
4.48 PSYCHOSIS

STRUT AND FRET THEATRE COMPANY

4 . 4 8 P s y c h o s i s

行 子 劇 團

IATL Student Producer: Serena Fu

OVERVIEW

4.48 Psychosis is a project by strut and fret, a student-led theatre company. In this project, Sarah Kane's 4.48 Psychosis was translated and performed in Mandarin at Wuzhen Drama Festival. The preparation started in March 2017 and the trip to China took place on the 20th – 28th October 2017. The performance was completed with a high standard and received excellent feedbacks from both the audience and the committee of the festival.

In this report, the main aims of the project will be outlined in the introduction, followed by a clear account of the preparation process. Problems and obstacles during the actual performance dates will be explained in the Performance section. Finally, a collection of feedbacks we received will be included in the final section. Any additional document will be displayed at the end of this report.

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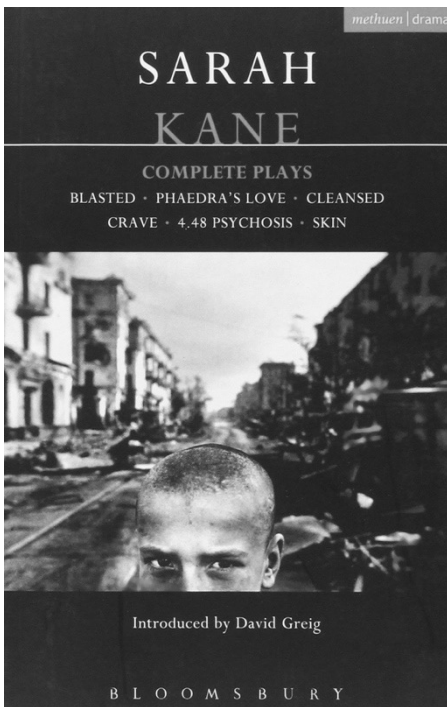
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INTRODUCTION

strut and fret theatre company is a newly-formed, student-led group. Our founders Elysia Qiu and Serena Fu have enjoyed both English and Oriental theatre for years and share a passion towards both. strut and fret was formed as a bilingual fledgling theatre company with a focus on bringing sharp, fresh, and confrontational British theatre to the Far East. *4.48 Psychosis* as our very first production was performed in Mandarin at Wuzhen Festival in October 2017.



4.48 Psychosis was selected for its unique point of perspective taken on the subject of suicide and mental illness which is still regarded as sensitive in China. The play describes the internal landscape of a suicidal psychosis. The format of the script is written purposely to mimic the fragmentation of self, the losing of borders of a psychotic mind. The paradox in the play is that the moment of clarity in the psychotic mind is, to those outside it, the moment when delusion is at its strongest – at 4:48.

Taking *4.48 Psychosis* to Wuzhen Festival in Mandarin, we hope to present to the audience in Wuzhen the authentic taste of a small-scale English theatre and the blend of Chinese cultural reference at the same time. We hope to eliminate the existing cultural prejudice against mental illnesses in China. In addition, we hope that the actors will develop and learn personally from the rehearsals and the trip to Wuzhen.



I'll die
not yet
but it's there



PROCESS AND PREPARATION

About 4.48 Psychosis

4.48 Psychosis is originally written in English. As part of the project, Elysia and Serena translated the script into Simplified Chinese and the translation was approved by the Copyright agency, Casarotto. We first adapted a method of direct translation to reflect the original version most precisely. After completing the first draft and submitting it to Wuzhen Festival Committee. The content and usage of certain words were marked and we were advised to change them. Thus for the play to be approved, we had to change some words such as ‘fuck’ from *cao ta ma de* (肏他妈的) to *ni ta ma de* (你他妈的). Many other strong languages were altered and modified as well. We value the content and emotion contained in 4.48 Psychosis more and decided that the theatrical conflict can be delivered to the audience through body language and stage design. Thus the translation was a compromise we were willing to make.

4.48 Psychosis, written in the form of ‘a stream of consciousness’ is a difficult script to interpret and direct. There were only three characters in the first performance directed by James Macdonald. In our project, we decide to invent four characters: Outer self, Inner self (1st identity), Lover (2nd identity) and the Doctor. In Macdonald’s 4.48 Psychosis, the character of the lover and the doctor were combined into one – the helper. Sarah Kane herself, has an ambiguous definition towards the character of Lover and Doctor. Has she fallen in love with the Doctor, or was it with an imagined person? We decide to separate the two and thus created the character – Lover.





Other than additional character, we have also made some cultural adaptations for the Chinese audience. During our performance, we constantly referred to The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying (《西藏生死书》). The famous line ‘Remember the line and believe the light’ was translated using a phrase from The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying (记住光明并坚信光明). The questioning of Life and Death was a common theme between the two.

About Wuzhen Drama Festival

The Wuzhen Drama Festival is an annual theatre event organised in an ancient town, Wuzhen in the South of China. The entire town of Wuzhen, which has a history of more than 1,300 years, was transformed into a splendid stage, and theatre lovers all over the world are invited to enjoy, and participate in, this tantalizing feast of the theatrical arts. The festival itself is not only a stage to perform on, but also a rare opportunity to learn from great oriental and international theatre masters. One of the uniqueness of Wuzhen Festival is the charm and variety of its outdoor theatre spaces – the venues include conventional theatre space, floating boats and temples. There were over 2000 plays from all over the world performed at the festival this year, varying from drama societies from universities to independent film studios.

