

# HACKNEY CITIZEN

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PUBLICATION : HACKNEY CITIZEN

COUNTRY : UK

DATE : 2013

DESCRIPTION : ARTICLE ON SUPEREVERYTHING\*  
PERFORMANCE AT HACKNEY EMPIRE



# OPEN LIGHT SURGERY

Audio-visual collective  
The Light Surgeons  
to operate live at the  
Empire this month



Fresh from playing at the Hackney Film Festival last September, cross-media collective The Light Surgeons will return to the live stage in the borough on 19 April, where they will play at the Hackney Empire in association with the Barbican, *writes Dominic Simpson*.

Entitled SuperEverything\*, and billed as a 'live audio-visual performance', the event is inspired by a journey to Malaysia where the collective worked with a number of musicians from the country, exploring traditional South-East Asian music tropes and producing field recordings.

In their own words, the accompanying footage and visuals "weaves together documentary narratives to create a kaleidoscopic portrait of Malaysia, one of South East Asia's most culturally diverse countries". This will include an exploration of Wayang Kulit, the ancient Malay tradition of shadow puppet theatre.

The performance will include members of the Heritage Orchestra, who have collaborated with Scanner and the Aphex Twin, and acclaimed Malaysian musician Ng Chor Guan. The interactive side of the performance will

involve the audience being encouraged to use Twitter.

The Light Surgeons' Chris Allen spoke to the Citizen about the event.

"Tim Cowie [of TLS] and myself were invited to develop a new collaborative project in Malaysia by the British Council and this performance is the result of that collaboration with a group of local artists and musicians," he says.

"We were really excited to work with the Gamelan orchestra Rhythm In Bronze. It was really interesting to combine the musical traditions with electronic music and our audio visual approach to creating music and visuals symbiotically."

Allen recalls the five-month sojourn in the country. "The film production was a pretty crazy period where we were non-stop filming in a very humid and sweaty environment," he says. We managed to gather a hell of a lot of material. We covered a lot in not a lot of time with a limited budget. If we could go back, I think we would like to go to Sabah and Sarawak – they have some of the oldest rain forests and indigenous tribes in the world there."

Explaining the tradition of Wayang Kulit, Allen says: "I've always been fascinated by the traditional shadow puppet theatre that comes from this

part of South East Asia, so when this project came along we were very keen to explore it. It's such an ancient art-form and really represents the origins of cinema. We travelled up to the Northern border of Malaysia and Thailand to film a Wayang Kulit performance and this features as an introduction. We want our audience to make a connection with this traditional form of live cinema and our electronic approach."

Allen is especially enthusiastic about the venue's location. "We discussed presenting the show at their [the Barbican's] LSO St Luke's space to begin with", he reveals, "but after seeing the Alphaville event at Hackney Empire last year, we knew we had to present the show there. It's super local for us, as our studio is just down the road on Mare Street, so it feels really great to have taken this project around the world and to bring it home. It's going to be a very special night indeed."

*SuperEverything\**  
19 April 2013, 8pm

*Hackney Empire, 291 Mare Street, E8 1EJ*  
[supereverything.net](http://supereverything.net)