

**first  
bite  
festival**



## Brand new theatre in the making

**Tuesday 28th Sept –  
Friday 1st Oct 2021, 1.30pm**

Four online events showcasing new work and ideas from some of the region's most exciting theatre makers.

Presented by China Plate and Warwick Arts Centre. In partnership with Attenborough Arts Centre, In Good Company and Midlands Arts Centre. Supported by Camden People's Theatre. Supported using public funding by Arts Council England and with funding from the Garfield Weston Foundation.

# Welcome to First Bite Festival Online 2021...

Grab your lunch, sit back and have a taste of some exciting new theatre being cooked up across the Midlands.

First Bite 2021 is a weeklong online festival showcasing new work in progress from some of the Midlands' most exciting theatre makers.

X10 artists and companies from across the region have been selected to develop a new idea for a show, and the festival offers an exclusive sneak peek of their work so far. These sharings are presented as digital translations of live work, and all of the artists have ambitions to develop the shows into full-length touring productions.

During the festival events, you will also see pieces from x3 exciting, young artists who are newly emerging into the arts scene, as part of Take a Bite – a China Plate initiative providing Midlands based young creatives aged 18-23 years with professional opportunities within the UK arts scene.

## Feedback

The artists want to hear from you! All of the First Bite work is currently in development and your feedback is essential in shaping the future of the work.

You can access the feedback forms by clicking the links provided in the video description for each festival event. Alternatively, you can contact [info@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:info@chinaplatetheatre.com) and we will email you a form directly.

When you submit your feedback form, you also have the option to be included in a prize draw for 2 free tickets to a show of your choice at one of our partner venues - Warwick Arts Centre, Attenborough Arts Centre (Leicester), Derby Theatre (as part of In Good Company), Midlands Arts Centre or Camden People's Theatre.

## Access

As part of China Plate's ongoing aim to improve access to our work for artists and audiences, all festival events are BSL interpreted, captioned and include audio description of the work.

Please do let us know if you have found this provision helpful, or if you think that it can be improved by emailing [info@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:info@chinaplatetheatre.com).

# The 2021 Bite Size commission

First Bite is a unique opportunity for emerging artists; two of the pieces programmed across the festival\* will be selected for commission by the First Bite partners.

Artists will receive mentoring, rehearsal space and financial support to develop the work, and the commissioned pieces will be performed at the Bite Size Festival at Warwick Arts Centre.

\* not including Take a Bite performances



# Bite Size Festival 2022

First Bite's sister festival, Bite Size, will take place in April 2022 at Warwick Arts Centre. Bite Size is a national platform promoting work from across the region to venues and producers and is a great opportunity for the public to see a wide range of work in a short space of time.

To find out which First Bite companies receive the 2021 Bite Size commission, keep up to date with China Plate at [chinaplatetheatre.com](http://chinaplatetheatre.com) or @YourOldChina.

## A message from the China Plate team...

*"It is fantastic to be showcasing so many brilliant, new ideas in development from artists working across the Midlands as part of First Bite online, and we can't wait to welcome live audiences back to our sister festival Bite Size at Warwick Arts Centre in April 2022.*

*We would like to say a huge thank you to our First Bite partners and funders, the programmed artists for all of your hard work, and all of the artists who applied to be part of the festival. We would also like to extend a special thanks to the audience for your continued support of Midlands and UK artists and creatives."*

# Programme at a glance

## Tuesday 28th September, 1.30pm

Altered Skin – *Fatherhood*

Penelope Yeulet and Lilith Harris – *Where There's a Rattle*

Radical Body – *Planet Alex*

\*Daz Scott – *Curfew*

## Wednesday 29th September, 1.30pm

Keiren Hamilton-Amos – *Pulled*

Georgia Kelly – *Blood*

\*Jana Aizupe & Company - *1001*

## Thursday 30th September, 1.30pm

S.B.Cole, Rukus and Donna Briscoe-Greene – *Forgiven*

Jess Green – *Remember Me*

\*Out of Office – *Hang in There*

## Friday 1st October, 1.30pm

Emily Howlett & Max Runham – *The Teacup Monkey*

Omar Khan – *A Beginner's Guide to Widowhood*

Fatt Butcher – *Fister Act*

All First Bite Online Festival events are pre-recorded and will be available to watch again for a limited time following the festival week.

Please note that individual pieces may have specific content warnings and age guidances, which are detailed during the festival and in the video description for each event.

