



## *Parallel Universe Theatre Festival*

*Another World is Possible*

*March 2020 - March 2021*

*Limited Edition Companion  
Brochure for Real Life, Spring/  
Summer 2021*

# Directors' Note, April 2021.

The 'Another World is Possible' Festival took place not far from here but a million miles away.

It was in March 2020 when, with barely a backward glance, we at Kilter Theatre decided to pack up our trusty old tour van & go & make some work in a parallel universe. One without an impending global pandemic.

The practicalities weren't as tricky as you might imagine (there are still no restrictions on traveling between parallel universes - useful knowledge if you've not yet planned your summer break) and the trip was a hugely worthwhile endeavour.

We weren't sure immediately what kind of thing we might make in a parallel universe. We wanted to create & share theatre full of what we most love about Kilter's projects here In Real Life (IRL). Whatever we did would need to feel communal - a shared experience with actors & audience. It would need to feel live & a little bit dangerous for that. It would have to be experimental & truthful & revealing somehow. We've made a lot of shows in our universe over the last 15 years & it's easy to start thinking you know what works. When you find yourself slipping between the cracks of reality, it's not always easy to guess what's going to go down well with the locals.

We decided to push ourselves & experiment in a new dimension we'd always been a bit afraid to embrace. We rolled up our sleeves, sharpened our imaginations & set about an exploration of what we could achieve to expand our audiences, our working practises &, above all, our performances with emerging & cutting-edge digital technology!

We looked through Kilter's decidedly analogue back-catalogue & chatted long & hard about some of the pipeline ideas we'd never got around to developing. We wondered what & who would benefit from different digital hardware & applications. It started to feel like there was potential.

Once we'd removed the brakes ideas started to flow & we began putting together a list,

which rapidly became a whole programme of fantastical theatrical exploits that built on everything we'd ever done but somehow took the company forward with exciting technological innovations that seemed playfully to twang the perimeter fence of Kilter's unique style. We could do that in a parallel universe. We could take the chance to do something out of character &, whilst risking the chance of failure, hoping to make huge leaps forward - for audience engagement & accessibility, for impact & duration, for cost-effectiveness & working flexibility. It felt like a whole new world.

We kept a watchful eye on what might fall by the wayside in exchange for this brave new work. Could we create hybrids that sacrificed nothing of the qualities of 'liveness' & 'togetherness' that we held so close to heart? What would become of the simple but essential ingredients of Kilter's portfolio like eye-contact, human touch & the kinaesthetic pleasures like eating together, promenading round a space, running for cover when the heavens unexpectedly open on an outdoor show in June?

## The making process in Universe B

is a little bit different to what we're used to here but it didn't take long to learn the ropes. Because of favourable variations in the time-space continuum, we were never once encumbered by a lack of any of the things that might have slowed us down at home: doors opened whenever we knocked, people said 'yes' & 'now'; we had plenty of cash from flexible, enthusiastic funders; we had patience; we had free copious, guilt-free childcare & flexible working hours; we had youthful vigour & the wisdom of age. The whole industry around us was inclusive, accessible, socially responsible & environmentally sustainable. The queue of talented collaborators went right round the black-hole. The very air felt fresher.

Once we knew our way round things came together quite quickly. Sometimes you barely had to articulate an idea before you were reading the press-night reviews (we got some great reviews!). We were a bit sad that our usual friends & followers back home were missing

out on the chance to join in all this pioneering new work but we were also really pleased to discover that audiences in a parallel universe were generally enthusiastic to try new things & receptive to our sometimes outlandish suggestions. It made us bold.

As social restrictions loosened back home, we began to realise it would soon be time to return to our own universe & honour our obligations IRL. We had a programme of performed walks to deliver in the landscape around Bath & a collection of songs to write about the climate crisis (there was no crisis in the other universe - they'd begun to sort it decades ago as soon as they realised it was a matter of life & death).

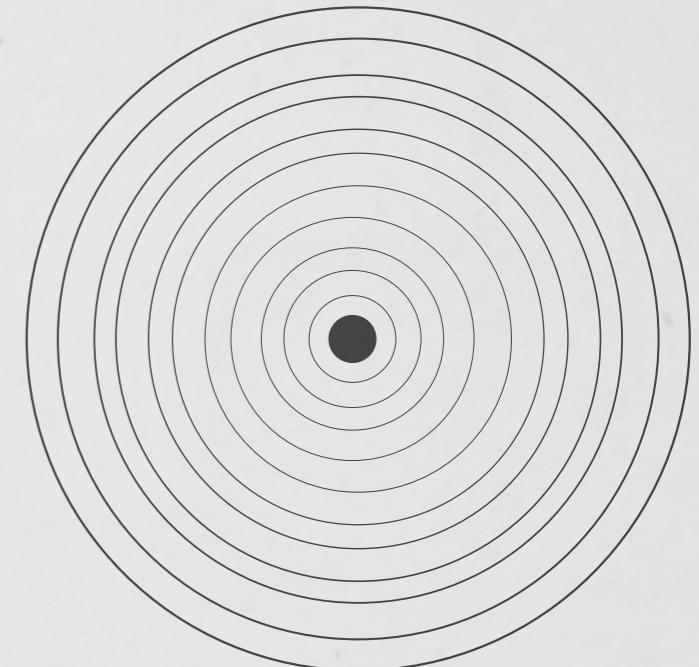
We packed up our new electric tour van & programmed the satnav for Planet Corona.

## We got back a year to the day from when we'd left

& quickly set about catching up on what we'd missed. The pandemic's impacts on our industry left us first shocked & then dismayed: so many artists struggling to stay afloat, so many star-spangled theatres gone dark & likely to remain so. We ordered a take-away & it was delivered to our door by a talented actor we'd known in a former life. His usually carefully coiffured hair was wild & unkempt & he was riding a moped. The mighty had fallen.

