

N S M  
National Museum  
of Singapore

Collecting

Contemporary

Singapore

# PICTURING ↔ THE ↔ PANDEMIC

A VISUAL RECORD OF COVID-19 IN SINGAPORE



Family Guide

Suitable for families with children aged 3 and above

How did your life change during the COVID-19 pandemic?

How do you record important moments around you?

Photograph on the cover:  
Tay Kailin dabbling in art  
and craft, 21 May 2020  
Brian Teo

A pandemic occurs when an infectious disease spreads around the world.

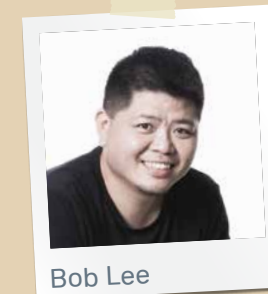
When the COVID-19 virus reached Singapore, our lives changed. For example, during the circuit breaker, many people worked and learnt from home, just like the little girl on this booklet cover.

The National Museum of Singapore brought together a group of photographers and filmmakers to record life in Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is part of the museum's work to preserve an important moment for the future. Their photographs and film are presented in this exhibition, titled *Picturing the Pandemic*.

📷 Use this booklet to take a closer look at some of these photographs.

📷 What do you see in these photographs and what do they make you think about?

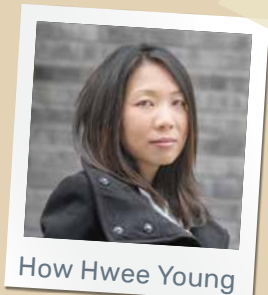
## PHOTOGRAPHERS AND FILMMAKERS



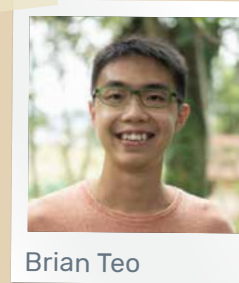
Bob Lee



Edwin Koo



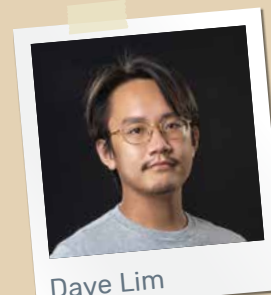
How Hwee Young  
Photograph by Stefen Chow



