

UpFront! with Oon Shu An, actress in #UnicornMoment

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If one thinks that the start of the play occurs after the curtain rises, then Checkpoint Theatre's latest production, *#UnicornMoment*, challenges this notion. With a series of episodes on YouTube, #UnicornMoment makes use of the potential of the internet to advertise the show and to put the audience in a certain frame of mind by compelling them to examine their past. We are asked to go on the same journey with the actress, Shu An, and meet her halfway at the show as we recall our personal stories while listening to hers.

Intrigued by the premise of the show, I caught up with Shu An to find out more about the artistic process as well as her insights gained from working on the show.

How did the idea for #UnicornMoment come about?

In terms of the title, I definitely wanted unicorn somewhere in there because I've been obsessed with them! And in a moment of clarity, the name entered the conversation. It was perfect!

Likewise, the premise of the show came up during one of the brainstorming sessions I had with the #UnicornMoment team. We were talking and suddenly my director Huzir went, "What if you went and interviewed everyone in your past?" My reply was, "That's a crazy idea!!!" The whole idea seemed very scary at first but it became easier as I started to find out more about the people in my life.

The show is a mix of self-discovery and asking the big questions about life (beauty, fear etc.) Why did you choose to embark on this journey at this juncture of your life/career?

I guess I was looking for my own sense of direction and #UnicornMoment provided me with an opportunity to gain new perspective from revisiting my past. We all have the same struggles and a common desire to find some kind of solution. I'm hoping that taking this step to share my story will help others to open up and get that conversation going.

Besides performing, you are also writing the script for the show. How do you choose what to include in the show? Were there any reservations? If so, how did you strike the right balance?

It was a very collaborative process with my directors Huzir and Shiv. We had a lot of discussions about the interview material and I would write about the things that struck a chord with us. There were definite reservations during the writing process. It's very important to us that the people I interviewed are represented fairly and in a balance manner, especially when they have been so kind in letting me into their lives.

In the various Youtube episodes, you often ask viewers to share their stories. Will these stories be included in the show? Are you playing yourself or will there be different characters?

I will be playing myself as well as other people in my life. While the stories may not be

explicitly included, they've inspired us during the creation process. There was a period of time when I was struggling with the process and was seriously wondering if I should continue. The stories I've heard really moved me and encouraged me to continue.

What is the biggest takeaway, be it about yourself or about life, from this project?

Wow. Where do I begin? I think the biggest one is that you need to surround yourself with people who believe in you. I really don't know how I would have gotten through the creation process if not for the team at Checkpoint, my boyfriend, and my friends. Another thing is that I've started to learn how to love myself. That has been a really invaluable lesson!

As the bulk of our readers are undergraduates, who are probably in search of their #UnicornMoment, what is one advice about life you would offer them?

No one will ever know you as well as you. Learn to trust your voice.

#UnicornMoment runs from 8-10 May at Esplanade Theatre Studio. Tickets from Sistic: \$28, \$19 (NSF, senior citizens concession) \$10 (student concession). For more information please visit [Checkpoint Theatre](#) or [Sistic](#).