levels, namely: regional nodes, neighbourhood nodes (in partnership with Community Clubs, Libraries and SAFRA Clubs) and street level pocket nodes, which incorporate more informal venues for the arts, such as various public spaces in the neighbourhood. Not only does this approach bring more vibrancy to the arts and culture sector in the neighbourhoods, but also creates more diverse experiences and opportunities for the local communities to enjoy arts on a regular basis.

2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY – NEIGHBOURHOOD SPATIAL OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

Five nodes and their surrounding neighbourhoods (areas of 400m radius around the node) were selected for case study analyses of spatial opportunities for arts and culture venues. Community arts and culture node partners are all different in nature, with their specific visions, target audiences and spatial capacities, ranging from indoor spaces within nodes' premises to public spaces within the neighbourhood.

Case study 1: Kallang CC (Community Club) is one of the oldest neighbourhood nodes whose main target audiences are families with children and senior citizens. It organises regular events on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis. Besides its own premises offering an indoor multi-purpose hall, open courtyard and smaller indoor facilities, this node also extensively utilises various public spaces in the neighbourhood, such as Boon Keng Plaza next to the subway station or a nearby mall street (Figure 1). The CC is a home to several local artists and arts interest groups who programme in the neighbourhood as well as across the island.



Figure 1 - Arts Venues at Kallang: CC Courtyard (left) and Boon Keng Plaza (right) (Source: by authors)

Case study 2: Woodlands Regional Library (WRL) has been a node partner since 2013 catering mainly to families with children and young adults. With a strong focus on the performing arts and workshops, WRL has established a 'Monthly Music Series' called 'RE:SOUND' and 'Art Fresco Theatre Club' for children. Various spaces inside the library are used as venues for arts events, such as an auditorium, programme zone, functions rooms and exhibition spaces (Figure 2).



Figure 2 - Arts Venues at WRL: Auditorium (left) and Programme Zone (right) (Source: by authors)

Case study 3: Singapore Armed Forces Reservists' Association (SAFRA) is a club for national servicemen and their families. Traditionally known for sports activities, SAFRA Jurong has recently embraced the arts programme termed 'ARTS@SAFRA' and started organising various art events on quarterly basis at the entrance atrium as well as other rooms within the club (Figure 3, left).

Case study 4: Tanglin Halt (Block 88), Queenstown is a one of the first street-level 'pocket' spaces initiated to develop Queenstown as a neighbourhood node, partnered with My Community, which is a non-profit organisation, whose aim is to showcase the diversity of intangible cultural heritage of the neighbourhood and to provide a sustainable platform for budding local artists. Music, theatre plays, traditional local arts, visual and literary arts, are some of the art events organised within the neighbourhood, the majority of which are held at a sheltered public space at Tanglin Halt (Block 88) next to the subway station, supermarket and a foodcourt, an area with high pedestrian traffic (Figure 3, middle).

Case study 5: Bedok Town Square is another 'pocket' node space in which NAC organises art events, yet without a regular partner. Located at the town centre, which contains a shopping mall, integrated public transport hub and a hawker centre, this recently built large sheltered plaza with high pedestrian traffic, serves as a space for community events and gatherings (Figure 3, right).



Figure 3 - Arts Venues at SAFRA Jurong: entrance atrium (left); My Community, Queenstown: Tanglin Halt open space (middle); Bedok Town Square: sheltered plaza (right) (Source: by authors)

The neighbourhood spatial opportunity analysis consisted of three main steps.

Step 1: Literature Review – Research Framework Development. A set of criteria was derived from literature review concerning attributes of good public space as well as features that contribute towards favourable venues for the arts. Good public space, a pre-requisite for an optional activity such as arts participation, is understood to possess a combination of physical attributes and socio-perceptual qualities (Cho et al., 2016). In addition, walk-through interviews with key community members, who have experience with organising events in the neighbourhood and have detailed knowledge of the community and spaces, were conducted. The intention was to gather qualitative data from the ground and to validate and refine the criteria distilled from the literature. The result is a framework for the evaluation of neighbourhood spaces in reference to their suitability for arts and culture events and activities.

