

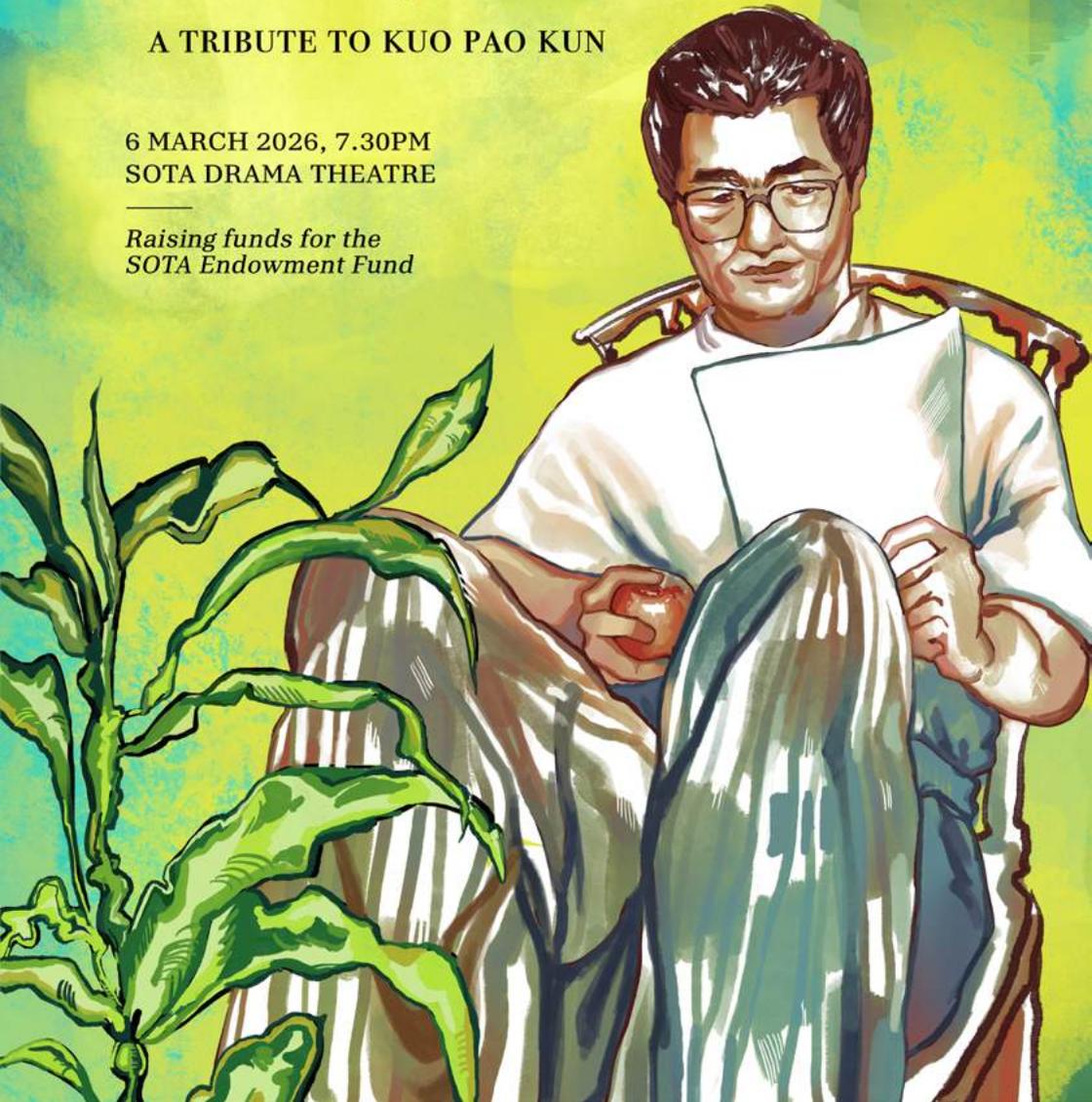
Impact 2026

sota
SCHOOL OF THE
ARTS SINGAPORE

A TRIBUTE TO KUO PAO KUN

6 MARCH 2026, 7.30PM
SOTA DRAMA THEATRE

*Raising funds for the
SOTA Endowment Fund*



Impact 2026

This year's Impact show celebrates the enduring legacy of Mr Kuo Pao Kun, one of Singapore's most influential theatre practitioners. His bold, humanistic works transcended language and cultural boundaries, sparking dialogue and shaping generations of artists. The show this year invites audiences to journey alongside Mei, a curious young seeker, as she tries to uncover the meaning of art. Through original music and dance, Mei discovers and learns truths about what art means to her. Her story is interwoven with excerpts from Kuo Pao Kun's plays — *Lao Jiu: The Ninth Born* and *The Silly Little Girl and the Funny Old Tree* — illuminating her journey of coming of age.



