

Live Art in Scotland: Andrew Jones

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Stephen Greer (SG): Maybe we can start by talking about the Edinburgh Showcase. I know it's been running since 1997 and that the overall premise, or the ambition of it, is to bring UK artists and companies to the attention of international promoters. Does that match up with your account of what the Showcase does, or are there other things that it's aspiring to do or has aspired to do over the years?

Andrew Jones (AJ): I'll start with the 2019 edition of the Showcase, which was the last one that we'll be doing for a while. The context of the Showcase and the way we might work with the performing arts sector in the UK in future is under review at the moment and it's in relation to recent moves by the Arts Council England for example, to create their own showcase in future in line with Creative Scotland that's made in Scotland and there's Wales and Edinburgh, and there's always been an intention of doing a Northern Ireland showcase as well. Historically, the idea has always been as best we could with the limited resources to represent Britain, the four countries through the showcase. Now that particularly Arts Council England is investing heavily in trying to promote English artists abroad, we're now waiting to see how the landscape looks before we decide how we can re-enter it in order to ensure that we make a comparable offer to all the arts councils in relation to their showcase and ambitions. But anyway, that was just a little adjunction. The Showcase has evolved quite substantially since it was started in 1997. In the very first Showcase, I was actually still

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in Volcano Theatre and we were one of maybe twenty companies. We were invited directly by the theatre and dance team, it was then called the drama and dance team, to participate with a range of other companies. It included some quite traditional companies like Cheek by Jowl and some others that were more edgy, like a very young Improbable Theatre were also involved in it. At that point, the curatorial process was limited. It was just the drama and dance team that chose the programme, and they were doing it very much on the basis of companies that were currently being very successful in an international sphere. My company had been touring very heavily with the British Council for a number of years before that, particularly with a few productions that were crossing over with a live art sort of sphere, and involved in a number directed by Nigel Charnock, one of the founders of DV8, and they were the shows that got picked up internationally. So I was in the first one. By the time of the second one in 1999, I had joined the drama and dance team after doing the Volcano thing for thirteen years. I was brought into the British Council at a point where most people employed by the Council were proper Oxbridge. I was one of the first people that didn't have that kind of background to actually be employed in the Arts division of the British Council and part of the reason for that was for me to bring in a different perspective to the way that the Showcase might look. In the very first one, there was a very clear emphasis on ensuring that the journey through the week was a good one for the presenters that were coming from abroad and there wasn't much focus on the wellbeing and welfare or interests of the artists. One of the first things that I suggested was that we need to address the balance and make a bigger effort to ensure that the artists were comfortable in the way that they were supported through the process because it was pretty harrowing to say the least, dealing in effectively, a marketplace full of people you didn't necessarily know and maybe didn't have particular techniques for approaching them. From that point on, and as other people with sector expertise like mine came into the organisation, the nature of the process of selecting the artists shifted internally. Over a number of years, we got it to a point where there was much more focus on ensuring that alongside the work being good, the artists involved were in a position where they felt comfortable to talk about the nature of their work. We did a lot of mentoring in relation to the process as well, to get them to understand about the nature of the interaction with the international delegates. As a natural process of those conversations, we then widened the curation beyond the theatre and dance department to include some international promoters. We did that on the basis of

