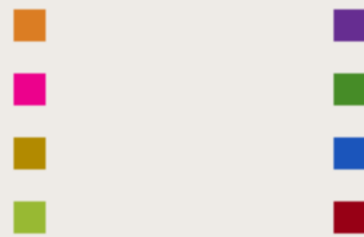


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Katie Antoniou on 22/10/13 with comments

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Through the steep cobbled streets and through the castle, inside churches and the front of forgotten shops something extraordinary is happening in Lincoln. Look carefully and you shall see things differently. The pioneers are here, the mavericks and the angels.

Frequency Festival of Digital Culture 2013 juxtaposed with the medieval beauty of Lincoln provides a dynamic and important platform for digital innovation and culture. This year's theme of Revolution is dealt with powerfully by Blast Theory's show "Dial Ulrike & Eamon Compliant". As you wander around a corner into an unassuming street you chance upon a poster in a café. It gives you a phone number. From your mobile phone you dial it. A firm voice speaks. You decide whether you want to be Ulrike or Eamon. Then the firm voice tells you to find a quiet spot and that they will ring you back in two minutes. Suddenly the once tranquil street feels alive with threat. Time seems slower and more dangerous. You urge your phone to ring. Every passer by, who just moments ago seemed so benign now appears to be sinister and watching. Then your mobile-phone rings. They are calling you back. Taking a deep breath you answer. Taking this call brings you into a world of dangerous and impossible choices. As we loiter carefully through the city centre we listen to snatches of our characters story of violence and death. However we are not allowed to remain passive. Using the keypads on our phones we have our own choices to make. Through these choices, the recordings we make, the secrecy that this experience forces us to engage with, one's mind is moved from the tranquility of faded Gothic grandeur to what is happening now, this moment, in Russia and to thoughts of the whistleblowers and from Edward Snowden to Syria. We are forced to think about what it is that we would fight for. And if we would be brave enough to make that choice. Do we hang up and go for a coffee? Or do we stay on the line and fight for our political beliefs....?



The festival also features work by the brilliant and the bold Me and the Machine, with the premiere of The Show of your Life. Once again there are choices to be made and questions to be answered. Except we are not quite ourselves and this is not quite our lives. As we enter we are put into goggles and ear phones. Then we look down with begoggled eyes and see that our body is not our own and immediately know that we are now in an altered reality. We have gone down the rabbit hole and now all there is to do is trust our instincts and follow the yellow brick road.

The effect of this show is one of lucid dreaming. We are ourselves but everything is different and our senses have altered. Sizes, colours, dimensions, they are all a little bit different in this world. We have to fight to maintain a sense of ourselves. What colour is our skin? Can we remember how our favourite song goes out loud? Do we dream of someone else taking control of us? Making our decisions? Seeing for us? Even thinking for us? Oh yeah, what are the words to our favourite song again?

The final image is simple and striking. We approach a door. A neon exit sign hangs above it. There is a woman there, waiting for us. And then our goggles are removed and we see exactly the same image before us. The door. The neon sign. The same woman. Except the scale is different. This time it is in real life dimension. The woman shows us the door. And tells us to enjoy the show. And then out we go into reality as we know it. This is the show. The here and the now. Our lives. The question of passivity and revolution is bought up yet again through this piece. We are forced to think about whether we live our real lives through goggles and if we surrender our choices to someone else. Are we strong enough to hold on to our own selves? Do we remember the words to Moon River?



Other highlights from the festival include Trope's Conversio, which is an audiovisual kinetic sculpture. It uses animation and sound to create a ballet for the senses. And Chris Levine's extraordinary Angel Presence set in St Swithin's church. The work is a beautiful LED light sculpture that engages the viewer in a sensory and moving experience. By watching and with the flick of the head one is truly standing in the presence of the angelic. Both of these pieces challenge our notions of seeing and believing.

This festival is an extraordinary discussion on how digital technology awakens us to the world we live in, how we see and what we believe in and how it's changed the way we interact with it forever.

See more from Rachel Snider on her website [here](#).

Many thanks to [The White Hart in Lincoln](#) for accommodating Rachel.



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