



**Esplanade
Presents**

The Studios

INCONSEQUENTIAL GODDESS

By Edith Podesta

An Esplanade Commission



About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on *Esplanade Offstage*, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Turning 20 in 2022, Esplanade marks the occasion with a year-long celebration themed *20 and Beyond: Keeping the Lights On*. In addition to the presentations of its year-long festivals, programme series, and special initiatives and events, there will also be a season of new works by Singapore and Asian artists specially commissioned for the arts centre's 20th anniversary and official opening of its newest venue, Singtel Waterfront Theatre.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-dog Friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](https://www.esplanade.com) for more information.

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Over the last 19 years, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's *The Studios* has been a space for inspiration, innovation and imagination. We have presented an eclectic collection of more than 160 productions that have asked artists and audiences to reconsider possibilities in contemporary theatre and performance.

This is the final year of *The Studios* in the format we are familiar with. The opening of Esplanade's new Singtel Waterfront Theatre later this year has given this platform the opportunity and space to evolve from 2023 onwards, and we look forward to sharing more about a new iteration of *The Studios* in time. What will continue is our commitment to enabling and collaborating with performance and theatre-makers to create new work and revisit past creations for today.

In this final season of this iteration, *The Studios* is very much influenced by the circumstances of the recent past. What have we learnt in the last two years operating under pandemic conditions? How have we paused to take stock of our modus operandi? And what is our place in this strange "new" world that feels so familiar?

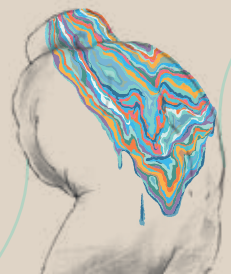
In mulling over these questions, we found our biological nervous system to be a fitting metaphor for society. Much like the way our nervous systems make sense of environmental externalities and transmit information back and forth, enabling each organ to perform their physical, mental and emotional functions, society is a network of inextricably linked individuals and groups who must work together to respond to the norms and pressures that govern our lives. These attempts to make connections and commune with one another determine our individual and collective successes. Inevitably, however, system overloads occur. We then find ourselves reaching for temporary coping mechanisms instead of solutions that require constant, concerted effort: care for oneself and more importantly, care for each other.

This concept of *collective care* proposes that the well-being of an individual or community is the shared responsibility of all who belong to it. Theatre can be construed as an act of collective care as we come together and share a couple of hours, or even a moment of epiphany. It certainly is an entry point for conversations surrounding themes such as family, love, mental health, grief, ageing, self- and collective care; even healing. The commissioned productions and supporting programmes of this season all illustrate this in their own unique ways. For this, *The Studios* team is ever grateful to have collaborators and compatriots in Edith Podesta and her team, The Necessary Stage, Teater Ekamatra and Checkpoint Theatre, as well as Alecia Neo and Natalia Tan.

Some of you may already unconsciously practise collective care, but in this season, we invite everyone to be intentional in this exploration of ways in which we may better care for ourselves and others. It is our hope that these programmes help you perceive refreshing new ways of living and relating.

Take care, and thank you for being with us.

Vanessa Loh
Programmer, The Esplanade Co Ltd





Synopsis

In a city not unlike ours, where the rules that govern the bodies of women are not unlike ours, an unnamed woman wants to be a goddess of no consequence. Daughter of the mythical Arachne, she chooses anonymity so that neither her actions nor her power will bring harm to the world around her.

But even as shame forces her to shrink into her own oblivion, she discovers that everything in this world, including her own body, is a shrine and sacred, despite the inconsequentiality that her society imposes on it.

Mapping the myths of Greek goddesses onto the bodies of women we encounter every day, Edith Podesta's *Inconsequential Goddess* is a performance poem that explores the cyclical nature of trauma and the ways these cycles are both broken and perpetuated over multiple generations and worlds.

Director's Note

I first wrote *Inconsequential Goddess* as a radio play for the Singapore Writers Festival in 2020 and much of the ethos of this work stems from the nature of the new world that the pandemic has brought about. Confined to our homes in lockdowns, it drew on that most primal of theatre, oral storytelling, as a means of connecting us across walls and borders, when we were made aware of just how inconsequential we were to a world in chaos. Its kernel is Greek mythology, and the Republic that forms the world of this show is populated with the characters from this incredibly rich body of stories, from Arachne and Hecate to Prometheus.

We constantly return to the world of myths because they attempt to wield the reins of this chaos and bring some semblance of order into our lives. They are timeless, but in their self-obsession with retelling, they also offer us constantly shifting gazes, ways of peering into their truths that generations before did not perhaps have access to. This live-stage version of *Inconsequential Goddess* gave me a chance not just to revisit the play, but to embody its retelling for the stage.

