

CREATE

York St John
University

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The magazine for Theatre at York St John University

ISSUE 8. CREATE FESTIVAL EDITION. SPRING 2014

THEATRE PAGES

ISSUE 8.

Editors:

Kiran Tanna and Matthew Reason

The Create Festival is York St John's annual graduate showcase, featuring hundreds of performances, screenings and exhibitions created by undergraduate and postgraduate students. In this issue of Theatre Pages we celebrate the wealth of theatre and performance work in this year's festival. Come along – and don't forget to book your tickets.

You might witness a soaking wet dog solving a murder, an absent author dealing with bickering characters, a physical theatre piece investigating god, death and kissing, a miscarriage of justice and the big bad wolf. There is work about love, remorse and loss produced by students who engaged with women at HMP Askham Grange and a participatory theatre project that explores the joys, pitfalls and impact of social media on adolescent life.

This work has been made by students who will be the creative agents and producers of the future; it is the result of a theatre programme that asks students to be contemporary, relevant and creative, to be aware of the world around them and to consider what it means to be compassionate.

Cover image: from The Wood Between Worlds, Lizzy Whynes. Photo: Jen Todman.

If you have any suggestions for future issues of Theatre Pages, or would like to find out more about Theatre at YSJU, then please visit us at www.yorks.ac.uk/theatre or email theatrepages@gmail.com or m.reason@yorks.ac.uk

FESTIVAL LISTINGS

13th May. 7.30pm. Theatres 1 and 3, Arts Workshop. Jess Chaney. *We Are Three*. Charlotte Goodlad. *And Then It Just Happened*. Kirsty Wolff. *Wolf Pact*.

13th May. 9.00pm. York St John Quad. Level One Ensemble Theatre. *To The Very End*.

14th May. 6.00pm. Theatre 3. KMA Theatre. *Decadence*.

15th May. 1.00pm and 3.00pm. Theatre 3. Inverse Theatre. *1984 Was Not Supposed To Be An instruction Manual*.

15th May. 6.00pm. Theatre 1. Faceless Theatre. *TTFN*.

15th May. 9.00pm. The Duchess, York. at least for now. *Tommy*.

16th May. 12.00pm Arts Workshop. Open Minds Theatre Company. *In Memory Of*.

16th May. 4.00pm. Theatre 3. Beyond The Walls. *Chocolate*.

16th May. 6.00pm. Theatre 1. JIMJAMS. *Little Red Riding Hood*.

19th May. 6.00pm. Theatre 1. Dopamine Theatre. *Christmas In May*.

19th May. 6.00pm. The Basement Bar at City Screen, York. MA Theatre Commission. *Madsen At The Basement*.

20th May. 4.00pm. Theatre 3. Something In The End. The Show With No Name.

20th May. 5.00pm and 9.30pm. Theatre 1. Meander Indoors. *AuthorArthurArthurAuthor*.

22nd May. 3.00pm. Theatre 1. For Me and My Lilly Collective. *And Then What?*

27th May. 1.00pm. Theatre 1. Empty Mask Theatre. *Butterfly*.

27th May. 3.00pm. Theatre 2. Ben Rosenfield. *Fireball XL5*.

27th May. 5.00pm. Theatre 3. Lizzy Whynes. *The Wood between Two Worlds*.

Create Festival Theatre Opening Night

Selected performances, taking place on the first evening of Create

This year, the Create Festival will open with a series of performances, selected from amongst the most exciting and diverse studio based work created and staged this year by students at YSJ.

Performances will take place in various studios from 7.30pm.

The night will also feature an epic outdoor performance, devised and performed by the Level One Ensemble and performed after dark, from 9.00pm, in the Quad.

Background image: Kirsty Wolff and Alistair Wolff. From: *Wolff Pact*.

Performances to include:

Wolff Pact – Kirsty Wolff, in collaboration with Alistair Wolff

Alistair doesn't do theatre. He wants to be a primary school teacher, but he has agreed to perform with me today so I owe him one!

We would like to dedicate this performance to Jonathan and Maggie Wolff, Prokofiev and Micheal Flatley.

We Are Three – Amy Woodier, Hattie Slevin and Jess Chaney

We are three,

Three and me,

We and you,

You can see...