them having a broad interest in different types of work, on a level of expertise of their own, and also on a regional basis. We tried to get somebody from, for want of a better phrase, a developed market like the EU and then from a less developed partner such as Latin America so that we'd have a mix of people who were brought into the curatorial process. Having those external influences also contributed to shifts in the programme in terms of making it more diverse, although people were already trying to do that before we brought in people externally. Ultimately, after there being a request for a review of the way that the British Council ran the Showcase in 2010 from Arts Council England, we then conducted a big external review of all the processes and on the basis of some recommendations in that report, we then changed the process again and also brought representatives from the home arts councils into the curatorial process in order to try and make the whole thing a bit more transparent. There was always a notion that there was this obscure way of putting a programme together, even if we had external experts from different parts of the world who influenced the programme heavily. We agreed in 2010 to work more closely with the arts councils. I have to say, when they got involved with it, they didn't really enjoy it because it's a big job. Throughout the life cycle of the Showcase, other than the first two where we were making the transition in terms of how it was put together and there weren't open calls, but open calls became part of the process quite quickly, the fundamental starting point for creating the line-up was based on the people that have applied via open calls. In relation to the curatorial process, we put in a number of filters. We used to say it's got to be work that's been made in the last two years on the premise that somebody who applied for the Showcase in the last year and was rejected, couldn't submit the same piece of work again. Filters like that would reduce the number of applications we'd get and obviously people had to be available to take their work to Edinburgh. There were lots of hurdles that we've never been in a position to address that were related to the cost of presenting your work in Edinburgh and that was a big question for the artists before they put in an application. Was it something that they were prepared to take the risk of investing in going to Edinburgh on the premise that they may or may not get some international work. More often than not, being in the Showcase would be a good grounding for artists because obviously the delegates would come and see that work first in most instances. The curatorial process got more complicated as we moved on through it and every time we did that it added another filter to whether artists would consider applying or not. In more recent years, because of

the way the British Council's own funding from the FCDO [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office] and previously, the FCO [Foreign & Commonwealth Office], has shifted and the requirements for them to use that funding. For the last few years, the Showcase, and in fact for all of the programmes that we've been running, we've had to consider the content in relation to things like the government requirements about ODA, that's Overseas Development Assistance. So in the context of Brexit, people are saying oh we send all this aid money abroad why are we doing that, why are we not looking after the farmers or the fishermen, that's all ODA money and basically, an increasingly large chunk of the British Council's grant from the FCDO was ODA money that had to be used against ODA principles. Development being the big word. In relation to the showcase, where it was initially primarily about export, the premise behind it shifted to a degree as well. Export was one aspect of it, where if you've got promoters from a developed market like western Europe, such as Germany, there wouldn't necessarily need to be any subsidy on the British Council's part. In that kind of context, it was still looking at it through an export lens. But in the developing part of the world, that qualify for ODA investment, and there's an official list of ODA countries and all the developed countries contribute money to this big aid pot, in those countries we shifted the argument more to what around the Showcase could be considered developmental. So in terms of the curatorial processes again, we then started to include in the pro-forma applications, questions around the expertise that the artists held and how they would use that in support of the work that they might put on stage. There would be things that people would do as standard part of their practice such as workshops, education and outreach projects, all of those kinds of aspects of an artist's make-up are part of a developmental context internationally. We were trying to identify what aspects of an artist's processes might actually be something we could effectively sell in the context of the showcase. If you were to look at the information on the Showcase website, we're talking about the mission of the artist and then about the work that's been presented. That shifted a bit in terms of its focus to talk a bit more about the range of things that the artist might do in relation to the development objectives, either directly through the themes of the work or in terms of their experience as practitioners. That's kind of the format that the showcase was in at the time of the last one in 2019. We had a conversation with all of the artists involved in that programme about those aspects of their work. Obviously, the definition of development would change quite dramatically in relation to the nature of the performing

arts sector and in the widest sense, in a particular country. What might count as development in Nigeria, would be very different to the development that we'd be talking about in Turkey, or Argentina. It's a broad umbrella under which you have a nuanced conversation about which pieces of work from the Showcase might fit best in a particular environment. From the delegate point of view, and this will very much inform anything to do with the nature of live art, one of the primary things about that moment in the calendar was and always has been the notion of whatever happens when you put the work in front of people, you want somebody overseas to commit to doing something with it. With that in mind, the choice of delegates has always been quite a complicated one. On one level, they've got to have a budget to buy international work, because if they haven't got that, we can't subsidise one hundred per cent of the cost. Also, we try to identify organisations, and whether or not they've got a long-term relationship with British Council anyway, finding organisations that also value the similar developmental objectives that we have. For example, social inclusion, artist development, working with marginalised community groups. Where an arts organisation in those things and that's resonant within the work in the wider context, it makes the connections easier to justify.

