

# Final Year Individual Project 2019

**ORIGINAL WORKS CONCEIVED AND PERFORMED BY ITI'S GRADUANDS**

16 – 25 May 2019

Emily Hill, 11 Upper Wilkie Road

The Final Year Individual Project (FYiP) is a critical and integral aspect of Intercultural Theatre Institute's actor training programme. This is a project that the student begins planning from the moment they start training at ITI. Combining the objectives of a performance with the exploratory intentions of a creative platform, it is each student's search for their own voice in performance.

Students' original works have found life beyond ITI: the cohorts of 2015 and 2018 were invited to present their works at the Singapore Writers Festival; Al-Matin Yatim '15 went on to develop his piece, *Ring in a Desert*, with Centre 42's Boiler Room programme; Uma Katju '17 performed *The Elephant and the Tree* at Aliwal Arts Night Crawl; and Lakshmana KP '18 performed *Fireflies* at Shantanjali Festival of Arts.

Further afield, Felimon Blanco '05 toured *The Day I Met A Muslim* to small towns in Mindanao, Philippines, while the region faced an Islamist separatist insurgency; Sonia Kwek '17 and Tan Weiyong '17 brought their works, *Hymen Instinct* and *What, That's It?*, to the Asia Weekend Theatre Festival, Taiwan; and Catherine Ho '16 performed *Recurrence* 寻环 at the Bangkok Theatre Festival.

# GROUP A (16–18 May)

## The Party

By Jin Chen

Surrounded by massive amounts of information, do we really know what's happening in this world?

When we talk about global conflicts and crisis, we can't help feeling anxious about the world we're living in.

What kind of a world are we moving towards?

Are we getting more united through difficulties, or separated?

Let's simply listen to what the leaders of the major powers say, as a start.

Let's make it interesting to hear.

Let's sing and dance!

Let's join the party!

## Twilight Melody

By Ted Nudgent Fernandez Tac-an

When was your darkest moment? What if you were told that it was coming — that your name was on the list? What if it was just outside your house and was about to knock on your door? What if your darkest moment would mean your life?

*Twilight Melody* is the carillon chimes of every human being's nightmare — that they wish to wake up from and forget.

It is inspired by Filipino stories about the war against drugs.

*Performed mainly in English with some Filipino and Cebuano*  
*Advisory: Mature themes and coarse language*

## -- INTERMISSION (10 MINUTES) --

## The Unmasking

By Earnest Hope Tinambacan

Hello, it's me! The voice inside your head. Yup, that voice that whispers things, the one that offers you different perspectives, possibilities, and a lot of "what ifs". I know you've been looking for me. Everyone is looking for me. Everybody wants to see me, but when you reach me, you begin to run away and shut the door. If you don't stop looking, you might find me one day and hear what I really have to say. Curious? Come up the hill. You might find me there.

*Advisory: Mature themes and coarse language*

## UnBEEcoming

By Wendy Toh

Welcome to Tan Bee Bee's clearance sale! Join her on a journey through time and space as she discovers how sentimental objects can give us strength and remind us of long-buried memories.

Do objects define us, or do we define them?

## 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 𠄎 . returning

By Regina Toon

Is it just me, or is the Earth burning up in flames? We are floating around like angels in Heaven, unscathed. But really, the fire's gone into my feet, my wings, my brain!

The wind on my cheeks is my mother's embrace, calling me home to where it's safe. But I can barely hear her; through the smoke, I can barely see her face.

Do you remember the way back from where we came?

*\*The title illustrates the evolution of the Chinese word 回 (to return) from around 1200 BC to the present day.*

# GROUP B (23–25 May)

## **Agora of Crimes**

By Nour el Houda Essafi (a.k.a. Yiseong)

The scene is set in ancient Greece, she thinks... At night in her atelier, a pathological schizophrenic, a patient with dissociative identity disorder and a delusional female serial killer decides to take a retrospective look at her life's self-proclaimed purpose while attending to her favourite activity.

*Advisory: Mature themes*

## **Exit**

By Jalal Albaroudi

"Between the nostalgia of the past and the unpredictable future, in the present, where the only thing you can call home is a suitcase that contains your identity, you ask yourself: What is identity? What is home?"

Far from home, a man known as the suitcase man experiences a stream of memories irrigating what remains of his bare-roots. A song, a smell and scattered images lead him to share an ancient story from his childhood about Al-Domari, 'The Lamplighter', who had a special bond with the lamps. It is believed that there are seven empires buried underneath Damascus, and the lamplighter's favourite lamp still stands out from one of these ancient empires...

