

# 30 silver

*14 people participated in an art project based on sound, as part of efforts to engage senior citizens in the arts*

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**SINGAPORE** – When retiree Kiang Siang Lok signed up to take part in this year's Silver Arts — an annual programme to engage senior citizens in the arts — he thought he might learn more about painting and drawing.

Instead, the 60-year-old found himself spending a morning at the Singapore Botanic Gardens, recording sounds on a tape recorder and, later, “acting” out the sounds for a sound-based art installation called Sounding Motion, under the direction of artists Angie Seah and Zai Tang.

Ms Seah, 34, a multidisciplinary artist who is also taking part in the Singapore Biennale starting next month, said she based Sounding Motion on her own work, which explores human nature in relation to social environments through sound and performance, but adapted it to suit a class of 14 senior citizens better. “This is a good way to introduce the idea of contemporary art to the community. Sound is also art,” she said.

The project — which is on display at the Jurong Regional Library until Sunday — was designed to get seniors to go through multiple stages of appreciating sound, starting with outdoor excursions to capture sounds on tape.

The process held surprises for Mr Kiang, who is a relative novice to creating art. “I wasn't really sure about what (the Sounding Motion project) was about. I just signed up because it looked interesting. It turned out to be a pleasant surprise because it was really fun and enjoyable,” said Mr Kiang, who is also a Changi Senior Ambassador and a volunteer at public libraries.

The Botanic Gardens trip was his favourite, as it brought back memories of his childhood, when he spent many hours playing there. What captivated him was not the sound of birds chirping or the lake water lapping at the shore, but the piercing calls of cicadas, which he chose to record and play back for his classmates in following sessions.

“When I listen to the recording at the Botanic Gardens, it gives me a nice feeling. It is like an orchestra of sounds, and the cicada is the conductor,” said the nature enthusiast.

The participants also visited Rochor Road, where Mr Kiang's attention was caught by the “clanking sounds of kopi glasses”. “Sound is so interesting. We tend to ignore most of it but, through this project, I (have) become more aware and sensitive to

**A PLATFORM FOR ELDERLY TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES**

## A taste of the contemporary at Silver Arts



Mr Kiang at the exhibition space featuring his work for Sounding Motion. PHOTO: DON WONG

my surroundings,” he said.

The completed recordings were passed on to Mr Zai, who then edited and mixed the sounds for sharing sessions. During these sessions, participants engaged in a movement exercise to translate their understanding of sounds through hand actions.

Said Ms Seah: “The participants were not shy and old-fashioned like you would imagine them to be. Instead, they were so open to possibilities with the art activities.”

Apart from sound and movement activities, the participants also designed their own cassette albums, which are also on display at the Silver Arts exhibition.

Ms Seah, who is taking part in Silver Arts for the second time, is already excited to come back next year with more concepts in mind, and affirmed the importance of the initiative to society and the senior community. “We can explore so much more with art collaborations in the future, through cross-genre and interdisciplinary art

to make this a platform for them to express themselves,” she said.

This year's Silver Arts, organised by the National Arts Council, featured 25 programmes over 11 different venues, and 46 artists and arts groups came on board to collaborate on various workshops and activities. Among them was When A White Horse Is Not A Horse, a bilingual journal-writing project inspired by Chinese philosophy and led by local literary journal Ceriph, which paired seniors with youths to pen poems and prose.

Another project, Create With Me, saw ceramic artist Lim Hua Choon come together with seniors from the Tsao Foundation Hua Mei EPICC day club to creatively enhance their mobility by creating ceramics. The activities were free for all senior citizens.

Various projects from the programmes are on display at the Jurong Regional Library until Sunday. Viewing is free for all. For more details, visit <http://www.nac.gov.sg/arts-you/for-everyone/senior-citizens>.



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