



COMPASS FESTIVAL

REPORT

LEEDS 13 – 23 November 2014

Compass 2014 was a city festival of live art by outstanding local, national and international artists whose practice is public engagement.

Our aim was to demystify the practice of live art and break down barriers to participation. 18 of the 20 events were free, located in public, accessible places requiring no booking and were durational, allowing people to come and go as suited them. Almost 6,000 people (5,837) engaged, participated and bought tickets.

ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

Compass 2014 had three main strands:

- Several major works and commissions in Leeds venues and around the city. Reckless Sleepers, Helen Cole, Invisible Flock, Quarantine, Forced Entertainment, Kings of England <http://compassliveart.org.uk/festival/archive/2014>

- Seven durational pieces around the city free to the public selected from a national call out

Brian Lobel, Simon Persighetti and Katie Etheridge, Jade Pollard-Crowe, Selina Thompson, Oliver Bray, Sylvia Rimat, Rita Marcalo.

<http://compassliveart.org.uk/festival/archive/2014>

- Free late platform of emerging work

Curated by Adam Young/Live Art Bistro

<http://compassliveart.org.uk/festival/archive/2014/a-building-of-community>

It was especially delightful to witness passersby stop and engage with Sylvia Rimat's *Imagine Us* in the Merrion Centre - dozens of couples dancing outside Morrisons. Jade Pollard-Crowe, *Because My Vogue is Your Vogue*, caught the attention of many teenage girls who were at first astonished and even turned off by the vogueing, facial hair wearing artist, but very quick to sit up on the make-up stool and have their own beards applied – gently subversive. And Rita Marcalo, *Dancing with Strangers*, asking people to dance with her in a series of duets created in advance by people in Headingley Hall Care Home proved to be some people's favourite event.

"I think you all know some of the results were overwhelming!!! Smiles, movement and participation was sometimes very tearful as they really came out of their shell!!! Rita's interaction with the residents was Outstanding!!!! Well done to you all and a huge thank you for letting us take part in something so wonderful." Yvonne Dale, Headingley Care Home

The pieces that required longer engagement: *Personal Shopper*, *Between us, we know everything* and *That Night Follows Day* reflected a deeper community involvement.

"We were delighted and overwhelmed by the positive and enthusiastic response the work achieved. Lively conversations about the shopping experience, personal anecdotes about the life of the market, touching local stories of childhood memories, speeches about current developments and controversies, discussions about aesthetics, politics and consumerism mixed with statements from market stall holders planning retirement after a lifetime under its canopy. The project made us think about other kinds of arts projects where the marketplace is given further recognition as a place of trade and social exchange" Simon Persighetti and Katie Etheridge

"I just wanted to say thank you for giving Gabrielle the opportunity to be part of a great performance today. She has loved it from the audition to rehearsing the performance. I am so proud of her being able to take her self out of her comfort zone and take new challenges in her stride, meeting new friends and just being a little star. Paul & myself really enjoyed the piece (Forced Entertainment: That Night Follows Day) it was so powerful from laughing to cringing I don't think there was a single person in the audience who wasn't totally transfixed. It was just so real." Paula Bunyan

VENUE PARTNERS/ COLLABORATORS

We created 16 partnerships including: Opera North projects; Yorkshire Dance, stage@Leeds, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Gallery Munro House, Leeds City Council, Trinity Leeds, Merrion Centre, Leeds Kirkgate Markets, Grand Theatre 42 New Briggate, Everyman Cinema, Leeds City Art Gallery, Left Bank, Union 105 Chapeltown Road, Headingley Hall elderly care home, Holy Trinity Church/Nurture Café. The quality of liaison and management of these partnerships was exceptional with every partner impressed with the festival and happy to work with us again.

"The pre-event planning was meticulous and there was a continuous open line of communication between us and Peter, which made us feel confident about the project management and the technical aspect of it too.... We get to see our space used in different and interesting ways, and Compass fest definitely brings a wider audience and new visitors to our space". Ellie Halls Schiadas, Gallery Munro House

YOUNG PRODUCERS

We piloted a highly successful Young Producers scheme that ran from July to the end of the festival. From a call out to universities, colleges and Breeze website we interviewed 15 young people and selected 6 recent graduates who were already active as artists, producers and makers looking for experience in festival production. The programme involved workshops with Compass co-directors on budgeting, venue liaison, artistic selection and marketing. Each fortnight we visited festival partners (East Street Arts, Anita Morris Associates, The HUB) artists (Quarantine, Forced Entertainment, In Between Time Festival) ACE and Leeds City arts development and Leeds Inspired officers. After each session we de-briefed and discussed arising issues and impressions. Each young producer had one to one meetings with the co-directors and used these to gain feedback and raise questions about their work and future prospects.

