

SEVEN | *Queer Objects*

An Archive for the Future

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Scenario Planning¹

Scenario 1: The year is 2065 and Singapore is celebrating its hundredth year of independence. The Ministry of Human Rights and the Community Archive are putting together an exhibition of objects retrieved from a time capsule buried in 2040. The time capsule was buried 25 years ago to commemorate the repeal of Section 377(a) of the Penal Code of Singapore. Section 377(a), inherited from the Indian Penal Code drafted under Thomas B. Macaulay and enacted in British Ruled India in 1860/61, was a section that criminalises sex between mutually consenting adult men. The effort to repeal this section of the Penal Code was initiated in 2007 by human rights activists. It took activists several attempts before the Parliament of Singapore repealed this section with the support of a group of politicians that included the first elected transgender member of parliament. This is a selection of 81 objects from that time capsule.

Scenario 2: The year is 2016 and it is a year after SG50, a year-long nationwide celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Singapore's independence. A contemporary art institution in Singapore is staging an exhibition of queer diasporic artwork titled *Fault-Lines: Disparate and Desperate Intimacies*. The exhibition includes an installation titled *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future* by a Singaporean artist. He curated a collection of objects contributed by friends, fellow artists, and members of the queer community.

Each contributor provided items that represent the lived experience of being queer in Singapore. The day before the exhibition opening, the artist was informed by the art institution that two of these objects were to be removed from the exhibition. The institution cited Section 292 1(a) of the Penal Code of Singapore, which prohibits the display and exhibition of ‘obscene materials’, as reason for the censorship.² Seventy-nine objects are on display as part of this temporary queer archive, with the absence of the two censored objects highlighted with black vinyl stickers.

In the preceding paragraphs are two scenarios. Some of the statements in these two scenarios are true, some are false, and some are both false and true. A couple are false statements to be made true, and truths that might be rendered false in time to come.

In Context

I identify as an artist and educator based in Singapore, and my work negotiates with re-enactments, temporalities, and bodies of information. I was completing a three-month artist residency in Australia in late 2015 when I was invited by a curator to participate in a group exhibition at a contemporary arts institution in Singapore. As part of my Australian art residency, I worked with the archivist at the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archive, a community archive based in Melbourne, to document objects in their collection. Inspired by my experience at the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archive, I decided to assemble a parallel archive in Singapore. I was curious to find out what objects will belong to a queer archive in Singapore.³ This assemblage is an answer to José Esteban Muñoz’s call to imagine a queer futurity and to enact ‘other ways of being in the world’ (Muñoz, 2009) – a glimpse into this queer future through a recording of the past in our present.

When soliciting for contributions to *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future*, I reached out beyond my network, and engaged

with community groups, interfaith religious organisations, and queer activists, to ensure a greater distribution and representation of queer experiences in Singapore. I made an aesthetic decision to display these objects without individual attribution and context. I was hopeful that this mode of display would create a productive aporia for interpretation. For those who were comfortable in being identified publicly as contributors, a collective acknowledgement was included in the exhibition room sheet.⁴ *Queer Objects* was designated as a temporary archive-on-loan; these borrowed possessions were returned after the exhibition concluded.

The exhibition opened in February 2016. The preceding year was SG50, a year of celebrations for the fiftieth year of Singapore's independence. There was an onslaught of state-funded cultural activities, parades, and propaganda events that occupied Singaporean news and media outlets throughout 2015.⁵ This included projects such as the *Singapore Memory Project*, a 'whole-of-nation movement that aims to capture and document precious moments and memories related to Singapore'.⁶ The *Singapore Memory Project* is an initiative led by the Ministry of Communication and Information and facilitated by the National Library Board. The project features a team of volunteers called the 'Memory Corps' whose responsibilities include helping to gather memories, spreading the word about this project, and 'connecting the [*Singapore Memory Project*] to people with memories of key Singapore events, personalities and places'. The *Singapore Memory Project* took the form of a website and database where people can submit digitised images, audio recordings, and writings pertaining to their memories of Singapore. A quick search on their database reveals memories of food, places, and heteronormative relationships. The queer body was clearly absent and relegated to the fringes of this national memory bank. It was projects such as the *Singapore Memory Project*, among other projects affiliated

with SG50 celebrations, that reminded one of the need to consider a mode of recording queer presence with projects such as *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future*.

