

Thursday 9th May 2019

Nakkiah Lui is the 2018 Sydney Theatre Company Patrick White Playwrights Fellow

- **Nakkiah Lui is the new STC Patrick White Playwrights Fellow**
- **Mark Rogers wins the Patrick White Playwrights Award**

Sydney Theatre Company announced last night that Nakkiah Lui is the 2018 STC Patrick White Playwrights Fellow. It was also announced that this year's Patrick White Playwrights Award recipient is Mark Rogers for his play *Superheroes*, which was presented as a rehearsed reading to a sell-out audience at the Richard Wherett Studio in the Roslyn Packer Theatre.

The Fellow

Nakkiah Lui is a Gamillaroi/Torres Strait Islander woman, a young leader in the Australian Aboriginal community, and a multi award-winning writer and actor in TV shows such as ABC's *Black Comedy* and *Kiki & Kitty*. She has appeared on Q&A and *The Drum*, is a regular guest on Screen Time, and co-hosts the BuzzFeed podcast series *Pretty For An Aboriginal*. In 2018, Nakkiah won the NSW Premier's Literary Award - Nick Enright Prize for her play *Black is the New White*.

Nakkiah Lui is well known to STC audience with three of her plays *Black is the New White*, *Blackie Blackie Brown* and *How to Rule the World* being staged in the last three years. *Black is the New White* was first presented in 2017 with a sell-out season at the Wharf, and returned for an encore season at the Roslyn Packer Theatre in 2018. This was followed up by her critically acclaimed play *Blackie Blackie Brown* in 2018 which also had a season at Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne. In 2019 her play *How to Rule the World* premiered at the Sydney Opera House and played a season at Canberra Theatre Centre. This year all three works will be presented at mainstage theatres in Australia.

Now in its eighth year, the \$25,000 Fellowship is awarded annually to an established playwright in recognition of their excellent body of work and achievements. As well as including a commission from STC, which each Fellow develops during their year-long engagement, the tenure provides opportunities for the playwright to share their skills with other playwrights and artists including the STC Emerging Writer's Group. Previous STC Patrick White Fellows are Sue Smith, Andrew Bovell, Tommy Murphy, Kate Mulvany, Angela Betzien, Hilary Bell, Patricia Corneliuss and Raimondo Cortese.

The Award winner

111 scripts were submitted anonymously for the 2018 Patrick White Playwrights Award, a prize of \$7500 for an original, unproduced play, with Mark Rogers play *Superheroes* most impressing the judges

Told through interspersed monologues that come together in a simple and beautiful collision, this play tells the stories of two women on opposite sides of the world. Anna, a young Australian woman is coming to terms with an unwanted pregnancy and dealing the fallout of her decision about it. Meanwhile in Mostar, Jana perpetrates an act of hatred that has deadly consequences. Although these women are in very different places, in very different situations they are connected by the questions of responsibility that they must grapple with. The monologues are beautifully observed, filled with evocative, almost filmic imagery; while the scenes that break the form are both surprising and moving. Written with great control, this elegant play is both global and domestic in its reach. It demonstrates impressive craft in the way that it deals with complex themes and ideas in a deceptively simple way.

“We are delighted to award this year’s prize to this accomplished piece of writing,” STC’s Literary Manager Polly Rowe said.

Mark Rogers is a playwright and theatre-maker living in the Illawarra. He holds a PhD from the University of Wollongong, where he lectures in theatre and performance. His previous work as a playwright includes: *The Pecking Order* (Shopfront Arts Co-Op, Commission) *Tom William Mitchell* (Merrigong-X), *Plastic* (Old 505 Theatre), *We’ll Become Good People, You’ll See* (Crack Theatre Festival), *Target Audience* (Novelty UK), *The Buck* (Rock Surfers, Bondi Feast), *Soothsayers* (Brisbane Festival: Under The Radar), *Blood Pressure* (Rock Surfers, Old Fitzroy Theatre) and *Gobbledygook* (PACT, AC Arts Adelaide). He is a founding member of the performance collective Applespiel. Mark also runs Merrigong Theatre’s Playwrights’ Program – a new initiative providing long-term mentorship to local writers. His play *Blood Pressure* is published by PlayLab. He is a proud member of the NTEU.

Superheoroes received a rehearsed reading directed by STC Richard Wherrett Fellow Shari Sebbens, and performed by Aleks Mikic, Teresa Moore and Adele Perovic.