Step 2: Primary Data Collection – On-site Investigation. All publicly accessible spaces in the neighbourhood were identified. A series of observational methods including visual ethnography and on-site observation of activities were carried out to evaluate these spaces against the criteria derived in Step 1.

Step 3: Data Analysis and Synthesis – Map Overlay Technique. The primary method of gathering and analysing collected data is visual mapping. The maps, indicating the presence or fulfilment of the criteria set by the framework, are then overlapped to reveal neighbourhood spaces with conditions that are the most conducive for holding arts and culture events or conducting arts-related activities. Map overlaying proved to be a fruitful means for filtering or distilling the most suitable spaces in the neighbourhood for arts and culture. Such filters, however, should not be taken as prescriptive, but rather indicative.

2.1 FRAMEWORK FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SPACE EVALUATION IN REFERENCE TO ARTS AND CULTURE

The overall aspects mapped and evaluated form the framework for identifying neighbourhood spatial opportunities, which includes: Filter 1 - general spatial conditions; Filter 2 - locational aspects (intensity of pedestrian movement and stationary activities); and Filter 3 - criteria for good public space and suitability for art and culture events (Figure 4).

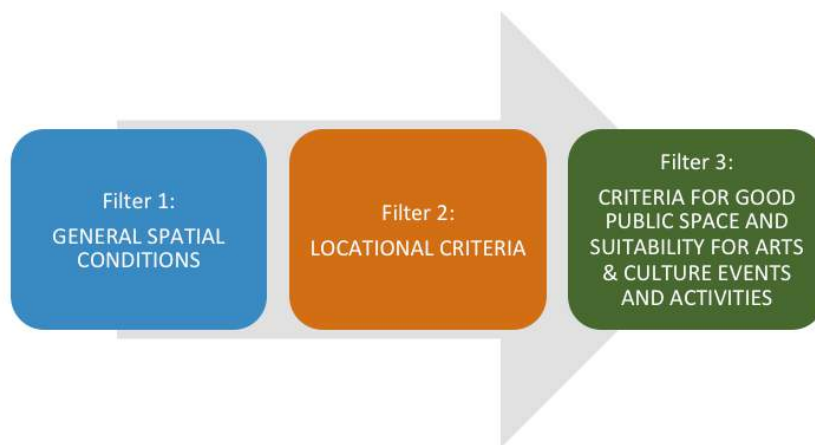


Figure 4 - Framework for Identifying Neighbourhood Spatial Opportunities (Source: by authors)

2.1.1 FILTER 1: GENERAL SPATIAL CONDITIONS

General spatial properties, including scale, shape, enclosure level and type of floor surface, describe the basic pre-conditions of neighbourhood spaces to become arts and culture events venues (Table 1).

Scale. The scale of the space (categorised into S, M, L, XL and XXL) is determined by the number of audience it can accommodate. In general, the larger the space, the more people it can accommodate and, therefore, the more desirable it is as a venue for big art events. However, large venues pose some challenges. There is a maximum distance at which the performers are visible to the audience, beyond which the connection between the two is lost. While crowds attract crowds, the opposite is also true; large spaces might make the audience seem scarce, discouraging new audience from joining the event. The largest spaces, more often than not, tend to be unsheltered or unpaved, which makes the logistics required to host events there more extensive than in smaller venues. Finally, some art activities demand smaller and more intimate venues.

FILTER 1: GENERAL SPATIAL CONDITIONS	
SCALE	S - Small: up to 200 m ² M - Medium: 200-500 m ² L - Large: 500-1000 m ² XL: 1000-5000 m ² XXL: larger than 5000 m ²
SHAPE	Linear Compact Fluid/Hybrid
LEVEL OF ENCLOSURE	Open Covered Enclosed
GROUND SURFACE	Paved Unpaved

Table 1 - Filter 1: General Spatial Conditions

Shape. Spaces can be classified as linear, compact and fluid/hybrid according to their shape. While linear spaces may be favourable for certain kinds of art interventions, the majority of arts events benefit from being held in a compact space with good sightlines towards the performance.

Level of enclosure. In terms of exposure to weather conditions (sun and rain), spaces are categorised into open, covered and enclosed. Arguably, the enclosed spaces, like classrooms or auditoriums, offer the best environment since they allow control over background noise and weather conditions. However, such spaces are often less accessible to incidental audience than open public spaces.