In but Not of Singapore

The framework that the curator Wong Binghao proposed for the exhibition was on South East Asian queer diasporas, and he places this exhibition in the critical tradition mapped out by Jasbir Puar, Gayatri Gopinath, David L. Eng, and Eng-Beng Lim, among others. In Wong's curatorial statement, he expressed the desire to 'complicate already fraught assumptions around embodiment and belonging' (Wong, 2016). Wong also emphasised the need to examine how the terms 'queer' and 'diaspora' 'oppose and influence each other': he claims that 'the queer subject has to be imagined as white, family-oriented, or homonormative in order to be folded back into the life-worlds of national protection', while the 'racialised or ethnic diasporic subject is cast as heterosexual premodern homophobe'. I was supportive of Wong's curatorial framework, and thought that it expands the possibility of reading this assemblage of queer objects.

Since *Queer Objects* was a work that was created specifically for this exhibition, there was a possibility for a productive dialogue with the curatorial framework to shift the work and its positionality. During the collection process, the title of the piece was amended from the *Queer Singaporean Archive* to simply *Queer Objects*, in part to reflect this conversation. It was important to go beyond national boundaries of exceptionalism that has plagued many SG50 celebratory projects to consider contributions that cannot be contained by national borders. In effect, as the collection process developed, many of the objects signal to the fact that the 'Singaporean' queer subject is already transnational and diasporic to begin with.⁷ There were objects that

were collected overseas by individuals who identify as Singaporeans; there were also other objects that were contributed by people who do not identify as Singaporeans, but had submitted a contribution that they deemed significant to their queer lived experience in Singapore.

At the same time, however, I am also cautious of the Queer South East Asian diasporic frame that was being imposed on *Queer Objects* through the curatorial frame of the exhibition. If anything, the exhibition demonstrated that the six works that were grouped together had vast differences in terms of methodology of resistance and formal aesthetic attributes. This condition of the 'queer' (as homonormative) and 'diasporic' (as homophobic) dyad, with the queer diasporic figure stranded in between, also varies greatly depending on whether you are based in the Global North and West or the Global South and East, and the specific conditions of how queer people are perceived by their respective communities. To echo Alexander Weheliye's critique of diaspora discourse in black studies, there is a 'de-emphasizing of specificities in the embrace of transnational frames of reference' (Weheliye, 2014: 30). Weheliye quotes Katherine McKittrick on the dangers of 'diaspora discourse', stating that it has the 'potential to be a hegemonic geographic project' (Weheliye, 2014: 31). In short, there is danger for this specificity to be lost in the queer relational mode of analysis in diaspora discourse. In its anti-assimilationist call to refuse the call for 'legislative rights', the curatorial frame has failed to comprehend that these rights are for the basic right to be not seen as criminal based on one's sexual preference, and not a call for additional legal 'homonormative' recognition that is circulating in American/Eurocentric rights-based discourse.⁸ In this instance, as is evident in the curatorial statement, there was a gap in addressing the urgent political *situation* of the queer community in Singapore that I hope *Queer Objects*, in its insistently specific contextual frame, was able to fill.

In but Not of An-Archive

The other word moved from the original title into its subtitle after a colon was 'archive', for it to be in but not of an archive, or 'an-archive', a play on the notion of an 'anarchic archive'. It was important that *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future* resists the institutional frame of an 'archon', etymologically dissected as being the gendered authoritarian 'house of the father', and emphasised the futurity of this institution that is yet to be. I was also interested in investigating what the concept of a queer archive might mean when transposed to a postcolonial South East Asian context.

The initial premise of *Queer Objects* was for the assemblage to be constantly shifting throughout the three-month exhibition period as a methodology to challenge this fossilisation, an an-archive or anarchic archive of sorts. Conceptually, the total number of objects would be maintained at 81, but the initial set of objects will be replaced with contributions from visitors to the gallery each week until the entire set of objects is renewed. Visitors will be invited to contribute and contemplate what they consider as a queer object. Unfortunately, due to the censorship incident and the subsequent breakdown of communication with the presenting institution over bureaucratic issues, this aspect of the installation was abandoned.⁹ The intent behind the exercise of replacing objects was to produce the possibility of an archive that is not static, one that allows different perspectives from various subjects who identify both as queer or straight to be consistently added to the narrative. The possibility of contribution changes one perceptual frame of the installation, and this possibility was foreclosed.

