

"I'D HIDE YOU" – THE UK'S BLAST THEORY INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE/GAME LAUNCHES MAY 17

Andy Horwitz | May 14, 2012 | [Ideas, Live Art, News](#) | [No Comments](#)



Sometimes I hear about things that just make me crazy with jealousy. One of those things is [FutureEverything](#), which is, like the coolest festival in the universe. Okay, maybe not. But it is pretty darn amazing. I'm definitely a "future" anything nerd and I love it when super-smart people converge to actively envision and shape the future. There are a number of festivals that are exploring this territory right now – [the Zero1 Biennial](#), the Sundance Film Festival's [New Frontier](#) program, Wayne Ashley's ongoing project [FuturePerfect](#), and pretty much anywhere you look you're going to come across [Blast Theory](#).

While so much of the conversation around performance and technology (particularly in American Theater circles) seems to revolve around Twitter and Facebook and vague ideas of "interactivity", the UK's Blast Theory has been deeply exploring the aesthetics, challenges and questions of technology-enhanced performance since 1991. Consistently adventurous, they use interactive media to create groundbreaking new forms of performance and interactive art that mix audiences across the internet, live performance and digital broadcasting. Led by Matt Adams, Ju Row Farr and Nick Tandavanitj, Blast Theory does more than merely include video or a live internet feed or comment on the media saturated world we inhabit. Rather they adopt (or created) new technology to build experiences that at once affirm our mediated condition and question our social and political frameworks. They use interactive media to interrogate the received ideologies of the Information Age.

At least, that's what I'm told they do, because I've never had the good fortune to actually experience their work in person! But now is my (and your) chance. Maybe not in person, but to participate from where you are around the world.

Long story short – Blast Theory have frequently been approached by Big Media to create “interactive” content, but when it came down to it, the Big Media guys would balk and ask for it to be pre-recorded. Actual live broadcasting is too expensive, too unwieldy, too threatening and is only reserved for sports and sometimes music. So Blast Theory decided to build their own broadcast platform, which they were able to do through the support of [The Space](#) (which deserves an article unto itself – it appears to be a collaboration between [BBC](#) and [Arts Council England](#) to build a multi-platform channel for the arts).

The first project they are launching for this new platform is a game called [I'd Hide You](#). I'm not sure I totally understand how to play it yet, but the basic idea is that there are three runners on the streets of Manchester trying to film each other without getting filmed. Online players can watch any given runner's live video feed and can switch between them. If you see a runner you can take a picture of them. But if the runner you are “with” gets snapped, you lose a life.

Part of the idea is to combine narrative TV (story, character, passive watching) with gaming (non-linearity, active engagement). I'm told you can chat with runners and ask/direct them to do things – visit specific places, talk to specific people. It is hard to say exactly how this will play out or what it might become, because it is just as dependent on the online community to define the experience as it is dependent on the people who are “performing” IRL. It is also exciting because this is a kind of “beta test” of the broadcast-quality technology, essentially launching a new platform for non-location-based interactivity. The possible future applications are limitless.

The game goes live from Manchester at 8M on May 17, 2012, which is 3PM in NYC.