

All The World's A Sea: Practice's latest original work to debut at Singtel Waterfront Theatre



The Theatre Practice (Practice), Singapore's longest-standing bilingual theatre institution, is excited to announce its 2024 mainstage show, *All The World's A Sea*, in collaboration with Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay. Featuring an international team of artmakers from Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nanjing and USA, the intercultural interdisciplinary epic will be staged at the Singtel Waterfront Theatre, from 1 – 4 August 2024.

Rootless and Wandering: In Search of Identity in Today's World

In 2016, Practice was commissioned by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay to create *I came at last to the seas* for *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts 2018*. Its debut marked the first-ever commission for *Huayi* at the 2,000-seat Esplanade Theatre by a Singapore theatre company.

Six years later, a global pandemic; wars and regional conflicts; the climate crisis and rising inflation has resulted in forced displacements of epic proportions. It is against this backdrop that director Kuo Jian Hong has chosen to revisit the themes explored in *I came at last to the seas*.

“As a Singaporean and a second-generation immigrant, I have always resonated with the idea of rootlessness. In recent years, man-made catastrophes have forced millions to leave their homes; mass displacement has emerged as the definitive crisis of our generation,”

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explained Kuo. “The search for one’s identity has never been more urgent. Who am I? What am I? What defines me?”

“Six years have passed since Esplanade worked with Practice on *I came at last to the seas*,” added Esplanade Senior Producer Delvin Lee. “It is a vastly different world now, where the effects of unrest and migration, whether forced or unforced, are more evidently felt everywhere. I am confident that the world presented in *All The World’s A Sea* will offer audiences much food for thought, both onstage and offstage, as it’s produced by an international team working closely and harmoniously together with the sole aim of creating a compelling work for audiences.”

Five Minutes Into the Future: Fact and Fiction Blurred Into a Multilayered Narrative

Diving into the complexities of individual and collective identity, the production blends speculative fiction, classic literature references and inspiration drawn from myth-like true stories, collected by playwright Liu Xiaoyi and script researcher Ng Mun Poh.

Inspired by the Buddhist philosophy of Ayatana (six senses), *All The World’s A Sea* presents the journeys of the uprooted and displaced as six disparate yet interconnected stories, set in an imagined near-future, shaped by our current reality.

A soldier with a captured nose; a girl’s ears lost in translation; a baby with aberrant eyes. A father’s body caught in limbo; a hacker searching for an escape; an outsider with a transplanted tongue.

Each modern fable portrays the journeys of various individuals — each faced with a form of displacement. Past, present, future. Fears, hopes, dreams. As their lives’ trajectories intertwine and come together, a complex web of human experiences is formed.

“Constructing *All The World’s A Sea* was like having a conversation with my father (theatre doyen and Practice co-founder Kuo Pao Kun),” observed Kuo. “I often asked myself what would he say if he was here now? His work, *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* (1995), used the metaphor of castration to respond to the cultural displacement faced by Singaporeans. I wondered if he could have ever imagined the catastrophes and mass displacement that we are witnessing. This is the castration we are facing now.”

Beyond a dialogue with the past, Kuo hopes that by presenting the emotional journeys of each character through multiple perspectives, the production can also posit a more hopeful future. “As his descendant, as descendants of the searching and displaced, I hope that when there is 危机 (crisis), there is also 转机 (opportunity), and a chance for 生机 (rebirth).”

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An International-Intercultural-Interdisciplinary Theatrical Epic

Epic. Primal. Evocative. *All The World's A Sea* is told through different theatrical disciplines. Bringing this ambitious work to life is a critically-acclaimed group of artists from Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nanjing and the United States. This includes set designer Szu-Feng Chen; costume designer Max Tan; lighting and multimedia designer Genevieve Peck; movement director Okorn-Kuo Jing Hong; hair designer Ashley Lim; make-up designer Bobbie Ng (The Make Up Room); composer and music arranger Joel Sim; and sound designer Guo Ningru. Combining their individual artistic visions, the creative team will come together to create a powerful theatrical feast that seamlessly synthesises text, performance and design.

The production will also feature eight performers including Practice associate artists Ang Xiao Ting and Ng Mun Poh, alongside veteran performer Hang Qian Chou. Rounding up the cast are renowned Kunqu performer Zhao Yu Tao from Jiangsu Performing Arts Group (Kun Opera Theatre), Hong Kong Repertory Theatre resident artists Vivian Chan and Clinton Zhang, Sunson Theatre Artistic Director Chang Wei Loy and Taiwanese film and television actor Lee Ming-Che.

Indeed, *All The World's A Sea* is not only the interweaving of different theatrical disciplines and practices, but an ongoing process of cross-cultural collaboration. As Kuo points out, while the cast and creative team are all Chinese, each come from vastly different backgrounds and lived experiences. “Bringing together artists from all around the world, I am looking forward to the creative exchanges and collisions as we excavate the resonances and differences across our cultures.”

