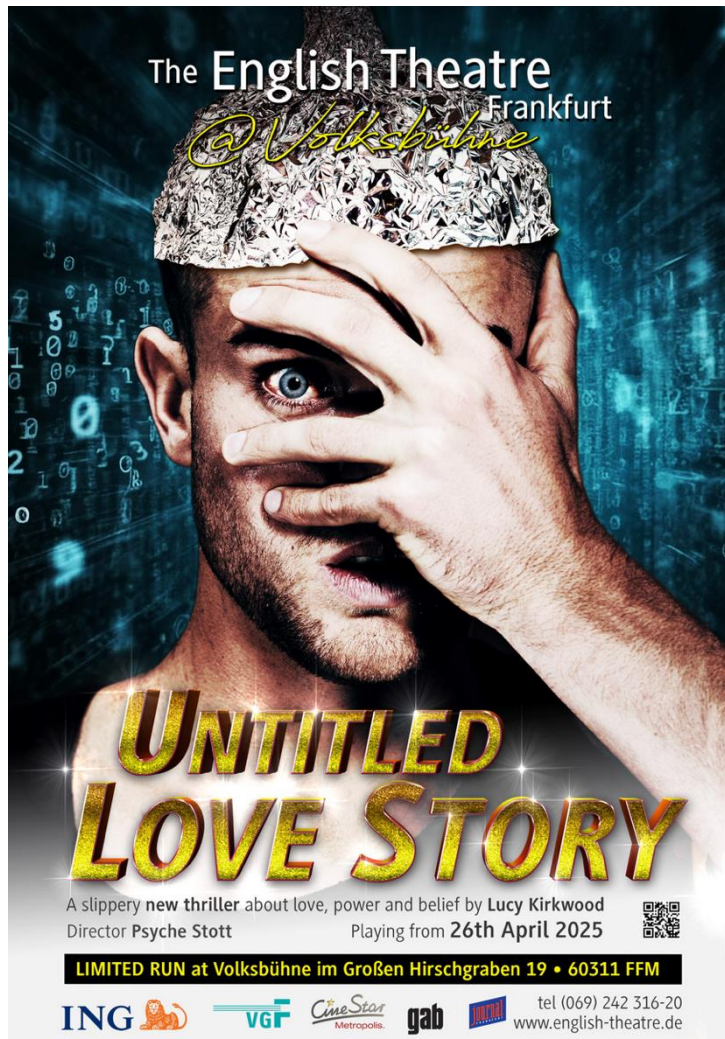


Untitled Love Story

A slippery new thriller in which nothing is as it seems, and nobody is who they are,
by Lucy Kirkwood



26th April 2025 – 30th May 2025

Matinees:

09.05.2025 at 11:00

21.05.2025 at 11:00

This Education pack includes background information as well as tasks and topics to be discussed in the classroom. The tasks do not necessarily build on each other. Cut and paste as you please, and please consult the official programme for additional information.

Introduction

THE PLAY

Main characters

Celeste Quilter – Celeste is a young woman, who works as a nurse on the **geriatric ward**. She loves her job at the **NHS**. The play focuses on her relationship with Noah.

Noah Quilter – Noah is Celeste’s partner. He is politically aware and worried about issues such as climate change, surveillance, and the corruption of political elites. He becomes a kind of influencer on these issues.

Lucy Kirkwood – she is the playwright and narrator of the story. She reconstructs the timeline of Celeste and Noah’s story.

The synopsis below contains spoilers. We would advise you not to disclose the play’s twist to your students, as it contributes to its strength.

Synopsis

The show opens with an **important reveal**: the play you are about to see is not called *Untitled Love Story*. The play is called *Rapture*. To avoid **copyright**, the real topic and true nature of the story had to remain hidden until its premiere. It documents the investigation about the death of the Quilters, led by the author Lucy Kirkwood.

First Flush

This first part relates the **first blind date of Celeste and Noah**. They joke, get along and share a same interest in the discrepancy between the truth and discourses of power they perceive. 9/11 is mentioned, so is a programme that aimed at providing Prince William and Prince Harry with “**commoner**” friends at school. Noah claims that he was part of it and therefore could go to **Eton**. Half-jokingly, half seriously, the couple tackles a few topics bordering **conspiracy theories**.

The story is interrupted by Lucy Kirkwood, who explains how she found evidence and witnesses of this first meeting. After that first date, Celeste and Noah become a couple. Later, Lucy Kirkwood reveals that they were **under surveillance and that tapes recording their daily lives** were leaked on the internet. It is confirmed again that both Celeste and Noah are now dead. Not only were they recorded but also followed by a neighbour and/or agent referred to as F12.