Ground surface. Paved surfaces (hardscape) are considered more preferable than unpaved ones (softscape) as they offer a more rigid surface to place seating and equipment, better acoustic conditions, and easier maintenance (among other benefits). In Singapore, the possibility of it raining is high throughout the year after which, unpaved ground can get slushy and inaccessible without additional flooring provisions.

The process of overlaying layers mapped in Filter 1 in the Kallang neighbourhood is shown in Figure 5. Darker areas indicate spaces of greater suitability for the arts and culture venues.

2.1.2 FILTER 2: LOCATIONAL CRITERIA - INTENSITY OF PEDESTRIAN MOVEMENT AND STATIONARY ACTIVITIES

While physical characteristics, without a doubt, contribute to quality and identity of a space, good public space is also a function of its users and the activities it accommodates. From the point of view of community arts engagement, sites adjacent to major movement paths have the most exposure to potential incidental audience. Moreover, according to Whyte (1980), a high proportion of people in groups for social or optional activities (those who are using the space out of choice rather than necessity) can be seen as an indicator of 'selectivity' and vibrancy. This step, therefore, involves evaluation of neighbourhood spaces in terms of both their proximity to the frequently used circulation paths within the neighbourhood and the number of people engaging in stationary activities within them (Table 2).

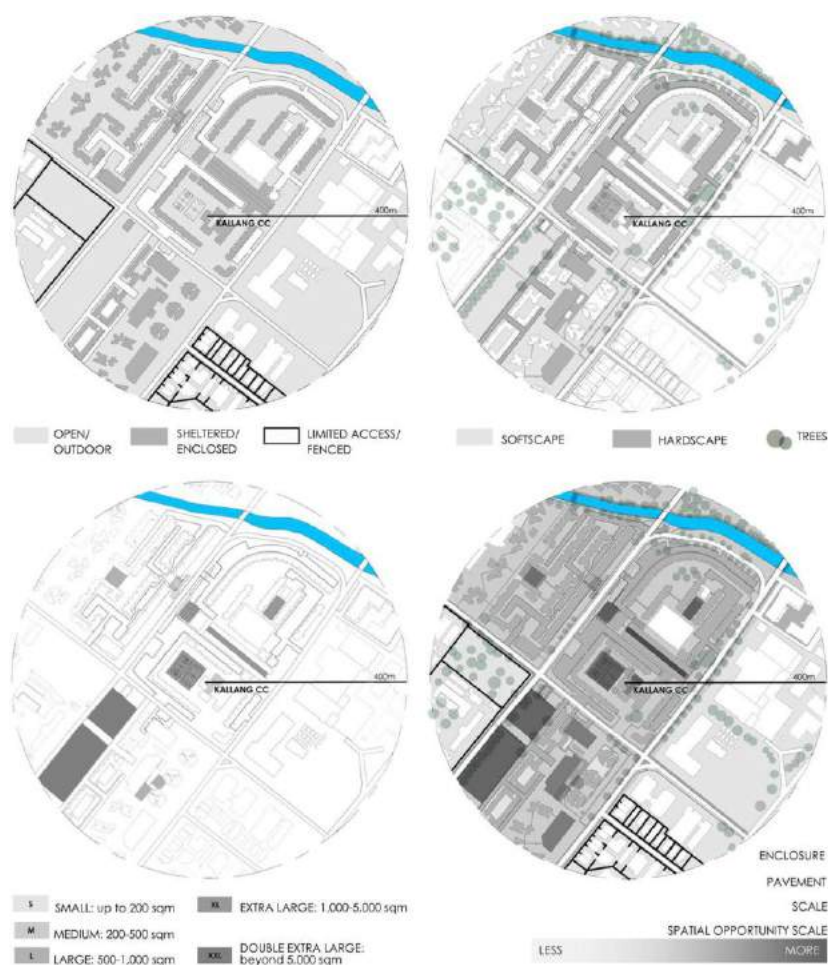


Figure 5 - Filter 1: Mapping of neighbourhood spaces around Kallang CC node according to Levels of Enclosure (top left); Types of Ground Surfaces (top right); Scale (bottom left); and Overlaying of all layers in Filter 1 (bottom right) (Source: by authors)