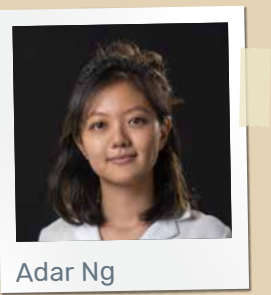
Brian Teo



Zakaria Zainal

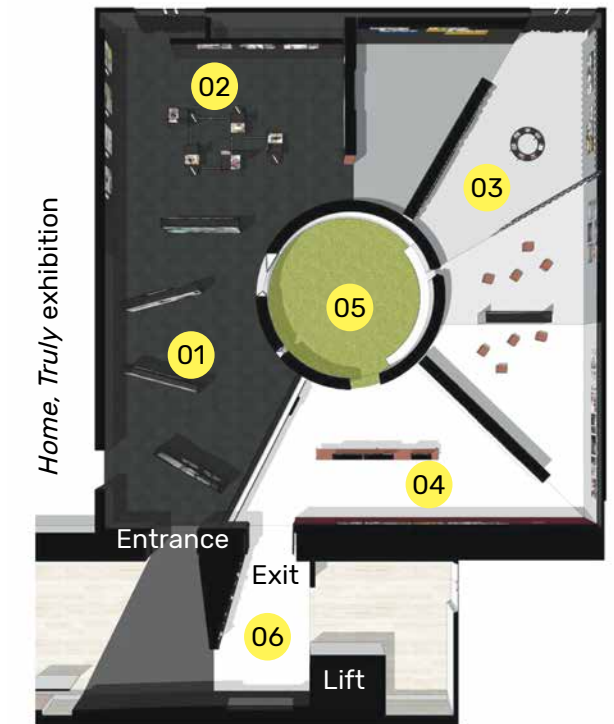


Dave Lim



Adar Ng

## FLOOR PLAN



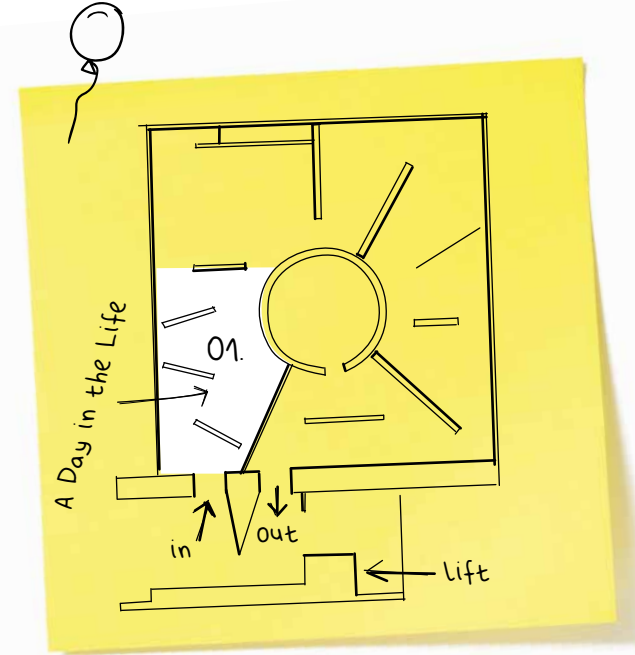
- 01 A DAY IN THE LIFE
- 02 ESSENTIAL WORKERS
- 03 NEW WAYS OF LIVING
- 04 MAKING VISIBLE
- 05 THE SPACES BETWEEN US
- 06 AFTERWORD



Photographs showing a day in the life of Christina Wong, a Senior Staff Nurse at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, 7 May 2020

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

Christina Wong and Rawaida Binte Mohamed Aron are Senior Staff Nurses at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. Before starting their duties in the hospital each day, the nurses put on Personal Protective Equipment that protects them from the virus. Christina works in the pandemic ward, where she checks COVID-19 patients' body temperature, blood pressure, pulse and breathing rate. Rawaida works in the emergency department, where she receives and swabs suspected COVID-19 cases.



- What are the roles of the nurses?
- What do they have to go through each day, from home to hospital?
- What makes them brave and what keeps them going?



- Who are the people who keep Singapore going during the COVID-19 pandemic?  
*Visit the Unsung Heroes exhibit in Section 2, "Essential Workers" to continue this discussion!*

