



BLAST THEORY

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Part role play game, part immersive theatre experience inviting audiences to go undercover for one night, *Operation Black Antler* arrives in London after sell out runs in Brighton & Manchester



Operation Black Antler. Image: Blast Theory.

***Operation Black Antler* by Blast Theory & Hydrocracker**
Off site at Southbank Centre – exact location revealed on booking
3-13 April, every 15 minutes from 6pm - 8.45pm (approx 120 min running time)
£27.50/£13.75 (concessions)
Tickets: <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/whats-on/135029-operation-black-antler-2019>

Following sell out runs in Brighton and Manchester, the politically charged immersive theatre piece *Operation Black Antler* arrives at London's Southbank Centre this April, inviting audiences to go undercover for one night. Watch the trailer [here](#).

Operation Black Antler is co-created by multi award-winning interactive art pioneers [Blast Theory](#) and celebrated site-specific theatre company [Hydrocracker](#). A fast-paced journey from safehouse to live operation to

debrief; *Operation Black Antler* places audiences in the position of an undercover police operative infiltrating a protest group on the fringes of society.

The experience begins with a text message telling audiences where and when to meet. Then, in small groups, they work to develop their undercover character, learning about their targets and their motivations before going operational. Part role play game, part interactive theatre, at its heart *Operation Black Antler* is an invitation to explore the moral and ethical dilemma of how far undercover surveillance is acceptable in the name of state security.

Created in response to ongoing revelations about the treatment of peaceful protesters at the hands of The Metropolitan Police, this highly topical show tackling the rise of the far-right and anti-immigration views now arrives in London.

"You decide on your cover story and how far you want to take it," says Matt Adams, Co-Founder of Blast Theory, best known for its politically driven interactive work drawing on gaming and new technologies.

"Audiences have told us that they feel empowered by this – it's fascinating to me that people are so hungry to understand where 'the other side' is coming from. I believe to really enter into a debate about the ethics of state sanctioned surveillance and how far it should go to protect its citizens, we need to step into different shoes."

Operation Black Antler gives audiences an opportunity to meet, build empathy with and ultimately try to win the trust of someone whose political and moral views may be the polar opposite of their own.

"We're acutely aware of the heightened atmosphere of political turmoil and anxiety around us – making the context of the piece all the more real and raw," says Jem Wall, Artistic Director of Hydrocracker Theatre, whose politically-driven work has seen him present Pinter in an old Police cell and a forgotten Joe Orton play on Brighton's Palace Pier.

"And that's very much affected the way we've treated the script and the characterisation. Whilst it's impossible to predict exactly where Britain will be come opening night at Southbank Centre, one thing is certain: that it's unlikely to be a settled political picture and we'll need to be sensitive to that."

Operation Black Antler is a work by Blast Theory and Hydrocracker. Originally co-commissioned by Ideas Test and Brighton Festival, *Operation Black Antler* has been developed with support from Arts Council England and in partnership with Dramatic Resources and Chalk Cliff Trust.

For further information, press tickets, interviews and images, please contact Chloe Barker, Blast Theory's PR Consultant, on 07921 866109 or at chloegudrun@live.co.uk or Southbank Centre's Press Team at press@southbankcentre.co.uk.

Notes to Editors

Blast Theory has been making interactive artworks that invite you to question your place in society for 25 years. Renowned internationally as one of the most adventurous artists' groups creating groundbreaking new forms of performance and interactive art, the group has created work for the Venice Biennale and Sundance Film Festival. Led by **Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr** and **Nick Tandavanitj**, the group's work explores the social and political aspects of technology. Drawing on popular culture and games, the work often blurs the boundaries between the real and the fictional.

www.blasttheory.co.uk @blasttheory

Hydrocracker creates unique performances in unusual spaces. Hydrocracker is interested in collaborative work, and in exploring how contemporary politics – its machinery and constructs – affects how we all live, particularly in the field of human rights and social justice. The company is happy working on piers, in police cells, town halls, and restaurants; but retain a robust acting process that enables them to mine the foundations of the text and immerse the audience in an intense experience.

Hydrocracker is led by Artistic Directors **Jem Wall** and **Richard Hahlo**. The company's patron is Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion - Britain's only Green Party MP. Hydrocracker is an Associate Company of Brighton Dome and Festival.

www.hydrocracker.co.uk @hydrocrackerco

About Southbank Centre

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 17- acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and Hayward Gallery as well as The National Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. For further information please visit www.southbankcentre.co.uk.



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