

## Feature: Here is where we meet Accidental Collective

Posted on 20 June 2013 Written by [Joe Raynor](#)

Accidental Collective is transforming the Kent area into a hubbub of theatrical experimentation, finds Joe Raynor



Before we find out about what Accidental Collective has been up to in the Kent region, first let us get introduced. Accidental Collective is “a performance company that came out of the University of Kent and decided to stay in the area. We felt that it was important to stay and be part of the new scene that was emerging at the time,” explains Daisy Orton, who formed Accidental Collective with Pablo Pakula. Accidental Collective was the first graduate company to develop from the University of Kent, and it still has very close links with the university.

Orton continues, “We make experimental, visual collaged work”. Their ethos is “experimentation with a courtesy to the audience. Whilst we don’t make ‘traditional’ theatre we firmly believe it should be enjoyable and accessible, and not challenging in an unpleasant way.” Accidental Collective is all about taking what it has and creating innovative theatre in its environment. It will be the first to admit it hasn’t always had the theatrical spaces to work in, but this means it has been able to explore its environment by taking theatre outside into the community.

Orton explains that “we’ve come from a live art experimental background, but working in this region [Kent] means there wasn’t an audience for that. Rather than plough ahead with something people felt very alienated from, we’ve looked to present experimental theatre in a way people in Kent will want to engage with.” Accidental Collective has slightly softened in its approach from “the young graduates that wanted to change the world to being interested in smaller, more personal action”. There is no denying that Accidental Collective has been hugely influenced by deciding to stay in the Canterbury area, instead of doing what so many young theatre companies do and move to London. Orton says: “we didn’t want to be another small fish in a big pond, so we thought we’d give it a go and try and build something here”. Accidental Collective was right to stand by its gut feeling as it seems that it is beginning to pay off.

*here is where we meet* is Accidental Collective’s new production, currently being performed in the Marlowe Theatre Studio in Canterbury. The piece is based on John Berger’s book of the same title. On their website it is described as “weaving together John Berger’s extraordinarily vivid stories with their own, Accidental Collective have created a visually striking, rich and evocative piece of theatre”. *here is where we meet* is all about

contemplating the people and their stories which have had an impact on your life, the ones that have stayed and the ones that have gone. It is a piece of reflection.

The inspiration for adapting and performing *here is where we meet* came firstly from the company's residency at the Marlowe. *here is where we meet* is rather different from anything Accidental Collective has done before, notably working from a script and placing the performance on stage, which the company hasn't done for a long time. But where did they discover Berger's book, which looks like a real theatrical treat? "The real honest and slightly embarrassing aspect of it is that my partner Richard is doing a PhD on John Berger, for many years now, and I have not read any of his books! It was becoming a bit of a joke that I would never read one." He recommended Berger's *here is where we meet* to the duo and after both reading the book over Christmas they fell in love with it. I think Orton might now understand her partner's choice of PhD.

*here is where we meet* is more than just another show for Accidental Collective. The company was given artist in residence at the Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury which is why they will be performing *here is where we meet* at the Marlowe's Studio. Becoming artists-in-residence is something to really celebrate as it is recognition and reward for a company that has tirelessly worked to promote and develop the artistic scene in Kent. Receiving a reward of some kind has helped to affirm in Orton and Pakula's minds that they were right to stay in Canterbury and be part of the growing arts movement there.

Accidental Collective is a company that believes it is important to help and support new, up-and-coming theatre companies, especially those in the Kent area. But why? "Two things really: we knew that there wouldn't be a performance space in East Kent if it was just us, we couldn't develop audiences and be part of something on our own. Secondly, having gone through the realities and challenges of the artistic world as a company and being heavily supported and mentored by those at the university and further afield, it was an obvious choice that we would want to pass all that along."

What does the future look like for Orton and Pakula, then? Well a lot more hard work, but maybe the tides are changing and recognition of the innovative, experimental theatre being made in Kent is on the horizon. Accidental Collective has received Arts Council funding for another round of its Pot Luck events, "an artist-led platform dedicated to supporting performance-makers in Kent, showcasing and developing their work and inviting artists from outside the region". It is clear to see that Accidental Collective is more than just a theatre company: it is a force for good in the artistic movement in Kent.

*here is where we meet* runs from 19-22 June at the Marlowe Theatre Studio. For more information and tickets [visit the Marlowe Theatre's website](#).

See more at:

<http://www.ayoungertheatre.com/feature-here-is-where-we-meet-accidental-collective/#sthash.zHHY9STJ.dpuf>