The act of retelling is itself tied up with the politics and violence of gender. Many of these myths, as told by men, shame women who dared to speak up, show off their abilities or step out of the confinements of the domestic sphere prescribed to them. So much of the *Inconsequential Goddess* too, is about reclaiming — about transfiguring the self-imposed shame that bears down on our bodies when acts of violence are committed against us; about transforming the quotidian banality of the domestic into a locus of beauty that helps us find a way out of the darkness. The *Inconsequential Goddess* of the title believes she is so because she turned an act of violence committed against her in on itself, the trauma of it provoking a paralysis that uses inconsequentiality as a protection from fear and shame. Like the women who have come before her, she has borne the trauma of generations that have repressed her with imposed silence. But the truth is that she, like all of those women, is of consequence and she has the power—divine or otherwise—to change the world around her.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Esplanade's *The Studios* for giving me the opportunity to come back to this work, as well as the incredible team of artists and creatives who have come together to weave together this story of the future — on what is to come and not what was.

Edith Podesta

Writer, Director and Performer

Edith Podesta

Writer, Director & Performer

Edith Podesta is a writer, theatre maker and choreographer. She studied Acting and Movement Studies at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), and holds a Master of Arts Fine Arts from LASALLE College of the Arts. In 2017, she was awarded Best Original Script and Production of the Year for her production *BITCH: The Origin of the Female Species*, commissioned by the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. Her production of *Leda and The Rage*, commissioned and produced by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, was awarded Production of the Year at the 2019 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. Edith is currently Associate Artistic Director of Young & W!LD, a division of WILD RICE.

Benjamin Lye

Assistant Director

Benjamin Lye fell in love with theatre at the age of 13. He recently graduated with Bachelor of Arts Honours from the National University of Singapore, where he pursued Theatre Studies as his major. His recent acting theatre credits include: *The Secret Life of Haw Par Villa* (Patch & Punnet), *Duckie Can't Swim* (Paper Monkey Theatre), *Mr Dong Guo* (Paper Monkey Theatre), *Pillow* (Matter.Less), *Anything Can Happen/Something Must Happen* (WILD RICE). After completing the programme Young & W!ld under the mentorship of Edith Podesta in 2019, he now works as the administrator of the programme.

Koh Wan Ching

Performer

Wan Ching is a performer and theatre maker. She is a graduate of the inaugural SITi Conservatory Program for international theatre artists and is currently part of the faculty at the Intercultural Theatre Institute. She has worked with companies including The Necessary Stage, Nine Years Theatre and Hatch Theatrics, and co-directed and performed in *tanah.air 水土: a play in two parts* presented by Drama Box. Directing credits include *precise purpose of being broken*, and *a line could be crossed and you would slowly cease to be*, independently produced at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

Benjamin Wong

Clarinet

Benjamin is a performer, researcher, and educator. Since graduating from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, he has performed regularly with homegrown ensembles such as the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra and the Orchestra of the Music Makers. He is also an avid chamber musician and founding member of award-winning woodwind quintet, EDQ. Most recently, Benjamin has returned from his postgraduate studies in musicology from King's College London and the University of Chicago. He is now taking time to rekindle friendships and to develop his artistic identity by looking for opportunities to collaborate with artists across disciplines.

Trinh Ha Linh

Cello

Trinh Ha Linh earned her Bachelor of Music degree in Cello Performance with honours from the Yong Siew Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore. Her teacher, Ng Pei-Sian, is the cello principal of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. During her time studying in the conservatory, Linh has represented the Keppel scholars to give Appreciation Concerts in Singapore and Vietnam. In 2011, she performed with the Asian Youth Orchestra, touring in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Japan.

Nicholas Loh

Piano

Nicholas is no stranger to the local music scene and is sought after as a soloist, collaborator and educator. He has been described as a "fervent exponent of new music" whose pianism is "an inspiration". He has given numerous recitals devoted to works by living composers, his most recent being part of the 27th Singapore International Piano Festival. He has performed with local and international artists, as well as groups including the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and the Singapore Chinese Orchestra. He currently works as an educator with the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

Max.Tan

Costume Designer

Max Tan started his eponymous label MAX.TAN on the back of the recognition he received at the Singapore Fashion Designers Contest in 2007 and began with creating capsule collections to meet the increasing interest for his designs. The label made its full-fledged debut with the S/S 2010 collection which was featured as one of the top ten collections globally on premier trend forecasting report, Stylesight.com, alongside with fashion powerhouses such as Alexander McQueen and Valentino.

MAX.TAN was invited to showcase at Modefabriek in Amsterdam in 2010 and became the first Asian-based label ever to do so. The A/W 2010-11 collection, which debuted in Amsterdam, was subsequently featured by Vogue Paris and went on to win second place at that year's China Fashion Creation Contest. More recently, Vogue Italia also featured Max as a finalist in the inaugural Dubai edition of *Who is On Next?*. Today, MAX.TAN is represented by Boon showroom (Paris) where it has started making inroads onto the international fashion design scene.

