

CLEAN BREAK

PRESS RELEASE

CLEAN BREAK, LIFT AND BRIXTON HOUSE PRESENT THE TRIALS AND PASSIONS OF UNFAMOUS WOMEN.

WOMEN WHO DARE TO TRANSGRESS WILL FACE JUDGEMENT.

The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women is a bold theatrical experiment that unpacks the experiences of women who have been labelled transgressive across time. From the stories of historic and mythic figures to the personal testimonies of those on stage, we see women driven by their passions; women who have crossed the line between legal and illegal, moral and immoral, and as a result faced the laws of their time.

The production immerses its audience in the haze between the shared rituals of theatre and the halls of justice, as it invites us to reflect on our own gaze. We encounter fragments of women, from Medusa and Joan of Arc to Afeni Shakur and Angela Davis, as the actors on stage blend their own experiences with the stories and myths that form our collective judgement of women.

Commissioned by Clean Break and LIFT, in proud association with Brixton House, the production is created by Clean Break Member artists (women with experience of the criminal justice system or at risk of entering it) with boundary-breaking Brazilian theatre artists **Janaina Leite** and **Lara Duarte**, acclaimed for their documentary theatre approach and working with autobiography, and dramaturg **Rachel Valentine Smith** (UK Associate Artist).

The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women is co-created and performed by Clean Break Member artists: **Sarah-Jane Dent** (Clean Break credits include *Meal Ticket* at Latitude Festival; *Change*, Union Theatre); **Athena Maria** (*Inside This Box*, Clean Break; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare's Globe); **Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh** (Clean Break credits including *All The Lights Are On*; *Maryland*, Royal Court); **Yvonne Wickham** (Clean Break credits including *Through This Mist*; *Road*, Hoxton Hall; *Cathy Come Home*, Barbican/Cardboard Citizens); **Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte** (Clean Break credits include *Belong* at Arcola and Lyric Hammersmith; *Cathy Come Home*, Barbican/Cardboard Citizens). Clean Break and LIFT have been at the vanguard of social justice for over 40 years, bringing the world's most exciting and provoking artists to London. The two companies collaborate for the first time, at a moment when art that challenges oppression and mobilises audiences to create change is needed more than ever.

Anna Herrmann, Artistic Director, Clean Break: *"We are thrilled to be co-producing *The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women* with LIFT in association with Brixton House. This project offers us a unique opportunity to work with radical women artists from Brazil, and connect them with our own practice of care and storytelling to centre the stories and lives of our Members. It is a strong statement of our commitment to making bold and imaginative work which brings audiences closer to the lives of women facing the sharp end of the criminal justice system."*

Partnering with LIFT has been a rich, invigorating experience, and performing at Brixton House feels the perfect home for this work, with its passion for connection, creativity and community. This work will be unlike anything you have seen from Clean Break before – prepare to be surprised, moved and enthralled!”

Janaina Leite: *“During 15 years of research into ‘theatre of the real’, I have been fascinated by the idea of theatricality beyond theatre – exploring situations where performance, staging, rhetoric and dramatization become tools in real life.*

The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women is a show that considers the relationship between theatre and the criminal justice system and the intermingling of ethics and aesthetics in these social and cultural practices. At the same time, none of this comes from a cold and distant perspective. On the contrary, choosing the idea of ‘passions’ as the heart of creation is about the real lived experiences of these more complex concepts. Our five actors on stage are bringing their own autobiographies to the stage, looking into their trials - judgements they have faced - and their passions -what has moved them in their lives. Here, they are not just their experiences, but creators in a theatre project. It is a great pleasure to create this with them and to establish this collaboration with Clean Break.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Press Contacts:

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Listing Information:

Venue: Brixton House, 385 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW9 8GL

Dates + times: 14 – 22 June at 19:30; 19 + 22 June at 14:00

Box office: www.liftfestival.com

Tickets: previews (14 + 15 June) £15 / Concessions £18 / Standard £22

Age recommendation : 16+

Running time: 90 mins approx.

