

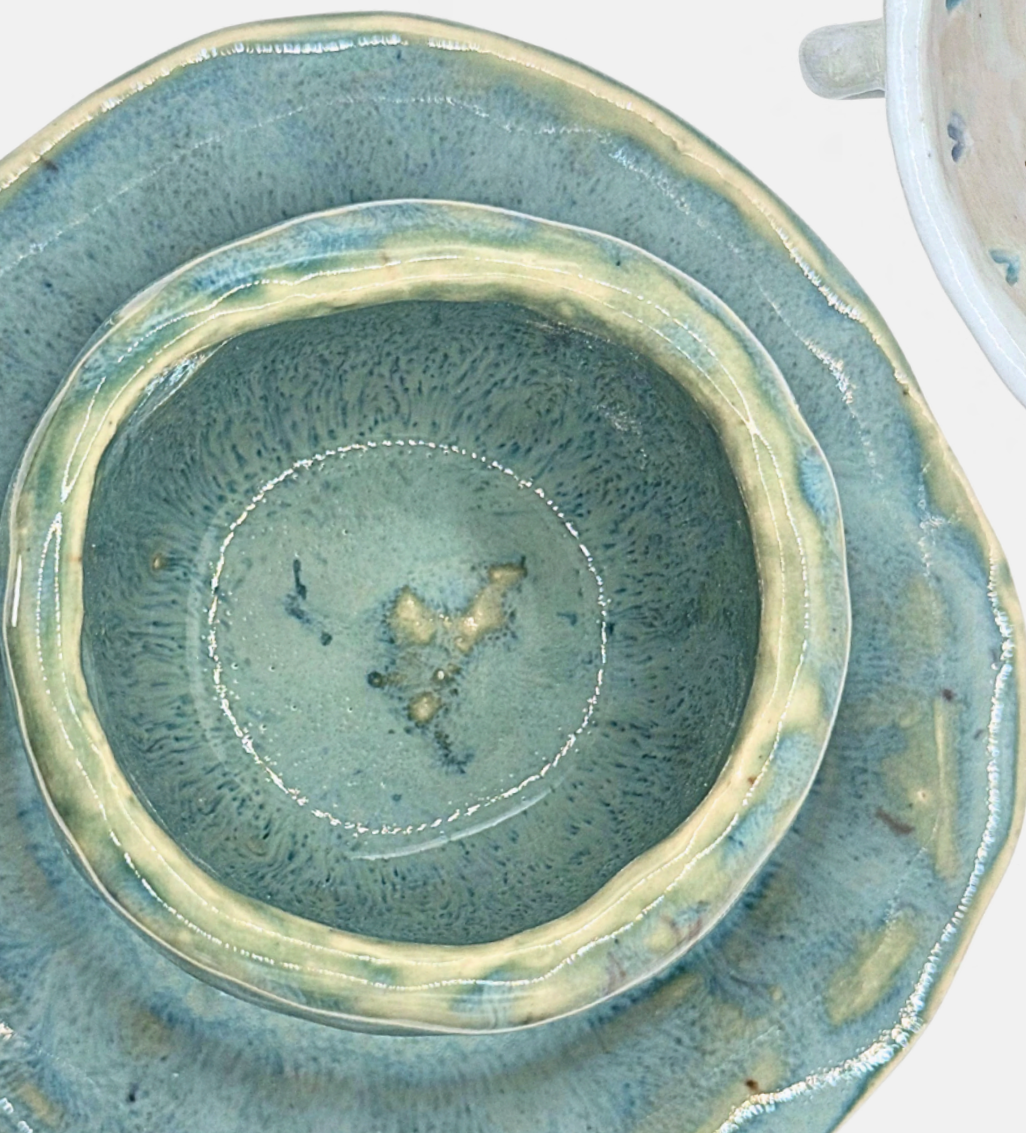


**SDMHI X KKH NEONATOLOGY
PRESENTS**

SDMHI

**being shaped:
VESSELS**

**EXPLORING HEALTHCARE NARRATIVES
THROUGH THE LENS OF ART THERAPY**



**WORKSHOP
CATALOGUE**





An Art Therapy Workshop for Neonatal Healthcare Professionals

ABOUT VESSELS

The VESSELS workshop was an innovative art therapy initiative for neonatal healthcare professionals in Singapore. It focused on emotional well-being, self-expression, and team cohesion through hands-on pottery making. The workshop achieved a 100% participant satisfaction rate and improved communication and empathy among team members. These outcomes demonstrate the potential of art therapy to enhance staff resilience, reduce burnout, and improve retention. The success of VESSELS highlights the importance of creative therapies in fostering a supportive workplace culture that benefits both staff and patients.

VESSELS was a project funded by the SingHealth Duke-NUS Medical Humanities Institute.

ABOUT CATALOGUE

This catalogue serves as a comprehensive document of the artistic creations born from the VESSELS art therapy workshop, encapsulating both the vibrant artistic expressions and the deeply personal narratives of the participants. Through a carefully curated selection of photographs and poignant artist statements, this collection stands as a lasting testament to the workshop's profound impact. It illuminates the therapeutic journeys and individual growth experienced by each participant, enriching the exhibition by offering a deeper understanding of the meaningful experiences shared throughout the sessions. This resource not only celebrates the creative achievements of the participants but also underscores the transformative power of art in fostering emotional resilience and connection.

ABOUT ARTISTS

The artists showcased in this catalogue are healthcare professionals within the Department of Neonatology, KK Women's and Children's Hospital, Singapore, who participated in the VESSELS workshop. Each participant contributed their unique perspective and personal narrative to their artwork, utilising the medium of pottery to delve into themes of emotion, identity, and resilience. The artworks exhibited here embody their shared journey of self-reflection and creative expression, providing an insightful glimpse into their experiences within the healthcare realm. Through their craft, these artists not only communicate their individual stories but also illuminate the profound impact of their work in the field of neonatology, inviting viewers to engage with the complexities of care, compassion, and the human spirit.





Wonderland

Thet Nu Khin



Catrina

Michelle Tan Yan Ni



Stars Against the Depths

Liyang Yang



The Dipper Bowl

Dimple Lim



Winter Snow!

