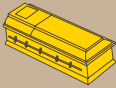
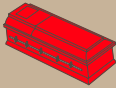
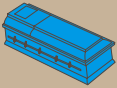
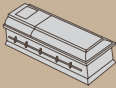
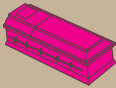
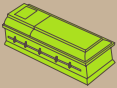
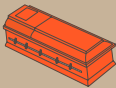
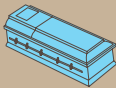
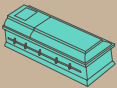
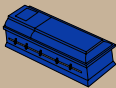
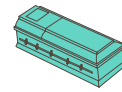
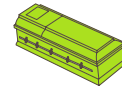


Happy Coffins

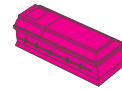




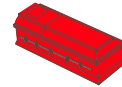
Why Happy Coffins



Art in Life and Death



My Life, My Coffin



The Underground Gallery

Why Happy Coffins

The Happy Coffins initiative overturns the stigma of death and turns the coffin from a symbol of fear, dread and grief, into a positive and life-affirming expression of art.

It is part of the Lien Foundation's Life Before Death campaign that advocates better care for the dying. It also seeks to create die-logues about death and dying for greater awareness on end-of-life matters. The campaign website can be accessed at www.lifebeforedeath.com.

Key partners of this initiative include St Joseph's Home and Hospice, FARM, Eyeka and Singapore Funeral Services.

For more, please visit:
www.happycoffins.org

Art in Life and Death

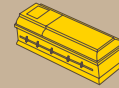
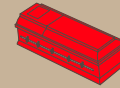
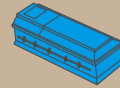
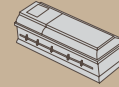
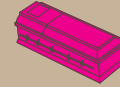
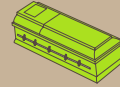
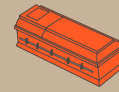
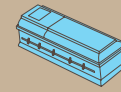
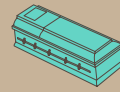
The Foundation commissioned FARM, a local arts creative society, to curate three designers to design personalised coffins for three residents at St Joseph's Home. These three enlightened individuals desired to have their coffins made before their passing.

In addition, a multi-disciplinary artist Gilles Massot, was commissioned by the Foundation to present his view of death on a Happy Coffin. The photographs of all these actual coffins were taken by photographer Deanna Ng.

The Foundation also invited youths and artists from Eyeka, a global online creative community, to design the best Happy Coffins. A record 733 entries were received from 37 countries. Six of the top designs have been made into Happy Coffins.

Singapore Funeral Services provided the coffins and logistics for this initiative.

My Life, My Coffin



ELSIE CHUA
79 YEARS OLD

ST JOSEPH'S HOME
RESIDENT

SAYANG
DESIGNED BY: ZIXI TAN

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

ELSIE CHUA
79 YEARS OLD



ST JOSEPH'S HOME RESIDENT

Elsie is a strong, quiet and determined woman. She knows what she wants, and she speaks her mind. A lover of flowers - roses, lilies and orchids are her favourites. To her, they are a symbol of God's presence in all the things around us.

Elsie used to work as a seamstress at the Singa Sewing Machine Company. When she speaks about fabrics and sewing, her face lights up and she can still be found lingering longingly in the nursing home fabrics storeroom.

Elsie appreciates intricate and detailed embroidery and revels in the rich colours and imagery of her Peranakan¹ culture. She speaks with much fondness of the Nonya dress - the robia. It was one of those dresses that she could sew very well.

When she passes on, Elsie would like to be dressed in the traditional kebaya² dress of a light blue colour.

¹Term used to refer to Straits Chinese.

²A kebaya is a traditional Straits Chinese garment for women.

SAYANG

DESIGNED BY: ZIXI TAN

LOCAL ARTIST COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

ZIXI TAN
DESIGNER, ILLUSTRATOR



LOCAL ARTIST COMMISSIONED COFFIN

CONCEPT OF WORK

Inspired by Elsie's background as a Peranakan seamstress, designer Zi Xi imagined the casket to be like a porcelain vase; a white casket with whimsical blue illustrations. The illustrated patterns feature Elsie adorned in a kebaya, surrounded by animals, flowers and leaves – and doing what she loves best – sewing. The dainty drawings and embroidered feel reflect Elsie's beautiful embroideries and love for nature.

THOUGHTS FROM ZIXI

I never imagined applying my work to a casket. Being a part of this unique project has been really heartwarming because I know for certain that I have blessed a complete stranger with my work.