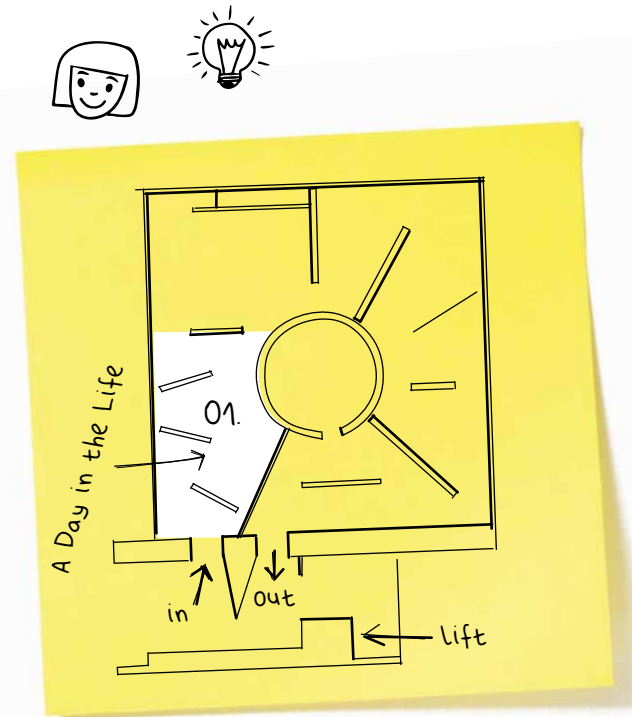




Photographs of Tay Kailin taken between 13 April and 21 May 2020

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

When Singapore entered the circuit breaker period on 7 April 2020, many adults worked from home while students attended lessons online. 10-year-old Tay Kailin stayed with her godbrother Brian Teo and his family as her mother went to work. Brian, who is a photographer, shows us the daily life of Kailin during the circuit breaker.



- What did Kailin do during the circuit breaker?
- How did she feel during that period?
- How do you think Kailin felt about not being able to see her mother for two months?
- How do you think she coped with the challenges? Who helped her?



- What was your experience of the circuit breaker?



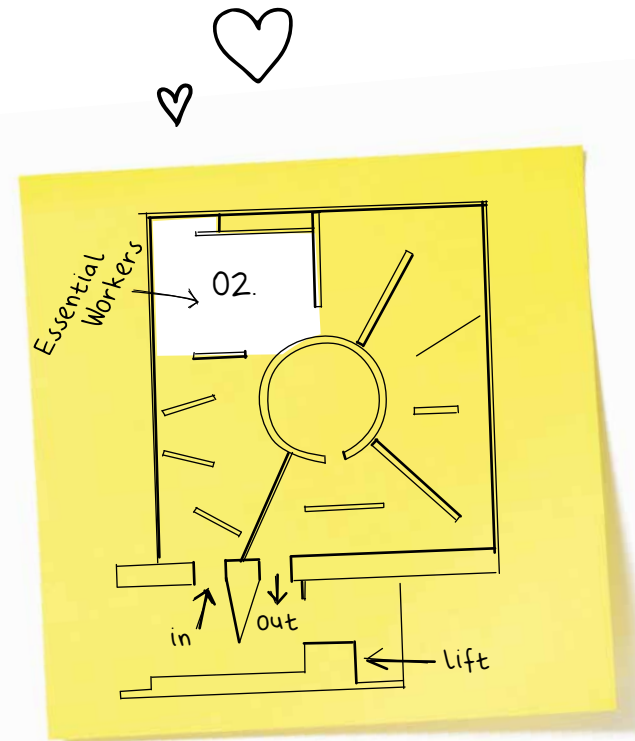
Community nurse  
Fiona Yoong assisting  
Mdm Lee at home,  
11 May 2020

Medical social worker  
Lena Lye speaking to  
Mr Chua, 5 June 2020



## ESSENTIAL WORKERS

For patients recovering at home, special community nurses like Fiona Yoong and medical social workers like Lena Lye visit them regularly to provide medical support and advice, and they refer to their patients who are at home as “residents” instead of “patients”. In one of the two photographs by Edwin Koo, Fiona is seen assisting her resident Mdm Lee as she sits up. The other photograph shows Lena visiting her resident Mr Chua, who was recovering from a fall. Both Fiona and Lena continued to visit their residents during the pandemic.



- How do they go about carrying out their duties during this period?
- Do you think they face any challenges or do they have any fears?
- Despite the challenges and fears, why do you think they still continue with their duties?



- Who stepped out of their homes to help others during the pandemic?  
*Visit the Deliver exhibit in Section 4, “Making Visible”, to continue this discussion!*





