

Neural Echoes: Enter the Sleep Lab

SHORT PRODUCTION DOSSIER
5 JANUARY 2026

Overview

Neural Echoes: Enter the Sleep Lab is a 50-minute immersive theatre experience for 4–6 participants. Set inside a fictional sleep and cognition research facility, the format blends interactive theatre with escape room mechanics, using tasks and sound to move participants through the story.

As participants encounter competing narratives—official reports, system instructions, and fragmented personal accounts—they are asked not only to interpret information, but to deliberate together on a critical decision. Progress is structured to require discussion, negotiation, and attempted consensus under time pressure, emphasising cooperation and shared decision-making.

Through this design, the work uses science fiction as a way of thinking through possible futures, placing participants inside a functioning system with rules, procedures, and consequences. *Neural Echoes* invites participants to sit with the tensions and trade-offs of possible futures, framing technological decision-making as a collective, social act.



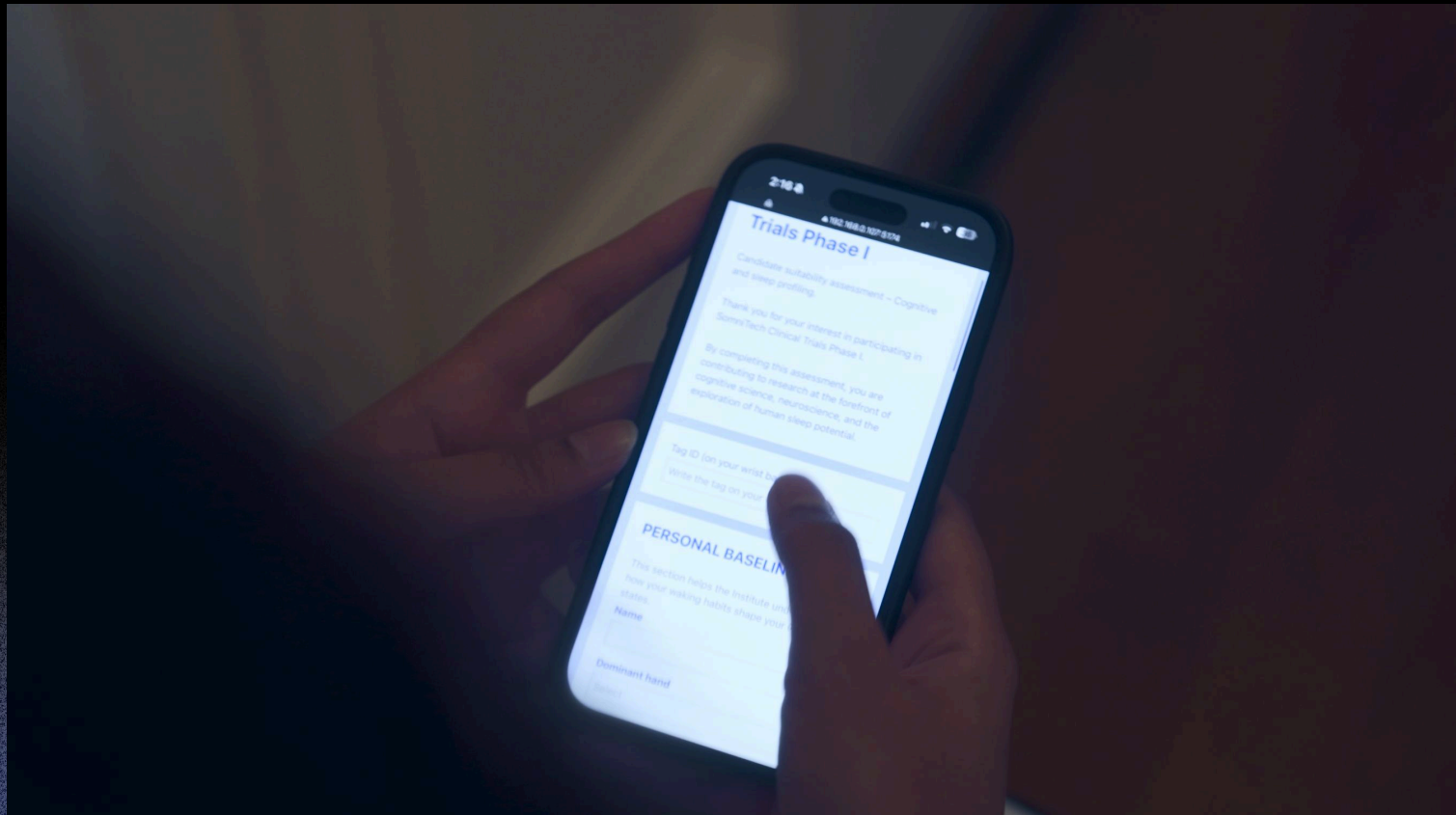
■ Top: *Neural Echoes* entrance, The Arts House, Old Parliament Road

