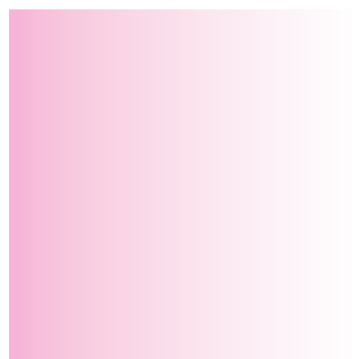
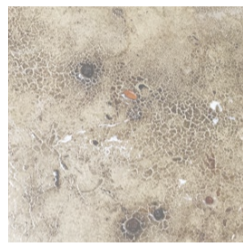
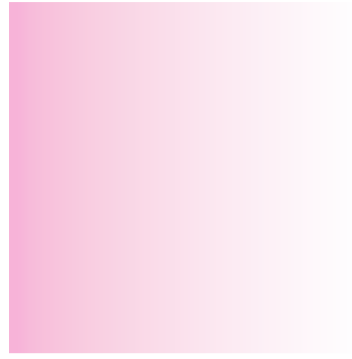
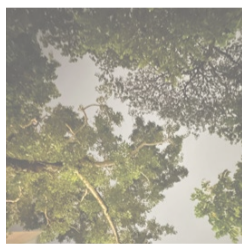


THIS
WILL
BE
SOMETHING



CO FABRICATING A GARDEN A GLIMPSE INTO PERIURBAN SCAPES



19 Oct 25
20 Oct 25

Compiled by:

Tang Wei, Ruth Chong

Workshop Hosts

This workshop was held in conjunction with:

THIS WILL BE SOMETHING:
CINEMATIC CARTOGRAPHIES OF THE POST-RURAL

Victoria Jane Marshall (Dr), Carlos G. Gomez

Event Producers

Hiral Patel, Lu Yixin

Student Research Assistants

Ankit Bagchi, Dipanwita Manna

India Research Assistants



Bodhi Garden Outside SDE 3
(Photo by Victoria Jane Marshall (Dr.), 2025)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Design Brief

Workshop Outcomes

Bi Hongying
Anatomy of Many Falls

Boddapati Krishna Sri
Silent Coexistence: Epiphytes on a Bodhi Tree

Daniel Joseph
The Peri-chicken Playground

Jamie Loh
Nature's Spotlight

Kothai Arunachalam, Ruchira Bhagwat, Shruthakeerthi Karthikeyan
Beneath the Surface

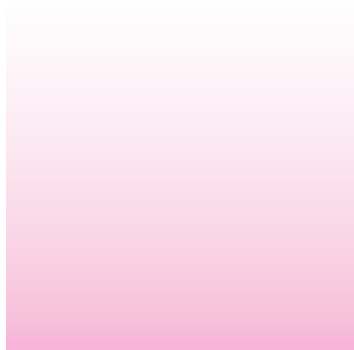
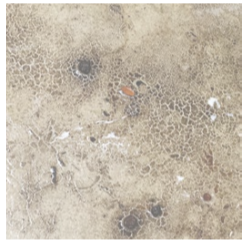
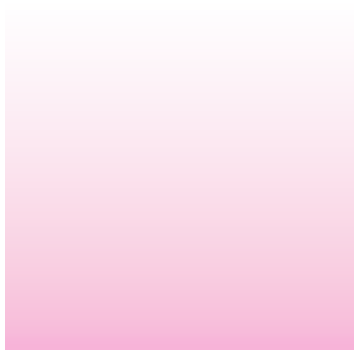
Lee Huei Min
Dapples in Bodhi

Li Jingyao, Zhao Fuhan, Wu Han
Mirror of Growth

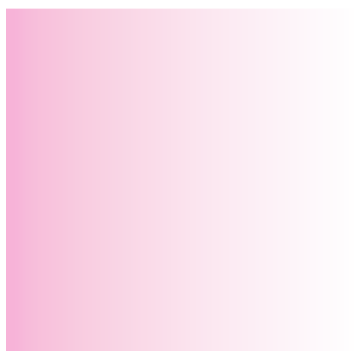
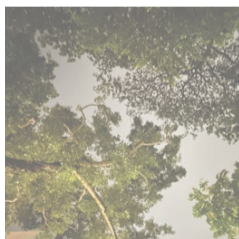
Loh Kah Miin, Heymans Lo
Among Humans and Fauna

Zhou Qinying
Canvas of Light and Shadow

References



DESIGN BRIEF



In this workshop, participants worked on co-fabricating a garden by digging deeper into the following topics:

On gardens

“Garden” carries various meanings across contexts and scales. In Singapore, gardens may refer from large-scale infrastructural projects such as Gardens by the Bay, to small assembly of potted plants outside one’s home. It may even refer to Singapore as a whole - a “garden city” vision in the 1970s to a “city in a garden” in present times. On a regional scale, gardens in periurban landscapes of Monsoon Asia may refer to cultivation of various trees and crops, sometimes in association with domestic animals akin to agroforestry systems (Mohan Kumar & Nair, 2004). These gardens all show an active role of human agency in shaping space, yet the impact of non-human agencies should not be left unrecognised. The subject of cultivation is responsive and reactive; a conscious effort is made to work with the elements, animals, insects and plants of the garden. The garden is not a static end-product, but remains fluid as it is shaped by culture across time, reflecting the persisting entanglement between humans and more-than-human agencies.

