

CAST AS MOTHER

Directed by Ruwanthie de Chickera

Production Design Document

Produced by Sanda Wijeratne

First performed on May 2012, Lionel Wendt Theatre, Colombo, Sri Lanka

stages
theatre
group



Introduction

Cast as Mother was a dramatized reading of excerpts from the Passing Stage project. The Passing Stage project was a year-long writing project initiated by Ruwanthie de Chickera, for artists who were also mothers. The women were brought together to reflect on themselves, their relationship with their children, their artwork and society. This resulted in producing a 300-page collection of the writings of 13 artist mothers put together in a bilingual manuscript. Cast as Mother was a dramatized reading of excerpts of this manuscript.

Production Design

Cast as Mother was not even promoted as a play. It was promoted as a dramatized reading. It grew out of the real writings of 13 real mothers. It was a production that dealt with the prosaic and domestic worlds of women who had dreams and objectives far greater and wider than their family and household.

As such in the overall production design there had to be a mix of the very ordinary and unremarkable quality of a mother's daily life – filled with interruption, multitasking, borrowings from the worlds of both adults and children.

Set Design

As the performance was produced as a 'reading' rather than a fully fledged production, there was a very sparse set – often no set at all

- on stage. The reading took the audience incrementally through the seven writing tasks that the 13 artist mothers engaged in, over a period of 1 ½ years. In order to emphasize the informal nature of the presentation, the performances were done on an empty stage with artists seated on the floor, and only when necessary, seated on chairs.

Light Design

Lighting fluctuated between very ordinary flat light representing the day to day tasks of motherhood and slightly textured lights settings when moving into the scenes which reflected imagination, dreams, secrets, games – in a way the secret world of mothers and children.

Note must be made of the beginning and ending of the play. The play began before the 3rd bell rang with the house lights on in the theatre. This was meant to provide a prologue to the play - or the gathering together of the women for the project.

The play also ended abruptly in mid scene – with the house lights coming on after one of the women on stage momentarily lost track of one of her children.

This interrupted, abrupt end and unclear beginning mirrored the experience of mothering. It bookmarked the play in a rather unusual way.

Costumes

Costumes were simple given that the performance took the form of a reading. The performance moved through seven acts – which represented the seven writing tasks of the Passing Stage project. Each task – or each act - had a basic colour palette assigned to it – and the costumes of the performers in that act, adhered to the colour of that palette.

In the scenes that all the 13 women were represented on scene – because certain writing tasks were undertaken as a group – a colour was assigned to each artist mother, or each character – and the costume adhered to this colour. Only plain colours were used for the costumes, not prints.

The exception to the all-female cast were two male performers who functioned as narrators. These two male characters maintained formal wear right throughout the performance.