Bottom: *Neural Echoes* Sleep Lab, The Arts House, Old Parliament Road

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At a glance

Form:	Immersive experience (cross between interactive theatre + escape room)
Duration:	~50 minutes
Audience:	4–6 pax per session
Language:	English
Age:	Recommended 13+ (themes of death and suicide)
First run:	Verse at Light to Night 2026 (as part of Singapore Art Week)

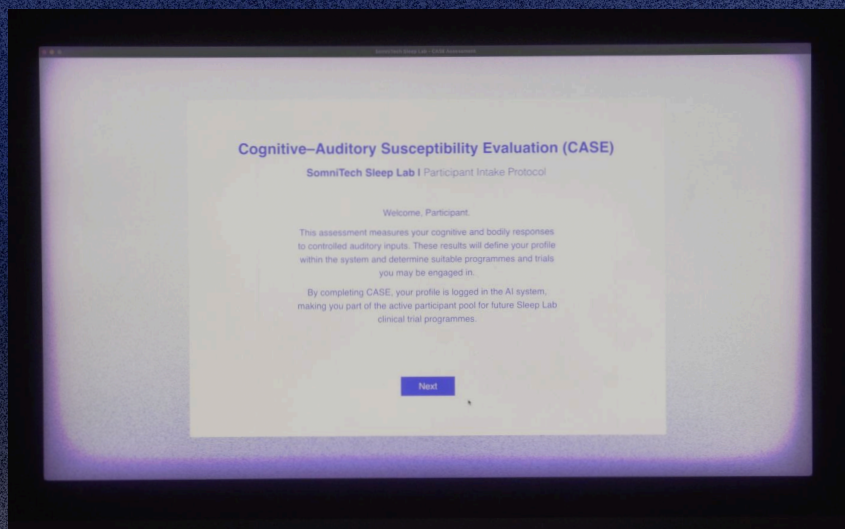


Experience

Participants enter the space undercover, posing as volunteers in SomniTech's clinical sleep trials, a programme that promises to revolutionise rest by making sleep productive, optimised, and monetised. Many trial participants never exited the programme, and Dr. Adrian Tan, the principal investigator of SomniTech, has recently disappeared.

As participants progress, they must go along with the lab processes to avoid detection, gaining access to deeper systems and suppressed information. Sound functions as both guide and constraint, shaping attention, regulating behaviour, and escalating psychological pressure. What begins as a corporate research programme gradually reveals itself to be something far more consequential, forcing participants to piece together the lab's true purpose and the fate of those who came before them.

The experience is designed to culminate in a collective decision. Armed with partial knowledge and limited time, participants must vote unanimously for one of two choices: terminate the project or assimilate into the system.



- Top: Onboarding 1
- Bottom: Onboarding 2

Structural arc

- Completion of a sleep-focused onboarding form, followed by a guided orientation
- An individual, two-part computer-based SomniTech assessment
- Access Dr. Adrian Tan's safe, containing restricted files and tools
- A cooperative task involving RFID tokens
- A set of questions about the lab's history, philosophy, and internal contradictions
- A final unanimous group vote determining the outcome of the experience

Interactivity is highly structured and participants are guided through a clear experiential arc. They have to choose between two choices at the end, and a secret ending surfaces if the group decision is not unanimous.

Audience

Neural Echoes is designed for audiences interested in immersive theatre, speculative fiction, and art–technology experiences, while remaining accessible to first-time immersive participants. The work particularly appeals to novelty-driven younger audiences interested in shared, physical experiences.

The small-group structure encourages conversation and negotiation throughout the experience, making it well suited to audiences who enjoy collaborative problem-solving and collective decision-making. While the tone is approachable and engaging, the narrative engages themes of AI, consent, productivity, and the optimisation of sleep and cognition, allowing participants to encounter these ideas through play.

The work is suitable for festivals and institutions programming participatory formats that prioritise audience agency, contemporary technological themes, and socially embedded experiences.

Source text and narrative world

Neural Echoes: Enter the Sleep Lab is set within the same speculative narrative world as Victor Fernando R. Ocampo's interactive fiction *The Book of Red Shadows*, a play-by-email work presented at the Singapore Writers Festival in 2020.

That work imagines a future in which the consciousness of the newly dead are conscripted into a secret government programme —the Red Shadow Project (TRSP)—in exchange for a chance to return to life. Participants are required to make irreversible decisions about who lives and dies, intervening in past events to avert future societal collapse.