And yet out there in the darkness brilliant creative people had struggled back to their feet &, against the odds, continued to be brilliant & creative. Some theatre companies had put out live-recorded broadcasts as a first dash to fill the gap. Some rejected digital assistance & mounted monster productions in carefully partitioned auditoriums that until recently had been airport carparks. There were others that began to broadcast new adaptations of their staged shows live & direct through youtube & online conference calling. And finally, the smaller more agile companies at the grass roots of theatre were working their usual magic - devising unique & beautiful ways to engage & enthral people in their own homes. Maybe without work, without school, without shops or sports or pubs or restaurants, maybe the

appetite for creative engagement was greater than ever before. Anyone who was anyone was painting a rainbow, nurturing a sourdough starter... and 'going' to the 'theatre'.



## We decided that people here & now

on Planet Corona IRL, in the Spring/Summer of 2021 would probably like to hear about what we'd been getting up to over there in Universe B. In the van on the way home we'd made a solemn oath that 'what goes on tour, stays on tour' but, whilst there was no point in boasting or making people feel like they'd missed out, perhaps it would be worthwhile to share some of our success stories & perhaps allow people to appreciate the visceral thrill that can emanate from reading about events that have actually taken place. We have always held at Kilter that our programme copy should in part cater for those that can't be there so that in some small way they can feel the excitement & imagine themselves in the crowd. Of course, reading is not the same as feeling the jostle & heat of an audience but (if we're totally honest) it can happen that sometimes a vision conjured in your mindseye is actually more poetically incisive & soaringly beautiful than what really happens in gritty, bogged-down reality.

So we decided to publish this Limited Edition Companion Brochure to share five of the best shows that took place at *Another World Is Possible* 2020.

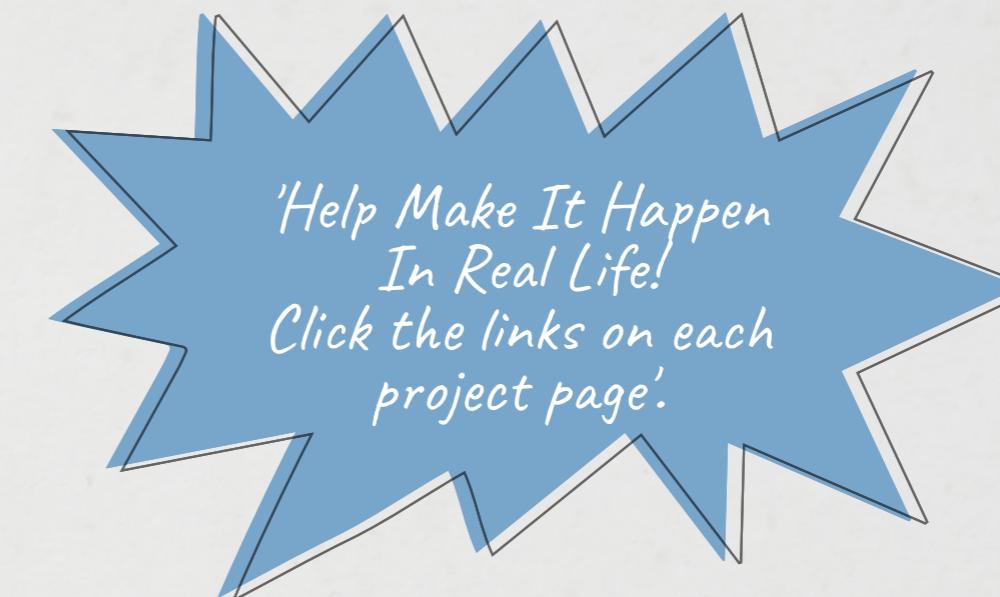
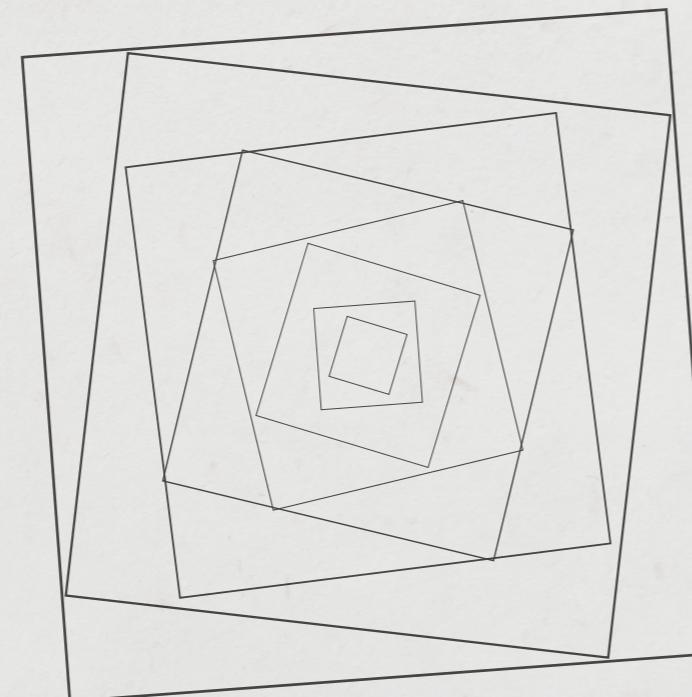
Here, you can read reviews from some of the big parallel universe newspapers & you can listen to what some of the people (& other entities) in the audience thought & felt. We were occasionally interviewed in the arts literature as eccentric curios from another dimension &, although perhaps a lot of what we had to say will seem superfluous to you, we've included transcripts of those for you to browse.

If you've been stuck at home this year then you might find your imagination has run dry a bit - particularly if you've been home-educating the national curriculum. If it helps, perhaps start by trying to think about what it would be like if we were to transfer any of the shows from Another World Is Possible to here... to this universe... this 'new normal'.

There's actually no physical reason that some of it shouldn't happen almost immediately. Some stuff, *Storyopathy* for instance, can be enjoyed from the comfort of your own home (apparently you don't have to go to the theatre to go to the theatre any more!). *Flying a Line of Silence* means a long walk in the countryside with a *smartphone* but there's no social restrictions that it contravenes. Some stuff, like our sequel to *VR100, A.R.Ghosts*, you will have to wait for.

Technology is much more advanced in the universe we visited & some things we did there just aren't possible here - yet.