FILTER 2: LOCATIONAL CRITERIA	
Intensity of pedestrian movement – proximity to most frequented pedestrian movement paths	
Intensity of pedestrian stationary activities – proximity to well-used spaces	

Table 2 - Filter 2: Locational Criteria

Tracing moving patterns and people counting. Groups of pedestrians were discreetly followed from points of origin such as the train stations and the housing blocks to identify the most highly used routes through the neighbourhood. The hierarchy of movement paths, identified by tracing, was then verified by counting the number of people passing by carefully selected points of observation across the neighbourhood. Counting was done for two minutes at each observation point at three different times of the day as well as during one weekday and one weekend day. The pedestrian routes were then traced on the maps using different thicknesses of lines to indicate relative volume of transient usage.

Presence and type of stationary activities. In this step, stationary activities occurring in and around each observation point were noted down to understand whether the space was used for necessary, social or optional activities. The number of people within each observed space is indicated on the map. The size of circles is proportionate to the total number of space users involved in both stationary and transient activities.

The process of overlaying layers mapped in Filter 2 in the Kallang neighbourhood is illustrated in Figures 6.

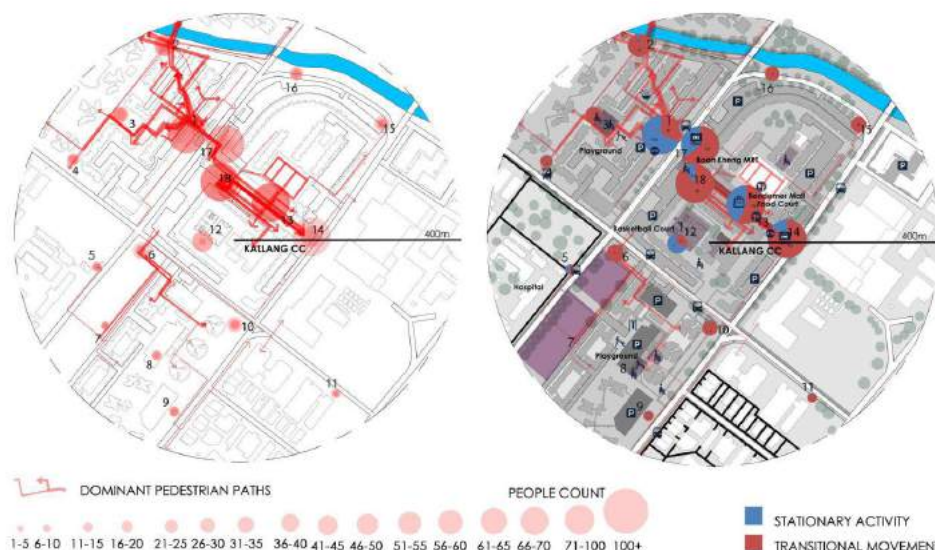


Figure 6 – Filter 2: Mapping of Pedestrian Movement Patterns and Stationary Activities (left) and Overlaying with shortlisted spaces in Filter 1 (right) in the Kallang CC neighbourhood (Source: by authors)

By super-imposing maps in Filter 1 and Filter 2, four main categories of neighbourhood spaces emerged, namely: (A) spaces next to major pedestrian movement paths and stationary activity; (B) spaces away from movement paths but contain stationary activity; (C) spaces next to major pedestrian movement paths but without stationary activity; and (D) spaces away from both movement paths and stationary activity (Figure 7). These categories provide an indication of how an arts and culture event might synergise with the space and available amenities. This will further be elaborated on in the conclusion.