Imagine yourself where a Teddy Bears' Picnic meets a Mad Hatters' Tea Party and you might just find yourself at three, me, we, you see?

Where the stories are true and the confessions are cheap!

And Then It Just Happened – Charlotte Goodlad

There's an unspoken discourse, and I'm trying to fill it.

I'm forgiving myself, I'm trying.

I invite you, me, us - to fill the void.

'Girls are under systematic pressure not to feel, know or act on sexual desire. It covers up both our consistent refusal to offer girls any guidance for acknowledging, negotiating and integrating their own sexual desire and the consequences of our refusal: sexual intercourse - most often unprotected, that 'just happens' to girls' - Deborah Tolman.

An honest, autobiographical performance, built on a foundation of anecdotes and poetry, written by Charlotte Goodlad and curated by Olivia Barr.

To The Very End – a Level One Ensemble Theatre Production

To The Very End is the culmination of a year's work by a cast and crew of over fifty people. It will be performed by an ensemble of Level One students.

More information overleaf.

To The Very End

Ensemble Theatre

Over twelve weeks of intensive devising from the characters in Bill Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Level 1 Theatre Students have created a large-scale, outdoor, ensemble production. *To The Very End* constructs theatrical images taking inspiration from the world of fine art, photography and specifically in theatre Bob Wilson's ideas of Landscape, Portrait & Still Life.

Students adopt the roles of performers, directors, stage managers, costume, prop and set designers, marketing and publicity officers as well as sound and lighting operator. This is a production of Level 1 students by Level 1 students and is a culmination of experiments and improvisations in contemporary theatre practice that have been the backbone of their first year experience at York St John.

Lettuce begin.

We see a portrait of a young prince holding in his outstretched hand a beautiful forest green lettuce.

We hear Pete Seeger singing to us from beyond the grave.

We watch projected images of fragmented limbs flickering.

We witness the worst Best Man's speech in history and fight the urge to laugh.

We see a landscape of flowers, the intensity, perfume and suffocating abundance.

We see a landscape.

We see a still life.

We feel a ghostly presence.

We hear crying, hysterical laughing and the occasional name calling out in the darkness. We feel the rhythm of the endless beat.

We wait for someone to move.

We wait to be moved.

We wait for images to emerge, for the picture to arrive and depart.

We hear singing.

We are here, ghostly apparitions and phantom thoughts.

We are the visible invisible.

We see women. We see a woman.

We see a woman, stood, defiant, powerful, refusing to play the game anymore.



Decadence

KMA Theatre

Decadence, written by Steven Berkoff and interpreted by KMA Theatre, explores diverse social issues such as class, gender, ethnicity, and the social decay that resulted from Thatcher era consumerist capitalism.

It approaches these social issues with a gritty and dark, physical and textual dramaturgy which responds to these in a transgressive way.

The play highlights the faults of society and the resulting travesty of the social decay through compositional techniques such as juxtaposition and fragmentation.

KMA Theatre have spent the last twelve months developing the project through intensive research, both theoretical and performative, which explores the ethics of contemporary English society.

What does it mean to be English in the 21st Century?

What are the social and ethical issues faced by contemporary England?

What are the origins of these social and ethical issues?

How can we overcome these issues?

These questions have stemmed from much more general discourses of contemporary politics and the role of performance and artistic practice in facilitating discussions of social change.

We aim to create work that actively contributes to a social discourse. We believe that performance practice can and should make a statement and have a message, that performance practice can and should be revolutionary rather than reactionary; that performance practice should make all involved in the process think critically and leave with more questions than they started out with.

We subvert existing performance styles – both contemporary and traditional – to achieve our goals. Our politics, the politics of creative resistance and those of creative activism, are informed by questions of identity and the need to use performance practice to both understand and respond to questions about who we are.

KMA Theatre are Rebecca Chambers, Jenna Sambou, Adam Browne and Lara Hamilton.



1984 Was Not Supposed To Be An Instruction Manual

Inverse Theatre



In a time when so much personal information is disclosed, Inverse Theatre tries to deal with the ever increasing surveillance culture we find ourselves in. Through our practice we aim to explore control, oppression and loss of privacy. How much are we willing to sacrifice for the prospect of security?

1984 Was Not Supposed To Be An Instruction Manual explores the past, present and future of four people; their love, their dreams and their inevitable conformity to the dystopian future.