If, as you're exploring this programme, you read something that makes your heart sing - that makes you feel like you'd like to experience it firsthand in a universe a bit closer to home, then do let us know. Click on the links in each project & tell us who you are & why you love the idea. If there's enough enthusiasm for a project then it could be possible for us to look into an inter-universal transfer. Your thoughts & feelings could provide the crucial evidence we'd need to persuade the powers that be here & now that theatre shouldn't be restricted by budgets & fear & an inability to assemble in public. It'll give us the courage to embrace possibilities offered by digital technology, safe in the knowledge that 'live' & 'together' can come in many guises. In fact, if our tour to a parallel universe has taught us anything, it's that with appropriate nurturing, theatre can morph & proliferate & flourish anywhere. Beyond the reach of mere pandemics & the universal laws of physics, another world is possible.



*Thanks for reading.*

Olly & Caroline.

Oliver Langdon, Artistic Director, Kilter Theatre & B+B Creative R&D Industry Fellow 2020.

Caroline Garland, Co-Artistic Director & Inventor of the Trans-Universal Tour Bus



Launched May 2020.  
Over 5000 Regular Flyers already!

# FLYING A LINE OF SILENCE



An everyday smartphone audio-walking adventure to navigate round the mountains of noise.

Birds do it, bees to do it.... But how would you fare navigating through a minefield of sensory explosions as if your life depended on it? Using adaptive podcasting, this self-guided walk takes listeners on a bespoke journey outside their comfort zones to find new & surprising feasts for their ears.

## What's the buzz all about?!

A comment for Readers In Real Life from Festival Director, Oliver Langdon.

The *Line of Silence* app is actually based on the foraging flight-paths of pollinating insects who have to work increasingly hard to navigate around natural & man-made obstacles to find suitable flowers in bloom. The survival of complex global eco-systems In Real Life depends upon their success. The survival of humanity depends upon their success! However, as the number & scale of obstacles increases the insects are increasingly defeated. On Planet Corona in 2020 Kilter developed an analogue treasure-hunt - *Go Forth & Pollinate!* - to raise the profile of this problem & give participants a visceral sense of the challenge insects face. Thanks to the *Another World is Possible Festival*, we were able to develop this experience in Universe B with a smartphone app. This meant we could scale up the number of

walking routes & offer them nationally to reach many more participants in towns & cities as well as in the countryside. In the parallel universe - where some of the same problems exist for insects - participants who flew the *Line of Silence* quickly became involved in a national conversation about the plight of the pollinators. Lark & Mard on UBBC Radio 6 Music ran a brilliant & popular series where celebrated naturalists & thinkers flew their own local lines live on air. As a result, since we've been back In Real Life, we've heard that the app's popularity has gone through the roof & for every flight taken the HMDICD (Department for Interspecies Co-Dependence) is investing another £1 into direct action & inspiring appropriate behaviour change.

*"I thought I knew these streets but now I will never hear them in quite the same way." Ceri, 76.*

Click [here](#) to read more feedback from our **Super 6 Sample**, including Radha, 48, & Jack, 15.



Flying A Line Of Silence is part of the Universe B Rabbit Holes Collective. Mountains of noise are provided by the UBBC Concert Orchestra.

## How to fly...

**Step 1.** Download the app to your smartphone & put on your walking boots.

**Step 2.** Type in your desired destination or leave it up to our random destination generator.

**Step 3.** Smartphone sensors track your progress & feed your headphones a soundscape of alluring music & distorted cacophonies mapped onto invisible contours on your GPS mapping.

**Step 4.** It's up to you. Wander & get lost in the foothills. Or tread carefully along the lines of silence to find your destination.

## It's all about you!

- You can fly the line whenever & wherever you like, new or familiar, including starting outside your front door.
- Opt in to all choices on the app to ensure that your flights are never the same twice.
- Mountains of noise are generated by the app according to 8 sensors & data collection points on your smartphone, including date, time, location, weather, how you've slept, your heartbeat & what music you've been listening to.
- Subscribe to 'Personalised Dedications' for unreleased material from your favourite musicians!

## Review

\*\*\*\*\* Out of this world! A humdinger of an audiowalk from a Real Life theatre company who've been keeping things quiet.

When I first read about this new adaptive podcasting walk from Kilter Theatre, based on Planet Corona In Real Life, I wasn't sure. I've never been much good at self-motivating for experiences that aren't scheduled in my diary & the 'mountains of noise' described in the download sounded a bit too much like hard work for me. However, when a friend of my daughter urged me to give it a go, I was persuaded by the fact that one of the great things about Flying A Line Of Silence is apparently that it fits into the gaps in your day: you don't need to schedule it &, better still, it turns out the mountains are for skirting round not climbing.

I found a gap the very next day. My train was getting in an hour before my midday meeting & I was planning to wander up through town to enjoy the sunshine. I wasn't exactly sure of the route so I would normally use the maps function on my phone to point me in the general direction. Today however, curiosity got the better of me so I instead decided to try the Line Of Silence journey-planner, which works in a very similar way. I put in my meeting place & had a quick glance at the proposed route - a bit of a long way round but it might be scenic, you never know. I then followed the prompt to remove the map & instead let my ears be my guide.

Read the rest of the review [here](#)



Live & Together ★★

Family Appeal ★★

Sustainability Stars ★★★★

Autumn 2020

# VR100

\*\*\*\*\* Another Guardian. Virtually Perfect! Seamlessly great writing & great acting on & offboard. Really challenging what theatre is & what it can do.

Start at a party with a glass of wine. End up in heaven in a headset.

It's 2079 & Grandpa is 100 years old. Raise a glass to toast his first century... and another to launch his next!

Loyal friends, jealous relatives & Virtual Reality architects, BucketList, are coming together to celebrate a life, settle their differences & sign up for subscription packages to visit Grandpa in VRHeaven.

Join the party, don a headset & chat about the meaning of life.

