



0930-1015

Wake Up and Tune in Workshop
The Flare Hub (FREE just turn up)

1030-1210

Talk Back Feedback Session discussing

Katie & Pip by Tin Can People, Boys Will Be Girls and Girls Will Be Boys by, ASK/Mole Wetherell, Castle Rock by Massive Owl

Baardeman by Simon de Winne/Tibaldus, Blind Cinema by Britt Hatzjus
The Flare Hub FREE (email liam@flarefestival to book)

1200-1235

PARTY: Beaches
The Flare Hub (£6 (£4)

1300-1344

Molar
Royal Exchange Theatre (FREE- just turn up)

1430-1505

PARTY: Beaches
The Flare Hub £6 (£4)

1430-1520

Sprachspiel
Royal Exchange £12 (£8)

1700-1815

FUTURE FLARES
Rise to Vertex
Martin Harris Centre £6 (£4)

1930-2020

Sprachspiel
Royal Exchange £12 (£8)

2000-2200

Double Bill—Someone Loves You Drive With Care/Breathe
The Lowry £12 (£8)

Double Bill – Baardeman / Castle Rock
HOME £12 (£8)

FLARE17 venues

HOME | 2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester | M15 4FN
 Homemcr.org | 0161 200 1500

Royal Exchange Theatre | St Ann's Square, Manchester | M2 7DH
 RoyalExchangeTheatre.co.uk | 0161 833 9833

The Lowry | Pier 8, The Quays, Salford | M50 3AZ
 Thelowry.com | 0843 208 6000

Contact | Oxford Rd, Manchester | M15 6JA
 contactmcr.com | 0161 274 0600

Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama | Bridgeford St, Manchester
 M13 9PL | martinharriscentre.manchester.ac.uk

The Flare Hub | No.70 Oxford Street, Manchester | M1 5NH

Contact Us.

Tickets from: www.flarefestival.com

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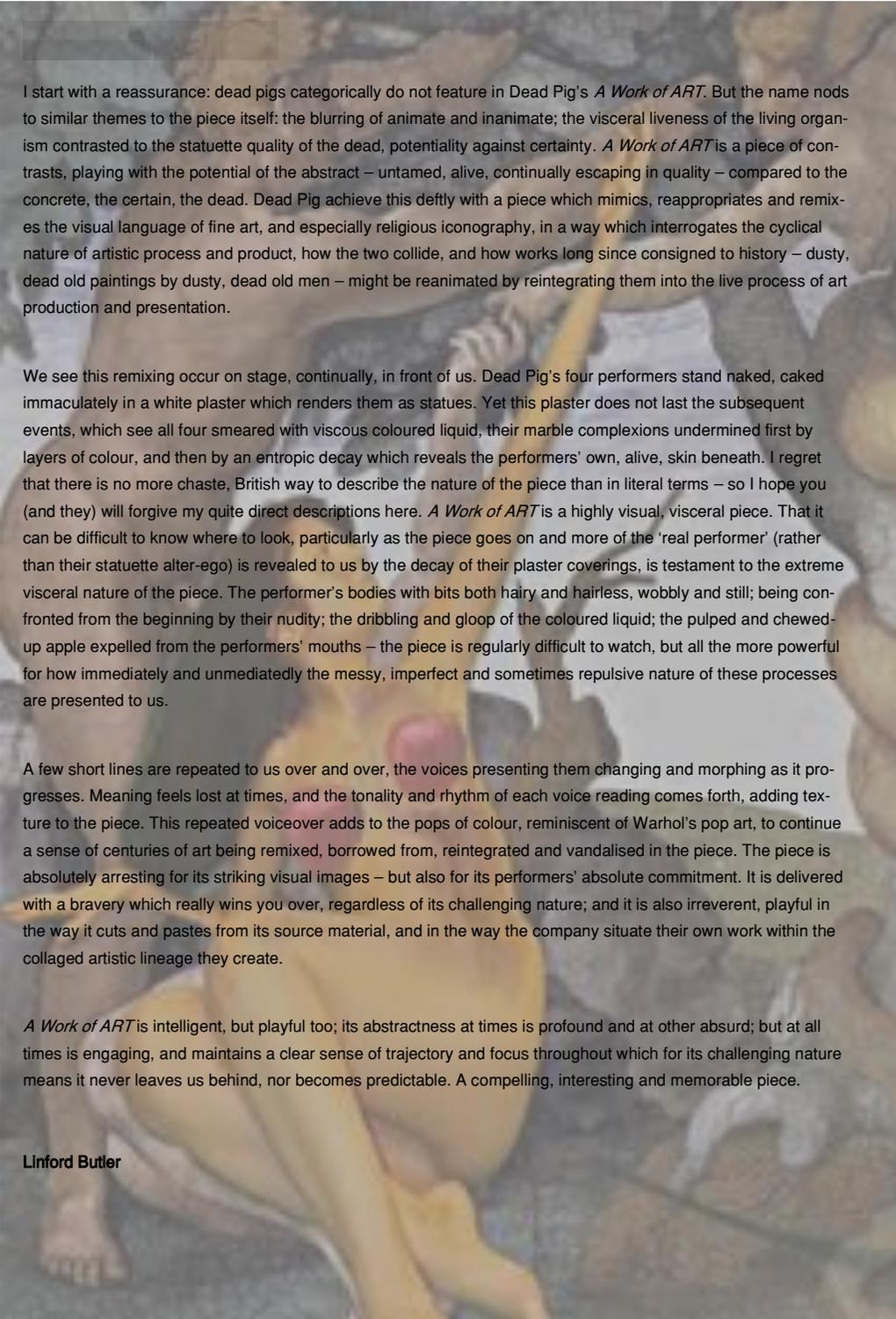
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#FLARE17