Post show discussion: Thursday 20 June

Information: www.liftfestival.com / www.cleanbreak.org.uk

Copy:

Brazilian theatremakers Janaina Leite, Lara Duarte and Clean Break theatre company Member artists devise an epic journey through the theatre of judgement. We encounter the voices of historic, mythic women and the personal stories and passions of the women on stage, labelled as transgressive as truth and fiction collide.

The world premiere of The Trials and Passions of Unfamous Women asks what is justice, and who has the power to decide. This bold and theatrical experience immerses us in the haze between the shared rituals of theatre and the halls of justice.

Credits:

Concept, Dramaturgy and Direction: Janaina Leite

Co-Direction, Dramaturgy and Writing: Lara Duarte

UK Associate Artist & Dramaturg: Rachel Valentine Smith

Set / Costume Design: Alex Berry

Lighting Design: Sarah Readman

Sound Design: Mwen

Production Director for Artist team – Carla Estefan

Cast: Sarah-Jane Dent, Athena Maria, Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh, Yvonne Wickham, Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte

About Clean Break:

Clean Break changes lives and changes minds through theatre – on stage, in prison and in the community. It produces ground-breaking plays with women’s voices at the heart of its work. Founded in 1979 by two women in prison who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of women who are criminalised to a wider audience, it remains true to these roots: inspiring playwrights and captivating audiences with the company’s award-winning plays on the complex theme of women and criminalisation. Its commissioned playwrights have included Alice Birch, Deborah Bruce, Lin Coghlan, E V Crowe, Vivienne Franzmann, Tanika Gupta, Katie Hims, Sam Holcroft, Theresa Ikoko, Lucy Kirkwood, Chloë Moss, Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Winsome Pinnock, and Rebecca Prichard.

Current Clean Break productions include *Dixon and Daughters* (by Deborah Bruce at National Theatre, now available on NT at Home), *Blis-ta* (an audio drama by the late Sonya Hale, BBC Audio Drama Award winner), *Sweatbox* (a film of Chloë Moss’s acclaimed play set in a prison van) *Hope* (a film by Nicole Hall, Michelle Hamilton, Kirsty Housley, Carina Murray, Natasha Jean Sparkes, and River, available on Clean Break’s Knowledge Hub). Recent productions include *Catch* (a small-scale touring play by Sonya Jalaly), *Favour* by Ambreen Razia (Bush Theatre), *Typical Girls* by Morgan Lloyd Malcolm (Sheffield Crucible) and *More Than We Can Bear* by Eno Mfron (part of *The Keyworkers Cycle*, Almeida Theatre). In 2021, the company presented *I am a theatre*, a retrospective exhibition at Swiss Cottage Gallery celebrating four decades of the company and launched a digital archive on its website in 2022.

www.cleanbreak.org.uk

About LIFT:

LIFT, London’s biennial international festival of theatre, has been bringing joyful, and unforgettable theatre from around the world to London for over 40 years, using the whole of the city as its stage.

Every two years, LIFT presents a festival full of bold and relevant culture, international perspectives, and thought-provoking performances. Whether it’s a much-loved venue, iconic landmark or unsung corner of London, LIFT gathers Londoners around incredible art.

LIFT’s mission is to create powerful, invigorating experiences that challenge artistic, political and social conventions; to champion artist advancement at home and abroad; to lead sustainable internationalism; and to celebrate and connect London to the world. We engage and create communities around ideas and projects, connect leading artists to locals, connect international artists and local artists to London, and together make incredible art happen.

A charity limited by guarantee and based in Toynbee Studios in East London, LIFT has a diversified income mix and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation with a biennial turnover in the region of £2 million.