## **Watermelon 我的美人**

By Theresa Wee-Yenko

*Watermelon 我的美人* is a series of scenes inspired by girlhood, wifehood and motherhood.

Scene 1: Someone's Daughter

Scene 2: Good Wife, Bad Life

Scene 3: Watermelon 我的美人

## -- INTERMISSION (10 MINUTES) --

## **nadia**

By Tysha Khan

16-year-old Nadia is singing, dancing, and dreaming her way to her spotless future. But she's also sitting on a secret, a secret her whole body is dying to tell. Will Nadia get through the day?

*Advisory: Mature themes*

## **BOX**

By Vignesh Singh

We live as if we are immortal. We hardly allow ourselves to be mentally and spiritually close to death when we are physically not.

Facing his mortality, a man goes on a journey recounting and reliving his experiences with loss. Inspired by personal accounts and material from the Tibetan Book of Living and Dying, this work is an investigation into loss and the loneliness that surrounds it.

*Advisory: Coarse language*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Production and Stage Manager:** Clarisse Ng

**Photo:** Bernie Ng

**Special thanks** to Malay Heritage Centre, Huang Xiangbin, GroundZ-0 and Teater Ekamatra

## Jin

This project wouldn't have been possible without my dear teammates: Marvin, Aaron, Hope, Ted, Wendy and Regina. I am grateful for their contribution, love and support. I would also like to thank my mentor Sasi, who inspires me, encourages me and shares his wisdom with me. Huge thank you to my teachers Chin Huat, Simon and Beto for their help and support. This has been such an enjoyable journey because I have all of you in my life.

## Ted

The birthing process of this piece was a bit bloody, yet pleasurable. Special thanks to my teammates, Jin, Hope, Wendy and Regina, for their pats on my back and for bringing back my sanity every time I felt like I was lost. I will also be forever grateful for the extended help from Marvin Ablao and Aaron Kaiser Garcia. To our teachers, Sasi, Beto, Chin Huat and Simon, thanks for the helpful insights in shaping, re-shaping and even deconstructing my work-in-progress piece. To my friends and extended friends: Dr. Danny Louie Elumba, Uncle Chan Mun Chew, Santine Pillay (Kult Gallery), and GroundZ-0, for realising my sets and lights. Lastly, thanks to Clarisse Ng for going beyond being our production-stage-manager in this year's FYiP.

## Hope

The face of this mysterious voice was created from a collection of stories from numerous friends of mine. I want to thank them all.

I thank all our past and present teachers in ITI, especially Beto for guiding me all the way and for pushing me to "play to the last consequence" and challenge my own beliefs to make this piece work, Simon for the dramaturgical help, Chin Huat for his eye for details, and Sasi for the continued affirmation and guidance.

Thanks also to my teammates Jin, Wendy, Regina and Ted for the teamwork, honest feedback and insights; Ang Gey Pin, Wan Ching, and Renee Chua for being our first audience and sharing their thoughts; Pooja Mohanraj who served as my outside eye; my stage hands Aaron Kaiser Garcia and Marvin Ablao who also designed and created my costume; Rhian Hiew for engaging with me in early discussions; Clarisse for the technical help; all ITI staff and admin; Uncle Chan Mun Chew for simply asking "what you need" and helping me find things; and the rest of my classmates for the inspiration.

I also want to express my gratitude to my pinoy friends in Singapore, and my YATTA and MISPA family for their support in many different ways. Finally, I dedicate this performance to my family, especially my parents, who are with me in spirit, and my brother Kim Tinambacan, who has been my support system, and who pushed me to learn music production, which is an integral part of this piece.

## Wendy

I would like to thank my cohort, especially Jin, Regina, Ted and Hope. Thank you to Aaron, Marvin, Theresa, Aki, Rhian and Prajith for all their help, and special thanks to Wan Ching, Sasi, Beto, Simon, Chin Huat, Renee, Hiroko Komiya and Ler Jiyuan.

## Regina

I would first like to thank my classmates Wendy, Jin, Hope and Ted who performed with me tonight — they have each given me so much love and support, and they definitely made the process so much more fun!

Thank you also to Caroline, my beautiful violinist, and my co-performers and crew Marvin, Aaron, Aki, Rhian, Ramith and Prajith. They are all an essential part of the magic. Of course to the teachers in ITI, Sasi, Chin Huat, Beto and Simon, for their continuous faith, guidance and support, not just for this project but for the last 3 years. Also to Gey Pin and Wan Ching for giving their time and insight.