\* Presented as part of Take a Bite

## Event 1: Tuesday 28 September



### Altered Skin Fatherhood

  @alteredskincic  
 AlteredSkinCIC  
alteredskin.org  
Creative Director  
@shaneshambhu

Being a father in the 21st century is complicated. Being the father of a young son of mixed South Indian, Turkish & Austrian heritage, even more so. Bringing together physical theatre rooted in the Indian performing artform Bharatanatyam and multilingual spoken text, *Fatherhood* explores the cultural & gender expectations on fathers and what it means to be responsible for a child navigating an increasingly complex world. Drawing from personal experience with contributions from community participants from differing cultural backgrounds, the piece also explores how the migrant experience has influenced fathers and fathering across different generations.

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Altered Skin is led by director & award-winning choreographer, Shane Shambhu. Initially trained in the classical Indian dance form bharatanatyam, he expanded his practice into physical & text based theatre, integrating movement & spoken word in an exciting and accessible new theatrical vocabulary. Altered Skin's unique brand of Indian dance inspired physical theatre laced with humour merges artforms and cultures from global perspectives, initiating new thinking around narratives of intercultural identity.



### Penelope Yeulet & Lilith Harris Where There's a Rattle

 @lilithwrites  
 @penelope\_yeulet  
pennyandlilith@gmail.com

Where there's a rattle, there's a snake.

An age-old legend told as you were never meant to hear – the apocryphal Fall of Man.

Set in a contemporary world, two unlikely allies fight for freedom from their mutual ex-husband and eternal entrapment in man's paradise. And in their deviance, find themselves drawn to a queer place. The Garden of Eden was Eden only to Adam, after all.

This play is a story of revenge, rebirth and overcoming the monster. But above all, it's a love story. This is the unspoken romance of the First Women - Eve and Lilith.

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Penelope and Lilith's work is observational of - and directly informed by - their own identities. From single motherhood, queerness and polyamory to advocating for sex worker and LGBTQ+ rights, and the experience of navigating male-dominated industries as young women who just won't (no matter how much they may beg) shut up.

Their shared voice serves as a reclamation of sexuality and femininity with cut glass sarcasm and bittersweet verisimilitude.

## Event 1: Tuesday 28 September



### Planet Alex Radical Body

  @radicalbodyarts  
radicalbodyarts.co.uk

Alex Draper is 16 years old. She's autistic, stressed about her GCSE's, and a few days ago she found an alien living in her garden. She has no idea what to do next!

*Planet Alex* is a solo play that follows the strange and magical journey of Alex, as she travels alone across the West Midlands, carrying an alien that she's hidden inside a cardboard box. Vivid and joyful, the show is a coming of age story about disability, friendship, and finding your place in the universe.

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Radical Body is a Coventry based disability arts organisation that produces subversive new performances by and for disabled people, with a particular focus on radical audience access. Founded in 2019, Radical Body have taken work to Warwick Arts Centre, The Barbican Centre, and The Belgrade Theatre, where they are a Springboard Company.



### Daz Scott Curfew

  @daryannescott

What would you do if men had a curfew?

*Curfew* is a verbatim dance-theatre film exploring the absurd reality of women's safety in public spaces at night. Combining the thoughts and voices of a variety of women, *Curfew* captures the experiences that women could enjoy in a world where sexual harassment and assault are not a threat.

It is about freedom. It's about trying to create, even just for one night, a world where women can feel free and safe at night.

A curfew is not the solution, but there is a problem.

Join the conversation.

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Daz Scott is a director and theatre-maker from the East Midlands. She creates multidisciplinary artworks, spanning dance, music, theatre, film and visual art. Daz's work is often community-driven, playful and process-lead, with a focus on facilitating original, co-created and devised work. *Curfew*, encapsulates all of this - a verbatim dance-theatre film which elevates community voices and reframes the debate around women's safety in public spaces from a women's perspective.

## Event 2: Wednesday 29 September



**Keiren Hamilton-Amos**  
Pulled

 @keirenjamos

After a difficult break up and time on his hands due to a global lockdown “Pedro” has been slowly navigating his way through the online dating scene.

After matching with somebody and restrictions being lifted it's finally time to meet.

With a 160 mile round trip up and down the UK on his hands, his evening spirals from ecstasy to emergency. Using spoken word, movement and digital art to tell this story we unpick the plight of what it means to be Black and in Love.

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Keiren was raised in the inner city of Birmingham. After graduating from the Royal Birmingham conservatoire, he's been a part of varying national and international tours including Liam Steel's Peter Pan, and five star, award winning, Freeman. Keiren has recently embarked on a journey as a writer, having his debut play close the international youth festival and has recently worked with the RSC as a movement director.



**Georgia Kelly**  
Blood

  @georgialoukelly

In 1980's San Diego, a group of lesbians decided to do something about AIDS. Their work changed lives, galvanised a community, and gave comfort and hope to many during a time of crisis. So why don't we know about them?

