

FLARE!



Flare International Festival of New Theatre
13-18 July 2015

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TICKETS AND CONTACT DETAILS

Festival pass: £65 (€50)

Double bill/triple bill/Royal Exchange Theatre: £12 (€8)


Work in progress/student work: £5

To book tickets, visit **FLAREFESTIVAL.COM** or contact the venues

 /flarefestival

 @flarefestival, #FLARE15

 boxoffice@flarefestival.com

 (Contact and Martin Harris Centre) 0161 274 0600, (Z-arts) 0161 232 6089,
(Royal Exchange Theatre) 0161 833 9833

WELCOME TO FLARE15

The Flare International Festival of New Theatre 2015 is delighted to present 23 innovative theatre pieces by new artists selected from 10 different countries over 6 days and across 4 venues.

And we really want you to feel welcome – this is a festival that is not just about showcasing international cutting edge theatre practices, but bringing people together, encouraging dialogue and getting involved. Join in the feedback sessions, the Open Forum, the workshops and the parties (and join in on Twitter and Facebook of course) to really get the most out of what FLARE15 has to offer.

We've scheduled the performances to give as many people as possible the chance to see the work. We hope you enjoy the double and triple bills running each evening, the pieces specially selected for the Royal Exchange Theatre and of course the (aptly named) Extraordinary Flare Party, but do try to catch some of the 5pm shows at the Martin Harris Centre, all just £5 and some real gems too.

And look out for the Flare Daily Paper, edited by freelance critic and writer Andrew Haydon, that our team of writers will be putting out every day of the festival. You're welcome to contribute too.

This brochure

Designed to be as much an artist catalogue (complete with a 'curatorial statement') as a theatre brochure, this aims to act as a guide to the festival, to profile the selected pieces and to give you an insight into the selection process that led to the programme detailed here. We hope you enjoy it.

The venues

FLARE15 is delighted to be taking place at four of Manchester's leading studio theatres:

Contact	Z-arts	Royal Exchange Theatre	Martin Harris Centre
Oxford Rd	Stretford Rd	St Ann's Square	Bridgeford St,
M15 6JA	M15 5ZA	M2 7DH	off Oxford Road
contactmcr.com	z-arts.org	royalexchange.co.uk	M13 9PL
			martinharriscentre. manchester.ac.uk

For tickets or other queries please ring the numbers opposite, or see venue websites.

Festival Opening

19:30 Monday 13 July

Contact

£12 (£8)

*The opening night of FLARE15, combining an Official Opening, the start of the installation by **Mareike Wenzel and the New Collective**, live music from **Becca Williams and Natalie McCool**, and a special guest performance of:*

AS THE FLAMES ROSE WE DANCED TO THE SPENS, THE SPENS SLEEPWALK COLLECTIVE UK/ES

In an hour of troubling intimacy, Sleepwalk Collective chop up and replay the iconography of B-movies and early cinema in a joyous and desperate attempt to re-work cinematic and cultural clichés into something heartfelt and profound.

Winner of First Prize and Best Actress at BE Festival Birmingham 2011, Best Actress at SKENA UP Kosovo 2011, Best Direction at Festival ACT Bilbao 2010, and nominated for a Total Theatre Award 2011.

Sleepwalk Collective is an award-winning live-art and experimental theatre group creating fragile, nocturnal performances between the UK and Spain.

Supported by Instituto Etxepare and Factoría de Fuegos.

Photo credit:
Alessia Bombaci



Festival Opening and all week

19:30 Monday 13 July –

22:30 Friday 17 July

Contact

UPDATE

As New Collective have been denied entry by the UK visa authorities, this performance won't now take place as planned. Instead there will be an ongoing installation/artistic interventions dealing with restrictions in freedom of movement, coincidentally the focus of the original performance. Director Mareike Wenzel, who holds a German passport, will be at the festival, and New Collective will be joining in from Georgia via Skype.

WELCOME

MAREIKE WENZEL AND THE NEW COLLECTIVE GE

Seven women from a different country stranded in Manchester. How to start a new life, once you have left everything behind? Strangers amongst strangers, the audience is invited to join a week-long house warming party. Based on Chekhov's '3 Sisters', but transferring the story into the present and following the characters' lives from the point where the play ends.

New Collective aims to set new benchmarks in the Georgian art scene, working at the intersection of

performance, documentary theatre and installation. Mareike Wenzel is an actor and performance artist from Berlin, who works internationally with Copenhagen based collective SIGNA, making site-specific, immersive, durational, performance installations.

New Collective are Ana Chaduneli, Tamar Chaduneli, Tamar Gobronidze, Ana Jikia, Gvantsa Jishakariani, Nata Kipiani.

