

NAFA Alumni Solo Spotlight Series
Show & Tell Studios

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1. Thanks for accepting this interview, share with us where has your creativity taken you after graduation from NAFA?

I've had quite an unconventional journey following my graduation from NAFA. I started out as a graphic designer at an ad agency for a while. Being adventurous and hungry for new experiences (and with youth still on my side), I soon made the effort to try on different hats. This became a journey that started from ancillary fields like writing, photography and publishing, and eventually took me through a variety of professional fields which included journalism, publication, e-commerce, marketing, events and sponsorship management.

After over a decade of working in several industries, I saw the advantages of taking a creative approach in 'non-creative' settings.

In 2018, I embarked on a business together with my wife, a creative turned early childhood educator. We founded Show & Tell Studios as a space to cultivate positive associations to art and to explore how creativity does indeed has a place in our everyday lives.



Bjorn and Peihuan of Show & Tell Studios

2. Share with how did you overcome the challenges brought about by COVID19?

I've learnt that the only constant in life is change. This is especially true in today's ever-changing landscapes.

The COVID pandemic has presented itself in so many permutations in the span of just a few months, presenting numerous business obstacles akin to navigating a minefield.

We play a part in our students' formative years and the support from their parents is special to us. We've touched the lives of many in numerous ways and I try to remind myself to be thankful for this privilege; that the work we do is of value.

Having clarity of our mission shapes the way to overcome obstacles, which helps us focus on what's important.



3. Which aspects of your NAFA design days has stayed with you throughout your career till now?

A group of my classmates found ourselves rather involved in school events, committees and the youth creative scene.

A particularly significant memory was during a marketing contest by National Youth Council Singapore. We had no real clue of what we were doing, but decided to join anyway, eventually making our way to the concluding round. The finals of the tertiary-level event had suits representing business schools from NUS and NTU, while we were year-two diploma students from NAFA presenting our proposal wearing pyjamas. We won.

Today's *SCAPE was inspired by our team's concept.

The memory has remained a poignant reminder of three important life lessons.

- 1: Always try
- 2: Keep learning
- 3: The importance of creativity



4. What are some ways you've given back to the local arts scene or your alma mater?

We've been working with NAFA on its Industry Based Learning programme and offer placements for internship. We make it a point to provide a productive and meaningful experience for the students. Whether or not they pursue something of similar nature in future, we want them to have key takeaways that will positively shape their worldview and how we all have the potential to make a difference in our own ways. We've recently hired two NAFA Fine Art graduates and one NAFA Fine Art intern to the Show & Tell team.

We also work with non-profit and charity organisations at various capacities. We are currently working with Extraordinary People, a charity organisation supporting individuals with special needs. The community project inspired by glass artist Dale Chihuly culminates as an art installation currently displayed at Gardens by the Bay.



5. How has your wife and your skillsets complemented each other from the two streams of education from LASALLE and NAFA?

I guess the culture of each institution is unique in their own ways. Pei Huan and I came from different schools, industries and life experiences. This is something that we see as an opportunity to leverage on.

People often have an 'us and them' mentality, but if we see past differences and find ways to synergise for common goals, this diversity can make for really great things. It's really about adopting a collaborative mindset.



6. What are your hopes for the new arts alliance between LASALLE and NAFA to form Singapore's first arts university?

It's nice to know that more people are sitting up to take notice regarding arts education and how individuals from different pathways can contribute effectively to our society.

The collaboration itself is great news, as the institutions are better poised to leverage on each other's strengths and diversity. That said, it is paramount that the vision and motivations of stakeholders are aligned. The last thing we need is a contradictory song and dance for the sake of looking pretty.

If done right, the implications could be great. It will see a spurt in Singapore's creative depth, ultimately improving standards and practices and value in the creative sector. This consequently effects a shift in our fundamental idea of art and the existing attitudes towards it.

It would be the much-needed response to the lacklustre quality prevalent in certain industries, ultimately bolstering the status of Singapore's creative standing.





"If people sat outside and
looked at the stars each night,
I bet they'd live a lot
differently."

- Bill Watterson,
Cartoonist & Author of
Calvin and Hobbes

Instagram
www.instagram.com/showandtellstudios

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