

## **ANNEX A: THE BOILER ROOM (CYCLE 2014) PLAYWRIGHTS**

The following three playwrights were selected through the Open Call process for the inaugural run of the Boiler Room (Cycle 2014):

### **1) Chan Yee Ann Daniel**

**Age: 18yrs old**

**Occupation: waiting for National Service**

Daniel has been hooked on the theatre scene ever since he saw the musical, *Wicked*, 3 years ago. His second attempt at playwriting (we do not talk about the first attempt) was at TheatreWorks 24-Hour Play writing competition in 2013, in which he won a Merit in the Youth Category. He has been involved with the various arts forms for as long as he can remember, and he views himself to be a fiercely driven individual, his volition being his greatest asset. He left school to pursue his interest in writing, and fervently hopes to one day live off his passion as a published poet and playwright. Daniel is honored to have been selected as a Boiler Room playwright at Centre 42. He currently also has the privilege to co-write for youth theatre collective, Bound Theatre. After his stint with national service, he might consider pursuing a Diploma in Technical & Production Management, whilst taking up writing ventures. He is the luckiest for the immense support, inspiration and encouragement he constantly receives from his family and friends. There is no line in *Wicked*, the musical, that he does not know.

### **Synopsis of his idea for the Boiler Room: *Inside The Box***

The theory of Schrödinger's Cat presents that the particles in matter exist differently before they're observed, and after they are observed. Before observation, matter exists in all of its states. A cat inside a box with a ticking bomb, is both dead and alive, until one checks up on the cat. With that theory in mind, *Inside The Box* attempts to explore the themes of frayed possibility, predestination, and the question: Is there a point in anything, if fate has already been set?

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### **2) Suzanne Choo**

**Age: 40**

**Occupation: teaching at NIE**

Suzanne Choo teaches literature at the National Institute of Education. She completed her PhD in English education at Columbia University in New York. Her book "Reading the world, the globe, and the cosmos: Approaches to teaching literature for the twenty-first century" was published in 2013. Aside from writing academic articles, she has an interest in scriptwriting and has been writing plays and musicals for schools for over ten years. In 2008, she was commissioned to write a play titled "Implosion" which was performed over three nights at the Drama Centre. Another play, "smoke," was a top-ten play performed at the Esplanade during the inaugural Short & Sweet Festival and won the People's Choice Award. She hopes to continue writing plays that would de-familiarize the ordinary and provoke philosophical thought on issues related to aesthetics, ethics and social justice in Singapore society.

### **Synopsis of her idea for the Boiler Room: *Open Spaces (working title)***

The play is an exploration of the power of the literary imagination and its contribution to the development of civic space in Singapore. It shifts between the present in which metaphor, irony, and word play are no longer understood or valued as a result of society's preference for the pragmatic, the logical, and the literal. This is juxtaposed with late nineteenth century Singapore which saw the

birth of the literary periodical as a platform through which locals could engage with social and political issues of their time. Set in the midst of a vibrant cosmopolitan world where contestations of power by colonialists, Chinese locals, Straits Chinese and other groups occurred, engagements with the literary played a vital role in developing dialogic and hospitable public discourse. This historical aspect of Singapore is layered with such philosophical questions as – does truth reside in the literal or does the empirical provide only half-truths that are surfaced as reality is disrupted by the fantastical? Does freedom lie in a world where concrete change occurs or in the realm of metaphor and allegory where dispositions of openness and ambivalence are cultivated? Audiences will embark on a journey to explore literature’s role in the past and its possibilities for Singapore’s future in a play of words, time, and imagination.

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### 3) Bryan Tan

**Age: 40**

**Occupation: Legal Counsel**

Bryan Tan is a playwright and theatre director. He graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Laws (Honours) in 1999, and is presently the regional legal counsel of a multinational company.

In 1996, he was awarded the First Prize in the Hewlett-Packard / Action Theatre 10-Minute Play Contest for *Lizard In The Loo*. In 1998, he received a Merit Prize in TheatreWorks’ 24-Hour Playwriting Competition for *Snakeskin*. In the same competition, he received the Second Prize in 2010 for *There Will Now Be A 15-Minute Interval*, and the First Prize in 2013 for *Strike*.

In 2004, Teater Ekamatra presented *Blissed*, and *Broomstick* as part of *Istana 2000*. In 2007, TheatreWorks presented *The Last Theatre State* as part of *120*. Play Den Productions presented *The Devil’s Encore* in 2009, and *Someday, Samsara* in 2010. Most recently, Short One Player Theatre (Taiwan) presented *WiFi Lovers* in 2013.

He is a member of The Blue Statesmen, an independent collective of theatre artists. For their inaugural production, he conceived and directed *BluePrince*, which was presented by the collective and The Substation as part of SeptFest 2012 and the Kuo Pao Kun Festival 2012. His other plays include *Heavy Heart*, *Travelling Light*, *Shopping For Baby* and *Nerve Endings*, *X-Country* and *Offering*.

#### **Synopsis of his idea for the Boiler Room: Paper Tigers**

*“All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality, they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are powerful.” – Mao Zedong*

**Paper Tigers** examines the issue: can theatre change society? In that regard, can theatre be an instrument of cultural transformation, in view of its ability to articulate the concerns of a community, convey different positions and perspectives, as well as provoke reflection and debate? Or is theatre nothing more than a form of middle-class (and possibly middle-brow) entertainment, an opiate for the moneyed masses?

This work is set in Singapore during the years of 1990 to 2002, and premised on a fictional theatre company. The audience will be taken behind the scenes, to contemplate the inner workings of the company, and the local theatre scene in general. They will witness, in the rehearsal spaces and

dressing rooms, both on- and off-stage, the artists' dreams and anxieties, their ideals and struggles, in that era of often experimental and politically-charged theatre.

**Paper Tigers** presents a meditation on the complex and often contentious relationship between art, society and politics, set during a significant period of theatre history in Singapore.

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**Boiler Room (Cycle 2014) Quick Facts:**

- 28 applications were received during the 2-month Open Call period (7 April to 7 June 2014)
- Youngest applicant: 18 years old; and oldest applicant: 74 years old
- More than half of these applicants have not had any previous works staged
- 10 applicants were shortlisted by a panel comprising of the Centre's resident director Casey Lim, resident dramaturg Dr Robin Loon, and theatre veteran Dr KK Seet.
- The final 3 playwrights were selected after an interview on 28 June 2014 with the panel comprising of the Centre's resident director Casey Lim, resident dramaturg Dr Robin Loon, and Nine Years Theatre's Artistic Director, Nelson Chia.