

Il Pixel Rosso present

And the Birds Fell from the Sky

by Simon Wilkinson & Silvia Mercuriali



“a potent collaboration between a theatre and a film director,
My response to the [autoteatro](#)-style instructions was as immediate and
unquestioning as that of a sleepwalker”

THE GUARDIAN

PROMO PACK

1.The Company

Il Pixel Rosso is the combined creative forces of Silvia Mercuriali artist and deviser from internationally renowned theatre company Rotozaza who pioneered the autoteatro style performances and Simon Wilkinson multi-award winning film maker and artist.

The 'Autoteatro' series explores a new kind of performance, whereby audience members perform the piece themselves, for each other. Using simple technology, participants are given instructions - often via headphones - about what to say and do. There are no actual 'audience' beyond the other participants.

This new collaboration aims to create work that is innovative and challenging, that reflects our condition as individuals and our relationship with the society that surround us.

Il Pixel Rosso create work that combines various art and technological mediums, avoiding easy classifications of their practice and allowing them to experiment with different art forms according to the aim of the project they are developing.

Sometimes performance, sometimes photography sometimes happenings, il Pixel Rosso reinvents itself constantly.

2. The Show

'And the Birds Fell From the Sky' is the first production by 'Il Pixel Rosso'. Funded by The Arts Council of England and Brighton and Hove City Council for Brighton's White Night 2010.

This new production is a work of subtle yet provocative political resonance and technical ingenuity; an immersive video goggle performance that combines 'autoteatro' style instructions with film, where the audience becomes the central character placed at the heart of the story.

Anarchic, dreamy and dangerous, 'And The Birds Fell From the Sky' takes you on a joyride from inside your head all the way to the edge of civilisation, accompanied by three Faruk Clowns.

3. The Faruk – the guiding concept

Until 10,000 years ago the Faruk and humans lived side by side as hunter gatherers. Theirs was a roller coaster life that tore through the ashes of death; a life of thrills, spills and unsullied truth, knowing its destination but with no concerns at all for the route.

The human race, however, began to change. Seduced by the vision of a future free from the hazards of nature, they traded the immediacy and freedom of their lives by steady increments for an increasingly guarded existence of far narrower dimensions; herding themselves into a life of meagre passions and within which they would become ever more isolated and unknowable. The humans, without realizing their folly, had de-humanized themselves to such an extent that they could no longer relate or freely communicate, even to each other.

The roller coaster ride had become a commuter train whose route was without surprise and whose destination was veiled in lies.

Do you remember how the trees would burn with a fire that reached so high, that the birds fell from the sky like a rain of flaming miniature suns? 10,000 years ago that fire was your home, and now the Faruk have come to return you to that place....



4. Technical Requirements

How the Show Works



The participants are fitted with headphones and video-goggles



They follow audio instructions for simple actions

Which mirror simultaneous actions in the film



They are moved through the space and lose sense of their real physical location helping them to embrace the fictional environment

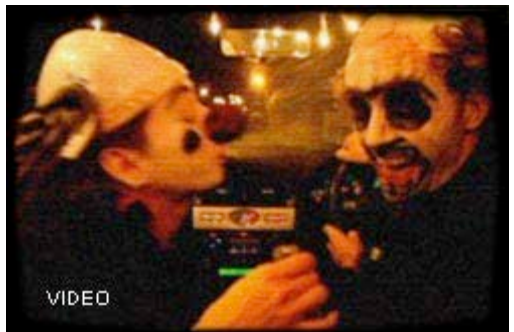


Participants find themselves performing simple actions...

Which allow them to interact with other characters in the film



The performance takes place in a space set up to deliver odours and physical sensations Which happen in sync with events in the film immersing the participant fully in the narrative and atmosphere of the film



Ushers

The piece requires ushers who have tried the piece before they start working. They must be familiar with the timing of the interactions that they'll be having with the audience members throughout the running of the piece.

The show is 20 minutes long for two audience members at a time and it's repeated through out the day as many times as the venue requires. Please be aware of charging time for the equipment, we suggest a 2/3 hours shifts with 1 and a half /2 hours break between shifts.

The technical requirements and the number of ushers needed to run the show depends on the interval at which each pair starts the piece.

We recommend having 2 audience members every 15 minutes.

This allows 8 people to participate every hour.

