



THEATREWORKS
ARTS • PRACTICE • CRITICAL MASS

72-13

2019 NOW.

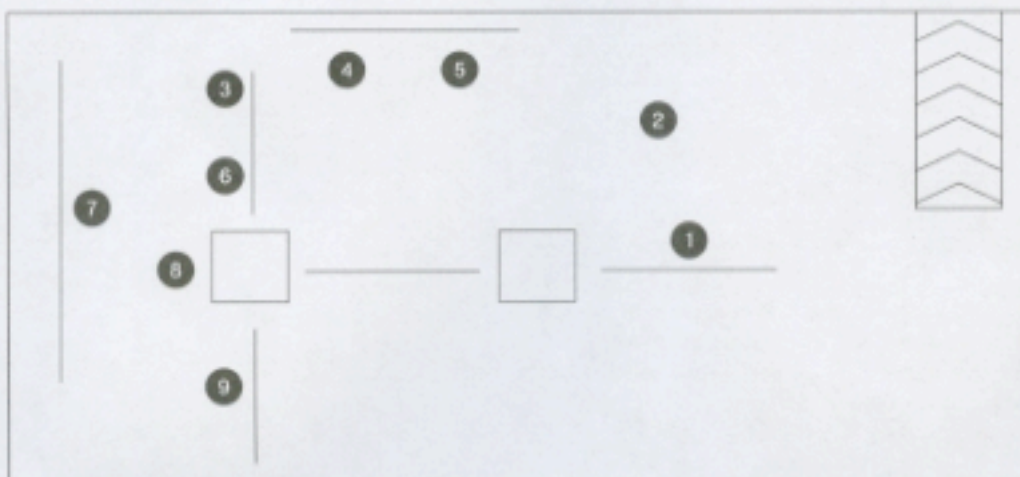
10-28
JULY 2019

Not. Ordinary. Work.
Nuanced. Open. Winsome.
Novel. Overt. Wayward.
Narratives. Of. Women.
Nonconforming. Overbold. Wicked.
Nectar. Oracle. Wisdom.

N.O.W. – not ordinary work – is a three-week public project presented by TheatreWorks (S) Ltd. From 2019–2021, N.O.W. is helmed by established actress and arts educator, Noorlinah Mohamed. As Artistic Director, Noorlinah has designed a three-year season focusing on women creators, thinkers, and change-makers, and their approach to making a difference.

N.O.W. is interdisciplinary. Its programmes include performances, films, music, mixed-media installations, workshops, talks and demonstrations. Led by women and supported by women production, technical and administrative teams, N.O.W. makes visible and audible the multifaceted and capable women, their voices and their *not ordinary work*. It spotlights *her* process, *her* thoughts and *her* creation. Experimental, deliciously weird, and yes, fun, these works explore the conversations women from different disciplines have with each other, and the world.

Apotropaic Texts



1 Zarina Muhammad
Weather Witching. Charms on Fruit Trees and Whistling Winds
2019
Installation, Mixed Media
Dimensions variable

2 Zarina Muhammad
*Tutup Bumi, Tapak Gajah,
Pokok Ara*
2019
Installation, Mixed Media
Dimensions variable

3 Marilyn Tan
Your Silence Will Not Protect You
2019
Digital collage on fabric
Texts by Audre Lorde,
CAConrad, David Frayne,
Georges Bataille, Hélène
Cixous, Marilyn Tan

4 Zarina Muhammad
In collaboration with Munah
Bagharib, Wardah Mohamed,
Hasyimah Harith, Sharmeen/
Sifar, Sunitha Janamohanan,
Julia Toramae

Cenderawasih
2019
Single-channel video, 13.31 min

5 Marylyn Tan
Remember the Rhythm/Remedy
2019
Single-channel video, 3:12 min

6 Marilyn Tan
*Starve Something Long Enough
and it Dies*
2019
Digital print on fabric

7 Zarina Muhammad and Marylyn Tan

*Bitter Medicine, Honey Jars
and Other Objects of Secret
Splendour*
2019
Installation, Mixed Media
Dimensions variable

8 Marylyn Tan
Assembling Holes of Holes
2019
Installation, Mixed Media
Dimensions variable

Puteri, Ratu, Nenek Kebayan
2019
Embroidered text on white
cotton
Texts by Barbara Andaya,
Alysha Rahmat Shah, Zarina
Muhammad

The Clandestine Care Between Women

By Marilyn Tan

Being a woman, especially as a queer woman working with the alienated, endangered body, I cannot escape an acute awareness of the weighted notion of care in my life. It is inevitable – whether because of the cultural impositions we place on each other, religious exhortation, or moral duty, we are conditioned or perhaps coerced into bearing that burden of care for others. Even more necessary, then, is a culture of care between women, with that care so often clandestine. I am more cognizant than ever that women need to care and hold space for each other, especially between women who have differently-privileged experiences in being marginalised, policed, or being denied access to resources.

My own work reflects this by being interested in how certain pieces of advice, actions, or stories – the oldest form of healing – come to take on apotropaic (as in, magical techniques intended to avert evil or harm) qualities. Care that is occult and clandestine is well-suited to a tradition of care between women especially because such care is often forced into positions of the covert (think of the secrecy surrounding women's sexual health and reproductive function, the spectre of the fearsome hag or witch). Conversely, these feared and abhorred figures often also hold taboo knowledge about women and their bodies (e.g. the performance of abortions, love charms, birth control), as well as the sexual and social abjection that is often placed upon us.