14:30 Tuesday 14 July
19:30 Wednesday 15 July
Royal Exchange Theatre
£12 (£8)

#LOSMICRÓFONOS

JORGE DUTOR AND GUILLEM MONT DE PALOL ES

Jorge Dutor and Guillem Mont de Palol dive into a familiar and ubiquitous universe, the universe of pop culture. '#losmicrófonos' offers the audience a choreography of names, song titles and choruses, a strange landscape of deviations, personal memories and wild associations in which to conjecture, make connections and play.

Jorge and Guillem work between Barcelona, Amsterdam and Madrid and continue to expand their own constellation. Their work revolves around language, semiotics, the body, musicality and rhythm. Their two previous pieces, UUUHHH (2009) and Y POR QUÉ JOHN CAGE? (2011) have been shown in festivals and venues in Spain, across mainland Europe and in South America.

Photo credit:
Ilaria Constanzo

Future Flares – UK students

17:00 Tuesday 14 July

Martin Harris Centre

£5

THE CIRCULATION GAME ASHLEY WILLIAMS UK

The Circulation Game is a solo performance that uses digital storytelling devices to 'illustrate' its meaning. The piece narrates a journey through a young man's mind, capturing the problems faced by his now lost generation, from Indiana Jones to the meaning of existence and back again.

Ashley Williams is a solo performance maker, recently graduated from the University of Chichester.



WHOOAA STEADY! LEENTJE VAN DE CRUYS AND UNIVERSITY OF SALFORD BE/UK

The British are weird. Take, for example, the racecourse: an intriguing world full of unexpected characters. Inspired by anthropologist Kate Fox's book 'The Racing Tribe', Whoaaa Steady! watches the horse-watchers.

Belgian actress and theatre maker Leentje Van de Cruys has been making quirky solo performances about domesticity and women's identity for the last 8 years. She also performs and tours with Quarantine, Reckless Sleepers and Proto-type Theater.



Triple Bill

19:30 Tuesday 14 July

Contact

£12 (£8) all three shows

WITH FORCE AND NOISE HANNAH SULLIVAN UK

When were you last angry? With Force and Noise is Hannah's first attempt at articulating anger. This personal one-woman monologue is delivered from complete stillness, in a bespoke costume designed by collaborating costume designer Annelies Henney. It rises, falls and simmers.

Hannah Sullivan makes playful and emotive studio and site work that incorporates autobiographical text, contemporary movement and collaborations with other artists. She is a member of Interval, a collective of Bristol-based performance makers.

Supported by Bristol Ferment, ICIA Bath, The Solo Contemporary Performance Forum, Shoreditch Town Hall and Arts Council England.



Photo credit:
Jack Offord

Triple Bill

19:30 Tuesday 14 July

Contact

£12 (£8) all three shows

DANCE PEAS

FIGS IN WIGS UK

'Dance Peas' is half dance piece and half world record attempt. One by one, Figs in Wigs try to break the record for eating the most peas with a cocktail stick in three minutes. One pea at a time – no multiple stabs. They don't have a stopwatch but they do have a three-minute dance routine.

'Dance Peas' is seriously competitive. At face value it may just seem like a pointless game, but beneath the surface there are darker themes at play.

Figs in Wigs are an all female, five strong performance company who make work that is a unique mix of theatre, dance and comedy.