Elisha Carmen



Ripple

Pamela Say



The Space That I Hold

Grace Koh



Echoes of Tradition

Lindsey Weller



The Avocado Nest

Tricia Lam



Layers

Quek Bin Huey



Magic Potion

Odattil Geetha



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Love of a Meow

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Be Happy Bunny

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24 AUG 2024

WORKSHOP ONE

A Shared Journey of Hope and Resilience



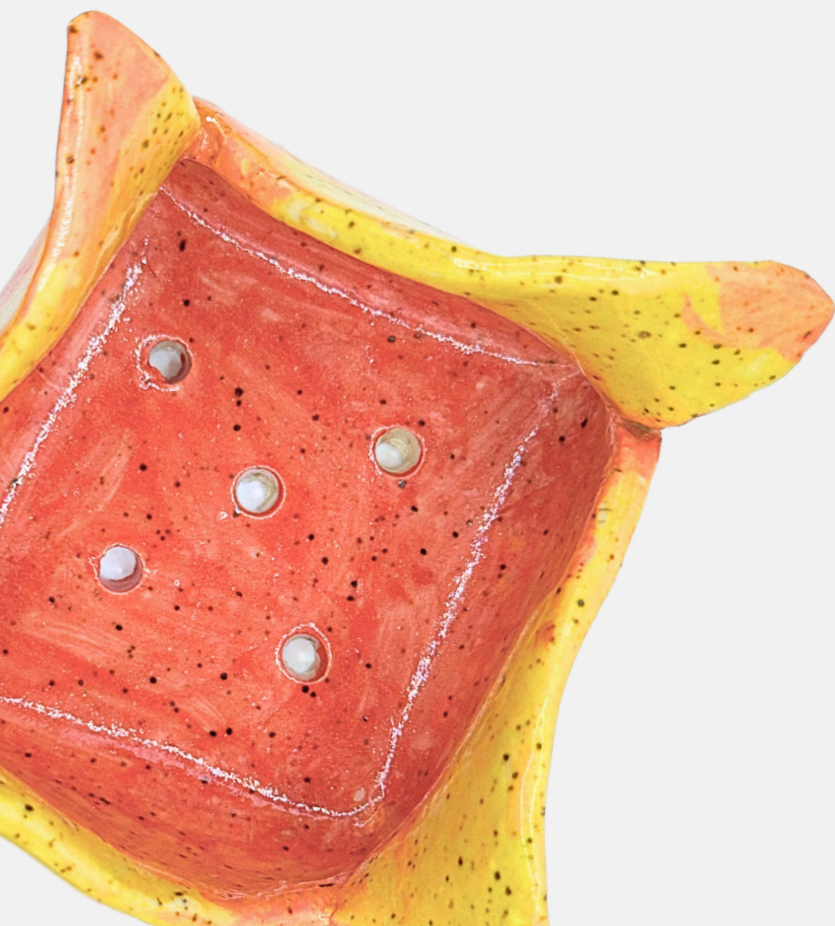
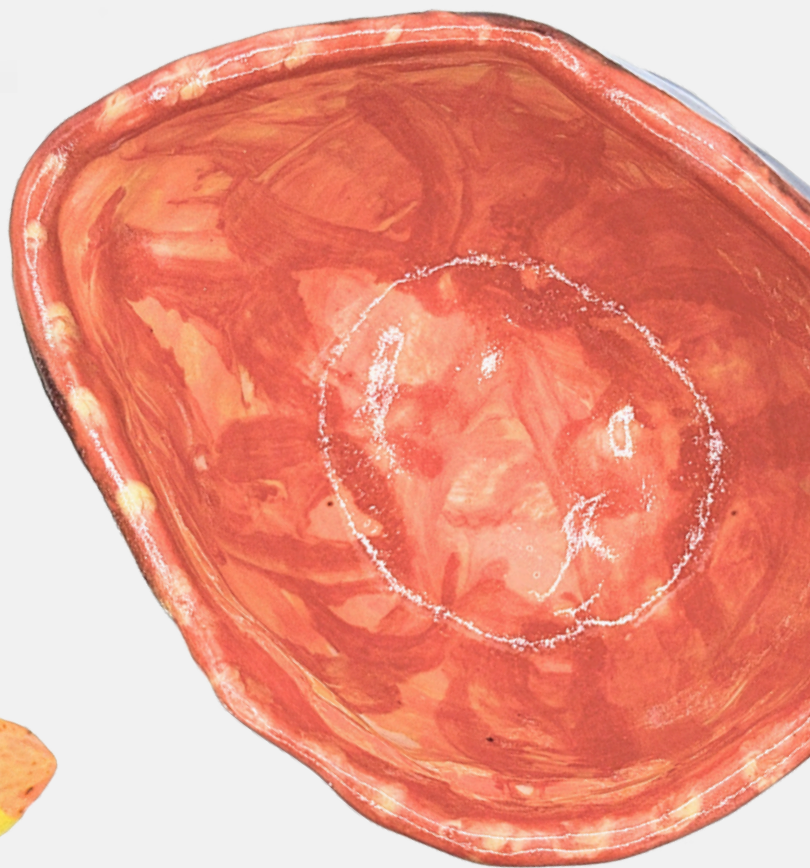
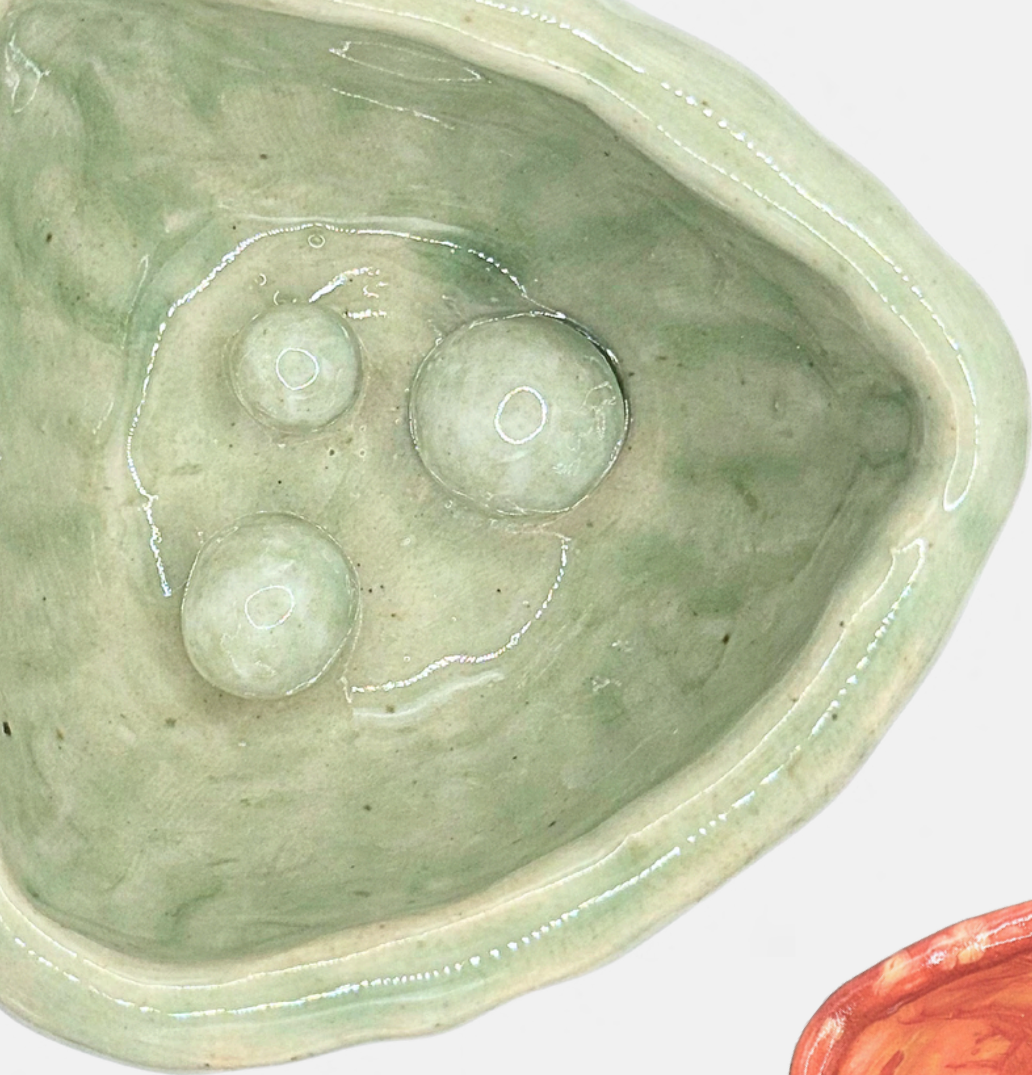
WORKSHOP ONE

The inaugural VESSELS workshop provided an invaluable platform for neonatal healthcare professionals to engage in profound self-reflection concerning their roles within the field. By selecting visual cards and participating in dynamic group discussions, attendees were able to articulate personal narratives that illuminated pervasive themes of loneliness, hope, and uncertainty. The visual cards acted as a poignant lens through which the intricate emotional landscape of these healthcare workers was revealed, evoking the deep bonds they form with their patients and their families, alongside the inevitable sorrow of loss.