Image courtesy of The Theatre Practice

Proceeds from ticket sales will go towards the SEF which supports students through bursaries, scholarships, and other forms of financial support to those in need.

Impact 2026: Floating Roots

The exhibition serves as a contemplative prelude to Impact 2026, paying tribute to the works and enduring legacy of Kuo Pao Kun. Inspired by his artistic philosophy and lifelong engagement with questions of identity, belonging and home, the exhibition invites audiences into a shared narrative shaped by Singapore's experience of displacement, rebuilding and renewal.

Framed by the metaphors of the Sea and the Tree, Floating Roots unfolds through works by SOTA students across theatre, music, dance, literary arts, film and visual art, tracing a journey from being adrift to finding rootedness. At the heart of the exhibition stands a central tree installation with extending roots and branches echoing how Mr Kuo's legacy continues to grow through generations of artists and audiences. The visitors are invited to contribute to the canopy of collective narratives through hanging reflection cards, responding to prompts that invite reflection on "What is Art?", its place within society and how it shapes us.

Some of the artworks featured in the exhibition are also available for online auction, with proceeds going towards the SOTA Endowment Fund, making arts education accessible to students from all backgrounds. Explore and bid on the pieces [here](#).

Artistic Director's Message



Ms Wendy Ng
Faculty of Theatre

This year's work is an interdisciplinary response to the writings, and theatrical philosophy of Kuo Pao Kun, an artist whose practice continues to shape our understanding of theatre, identity, and responsibility. Our SOTA ensemble comes from diverse artistic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds, and each artist approached Kuo's work from a different entry point. Some were deeply familiar with his philosophies and plays, while others encountered his ideas for the first time through rehearsals, discussions, and embodied explorations. Rather than attempting to recreate or explain Kuo's work, this performance incorporates and responds to it, through movement, text, sound and visual imagery, echoing his belief that theatre is not a single form, but a living dialogue between cultures, histories, and people.

As the Artistic Director of the show, my role has been to hold these many voices together, emulating Kuo's own insistence on "many roots, one practice." Most of what you see in today's show is an original creation. The script, drama, music, art animations, film and dance movements were created in response to Kuo Pao Kun's philosophies and works. Through our protagonist, Mei, we engage in dialogues, exploring the question, 'What is Art?', and by extension, its place in our world.

I hope this performance offers you a generous space to reflect on identity, belonging, and the courage to form your own answer to that question. And while there is no pretense here that our show will come close to comprehensively representing Kuo Pao Kun's work, we have naturally worked hard to ensure that it is rendered with sufficient respect and sensitivity. This would not be possible without the help of the creative team who had helped shape this show, together with a great number of students, alumni and industry practitioners. As Kuo reminded us through his work, theatre is never made alone. It exists because of a community that gathers, witnesses, and continues the conversation together.

We hope that you, our audience, will also meet this work from your own access points, shaped by language, memory, and lived experience.

Thank you and congrats to every staff, student and alumni who has poured their time and effort into this creative work. It is my honour to have been a part of it, together with you. Every single one of you inspires me with your imagination and hard work. Thank you once again to all our audience and generous supporters, without which this experience would not be possible.

Scenes

Scene 1 - Uncertainty... The Silly Little Girl and the Funny Old Tree

Mei finds herself caught between her love for puppetry and her parents' expectations for her. Inspired by the playful questioning of Kuo Pao Kun's *The Silly Little Girl and the Funny Old Tree*, she begins to ask herself: what is art?

Scene 2 - Doubt

In a quiet encounter with nature and her own thoughts, Mei listens, reflects and senses that art may be something more than just skills.... something that is felt.

Scene 3 - Trial

Through storytelling and performance, Mei begins to see art as a living force, shaped by resilience, memory and the courage to grow.

Scene 4 - Fracture

Naysaying and criticism overwhelm Mei, but she is reminded that art is part of who she is.

Scene 5 - Turmoil... Lao Jiu: The Ninth Born

Interwoven with excerpts from Kuo Pao Kun's *Lao Jiu: The Ninth Born*, movement and rhythm collide as Mei confronts society's many definitions of art and searches for her own.

Scene 6 - Synergy

Supported by community, music and dance, Mei discovers that art is shared, learned and sustained through connection with others.

Scene 7 - Fortitude

Mei sees a world where art thrives freely. She understands that art must be carried back into everyday life, not confined to imagination alone.

Scene 8 - Embrace

Back in her everyday life, Mei integrates her love for puppetry and learning. She finds a way to balance responsibility and creativity, completing her journey of self-discovery.

Behind The Scenes

In the lead-up to *Impact 2026*, students and teachers embarked on a series of curated learning experiences to deepen their understanding of Kuo Pao Kun's life and legacy. Through workshops, research, and personal sharings from those closest to him, participants gained insight into his artistic philosophy and enduring influence. These experiences shaped the creative journey behind the performance you see tonight.