Photo credit:
Manuel Vason

Triple Bill

19:30 Tuesday 14 July

Contact

£12 (£8) all three shows

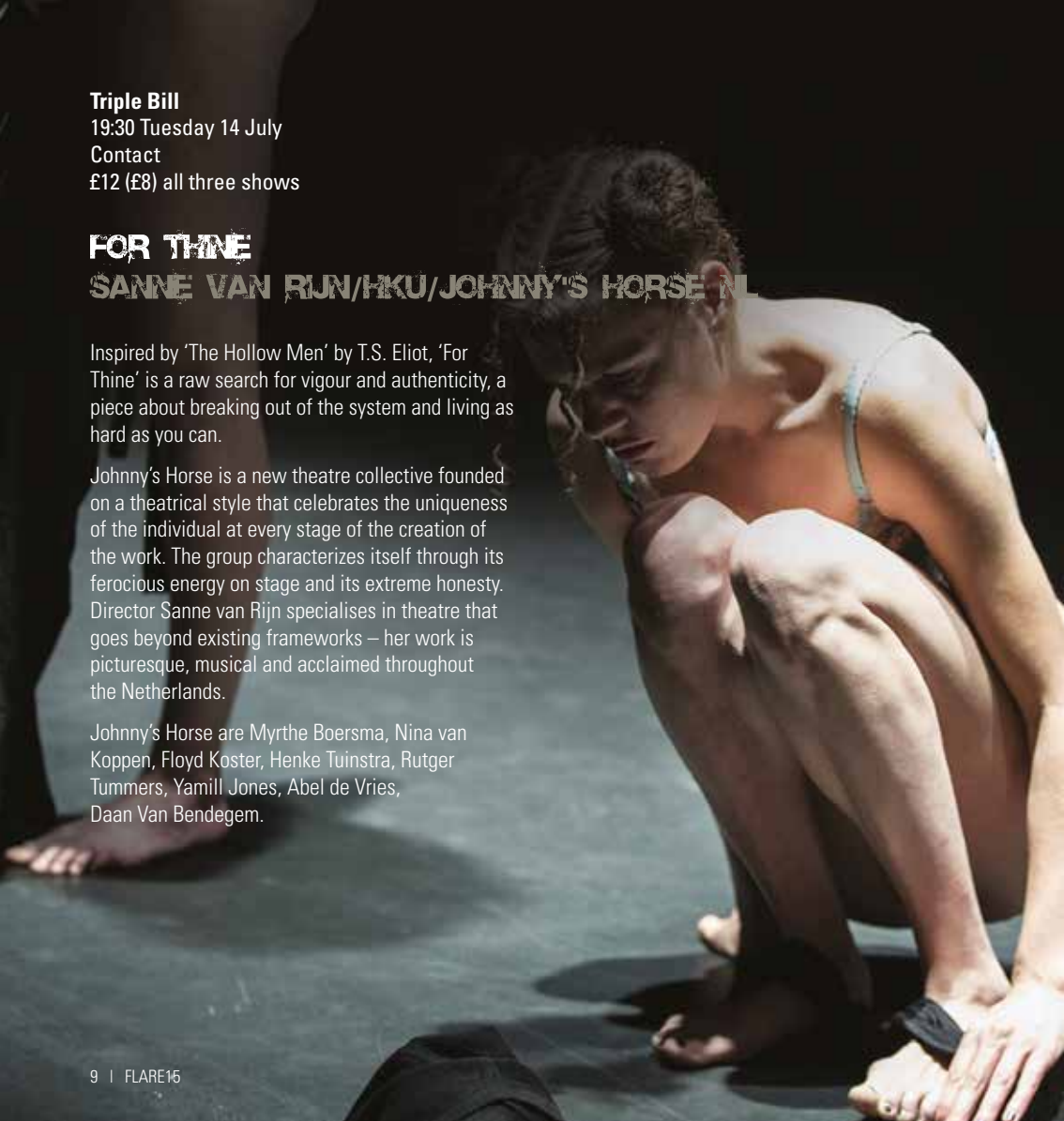
FOR THINE


SANNE VAN RIJN/HKU/JOHNNY'S HORSE NL

Inspired by 'The Hollow Men' by T.S. Eliot, 'For Thine' is a raw search for vigour and authenticity, a piece about breaking out of the system and living as hard as you can.

Johnny's Horse is a new theatre collective founded on a theatrical style that celebrates the uniqueness of the individual at every stage of the creation of the work. The group characterizes itself through its ferocious energy on stage and its extreme honesty. Director Sanne van Rijn specialises in theatre that goes beyond existing frameworks – her work is picturesque, musical and acclaimed throughout the Netherlands.

Johnny's Horse are Myrthe Boersma, Nina van Koppen, Floyd Koster, Henke Tuinstra, Rutger Tummers, Yamill Jones, Abel de Vries, Daan Van Bendegem.





13:00 Wednesday 15 July

12:00 Saturday 18 July

Contact

£5

Photo credit:
Tara Yarahmadi

THE PRIVILEGED JAMAL HAREWOOD UK

Have you ever seen a polar bear in the flesh? Been close enough to notice just how white these magnificent mammals are? Remove your shoes, coats and bags, as you are about to encounter the Arctic's whitest apex predator, with black skin. This is a limited capacity work for up to 40 people that places you at the centre of the action.

Jamal Harewood is a solo artist who creates temporary communities through participatory events. He believes that these events should be playful experiences that allow everyone to get involved. He has a keen interest in equality and abolishing the performer/audience hierarchy that tends to occur in theatre.

Made with support from the University of Chichester.

Future Flares – Works in progress

17:00 Wednesday 15 July

Martin Harris Centre

£5

CUNCRETE **RACHAEL CLERKE UK**

Concrete is the stage version of the TV show that might have happened if Chris Morris ever collaborated with Jonathan Ross to make a punk drag show about concrete architecture.

Rachael Clerke is a Bristol-based maker of performances, websites, writings, drawings and films. She wants to make people swear, in a good way.



Photo credit:
Paul Samuel White

WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT **'THE SWIMMER' WILL YOU** **TALK ABOUT YOURSELF?** **ANTOINE FRAVAL FR**

Made in collaboration with Augusto Corrieri. This new choreographic project works from the iconic 1968 film 'The Swimmer', in which Burt Lancaster swims through a series of outdoor pools in an attempt to return home. The performance is part movie re-enactment and part reflection on its motifs.

Antoine Fraval is an artist and performer, co-founder of Deer Park and collaborator on the Lone Twin Theatre projects. Augusto Corrieri is a London-based artist and writer.