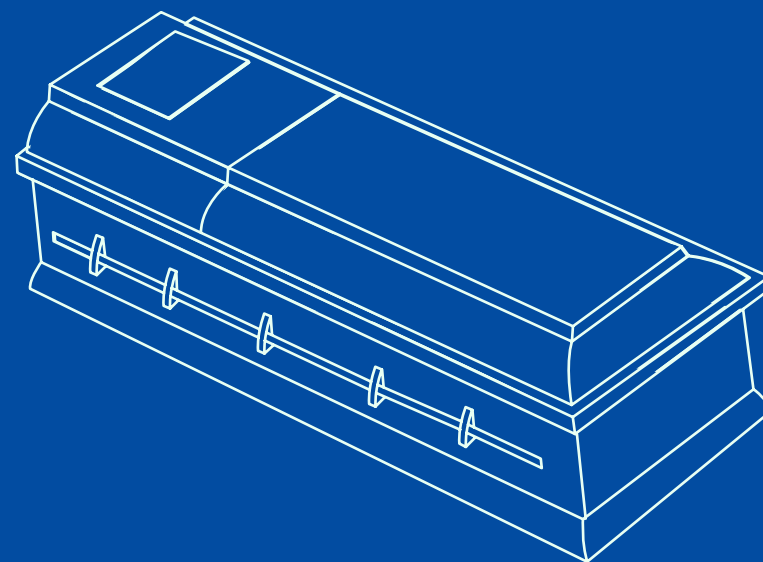
I hope Elsie's casket will become a vessel that speaks of her preciousness and beauty, and evoke a sense of eternal peace.

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Singapore, Zi Xi Tan has learnt to find beauty in the vernacular and in the 'everyday'. Likely due to the mundane environment of living on a little island, she dreams of a bigger better world and a brighter every day.

Having won a Government scholarship from Design Singapore in 2006, she left Singapore to major in Illustration at Central Saint Martins, London. Zi Xi now works independently as a full-time illustrator and recently held her first solo exhibition at The Art Studio in Singapore.

Her work has received awards and commendation from both Singaporean and International organisations. Most recently, she was a Finalist in the London International Creative Competition 2010.



KITTY FOGH
90 YEARS OLD

ST JOSEPH'S HOME
RESIDENT

A LIFE WELL LIVED
DESIGNED BY: ARLENE RIENEKL

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

KITTY FOGH
90 YEARS OLD

ST JOSEPH'S HOME
RESIDENT



Kitty is one of the most colourful characters in the nursing home, and has been living there for more than 30 years. She is chatty, affable, with a friendly nature. Born of Danish and Ceylonese parents, her Danish father was tragically killed by the Japanese after the war.

Kitty has led a full life and had a very fruitful career. She was a teacher in her younger days, and taught many different things – English, netball, drama, choir and even folk dancing. She speaks fondly of her teaching days, recounting her various students and assistants. She is also very proud of the fact that she was invited to teach country dancing to the royal Tengkus¹ in Johor Bahru, Malaysia.

¹Tengku, also spelled Tunku, is a hereditary title reserved for royal families of Malaysia.

A LIFE WELL LIVED

DESIGNED BY: ARLENE RIENEKE

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

ARLENE RIENEKE
DESIGNER, ILLUSTRATOR



LOCAL ARTIST COMMISSIONED COFFIN

CONCEPT OF WORK

Arlene wanted the design to embody Kitty's beautiful and lively spirit, and at the same, to address the issue of death in a gentle and positive way. In search of a solution, she stumbled upon a poignant quote by Louisa May Alcott, the author of *Little Women*, who is very much like Kitty – a Renaissance woman, a teacher, and a truly independent spirit. "Love is the only thing we can carry with us as we go" ~ Louisa May Alcott.

Arlene rendered the quote in organic, flowing form and a warm color palette, and created little characters, cheerful boys and girls, to represent Kitty's students, or her 'children' as she fondly addresses them.

THOUGHTS FROM ARLENE

I approached the brief with apprehension initially as it was such unfamiliar territory. In addition, I was mindful of the generational gap, the scope of the artwork, the sensitivity of the project.