In this show identity is stripped away until it only exists on a screen, social interaction is deteriorating and relationships, which were once so strong, cease to exist. Could the very essence of what it means to be human be diminishing slowly through the generations, giving rise to the perfect online shadows of a supposed super-human?

“Bags packed, small, but filled with big dreams. As a bird leaving the nest for the first time, you flew. Close to the sun, your wings refusing to melt. For your heart burns hotter than any star. The twinkle in the night is that of your eye, I cannot help gazing. But I ask how long until the clouds blanket the sky? Because even the brightest fire is extinguished eventually.”



Inverse Theatre are Callum Davies, Becky Wood, Charlie Holliday, Jordan Fisher and Andrew Giblin.

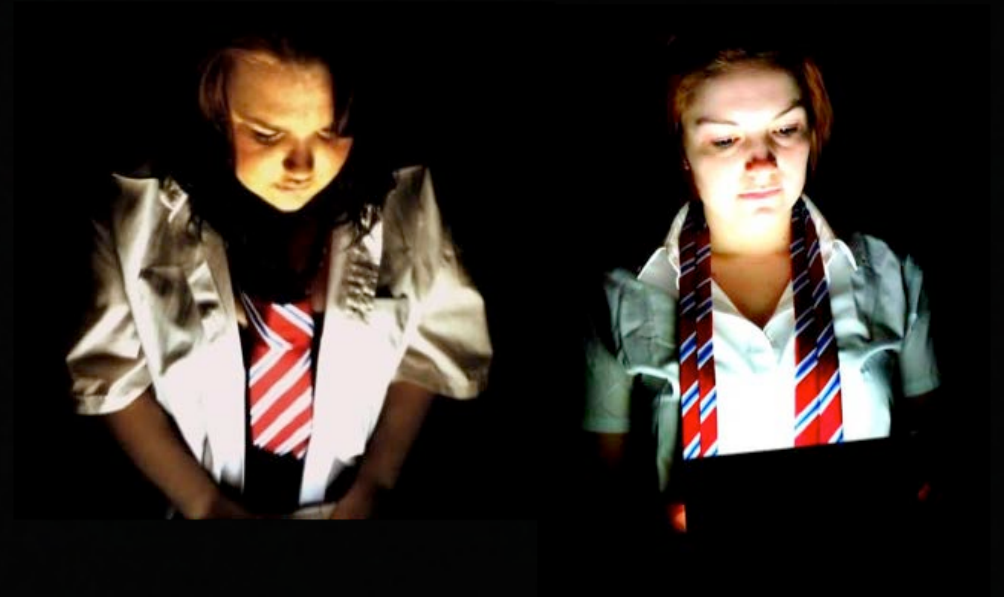
TTFN

Faceless Theatre

Faceless Theatre make performances by gathering experiences and conversations held in workshops. We seek to explore current issues amongst young people through the medium of performance to bring about a dialogue on topics that some may find hard to express verbally.

TTFN encourages a conversation on the use and misuse of social media. With anonymity at the end of your fingertips, how deep can you go into the virtual world of the internet without it blurring the boundary of online and reality?

Faceless Theatre are Melissa Mallin, Catherine Mills, Cheryl Potts and Moya Dawson.



Tommy

at least for now

We came together on the sunny lawn of York St John's Quad a number of weeks after starting university, desperate to make some theatre for us and our audience.

at least for now theatre was then formed by fresh faced and naive first year theatre students ready to make theatre that would change the world. Two years, four shows, five best friends, endless amounts of laughter and in August, one company wedding later, and here we are.

Our new piece is called *Tommy* and is representative of our three years here: the good, the bad and the down-right ugly. It takes a look at humanity, mortality and the world in which we find ourselves. It also involves a little bit of magic, a song or two and a wet dog. We know. It sounds strange. We celebrate the happiness of living when we collaborate against adversity and join together for a revolution.

We are performing in The Duchess, York - it's a great space for this Cabaret style show. We can't wait to see you there as we sign off a chapter and celebrate our three years together.



at least for now are Amy Camsell, James Norris, James Aconley, Niki Morton and Kirsty Wolff.

at least for now
theatre

In Memory Of

Open Minds Theatre Company

Dear Audience,

Have you ever noticed that on a first date, when you meet that someone for the first time, it is a lot like an unsent letter? Like the letter you have never sent there are so many things that you want to say but you just can't. So many words but not enough courage to let them be.