Figure 7 - Examples of categories of neighbourhood spaces: (from left to right) Category A - Bedok Town Square, sheltered plaza next to the subway station and a shopping mall; Category B - Space adjacent to food court, badminton court and a green open space in Woodlands; Category C - Paved open space between the housing blocks in Woodlands, next to a frequently used covered walkway; and Category D – An empty underused amphitheatre in Bedok

2.1.3 FILTER 3: CRITERIA FOR GOOD PUBLIC SPACE AND SUITABILITY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

In this final stage, all shortlisted spaces (resulting from Filter 1 and Filter 2) are evaluated against an extensive list of criteria for good public space and suitability for arts and culture events (Table 3). Different types of art events have different requirements and this detailed evaluation of spaces is meant to act as a guide to indicate which types of events the venue is most suited for. These criteria are classified under 'hardware' (design values) and 'software' (programming and socio-perceptual values). Under 'hardware', we evaluate the physical qualities of the space, such as accessibility, flexibility and configuration, which contribute to making it good and suitable as an art and culture venue. In general, 'software' relates to programming and social value of urban space and focuses on the relationship between people and the space with issues related to diversity of uses, choice of activities, seating amenities, interactivity and privacy, as well as ambience/image, to name some.

The outcome of Filter 3 is a detailed evaluation that can help organisers to understand the specific strengths and weaknesses of each space and synergise it with the requirements of a particular art

program. For example, the Tanglin Halt Node satisfies many of the Filter 3 criteria. It also has a variety of adjacent activities that are synergetic with the art venue. Namely, it is located between a food court and a supermarket, both of which are essential amenities that are well used by the local residents on regular basis (Figure 8). The food court has an indoor seating area where the audience can have dinner before the performance and also an outdoor area which serves as an extension of the event area from where people can watch the performance while they eat. The challenge of the space is that its favourable location creates competition for use.

In the case of the events organised by the Kallang CC, the challenge of the open air venue is that if it is raining at the time of the event and a temporary shelter is not put up, the stage has to be moved from the plaza to the shelter of the subway station (Figure 9). This also demonstrates the strengths of the node - both in the ability of the node partner to make timely decisions and manage the logistics required for such a change, and in the flexibility that the venue allows to accommodate such a change.

FILTER 3: CRITERIA FOR GOOD PUBLIC SPACE & SUITABILITY FOR ARTS AND CULTURE EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES	
HARDWARE – spatial design criteria	
ACCESSIBILITY	Is the space visible from a distance? (Marcus and Francis, 1997; Project for Public Spaces, 2009; Talen, 2011)
	Is its interior visible from the outside? (Carmona et al., 2010; Carr et al., 1992; Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
	Can people use a variety of transportation options to reach the place? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009; Urry, 2007)
	Does the space function for people with special needs? (Carmona et al., 2010; Levine, 2003; Project for Public Spaces, 2009; Shaftoe, 2008)
CONFIGURATION	Is the space free from columns and other obstructions? (Kallang CC Chairman, 2016)
LOCATION	Is the space adjacent to noise sensitive areas? (Kallang CC Chairman, 2016)
SUPPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE	Does the space have electrical points? (Cho et al., 2016)
	Does the space have adequate lighting? (Levine, 2003; Marcus and Francis, 1997; My Community, 2016)
	Does the space have public toilets? (My Community, 2016; Shaftoe, 2008)
SOFTWARE – use and socio perceptual criteria	
MULTI-FUNCTIONALITY	Is the space multi-functional i.e. do multiple uses and activities happen in the space? (Evans, 2001)
SOCIABILITY	Are there opportunities to talk and listen? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
	Is the space used by people of different ages? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
	Are people in groups? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009; Whyte, 1980)
	Are there places to sit and stay? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
	Are there choices of things to do? (Carmona et al., 2010; Gehl, 2010; Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
IMAGE	Does the space make a good first impression? (Project for Public Spaces, 2009)
	Is the space clean and free from litter? (Cho et al., 2016)

Table 3 - Filter 3: Criteria for Good Public Space and Suitability for Arts and Culture



Figure 8 - Supermarket and Food Court adjacent to Tanglin Halt (Queenstown) node (Source: by authors)



Figure 9 - Stage and performers moved from the original location at the unsheltered plaza (left) to an adjacent sheltered space next to the subway station (right) (Source: by authors)

3 DISCUSSION

In reference to four main categories of neighbourhood spaces identified through spatial opportunity analysis, certain strategies to activate urban spaces can be discussed. The discussion of the preliminary findings is framed by the three key question posed in this study: (1) What can space do for arts?; (2) What can arts do for space?; and (3) What can arts and space do for the community?

