

## 25 YEARS OF FORCED ENTERTAINMENT

2009 marks Forced Entertainment's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Since forming the company on graduation from Exeter University in 1984, the six core members of the group have sustained a unique artistic partnership for quarter of a century, confirming time and again their position as trailblazers in contemporary theatre. The company's substantial canon of work reflects an interest in the mechanics of performance, the role of the audience and the machinations of contemporary urban life. The work - framed and focused by Artistic Director Tim Etchells - is distinctive and provocative, delighting in disrupting the conventions of theatre and the expectations of audiences. Forced Entertainment's trademark collaborative process - devising work as a group through improvisation, experimentation and debate - has made them pioneers of British avant-garde theatre and earned them an unparalleled international reputation.

Already in this year the company has staged a live webcast of their iconic durational work *Speak Bitterness* and world premiered *Void Story* for SPILL Festival 2009.

**Projects for the second half of 2009 include:**

***SPECTACULAR***

15 & 16 June 2009

**Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, Frankfurt**

22 & 23 June 2009

**Eurokaz Festival, Zagreb**

6 - 8 August 2009

**Arts House, Melbourne**

13 - 15 August 2009

**Theaterhaus Gessnerallee, Zurich**

2 & 3 September 2009

**Salle communale des Eaux-Vives, Geneva**

Following a successful UK tour in 2008, *Spectacular* continues to tour in Europe and beyond:

A lone performer takes to the stage, explaining that the show we're watching is somehow different tonight. The atmosphere is different, his entrance was off, some scenery is missing, some performers are absent. The audience reaction is not quite what he expected. Perhaps the fact he is dressed as a skeleton has something to do with it. When a histrionic actress takes to the stage determined to perform her 'big death scene' the evening takes a still stranger turn.

***LIVE BRITS SPECIAL - FORCED ENTERTAINMENT***

27 June - 3 July 2009

**Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin**

As part of Forced Entertainment's 25 birthday celebrations, at the end of June the company will take up residence at Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin for a special week-long edition of the theatre's Live Brits programme focused entirely on Forced Entertainment. The company will perform a selection of recent works in contrasting styles comprising *And on the Thousandth Night...*, the uproarious and combative six hour story-telling marathon; *Exquisite Pain*, Forced Entertainment's staging of Sophie Calle's tales of ordinary and not so ordinary heartbreak; our latest show *Void Story*, a dark dystopian fairytale told somewhere between a radio play and a graphic novel; and Tim Etchells' comically encyclopaedic solo piece *Sight is the Sense that Dying People Tend to Lose First*. Find more details below:

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## **AND ON THE THOUSANDTH NIGHT...**

27 June 2009

**Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin**

Taking its title and part of its inspiration from *One Thousand and One Nights*, this show explores the live relationship between a story and its public, a story and its tellers. The stories are made-up live, dragged from memory by a line of eight performers dressed as Kings and Queens, wearing cheap red cloaks and cardboard crowns. It is a long, mutating and endlessly self-cancelling story. It is a story which somehow, in its many dips and turns, seems to include many—if not all—of the stories in the world. Moving from the extraordinary to the banal, it mixes everything from film plots, religious stories, children's stories, traditional tales, jokes and modern myths, to scary stories, love stories and sex stories. The Kings and Queens compete, interrupting, exaggerating, taking over each other's narratives and incorporating stolen bits into their own tales. Their storytelling moves between tiredness and hysteria, between absurd vulgarity and surprising tenderness. At times, some of the Kings and Queens take a break to sleep on the floor at the back of the space whilst their colleagues continue. During this six-hour odyssey the audience are free to arrive, depart and return at any point

## **VOID STORY**

**German Premiere:**

29 June - 1 July 2009

**Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin**

After its World Premiere at SPILL Festival in London earlier this year *Void Story* comes to mainland Europe.

*Void Story* follows a beleaguered pair of protagonists on a rollercoaster ride through the decimated remains of contemporary culture. Navigating one terrible cityscape after another, mugged, shot at and bitten by insects, pursued through subterranean tunnel systems, stowed away in refrigerated transport, shackled up in haunted hotels and lost in wildernesses, backstreets and bewildering funfairs, they travel to the centre of a night so intense that there are no stars to be seen.

Forced Entertainment perform *Void Story* as if it were a radio play, sitting at tables, turning the pages of the script, 'doing' the requisite voices and adding in sound effects for gunshots, rain and bad phone-lines. Simultaneously the otherwise empty stage is dominated by a series of projected images, a storyboard for an impossible movie-version of Tim Etchells' uniquely unsettling text. Somewhere between the live dialogue, the recorded sound effects and the collaged images attempting to visualise the narrative, is where *Void Story* actually takes place.

*Void Story* is a new Forced Entertainment project made for SPILL with support from Tanzquartier, Vienna and Tate Media.

## **EXQUISITE PAIN**

2 & 3 July 2009

**Hebbel am Ufer, Berlin**

*Exquisite Pain* is an extraordinarily simple and intimate piece for two performers using text and images by French conceptual artist Sophie Calle. A man and a woman sit at identical tables and tell stories of ordinary and not-so-ordinary heart-break, each story accompanied by a single iconic image. These snapshot narratives of sorrow form a growing catalogue of suffering, break-ups, humiliations, deaths and love letters that never arrive. A show about the stories we tell ourselves when things have gone wrong.