Excerpted from my first volume of poetry, *GAZE BACK*, one of my visual poems, titled *Barrier Method*, is featured in this exhibition and based on the layout of a tab of birth control pills, calling to mind a board game or a grid. Arrows from each tile lead to the next in a clockwise direction, pointing to both the ongoing circularity that is a tradition of care and the sometimes-seeming futility of trying to protect oneself from the

dangers at hand. In each tile are quotations from my various experiences with birth control, from the pamphlet for Mercilon, to quotes from the doctor administering it, to online sources and word-of-mouth on how to induce a miscarriage. Such information is necessarily hard-won, and definitely did not feel easily accessible to me as a seventeen-year-old, when I most needed it.

It was also interesting to note that the medical or scientific information that would ostensibly give me more autonomy over my own body was also often laden with moral, spiritual or emotional weight, such as the doctor telling me not to engage in rough sex, and that 'relationships with boundar[ies] [were] like staircase[s] with railing[s]'. Other texts, with which I associate apotropaic function, have paralleled this – *Girl* by Jamaica Kincaid, for example, in the same breath, speaks of how to 'throw back a fish you don't like, and that way something bad won't fall on you; this is how to bully a man; this is how a man bullies you; this is how to love a man, and if this doesn't work there are other ways [...]'. An apotropaic text, for women, recognises the multiple positionalities that are inherent and inseparable to a woman's lived experience. Further, the impulse to guard these positionalities, these experiences, is often palpable, as in the self-explanatory Linda Stupart's *A SPELL TO BIND STRAIGHT WHITE CIS MALE ARTISTS FROM GETTING RICH OFF OF APPROPRIATING QUEER AESTHETICS AND FEMININE ABJECTION*.

Therefore, how do I continue this tradition of occult (that is, secret), mouth-to-mouth passing down of vital, erotic, unknown, taboo knowledge? Women's writing and knowledge belongs to us; it is a source of vilified power. The lack of description of what happens between women, which is often denigrated or dismissed in any case, makes it, as Chris Kraus' *I Love Dick* proclaims, 'the most interesting thing in the world'.

**"Admitted only as footnotes and marginalia...":
Writing the Apotropaic on/for Non-Conforming Bodies
and Other Creaturely Forms**

By Zarina Muhammad

Si(apa) Hantu Songkei? Hantu Belian? Hantu Laut? Hantu Angin? Hantu Kubor? Hantu Jembalang? Who is Dato Uban, Dato Paroi and Tok Gunung? Who is the Buaya Putih? Tok Sarilang? The ancestral tiger? The weretiger? The Orang Bunian? The naga? Who is the Queen of the South Seas? Nyi Blorong? Che Siti Tanah Masyur? Rangda Ning Dirah? Mahendradratta? Ken Dedes? Prajnaparamita? Puteri Gunung Ledang? Tun Teja? Wan Seri Beni? Radin Mas? Fatimah Rocker? Apa ada pada nama? What's in a name? In resurrecting, remembering, reciting their names, what/who are we invoking?

The names cited here are but a small fraction of the powerful figures that have historically been invoked as being notable spirit guardians and otherworldly beings related to the forests, lands and seas of this region. In addition, they can also lay claim to a certain involvement and influence in the political and magico-religious histories of their respective localities of belonging. In mapping out an inventory, a constellation of the otherworldly and the supernatural, of (dis)enchantments, deities, divinities and the demonised, where should we begin? Sea-faring, earthy, chthonic, tree-inhabiting, flapping, winged avian, animalistic and anthropomorphised spirits and deities have played significant roles in the mythologies and cultural landscapes of Southeast Asia. Who has survived? Which names have been maligned? Or rendered obsolete? Whose historical legacies have been appropriated for the entertainment industry, popular culture and sensationalized exoticised renderings and representations? How valid, accurate or limiting is it to see these figures through the lenses of gender, sexuality, race, age, environmental contexts or our other cultural baggage? With regards to what we fear, what comforts us, the knowledge of ghosts, magic, myth, charms and the talismanic – what has been retained, passed down, adapted or forgotten

in cultural memory, especially as told by, to and through women? As Barbara Andaya has noted in *Studying Women and Gender in Southeast Asia*, "when the national epic has already been laid out according to certain accepted formulae, the experiences of women can only be admitted as footnotes and marginalia". I would like to add that the female-identifying from the otherworldly spheres are not exempt.

Apotropaic Texts is a body of work I would describe as being taking on one of the faces of the multi-headed shapeshifting composite beast that is my research. My work, in its various incarnations, has generally been interested in the cumulative nature of stories and the labyrinthine vexations associated with embodied knowledge and the act /power of naming. The otherworldly figure, the spirit loci, the ethereal entity as actuality, metaphor and concept, as a mirror of worldly anxieties, desires, preoccupations and precariousness has been central to most of the work of my decade long research project. Whose names continue to evoke unruly bodies, uncanny landscapes and abject natures? Whose names have become metaphor, myth and a projection of normative (or not) socio-cultural attitudes? In negotiating this multi-headedness and the

monster truck load of cultural baggage that can come with the words 'magic', 'myth', 'hauntings/hantu', the supernatural, 'mysticism', 'witchcraft', 'sorcery', I'm interested in the consideration of certain legacies of intergenerational trauma and survival as a haunting force and the extent we each (in varying degrees and rather problematically) play ethnographer, cultural ventriloquist and medium. I'm aware of the limitations of what art can do and it's important to me that these various bodies of knowledge are not simply 'props' for the work and superficially and flippantly dealt with. What also interests and intrigues me is the various ways ritual is pragmatically set up and constructed via words, gestures, actions and objects as well as the employment of magic as a way to keep communities cohesive or as a way to maintain political and cultural dominance.