*"The effects are out of this world. And I don't say that lightly." Jaron Lanier II*

To read some more comments from people in the room, including Paul, Jin & Radha from our Super 6 Sample\*, click [here](#)

## A Play of 3 Parts!

*Act 1* is 'in real life'. *Act 2* is in VR. *Act 3* is the icing on the birthday cake - a level-platform discussion about ethics & plausible futures for immersive technology. With Kilter's actors & directors as well as commercial VR-makers, active VR-users & outspoken dissenters. [And you](#).

## Sponsors

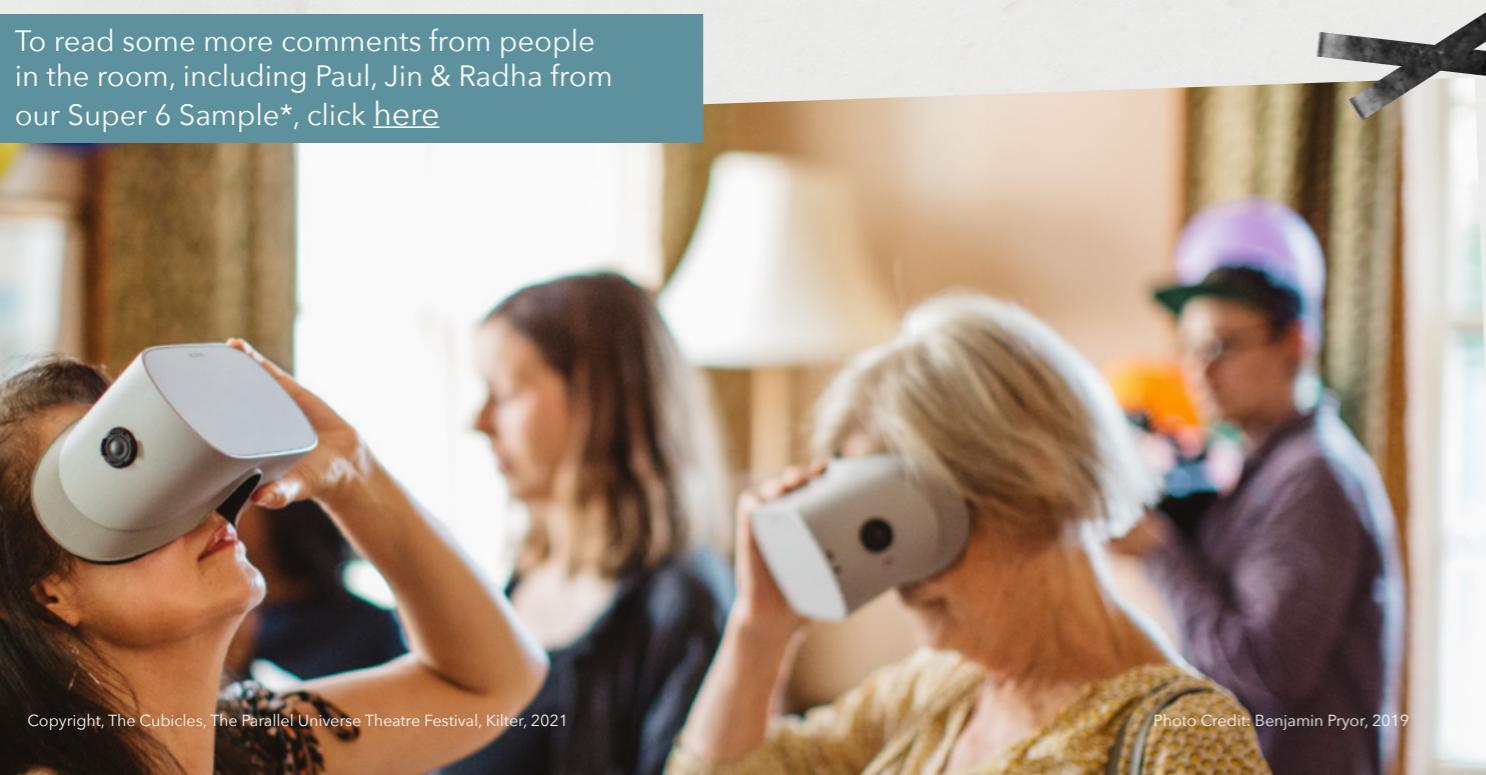
This parallel production of VR100 is made possible thanks to the generous support of Oculus & Google. Buying a ticket is taken as consent to Oculus & Google using your information & opinion to guide their future developments.

**Tech Spec** - Untethered oculus quests offer visitors to VRHeaven 6 degrees of freedom within Grandpa's last year of life, captured photogrammatically. A remote actor is 'projected' through a character animation in the virtual space to interact 'live' with visitors.

Suitable for 12+. Free tickets for over 80s!

Now available to book for residential care homes & community centres.

VR100 was initially conceived IRL & partly performed in Bristol on Planet Earth. We are grateful for the support of so many people involved, particularly Kirsten, Stuart, Chris & Jo at Bristol Uni, Anthony at Bath Spa, those who attended workshops at we the curious & those who signed up at Redland Green School. Thanks to EPSRC for funding the exploration & Sarah for baking a cake.



Copyright, The Cubicles, The Parallel Universe Theatre Festival, Kilter, 2021

Photo Credit: Benjamin Pryor, 2019

## Interview with directors:

### Why did you make it?

**Olly:** We've worked in 'Responsible Research' for a long time back IRL, helping organisations & communities have conversations about important new developments, which might have an impact on society in the future. There is a tyranny of urgency, particularly around technology so we wanted to jump ahead to imagine a plausible future with hindsight.

**Caroline:** It's really important to us that everyone is included in these really critical conversations as if they are an expert. The future is so broad & everybody will be impacted - often in ways that the developers themselves can't envisage. It's not their fault - they've not invented a time machine - but it's really important they pay attention to people's hopes & fears so that they can adapt their work around that. There is a growing awareness of this back home but often the big players are missing from the conversation. That's why we were so pleased to have support from Parallel Google & Parallel Oculus on VR100.

### Who was it popular with?

**Caroline:** Older people, younger people, tecky people, theatre people. People who knew to come to Kilter for conversations about ethics & futures..