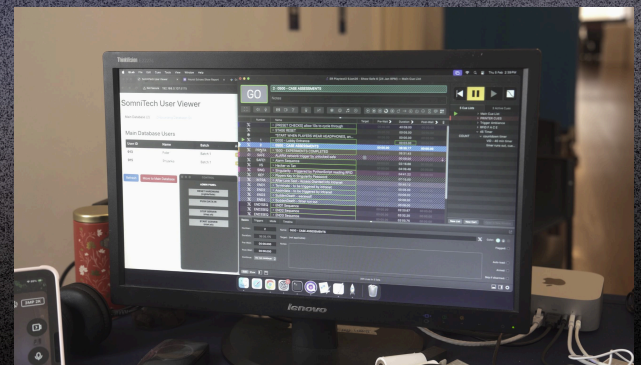
Neural Echoes functions as a narrative prequel to this world. Within the SomniTech Sleep Lab, sound becomes a primary tool of guiding attention, regulating behaviour, and shaping moments of doubt and compliance. *Neural Echoes* invites participants to inhabit the ethical beginnings of a dangerous system: foregrounding sleep, consent, and collective decision-making as the hidden infrastructure of technological power.

Narrative and experiential design

The structure of *Neural Echoes* is shaped by two opposing systems that influence how information and authority are encountered within the lab. One system operates through institutional protocols, research objectives, and cohesive official narratives that frame assimilation as necessary for collective progress. The other introduces disruption through fragmented voices, emotional testimony, and contradictory materials that complicate or undermine that authority.

These “order” and “chaos” systems are expressed through spatial and sensory design as well. The environment sits between a research lab and a gallery, with light and sound operating as dramaturgical signals. Visual and symbolic elements, such as the butterfly motif drawn from Zhuangzi's parable, gesture toward themes of dreaming, perception, and uncertainty. Together, space, sound, and visual cues align with the experience's central tension between collective good and individual autonomy.

Tasks and information are distributed in ways that require participants to cooperate and share knowledge. No single participant can process all the necessary information, and progress depends on discussion and coordination. The experience culminates in a unanimous group vote, with a secret ending unfolding in the event consensus is not reached.



Left: SomniTech Assessment booth

Right: QLab control interface for *Neural Echoes*

Art and technology

Neural Echoes uses the familiar language of clinical and corporate systems to examine how sound, data, and procedural interfaces already structure attention, behaviour, and consent in everyday life. Within the world, technology functions as an instrument of authority. Interfaces guide behaviour, restrict options, and frame compliance as care. Participants submit information, respond to prompts, and make decisions through familiar bureaucratic forms, mirroring how individuals increasingly participate in their own monitoring and optimisation.

This approach emerged from an interest in the unsettling familiarity of automated and “smart” devices—systems that operate quietly, authoritatively, and often without friction. The work is informed by real-world research on sleep and cognition, such as MIT Media Lab’s Dormio, which explores how sound and external stimuli can influence dream states and transitional phases of sleep.

The show’s interactivity currently relies on a combination of networked computer terminals, RFID-enabled artefacts, projected text, thermal-printed outputs, QR-based interfaces, and synchronised sound and lighting systems. Our aim is for these elements to feel tightly integrated to support narrative progression and collective decision-making, reinforcing the work’s interest in how technological infrastructures mediate trust, compliance, and agency.

Programming contexts

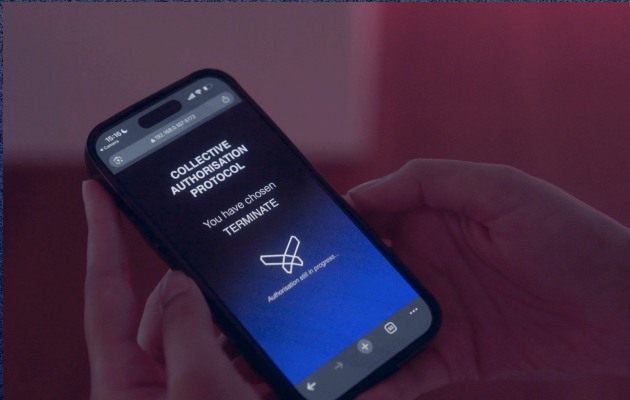
Neural Echoes can be presented as a standalone immersive experience or situated within broader festival contexts. The work has been designed to tour easily, with minimal venue requirements. Its participatory format and thematic focus on technology, sleep, and collective decision-making align naturally with public conversations across performance, art–technology, and interdisciplinary contexts.

Where appropriate, it may also be accompanied by related public programmes such as artist talks, panel discussions, workshops, or informal post-show conversations.



■ Top: NFC tag with RFID and Arduino embedded underneath the set

Bottom: Phone-based voting system



Team

Creatives

Concept and direction:	Tusitala
Narrative world:	Victor Fernando R. Ocampo
Narrative design:	Jane Tan
Sound:	Artwave Studio
Scenography:	Yeo Ker Siang

Production

Stage management:	Marilyn Chew
QLab programming:	Artwave Studio
Visual and UX design:	Foler Goh, Tusitala
Systems and tech:	Vaibhav Sidapara, Tusitala
Hardware:	Hoe Jian Wei, Tusitala

Co-producers

Tusitala is a Singapore-based digital storytelling studio creating interactive literary and performance experiences at the intersection of art and technology.

Artwave Studio amplifies emergent voices through creative writing, sound design, and audio-first storytelling, providing consultancy and production support for narrative-driven works.