Thank you to all the staff in ITI, especially Su Lin who helped so much with the licensing, and to our wonderful production manager Clarisse. Thank you also to kult kafe for the benches and to GroundZ-0 for the lighting equipment. A soft thank you to Lakshmana, who first showed me the beauty of the earthworm. And finally, my quietest but deepest gratitude goes back, always, to the Earth. Thank you.

## **Yiseong**

I want to thank my guilty victims Kewal, Sandeep and Sonu, Year 1 students who patiently played dead for me. A huge thanks to Clarisse who made all our pieces possible. Thank you to my mother and my landlady (my mental strength) for their support. Thank you to Aurelien, my friend and second pair of eyes for my writing.

Thank you to all the teachers of ITI for their guidance and everyone in the admin team who are always there to help. Thank you to my classmates; we always manage to find a way to work it out together.

## **Jalal**

This work was inspired by the graphic novel *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan and the book *The Enigma of Arrival* by V. S. Naipaul. Thank you to Sasi who planted the seed for this work at the beginning of the year.

I would also like to thank Hau Guei Sze for being the second pair of eyes for this piece, and Clarisse for giving me the space and understanding for this creation.

## **Theresa**

Some of my teachers are ITI students and faculty, some of my teachers are friends, some of my teachers are strangers that I've met once and never again, some of my teachers I've never met before and have been dead for years. They are the ones who have gifted me with tools to grow into the person I want to be. Below are just a few of my teachers whose work and wisdom have had a direct impact on my life.

Thank you to everyone I've crossed paths with at ITI for creating a space that helps me learn every day. Thank you to everyone at Emergency Stairs for fearlessly pushing the boundaries of what art can be. Thank you to the dancers and musicians at our lab sessions at Dance Nucleus for engaging in deep play with me. Thank you to my Creative Edge family for always being there for me. Thank you to my family for supporting my unconventional decision making. Special thanks to Issy, Sonia, Wendy, Carol and Wan Ching for the generosity and kindness you showed as my first audiences. Thank you Clarisse for your advice, patience and humour. Thank you Kuo Pao Kun, Billie Holiday, Pina Bausch, Frank Ocean, Akira Kurosawa, Ezra Pound, Milan Kundera, Henri Rousseau, René Magritte and so many others for endless inspiration. Thank you to the cute aunties and uncles and Kafka from my neighbourhood for your joy and levity. Thank you Mowgli, Lucky and our guardian angel for everything.

## **Tysha**

In the process of creating *nadia*, I have been fortunate enough to come across many kind, helpful people. I would like to thank: Henrik Cheng, whose clarification process helped me create ghee out of milk; Simon Stollery, for helping me see the different ways I could tell the story I wanted to tell, and feel the different textures I could layer and play with; Juraidah, my mother, who gifted me Nadia's uniform; Sher, my father, who always had an encouraging word to say; Mimi, my partner, who was there for me to lean on; the invaluable training I received here at ITI, under the tutelage of Sasi, Beto, Chin Huat, Simon, Karen, and the numerous teachers who come through our doors; and the support of ITI staff, without whom this show would not be possible.

## **Vignesh**

Although the product only credits one person, the process has been a group effort. I would like to extend my gratitude to all my mentors in and outside of ITI. Without their generous support and tutelage over these last few years, I am not certain that I would have been able to have done this.

I would like to specially mention Alvin Tan, without whom this work would really not be possible, for being so generous, and Koh Wan Ching, who has inspired fearlessness in me, something I am still working towards.

My brothers and sisters of ITI have always been there as an anchor. I would like to thank Rhian, Aki and Kyongsu for their support during this process, especially when the path was foggy.

Without a doubt, the ITI admin and marketing team and my stage manager Clarisse for making all this possible. Thank you for being so flexible, patient and generous.

# CLASS OF 2019

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## **Earnest Hope Tinambacan (The Philippines)**

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Earnest Hope Tinambacan is a theatre actor, director, playwright and singer-songwriter based in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. He started his theatre journey at the age of 12 as a member of the LIYAB cultural group in Misamis Occidental. As a student at Silliman University, he performed in university musical productions such as *The King and I* and *Man of La Mancha*. He is also a senior member and former president of Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA), with whom he has acted in plays all around the Philippines, including *Aaah Bakus!*, performed at PETA Theater in Quezon City. He has also written plays for YATTA, including *Isla Tawak*, performed at the Asian Youth Theatre Festival 2018 in Singapore.