My name's Lucy Kirkwood, or rather, I'm playing Lucy Kirkwood as she thought she'd be brave enough to do this herself but decided, quite late in the day, it wouldn't be a good idea [...].

— Lucy Kirkwood

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Noah and Celeste move together into a new home. However, tension already rises: they both become **anxious and aware of the climate crisis**, Noah receives calls from withheld numbers etc.

Celeste is working long hours while Noah stays at home, mostly reading newspapers and posting comments online. In early 2014, he starts **filming himself** and posting videos online. Quite quickly, he gets many subscribers. His videos are political, he talks about global warming, capitalism and society's modern race for growth as well as the failing of democracy.

Slowly, the household is getting **off-grid**.

Married life

We then enter a phase of domestic life, over a few years. Conversations are mostly about everyday life, routines, work, hobbies, and leisure. By 2015, Noah has written **a scenario** called '**State of Awake**'. It is about the advent of a new system. Shortly after, he starts shooting the film and working as an electrician.

The couple decided that **they want a kid** and have some difficulties conceiving. They become more isolate, friendships are more distant, they see less of their families etc.

By the year 2018, they finally welcome their daughter, Candice. Noah has finished his film that Celeste finds great but giving into conspiracy theory. Somehow, these comments break Noah's enthusiasm. However, his channel wins more and more subscribers. Celeste gets involved too: the videos cover various topics like politics, the NHS development, everyday life.

By the year 2019, **their channel has reached more than one million subscribers**. However, work is becoming harder and harder for Celeste and Noah still doesn't work on his new project, a documentary. **The Covid pandemic** then hits. Even if work is tough, the couple seems to enjoy **lockdown**. There is hope in seeing nature reclaiming the world. Noah finally gets to work on his film by raising funds.

The end of lockdown however is hard on Celeste who works at the ICU (intensive care unit). Noah is almost done with his documentary. That is when their house is **burgled**.

Final days

The camera and hard drives on which Noah's work was saved are gone. From then onwards, Noah doesn't leave home anymore. Around that time, they discover that their investment is worthless and that **all their savings is lost**. They're slowly sinking.

Celeste starts telling her colleagues that Noah received an anonymous envelope showing the **Prime Minister breaking the law**. 6 months later, pictures of illegal parties held in Downing Street are revealed. By then, Celeste has quit her job and gives some colleagues the idea that worse revelations are coming.

“

And ultimately, you know, human life on this planet will become extinct cos though it's illegal in the UK to ride a bike after two beers, **ecocide** is not a crime. I'm gonna say that again, the *knowing destruction of life on this planet is not a crime*.

— Noah

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Money has become a major issue, to the point that the couple cannot afford heating. Around Christmas, Celeste has a **seizure**, is “raptured”.

They invite their subscribers to gather on Boxing Day 2021 (26th December) at Trafalgar Square in London. On the day, about 10.000 people come to the meeting point. No newspaper article nor pictures relate the event. The couple does not show up, no big reveal is made that day.

The couple has been shot. Or is found dead, on their couch, Noah holding a gun on his lap. Lucy Kirkwood explains how the investigation was led, with its incoherences, its gross mishandling. The daughter of the couple went missing, no trace of the four-year-old remains.

The play ends with **the intervention of the “real” Lucy Kirkwood**, disagreeing with the way things are suddenly being portrayed. She gets into a fight with the actress playing her role, claiming that the couple has been murdered. F12 appears and shoots her. The Stage Manager invites the audience to leave the room.

The Playwright – Lucy Kirkwood

Lucy Kirkwood is a British playwright and screenwriter, born in 1984. She studied English Literature at the University of Edinburgh and her debut play *Grady Hot Potato* premiered there, at the Bedlam Theatre in 2005.

Theatre credits include: *The Human Body* (Donmar Warehouse, London, 2024); *Rapture* (promoted as *That Is Not Who I Am*, Royal Court Theatre, London, 2022); *The Welkin* (National Theatre, London 2020); *Mosquitoes* (National Theatre, 2017); *The Children* (Royal Court Theatre, 2016); *Chimerica* (Almeida Theatre & West End, 2013; winner of the 2014 Olivier Award for Best New Play, the 2013 Evening Standard Best Play Award, the 2014 Critics’ Circle Best New Play Award, and the Susan Smith Blackburn Award); *NSFW* (Royal Court, 2012); *small hours* (co-written with Ed Hime; Hampstead Theatre, 2011); *Beauty and the Beast* (with Katie Mitchell; National Theatre, 2010); *Bloody Wimmen*, as part of *Women, Power and Politics* (Tricycle Theatre, 2010); *it felt empty when the heart went at first but it is alright now* (Clean Break & Arcola Theatre, 2009; winner of the 2012 John Whiting Award); *Hedda* (Gate Theatre, London, 2008); and *Tinderbox* (Bush Theatre, 2008). Television credits include: *Adult Material*, *Foreign Skies*, and *Skins*.



