

Heed, to the Mound

By Emma Brennan

Saturday September 22nd || The Complex || 14:00-17:00 || free and unticketed



Women taking up space: physically, vocally, socially, politically and economically. We are moving mounds through the political landscape of gender. We will command attention with respect, without apologies. This floor is our landscape, our journeys will mark it. We are building a road map. This is performance, this is action, this is ongoing. We need your presence, let us negotiate.

Visual and Performance Artist Emma Brennan makes her Fringe debut with the brand new performance work; *Heed, to the Mound*.

Along with a team of fantastic female performers, Brennan takes her recent video work, developed during a residency in Draíocht Blanchardstown, out of the screen and onto the floors of the Complex in a simple and powerful statement. *Heed, to the Mound* blends movement and materiality, taking up space on behalf of Irish women through the simple metaphor of kneading dough. Balanced between art and theatre, this piece is free and unticketed. Brennan asks her audience for their presence, to stand among her performers, free to drop in and out as they choose.

A brave offering by one of Dublin's most interesting young Performance Artists, *Heed, to the Mound* promises to be immersive, breathing with physicality and emotion and certainly a Fringe show not to be missed.

"This piece was born out of my own frustrations at the discourse surrounding gender in Ireland today. Frustration at not only the context of the dialogue occurring but also at my own inability to articulate these feelings in such a way that would be representative of any woman other than myself.

As a woman at the beginning of my career, certain things became clear to me as I ventured into adulthood. I am opinionated and not shy about it. I am ambitious and driven to succeed. I am overweight but of average height, according to social norms.

Heed, to the mound is my response to the view that this list of characteristics especially when applied to a woman are negative traits to have. It's about accepting that being these things doesn't take away vocal, political, physical or any other kind of space from anyone else. This performance is an attempt to challenge how we think about space as socio-political currency and to reject the ideal that women should make themselves smaller in order to remain aimable and unthreatening.

Dough as the material for the piece is really important to me. For many weird and wonderful reasons I'm absolutely obsessed with it. It's a massive part of my artistic practice as well as how I visualise the body and how I relate to my femininity. Most importantly, it has sentimental significance to me. The making of bread has always had a key role in my family's day to day rituals, and no it's not because my name is Brennan. It's from my mother's side of the family, where the method of making loaves of brown soda bread were passed down through the generations of women. I spent a lot of my youth sitting at the end of the kitchen table in Lanesborough, Co. Longford, watching my Granny bake these magnificent blocks. No measuring or fancy tools, just some simple ingredients and her hands. This process of pure alchemy seemed to go almost unacknowledged and undervalued compared to the work of men's labour on the farm. To me they were magic. How the smell could warm a house and the taste was so comforting it almost felt like a hug to eat it. When she passed away earlier this year, I was at a loss for how to understand this strange new world without her and my place in it. I have processed my grief through continued creating and making. As a result, my preoccupation with the bread has moved to a fascination with dough, as a simple and metaphorical way to create life. With flour and water we can create a living, breathing body, something which can grow through proving.

*A tribute to my first feminist, my guardian and my role model, Anne Gavigan." - **Emma Brennan***

*"The corporeal nature of the visuals of dough resting, rising, rolled and stretched in the space, and the durational actions of kneading taken out of the defensive shell of the kitchen become a strong statement and a demand to be seen and accepted. This is accomplished by constant contrasting of the dough with the artist's own physical being, Brennan is present in the imagery as a powerful creator of bread who forms, nurtures, patiently protects it while it rises, then graciously endows it. In fact, she demands for her dough and bread to be valued for the worth of the care put into their creation. She demands it for the care she invested into the work as well as the generations of women before her whose practice was unvalued care and generosity." - **Moran Been-noon, 2018***

About the Artist/Director

Emma Brennan is a visual artist and curator based in Dublin. She graduated with a BA honours in Fine Art Media from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2016. Curating and exhibiting in numerous group and solo shows during her time there, she has also participated in a number of live art festivals including *Livestock* and the *Dublin Live art Festival*, as well as curating the inaugural *NCAD Live Graduate Performance Showcase* in 2016. At the core of her practice is an interest in how we as a society perceive and assign value. In particular she is interested in questioning the relationship between producer and consumer. Honing in specifically on that relationship in terms of the artist and the viewer. The questions surrounding this relationship often manifest themselves in her work as performance based or through video installation. She was one of this year's INCUBATE resident artists at the Draiocht, Blanchardstown where she exhibited the video installation entitled *Heed, to the Mound* in their *PLATFORM* exhibition.

She has been a member of No Drama theatre since October 2017. With them she has performed in numerous pieces including their *Shindig* in the Project Arts Centre, their Winter production of Dario Fo's *The Virtuous Burglar* and most recently at the All Together Now Festival Waterford, in an original piece entitled *Grand Day for Drying*. She has recently been in a Gorgeous theatre production, *Somewhere else* in the Trinity Players theatre. Brennan has also been involved behind the scenes, working backstage on Gorgeous Theatre's previous show *Alex And* and No Drama's Summer Production of *She Kills Monsters* in the Smock Alley theatre.

Credits:

Artist/Director: Emma Brennan

Producer: Cara Farnan

Performers: Lucy Bowen, Emma Brennan, Margot Kenny, Joanne Kernan, Helen McGrath, Eimear Regan, Katie Ryan, Mateja Schmitz, Renée van de Schoor, Patricia Wallis

Venue: The Complex

Date: 22/09/18

Time: 2pm - 5pm

Durational Performance, drop in at any time

Free and Unticketed