FLARE DAILY





I start with a reassurance: dead pigs categorically do not feature in Dead Pig's *A Work of ART*. But the name nods to similar themes to the piece itself: the blurring of animate and inanimate; the visceral liveness of the living organism contrasted to the statuette quality of the dead, potentiality against certainty. *A Work of ART* is a piece of contrasts, playing with the potential of the abstract – untamed, alive, continually escaping in quality – compared to the concrete, the certain, the dead. Dead Pig achieve this deftly with a piece which mimics, reappropriates and remixes the visual language of fine art, and especially religious iconography, in a way which interrogates the cyclical nature of artistic process and product, how the two collide, and how works long since consigned to history – dusty, dead old paintings by dusty, dead old men – might be reanimated by reintegrating them into the live process of art production and presentation.

We see this remixing occur on stage, continually, in front of us. Dead Pig's four performers stand naked, caked immaculately in a white plaster which renders them as statues. Yet this plaster does not last the subsequent events, which see all four smeared with viscous coloured liquid, their marble complexions undermined first by layers of colour, and then by an entropic decay which reveals the performers' own, alive, skin beneath. I regret that there is no more chaste, British way to describe the nature of the piece than in literal terms – so I hope you (and they) will forgive my quite direct descriptions here. *A Work of ART* is a highly visual, visceral piece. That it can be difficult to know where to look, particularly as the piece goes on and more of the 'real performer' (rather than their statuette alter-ego) is revealed to us by the decay of their plaster coverings, is testament to the extreme visceral nature of the piece. The performer's bodies with bits both hairy and hairless, wobbly and still; being confronted from the beginning by their nudity; the dribbling and gloop of the coloured liquid; the pulped and chewed-up apple expelled from the performers' mouths – the piece is regularly difficult to watch, but all the more powerful for how immediately and unmediatedly the messy, imperfect and sometimes repulsive nature of these processes are presented to us.

A few short lines are repeated to us over and over, the voices presenting them changing and morphing as it progresses. Meaning feels lost at times, and the tonality and rhythm of each voice reading comes forth, adding texture to the piece. This repeated voiceover adds to the pops of colour, reminiscent of Warhol's pop art, to continue a sense of centuries of art being remixed, borrowed from, reintegrated and vandalised in the piece. The piece is absolutely arresting for its striking visual images – but also for its performers' absolute commitment. It is delivered with a bravery which really wins you over, regardless of its challenging nature; and it is also irreverent, playful in the way it cuts and pastes from its source material, and in the way the company situate their own work within the collaged artistic lineage they create.

A Work of ART is intelligent, but playful too; its abstractness at times is profound and at other absurd; but at all times is engaging, and maintains a clear sense of trajectory and focus throughout which for its challenging nature means it never leaves us behind, nor becomes predictable. A compelling, interesting and memorable piece.