SG: Hearing you talk about that widening gaze from an initial focus which was quite tightly located on the company and the work, to then think more broadly about what an artist's practice might include... I'm also wondering if there was a shift in that time to – and this is thinking a little bit about who I know has been programmed over the years – include not just people who are already known and successful artists and companies, but also to engage with artists who have had some success but are perhaps still emerging. I know 'emerging' is a bit of a contested term, but it feels like there has been a desire to engage with a broad range of artists from that perspective as well. There are already very successful artists and those who are perhaps less well known.

AJ: Yes. It's always been a mix I suppose. Certainly the conversations about the breadth of artists we could include shifted at the point that people like me were brought into the conversation. For example, when I was interviewed for my job, I didn't have any idea I was going to get it, I just thought I'll go for it for a laugh but they're not going to employ a loudmouth Welsh oik. The first question they were asking me about was what kind of work blew my socks off in the UK and I was totally dumbfounded. I'd just come from Get Out, a

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venue in deepest west Wales, I was super tired, and I was covered in aluminium dust and all kinds of stuff, and I thought what the fuck and I couldn't think of anything. I said to be honest with you, I think most British theatre is rubbish, it doesn't appeal to me. I'm only really interested in seeing the work of my competitors so I can see how they might beat us to international gigs. I was talking about Forced Entertainment, V-TOL Dance Company, Michael Clark, that's who I went and saw. I wouldn't go near Cheek by Jowl, I thought it was really fucking boring! Traditional work was not anything to do with the world that I was coming from and I had no interest in it. I said look, there's all this other stuff out there, shouldn't we broadening the perspective simply because most of the work I see is this dirty, edgier stuff and we were engaging with Nigel Charnock. I've lost my thread, what was your question again?

SG: This idea of broadening out, so it's not just well-established artists but emerging or less well-known artists.

AJ: So that was part of that process. Putting the net out across the entire globe to art centres saying this event is happening in Edinburgh, do you want to come? Obviously, you have to target people, but bearing in mind that they've got to have some money otherwise there's no point. Typically, certainly in the early years, you'd get more established international presenters, whether they were festivals or big arts centres. With those in mind, you then have to consider their tastes as well and part of the reason then that you might have Complicité alongside a scuzzier, more experimental company was because it might be that we can attract the people with more conservative tastes with the bigger names and we can persuade them to go and see the other companies and maybe they'll be interested in them if they take the time to go and have a look. That principle has been applied throughout. It's not necessarily the best way of curating. There has always been a bit of something for everyone in the mix. What you're trying to do is to say, I appreciate your perception of what theatre is, but this is also theatre, and that might be theatre in the back of a taxi or in a flat, using different locations or different forms. We've tried to introduce more contemporary practice alongside more traditional work at every point in the process. That's what we were doing when we started to present Adrian Howells' work. Adrian's work is incredibly gentle and sincere and human. We presented *An Audience With Adrienne* in 2007. I saw that and I knew Adrian from years before from connections with

