

NEWS RELEASE

6<sup>th</sup> February 2019

# I'm Here, Where Are You? New two-day festival showcases disabled artists

26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> April, Cambridge Junction

- Festival will explore the intersections between disability, class, queerness, mental health and gender
- *I'm Here, Where Are You* will include performances, installations and poetry readings from artists including Jackie Hagan and former Judo champion Owen Lowery
- A new duet from Joel Brown, a dancer with Candoco Dance Company, collaborating with former Scottish Ballet principal dancer Eve Mutso
- Exhibitions, focus groups and participatory workshops will also feature in this celebratory and enlightening showcase of the best of disability arts in the UK

This Spring, a jam-packed two-day festival comes to Cambridge in a celebration of the wealth of talent on offer from disabled artists across theatre, comedy, dance and visual art. Aiming to highlight the need to widen access both onstage and off, from performers to audience members to careers in the arts industry, *I'm Here, Where Are You* will welcome some of the top class talent from both emerging and established disabled artists to East England.

Highlights of the programme include a new duet from dancer and singer-songwriter Joel Brown in collaboration with Eve Mutso, who has performed with Scottish Ballet and Estonian National Ballet. The duet, *111*, is so called because of the number of vertebrae Joel and Eve have between them; Joel's spine has fused meaning he only has 11, Eve "moves like she has a hundred".

*This Is Not A Safe Space*, from working class, queer amputee and Jerwood Compton Poetry Fellow Jackie Hagan, will unpick the frustrating paradox in which disabled people are categorised as either Paralympians or a drain on resources. Meanwhile, Vince Laws explores the devastating effect of benefit cuts and mental illness on an artist's creativity with his politically-charged exhibition, *A Very Queer Nazi Faust*.

An Unlimited Emerging Artist Commission, Kristina Veasey's immersive installation, *My Dirty Secret!* is borne from Kristina's frustration as a disabled person battling to keep up with the housework and maintain her independence. The experiential piece invites audiences to step into Kristina's world and celebrate unnoticed splendor by transforming images of common household detritus into stunning fabrics and furnishings.

Cambridge-based writer and criminologist Jane Carter Woodrow's debut play is the darkly comic *WHACK-A-MOLE*, which follows three generations of women on the autistic spectrum, and is described as 'an all-female *Breaking Bad* set in the Fens'.

Tetraplegic poet Owen Lowery, a former British Judo champion who has published two major collections and performed everywhere from the National Theatre to the Southbank Centre, will consider the nature of transition

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The Lower Vestry  
St George's Bloomsbury  
6-7 Little Russell St  
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in relation to nature, migration, sport and history with a screening of his short film *Transitions* and a reading of his poetry.

In the run up to the festival, participatory workshops will be hosted across the region including director Rachel Bagshaw who will lead a workshop in Cambridge on devising work from a personal starting point. Meanwhile, Ipswich's resident theatre company of visually impaired people will collaborate with Rationale Method to explore a new and dynamic form audio description enhanced by beatbox sound effects.

**Producers Liz Counsell and Linda Rocco said** "We are delighted to be presenting some of our favourite and some of the UK's most dynamic artists across one weekend. We hope that artists, audiences and other arts professionals see this as a big step forward in the UK arts scene and can relish the opportunities that holding a festival such as this can offer."

**Matt Burman, Artistic Director of Cambridge Junction, said** "We are very happy to be co-producing and hosting this new festival and working with Liz and Linda to realise their ambitious vision. It promises to be a programme that makes you laugh and moves you, as much as it makes you think, and again shows Cambridge Junction's commitment to supporting and promoting disabled artists, producers and makers."

**I'm Here Where Are You?** is Co-produced by Liz Counsell, Linda Rocco and Cambridge Junction as part of its Vision Mixers Programme

**Liz Counsell is a freelance Project Manager and Producer for a variety of organisations**, both large and small, and has worked over Manchester, Yorkshire the South West and London. With a focus on new, produced work, community facing projects and a keen interest in emerging talent and creating work that is accessible.

**Linda Rocco is a London-based Contemporary Art Curator, writer and programmer with a background in contemporary dance and theatre.** Graduated from a two-year MA at the Royal College of Art, her interests spread across the presentation, mediation and preservation of live and ephemeral practices; the sociology of the artist in today's hyperconnected societies and audiences' dynamics within institutionalized and public contexts. Avid for interdisciplinary encounters, she strives for accessible Art which engages with current issues and urgencies.

**Cambridge Junction** is the performing arts centre where audiences and artists experience and explore contemporary performance, popular culture and creative learning and everything in-between. Cambridge Junction has a varied presentation programme which includes contemporary theatre and dance, family theatre, live music, comedy and clubs. It presents over 350 events each year across its three spaces to around 100,000 people. Cambridge Junction's presentation and creative learning programmes make valuable contributions to the community as a site for audiences and young people to engage with the arts. Cambridge Junction also plays an important national role in talent development for artists including supporting the development of new work.

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## Company Information

Produced by Liz Counsell, Linda Rocco and Cambridge Junction

## Listings information

**Cambridge Junction, Clifton Way, Cambridge, CB1 7GX**

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April – Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> April

Performance times TBC

[www.junction.co.uk](http://www.junction.co.uk) | 01223 511 511

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