To find out about the different ways you can help LIFT celebrate their 40th anniversary year, visit www.liftfestival.com/support

About Brixton House:

Located in the heart of Brixton, South London, Brixton House, is a modern venue that was formerly known as Ovalhouse. With a rich legacy of groundbreaking theatre, it serves as a hub for artists, writers, producers, and audiences, fostering community solidarity and a passion for social change. Brixton House continues this tradition of promoting innovation and creative expression by showcasing stories that resonate with local, international, and intergenerational audiences.

www.brixtonhouse.co.uk

Biographical Information:

Janaina Leite (Concept, Dramaturgy and Direction) is an actress, director, playwright, and postdoctoral researcher at the School of Communication and Arts at the University of São Paulo (USP). She is a reference in the Brazilian scene for research on 'theatres of the real' with award-winning works such as *Stabat Mater* (Shell Dramaturgy Award in 2020) and the project *Scophylic Essays*, researching the relationship between theatre and pornography in works such as *Camming 101 nights* and *History of the Eye* – a porn-noir fairy tale. Her research focuses on hybrid languages, the obscene perspective that approximates theatre and performance, art and life, and diffuses borders between artistic practices and socio-cultural practices. Janaina's work has been attracting interest outside of Brazil; your shows and research have been presented at significant festivals and universities in countries such as Chile, Argentina, Mexico, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, England, and Scotland.

Recently, through the Art in the Metaverse grant from Itaú Cultural, she created a new work *Deeper* about virtual reality and the limits of the body and consciousness, which premiered in São Paulo.

Janaina published the books *Autoescrituras Performativas: do diário à cena (Performative selfinscriptions: from the intimate diary to the scene)* by Editora Perspectiva and *Conversas com meu pai + Stabat Mater – Uma trajetória de Janaina Leite (Conversations with my father + Stabat Mater, a trajectory by Janaina Leite)*, launched by the Javali publishing house. In 2024 she will publish her next book *Ensaio sobre o feminino e a abjeção na (ob)scena contemporânea (Essays on the feminine and abjection in the contemporary (ob)scene)*, through Anna Blume publishing house.

Lara Duarte (Co-Direction, Dramaturgy and Writing) is a playwright, director, actress and researcher. She has a Masters in Performing Arts from UNICAMP with the research *Por uma dramaturgia monstra!* and a BA in Performing Arts from UFBA, where she received a PIBIC scholarship for her research *Spoken writing: dramaturgy of storytelling*. She graduated in dramaturgy from SP Escola de Teatro. She was a member of the Base Theatre and is Author of the book *Gambiarra Sentimentais*, published by Patuá; performer.

Her credits include: playwright and director of *Pânico Vaginal (Vaginal Panic)*, which won awards at the São Paulo Short Film Week and the CRASH Fantastic Cinema Showcase; organiser and curator of

the *Jornadas Heroicas Possíveis drama festival*; dramaturg and assistant director of the plays *Stabat Mater* (winner of the Shell Award for dramaturgy), *História do Olho* (nominated for the Shell Award for direction) and *Camming – 101 nights*, directed by Janaína Leite; actress and assistant dramaturg in the play *Acúmulos*, directed by Kênia Dias and dramaturged by Márcio Abreu; dramaturg for the play *Capô*, directed by Georgette Fadel; librettist at the lyrical atelier of the São Pedro Theatre. As a performer and playwright, she worked on the play *A Bunda De Simone*, directed by Diego Pinheiro, which was nominated for best text by the BRASKEM theatre award. She took part in the História Sob Rocha project, directed by Daniel Guerra, as part of the programme for the International Festival of Performing Arts. She is the creator of the stage performance *Como Medeia Para Minha Mãe* and the play *Re-Medeia*.

Rachel Valentine Smith (UK Associate Artist / Dramaturg) is a director for stage and screen and a freelance artist working across projects nationally and internationally. Rachel is former Co-Artistic Director of The Faction for which her credits include *Duende* (Wilton's Music Hall/Stephen Joseph), *MLD* (short film), *Medea* (short film), *Lear/الملك لير* (Masrah Al Madina, Beirut), *Much Ado About Nothing* (UnFashioned Theatre commission), *Vassa* (Southwark Playhouse), *Metamorphosis*, *Faust* (Wilton's Music Hall), *Romeo and Juliet*, *Thebe*,; *Blood Wedding* (New Diorama Theatre and UK Tours).