Triple Bill

19:30 Wednesday 15 July

Z-arts

£12 (£8) all three shows

WHO'S AFRAID OF RED, YELLOW AND BLUE

DAAN VAN BENDEGEM NL

'Who's afraid of red, yellow and blue' is about the world famous painting by Barnett Newman – about the destruction of the painting, its restoration, the resulting ruckus, and Daan's own investigation into the secret reports of the bad restoration by Daniel

Goldreyer. On one level a narrative thriller about a big red painting, the piece questions the status of all art, including the performance itself, and its value.

Daan van Bendegem graduated in 2014 from the HKU theatre-academy in Utrecht. Previous theatre works include 'The best show ever, after this show, no one has to make a theatre show again'. He is also a member of new theatre collective Johnny's Horse.

Photo credit:
Jos Kuklewski

Triple Bill

19:30 Wednesday 15 July

Z-arts

£12 (£8) all three shows

YOU NEED THE GLASS AND YOU NEED THE MILK DORIAN ŠILEC PETEK SI

We require absence. We do not need another story. We do not need someone dictating a story. We do not need someone dictating emotions. We do not need a leader.

Supported by a curated visual environment, the audience are subjected to an alienating and calming experience and one that, seemingly, demands nothing. In a hectic world, the performance attempts to overcome the need for information and allows

you to be with your thoughts, whilst being gently guided by archetypal visual and vocal settings into different emotional states.

Dorian Šilec Petek is a Slovenia-based theatre and visual maker. His work has been presented at the Transgenerations Festival in Slovenia, at Tienalle di Milano, and at the Watermill Center in New York, run by legendary director Robert Wilson.

Triple Bill

19:30 Wednesday 15 July

Z-arts

£12 (£8) all three shows

FIGHT, FIGHT – THAT'S ALL WE CAN DO

JA JA JA NE NE NE PL

M: Many of you are asking me, why wrestling?

Wrestling is my song of love, my song of freedom.

A: I never know what to expect – I like the constant surprises, and always having to be ready.

This is fighting as spectacle, fighting as metaphor, fighting as choreography. It was developed and first performed at Stanica Žilina-Záriečie, Slovakia supported by the International Visegrad Foundation. 'fun, energetic, and smart, referencing popular culture in a thoughtful and apposite way' Kulturpunkt

Ja Ja Ja Ne Ne Ne is an organisation established to increase the feasibility of its members' and associate artists' creative initiatives. The name Ja Ja Ja Ne Ne Ne is taken from the 1968 artwork by Joseph Beuys.

Performers: Magda Tuka, Anita Wach

Sound & Video: Myles Stawman



Photo credit:
Stanica Žilina-Záriečie

14:30 Thursday 16 July
19:30 Friday 17 July
Royal Exchange Theatre
£12 (£8)

WHERE THE WORLD IS GOING, THAT'S WHERE WE ARE GOING HOF VAN EEDE BE

Presented by Hof Van Eede, Big in Belgium, Theater Aan Zee, Richard Jordan Productions, Theatre Royal Plymouth and Summerhall.

"We'd love to tell you about Jacques the fatalist and his Master, by Denis Diderot, one of the best books ever written, but we're having a problem."

'Where the world is going, that's where we are going' is the first, award-winning show by theatre

company Hof van Eede. They took the novel as a starting point, and ended up embracing the vulnerability of language in a deliciously whimsical conversation between a man and a woman, "who need to go somewhere else, urgently."

'Jeroen Van der Ven and Ans Van den Eede go for a virtuoso masterclass of body language...'

★★★★★ The Stage

Photo credit:
Tom Callemin

Future Flares – International students

17:00 Thursday 16 July

Martin Harris Centre

£5 (age guidance 16+)

J.U.D.I.T.H.

MARJA CHRISTIANS AND ISABEL SCHWENK DE

Based on a drama by Friedrich Hebbel, things start to unravel when multiple species of dildosaur, and chickens, both fried and headless, dance through the orgasm landscape. And of course it ain't over 'til the opera-singing vulva sings... A performance of heavy sweating and physical comedy – dangerous, hilarious and wonderful!

A piece by students at Hildesheim University, 'J.U.D.I.T.H.' has already toured widely across Germany, and won the jury award at the 100° Festival, Berlin 2015.

Created in cooperation with Argentinian Choreographer Ayelén Cantini and cobratheater.cobra.

Marja Christians and Isabel Schwenk have been working together since 2012. They are searching for performative representations of structural violence, using strategies of comedy. They challenge current norms and conventions and create new images of the (female) body.



Photo credit:
Clemens Heidrich

Double Bill

19:30 Thursday 16 July

Contact

£12 (£8) both shows (age guidance 16+)

SCENES FOR A CONVERSATION AFTER VIEWING A MICHAEL HANEKE FILM EL CONDE DE TORREFEL ES

Nobody really knows what to do with their life. Because of this, in a city, there are always possibilities for inventing a life. And because everything is possible, nobody really knows what to do.