Queer Archive as Subjugated Knowledge

There are several refrains that one will associate with Singapore in common circulation. Disneyland with the death penalty.¹⁰ The nanny state. An authoritarian democracy. The ban on

chewing gum. The ban on performance art.¹¹ It appears to be a nation state mapped out meticulously by a close reader of Foucault's governmentality, pushing the limits of biopolitics to its logical extreme.

I would like to refuse these refrains and offer up a discordant claim in its place. In the spirit of Foucault's refuting of 'the Repressive Hypothesis' in *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1* to expand our philosophical understanding of power, what will it be like to begin from a queer disposition and consider a Singapore that is not repressed or differently conservative? To extrapolate from Foucault, and consider the verisimilitude of conservatism as a guise by the state – a bourgeois class of citizens wielding repression as a strategy to manage the rest of the population and exacerbated by transnational late liberal humanist tendencies to categorise Singapore (that is, to put us in our place/in our time) – and as a form of claiming to know what is unknowable. Unknowable not only because it has been purged from the colonial archive, where any form of national record is necessarily filtered through an authoritative colonial perspective and where bodies that serve as vessels for these subjugated memories have long since turned to dust.

To paraphrase Foucault, I would like to question if repression in Singapore is 'truly an established historical fact' (Foucault, 1978: 10) or one that is induced by the colonial authority and sustained by the post-independence government as a means of control. I would also like to question if the 'mechanisms that are brought into play in societies such as ours, really belong primarily to the category of repression' (Foucault, 1978: 10), and identify, as Foucault does, that the critical discourse of conservatism that has come to address 'repression' in Singapore is part of the power mechanism that it claims to be refuting.

If we assume that power is productive instead of repressive, how do we identify these polymorphous techniques of power that are being generated? Where are the varied sources of such power

located in aesthetics and the archive? In commencing from a place that refuses the assumption of repression, we can then begin to 'specify what [sexuality] does and how it works in discursive and institutional practice' (Halperin, 2002: 110).

I am interested in tapping into what Foucault describes in his 1976 lectures as 'subjugated knowledges': 'blocs of historical knowledge that have been buried and disguised within the body of functionalist and systematising theory'. Foucault goes on to claim that it is through this 'local, regional' and 'differential knowledge' that 'criticism performs its work' (Foucault, 1980: 82). I am aligning his notion of subjugated knowledges with Singaporean sociologist Teo You Yenn's study of 'subjects' subjectivities' in her examination of the impact of neo-liberalism on morality in Singapore. Teo conducts her research through extensive oral interviews as a strategy to move analyses away from 'state technologies of governance' to focus her research on her interviewees' subjectivities that are 'continually in production rather than static' (Teo, 2011: 116). This strategy permits us to conduct an 'ascending analysis of power' (Foucault, 1980: 99) and tap into a plurality of shifting positions that might be invisible otherwise.

In the following paragraphs, I will be examining two of the 81 objects from *Queer Objects* as objects that hold such subjugated and suppressed affect and knowledge. As fragments of information congeal into a document, there is a need to edit, consolidate, and privilege some information over others. As with any attempt to represent queer presence, these processes of discernment will only permit a fraction of what can be represented in objects and language to emerge. In other words, I am aware that the critical discourse I am producing around these objects is implicated in these mechanisms of suppression. In the examination of these objects, I will urge you to inspect the shifting shadows they cast over time, and consider the narratives they might occlude in their presence.

National Registration Identity Card

The object is a light pink Singapore National Registration Identity Card in the ID-1 format ($3\frac{3}{8}$ " $\times$ $2\frac{1}{8}$ ") with rounded corners in accordance to the International Organization for Standardization dimensions. Capitalised across the top is 'Republic of Singapore' and an identity card number that begins with an S (for Singaporean citizens), followed by seven numbers, and a letter from the alphabet that functions as a checksum, a mathematical device designed to ensure the validity of the seven preceding numbers. For citizens born in Singapore, the unique National Registration Identity Card number is assigned at birth and remains the same throughout the citizen's life.

On the top right corner of the card is the Singaporean coat of arms. It depicts a lion, the national symbol of Singapore, and a tiger, the national symbol of Malaysia, standing on two sheaths of rice and holding a red shield with a crescent moon and five stars: the insignia on the Singaporean flag. The rice stalks rest upon a blue ribbon inscribed with 'Majulah Singapura', translated as 'Onward Singapore' in Malay, the national language. The coat of arms was designed in 1959 when Singapore was released from British colonial rule, but it was only after separating from Malaysia in 1965 that Singapore was declared an independent nation.

