

THE 'd' MONOLOGUES: A LECTURE- PERFORMANCE

BY KAITE O'REILLY

SATURDAY 2 NOV 2019
2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
PLAY DEN @ THE ARTS HOUSE

A one hour lecture-performance by playwright Kaite O'Reilly, presenting various *'d' monologues* she has written over the past decade, with a specific emphasis on work reflecting the lived experience of disability in Singapore. This script-in-hand reading showcases performers Grace Lee Khoo, Danial Bawthan and Tung Kawai



Kaite says:

I decided to create these fictional monologues inspired by lived experience of disability as I was frustrated by the narrow and overwhelmingly negative representations of difference in the media and historically in our dramatic canons. I was tired of the charity model's treatment of disabled people as figures of pity and its opposite, the relatively new representation of disabled people serving as 'inspiration', encouraging others to 'overcome' burdens. I wanted to find a language of our own which was led and shaped by disabled and D/deaf people ourselves rather than a well-meaning but problematic ableist mainstream. I wanted to make work which was informed by a politicised disability perspective, which sees all human beings as equal, and as deserving parity in treatment and rights.

Weak and piteous (Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*), terrifying and evil (*Richard III*) dangerous and murderous (Lenny in *Of Mice and*

Men), mad and out of control (Mrs Rochester, the mad woman in the attic in *Jane Eyre*)... For hundreds of years negative representations of difference have held sway in the western tradition, and so the very language itself needs to be deconstructed, interrogated and reinvented from this fresh perspective – the old narratives need to be disrupted and made anew. Language is powerful – describe something, and it 'is' – let us consider language anew, informed by a disability perspective which reinterprets often problematic existing definitions and assumptions, challenging the notions of normalcy and embracing instead all the possibilities of human variety.

This sharing is dedicated with admiration, respect, and thanks to all the researchers, transcribers, translators and interviewees whose contributions inspired these fictional monologues. Long may you continue!
Long may you thrive!

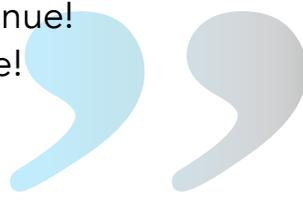




Photo by Wesley Loh
(Memphis West Pictures)

KAITE O'REILLY

Writer of *The 'd' Monologues*

Kaite O'Reilly works internationally as a playwright, dramaturg, and tutor. She won The Ted Hughes Award for New Works in Poetry for her dramatic retelling of *Persians*, produced by National Theatre Wales in their inaugural year and recently published by Fair Acre Press. Other prizes include The Peggy Ramsay Award, Theatre-Wales Award, Manchester Theatre Awards and Honorary Commendations for the Jane Chambers Award (US) and Elliot

Hayes International Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy. She was a finalist in the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize for women playwrights and shortlisted twice for the international James Tait Black Drama Prize. Her work has been produced in fifteen countries worldwide, most recently *peeling* (US, UK, 2019), *Cosy* (Ireland, 2019) and *The 9 Fridas* in Taipei and Hong Kong (2016). The Asian premiere of *Lie With Me*, directed by Phillip Zarrilli and featuring the graduating cohort from Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) will run 7–9 November 2019 at Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay.

A leading figure in disability arts and culture in the UK, Kaite received two Cultural Olympiad Commissions for *In Water I'm Weightless*, produced by National Theatre Wales/Southbank Centre as part of the official festival celebrating the 2012 London Olympics/Paralympics. Her Unlimited International Commission *And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore/UK 'd' Monologues* was developed with disabled and D/deaf partners in Singapore and produced by Access Path Productions at Gallery Theatre, National Museum of Singapore in 2018, before transferring to London's Southbank Centre. Her critically acclaimed selected plays *Atypical Plays for Atypical Actors* is published by Oberon. *The 'd' Monologues* will be launched at the 2019 Singapore Writer's Festival.

www.kaiteoreilly.com

www.kaiteoreilly.wordpress.com

[@kaiteoreilly](https://www.instagram.com/kaiteoreilly)



GRACE LEE KHOO

**Performer in
*The 'd' Monologues***

Grace Lee Khoo is the Founder and Creative Development Director of Access Path Productions. A UK-trained applied theatre practitioner, she completed her Master's Degree in Applied Theatre at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in 2016. An Honours graduate from the National University of Singapore's Theatre Studies programme in 2009, she also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from the National Institute of Education (Singapore).

