

Conceptualisation

It took me a long while to come up with my concept and direction for this installation. It was tough because I knew this topic has been done excessively, and I wanted a refreshing angle that came from a personal lens, and I wanted to introduce this topic in a different light.

I did not want to go for the usual of showing empathy for the personal lives of these workers because that has been done and it would be too ideal a message and perhaps even unrealistic.

My initial idea was to appreciate the local-migrant coexistence which I felt was actually quite vague because I felt there were too many things I was trying to show/say with beauty, coexistence, dormitory life and work, and it was not cohesive as an idea.

As I was trying to streamline it, I decided to keep things simple with a video to appreciate the new hdb buildings and to show glimpse of the cohabitation of local and foreigner population within. I intentionally hid the faces of the workers to make it a more subtle gesture and instead, showing a picture of a hand projected on the floor.

THE HANDS BENEATH YOUR FEET

This is the title that came to me after the floor scrubbing incident and it struck me while making this work.

I like that it is catchy and that it plays on the visual pun of the placement of hands and feet with the role/status of the locals vs foreign workers.

I felt it was a title that could hinge the entire angle of the project on the fact that the ground we feel safe to be stepping on in our homes, is the work of these labourers and this is the impact they have made in our lives. It ultimately is beyond the buildings but the beauty and life that they have injected into the society.

Built-to-Order / Ordered-to-Build were other titles I was toying with, to liken the idea of the buildings being built in Punggol to the influx of foreign workers to build these buildings. But the first title stuck through.