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Nigel Charnock actually. Nigel had made a show in the late 1990s at The greenroom in Manchester called *The Room*. It was a sort of elaborate peep show where Nigel and various guests were in this bedsit scenario and the audience looked in through the windows at what they were doing. One of my co-founders of Volcano, Fern Smith was one of the performers and Adrian was another performer and they bonded at that point. Adrian would come to all of our shows and he was thinking of developing work. So for me, it was a natural thing to go and see his first show as a friend. By that point, I was working for the British Council and I thought this is great, I'm going to recommend that he applies and let's try and get it into the British Showcase, and low and behold we got it in. A lot of that was one person around the curatorial table saying I really think that this is going to work and some of us had a track record of that happening before. In an earlier Showcase for example, with the broadest notion of live art, I convinced everybody to present Stan's Cafe *It's Your Film*. That was the first time we had a one-person show in the Showcase. I just said it's fucking brilliant and yes it's one person but we can get two hundred in a day and I tell you it's going to sell, and it did. Our instinct as artists is a big part of trying to push the programme a bit but with someone like Adrian, you were going to appeal to everybody. Through the two hundred delegates that might come, there's probably going to be ten or maybe twenty that are going to really like this and they're going to start talking to the other delegates and that'll start to get the ball rolling with that kind of work. Once you've got one or two people that are interested and would like to take the work, you can demonstrate through conversations the rest of the year, Adrian's show went really well and we promoted it. Often, the Showcase is like a platform where, once you can demonstrate that there's a market, you can then have conversations with British Council colleagues that didn't make it to the Showcase but are looking for a particular kind of work for a particular context and you can suggest this, this and this. Adrian's show opens up a wider dialogue then. That notion of having different things in the mix has always been there, we've just tried to push it a little bit further when we could. It's always been on the basis that it's down to the artists first to decide to go through the open call process, because if they don't do it then we can't just pick it up. In parts of the world that I specifically deal with for example, I deal with all the post-Soviet countries and the notion of what theatre or performance might be in different parts of that chunk of mainland Europe are radially different. If you look at something like Serbia, there has always been a tradition of very experimental practice happening locally. Historically,

they had festivals like the Beta Festival which has been going on since the sixties, where they put on some fairly radical work and it'll be big stuff alongside small stuff. Volcano performed at Beta three times and when we there, it was Robert Wilson and us or Complicité and us. In that context many years ago we were able to work with curators working across art forms and maybe doing presentations in a gallery context and present things not easily, but certainly successfully. Things like Franko B's catwalk shows, for example and bleeding for twenty minutes. In Serbia, it's like yes we like this, the context of somebody bleeding obviously has particular resonance for somebody in Serbia if you're talking about the time around the Bosnian war. Whereas today it'll be very difficult to find anybody that could present a piece of work like that in somewhere like Azerbaijan because the theatre tradition there, the locally made work is still Stanislavski stuff. All of the training that happens through the academy system there is Stanislavski based. There is no independent sector and no support to create an independent sector, so everybody who goes into the system just thinks Stanislavski is great and that's what you get. What you might find with a promoter of the one big festival in Azerbaijan, is if you show someone like Adrian, or something that's a bit more accessible, like Cade and MacAskill, with that kind of work they might say oh this is good and you are then taking them on a bit of a journey and shifting the conversation.

SG: I guess you're also making it easier, directly and indirectly, for them to take that risk.

AJ: Yes, absolutely. We're supporting them in the risk. If it goes pear-shaped, it's British Council's fault. But we as experts can help you market it, we can help you do whatever you need to do in order to present it. Usually, because the work is being presented in the context of the Showcase, and more often than not, delegates have become before and they trust us so they know we're not putting the work in there and asking them to take a gargantuan risk. They know that we've had the conversations with the artist about the other supporting work that they could do. In somewhere like Azerbaijan, if we were taking say Cade and MacAskill out there, inevitably because there had been nothing seen like that in the local context, there might be a residency on the back of that. There is a slow incremental way that you start to widen the conversation about what theatre and performance can be and where it can be shown. It's almost by stealth, what you're trying to show people is a wider perspective. When you can see an opportunity to put on something

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more avant-garde for want of a better phrase, you say come on we've got to put this in. Companies like Action Hero have had big success on the back of their presentations. In places like Azerbaijan, the notion of how you could present one of their early shows like *A Western* for example, how would you do that? I'd say well, I know you've only got a black box but find a gym, find a different space. Alongside the conversations about the work, you're also talking about how those organisations that are just a black box and are maybe struggling to maintain the support outside the Ministry of Culture somewhere, you can then have a conversation where we say we can help you to take your brand to a wider audience. You could present this in a marginalised community, you could do this with it and show how your work is vital to the infrastructure and is helping to engage marginalised groups. We support those kind of conversations on the back of the moment in Edinburgh. Quite often that work might, in the broader sense, be considered live art. That's more often than not the best those are the best acts to have those conversations around, those artists are pushing form and trying to have different conversations with their own audiences. For us, that's often the most interesting conversation, rather than here's a big shiny show with a bourgeois audience in Azerbaijan you know, who cares. [Laughs].