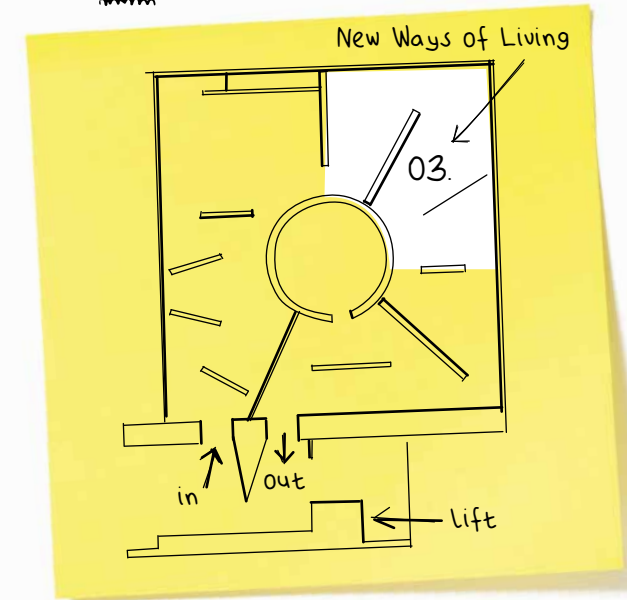
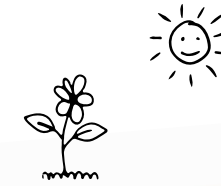
Students wiping down their desks after their final lesson of the day, 4 June 2020



A student wearing a mask and face shield while in the classroom, 8 June 2020

## NEW WAYS OF LIVING

To prevent the spread of the virus, we have adopted new habits, such as wearing masks and taking temperatures at schools, at work and in public places. How did your school life change after schools reopened on 2 June 2020? What are some activities that you used to do in school, but are now unable to? Taken right after students returned to school, Brian's photographs capture Clementi Primary School students doing their part to keep their environments clean and safe for all.



- How can students keep their school environment clean and safe?
- Why are the students roped in to clean their desks?
- How do you think they feel about wearing masks the whole day?



- How has the pandemic changed your parents' or grandparents' working lives?

## A Reclusive Ramadan and Keeping the Faith ←→ Zakaria Zainal

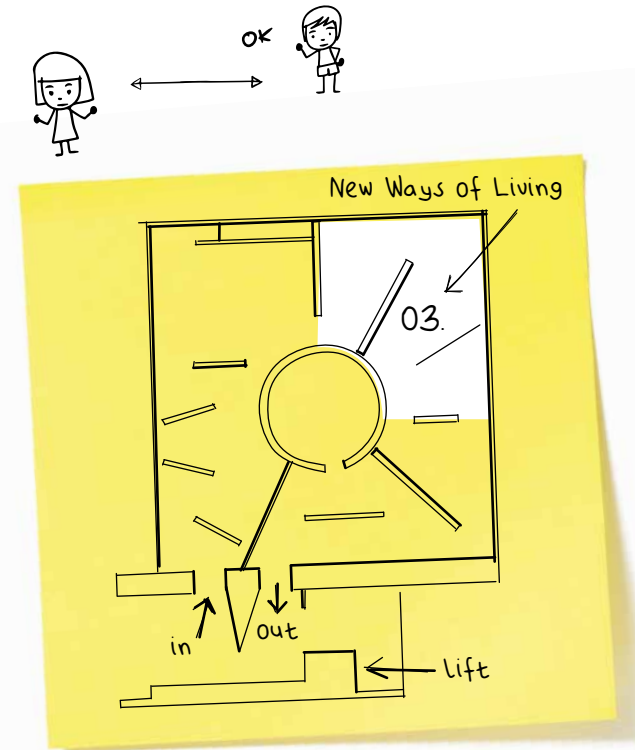
Muslim migrant workers performing evening prayers after breaking fast, inside Singapore Expo's Community Care Facility, 21 May 2020



Azhanani Kamis (second from right) celebrating the last night of Ramadan with her relatives over Zoom, 23 May 2020

## NEW WAYS OF LIVING

Communities in Singapore continued to celebrate and commemorate festivals and religious events, but in a different way. During the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslims would usually gather at mosques for evening prayers and to break fast. During the pandemic, Muslims in Singapore observed Ramadan, which took place from 24 April to 23 May 2020, differently. Let's focus on two of Zakaria Zainal's photographs which show the experiences of some migrant workers and a family.