The notion of magic as occupying one half of a binary is an idea that has been conjured time and time again. The relationship between magic and religion, magic and science, magic and modernity – where magic is set up as that dubious archaic problematically 'feminised', disordered, 'primitive' thing of past, play out in enduring ways. At numerous points in history, magic has been set up as a non-conforming body, an antithesis to order, to the normative, to the righteous and rational. This "non-conforming body" is unpredictable, ill-disciplined, fails to respect borders and fails to occupy a position of legitimacy. She is often depicted as abject, wicked, if not morally ambivalent, sinister and conjured through unholy, shrouded underhanded means.

Yet in spite of her disruptiveness, she is reparative to some. She offers reprieve, respite. Destructiveness does not rule out her usefulness. The imposing of these binaries do perhaps point out the extent magic as a concept can be read as a polemical and ideological tool in thinking about cultural power and politics. The positioning of magic as a tool and as an act of disruptiveness, as resistance, as a cultural weapon of sorts, has reiterated and reinforced layers of moralizing theories and representational narratives of the 'demonised' and 'maligned' (often gendered) body. Enquiries about magic are really enquiries about the nature of modernity, contemporary life and the enactment of social power, classification and control onto people, bodies and sites.

Apotropaic Texts for me is a project that extends from personal lived experiences and family histories into broader issues looking into the constellations and timelines of mythmaking and the shapeshifting intergenerational, inter-regional, diasporic understandings of the otherworldly and the unseen legacies of trauma and survival and other spiritscapes that continue to haunt aspects of the worlds of our making. It is also about acts of mourning, gestures of reconciliation and the knowledge passed down from generations of mothers in the form of lullabies, mementoes, *pusaka*, instruction or storytelling we end up believing as fact. At the core of the work is the question of what we might (ritualistically/magically) do to help ourselves, and others, to feel safe, to cope with the micro and broader terrors of the everyday and the banal. It is also without a doubt, my love letter, gesture of gratitude and tribute to the Southeast Asian spirits, shape-shifters, sorcerers, ancestors and the elemental animistic creaturely beings we both fear and revere.

More Than Words

By Jovelle Leong Wei Shan



Image by Lim Wee Jin

As a female millennial in Singapore, I have been raised to speak up. I can compete against my male classmates in both sports and academia on fair grounds and engage in leveled conversations with them about socio-political issues without being slapped with a shade of condescension. As such, I never fully understood the need for female advocacy in Singapore as I felt that we have already achieved gender parity.

Today, more women in Singapore qualify for higher education than men, we have suffrage rights, equal marriage and housing rights and yes, a female president. With equal opportunities and education handed to us on a platter, what is the buzz about gender equality for?

I reckon we do not question, or at least not often enough, where did all our rights come from? There is this saying in Chinese, 饮水思源 (ying shui si yuan). It literally means that when you drink water, you need to think of where this sustenance came from. Embarking on the research process for *Power of Letters* prompted that question in me and provided me with insights as to how much has been done for the entitlements I am afforded as a Singaporean woman today.

The tireless dialogues held between women organisations like Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) and the government; petitions made over the years by prominent female rights advocate figures like Tisa Ng and Constance Singam, paved the

way for the establishment of the Family Court, the abolishment of female medical quotas and secured welfare rights for divorced women. It is their audacity and persistence to speak up and against, in a time of conservative thinking, that effected the ease with which we live our everyday lives in today.

Constance Singam confronted the notion of family courts being "un-Asian" in 1994. It was denied establishment under the premise that it goes against the Asian practice of not "airing our dirty linens in public". The pressing need for jurisdiction in dealing with civil matters within families pertaining to issues like child custody, alimony or familial violence is swept under the rugs simply because Singaporeans were deemed "not ready" for what was considered a drastic ideological shift at that time.

Watching her letters get rejected by local publications under the grounds that they have already "carried two letters on the issue" and realizing after, how it has been nearly fifteen years since the first Family Court was established, I felt inspired. A renewed sense of reverence for the noble work that has been done in unwavering, graceful silence.

Of course, it would be naïve to assume that these letters did all the work. It was also the public's relentless attempts to take ownership of these uncomfortable issues and discuss them openly, that has made a world of difference. It was that discerning critical attitude of the public – both forum writers and reporters alike, in its confrontation that generated concrete change. Indeed, we have come a long way.

But the fight for gender equality is far from over.

Times have changed and discourse has evolved. With the rampant use of social media platforms

that enable the "herd attitude" and undermine individual accountability, socio-political conversations have become more emotionally driven and risks cumulating in white noise. Today, we need discerning critics and sensible social leaders who desire to effect change, not just in the tangible but in ethos as well.

Used judiciously, social media could serve as a great tool in expediting the achievement of gender equality. Take the most recent Monica Baey incident for instance. Beyond all the noise that ensued, the exposé of her sexual assault online was pure action. She chose to become a public presence, a face to her own story. She chose to be seen and named. She chose to act. Awareness was then raised and regulations revised.

And this is just the beginning.

Like the tenacious and persistent female advocates before us, it is imperative to follow up action with discourse in order to elicit change for the long-run. What is the true root of the problem? How can we resolve it for good? Action without discussion is like a story with no plotline, there has to be direction.

The kind of gender disparity and discrimination we tackle today are much more subtle and intricate. It infiltrates our day-to-day conversations, like "you're such a girl" or "quit crying Bob, man up". Indeed, it is impossible to eradicate centuries' worth of cultural instillation and social conditioning of what defines man and woman overnight. But that is not our purpose.

Our purpose I believe, is to proactively engage and discuss as individuals – to take ownership. It is our responsibility to dig deeper and question what more we can do, for there is so much more to be done.

Three Fat Virgins Unassembled (3FVU)



Image by Joanne Ho

“

When I first read the script, my first reaction was one of shock. 28 years and things have not changed much. Harassment has not stopped.