SG: I'm wondering about, you mentioned the idea of branding, live art as a kind of brand, a maybe even distinctly British brand. If I go into North America, which is not the kind of market we've been talking about, we'll be talking about performance art, new theatre or new theatre performance, but not necessarily calling it live art. I wonder whether that is part of this conversation, recognising that the very terminology live art is actually quite a British tradition or a British curatorial frame that is part of marketing Britain abroad.

AJ: Yes, potentially. In a lot of the places that I'm working like the Azerbaijanis, the Georgians, the Kazakhstans, the concept of live art doesn't really exist, or if it does, it's in very small pockets and it's quite obscure and the local British Council offices might not know anything about it because it's really underground. In some of those countries again that I'm dealing with, there are lots of artists working in the live art field and they might in their practice deviate from the norm in terms of their opinions. For example, going back to somebody like Adrian again or someone like Nigel Charnock, presenting their work somewhere like Azerbaijan, there is potentially actual danger in it for the artist because in those countries, homosexuality is illegal. If there are things to do with the artist's personal circumstances,

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like it's a gay artist, you've got to be very careful about how you introduce the artist for their safety. In somewhere like Georgia, homosexuality is banned, but there have been a number of artists who have presented there who are gay artists but just don't talk about it. The local gay community that is underground will come and see the work and they'll be accepted into the venues and no one will have a problem with it, it's just not official. You may then be in a position where you can create some interaction between the UK artist and that particular group. But sometimes, because of a situation that the British Council is in where to operate in a particular country they obviously have to have government agreement and licences, if then they seem to be actively promoting something that's illegal, then that puts the British Council in a difficult place. It doesn't mean to say that we won't have the conversations and find ways to do it. If we can have a conversation which is saying that this work inherently demonstrates freedom of speech and openness and inclusion, those conversations we can have. We might say that this artist is gay because they might turn up with a hit mob. Volcano took a Nigel Charnock show called L.O.V.E. to Georgia. I'd left, it was in the British Council at that point and it wasn't a nepotistic thing, it was a direct request from a producer to show the work. It was L.O.V.E., it was based on Shakespeare's love sonnets and what we'd done with the show was to rip up the sonnets and put them back together to create a narrative that suited our agenda and we created a sadomasochistic love triangle between the poet, the dark lady and the young boy, all the stuff in the sonnets about is Shakespeare bisexual and he's having an affair with the boy as well. That was all played out on stage in the production and when it went to Georgia, we had to provide some footage of the show in advance for a tv advert, and in the raw footage we sent, there were certain images of the poet kissing the young boy and we told them that this happened, that they kiss on stage. We asked if it would be okay having the men kiss on stage and they said oh Andrew, men kiss all the time, but what they meant was a little peck on the cheek. I said, no I don't mean like Georgians, I mean with tongues and everything. They kind of ignored it and when they saw this footage, they thought fuck, what! And I said, I told you that's what they're going to do, but they said oh my god and went into overdrive to ensure there weren't any incidents happening around the show. Unbeknown to us, the Georgian elections were taking place at the time the show was there. There's a kind of hardcore right, Orthodox Christian party that was in power and they were informed by the British Council that this show was happening and they did actually turn up ready to riot with

a few hundred people outside the theatre shooting guns and there was a kind of coup inside the theatre where the Ministry of Culture got up and threw stuff on the ground and stormed out mid-performance and all of us went with him and they called the show down. It was an orchestrated attempt to shut the show down and after that, we couldn't do the other performances. That was an extreme version but we have to look after the safety of the artists because you can't predict what's going to go on. Part of the conversation about how far you can push the work is also about considering the local context and the culture and when you can make an opportune intervention that will actually create a wider conversation about democracy, freedom of speech and difference, but not at any point putting the artists in jeopardy. That's also part of the understanding that you have to have when you create the programme. There is also work in the context of the showcase where there may be work with nudity in it, which we're quite happy to show, but a lot of the delegates are going to be coming from Arab and Muslim countries and to suggest that the delegates go and see that work without formally advising them in the first instance that there is nudity involved is not diplomatic. There are political underpinnings with some of the decisions. If you can show work which is going to broaden the conversation about what performance is, you'll do it. Going back to what you said about live art as a brand, I think what we would tend to say is performance rather than live art in those conversations.