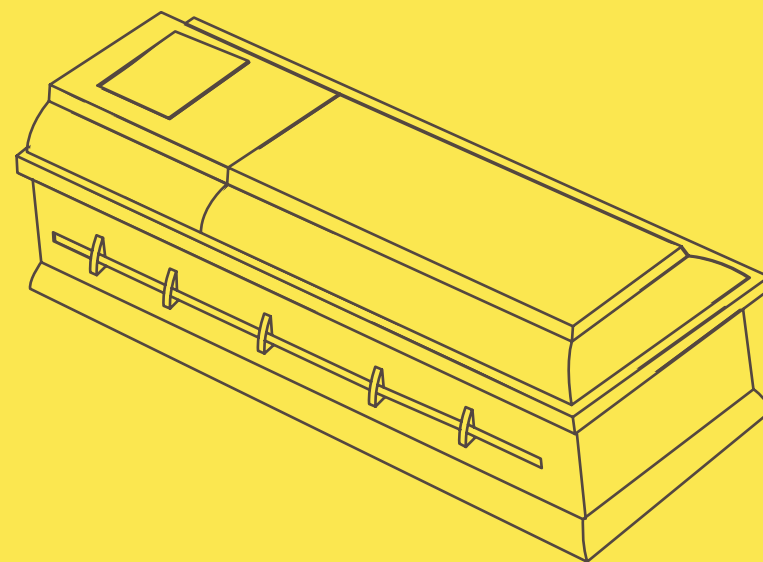
The important issues the project raised also moved me. The notion and spectre of facing death for many remain disconcerting and touchy matters. How do we 'accompany' a loved one to death's door? These are difficult matters to grasp and wrestle with, especially for young people like me. I do agree that we need to talk about this.

We will all have to face death one day, and such conversations remind us that we are never alone in our struggle against the inevitable.

BIOGRAPHY

Arlene Rieneke is a designer by day and illustrator by night. In her spare time, she builds little wonderlands with colour pencils, paint, and finely wrought cobwebs.

After finishing her art studies, she has been working on various commercial and independent projects. She is currently residing in Singapore.



MAGDALENE KHOO
70 YEARS OLD

ST JOSEPH'S HOME
RESIDENT

ROSE IN PEACE
DESIGNED BY: BRICK

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

MAGDALENE KHOO
70 YEARS OLD

ST JOSEPH'S HOME
RESIDENT



A shy and reserved person, Magdalene was born with polio and lost her father when she was six years old. Despite such unfortunate circumstances, Magdalene has a heart of compassion. She has gone on missionary stints overseas at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes in Southern France.

Magdalene loves roses in all shades and colours. To her, they represent happiness and bliss and remind her of the good times she had in the French countryside.

Despite her disability, Magdalene creates nifty knits - socks, shoes and scarves come out of her amazing hands.

Magdalene would like to be in a simple white dress when she passes on.

ROSE IN PEACE

DESIGNED BY: BRICK

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

BRICK (BRIAN CHIA)
DESIGNER, ILLUSTRATOR



LOCAL ARTIST COMMISSIONED COFFIN

MOTIVATION

Brian, or Brick as he is better known, created scenes with a “cross-stitched design” for Magdalene. It captures her love for roses and knitting and her time as a missionary, spreading love, peace, and faith in Southern France.

On the side of the coffin is the word, “Thankful”. It represents Magdalene’s heartfelt thanks to all the people who have helped in her life, especially for the good care and love of the sisters at St Joseph’s Home.

THOUGHTS FROM BRICK

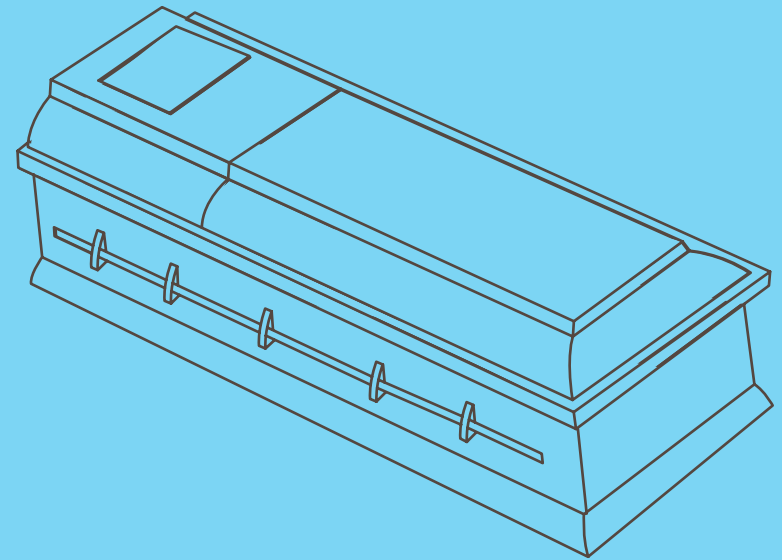
After I learnt about Magdalene’s life, I was filled with respect and empathy for her. I was also greatly inspired by her noble heart. She overcame adversity and did not give in to her disability. I salute and celebrate her spirit and strength!