Do you remember as a child, how fearless you were to say things and to be honest? When others who were older and perhaps wiser would say nothing at all? We remember. We remember playing in our safe havens, our own hand made dens where our own naïve truths of the world and our fantasies would intertwine.

We want you to come with us on this journey, we want you, if only for a short time, to think of your childhood, your memories, and your loved ones.

We extend this invitation to you to visit James and Anna's den. To hear our unsent letters, the ones we wish we could have said in words but never got the chance. We invite you to share with us those letters, those words you wish you could have said.

We hope that you can make it.

From,

Open Minds Theatre Company

Open Minds Theatre Company are
Anna Railton and James Lane

James

Anna



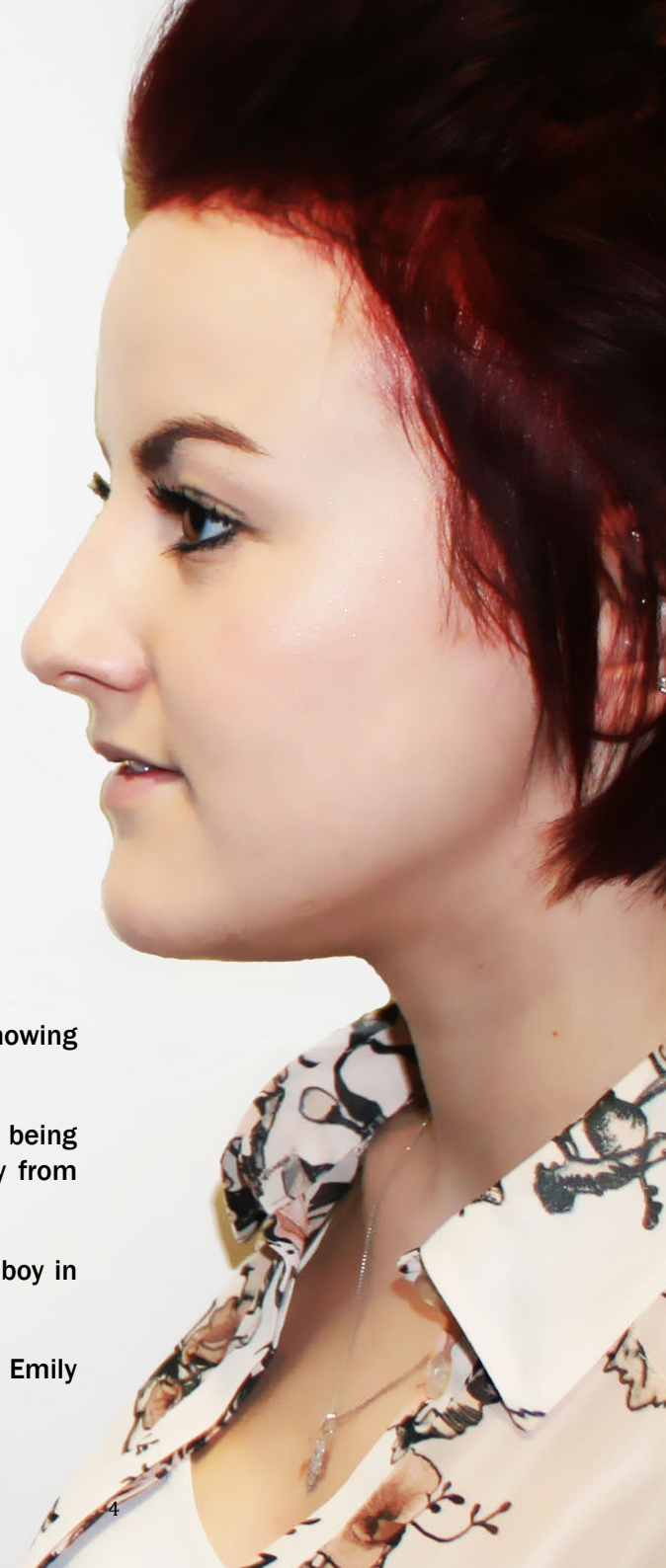
Chocolate

Beyond The Walls Theatre

We aim to become the voice of others. To spread their stories in both past and present, so that the numbers, statistics and stereotypes can be lost and the individuals can step forward. We focus on creating theatre with and about people leaving or about to leave prison, in order to examine the obstacles that may get in their way. Our aim is to create performances that change people's preconceptions about offenders and hear the voices not normally heard, but bound by statistics, cliches and the criminal justice system.

