



The Future Is Unwritten Still

The Future Is Unwritten is a theatre company powered by punk values of inclusion and Do-It-Yourself invention; exploring issues of popular culture, politics and injustice. Work includes Thirteen (a Brighton Festival commission), five touring shows (including Fringe First winning Meeting Joe Strummer) and Brighton 'Til I Die at Brighton's Theatre Royal. Paul is Dramaturge/Director for Victoria Melody on Major Tom and currently Ugly Chief. Emily has produced Hannah Walker and Chris Thorpe, Bootworks Theatre, Pebble Gorge, Spymonkey and Hijack.

Still

We want to make a new piece of theatre about photography, social media sharing and the internet, personal creativity and data protection. A piece that celebrates the life and work of Vivian Maier and investigates ideas of surveillance - using the audience's images in public.

Born in working class New York, Vivian earned her living as a nanny, dying in near poverty, after a period of homelessness, aged 83. She had no family; those who remember her say she was mysterious, contradictory, lonely. After she died a treasure trove of her (mainly undeveloped) photographs was found, taken on box cameras, capturing the lives of people in public. The images are in the process of, posthumously, creating some kind of fame for Vivian: www.vivianmaier.com. She was particularly interested in photographing those living in poverty, often presenting the homeless against the backdrop of the rich and wealthy.

Modern images are created very differently: computer technology helps mobile phone users snap and broadcast instantly, whilst surveillance cameras capture constant images of people's lives. We want to play with the way images and information can be used and shared by making the second strand of the show around images and information gathered about the audience throughout the evening.

In summer 2015 will will enter a period of research and development to spend time with two performers, a photographer/film maker, a data protection expert and information hacker to explore how we use the subject matter in a performance context.

Our focus for the R&D would be to understand to what extent we want to combine Maier's story with the surveillance work and to use the performances (offered by Ovalhouse) to test audience reaction to being subjected - and the limits the work can go legally.

Utilising Ovalhouse's downstairs space during the work in progress performances, we would use projection and large television screens in different configurations in relation to the audience (traverse, in the round, end on) to experiment with the most effective way of immersing the audience within the images used in the performance.

Still, for the audience

The secret life of Vivian will be acted out by a female actor, sometimes seen simply on stage, sometimes 'close up', projected on to big screens. The audience will enjoy the mysteries and contradictions of Vivian's life, appreciate her talents, wonder at her sanity, think about the nature of photographic art: for Vivian the moment of taking the picture was all that mattered; most of the subjects were unaware they were being photographed.

As the evening progresses, the photographs and images which appear on stage will be joined, initially fleetingly, by a few pictures of the audience taken on the night of the show. The two strands will intertwine: Vivian's tale, coupled with with the 'surveillance' of a few members of the audience. Initially the surveillance will be lighthearted - commenting on the members of the audience photographed secretly before and during the show, and speculating about what they might be up to. As this progresses more information about the people will be broadcast.

We will test how much information can be gathered by a hacker in a live situation and how to manage this interaction in a sensitive but dramatic way. Feedback from the audience on work in progress nights will be used to rework, incorporate or adapt ideas in the next stage of development.

Still, why now?

We want to help tell Vivian's emerging story more widely, celebrate her extraordinary talent and investigate the issues it raises. The documentary film, *Finding Vivian Maier* has also been nominated for an Oscar so now is a pertinent time to investigate her life and art further.

At the same time, intrusion into people's lives has never been greater: access to personal information by the state and corporations has never been greater.

We want to use opportunities currently available to TFIU to make new work which comes from an urgent and thought-provoking subject. Paul and TFIU have been extremely successful touring plays to regional audiences but *Still* would challenge Paul to work in new ways, with new technology and in a more collaborative approach.