Visit to The Theatre Practice



Students went on a learning journey to The Theatre Practice (TTP) to learn more about Kuo Pao Kun's work and legacy. They met with Kuo Jian Hong, daughter of Kuo Pao Kun and Artistic Director of TTP Ltd, who shared insights into his life, artistic philosophy, and impact on Singapore theatre. The session featured inspiring sharings and an engaging Q&A, offering students the opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect on Kuo's enduring legacy.

Get to know Kuo Pao Kun





Students participated in a session conducted by our teachers to learn about the life and legacy of Kuo Pao Kun. The session introduced a brief overview of his history and contributions, followed by small-group discussions where students shared and reflected on what they knew about him, laying the foundation for deeper engagement with his work.

Puppetry Workshop



To deepen the students' understanding of puppetry, the school arranged for a hands-on workshop conducted by Tan Beng Tian, a multifaceted independent theater practitioner skilled in building and designing puppets. Beng Tian is the former Artistic Director of The Finger Players, a theatre company that Kuo Pao Kun initiated. She introduced the origins of traditional puppetry and demonstrated the finger techniques used to bring puppets to life, giving students a practical insight into this expressive art form.

In addition to the key events, the *Impact 2026* team held numerous rehearsals, discussions, and collaborative sessions to craft a showcase that honors Kuo's enduring legacy. Each performer and creator involved in the show has drawn upon the lessons learned through these 'behind the scenes' efforts, striving to produce an authentic and meaningful tribute.

We hope that you, the audience, will enjoy and appreciate the dedication and artistry that has gone into creating this special performance in honour of Kuo Pao Kun, as we lead you on a journey to discover your own answer on 'What is Art?'

Our Cast and Creative Team

Performers

Ayra Putri Adel Dzulkarnaen (Year 4, Theatre)

as *Ensemble*

Isabelle Tan (Year 6, Theatre)

as *Mei*

Lea Jaccard (Year 6, Theatre)

as *Pa Wayang Kulit puppeteer/
Ensemble*

Leung Arielle Meredith Ka Ching (Year 6,
Music)

as *Singing Tree/Passer-by/Ensemble*

Natalie Chua (Year 5, Film)

as *Ma/Ensemble*

Oliver Tan (Year 5, Theatre)

as *Ensemble*

Putra Harris (Year 4, Theatre)

as *Pa/Ensemble*

Rithika Vijayakumar (Year 6, Theatre)

as *Ensemble*

Shrujay Ramakannan (Year 5, Theatre)

as *Ma Wayang Kulit puppeteer/
Ensemble*

Dancers

Bethany Hope Yang (Year 4, Dance)

Carlynn Lee Ka Shyann (Year 4, Dance)

Juluri Laxmi Prasanna (Year 4, Dance)

Lai Rui Yu Noelle (Year 4, Dance)

Thea Pereira (Year 4, Dance)

Musicians

Koh Yong Yi, James (Music alumnus)

Li Wenying Alexis (Year 3, Music)

Roanne Wong (Year 4, Music)

Sai Thejaswi (Year 4, Music)

Tan Guan Ying, Alfryd (Year 5, Music)

Music Composers

Ho Mei Xuan (Year 6, Music)

Kaustubh Chandra Mouli Manikandan (Music
alumnus)

Leung Arielle Meredith Ka Ching (Year 6, Music)

Tan Guan Ying, Alfryd (Year 5, Music)

Research and Writing

Master Radha Dhaval (Year 6, Literary Arts)

Tan Ying Tong Laura (Year 6, Literary Arts)

Production Team

Li Xiaoqiao (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Animation and Projection

Miranda Lim (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Hair / Make-up

Natasha Chan (Year 6, Theatre)

Props Maker

Hannah Tan (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Props Maker /Set Designer

Charmaine Ng (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Set Designer

Lu Hui En (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Key Visual and Costume Designer

Ho Chen Rui, Dayna (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Assistant Costume Designer and

Assistant Lighting

Scarlett Timko (Year 6, Theatre)

Stage Manager

Kaitlyn Tan Yu Xin (Year 6, Music)

Sound Designer

Fiza Sudheer Jahangeer (Year 5, Film)

Videography (Wayang Kulit)

Kara Ann Naylor (Year 5, Film)

Videography (Wayang Kulit)

Reflections



Lu Hui En (Year 6, Visual Arts)

Key Visual & Costume Designer

"I was drawn to Mr Kuo's connection to nature and his use of natural elements as motifs in his work (e.g. The Funny Old Tree), so I used earthy hues and deep greens to imply him being surrounded by the tropical forests of Singapore. I am also very inspired by the intercultural approach in his plays, so I illustrated him wearing a sarong while reading a script in deep contemplation. Mr Kuo's connection to maize was also really intriguing to me, so I included maize plants in the background as well."