The Emerging Writers Group

The new Emerging Writers Group is James Elazzi, Jordyn Fulcher, Enoch Mailangi and Wendy Mocke.

The group of four emerging writers will meet regularly throughout the year-long program (May 2019 to May 2020) and will receive mentorship from STC's Literary Manager and Resident Artists, including the Patrick White Playwrights Fellow and Associate Director. The group will attend all of STC's productions, company runs of STC shows and take part in workshops with STC artists, as well as have opportunities to discuss with mentors the work they see and create.

James Elazzi: James Elazzi is an Australian writer who grew up in Western Sydney. His writing seeks to find a balance between both cultures of Australian and his Lebanese heritage. A catalyst in James' writing is the universal ideas of obstacle and transition. His characters ebb and flow through themes of family, culture and nudging the status quo, inadvertently challenging existing cultural conventions. His characters exist to break the mould and find what is true, and this is always at the core of his writing. James completed the 2017 National Theatre of Parramatta's script program, Page to Stage, culminating in a public reading of his script *Miriam*. James was also chosen to be part of the 2018 NToP's emerging playwrights program, 'Creative Futures'. James's script *Miriam* was then given a public reading in 2018 National Playwriting Festival. James' play *Omar and Dawn* was a finalist and showcased in the 2018 bAKEHOUSE Storyteller's festival at KingsX Theatre. In February 2019, James' play, *Son Of Byblos* in partnership with Siren Theatre Company, was chosen to have a public reading. In July 2019, *Omar and Dawn* will be staged in King's Cross Theatre, supported by Apocalypse Theatre and Green Door Theatre. In May 2019, James's sold out play *Lady Tabouli* was chosen to be part of Griffin Theatre's Batch Festival.

Jordyn Fulcher: Jordyn Fulcher is an actor and emerging playwright from Sydney. Recently graduating from her Advanced Diploma in Acting at AFTT (The Academy of Film, Theatre, and Television) in 2017, she turned her focus to nourishing her skills and creative potential in writing. Penning her first novel at eleven years old in her grandparent's living room, Jordyn found her home in the stories she told and the natural wonder of the world around her. She hopes to contribute to the narrative that demands unbound humanity. Her notable acting credits include: Caryl Churchill's ensemble piece

Love and Information (2017), The Nurse in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (2016), Karen in David Mamet's *Speed the Plow* (2016), Olga in Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (2015), Diana Rivers in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (2013), Horatio in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2013), Marina in a staged adaptation of John Marsden's *So Much To Tell You* (2012). Currently, Jordyn is cast as Human in Amy Sole's *Doing*, the debut show by Puddle or Pond, in association with KXT bAKEHOUSE this June.

Enoch Mailangi: Enoch Mailangi is a text-based artist and writer for performance currently based in Lakemba, Sydney. Currently studying a Masters of Fine Arts (Writing for Performance) at NIDA, Enoch just finished with their first production with Campbelltown Arts Centre, *FLORA 4 FLORA* a movement comedy about a Grindr hook-up between a Native Wattle and Introduced British Rose, the twist? It had no IRL audience and was only watchable off Facebook live. Their work currently interrogates three main ideas; who Indigenous characters are on screen when they're not too busy responding to whiteness, Blak Mediocrity as a legitimate tool against the dangers of Blak Excellence, and celebrity culture as a vehicle of colonisation. Their works and texts explore larger themes of desire, shame, and the internet. Enoch is a Libra first, and a Taurus rising and just wants to have fun and kick back with the gurlies.

Wendy Mocke: Wendy is a Papua New Guinean inter-disciplinary storyteller. She is a NIDA Acting graduate and Creative Director of Melanin Haus, a creative arts company based in Cairns, Far North QLD. She works and devises across live performance and film as an actor, writer and visual artist. Some of her acting credits include; ABC's Season 2 of *The Code*, *Home Invasion* at the Old 505 in Newtown and *Moby Dick* at the Seymour Centre where she was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role in an Independent Production. Wendy performed in last year's Festival Fatale at Darlinghurst Theatre in a play she co-wrote called *Jelbu Meri*. Wendy has also undertaken a residency through the University of Sydney at Rex Cramphorn Studio for a verbatim theatre piece she devised called *Voices of West Papua*. Her visual arts project entitled *m e r i* will be going into exhibition in August of this year at the Centre of Contemporary Arts in Cairns. One of Wendy's quests as a writer and artist is to make alive what is quiet and asleep in Melanesian stories and unpack the myriad of layers that is black Pacific Islander identity.

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