Emerging insights highlighted a profound concern for their patients, particularly the neonates who may never experience a full life, and the participants' continuous emotional processing of the uncertainties that punctuate their professional existence. Many shared the hope that persists despite the often daunting realities they encounter daily, using imagery such as rainbows, the sun, and the simple yet profound act of holding a patient's hand to symbolise that hope. These reflections not only captured the challenges faced but also celebrated the privilege of accompanying families through their journeys—navigating both the triumphs and tragedies inherent in their experiences.

As participants transitioned to the creation of their vessels, they wholeheartedly embraced the symbolic act of crafting pieces that would encapsulate their experiences and emotions. Each artist infused their pottery with elements of personal significance; cracks in the clay represented the imperfections of life, while certain designs were intended to create safe spaces or to symbolise a sense of control over their emotional landscapes. In this act of creation, participants were not merely reflecting on their emotional and professional experiences; they were also fashioning tangible symbols of resilience, hope, and the emotional strength required to thrive within their demanding work environment.





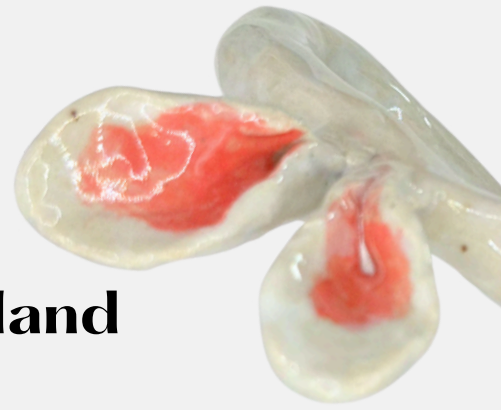


Wonderland

Thet Nu Khin

Nurse

My art represents me! I chose a shape that is practical and functional to represent my want to bring a purpose to life. I chose colours that are bright and colourful to represent my hope for life to be fun and exciting, to cover up the cracks and imperfections of my cup. It takes inspiration from Alice in Wonderland with the rabbit ears included; you never know which door in life you are opening that sets us on our next adventure.

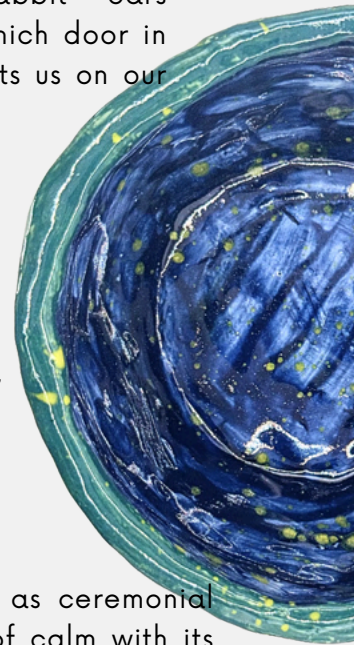


Stars Against the Depths

Liying Yang

Physiotherapist

I sought to craft a chawan as ceremonial matcha brings me a sense of calm with its brewing process and the flavour of the tea. The weight of the chawan also invites me to be in the present as I savour the tea. It invokes mindfulness and connection as well. The transition from blue to white with speck of yellow embodies the healthcare journey of transition and transformation. The blue represents the depth of the ocean and vastness of the sky. The transition to white symbolizes clarity and light and serenity that follows reflection. The yellow specks scattered across the surface are like stars of the night sky. Suggesting burst of joy, spontaneity, & the beauty of imperfection of the journey of life.





Catrina

Michelle Tan Yan Ni
Nurse

It shows that there is substance in life, that a vessel can be filled to various volumes.

Sometimes, when it's empty, it can be filled up by ourselves or others. Furthermore, with its imperfections, it shows that life is never perfect, but we can savour whatever happiness or tribulations in whatever way we possibly can.

The cat at the corner just symbolises us hanging onto the roller coaster called life, and as we make our way gradually through every twist and turn it takes us on.



Exhibition feature

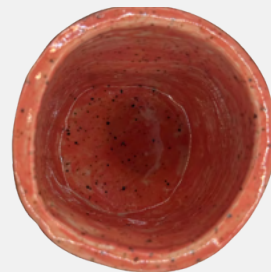
A playful cat peeks over the rim, adding a touch of curiosity and delight.





The Space That I Hold

Grace Koh
Speech Therapist



This cup has indentations of my hand. It represents my space that I hold and reminds me that I have control of my own emotions. This is my safe space.



Echoes of Tradition

Lindsey Weller
Physiotherapist

Drawing on inspiration from age-old techniques – this vessel honours the past while embracing the present – offering a bridge between history and modern life. To look forward but to be mindful and reflective of the past.



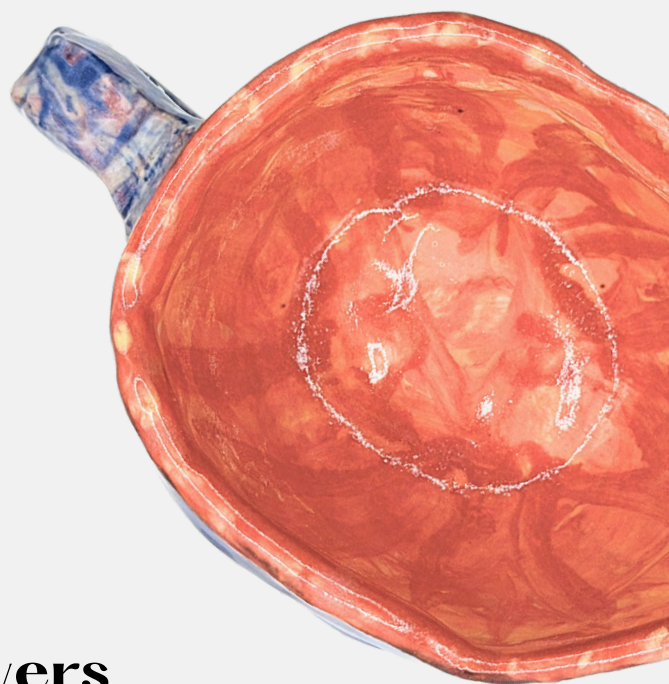


Magic Potion

Odattil Geetha

Doctor

The magic cup is made of a concoction of love with passion for new mothers, and asking them to breastfeed and donate breastmilk.

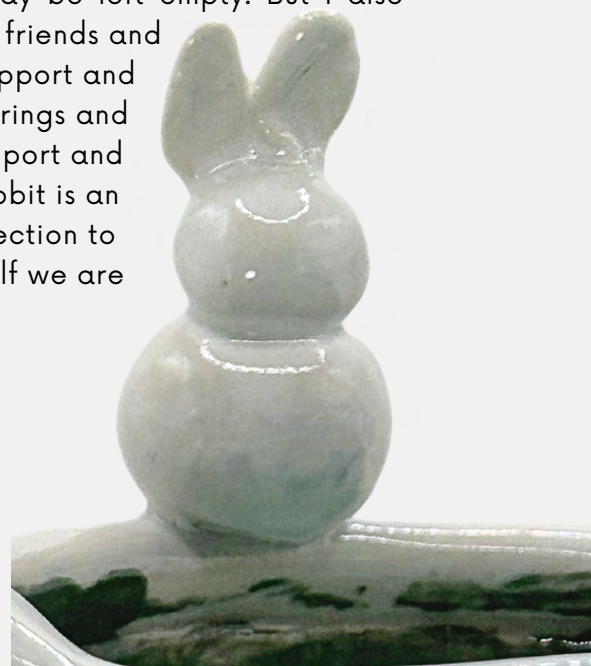


Layers

Quek Bin Huey

Doctor

Our line of work usually requires us to dig deeper within ourselves to give more of ourselves to our work and patients. Many times you may be left empty. But I also rely a lot on friends and family for support and they are my rings and layers of support and love. The rabbit is an internal reflection to remind myself we are not alone.





