

fierce

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FIERCE FESTIVAL, BIRMINGHAM
THURSDAY 2 - SUNDAY 12 October 2014

www.wearefierce.org



BIRMINGHAM'S ACCLAIMED FESTIVAL OF INTERNATIONAL PERFORMANCE

FEATURING UK PREMIERES FROM:

FORCED ENTERTAINMENT & TAREK ATOUI, MIGUEL GUTIERREZ, TANIA EL KHOURY, DANA MICHEL

SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS FROM:

MAMMALIAN DIVING REFLEX, DINA RONČEVIĆ, PHOEBE DAVIES

ART IN UNEXPECTED PLACES:

AMY SHARROCKS' MUSEUM OF WATER AT THE GRADE II LISTED MOSELEY ROAD BATHS
THE COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CONVEYORS ON DOORSTEPS ACROSS THE CITY

EXTRAORDINARY BODIES:

THE CYBORG FOUNDATION, UNLIMITED ARTISTS: JO BANNON, IAN JOHNSTON & GARY GARDINER

Fierce Festival returns this October with a series of cross-disciplinary performances and playful social interventions. This high-impact series of events will take place in theatres, swimming pools, galleries, warehouses, a former metal factory, a car mechanic's garage and streets across Birmingham.

Laura McDermott & Harun Morrison, Joint Artistic Directors of Fierce Festival comment: *"The diversity of the artists in the festival mirrors the city. It seems fitting that bold new performance from distinctive voices should take place in the cultural melting pot of Birmingham. Birmingham is also the UK's youngest city so we've programmed several projects that might shift your perspective and help to see the radical potential of young people."*

(Continues...)

HIGHLIGHT PERFORMANCES: Fierce features several UK Premieres as part of the 2014 programme

Forced Entertainment and Tarek Atoui - *THE LAST ADVENTURES*

1 – 3 October 2014, 7:30pm **UK Premiere**

Warwick Arts Centre in association with Fierce Festival

£18.50 / £16.50 (under 26 £13.50) | Tickets 024 7652 4524 | warwickartscentre.co.uk | wearefierce.org

In this extraordinary project, Forced Entertainment rediscover and rewrite definitions of what performance can be. Commissioned by the Ruhrtriennale in 2013, Forced Entertainment's artistic director Tim Etchells leads the group and invited guests in an intense collaboration with Lebanese sound artist Tarek Atoui. A cast of 12 international performers, an electronic score from Atoui and a live improvised musical contribution from Japanese noise artist KK Null all contribute to this auspicious performance.

Miguel Gutierrez - *HEAVENS WHAT HAVE I DONE*

Sunday 5 October, 7pm **UK Premiere**

DanceXchange £12 / 8 | Tickets: 0121 689 3170 | dancexchange.org.uk | wearefierce.org

One of the most provocative choreographers on the New York scene, Miguel Gutierrez makes works that translate the experiential nature of performing into a sensory experience. In this solo, Gutierrez weaves a rambling, comic monologue that unspools into a bold, ferocious dance. Set to music sung by renowned soprano Cecilia Bartoli, *HEAVENS WHAT HAVE I DONE* pulls the audience through the costuming and preparations for the artist's piece, all while addressing the high stakes of artistic practice. From ruminations on teaching and travel to the hypocrisies of an unstable world, Gutierrez reveals dreams and desires of a far more personal and turbulent nature.

"Every movement is immediate and deliberate, despite how volatile it feels — a meticulously planned self-destruction." - Christine Hou for **THE BROOKLYN RAIL**

"Heavens What Have I Done was slyly subversive, chopping through boundaries between artist and audience and aiming for truths about love... a fearless artist" Best of Dance 2011 - **LA Times**.

Dana Michel - *YELLOW TOWEL*

Friday 10 October, 8pm **UK Premiere**

DanceXchange £12 / 8 | Tickets: 0121 689 3170 | dancexchange.org.uk | wearefierce.org

As a child, Dana Michel would drape a yellow towel on her head so she would resemble the blonde girls at her school. As an adult, she revisits the imaginary world of her other self in a ritual performance without cover-ups or censorship. With a blend of gravity and buffoonery she digs into the stereotypes of black culture, turning them upside down to see what is revealed. From these deep memories a strange creature slowly emerges, and it adjusts to its surroundings in a slow and disconcerting metamorphosis that the audience follows with fascination. Initially attracted by the aesthetics of fashion, video clips, queer culture and comedy. Montreal based Dana Michel has rapidly made her mark as an innovative dance artist.

"A real original, peculiar to the nth degree and remarkably compelling" – **The New York Times**
Yellow Towel was awarded the inaugural **IMPULSTANZ AWARD** at *ImPulsTanz Festival*, Vienna 2014.

