

VILLA ALICIA

A new project by
Singaporean artist Alecia Neo
about homes and memories.

JULY 2011, Singapore – There is an old, old house in Binjai Park. One that has housed many memories for Dr Nalla Tan, 88, a prominent physician and feminist, and her family since the 1970s.

In August 2011, it will be demolished. But for its swan song, it will play host to a sound and photography installation, Villa Alicia. Curated and created by artists Alecia Neo and Clarence Chung, both 25, visitors are invited to wander through the rustic home and visit the memories within.

The bungalow is split into two parts. One half of the house was where the son, wine bar owner Tan Ying Hsien, 49, lived and the other belonged to Dr Nalla Tan, who suffers from Alzheimer's Disease.

In Villa Alicia, Neo restaged old photographs from the Tan's family photo album. A child's first birthday. A wedding. A wake. About forgotten memories and the act of remembering, Villa Alicia looks into how memories and histories are shaped by time, mind and disease. Is it the people around us, who help us remember? Is it the place where we are? Or is it the possessions we surrounded ourselves with?

Neo, 25, says: "I see the value in capturing the fragility of memories, people and spaces, through a rare opportunity in having access to the home of a prominent person; the contrast of generations, the new and the old, and the loss faced as memory fails you."

For Ying Hsien, the decision to sell and move out of the house was a heart-rending one. "I've lived there for the better part of a lifetime and most of my memories are inextricably tied to the house. Whilst I carry away these memories, their physical link will be severed when the house disappears."

The house is slated to be demolished a few days after the exhibition closes. Come by, visit and help us bid a fond farewell to the old home.

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Event Details

Villa Alicia

Dates: 6 to 11 August 2011, from 9 am to 9 pm

Where: 43 Binjai Park, Singapore 589843

Admission is free

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About Villa Alicia

In August 2011, a bungalow in Binjai Park will play host to a sound and photography installation by Singaporean artist Alecia Neo and musician Clarence Chung. The 1970s house is home to wine bar owner Tan Ying Hsien and his mother, Dr Nalla Tan, a prominent physician and feminist who suffers from Alzheimer's Disease. Visitors will be allowed to wander through the rustic house in Villa Alicia, before it is demolished a few days after the exhibition closes.

About Alecia Neo

With a great love for people and cultures, Alecia Neo's documentary-based work is often about common human experiences of alienation and loneliness, dislocation and belonging, and the search for self. Portraiture is the main focus of her work. Her latest body of work, "Home Visits" has received a Honorable Mention in the 2009 Berenice Abbott Prize by juror Tim B. Wride, Curator of the Department of Photographs at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. "Home Visits" was also selected for the 2nd Singapore International Photography Festival (SIPF) in Oct 2010. She has also been recently selected as one of five mentees of renowned NY-based photographer John Clang for his 2011 mentorship programme.

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About Clarence Chung

Paid to perform for the first time in 2006 at the tender age of 19, Clarence has been performing professionally ever since. Today, he entertains as resident musician at Reddot Brewhouse at Dempsey Road. In 2010, Clarence found an interest in contemporary sound design and post-modern composition and hence began to take on freelance motion picture projects that require the manipulation of sound effects and music to create emotive and abstract commentaries.

About Dr. Nalla Tan (Mother)

Nalla Tan, (b. 1923, Ipoh, Perak), nee Navarednam, is a well-known physician, counsellor and educator in sexual matters in Singapore. She was also the first woman in Southeast Asia to be awarded the Fellow of the Faculty of Community Medicine from the Faculty of Medicine of the Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom. She has published short stories and books about poetry (Beyond the Navel, Hearts and Crosses, Villa Alicia etc), women issues, as well as sex education.

About Tan Ying Hsien (Youngest Son)

Tan Ying Hsien (b. 1961, Singapore) is a lawyer by training and spent most of his professional career providing legal and compliance advice in-house to major international banks. He started tasting and studying wine in 1983 while pursuing university studies in the United Kingdom. He was on the tasting panel of Wine & Dine Singapore for a number of years and has served as a judge in International Wine Challenges held in Singapore. He currently tastes for the The Local Nose, gives wine talks and is engaged in wine education. Tan Ying Hsien is the owner of Taberna Wine Bar.

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Dr Nalla Tan's writings on the walls of the house, which help her remember what the photos and paintings are of.



The Tan family's house is an almost undisturbed and fully preserved area with anachronistic furnishing which has seen little changes since the 1970s. This house will be treated as a gallery space where guests will be able to experience the artwork and explore the house.