Every day we hear of a woman being sexually abused somewhere in the world. So, are we really being heard?

Men and women cheat on each other all the time. Does this mean that we have taken empowerment in the wrong way? Whenever my mum mentioned that her main life achievement was giving birth and taking care of three children, I always laughed at that. Given her circumstances, should I have understood why and congratulated her? Do I always need to appear strong, even though I am tired and on the verge of collapse?

A woman plays many roles - daughter, wife, mother, grandmother, aunt, worker, friend etc. But how often does she take time to smell the roses and just be herself? How often does she acknowledge and look at the Fat Virgin within her and celebrate her?

A flood of questions bombarded my thought processes during this journey. Ovidia's script spoke to me but of course it had to be made current, and so I have added some things and removed some things and changed the ending a bit. I hope that in this 2019 staging of *Three Fat Virgins Unassembled*, we can explore what it means to be a woman now!

—Grace Kalaiselvi, Director, 3FVU

”

“

The ideas and issues brought up in 3FVU are so close to home because each one of us has experienced them or know someone who has. But the powerful thing that is important to highlight, especially amongst us women now, is that real queens fix each other's crowns. We all stand together. —Munah Bagharib, Actress, 3FVU

”

“

What was hard won can so quickly and easily be lost. And what has not yet been won, must continue to be fought for.

—Chanel Chan, Actress, 3FVU

”

“

The text is terrifically funny. What I love most is that it allows room for response, which is imperative. It's a fascinating process to be able to tease out areas where I think women today - more than 20 years since the first staging - will and can respond to situations that are centuries old.

—Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai, Actress, 3FVU

”

“

There's a 'Fat Virgin' in everyone - regardless of gender, age or status. It's your own 'Little Devil'... It changes and evolves through time... Deal with it! Be with it. —Zelda Tatiana Ng, Actress, 3FVU

”

Co-constructing Narratives

By Akshita Nanda

"Nimita's Place is my own experiment in understanding and challenging a woman's place in space and time and myth and linguistics"



Image courtesy of Epigram Books

When Edith Podesta told me she was reading my novel *Nimita's Place*, my nervous system went on happy alert. I write to be read and cherish every reader's gift of their time, but there is a special thrill in knowing that someone like Edith is making space and time for your story. Edith has a deep understanding of a woman's place in space and time and myth and linguistics. Even better and rarer, she has the ability to communicate this through amazing theatrical works such as *"Bitch: The Origin Of The Female Species"* (2016) and *"Leda And The Rage"* (2018).

Nimita's Place is my own experiment in understanding and challenging a woman's place in space and time and myth and linguistics. This includes addressing the question of why a woman's perspective is rarely considered universal. The story is told in the voices of two different women with the same name, who were brought up in Hindu Punjabi culture. This is a way of life – of seeing and celebrating the world – that dominates Bollywood and thus many people's understanding of what it means to be Indian.

Nimita's Place celebrates the traditions I was brought up in but also examines how these traditions circumscribe one's life from birth to death, leaving very little room for human beings to manoeuvre. For example, there are only two socially acceptable genders and traditionally, men are meant to have careers and women are meant to be married. Men are not expected to make a home in the emotional sense but they own the

physical space. Women are dislocated from the homes they are born into and told to make a new home, once married, even though their rights to the physical property are traditionally limited.

The novel also looks at human dislocation in the sense of migration. For centuries, people have moved around the world or been forced to move because of catastrophe or the understandable desire for a better life. Dislocated in space and time and linguistics, migrants are rarely welcomed by the existing population, much like a woman can remain a stranger in her marital home for years.

Edith and I are both women and immigrants. Her perspective on *Nimita's Place* is delightfully similar to mine and also uniquely hers. She and the cast have taken the novel as source text but made it their own, transforming it into a new creation for the stage. I am honoured by their interest and trust and time.

I am also humbled and honoured by the support of Ong Keng Sen, Noorlinah Mohamed and the team at TheatreWorks, who have long worked on new art forms and vocabularies and carved spaces for diverse voices to be heard. The multi-faceted and provocative N.O.W. Season is just the latest example of this. It puts women front and centre, in the space they should have occupied for much of myth and time. There's a special thrill in having *Nimita's Place* featured here, just as rewarding as the time Edith told me she was making place for my story, and thus making it part of her own.

Be a Comedy Superhero

By Sharul Channa



Image by KC Eng

Being the only full-time female stand-up comedian does seem rather strange when Singapore has a population of approximately 5.46 million. Surely we have more funny women in the country, no? Of course we do! Then why aren't they coming out to explore a career in stand-up comedy? In the past, those who wish to be an actor were advised that it is not a sustainable career. Now, we have government-funded schools dedicated to the arts. Indeed, we have been fighting many odds. What makes me an exception – this Singaporean Indian girl from a middle-class family trying to make people laugh in bars, auditoriums and festivals, hoping to represent her country in stand-up comedy?

I grew up watching my migrant parents work hard to earn a living in Singapore. They came in to Singapore 32 years ago. I saw both my father and mother work hard to educate their three daughters: he chef and she teach children in the pre-school. Gender-roles didn't exist for me as a girl growing up in my household. So the coy, sheepish, conservative Asian girl expectations that are placed on women didn't agree with my upbringing and my life-choices.

From a three-year diploma in Acting from Lasalle, College of the Arts, where my class consisted of only five students during that year, to being outside an open-mic night where the owner was coaxing me to try 3 minutes on stage as no woman was jumping up, I noticed a gap in the situation. I initially only jumped up on stage to fill a 'women quota' but got addicted to the art form.

