

The Antidote

Fri 10 and Sat 11 November 2023

[Bobuska](#), Linnestgade 24, København K

Devised and performed by [Copenhagen Platform](#)

Project overview

The Antidote is an interactive performance event that explores playfulness, creativity and human connection. It is set ten years in the future, during the AI Apocalypse, which is different from what we had imagined. It doesn't look like *The Terminator* or *The Matrix*. Instead, The Intelligence - as it has come to call itself - uses the worst aspects of our everyday behaviour - gaslighting, manipulation, domination and emotional violence - to control us. Having become completely dependent on AI for almost everything, we have no choice but to comply – and as a result we've become its slaves. (The full backstory is attached as an appendix.)

The performance itself takes the form of an interactive cabaret party staged by the human resistance. The resistance has discovered that certain actions cause The Intelligence to experience computational glitches. In particular, it finds it hard to comprehend and control parties – especially when people behave in surprising and unusual ways.

This is *The Antidote*: a party where the audience must participate fully to survive.

What will happen at this event?

Although the event is sold as a cabaret, *The Antidote* is in fact an immersive theatre performance. We achieve this immersion through a range of engagement techniques, including:

- Surrendering smartphones: as smartphones are a tool The Intelligence uses to monitor us, they are not allowed at the event and must be checked in on arrival. This enables the audience to feel more presence and connection during the event.
- Playing roles: each audience member is assigned a role - Antidote Hunter, Hedonist or Playful Connector - and given missions to complete during the event.
- Dressing up and putting on weird makeup: we will provide a full dress-up wardrobe, sponsored by The Chameleon's Closet. The audience is encouraged to discover new identities, increasing the feeling of playfulness and interactivity.
- Scans by The Intelligence: a few times, a "scan" happens and everyone must exaggerate their strange behaviour to confuse The Intelligence. These moments of peak activity generate adrenaline, heightening the event's excitement and intensity.

Why is this relevant?

The Antidote creates a light-hearted frame in which topical and important themes are explored. Playfulness is both a way to make interacting easy, and also a theme in itself. Playfulness is a uniquely human quality, and a base ingredient of our creativity. Fostering it is both empowering and invigorating.

The event's participatory nature encourages people to be more engaged and less passive. This counters the hopeless passivity that many feel, amid growing fears about climate change and the rise of new technologies like AI.

The show fosters immediacy, authentic connection and presence, three qualities that deteriorate as our ability to focus declines. In his recent book *Stolen Focus*, Johann Hari talks about the importance of spending time each day without our phones. At this event the context forces people to give up their phones on arrival. This helps them be more present and experience what's happening live in the moment.

We are also inspired by Kevin Roose's excellent TED talk [The value of your humanity in an automated future](#). Roose, a tech columnist for The New York Times, talks a lot about what makes us uniquely human and how this will be a key to surviving the automated future. In this performance, people have a lived experience of this. We feel that few topics are more relevant right now.

Who is behind this performance?

Copenhagen Platform is a collective of artists and theatre-makers led by J Newman Allen. Newman curates a group of co-creators to realise each project.

The group who are creating *The Antidote* are three queer artists and a lab technician with a background in clowning, physical theatre, personal development, authentic relating and interactive performance art. As queer artists, we are informed by Harry Hay's idea of subject-subject relating, creating political change by transforming the way people interact with each other.

Who is this performance for?

The form of the event - an interactive cabaret party - inclines it towards a young queer audience who are deeply engaged with the themes of playfulness, creativity and human connection. As Danish psychologist Svend Brinkmann frequently observes, people under 30 are under an unprecedented pressure to perform unrealistic, perfected versions of themselves. Through the space we create at *The Antidote*, they are empowered to relate more authentically – the emotional equivalent of #nofilter. We also imagine it's a great relief – albeit a challenging one – for this audience to be forced to put down their phones for the evening.

We have close links with The Lighthouse Association, and will target its members to form about half our audience. The Lighthouse creates participatory arts events with a queer focus, with a

strong focus on playfulness and authenticity. By creating a mixed audience of Lighthouse members and young Copenhagen theatre-goers, we aim to create a social learning space in which the themes of playfulness, creativity and connection can be lived and embodied.