

What Doesn't Kill Us...

Contact Theatre, Oxford Road
Manchester, M15 6JA



A COLLABORATIVE EXPLORATION OF IDENTITY AND TRAUMA

9 – 12 MARCH 2016

Speakers, artists and contributors include Lemn Sissay MBE, Prof. Anthony Redmond OBE, Kim Noble, Bryony Kimmings, Hetain Patel, Prof. James Thompson, Quarantine, Prof. Bobbie Farsides, Prof. Jackie Stacy, Prof. Michael Brady, Dr. Jonathan Mair, Prof. Alex Sharpe and Disability Arts Online with many more to follow.

The challenges of life and death may not make us stronger, but they certainly make us who we are. SICK! Lab explores the most challenging experiences that we live through and die from. These challenges are sometimes rooted in bodies and minds that fail us, sometimes in the complexities of living in an imperfect society with other imperfect individuals. From the difficulties of our daily lives to the experience of global traumas of conflict and displacement, how do our personal battles write themselves across our minds and bodies?

SICK! Lab is a focussed 4-day programme of performances, presentations and discussions bringing together artists, academics from a wide range of disciplines, clinicians, commentators and the public to explore questions connecting identity and trauma: Why do we find it so hard to be alone in our minds? What do we gain from and lose to our social groups? Who do we choose to be the objects of our compassion? How much are we still defined by all those traditional categories: Religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality, disability?

SICK! Lab 2016 generates discussion between widely differing perspectives and will inform the development of SICK! Festival March 2017. SICK! Festival confronts the physical, mental and social challenges of life and death, and how we survive them. Taking place in Brighton and Manchester, the festival brings together an outstanding international arts programme with perspectives from academic research, clinical practitioners, public health, charities and people with lived experience of the issues we address. SICK! Festival won the prestigious EFFE Festivals Award 2015/16 for excellence and innovation.

All SICK! Lab events at:

Contact Theatre, Oxford Road
Manchester, M15 6JA
www.contactmcr.com

www.sickfestival.com

#SICKLab2016

info@sickfestival.com

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Performances



Wednesday 9th & Thursday 10th March, 8.00pm - Bryony Kimming *Fake It 'til You Make It*

Bryony Kimmings is a Performance Artist from London. Tim Grayburn is an account manager at a top advertising firm. These two humans happen to be a couple. Bryony spends most of her life on tour trying her best to change the world. Tim spends most of his life at a desk trying his best to sell the world. Six months into their relationship Bryony found out that Tim has severe clinical depression. It is estimated that half of male depression goes undiagnosed, yet mental health related suicide is the number one killer of men under 35 in the UK. So why do we find it so hard to talk openly about the subject? And how do we cope with it when it arises? The performance is followed by a post show discussion with Dr. Ben Fincham of the University of Sussex.



Friday 11th March, 6.00pm – 10.00pm Various Artists *Lab Test*

During SICK! Lab 2016 we will present a programme of works-in-progress, sharing embryonic ideas with a critical yet sympathetic audience. *Lab Test* will feature sketches of, or extracts from, new works that explore issues of physical, mental or social health and well-being. Performances will be followed by a chaired discussion with the audience. As well as giving audiences a chance to see into the creative processes that underpin the artists practice, these events will also give audiences and artists the chance to discuss the research, ethical dilemmas and subjective experiences that contribute to the development of the works.



Saturday 12th March, 8.00pm - Kim Noble *You're Not Alone*

Blending performance, comedy and film, Kim Noble tries to get close to other people on this planet. Keith for instance. You maybe. *You're Not Alone* is a provocative, moving and comic production that chronicles one man's attempts at connection, friendship and employment at B&Q. Kim Noble takes his audience on a journey through tower blocks, supermarkets and Facebook, seeking an escape from the loneliness of modern society. It is an intimate glimpse into the mind of an eccentric genius.