Public speaking ranks among the most feared things in a list of fears that people generally have. Death is second. Still, I chose to be on stage trying to make strangers laugh. The freedom of being my own writer, producer, director and actor gave me a sense of liberty to tell my truth on stage and explore my "voice". I won't say that being in the stand-up comedy scene these past 8 years has been a bed of roses. I have heard it all – from being judged for being 'vulgar', a 'pottymouth' and unsuitable woman of 'little dignity', to also being mocked by some male promoters for not dressing 'girly' enough on stage. Nerves became the least of my concerns when I had a duty to represent the female sex on stage. Not only the female sex but trying to explore and develop a voice that appeals to the cosmopolitan crowd in Singapore.

So, if a woman in Singapore feels that she has a funny bone or wants to simply share her observations on stage, just know that the following fears run through everyone's minds but can be overcome. Am I actually funny? What if people judge me? What if I don't make it? These fears went through my mind time and again when I was starting out, even after I was two years into my career. Trust me, the rewards when these fears are overcome are far greater and there are millions of women out there who will relate to your voice and need the moral support to know that 'it is ok' and 'I am normal.' So, come – be a stand-up comedy superhero – not with a cape but a mic in hand.

Film Screenings



***Innocents* (2012)**

19 July, 7.30pm–9pm

Dir. Wong Chen-Hsi / 88 min / Singapore

In English and Malay with English subtitles / Rating PG

Set in 1980s Singapore, Syafiqah enters a harsh institution, where she befriends a boy, Ah Huat. Don't miss this award-winning coming-of-age story by Singaporean filmmaker Wong Chen-Hsi.



***A Lonely Woman (Kobieta Samotna)* (1981)**

19 July, 9.30pm–11pm

Dir. Agnieszka Holland / 95 min / Poland

In Polish with English subtitles / Rating TBD

A Lonely Woman depicts the life of Irena, whose bleak life is turned upside down by a new love affair. This film was banned for years by the Polish government due to its criticism of Poland's societal hierarchies.



***I Am The Revolution* (2018)**

20 July, 3.30pm–5pm

Dir. Benedetta Argentieri / 74 min / Afghanistan, Iraq & Syria / In English, Arabic, Kurdish, Pashtun, Daari with English subtitles / Rating TBD

This film documents the fight for gender equality by three women in the Middle East. Set in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq, these women challenge the stereotypes of the veiled and silent Muslim woman.



***Spoor (Pakot)* (2017)**

20 July, 5.30pm–7.40pm

Dir. Agnieszka Holland / 128 min / Poland

In Polish with English subtitles / Rating TBD

Janina Duszejko is a seasoned animal-rights advocate who witnesses a series of murders in the Sudetes Mountains. But were these men killed by wild animals... or something else?

Programme Summary: Week 1



Image courtesy of Zarina Muhammad

STAND-UP COMEDY WRITING WORKSHOP BY SHARUL CHANNA

From 24 June onwards

A 10-part workshop conducted by the inimitable Sharul Channa. Participants learn how to write jokes in their own voices and perform on a live stage by the end of the course.

OPENING PANEL - WOMEN'S VOICE: PERCEIVED OR REAL CHALLENGE?

10 July, 7.30pm–9pm

This panel brings together the voices of artists, creators and advocates to examine how women's expressions of our place, roles and desires have changed over time. Speakers: Dr. Jovina Ang, Shailey Hingorani, Eunice Olsen and Nasyitah Tan.

POWER OF LETTERS

10 July, 6.30pm–10pm (Opening)

11–28 July, 11am–7.30pm (Closed on Mondays)

Power of Letters exhibits letters written by women's rights advocates, from 1986 to the present. In exhibiting these letters, we invite all to engage with the issues and reflect on how they have affected policies as well as attitudes towards women in our society. By Noorlinah Mohamed and Dahlia Osman. Research assistant: Jovelle Leong

Rating: TBD

APOTROPAIC TEXTS

10 July, 6.30pm–10pm (Opening)

11–28 July, 11am–7.30pm (Closed on Mondays)

Apotropaic Texts dives into the use of protective

magic, the (mis)representations of the witch as well as the application of apotropaic defensive tactics historically. This installation intends to be a space for the voiceless to return and create a collective chant of protest. By Marylyn Tan and Zarina Muhammad.

Rating: Advisory (Some Mature Content)

THREE FAT VIRGINS UNASSEMBLED

10–13 July, 7.30pm–9pm

13 & 14 July, 3pm–4.30pm

Written by Ovidia Yu in the 1990s, *Three Fat Virgins Unassembled* redefines the oppressed woman as a 'fat virgin', while illuminating the stereotypes of Singaporean women. This 2019 edition re-examines the text and asks: Have things changed for women since then?

Written by Ovidia Yu Directed by Grace Kalaiselvi

Featuring Chanel Chan, Munah Bagharib, Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai and Zaida Tarlana Ng Set Designer Bernice Ong Lighting Designer Dorothy Png Assistant Lighting Designer Fiona Lim Sound Designer Inch Chua Co-songwriter Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai Stage Manager Jeannette Chong Assistant Stage Manager and Props Cindy Sng

Rating: Advisory 16 (Mature Content)

TOTEMS, TALISMANS, CURIOS AND PHARMACOPOEIAS: A BRIEF TIME- TRAVELLING HISTORY OF CURSES, CONDUITS AND CURES

12 July, 7.30pm–9.30pm

This workshop invites you to sift through ancestral knowledge, personal memory and public archives on healing and killing. Conducted by Zarina Muhammad.

THEATREWORKS 24-HR PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

13–14 July, 11am–11am

First held in 1996, participants write a play in 24 hours. This year's edition takes place at the historic Former Ford Factory. In partnership with the South East Community Development Council, the competition aims to nurture and develop playwrights. Games Mistress: Munah Bagharib.