Playfully deadpan, beautifully staged, shocking and enigmatic in equal measure, 'Scenes for a conversation after viewing a Michael Haneke film' offers 12 stories and multiple images, as it oscillates calmly between contemporary literature, art and choreography.

Founded in 2010 El Conde de Torrefiel is based in Barcelona and led by Pablo Gisbert and Tanya Beyeler.

Touring this summer to leading venues in Belgium, France, Holland and Germany, Flare is delighted to present this major work by one of the most significant and unique voices in new Spanish theatre.

Photo credit:
Mara Arteaga



Double Bill

19:30 Thursday 16 July

Contact

£12 (£8) both shows

ACTRESS

SLEEPWALK COLLECTIVE ES/UK

Why are you lying to me? Why are you lying to me?
Why are you lying to me? Why are you lying to me?
Why are you lying to me? Why are you lying to me?
Why are you lying to me? 'Actress' is a new show
about language and voice and slips of the tongue
– a reckless, noisy, lovesick plunge into the messy
heart of how we speak, and why.

Sleepwalk Collective is an award-winning live-art
and experimental theatre group creating fragile,
nocturnal performances between the UK and Spain.

*'There's an intensity and shapeliness to Sleepwalk
Collective's work that commands attention.'*

The Scotsman

Developed at and supported by The Yard Theatre
(London), The HUB (Leeds), Summerhall (Edinburgh),
and Sala Baratzta Aretoa (Vitoria-Gasteiz).



Photo credit
Alex Brenner

14:00 Friday 17 July
Z-arts
18:30 Saturday 18 July
Royal Exchange Theatre
£5

THE PRESTON BILL (WORK IN PROGRESS) ANDY SMITH UK

Presented by Andy Smith and Fuel

Award winning theatre maker Andy Smith presents a work-in-progress showing of a new piece of theatre telling a story from the north. A story that considers some of the socio-political shifts that have taken place in the last 80 years.

Andy Smith's most recent solo works include 'all that is solid melts into air' and 'commonwealth'. Since 2004 he has also collaborated with the writer and actor Tim Crouch, co-directing

plays including 'An Oak Tree' and 'The Author'. In 2013 Tim and Andy co-wrote and performed 'what happens to the hope at the end of the evening' together.

'Beautiful, original, powerful theatre'
– A Younger Theatre on 'what happens to the hope at the end of the evening'

The Preston Bill is part of New Theatre in Your Neighbourhood, funded by Arts Council England and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.



Triple Bill

19:30 Friday 17 July

Contact

£12 (£8) all three shows (age guidance 16+)

BODY ON

TAMAR BLOM AND KAJETAN URANTSCH.NL

How far can I go with my own body in relation to another body? Where do I lose myself and where do I lose the other? Where do I start to be afraid of intimacy, of the wilderness of our human bodies? They can be uncomfortable, intimidating, shameful, disgusting... and pleasurable. Our desire for the other is always challenging us and showing us the unknown reality of being together.

Tamar Blom and Kajetan Uranitsch graduated from the Mime Department of the Amsterdam School of the Arts in 2014, a renowned department whose graduates (including Jolika Sudermann and Schwalbe) have a unique approach to theatre making with an emphasis on physical and spatial sensitivity.

'Body On' won the acclaimed ITs Parade Parel 2014, at the ITs Festival in Amsterdam.

Triple Bill

19:30 Friday 17 July

Contact

£12(£8) all three shows

YOU ARE KIND OF LIKE A Hairy STRANGER I KNOW TIANA HEMLOCK-YENSEN AU

You are kind. I know. Like a stranger. Kind of hairy?
Like strange. Like you? You know.

Choreographed and performed by Tiana Hemlock-Yensen. Advised by Aitana Cordero. Originally produced by the Theaterschool Amsterdam.

Tiana is an Australian theatre maker who has been studying at the S.N.D.O. in Amsterdam. She's curious how to get intimate with the world. And yes, you. What are the raw, honest places we find each other? Can we? What does it all taste like?

Tiana has recently been working in New York City, dancing, making and curating as well as working with Alexandra Beller, Palissimo and Giulio D'Anna. Her work was seen at Judson Church and toured in Spain. Tiana also writes, teaches and makes installations and costumes from recycled materials.



Triple Bill

19:30 Friday 17 July

Contact

£12 (£8) all three shows

PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

THOMAS MARTIN UK

When I turned thirteen I became a completely different person... Not in the way you might think. A time-travelling coming-of-age spoken word murder mystery starring Johnny Knoxville from Jackass. With songs.

Bursting with bizarre characters and accompanied by the gnarliest of guitar, Professional Supervision is an offbeat hour of surreal indie storytelling, a pulpy poem to teenage truths and misspent youth. This is going to suck.

