

# MANIPULATE

Media Release Embargoed until 6pm on Thursday 4 November 2021

## Puppet Animation Scotland announces MANIPULATE Festival's 15th anniversary programme for 2022

28 January - 5 February 2022

Tickets on sale at 6pm, Thursday 4 November 2021

Today, Puppet Animation Scotland is excited to announce the programme for MANIPULATE Festival 2022 – a year that marks its 15th anniversary, and sees Scotland's international festival of visual theatre, animated film and puppetry return with its first live series of events in two years.

Presenting a dynamic programme of live performance, film, installation, workshops and events, and additional content online, **the 15th edition of the award-winning MANIPULATE Festival will run from Friday 28 January until Saturday 5 February 2022** across Edinburgh's Festival Theatre and Summerhall; bringing together leading **Scottish and international artists from 15 countries including Canada, China, Brazil, England, Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Ireland, Latvia, Norway, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain and the USA.**

Acclaimed for presenting outstanding visually-led work that engages and challenges audiences, the 2022 edition of the festival will centre its artists and audiences with a curated programme from around the world. The programme will see MANIPULATE favourite artists return, alongside brand-new artists who will present live performances, work in progress, film, immersive installations and industry-focused workshops and events.

MANIPULATE will mark its anniversary year by looking at the current and future landscape, with a programme of cutting-edge and boundary-pushing work that surrounds timely themes including **feminism, gender, identity, queer culture and sexuality**, alongside relevant issues including the **environment, faith, mental health, power and war**. Together, the programme explores the relationship between the individual and society, asking of its artists and audiences, how do you build back better as we move forward as one?

**Programming her first live festival since taking up the helm as Puppet Animation Scotland's Director in 2020, and talking about MANIPULATE Festival, Dawn Taylor said:** *"We are so thrilled to bring live work back to Scottish audiences in 2022 and also to continue developing the digital programme initiated in 2020. As we progress through to this next phase of the global pandemic, it's clear that artists are interested in questioning the status quo and asking big questions about the society we are part of and each of our place within it. Questions of identity, climate, global unrest and the contract between individual and collective resonate through the work and in our conversations around it.*

*MANIPULATE 2022 is a moment for audiences, artists and industry to come back together for moments of escapism and joy as well as provocation and challenge. We'll share spaces, both live and virtual, and engage in dialogue, learn from one another and explore questions about our shared future. That's why for the first time this year we invite our audiences to connect in new ways, whether walking together or sharing a meal, and we'll host more open spaces than ever to demystify the work of MANIPULATE and create points of access for emerging artists. We can't wait to welcome you back."*

**The 2022 Programme includes:**

Live performances throughout the festival comment on **economic, political and social issues**. The

# MANIPULATE

festival will open with Edinburgh born artist and performer **Sadiq Ali** who presents his first-full length show ***The Chosen Haram***, dealing with themes of **addiction, connection, faith and sexuality**. *The Chosen Haram* tells the story of two queer men and their chance meeting through a dating app, portraying the highs and lows of their relationship and the barriers they face, both social and cultural, in seeking happiness and personal fulfillment.

Each weekend, the festival will see a special new strand ***Dinner with...*** which invites audiences to a two course meal in Summerhall's gallery bar, hosted by some of our favourite Scottish performance artists. Audiences are invited to ***Dinner with LARDS***, an ensemble of Scottish theatre artists with specialisms in clown, bouffon and character work who celebrate liveness, risk and joy in their work. The following weekend, join MANIPULATE for ***Dinner with Plutot La Vie***, a mesmerising evening of intimate performance, an evening of illusion where everything may not be what it seems.

**Jean Daniel Broussé (JD)** explores themes of **family, queer culture and sexuality** in his performance (***Le Pain*** - a show about breadmaking, physical heroics, growing up queer in a boulangerie in the south of France, endings and new beginnings. It includes circus, dance, storytelling, Béarnaise folklore video, karaoke and laughter.

