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Australian Script Centre



# The Eyes of Marege

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by Julie Janson

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EXTRACT



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# THE EYES OF MAREGE

By Julie Janson

This play was written with the support of Asialink, the Australia Indonesia Institute, the Australia Council and the Koori Centre University of Sydney.

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Workshop development with directors: **Sally Sussman and Asia Ramli Prapanca**



**Australian Government**



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# CHARACTERS:

DHALAWAL: YOLNGU WOMAN

BIRRAMEN: YOLNGU MAN

AHMAD: MAKASSAN FISHERMAN

KASIM: MAKASSAN FISHERMAN / MAKASSAN MAN

NUD: YOUNG MAKASSAN

DJANDAPURRA: YOLNGU DANCER/ ELDER

FATIMA: A YOUNG MAKASSAN WOMAN:(doubled by Dhalawal)

DOGMAN: (doubled by Kasim)

KANGAROOS: (doubled by Kasim and Nud)

DUTCH WOMAN: (doubled by Dhalawal)

GHOSTS/CROCODILE SPIRITS /MAKASSAN SOLDIERS (LARGE SCALE PUPPETS)(Doubled by musicians)

MUSICIANS: INDONESIAN AND INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIAN

Note: the character of Nud is clown like and is mostly ignored by the other characters

TIME FRAME: SET IN 1905

MUSIC: THE MUSIC OF SOUTH SULAWESI AND ARNHEMLAND ACCOMPANY  
THE ACTION PERFORMED BY LIVE MUSICIANS PLACED ON THE STAGE

SETTINGS: MAKASSAR, SULAWESI, INDONESIA  
BIMO ISLAND, ARNHEMLAND NORTHERN TERRITORY

SCENE 1

PROLOGUE

DOGMAN WALKS ON ALL FOURS, HE SCRATCHES AND HOWLS, EXITS

DHALAWAL DANCES ONTO A BEACH, SHE IS FOLLOWED BY CROCODILE  
DANCE BY DJANDAPURRA AND SPIRITS (LARGE SCALE PUPPETS)

DHALAWAL :

SHE SINGS

She comes, the Prahau, rushing in the ocean

The black sail rising in the air, cutting the sky

A red prahu in the wind, it cuts the white foam

That boat, leaning in the water,

The men leaning in the boat, looking to the land

East wind crying

The Monsoons blow rain from Indonesia, Makassar to

Northern Australia. Every Summer, the black clouds gather. Trembling with

thundermen. Stories fly across the Arafura sea. Telling us about the Makassans and

the Yolngu people of Arnhemland. Prahau ships blown by the monsoon .

DHALAWAL:(TO AUDIENCE)You see this Tamarind tree, planted four

hundred years ago by Makassans. The fruit looks like a peanut and it tastes like  
lemon. We trade with Makassans, we dive with the men for sea slug. In Yolngu

language, it's called Trepang. I longed for a Makassan promise husband, I loved him from the first look. His name is Ahmad. He comes to our island every year and he brings me cloth to make mourning flags. He is gentle and has skin like the golden sunset.

## SCENE 2

### BIMO ISLAND

MAKASSAN SAILORS SAIL ON THEIR PRAHU SHIP IN A STRONG WIND, THEY CALL OUT TO EACH OTHER ON THE SEA, THEY SING A SULAWESI SONG. BIRRAMEN SEES THEM FROM THE BEACH.

BIRRAMEN: (TO AUDIENCE) Look, Makassans! Ten days sailing from Makassar .

They come for trepang! Wearing sarongs and scarves around their heads.

NUD MODELS SARONGS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES, HE SHOWS ALL THE GOODS ON THE PRAHU, HE MIMES BEING DRUNK ON ARAK

They bring tamarind pods, rice, sugar, tobacco, iron knives, cloth, wine, money, coconuts, arak, Dutch gin. Watch out! There is a cannon on that prahu. See the big sails on a bamboo mast. A prayer man climbs the mast to look to the West. He is calling to their one God. Tell everyone, they are coming!

A MAKASSAN MAN CLIMBS THE MAST TO CALL, THE CALL TO PRAYER IS HEARD

Here on Bimo Island amongst the Pandanus palms, we will trade with Makassans, We Yolngu will dive for trepang.

NUD MIMES BOILING TREPANG AND BAD SMELLS

The Makassans make money from trading trepang to the Chinese. We dive all day for these creatures. They will gut and boil these big black slugs in big pots on the beach. It smells bad.

THE MAKASSANS CLIMB DOWN FROM THE PRAHU

AHMAD ENTERS WITH HIS COUSIN, NUD, HIDING BEHIND HIM. ENTER DJANDAPURRA, DHALAWAL AND BIRRAMEN. THE YOLNGU WELCOME THE MAKASSANS

BIRRAMEN: Ahmad, welcome brother!

AHMAD: Wawa.

DHALAWAL: You have come back!

AHMAD: Dhalawal, aku rindu padamu! Aku memimpikanmu saat berlayar di laut.

(Dhalawal, I missed you! I dream of you while sailing across the sea).

NUD: Aku rindu padamu juga. Kamu mau lihat kekasihku? Dia orang Belanda.

(I missed you too. You want to see my love? She is Hollander.)

NUD SHOWS PHOTOGRAPH, HE IS USUALLY IGNORED

DHALAWAL: My family wants me to go with another husband. They might punish me if I am with you.

DJANDAPURRA: Dhalawal, you come away from him, we want you to marry with a Yolngu man.

HE TAKES HER BY THE ARM, SHE STRUGGLES, NUD KICKS DJANDAPURRA

DHALAWAL: I have been waiting for Ahmad, he is my promise!

DJANDAPURRA: Your father wants you to marry an important old man, not this young Makassan!

AHMAD: Tidak, kawan, dia telah dijanjikan kepadaku sejak dia masih gadis kecil. Aku telah menunggunya hingga dia dewasa. Aku menghormati keinginan keluarganya tapi mereka sudah berjanji. Demi Allah, mereka harus menepatinya.

( No, friend, she has been promised to me since a little girl. I have been