



OH! Open House launches Departures: what do we keep when a place disappears?

Description

What do we keep when a place disappears? That is the question at the heart of **Departures**, a new programme by independent arts organisation **OH! Open House** that brings artists into Singapore spaces facing closure, redevelopment or transition, long before the wrecking ball arrives.

Rather than mourning change, Departures asks what is worth carrying forward when a building, business or landscape disappears: the knowledge, routines, relationships and memories that don't always make it into official records. The programme kicks off with two editions this October and November, with a third planned for 2027, and will also build a digital archive documenting the histories and lived experiences connected to each site.



Singapore transforms
faster than we remember.

So when a place
disappears, what should
we carry forward?

Come explore through art,
stories and conversation.



Edition 1: Kelong E63, 23 to 25 October 2026

The first edition turns to **Kelong E63**, formerly one of Singapore's last active working kelongs. More than 250 licensed kelongs once operated here in the 1940s, and E63 was run for over two decades by the late Timothy Ng (âUncle Timothyâ) and his wife Maureen Ng, alongside an adjoining floating fish farm, before it ceased operations in 2025.

While the National Heritage Board has documented the kelong's physical structure, Departures turns to what is harder to capture: the memories that continue beyond the site. Singaporean artist-curator Daniel Chong works with materials Uncle Timothy gave him, including fishing nets and wooden floorboards, exploring how ordinary objects accumulate meaning through use. Alongside him, Kenny Lek of Pasarfish presents a dining and storytelling experience tracing how Singapore's fishing landscape has shifted from kelong-based wild catch to fish farming.

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Edition 2: Sin Siong Lim Sawmill, 7 November 2026

Departures then moves to **Sin Siong Lim Sawmill**, Singapore's last operating sawmill, tracing its roots to a business established in 1912. As regional logging controls tightened over the decades, the sawmill adapted to working increasingly with locally generated wood, giving the century-old business a continuing role in Singapore's circular economy today.

Artists Robert Zhao Renhui and Lewis Choo respond to the sawmill, its materials and the people behind it. Zhao's practice often examines the relationship between human activity and the natural world, while Choo works through sculpture and ceramics to explore material, memory and transformation. Visitors will encounter the working sawmill's timber, machinery and daily processes alongside the

artistic responses and stories from the Lim family.

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DEPARTURES

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Why It Matters

“Departures is not about asking Singapore to stop changing,” said Alan Oei, Executive Director of OH! Open House. “It is about asking what deserves to continue even when the building, business or landscape does not. Artists give us a different way of looking at these places, because they can spend time with what is easily overlooked and make those stories visible to the rest of us.”

Across the series, OH! invites audiences to consider a broader idea of what is worth remembering: not just what happened in a place, but who spent their lives there, what they learnt, what they made and what they passed down. Departures will continue in 2027 with a third edition centred on a vinyl shop at Golden Mile, with further details to be announced.

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What Do We Keep When a Place Disappears? OH! Open House launches Departures

New programme begins with Kelong E63 and Sin Siong Lim Sawmill, using art, stories and conversation to examine what should be carried forward when places change or disappear



Singapore, 30 September 2026 – Independent arts organisation **OH! Open House (OH!)** has launched Departures, a new programme that brings artists into places facing closure, redevelopment or transition to explore the people, practices and stories that risk disappearing with them.

Beginning with Kelong E63 and Sin Siong Lim Sawmill, and continuing with a third edition at a vinyl business in Golden Mile Tower in 2027, Departures will invite audiences to encounter these places through art, stories, conversations and experiences. The programme will also contribute to a digital archive documenting the histories, knowledge and lived experiences connected to each site.

Departures asks what is lost when a place disappears: not only its physical structure, but the knowledge, routines, relationships and memories connected to it. Rather than resisting change, the programme considers what should continue even when a place cannot.

"Departures is not about asking Singapore to stop changing," said **Alan Oei, Executive Director, OH! Open House**. "It is about asking what deserves to continue even when the building, business or landscape does not. Artists give us a different way of looking at these places, because they can spend time with what is easily overlooked and make those stories visible to the rest of us."

Tickets and Information

Tickets for the first two editions of Departures are available at bit.ly/ohprogrammes. For more ideas on exploring Singapore's heritage spaces, check out our guides to [Kampong Gelam Festival 2026](#) and the [HeritageSG Liberation of Singapore trail](#).

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