Below the header is the cardholder's information and photo. This includes her previously held legal full name: Joenathan s/o Thomas Nathan. The abbreviation s/o is short for 'son of', in line with the official format for patronymic ethnic Indian names in South East Asia. Race: Indian. Date of birth. Sex: M for male. Country of birth: Singapore. The identification photo is in black and white. The owner is depicted with her hair tied back, looking unflinchingly into the camera. Two sharply drawn arched eyebrows, large eyes, and a tensed half-smile.

There are two small holograms on the card designed to deter forgery; one is the faint duplication of the photo and the other is a Singaporean crest on the bottom right corner of the card. There is a hole punched through the Singaporean crest hologram that voids this once-valid identification card. This well-worn card is fraying at the edges, black dust adheres to the plastic laminate at the corners. The card itself is fractured into four pieces. According to the edges of the fragments, it appears to be roughly but cleanly spliced by a sharp device. One horizontal fault line runs across her eyes, through her father's name 'Nathan'. The other vertical fault line cracks a fissure between words that pronounce her nationality, birth name, race, and date of birth. The four plastic fragments are held together with clear plastic tape.

This was Sandhya's identification card and one of two items that she contributed to the installation, the other being a glass dilator. In many ways, the trans community has been historically recognised and instrumentalised by the Singaporean state. The second President of Singapore, Dr Benjamin Shears, who held the position from 1971 until 1980, was a notable obstetrician and gynaecologist. Dr Shears was recognised for pioneering a vaginoplasty technique that was subsequently developed by his colleagues for use in male-to-female gender reassignment surgery. The first gender reassignment surgery in Singapore was performed in 1971 and swiftly legalised in 1973. Singapore was one of the first countries in South East Asia to legally recognise transsexual status, and performed 'more than five hundred operations in government-funded hospitals' (Yue, 2012: 6), with foreigners making up more than half of these operations.

It is important to note that the transgender community is the only segment of the Singaporean queer community to receive legal state recognition. However, in retrospect, it was highly likely that this acceleration and push for legalisation was fuelled primarily

by an interest in capital and reputation. As Singaporean queer theorist Audrey Yue has claimed, this rapid institutionalisation of transgenderism in Singapore since the 1970s reflected a desire to govern ‘gender transgression as a disease that can be medically corrected and socially hetero-normalized’ (Yue, 2012: 6). The first few successful gender reassignment surgeries received prominent media coverage in Singaporean state-sanctioned media.¹² They were held up as examples of an exceptional breakthrough in medical science, essentially doubling up as advertisements for medical services that Singaporean surgeons were capable of providing. The fungibility of their retracted anonymous identities were spectacularised in the media as trophies for the Singapore state in exchange for legal recognition. In a move from productive to consumptive economies, this case study in Singapore of the 1970s is one example of how power commodifies sexuality according to a pragmatic and corporatised vernacular of profit and loss.

The Invisible Dilator

The second object that Sandhya contributed to the archive was a clear glass dilator, approximately eight inches in length and one inch in diameter. This object is made of transparent clear glass, with tiny air bubbles encased within. Its surface is smooth and the material is of a substantial weight. Sandhya was candid in explaining how this dilator was part of a larger set of dilators in various dimensions that was passed down through her transgender family. The dilator is utilised after undergoing gender reassignment surgery to prevent the vaginal cavity from collapsing. She recalled the process of agitating a fresh wound several times a day for up to 12 months. The brief conversation I had with Sandhya gave me a sliver of insight into the discipline, psychological strength, and determination necessary to undergo gender reassignment surgery and manage its consequences.

When *Queer Objects* was exhibited in 2016, three of the 81 objects were flagged by the director of the exhibiting institution as potentially obscene. I was called in for a meeting with the director of the institution, and after lengthy negotiation, two objects, namely a puppy tail butt plug and a dildo sheath, were determined as obscene and withdrawn from display.¹³ When I provided an account of the glass dilator, they recalibrated their initial misinterpretation of it as a sex object and understood it as a medical device, and it was reinstated into the exhibition.

There are several ways the censorship incident reminds me of what Foucault describes as the ‘micro-physics of power’ that suppresses sexuality: a dissipated form of control that permeates all levels of society. First, the censorship was enforced not by the state, but volunteered by the director of the institution, an Australian working in Singapore taking advice from her Singaporean colleagues. It was performed as a pre-emptive measure to avoid potential legal repercussions. Second, acts of suppression only serve to draw more attention to these acts themselves, and the incident was picked up and reported by the media in an article that highlighted the absence of these two ‘sex objects’ (Lee, 2016).

