

London performers in EXHIBIT B speak out

The London performers of EXHIBIT B have issued a statement regarding the events surrounding its closure.

It is with utter disappointment that we, the London performers in EXHIBIT B, write these words.

Exhibit B is an important work that has given us an education into the lives of other human beings. We believe everybody has the right to their specific story being told, and this work provided that platform, through the medium of art - living and breathing. It is a shame that these stories will no longer be heard, seen, nor felt. An even greater shame that those who were open and brave enough to purchase a ticket, have now been robbed of that experience.

Exhibit B afforded us the opportunity to explore and engage with our past, while reminding and reawakening us to its impact on the present.

To the 23,000 petitioners who complained that Exhibit B objectified human beings - you missed the point.

This is the 21st Century and we believe that everyone has a choice, a right, an entitlement, to do or say whatever they deem to be right for them. We can accept someone seeing the piece and not liking it-that's fine. What we cannot accept about the events of Tuesday evening and the subsequent cancellation of Exhibit B, is the physical action that was taken outside of the Vaults, by a minority of the demonstrators who would not even entertain the thought of seeing the piece.

We, a group of intelligent and informed actors and performers, have been censored and silenced by protestors, who truly have an ill-informed and misguided perspective of this significant and informative piece of work.

We are appalled, outraged, angry...extremely angry as artists, as human beings. We cannot believe that this is London in 2014. We are appalled that Exhibit B has been cancelled because of the actions of some of the demonstrators.

We are artists who, after thoughtful and careful deliberation, decide what projects we want to work on. Grown men and women who decided that our contribution to Exhibit B would be worthwhile and important. Who, on Tuesday, were told, by way of the protestor's force, that we couldn't make creative and

life decisions for ourselves.

That complete strangers knew what was best for us.

For all of us.

Our voices and ideas were deemed not worthy of being shared with the world. This is exactly what Exhibit B is about: we want to denounce oppression, racism and bigotry. We want to denounce actions like this. And the fact that this is still happening in London in 2014, proves even more why this piece is necessary.

The anger and vitriol and hysteria which the protestors have and continue to level at the company of Exhibit B, astounds us.

It doesn't feel rational. It doesn't feel measured. There simply has not been room for an exchange of ideas.

There's such vulnerability in holding a mirror up to humanity. No one wants to see a representation of themselves oppressed, but it doesn't mean that we shouldn't look.

We welcome protest, but surely it's best to have as much information beforehand, so your opinion is truly informed. Surely as a protestor, you have a duty to ensure your 'peaceful protest' really is peaceful. And, surely your right to protest should not impact another person's freedom of thought and speech.

We are actors and performers who believe that art should be meaningful. Challenging. Provoking.

Not only for us, as participating collaborators in the work, but also for the audience who witness the work.

This project afforded us the opportunity to be the most vulnerable, most on display, silently engaging and being engaged, while exploring themes around other, sex, race, and gender.

Exhibit B was created with love and sensitivity. We are intelligent creatives who made a brave choice to be part of a thought provoking piece of work. As Londoners, we are embarrassed that this has happened in our city, as the show has already been seen by 25,000 people from all over the world, and will continue to tour.

We would like to thank the Barbican for their immense support and Brett Bailey for his inspired work.