Hope has performed in devised play *ArmMUT* in Stuttgart, Germany, award-winning play *In My Father's House* directed by acclaimed Filipino director Amiel Leonardia, and *Heaven As The Sea (An Ulahingan Story)* directed by ITI alumna Denise Aguilar. He has directed several plays, including the musical *Scharon Mani*, *The Vagina Monologues* and *The VManologues*. In 2018, Hope was a collaborator-actor in Kolab Mindanao and Kolab2 Theatre Devising Workshop and Performance organised by La Salle University, Ozamiz City, in partnership with ITI.

*Hope is a recipient of the U.S.-ASEAN Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund, which provides loans for actor-students.*

## **Jalal Albaroudi (Syria)**

Email: jalalalbaroudi@gmail.com

Jalal Albaroudi is an actor and theatremaker from Damascus. He started his journey in 2009 with an experimental theatre group, and went on to train in the Stanislavsky method for two years, but was unable to finish the programme due to the situation in his home country. In 2012, Jalal started his journey as an independent artist creating his own work. He later joined Tajroubah theatre collective and performed in several shows, most recently *Dreams* in 2016 in Damascus. He has collaborated on devised works with dancers, musicians and artists from different disciplines.

Jalal has also worked in film and TV across Syria, Lebanon and Turkey, and has taught drama in youth drama schools and refugee camps. He is part of White Flux short film company, and has performed in several films, including *One Day Calendar*, which won Best Foreign Language Movie at Sciacca Film Festival in Italy. In 2016, Jalal moved to Kuala Lumpur, where he was involved in workshops and theatre laboratories until he found his way to ITI.

Jalal is currently researching artists in exile, and has an upcoming project with other exiled artists.

*Jalal is a recipient of a scholarship sponsored by a private philanthropist, and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

## **Jin Chen (China)**

Email: seagin7@gmail.com

Jin is a theatre director and actor. She initially studied e-commerce at South China University of Technology while also participating in theatre workshops and performing in local productions, such as site-specific work *Body Space* in Yangjiang by Li Ning, and physical theatre piece *The Wind* by Jiangnan Liguó at Beijing Fringe Festival. She also co-founded Yooxi-Yooxi Arts Festival in her hometown, Yangjiang.

Jin holds an MA in Creative Practice and Direction from Guildford School of Acting (GSA), University of Surrey, UK, where she directed *I Never Get Dressed Till After Dark on Sundays* by Tennessee Williams, under the guidance of her mentor Terrie Fender, the former head of GSA. There, she combined her interest in physical theatre and contemporary dance with an exploration of text.

After returning to China's theatre scene, Jin realised her experience in Europe had largely shaped her view of theatre, while she knew less about Asian theatre. She therefore decided to join ITI to explore communication, understanding and creation in theatre in a time of interculturalism.

*Jin is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

## **Regina Toon (Singapore)**

Email: reginatoon@hotmail.com

Much to her parents' credit, Regina grew up with music, dance and literature. This naturally opened the door to theatre for her. Prior to her training in ITI, she trained at East 15 Acting School (UK), Natanakairali (India), Shanghai Theatre Academy (China) and the International Noh Institute (Japan). She also trained in classical ballet under the Royal Academy of Dance and vocally at the Lee Wei Song School of Music. Regina has also published a book of poetry titled *Coordinates*.

Regina was born in Singapore, but has travelled, trained and worked in multiple countries and cultures. This has acquainted her with different ways of thinking, being and living. She feels it is this exposure that has given her the sensitivity to appreciate the value of interculturalism. She is grateful that she is able to constantly rediscover herself and the world, in the work of theatre.

*Regina is a recipient of the ITI-William Teo Scholarship, the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship and the ITI Scholarship, and is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

## **Ted Nudgent Fernandez Tac-an (The Philippines)**

Email: tectac.an@gmail.com

Ted is the Culture and Arts Director of La Salle University (LSU), Ozamiz City. While working as a high school Mathematics teacher, Ted was asked to teach performing arts at LSU's Senior High School, leading him to pursue practice-based theatre training at ITI. As Associate Director of LSU Teatro Guindegan, Ted's roles include actor, choreographer, stage manager, production designer and director. His recent works include *Damgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream Adaptation*, *PATCHED* (at Ashirwad International Theatre Festival, India), *Istoryahe Lang Ko*, *Hugis* (performed in Indonesia), *Awane*, *Ang Alamat ng Lamok*, *Antigone* and *NOLI*.