Linford Butler

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

In a generation obsessed with what it means to be identifiable, *Beauty and The Beast* (not to be confused with the Disney classic), written and performed by Enis Turan, throws you head first into a world and an atmosphere where traditional and accepted theatrical conventions have been thrown out the window.

Imagine sitting in a room, any room in complete darkness listening to the radio when out of nowhere a voice of calm wisdom and guidance echoes. This voice tells you simply everything is going to be ok and regardless of what others think, the best person you can be is you. This is the show. The concept is very simple, one actor and one mouthpiece a journey of self-discovery and acceptance and you, their ever adoring fans.

Playing out like an embellished Oscar-acceptance-speech, the performance takes you away from the comfort of your dark room and that once calm voice into an atmosphere where every word spoken feels like another pair of eyes staring at you, judging you. The very change from darkness to blinding light informs you this is a show that wants your attention, that it commands your attention.

The beginning entrance of an actor dressed like your favourite celebrity handing out autographs (imagine Lady Gaga) with ensuing photographer in tow already gives you an idea what the show has in store for you. Behind this façade, the show is deeply human and exposes stigmas and ideologies some would rather ignore. Over time, the "celebrity" appearance is stripped back, (quite literally) and on-stage is an actor tearing themselves apart for your entertainment, or is it enlightenment?

Beauty and the Beast is a show that leaves very little to the imagination, with dialogue that is personal yet repetitive. This is not to say the dialogue falls flat. Quite the opposite. It echoes around the space and each time it is spoken hits you harder than the last.

Overall it is a very unconventional show, often blurring the line between what is theatre, and what is reality. The strongest aspect of the show was towards its climax when spectators are invited onto the stage to reveal themselves in a hypnotic and strobe-light powered rave. This open inclusion or invitation of engaging spectators to become part of the performance reminds us (the viewer[s]) that these issues are not confined to a sole actor, but maybe also the person sat across from you. I found myself staring intently at the mass of bodies that joined the stage almost willing myself to be among them enjoying the very freedom of being myself.

This ending comes across like a celebration; a celebration of the actor completing the show and a celebration of people finally accepting who they are. It is a safe space in which all things are possible. However, there is something deeply unsettling (to me) about *Beauty and The Beast*, it is in parts, a journey of self-discovery while also being a stark warning to those who would choose to live in somebody else's shadow. As the show asks, "What is beauty, and what is the beast hidden in the beauty?" Its message is clear: stand out, ignore what society expects of you and live your life. Overall it is a highly provocative show that left me feeling inspired, yet also anxious for the coming days of a society built upon defining itself.

Kyle Higgins



The stage is draped with a tightly folded curtain. The harsh white contrasts with the black box theatre. An unseen male voice explains that we are watching a live exhibition of Bizet's tragic opera Carmen. Gradually the curtain begins to radiate yellow light accompanied by an overture from the opera.

The four scenes of the opera are curated into four live exhibitions showing artworks made from repurposed materials by Norberto Llopis, Luis Urculo and Bernhard Wilhelm and live performances from Guillem Mont De Palol, Jorge Dutor and The Romulus Singers.

Scene one: the curtain rises to reveal a bare stage, an amalgamation of plastics organised into various shapes creeps across the stage. Slowly a translucent material is inflated with air; she is a delicate beast. Quietly seducing the audience and swelling to the music, she blisters until filling the entire stage. Patience is forgiving and the scene is as beautiful as it is simple.

Scene two: two men dressed in multicoloured overalls begin to roll to and fro, banging a wooden stick onto the floor falling in and out of sync. It is difficult to recognise a connection with Carmen in this scene though independent of the stimulus is an interesting choreography of artworks. A chorus of bed-sheet ghosts in sunglasses pool in the space, a humorous addition to the abstract landscape. After the chorus exit the stage Mont De Palol and Dutor are knowingly coy as they delicately thread colourful strands and raise a blue plastic sky.

Scene three is the most abstract interpretation as Mont De Palol and Dutor patiently stack increasingly difficult and comical objects like a pack of cards only for them to fall. Each new sculpture more complex and colourful than the last. Eventually they appear to give up on this charade and take their fallen objects bravely and methodically off the stage in whimsical movements. The two male performers gradually removing their clothes as they do so.