Ironically and unfortunately, though, the glass dilator was made twice invisible, first in its removal, and then in its reintroduction, as media and public attention was focused on the two objects that were censored. What was initially classified as a ‘sex object’ was rendered visible because it ‘passed’ as a medical device, and in its transparency the dilator and its narrative were obfuscated in a different manner, where it was placed off scene and no longer visible. The fungibility of a trans-object/subject is one that is insistently defined as biological and medical, correctional instead of queer, a prosthetic of pain instead of pleasure. Gender reassignment surgery was thus viewed both in the 1970s and in 2016 as a technology of normativisation; the object by extension was wielded as a disciplinary tool on queer bodies.

Conclusion

I started out this chapter with an overview of the context for *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future*. I explained the critical framework that underscores the installation, referencing the Foucauldian notion of subjugated knowledges. Through the thick description of two objects, I have traced various fragments of memories and identity that are fossilised in them and I have used these objects to gesture towards their brief circumstantial history. It is my hope that through this gesture, I have outlined the techniques of power exercised over queer bodies in Singapore and provided a brief insight into the queer community that expands beyond common tropes of conservatism and repression that frames the discussion about Singapore.

Annex A: Statement to Press by Loo Zihan, 12 February 2016

On 12 February 2016 at approximately 9 a.m., I received a call from Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore (ICAS) personnel about the potential withdrawal of a couple of objects from public display in the Earl Lu Gallery. These objects were on display as part of my installation *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future*. This installation is curated for an exhibition of queer international and Singaporean artists titled *Fault-Lines: Disparate and Desperate Intimacies*. The exhibition runs from 13 February to 13 April 2016.

Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future is a collection of 81 objects contributed by members of the queer ‘community’ and their straight allies. These objects vary from items of personal significance to memorabilia from events and organisations. They are on loan for the duration of the exhibition and will be returned to their respective owners after the exhibition ends. The installation is meant as a temporary archive of objects to represent a spectrum

of Singaporean LGBTIQ individuals and their diverse experiences. The contributors of these objects were acknowledged collectively in the exhibition guide, and names were not pegged to individual objects.

The mode of display is on a tiered archive shelving unit measuring 12 m in length and 0.5 m in width. The objects are presented on the shelves without context – there is no information specifying the nature of these objects and how they would be used. The intention was to permit the viewer to construct his or her narratives for these objects based on their individual experiences.

By the time I arrived in the gallery at 11 a.m., three objects have been removed from display. Specific alterations to the display includes the removal of a cylindrical glass dilator, a white silicone penis sheath, and a black silicone butt plug. A calendar from 2007 that featured a photograph of a reclining nude male figure (with no front or rear nudity) was flipped so that the image was hidden from view.

During the subsequent discussion from approximately noon to 1 p.m. with the ICAS Director and ICAS Assistant Curator, they explained the rationale for the withdrawal of these objects to me and the curator of the exhibition. They cited Section 292 1(a) of the Penal Code on the display and exhibition of ‘obscene materials’ as a reason for the withdrawal. They also cited concerns of LASALLE College of the Arts as an educational institution and the necessity to be sensitive to the students between the age of 16 to 21. The Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore is part of LASALLE College of the Arts.

The exhibitions at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Singapore are self-rated, and the institution does not have to submit materials to the Media Development Authority of Singapore for licensing and rating. The curator for the exhibition and the institution wanted the exhibition to be viewed by the public without the need for an explicit advisory.

After hearing the institution's concerns, I was agreeable to the withdrawal of two of the objects from display. The institution compromised by reintroducing the glass dilator into the installation and permitted display of the image of the nude male on the calendar. I compromised by replacing the penis sheath and butt plug with black vinyl stickers outlining the shape of these objects. I also requested that their absence be noted in the exhibition guide, stating that a total of 79 out of the 81 collected objects are on display.

The situation was resolved amicably at approximately 3 p.m., and we hope to continue the discourse and seek legal advice on the display of 'obscene materials' and the definition of 'obscenity' in the context of an art exhibition or performance. This is necessary for arts managers, curators, and artists to clarify the implications on the exhibition and making of art in Singapore.