In 2017, Grace was an international artist-in-residence at Graeae Theatre Company (London) – UK's flagship disability-led inclusive theatre company. She is currently an Associate Artist of David Glass Ensemble, an international collective of radical artists. She is a proud member of DADC, a collective of dancers living with and without disability.

Grace works internationally as a performer, director, dramaturg, researcher, educator, audio describer and access consultant. Her recent theatre credits include: Access Path's *3 Words, Repeat* with her dad who lives with dementia, Bhumi Collective's *Sau (Dara)*, Singapore Repertory Theatre's *Silence Bubble*, Emergency Shelter's *Offstage 2.0* and *A Grinder's Diary* with Pitapat Theatre (Malaysia). Her most significant project to date is *And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore/UK 'd' Monologues* where she served as associate producer and performer. Visit www.graceleekhoo.com for more information.



Photo Credit: NDP2019

DANIAL BAWTHAN

Performer in *The 'd' Monologues*

Danial Bawthan a.k.a. Wheelsmith, is an award winning Music Producer, Rapper and wheelchair rugby player for Team Singapore. Danial is particularly drawn to rapping as “music allows me to be fearless and brazen”.

He performed with local celebrities for the *President's Star Charity* in 2016 and made his debut as a sound engineer, composing soundscape for the theatre production *And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore/UK 'd' Monologues*. He was also a performer and musician at the National Day Parade 2019.

Tung Ka Wai — Born in Hong Kong, Ka Wai immigrated to Singapore in 1989. In 2008, he graduated from National University of Singapore, Department of Chinese Studies. He went on to work at Singapore Centre for Chinese Language as a Project Officer where he took part in Drama-in-Education research projects. In 2012, he joined The Theatre Practice and helped with marketing, copywriting and translation. That same year, Ka Wai travelled to Taiwan to further his studies in Taipei National University of the Arts and completed his Masters in 2016. He was also a part-time DJ at Rediffusion from 2008 to 2012, where he hosted *Beautiful Sunday* in Mandarin and Cantonese. Ka Wai currently works at Sprout Language Centre as curriculum planner and teacher. He is also the drama instructor for Chinese Cultural Society in Nanyang Junior College. In 2018, he co-founded The Fool Theatre with Xavier Kang and staged their inaugural production *Because it's Fun*.

TUNG KAWAI

**Guest performer in
*The 'd' Monologues***



Photo by Sebastian Tan

JOIN US FOR
YOU SAY
'INCLUSIVE', I SAY
'SUBVERSIVE'
WRITING
WORKSHOP BY
KAITE O'REILLY

You say 'inclusive', I say 'subversive' – A practical writing workshop where participants consider how to be more inclusive and representative in the creation of characters, perspectives, narratives, and fictional worlds. This would include examples of poetry, fiction and plays written by disabled and D/deaf writers working from a politicised and cultural perspective, who have created a language of our own refuting the mainstream ableism and reclaiming previously negative words and terminology. Participants would be encouraged to consider new narratives, with new protagonists, new endings and a refreshed language.