Make up

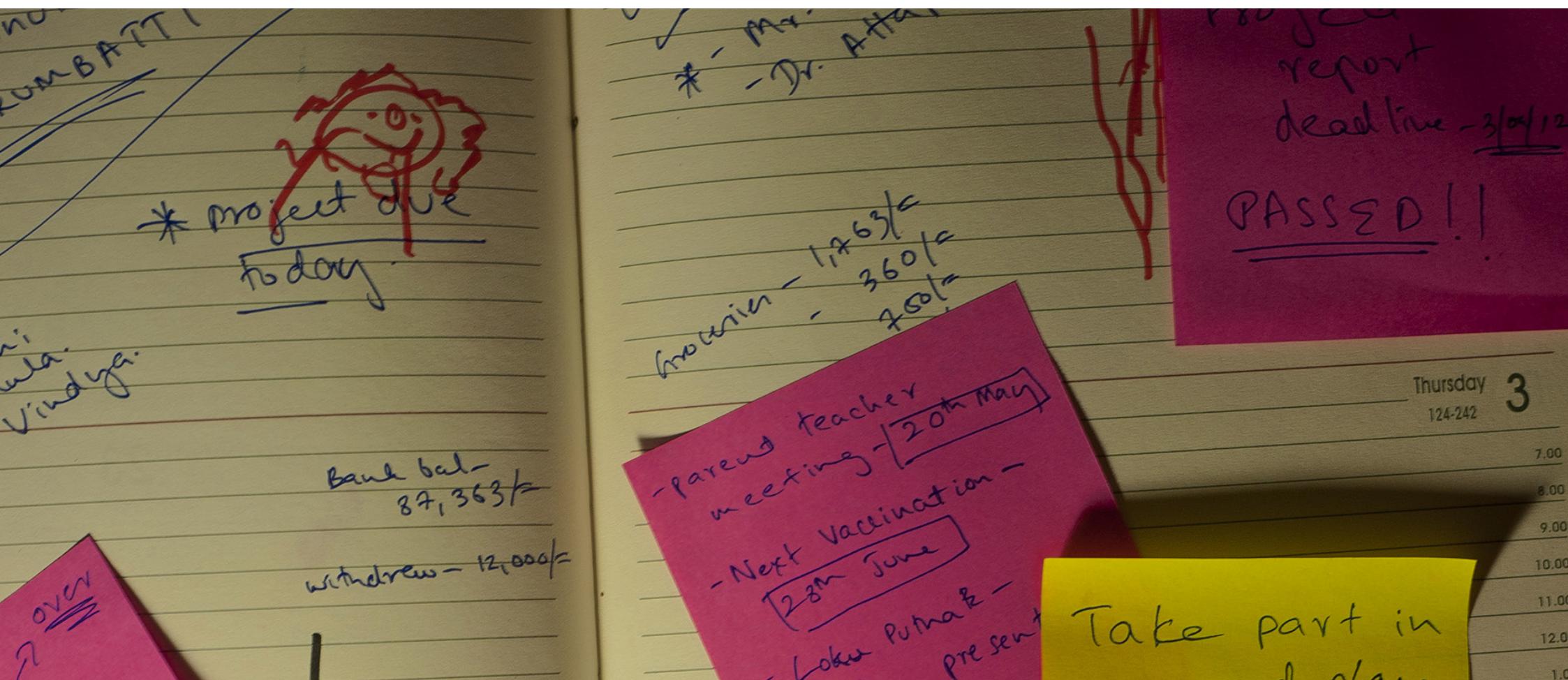
Make up was very naturalistic. There was no character make up at all.