3.1 WHAT CAN SPACE DO FOR THE ARTS?

Spaces close to movement paths and containing stationary activity (Category A) provide greater access to the arts at the neighbourhood level. These spaces generally have the highest number of users in the neighbourhood and are situated near subway stations, town centres or other major amenities, like food courts and shopping centers. They are the most favourable venues in the neighbourhood in terms of greater exposure of the arts and culture activities and, therefore, suitable for diversifying and broadening the audience for the arts (McCarthy and Jinnat, 2001). However, the challenge of these spaces is that they are often designated for commercial activities that also benefit from the high pedestrian traffic, resulting in an intense competition between different users. Moreover, these are also spaces used to perform necessary activities and may not be designed to encourage people to linger. As a result, they can also be over-crowded and noisy, which may not necessarily provide the most conducive atmosphere to enjoy certain types of arts and culture events and activities.

Spaces that are not adjacent to major movement paths but contain stationary activity (Category B) in Singapore's housing precincts are numerous. They are community gathering spaces, such as schools, Community Clubs (CCs), basketball courts, hawker centres, playgrounds or simply green lawns. These spaces often function as gathering places for residents with limited mobility, such as mothers and maids with young children and the elderly and can act as ideal venues for art and culture activities and performances. Art activity can be introduced into these spaces to further foster social bonding between residents and deepen arts engagement.

3.2 WHAT CAN THE ARTS DO FOR SPACE?

There are also spaces near movement paths but without stationary activity (Category C), such as void decks, pavilions and covered linkways. These spaces are frequently passed-by by the residents, but since they are not next to amenities, almost nothing encourages people to stay there for a little while. Performing arts can capitalise on the potential audience in these spaces while simultaneously magnetising and enlivening them with a sense of fun (Taylor, 2008).

Performing arts can also be used to test out possibilities in underutilised spaces that are away from both movement patterns and amenities (Category D), so-called "white elephants", such as amphitheatres and roofs of car parks, for instance. In fact, many of these spaces often provide very conducive environment for art events. Through temporary alterations of aesthetics or programming to set the stage for an event,

arts can help to test out or discover various ideas which could lead to permanent improvements being made to the space. Finally, there are also spaces, such as ground car parks or school amenities that may be only temporarily available or less accessible, but can also be considered for re-use and holding occasional arts and culture events.

4 CONCLUSIONS - WHAT CAN ARTS AND SPACE DO FOR COMMUNITY, AND VICE VERSA?

Social interactions between people in the neighbourhood public spaces are likely to be of greater depth than those in city centres as places in residential streets are accessed by a limited number of people (Whyte, 1988). This indicates the greater potential of neighbourhood spaces to sustain or form social interactions between audience at art and culture events than public spaces in city centres. Arts and culture events magnetise by creating shared experience and therefore encourage people to spend more time in a space, increasing the exposure of neighbours to one another and providing more opportunities for them to progress along the stages of 'neighbouring', namely: familiarization with strangers (passive face-to-face contact), mutual recognition, shared experience, further interaction and friendship (Grannis, 2009).

Moreover, arts can encourage community participation and volunteerism, which are critical for building sustainable, creative and resilient communities. The resources needed to organise frequent arts events at the neighbourhood level present a challenge that can be met with a stronger neighbourhood arts ecology. The involvement of professional artists can play a role in the transference of skills and mentorship to amateur neighbourhood performers in the form of workshops or participatory arts projects. The community arts and community interest groups, for instance, play an important role in the organisation and (return) audience building for the quality arts programs. In Kallang, for example, the organisers, professional artists, interest groups, volunteers and some audience members together support the quality/professional art programmes. The ecology of a continuous community art practice in the Kallang neighbourhood is crucial to sustaining the organisation of the quality arts performances (Figure 10).