The Avocado Nest

Tricia Lam
Physiotherapist

Our tiny preemie babies are in an environment that is so vulnerable (NICU) yet they strive and fight on. The seed reminds me of the nest created around the babies in the incubator, being protected despite the harsh environment.



Exhibition feature

Vibrant and earthy, this avocado-inspired ceramic bowl showcases layered textures and rich tones, adorned with delicate accents on its surface.



The Dipper Bowl

Dimple Lim

Nurse

Food is one of my happiness, the ability to dip into sauces without washing extra dishes is an additional happiness.

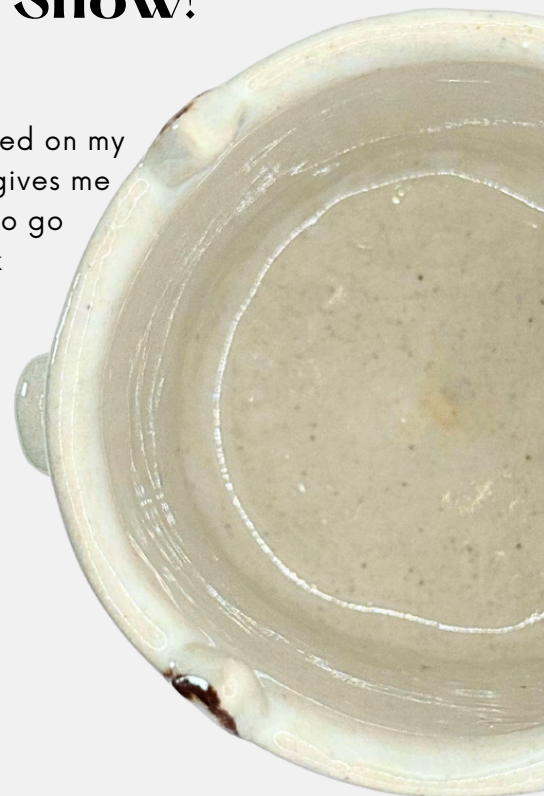


Winter Snow!

Elisha Carmen

Nurse

A little kitty based on my actual cat. He gives me the motivation to go home from work every day.





Refill to Regift

Kong Juin Yee

Doctor

As a healthcare worker, we juggle multiple roles. It is easy to give continuously without realizing how empty our cup can become, when our resources run low, burnout is inevitable, even though our passion for our work endures. We must remember to refill our cup; for me, often with the support of my loved ones, my family.

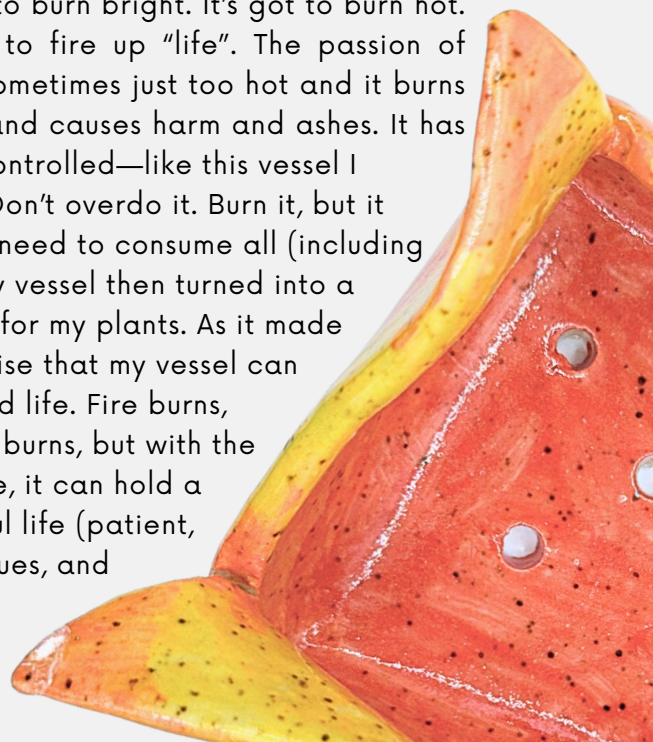


Passion Burns

Tan Pih Lin

Doctor

My vessel turned into a planter. I'm passionate about my medical work. I pour all of myself into it as I want all of my patients to do well! They all need to survive & do well! So I pour every ounce of effort into it like a fire in a furnace. It's got to burn bright. It's got to burn hot. It's got to fire up "life". The passion of fire is sometimes just too hot and it burns others and causes harm and ashes. It has to be controlled—like this vessel I made. Don't overdo it. Burn it, but it doesn't need to consume all (including self). My vessel then turned into a planter for my plants. As it made me realise that my vessel can also hold life. Fire burns, passion burns, but with the right use, it can hold a beautiful life (patient, colleagues, and self).





Ripple

Pamela Say
Speech Therapist

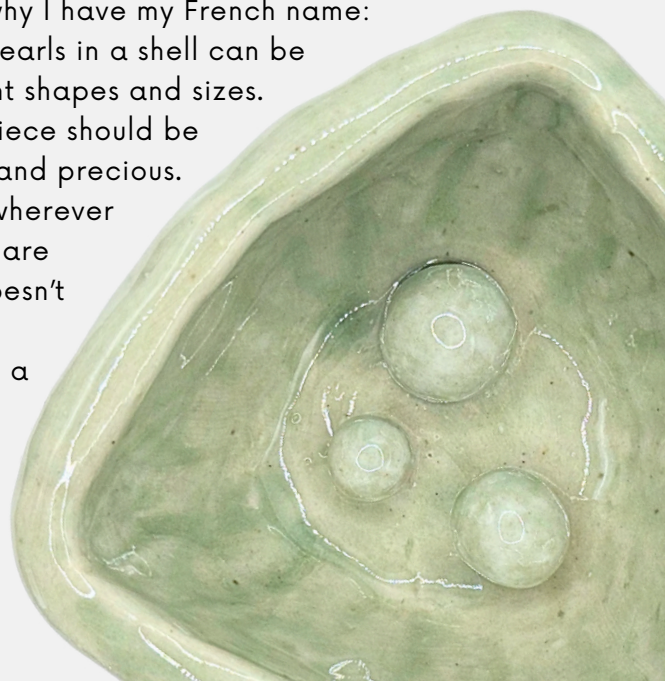
A ripple may start small, but being in a large water body, it can turn into something bigger. It's effects may not be witnessed immediately and you'll never know how far it's gone. A reminder that you don't have to be a tidal wave to make a huge impact.