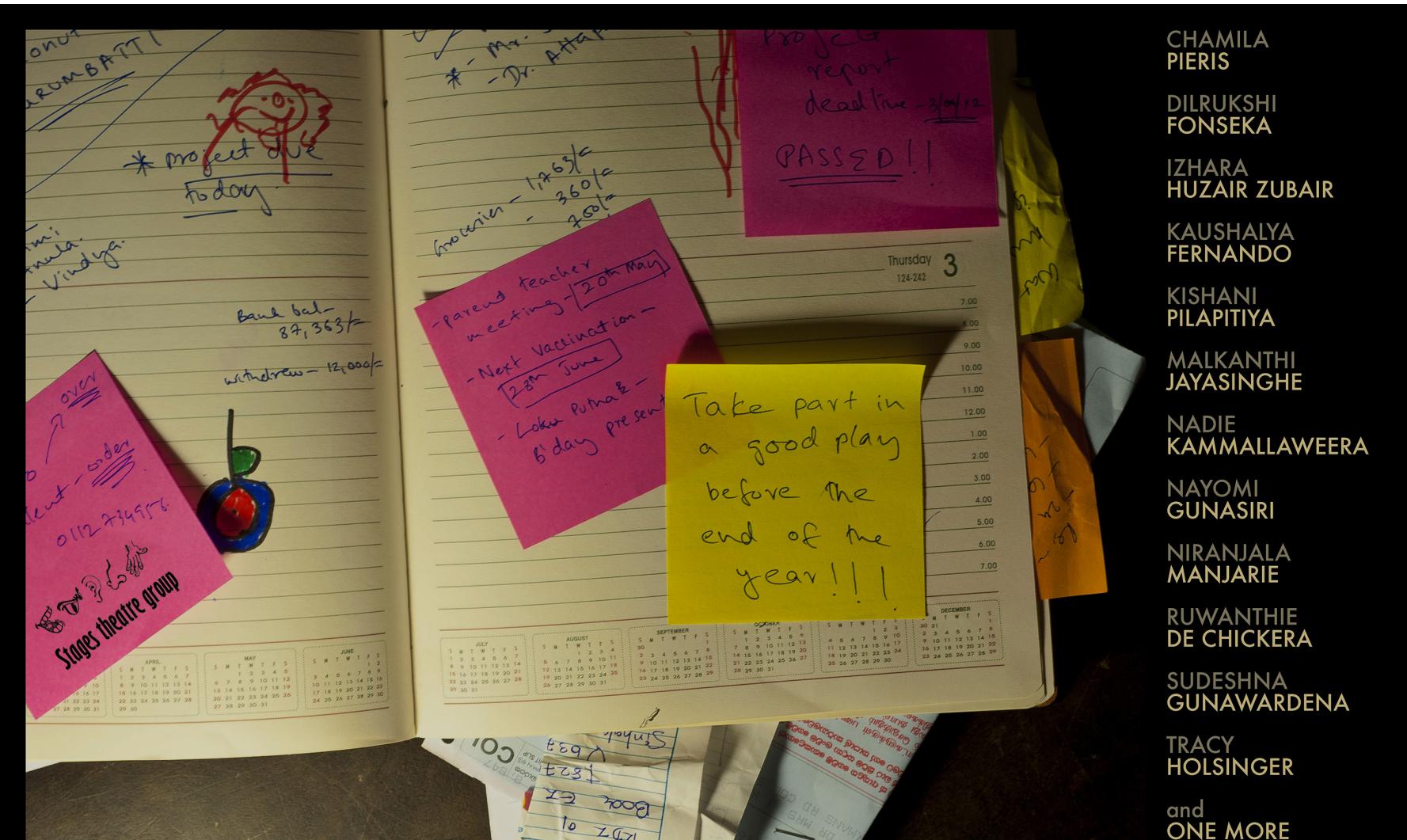
Publicity Design

There was only digital publicity done for this production. As such a single email poster was designed and circulated through personal contacts.

The image used for the poster was taken from the real diary of the director of the show – Ruwanthie de Chickera - which had in it a squiggle by one of her children.

The concept behind the design was the reality faced by most of the women – of having diaries full of contrasting material – daily tasks, longer dreams, personal entries, children’s drawings. In a way, the diary of an artist mother is a physical manifestation of her life. At one point it may have just included her journal entries – when she had the time and energy to sit down and write.





For one year 13 women of the stage wrote about their experiences of motherhood, through the lens of theatre. *Cast as Mother*, a play based on these writings, will be staged in September. An exclusive reading of excerpts will be presented by the writers themselves in May.

CAST AS MOTHER

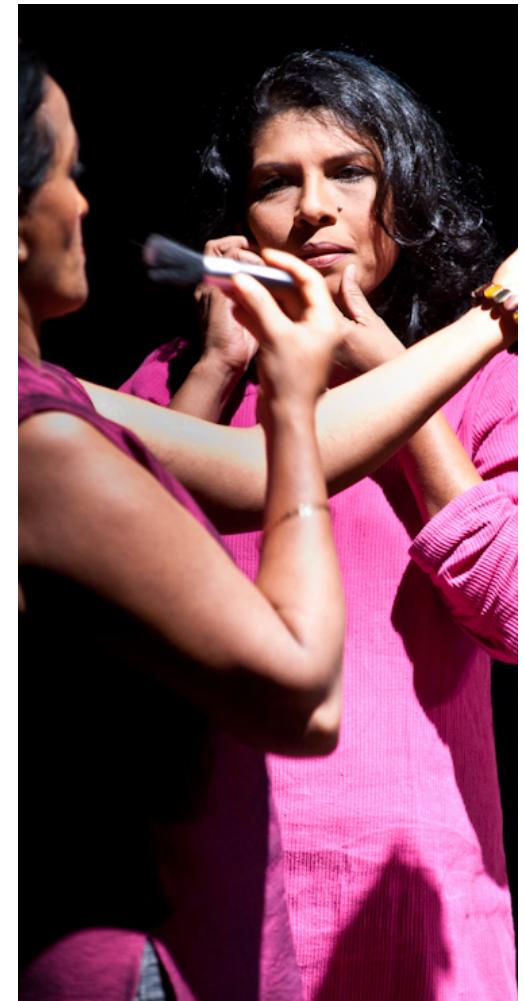
A READING 24th MAY 2012 AT 7:30PM AT THE LIONEL WENDT THEATRE