On methods of representation

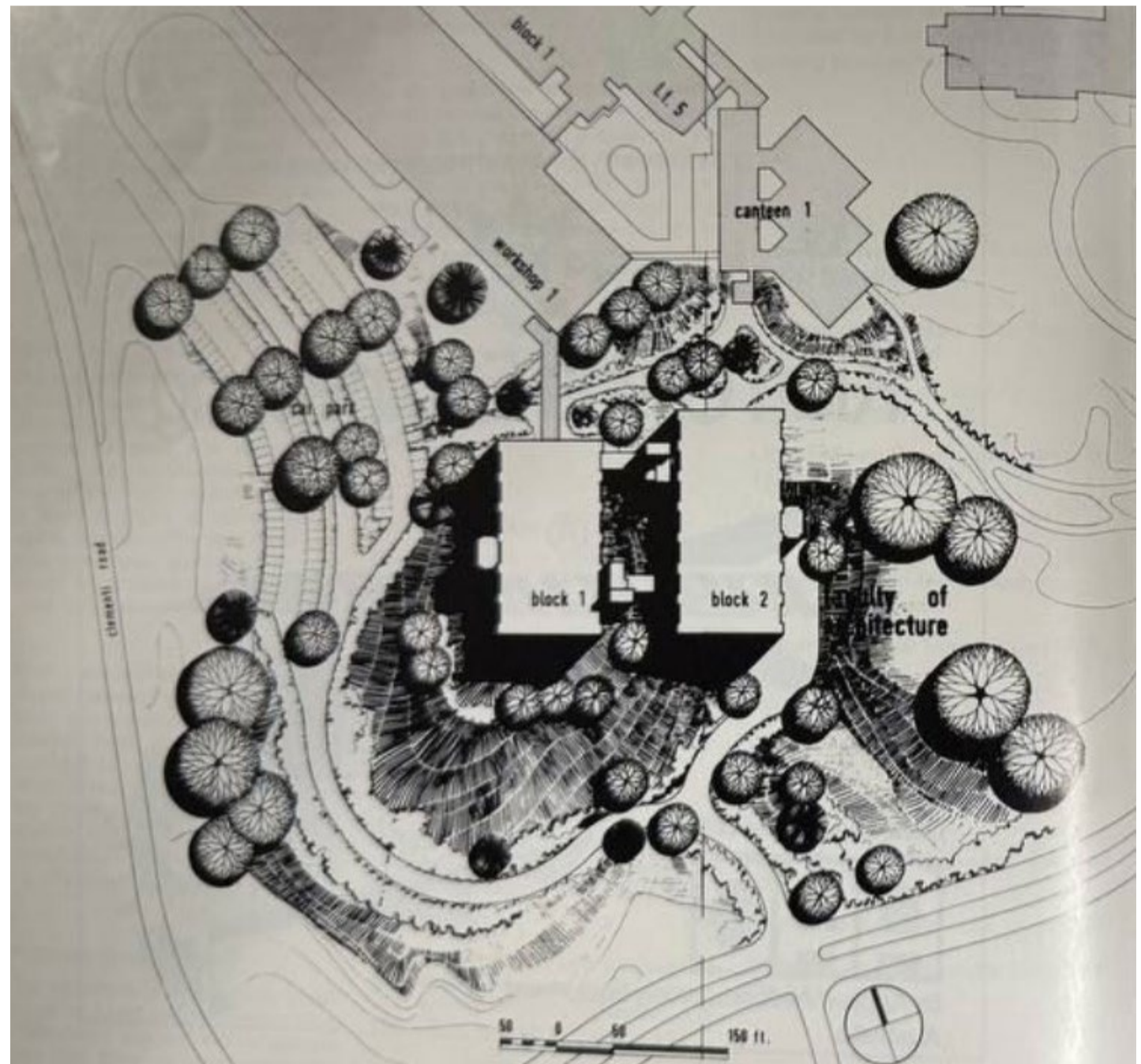
The map is a conventional method of aerial representation but has its own set of limitations, leaving out the sensorial experience, dimensionality and processes of the site. Speaking against these established ways of representation, we will engage in a mini site activity where we adopt a more-than-human lens to record observations that are not represented conventionally. During this, we will develop alternative methods of seeing and mapping with codes, symbols and descriptions as annotations of fieldwork observation.

On agencies

The workshop expands on the conversation through the act of making with more-than-human agencies in a garden closer to home - the Bodhi Garden of SDE3. Through literary excerpts, contextualised sharings, multi-channel installation and tactile workshops, students explore how they may see the garden in an alternative lens, to bring out their narrative of the garden.

The participants were tasked to create a Garden Element for the Bodhi Garden (outside SDE 3). Simply put, the Garden Element can be described as a reflection of a specific experience or observation of the garden. It utilises alternative methods of representation to best contextualise one's experience within the garden across different scales of time and space.

A short guided tour of the Bodhi Garden and the Nasi Ulam Forest Garden was given as an introduction, where the participants were exposed to a more-than-human lens of observation of the garden and its agencies via a counter-mapping exercise. Referencing the counter-mapping exercise, they then selected an observation of interest to explore further to create a Garden Element.



