



# 09/10 ANNUAL REPORT

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**THE OTHER WAY WORKS**

**The Other Way Works** creates daring and remarkable theatre that draws the audience into the very heart of the experience.

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Welcome to our annual report for 2009/2010.

It's been a very busy year for The Other Way Works. Alongside performances of Black Tonic in Birmingham and Bristol, we began developing a new show 'Avon Calling', and delivered a range of participation activity. I also attended a number of workshops, conferences and events, and in September we had a great away day with the board, plotting and planning for the future.

Our biggest news was my selection for the prestigious Cultural Leadership Programme's Peach Placement. I started work at

iShed in Bristol, producing the new Theatre Sandbox commissioning scheme. The placement runs for a year, and alongside the position at iShed, I've been benefiting from the programme of mentoring, coaching and training provided by the Cultural Leadership Programme.

On the following pages you can read about what we've been up to over the past year, and you can find out more on our blog at [www.theotherwayworks.co.uk](http://www.theotherwayworks.co.uk)

Katie Day, Artistic Director



# 09/10 PRODUCTION & IN DEVELOPMENT

## **BLACK TONIC**

The company continued to perform Black Tonic during 2009 and 2010 performing the show in Birmingham, sponsored by Radisson Blu Hotel and in Bristol, as part of Mayfest, sponsored by Mercure Holland House Hotel. We had some great feedback from audiences in both cities, and the Mayfest performances sold out before we had even arrived! You can see some 'word cloud' feedback on the show on our blog at [www.theotherwayworks.co.uk](http://www.theotherwayworks.co.uk)

## **SPOOL**

Work in development included One Week Works, where the company created a new piece of work in under a week. Spool was a response to an area of the AE Harris factory in Birmingham – work began on

Monday morning at 10am and the show was performed on Thursday night – guerilla site-responsive theatre! The piece explored the creation of soundscapes using live sound looping. It was performed by Toni Midlane and Vimal Korpai, with sound by Mark Day, scenography input from Kristina Penna, research by Nix Wood, and direction by Katie Day.

## **AVON CALLING**

Between August and October, we began to develop our new work Avon Calling in collaboration with Louise Platt. This period of research and development led to several production opportunities later in the year, from which we were able to gather some very valuable feedback. Performances included work-in-progress full length showings at Camden People's Theatre and as a

double bill with Kings of England at Warwick Arts Centre. We also performed extracts of the show at the First Bite showcase in Birmingham, commissioned by China Plate, and at the Theatre Bristol/Tobacco Factory Prototype event.

To accompany the show, the company also launched [www.avonandme.co.uk](http://www.avonandme.co.uk) a new online space for people to share their stories and memories about Avon Cosmetics.

Avon Calling is commissioned by Pilot and Warwick Arts Centre and funded by Arts Council England.

*Spool.* L-R: Toni Midlane, Mark Day and Vimal Korpai.



**The chair of our board Joel Love gives his personal opinion of 'Avon Calling' in its most recent form (It Came from Pilot 2009, at Warwick Arts Centre, 8 October 2009)**

Evoking a whole host of personal associations, popular stereotypes, jokes, and cultural memories in just the two words of its title, 'Avon Calling' invites us to have a good laugh at the public image of the international cosmetics giant, in particular through its early marketing materials. We also get to snigger at the names and appearance of several of the products in its range.

But this is only the beginning. The show then invites us to explore a more private side of the Avon story, by looking at the life, the home, and the personal

relationships of an "Avon lady", or sales representative. The story is all the more powerful for being true. It is based on the mother of performer Lou Platt, who has taken the brave/gonzo step of becoming an Avon representative in her real life. She shares her first-hand experiences of the temptation to add extra products (for herself or for her friends), to bump up her orders and fulfil her sales targets. As a result, she is beginning to understand her mother better.

This is a personal story, and a powerfully affecting one. The only problem is that audiences are not conditioned to believe in what they see on stage. Let's see what The Other Way Works will do with this show in the future...

**Our next move with Avon Calling is to develop the final production, working with Alex Kelly from Third Angel as a mentor. The final production will be a site-based performance for audiences' own living rooms. The performance will start with a real 'Ding dong! Avon calling!' at your front door, followed by an Avon party with a theatrical twist.**

**We are currently in conversation with commissioning venue and festival partners to present this version in Summer 2011. If you would like to join this conversation, contact Katie on [info@theotherwayworks.co.uk](mailto:info@theotherwayworks.co.uk)**



# 09/10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the year, Katie attended a number of workshops, events and festivals on behalf of the company. These included the AmbITION Roadshow in Birmingham, hosted by ACE, West Midlands; Edinburgh Fringe 2009; the Red Teapot artists conference in Coventry; Devoted and Disgruntled Open Space in London and Bite Size Festival at Warwick Arts Centre. As part of her Mid\*Point Steering Group position, Katie also attended and facilitated two Mid\*Point events including The Challenge of Change, an open space event for those working in theatre in the West Midlands.