- Why were the migrant workers staying in the Singapore Expo?
- How did Muslims in Singapore continue to observe Ramadan during the pandemic?
- What has remained the same and what has changed?
- How did big extended families, like Azhanani's family, celebrate religious events when they had to stay apart?



- How are you and your family celebrating and commemorating festivals, birthdays and other events during this period?





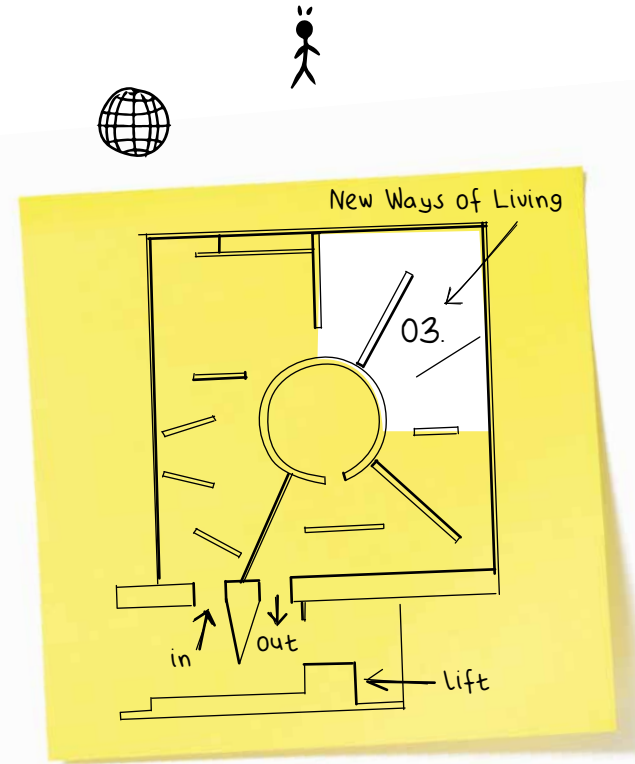
The closed-off Jewel Changi Airport Rain Vortex in Changi Airport, 8 May 2020



Tables at People's Park Food Centre covered with plastic to prevent people from dining in, 15 April 2020

## NEW WAYS OF LIVING

As people stayed home during the circuit breaker, the crowds that once filled our public spaces were gone. People were not allowed to dine out, so tables and seats were taped up or wrapped in plastic. Singapore closed its borders, so places of attraction were no longer visited by tourists. Take a closer look at these unusually empty and quiet spaces captured by photographer How Hwee Young.



- What is different about the Jewel and the People's Park Food Centre in these photographs?
- What do you think happened to the people who work in these places?
- What activities continued during this period?
- What activities stopped?

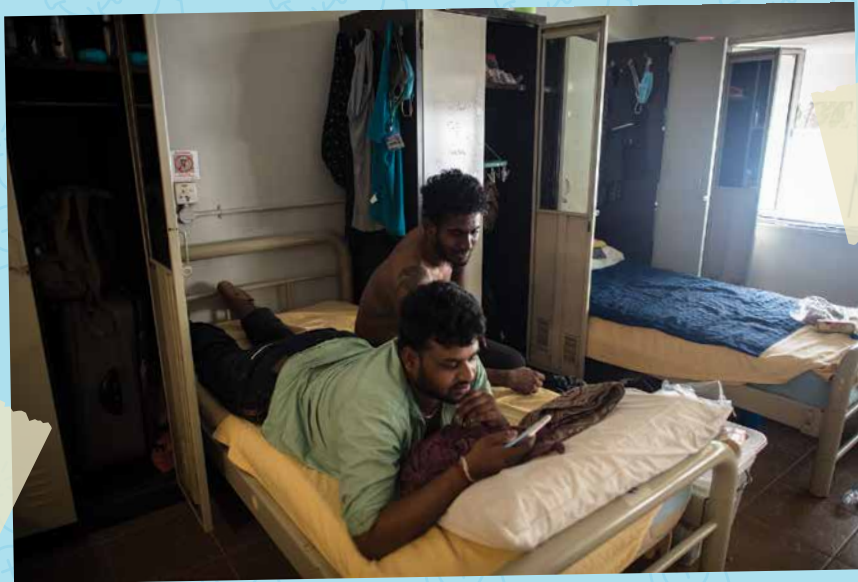


- How has COVID-19 affected your neighbourhood?