In *Chocolate* we discover what becomes of two sisters who were once inseparable and how one mistake could cost you everything. We aim to consider prison life, on both the inside and the outside.

Jamie and Lydia have spent eight years living similar lives. Jamie on the inside, Lydia on the out.



How does Lydia cope with knowing what her sister did?

How does Jamie cope with being released back into the society from which she came?

And who looks after the little boy in the middle?

Beyond The Walls Theatre are Emily Nardone and Danni Ellis.

Little Red Riding Hood

JIMJAMS

JIMJAMS Theatre Company make quality theatre for children. They invite their audiences into a world where playful imagination is in control and stories are brought to life.

In *Little Red Riding Hood* JIMJAMS present an adaptation of the classic fairy tale. The plot is developed by an ensemble of three little wolves as they present an alternative perspective to the original, trying to stop their father being labelled as The Big Bad Wolf.

Through song, dance and multi-rolling characters, the performance presents a plethora of opportunities to see and consider issues surrounding ecology and family diversity within a creative environment.

Their thematic decisions are sophisticated and often microcosmic, however, they explore these in a jovial, light-hearted way in order to support children as their emotions are liberated by their work. This classic fairytale come court room drama is fun for all the family. JIMJAMS Theatre Company tours to schools, studio theatres and other small venues. If you are ready to see an array of colourful characters playing in a vibrant setting with silly antics and live music, then join JIMJAMS as they make their debut this May.

JIMJAMS are Adam Waslin, Michaela Pascall and Alex Holderness.

Christmas in May

Dopamine Theatre

As individuals and as a group we are privileged to have experienced and interacted with a wide range of talented theatre makers. Here is where we draw the majority of our example in terms of technique and we use these to create work that successfully challenges the ordinary and preconceived.

The techniques and inspiration that we gain from the experiences and research we carry out all contribute to our own unique creation process.

Dopamine Theatre are reinventing Christmas, using a multi sensory environment. We devise texts and movement where the audience is immersed in a festive world, full of holiday memories.

Audience participation is another major element of our work. We seek to create work that provides an audience with a fully immersive and impactful environment. We make work that we believe falls into the category of a "performative event". A piece that allows the audience to freely experience the environment intersected by moments of emphatic performativity.

Dopamine Theatre are Mikhail Lim, Kathryn Sabourn, Devon Blood, Claire Edwards, Anise Francis and Helena Hadden.



The Show With No Name

Something in the End

Something in the End Theatre Company are four friends united by a shared passion for theatre and performance art, and a love of all things dark, sinister and fantastical.

Four women, who might all be the same person, discuss existentialism, memories, time and the meaning of life through the medium of hot tea and nonsense poems. *The Show with No Name* is an enjoyable, dark performance from a superfluous company.

Beginning as an exploration into the darker aspects of Lewis Carroll's iconic *Alice in Wonderland*, the company's work has evolved to deal with a the human need for escapism and the desire for something a little beyond the ordinary.

Please feel free to come along and join us! Even if Alice isn't amongst us at the table, with the cat and the hat and the hare; so we think, there's still a lovely tea party being held where everything lends itself to changing your state of mind, but there really is no doubt that we're still all mad here.

Something in the End are Sophie Graham, Naomi Stead, Rosie Balla and Leafy (Charlotte) Leaf.



~~AUTHOR~~ARTHUR ~~ARTHUR~~AUTHOR

Meander Indoors

Hello there! So glad you've managed to find this page... Got a couple of minutes? Good. Read on. No?

S'alright. Jog on.

We are Meander Indoors; a theatrical sextuplet founded in York, est. 2013. We don't believe in much, other than simplicity, uncertainty and absurdity.

The work we find ourselves producing follows our beliefs; simple, uncertain and absurd, with a book load of word play thrown in there for good measure. All in all, we believe in humanity and communication; that words have evolved for the purpose of communicating with others civilly, instead of throwing our arms around like some buffoonish Meander-er- Neanderthal.

