



The script, written and directed by **Chong Tze Chien**, is filled with action that is vividly coloured by hope, despair, tenderness and cheek. Offhanded comments by various characters offer precious moments of humour throughout the devastation of the war, and adds intimacy to the relationship not only between characters, but also between actors and the audience, who laugh appreciatively at the play's subtle commentary on society's contemporary attitudes towards art, consumerism and morality. The story is told with clarity and simplicity in spite of its various twists and turns. There is truly not a dull moment in this production as it travels across space and time to uncover the significance of this imaginary artwork.

The action begins with all the actors standing silently in a line across the stage as stage crew hand them their props, hence establishing that there is no attempt to conceal that this is ultimately an act of storytelling. Complete with shadow puppetry as a visual element to changing of scenes, the performance bares itself as what it is – with no intention to 'suspend one's imagination' but rather, constantly urge the audience to challenge their perspective of reality and the current beliefs of society.

Slowly, they transition into character, then they take their places and the show begins.



Each actor takes on a major role and other various characters, except for **Joshua Lim**, who plays the antagonist, The Victim. While he no doubt has a strong and consistent physicality in his performance, his portrayal of an autistic man from young to old could certainly afford more nuances. At times, Lim's character comes across as buffoonish and caricatured, but perhaps the absurdity of his circumstances and dialogue is already sufficient in presenting him as someone who thinks and speaks differently, without his condition being overtly demonstrated. This is a contrast to **Timothy Nga's** portrayal of The Auctioneer, who moves with efficiency and is comfortable with stillness. Despite not being seen onstage as much as other actors, Nga still exudes an undeniable stage presence that allows him to direct the audience's attention towards or away from him at appropriate moments. Special mention also goes to Serene Chen, who as The Seller simultaneously balances vulnerability and power.

The performance is for the most part tightly woven together. Although actors may trip on their lines enough times to warrant a mention, the highly intriguing plot, together with **Darren Ng's** cinematic sound design and the intricate puppetry of **Myra Loke** and **Ang Hui Bin**, saves the show. Their subtlety and manipulation of the audiovisual elements help to ground the performance beyond its absurdity and larger than life circumstances.

Framed, By Adolf is intelligently crafted, and a pleasure to watch and experience. Whether audiences are interested in history or not, this show certainly does not bore.

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