People need to see the Truth of how things are run.

— Celeste



I wanted the feeling of: what the f*** did I just see? What is happening? What is real? Not like a West End, famous person in a nice costume, evening.

— Lucy Kirkwood about the play



“[Lucy Kirkwood](#)”, Nick Hern Books

Introduction

CREATIVES

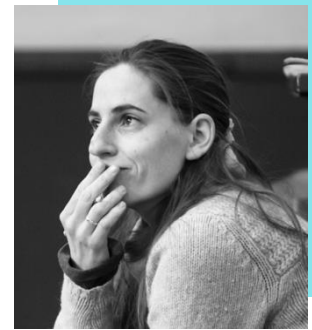
The Director – Psychee

Psyche is a freelance Theatre Director. Her work has taken her to Rome, Australia, Europe and throughout the UK. She opened the 2024/25 season for the English Theatre Frankfurt with *The Wasp* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm at Volksbühne Theatre.

Previous productions for the ETF include *The Two Popes* by Anthony McCarten. The German Premieres of *The Children* by Lucy Kirkwood and *Girl on a Train* adapted by Rachel Wagstaff.

In what seems like a lifetime ago, she won the Channel 4 Regional Directors Award (now the Regional Theatre Young Director Award) enabling her to take up the role of Director in Residence, at Northern Stage. Continuing as Associate Director for their UK tour of *Our Friends in the North*. Training also includes the National Theatre Studio. She is a regular guest Director for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and LAMDA. She is also on the audition panel for RADA. Productions for RADA include *Against* by Christopher Shinn. *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Something Unspoken*, *Kindertransport*, *The Five Wives of Maurice Pinder*, *Women of Twilight*. Productions for LAMDA: *Boudica*, *Duchess of Malfi*, *The White Devil*. And scenes from Shakespeare.

Some directing highlights include: *Jekyll & Hyde*, a new adaptation (Story House, Chester); Lucy Kirkwood's *NSFW* (Platform Theatre London); The 20th anniversary production of David Farr's *Elton John's Glasses* (Watford Palace Theatre); *The Fighting Bradfords*, new commission (Gala Theatre, Durham); *Blue Remembered Hills* (Northern Stage & UK Tour); *Skylight* (Teatro Dell'Orologio, Rome); The Australian premiere of the Award winning British hit comedy *Calendar Girls* (for Gordon Frost Organisation, Lyric Theatre, QPAC Brisbane, Theatre Royal Sydney and Comedy Theatre Melbourne); *Calendar Girls* (Chichester Festival Theatre and New UK Tour); *Pub Quiz* (New Writing North and Northeast Theatre Consortium Regional Tour). Directing for BBC Radio: Brian Friel's *Hedda Gabler* (produced by Sparklab for BBC Radio 4).



www.psychestott.co.uk

The Cast – Who's who?



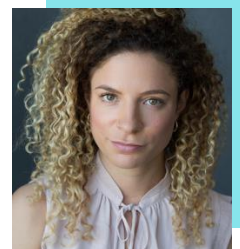
Noah McCreadie
(Noah Quilter)



Alice Osmanski
(Lucy Kirkwood)



Jordan Peedell
(Assistant Stage
Manager / Company)



Asha Reid
(Celeste Quilter)

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Amanda Shodeko
(Briony / Stage
Manager)



Stephanie Rona
Strange
(Real Lucy)

Have a look at all the creatives who worked on *Untitled Love Story* and read their biographies:

[Cast & Creatives – Untitled Love Story](#)

Context

THEATRE & POLITICS

Political theatre in contemporary drama in the UK

Untitled Love Story, or rather, *Rapture*, opens with a **very political statement**. Because the play tackles a sensitive topic and classified information protected by the government itself, the play had to be marketed under another title. It would have been censored by the authorities otherwise.

The story of the Quilters, (that we know of!), is pure fiction. However, by questioning surveillance and censorship and what can or cannot be said in the public sphere, Lucy Kirkwood joins in tradition of **political theatre**, a genre pervading contemporary British drama, with strong roots in the late 1960s.

In the UK, **stage censorship** was only abolished in 1968, and the staging of ***Saved*, a play by Edward Bond**, largely contributed to it. The play didn't receive the right to be performed, as it stages the murder of a baby by a group of young men. The agenda of the playwright was political: he wanted to explain the origin of violence, not embedded in human nature, but caused by a society that impoverishes its population by design. Because the Royal Court Theatre (where *Rapture* also premiered) managed to get around the law, the government was eventually forced to abolish censorship.