**From sexuality and queer culture, to celebrities and drag culture**, award-winning Rambert-trained British dance theatre company **Thick & Tight** take influence from a wide range of historical, political, literary and artistic subjects, with a focus on promoting queer culture and accessibility within dance. **Created by Eleanor Perry and Daniel Hay-Gordon**, the company present ***Short & Sweet***; a modern variety show that mixes **dance, drag, lip-synching and satire**, bringing together a host of famous and infamous characters to life including Sid Vicious, Twiggy, Grace Jones, Rasputin, Edith Sitwell and everyone's favourite avant-garde duo, John Cage & Elaine Paige.

From icons to idols, **Scottish-based dance artist Suzi Cunningham** presents double-bill ***Rules to Live By // EIDOS*** that veers between anarchy, punk music, heroism and how idolatry and loss can shape a life. The idea for ***Rules to Live By*** came in 2018 after the death of one of Suzi's teenage idols, Mark E. Smith of the band *The Fall*, whose collaboration with Michael Clark led her to train as a dancer. It is a requiem for heroism, hedonism, rebirth and dark disturbing humour. ***EIDOS*** is a tribute to Suzi's grandmother, who was a punk in-her-own-right. She is the hero, the stalwart, Suzi's personal Vivienne Westwood, the treasure hunter and the curio-with-a-cause.

**Scottish female-led theatre collective Snap-Elastic** is led by **Alice Mary Cooper, Eszter Marsalko, Isy Sharman and Claire Eliza Willoughby**, and together they create bold physical performance work. Exploring themes of predatory behaviour, ***EAT ME*** is a luscious, incendiary theatre show about unconventional **love, chaos, control and the shifting complexities of power**.

Also exploring themes of **power and control** are festival favourites **Ljubljana Puppet Theatre / Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana** who return to MANIPULATE two years after their visit with the extraordinary ***Open The Owl***. An intimate puppet-object miniature exploring power, weakness and control, ***Moč / The Power*** draws the audience into a strange, distorted world, asking the question: 'Who is manipulating who in this work, which plays with varying notions of power and weakness, as well as of public and private?'

Looking at the impact of **war and displacement** is the world premiere performance of ***The Yellow Canary*** that opens following its work-in-progress presentation as part of the MANIPULATE digital festival in 2021, and animated documentary ***My Favourite War (MANS MĪĻĀKAIS KARŠ)***.

Presented by performance maker **Tashi Gore**, with visual theatre expert **Ross MacKay** and playwright **Will Gore**, ***The Yellow Canary*** will be presented in a hybrid format of live performance and digital

# MANIPULATE

animation. It is both an epic true story and a leap into the imagination of a young child desperate to escape the horrors of war, exploring love, loss and what it means to flee your home.

From stage to screen, **Ilze Burkovska Jacobsen's *My Favourite War (MANS MĪĻĀKAIS KARŠ)*** - tells the personal story of its director, Ilze, about growing up in the Cold-War USSR. Winner of awards including Annecy Contrechamp Competition, French Critics Prize and Latvian National Film Prize- Animator Of The Year, it is an exciting coming-of-age story about finding one's own **identity, truth and loyalty**.

The theme of displacement is also pertinent to the work of theatre company **Agrupación Señor Serrano**, Spanish masters of micro-cinema Señor Serrano who blend live feed video, scale models, text, performance, sound and objects, and return to MANIPULATE following their critically acclaimed performance of *A House in Asia* in 2017. Presenting the Scottish premiere of their theatre work ***Birdie***, the multimedia performance highlights the plight of refugees through the lens of migrating birds, and includes live video, objects, Hitchcock's *The Birds* revisited, scale models, 2000 mini animals, wars, smugglers, a massive migration and three performers handling this messy world with wit, criticism and commitment with humankind.