**Olly:** Some people were definitely just there for the cake & free wine!

**Caroline:** But hopefully they got more than that from it. The show has a pretty broad appeal & its a great conversation starter for families.

**Olly:** Oh yeah, it builds a sense of community immediately & that's important for us. And the audience-sized communities transcended the nature of the live/together thing - it flowed into VR quite effortlessly.

### COMING SOON! A.R.Ghosts!

Live & Together ★★★★

Family Appeal ★★

Sustainability Stars ★

**Caroline:** And I hope that sense of togetherness outlasts the time spent together in the room. Would we have got that community vibe with a zoom-party & people using their own headsets at home? Or cardboard headsets sent through the post, which was one plan? I'm not sure we would.

### What did you learn?

**Olly:** We've actually hosted this party In Real Life in 2019 & it was brilliant. We essentially had Act 1 & Act 3 but missed out Act 2 in VR. We worked with a research team at Bristol Uni & some secondary school children to develop the idea. When we staged it we had a real cross-section in the audience & the conversations went really far & wide. But it felt like we were missing out on the VR element of the production. The audience really needed to go to VRHeaven to visit Grandpa to deepen their understanding & reactions. Unfortunately In Real Life we haven't been able to raise the funds to develop a platform. There's lots of interest from the Arts Council, from EPSRC, but no money. Yet.

**Caroline:** That's one of the reasons we wanted to take the chance in Universe B to see how far we could go & how VR might be an equal partner with live immersive theatre. If the VR was good enough, how might the two interact & depend on each other?

**Olly:** The technology & ideas for the software are actually already there back home - a woman in China was reunited with her dead daughter in VR last year. We had some really great design conversations back home about how we could do it with graphics or photogrammetry or actors in remote spaces being projected into a shared VR space. In the Parallel Universe Festival we just did it all. We had as many headsets as we needed & wearers had 6 degrees of freedom to go forward/backward, left/right, up/down... um, what are others? Closer/further away.

read the rest of the interview [here](#)



For more information  
on VR100 In Real Life,  
[click here](#).

Kilter Theatre & The Welcome Home  
Trust present:

# The Cubicles

Bespoke-fitted body-positive  
sound cocoons for all ages.

You've got a perfect body. Yes, you! Your eye-lashes catch your sweat; you gag when you swallow a fish-bone. Step inside *The Cubicles* - a collection of tailor-made changing rooms with a sound installation to inspire & reassure the best & only YOU!

*The Cubicles* are private walk-in changing rooms that pop up in public spaces for passers-by to explore in their own time. The telephone-box like constructions are adorned with beautifully presented curious facts & figures from international body-resilience programmes aimed to focus on

*"I came out standing tall  
with the blood rushing  
through my veins & my chin  
held high. I have a bent  
nose & crooked teeth. I am  
perfect." Radha, 43*

To read more comments from our Super 6 Sample\*,  
who all visited *The Cubicles*, each with a very different  
body, see [here](#).

body functionality over aesthetic. Take a seat inside the tardis like Cubicles & a collection of voices will welcome you, question you & guide you through a personalised participatory audio-experience that makes your perfect body the starring role.

Using voice recognition technology & targetted spatialised sound, each participant is gently encouraged to 'try on' a body-positive mindset. As your attention is drawn to each miracle that makes you who you are, participants learn to celebrate everything from their hiccups & toe-nails to their goosebumps & hairy armpits.

## How it's done...

Positional speakers on all surfaces within *The Cubicles* create sonic cocoons that shift your awareness from realism ('I'm in my school reception') to suspended disbelief ('There's a shop floor out there') to fantastical ('Is there an elf in here with me?') The clever use of microphones also means that listeners can suddenly find themselves listening to their own body's working parts. Or stranger still, depending on which route you take through the adaptable sound-track, parts of your body may surprisingly begin to vibrate in response to a subsonic bass track.

Suitable for everybody. All ages, shapes, sizes, colours, genders & abilities. Every body.



Photo Credit: Anna Barclay, 2018



## Interview with directors:

### Why did you make it?

**Caroline:** Body Psychologists have been looking at community interventions In Real Life for a long time but haven't found effective ways to facilitate such an important conversation. Kilter had devised a live performance around a Cubicle in 2018 - it was great, it really helped people think & talk but it only reached a very small pool of brave local people who were happy to have two actors talk to them in a very small closed space. So when we were in the Parallel Universe we thought we should take the chance to adapt. We quickly created the prototype with the sound installation and soon had a production-line going to produce half a dozen for different places around the festival. Because they were completely free-standing & work-alone it was cheaper to run 6 around the clock than it had been to run one for an hour back home. The number of people who went inside increased exponentially across the festival as the word got around that it was worth doing. When we came home, we left the first 6 Cubicles in place & our Cubicle construction team in Universe B are creating more all the time. There's a waiting list of places that want them.

**Olly:** We talked about working with visual technologies like projection & AR, VR, all sorts but decided in the end to make the experience with audio. It's not the most cutting edge but it was the right tool for the job. We ended up with something completely immersive & other-worldly but at the same time without turning your back on where you really are, with your real body. That was important to us.

### Who was it popular with?

**Caroline:** To begin with, a lot of people who already had an awareness of the body positivity movement. Later, it started to attract people who wanted to test the vocal recognition system. I think a lot of young people went in several times to answer the questions differently & to see what would happen. I was really pleased with that actually because they got to see the world from someone else's point of view. From within someone else's body in a way.

**Olly:** Once we'd been on *That Morning with Wan Gok*, we had lots of interest from all over the place, most surprisingly perhaps from big high street shops wanting to talk to us.

**Live & Together** ★★★

**Family Appeal** ★★★

**Sustainability Stars** ★★

### What did you learn?

**Olly:** Your body is very private so it was right that people experienced *The Cubicles* on their own. Sometimes in the theatre you sit in the dark & have private thoughts writ across your face but in daylight, in a school or shopping centre, perhaps you really do need to sit in a cupboard & close the door!

