

Strangers & Others

Event and Q&A cont...

By Joanna Bailey

How would you describe your experiences leading up to this event? How have you prepared for the shows?

The development of the work has taken place over one and half years during residencies in five different countries and with local participants. Each residency has reformed the next stages of the work and brought up several new questions in particular around agency and consent. Over the time the script has evolved and become more and more a set choreographic score that we read out to the participants. The feedback gathered from each try-out and the various groups we have worked with has informed the development of the work. We are currently honing in on the final version and very excited for the work to finally meet the audience.

Together, you both hope to choreograph evocative performances that challenge and respond to the audience. How will this project inspire them and what responses are you hoping to trigger?

We see the work more as a provocation rather than something that inspires. It is important to us that the work is presented as a performance on stage which will trigger thinking around how different contexts and groups might give you permission to do certain things. We question how we can become aware of our biases and how we meet and react to people of difference.

How will you address controversial and political problems with humour?

Some of the instructions are pushed quite far towards social taboos, which often leads to giggles and slight awkwardness in the participants. However, from the feedback we have got, this is an interesting place to be seeing how we can go beyond and be encouraged to do things we thought we would never do with strangers. We are interested in how one thing leads to another e.g. where in one instance the gesture comes across innocent and abstract, later the same gesture suddenly has meaning.



"Strangers & Others" is a very striking conceptual project. How does this compare to your other projects and performances?

It is the first time we have worked with the audience as performers with nobody witnessing apart from us, and being part of the performance is the experience. It is maybe the most risk-taking and less result driven work we have created, in that there is no outcome or no success that can be measured, only the experience of being part.

Has the concept of "Strangers & Others" influenced any other upcoming performances?

Each work we make very much influences what comes next. We often ask the same questions again, looking at the same thing from a different angle. We have an ongoing fascination with meetings of difference and our process often involves local participants. Our work is informed by workshops and conversations with people of different ages and backgrounds, and these encounters influence and inform the ideas and aesthetics of the work. Recurring themes in our work are group behaviour, conformity, power balance and manipulation. In each project we do there is a great sense of learning, that we take with us into the next, which to the audience perhaps is not so visible, but to us there is a clear thread.