

**T:>Works**  
presents

# How To Break A Window II

**Triple Bill**

15-19 February 2022, 7.30pm

Live @ 72-13

Livestream on Zoom



# Creative Director's Message

Noorlinah Mohamed

In 2019, when I initiated and proposed "Festival of Women N.O.W.", Artistic Director of T:>Works, Ong Keng Sen, asked if I wanted to incorporate the only and longest-running **24-Hour Playwriting Competition** into the festival. Decades ago, as a young actress, I performed in the readings of many of the winning scripts. There was, naturally, no hesitation on my part.

Normally, following the playwriting competition, a winning entry would be staged and tour the community. When the pathway for touring abruptly ceased because of the pandemic, I felt it necessary to create a new platform to celebrate and showcase the winning entries. That was the start of **How To Break A Window**: its name grew out of the need to break through the doldrums caused by the pandemic, and a nod to the many different experiments artists, in Singapore and around the world, were doing. Indeed, **How To Break A Window** is a platform to exist, to make work happen, to breathe life to new beginnings and to thoughtfully and collaboratively explore possibilities.

This year, **How To Break A Window** has two events. The first is a Triple Bill (15-19 Feb), featuring scripts by Amanda Chong (First Prize, 2021, open category), Melizarani T.Selva (Second Prize, 2021, open category) and Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock (First Prize, 2019, open category). The second event is a Youth Forum presenting staged readings of the winning entries from the youth category of the playwriting competition – Sarah Zafirah (First Prize, 2021, youth category) and Tania Lam (Second Prize, 2021, youth category). There will also be a discussion on youth writing development with the two winners, led and moderated by Ang Kia Yee. Kia Yee is a past participant and repeated winner of the competition. She continues to write and most recently had her play read at C42 as well as with the Playwright Commune.

Tonight, we are excited to begin the showcase with the first three scripts. From an initial idea, to the words they worked sleeplessly over 24 hours, and then, brought to life with dedication, commitment and care by a community of actors, directors, designers and technical and production team. These writings won the hearts of the judges - Sim Yan Ying "YY", Jean Tay and Zizi Majid - for their brilliance, urgency and honesty. They speak of lived experiences that bear witness to the struggles that are often not spoken.

Mounting these works is challenging, especially during these times. It would not have been possible if not for the generosity of spirit and talent of all the collaborators who came on board. They include directors, actors, production and technical team, filmmaking artists, stage managers, family and friends, volunteers, and the media. My utmost gratitude to T:>Works for their resilience and commitment in keeping this 25-year old competition alive and embarking on **How To Break A Window**, the companion showcase platform for new writers. To all who are here tonight, thank you for your presence and support. Enjoy!

# More on How To Break A Window II

For more information on How To Break A Window II, visit the T:>Works blog page through the QR code here:



## Donations to T:>Works

Help us provide quality public engagement programmes. Donate through the QR code here:



Your donation will help us connect the arts and life in a deeper way, thank you!



# Green Leaves

Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock - Educator, art-maker, aerialist



The 2019 24-Hour Playwriting Competition with its opening stimulus of a pair of green streamers being woven into a ketupat, gave me the opportunity to write, what at that time, had been a seven-year old secret desire, to create aerial theatre. I was thrilled when T:>Works approached me last year to revisit this, and with me, not just as playwright, but also the actor/aerialist.

I am so grateful for this opportunity because aerial theatre has never been

something that I could do by myself. As a medium, the aerial arts is still very new to me and finding the connection between actor's body and aerialist's breath is an explorative endeavour that I could not do without the guidance of director Shona, and creative director Noorlinah. They helped me to find ground in the theatre of the piece when the fledgling aerialist in me kept wanting to take-off into the wild acrobatics of the aerial silks. I'm so thankful for the long discussions we had about the piece. They strove to find my intentions and vision, because these were the same things they kept going back to when I found it difficult to juggle all my playwright, aerialist, and actor's hats. Thank you for helping me stay true to my course.

My writing has always been poetry or prose, and I have only ever written plays as a performer trying to create the work that I was envisioning. As playwright, this process has sharpened, for me, the distinction between the various literary genres. I found I had to ruthlessly chop the long poetic paragraphs that I had placed in Green Leaves to drive through the dramatic.



Over the course of this experience, I've learnt that in prose, characters suffer, but in plays, characters struggle. I needed to show this struggle in my writing rather than describe Eve's suffering. It's been a huge learning curve!

As actor-aerialist, I see the great possibility of further exploration in this very new genre. The aerial arts has so much potential as a physical theatre medium but very rarely have I seen it coupled with text. I've gained so many perspectives about how to approach this as well as the potential pitfalls as well as new playwriting skills that I can't wait to start working on another piece – this time probably with red silks!