**Caroline:** Also, because its so tailored to how you respond in the moment, it really feels like it's live in some way & that someone is there with you. You feel private & reassuringly accompanied: held but not observed and not measured. It's a really satisfying middle ground.

**Olly:** Using the voice recognition tech did mean we had to do tonnes of material though. So that it could be so adaptive. But on the plus side we only had to record it all it once instead of doing 1000s of performances!!

**Caroline:** It was great in development to work with the technology in tandem. We've never done that before to such an extent In Real Life. We often have to make things & then pass them on for a tech intervention, which can sometimes dilute the impact of what you're trying to do.

**Olly:** That's true across the board - when you are trying to be quite holistic in your approach, you want the tech team, the marketing team, everyone in the room together so everyone can pull in the same direction & create something which feels tight & unified, especially when you're devising something new & it changes every day to begin with.

### How could it transfer to this universe?

**Olly:** It'd go down really well In Real Life. Well it ought to. It's needed. Diversity's a big thing in other universes. It's really celebrated. Here, a lot of people want to just fit in. *The Cubicles* challenge that. We'd need a bit of time & money to get the things made & rolled out but the tech isn't that expensive & the science is robust & the artwork is arresting.

**Caroline:** There might need to be a bit of a shift in the way arts can be valued as a tool here IRL. They're fun & illuminating but *The Cubicles* are also potentially a life-saver. They'd be a massive boon to the NHS for instance. It could save the tax payer a fortune.



Bookey Prize Nominees, Kilter Theatre  
& A Word In Your Ear, present:

# STORYOPATHY

Half bed-time story, half therapy. 100% feel good short stories, read aloud on zoom.

*"Delicately hand-crafted story therapy for when you feel like you're losing the plot. It starts like a joke & then you realise this is going deep. Tender, funny, wistful. This is the future." Bookey Prize Judge Comments.*

See [here](#) for more comments from our Super 6 Sample, including Paul, Jin & Radha

Our resident storyopathists are now taking bookings for one of the oldest therapeutic treatments known to (hu)mankind. Select a title from our Storyopathic Remedy Compendium® & sign up for an online reading & consultation with Storyopathic Listening® & Shared Reflection®. Each session is tailored to your needs & is guaranteed to leave you feeling refreshed & revitalised in mind, body & spirit.

Everyone knows that a good story leaves you feeling better. Whether you're just overwrought with life's twists & turns or facing

the cosmic fallout of an international pandemic, an appointment with The Storyopathy Practise will ensure you carve out a quiet moment to listen properly & absorb the therapeutic benefits of a well-read, high-quality short story.

Crafted in our cutting-edge word labs by our world-class story-clinicians, the practise offers treatments for every modern condition: stories for company & for going out in public, silver lining stories & stories for getting on with your household.

Over 18s Only

*Children are intuitively storyopathic & should not use this service.*

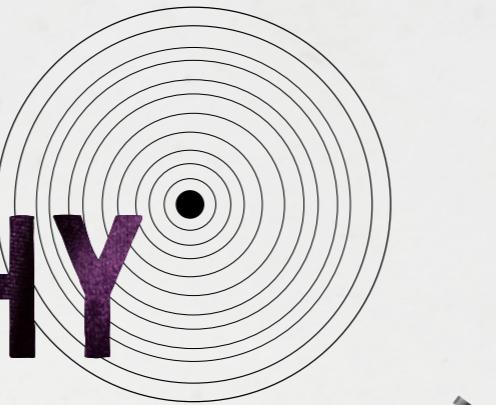
£10/ household/  
session! Discounts available for those who develop a habit.

Tailored prescription of specific stories available by arrangement. Click [here](#) to contact the practise with your symptoms or to receive an introductory client questionnaire.



Photo Credit: Caroline Garland, 2021

Copyright, Storyopathy, The Parallel Universe Theatre Festival, Kilter, 2021



GROUP SESSIONS  
NOW AVAILABLE IN  
THIS UNIVERSE!!

Q&A with directors:

## Why did you make it?

**Olly:** Mainly because we wanted to create something & perform it in the evenings after our children were in bed. We didn't want to book a babysitter & we didn't want to change out of our tracksuit bottoms. Oh, & we can do them during the school day too!

**Caroline:** That's not the only reason Olly! We definitely saw an opportunity to diversify our working practise as a married couple with kids but we also wanted to diversify our audience.

**Olly:** Yeah, it's a great way to work with lots of writers too. It's fun & it brings a smile to people's faces.

## Who was it popular with?

**Caroline:** We were able to reach people further away from our base in Bath. People who have been interested in Kilter's work for a long time but haven't had the chance to see much. We reached a different profile of audience too - people who aren't that into theatre -

**Olly:** - who think they're not into theatre!

**Caroline:** People who were feeling a bit lonely & treat it like a night out. People with kids who can't get out easily but can find 40 minutes in the day or before their own bedtime. People who can't easily get out for other reasons. Healthcare. Transport. It's very accessible. And there's people stuck out in the sticks who don't want to make a big trip into town for a cultural experience.

**Olly:** That appeals to us as we did a carbon analysis of our work some years ago & the miles travelled by our audiences added quite a tally. There are no miles travelled for Storyopathy.

**Caroline:** We had a slightly older profile of audience than we're used to too.

**Live & Together** ★★★★

**Family Appeal** ★★

**Sustainability Stars** ★★★

Thanks

We are hugely indebted to Clare Reddaway from A Word in Your Ear for working with us on developing the Storyopathy idea. Thank you too to all the writers who submitted work, particularly Christine Robers, Derek Williams, Piers Pennington, Chrysse Morrison, Pauline Masurel, Robert Garnham & Sherry Morris. Finally to Mrs Diane Petitistoire (VHS, PHSE) - your name will go down in history.

Parallel Universe Theatre Festival March 2020 - March 2021. ANOTHER WORLD IS POSSIBLE. Limited Edition Companion Brochure for Real Life, Spring/Summer 2021

**Olly:** I think it's the simplicity of the form. I think that's appealing to older people - it's really just a story - or a book-group - dressed up with a silly framing device. And the tech is simple enough - you just click the links.