WRITE FORUM 1 (FOR STUDENTS AGED 15 AND ABOVE)

17 & 19 July, 3pm–5pm

This workshop encourages young minds to consider the process of writing for a cause.

Through discussions and written exercises, participants will examine samples of published letters and analyse the art of persuasive and argumentative discourse. Conducted by Noorlinah Mohamed.

WRITE FORUM 2 (FOR THE PUBLIC)

20 July, 11am–1pm

Writing letters to the papers is one way to express your views. Join two established writers and women's rights activists as they share strategies of getting your ideas across effectively, succinctly and powerfully. Conducted by Constance Singam and Dana Lam.

Programme Summary: Week 2



Film still from *I Am The Revolution* (2018)

THE WAY WE WALK WITH EACH OTHER: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY CONVERSATION ABOUT APOTROPAIC SYMBOLS, TEXTS, GESTURES AND PRACTICES

17 July, 7.30pm–9pm

In this talk, the panelists speak about how magic has been used to carve out care, humour, justice and resistance across the multiple worlds they traverse. Featuring Hasyimah Harith, Izzaty Ishak, Marylyn Tan and Zarina Muhammad.

DRAWING THREADS: DESIGN YOUR BAG WORKSHOP

19 July, 8pm–10.30pm

In just a few hours, a brand new one-of-a-kind wearable art piece is borne. Handcrafted by you and facilitated by the creatives from LOOMS, you

can make either a Shopper Tote, Laptop Tote or Classic Clutch. Conducted by Nasyifah Tan.

FILM SCREENINGS

19–20 July, various times

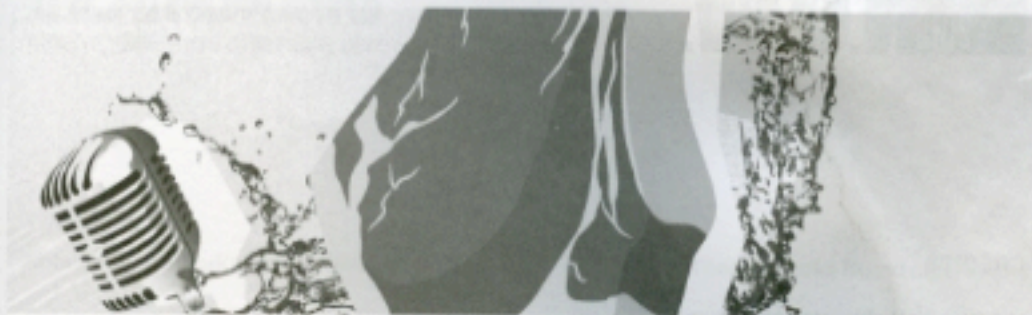
See Film Screenings for programme details.

INCHOATE TO MATERIALITY: PROCESS OF CREATION

20 July, 2pm–3.30pm

Hear from a film director, theatre practitioner and author who will share how they stoke the sub-conscious and awaken the unconscious to let the imagination run wild and thereafter tame to a sense of coherence. Featuring Wong Chen-Hsi, Edith Podesta and Akshita Nanda.

Programme Summary: Week 3



Stand-up: Fresh + Raw

SYMBOLS, SECRETS, SILENCES: A POETRY/ART WORKSHOP (FOR STUDENTS AGED 15 AND ABOVE)

24 July, 3pm–5pm

This workshop invites you to create your own apotropaic text, one that empowers you in times of danger, and explore the tradition of women protecting each other. Conducted by Marylyn Tan.

NIMITA'S PLACE: STAGED READING

25–27 July, 7.30pm–9pm

27 July, 3pm–4.30pm

Nimita's Place is a story of two women who face the same quandaries: Is history repeating itself? With this staged reading, director Edith Podesta navigates the real and the fictional by making audible the voices of those who have read the book.

Written by Akshita Nanda **Directed by** Edith Podesta
Set & Lighting Designer Petrina Dawn Tan **Featuring** Mehr Dudeja, Daisy Namdar Irani, Manisha Joshi, Namrata Juneja, Nidumathi Tamiliselvan **Stage Manager** Melissa Chin
Assistant Stage Manager Catherine Lian Andrade
Rating: TBD

STAND-UP: FRESH + RAW

26 & 27 July, 10pm–11pm

Running for two nights, this open-mic style performance will be a safe space for all to kick back, relax and laugh. Hosted by Sharul Channa, expect comedy that's authentic, fresh and raw.

Set & Lighting Designer Petrina Dawn Tan
Stage Manager Melissa Chin **Assistant Stage Manager** Cindy Sng **Rating:** TBD

DRAWING THREADS: DESIGN YOUR WALLET BASIC WORKSHOP

27 July, 3pm–5pm

This workshop offers stay-at-home mums a chance to learn while creating merchandise, working with free-form art using harvested threads from off-cuts of textiles and fabric pens. Conducted by Nasyitah Tan.

FIRST READ: READINGS OF NEW WRITINGS BY EMERGING PLAYWRIGHTS

Well of Silence

28 July, 11am–1pm

Well of Silence explores caregiver challenges of adult-children, mortality and deeply entrenched beliefs on masculinity. Who is enabling these cultural systems to thrive? From when? And why?

Written by Aswari Aswath **Directed by** Grace Kalaiselvi
Featuring Sharda Harrison, Muntaz Maricar, Ruban Mohan, and Hemang Yadav **Production Stage Manager** Hazeline Ali
Rating: Advisory (Some Mature Content)

The Book of Mothers

28 July, 2pm–4pm

Every woman has been a child, but does that prepare them to become a mother? *The Book of Mothers* examines motherhood through the eyes of Louise, whose complicated relationship with her mother leaves her ambivalent about her own pregnancy and impending motherhood.