Wuzhen Theatre Festival
如幻如戏 乌镇
BEYOND THE REAL. ALL WUZHEN'S A STAGE!
明
LUMINOSITY
2017年10月19日 - 29日
第五届 Wuzhen Theatre Festival 乌镇戏剧节
2017年10月19日-29日
本届乌镇戏剧节艺术总监：田沁鑫
乌镇戏剧节发起人：陈向宏 黄磊 赖声川 孟京辉
主办单位：文化乌镇股份有限公司 票务独家代理：Genway

Our outdoor stage in Wuzhen was selected in August after a trip by Elysia, Serena and PeiYao. The stage was split into three sections. Area 1-1 represents the Reality, showing the place where Sarah Kane wakes up at 4:48 and commits suicide at 6:00. Area 1-2 represents the Imagination where Inner self recalls his memory about consulting the Doctor; treatment; surgery; all completed by Outer self. Area 2 is a rectangular passage connecting Area 1-1 to Area 1-2. Area 3 locates on the bridge facing the stage across the water which was used for interaction. The stage was designed in such a way, so the performance can exploit the full potential of this beautiful outdoor setting.



Area 1-1 & 1-2

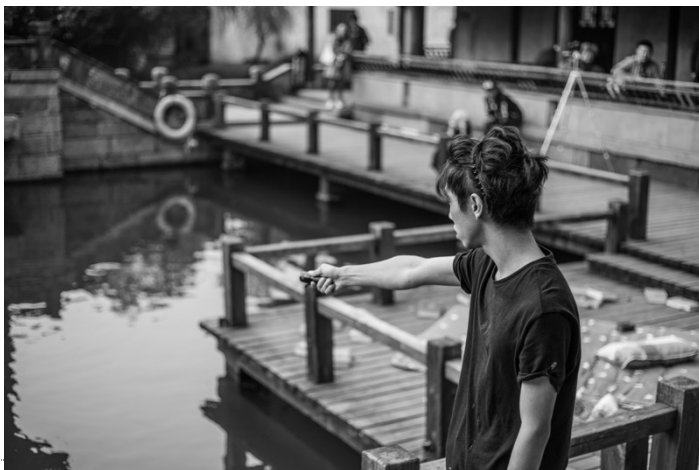


Area 3: The Bridge

PERFORMANCE

Like any other theatre production, no matter how prepared you are, there will always be 99+ new problems thrown into your face on the day of performance.

Our suitcases were lost by British Airways and were not sent to us until the 24th October, and our performances started on the 22nd. Nevertheless, we managed to put the first two shows on without no delays. Due to the lack of crew members in Wuzhen, everyone on the production had multiple roles to play. Although in the credit section, everyone's name and job were listed. Everyone did much more than that. With countless DIYs and meetings after every single performance, the standard of our performance was improving day by day.



FEEDBACKS

From Wuzhen Theatre Festival

“I highly recommend 4.48 Psychosis by strut and fret. The longest show of the Carnival section and I dare say, the most spectacular one.”

“absolutely loved it! Been coming to this festival for the third time. I felt the commitment and dedication of this group of young artists through the performance, the props, the music and the make-up! Looking forward to your next show!”

“Thank you so much for translating this and bringing this amazing piece of work to us!”

“very lucky that I happened to walk pass your show, I am not a professional but I stayed for the entire show and was touched and amazed at the same time. I simply cannot express my feelings in words. But best wishes to you all. Please come back and perform again in the future.”

From University of Warwick

“To Elysia:

Thank you for inviting me to this show, watching it on a Sunday night added a bit of philosophical thinking to my plane ordinary weekend. The delicacy of this show, the neatness of every single component of the show and how perfectly they fit with each other absolutely wowed me. Having worked in a few production groups and as a working member of theatre festivals, I have to comment on the high standard of quality of 4.48 Psychosis. I can tell it was well-prepared and carefully thought through. It was professional.

I rarely say I like something now. But tonight was an exception. I loved it. Every single line hit me. Although the lines seem illogical and lunatic at first, they strangely hit me at the deepest place of my heart. I felt this urge to express, to reach out, to escape after watching the show, as if the facade of harmony has been torned down. I have not heard of Sarah Kane before this show, and when you mentioned that the script was translated, I was shocked. The language flew beautifully and so natural that I did not realise. And at last, I have to comment on the selection of background music. The emptyness and calmness of the music contrasted so well with the conflict on the stage. The show was a master piece.”



CREDIT

University of Warwick

Artistic Director & Light Designer

YuQi Qiu (Elysia)

Executive Director & Actor – Lover

ShuTian Fu (Serena)

Producer & Sound Designer

YuanJun Cui (Joy)

Stage Manager (Warwick)

JiaLu Wang

Marketing

LangLang Fan

Actor – Inner self

YouBin Lin

Actor – Outer self

Edward Eng

Actor – Doctor (Wuzhen)

ChenXin Pan

Actor – Doctor (Warwick)

ZiQi Guo

Nanjing University

Stage Manager (Wuzhen)

PeiYao Xu

Technician

LingBo Fu

South Central University for Nationalities

Photographer

ShengYuan Wang

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

我 从 未 相 見 過 的

其 實 就 是 我 自 己

彳亍劇團

‘It is myself I have never met, whose face is pasted on the underside of my mind

please open the curtains’

----- 4.48 Psychosis

A huge Thank You to IATL (Gabby, Adam, Harry and many more).

Without whom, we could not have completed this production.