*Blood* is a new play being developed by playwright, Georgia Kelly, that draws from the real life San Diego Blood Sisters, their interviews, letters, and one-to-one conversations with founding Sister, Barbara Vick, with the support of Lambda Archives of San Diego, to tell the story of one of the most significant movements of lesbian AIDS activism.

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Georgia Kelly does things. Lots of things. Perhaps too many. As well as being a playwright and actor, they also work as a producer across the arts sector, film and take pictures of stuff, and are an adept admin monkey. Georgia's writing often explores identities; primarily queer, mentally ill, and working class ones. She has a lot of rocks and plants and her house is never clean.

## Event 2: Wednesday 29 September



### Jana Aizupe & Company 1001

 @aizupejana (Jana Aizupe)  
@kulbirmaras (Kulbir Maras)

We are too exhausted to describe this show. But we'll do it anyway. *1001* is a study of exhaustion – of being pushed beyond limits and working 16 hour days (because what's the alternative?).

Inspired by personal experiences of mental collapse and burnout, the show explores and brings attention to the unbearable pressure of the capitalist systems and 'routines' that we are conditioned to inhabit - whether we like it, or not.

Created and devised by Jana Aizupe and directed by Kulbir Maras. *1001* was originally made as part of Theatre dissertation and was awarded a Research Prize 2021. It is also a full-length theatre show and will continue as live performances, workshops and audio-visual explorations on the theme.

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Jana Aizupe is a recent Theatre and Performance Studies graduate from University of Warwick with a passion for devised theatre and movement. Kulbir Maras is a recent Film and Literature graduate with a strong passion for ambitious yet intimate writing and directing. Their collaboration manifests in digital adaptation of *1001*, which is performed by current Warwick students.

## Event 3: Thursday 30 September



### SB Cole. Rukus & Donna Briscoe-Greene Forgiven

 embaa.arts (Donna Briscoe-Greene)  
serenah.cole (S.B.Cole)  
 @RUKADIAH (Rukus)

For First Bite S. B. Cole (Writer), Rukus (Composer), and Donna Briscoe-Greene (Singer/Producer), worked together to develop the music and songs for the first short scene of a musical called *Forgiven*. Our digital pitch is a short audio extract from this scene. *Forgiven* is a musical set in Leicester in the early 2000's and revolves around a multicultural cast of vibrant young charity fundraisers who are fumbling their way through their twenties, trying to heal the world and pay the rent. When an old friend returns unexpectedly after a bereavement their fragile world starts to fall apart...

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S. B. Cole is a playwright who has a MPhil in Playwriting Studies from the University of Birmingham and has participated in development programmes at the Soho Theatre and Royal Court Theatre.

Rukus is a recording artist, DJ and producer who has had many successful releases and worked alongside, Mark Ronson, Amy Winehouse and Skepta.

Donna Briscoe-Greene is Artistic Director of Maypole Café Bar and Theatre and founder of EMBAA (East Midlands Black Arts Associated).

## Event 3: Thursday 30 September



### Jess Green Remember Me

 @jessgreenpoet (Jess Green)  
unitedagents.co.uk/jess-green

 @jakeleonard1992 (Jake Leonard)  
jakeleonarddirector.com

You'll love Tim. Friendly, gets on with everyone, good at his job in a tough inner-city comp. Easy going, despite balancing the pressures of his job with building bridges with his estranged mother. But in between visits to the care home, reading blogs on dementia and submitting his application for Head of Year, something terrible happens which could ruin everything Tim's worked so hard to achieve.

Praise for Jess Green's previous work:

"Punchy, she struck a chord" – The Guardian

"Brilliant" – Huffington Post

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Award winning BBC Slam Champion, Jess Green was part of BBC Writers Academy 2019 and has written episodes of *EastEnders*, *Holby City* and *Casualty* as well as 5\* poetry/theatre shows, *Burning Books* and *A Self Help Guide To Being in Love With Jeremy Corbyn*.

Jake Leonard directed Jess Green's *A Self Help Guide* as well as *Powered By Fairydust* by Fishhouse Theatre/Live&Local and assisted on *George's Marvellous Medicine* by Curve and Rose Theatre Kingston.



### Out of Office Hang in There...

 @outofficetheatre

The Out of Office trio use abstract choreography, interviews, humour and absurd costumes, to explore how a nation stuck at home has adapted to the 'new normal'. *Hang in There...* propels the typical office setting into the streets of Leicester, with performers 'hanging' from a clothes rail in their office attire. Drawing from the current climate of digital relationships, they reveal a 'behind the scenes' account of the working day and the recognisable emptiness left when the screen is turned off. But, stick the kettle on, it won't be long until we're back in the office...

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Out of Office is an all female theatre collective founded in the East Midlands. With a focus on multimedia theatre for screen, we create contemporary performance in both online and live settings. Our signature digital drawings, paired with an audience centred approach enables us to playfully explore current societal issues. We are passionate about embracing a fearless-ness of the ridiculous, allowing us to reveal something more delicate about humanity.