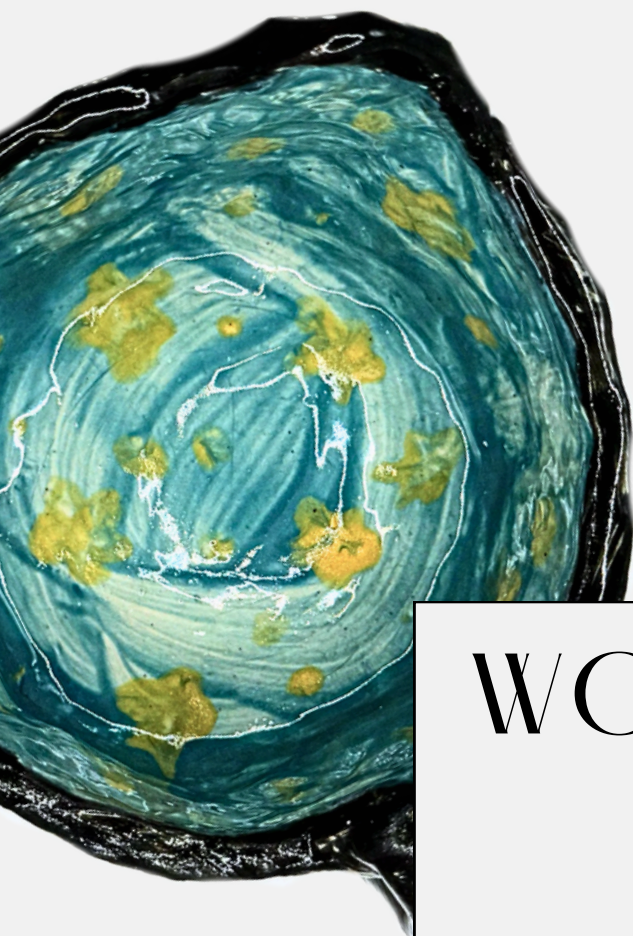
Les Perles

Pearl Huang Tzyy-Rong
Respiratory Therapist

When my mother was pregnant with me, she found an oyster which had 3 little pearls inside. It happened in France. That's why I have my French name: Perle. Pearls in a shell can be different shapes and sizes. Every piece should be unique and precious. I think wherever people are born doesn't matter. You are a special pearl!

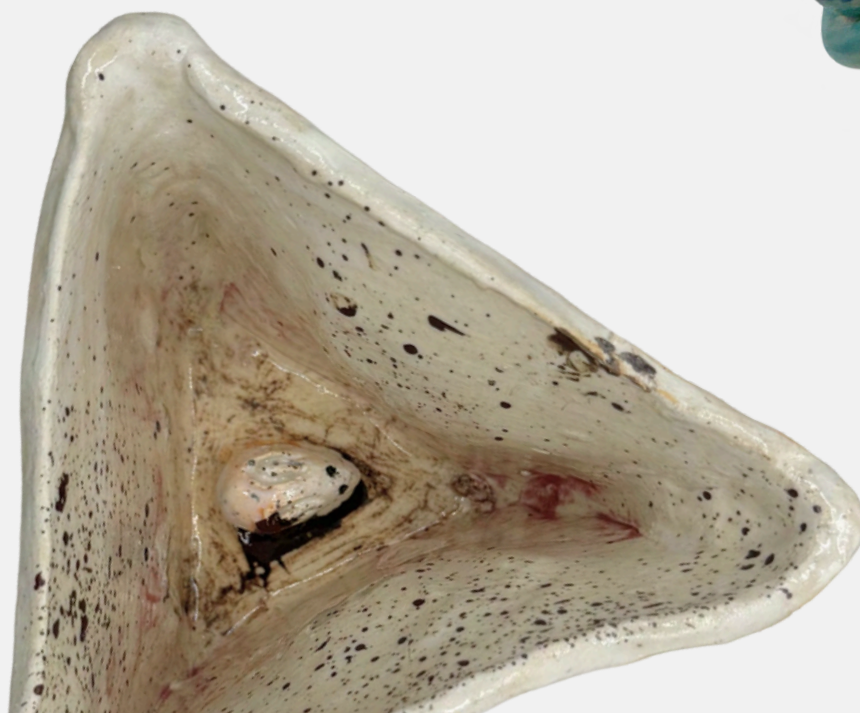


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WORKSHOP TWO

Exploring the Self and the Collective in Healthcare





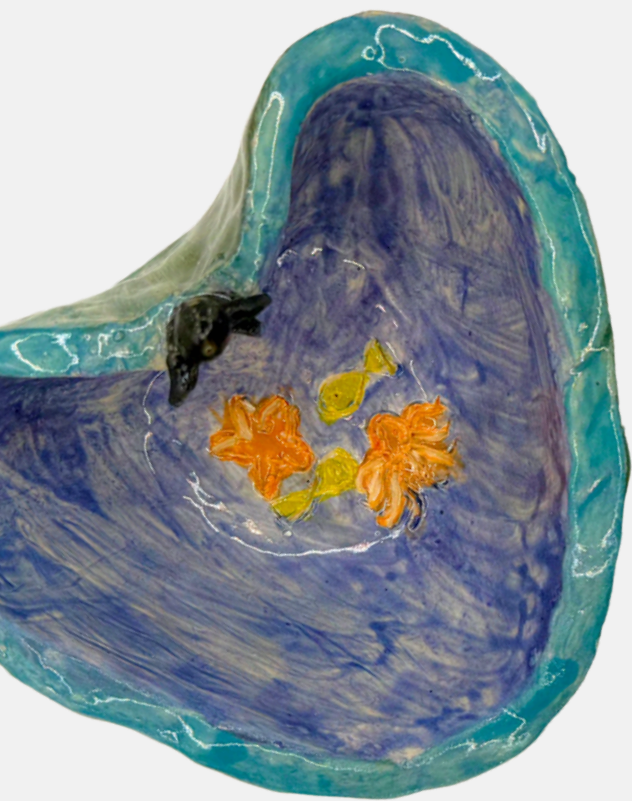
WORKSHOP TWO

The second VESSELS workshop yielded an insightful exploration of self-care, personal reflection, and the multifaceted roles that healthcare professionals embody. Building upon the foundation established in the first session, this gathering introduced fresh contemplations around the notion of "third spaces"—sanctuaries where individuals can momentarily detach from their demanding responsibilities and rejuvenate. The significance of these spaces became increasingly apparent as participants delved into the duality of being vessels for others whilst simultaneously needing to nurture their own well-being.

As healthcare workers reflected on their professional identities, the discussion illuminated the sustaining elements that are vital in the high-pressure realm of neonatal care. A palpable sense of community and support resonated throughout the session, with many attendees recognising the indispensable role their colleagues and families play in maintaining equilibrium. One poignant observation highlighted how healthcare professionals often create space for others; yet, it is equally vital to carve out a personal space for oneself. This led to the emergence of the evocative metaphor of "vessels within vessels," encapsulating the intricate ways healthcare practitioners carry not just their patients, but also the emotional and practical support of their colleagues and loved ones.

Throughout the workshop, the act of crafting vessels assumed profound significance as participants began to view their creations as reflections of both their individual journeys and the collective experience of their profession. One participant fashioned a vessel resembling a lotus leaf, a powerful symbol of resilience and the capacity to relinquish burdens, whilst another's creation illustrated a "third space" that epitomises balance and self-preservation. As the group engaged in sharing their narratives, the emotional depth and vulnerability inherent in their work became increasingly evident, with each vessel telling a unique story and collectively contributing to a rich narrative woven from themes of community, self-care, and hope.







THE NEST

Nirmal Visruthan Kavalloor

Doctor

This is a bird's nest. However if you look carefully, there are sharp edges. These are the trials and obstacles a premature neonate has to go through. We neonatologists with diverse backgrounds are here at this corner of the world with a common intent. To help these babies leave the nest. We are privileged to be around at the beginning of life. We have been given the power to change life trajectories. Our diversity is our greatest strength. And let's come together for a common vision. To let these birds fly and spread their wings.



