

Samithi Sok's

THE THOUSAND

DEATHS

OF DIGNITY

ABOUT THE WRITER

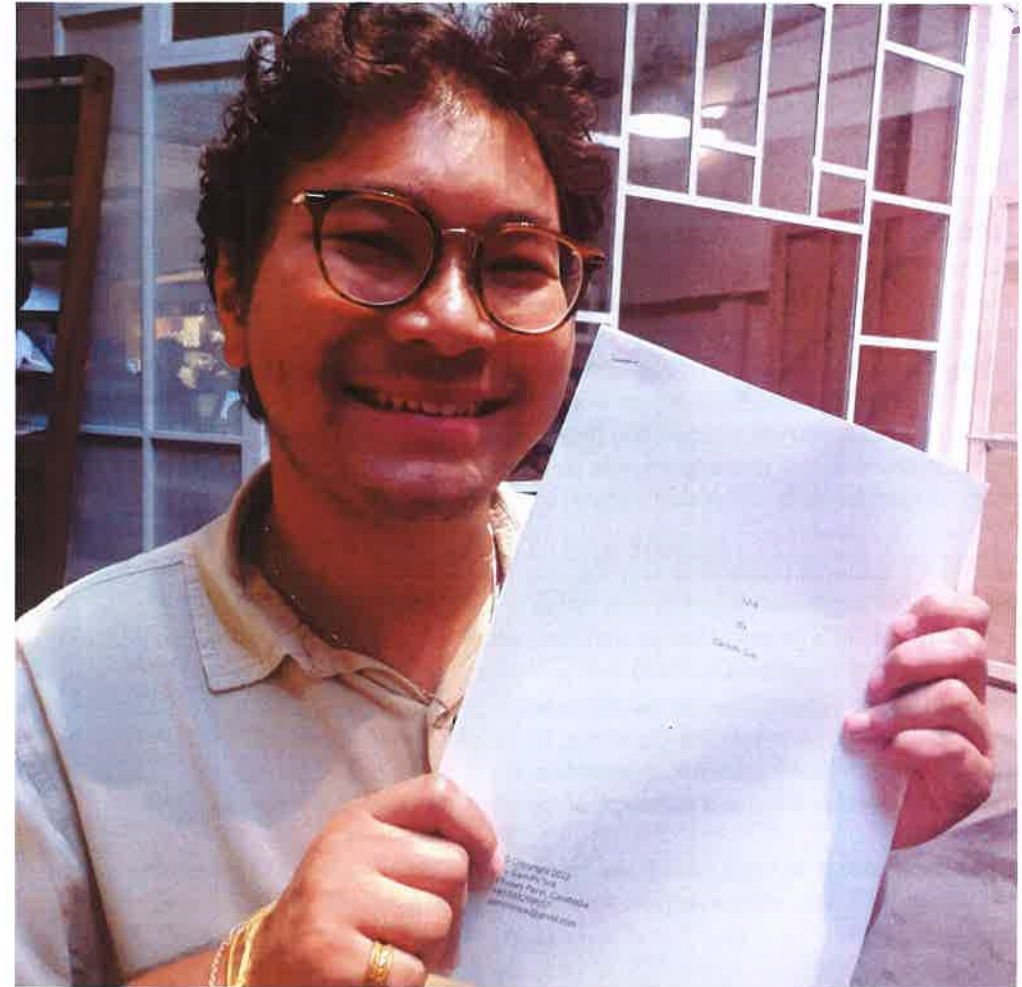
Samithi Sok was a Khmer playwright and director, formerly a student of the University of York studying under their Theatre course. He had been involved in theatre from a young age as a performer and director.

His credits include: co-director of a production of Federico García Lorca's *Blood Wedding* (2018); writer for several pieces at the University of York's Drama Society—*Wind Up Mice*, a limited, Covid-restricted version of this piece (2020); *Nightcall* (2021); and *Earthbound* (2021)

In Phnom Penh, he finished writing and co-directed *12-8* (2022), presented as part of the Creative Generation Performance Series, in association with the Phnom Penh Players and co-directed with Marika Els. The final play he co-directed with Marika Els was *Wind Up Mice* (2023) at Java Creative Café.

Sami passed away from cancer on the 22nd of October 2023 and it is our great privilege and honour to bring to the stage the last play he wrote, *The Thousand Deaths of Dignity*.

Sami had an insatiable love and passion for theatre and we hope to make him proud with what we have done.



Directors' Note

The original concept for producing this play was a table read. We wanted to keep that idea in mind but elevate it to a Readers' Theatre production. This style of theatre emphasises the spoken word and focuses on the text itself, where the richness of language and the beauty of storytelling take centre stage. Our main goal was, first and foremost, to do justice to Samithi's play — to focus on the beauty and impact of the text, to make his words shine through, and for the script itself to be the lead star of the show!

To bring the text into focus, we decided to strip away everything else. No set, no props, no costumes — we wanted the words themselves to transport you to the nooks and crannies of the protagonist's mind and the dark corners of Phnom Penh. The play takes us on a journey to various locations, where we encounter a range of characters along the way. The whole cast plays the protagonist, embodying his inner thoughts, both calming and dark, and everything in between. You will hear moments where he engages in conversations with different parts of himself, observes himself from the outside, and, of course, engages in dialogue with other people he meets along the way. As you listen to the actors' expressive voices, we hope you will discover the depth and emotional range that the spoken word brings to the text. Our aim is to engage your imagination and allow you to visualise the story, characters, and worlds that Samithi so masterfully weaved together.

During the research phase of writing the play, Sami explored the issue of mental health, especially among men. He talked to a range of men, young and old, asking them about how they deal with personal issues and how, when, why (or not) they express their feelings. At the time of writing this play Sami was going through a challenging time in his life when he was dealing with his own fears and doubts. There is no holding back in this play. Everything is laid bare, just like our stage. It's an emotional, vulnerable, and brave play; it speaks honestly and frankly about emotions, good and bad, sometimes ugly. Through the darkness however, there is a message of friendship, support and endurance.

It is a huge honour to bring Sami's last piece of work to an audience, for you all to be able to listen to his words and have them sent out into the world. His legacy remains.



Marika Els

Producer, Director, Production Design, Marketing, etc.

"But true change is possible. Only for the living."



Lizzie Hodge

Producer, Director, Lighting design etc..

*"YOUR FOOTPRINTS WILL REMAIN.
MY IMPRINT ON YOUR SOUL."*



Thomas Pearson

Actor

"All things change. Only the dead stay still."



Divyanshu Sharma

Actor

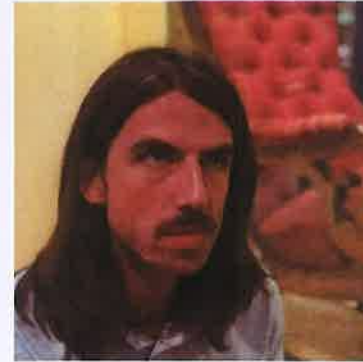
"And you will always be my best friend."



Thearo Nuch

Actor

"Peace can only be found in the deepest depth of solitude, mon frère"



Sam Thomas

Actor

*"don't laugh don't laugh don't laugh
don't laugh
I'll find him, I promise."*



Raven Norwood

Production Assistant

"what's more romantic than a man in pain?"



Matt Clouter

Graphic Design

"The dance floor is where all the hope is."