CHAMILA PIERIS
DILRUKSHI FONSEKA
IZHARA HUZAIR ZUBAIR
KAUSHALYA FERNANDO
KISHANI PILAPITIYA
MALKANTHI JAYASINGHE
NADIE KAMMALLAWEERA
NAYOMI GUNASIRI
NIRANJALA MANJARIE
RUWANTHIE DE CHICKERA
SUDESHNA GUNAWARDENA
TRACY HOLINGER
and ONE MORE

ENTRY BY INVITATION
PLEASE CONTACT
0770.286.886
BEFORE MAY 22ND

Gallery







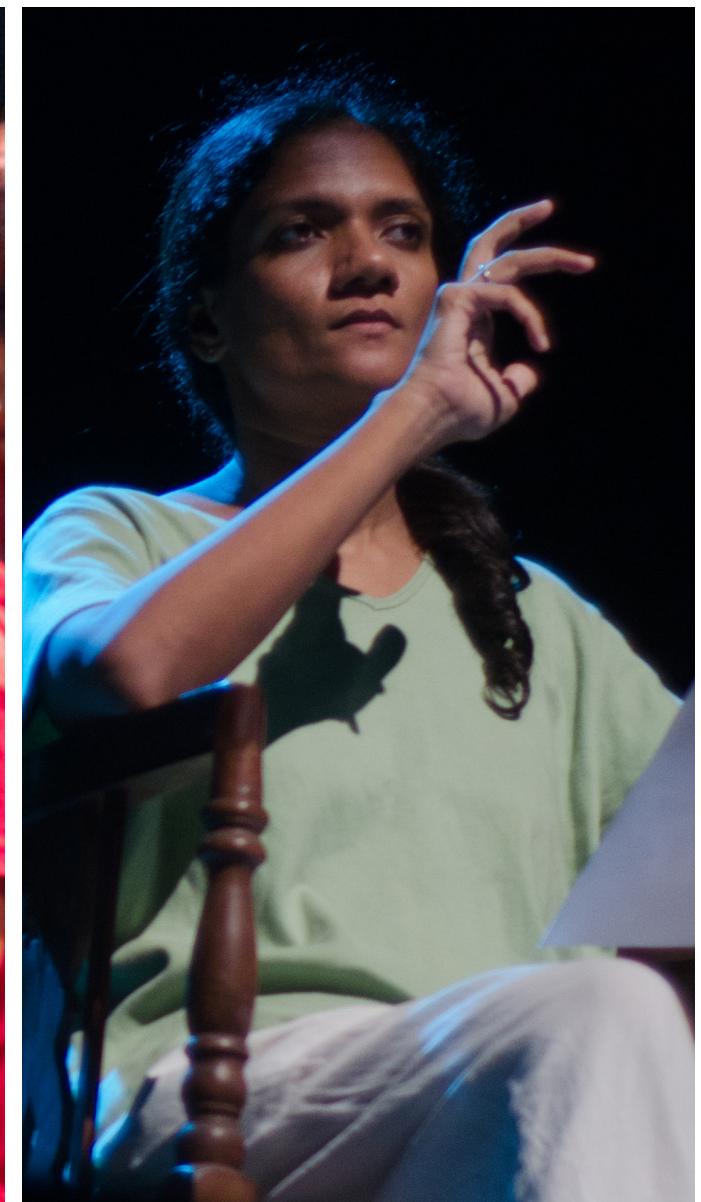
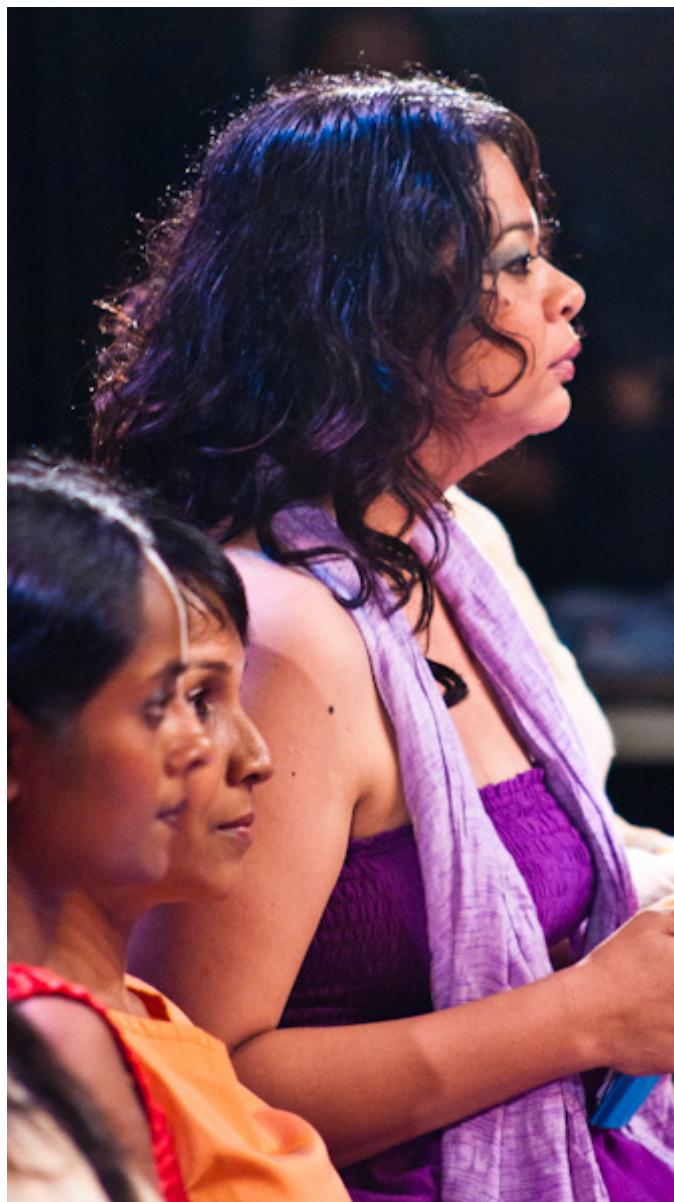