Toblerone Sauce Cup

Tong Wing Yee

Doctor

Vessels don't have to be round – they can come in all shapes and sizes!





Vessel Within a Vessel

Natasha Charan
Doctor

My piece shows a pregnant lady relaxing in a tub. She is a vessel that holds life and nurtures life within her.

She is held in a vessel that represents the people who look after her and nurture her as well – her family, her colleagues, and friends who all join together to support her so that she can relax and thrive in the process of creating new life.



Exhibition feature

A beautifully fired ceramic bowl depicting a serene pregnant woman, at ease in a bathtub.



Bird of Paradise

Chiew Lee Chern

Nurse

The vessel holds "lives", which is my plant, with the sun shining and bird chirping.



Pond

Anjelica F Thenarasu

Nurse

An incense holder that reminds me of my family. A reminder that no matter how difficult life gets, my family is always there... and that self-care is important too!



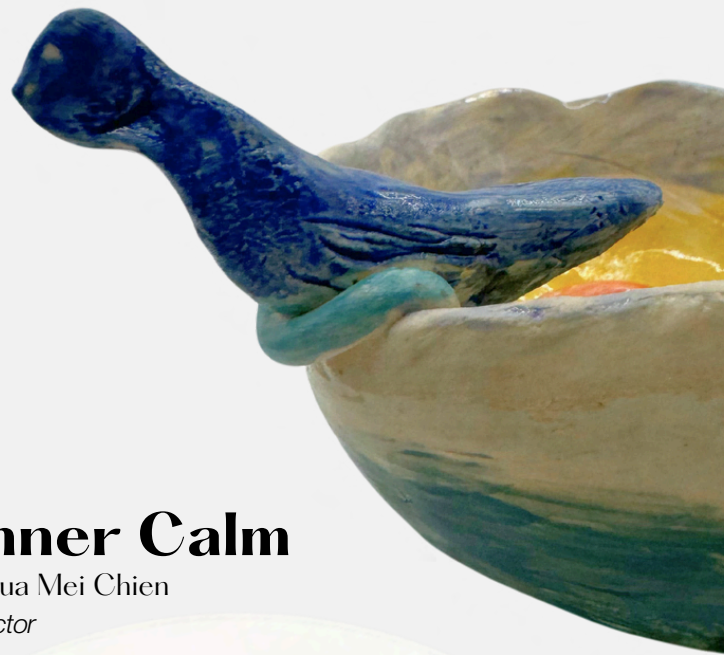


Bird Whale

Khoo Poh Choo

Doctor

The vessel contains a heart and is meant to share the love with all. The bird/whale (interpret it as you wish) is an expression of freedom/flight.



Inner Calm

Chua Mei Chien

Doctor

In moments of chaos or duress, take a step back, have a cup of coffee or tea, and reset. An internal milieu of peace and calm is the strength that will see you through.





Meant to Fly

Huang Peiqi
Doctor

My journey as a doctor felt a lot like learning to fly: full of uncertainty, doubt and wobbly steps. But I was reminded of my purpose and discovered that I was always meant to fly.

Now that I've learned to fly, I've built my own nest. The eggs represent my family and the little babies I protect. And just as I learned to fly, I hope that the little birds in my nest will grow in my care and someday learn to fly as well.

Note: Dr. Huang Peiqi served as the Principal Investigator for this project, which received funding from the SingHealth Duke-NUS Medical Humanities Institute. Dr. Huang played a crucial role in ensuring the project's successful execution.



Exhibition feature

A nest reinforced with branches on the outside, with a yellow bird perched above, gazing at the nest that holds three colourful eggs.

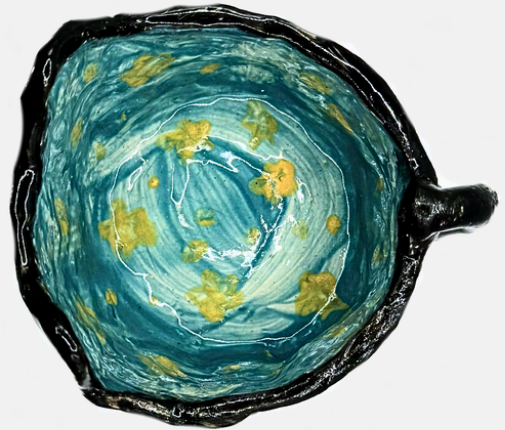


Dreaming Black Cat

Natasha Theodore

Nurse

Reminds me of my best friend who loves the universe and the skies. The vessel holds memories I have with her.



Garden of Eden

Mirabel Jiang

Medical Social Worker

Representation of beauty, growth in seasons



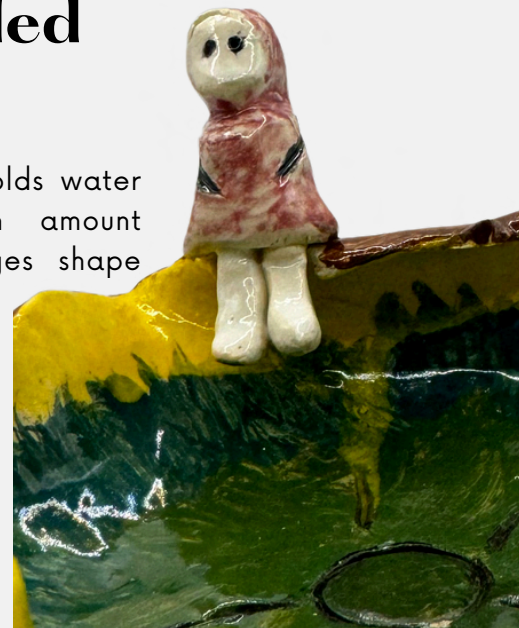


Half-Filled

Dong Xiao Ao

Doctor

The lotus leaf holds water until a certain amount before it changes shape and lets some water pour. In life, we also have to learn to let go and focus on what is really important.



Us

Lydia Tan

Medical Social Worker

The journey is made enjoyable with everyone's collaboration.





Nothing Wrong with Me-Time!

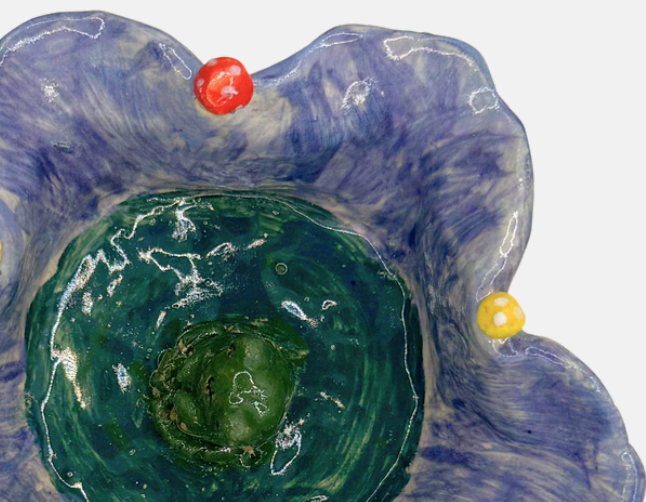
Jasmine Chan
Nurse

The frog in the flower represents me having a little self-care with quiet reflection in a calm environment outside our job and the hustle-bustle of life. The purple colour represents love.



Exhibition feature

An adorable bowl adorned with tiny mushrooms and a frog nestled comfortably in the center.





Love of a Meow

Phu Pwint Pyae Sone

Nurse

Created a heart-shaped vessel, inspired by the idea of holding love from the heart. A cat on top symbolises me; a cat enjoys personal time and is a master of self-care. Insight: You need to love yourself fully; only then can you share that love with your surroundings, your patients, and your colleagues.