Tania el Khoury - *GARDENS SPEAK*

2 - 5 & 9 - 12 October

Thurs & Fri 3pm, 4pm, 5pm

Sat & Sun 11am, 12pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm, 5pm | **UK Premiere**

AE Harris £10 | Tickets on sale 2 September

Across Syria, many gardens conceal the dead bodies of activists and protect their living from the violent thrusts of the regime. These domestic burials play out a continuing collaboration between the living and the dead, the dead protect the living by not exposing them to further danger at the hands of the state and the living protect the dead by conserving and nurturing their identities and their stories in the ground, by not

allowing their deaths to become instruments to the regime through potential disappearance, anonymity and forgotten history.

Gardens Speak is an interactive sound installation containing the oral histories of 10 ordinary people who have been buried in Syrian gardens. Each narrative has been carefully constructed with the friends and family members of the deceased to retell their stories, as they themselves would have recounted it. They are compiled with found audio that evidences their final moments.

SOCIAL INTERVENTIONS IN BIRMINGHAM: Child restaurant critics, female car mechanics and feminist nail art - projects with a focus on youth (Birmingham is the UK's youngest city, with 40% of the population aged under 25 years old)

Phoebe Davies - *INFLUENCES*

3 – 4 October

Fri 5pm - 8pm and Sat 12pm - 5pm

Fierce Festival Hub @ The Edge FREE

In her *Influences* series, Phoebe Davies collaborates with groups of women, exploring current attitudes to gender equality, feminism, female expectations and individual agency. Drawing upon the contemporary culture of nail art, these dialogues result in a series of printed nail designs depicting people of personal influence or significance, specific to participating groups.

Members of the public can come and get nailwraps applied in a nail bar run by participants. The nail bar acts as a site to exchange opinions and ideas, questioning what feminism means to young women today. Before Fierce Festival Phoebe will be meeting and working with Sister Act (a group of women from Birmingham, linked to the One Mile Away Foundation). *Influences* nail bar will be open in the festival hub on the first weekend of Fierce.

Dina Rončević - *CAR DECONSTRUCTION*

3 - 5 October

Fri 6pm - 8pm, Sat 11am - 5pm, Sun 11am - 5pm, drop by during these times.

Eastside Projects FREE

This work involves a group of seven Birmingham-based girls aged between 10 and 12 years old disassembling a car to its nuts and bolts over three days. Prior to this the girls have undergone a basic introduction to car mechanics under the guidance of Amsterdam-based Dina Rončević.

Dina Rončević is an artist, textile designer, film animator and car mechanic from Croatia. She graduated from Animation and New Media department at Art Academy in Zagreb, Croatia. For her graduate work she made a professional retraining to be a car mechanic. During this three-year-long project (2007-2010) she worked on issues of social identity and gender roles in this male dominated socio-cultural niche.

Mammalian Diving Reflex - *EAT THE STREET*

3 - 9 October, various times

Various locations - restaurants across the city, see www.wearefierce.org for details

FREE - Reservation required in advance, diners pay for their own meal

Eat the Street is an intervention into the city, in which a group of twelve-year-olds are trained up as restaurant critics and make stops at several of Birmingham's most notable eateries. They will be feted and fed, charged with offering their brutally honest, uncensored opinions on the food, the service, the decor, the state of the washrooms and the charm of the waiters. For the mere cost of a meal, the public is invited to sit amongst the kids for a front-row view of the youthful connoisseurs in action. On Saturday 11 October, join the panel of pre-adolescent adjudicators for an uproarious awards ceremony where awards are bestowed for everything from "Most Delicious" and "Coolest Chef" to "Least Graffiti in the Bathroom."

ACTIVATING UNUSUAL SPACES ACROSS THE CITY: Artworks collide with distinctive locations and performances spring up in unexpected corners of the city.

FIERCE AT MOSELEY ROAD BATHS

Fri 10 – Sun 12 October, during pool opening times FREE

Moseley Road Baths is a beautiful Grade II* listed building (opened in 1907), a public swimming pool beloved by the community, but due to close imminently. Fierce spotlights this invaluable social resource through Amy Sharrock's **Museum of Water** and Lisa Stewart & Laura Delaney's **Parting Waters**.

Museum of Water invites donations of precious water and displays them with their associated stories in a transient museum. **Parting Waters** combines projections on the building's elegant facade with sub-aqua musical experiences (with underwater speakers) for those who bring their swimming costumes.

