

Centre for Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies

PRESENTS

4th Year Theatremaking Adaptations

EBB

Mariana del Carmen

an adaptation of *The Worme Bridge* by Cat Hellisen

Director & Writer * Mariana del Carmen

Dramturge * Jayne Batzofin

Costume & Stage Design * Mariana del Carmen

Lighting Design * Mariana del Carmen

Cast

Sanette * Sophie Jones Schmidt

Ma * Alice de Beer

Matty * Renier Nolte



Tidemarks

Life comes to us in the same way the ocean approaches its shore. What is brought with it, and what is taken away again, often lies with forces larger than us.

So what remains after?
After a love, a loss or a fatal choice?
What remains?

The tidemark left behind is a constant reminder that separates the before from the after. The imprint remaining; an invisible scar or a deeply treasured memory.

Are we each other's tidemarks?
Which tidemarks have become our common history,
our common burden, our common book of memories?
Which tidemarks have shaped and marked us,
to who we have become?

Tidemarks is a series of adaptations presented as part of the 4th year Theatremaking students program. Starting with a South African short story, the theatremakers undergo a 5 week exploration in discovering how to shift the medium of the written word into the physical and visual theatrical space.

Ebb

How do the tidemarks of deep family trauma leave their lasting imprint on a child? Where do the repercussions of a parent begin and the responsibilities of a child end?

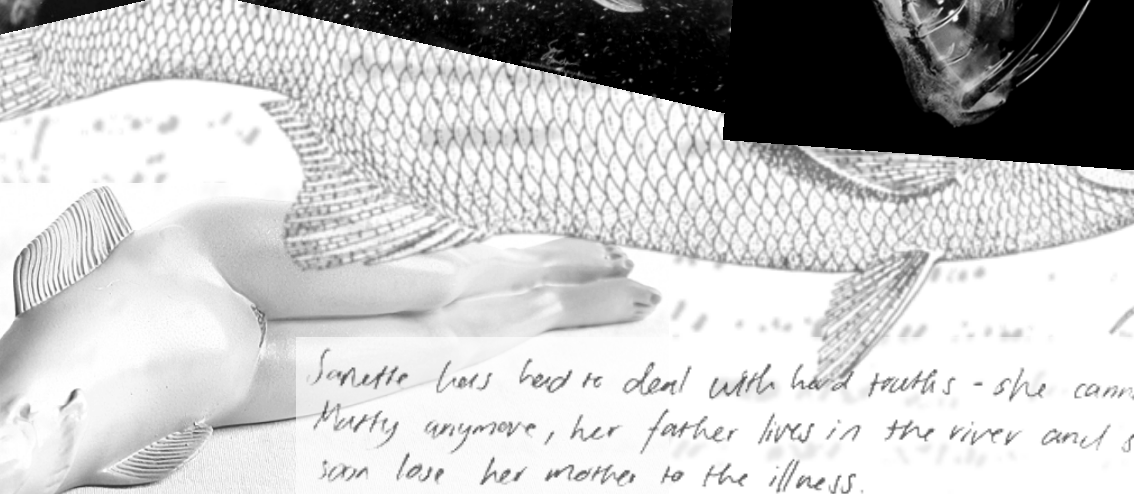
When the borders between reality and fantasy are so intertwined, how do we navigate our worlds?

Where everyone is a fish out of water, who remains behind?

Ebb is a theatrical adaptation of Cat Hellisen's hauntingly strange short story *The Worme Bridge* (2015). Working in the genre of Magic Realism, the world of *Ebb* is situated in the damp, foul smelling, mold infused walls of the Worme family home. Born into a cycle of a mysterious family illness, thirteen year old Sanette is caught within these walls taking care of her mother and brother, Matty. The story operates as a metaphor for the cyclical family trauma experienced by those trapped by the detrimental and damaging impacts of alcoholism. This troubling story explores the different coping mechanisms employed in dealing with a generational trauma, as seen through the discussions, desires and crucial choices of Sanette, Ma and Matty.

Description of world:

We are in a small town. The roads are old and dirt escaping from underneath. We walk past with dark eyes and white smile. We walk up along the river. We walk in a crowd past us. A few feet behind a boy with bright white pants more crooked, in the background.



Sonetta has had to deal with hard truths - she cannot marry anymore, her father lives in the river and soon lose her mother to the illness.

Author Biography

Cat Hellisen

Self-proclaimed "untraveller.
Janus. Liar. Saint. Pukes out
words. Rearranges them for cash."