Old SDE Site Plan with the Bodhi Garden open towards the Clementi Road.
(Journal of the Singapore Institute of Architects, 1976-78)

The Bodhi Garden at SDE3 first appeared on the plans for the SDE1 and SDE2 buildings in the 1970s. It formed part of a pedestrian route linking the canteen block, the Engineering block, and the SDE blocks. When SDE3 was constructed in the late 1970s over part of the old car park, it enclosed the Bodhi Garden, which had previously opened toward Clementi Road.

The complex was likely designed by the University of Singapore Development Unit, the project architect for the early SDE buildings. These works formed part of the first phase of development at the NUS Kent Ridge campus.

Several significant trees remain. They include the bodhi tree at the nook between SDE3 and the link bridge to Engineering, the banyan tree between SDE1 and SDE3, and the large rain trees lining the path towards Kent Ridge Crescent. Together, they have witnessed the growth of the Kent Ridge campus.

Non-exhaustive list of agencies, processes and spatial elements of the Bodhi garden were provided to the participants as a guide to explore for making the Garden Element. They were motivated to choose personal experiences and observations even outside of the list.

Subject/Agencies in the Garden

Elements	Animals	Insects	Plants/Fungi	Human
Sun	Migratory Bird	Butterfly	Bodhi Tree	Landscape Architect
Rain/Water	Chicken	Ant	Trees (branches, fruits, leaves)	Faculty Staff & Students
Wind	Cat	Moth	Shrubs	Maintenance Staff
Earth	Frog	Wasp	Mould	
	Snail	Centipede	Algae	
			Fern	
			Moss	

Processes in the Garden

Heating	Migration	Metamorphosis	Fruiting	Walking
Precipitation	Nesting	Pollination	Decomposition/ Decay	Cleaning
Flooding	Foraging	Burrowing	Flowering	Sitting
Erosion	Composting	Symbiosis	Swaying (branches)	Talking
Radiation	Fertilisation	Camouflage	Photosynthesis	Pruning
Evaporation/ Condensation	Nutrient Recycling	Webbing	Tranpiration	Planting
Runoff	Sound communication		Seed Dispersal	
			Phototropism	
			Germination	
			Leaves Shedding	

Spatial Elements in the Garden

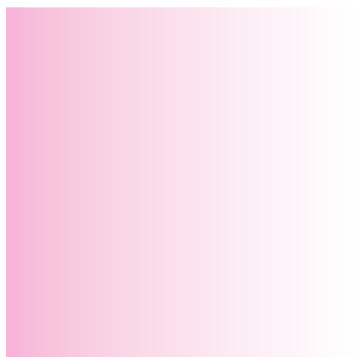
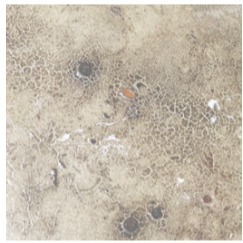
Footpath	Planters	Rainwater Downpipe	Concrete Tiles	Trees & Shrubs
Drains	Lights	Signboard	Bench	Covered walkway
Plant matter	Rocks			



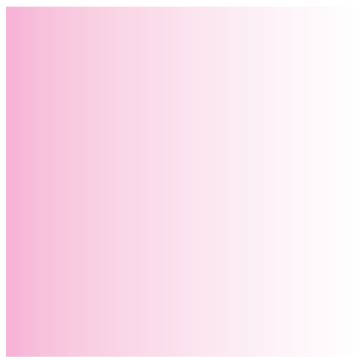
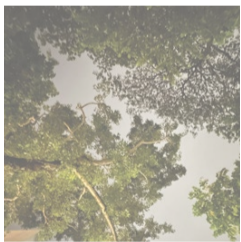
Guided tour to the Nasi Ulam Forest Garden.
(Photo by Hiral Patel)



Participants in the Bodhi Garden making observations.
(Photo by Hiral Patel)



WORKSHOP OUTCOMES



Participants worked in groups or individually to create the Garden Element in any medium of choice. A size dimension of 600 x 600 x 600mm was given which corresponds to the tiles of the Bodhi Garden. The use of recycled materials or foraged materials from the garden was encouraged.

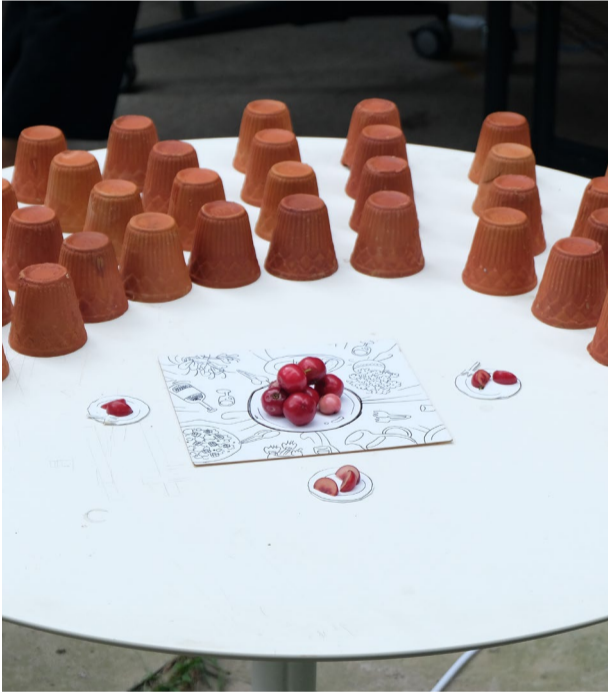
They then presented the fruit of their labour for about 5 minutes at the end of the second day with observations and reflections.