When something major happens, we find six chairs, six light bulbs and five characters suddenly presented with the freedom to think for themselves. Of course, things get heated and doubt quickly settles among the group.

The very fabric of narrative, meaning and identity begins to wane, leaving them susceptible to the threat of

dodgy voices, compulsive foot disorders and God awful 60s pop-culture references.

Meander Indoors present AuthorArthurArthurAuthor.

Meander Indoors are Jonny Curd, Kym Kitching Ben Rosenfield Elizabeth Whynes, Charlotte Goodlad and Simon Bedwell.



And Then What?

For Me and My Lilly Collective

This is about us questioning our existence. It is about questioning what happens when we die and how we feel about dying. It is about questioning our philosophies, our faith, our fears, our obsessions and our intrigue.

We discuss. We discuss through our bodies, through the rhythm we create, the words we speak, the images we make, the challenges we face and our explanations. We have no answers; but we have questions, expectations, beliefs and fears. We put these questions to you, to react. We ask you to ponder *your own* existence and to feed *your* intrigue.

Through performance, we hope to gain insight into the ineffable processes of life.

We put this into practice through performative techniques such as:

Movement

Text,

Image,

Song,

Rhythm,

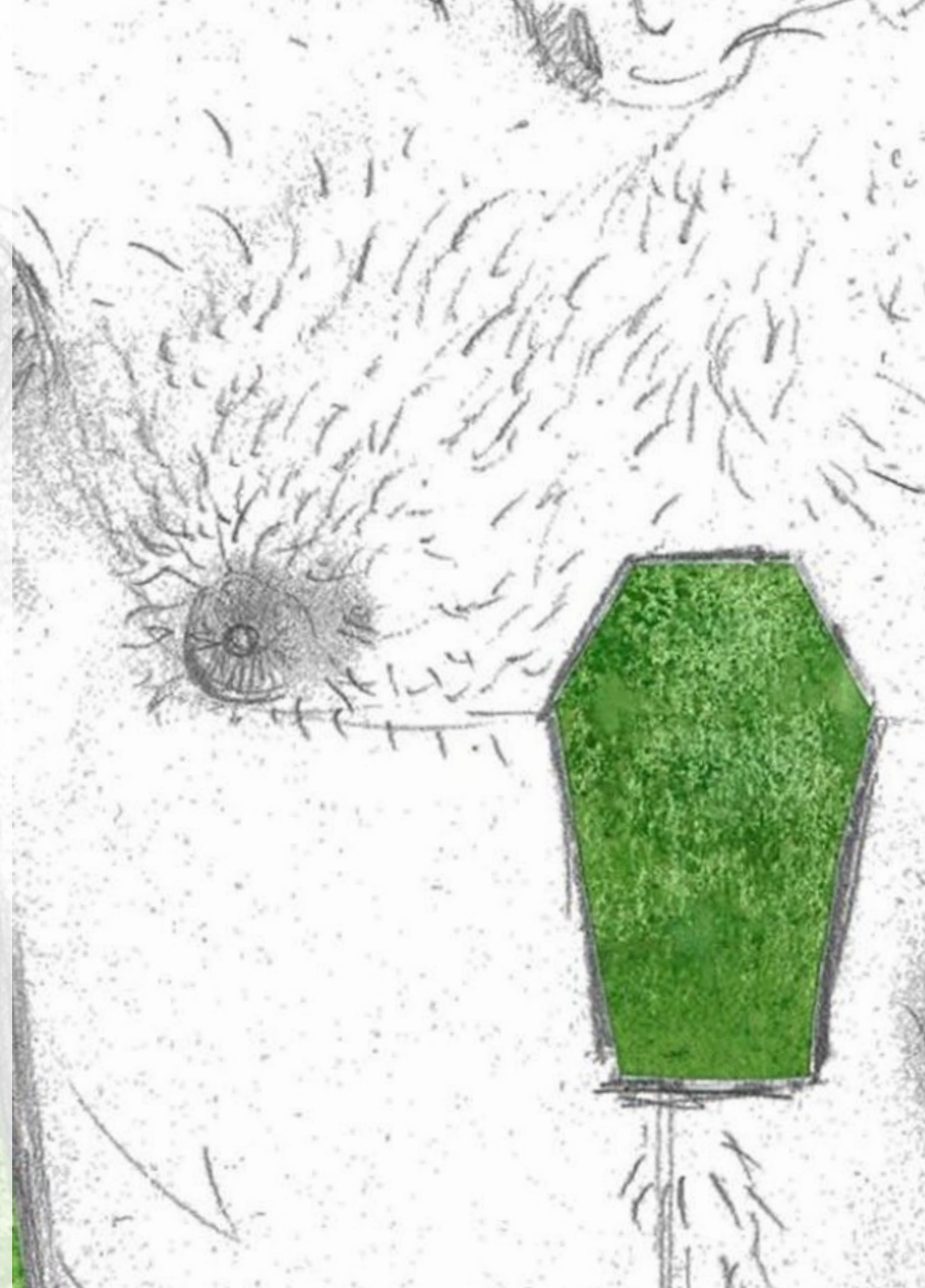
Conversation,

And risk.

We ask the question:

'And then what?'

For Me and My Lilly Collective are Liv Barr, Gwen Pritchard, Tom Stevens and Tom Stubbings.



Madsen At The Basement MA Commission

Madsen at The Basement is a mixed bag. It is a night of actions and interventions at the City Screen Basement Bar – inspired by the eclectic Madsen Collection and commissioned by York Art Gallery.

The Basement Bar at City Screen is accessible from Cony Street, York City Centre.

Entrance is FREE and tickets are available online from yorksja.ac.uk

Beer, wine and food will be available from the bar until 11pm!

Performances have been created and curated by Mercedes Cragg, Lawrence Crawford, Yasmin Porritt, Victoria Sharples and Kiran Tanna.

That Look She Gives – performed by Mercedes Cragg

A short performance exploring the women behind Pre-Raphaelite painting: how they lived and where they grew up; their marriages and their childhoods; the thoughts that resided behind their long, luscious hair and masculine, beautiful faces. A testimony to the portrayal of women in art.

THE JUDAS CUT – performed by Lawrence Crawford

Come and perform your very own autopsy – live on stage!

No experience necessary!

Incision, separation, removal, return; and it's 100% Meat Free!

The Hysterically Mute Woman – performed by Yasmin Porritt