On The Couch

Thursday 10th March, 10.00am – 5.00pm

10.00am – 10.15am **Welcome**

Introduction from SICK! Festival: Tim Harrison

10.15am – 11.15am **Fluid or Fractured Identities**

How much are we still defined by all those traditional categories: Religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality... Do these aspects of our culture still define us, are we finding new categories or are definitions becoming so fluid that they are meaningless. For some the loss of coherent structures of identification is a great cause of discomfort, alienation and anxiety. For others it is a liberation. For many it is both.

11.30am – 12.30pm **Troubled Souls**

Blaise Pascal wrote: 'All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone' and Satre stated that 'Hell is other people.' That intangible consciousness that exists deep inside our heads, outside our social interactions, the soul, the core-self, whatever we want to call it, seems always to be held in high regard. So why do we find it so hard to be alone in our minds?

12.30pm – 1.30 pm **LUNCH**

1.30pm – 2.30pm **Us & Them**

Whether we choose our people, or they choose us, our bonds define who we are. From the bands we love and the football teams we support, to our countries, clans and religions, they can offer comfort and the means of self-realization, and they can oppress us and others. Some of us seem to like labels and seek them out. But do we do this to strengthen ourselves in opposition to those that we do not wish to be like? Do these divisions between us and them define the basis of hostility with local and global neighbours? What do we gain from membership of our social groups, what do we sacrifice and what are the risks?

2.45pm – 3.45pm Who is your neighbour?

With conflicts breaking out and on-going across the world, and a homelessness crisis literally on our doorsteps, where do we direct our compassion? As the media gives us access to such an incomprehensible range and depth of human suffering we ask who is our neighbour? How do we, our media and our politicians choose where to focus our attention?

3.45pm – 4.30pm Round-Up

Open Space: The Future of Identity



Friday 11th March, 10.00am – 3.30pm - The Future of Identity

Often described as Un-conferences, *Open Space* events put the agenda in the hands of the audience. Come along and find others with similar questions, but possibly different answers. *Open Space* gives all participants the chance to propose a starting point for discussion, take part in any of the conversations or flit between them all. It is particularly effective in dealing with complex issues where diverse and conflicting views are present.

Bar Flies Philosophy: The Trigger's Broom Paradox



Thursday 10th March, 9.30pm – 11.00pm

Drawing on the wisdom of *Only Fools & Horses*, this late night event gets to the core of our very existence. Never known for his intelligence, the classic TV comedy character inadvertently restages the *Theseus's Ship Paradox*, which has been discussed by philosophers throughout history. This event will consider how the paradox has a particular significance when we replace the object in question with ourselves. If our bodies and minds are constantly changing, what remains of the thing that I call 'Me'? Developed and delivered in partnership with Quarantine (www.qtine.com)

SICK! Lounge



Thursday 10th March, 9.30am – 11.00pm

Friday 11th March, 3.30pm – 11.00pm

An open, informal space in which to continue discussions, take on refreshments and engage with our Lab Activators: Disability Arts Online, Nuffield Council on Bioethics and Das Arts (Amsterdam) and our international Arts / Humanities Research Group. The lounge will provide a setting for films screenings, installations, pop-up performances and impromptu discussions.

ATTEND ALL EVENTS AT SICK! LAB FOR ONLY £45.20

Experience the full 4-day programme of performances, talks, discussions & presentations for £45.20.

Buy a Lab Pass and claim a 10% discount on performances by Bryony Kimmings and Kim Noble.

Lab Pass, 10th - 11th March - £20

To include entry to *On The Couch*, *Open Space*, *Lab Test* and *SICK! Lounge*

On The Couch, 10th March - £15

Bryony Kimming *Fake It 'til You Make I*, 10th March - £15 / £10 concession (With a Lab Pass - £13.50/£9)

Kim Noble *You're Not Alone*, 12th March - £13 / £7 concession (With a Lab Pass - £11.70/£6)

To book go to www.contactmcr.com or call Contact on 0161 2740600

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