South African born Hellisen writes Fiction of the Fantastical for adults and children. Having grown up in a series of libraries, she has always preferred reading to just about anything else – understandable how she found herself as an author. However, she originally studied graphic design at the Technikon of Witwatersrand, before realising that she had no interest at all in the world of advertising. She began writing seriously at age twenty-five but it was not until 2010 that she sold her first full-length novel, *When the Sea is Rising Red*.

Since then, her short stories have appeared in *Tor.com*, *Fantasy & Science Fiction*, *Apex Magazine*, and *Something Wicked*, and in several anthologies ranging from *Lovecraftian*, to *Steampunk*, to *African fiction*. In 2015, she won the Short Story Day Africa award for *The Worme Bridge*. Her work has been praised for its compelling and unflinching detail, drawing readers into the unusual and intriguing elements of the magical worlds she creates.



WEEK 7



LONG TERM REHEARSAL PLAN

- Character psyche
- Read through
- Character body
- Character voice
- scene 2 Action (A&J)
- scene 1 Line work (R&J)
- scene 3 Devise & Improv (R&A)
- Showing
- Gesture & extension ✓
- scene 4 action
- Action scene 3 (R&A)
- scene 4 action + lines
- scene 4 action + lines
- scene 3 action + lines
- scene 1 lines + action (R&J)
- choreography (Ren)
- scene 2 line + action + variety (A&J)
- Run - RHYTHM / choreography (R)
- Showing
- Work on feedback
- FULL RUN THROUGH

THURSDAY

Rehearsal Plan 8:

- PHYSICAL
- Shake up
- Wa SKI Da
- Jog - jump, floor, wall, obje
- VOX Bounce out sounds
- ~~Hum~~ Breathing exercise
- BBBB BB BB B.
- stretch face
- Opera voice, Old lady, Clai
- ↳ create characters per e.
- EX Create images with body

Interview with 4th year Theatremaker Mariana del Carmen



Why *The Worme Bridge* as your South African short story to adapt for this project?

I was immediately compelled by the short story's mysteriously eerie and grotesque telling of a South African family. I didn't know of Cat Hellisen before this project, and came across her while searching online for African short stories about water. Water was one of the biggest things on my mind at the time; with the water crisis, it has become ever more sacred. Her story sparked my imagination about the ways to interpret it.

At the start of your process you already knew you wanted to work in the genre of Magic Realism, why is this?

Personally I find Magic Realism to be a truer representation of life than Realism, because it focuses on perception of reality rather than an objective reality. Magical Realism includes the realm of imagination, dreams, thoughts and experiences - this is an important aspect of my personal life experience.

Why did you add the lens of the trauma of alcoholism to your adaptation?

Trauma and the continuing cycle of it is a principle I see daily in all aspects of life. I found that *The Worme Bridge* captured the ugliness and choicelessness of certain coping mechanisms.

How much of *The Worme Bridge* did you want to remain faithful to?

I was not particularly strict in remaining true to the short story, but I hoped to capture the eerie essence of it.



Why did you choose to title your work *Ebb*?

I wanted to place emphasis on being stuck in imbalance. It is the cause of chaos and is often most difficult to rectify. The play is a result of imbalance and without a break in the cycle, the flow can never come.

What motivated you to start from a working script instead of devising on the floor?

I have worked with devising before and wanted to challenge myself by writing and directing a script. And it was challenging, making sure the story made sense and still contained its essence. But I've found it to be a more rewarding process than devising. I was afraid I might lose the moments devising offers, however writing the script allowed so much more thought and insight into the story. Making the characters and story that much richer and complex than what I've experienced before in terms of devising in a short period of time.

What was your experience of hearing your actors reading your script aloud for the first time?

It was like hearing the voices in your head on the outside - walking, talking and psycho-analysing themselves.

What has been a memorable moment on the rehearsal floor?

Every moment in which a scene starts to come together and come alive. The idea's first breath of life in the real world!

Any words of advice for next year's students doing this project?

Challenge yourself. Experiment, but have a plan in your intentions. Remember that although you are learning, you still have to carry your actors.

What mark would you like to leave your audience with?

To recognise the reality of the story of *Ebb* and its characters, and come away with a feeling that their realities could be as magical.

*Production Manager: Luke Ellenbogen

*Head of Workshop: Nicolas Mayer

*Workshop assistants: Mark Miller & Justin Jacobs

*Senior Technician: Marco Frontini

*Head of Costume: Leigh Bishop

*Costume Assistant: Dilshaad Jack

*Costume Interns: Lindiwe Makaba & Michaeline Wessels

*Theatre Administrator: Tabassum Pansari

*Senior Stage Manager: Kei-Ella Loewe

*Financial Administrator: Rob Keith



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