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72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road Singapore 239007 // +65 67377213 (T) // +65 67377013 (F) // TWorks@singnet.com.sg
// 72-13.com // TWorkssg.wordpress.com // T:>Works is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major
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MEDIA RELEASE

STARTING THE NEW YEAR WITH GREAT NEWS! Winners of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition (Digital Edition) takes the stage at How To Break A Window II

Singapore, 7 January 2022 – After more than 80 participants had survived the marathon **24-Hour Playwriting Competition**, T:>Works celebrates three winning scripts by staging them in a hybrid production in the upcoming **How To Break A Window II** in February 2022.

This year the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* was held as a digital edition for the second time since 2020. The digital edition made it possible for a gathering of writing enthusiasts committed to commune with words and inspiration. This year's adjudicators – Jean Tay, Zizi Majid and Sim Yan Ying – awarded the following writers the top three places in their respective categories.

OPEN CATEGORY:

- First Prize: #WomenSupportingWomen by Amanda Chong
- Second Prize: Kudumbam by Melizarani T.Selva
- Third Prize: Self-Care by Wan Nur Syafiqah Binte Syed Yusoff

YOUTH CATEGORY:

- First Prize: Effets de soir (Effects of the Evening) by Sarah Zafirah
- Second Prize: 80s Power Hour by Tania Lam
- Third Prize: Ghost Republic by Chen Enying

Noorlinah Mohamed, Artistic Director of **Festival of Women N.O.W.** (2019-2021) who moderated three annual competitions since 2019 added, "This year we welcomed 66% new participants. That's a good indication of the event's reach and impact on writers. Additionally, our effort in transforming a site-specific competition into a digital event enabled participation even when social gathering is limited. We believe time and space for creativity, inspiration and imagination are necessary in these times. And over 80 registrants agreed with us. As a community, we gathered, exchanged ideas and made connections, albeit within the virtual space."

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Endurance, creativity, and enduring creativity: 24 hours becomes 24 years

The *24-Hour Playwriting Competition*, in its 24th year, is considered one of the longest-running creative platforms in Singapore. Conceptualised by Artistic Director of T:>Works, Dr. Ong Keng Sen, it is designed to connect the arts with the community. As the name succinctly describes, participants in two categories, youth and open, are given 24 hours to write a fresh play, all while periodically receiving various stimuli that must be included in their scripts.

Undaunted by constraints to social gathering, T:>Works launched the digital edition of the annual competition in 2020. With the digital edition participants connected via online platforms: meal gatherings were held on Zoom while the five stimuli were distributed using Telegram and WhatsApp.

With the digital edition, T:>Works introduced a new element to this enduring writing competition: mentorship. The adjudicators for the competition made an appearance as writing buddies attending to participants' queries as well as acting as a sounding board for their writing ideas. The mentorship process continued beyond the competition with the initiation of a new platform in 2020, *How To Break A Window*.

Now in its second year, *How To Break A Window* stages selected winning entries of the competition with mentoring and creative support by the judges, as well as a community of actors and directors to further develop the selected scripts. This year's selected scripts include two from 2021, **#WomenSupportingWomen** by Amanda Chong, and **Kudumbam** by Melizarani T.Selva, as well as a script from 2019 titled **Green Leaves** by Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock.

The first prize, *#WomenSupportingWomen*, is a layered and nuanced exploration of the hashtag trend of rallying women to support other women when personal traumas and privileges are stacked against systemic limitations. *Kudumbam*, which bagged the second prize, finds a father and daughter dismantling the family's dining table while unravelling the grief and gain of dividing a family and leaving a country behind.

Meanwhile the 2019 first prize winning entry, *Green Leaves*, performed on aerial silks, brings us on the tumultuous journey of one woman's struggle to find self and meaning even when life seems perfect. *Green Leaves* is added to the presentation this year having experienced a postponement in 2020 due to the pandemic. T:>Works is delighted to have the opportunity to stage this aerial theatre in February.

How To Break A Window will also include an afternoon focused specifically on young writers aged 18 to 25 years old. In this forum, two staged readings -- **Effets de soir**

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(Effects of the Evening) by two-time champion Sarah Zafirah and **80s Power Hour** by Tania Lam will be staged. Alongside the staged readings are presentations of youth writing development and discussions led by Ang Kia Yee. Ang had participated in the same competition, in the youth (2013, 2015) and open (2018) categories, and is now an emerging playwright and artist.

Effets de Soir (Effects of the Night), written as a melding of art and technology, centers on a father-daughter relationship where trust between familial ties are tested. Meanwhile, *80 Hour Power* tells a story of a magical yet necessary friendship between two men born from the need for connection in a time of loneliness and separation. Both plays were praised by the judges for their adroit handling of current themes and issues layered with a complex mix of genres and theatrical approaches.

The 24-Hour Playwriting Competition will return in 2022 with added vigour and new ideas, committed to invite and challenge participants to reflect the times they live in through their writing.

How To Break A Window II (Live and Live-streamed on Zoom)

Featuring Amanda Chong and Melizarani T.Selva, winners of the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* (Open Category, 2021) and Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock, winner of the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* (Open Category, 2019).

