

NOISE ART MENTORSHIP SHOWCASE:

PROPOSALS FOR WATERLOO



19 – 31 JANUARY 2017

12.00 – 7.00 PM

WATERLOO CENTRE

262 WATERLOO STREET

**AT WATERLOO CENTRE, ARTISTS TAKE OVER POCKETS OF SPACE
BETWEEN THE RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL AREAS. A STRUCTURE
STRETCHING ACROSS THE PLAZA IS WRAPPED IN BLACK. A CAVE IS
CONSTRUCTED USING OBJECTS DISCARDED BY RESIDENTS. A PAINTER
PLAYS WITH THE AGING TEXTURES OF THE BUILDING'S ARCHITECTURE.
12 ARTISTS.**

**12 NEW PROPOSALS
FOR ENCOUNTERING SPACE.**

CURATORIAL NOTE

Waterloo Centre was always meant to be many things within one vertical space – shops, offices, HDB flats and all the public spaces in between. Over the past four decades, the public spaces in particular have become peculiar evidence of how different functions of this building have accumulated, changed, and even failed. The concrete plaza on the fifth floor, a substitute for communal areas in larger HDB new towns, attracts strong breezes but not residents. Dead spaces nestled in between lift lobbies, initially built as a fire safety precaution, are locked up today. In just one building, there are so many layers to negotiate and navigate.

On top of all these conflicts, *Proposals for Waterloo* feels like an imposition. We have challenged 12 artists to create site-specific artworks that will reside in these underused and overlooked spaces of Waterloo Centre for the last two weeks of January. But we do not want to just use this building as a gallery to showcase artwork. Rather, each project is a sincere attempt by an artist to relook and reframe the everyday, within the everyday.

For most of the artists, this mentorship programme is their very first experience of creating art under such conditions. There are real situations, rules and changes that the artists have to observe, and to which they have to respond. These spaces, unlike the static white walls of a museum or gallery, were not built for the sole purpose of exhibiting art. In the process of negotiation, the artist's ideas may seem unsafe, impractical, and insensitive. Those that chose to work with residents had an added human element with which to grapple. At times, it may have been challenging, daunting, and even unfair.

Yet, there is an increasing demand for artists to connect their practices to the larger world. *Proposals for Waterloo* gives these twelve artists the opportunity to reflect on their own work and explore how it can function in the context of Singapore. Throughout the process, our mentors and curatorial team worked and struggled alongside them. Our designers, the Town Council, the Residents' Committee, officers from HDB, and even the foreman of Waterloo Centre became stakeholders in the development of this showcase. Every step and every decision makes each of us more aware of how we use and think about our everyday environment – with all its limitations, and all its possibilities.

– Berny Tan