## Credits

Eve  
Voice

Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock  
Arielle Jasmine Van Zuijlen

Directed by

Shona Benson (Bluefruit Theatre)

Written by

Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock

Set/Scenic Design Consultant

Pan Jingyi Johanna

Lighting Designer

Chong Wei Siong

Sound Designer

Chooi Wai Qi



# Kudumbam

Melizarani T.Selva - Writer, journalist, spoken word poet, author of 'Taboo'



Choosing Noorlinah to direct 'Kudumbam' has certainly been a rewarding decision. Since our first conversation in late November, Noorlinah has taken tremendous care in honouring the weight of the words I've written.

Writing the play required me to be an architect. I had to know exactly where every element and emotional turn needed to be. When the actors, Ahamed and Sangeetha, arrived, I watched Noorlinah

sit with them and slowly unpack each sentence. They were able to see beyond what I envisioned. They could pick out and carry layers of emotion that I didn't know the play had. Together, they constructed strong pillars to make the father-daughter performance even more poignant. It was such a fascinating collaborative process.

Watching Ahamed and Sangeetha mouth the lines for their characters enabled me to discover how I can incorporate more breathing room between my sentences. Pauses are necessary. Coming from a poetry background, I enjoy writing verses and metaphor-rich lines, and because I was always the performer of these lines, I wrote them in my voice and natural cadence. But when the actors approached the text, they found it challenging to carry the rhythm that a long poetic sentence demands. We had to work together to figure out how to make the micro monologues manageable, without compromising the intimacy between the characters.



I truly admire how Ahamed and Sangeetha repeated the lines over and over to figure out the best way to present each punctuation mark. They aimed for precision and I love that!

Another memorable instance for me was having to convey the meaning of “manja” and “merajuk”. Although the script is predominantly in English, it’s emotional core is bilingual and built on Malaysian ideas of relationship. Noorlinah and I worked together to break down the intimate union between father and daughter as well as communicate these ideas to the actors. The way the daughter character ought to appear playful and annoyed without seeming infantilised. The way the father character ought to appear worried and grieving without seeming hot-tempered. A complex balance is required to achieve this accuracy. This dramaturgical process will always be on my mind, especially when I write my next play.

Seeing ‘Kudumbam’ come to life on stage and screen has definitely inspired me to devise new work. Presently, I am keen to further explore the depths of daughterhood in relation to societal, cultural and familial ideas of what kind of woman she must be. I am also persistently interested in invoking the silent spirit of the mother character in Kudumbam. I would like to give her a voice and reason for the choices she made.

## **Credits**

Father	Ahamed Ali Khan
Daughter	Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai
Directed by	Noorlinah Mohamed
Written by	Melizarani T.Selva
Director of Photography	Brian Gothong Tan
Camera Operators/ Grip and Gaffer	Tan Yee Shen
Film Editor	M. Nurfadhli Jasni
	Moira Loh



# #WomenSupportingWomen

Amanda Chong, Lawyer, poet, advocate



Since stumbling into playwriting, I have been enraptured by the collaborative aspects of theatre, which stands in contrast to my solitary practice as a poet. The Company of #WomenSupportingWomen has deepened my love for the magic of theatre – how the combined imaginations of artists elevates a text and crystallises it in the corporeal.

#WomenSupportingWomen is about the stakes of feminism across the intersections of race, class, and generation, as well as the various ways that pain is carried and masked in the female body. I hoped for the play to be richly infused with the lived experiences and consciousness of other women artists. This is exactly what the play has received thanks to my collaborators, and it is all the better for it.

Director Sim Yan Ying sharpened my script with her many thought-provoking questions and sensitivity to dramatic beats. YY brought her Gen Z feminist sensibilities to the creation process, and was refreshingly open to ideas in the rehearsal room. I enjoyed taking the Company on a deep dive into the process of reporting a sexual assault case from police station to court verdict, and discussing how stereotypes of trauma reinforce the template of a “perfect victim” which ultimately militates against bringing perpetrators to justice.

I’ve always considered acting to be an act of bravery, especially when playing characters that require you to draw deeply from your own well of vulnerabilities. Jo Tan and Tysha Khan have imagined the inner lives of Karina



Teng and Sara Ismail so fully, that I no longer feel that the words they speak are my own. Their performances depict trauma, not as spectacle or hysteria, but in all its embodied nuances.

Creative Director Noorlinah Mohamed has a dramaturg's eye for motifs and symbols, unpacking new angles that are revelatory even to the playwright. I thank her also for contextualising the play's themes for the audience, by involving AWARE's Shailey Hingorani to discuss the realities of sexual violence in Singapore.

After two years of live theatre being constrained by the pandemic, I thought it was high time we turned the tables by staging Zoom interactions and using Zoom as a theatrical device to explore the breaks between performativity and authenticity; what is seen and unseen. Streaming engineer Nurfadhli Jasni made this happen with his technical wizardry, along with #girlboss stage manager Nurul Hanna Daud who handles the many moving parts of this hybrid performance.

I hope to develop #WomenSupportingWomen into a full length play. My journey with this wonderful Company has given me many new ideas and directions to pursue. Most important for my process, is feedback from you, the audience, so please reach out to me at the talkbacks, via instagram (@asenseoffalling) or my website (amandachong.com) and let me know how the play has spoken to you.