Migrant Workers ↔ Edwin Koo  
Transit Point @ Margaret Point ↔ How Hwee Young

Baskarelango Surajkumar and his brother, Selvasekaran Hariharan, preparing to rest after returning to Jurong Camp II following their 12-hour work shift, 1 May 2020  
Photograph by Edwin Koo



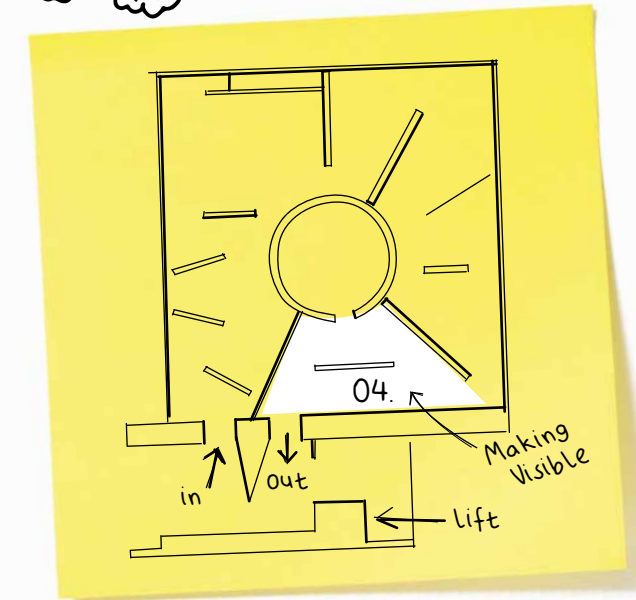
Yusof bin Kameen, a 75-year-old part-time cleaner in an interim shelter for the homeless, 15 May 2020  
Photograph by How Hwee Young

## MAKING VISIBLE



Who are the people who live alone, who are disadvantaged, and who do not have a home in Singapore?

Migrant workers like Baskarelango Surajkumar had to move into temporary homes to stop the spread of COVID-19 among workers in their dormitories. Part-time cleaner Yusof bin Kameen could not go home to his wife and children in Johor, after the Malaysian government introduced restrictions on people entering and leaving the country. Yusof sought refuge in void decks until volunteers brought him to an interim shelter for the homeless.



- What can you see in the brothers' and Yusof's temporary lodgings?
- How do you think the brothers might have felt when they had to temporarily move from the dormitory to a new place?
- How do you think Yusof might have felt when he could not go home to his family in Johor?



- How has COVID-19 affected vulnerable communities or the people around you?