**Caroline:** I think people like that you can tailor it to suit you - the right story, the right time & day. You can book a private session if you like. And we actually steered it away from young people to be honest, partly because we didn't want to involve storyopathy with issues around vulnerability etc but also because people tend to think that stories are for kids & we wanted to fly in the face of that. Everyone can benefit from being read a story.

## What did you learn?

**Olly:** We had to think quite differently from a marketing perspective. As soon as you're operating online your audience is potentially international, certainly within your time-zone. We know our local press very well but we're not so hot online.

**Caroline:** I think it was quite a steep learning curve multi-tasking as an actor too. Don't you think? Not only did you have to perform in your own living room, sometimes to a sea of black boxes, but you had to listen & interact with the audience in a very different way. We learned tricks to establish who was up for it but that took a while.

**Olly:** Yes, if someone was filling the frame & smiling they were definitely more up for participating than someone who you could only see the top of their head.

**Caroline:** You're multi-tasking too to a degree - seeing if there are late-comers in the waiting room. Who's crashed out. Who's waving their arms because they can't hear you.

**Olly:** But zoom is a gift for a devised comedic piece. The characters could be anywhere with a simple background tweak. It was fun to enjoy the affordances that allowed. It felt perilous - suspending disbelief like that really bought a quality of liveness for the performer.

read the rest of the interview [here](#)

Click [here](#) for Storyopathy Appointments available In Real Life

Launched July 19th 2020-

The First International Bench Day.

# BENCH MARK



Sit down & tune in to the extraordinary lives of everyday ordinary benches.

*Have a seat, take a weight off.  
You're not the first.*

Have you ever sat on a bench & wondered who else has been here before you? Who's made or taken a call here that's changed their life forever? Who's had a big row & fallen out here? Who's fallen in love here? Or fallen asleep here, for the night? Everyone's story is different, everyone has a different **benchmark**.

In every town & city, woodland, hillside & riverbank up & down the country Kilter has begun to map a growing collection of benches with stories to share. Stories that can't be told with a sharp blade & the words 'I woz 'ere'!

Sit on any benchmarked bench & users of the smartphone app receive a notification, inviting them to listen to memories that stretch from WW2 to Lockdown 2. Every age of man & woman, every walk of life, every shape & size... everyone's benchmark is different.

*"My lunchbreak has gone to a whole new level. I'm like a scavenger, searching for a new bench to sit on. I'm often late back to my desk having thoughtfully chewed my sandwich on 6 different benches in 6 different decades." Chloe, 27.*

See [here](#) to read more feedback from Chloe, Jin, Paul & the rest of our Super 6 Sample.

## New for Another World Is Possible 2022. The Longitudinal Bench.

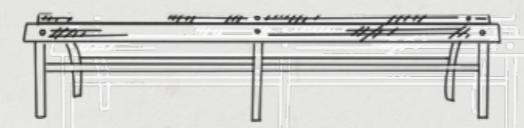
Holiday romances, final farewells, spectacular visions & divine interventions. Sometimes the most amazing things happen a long way from home. On benches.

If you would like to mark a bench on the other side of the world, catch up with The Longitudinal Bench at *Another World Is Possible 2022*. This classic wooden park-bench is equipped with a touch-screen google-map & 'listening-ear' device to help you locate any bench in the world & record your longitudinal **benchmark** for far-off strangers to discover.

What's your **benchmark**? Kilter routinely posts invitations on particular benches to gather new stories. If you can't wait [kilterolly@gmail.com](mailto:kilterolly@gmail.com) will always be pleased to hear from you.

## How to listen to benchmarks.

1. Download the **benchmark** app on your phone (the app is only available if benches have been marked in your neighbourhood.)
2. Turn on your location & opt in to **benchmark** 'alerts' (Settings/ Alerts/ **Benchmarks**).
3. Go sit on some benches. To keep things interesting, specific marked benches are not mapped. It's up to you to find them for yourself.



Small Print: In some universes smartphone coverage may not reach certain benches so remember to download in advance. Contributor privacy is very important to us. Kilter & its partners cannot reveal any identifying information about **benchmark** contributors. We cannot be held responsible for any content that listeners find disagreeable. Please do not judge historical accounts by contemporary or universe-specific standards.

## Interview with directors:

On July 24th 2020 Olly & Caroline made an appearance to talk about **benchmark** on BBC Radio 4's flagship culture programme, From our Front Row Correspondent. Here's a transcript of their conversation with Kirsty Ling. ([link through...](#))

**Kirsty:** I've always been a big fan of Kilter's socially engaged art projects on Planet Corona so I was really excited to hear about their new digital piece, **benchmark**, which involves a smartphone app that records everyday stories of events that have taken place on particular benches & then makes those stories available to people to hear when they're sitting in the right place at the right time. Here to tell us a bit more about the project, I'm joined tonight by Caroline Garland & Oliver Langdon, Joint Directors of Kilter Theatre. Caroline & Olly, good evening.

**Olly & Caroline:** Hi. / Good evening.

**Kirsty:** Caroline, if I can start with you, I know in your universe you have a reputation as a theatre company but this project is really beyond theatre, isn't. There are no actors or stages to be seen. How did **benchmark** come about?

**Caroline:** Thanks Kirsty. I think really the project was born out of a passion for local social history. As you say we've made lots of work in communities before & always just found the right tool for the job to validate & promote local social history in whatever way works. It's all about stories really. It's all theatre. For **benchmark**, we had the opportunity at *Another World Is Possible* to work with a great tech team & a fair budget, so the app was just the perfect medium. It's universally available & accessible for free so it ticks lots of boxes.

**Kirsty:** Yes, it's interesting you mention that because I've had a play on the app & it is really lovely & intuitive to use. I sat on a bench outside Broadcasting House & perhaps unsurprisingly several stories came up - interviews that went wrong, chance meetings, awkward moments with celebrities. I mean it is really great for that slice of life feeling & it just uses googlemaps & the sensors in your phone, is that right?

**Caroline:** Yup that's it. It's not rocket science, it's just a nice way to connect people with the history all around them with the technology they already have in their pocket.