DATE

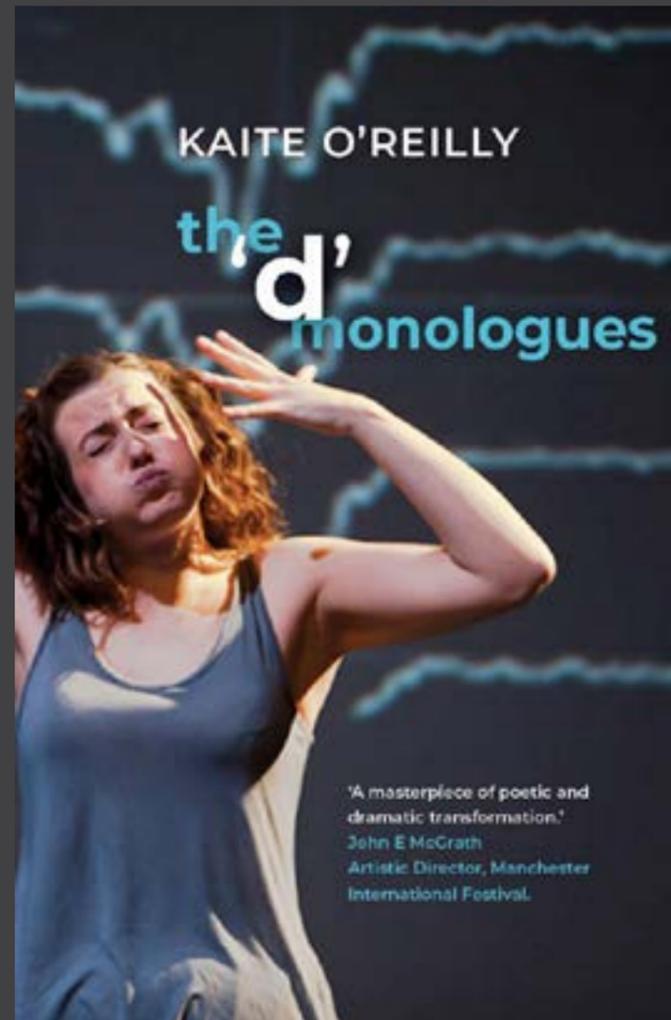
3 Nov 2019, Sunday

TIME

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
(120mins)

VENUE

National Gallery Singapore,
Rooftop Studio 3



"A masterpiece of poetic and dramatic transformation..."

– John E McGrath,
Artistic Director,
Manchester International Festival

"This extraordinary piece of written art is an emotional rollercoaster of raw pain, humour and resilience.... This is a book for anyone who treasures the diversity of the world."

– Jenny Sealey
CEO & Artistic Director,
Graeae Theatre Company

GRAB YOUR COPY OF
THE 'd' MONOLOGUES
AT THE FESTIVAL BOOKSTORE

This unique collection of fictional dramatic monologues was written specifically for D/deaf and disabled performers (the 'd'

of the title), informed by lived experience of disability. But the 'd' could just as easily refer to difference, diversity, defiance, determination, desirability and a host of other delicious 'd's.... Covering a wide variety of form, content, and theatrical styles, the monologues offer fresh perspectives on difference and disability from across the UK and beyond. From biting satire to crip' pride, observational comedy to poignant revelations of life in contemporary Britain and beyond, these texts challenge and subvert ingrained preconceptions of disability and celebrate all the possibilities of human variety.

This collection is the culmination of ten years work, with fictional monologues inspired by over 100 interviews, conversations and interactions with D/deaf and disabled individuals internationally. It brings together new and previously unperformed texts alongside monologues from *In Water I'm Weightless* (National Theatre Wales Cultural Olympiad 2012), the 70 minute stand alone one-woman show *richard iii redux*, co-written with Phillip Zarrilli, and the multilingual intercultural *And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore/UK 'd' Monologues*.

ABOUT SINGAPORE WRITERS FESTIVAL

SWF 2019: A LANGUAGE OF OUR OWN

This year we invite you to join us in considering all the ways in which the verbal, physical and visual languages we use every day affect how we see the world. Language heals and language hurts. Language can tie down and language can transform. In a world that is so simultaneously connected and fractured, who has language left behind? What has language taught us about the past and how must language evolve to accommodate a changing humanity.

ABOUT SWF

The Singapore Writers Festival (SWF) is one of Asia's premier literary events.

SWF which celebrates its 22nd edition this year, is regarded as one of Asia's premier literary events. Founded in 1986 as Singapore Writers' Week, it is one of the few literary festivals in the world which is multi-lingual, celebrating works in Singapore's four official languages – English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil – as well as other languages. Over the years, SWF has become an exciting meeting point of writers and thinkers in a choice spread of lectures, panel discussions, workshops, masterclasses and performances in 10 days. It has hosted literati the likes of Nobel Prize winner Gao Xingjian, Whitbread Book Awards First Novel winner Tash Aw, British poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy, Nebula winner Neil Gaiman and Pulitzer Prize winners Michael Cunningham and Vijay Seshadri. This year, the Festival will be housed in the Empress Place district among historic buildings such as The Arts House, National Gallery Singapore and the Asian Civilisations Museum.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Commissioned by



Supported by



Access Path Productions is a proud programme partner of Singapore Writers Festival 2019



ACCESS PATH PRODUCTIONS

Sign language by **Evelyn Chye**