Loh Kah Miin, Heymans Lo co-fabricating their work *Among Humans and Fauna*.
(Photo by Hiral Patel)



Jamie Loh Presenting her work *Nature's Spotlight*.
(Photo by Hiral Patel)



Bi Hongying
Anatomy of Many Falls

Have you ever noticed the little red fruits scattered around that clearing in front of the main SDE3 entrance? Ever stepped on one before? Accidentally or on purpose?

Throughout my year 2 days, every morning whenever I head to the studio, I will walk past the Bodhi Garden. The numerous round fruit, starkingly red, is my everyday welcome into a new day. The first few times, the fruits were crushed by accident, the latter times, not so. Perhaps this small ritual had indeed brought me a bit of joy in my dreary routine.

Now, once again reviewing the garden, I gain a new perspective. The little red cherry fruits from the towering trees, unbestowed to us, is just one small part of the cycle that the plant goes through at any moment. The tedious acts of nutrients from decomposition to growth, to leaves sprouting, to maturing, to flowering, to bearing fruits, to fruits turning from green to red, to spreading seeds via fruits falling plop, plop, plopping down and -- squish--.

This simple and even unnoticed act of human imposition on nature is astounding. The disruption to the cycle via stepping on the fruits is just another human destruction to the more-than-human beings that share the space with us. Other actions, such as concrete constructions into the boundaries, cleaners removing leaves and fruits from the premise, the jetwater spray, student noises, etc, etc... these conflicts are their norm.

Hence, I would like to draw the audience's attention to these details which they often forgo. Imagine the exact process, but in an exaggerated blow up of dramatic destruction in 7 acts. Scattered all around the garden, I invite you into the joy of discovering the stories of these "falls", entirely up to your own interpretation.

An explosion of cherry mess under a concrete block, a who-dun-it murder mystery, a luscious fruit feast, a Hirst artwork replica, unfortunate branch accidents etc... I hope my imaginative tales will encourage you to look at our collective garden once again.



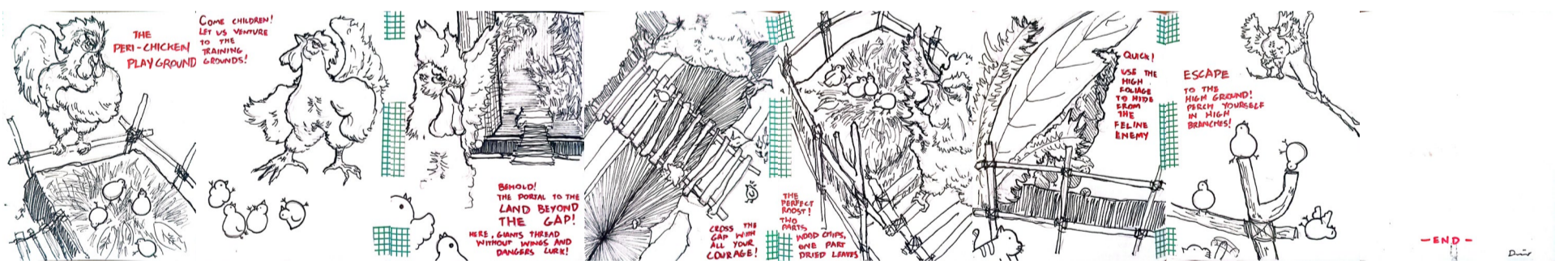
Boddapati Krishna Sri***Silent Coexistence: Epiphytes on a Bodhi Tree***

During my site visit, the Bodhi tree immediately captured my attention — not only for its spiritual significance and sculptural form, but also for the intricate, layered ecosystem thriving along its trunk. Its rough, uneven bark, sometimes chipped and covered with soft moss and pale powdery growth, reflected a story of time, adaptation, and coexistence. On closer inspection, I discovered a miniature community of ferns, mosses, and lichens, each occupying the trunk in a way that supported and complemented others.

Among the ferns, the marginal wood fern, dragon scale fern, and bird's nest fern were particularly noticeable, reproducing through spores dispersed by wind and rain. The bird's nest fern, with its broad rosette-shaped fronds, trapped fallen leaves, dust, and rainwater, forming small pockets of organic matter that nourished both itself and surrounding epiphytes. The dragon scale fern, with its tough, overlapping fronds, clung to shaded portions of the bark, flourishing in the filtered light and humid microclimate created by the Bodhi's dense canopy. These ferns help retain moisture and stabilized trunk temperature, protecting it from excessive drying or heat.

Mosses form a soft, green carpet at the base of the trunk, absorbing and holding water while slowly decomposing to enrich the bark with nutrients. Above them, lichens appeared as delicate grey and white patches — symbiotic associations of fungi and algae that clean the air and indicate healthy environmental conditions. Together, these species moderated the trunk's microclimate, prevented erosion, and provided shelter for insects, snails, and other small organisms.

What began as a casual observation soon revealed a deeper understanding: the Bodhi tree is not simply a single organism, but a microcosm of ecological processes. Its surface demonstrates cycles of growth, adaptation, and interdependence, showing how even small layers of life contribute to a resilient and thriving ecosystem.