Written by Eleanor Tan **Directed by** Yeo Yann Yann **Featuring** Isabelle Chiam, Edward Choy, Jordan Gan, Joshua Lim, Jo Tan, Debra Teng, and Jasmine Xie **Production Stage Manager** Hazeline Ali **Rating:** Advisory 16 (Mature Content)

2019 N.O.W.

CREDITS

N.O.W. Artistic Director: Noorlinah Mohamed

Project Manager: Elena Yeo

Production Manager: Jeannette Chong

Technical Manager: Yap Seok Hui | ARTFACTORY

Film Traffic Manager: Teo Swee Leng

Marketing - Digital: Cheong Si Min

Marketing - Outreach and Sales: Tiffany Chow

Public Relations: Amanda Wong

Assistant Production Manager: Hazeline Ali **Assistant Stage Manager:** Cindy Sng

Exhibition Coordinator: ARTFACTORY **Technical Team:** Joel Fernandez, Kailash, Steve Kwek,

Jed Lim, Rafie Hussain, Shaiful Rahmat, Chloe Jester Tang, Zamier Abu Bakar

Front of House Manager: Vinise Kwa **Interns:** Chin Yong Hui, Hidayah Md Sham, Preenttha Makend

With support from

CULTURAL
MATCHING
FUND

豐隆基金
HONG LEONG
FOUNDATION



SPRMRKT





About TheatreWorks and Writers' Lab

TheatreWorks, established in 1985, is an independent and international performance company based in Singapore. It is unique for its reinvention of traditional performances through a contemporary juxtaposition of aesthetics. TheatreWorks has two main red lines in its work: the first is the creation and presentation of inter-disciplinary or intercultural programmes, the second being documentary performances.

TheatreWorks reflects a concern with negotiation, synergy, as well as artistic sharing between individuals and societies. TheatreWorks has consciously created 72-13, a space, to have more diverse and inclusive dialogues. TheatreWorks intends to share the transcendental potential of art through innovative contemporary performances engaging audiences with uncommon alternatives.

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

www.theatreworks.org.sg
www.72-13.com

About Writers' Lab

Conceived by Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen in 1990, the Writers' Lab has been pioneering in encouraging and developing Singapore playwriting with its varied as well as far-reaching programmes.

The Writers' Lab aims to provide exceptional first-time and emerging playwrights with opportunities to hone their creative writing skills through an incubating environment. In addition, the Writers' Lab also maintains its R&D profile by affording established writers and Writers' Lab alumni an enhanced environment to advance their new works.

TheatreWorks Board of Directors

Caroline Lim
Heman Chong
Justin Hill
Kalyani Kausikan (Chairperson)
Lim Kay Tong
Monica Alsagoff
Ong Keng Sen
Restu Imansari Kusumaningrum
Sharon Lim
Stephane Benoit

TheatreWorks Team

Artistic Director
Ong Keng Sen

General Manager
Mervyn Quek

Administrator
Ong Soo Mei

Finance & Accounts
Rosalyn Zaldua / 1-Bureau Private
Limited

Intern
Lim Wee Jin

2019 N.O.W.

CREDITS

N.O.W. Artistic Director: Noorlinah Mohamed
Project Manager: Elena Yeo
Production Manager: Jeannette Chong
Technical Manager: Yap Seok Hui | ARTFACTORY
Film Traffic Manager: Teo Swee Leng
Marketing - Digital: Cheong Si Min
Marketing - Outreach and Sales: Tiffany Chow
Public Relations: Amanda Wong

Assistant Production Manager: Hazeline Ali **Assistant Stage Manager:** Cindy Sng
Exhibition Coordinator: ARTFACTORY **Technical Team:** Joel Fernandez, Kailash, Steve Kwek, Jed Lim, Rafie Hussain, Shaiful Rahmat, Chloe Jester Tang, Zamier Abu Bakar
Front of House Manager: Vinise Kwa **Interns:** Chin Yong Hui, Hidayah Md Sham, Preentha Makend

With support from

CULTURAL
MATCHING
FUND

豐隆基金
HONG LEONG
FOUNDATION



SPRMRKT





ARTISTIC DIRECTION ONG KENG SEN

About TheatreWorks and Writers' Lab

TheatreWorks, established in 1985, is an independent and international performance company based in Singapore. It is unique for its reinvention of traditional performances through a contemporary juxtaposition of aesthetics. TheatreWorks has two main red lines in its work: the first is the creation and presentation of inter-disciplinary or intercultural programmes, the second being documentary performances.

TheatreWorks reflects a concern with negotiation, synergy, as well as artistic sharing between individuals and societies. TheatreWorks has consciously created 72-13, a space, to have more diverse and inclusive dialogues. TheatreWorks intends to share the transcendental potential of art through innovative contemporary performances engaging audiences with uncommon alternatives.

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022.

www.theatreworks.org.sg
www.72-13.com

About Writers' Lab

Conceived by Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen in 1990, the Writers' Lab has been pioneering in encouraging and developing Singapore playwriting with its varied as well as far-reaching programmes.

The Writers' Lab aims to provide exceptional first-time and emerging playwrights with opportunities to hone their creative writing skills through an incubating environment. In addition, the Writers' Lab also maintains its R&D profile by affording established writers and Writers' Lab alumni an enhanced environment to advance their new works.