Shan Tennekoon













Credits

Production Photography Deshan Tennakoon, Ruvin de Silva

Production Team

Director Ruwanthie de Chickera

Producer Sanda Wijeratne

Production Coordinator Nadya Perera

Production Team Bimsara Premaratna

Megal Perera, Kaushalya Attygalle

Thanuja Jayawardena, Chathura Hewamallika

Mayanthi de Silva, Adam Kenny

Pasan Ranaweera, Gihan de Chickera

Sabreena Niles, Imesha Perera

Choreographer Ruwanthie de Chickera

Composer of the Song Kasun Kalhara

Lights Designer Thushara Hettihamu

Costume Designer Ruwanthie de Chickera

Lights Operator Thushara Hettihamu

Sounds Operator Dino Corera

Stage Manager Themal Ellawela

Publicity Campaign Designer Deshan Tennakoon

Cast

Readers

Ruwanthie de Chickera

Nadie Kammallawera

Chamila Peiris

Dilrukshi Fonseka

Hasini Haputhanthri

Izhara Huzair Zubair

Kaushalya Fernando

Lakmini Seneviratne

Malkanthi Jayasinghe

Niranjala Manjarie

Shenali Rajkumar

Tracy Holsinger

Kalumaali

Malshani Delgahapitiya

Comperes

Pasan Ranaweera

Prasad Pereira

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This production design document was produced as part of the 'Artist Research, Archiving and Documentation Project' of Stages Theatre Group.

Through this project, practicing artists engaged in systematic and critical analysis of their own work, analysing a decade worth of theatre productions and processes of Stages Theatre Group. The decade spanned the immediate ten years after the end of the civil war in Sri Lanka (2009 to 2019).

The production design documents, were compiled to give a wholistic insight into the design aspects and elements of these productions.

Along with these production design documents, sixteen resource packs which provide insight into the creative processes behind Stages theatre productions have also been created in Sinhala, Tamil and English. In addition to this, supporting video material has been created as part of this initiative. All material produced through this research project can be found at www.stages.lk

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