

DIY collective carries the standard for free art at the Fringe

“This spirit of risk and experiment is no better demonstrated than by the development of free venues such as The Forest on Bristo Place, which has become a magnet for young artists wanting to try things out.”

Lyn Gardner The Guardian

With the average price of a theatre ticket at the Edinburgh Fringe at a record high and the cost of taking a show there astronomical, it is fast becoming near-impossible for both artists and audiences to offer, experience or participate in new and experimental work with inevitably low budgets. These days, the true spirit of the Fringe is increasingly found at free events and delivered by volunteer artists in marginal spaces. Leading the charge are pioneering, not-for-profit organisations like *What They Could Do, They Did* - a London-based group with a commitment to participatory, multi-disciplinary shows of high quality. This emerging artists collective are bringing a new dimension to the Fringe in partnership with Edinburgh's Forest Café over the course of a four-day micro-festival from 21st-24th August 2008.

Here, the unsuspecting wanderer may find themselves mesmerised by a light installation which translates local internet traffic into digital sigils, building a audio-visual automaton that draws pictures when its component instrument parts are twanged, being subsumed by story-tellers and performers into a twilight world of baroque excess, or thrust, hosepipe-trumpet in hand, into a 20-piece improv-pop band that is playing live in 1 hour's time. Operating outside of standard venues and structures, the collective invite audiences to become complicit in an experience of the arts that is simply not found in a conventional theatre, gallery or music venue. And all for free. Workshops, live performances and exhibitions combine for 4 days of knife-edge-walking delights.

For the third year running, *What They Could Do, They Did* are working in partnership with The Forest Café on Bristo Place, also home to the 'Forest Fringe' programme. Founded in 2000, The Forest has remained the only space in Edinburgh to offer high-quality art and culture at no cost to either artists or audiences; it has become a hub for adventurous and innovative art practice, both from within Edinburgh and further afield. Collaborating with curators and performers from one of London's leading open spaces 'Battersea Arts Centre', Edinburgh arts collective 'TotalKunst' and performers such as Amanda Palmer (Dresden Dolls) from the nearby 'Spiegel tent', *What They Could Do, They Did* are modelling a performance practice as revolutionary as it is engaging.

www.theydid.org.uk/press
www.theforest.org.uk

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