SG: It's interesting the way you're describing that ambition of broadening the conversation is as much to do with the form as the content of these works. The formal innovation or the experimental quality of the work maybe doing that work at the same time as the literal themes or narrative of a work might also be contributing to that.

AJ: Yes. It can be lots of things. I wouldn't say that something is going to happen on the back of this particular example, but where it sits in this spectrum, Cora Bissett's show about human trafficking was presented in a real flat in Edinburgh during the fringe.

SG: *Roadkill*.

AJ: Yes. Well remembered. We presented that as part of the Showcase in 2013 and for a lot of international delegates, the notion of going to a flat to see a piece of work was really unusual and again, it opened up conversations about how that work might be presented internationally. It was quite harrowing for some people and they realised they couldn't necessarily show it. In relation to that piece of work, alongside the thematic content, the

and form and the location being such that you have to do it in a real flat somewhere, alongside that, we were also exploring expertise in the way that Cora had researched and put together the production where she was dealing with experts at Amnesty International for example. In terms of parts of the world where the independent sector is limited or effectively non-existent, you can also demonstrate that there is a different economy that can be grown. Cora's made this piece which is about human trafficking and she's made it in collaboration with Traverse Theatre and they've co-produced it. They've done it in this way, but in making it, she's actually made connections with an NGO [non-governmental organisation] that's got nothing to do with the arts, i.e. Amnesty International. In conversation about this work and how you might present it in an international context, that's then opening up a possibility. Say you're going to do a post-show discussion, does that mean you bring in somebody from the local Amnesty International office. It opens up the range of connections and partnerships and it demonstrates to the makers locally, that you can mix the economy. You don't necessarily have to have just Ministry of Culture. You can entirely bypass it. You can get other sponsors for your work that will allow you to present more radical work which the conservative powers that be won't go anywhere near. It's a very broad conversation. What we're trying to do is analyse all of these different aspects of the work that is being put forward for the Showcase, or the work that we present at other times during the year and considering where the potential empty points for conversation might be.

SG: I'm now thinking about all the various different shows that I've seen at the Showcase over the years and imagining how these conversations might have played out.

AJ: Some of them never get there. Cora's piece went to the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris. A big posh theatre in the middle of Paris, but what they're able to do with it, was present the work in one of the rough arrondissements where human trafficking happens. It was so potent, and I don't mean it in a superficial way, what the press created around that and the value of that experience and the notion that this big theatre was doing something in this rough suburb, it at least briefly really changed the dynamic about the value of theatre in Paris. The national newspapers cover it and on the back of that, we are able to have a wider conversation and art can matter. It's not just entertainment is it. You've got to pick your moment about how much you can extract from that intervention when it happens. What we

were trying to do as part of the curatorial process was to, as best we could, anticipate the kind of conversations that could come on the back of a delegate seeing the work and then trying to ensure that the artist is comfortable about those conversations happening in relation to their work and in fact, that they want to have them in the first place.

SG: There was one last thread that I was interested in asking you about. You perhaps partly addressed this right at the start of our conversation, and this is about the place of the Showcase in the larger ecology of the Edinburgh Fringe. I know you said that the Showcase is on pause while you see what Arts Council England is developing and how those funding body led showcases like Made in Scotland all fit together. Maybe the answer is literally you're just waiting to see what they do. I'm interested in the overlap of things like the British Council Showcase and some other artist-led initiatives. I'm interested in shows or artists who have worked closely with the Forest Fringe, for example and have then ended up being associated with the British Council. I guess my question is about your sense of that wider ecology of things like the Forest Fringe or things on the Free Fringe, knowing that the invitation to come, or the prospect of coming to the festival is a financially risky one. Did you have a sense of those other economies or those other ecologies?