15-19 Feb, 7.30pm

72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road, Singapore 239007

Tickets are available on Peatix bit.ly/HTBAW-ticketing, sales start 10 Jan 2022

- Live performance: \$25
- Zoom digital broadcast: \$10

Youth Forum

Featuring Sarah Zafirah and Tania Lam, winners of the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* (Youth Category, 2021) moderated by Ang Kia Yee

19 Feb, 3-5pm

72-13 Mohamed Sultan Road, Singapore 239007

Free admission by registration on Peatix bit.ly/HTBAW-ticketing

For more information, please contact:

Ms. Deirdre Chang

Communications & Engagement Associate

T:>Works T: +65-67377213, Mobile: +65-8418 7246

E: deirdre.tworks@gmail.com

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Annex A: Bios of writers featured in How To Break A Window II

Amanda Chong

Amanda Chong is a lawyer trained in Cambridge and Harvard, who writes when she should be sleeping. Her first collection of poetry, *Professions* (2016), was shortlisted for the Singapore Literature Prize in 2018. Her interest in exploring themes of gender and power in her creative and academic writing has led to being published in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender*. She also co-founded ReadAble, a non-profit which aims to improve social mobility by empowering children and migrant women with literacy. (www.amandachong.com).

Melizarani T.Selva

Melizarani T.Selva is a Malaysian writer and spoken word poet, with notable performances at ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival and TEDxGateway. Her first book, 'Taboo' is a poetic exploration of her Masters' thesis on the constructs and representations of the Malaysian Indian Identity. She has co-published an anthology of 100 poems by 61 poets from Malaysia titled 'When I Say Spoken, You Say Word!'. Presently, she serves as co-editor of the literary magazine *SingPoWriMo.com*. She can be found at melizarani.com. *Kudumbam* is her first play.

Yin Mei Lenden-Hitchcock

Full-time educator and part-time art-maker, it's been 10 years since Yin Mei last fully exercised her acting chops after graduating from the second batch of Young & Wild. Unable to leave theatre, she went on to pursue her Masters in Education (Drama). She won the 1st prize in the Open Category of the *T:>Works 24-Hour Playwriting Competition* in both 2012 and 2019 after discovering she writes best under pressure. Yin Mei is also an accomplished aerialist and has performed for Esplanade's Aerial Open Stage in 2020 and 2021.

Sarah Zafirah

Sarah Zafirah is a fresh graduate from St. Joseph's Institution. Having become rather acquainted with the 'O' Level Drama syllabus in her alma mater, CHIJ Katong Convent, Sarah hopes to become more involved in the Singaporean theatre scene. Her hobbies include regular cat-cuddling, reading up on social issues that she is passionate about, and of course, writing. She hopes that her creations can serve as an insight into the mind of a teenager living in uncertain times, seeking answers to unknown questions.

Tania Lam

Tania Lam recently graduated from secondary school. Despite lacking prior theatre experience, Tania always had a passion for storytelling. Spending time playing video games, reading novels, and generally consuming a wide array of media; Tania wants

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to write stories that people will find meaningful, and be able to see themselves in one way or another.

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Annex B: List of winning plays of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2021

Open Category

First prize: #WomenSupportingWomen by Amanda Chong
Second prize: Kudumbam By Melizarani T.Selva
Third prize: Self-Care by Wan Nur Syafiqqa Binte Syed Yusoff

Youth Category

First prize: Effets de soir (Effects of the Evening) by Sarah Zafirah
Second prize: 80s Power Hour by Tania Lam
Third prize: Ghost Republic by Chen Enying

Special mentions

Open Category

Three Hours by Wong Chen Seong
Broken Vows by Wan Ni Lo
What is left Said/Unsaid by Christopher Chee
Train Rides by Anastasha Perry
How to Break A Girl by Kate Parsons

Youth Category

What We Know of Kin by Tan En Xi
In Case of Emergency, Break Glass by Ng Yu Xin

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Annex C

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 – 31 March 2022. T:>Works is an Institute of Public Character with charity status.

About 24-Hour Playwriting Competition

The T:>Works *24-Hour Playwriting Competition* was first held in 1996, this competition is one of the longest-running creative platforms in Singapore. Developed as part of T:>Works Writers' Lab conceptualised by Artistic Director Dr. Ong Keng Sen, it is designed to connect the arts with the community. Participants write a completely new play in 24 hours, with various stimuli given throughout the competition. It comprises two categories, youth and open, and aims to nurture and develop playwrights from the community. This year, the three judges include - acclaimed playwrights and theatre-makers Jean Tay, Zizi Majid, and Sim Yan Ying.

About How To Break A Window II

How To Break A Window II is the second showcase of the brilliant winners of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition. Initiated in 2020, it includes a month-long mentoring programme culminating in a presentation. *How To Break A Window* is a nod to the ingenuity of the featured playwrights, who approached the *24-Hour Playwriting Competition's* 2021 stimuli with such fearlessness and creativity, akin to breaking a window in order to discover a new world.