

NEW NORMAL



Synopsis

New Normal is a 10-minute site-specific performance work for 4 actors, exploring the polarization of public debate and political beliefs during the covid-19 pandemic, and asking whether these kinds of social interaction will become a 'new normal' in our society.

Directed by: Lloyd Corporation (Ali Eisa & Sebastian Lloyd Rees)

Written by: Nicholas A Newman

Dates

Performance: Thursday 16th December 2021

(Technical: 11am-1pm, Performance: 6pm – 11pm)

Rehearsals: (TBC) Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th December 2021, 11am – 6pm

Venue

Performance: Studio Spaces, Unit 2, 110 Pennington St, London E1W 2BB

<https://studio-spaces.com/>

Rehearsals: Autograph Gallery, Rivington Place, EC2A 3BA

<https://autograph.org.uk/>

Fee - £450

3 days @ £150p/day with refreshments provided

Project Outline

New Normal is a site-specific live performance piece for 4 actors responding to the rise in polarized public debate during the covid-19 pandemic. Through 4 different characters (a couple, a bystander, a heckler) the performance explores how different people have navigated the political, ethical and emotional impacts on social interaction and behaviour during these unprecedented times.

The piece is staged outside and within the queue of a contemporary art event (Live Art Commissions, Roberts Art Foundation). As attendees of the event (the audience) gather to wait for entry into the venue, the actors will enter the queue at strategic points and perform a script that stages dialogues between the actors, as well as improvised responses that address the audience members in the queue.

The characters and scenarios to be performed within the queue include:

THE COUPLE (Ben - mid 30s, White, Male; Sandeep - mid 30s, South Asian, Female)

Entering the queue whilst having an argument about mask wearing, responsibility and love, that is about to boil over

THE BYSTANDER (David - late 40s-60s, White, Male)

Trying to dispel feelings of awkwardness and anxiety by talking to people whilst they wait for friends to arrive

THE HECKLER (30's-40's, Any Ethnicity or Gender)

Who addresses anyone who will listen in the crowd with polemical commentaries and observations about the people around them.

Each character or scenario relates to complex political and ethical differences we face in today's climate – addressing core issues including freedom, power and control - and how these manifest within intimate relationships, in public and at a wider social level. All the actors will enter the queue at the same time and begin to perform the script simultaneously, whilst making improvised responses to the audience depending on their reaction and engagement with the work. The piece is expected to last approximately 10-15 minutes.

The work is influenced by activist theatre maker Augusto Boal's strategy of Invisible Theatre, in which distinctions between actors and audience are blurred, and the actors perform a political skit according to a script that challenges members of the public to become involved or share their opinions on a current political issue. Crucially the audience experience the work as 'real life', they don't know it is a staged event by actors. The work is also inspired by public debating spaces like Speakers' Corner in Hyde Park and online social media platforms, where during the pandemic we have seen a rise of clashing ideologies, ethical conflicts, (dis)information and conspiracies.

New Normal is therefore a work of political theatre that challenges the audience to consider, and even to weigh in on, difficult question such as: to what extent is genuine political dialogue possible in our current times? To what extent are the differences,

behaviours and actions that emerged over the pandemic period a new normal in our society? What would it take to overcome these differences?

Further Information

New Normal is commissioned as part of Live Art Commissions by the Roberts Art Foundation, an evening showcase of brand new performances by six artists whose practices include live work.

<https://www.therobertsinstituteofart.com/programme/performances/live-art-commissions>

Lloyd Corporation are a contemporary art duo (Ali Eisa and Sebastian Lloyd Rees) who have directed performance works that explore political issues such as migration, inequality. Staging works in public spaces, the duo are driven by a desire to engage and reach the public and explore political debates and issues in new, radical and different ways, challenging how such dialogues might occur within traditional theatre, performance or art gallery venues.

<https://www.carlosishikawa.com/artists/lloydcorporation/>

Nicholas A Newman is an experienced actor and writer. His CV includes feature films, television and stage performance.

<https://www.spotlight.com/0537-8943-9766>