A woman brushes off the dust – oh so theatrically – but only four things strike her.

Relics – carefully stowed away and played with. Reminiscent of a place where time has not yet taken its toll.

She invites you into a world – to visit these things – and life is breathed into them once more.

LINES OF FLIGHT – performed by Kiran Tanna

A series of moments – meanings – stories – thoughts – all strung together – spiralling outward – and in the background – as the background dims – voices – and tracks – as it fades – and falls away.

A series of miniature monologues and short lectures spread out across the evening.

(wo)man stow – performed by Victoria Sharples

'I have made you a story all for yourself'

Peeping out and peering in-
Stuck, stored in that trunk.

Hidden from button-bridal
sight- shipped up, sent still-

Waiting...

In dust and decay-

The pending (wo)man stowed
and secure.

Words emerge, shoulders of
words, legs, arms, hand and
palms-

Cocoon and collect-

Ready to story-share- scr-
ritch, scratch, scratch, scritch



Image: Askham Grange. Photo courtesy of Askham Grange

The Prison Partnership Project

Since September 2013 the Prison Partnership Project has provided theatre and fine arts students from York St John the opportunity of gaining experience from working inside Askham Grange prison.

Run in collaboration with the nationally acclaimed theatre company Clean Break and HMP

Askham Grange, the project was born out of the desire to provide a unique, creative partnership between education, the arts and the prison service.

The project aims to give students the invaluable experience of working in the community and provides a real-world understanding of the impact of the arts within a criminal justice setting.

The Prison Partnership Project also aims to provide the women residents with the opportunity to develop creative and life skills in line with their resettlement plans approaching release into the community.

By going behind the walls of the prison, the Prison Partnership Project brings together two different kinds of communities – university students and women prisoners – which in other circumstances would never meet. Our perception of prison, and how we see the women within it, is largely built from what the media and society tells us. Often this is that these people within prison are not like us – they are excluded, silenced and dismissed.

The aim of the project is to merge these two worlds so that the participants come together, engage in an arts process and gain understandings that go beyond myth and stigma. Through such encounters across profound social barriers, the aim is for both communities to be part of a transformative learning experience that emphasises collaboration, dialogue and addresses issues of social concern.