## Credits

Karina Teng  
Sarah Ismail

Jo Tan  
Tysha Khan

Directed by  
Written by  
Set/Scenic Design Consultant  
Lighting Designer  
Sound Designer

Sim Yan Ying "YY"  
Amanda Chong  
Pan Jingyi Johanna  
Chong Wei Siong  
Chooi Wai Qi

# Triple Bill Collaborators

## Green Leaves

### **Shona Benson, director**

Green leaves is a beautiful piece, exposing a woman's struggle to find her place in the world; growing up, navigating millennial pressures, societal expectations and her own complexities. Written to be performed in silks, it offers a unique theatrical experience that challenges conventions, physically and emotionally interweaving and exploring states of being.

### **Arielle Jasmine Van Zuijlen, actress**

Working on Green Leaves with Yin Mei and Shona has been a truly exciting process. There is a grace, insightfulness and simplicity in the text and movement which reminds me of the beauty in storytelling. Overall, this experience has taught me a lot as an actor, and I have immensely enjoyed working with the team.



From left to right: Arielle Jasmine Van Zuijlen, Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock, Shona Benson



# Triple Bill Collaborators

## Kudumbam

### **Noorlinah Mohamed, director**

Nothing gives me more pleasure than working with a text that generously surprises you each time you return to it. Nuanced, thoughtful and poignant, Meliza's writing gifts us with so many possibilities.

### **Ahamed Ali Khan, actor**

As an actor I have to project the voice of the Playwright, and move towards all directions -- as I am told by the Director. To the audience we bring that world of "reality" we have lived through while rehearsing. This play will fill your hearts and minds.

### **Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai, actress**

Having never had a father-daughter relationship, Meliza's play helped me understand what that could possibly feel like. I often spend long hours working, forming, building a character; this was the first time a character worked on me instead, guiding me through and giving me answers to questions I've long held.



From left to right: Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai, Noorlinah Mohamed, Melizarani T.Selva, Ahamed Ali Khan

# Triple Bill Collaborators

## #WomenSupportingWomen

### **Sim Yan Ying "YY", director**

I feel honoured to be part of the process of taking #WomenSupportingWomen from page to stage, breathing life into the fearlessly resilient, recognisably flawed, and deeply human characters. Amanda has written a play that is urgent and affecting for our times and hearing those words triggers something deep-seated in me every time.

### **Jo Tan, actress**

Amanda's harrowing witness account about the price of being a woman is a punch to the gut. Who becomes collateral damage as we fumble our own ways towards a more female-friendly future?

### **Tysha Khan, actress**

Amanda's script struck me from the beginning with how nuanced and thoughtful it is. We see the complexities of both Karina and Sara's experiences in such a short time frame. It has made me rethink what I consider the "right" thing to do, and see how people continue to be trapped by their own limiting beliefs long after they have actually "made it".



From left to right: Jo Tan, Sim Yan Ying "YY", Tysha Khan, Amanda Chong



## About T:>Works

Established in 1985, T:>Works is an independent and international arts company based in Singapore at its space, 72-13. It is currently led by Artistic Director, Dr. Ong Keng Sen. T:>Works' mission and vision is the pioneering of thought leadership in the arts focused on transdisciplinary, transcultural, and inclusive processes. To this end, there is a strong educational perspective with research and discourse contextualising the histories, lived contemporary experiences, and situated art practices. T:>Works also serves to investigate the current urgencies of being located in Singapore through different creative expressions in the public sphere. It is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Company Grant for the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2022. T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character with charity status.

## T:>Works Team

**Board of Directors:** Heman Chong, Kathy Lai, Noorlinah Mohamed, Ong Keng Sen

**Artistic Director:** Ong Keng Sen | **Executive Director:** Traslin Ong | **Administrator:** Ong Soo Mei

**Finance:** 1-Bureau Private Limited | **Communications and Engagement Associate:** Deirdre Chang |

**Communications and Engagement Interns:** Berlin Woo, Charlotte Tan, Nurul Farisha

## Creative & Production Team

**Creative Director:** Noorlinah Mohamed | **Lighting Designer:** Chong Wei Siong | **Set/Scenic Design**

**Consultant:** Johanna Pan | **Sound Designer:** Chooi Wai Qi | **Technical Manager:** Varian Tan **Production**

**Coordinator & Streaming Engineer:** M. Nurfadhli Jasni | **Stage Managers:** Nurul Hanna Binte Daud,

Nur Fatin Nabilah Binte Mohammad Rafie | **Production Crew:** Kailash, Jed Lim, Brenda Mok | **Production**

**Interns:** Berlin Woo, Nurul Farisha | **Front-of-House Manager:** James Jordan Tay | **FoH Volunteers:**

Nadirah Abdullah, Irish Alcantara, Hema Chandramohan, Cheng Kam Yiu Yolanda, Hannah Chua Chi

Min, Ayaka Fujii, Philicia Geow, Charlotte Greenall, Ahmad Musta'ain Khamis, Danny Raven Tan

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