In August 2009, the company were selected for the Artists Pervasive Gaming Training weekend at the

Pervasive Media Studio in Bristol. During the weekend, we learnt about game theory and created several street games in groups.

As part of the development of Avon Calling, Katie and Louise Platt attended a weekend voice workshop with Frankie Armstrong, organised by Foursight Theatre.

The most significant development of the year however was Katie's selection for the prestigious Cultural Leadership Programme's Peach Placement at Watershed in Bristol. Katie's placement is a year-long role as Producer of Theatre Sandbox, a new commissioning scheme for theatre artists, companies and collectives to research and develop new ideas

which use pervasive media technologies. Six commissions were selected by a team of theatre-makers and producers and will receive space, time and opportunity to develop their work.

Alongside producing the Theatre Sandbox scheme, Katie has benefited from the mentoring and training provided by the Cultural Leadership Programme – skills which will be reinvested in The Other Way Works over the coming years.

Image: Mid\*point Event November 2009. Photo: Ed Collier



## SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Between April and December 2009, Katie continued to be an elected member of Mid\*Point Steering Group, helping to organise several large events including a 2 day Open Space event in November. Katie stood down from this role on taking up the Cultural Leadership Programme placement.

In November 2009, the company hosted a month-long graduate placement for 2 postgraduate students from Coventry University which focussed on theatre company management. You can stay up-to-date with what Jennie and Victoria are up to now here:

[www.twitter.com/sharpugly](http://www.twitter.com/sharpugly).

We also hosted practical placements alongside our performances of Black Tonic in Birmingham and Bristol, providing opportunities to gain experience in performance and stage management as part of our friendly and supportive team. We were lucky to work with Nix Wood, Lil Henstridge, Jo Gleave, Leigh-Ann Clarke and Caroline Earnshaw. Here's what Jo Gleave said about her placement with us.

“Working with The Other Way Works provided me with an interesting insight into the workings of an exciting and innovative theatre company. It provided me with the opportunity to develop my organisational and team work skills and also to work well under pressure, adapting to many different situations. Overall I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience with the

company and feel that it was an entirely beneficial and enjoyable experience.”

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

In September 2009, the company enjoyed a Board of Directors Away Day in Stratford upon Avon. The aims of the day were to identify the company's aims and values and to begin planning for the future. The Away Day was facilitated by Katie Keeler.

Image: Board of Directors Away Day. L-R: Andrew Tims, Fiona Handscomb, Lina B Frank (minute taker), Chris Unitt, Katie Keeler (facilitator), Louisa Davies and Joel Love.



# 09/10 PARTICIPATION

Between April and July, The Other Way Works created a new project for parents with Creative Partnerships, commissioned by Bright Space. Together with parents and carers the company created a World War II Air Raid Shelter Experience for pupils of Colmore Infant School in Birmingham.

The parents and carers took part in a number of sessions, including a visit to the city archives and an 'in conversation' session with a local historian. They then devised and performed in a short interactive performance and helped practically with building the set and editing the soundtrack.

In March 2010, the company delivered a series of

workshops called Outside Eye at St Martin in the Bullring, Birmingham. Funded by Birmingham City Council, and supported by St Martin's Arts, the series of workshops for refugees, asylum seekers and newly arrived people, explored people's perceptions of Britain through music, craft, photography and discussion. The lead artist was Katherine Maxwell-Cook, and the Kurdish musician Zirak Hamed led a workshop with traditional instruments.

Over the two days 25 people benefited from these two workshops. The majority of these participants were from refugee backgrounds or were recent migrants. <http://outsideeye.tumblr.com/>

Also in March 2010, we held a Black Tonic ideas day, facilitated by Mudlark, a digital agency in Birmingham, and funded by Arts Council England's Digital Content Development Fund. It was a very inspiring and thought-provoking day-long session with key collaborators exploring how the company can exploit the rich material touched on in Black Tonic to create new digital or game based versions of the material.

Image: Outside Eye workshops, workshop participant.



## FUNDERS

Arts Council England – Grants for the Arts  
Arts Council England – Digital Content  
Development Fund  
Wellcome Trust  
Sir Barry Jackson Trust  
Birmingham City Council

## PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Mayfest Bristol  
Radisson Blu Hotel Birmingham  
Mercure Holland House Hotel Bristol  
Camden People's Theatre  
Theatre Bristol  
China Plate  
Pilot Nights  
St Martin's Arts  
Bright Space  
Colmore Infant School, Birmingham  
Warwick Arts Centre

Image: *Avon Calling*, pictured: Louise Platt