

2009 Berenice Abbott Prize
Honorable Mention

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Artist Statement: "Home Visits"

I am most drawn to individuals with stories to tell, common people with imperfections. I see my own vulnerability in theirs. I love how photography allows me to form new relationships with people, and how it allows an entry point to the unknown.

In the ***Home Visits*** series, I photograph people in the neighborhood that I grew up in. Being one of Singapore's oldest housing estates developed by the government's public housing authority, Queenstown is populated with curious characters. Some have lived in this area all their lives, building a tight knit social group within the estate, while others are foreigners, making this place home temporarily. I find myself being captivated by the way these individuals move and rest in their spaces. One central aspect of the work is the investigation of Home, the idea of ownership, identity and that of movement and the search for rootedness. Our home contains personal treasures, private rituals and the aspirations of the owners and those who live in it. In this series, the idea of home is not simply confined to our houses, but also to spaces that people spend a great deal of time in, such that these spaces, such as the community karaoke club and wet market, have become an extension of the people themselves.

These images are the beginning of an attempt to delve deeper into the psyche and lives of people who have made their homes in Singapore. While the nation is often conveniently dismissed as monotonous and operating with clinical dentistry, the presence of these tender individuals appears enchanting.