Tour dates are constantly being added. Check [www.forcedentertainment.com](http://www.forcedentertainment.com) for the most up-to-date information, along with full details of all these projects as well as venue and booking information.

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## Tim Etchells Projects

Artist, director and writer Tim Etchells is Artistic Director of Forced Entertainment. Alongside his work with the group since 1984, Tim has collaborated with a wide range of other artists, choreographers and writers and has created original works in diverse media from performance to video to installation and works on paper. He has also developed a unique voice in writing fiction and in writing for and about performance (*Certain Fragments*, Routledge 1999). His first novel - *The Broken World* - was published by Heinemann, UK in July 2008 and will come out in paperback in autumn 2009.

**Tim Etchells' solo projects in the second half of 2009 include:**

### ***SIGHT IS THE SENSE THAT DYING PEOPLE TEND TO LOSE FIRST***

29 June - 1 July 2009

Hebbel-am-Ufer, Berlin

*Socks are gloves for the feet. Snow is cold. Water is the same thing as ice. In America things are bigger. America is a country. Korea is also a country. Some men have sex appeal. Blind people cannot see anything.*

*Sight is the Sense that Dying People Tend to Lose First* is a long free-associating monologue that tumbles from topic to topic to create a vast, failing iteration and explanation of the world. Comical in its apparent naivety and preposterously encyclopaedic in scope *Sight is the Sense...* explores the absurdity and horror of consciousness as it tries and fails to seize and define everything that it encounters. *Sight is the Sense...* is written and directed by Tim Etchells. The text is performed by Jim Fletcher, the extraordinary New York-based actor who many people will know from his work with renowned down-town New York performance innovators Richard Maxwell's New York City Players and Elevator Repair Service.

*Sight is the Sense that Dying People Tend to Lose First* was commissioned by Tanzquartier, Vienna.

For more information about the project see [www.forcedentertainment.com](http://www.forcedentertainment.com)

### ***IN PIECES***

**World Premiere**

4 - 13 June 2009

Kaaithheater, Brussels and then touring

*in pieces* is a collaboration between Tim Etchells and Fumiyo Ikeda, a solo performed by Ikeda. Comical, puzzling, emotional, intimate and veiled by turns in pieces combines movement, dance, written text, improvised speech and concerns itself with memory, with the processes of remembering and forgetting, exploring these both as they are felt and articulated by the body and as they are made manifest in language.

Formed out of fragments - one sense of the 'pieces' of the work's title - the performance comprises an unstable, absurd, surprising, poetic and occasionally numbered catalogue containing remembered phrases, movements, narratives, emotional states, music and songs. Somewhere in the space between these things - between movement and speech, between past remembered and the unfolding present moment of the stage - the event of the performance takes place.

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## **LEGACY: THINKER IN RESIDENCE AWARDS**

We are delighted to announce that Tim Etchells has won one of only two *Legacy: Thinker in Residence Awards*. *Legacy* is a one-off initiative developed in collaboration between the Live Art Development Agency and Tate Research and financially assisted by Arts Council England and the Live Art Development Agency.

The awards have been set up to acknowledge achievers and achievements in the field of Live Art and the residency will offer Tim the time and space to address the legacy of the discipline, both in art historical and broader social contexts and in relation to his own work. Tim will undertake the residency over late 2009 and 2010 and use it to explore the archives of performance materials at Tate and LADA, as well as the traces and documentation of his own work with Forced Entertainment and as a solo maker, performer and writer. At the same time he will reflect on the possibilities of the archive itself, its relation to performance and its potential to re-tell, remix and refocus the past in dialogue with the present. It is likely that this process will result in a new work - a book in which text by Tim will be illustrated by the photography of his friend and collaborator Hugo Glendinning, who has for more than twenty years photographed Forced Entertainment and many other contemporary artists working in Live Art.

## **UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD VISUAL ART COMMISSION**

Tim Etchells has been selected from a group of ten artists to create a major public art commission for the University of Sheffield's Jessop site. The building, which was once the site of the Jessop hospital for women and the place where Tim's two sons were born, is currently being developed to house the Department of Music, Department of History, the School of English and the School of Modern Languages and Linguistics. The artwork, which will be installed in 2009, will be a chasing LED text-based piece installed as part of a tall free-standing structure. Etchells' work takes as its theme the phrase 'The story starts here', suggestive of the new beginnings forged in both hospitals and universities. The continually changing display will mean that each viewer has a different experience of the work keeping it fresh as it both reflects on the past and anticipates the future.

## **DLA: PIPER SERIES: THIS IS SCULPTURE**

### **Tate Liverpool**

Running until May 2010

Tim Etchells has been chosen to co-curate sculpture from the Tate Collection for DLA Piper Series: *This is Sculpture* showing at Tate Liverpool. Along with artist Michael Craig-Martin; designer Wayne Hemingway and his son Jack and film maker Mike Figgis, Tim's selections will transform the first and second floor galleries. Tim's section, 'Performing Sculpture', will display works by artists including Piero Manzoni, Gilbert & George and Jeppe Hein, as well as a new work by Tim himself called *In Many Ways*, in which a performer moves a chair to occupy many different positions marked by dots on the gallery floor.

For more information about Tim's work as an artist and writer visit [www.timetchells.com](http://www.timetchells.com)

For all press enquiries relating to Forced Entertainment and Tim Etchells projects contact:

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## **Notes to Editors:**

Forced Entertainment is regularly funded by Arts Council, England and Sheffield City Council.

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