

De La Warr Pavilion presents Blast Theory's Ulrike and Eamon Compliant

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- **Artform:** Combined arts
- **Region:** South East

The De La Warr Pavilion and interactive art group Blast Theory turned the renowned visual art show Venice Biennale on its head with their four-day mixed-media participatory performance, *Ulrike and Eamon Compliant*.

Ulrike and Eamon Compliant is a virtual game of truth or consequence, based on the true lives of two unrelated extreme political activists Ulrike Meinhof and Eamon Collins.

The performance was played out amidst the backdrop of Venice's romantic canals, piazzas and bridges from 4-7 June 2009 via live participants.

Having assumed the character of Meinhof or Collins, participants were asked to make decisions as they moved around the city, guided by a mobile. Later, in a dramatic final interview in a disused church, the participants were asked to question their decisions and what the consequences might have been.

De La Warr Pavilion, a Modernist icon for contemporary art on the Sussex coast, was awarded £52,500 through Arts Council, South East Grants for the arts to commission Blast Theory's *Ulrike and Eamon Compliant*.

The grant application received strong support as both organisations have reputations for producing high-quality, risk-taking work with a clear ambition for innovation and excellence. The grant also represented an opportunity for the gallery to expand their role as a visual arts commissioner.

The project reflected considerable advanced collaboration and dialogue between the two organisations and also drew on Blast Theory's 10-years of collaborative work with the **Mixed Reality Lab**, University of Nottingham. Both organisations are currently Arts Council, South East regularly funded organisations.

Visual Arts Officer Verity Slater said, "This collaboration is one of three major projects from the visual arts sector funded by the Arts Council that's taking place in Venice this year. The Arts Council is delighted to support a collaboration between these two organisations."

Underpinning the grant to De La Warr Pavilion is **Turning Point**, the 10-year national strategy for strengthening visual arts, which support projects that have

strong ambition, are engaged in partnership working and are delivered on an international context.

Blast Theory's explicit handling of political extreme activism as a theme for public engagement, performed in such a global context, combined with their unique blend of gaming, digital media and performance created a visual arts experience that fully met the Arts Council national priorities for excellence, risk and engagement.

It is only by making such bold moves that Arts Council, South East can help art in the region innovate and presented an opportunity to lead the way on what the Arts Council views as a priority: for digital arts to be at the forefront of the art agenda.