

Produced by  
**TURTLE  
KEYARTS**

ockham's  
**razor**

*Tess of the d'Urbervilles*  
*Drama & English workshops*





# FREE workshop offer

Autumn 2023 - Summer 2024

## Workshop objectives:

- Show how Ockham's Razor, the UK's leading contemporary circus company, have adapted Thomas Hardy's classic novel Tess of the d'Urbervilles for the stage using physical theatre, circus movement and spoken word text.
- Share the use of devising techniques and unusual object manipulation to tell a story.
- Explore complex themes including : class and social structure, injustice, female identity, privilege and consent, through circus and physical performance.
- Train and empower young people to stage work using circus and physical theatre.
- Introduce discussions around contemporary relevance of themes from the past.

To book a workshop or for  
further information please  
do get in contact with:  
**[charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk](mailto:charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk)**  
**020 8964 5060**





Ockham's Razor produced by Turtle Key Arts  
presents

# Tess

Based on the novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles by Thomas Hardy  
Adapted & Directed by Ockham's Razor

Devised by:

Alex Harvey, Charlotte Mooney,  
Macadie Amoroso, Joshua Frazer, Lauren Jamieson,  
Lila Naruse, Victoria Skillen,  
Leah Wallings and Nat Whittingham

Performed by:

Macadie Amoroso, Joshua Frazer, Lauren Jamieson,  
Lila Naruse, Victoria Skillen,  
Leah Wallings and Nat Whittingham

[www.ockhamsrazor.co.uk](http://www.ockhamsrazor.co.uk)  
[www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk](http://www.turtlekeyarts.org.uk)

“Ockham's Razor are a key company in the British contemporary circus scene”

Arts Council England



“artful and beautifully human”

The Times



“There’s something magical about Ockham’s Razor”

Evening Standard



“Ockham's Razor is a hugely promising young company with superb circus skills and highly creative brains”

The Guardian

## About the Company

Ockham's Razor is an award-winning aerial theatre company at the forefront of the movement re-defining circus. We consistently produce ground-breaking, artistically excellent work. Since our foundation in 2004 we have created, to critical and public acclaim, a distinct style of performance which draws upon the relationships, emotions, and images of circus to create innovative theatre with coherent narratives and moving stories. Tess will be our eighth full length show.

We have mounted numerous hugely successful national and international tours and have a strong track record in delivering new productions to sell-out audiences.

We have a commitment to making shows as accessible as possible and will offer audio described and BSL interpreted performances and touch tours for the tour of Tess. We will also continue to offer relaxed performances to ensure that the greatest range of people can experience our work.







## About the show

Tess is an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's classic novel Tess of the D'Urbervilles. It will weave together acrobatics, aerial, physical theatre and an inventive, evocative set to conjure Hardy's world. The classic novel still has extraordinary relevance for contemporary audiences as it explores questions of privilege, class, poverty, agency, female desire and sisterhood. It is the first time we have worked from a novel and it's thrilling to begin work on weaving together Hardy's words with our physical storytelling to tell this gut wrenching story about the strength to endure.

Tess of the D'Urbervilles is a very physical and visual book. The show features a cast of 7 performers – including a central ensemble of 5 women. These incredibly skilled circus performers will use their strength and circus language to evoke the physical labour of the novel. They will also create Hardy's Wessex onstage wielding a series of wooden planks, shifting walls, ropes and swathes of linen to make sets that can unfold and which the cast, balance upon, climb, and construct to become the vast landscapes and interior worlds of Hardy's Wessex.

The story will be told to the audience by an actor playing Tess – she is speaking to us just before her execution, looking back at the events that have led to that moment. She will tell her story using Hardy's words while the ensemble re-creates her memories onstage: the extreme physicality of the movement evoking the depth of emotion. Alongside the themes of fate and class this is also a book about heartbreak, yearning and redemption – relatable to adults of all ages.

It is important to us that despite it being a radical and physical telling of the story that it is true to the novel. We have written the script using Hardy's words from the novel with oversight from Anne Marie Casey, an acclaimed novelist and screenwriter who has also previously adapted Little Women and Wuthering Heights for the stage. The script captures the narrative, the poetry of Hardy and the philosophical depth of the novel to rest alongside the physical telling.



## About the workshops

Tess of the d'Urbervilles is included in the A-level English curriculum and is also relevant to drama students at both GCSE and A-level stages. Thomas Hardy and Victorian literature is also included within university courses and many of the other themes that have been identified by the directors of the show are relevant to history, law and politics students.

We are building a team of workshop facilitators made up of Ockham's Razor circus leaders and drama facilitators including members of the cast and creative team that would like to be involved as well as members of the existing outreach teams within our partner venues.

In autumn 2023/spring 2024, the show will tour to, Bristol, Salford, Malvern, Warwick, Huddersfield, York, Poole, Didcot, Oxford, London and Exeter.

The workshops will be run following on from students seeing the show in their local theatre. In some areas we will also offer pre-show discussions with academics and other experts around themes included in the show. There will also be a digital resource pack for teachers to use alongside a visit to the show.



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Turtle Key Arts produces and devises original, inclusive art to entertain and inspire. They believe that access to the arts helps to improve the quality of life by bringing people together, offering creative opportunities and social inter-action.

They produce a number of innovative performance companies and run free participation arts projects for disabled, disadvantaged and socially excluded people.

*“Turtle Key Arts promote many initiatives and implement a series of measures to engage with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged parts of society.”* - Everything Theatre

Turtle Key Arts is a registered charity No.1003113

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