

# BLAST THEORY

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## BIOGRAPHY

Blast Theory is a pioneering artist group creating interactive art to explore social and political questions, placing audience members at the centre of work. Since 1991, we have been using interactive media to create groundbreaking new forms of performance and interactive art that mixes audiences across the internet, live performance and digital broadcasting. Led by artists Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr and Nick Tandavanitj, we create interactive art that puts you at the centre of the work. Drawing on popular culture, technology and games, the work often blurs the boundaries between the real and the fictional. In virtual and physical spaces from pubs, canals and abandoned warehouses to libraries, museums and apps – we go to unexpected places to make our work accessible to everyone. Blast Theory is based in Brighton, UK.

## Selected highlights

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- *2097: We Made Ourselves Over (2017)* takes you on a sci-fi journey to the cusp of the next century, co-commissioned by 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.
- *My One Demand (2015)* seven people stride out across Toronto in an interactive film about unrequited love.
- *Karen (2015)* an app that psychologically profiles you as you play.
- *My Neck Of The Woods (2013)* young people chat with you during a live video streaming tour of their city.
- *The Thing I'll Be Doing For The Rest Of My Life (2013)* a crowd of people bring a trawler out of the water and through the streets of Nagoya.
- *Hurricane (2013)* up to 25 players prepare before a storm floods their island. A permanent work for the Red Cross Museum in Geneva.
- *I'd Hide You (2012)* a live video streaming game of stealth, cunning and adventure commissioned by The Space.
- *Ivy4Evr (2010)* the first ever 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 for innovation in combining performance and mixed reality.

## Selected awards

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| 2016 | Nam June Paik Art Center Prize (KOR)   |
| 2015 | The Lovie Awards (UK) - Bronze Winner in Experimental & Innovation for <i>Karen</i><br>Winner, British Interactive Media Association (UK) in Data Category, Best of British Digital for <i>Karen</i><br>Winner, Festival du nouveau cinéma (CAN) - Innovation Award for <i>Karen</i> |
| 2014 | The Lovie Awards (UK) - Silver Winner in Events and Live Broadcast category for <i>My Neck Of The Woods</i>  |
| 2013 | The Lovie Awards (UK) - Bronze Winner in Events and Live Broadcast category for <i>I'd Hide You</i> 2012 MUSE Awards (US) – Honourable Mention in the Applications & APIs category for <i>Ghostwriter</i>  |
| 2010 | International Mobile Gaming Awards (Spain) – Winner Best Real World Game, <i>Ulrike and Eamon Compliant</i>  |
| 2009 | IndieCade Festival of Independent Games (USA) – Finalist, <i>You Get Me</i><br>Total Theatre Awards, Edinburgh Festival Fringe (UK) – Nomination in Innovation/Interaction/Immersion category, <i>Rider Spoke</i>  |
| 2008 | DiMAS - Digital Media Awards South (UK) – Winner of Collaboration Award with Mixed Reality Lab<br>European Innovative Games Awards (Germany) – Nomination, <i>Rider Spoke</i>  |
| 2006 | The Hospital Award (UK) – Winner of Award for Interactive Media  |
| 2005 | Game Developers Choice Awards (USA) – Winner of the Maverick Award<br>BAFTA Awards (UK) – Nomination for Interactive Arts and Technical & Social Innovation  |
| 2003 | Prix Ars Electronica (Austria) – Winner of the 'Golden Nica' for Interactive Art   |
| 2002 | BAFTA Awards (UK) – Nomination for Interactive Arts Award<br>Arts and Humanities Research Board (UK) – Winner of Innovation Award  |
| 2000 | BAFTA Awards (UK) – 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 or 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 [*Ivy4Evr*] 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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