

Edinburgh Festival Fringe 2016 REVIEW: BLUSH****



BLUSH – playing now at Underbelly Cowgate

At Underbelly's Cowgate venue, *BLUSH* is another play on this year's Fringe that incorporates glitchy sound design, a stripped-down setting, actors taking on multiple roles, and a sense of foreboding and menace. *BLUSH* has the virtue of taking these staples that feel particularly apt in the 2016 iteration of the Fringe, and applying them to a particularly contemporary set of stories.

BLUSH is billed as “five candid stories about revenge porn and all its many victims.”

[But playwright Charlotte Josephine has clarified in conversation with *The Edinburgh Reporter*](#) that, while *BLUSH* uses revenge porn as a catalyst, it's really a play about shame. The characters of three women and two men – all played by Josephine and Daniel Foxsmith – take turns to unspool parts of those stories. Their performances are the highlight of the production, strong and physical.

When the characters run around a rope circle in the middle of the performance space, Ed Stambollouian's kinetic direction conveys something of their pent-up aggression and anxiety, trying to exist in this modern world of sexting, easy pornography, and Twitter bullying.

Accents are judiciously and consistently applied so that the audience can disentangle the strands of the story. If it is nevertheless not always easy to keep up, perhaps there is something appropriate about that in this time and space. The audience certainly thought so, and this aggressive, sometimes ugly, show vacated the space leaving the message to *Be kind*,

you [right so-and-so's]! stamped on their synapses.

*BLUSH, Underbelly, Cowgate (Venue 61), 11-15, 17-28 Aug |
18:00-19:00, £11/£10 (Concs)*