

Nomads Marks an Abstruse Swan Song for Incubator Arts Project

By Tom Sellar Wednesday, Jun 4 2014



Yi Zhao

Jenny Seastone Stern, Kate Benson

***Nomads*, a new and deliberately oblique play by Julia Jarcho**, makes the perfect going-away party for the always-adventurous Incubator Arts Project, which closes down this month. Jarcho's drama toggles between two 1930s ladies embarking on separate journeys. Jean (Rebecca Lingafelter) seeks excitement in a South American jungle, which may or may not also be an extension of her mind; there, she encounters a Veiled Figure (Jenny Seastone Stern) who may or may not have wisdom to impart. Meanwhile, Joan (Kate Benson) leaves a swanky party and takes off with her otherworldly taxi driver (a very funny Ben Williams), either for a late supper or a major head trip. Or maybe all and none of the above materialize — the playwright's intentionally un-narrative jags of ephemeral dialogue make it impossible to know for sure.

In last season's Obie Award-winning *Grimly Handsome*, Jarcho stylishly pinned her disorientation-by-design to offbeat but concrete scenarios. Here, though, the puzzle isn't as engaging. The play makes allusions to the writer Jane Bowles, but there's not much to grasp when these speakers depart into their consciousness. It's hard to tell if it's the dense text or Alice Reagan's spare staging that prevents the language from landing, but even the most venturesome vessels need to drop anchor somewhere.