In another performance which asks searching questions about the relationship between the individual and society, physical theatre artist Lewis Sherlock and performance writer Ali Maloney present ***After Metamorphosis***; a dramatic reworking of Kafka's classic which puts toxic workplace culture and its effect on the individual under the lens. The piece weaponizes the surrealism of the original text into a wild rumpus, unveiling a satire of identity and conformity. Scuttling around between micro-cinema, physical theatre, and spoken word burlesques, it explores imposter syndrome, individuality in the corporate hive mind, and our relationship with the insect ecosystem.

From physical to aerial theatre, ***III Lit*** is a powerful performance that uses the Japanese art of shibari (rope bondage) exploring **mental health**, cycles of repetition and the struggle to break out. Performed by Kasia Zawadzka, one of the pioneers of world self-suspension rope performance who has worked with some of the world's leading rope practitioners including Kinoko Hajime, Saki Kamijoo, Garth Knight and Esinem.

For the second year running, the festival will platform and celebrate the work of **womxn and non-binary animators** from around the world. First initiated in 2020 to champion the work of women (cisgender, transgender, non-binary, genderqueer or intersex), with the aim of improving visibility for women in the film sector and addressing the current gender imbalance in animated film, the programme features work employing a wide range of techniques, textures and styles and includes some of the most decorated shorts in this year's festival season.

Looking to legends of the animation world, ***Animated Women: Aaronimation*** will include a compilation of seven short experimental animated films by **legendary American artist and animator Jane Aaron** (1948-2015). Aaron's experimental animations, compiled in the half-hour *Aaronimation*, are quintessentially cinematic. One frame at a time filmed with her Bolex camera, the films explore qualities unique to pre-digital movie-making augmented by Jane's own handmade production tools and techniques. The works capture an era of 16mm filmmaking that is now frozen in history by obsolescence of the film medium.

With a dizzying array of animation styles and a packed programme of untold stories and exciting talent, **MANIPULATE once again partners with Edinburgh Short Film Festival** to bring audiences award-winning short animated films from around the globe. Featuring new work fresh onto the festival circuit, the programme offers something for everyone whether new to animated film or an avid fan.

# MANIPULATE

All animations in the programme will be available for audiences to watch online as well, keeping the programme accessible to those outside of Scotland, or who cannot attend in person.

From film to installations, French artists Adrien M & Claire B present two **immersive digital experiences that use interactive augmented reality** in *Acqua Alta – The Crossing of the Mirror* and *FAUNA*. *Acqua Alta* is an interactive virtual reality installation that invites audiences to look through a tablet or a smartphone to discover the story of a woman, a man and a house. It traces the odyssey of those involved, facing the rising waters, among storms, ink seas, breaking waves and jellyfish.

Visual artist and scenographer Claire Bardainne and computer scientist and juggler Adrien Mondot also showcase their creativity and skill in second installation *FAUNA*, which allows people to go on a treasure hunt to find and explore the imaginative worlds hidden behind the graphic prints. *Fauna* is a series of ten large-format posters with a custom-built Augmented Reality application that can be discovered via your smartphone, and presents animals roaming in beautiful landscapes and subtle soundscapes hiding behind city walls.

Continuing the programme of installations, audiences can discover *Forest VIDEOLAB* in the Meadows adjacent to Summerhall. Led by Mettje Hunneman, a Scottish-based videographer/editor and video artist hailing from Amsterdam's dynamic art and VJ scene, the installation is a series of unique, site-specific, public artworks using immersive video projections with original soundscapes to highlight and transform public green spaces and question our place in nature.

Celebrating and supporting artists who play with form and challenge perceptions is central to the work of Puppet Animation Scotland, and this year's MANIPULATE will see 3 programmed work-in-progress performances, working once again in partnership with SURGE and their bursary programme.

Firstly is *Between Earth and Moon* by Noah Thomson - a Surge bursary award recipient who will present this Scottish-Argentinian work-in-progress collaboration, performed live between the two countries using livestream technology. The piece is inspired by Italo Calvino's short story 'The Distance of the Moon' and will explore relationships across distance.