But how can one define political theatre? Michael Patterson writes about it: “it does not only depict social interaction and political events but implies **the possibility of radical change** [...]”.

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The genre has evolved and has taken many forms. One of them, with which Lucy Kirkwood plays here, is the **Theatre of the Real**, also called Documentary theatre. Inspired by a more journalistic approach, this genre explores **the relationship between truth and fiction, truth and art**. This type of theatre, based on recordings, would offer a direct channel to some sort of objective reality. One of its main purposes is usually to investigate injustices, not unlike *Rapture*.

However, what is the extent to which the playwright intervenes? A question largely exemplified here with the direct intervention on stage of the real fake Lucy Kirkwood. The playwright clearly **subverts the genre** by turning a fictional story into a piece of documentary theatre. To what purpose? Perhaps to question **the power of language** and the authority given to a storyteller, by showing us how easy it is to believe a fiction to be true? Thus raising awareness for an audience evolving in a **post-truth era**. The play encourages us to take its claims at face-value because they feel real when actually it is only the authority of the storyteller (Lucy Kirkwood, the author) that tricks us into believing that this fiction is truth.

Perhaps the ease with which we believe the story to be an objective portrayal of real-life events is caused by **its likeliness**? This time thus raising awareness about **modern means of surveillance** and censorship. **Data usage** by firms, such as Meta for instance, or by the government, in the play through Ding Dong (the company who supplies the couple's doorbell) or through the British Covid app Test and Trace, push the Quilters to get **off-grid** and only use a Nokia phone. If we do believe the couple's story to be real, it is because it's based on very legitimate concerns about privacy and its slow abolition.

In **1984**, **Georges Orwell** writes about the telescreen, a device used to spy on the population, present in every home and always turned on:

"In the past no government had the power to keep its citizens under constant surveillance. [...] With [...] the technical advance which made it possible to receive and transmit simultaneously on the same instrument, private life came to an end. Every citizen [...] could be kept for twenty-four hours a day under the eyes of the police and in the sound of official propaganda. [...] The possibility of enforcing not only complete obedience to the will of the State, but complete uniformity of opinion on all subjects, now existed for the first time".

What can it remind us of in our daily lives?

As Noah points out in the play, not only is privacy at home potentially breached, but also in the **public sphere**. In London, there is approximately one camera for every 10 people. Inhabitants are likely to be filmed around 100 times every day.

Rapture, by touching upon these topics, invites the audience to think and figure out what belongs to conspiracy theories or legitimate concerns. What is the difference between the two?

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Discussion:

- According to Michael Patterson's definition, does *Rapture* belong to the tradition of political theatre? If not, how so?
- As your students what the description of the telescreen by Georges Orwell remind them of. How can smartphones contribute to "the uniformity of opinion"?
- What is their reaction when they hear about the number of cameras in London? Is it justified? How do they understand the balance between freedom and security? What is a priority to them?

SOURCES

Rees Catherine, Chapters 1 and 4, "The Rise of Political Theatre" and "The 'New' Political: Verbatim Theatre and Theatre of the 'Real'", *Contemporary British Drama*, Red Globe Press, [2020]

Orwell George, *1984*, Penguin Books [2000], 1949, p.232.

["How Many CCTV Cameras Are in London 2025?"](#), Secure Life Technology.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES IN A POST-COVID SOCIETY

Conspiracy theories are an attempt to **explain events** (mostly harmful or tragic) as the result of the actions of a **small powerful group**. Such explanations reject the accepted narrative surrounding those events; indeed, the official version may be seen as further proof of the conspiracy.

A conspiracy theory is also defined as the belief that a secret but influential group, a political party for instance, is controlling events **behind the scenes**. Conspiracy theories increase in prevalence in **periods of widespread anxiety**, uncertainty, or hardship, such as wars, economic crisis, natural disasters or pandemics.

The most popular conspiracy theories are:

- the **assassination of President John F. Kennedy**;
- the idea that the first **moon landing** was a **hoax** staged by NASA;
- the theory that the **9/11 attacks** on the World Trade Center were not (exclusively) conducted by al-Qaeda, but that the US government conspired to let these attacks succeed;

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- theory about **chemtrails**, also known as SLAP (Secret Large-scale Atmospheric Program): the water condensation trails from aircraft consist of chemical or biological agents, and are part of secret government policies;
- theory about **COVID** which implies that the virus was created by the so-called 'world government' to control people.