Oliver Tan (Year 5, Theatre)

Ensemble actor & student at The Theatre Practice

"To me, *Impact 2026* is more than just a performance. It's a way for me to honour the legacy of Mr Kuo Pao Kun. It's also a way for me to show gratitude for the hard work put in by The Theatre Practice (founded by Kuo Pao Kun) in nurturing me all these years."



Sai Thejaswi (Year 4, Music)

Musician

"*Impact 2026* has positively influenced my growth as a musician. Working with a group of musicians has encouraged me to practise with greater discipline and intention. I learned to adapt my playing to different settings, and it also pushed me to think more creatively about interpretation and how music supports the drama. Being part of the show also motivates me to perform with greater purpose and responsibility, knowing that my contribution can help create positive change."



Juluri Laxmi Prasanna (Year 4, Dance)

Dancer

"A particularly meaningful moment for me is the intercultural dance later in the play, where many different forms of dance are woven together. The first part of this piece is one I choreographed under the guidance of my teachers, which makes it especially meaningful to me. I hope the audience leaves this performance with a newfound appreciation for the arts and feels encouraged to engage with different artforms on a deeper level."



Trevor Poh (Class of 2015, Film)

Videography, Trinutty Studios

"As an alumnus, it's a privilege to be back here, seeing the juniors come together across all artforms, year levels, and teachers for one shared purpose. The most meaningful part for me was having my company's interns, who are also SOTA alumni, take part in *Impact* to put up a good show for the SOTA Endowment Fund."

Special Thanks

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Dr Lee Boon Yang

Patron, SOTA Endowment Fund

Mdm Goh Lay Kuan

Co-founder of The Theatre Practice

Ms Kuo Jian Hong

Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice

Mr Alvin Tan

Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage

Mr Ivan Heng

Founder and Artistic Director at Wild Rice Ltd

Mr T. Sasitharan

Co-founder and Director of Intercultural Theatre Institute

Our Appreciation

Artistic Director

Ms Wendy Ng (Theatre)

Assistant Artistic Director

Ms Joanne Poon (Theatre)

Teacher Mentors

Ms Aswani Aswath (Literary Arts)

Ms Dapheny Chen (Dance)

Mr Gu Wei (Music)

Mr Soh Ee Shaun (Visual Arts)

Project Management and Marketing

SOTA Fundraising Committee

Publicity Design

Sarah Noorhimli (Class of 2019, Visual Arts)

Videography

Trevor Poh (Class of 2015, Film)

Trinutty Studios

'Floating Roots' Exhibition Curator

Eunice Lim (Class of 2024, Visual Arts)

Production / Stage Manager

Ms Alycia Finley

Ms Melissa Ho

Alvan Tan (Theatre alumnus)

Lighting Design

Tai Zi Feng

Student & Alumni Performers and Creators

(see 'Our Cast and Creative Team' list)

Student Volunteers who helped in various ways behind the scenes including photography, set painting, usher duties and production

And all who have contributed in one way or another to *Impact 2026*

Ashurst

Since 2012, Ashurst LLP has showcased works by School of the Arts, Singapore (SOTA) Visual Arts students within their office, offering an authentic platform for students to extend their creative reach beyond the school campus. Beyond displaying their artworks, Ashurst has warmly welcomed the SOTA community, including students, teachers, and parents, through a tea reception celebrating the partnership and providing students the opportunity to share the stories and inspiration behind their creations.

As a passionate supporter of the arts, Ashurst LLP continues to nurture young talent by extending their partnership with SOTA as a Silver Donor for *Impact 2026*.



OUE

Nourishing Communities, One Meal at a Time

OUE Limited continues its fourth year of fundraising in support of Community Chest. Through its iconic brand Chatterbox, the *Let Us Feed Kindness Together* campaign invites diners to give back simply by enjoying local favourites, turning everyday meals into meaningful support for the community.



The SOTA Endowment Fund: Supporting Arts Education for All

At SOTA, our vision is to nurture creative citizens who will positively impact both Singapore and the world. We are committed to providing a vibrant and supportive learning environment deeply rooted in the arts.

To support this vision, we have established the SOTA Endowment Fund (SEF) to ensure long-term sustainability of funds to provide essential financial assistance to our students through bursaries, scholarships and other financial assistance.



Your Contribution Matters

Your contribution to the SEF will make arts education accessible to students from all backgrounds, empowering them to pursue their passion and reach their fullest potential.

Beyond financial assistance, your contribution sends a powerful message of inclusivity and support for the arts community. Together, we can nurture the next generation of creative leaders for years to come. Join us in making a lasting impact and transforming lives through the gift of arts education.

Scan or tap on the QR code to find out how you can donate.





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