Secondly is *Sand*, presented by multi-skilled artists Petre Dobre & Daniel Livingstone which tells of a very old mythical being - the Sandman. Sand is a highly visual work-in-progress performance that blends theatrical styles to bring the Sandman's world to life through movement, object manipulation and shadow puppetry. Through this lens, they'll explore dreams and face nightmares.

Next up is MANIPULATE's SNAPSHOTS that gives audiences a first look at exciting new visual theatre works from five Scottish artists, presented in the early stages of their development. Featuring puppetry, object theatre, physical theatre and dance, the lineup promises insight into the process of a diverse group of artists working with a wide range of techniques. Presenting work at this early stage is an invaluable opportunity for artists to share their work with an audience and receive feedback which can play a key role in shaping the work as it evolves.

From work-in-progress to professional development opportunities, MANIPULATE Festival has **2 workshops from leading practitioners Al Seed and Green Ginger**.

**Al Seed presents What Makes a Good Idea for a Show?** This is a question that can be deceptively difficult to answer at any stage in one's career, but more so when there is the agenda of creating a show that is visually / physically driven. In this workshop Al will work with participants to explore approaches

# MANIPULATE

to identifying, developing and pitching concepts for future shows with presenting partners, audiences and collaborators in mind.

**Green Ginger presents TRASH-HACK Puppetry Workshop**, a full day workshop for both experienced and emerging puppeteers with the inimitable Chris Pirie of leading UK puppetry company Green Ginger. Trash-Hack is a masterclass in re-purposing domestic and industrial junk to create and animate instant puppet creatures.

And finally, in a series of events programmed to help artists, practitioners and producers connect with other puppeteers and enthusiasts, **MANIPULATE Festival presents *Netwalk (puppetry)*** - a practical way to connect with other professionals by walking and talking around Edinburgh's iconic Meadows. Proven to increase creative thinking, as well as to encourage honest and productive conversations, one member of the Puppet Animation Scotland team will join each walk with ticket holders entitled to a free hot chocolate to keep them cosy as they stroll.

**Tickets for the 2022 festival go on sale at 6pm, Thursday 4 November and can be booked by visiting [MANIPULATEfestival.org](https://manipulatefestival.org).**

**ENDS.**

**For MANIPULATE press kit:**

A press kit of assets including images and photography is [available here](#).

@MANIPULATEfest | #ManipulateFestival2022

All available at [MANIPULATEfestival.org](https://manipulatefestival.org).

For access information visit <https://manipulatefestival.org/access/>

**For all media enquiries contact Storytelling PR:**

Joy Parkinson [joy@storytellingpr.com](mailto:joy@storytellingpr.com) 0778 031 0614

Emma Costello [emma@storytellingpr.com](mailto:emma@storytellingpr.com) 0795 028 7075

**Notes to Editors.**

## **About MANIPULATE Festival**

MANIPULATE Festival presents the very best of Scottish and international puppetry, visual theatre and animated film to audiences in Edinburgh and beyond. The Festival aims to engage and challenge our audiences with high-quality visually led work which pushes boundaries, plays with form and challenges perceptions.

By bringing together the very best puppetry, visual theatre and animated film from across the globe with work which has been developed here in Scotland, we aim to spark opportunities for artistic exchange and to offer our audiences a diverse palette of rich visually led work.

Since 2008 leading, award-winning companies, artists and film-makers from Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, England, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and the USA have provided the vibrant, dynamic core of a festival that entertains, intrigues and inspires.

## **About Puppet Animation Scotland**

# MANIPULATE

Founded in 1984, Puppet Animation Scotland champions puppetry, visual theatre and animated film in Scotland and internationally. As well as our MANIPULATE Festival and Puppet Animation Festival, Puppet Animation Scotland provides year-round networking opportunities, practical advice, support and encouragement to all artists working in puppetry, visual theatre and animated film. We promote and celebrate these art forms as valued art forms integral to Scotland's rich and diverse cultural life. Since 2000 Scottish puppetry companies have presented their work to over 1,850,000 people throughout the UK.

Puppet Animation Scotland is supported by Creative Scotland as part of their Regular Funding Portfolio.