

Ong Keng Sen Director

TheatreWorks' Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen is an active contributor to the evolution of an Asian identity and aesthetic for contemporary performance in the 21st century. He studied intercultural performance with the Performance Studies Department at Tisch Schools of the Arts, NYU, and holds a law degree.

His belief in the juxtaposition of different art forms and cultural styles has helped him create his own epic performance style of directing. These productions are often in collaboration with international artists, both traditional and contemporary and from across disciplines. He is especially well known for his **Asian Shakespeare Trilogy** (*Lear*, *Desdemona* and *Search:Hamlet*) and **docu-performances** (like *The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields*; *The Myths of Memory* in Vienna Schauspielhaus and *Sandakan Threnody* in Melbourne Festival in 2004, *Diaspora* for the IMF/World Bank Meetings in Singapore in 2006 and the Edinburgh International Festival in August 2009. In the same year, he also directed *Directing Good Person of Szechwan* by Bertolt Brecht that premiered in Landestheater Linz, European Cultural Capital 09.

His productions has been presented in numerous centres and cities that include the Lincoln Center New York; Tanzquartier Vienna; Goteborg Dance and Theatre Festival; Oslo Dansenshus; Zurich Theater Spektakel; Paris Center National de la Danse; Roma Europa Festival as well as the Lyon Danse Biennale.

In 1994, Keng Sen conceptualised **The Flying Circus Project**, a laboratory project that brings together traditional and contemporary Asian artists from all disciplines. Since 2004, European, American and Arab artists are included. The most recent was in 2009 / 2010 which involved the setting up of alternative universities of daily life in Phnom Penh as well as working with Rithy Pan's Bophana Centre of Memories and Archives. Also there would be the workshop proposals for the designing of the contents of a museum to memorialize the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge/Pol Pot

He also initiated a new network for Asian artists to encourage inter-Asian engagement, known as the **Arts Network Asia** (ANA).

As a curator, he is known for his inter-disciplinary approaches. He conceived and directed *In-Transit*, for the House of World Cultures, Berlin. He also curated the *Insomnia@ICA* season of Southeast Asian cutting edge young visual artists and filmmakers for London's Institute of Contemporary Arts, as well as *Spaces and Shadows*, a programme on contemporary South East Asian art and urban societies, in the House of World Cultures in Berlin. Ong's Flying Circus Project (Special Edition, Yokohama): The School of Politics, was presented at the Yokohama Triennale.

A Fulbright Scholar, Keng Sen is also the first Singapore artist to have received both the Young Artist Award (1992) and the Cultural Medallion Award (2003) for Singapore.

Karen Tan
Performer

Karen started her theatre career with a TheatreWorks production, and has since been described on Singapore radio as “very employed for someone who’s unemployed”. Her work has been described variously, but she personally does not like the word “veteran”, as she’s never fought in a war.

She is privileged to have worked with The Necessary Stage, Action Theatre, Dramaplus Arts, SRT’s The Little Company, Escape Theatre, luna-id, Wild Rice, director Zizi Azah, Teater Ekamatra, Toy Factory, The Finger Players, and Cake Theatricals.

Red Ballerina is Karen’s 10th production with TheatreWorks, after *Mixed Signals*, *Mimi Fan*, *Private Parts*, *Our Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate ‘S’ Machine*, *Broken Birds*, *The First Emperor’s Last Days*, *The Spirits Play*, *Machine*, and *Pulse*

Karen has lived and worked in the UK and Vienna, and has performed in Kuala Lumpur, Cairo and New Zealand. However, she is happiest in Singapore, where she is a working mum with possibly the best job in the world.

Lim Kay Tong
Performer

Lim Kay Tong is a veteran actor and a familiar face among his native Singaporean audience, with a long string of stage and performance credits to his name. Among his best-remembered theatre appearances are *The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole* (Hong Kong Festival of Arts Fringe), *No Parking on Odd Days* (Singapore Arts Festival), *Dance and the Railroad*, *Longing* and *Broken Birds* (TheatreWorks) and most recently *Diaspora* (TheatreWorks) which he performed at the Edinburgh International Festival. His film and television credits include *Shanghai Surprise* starring Sean Penn and Madonna, *Dragon: The Bruce Lee Story*, *Mee Pok Man* directed by Eric Khoo, Emmy nominee *A Bright Shining Lie*, *Brokedown Palace*, *One Leg Kicking*, *Perth* and *The Photograph*, an Indonesian film that won a Special Jury Prize at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival and had its premiere in the USA at MOMA, New York. He has also delighted audiences over the years with his acting in several popular drama serials and mini-series, including *Noble House*, *Tanamera*, *Frankie’s House*, *Growing Up* and *The Pupil* which he played the role of Harris Fong. He has also been nominated for Best Actor at the Asian Television Awards — twice for *Growing Up* and once for *En Bloc*. He currently sits on the board of directors for TheatreWorks, Singapore’s first professional English-language performance company, which he also founded.