TheatreWorks Board of Directors

Caroline Lim
Heman Chong
Justin Hill
Kalyani Kausikan (Chairperson)
Lim Kay Tong
Monica Alsagoff
Ong Keng Sen
Restu Imansari Kusumaningrum
Sharon Lim
Stephane Benoist

TheatreWorks Team

Artistic Director
Ong Keng Sen

General Manager
Mervyn Quek

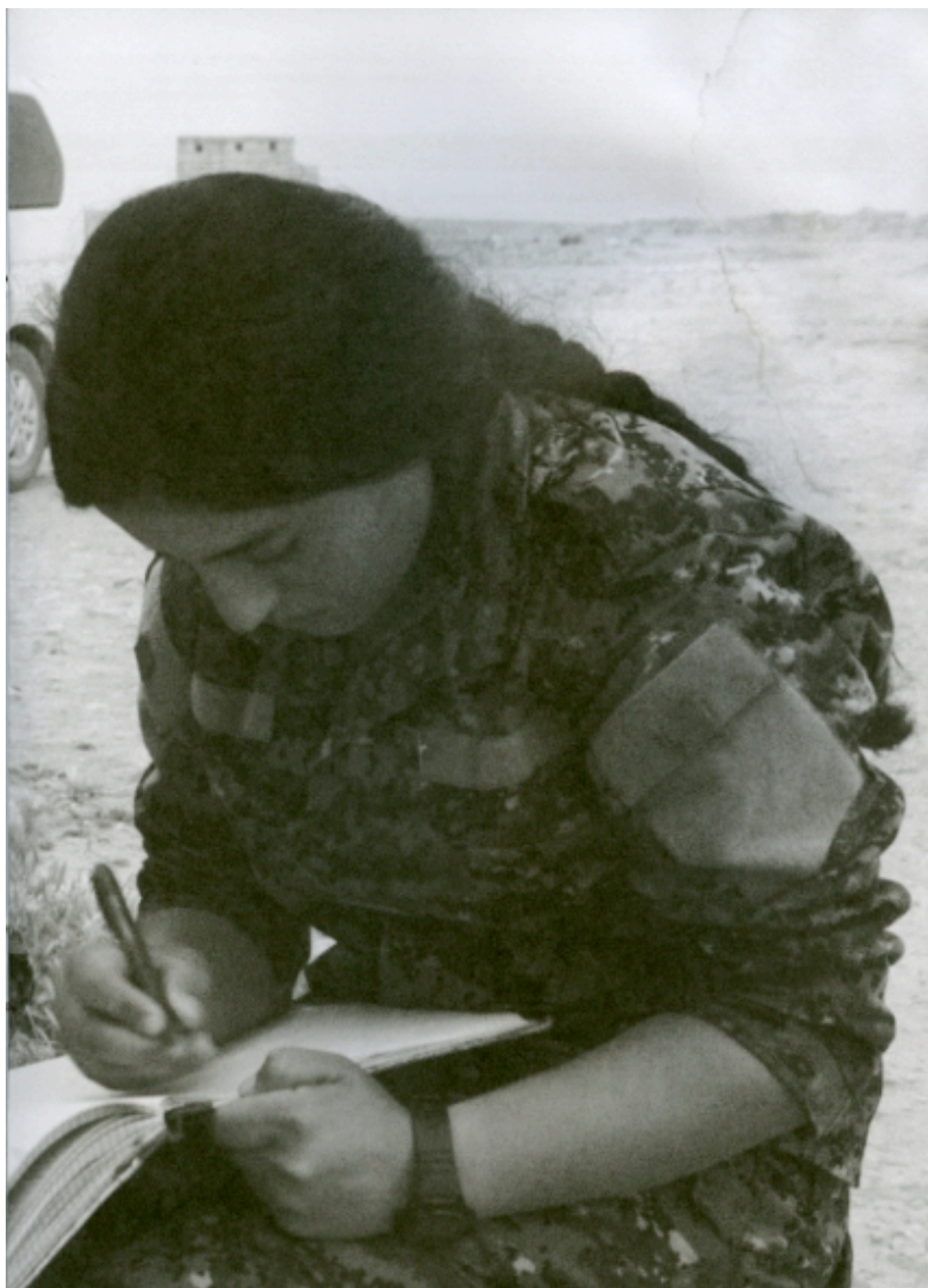
Administrator
Ong Soo Mei

Finance & Accounts
Rosalyn Zaldua / 1-Bureau Private
Limited

Intern
Lim Wee Jin



Film still from *I Am The Revolution* (2018)



Ticketing

Three Fat Virgins Unassembled (3FVU) – \$35 (Concessions* \$20)

Students, Seniors above 62, NSF men and people with disabilities

Film Screenings – \$12

Nimita's Place: Staged Reading – \$18 plus one drink

Stand-up: Fresh + Raw – \$18 plus one drink

Bundle Buys (excl. workshops)

2 programmes - 10% discount

3 programmes - 15% discount

4 programmes - 20% discount

Tickets for 3FVU, Film Screenings, Nimita's Place: Staged Reading and Stand-up: Fresh + Raw are available at SISTIC.

Workshops:

Stand-up Comedy Writing Workshop - \$500 (early bird at \$400 before 31 May)

Workshops for students/public: \$25 per person, incl. materials and exhibition tours

Drawing Threads: Design Your Bag Workshop - \$200 - \$300

Including materials, the handcrafted merchandise plus light bites and drinks

Drawing Threads: Design Your Wallet Basic Workshop - Free for Stay-At-Home mums

Free Admissions:

Exhibitions: Apotropaic Texts & Power of Letters

First Read: Readings Of New Works By Emerging Playwrights

Talks

Registration is required for Workshops, First Read and Talks.

N.O.W. 2019 is held at 72-13, Home of TheatreWorks.
72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road, Singapore 239007

Details on www.notordinarywork.com

General enquiries: writerslab@theatreworks.org.sg

Enquires for Drawing Threads Workshops: noorlinah.mohamed@gmail.com

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Telegram for updates