

forced entertainment

30 March 2011

Forced Entertainment successful in application to be an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation 2012 - 2015

Forced Entertainment found out this morning that we have been successful in our application to be a National Portfolio Organisation. This good news secures Arts Council England (ACE) support for the company and its work from 2012-2015. Having already taken a cut of 6.9% for 2011/12 our new funding settlement as an NPO represents a stand still in funding for 2012 - 2015. This will certainly impact on the scale, reach and ambition of our activities in the UK. However, we're excited to go forward with our plans for making and presenting ambitious and challenging theatre and performance at home and abroad. We look forward to inspiring encounters with audiences and continuing to help set the agenda for theatre in the 21st Century from our base in Sheffield.

ACE's support represents a cornerstone for our organisation and provides a base from which our artistic work and our fundraising and income generation for projects can begin. ACE's contribution to our funding in recent years represents less than half of our turnover, the rest coming from co-production partners and earned income from touring fees and box office sales. In this sense Forced Entertainment provides a good argument for the importance of arts funding in England being a trigger to further revenue being brought into the country.

The success of Forced Entertainment's application comes in the context of the deep cuts across the arts sector and the broader public sector. Arts Council England has been subjected to a 29.6% cut over three years, with a specific instruction to scale back its own costs by 50%. Our sympathy goes out to those organisations which have received significant cuts or will lose their funding in 2012.

Tim Etchells, Artistic Director of Forced Entertainment said:

'We're pleased that our commitment to artistic excellence and innovative practice combined with sound management has been recognised by Arts Council England. With ACE's support and that of our other partners we can continue to excite and challenge audiences in the UK and elsewhere. We have a strong sense of how fortunate we are to receive this funding given that the demands of central government for cuts at any price will devastate the British arts scene. We feel that the government cuts - to the arts and to other vital areas of social provision - are both destructive and ideologically motivated. Cuts for the arts are particularly short-sighted given that the recent commitment to funding and development has made British culture the envy of the world and an industry which enjoys a sizable return on investment.'

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Since forming the company in 1984, the six core members of the group have sustained a unique artistic partnership for quarter of a century, confirming their position as trailblazers in contemporary theatre. The company's substantial canon of work reflects an interest in the mechanics of performance, the role of the audience and the machinations of contemporary urban life. The work is distinctive and provocative, delighting in disrupting the conventions of theatre and the expectations of audiences. Forced Entertainment's trademark collaborative process - devising work as a group under the direction of Tim Etchells and working through improvisation, experimentation and debate - has made them pioneers of British avant-garde theatre and earned them an international reputation.

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