American historian Richard Hofstadter explored the emergence of **conspiracy theories in relation to democracy** as a political regime. Those who feel unable to channel their political interests into representative groups slowly become **alienated** from this system. These individuals tend to disagree with the statements of opposition parties and do not see them as representing a fair disagreement; rather, differences in opinions are regarded with deep **suspicion**. They slowly develop a paranoid fear of conspiracy, thus making them vulnerable to charismatic rather than practical and rational leadership.

Belief in one conspiracy theory tends to **coincide with belief in others**. This occurs because conspiracy theories cohere with the general proposition that important things are covered up or hidden from the public.

Discussion:

- Which conspiracy theories are mentioned in the play? Ask your students to pay attention while watching.
- Can they think of other conspiracy theories they have come across?
- Isolation and adherence to conspiracy theories usually work hand in hand. Ask your students to follow the pattern of ever greater isolation of the Quilters in the play. When does it start? With which aspect of their lives?

SOURCES

“[Conspiracy theories](#)”, Marc Pauly, University of Groningen The Netherlands, Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

“[Conspiracy theories influence behavior](#)”, The University of Innsbrück, 06.02.2024.

REFERENCES TO THE BRITISH SOCIETY

The NHS — The National Health Service was founded in 1948 and is the public health care system in the UK. Everybody can use it when they become poorly or injured. It is 'free at the point of use', which means people can be treated for free. It is paid for through taxes. The NHS has been famously underfunded for many years, leading to the crisis it currently faces (not enough beds in emergency services, people waiting months to get an appointment at their GP – general practitioner etc.).

Downing Street Parties or Partygate — this term refers to gatherings and parties taking place in Downing Street and elsewhere among the government during the Covid lockdowns in 2020, which contravened the regulations in force at the time. Many of these parties took place in the run up to Christmas 2020, when British families were forbidden to travel across regions to celebrate. The parties were attended by a range of people, including special advisers, civil servants and ministers, among which the Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Eton college — The education system in the UK is divided between state schools (public and free schools) and private ones. A few of very expensive boarding schools exist in the country, usually accepting either only boys or girls. Eton is a boys' boarding school, the most prestigious one, attended by the Royal Family and most of the political elite of the country. Boris Johnson became the 20th British prime minister to have attended the school.

Pegasus — a spyware developed for eavesdropping on mobile phones and harvesting their data. It was used to track politicians, government leaders, human rights activists, dissidents, and journalists. Its founder, NSO Group, claims its product is sold exclusively to government security and law enforcement agencies and only for the purpose of aiding rescue operations and battling criminals, such as money launderers, sex- and drug-traffickers, and terrorists.

REFERENCES TO POP CULTURE AND TV SHOWS

Broadchurch (2013–2027) — British TV series created by Chris Chibnall, starring David Tennant and Olivia Coleman. A seemingly calm and friendly seaside town becomes a town wrapped in secrets when the death of an eleven-year-old boy sparks an unwanted media frenzy. As the town's locals start to open up about what they do and don't know, it falls upon the police to catch the supposed killer.

X Factor (2004-2024) — British singing competition in which contestants sing cover songs to try and impress judges and voting viewers. It is a part of the the global franchise under the same title X Factor.

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Batman Returns (1992) — the film by Tim Burton. While Batman (Michael Keaton) deals with a deformed man calling himself the Penguin wreaking havoc across Gotham with the help of a cruel businessman, a female employee of the latter becomes the Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) with her own vendetta.

Downton Abbey (2010-2015) — British TV series created by Julian Fellowes, starring Hugh Bonneville, Phyllis Logan, Elizabeth McGovern. A chronicle of the lives of the British aristocratic Crawley family and their servants in the early twentieth century.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (2005) — the film by Tim Burton. Charlie, a young boy from an impoverished family, and four other kids win a tour of an amazing chocolate factory run by an imaginative chocolatier, Willy Wonka, and his staff of Oompa-Loompas.

Inception (2010) — the film by Christopher Nolan. A thief who steals corporate secrets through the use of dream-sharing technology is given the inverse task of planting an idea into the mind of a C.E.O., but his tragic past may doom the project and his team to disaster.

Curtain up! Creatives in conversation

Interview with Joseph Reed, Fight Director

**Can you tell us about your job as Fight Director?
What does it mean?**

As Fight Director, I am in charge of **any moment of violence** in the play I work on. It doesn't necessarily have to be a combative or physical type of violence. The building of the tension, moments of high stakes that lead to violence are also something I take care of.

I am also in charge of **the actors' safety**, which means that I coach them for scenes in which they might fall down the stairs or break their wrist for instance. I make sure they can do it safely while looking spontaneous. As all other creative roles, I am a **custodian of the story**. And because I support it and also the actors in moments of high pressure, I need to ensure they look coherent and are told clearly. Those scenes should not look like something separate or isolated. As it is a different form of storytelling, I need it to fit into the play as a whole and not look like a choreography. My work should be invisible.

