

2018 Writers & Readers

Circa One, Circa Two, Circa Foyer
& other venues

8 – 11 March
From \$19

Part of the 2018 New Zealand Festival



Top writing talent on intimate display at Circa Theatre.

A wealth of intimate sessions will be on show in Circa One and Two, during the *Writers & Readers* season (8-11 March) at the 2018 New Zealand Festival. Along with the two theatre spaces, the refurbished Circa foyer will also play host to the Unity pop-up bookshop, and two book launches over the weekend.

Writers & Readers manager Mark Cubey is excited to have several international visitors in sessions at Circa, including wide-ranging non-fiction writer and novelist Francis Spufford, Australia's Nick Earls and Ursula Dubosarsky, Singapore comics creator Sonny Liew and his American counterpart Sarah Glidden, and New York Times photography critic Teju Cole.

"This will give audiences a chance to get up close with these writers," said Cubey, "and in Circa One we will also have two big screens on each side of the stage so that writers and illustrators like Sonny Liew and Teju Cole can show as well as tell."

Local photographer Peter Black will also use the screens to talk about the photographs in his book *The Shops*,



while Marcus Thomas and Neil Silverwood will display their astonishing images taken deep underground in New Zealand's caving systems. Top local fiction talent will also feature at Circa, with two sessions – *Bloody Difficult Women* and *Bloody Difficult Men* – exploring different sides of the New Zealand psyche with long-listed Ockham New Zealand Book Award finalists Annaleese Jochems, Kirsten McDougall, Apirana Taylor and Dominic Hoey.

Another Ockham longlister, novelist Brannavan Gnanalingam, will speak in the New Asia, New Zealand session with fellow locals Emma Ng and Rajorshi Chakraborti. And the Lauris Edmond Memorial Award will be presented to poet Anne French, in a session hosted by Adelaide poet Mike Ladd, featuring former recipients Diana Bridge and Jenny Bornholdt.

So, get ready for four days of fast-tracked, smart conversation from some of the world's best thinkers and talkers – and you, from Thursday 8 to Sunday 11 March 2018.

Book fast at festival.co.nz/writers.

Us/Them

By Carly Wijs

BRONKS and Richard Jordan Productions
with Theatre Royal Plymouth and Big in Belgium
in association with Summerhall

Fri 16 - Sun 18 Mar, 7.30pm.
Plus Sat 17 & Sun 18 Mar, 1.30pm
\$49

Recommended for ages 12+

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Carly Wijs on creating a child's perspective on Us vs Them...

In 2013, I was asked to create a performance for BRONKS, a Belgian theatre company for young audiences. The terrorist attack in a shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, had just occurred; I had read about it in the newspapers and watched footage of it on television, but I had not discussed it with my then eight-year-old son.

But he had seen it for himself on the news and he came to tell me. The way he talked about the attack was very specific: objective, with the ability to overlook the emotional implications. It was as if the horror for him as an eight-year-old child had a completely different meaning because it was not possible to relate it to his own life. A child, unlike an adult, does not think: 'That could have been me.'

I started to think about another horrifying act of unspeakable violence – the Beslan school siege of September 2004 – and how this dark episode in history could combine with the thoughts and



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impressions of children about such acts, to make a piece of theatre for young people.

Why Beslan? Well, it all took place at a school, and the first day of school is something to which every child can relate. The fact that the terrorists chose that specific day and environment to stage their atrocity reflects a profound perversion – but I did not want to talk about that. That's just an ongoing debate by adults: why is this happening? A child cannot and does not have to answer that question. That is the privilege of being a child.

As adults, we are conditioned by our overly dramatised perspective, by the media, by ourselves, into black and white thinking: 'Us' versus 'Them'. The refreshing thing about a child's gaze is that it is not coloured by the need for 'dramatic interpretation', because that view of things does not connect to their own life. And if it does connect to their own life, it is tackled through imagination. That is what *Us/Them* is about.

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