Over the past decade, Tan has been recognised for his innovative designs that challenge fashion trends while incorporating his Asian roots. Apart from designing for his label, Tan also lectures at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Singapore) and enjoys partnering with different theatre groups in Singapore to design costumes for their key theatre productions.

Stev.e Kwek

Lighting Designer

Stev.e Kwek is a Singapore-based technical creative, who takes on works ranging from lighting and technical design for art installations, theatre and dance performances, to finding creative technical solutions for multi-media art installations. Some recent works include *Pallavi in Time* and *In Your Shadow* (CHOWK Productions), *The Mysterious Lai Teck* (Ho Tzu Nyen, Melbourne, AsiaTOPA), *Idomeneo* (The Opera People), *Escape Velocity V* (Zai Tang, Singapore Art Week), *Cosmic Wander* (Choy Ka Fai, Singapore ART Week), *The Feelings Farm* (Esplanade's March On), *Love & Information* (Young & Wild, WILD RICE), *These Brief Encounters* (CHOWK Productions), *I Have Something to Say* (Esplanade's March On) and *YAH!* (CHOWK Productions).

Chong Li-Chuan

Composer

CHONG Li-Chuan (he/him) b.1975 is a Singaporean composer who is passionate about philosophy, culture and the arts. Li-Chuan's career in music and sound started in the late '90s, working as a composer and sound designer collaborating with practitioners in theatre, dance, spoken word, architecture, filmmaking, design and visual art. His creative output includes music composition, sound design, site-specific art, installation, free improvisation, and works exploring the conversations to be had between music and sound, and across different modes of expression.

Brian Gothong Tan

Multimedia Designer

Brian Gothong Tan is one of the leading creatives in Singapore and is best known for his cutting-edge and highly engaging works in theatre, film and installation art. He graduated from the California Institute of the Arts in 2005 under the Shell – NAC Scholarship. His works have been featured in numerous productions which have toured successfully in many countries like Italy, USA, Korea and the United Kingdom. His notable projects include *Tropical Traumas* (Singapore International Festival of Arts 2016), the Singapore Bicentennial Experience, *Lost Cinema 20/20* (2021, Esplanade) and *Havoc Girls* and *Kamikaze Boys* (2021, M1 Fringe Festival and NAFA). He was conferred the Young Artist Award in 2012, and more recently, the Singapore Youth Award in 2015. He is currently the artistic director for T:>Works Artistic Atelier.

Joel Fernandez

Sound Designer & Engineer

Joel Fernandez is a sound designer working in theatre, dance and media arts. His work as a sound designer and engineer can be heard in a variety of media, from local plays and musicals to musical concerts of the West End UK. In 1997, he started his career in the sound department at Disney Fest Singapore. That same year, he worked on his first professional musical, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. Joel has been an integral part of the sound team at Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay for many editions of definitive local music festivals.

Ashley Lim

Hair Design

Ashley Lim started his hairstyling career in 1986 and opened Ashley Salon in 1999. Since 1987, Lim has worked on more than 300 local and international productions. With more than 25 years of theatrical projects under his belt, he has had the opportunity to work with all the leading theatre companies in Singapore creating designs that span cultures and periods. Some of his most memorable productions include *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), *Liao Zhai Rocks!* (The Theatre Practice) and *A Single Woman* (Dream Academy), which led to the creation of the *Dim Sum Dollies*.

Bobbie Ng

Makeup

Bobbie Ng has been passionately involved in makeup for more than 20 years. She co-founded The Make Up Room, which was started with the belief in creating a space that appreciates and respects one's beauty. To date, The Make Up Room has been involved in more than 200 local theatre productions and their recent backstage involvement this year includes various shows at Huayi 2022, SIFA 2022 as well as works for Wild Rice, Dream Academy and The Theatre Practice.

Mirabel Neo

Production Stage Manager

Mirabel is a production and stage manager based in Singapore. She is well-versed in different forms of art, such as drama, musical theatre, classical opera and theatre for the young, as well as commercial events. In recent years, she has travelled internationally and production-managed for *The Mysterious Lai Teck* (2018-2020). She was also the co-producer for Imaginique, the 2019 incarnation of the Singapore Children's Festival.

Shridar Mani

Producer

With more than a decade of programming and producing experience, Shridar's current practice centers on bringing socio-cultural issues to light by re-thinking traditional forms and modes of presentation within the framework of contemporary artistic practice, and putting art forms and practices in dialogue with each other to build and sustain stronger artistic communities in Singapore. He is also the co-founder and company manager of The Opera People, a Singapore-based opera company, redefining the experience of opera and the co-founder of local arts initiative *Other Tongues – A Festival of Minority Voices*. He is currently also one half of The Public Space, a production house with an arts-centred vision, designing experiences that bring people, stories, and ideas together.