Ted was one of 12 theatre practitioners selected to devise *Likha-Lakbayan* for Tanghal National University and College Theater Festival, touring to five major cities in the Philippines. As a recipient of the Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship, he spent three months learning the arts and culture of Jogjakarta, Indonesia. In Singapore, he has performed at the Singapore Writers Festival, Malay CultureFest and Neon Lights Festival.

In the future, Ted hopes to continue collaborating with various practitioners alongside his teaching job. He also wants to develop artistic advocacy works for children, youth and the environment.

*Ted is a recipient of the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

## **Theresa Wee-Yenko (Singapore)**

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Theresa is a member of Emergency Shelter in Singapore, and is currently working on *Encounters of Dance and Music in Instant Composition* (Dance Nucleus).

Stage credits include *Off Stage* (Emergency Shelter, 2018), *Uproot* (The Theatre Practice Lab, 2016), *Let's Get Back Together* (Red Pill Productions, 2014) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Toy Factory, 2014).

*Theresa is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship.*

## **Tysha Khan (Singapore)**

Email: tysha.khan@gmail.com

Tysha is a Singapore-based actor and writer. She has worked in productions by companies such as Teater Kami and UNSAID, often on topics that mean a lot to her, such as race relations or LGBT rights. Her most recent performance was in *Anak Melayu* (Teater Kami). Besides performing on stage, Tysha acts on screen, hosts, and has her own YouTube channel called *Go Jerr*. She is also a published poet, and has translated films and interviews.

Tysha's training at ITI has opened up new vistas in acting and performance: vocally, physically, and in the way she thinks about – and writes – theatre. She possesses a strong interest in voice work and aims to teach it one day.

As the first Malay-Muslim woman to graduate from ITI, Tysha hopes to create theatre that effectively captures the culture of her community.

She also aims to keep making and performing work that explores different facets of identity and delves into societal issues.

*Tysha is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund. She is also a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award, a scholarship that is given to Malay/Muslim youths with the potential to be role models for the community.*

## **Vignesh Singh (Singapore)**

Email: vigneshsingh1995@yahoo.com

Vignesh is a Singaporean actor, director and educator who has performed in Singapore and Malaysia. His affair with the stage began in 2008 when he performed in *Rainbow's Ending* by Noel Grieg, produced by We Colour People Theatre & Company. Since then, Vignesh has worked with Toy Factory Productions, Teater Ekamatra, Singapore Repertory Theatre, Buds Theatre Company, Dark Matter Theatrics, Our Company and GroundZ-0.

Fascinated by theatre in unconventional spaces, Vignesh has performed in and directed shows in fields, by the sea and in trains. Inspired by his mentors, Vignesh is determined to continue seeking out and investigating alternative beliefs and logics in art and life.

Presently, Vignesh is a drama teacher to students at the Global Indian International School.

*Vignesh is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and a grant recipient of the Trailblazer General Fund.*

## **Wendy Toh (Singapore)**

Email: zhuo.wendy@gmail.com

Wendy Toh is a Singapore-based performer whose numerous acting credits span both screen and theatre. She has acted in award-winning films and regional television dramas such as HBO Asia's *Serangoon Road*. She is also a core member of Tapestry Playback Theatre, and has trained and worked with Jinen Butoh School under Atsushi Takenouchi.

Wendy also practises a wide range of fine art, creating abstract canvasses and thought-provoking mixed media installations. After graduation, Wendy hopes to deepen her Butoh practice and further explore physical theatre.

*Wendy is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship, and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

## **Nour el Houda Essafi (a.k.a. Yiseong) (France)**

Email: nour48houda@gmail.com

At a young age, Nour el Houda a.k.a. Yiseong was selected into a specialised performing arts school in Paris, where she trained in classical ballet, violin and piano, performing onstage in an orchestra and a ballet ensemble (performances included *An American in Paris*, a ballet adaptation by His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia and *Madame Haïm*). She later trained in performing art forms such as Cambodian Khmer dance, as well as Indian Kathak under Mrs Sharmila Sharma Guruji, and learned to play Taiko drums with Paris Taiko Ensemble.

Coming to ITI has been a life-changing decision that has enabled Yiseong to rediscover herself, her roots, and the definition of what an artist should be.

*Yiseong is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*

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