



BATU, an Esplanade commission built around a grinding stone, premieres from 16 to 18 October

Description

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BATU by Ayu Permata Sari and Hasyimah Harith. Photo: Esplanade

BATU, a new [Esplanade commission](#) by Indonesian dancer Ayu Permata Sari and Singapore dancer Hasyimah Harith, premieres at the Esplanade Theatre Studio at 8pm from Friday 16 to Sunday 18 October.

The work is the Singapore-made centrepiece of da:ns focus: Connect Asia Now, the Esplanade weekend of contemporary dance created by or with Asian artists, which runs from 15 to 18 October.

A grinding stone at the centre

Batu means stone, and the piece is built around the grinding stone found in Malay and Indonesian kitchens. Through movement and voice, the two dancers work through tradition, restraint, devotion, intimacy, shame, pleasure, sacrifice and healing, with the kitchen as the main setting. Held close to the body, the stone carries memories passed down the female line of a family.

Belgian dramaturg aRco Renz works with the pair, with sound by Rosemainy Buang and lighting by Emanorwatty Saleh. The work was developed in Esplanade's Contemporary Performing Arts Research Residency, supported by the National Arts Council, and is co-produced by Performance Space in Australia.

The performance now runs 1hr 15mins with no interval. Audience members are offered food during the show, and eating it is optional.

Sambal after the show

After each performance, Sendok Rakyat runs Sampai Lumat (Until Finely Ground), a free one-hour session in the foyer where audience members pound sambal belachan with a traditional Malay pestle and mortar. A vegetarian option is available and places go on a first-come, first-served basis. The 17 and 18 October shows also end with a post-show dialogue.

BATU is rated R18 for mature themes and is performed in English, Malay and Bahasa Indonesia. Latecomers are not admitted. Standard tickets are S\$32, with concession tickets for students, NSFs, seniors and persons with disabilities, and SG Culture Pass credits can be used.

The rest of the weekend

da:ns LAB 2026, produced by Dance Nucleus, shows four works in progress from Bunny Cadag, Chung Nguyen, Hee Suhui (Anise) and Pradeep Gupta at the Esplanade Annexe Studio at 4pm and 5pm on 15 and 16 October, as part of the VECTOR#7 exhibition.

Two free talks round off the weekend. Indonesian artist Melati Suryodarmo leads Rethinking Representation: Contemporary Art and the Question of Identity on 17 October, and Tang Fu Kuen and aRco Renz hold Perspectives on Practice on 18 October.

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