

# BLAST THEORY

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## BIOGRAPHY

Blast Theory make interactive art to explore social and political questions. The group's work places the public at the centre of unusual and sometimes unsettling experiences, to create new perspectives and open up the possibility of change.

Led by Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr and Nick Tandavanitj, the group draw on popular culture and new technologies to make performances, games, films, apps and installations.

Blast Theory have shown work at the Venice Biennale, Tribeca Film Festival, ICC in Tokyo, Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin, the Barbican and Tate Britain. Commissioners include Channel 4, Sundance Film Festival and the Royal Opera House.

The artists work closely with researchers and scientists and have collaborated with the Mixed Reality Lab at the University of Nottingham since 1997, co-authoring over 45 research papers. The artists teach and lecture internationally including at the Sorbonne, Stanford University and the Royal College of Art. They curated the Screen series for Live Culture at Tate Modern.

Blast Theory have been nominated for four BAFTAs and won the Golden Nica at Prix Ars Electronica and the Nam June Paik Art Center Award.

Founded in 1991, Blast Theory are based in Brighton in the UK.

## Selected highlights

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- *Spit Spreads Death: The Parade (2019)* a parade through Philadelphia to remember the 1918 flu epidemic and to celebrate public health workers today.
- *Bloodyminded (2018)* a live streamed interactive feature film broadcast to cinemas across Europe for 14-18 Nov.
- *A Cluster of 17 Cases (2018)* an installation in New York and Hong Kong resulting from a residency at the World Health Organization.
- *You Start It (2017)* a major retrospective at the Nam June Paik Arts Center in South Korea.
- *2097: We Made Ourselves Over (2017)* a sci-fi journey to the cusp of the next century, for Hull UK City of Culture and Aarhus European Capital of Culture 2017.
- *Operation Black Antler (2016)* go undercover for one night to explore the moral corruption at the heart of state surveillance.
- *Karen (2015)* an app that psychologically profiles you as you play.
- *The Thing I'll Be Doing For The Rest Of My Life (2013)* a crowd bring a trawler out of the water and through the streets of Nagoya.
- *Ivy4Evr (2010)* an SMS drama for teenagers commissioned by Channel 4.
- *A Machine To See With (2010)* the world's first locative cinema commission shown at the Sundance Film Festival.
- *Ulrike And Eamon Compliant (2009)* adopt the role of a terrorist as you walk through the city in this piece for the 53rd Venice Biennale.
- *Rider Spoke (2007)* cyclists explore the city at night recording stories.
- *Can You See Me Now? (2001)* and *Uncle Roy All Around You (2003)* receive acclaim as groundbreaking location based games.
- *Desert Rain (1999)* a large scale installation, performance and game using virtual reality marks the first output of the group's collaboration with the Mixed Reality Lab, University of Nottingham.

## Selected awards

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| 2020 | MUSE (American Alliance of Museums) Awards, Gold Winner, Video, Film, Animation, & Live Media Or Digital Performance for <i>Spit Spreads Death The Parade</i>                       |
| 2019 | Winner of the 2019 Trailblazer Award, IndieCade for contributions to the field of games   |
| 2018 | The Lovie Awards - Silver Winner in Best Use of Interactive Video for <i>2097: We Made Ourselves Over</i>   |
| 2016 | Nam June Paik Art Center Prize  |
| 2015 | British Interactive Media Association - Winner in Data Category, Best of British Digital for <i>Karen</i><br>Festival du nouveau cinéma - Winner, Innovation Award for <i>Karen</i> |
| 2010 | International Mobile Gaming Awards - Winner Best Real World Game, <i>Ulrike and Eamon Compliant</i>   |
| 2005 | Game Developers Choice Awards - Winner of the Maverick Award<br>BAFTA Awards – Nomination for Interactive Arts and Technical & Social Innovation                                    |
| 2003 | Prix Ars Electronica – Winner of the 'Golden Nica' for Interactive Art  |
| 2002 | BAFTA Awards – Nomination for Interactive Arts Award<br>Arts and Humanities Research Board – Winner of Innovation Award   |
| 2000 | BAFTA Awards – Nomination for Interactive Arts  |

# SELECTED PRESS

## Blast Theory

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"It is implicitly political – the collective creates interactive, issue-driven performances that invite us to make ethical decisions about how we engage with, or interpret, the scenarios proposed."

Nick Thurston, Frieze

## Operation Black Antler

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"[T]his kind of imaginative conspiracy shakes one up a bit, makes one look at the world differently and obliges one to engage in lively, post-event debate about the morality of police surveillance."

Michael Billington, The Guardian

"Thought-provoking and superbly performed immersive experience with a political charge"

Tim Bano, The Stage

## A Machine To See With

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"They have done it again ... Blast Theory keeps challenging our use of space and identity by using pervasive technology. This time it is through mobile phones that they involve us into their spatial narrative."

Sandra Gaudenzi, Interactive Documentary blog

## Rider Spoke

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"As soon as it was over, I wanted more. We are truly fortunate in this century, in the wired and anonymous city, to have rediscovered aboriginal notions of songlines and dreamtime, to explore with the aid of mobile technology a new form of strangely low-tech play.

*Rider Spoke* was magical, and I look forward to the next Blast Theory project".

William Wiles, ICON

## Ivy4Evr

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"As a piece of interactive drama it was outstanding, revealing a compelling story of teenage life. Yes it was aimed at teenagers with an educational slant, but it has revolutionised my thinking about mobile personal theatre."

Jake Orr, A Younger Theatre blog

## Karen

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"Few character softwares offer the peculiar ego-boosting appeal of adapting themselves to the user. This makes 'Karen' an intriguing tool for exploring the knotty relationship between digital personalization and human solipsism"

Frank Rose, The New York Times

## Desert Rain

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"As a company, Blast Theory seems finally to offer Britain a theatre group that delves into our popular culture to create deeply challenging work."

Stephen Armstrong, The Sunday Times

"*Desert Rain* is possibly the most technologically ambitious art installation ever made"

Hettie Judah, The Times

## Fixing Point

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"This outfit can always be relied upon to produce edgy, challenging, technology-based work, and this haunting walk in the woods, recapping the story of murdered Irishman Seamus Ruddy, does not disappoint."

Alison Thompson, The Sunday Times

## Contact

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