Further directing credits include: *Playwrights Pathways* (Royal Court Theatre), *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* (Zoukak Theatre, Beirut – British Council and EUNIC commission), *No Demand No Supply* (Gate Theatre/Shubbak Festival), *Sahar Speaks*, *Refractions*, *Nightclub* (Theatre503). Other curated events include *The Abolitionist Dinner Party* and *Letters to Leaders*.

Rachel has recently completed her tenure as Creative Associate for Clean Break and is currently a Trustee for NSDF.

Sarah-Jane Dent (cast) is a writer, actress and Clean Break Member artist. She has been in several Clean Break productions including *Hours til Midnight* by Sonya Hale, *Meal Ticket* (Latitude Festival), *Hear* by Deborah Bruce, and *There Are Mountains* by Chloë Moss. For Clean Break, she worked with Chloë Moss to write and perform in *Maren for Through This Mist*. Her recent film credits include: *Silver Haze* (dir. Sasha Polak, EMU Films Limited), *My Dad's Christmas Date* (Dir Mick Davis, Cinema Films Ltd), *My Mother's Daughter* (short film, dir. Amelia Morek), and *Cywife* (Champ Dog Films). Her recent theatre credits include: *Change* (Union Theatre) and *Zina* (one woman show, Vault Festival). She was also in the company as the prison guard and understudy for Donmar Warehouse's all-female *Shakespeare Trilogy* (dir. Phyllida Lloyd).

Dominique Lavine Wood-Whyte (cast) is a support worker, performer, and Clean Break Member artist. She joined Clean Break as part of the *Brazen* Young Artist Development Programme and performed in *Belong* (Arcola / Lyric Hammersmith), *All the Lights are On* (with Cardboard Citizens), and the Young Women's Digital Project. She has worked extensively with Cardboard Citizens including as a performer in the UK tours of *Lewisham Housing Project*, *Priority Needs*, *My Options*, *Don't Kick the Bucket*, and *Street Life*, and in productions of *Meta* (Wellcome Trust) and *Cathy Come Home* (Barbican).

Athena Maria (cast) is a designer, performer and Clean Break Member artist. She joined Clean Break as part of the Young Artist Development Programme for which she performed in *Inside This Box* by Yasmin Joseph (Arcola / Omnibus Theatre). She also appeared in the ensemble for *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Shakespeare's Globe).

Her recent performance credits include: *Brass Altar* (Canal Dream Art Festival), and *MILITARIA* (Camden People's Theatre). Athena has also worked as a Set Designer for *The Pidgeon & The Mouse* (The Space) and *Consent* (Tower Theatre), and as a Design Assistant for Punchdrunk's *The Burnt City*.

Kim Teresa (KT) Marsh (cast) is a writer, performer, and Clean Break Member artist. For Clean Break she has appeared in *Write 2 Connect* (short film), *Sisters* (Podcast), *Missing*, *All the Lights are On* (with Cardboard Citizens) and in the chorus for *Hope* (short film). Her credits include: *Maryland* (Royal Court Theatre), *The Outrun* (feature film, dir. Nora Fingscheidt), *Heroine's Journey* (Boundless), *Two Brothers - London on Lockdown* (short film), *La Dialogue des Carmelites* (Royal Opera House), *The Heroin Project* (Raging Calm), *HOME* (Young Vic), and *Every Person Wandering -The Vagrancy Act* (Cardboard Citizens, BBC Radio 4).

Yvonne Wickham (cast) is an actor, writer and Clean Break Member artist. Yvonne joined Clean Break in 2007 and she then went on to train at London Metropolitan University with a BA in Performing Arts (2012). For Clean Break she has performed in: *Through This Mist*, *Sounds Like an Insult*, and *Cakehole*.

Further credits include: *Road* (Hoxton Hall), *Kineara Southwark*, *To Whom it May Concern* and *Cathy Come Home* (Barbican, Cardboard Citizens), *Lysistrata* (Arcola Theatre), *And Yet it Moves, Go Between* (Young Vic), *Dusa*, *Fish Stars and VI*, *You Say You Want a Revolution* (Synergy) and *EastEnders* (BBC). She has also featured in several commercials including for HSBC (2023) and the NHS (2021).



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