Daniel Joseph
The Peri-chicken Playground

Venturing onto the site, we were greeted by chickens scratching at the ground, a mother hen teaching her chicks how to brave the wild, hunt for food, and evade danger. Such encounters are hardly unusual; the NUS chickens are notorious troublemakers. What was striking, however, were the luminescent cones and hazard tape enclosing the flock. Within this cordoned-off zone lay a broken drain, likely eroded by torrents of rainwater from the nearby downpipe.

Here, the human and nonhuman worlds seem to part ways. The drain becomes a threshold, a boundary between two agencies. On one side, the chickens actively shape their surroundings, scraping and clawing at the soil in small acts of transformation. On the other, human intervention appears reactive: a downpipe diverts rain, a drain cracks and decays, a barrier is erected to mark repair.

My installation sought to bridge these worlds, to create a space where the active nonhuman agents might be invited into the human domain. Positioned on the edge between the two territories, it occupies the periphery of the chickens' realm, the Peri Chicken. Conceived as a playground for chickens, it becomes a learning ground where parent hens can teach their young the dos and don'ts of chickenhood: how to forage, to play, to survive. It is a place designed from the perspective of a chicken, where human construction yields to nonhuman agency.

Through this workshop, I came to understand an expanded definition of the periurban: not just a spatial edge between city and rural, but an entirely distinct condition of flux, of negotiation between coexisting worlds. This exercise invited me to reimagine that threshold, to transform the periphery into a space of encounter, play, and shared transformation.



Jamie Loh
Nature's Spotlight

Pleasure from silence and in the sitting. Choosing to feel,

Foraged and picked up from the ground

Like a leave wind chime, a resting place, shadows

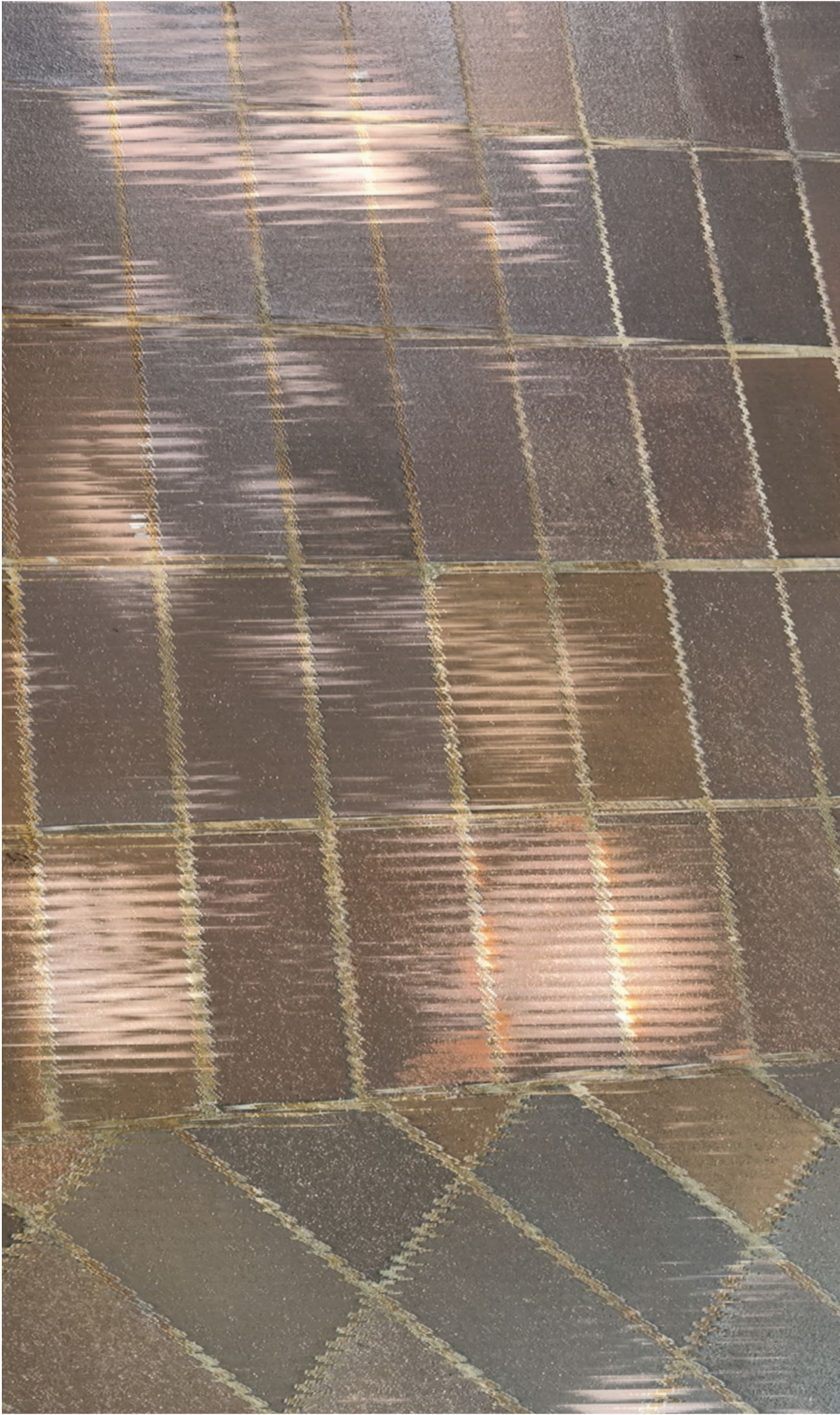


Kothai Arunachalam, Ruchira Bhagwat, Shruthakeerthi Karthikeyan
Beneath the Surface

This project is a response to the dancing tiles in the Bodhi Gardens. As we walked through the garden, we noticed that the tiles that were initially laid flat, had become crooked. Out of curiosity, when we lifted the tile, we saw the roots of the bodhi tree surfaced through the soil.