Pick of the Week; Nominated for Best Debut and Pick of the Year (VAULT Festival 2015)

Thomas Martin is a new London-based theatre maker working across multiple disciplines: writing, collaborative performance, directing and live art.



The Extraordinary Flare Party

20:00 Saturday 18 July

Z-arts

£12 (£8)

*Marking the climax of FLARE15, the Extraordinary Flare Party takes over Z-arts, filling it with performance, live music, food and dancing. Featuring live music by **Joyce D'Vision** and **Organ Freeman**, host **Jana Kennedy**, guest performances and:*

RESERVOIR DUCKS/DUCK AND COVER IRREVERENT SIDESHOWS UK

'Reservoir Ducks' ruffles the feathers of Tarantino's chauvinistic tipping scene (from his film Reservoir Dogs). 'Duck and Cover' was inspired by the 1951 American Civil Defence movie of the same title.

Formed in 2014 Irreverent Sideshows creates short poetic expositions of socio-political issues marinated in a rip-roaring soundscape, with writer/director *anna frisch*, Joel Cahen (sound), performers Rachel Sweeney and Laura Bradshaw, and a host of associate artists.



ON CURATING FLARE15

Curating a festival of new work like FLARE15 comes with a lot of challenges, but one of the biggest is communicating what kind of theatre will be on offer. We talk about work that is by 'emerging' or 'early career' international artists, work that is 'innovative', 'radical', 'experimental', 'cutting edge', but how helpful is this?

Sometimes we've talked about theatre that tests accepted ideas of the nature of theatrical experience, that challenges the boundaries of the art-form from an informed and conceptual basis, that questions the process of meaning-making, and its relationship to its cultural context. But perhaps the easiest way to talk about it, is to talk about how we choose it.

So this is about how we've curated FLARE15.

But why talk about 'curating' at all? Coming out of visual art, curation is apparently 'the practice of constructing meaning by exerting control through selection, clever arrangement, labeling, interpretation and so on'. Beyond the idea that 'selecting' is a big part of what we've been doing, it doesn't really seem to fit the task of pulling together a theatre festival.

And yet we think it is the right word to use. For a start it acknowledges, or re-claims, the theatrical performance piece as a work of 'art'. The 'strangeness' of using the term even points to an expanded notion of what art is, made familiar since the term 'contemporary art' was coined. It also suggests the care with which the works have been selected, and the existence of specific aesthetic criteria underpinning the act of selection. And it invokes the co-existence of refined judgments and simple pragmatics that the 'selection and clever arrangement' of contemporary art requires.

And so if the work is curated in this sense, what are the criteria that have underpinned the selection?

Pragmatically of course, the work had to fit the context established. It also had to be 'new', i.e. not wedded to long established traditions, and by 'emerging artists'. But with these satisfied, and as good a sense of the work as the inevitable video footage allowed, there was still the more refined selection process, the attempt to assess 'how interesting' the work was, and/or 'how good' it was too.

Talking about these decisions is trickier, as it's about articulating judgments that largely felt instinctive, judgments made without really thinking about criteria. Perhaps it's this reliance on instinct that makes curation an 'art', i.e. something that can still be rationalized, but after the event, rather than before.

So, in a retrospective attempt to define more detailed criteria, I'm going to reflect on a few areas of interest evident in the work chosen to be part of FLARE15.

It is revealing that a proportion of the work that has been selected for FLARE15 and previous iterations exists, outside of this country, under the headings of dance or choreography. Even more surprising, to an English sensibility at least, is that some of it is categorised elsewhere as mime, inevitable perhaps when you're talking about work that is built around an emphasis on the body, specifically the materiality, idiosyncrasies and signifying potential of the body, and the relationship between these.

Body On by Tamar Blom and Kajetan Uranitsch, is one such piece. As if to emphasize the point, the space is fully lit and evidently empty and the two male performers, naked throughout, stand for a significant amount of the opening calmly adopting positions or poses whilst looking back at the audience.

As it progresses the piece invites its audience to experience both the body in itself, and some culturally recognizable images of the body. And to be present with these bodies, to be sat watching two naked men doing these things as spectacle, creates a bodily 'experience' for us the audience, as we both watch and experience the bodies 'signifying', and the processes they go through to do so.

This emphasis on the body as both experience and spectacle is evident across much of the work on offer at FLARE15, from the overtly political work of Marja Christians and Isabel Schwenk, and the interactive work of Jamal Harewood, to the deadpan comedy of Figs in Wigs and, I would contend, even the apparently narrative reflections of Thomas Martin.

And away from such body-based practices and extended definitions of mime, the work of other practitioners selected has also been presented or developed in dance contexts, bearing relationships to extended definitions of choreography. El Conde de Torrefiel from Barcelona, Tiana Hemlock-Yensen from Australia (via Amsterdam) and Antoine Fraval from Angers employ the vocabulary of choreography in articulating their work, as well as benefiting from a structural logic free from the organizing principle of dramatic narrative.