Most cases of implicit or explicit arts censorship in Singapore reveal a lack of understanding on the legal ramifications of exhibiting art that might be construed as 'obscene'. There are institutions who are willing to take reasonable risks and stand by the artist, their practice, and the work. More often than not, institutions and curators choose to err on the side of caution.

The only way we are able to advance this conversation on the definition of 'obscenity' is by constantly questioning what is visible and permitted to be seen. The following paragraph is an excerpt from my write-up on *Queer Objects: An Archive for the Future*:

The year is 2065, the nation is celebrating SG100. Section 377(a) of the penal code has been repealed. The first transgender member of parliament was elected to represent the Aljunied constituency in the last General Elections. The Ministry of Human Rights (MHR) and the Community Archive (CA) is organising an exhibition of objects from a time capsule buried 25 years ago. This is a selection of 81 objects from that time capsule.

This is one utopic vision of the future, one that might make queer lives liveable. For such visions to be possible we have to begin in the present, with small acts of criticality to expand minds and conversations in order to contemplate such thoughts.

Notes

- 1 *Scenario planning* refers to an exercise that is performed in business enterprises and adopted by Singaporean public service institutions such as the Center for Strategic Futures (www.csf.gov.sg/about-us) to envision and prepare for future contingencies.
- 2 Section 292 1(a) of the Singaporean Penal Code states: ‘Whoever sells, lets to hire, distributes, transmits by electronic means, publicly exhibits or in any manner puts into circulation, or for purposes of sale, hire, distribution, transmission, public exhibition or circulation, makes, produces, or has in his possession any obscene book, pamphlet, paper, drawing, painting, representation or figure, or any other obscene object whatsoever; shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 months, or with fine, or with both.’
- 3 There are a couple of resource spaces for the queer community in Singapore, but no official archive. The Pelangi Pride Center (www.pelangipridecentre.org) is the closest example. It is a library that consists of books donated by members of the queer community in Singapore.
- 4 The final acknowledgement list for contributors: ‘Action for AIDS Singapore, Alfian Sa’at, Boo Junfeng, Leon Cheo, Kenneth Chia, Olivia Chiong, Chiu Chien-Seen, Bryan Choong, June Chua, Shawn Chua Ming Ren, Becca D’Bus, Tania De Rozario, Nicholas Deroose, Eztelle, Free Community Church, Guo Jie Si, Ivan Heng, Russell Heng, Darren Ho, Sun Koh, Lan Gen Bah, Eileena Lee, Lee Mun Wai, Jereh Leong, Joena Shivani, Leow Yangfa, Casey Lim, Atiq Lukman, Alex Neo, Ng Yi-Sheng, Irene Oh, Oogachaga Counselling and Support, Pelangi Pride Centre, Phitthaya Phaefuang, Pink Dot SG, Alan Seah, Jerry Siah, Miak Siew, Avin Tan, Jolene Tan, Kathleen Elizabeth Tan, Luke Tan, Roy Tan, The Necessary Stage, The T Project, TheatreWorks Singapore, Tracy, Wild Rice, Jason Wee, Jason Wong, Lydia Wong, Ming Wong, Bjorn Yeo, Sammi Zhen, Darius Zheng among others.’ For a complete documentation of the installation and objects, see www.loozihan.com/queer-objects-2016/.
- 5 For examples of this, refer to the SG50 website (www.sg.sg50) and Straits Times Singapore (2018).
- 6 From the Singapore Memory Project website (www.singaporememory.sg/), accessed 1 April 2018.
- 7 The oldest object in the collection was a Colonial Landing Permit. It belonged to a contributor’s grandfather who arrived in Singapore to work as a coolie labourer in 1948 when Singapore was still under colonial rule.

- 8 Section 377(a) of the Singaporean Penal Code states: 'Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or abets the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to 2 years.'
- 9 See 'Annex A: Statement to Press' by Loo Zihan, 12 February 2016 (end of chapter).
- 10 A phrase widely attributed to journalist William Gibson in a report from 1993 (www.wired.com/1993/04/gibson-2/), accessed 22 March 2018.
- 11 Performance art in Singapore was restricted in terms of public licensing and state funding from 1993 to 2003. For more information, see www.loozihan.com/s/Archiving_Cane_Folio.pdf, accessed 22 March 2018.
- 12 For a compilation of articles and more information, see http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_1828_2011-08-04.html, accessed 22 March 2018.
- 13 See 'Annex A: Statement to Press' by Loo Zihan, 12 February 2016 (end of chapter).

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