This option has the lowest costs for the venue. (details of material to be sourced by the venue etc follows)The Venue needs to provide 2 ushers to run the show and 1 extra to show the audience where to wait for their turn and to assist with handing them the goggles and headphones. (timings are crucial for the show so this extra person needs to have a watch and to be in touch with the main ushers constantly).

The space

The show is very flexible and responsive to different sites it is installed.

It has been performed in a car park, in the backstage of a big theatre, in a theatre above a pub, outdoor and in a portacabin.

We need to create three different spaces

- A waiting room – this can be very small to accommodate 2 chairs, a monitor and a little table
- Fitting room – with a desk and wheelchair’s access
- A room with wheelchair access and that can be blacked out completely- this needs to be big enough to accommodate a van seat and two wheelchairs.

The equipment

The video equipment is provided by the company for a small hiring fee to cover wear and tear.

Equipment required (provided by the company):

Video goggles	6
Mp4 players	6
headphones	6
mp3 player	1
extra headphones (used by the ushers)	4
chargers	12

Props to source:

1 desk with a chair

1 table lamp

2 wheel chairs (for UK venue 2 wheel chairs and three sets of car seat available for a small hire/transportation fee)

rear car / van seat pairs or

1 sub woofer

1 desk fan

Props provided by the company:

- Envelopes (to give to the participants at the beginning of the show)
- A keepsake (to give to the audience member at the end of the piece to take away with them)
- Flyers and newsletter for the waiting room area (company provides originals of Newsletter, the venue provides copies for the show).
- Lavender scented oil
- Brandy scented spray

The Performance Space Explained

Performance Space Set Up



As explained above the main body of the show is run in two spaces; a small space with a desk where participants are fitted with goggles and headphones and a larger space where the majority of the piece takes place. The audience are kitted up in the smaller room, placed in a wheelchair, wheeled into the larger performance space where they are sat into car seats. This area is fitted with the props, smells and small objects, which the ushers use to interact with the

participants.

5. Wrap Around Activity

Simon and Silvia also offer workshops and discussions, which can be tied in with performances.

Video Goggle multi-sensory film making workshop

This is a workshop for up to 8 people running from 10am until 5pm. The group is taken through the process of creating a short multi-sensory film performance for video goggles incorporating script, production, video interactions and performance.

Faruk Clown Workshop

A one day workshop for up to 20 people and culminating in a live public interaction. In the past, this has been incorporated into the opening of the main piece, taking over the bar / cafe area of the venue to extend the mythology of the show.

The workshop explores the concept of the Faruk clown, who does not perform for an audience but instead embodies 'Farukism' in a way, which invites the intrigue of an audience. Liberated from the

tediousness of domesticated human concerns and free to express oneself in the language of Faruk whilst dressed in ragged disheveled clothes, the participants discover their own inner pariah and the ability to bypass the need to be acceptable in the eyes of others. Feedback from previous participants has been ecstatic: 'I think there is a Faruk in all of us', said one, 'mine will always be with me from now on'.

Involve local artists and writers

One of the props for the show is a fictional parish newsletter, which, each audience member gets to read. There is an option to create a bespoke version of this document through inviting submission of articles from local artists and writers so that the newsletter is specific to the town in which the show is being seen and reflects a regional focus.

6. Touring Info

Venue size: adaptable and site specific (see Tech requirement)

Company size: Two on the road for the first 2/3 days (Simon and Silvia will set the space up one to two days prior to the opening of the show training the ushers the day before the opening and monitoring the run on the first day)

The show is then run by the venues itself, which will take care of safely sending all of the equipment back to the company's address.

Touring period: All year around

Language: English is the original version but it can easily be translated in any language

7. Marketing

'and the Birds Fell from the Sky' is a show which thrives on word of mouth recommendations, the more people get to see the show, the greater the demand for tickets through recommendation; as a result we have developed a few strategies for linking the positive feedback of those who have already experienced the piece with potential ticket buyers.

FACEBOOK

There is a facebook group for the show BUT we have found that if the venue itself creates a facebook group and invites their own existing friend base then it is possible to generate local interest and pre-show buzz to encourage ticket sales. At Brighton Fringe promo through facebook generated around 20% of ticket sales. It is advantageous to create real time wall posts with links to audience feedback, reviews and available time slots during the running of the show.