Clearly this points to extended ideas of what choreography is too. As French choreographer Jerome Bel has said: 'Choreography is just a frame, a structure, a language where much more than dance is inscribed'. Perhaps its not too surprising that Flare, as it looks for acts of performance that employ 'a frame, a structure, a language' distinct from that established in British theatre, finds itself in this expanded territory of dance and choreography.

And as a festival engaging with radical conceptions of theatre and theatricality perhaps it's no surprise that a significant strand of the work selected seems overtly self-conscious, constructing a theatre that examines what theatre is and what it does in the world, or employing the language of theatre to talk about... language in theatre. So Hof van Eede's work takes on a classic literary text but gets so bound up in the difficulties of articulating the work, its meaning and its relevance, that it falls in on itself, becoming a conversation about conversation and the impossibility of unmediated communication, particularly in the context of live theatre. Guillem Mont de Palol and Jorge Dutor don't get past the names, and occasionally the tunes, of popular culture but still end up physically exhausted by their apparent desire to attain something of the meaning or magic apparently embedded within. And Sleepwalk Collective's brand new piece *Actress* (so new we haven't seen it yet) takes on 'language, and voice, and slips of the tongue'.

And this self-consciousness isn't just concerned with language. The work of Andy Smith very directly reflects on the theatre situation, and the experience of the audience. Taking theatre as essentially a meeting, Andy creates a highly self-reflective theatre that is deeply concerned with the socio-cultural function of the art-form.

The idea of self-consciousness also extends to the interrogation of audience experience and acts of spectatorship by and in the work itself. Dorian Šilec Petek has constructed a work that encourages the audience to reflect on their act of being an audience, and their expectations and assumptions about meaning, whilst of course being an audience to the work as well. And the experience offered by Sanne van Rijn and Johnny's Horse, whilst not overtly self-conscious, takes the audience on such a rigorously contained journey that it is difficult not to re-assess expectations and reflect on the experience as it is happening.

And then there's the work of Mareike Wenzel and the New Collective from Georgia. Whilst at the time of writing we still don't know whether New Collective will be allowed into the country (as we still try to prove that they are 'genuine visitors'), the way the piece engages with ideas of home and nationhood, the stories of people in one place wanting to be in another, and what it means to be 'welcome' if and when you ever get there, offers an uncomfortable self-consciousness, an acutely current reflection on 'otherness' that an international festival like this is supposed to be so happily celebrating.

So then, perhaps, there were some aesthetic criteria. Perhaps we were looking for work involved in a self-conscious examination of theatre and language, work that employed new frames and structures, that took on the significance and materiality of the body and its organization in the performance space, that reassessed theatre experience whilst engaging with the cultural resonances of all these, amongst other things.

But I can also guarantee that we will not have these in mind, and that even if we do we will not want to trust them, or any other criteria, to determine whether a piece should be selected for a future Flare festival. There is something about art's ability to outrun such rationalisations that is at the heart of why we do this.

The question of Flare's 'international' status is a final concern worth sharing. Part of the point of running an international festival is to bring together work that is geographically diverse, to allow those who witness it access to this sense of diversity, even if there are areas of commonality in evidence too. And it's not a European festival, so the diversity should really encompass at least some elements of the trans-continental (assuming we are allowed to).

And yet our conception of an international festival of innovative theatre is not talking about theatre practices that are innovative in relation to the cultural and artistic contexts they were developed in, but rather work that audiences in the UK would see as innovative, that retains a sense of cultural resonance for this context, the cultural context of the festival. Despite the political anxieties of western liberalism, this is an act of curation that is attempting to be rigorous in artistic terms, that perhaps is accepting its euro-centricity in its desire to sidestep an intercultural political agenda and maintain an artistic one.

We'd love to hear from anyone who comes to FLARE15, to know if any of these ideas resonate for you across what we hope will be a hugely stimulating 6 days.

Neil Mackenzie
Artistic Director of FLARE15

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

Talk Back

A series of chaired sessions where the audience and the artists get to discuss the performances, mostly from the night before. *Wednesday 15 July 11:00 at Contact, Thursday 16 July 11:00 at Cross St Chapel, Friday 17 July 15:00 at Z-arts, Saturday 18 July 14:00 at Contact.*

The FLARE15 Open Forum

Your chance to hear and discuss a range of issues chosen by some of the international artists at Flare, in dialogue with leading figures in new UK theatre, and chaired by theatre academic Dr Patrick Campbell. *Wednesday 15 July 14:30 at Contact.*

WORKSHOPS

Wake up and tune in

A chance to spend quality time at the start of a busy festival day paying attention to your own sense of wellbeing with Feldenkrais practitioner Teresa Brayshaw. *Wednesday 15 July 09:30 at Contact, Friday 17 July 09:30 at Z-arts.*