AJ: Oh god absolutely. It's partly based on the experience of working with the British Council and for me, being around since the start of the Showcase, but also for many years before that Volcano used to perform in the Fringe, we went every year and made and lost money knowing first-hand what the risks are. In terms of the effect you're trying to achieve with the Showcase, you're trying to get as much as you can. In the early days of the Forest Fringe when it was at the Forest café we presented. Action Hero's *A Western* was part of the programme there and for a couple of years, Third Angel shows had been presented there and they were in the Showcase. We're very happy for delegates to go and see these different kinds of set-ups. It is opening their eyes in terms of what constitutes a theatre and where you can present it. For people that were going to the Forest Fringe at that point, the notion was here's a bucket, pay what you can. I remember taking a delegate from Hungary from the main venue that we work with called Trafó, which really does present some experimental work, to see *A Western* in the Forest café and he was blown away. It was full, unlike a lot of the other venues which weren't anywhere near there. He said, Andrew, this is absolutely full and I explained to him about the economy that they were running on. He was

then going away having learned something from that and thinking that he could run some events like that off-site back in Budapest. There are all sorts of little tangential benefits of us having our ear to the ground and knowing where the innovation is going on in relation to the Fringe in the broader sense. With Forest Fringe we were right in there at the start of all of that because we don't want to miss a trick. What we've done subsequently, as Forest Fringe shifted and got bigger and sort of became part of the Fringe, which it didn't want to do, they then built a large group of associate artists to get people doing more innovative work, working in different kinds of sites and obviously presenting work in the context of the Fringe that would look okay in the Forest café, so the two things go hand-in-hand, I guess. With that network that they've got, we're then able to export the concept of the Forest Fringe. What we did a number of times with them, talking with Andy and his colleagues, is saying look this model is great and in places like Kazakhstan where there's no funding for independent cultural sector, say okay, let's get Forest Fringe to do something and show the young artists who want to be independent, just do it. Fuck the system, you don't need it. It's not the best way, to say you're not going to get paid a grant, but if you really want something to happen, there are different infrastructures. The expertise that Andy and his colleagues have, we've exported on a number of occasions. In relation to that, in conversations with me and a colleague called Steven Brett who's an ex-dancer, he was in Rambert and Nederlands Dans too. For a while he was the executive director of SPILL. He's the one that used to run the Nightingale Theatre down in Brighton, which is actually where I saw Adrian do *An audience with Adrienne*. Small world. But anyway, in conversation with Andy, he came up with this concept of Forest Fringe micro-festivals, which was a group of associated artists with the core team, working with a group of peers internationally, somewhere like Kazakhstan. So, three associates from the UK and three in Kazakhstan, where the UK associate artists would help emerging artists in Kazakhstan to develop some shows and then we'd take out the Forest Fringe guys, they'd do up a micro-festival with six artists in situ in a small space somewhere in Almaty and depending on what they made with local artist, whether it was work-in-progress or a full piece, that would be presented as part of the micro-festival programme. The local artists were learning how to run the venue with the Forest Fringe guys. Expertise alongside content. They demonstrated that there are different ways that you can create a niche economy really. So we've always been interested in looking at those kinds of models. At the moment, there's not a lot like that doing the

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Fringe, but there are other things happening. There's been things like BUZZCUT, other initiatives in Scotland that have happened out with the festival context and we go to those instead, or alongside the Fringe. With the 2019 programme, having Cade and MacAskill involved, meant we could say oh Rosana, they were one of the founders of BUZZCUT. You can bring these other things because they have all this expertise doing that. The Showcase has been, from our perspective, a very useful platform to start these different conversations where you can see a potential opening with somebody.