Through the creative arts process social issues and stories are discussed, facilitating deeper understanding of self, community and justice.

One of the ways in which decision makers of the future are going to affect social change, is to encourage them to look beyond their own selves and own community, to nurture a wider perspective that listens and debates rather than simply accepts and does not challenge.

The importance of the face-to-face encounter in the process of taking responsibility for all our community is absolutely central. After a genuine face-to-face exchange it is impossible simply to shrug our shoulders and dismiss challenges

By creating theatre and facilitating an arts process that encourages an equal voice in the learning process, both communities can experience thinking that enables them to see each other as real people.

The project is clear in not aiming to address the women's offending behaviour, but instead inspires change in individuals and in so doing energises new ways of seeing and sharing personal and community narratives. It builds confidence through the process of learning and enhances the participants' sense of autonomy.

For the students it provides a learning environment in which to embrace difference, challenge prejudice and to witness the power of the arts to transform lives.

Student Involvement

In this first year of the partnership, level 2 and 3 undergraduate theatre students have run weekly drama and singing workshops in the prison. Level 2 fine art students are currently starting a 10-week art placement in the prison.

Two level 3 theatre students, Danni Ellis and Emily Nardone, took part in the Clean Break theatre residency in the prison. Together they have developed a practice as theatre makers concerned with women in the criminal justice system. Their research has taken them to the York court service, to the national organisation Prisoners' Friends and Families Service and to see Clean Break's searing new play *Pests*. Together they have formed a theatre company called Beyond the Walls and their performance *Chocolate* is in this year's Create festival.

Due to the success of the singing workshops the Prison Partnership Project has employed two theatre students, Melissa Mallin and James Alconley, as freelance practitioners to continue working in the prison after finishing their degree. Melissa is also working as a student researcher to evaluate the impact of the project along with theatre graduate, Lisa Thornton, who has been awarded a graduate internship.

Further funding from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation will also support the development of a creative arts project that will work with women living in the wider York community who have experience of the criminal justice system.

This project will be delivered on campus at YSJ, and will work with outside support agencies in mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence and probation services that already support and work with women in the community.

"During the last twelve months the partnership with York St John has gone from strength to strength and has evolved into a positive experience that residents at Askham Grange can enjoy. This can be done through either participation or observation with the project."

"The benefits to residents can be vast including self confidence and self esteem building, there are positive working relationships amongst residents and also working with the students of YSJ, these have given residents a focus to achieve their personal targets constructively while in custody."

- Michelle Daly, Learning Skills and Employment Manager, HMP Askham Grange

Rachel Conlon, Senior Lecturer in Applied Theatre

Like many who are passionate about making art in social contexts my engagement with theatre and prisons has strong political and emotional resonances.

When I was an undergraduate theatre student myself, I entered HMP Style Prison, to take part in a drama project working with female offenders. I was in a place that housed women who had committed the unthinkable, but also women from a wide demographic and socio-economic background. I watched them and they watched me, both assessing, both imagining what we were like and why we were here.

Across those weeks of working there, getting used to the barred windows, acclimatizing to the noise of the wing and not feeling the stare of the officers any more, I instead focused on making moments of theatre and using drama as a tool for change. I began to realise that some of their stories of womanhood rang true to me too - they were very quickly becoming less "other" to me.

I began to experience a shift in my thinking. A closed prison is a shitty, horrible place, it bleeds pain and anguish and the system itself anaesthetises freethinking and possibility. For the majority of women with whom I have worked in

prison, harm reached them even before the moment they committed a crime. Poor housing, poverty, a lack of education, an emotionally malnourished childhood, violence and oppression. For some, their crime was a way out, a moment when prison would present itself as a viable option.

Time and time again I have meet women who bear hundreds of scars on their body, that look androgynous, that appear hard with an inner steeliness that is difficult to bear witness to at times.

But I also meet in these same women an honesty, a frankness that lays bare their trauma - and we find an at times unpalatable comfort in the fact that many of the women listening share the same stories.

They might have different characters in each, but essentially the defining moments of the narrative ring true. But until we take action and be bloody minded in our approach to female oppression and do not except that for some people "that is just life", we will continue to lock up women, we will continue to turn a blind eye to things that we don't really want to think about.

Words: Rachel Conlan.