Production Credits

Writer/Director:	Edith Podesta
Assistant Director:	Benjamin Lye
Performed by:	Edith Podesta, Ian Tan & Koh Wan Ching
Costume Designer:	Max.Tan
Set Designer:	.
Lighting Designer:	Stev.e Kwek
Composer:	Chong Li-Chuan
Sound Designer & Engineer:	Joel Fernandez
Video Designer:	Brian Gothong Tan
Hair Design:	Ashley Lim
Makeup:	Bobbie Ng
Production Stage Manager:	Mirabel Neo
Producer:	Shridar Mani (The Public Space)

Musicians from Wayfarer Sinfonietta

Clarinet	Benjamin Wong
Cello	Trinh Ha Linh
Piano	Nicholas Loh

The performance on 29 July 2022 will have Singapore Sign Language Interpretation provided by The Singapore Association for the Deaf.

The text for *Inconsequential Goddess* was first commissioned as a radio play for Singapore Writers Festival 2020.

Our deepest thanks to the following for their support:

Natalia Tan

Rosemary McGowan

Stefanos Rassios

Singapore Writers Festival

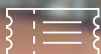
Esplanade gives our heartfelt thanks
to our Esplanade partner, arts benefactor, donors and sponsors for believing in our vision to be a performing arts centre for everyone. They made all these possible!^



1,276

activities took place at Esplanade.

Ticketed



412

Non-Ticketed



864

223,399



People attended our activities at the centre.

Ticketed

18,081

Non-Ticketed

205,318

We believe that everyone should be able to experience the joy of the arts, including children, youth, seniors, migrant workers and individuals with special needs. Our community engagement activities bring the arts to those in need.



185
Activities

4,357
Participants

*Figures for Esplanade's activities from Apr 2020 to Mar 2021.

Your contribution* will make a difference.



On behalf of the communities we serve, thank you!
Find out how you too can make a difference through the arts at Esplanade.

Donate at www.esplanade.com/donate
To find out more, email us at donations@esplanade.com or speak with us at 6828 8321.

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With Gratitude

Esplanade–Theatres on the Bay is a charity, a not-for-profit organisation and Singapore’s national performing arts centre. We seek to entertain, engage, educate and inspire through the arts.

In 2022, we mark our 20th anniversary of being an arts centre for everyone. We thank everyone who has been a part of our journey. You have helped us bring joy, inspiration and positive impact to Singaporeans from all walks of life.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes especially to our Donors and Sponsors, for their steadfast belief in our mission and for generously supporting us.

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We believe that an experience with the arts is special and that with your generous support, more people will get a chance to enjoy the arts. Join us in sharing the joy of the arts and help us reach more communities in need.



We've saved you a seat



Leave your legacy by adopting and dedicating a seat for yourself or a loved one in our new theatre.

Your gift will help us to put the finishing touches on the Singtel Waterfront Theatre and develop it as a space that benefits our next generation of artists and audiences.

Your kind donation will be acknowledged in the following ways:

- ▶ Seat plaque
- ▶ Invitation to a special *Appreciation and Preview Experience*
- ▶ Invitation to receive *Esplanade&Me Black Card*
- ▶ Priority ticket purchase to the Singtel Waterfront Theatre's opening festival
- ▶ Full tax deduction of donation amount

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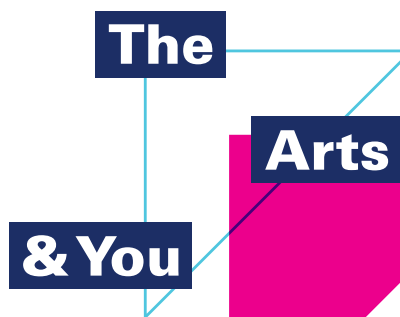
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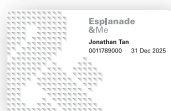
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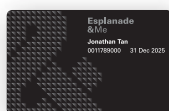
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Talk

In Their Own Words: Writing Verbatim Plays by Haresh Sharma

27 Aug 2022, Sat, 12pm
library@esplanade
(1hr)

Free



Panel Discussion

Performing Grief

by Mohd Fared Jainal, Chong Tze Chien,
and Jolene Chiang

10 Sep 2022, Sat, 3pm
library@esplanade
(1hr)

Free



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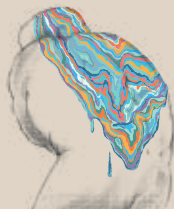
Chat with the Artists

In Conversation: And So The Conversations Continue... by Checkpoint Theatre

24 Sep 2022, Sat, 3pm
library@esplanade
(1hr 30mins)

Free

28 Jul
-
24 Sep
2022



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The Studios 2022 and the
ticketed productions



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singapore

**20
and
beyond**

**the
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