I hope my specially designed coffin for Magdalene would make her excited and happy.

BIOGRAPHY

Brick’s style of illustration is like how he lives life - colourful with occasional bouts of sullenness, but always experimental.

An MA graduate in design for interactive media from Middlesex University of London, Brick spent years honing his skills in both interactive media and digital illustration.



GIVING BACK

DESIGNED BY: GILLES MASSOT

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



ABOUT

GILLES MASSOT
MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
ARTIST



LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN

CONCEPT OF WORK

Gilles Massot's "Giving Back" is the only artist commissioned coffin. It represents a restitution of energy to the universe, both from the spiritual and materialistic point of view. It means: time to give back to the universe the energy which had built and sustained the body throughout its physical existence, like the energy coming from the sun through diverse channels such as the food chain. The design also illustrates a 'merging with the universe'.

THOUGHTS FROM GILLES

The invitation to join this project came just as I was researching the evolution of how western society relates to death at the turn of the 19th century. At that time, cemeteries located in the city centres symbolized the intricate relation of life and death as two sides of the same coin. But as urban planning pushed cemeteries to city outskirts, and with the concomitant successful evolution of medicine, death began to be regarded as something that could be kept at bay, which is of course eventually nothing but a dangerous illusion. The project provided an interesting opportunity to work on a meaningful topic that I had explored in other contexts.

BIOGRAPHY

Gilles' practice covers a wide range of forms of expression, from visual, to writing, to performance, to education, while at the same time focusing on history and ethnology.

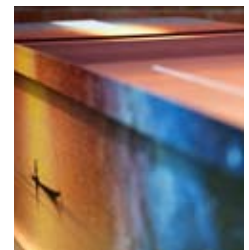
After studying architecture in Marseille (France) and eventually graduating in photography, Gilles came to live in Singapore in 1981.

His early participation in the local art scene saw him involved in a string of seminal art events. His photojournalistic work has been extensively published in various magazines and his artistic work has been presented internationally in over 50 exhibitions. He is currently a lecturer in LASALLE and NTU.

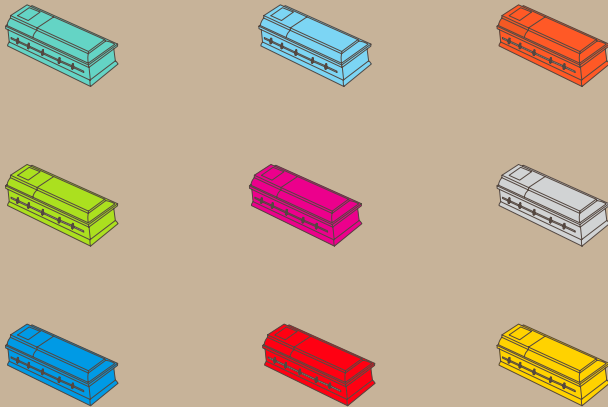
GIVING BACK

DESIGNED BY: GILLES MASSOT

LOCAL ARTIST
COMMISSIONED COFFIN



The Underground Gallery



EYEKA
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
FIRST PLACE WINNER



HELLO COFFIN
INES VAN GUCHT
27 YEARS OLD
BELGIUM



This coffin is designed for myself and I wanted it to be personal and real.

I have started to think about my funeral, my life, the future and my death because they raise many questions, like *who will I be and will I be happy? Will I be happy with what I made of my life? Will there be regrets?*

These questions can't be answered now, but once I lie in this coffin, it won't matter. The only certainty is this coffin. That is why I designed my coffin as my friend, the one that will take care of me after my death.

EYEKA
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
SECOND PLACE WINNER



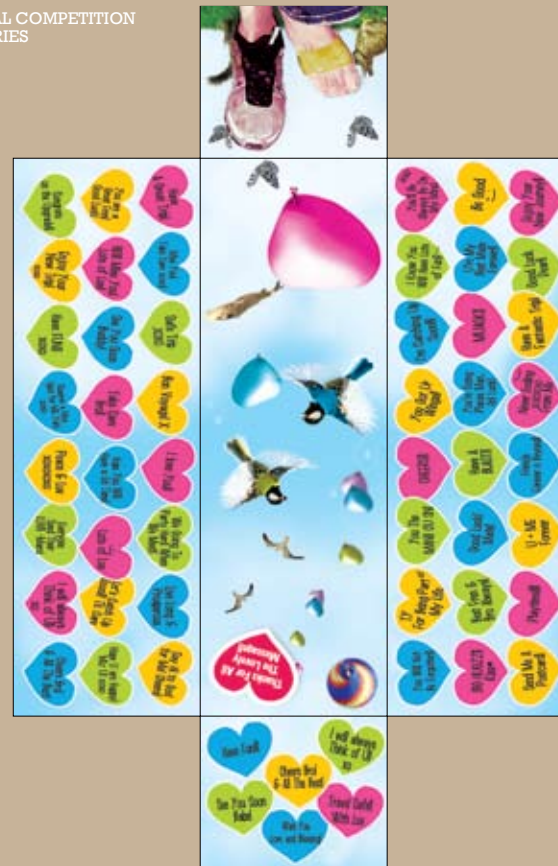
INSPIRING FORCE
IAN LIM WEI MING
25 YEARS OLD
SINGAPORE



