

September 2021

Phoebe Angeni

### A Note on *Ithaca*

In creating *Ithaca*, I realised that instead of attempting to change myself to fit a social role, I could work to change society – to teach the world how I want to be seen as an artist.

The story of *Ithaca* unfolds from the perspective of Nobody, a feminine aspect of Odysseus. Nobody is an alias used by Odysseus when trapped in the cave of a Cyclops as part of his plan to escape. I'm an emerging small-fat neurodiverse artist with chronic illness, a traumatic background, and without the pedigree of full-time conservatory education. I have been repeatedly told throughout my life that I am Nobody – that my story does not deserve to be told. Like Odysseus, I have also taken on the alias to escape. In my life and career up to this point, I hid my obstacles and differences because I didn't want to face associated stigmas. Because most of my differences are invisible, I usually got away with it but often ended up short selling, compromising, and feeling worse about myself in the process. *Ithaca* marks a big turning point for me because in this show I put almost all my experiences and differences out in plain sight. I realise now that they've not only made me who I am but that I am a better artist for them. It's true that I don't fit the traditional mould for women in the entertainment industry; BUT, in creating *Ithaca* I chose myself, put myself forward, got the job done, and am not only able to be the hero of my own story but to show others like me that it's possible.

I am very grateful for the time I had to create this work and for the support I've received from family and friends in making this production a reality. I am thankful to my PR team and all the amazing reviewers and publications that covered my show – I'm thrilled to bits that you enjoyed and supported *Ithaca* because that proves there's space for artists like me in the industry. I am also incredibly grateful for the support network and resources that I have been given on my

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journey to reclaim, change the course, and re-write the narrative of my life. These resources are a privilege that should be available for everyone, but are not due to systemic marginalisation, prejudice, and oppression, especially towards BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and disabled communities. Hope is conditional on systemic equality. Without professional support, I would not have been able to work through my trauma or self-advocate for accommodations necessary to my education, health, safety, and wellbeing. I would not have been able to create this show. This support is systemically inaccessible for the people who need it most, and there is much work to do to resolve this inequality.

As my professional debut, my goal with *Ithaca* was to create an artistically ambitious piece and raise awareness for taboo and invisible social issues, which have impacted my life and impact the lives of many others. I aim to spark hope and reach out so that people who have faced similar challenges will feel seen and so that audiences will feel empowered to create space and advocate for themselves.