These dancing tiles are spread throughout the garden (marked in green post-it notes) making a tangible contribution to the sensory experience of the Bodhi Garden, which is further enhanced by the Rukam Masam staining the pathways.

This inspired us to create a participative installation that allows us to co-fabricate an interaction between human and non-human activity. The installation sits over one of the dancing tiles mimicking the root that is below. In projecting this feature above ground, we intend for people to notice the unseen. This could be by touch, that is, by tripping on the branch/root itself. The embedded Rukam Masam fruits are meant to stain the canvas, similar to how they stain the tiles of the garden, creating an artwork that is an assemblage of the entanglements in the garden.



Lee Huei Min
Dapples in Bodhi

As I was walking along the pathway, the flickering of light from above caught my attention. The midday sun cast shadows of the leaves on the white-tiled walls of SDE1, and not only that, as the wind blew, the light flickered, and patterns changed. I thought of how the patterns of the shadows were a co-fabrication of not only the garden elements, like the trees and plants of the Bodhi garden, but also the sun and weather. This pattern will likely be more erratic during stormy weather and more rhythmic during nice weather. My design aims to immortalise these moments using stop motion art, as we can see here.

This workshop was very thought-provoking on what defines a periurban and also gave us many readings on more than human contexts for our own reading and exploration.

Process:

Take a video of light dapples > Extract frames from video > Resize images > Combine image to create stop motion animation

Links:

Video frames extraction:

<https://frame-extractor.com/en/extract>

Image resize:

https://www.birme.net/?target_width=3508&target_height=4961&pica=true

Combine image to create stop motion animation:

<https://scanimation.org/>



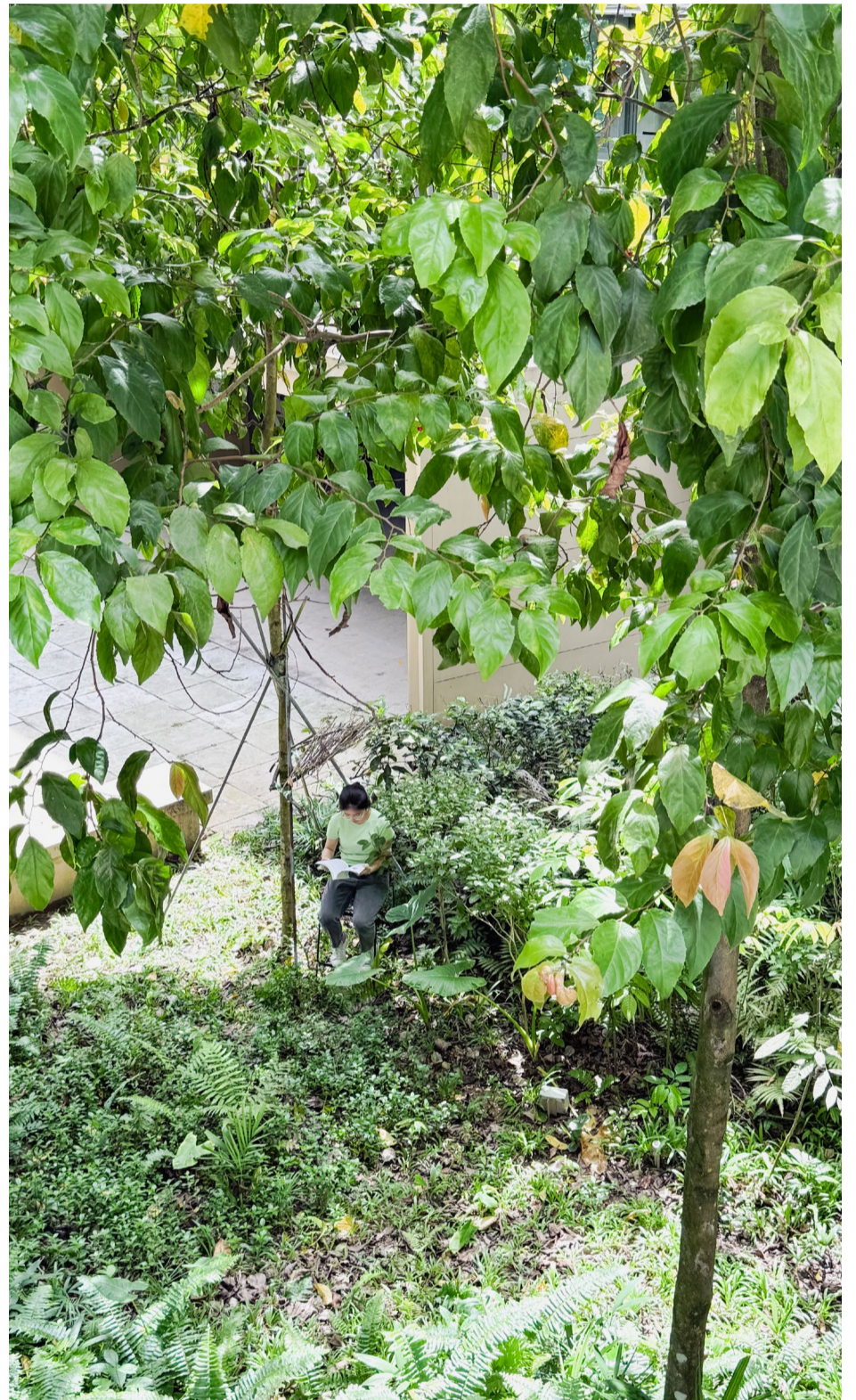
Scan here for a Stop Motion Art



Li Jingyao, Zhao Fuhan, Wu Han
Mirror of Growth

In the Bodhi Garden, growth and change take place quietly and slowly—similar from year to year, yet different in every moment. The shadows of trees move, fruits ripen, and leaves fall, while people often pass by quickly, rarely looking up or down to observe. The subtle interactions among light, leaves, and animals sustain the garden’s continuous rhythm of life and coexistence. We wanted to make this delicate relationship visible, so we used only materials found on site—branches, leaves, stones, fruits, and a thin plastic film—to create a shallow basin that collects rainwater and reflects the surrounding trees. The basin embodies the natural cycle of accumulation and disappearance: sometimes holding still water that mirrors the canopy above, sometimes rippling in the wind, or drying up under the sun. When squirrels, birds, or insects come to drink, the piece fulfills its purpose—showing that space is not built solely by the designer, but co-shaped by wind, light, water, animals, and humans.

Through this process, we learned to slow down and notice the quiet presence of growth and transformation, realizing that shaping space is a dynamic process. Landscape making is not only about form, but about creating the conditions in which relationships between living and non-living elements can emerge.



Loh Kah Miin, Heymans Lo
Among Humans and Fauna

Our project observes the small movements of ants and lizards within the Bodhi Garden, noticing how their paths weave between the spaces we move through every day. The trees planted by humans become a middle ground, connecting people who pass by while also offering shelter and a sense of home for the smaller species that live among them. These overlaps reveal how space is never shaped by humans alone but through the constant co-fabrication between human and non-human agencies.

We question how man-made elements could start new interactions with nature, how humans, animals, and materials could all share the same structure in ways that support one another. The installation takes shape as a small playground built from fallen twigs and branches found on-site, lightly attached by tying string to only the man-made steel poles that support the tree. It invites ants and lizards to climb, pause, and inhabit, while also creating a small shelter for people, a place to rest, to stand under the rain, to simply notice.

Through this process, we learnt to observe more closely the smaller agencies that move quietly around us. Design, we realised, should not just respond to human needs but weave between all forms of life that shape and share the space we inhabit together, creating delight found in the unnoticed.



Zhou Qinying
Canvas of Light and Shadow

The shadows of plants in the garden move differently from those of static structures — they sway, flicker, and shift with the wind. That subtle movement caught my eye and became the starting point of my observation. From 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., I photographed the garden every hour to record how the shadows changed. At each moment, I marked the shadows of individual plants as small samples, and when I stepped back, the ground and the wall together became a single canvas, where these samples layered over time formed a moving composition. As the day went on, the shadows slowly climbed from the ground up the wall, as if the sunlight was tracing their edges. Although both surfaces were static, this process gave them a quiet sense of growth.

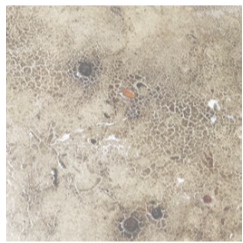
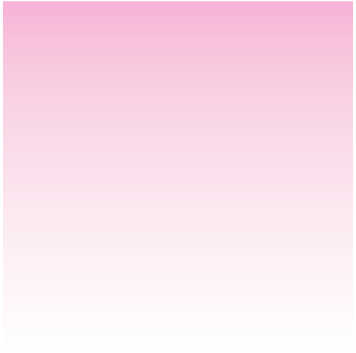
Through this workshop, by tracing how light and shadow move across built surfaces, I saw how natural rhythms keep reshaping what seems static. This everyday negotiation between sunlight, wind, plants, and structure reflects a space which is continuously co-produced by both human and non-human forces. Even small, intangible changes reveal how the garden is always in motion.



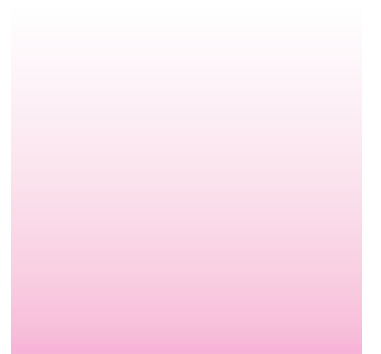
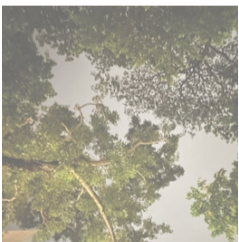
As a culmination to the the workshop, the Garden Elements were presented within the garden, interacting with the space and the media event on 20 October 2025.
(Photo by Aw Wei Kang)



