

3 of 11 DOCUMENTS

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Theatre: **Burst** festival BAC, London

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It is the festival season, with Brighton and Mayfest in Bristol in full swing, but nobody does it like BAC, which is bursting out all over the building. Geraldine Pilgrim has filled the Grand Hall with dancing women in a witty and wistful performance that, in a few delirious moments, succinctly makes the point that no woman needs a man when she has got her handbag in tow.

Elsewhere in the building, The 14 Stations of the Life and History of Adrian Howells is a beautiful, brutally honest autobiographical piece that takes you on a pilgrimage through the corridors and ends with you and the artist in bed together in a room high up in the building. Even the traditional theatre spaces have been transformed until they are barely recognisable. In particular, Studio 68 has become the venue for Smile Off Your Face, the astoundingly disorienting show in which you are tied up and put in a wheelchair and subjected to sensory bombardment. I am confident we will be seeing, and feeling, more of the Belgian company responsible - Onetroend Goed.

With its all-hours performances and palpable buzz, **Burst** feels like the Edinburgh Fringe on a smaller scale, and experiment is at its heart. Much of the work is fragile, finding new ways to explore old stories. Proto-type Theatre's Whisper uses the headphone technology in Contains Violence to spin a story that unfolds inside your head like a nightmare. The writing could be sharper, but the mixture of foley soundscapes and the strange melding and disconnect between image and sound sucks you in. As with so much at **Burst**, it is not just what the Proto-type are doing now, but what they might eventually do that is tantalising.

Lyn Gardner

Until May 24. Box office: 020-7223 2223.

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