All The World's A Sea runs from 1 – 4 August 2024, with tickets now available on [BookMyShow](#). Additional information and discounts can be found [here](#).

[Publicity Visuals](#)

Credit: Courtesy of The Theatre Practice

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All The World's A Sea

Synopsis

Seeking anchor in a world buffeted by unrest, *All The World's A Sea* presents the journeys of the uprooted and displaced — where despair and oppression sit alongside hope and resistance.

A captured nose. A body in limbo. A transplanted tongue.
Aberrant eyes. Ears lost in translation. Consciousness gone rogue.

Who am I? What am I?

Inspired by the Buddhist philosophy of Ayatana (six senses), director Kuo Jian Hong builds upon her 2018 epic *I came at last to the seas* (commissioned for *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*) for a bold new reimagination. Bringing together an international team from Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Nanjing and USA, the interdisciplinary epic fuses evocative storytelling with ambitious scenographic design.

All The World's A Sea is presented by The Theatre Practice, in collaboration with Esplanade — Theatres on the Bay, and features performers from Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Jiangsu Performing Arts Group (Kun Opera Theatre) and Sun Son Theatre.

Programme Details

Date: 01 – 04.08.2024

Time: 2.30pm (Sat – Sun), 8pm (Thu – Sat)

Venue: Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

Language: Performed in Mandarin (with English surtitles)

Duration: 95 mins (No intermission)

Ticket Price: From \$48 (+\$4 booking fees)

Get your tickets here: <https://bit.ly/2024SEA>

Promotions

*Limited discounted tickets per show.

Esplanade&Me Specials (ends 31.07.2024)

- Black: 15% discount
- White: 10% discount
- Discover: 10% discount (min. 2 tickets)

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Marketing Partners: 10% Discount (ends 31.07.2024)

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Student/Senior/NSF Concession: 10% Discount (ends 31.07.2024)

About Kuo Jian Hong

Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice (Practice), theatre director, designer, and filmmaker, Kuo Jian Hong has always taken on multi-faceted roles. She has led more than 200 theatre projects, in a career spanning three decades.

Transcending themes, genres and forms, Jian Hong's vision encompasses Practice's broad spectrum of works. She is a leading proponent of the Chinese Language Original Musical Theatre genre, with award-winning works like *Lao Jiu: The Musical* while her experimental ventures include *I came at last to the seas* for Esplanade's *Huayi Chinese Festival of Arts*.

As an advocate for Theatre For Young Audiences, her works include the beloved *The wee Question Mark* series and *The Nursery Rhymes Project*. She also spearheaded Practice's groundbreaking exploration in Digital Theatre, notably through XIMI and *The Bride Always Knocks Twice — Killer Secrets*.

Under her direction, Practice continues to be a vital voice in the Singapore arts scene.

About The Theatre Practice

The Theatre Practice (Practice) is Singapore's longest-standing professional bilingual theatre institution. Artist-driven and deeply progressive, Practice strives to be an arts space in Singapore that consciously nurtures and empowers people who care about humanity. Over the past 59 years, we have developed and presented works that aim to reflect the richness and complexities of Singapore's diverse cultures.

Today, we carry on the work of our visionary co-founders and cultural medallion recipients, Kuo Pao Kun and Goh Lay Kuan. Under the helm of current Artistic Director Kuo Jian Hong, Practice continues to shape Singapore's cultural landscape as the definitive voice in Singapore theatre. Jian Hong is deeply influenced by the importance of play in art-making and under her leadership, Practice has become the embodiment of the irrepressible spirit and fearless experimentation of play.

Practice is motivated by a desire to always respectfully entertain. We have collaborated with Singapore and international artists alike to present a critically-acclaimed repertoire of over 350 productions including musicals, classics, original and experimental works. We have toured extensively in the region. Many of our works have entered the canon of Southeast

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Asian literature and have been adapted and presented by theatre companies worldwide, presenting an authentically Singaporean voice on the world stage.

Since our inception, Practice has served as a cultural bridge between Asia and the world. Our current theatre festival – *Patch! A (Live) Theatre Festival of Play* – comes from a legacy of carefully curated festivals and seminars that gather practitioners of all disciplines and cultures for sharing and exchange, while providing a valuable platform for outstanding international works.

As pioneers in Arts Education in Singapore, Practice has been instrumental both in nurturing leaders in the Singapore arts scene, and inculcating a love for the arts in generations of Singapore youth.

Artistically diverse and constantly relevant, Practice will always engage with the ceaseless exploration of new frontiers.

The Theatre Practice is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period of April 2023 to March 2026. Practice is also an Institution of Public Character and a recipient of MCCY's Charity Transparency Award 2023.

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