Be Happy Bunny

Tai Yi Hwey

Nurse

This is an art piece that holds happiness. The BUNNY symbolises my mother, who always wanted me to be happy. The CRACKS on the pottery symbolise that life is not always perfect. WAVES symbolise uncertainty in life. The ORIGINAL colour on the inside symbolises originality (respect and honesty). It can symbolise truth as well. It will be filled with SWEETS, which symbolise happiness in life.





INSIGHTS FROM OUR PARTICIPANTS

INSIGHTS

RESILIENCE

Beauty and growth all take time



"Be more open and adaptable to change. Everything will be beautiful in its own time"

"When we were crafting the piece, I had uncertainty about what I was going to make. Even though I had a vision before starting, I found it evolving. And I think it might be the same for work - I come in with an idea but it may evolve into something else."

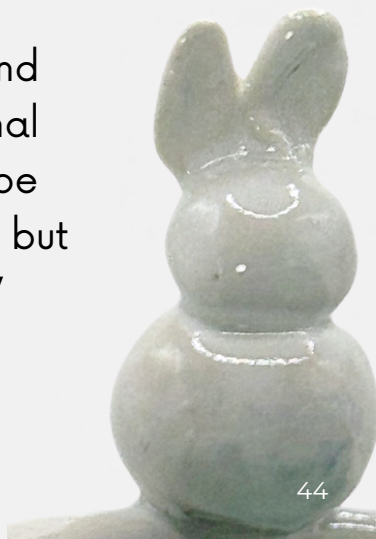
"The process of moulding the clay is just like how I as a trainee continue to mould myself into a better doctor."

"Things will get better if you just take your time and keep trying"

EMBRACING IMPERFECTIONS

Embracing ourselves wholly for our strengths and weaknesses

"Be patient. Be kind to yourself. The final product may not be what you imagine but it is still beautiful."



"Embrace ourselves for all the strengths, weaknesses and flaws. We need to be kind and embrace the uncertainties in our care to patients."

INSIGHTS



SHARED HUMAN EXPERIENCES

We are never alone

"...better understanding of the inner motivations of my colleagues and what is important to them. It reminded me of the need to be kind to one another as we seek to do our best for our patients."

"We are after all not that different. The fears, regrets and happiness. All the same whichever health profession."

"We are all human and we all have the same struggles."

SELF-CARE

Filling and emptying with purpose

"I am a vessel that also needs a way to empty my own stress so that I am able to put my best foot forward as a nurse."

"...my role as a vessel - to pour out of, to receive from others."

"To slow down and reflect on what is important. Keep what is important in the lotus leaf and pour out whatever that holds us down."

"Protecting the third space - me time - (to) ensure the vessel is continuously filled with love and passion."





SDMHI

About SingHealth Duke-NUS Medical Humanities Institute

The SingHealth Duke-NUS Medical Humanities Institute (SDMHI), established in October 2023, is a partnership dedicated to advancing medical humanities within healthcare. Its primary aim is to enhance the field of medicine by integrating human sciences, social sciences, and the arts into both education and practice. This initiative promotes person-centred care, emphasising the importance of viewing patients as unique individuals.

The institute encourages collaboration among medical professionals, arts organisations, and humanities scholars to cultivate humanistic values that ultimately enhance patient care and the wellbeing of healthcare workers. SDMHI envisions a compassionate, community-oriented healthcare system that prepares clinicians to take on leadership roles in various contexts.

About Art Therapy

Art therapy stands as a vibrant and transformative practice, deeply rooted in evidence-based methodologies that harmoniously blend creative expression with the realms of psychological and emotional healing. Situated at the confluence of medical humanities, this discipline facilitates a profound dialogue between narratives and creative processes, empowering individuals to delve into and articulate complex emotions that often elude verbal expression. Through the act of creating art, patients are afforded the opportunity to externalise their lived experiences, unveiling invaluable insights into their personal narratives, struggles, and inherent resilience.

This expressive journey not only cultivates self-awareness and emotional regulation but also engenders healing. Art therapy plays a pivotal role in the holistic care of individuals, providing a non-verbal medium for expression particularly crucial within healthcare environments frequently marked by trauma, illness, and loss. Beyond fostering personal growth and enhancing mental wellbeing, art therapy serves to humanise the healthcare experience, bridging gaps of understanding and empathy between patients and caregivers. By facilitating the sharing of narratives through artistic outputs, art therapy enriches the overarching objectives of medical humanities, thereby elevating the emotional and relational dimensions of care.

About Facilitator

Phylaine is an accredited art therapist and a core member of the faculty at the SingHealth Duke-NUS Medical Humanities Institute. She is profoundly passionate about personal narratives that illuminate the intricate intersections of Art Therapy, Medical Humanities, and the individuals who enhance the healthcare landscape.

In her clinical practice, Phylaine specialises in areas of trauma-informed care, addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Eating Disorders, Medical Trauma, Survivorship, and the education of healthcare professionals.