Usually, physical violence comes as the last resort. Other moments and engagements build up to it, the very first being **eye contact**. When I teach, I always start with this, also because it is a number one safety priority. Then come social cues, the physical proximity, how people through movement, are changing the space around them etc. We're all aware of it, and every sequence tells a story. You have to be attentive to all of them when you create such a scene.

The way we work on projects often depends on their size. I am usually consulted during the **pre-production** time. I then advise the production on what's needed for safety, the legal aspect of things, which weapons to choose depending on the set etc. This prep time is useful because during **rehearsals**, time flies by. Once they start, I join and set up the fight choreography. It might just be a couple of sessions. During **tech**, right before the premiere, you make sure the actors are comfortable and safe.

Is there a type of scene, of combat, that you particularly enjoy coaching actors for?

It's always great when you get to work with lots of weapons and lots of fighting! It's very satisfying when you can use your maximum skills in that sense. I'm also a specialist in what we call the **"light swords"**, from the 1400s through to the 1800s: different sorts of rapiers and daggers, all the way through to the fencing foils. But I've used everything from whips to sticks and knives, axes, and all the stuff. But I do love sword work. It's particularly fun and dramatic because they are metal weapons and they tell a story to the audience on their own. Also, when you work on **period pieces**, it is part of



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the training to learn about what the character would have been wearing at the time and how that would have influenced their movement, their interaction with the world, and how it was perceived at the time as well. It is fascinating.

Which weapons do you work with on stage? They are not real weapons, are they?

It depends! That is where **film and theatre slightly differ**. On film, you might train with a prop or plastic weapon because you'll often be making **contact** during a fight. Why? Because the camera can see gaps a lot easier. In film, you mostly work with **stuntmen and women** having lots of practice: people are used getting hit and being very precise about pulling blows. There is a slightly different level of training in cinema. In theatre, you can't get away with fake or plastic weapons, because of the **sound** they make. The audience would never believe it to be dangerous. You have to use real weapons. Swords are blunted at the tip but it requires training. You have to respect how dangerous they can be.

And how do you find them, the weapons you work with?

There are a couple of **specialists** in England. In the last few years, it has actually been increasing because of the rise of historical martial arts. They're usually quite expensive and quite hard to come by. It is an issue when you're working with a low budget or a **fringe** show. We always try to find a balance between the cheapest option and the most realistic one.

You have delivered workshops, also for young people. A lot of your work is to deal with teaching. Is it a dimension in your career that you enjoy and that you foresaw when you first started working?

I did not really foresee it! But I definitely love it. It's really rewarding, because you get to spend time with people. As a freelance fight director, you usually never get as much time as you would want. With teaching, you have the permission to dive into things. Besides, fight is intimidating and people might think that it's just not for them. My favourite thing as a teacher is precisely to see these people pass their exams, get into shows doing fights, and see their confidence grow. I love showing them that fight is essentially **a pure form of storytelling**. You are playing an objective, and then actions towards that objective. Those actions come across obstacles, to which you react with new actions.

But no, I never saw it for myself. I was trained an actor. I went to LAMDA in London, which offer more fight training than any other drama school, and I got into it there. By my 30s I was assisting my teachers, and I just sort of fell into it that way. It's provided me with a whole other strand of my creative career.

What is it that people you teach struggle the most with?

I always start with the core principles, the first one being safety. There eye contact and distance are the most important things. And these days, **eye contact** is really tough for people. It can be since Covid for sure, but I think screens are the main reason: because people are on their phones most of the time, they are not used at maintaining eye contact anymore, or the same way as before. And you need it a lot in a combat! It usually feels a bit odd or intense for people. They take a world to getting there.

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The second hardest thing for anyone really, is to learn to be able to exist in a place where you don't know what's coming next. You do, but you need to allow yourself to forget it. You need to live in this very responsive place and move with your partner. You cannot afford to be disconnected from them. And that takes a long time to master.

Which was the most challenging play you ever worked on and why?

I worked on a tricky version of *King Lear* at The Globe in London (2022). It wasn't anyone's fault particularly, just a lot of different things. It was the hottest summer in a few years, Covid was still around so we were losing actors and the director got into a car accident two weeks before the premiere. She was fine, but could not join us until then and we were working on Zoom etc. It was a lot to work with!

There is a fight between Edmund and Edgar, that we spent a lot of time to choreograph. Traditionally, it is **with axes and shields**. We used almost the whole allotted time for the two actors on that fight. And the night before, the tech director changed her mind completely and wanted knives. And I mean, knives are great, but they don't work on stage because they're too small. You can't cut with them, you can't hit them together. I had very little time to re-choreograph a **knife-fight** that had to look convincing. And we ended up rehearsing in a graveyard near LAMDA and luckily we didn't get arrested... But they got it and somehow it worked well.