Scene four: Mont De Palol in the nude whipping a long black rope. He is joined again by the chorus. Dutor sheds his disguise as one of the chorus and serenades Mont De Palol with promises of being his 'Sugar Daddy' if he will be his 'Gold Digger' it is an amusing yet wholesome expression of affection, a welcome human touch alongside the astute abstract scenes before it.

This is not an explicit rendition of Carmen but more of a radical interpretation; at times it can be hard to decipher what is going on. However, this is an intelligent and humorous piece of theatre with a strong identity.

Grand Applause is an accomplished work that playfully collaborates artistic styles and disciplines to enchant its audience.

Rebekka Platt



CIVILISATION

The three stories presented by Emma Gannon's *Civilisation* - of intolerance, antagonism and anger, and most importantly of the binary opposition of 'them' versus 'us' - offer us an insight into racist opinion and its contradictions. Gannon inventively applies a physiological understanding of the body's reaction to various situations as a frame through which such opinions might be reinterrogated. In doing so, it riffs on the clichés of racism and fascism, such as notions of blood 'purity'.

The piece still feels very much in its formative stages, yet there is much to enjoy here. Gannon is engaging as a performer and the text is inventive, presenting compelling and unexpected situations before problematising them. The concept itself is innovative, original and feels prescient in the current climate, at a time of increasing tension around race relations and the politicisation of the 'outsider', by no means a neutral status as it stands, but which is becoming an increasingly untenable position to be in. And Gannon's approach to the delicate subject matter is refreshingly direct, presenting us with the material to allow us the opportunity of conducting our own interrogation, rather than moralising on our behalf.

That boldness though needs to be facilitated by careful decision-making, particularly in its delivery, which I feel it lacks in its current form: if Gannon embodies the intolerant characters around which each of the stories form, the delivery would benefit from being braver, and delivered with a greater sense of antagonism, and perhaps delivering the more contentious material more directly to individual members of the audience. Opportunity arises here to implicate the audience, and consider their complicity in such agendas if they go unchallenged. Alternatively, if Gannon means to comment upon the opinions, it would help to do so more candidly. In its current form, this conceptual framing feels a little uncertain, and clarity around Gannon's role in the piece - as artist and performer - would do much to make the piece more accessible, and its message that much more tangible.

The physiological science feels important to the concept, and these moments - of synthesising the challenging narrative with complex scientific knowledge - are some of the most satisfying in the 20 minutes or so of current material. Yet while it feels this should be at the forefront, the frame through which the behaviour might be almost autopsied, deconstructed for understanding; these sections instead feel slightly underdeveloped, and clumsily integrated into the whole. I'd also like Gannon to enjoy the science more, to revel in it and have more fun, taking satisfaction in the near-deviancy of arguing even hypothetically that there might be a reason in science for such behaviours or ideas. There is a whole lot of potential here to set up the science earlier, to lead us through it, and to conduct the sort of nuanced, coldly unemotional scientific interrogation of such a contentious subject which is in such short supply, and which would be extremely bold, instead overshadowed by (at times) simplistic moralisation. There has to be care in this, to recognise the highly problematic and, indeed, reprehensible nature of some of the viewpoints put forward - but clarifying the framing will only help Gannon to put forward such views for examination in the direct way she seems to be aiming for with much greater success.

There are some great ideas in *Civilisation*, and a fearlessness in handling such complex subjects which must be applauded. With some careful thought and decision-making in its onwards development, particularly around the difficulty of framing the content, Gannon will surely be able to realise the promising and innovative concept demonstrated at FLARE17.