## Event 4: Friday 1 October



### Emily Howlett & Max Runham Teacup Monkey

 @ehowlett (Emily Howlett)  
 @maxrunham (Max Runham)  
 MaxRunhamMusic  
max-runham.co.uk

"Everything we see is perspectives, not truth."

A man. A woman. A society that asks for everything except truth.

Max and Emily are in a relationship, but also in therapy because of it. They can talk to a stranger more freely than each other. That is, if they're being honest...

Everyone knows some lies we tell to be accepted. But what about the lies we tell ourselves? The version of 'us' we present to the world instead of who we really are, and what we really feel.

An intimate encounter of the confusing kind: are Max and Emily worth saving?

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Emily is an actor/director who also works as a BSL consultant. She has been working in theatre for 20 years, most recently as Associate Director with Derby Theatre to develop their BSL-using audience and accessible programming.

Max is a singer-songwriter. He's a multi-instrumentalist born with one arm, who spent several years as a touring actor in plays and musicals. He is currently focusing on recording and gigging with his 4-piece band, and his own theatre projects.



### Omar Khan A Beginner's Guide to Widowhood

 @thebreadbinman (Omar Khan)  
@ZoGibbons  
zoe\_gibbons@hotmail.com

"Have you had widow brain yet? Do you ever find yourself standing in front of an open cupboard door with no idea how you got there? "

Suria has just lost her husband (She hasn't misplaced him or anything - he's dead.)

The family are on holiday in Turkey, trying to process their grief, but fraught emotions and the turbulent dynamics of a newly fractured family mean it isn't exactly the restful getaway they had hoped for.

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Omar is Associate Artist at Derby Theatre, director and creator of *A Beginner's Guide to Widowhood*. ABGW is a semi-biographical exploration of his mother's grief.

Collaborating with writer & Birmingham REP Foundry co-alumnus Rae Mainwaring, they have been working on *A Beginner's Guide to Widowhood* since 2019, exploring the bereavement journey through extensive interviews via a partnership with charity 'Widowed & Young'.

Initial material was devised digitally during lockdown with Alison Belbin and Caroline Parker.

If you have been affected by the themes of the play, you may find it helpful to visit or contact Widowed and Young - [www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk) | @WidowedAndYoung

## Event 4: Friday 1 October



### Fatt Butcher Fister Act

  @FattButcher  
adamgcarver.com

Strictly 18+.

*Fister Act*, is a life-affirming queer fantasy adventure through logic, space, time, and sphincter. Join intergalactic sexpot and non-binary drag icon in the making, Fatt Butcher, as we journey beyond the knuckles, to battle our demons, and free ourselves from shame with the help of an enchanted bottle of poppers and the disembodied voice of Liza Minelli.

With an original score of synth-pop musical theatre (think *Bohemian Rhapsody in space*) and kaleidoscopic visuals, *Fister Act* is a cult classic in the making. Oh, and it's strictly B.Y.O. Poppers!

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Adam Carver (they/them) is an award-winning midland based producer & theatre-maker, developing socially engaged performance exploring queerness, community, & making change.

Adam performs in drag as Fatt Butcher, and is the creator and host of *Fatt Butcher's Disco Bingo*, *Disco Tea Party*, *Fantabulosa!* and *Big Gay Disco Bike*. Described by critics as a 'spine-tingling vocal powerhouse' and 'the accelerating decline of humanity' by trolls on Twitter, their work has been previously been commissioned by Without Walls, DanceXchange, Birmingham Hippodrome, Home Live Art, & Cambridge Junction.

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#FBBS21

### **First Bite guest programmers**

Aiofe O'Connor  
Diandra McCalla

### **Take a Bite guest programmers**

Karolina Chrzanowska  
Lily Butcher  
Paige Corcoran  
Taybah Rahman

### **Video design**

Ben Hewis Videography

### **TV In-Vision BSL interpretation**

Jay Thomas-Morton, CommPlus

### **Audio description**

Michael Achtman

### **Captioning**

Rev.com

**Produced by China Plate.**

**China Plate are:**

**Ed Collier and Paul Warwick**

Artistic Directors

**Rosie Kelly**

Senior Producer

**Izzy Taylor (maternity cover) and  
Andrea Pierie Gonzalez (maternity leave)**

Engagement and Participation Producer

**Sammy Fiorino, Tamara Moore  
and Susan Wareham**

Producers

**Charlotte Lund, Aksana Khan and Diandra McCalla**

Associate Producers

**Sarah Isaacs**

Administrator and Digital Lead

**Lucia Hogg**

Interim General Manager

**Kate Sayer**

Interim Development Director