Which aspect of your work with *Rapture* have you found the most interesting?

This play is **layers and layers of tension**. And that's been really fun. For the actors it's a challenge because they're switching between two modes of delivery, something more playful and something really tensed. And we worked on this tension building up, that still needs to surprise the audience while not wearing them out. We had to understand all these variations in anger and aggression to make it subtle.

What would you like young people who come see the show to pay close attention to?

For me personally, I would like them to just **experience the story**. And if they can't see anything I've done, I have done my job well! This story is really about how it gets you thinking. Allow yourself to form your own thoughts about it, don't try and figure it out too hard, let it sink in, let it come to you.

How does one become a Fight Director?

There are lots of ways, like anything in this industry, there is no one set path. In my case, I could begin **an apprenticeship** with my teachers in LAMDA. You can also follow courses: you can attend the BADC or APC in England (they're the two biggest ones). You then get a **certification** and start working. You keep learning while on the job. But I also know people who have just done martial arts, or parkour, or gymnastics. People usually combine it with intimacy.

For cinema, there is the slightly different path of **stunts**: it is a bit less creative, less directorial, you are a performer. If you train to be certified, you have to master a minimum of six disciplines, to a very high level. Once certified, you get on a register and are almost guaranteed to work. It's more structured but also very hard and dangerous. Then you get to be set on fire and blown up. No day looks the same.

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Is there an artist, a martial arts master, a choreographer, or someone in your field that you admire why?

Loads. I'm very lucky with the people who taught me, I admire them a lot. **My fencing teacher** for instance, Rodney Cottier, who is a Shakespeare expert and actor. He taught me everything I know about sword work essentially. **My wing gun gung fu** instructor, Sifu Greg Holloway as well. He's done incredible stuff and has been practicing for 45 years plus.

Otherwise, growing up, I think people like **Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan**, you know! They offer two counterpoints of the same art: one brutal and serious and philosophical and the other being a fighting clown. It shows how combat can be different and can tell a different story, while both being incredibly effective.



A rapier



A fencing foil



An axe



A dagger

Activities

BEFORE THE PLAY

Dice game – social media in our lives

Noah, one of the main characters in the play you will watch, becomes a kind of influencer on social media. In a group of 4, discuss the role of social media in your life by using a (e-)dice and answering the following questions:

1. Do you use social media and how often every day?
2. Do you use it to follow the news? If so, do you check the sources of the information?
3. Do you express yourself on social media about your political opinions? Give an example if so. If not, explain why.
4. What are the pros and cons of social media?
5. Do you think social media contribute to the spreading of conspiracy theories?
6. Does social media affect our privacy?

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA – TO GO FURTHER

[Social media is making kids sad – and it's bad news for democracy.](#) The Guardian, Van Badham, 2024

[How social media created the ultimate age of envy.](#) BBC video, Dan John, 2022

[How social media may benefit teens' mental health.](#) Education Week, Adrianna Prothero, 2024

Activities

WHILE WATCHING

Quiz

- 1/ What is the true topic of the play?
 - a. A scandalous love affair involving members of the Royal Family
 - b. The death of the Quilters, investigated by the author
 - c. The revelation of British state secrets by the Quilters

- 2/ How did Celeste and Noah meet?
 - a. They went on a blind date, organised by a national newspaper
 - b. They had a common friend and met at their birthday party
 - c. Celeste went to a restaurant after work and Noah bought her a drink

- 3/ How does Noah claim to know Prince William and Prince Harry?
 - a. He belongs to an aristocratic family and he met them at a reunion
 - b. He worked for them
 - c. He was selected to be part of a programme that aimed at providing William and Harry with “commoner” friends in Eton

- 4/ What is the main source of information that Lucy Kirkwood uses to investigate the couple’s death?
 - a. Notes from Celeste’s **diary**
 - b. Footage from their home security camera
 - c. Tapes on which their conversations are recorded

- 5/ What is Lucy Kirkwood’s role in the story, who is she?
 - a. The playwright (or author of the play)
 - b. The director
 - c. A journalist

- 6/ What is Celeste’s job?
 - a. A teacher
 - b. A nurse
 - c. An influencer

- 7/ Why did Lucy Kirkwood decide to write about the Quilters?
 - a. She was commissioned to do so by a campaign group
 - b. She wanted to write a first love story
 - c. She found out about their story and wanted to expose the truth

- 8/ Noah is active on social media. How?
 - a. He becomes an influencer sponsored by **zero waste** brands
 - b. He writes posts about his daily life, being a man staying at home
 - c. He publishes regular videos about his views on politics

- 9/ Why does the couple decide to Netflix, their smart TV etc.
 - a. Because they fear they are being recorded and listened to
 - b. Celeste finished watching *Broadchurch* and has no interest in watching a new series
 - c. They don’t have the money to afford it

NOTES

Write your thoughts on the play, pay attention to the props used on stage, the costumes, the music etc.