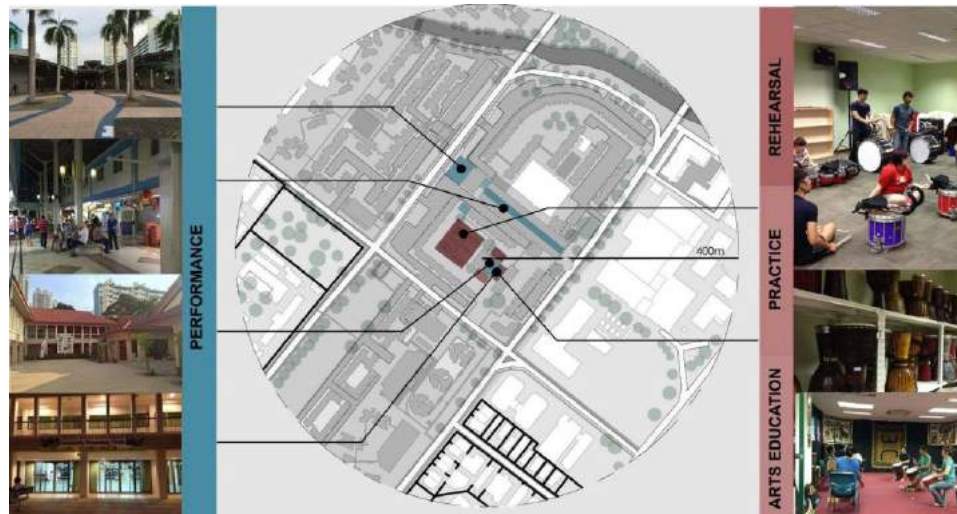


Figure 10 - Neighbourhood Arts Ecology for Community Arts in Kallang (Source: by authors)

Community art, public space and cultural facilities together help in building community cohesion. In order to achieve this, among other factors, it is important to: understand the neighbourhood and the community and all its material and human resources and skills (community assets); provide adequate infrastructure and programming to boost vibrant neighbourhoods (formal and informal arts and culture venues - arts ecology); empower the community to take an active creative initiative (community engagement, ground-up initiatives and volunteerism); and develop collective community vision and partner network.

Cultural planning is a process that inevitably begins with identifying the key goals and strategies, including both overall (common) and specific goals set by each arts and culture node (together with NAC and local community). The choice of spaces for holding arts and culture events and activities in the neighbourhood

would depend on the establishment of such goals and strategies. Accordingly, the filtering process explained in this paper serves primarily to assist in decision making, rather than being a prescriptive tool. With the guide for choosing and activating spaces (and communities) in the neighbourhood, this study hopes to contribute to the establishment of a vibrant neighbourhood cultural ecology with an aim to bring the arts into individual's everyday lives, boost a stronger sense of neighbourhood identity and attachment through arts, diversify, broaden and deepen arts and culture provision and engagement, and encourage stronger community bonding.

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ID 1422 | THE GATED COMMUNITY IN CHINA: ETHICS AND THE PATTERN OF SETTLEMENT

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1 INTRODUCTION

Recognized as a global phenomenon, the gated community has provoked heated discussions from various perspectives, including social, political, economic, anthropological, and geographical ones. Particularly due to the obvious spatial demarcation and social segregation embodied by the fortress-like forms, the social-spatial aftermath of gated community, has become the major focus of those multidisciplinary debates. Moreover in the practical world, despite the fact that the gated communities, have embraced unprecedented levels of prevalence, pervasion and variety, notably in China where such patterns have become the standard form of contemporary residential development and widely welcomed by all social classes and groups, it has been gradually noticed that the predominant gated communities in China have raised other public issues than social and spatial segregation, such as the greatly reduced land-use efficiency, the restricted transportation network and the negative impact on the well-being of public spaces (Huang and Feng, 2008; Wang, 2010; Wang, 2014). Under such circumstances, Chinese government has officially announced the reforms of the current urban residential wards in China by gradually removing the gates of the contemporary gated communities and “danwei” (work-unit compounds), which has inevitably provoked a variety of controversies (Liu, 2016).

As any materialization of place and locale as urban form is not a result of arbitrary architectural or planning interventions in the urban realm, but is fundamentally shaped by and embodies the deeper, more enduring social, political and cultural forces that emanate from the whole process of the urban development (Lefebvre and Smith, 1991). Therefore the paper will attempt to identify the significance and specificity of the social and historical context in Chinese cities that substantially resulted in the adapted gated communities in specific loci and to understand how ethics have influenced the pattern of residential settlement. Finally the paper will aim to suggest some pivotal elements that should be preserved in the face of housing reforms in China.