They were also exhibited within the subsequent media event of This Will Be Something: Cinematic Cartographies of the Post-Rural held on the evening of 22 October 2025.
(Photo by Hiral Patel)



REFERENCES



- Ait-Touati, F., Arenes, A., & Gregoire, A. (2022). *Terra forma: A Book of Speculative Maps*. MIT Press.
- Badenoch, K., Periscope, & Dorsch, T. (2022). *Riparian score: The River Lea variations* (pp. 01–32) [Book; Microscope Slides]. Periscope. Retrieved October 13, 2025, from https://www.periscope.uk/media/downloads/0099-PR-RP-L-0001_Riparian-Score.pdf
- Barnard, Timothy P. (2014). *Nature Contained: Environmental Histories of Singapore*. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Barron, Jennifer. (2016). "Community Gardening: Cultivating Subjectivities, Space, and Justice." *Local Environment* 22 (9): 1142–58. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2016.1169518>.
- Bell, Sarah J. (2017). "Co-Becoming with Angophora: Performing More-Than-Human Belongings in Ku-Ring-Gai Chase National Park." *Social & Cultural Geography* 20 (5): 605–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2017.1375551>.
- Castree, N., & Braun, B. (Ed.) (2001). *Social nature: theory, practice and politics*. Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Cattoor, B., & Perkins, C. (2014). Re-cartographies of Landscape: New Narratives in Architectural Atlases. *Cartographic Journal*, 51(2), 166–178.
- Desimini, J., Desimini, J., & Waldheim, C. (2016). *Cartographic grounds: projecting the landscape imaginary*. Princeton Architectural Press.
- Elkin, R. S. (2022). *Plant Life*. University of Minnesota Press.
- Gandy, Matthew. (2016). "Unintentional Landscapes." *Landscape Research* 41 (4): 433–40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01426397.2016.1156069>.
- Head, L., & Atchison, J. (2008). Cultural ecology: emerging human-plant geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33(2), 236-245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132508094075> (Original work published 2009)
- Head, Lesley & Atchison, Jennifer & Phillips, Catherine. (2015). The distinctive capacities of plants: Re-thinking difference via invasive species. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 40. 399-413. 10.1111/tran.12077.
- Hunt, John Dixon. (2012). *A World of Gardens*. Reaktion Books.

- Jones, E. & Twose, S. (2023). Drawing Ground. *Interstices: Journal of Architecture and Related Arts*. 79-86. 10.24135/ijara.v22i22.717.
- Marshall, V. J., Cadenasso, M. L., McGrath, B. P., & Pickett, S. T. A. (2019). *Patch Atlas: Integrating Design Practices and Ecological Knowledge for Cities as Complex Systems*. Yale University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvt1sg8j>
- Marshall, Victoria. (2024). Periurban cartographies: Kolkata's ecologies and settled ruralities.
- Mathur, A. & da Cunha, D. (2006). *Deccan Traverses: The Making of Bangalore's Terrain*. New Delhi: Rupa & Co.
- Mathur, A., & Da Cunha, D. (2009). *Soak: Mumbai in an Estuary*. Rupa & Company.
- Mathur, A., da Cunha, D., Birch, C., Bass, S. & Trower, G. (2019). 'Anuradha Mathur and Dilip Da Cunha Interviewed by Charlotte Birch, Sarah Bass and Georgia Trower'. In *Monsoon [+ Other]* Waters, edited by Lindsay Bremner, 103–21. *Monsoon Assemblages*. London: Monsoon Assemblages, University of Westminster.
- Mohan Kumar, B. & Nair, Pk. (2004). The enigma of tropical homegardens. 10.1007/978-94-017-2424-1_10.
- Niyas, P. & Tk, Kunhamu & Ali, S.K. & Jothsna, C. & Aneesh, C.R. & Kumar, N. & Sukanya, R.. (2016). Functional diversity in the selected urban and peri-urban homegardens of Kerala, India. *Indian Journal of Agroforestry*. 18. 39-46.
- Pitt, H. (2014). On showing and being shown plants - a guide to methods for more-than-human geography. *Area*, 47(1), 48–55. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12145>.
- Pollan, Michael. (2001). *The Botany of Desire: A Plant's-Eye View of the World*. New York: Random House.
- Roudavski, S. (2018). "Notes on More-than-Human Architecture." In *Routledge eBooks*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315526379-3>.
- Spoerri, D., & Filliou, R. (2016). *An anecdoted topography of chance**. Atlas Press LLC.
- Swyngedouw, Erik. (1996). "The City as a Hybrid: On Nature, Society and Cyborg Urbanization." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 7 (2): 65–80. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10455759609358679>.

Tsing, A. L. (2015). *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Tsing, A. L. (2012). "On Nonscalability: The Living World Is Not Amenable to Precision-Nested Scales." *Common Knowledge* 18 (3): 505–24. <https://doi.org/10.1215/0961754x-1630424>.

Whatmore, Sarah, and Steve Hinchliffe. (2012). *Ecological Landscapes*. Edited by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry. Oxford Handbooks Online. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199218714.013.0019>.

Whatmore, S. J. (2013). Political Ecology in a More-than-Human World: Rethinking 'Natural' hazards. In *Anthropology and Nature* (pp. 89–105). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203795361-11>.