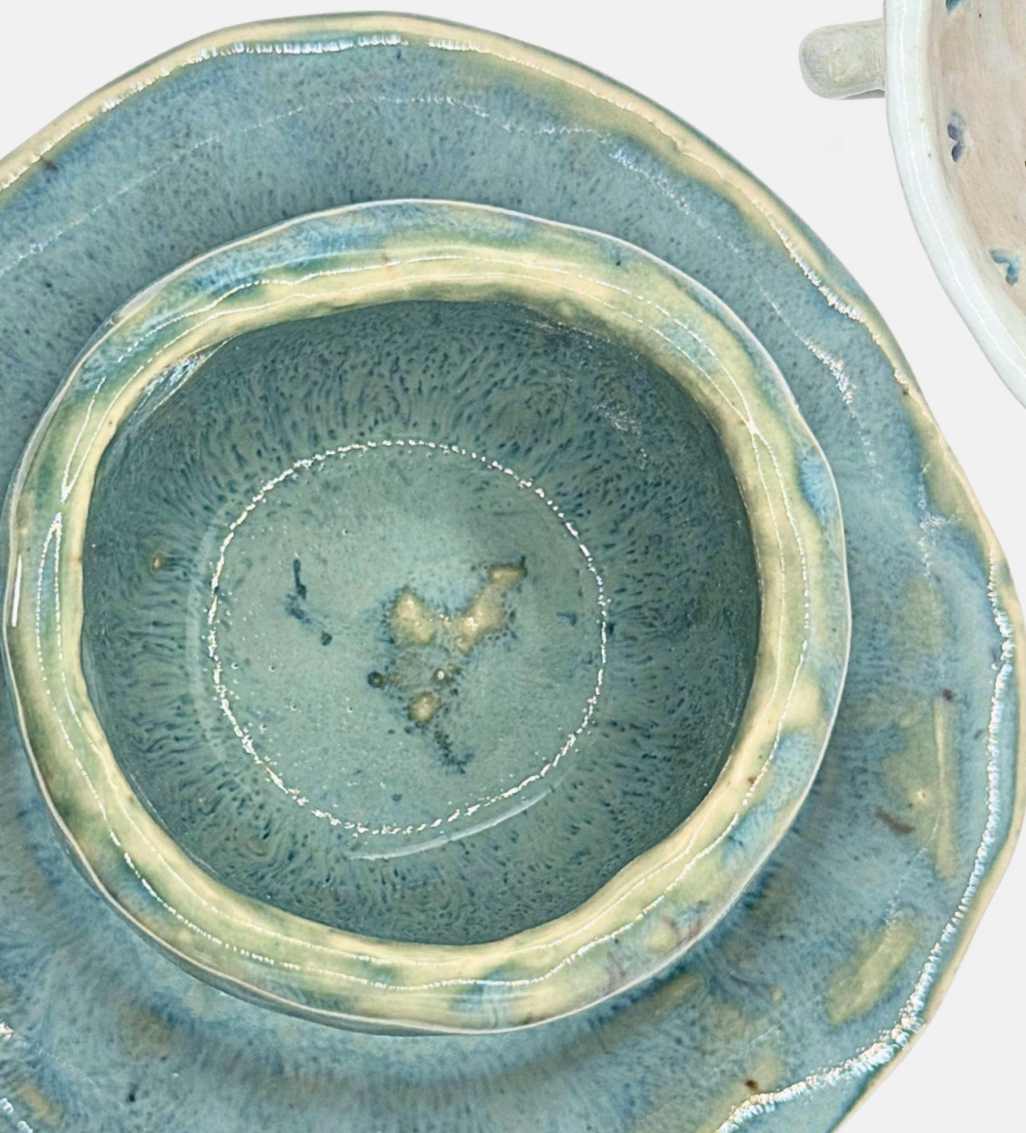
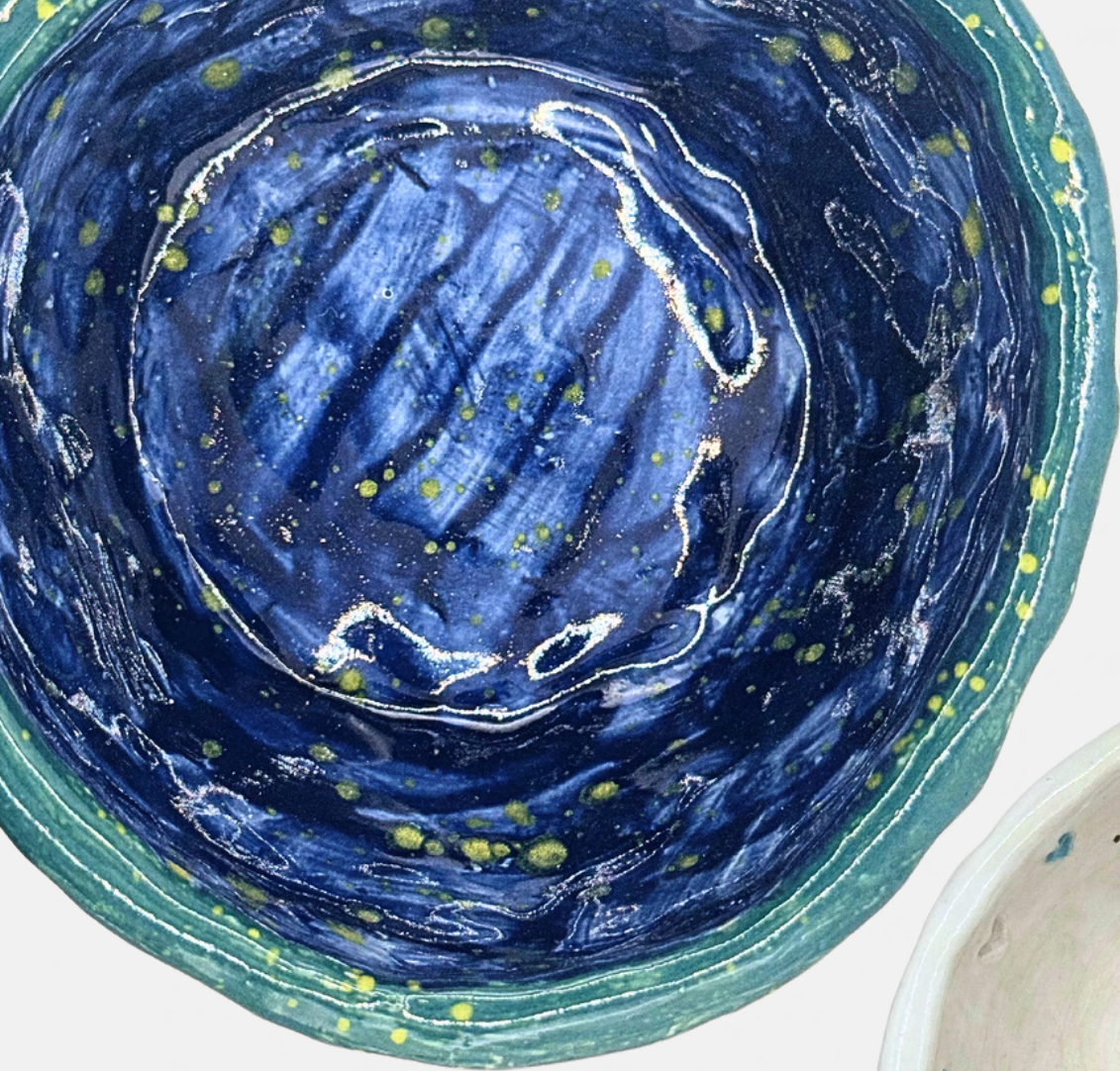


About Principal Investigator

Dr Huang Peiqi is an Associate Consultant in the Department of Neonatology, KK Women's and Children's Hospital. Working in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, she has witnessed the physical and emotional challenges confronting patients, families, and healthcare professionals. In a field marked by pivotal moments of both triumph and loss, she recognises the importance of empathy in patient care and believes that supporting staff wellness is essential to maintaining genuine, human-centred healthcare.

As a former art student, she has found creating art to be invaluable in navigating and making sense of her professional journey. She now shares her passion for art with her 4-year-old daughter, delighting in the connection and healing that art brings. She believes we are vessels shaped by our experiences, made for a purpose.



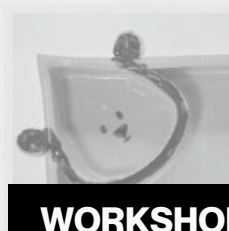
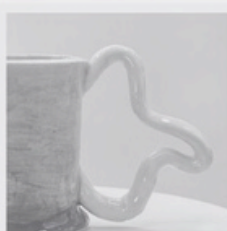
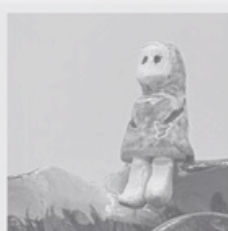
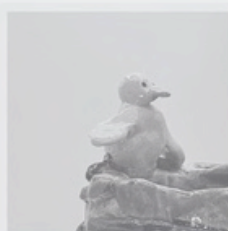
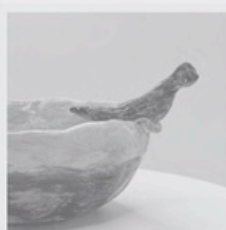
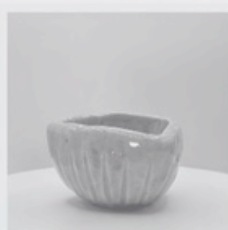
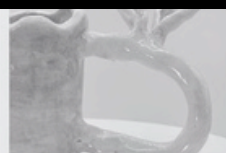
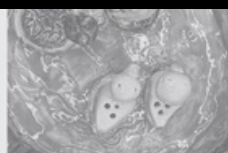
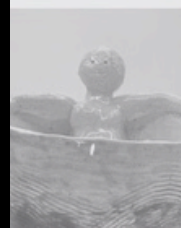


**SDMHI X KKH NEONATOLOGY
PRESENTS**

SDMHI

being shaped: **VESSELS**

**EXPLORING HEALTHCARE NARRATIVES
THROUGH THE LENS OF ART THERAPY**



**WORKSHOP
ARCHIVE**