Your words

A workshop with *Sleepwalk Collective* exploring ideas and strategies drawing from their experience of creating performance across genres, cultures and languages. It will focus on practical, DIY approaches to developing text – spoken and otherwise – and creating material for end-on theatres and intimate encounters. *Tuesday 14 July 11:00 at Contact.*

What we can do with what we have got

A workshop with *Andy Smith* revealing some of the processes behind his new show, 'The Preston Bill', exploring the practical application of a theatre that uses little physical material, plus ideas of writing and performing, the use of objects and the imagination, and what it might mean to be an audience in a theatre. *Friday 17 July 11:00 at Z-arts.*

Flare artist workshops

Two more workshops are promised at these times, run by Flare artists and associates to be confirmed – see website for details. *Thursday 16 July 14:00 at Contact, Saturday 18 July 11:00 at Z-arts.*

All sessions are FREE. To book your workshop place or other participation enquiries, please contact alice@flarefestival.com. Details may change – please check the website.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

MONDAY 13 JULY

19:30 FESTIVAL OPENING Contact £12 (£8)

Official Opening

Sleepwalk Collective – As the flames rose we danced to the sirens, the sirens

Installation *Mareike Wenzel & the New Collective – Welcome*

Live music *Becca Williams and Natalie McCool*

TUESDAY 14 JULY

Installation *Mareike Wenzel & the New Collective – Welcome* Contact

14:30 *Jorge Dutor and Guillem Mont de Palol – #losmicrófonos* Royal Exchange Theatre £12 (£8)

17:00 FUTURE FLARES – UK STUDENTS Martin Harris Centre £5

Ashley Williams/University of Chichester – The Circulation Game

Leentje Van de Cruys/University of Salford – Whoaaa Steady!

19:30 TRIPLE BILL Contact £12 (£8)

Hannah Sullivan – With Force and Noise

Figs In Wigs – Dance Peas

Sanne Van Rijn/HKU/Johnny's Horse – For Thine

WEDNESDAY 15 JULY

Installation *Mareike Wenzel & the New Collective – Welcome* Contact

13:00 *Jamal Harewood – The Privileged* Contact £5

17:00 FUTURE FLARES – WORKS IN PROGRESS Martin Harris Centre £5

Rachael Clerke – Concrete

Antoine Fraval – When you talk about “The Swimmer” will you talk about yourself?

19:30 *Jorge Dutor and Guillem Mont de Palol – #losmicrófonos* Royal Exchange Theatre £12 (£8)

19:30 TRIPLE BILL Z-arts £12 (£8)

Daan van Bendegeem – Who's afraid of red, yellow and blue

Dorian Šilec Petek – You need the glass and you need the milk

Ja Ja Ja Ne Ne Ne – Fight, fight, that is all we can do

THURSDAY 16 JULY

Installation *Mareike Wenzel & the New Collective – Welcome* Contact

14:30 *Hof van Eede – Where the world is going, that's where we are going* Royal Exchange Theatre £12 (£8)

17:00 *Christians Schwenk – J.U.D.I.T.H.* Martin Harris Centre £5

19:30 DOUBLE BILL Contact £12 (£8)

El Conde de Torrefiel – Scenes for a conversation after viewing a Michael Haneke film

Sleepwalk Collective – Actress

FRIDAY 17 JULY

Ongoing *Mareike Wenzel & the New Collective – Welcome (installation)* Contact

14:00 *Andy Smith – The Preston Bill (work in progress)* Z-arts £5

19:30 *Hof van Eede – Where the world is going, that's where we are going* Royal Exchange £12 (£8)

19:30 TRIPLE BILL Contact £12 (£8)

Tamar Blom and Kajetan Uranitsch – Body On

Tiana Hemlock-Yensen – You are kind of like a hairy stranger I know

Thomas Martin – Professional Supervision

SATURDAY 18 JULY

12:00 *Jamal Harewood – The Privileged* Contact £5

18:30 *Andy Smith – The Preston Bill (work in progress)* Royal Exchange Theatre £5

20:00 THE EXTRAORDINARY FLARE PARTY Z-arts £12 (£8)

featuring *Irreverent Sideshows – Reservoir Ducks/Duck and Cover*

Live music *Joyce D'Vision, Organ Freeman*

Host *Jana Kennedy*

Flare Producers Alice Withers, Christie Hill, Gareth Cutter, James Barker, Sarah Sharp and Susan Wareham.

Artistic Director Neil Mackenzie, General Director Jackie Crozier, Audience Director Clare Simpson, Production Manager Chris Whitwood, Paper Editor Andrew Haydon, Admin Assistant Laura Kendall.

Many thanks to all the Flare volunteers and technicians, all the venue staff and directors, all MMU Contemporary Arts staff and technicians, and to the Flare advisory board Kevin Egan, Annie Lloyd, Leanne Feeley and Teresa Brayshaw.

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