Deliver ↔ Zakaria Zainal

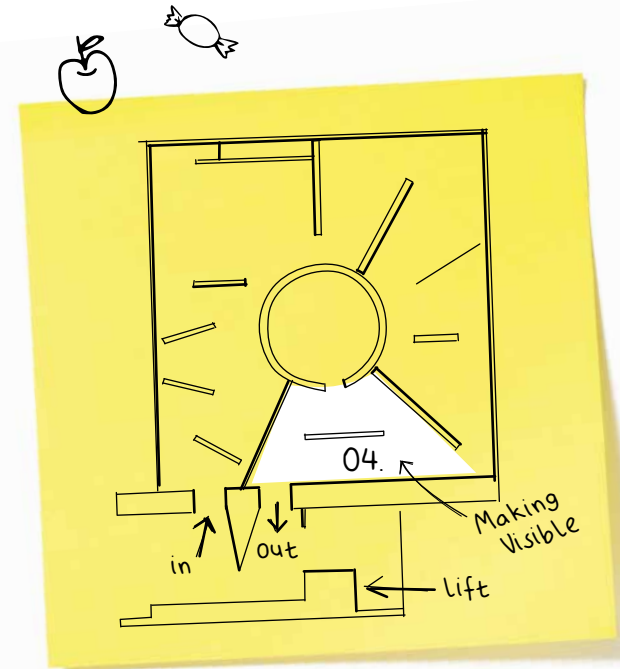


Zulkifli Atnawi and his family buying, organising and delivering groceries to neighbours in need, 12 to 17 May 2020

## MAKING VISIBLE



The circuit breaker measures kept people at home and disrupted day-to-day activities, such as grocery shopping. The elderly, who are more vulnerable to the virus, were asked to stay home. There were people who lost their jobs or whose work was affected, and thus could not earn money to support their families. Zakaria's series, *Deliver*, shows the delivery of services, acts of kindness and hope. Follow the journey of Zulkifli Atnawi, a retiree, who organised grocery runs to help neighbours in need.



- What are Zulkifli and his family doing in these photographs?
- Who is Zulkifli helping?
- Why do you think he and his family are helping other people?



- How can you contribute or help another person in need?



## The Spaces Between Us ↔ Adar Ng and Dave Lim



Two filmmakers, Adar Ng and Dave Lim, created this film to show the changes and challenges people faced during the pandemic. You have seen some of these stories in the photographs and can now watch them in this film.

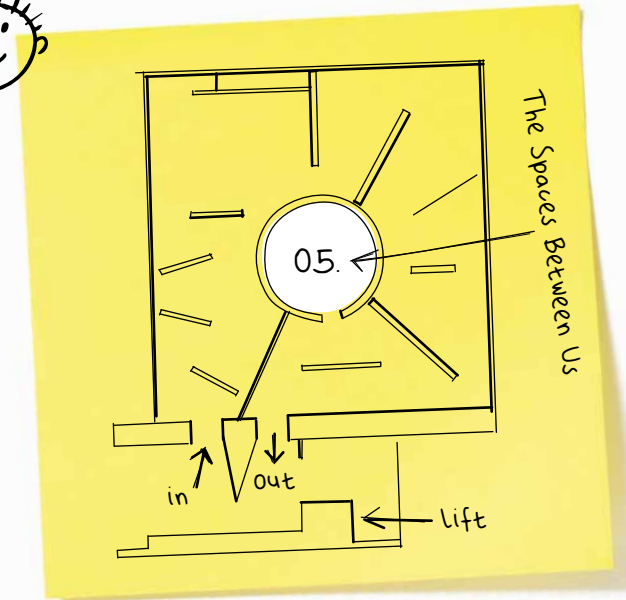
## THE SPACES BETWEEN US

Duration: 21 minutes



**For parents/ educators:**  
A tip for mindful watching with your child/ children.

As you watch the film with your child/ children, engage them in conversations on what they see, how they feel and what they think.



- Who are the people you see in this film?
- What are some challenges they face?
- How do they overcome the challenges?



- Name one challenge you faced during this pandemic and how you overcame it?
- Share with your family one thing you are thankful for during this pandemic.

# It's Your Turn!

What would you like to record of your experience of the COVID-19 pandemic?

1. Write down your thoughts, stories or experiences in these boxes:




2. How do you want to record your experience? You can choose more than one method or ideas that are not listed here!



Photographs



Videos



Diaries



A treasure box of items



Stories on social media

3. Start recording! You may want to put a date to each entry and mention why you are recording that moment.

4. Save these records, and share them with your family one year later.



Your museum journey does not end here!  
Visit the *Home, Truly* exhibition next door or  
our permanent exhibitions on levels 1 and 2.

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*Picturing the Pandemic* exhibition programmes  
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