

Suffrage Stories

Welcome to our event, inspired by the courageous and passionate women who were involved in the suffrage movement a century ago. In association with the Wonder Women network and the Pankhurst Centre, we would like to celebrate women past and present who have helped make history and have too often been forgotten or left on the side lines.

We start with a talk from Naomi Paxton about **Edith Garrud** who trained many of the suffragettes in jiu-jitsu as a means of self-defence. Naomi is a performer and researcher with a passion for suffrage theatre. She has just completed her PhD research at the University of Manchester into the Actresses' Franchise League and is the editor of *The Methuen Drama Book of Suffrage Plays*, which was published in 2013. One of the AHRC/BBC Radio 3 New Generation Thinkers for 2014/15, Naomi is also an Associate Artist of the feminist production hub Scary Little Girls. She is delighted to be sharing the story of ju-jitsu suffragette Edith Garrud with you tonight. Find her on twitter @NaomiPaxton or www.naomipaxton.co.uk

The second part of the event is the screening of '*To Hear Her Voice*' a short documentary about the playwrights who wrote in support of the women's suffrage movement a century ago. Through the dramatisation of one of the plays and interviews with researchers and practitioners, this film asks about the validity of the playwrights' work today and why it should be remembered and performed. The film was directed and produced by Clare Neylon, a lecturer in Media Performance at the University of Salford, who has a particular interest in forgotten history and representing women's stories. She can be found on twitter @clareneylon or c.neylon@salford.ac.uk.

The final piece is a performance of part of a speech given by the writer **Elizabeth Robbins** at an address to the Women Writers at the Critereon in 1910. She highlights the lack of women's stories told by women, a situation that still rings true over one hundred years later particularly in the fields of media and television. The performance is accompanied by projections inspired by '*A Pageant of Great Women*', representing the women through history who have been inspiring and influential across different strands of society. More on this speech and the great women featured in the projections can be found at www.clareneylonfilm.blogspot.co.uk.

The performer is Gemma-Jane Bowker. Currently based in Powys, she has a PhD in representations of motherhood in contemporary women's playwriting from the University of Manchester and an MA in Text and Performance from King's College London and RADA. She has previously acted, directed and written for the stage. She can be contacted on gemmajaner@gmail.com