Teacher resources

Education pack

10/ What is “State of Awake”?

- a. A book that inspired Noah for his videos
- b. A hashtag you can add to your posts on social media, when questioning official reports about an event
- c. A screenplay that Noah wrote

11/ The couple wants to have a baby. How is going for them?

- a. They realise that they cannot have a baby and decide to adopt
- b. They struggle and it creates tension between them
- c. They have their daughter almost immediately, creating a new strain on their fragile finances

12/ At which point does Noah’s channel become so successful?

- a. When Celeste appears in them and take part in their creation
- b. When a famous politician starts sharing his content
- c. When when he decides not to talk of politics anymore and focuses on animals and nature

13/ How is the couple reacting to lockdown at first?

- a. They are on the verge of splitting up
- b. They have hope, seeing nature reclaiming the world
- c. They think the government created the virus and that Covid does not really exist

14/ They suffer two major misfortunes in a row... (two answers needed)

- a. Their house is burgled and Noah’s footages are stolen
- b. Their daughter dies
- c. They lost their savings through a real estate scam

15/ Despite the precarious situation, Celeste quits her job. She suggested to colleagues that she and Noah knew of the Prime Minister breaking the law. To which scandal is this linked to?

- a. The Prime Minister organised illegal parties at Downing Street during lockdown, a scandal otherwise known as Partygate
- b. The Prime Minister tried to hire his own wife in a Ministry and asked the press to remove any articles on the topic once forced not to do it
- c. The Prime Minister unlawfully closed Parliament to pass the no-deal Brexit with the European Union, without a vote

16/ The Quilters do not show up at the meeting they invited their subscribers to. They are found dead a few weeks later. What is the reason the police gives for their death?

- a. A neighbour came in a killed them both, kidnapping their daughter afterwards
- b. Noah first killed Celeste then himself
- c. They were identified as terrorist threats and had to be eliminated by the police before harming the population

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Activities

AFTER THE PLAY

Scene worksheet

Students in the group: _____

Title of the scene (find a title that suits the moment in the play you have chosen to work on):

Setting

Name the characters in the scene:

Where does the scene take place?

Describe the scene

How does it start? _____

What is the weird / exciting / special / upsetting thing happening? _____

How does it end? _____

Who do you think is the main character? And why?

What do they want? What is their goal?

Given the opportunity, how would you re-write the ending of the scene?

Would you stage it differently? In which way?

Feel free to draw a set or use a story board to describe the progression of the scene.

Appendix

ANSWER SHEET

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Appendix

REFERENCES & VOCABULARY

References

See above of the most important references in the play.

Edward Bond (1934-2024) was an English playwright, theatre director, poet, dramatic theorist and screenwriter. He was the author of some 50 plays, among them *Saved* (1965). His other well-received works include *Narrow Road to the Deep North* (1968), *Lear* (1971), *The Sea* (1973), *The Fool* (1975), *Restoration* (1981), and the *War Plays* (1985). Bond was broadly considered among the major living dramatists, but he has always been and remains highly controversial because of the violence shown in his plays.

George Orwell (1903-1950) was an English novelist, essayist, and critic, famous for his novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-four* (1949). The latter of these is a profound anti-utopian novel that examines the dangers of totalitarian rule.

Appendix

Vocabulary

To be burgled: to be broke into, to be robbed

Censorship: censoring something or someone, to examine and change or remove (parts of a book, etc.).

Commoner: a person without titles of nobility or ranks in society.

Diary: a daily written record of one's observations and feelings.

Ecocide: the destruction of large areas of the natural environment by such activity as nuclear warfare, overexploitation of resources, or dumping of harmful chemicals.

Fringe theatre: a form of theatre produced outside of the main theatre institutions, and that is often small-scale and non-traditional in style or subject matter.

Geriatric: of old age, for old people.

Hoax: something intended to deceive, like a trick

Lockdown: the imposition of restrictions on travel, social interaction, and access to public spaces.

To get off-grid: it refers to the idea of hiding from all observation or tracking. It can be more extreme and can imply vanishing from society, being self-reliable by not being connected to any public service (water, electricity etc.).

Seizure: as sudden attack, as of some disease

Ward: a division of a hospital.

Zero waste: the conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse and recovery of products, packaging and materials. It is also a mode of living.