TWITTER

il pixel rosso is on twitter as @ilpixelrosso. We are currently building our follower base in order to generate discussion and interest in the show. Twitter is particularly useful in festival scenarios where traditional marketing loses impact due to the sheer quantity of shows on offer. In order to create local interest it's advisable for venues / festivals to tweet about the show using the #TAG #andthebirdsfellfromthesky and @ilpixelrosso. During festivals it is advantageous to tweet out links to reviews, audience feedback quotes and information about available time slots during the running of the show.

PRE-SHOW WORKSHOPS

We have discovered that running a workshop prior to the opening of the show, in which participants get to try the show and learn about the techniques used in the production helps to generate a buzz around the show leading to pre-sales.

EXTENDING THE MYTHOLOGY

The subject matter and mythology explored in the show lends itself to a variety of other indirect promotional activities. During previous runs we have developed a number of useful tools which can be used through facebook, twitter, local radio and other social networking tools;

- *radio feature*

For Brighton Fringe Festival a radio feature was created which included interviews with fake anthropologists and academics discussing The Faruk. The article also features a fictitious statement by a local police officer warning people to avoid the show 'and the Birds Fell from the Sky' and if they should attend, that they shouldn't attempt to drive a car. We are currently editing this feature to take out regional references.

- *Parish newsletter*

As part of our original show we produced a fake parish newsletter featuring articles which extended the mythology of the piece. We are currently creating a new version of this without regional references. The newsletter will be up on our website and available to be linked to via social networking sites.

8. Reviews

Brighton Festival Reviews

Fringe Guru **** - 9th May

"this is a disturbing and innovative show that stays with you for days after you experience it"

Fringe Review ***** - 13th May 2011

"This is something very special and unforgettable which will resonate for every audience. It combines technology with a potent narrative to conjure up a unique, compelling and emotionally charged experience. An outstanding piece of theatre"

The Argus - 16th May 2011

"There is more than enough on offer here to test the nature and boundaries of the imagination"

Living Lou [blog] - 29th May 2011

"definitely a show to check out"

BAC Reviews

BELLYFLOP MAGAZINE - 30th March 2011

Technology toying with the body's need to know what the hell is going on, the whole fuelled by that meddling creature, Imagination: Beautiful.

WHAT'S ON STAGE MAGAZINE - 15th March 2011

Il Pixel Rosso's *And The Birds Fell From The Sky* plays with sensory manipulation through the use of video goggles and headphones, creating an atmosphere of claustrophobia and disorientation that lingers long after the participant has left the room.

CAROUSEL OF FANTASIES - 3rd April 2011

The whole film is beautifully shot, glazed with the burnt ochre of nostalgia.

A Younger Theatre - 5th April 2011

Being lost to the world of video goggles, and relying on the assistance of the company to move me around, was truly a joy.

Hannah Nicklin (blog) - 10th April 2011

A fascinating piece, that I wanted to spend more time with.

Fourth Wall Magazine - 11th April 2011

You are aware of both this world and your own but it's a testimony to Il Pixel Rosso that for a moment at the end, you want to stay in theirs.

White Night Review

The Guardian - November 1st 2010

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9. Images and Audience Feedback

For more feedback please visit our website on www.ilpixelrosso.org.uk



“Wow brilliant! I've never experienced anything quite like that, I want to do it again straight away!”

"I loved it, it has really made me feel like I have to go out and enjoy life; I'd love to be inside the heads of the people who made this"



"As well as being incredibly exciting and funny I found that the ending made me cry. The way in which you experience the whole thing made those feelings very present. I thought it was really well done, thank you"

"I wanted to be able to read the words that were being spoken because they were so beautiful"



"That was amazing, I found it so easy to slip right into story and forget I was actually sitting in a car park in Brighton"

"Taking the goggles off at the end was like waking from a beautiful dream that I didn't want to wake up from"

10. Contact Information

For bookings contact Associate Producer Natalie Richardson booking@natalierichardson.org or by phone +447743 052926.

For more information about the practical aspects of the show or workshops please contact the company directly;

Silvia or Simon on: ilpixelrosso@gmail.com or visit our website <http://www.ilpixelrosso.co.uk>

You can also call us directly on:

07782504675 for Silvia Mercuriali or 07990980296 for Simon Wilkinson