In addition the producers chose and were allocated particular artists/projects to support. They became hands on producers liaising with artists and venues, sourcing materials, organising and supporting volunteers. They undertook community visits prior to Quarantine's arrival with *Between us, we know everything*, meeting groups, explaining the project and encouraging attendance especially in Burley and Chapeltown. They administrated the call out and auditions for Forced Entertainment's *That Night Follows Day*. Alice Withers attended and supported each dance workshop Rita Marcalo took at Headingley Hall elderly care home in preparation for *Dancing with Strangers*. Jess Sweet prepared the market stall for

Katie Etheridge and Simon Persighetti. They made brochure drops all round town more than once. They helped Reckless Sleepers with get-in and get-out at Stage@Leeds. They organised all the Compass talks and events from the programme launch in September to the Festival Launch, artists talks and artists brunch. They recruited, trained and managed the 40+ volunteers who stewarded each project. The Young Producers' confidence and efficacy grew rapidly and they became an invaluable (couldn't have done it without them) part of the festival delivery. They all speak really highly of the scheme and would recommend it to anyone interested in gaining experience and confidence in producing.

"...pre-Compass, when I found myself in unexpected situations that of course hadn't been planned or prepared for, I felt a massive lack of confidence which meant that I wouldn't do myself justice in that situation. But through the scheme I have found a way of responding to these situations confidently and in being okay with thinking/reacting on the spot. I feel that this will serve me in future employment, in networking situations, in finding opportunities, and in my own practice." Joely Fielding

"I could have never anticipated the level of trust and faith that Compass has in us, which meant we were treated like equals rather than underlings." Anna Turzynski

"The most important thing I gained from the experience was a community of young aspiring arts professionals in the other Young Producers....you have peers to learn from, in contrast to internships within companies or things of the like" Jess Sweet

Each Compass Trainee has gone on to paid work with Compass; as Production Assistants for West Yorkshire Playhouse, Transform Festival; Live Art Bistro and in(X)clusion, Flare Festival, Yorkshire Dance and Quarantine, and assisting independent producers like Peter Reed.

ARTISTS' FEEDBACK

"My volunteers were fab. It really took a weight off my mind having my gear transported between locations and ensured I was able to restart successfully. It was great to have such upbeat supportive people as well, they were not just there to 'work' they were very interactive and took a genuine interest in the piece, interacting with the public and informing them of the nature and reasoning behind the work." Jade Pollard-Crowe

"Incredibly generous response to an old and very new piece of work, which I believe is due to the generosity of the festival as much as to the qualities of the work. No surprises, only thankfulness that you produced the festival in such a way that it raises expectations and created possibilities."

Simon Bowes, Kings of England

"The young producers were exceptional - best ushers we have had so far. They were absolutely wonderful and very helpful. They completely understood the project and our needs and worked very hard - supported us tirelessly, nothing was too much trouble. Joely and Jess are wonderful and we would be very happy to work with them again. We also had great support with the project from volunteers, Kay and James."

Quarantine

I'm really proud to have been a part of Compass. I felt that the whole festival was reminiscent of a love letter to the city, and I adored it. Selina Thompson

"As artists we feel as if we have been hosted by an organisation that cares about artists and arts in many forms with recognition via the Compass Festival that arts practice can occur and be celebrated anywhere. The located and relational aspect of Compass Festival is exemplary in intention and output." Simon Persighetti and Katie Etheridge

"I was surprised by the number of new/unknown faces in the audience, many groups were not from the 'typical' arts crowd that I recognise in Leeds." Adam Young Live Art Bistro

"If Compass is about any one thing, it's how a city hears itself" Audience response

The festival publication, *Unruly Utterances*, supported by Live Art UK is available to download here:

<http://compassliveart.org.uk/festival/news/unruly-utterances-participation-criticality-and-compass-festival-2014>



Etheridge & Persighetti

Invisible Flock



Forced Entertainment

Rita Marcalo



Brian Lobel

Reckless Sleepers



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