Linford Butler



BLIND CINEMA

An intense sense of intimacy and a pervasive eeriness characterise Britt Hatzius's *Blind Cinema*. A bold, striking and personal experience; the piece asks audiences to surrender their sight before the film begins, and in exchange are offered the opportunity to experience it through a surrogate – a schoolchild who narrates the film in a whisper. Their descriptions of its images and action become our pilot line. This replacement, of visual content with the linguistics of each child's narration, offers a rare opportunity to understand art through the lesser-mediated experience of a child, offered as they are agency to describe the film they see (and we don't) in their terms. Listened to through 'listening funnels', designed to amplify each child's whispers whilst also delivering the narration directly to the audience member, the experience is intimate. We each receive the narration separately, the film we're unable to see uniquely described to each audience member, so that each leaves having experienced something quite different. The listening funnels give a sense of immediate closeness and proximity to each narrator, which puts focus on their individual patterns of speech: the sound and shape of their pronunciation, their elongation or abridgement of syllables, the tone of their accent and rhythm of their patois. Without sight, we experience the film through their synthesis of the image on screen with their own experience and vocabulary, a process we literally hear happening and which - in the spacelessness of our blindness - feels tangible. For their part, the schoolchildren meet their responsibility with admirable poise and maturity, and bearing witness to their moments of confusion, instances of being unable to find the right words, and their humour was joyful.



I was disappointed that the film being described to us was not a well-known one, as I felt there was a potential for a distinctive moment of recognition – when realising which film was being described – which was lost, and which might have augmented our sense of connection with our narrators. However the film seemed (having not seen it) to offer a number of strong, if abstract, images, which possibly offered the narrators the opportunity to more easily describe what they saw, and therefore opportunity to experience the film through the narration of three children during the 40 minute piece. This struck me as both a successful practical choice which maintained intrigue in the device—avoiding the potential for the piece to become repetitive or tiresome – but which I also found somewhat disappointing. The proximity and the exclusive nature of their narration to us personally developed a connection, particularly with the first narrator, was somewhat severed by introducing changes of narrator. It was a connection I didn't feel nearly as acutely with subsequent narrators. The proximity *Blind Cinema* engenders is isolating, rendering us acutely aware of our subjective and individual experience of the piece even amidst others experiencing the same work; yet it also offers a sense of communality. The whispered narration and quiet soundtrack also offer the opportunity to tune out, experiencing the piece in a visceral, rather than intellectual, way. These moments of tuning out of our individual experience allow us to attune to the communal experience. The whispering of each narration forms part of a whole, a soft hiss which has a texture and a momentum of its own, and which moves around the room. There are moments of laughter which emerge spontaneously but simultaneously in distinct areas of the room, moments of community which interrupt an otherwise individual experience. And once the experience is over, and the blindfolds removed, it feels like an experience shared together rather than experienced privately, as we see our schoolchild-narrators for the first time, as they applaud us, and we them, for an endeavour collectively achieved. *Blind Cinema* is an ambitious concept, executed well, to create a piece which feels wonderfully delicate and personal, and which is at times quite moving too. Hatzius has created – or perhaps curated – an experiment which is both ambitious and gentle, and which absolutely pays off. A genuinely beautiful, enjoyable and unique piece, which courageously reimagines how we might experience spectatorship.

Linford Butler

ONE BOG

This award-winning play sees actress and musician Lisa Verbelen give an intriguing performance without uttering any words until the final song. Her solo act involved singing a variety of melodies, accompanied by recorded harmonies. A rolling score was shown in the background imitating her different styles: jazz, folk, and almost chamber music. Meanwhile a mechanical arm revolved around the raised stage as if drawing a circle.

She performed the music in a sometimes comical, tongue-in-cheek manner, at a few points even being turned slowly on the world's smallest revolve. At other times she portrayed a person struggling to come to terms with what seemed to be an outpouring of her internal debates on the meaning of life.

The act ended on a more "normal" note of a pleasant folk-style song, with Verbelen accompanying herself on guitar. With a sparse set and simple content, she has created an unconventional piece of art theatre that requires a patient audience



LEOPARD MURDERS

Swiss theatre group K.U.R.S.K used the family history of one of the group's members to give a thought-provoking exploration of the rise of right wing populism in Europe and Germany. German actor Timo Krstin's grandfather had been a high-ranking SS Officer during World War 2, but turned peace activist in the following years.

Krstin recalled his grandfather, George Ebrecht, as a kind and loving man with a strong interest in saving the world. This jarred with Ebrecht's history as a colonial plantation owner in Africa and finding racist writings in the family house attic, and discovering the immoral actions he had carried out in the war years.

Krstin explained the many ways in which they had similar characteristics, but he became concerned at the rising anger and conspiracy theories against the European Union, old-school politicians and the "elite". The play is a timely reminder of the need to remember history and learn lessons from it.

Sian Ilett