**Olly:** We also really liked that we could offer a complete world-wide canvass for **benchmark** without having to burn any energy making new bits of equipment for sale. The environmental costs are very low.

**Kirsty:** Yes that's true. Olly, you're responsible for Kilter's environmental sustainability, aren't you, & I know you run a lot of work trying to connect people with nature & that **benchmark** was originally conceived as a rural arts project?

Live & Together ★★

Family Appeal ★★★★

Sustainability Stars ★★★



**Olly:** Yeah, we were thinking of our Bathscape crowd as the first wave of listeners when we made this. In Real Life we are halfway through a 4-year contract, working with local communities in the landscape around Bath & we encourage a lot of people who don't connect much with the great outdoors to come and join us outside in green spaces. Funny enough, we actually publicise our Bathscape experiences as a chance to take a break from your screen - to get out and open your eyes to the horizon & the changing beauty of the seasons - so that was a bit of a tussle to begin with but in the end we realised that **benchmark** works everywhere & the listening nature of the app is completely fine. You don't have to be in a rural setting to benefit from getting out. Sometimes it's good to incentivise an office worker to leave their desk for half an hour in a town as it is to get someone to spend a day miles from anywhere. And the audio recordings for **benchmark** work because somehow sound is the least intrusive. You aren't bent over a screen - in fact you have to look at the landscape to really benefit from the benchmarks - to imagine how where you are sitting would have had an impact on the events you're hearing about.

**Kirsty:** It really sounds like you've learned a lot yourselves, which I always think is the hallmark of a good project for a creative team? Have you enjoyed that part of things, Caroline?

**Caroline:** So much! We have heard so many incredible stories from people of every age & background. We try to work with benches with history - some benches on the app have been in place for over 100 years, beyond the life of anyone sitting on them today but occasionally we get a story from an older person who remembers going there with their Mum or a grandparent & suddenly that throws you back about another 100 years. But I love that the marks are surprisingly similar in some ways down the ages - people being people. On benches. Falling in love, falling out of love, being depressed & down on their luck or having a weirdly lucky serendipitous moment. Sitting next to famous people, as you heard outside today, that's always a good theme.

**Kirsty:** And do you listen to all the stories that come in?

**Caroline:** We did to begin with but now we have a team who sift through, because you do get some people submitting daft things just to test the system & we have to moderate that. We still always try to curate a collection of marks. You don't want a bench to be dominated by one voice or one time period. We could have made it automatic & user-generated entirely but we didn't want to let go of that sense that this is a performance in some way. It's quality controlled.

**Kirsty:** Well, it's been brilliant to talk to you about it. Thank you so much for coming in. You can read all about the brilliant Kilter Theatre & **benchmark** & how to download it on our website.



# Thank you

for reading this Real Life Limited Edition Companion Brochure for The Parallel Universe Theatre Festival 2020. We'd love to see you sometime IRL - wherever & however that might be possible.

**WIN TICKETS** to The Parallel Universe Theatre Festival 2022 by responding to all 6 audience questionnaires in this brochure. Find the links in the stars on each page. Your answers will be shared anonymously across the industry & help shape the future of theatre.

Please stay in touch with Kilter. We love receiving your thoughts, ideas, questions & requests for information from the other side.

[www.kiltertheatre.org](http://www.kiltertheatre.org) / [kilterolly@gmail.com](mailto:kilterolly@gmail.com) / Facebook / Twitter / Instagram

## What do all those stars mean?

### 'Live & Together'



In order to thrive & survive theatre must be live! But from the fringes of space & time, across the known multiverse & even here In Real Life, the edges of what 'liveness' even means are blurring. With technology mediating performance in a hierarchy of 'liveness', a solid definition is hard to find. Can an autonomously adapting 'performance' app responding to a digital live feed really be classed as 'live' theatre? It depends who you ask. If you ask us, we'll give you a score on the Garlangdon Scale of Live & Togetherness. 5 stars indicates real-time, physically-proximate visceral spontaneity. 1 star feels live but it's not clear why.

### 'Family Appeal'



Different generations can react differently to new technological innovations. Age in itself is rarely a barrier but digital know-how is cumulative & some of us started later in life than others. Kilter makes work for families - rarely for children alone but for several generations simultaneously, interacting together to enjoy a production. The Kilter Family Appealometer rates projects from 1-5 stars. It is not a measure of age range but of the connections it engenders between ages.

### 'Sustainability Stars'



Climate change is not a big thing in every universe but in this one it is. In Real Life Kilter continuously scrutinises our processes & productions to limit our footprint & promote positive behaviour change. Because of the lack of climate emergency-status in Universe B, sustainability was not a key priority for our festival. However, once we started considering transferring some of the work back home, we gave each of our projects a rating of its potential environmental impact. 1-star is not without merit but would need to work hard to justify itself. A 5-star production would be confident of net carbon negativity.

## Who are the Super 6?

Throughout our stay in Universe B we kept a close eye on audience reactions to our work. We had a lot of useful feedback from across the spectrum, which we'll use to develop our projects for other universes. We used online forms, written & spoken word, immediately after experiences & with reflection one week later. We particularly consulted a Super 6 Sample - 6 keen audience members (all human) who experienced everything we did & responded to our questions in detail. The Super 6 were chosen to represent a good cross-section of society as recommended in industry-standard audience profiling models on Planet Corona. Jack, Chloe, Jin, Radha, Paul & Ceri vary in age, gender, income, location (urban/rural), domestic situation (alone/ flatshare/ with family etc), ethnicity, sexuality, cultural & technological capital, physical & mental ability. We have changed their names to protect their identity.

## Infinite thank yous

To everyone who made the Parallel Universe Theatre Festival happen. You showed us Another World is Possible. Thank you particularly to everyone involved in the Performance Expansion B+B Creative R&D on Planet Corona - all the producers, the fellows & industry partners. I'm assuming you exist - I've not met you In Real Life. Your ideas, energy & stoic commitment to video-conferencing are present in every vibrating atom of this brochure. OL. ;-)

James Shaw @ Volley Design for the support in designing this brochure.

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