

DAY TRIPPERS

RAJNI SHAH REPORTS ON THE LATEST RULES AND REGS LIVE ART PROJECT, WHICH BROUGHT A GINGERBREAD WOMAN, TEA PARTIES, RIVER WALKS AND A SOUND INSTALLATION IN A CAR TO SUBURBAN FARNHAM

THE ARTISTS

GERSHON BERKOWITZ

was commissioned to make a DVD of the performances, working as an artist to capture the essence of this Rules and Regs event.

ALEXANDRA BUHAGIAR

went on a mission looking for Peace Groups in the town. She then dressed in and used gingerbread to perform short domestic scenes with a political undercurrent exploring the region's military history.

JENNY EDBROOKE

spent time meeting Farnham residents. She used her childhood toys to re-enact these meetings, giving audiences a chance to imagine (and enact) happenings such as the building of a night-club and the opening of a cinema.

KATIE ETHERIDGE

created a sound installation in her car, inspired by the fact that Farnham was the birthplace of the first two-minute silence and the first petrol-driven car.

GLAS(S) PERFORMANCE

hosted nineteen tea parties in Farnham over one week and used these meetings with local residents as the inspiration for a durational performance.

REBECCA GLOVER

became fascinated by the closure of the local Redgrave Theatre. She built a structure around herself and spent the performance time escaping from it, destroying the structure and in the process creating something new.

TIM JEEVES

randomly approached a local who selected three performance sites by folding a map of Farnham, and each was used as a launch pad for new experiences. He then took small groups of the audience on walks around Farnham, finding new ways to look at familiar places.

RICHARD KINGDOM

explored the River Wey that runs beside the Maltings, literally bringing some of the river into the Maltings as part of his performance and inviting audience members to sort it into categories of their choosing.

Rules and Regs made me happy. And what's more, it made Farnham happy. This is quite an achievement. We're not usually a town of joyous, performance-art-loving young-at-hearts. We are sensible, beautiful, affluent, commuting suburbia. But eight South East artists soon unpicked that, questioning and listening, walking and driving, even paddling through the town for two weeks – they were on a mission to make sense of their five rules and of their surrounds. Each in their own way made a real impact on the town, and convinced unsuspecting members of the Surrey public that live art was worth watching. Glas(s) Performance had nineteen non-confrontational tea parties in public spaces around the town. Alex Buhagiar, on a mission to find peace groups in Farnham, inadvertently started one herself before she'd even finished making her piece. And thanks to Richard Kingdom, who invited audience members to 'sort' all the rubbish he had hauled out of the river in a shopping trolley during each performance, the Wey has almost doubled in size.

It was this level of interaction before and during the event that made it so successful. Most audience members had seen at least one of the artists somewhere in Farnham before ever hearing about the performance. Some never came to the official 'performance'. Most importantly, they weren't put off by the idea of some interactive, experimental live art that had nothing to do with their lives or interests. In fact, they already felt a part of it. Whether they'd had a conversation about homelessness with Tim on Downing Street, taken tea with Glas(s) Performance outside Sainsbury's, or seen Richard wading down the river with his shopping trolley, they owned a part of what was happening. The performance itself was rich with Farnham; soaked in facts, curiosities, and experiences – and even the most unlikely Farnham residents enjoyed it. These are the people we want in our audiences – old ladies, men in suits, children, mothers. It feels good when they take hold of the work, when they can somehow claim it, and when it becomes a part of their lives. This Rules and Regs project produced eight excellent new pieces of work. Thanks to Farnham.

IMAGE 1:
GLAS(S) PERFORMANCE

THE RULES

Rules and Regs has recently collaborated with three dynamic partners to present new performances. Each host organisation asks their artists to create new live art in response to a set of Rules designed to challenge them to explore their practice and discover new ways of working.

These were the Farnham rules.

Each new piece of work must:

- [1]** Use as a key element a story, object or pattern found during one day spent in Farnham
- [2]** Address the theme of real-time/simultaneity
- [3]** Feature the artist(s) as him/herself
- [4]** Offer a commentary on itself to the audience that is integral to its structure
- [5]** Use something copied from or directly inspired by one of the other pieces



Rajni Shah produced and curated Rule and Regs: Farnham at the Farnham Maltings in Surrey.

To find out more about Rule and Regs visit www.rulesandregs.org or email artistic director Seth Kriebel on seth@rulesandregs.org.

To find out more about the Farnham Maltings, visit www.farnhammaltings.com