COUNCIL OF COMMUNITY CONVEYORS

4 – 5 October & 11 – 12 October

Sat 4 October 11am & 4pm, Sun 5 October 11am, Sat 11 October 11am, Sun 12 October 11am

Households across the city, meet at Fierce Festival Hub @ The Edge £5

In an intriguing attempt to get Birmingham to talk to its neighbours, the *Council of Community Conveyors* will encourage festival visitors to knock on 1500 doors across Balsall Heath, Edgbaston and Perry Bar with clipboards and forms, registering messages from one neighbour to be given to the next.

BODY POLITICS: DIVERSITY OF ARTISTS IN THE PROGRAMME: bodies beyond the norm that challenge our idea of the human body and its limits

Fierce Festival is an Unlimited Ally; celebrating the work of disabled artists as part of the **Unlimited** programme. **Unlimited** was at the heart of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, celebrating the work of disabled artists on an unprecedented scale. In 2013 Shape and Artsadmin were awarded funding by Arts Council England and Creative Scotland to deliver a new three-year programme with Jo Verrent as Senior Producer. www.weareunlimited.org.uk

Ian Johnston & Gary Gardiner - *DANCER* (Unlimited commission)

Saturday 11 October, 8pm

mac £12 / £8 | Tickets: 0121 446 3232 | macbirmingham.co.uk | www.wearefierce.org

Dancer is a performance created by Ian Johnston, Gary Gardiner and the late Adrian Howells. *Dancer* is a gentle provocation on what it is to be a 'dancer'. Ian and Gary both love to dance in public. Neither are trained dancers. *Dancer* asks questions about visibility, opportunity and experiences; as well as sharing a few of Ian & Gary's dances, to songs by Kylie Minogue, Lady Gaga and Nick Cave.

Jo Bannon – *EXPOSURE* (Unlimited commission)

Saturday 4 & Sunday 5 October

12pm - 2pm & 3pm - 5pm both days (one on one performance - slots every 12 minutes)

Fierce Festival Hub @ The Edge £3 | Tickets on sale 2 September

Exposure is an intimate one to one performance that gently examines the politics of the gaze. Jo Bannon says: "*Exposure* comes out of a tentative enquiry I am making into autobiography and into how I look and appear in the world, this is informed by my relationship to the fact that I have albinism. Albinism, a condition which affects my pigmentation and also my sight, affects both how I physically see and experience the world and how I am seen and perceived within it."

The Cyborg Foundation

Sunday 12 October 6.30pm

Millennium Point £15 / £12 | *Tickets on sale 2 September*

A cyborg (short for "cybernetic organism") is a being with both organic and bio mechanic parts. Cyborg activist Neil Harbisson and choreographer Moon Ribas created the Cyborg Foundation in 2010.

Harbisson was born with achromatopsia and could only see in grey scale. He has co-designed an electronic eye that allows him to experience basic colours as bone conducted vibrations. Moon, has an implant that enables her to register global earthquake tremors.

The day's programme will feature an AV set from Neil Harbisson and the dance work *Waiting For Earthquakes* by Moon Ribas.

Neil Harbisson and Moon Ribas, founders of The Cyborg Foundation eloquently challenge preconceived notions of what is natural.

Neil says: "Having an antenna makes me feel closer to insects, hearing through bone conduction makes me feel closer to dolphins, perceiving ultraviolet makes me feel closer to bees."

NOTES:

Fierce Festival, 2-12 October 2014

Venues across Birmingham and Warwick Arts Centre

www.wearefierce.org

WEEKEND PASSES ON SALE

FIERCE Multi-Show Ticket Passes Weekend 1 (3 – 5 October) £50 / £35

FIERCE Multi-Show Ticket Passes Weekend 2 (10 – 12 October) £45 / £35

Weekend passes on sale now: *A limited number of multi-show passes are available for weekend 1 (3-5 October) and/or weekend 2 (10-12 October) of the festival. The passes represent a saving of at least £25 on a weekend's activities. A multi-show pass is the easiest way to see the maximum festival programme, on a guided itinerary. Festival pass holders will also be offered priority booking for limited capacity shows.*

Fierce Festival was founded in 1998 by Mark Ball, now Artistic Director at LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre). Since 2009, Laura McDermott and Harun Morrison have been joint artistic directors of Fierce. The duo have introduced programming model centred on developing and commissioning new works specific to the city, alongside national and international touring works reworked for Birmingham.

Fierce Festival is supported by Arts Council England, Birmingham City Council and the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. Fierce is an Unlimited Ally organisation, celebrating the work of disabled artists as part of the Unlimited programme: <http://www.weareunlimited.org.uk/>

This year Fierce was delighted to maintain its status as an Arts Council England, National Portfolio Organisation until 2017/18. The festival is shifting to a biennial model, with the next festival editions in October 2015 and October 2017.

For further press information and images please contact:

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Press coverage or previous festival editions: <http://wearefierce.org/press/>