This coffin is dedicated to my late Art Teacher, Ms Ivy Ho Hwee Ting who passed away in 2002 due to Hepatitis B. The image on the coffin is without facial expression because her smiles cannot be replicated by painting, and sunflowers are her favourite flowers.

A devoted mentor, she carried on helping us even after she left teaching for further studies. Her love and enthusiasm inspired me to follow in her footsteps and take up design as a career. This coffin is specially created in appreciation of her. Thank you, Ms Ho!

EYEKA
INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION
WINNING ENTRIES



A NEW JOURNEY WITH LOVE
JACOB HU
34 YEARS OLD
SINGAPORE



This design represents how I feel about death and how I envision my transition to another world.

I think there will be Life and a new home after death. It's like starting a new journey in another form, more surreal perhaps. This journey will be blessed with love. That's why the sides of my coffin are covered with "Love Message" stickers, which allow my loved ones and friends to leave their messages.

With blessings and love, this journey is gonna be a wonderful one!



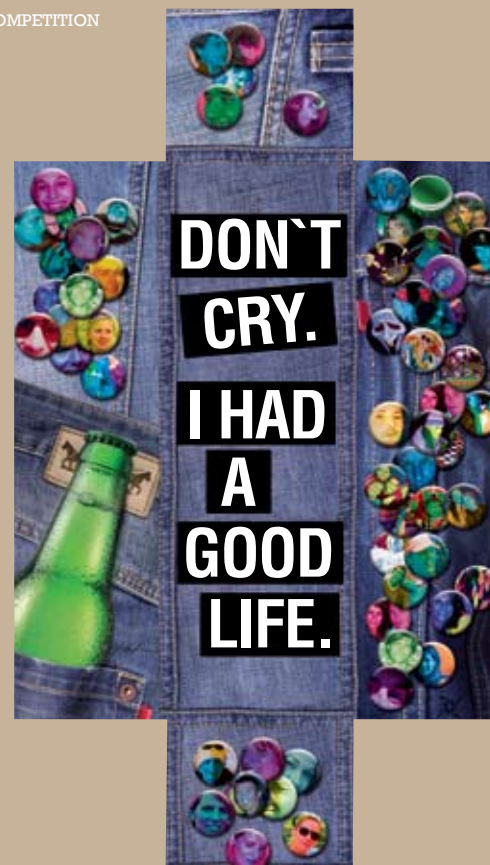
SIGNED PETITION - PLEA FOR HEAVEN

HARUN A. WIRANTO
45 YEARS OLD
INDONESIA



My motivation for designing this coffin is the belief that in all religions, God loves the one who helps others while they are on earth and that we are all going to meet our maker eventually.

What better medium is there than the coffin to prove that you've been a good person! A coffin signed by many loved ones shows just that.



MY FAVORITE THINGS IN LIFE

MARTIN MATERA
30 YEARS OLD
CZECH REPUBLIC



This is my vision of a happy coffin. I don't like sad funerals and I want mine to be a happy one.

This design represents the things I like. The people and pets I love are featured on the buttons. Because I am crazy about music and films, there are signatures and logos of my favorite bands, actors and directors .

The coffin is 'made of' my favourite denim jeans and it has my most-loved beer.



ANKH

IHDAR NUR
27 YEARS OLD
INDONESIA



The Ankh was, for the ancient Egyptians, the symbol (the actual Hieroglyphic sign) of life. Till today, it is an enduring icon that remains with us, like that of a Christian cross. It is one of the most potent symbols represented in Egyptian art, often forming a part of decorative motifs.

The main concept behind this design is the beauty of "Life" after death, as we can see there is "Anubis" God from ancient Egypt. One can also visualize angels on the coffin.

The hieroglyphic symbols mean: "Life is Beautiful", "Heaven is Eternal", "Ankh is our Life" .

www.happycoffins.org