

Beginning as an evaluative research practice bent on challenging the dominant themes of body, gender and identity politics within curatorial and museological versions of performance art ontology and history, Mel Brimfield's work is predicated on developing active modes of meaningful interdisciplinary and participatory dialogue that embrace narrative, theatricality and virtuosic performance skill. A range of wildly inappropriate absurdist narrative forms are used to articulate the findings of rigorous academic research processes, including elaborately choreographed musical theatre numbers, gymnastic routines, stand-up monologues and queer cabaret turns. Operating at the intersection of theatre, live art and film, the work aims to combine audiences for the arts and erode outmoded distinctions between creative fields.

During Frieze week in 2018, Brimfield staged *TBCTV*, a large scale performance series and exhibition for Somerset House in partnership with filmmaker Ewan Jones Morris and Royal Court Associate designer Chloe Lamford. Live and moving image work was produced in association with playwrights and artists in response to a theatrical set doubling as an exhibition context in the form of a TV studio. As part of the Somerset House Summer Screen series 2018, she was also commissioned by Film4 with collaborator Jones Morris to make a short for screening in the courtyard as part of the curated programme for nightly audiences of up to 800. Between 2014-16, she produced a major *Art on The Underground* film, album, performance and publication commission (£85,000) in partnership with Theatre Royal Stratford East to mark the centenary of radical socialist theatre director Joan Littlewood, co-authored with composer Gwyneth Herbert.



In 2014-15, in partnership with the Kinsale Arts Festival, she was awarded a €35,000 ACI grant for a series of solo exhibitions, screenings and talks at the Luan Gallery, Athlone, Wexford Arts Centre, Galway Art Centre and The LAB, Dublin with accompanying publication. In 2014, she received a £30,000 Contemporary Art Society/Art Fund award in partnership with the Ceri Hand Gallery, Harris Museum, Preston and Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts as part of the Testing Media scheme, designed to support museums in the acquisition of significant contemporary performance works presenting particular challenges around display and conservation. In 2012, she was awarded the sole new commission (£38,000) for the Government Art Collection's first public series of 5 exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, touring to Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Ulster Museum, The Olympic Museum Lausanne, Switzerland and on current display as part of the permanent collection at the Department for Culture Media and Sport, London. Other significant solo shows and performances include Yorkshire Sculpture Park, John Hansard Gallery, VOID, Jerwood Visual Arts, Wilton's Music Hall, Tate Liverpool, Henry Moore Institute, Site Gallery, Mead Gallery, Ceri Hand Gallery and Performance Matters (Goldsmiths, Roehampton University and the Live Art Development Agency project).



Top: Death and Dumb: Part I
Bottom: Quantum Foam