

Hidden Door will rise to new heights at former Royal High

Hidden Door is more than a music festival with visual art, dance, theatre and spoken word included in the mix. This year's festival promises more than 200 new and emerging artists all performing in the A listed building and the grounds around it – which has lain empty since 1968.

Taking place from 9 to 18 June Hidden Door have yet again found a unique venue to bring back to life with their individual mix of the arts. As well as stages both indoor and out, Pianodrome will begin its four month stay with a specially built amphitheatre created from upright pianos. The music performed there will be from Sink whose Tim Vincent-Smith is behind the creation which has graced the Botanics, and Pitt Street in recent years, as well as Mike Keaney and Friends Improvathon and producer The Reverse Engineer.



PHOTO Chris Scott



Royal High School. Photo: © 2022, Martin P. McAdam
www.martinmcadam.com

David Martin, Creative Director of Hidden Door, said: “I believe this is the most ambitious programme Hidden Door has put on so far, and reflects the sheer amount of talent and creativity that has been starved of opportunities over the last two years and is raring to go.

“We have designed our programmes by putting out ‘Open Calls’, where we invite artists of all these different disciplines to tell us about their new work, and how they would show it at Hidden Door. We have been completely inundated with submissions and it has been genuinely exciting to read through so many inspiring proposals.

“It is going to be incredible to bring so many of Scotland’s best new emerging artists into the Royal High School building, and see it burst into life. We are privileged to live in a country with so much creative talent and Hidden Door is doing what it can to ensure that talent has an opportunity to announce itself to the world at an early stage. There is going

to be so much energy at this year's Hidden Door Festival."



David Martin at the site of Hidden Door Festival 2021 which

was held in Granton next to the gasometer and also in a 'secret' building across the road PHOTO ©2021 The Edinburgh Reporter

On the outdoor stage, 90s indie-dance pioneers **Saint Etienne**, soul-pop singer **Yellow Days**, modern instrumental music group **Portico Quartet**, Edinburgh music collective **Tinderbox Orchestra**, spoken word post-punk band **Dry Cleaning**, alternative folk rock collective **This is the Kit**, and maveric punk electro group **Warmduscher** will each headline a different night.

Inside, audiences will be able to see electro-punk solo artist **LoneLady**, London electronic group **Real Lies**, six piece Alt-rock band **The Joy Hotel**, Scottish hip-hop rising star **Billy Got Waves**, and genre-hopping dance band **PVA**.

Down in the basement, music label **Hobbes Music**, Edinburgh radio station **EHFM** and women and non-binary DJ collective **Sisu** will each host residencies showcasing their roster of talent.

Visual Art

Amy Harrison will create a site-specific piece with mirrors, lights and paintings responding to the Royal High's architecture. **Sax Shaw** will also be responding to the space, creating a glass sculpture with light that casts colours onto the surrounding area.

Among the roster of Scotland's best new artists are a number of international practitioners, with the programme reflecting the contribution they make to Scottish culture. This includes illustration from **Jagoda Sadowska**, her style combining her Polish background with East Asian aesthetics. Also celebrating her heritage, **Soorin Shin** will show *Four Seasons*, a series of architectural metal sculptures representing Korean Norigae charms.

Celebrating deep sea corals found off the coast of Scotland,

Jodi Le Bigre will paste lithographic prints onto the walls. Meanwhile, **Fraser MacBeath** is creating an immersive audiovisual installation exploring the depopulation of the Hebrides.

Work will also be on display from three artists currently undertaking a graduate residency at the Leith School of Art, **Molly Kent**, **Madeleine Wood** and **Jack Whitelock**.



Collidoscope from previous festival PHOTO Chris Scott

Dance

The central atrium will be transformed into a dance area with a specially constructed stage, where **Taylor Han and Simone Seales** will perform *With Catastrophic Consequences* blending dance and live music with audience suggestions to bring a cacophony of joy.

Elelei's A Ciegas is a two person, immersive performance exploring the concept of sight. And **Eowyn Emerald** brings

Sugared to the chamber, a fun and flirty piece that builds from a solo dancer to an ensemble of five.

Collective Endeavours is a group improvisation of dancers and musicians engaging with each other, the audience and the space.

Elsewhere on site, **OCEANALLOVER** will present *Ecdysis*, a boundary-pushing combination of dance, new music, costume and wonky choreography. **House of Jack** will perform *The Unknown*, a piece that explores stories of loss, loneliness, social anxiety and passive aggression.

Trio **Nomoss** will combine Butoh performance, sound art and vocal elements in their performance. And **Alan Greig** will take audiences with him into the venue's tiny spaces as part of *Within Reach*, an intimate character performance.

Theatre

Seven theatre companies have been selected to perform at this year's festival, with many performing in the Pianodrome.

Mystica Glamour will be performing *Between Revolutions*, a cabaret inspired by the book *The F*ggots and Their Friends Between Revolutions*. **Noah Tomson and Sakis Longoretti** are staging *The Great Pretender*, a physical theatre show exploring imposter syndrome.

Sweatshops bring *Witches Assembly* to the Pianodrome, a multidisciplinary theatre piece exploring the social repercussions of the witch trials. **Jess Brodie and Victoria Bianchi** are staging *Help Yourself*, a two-hander based on the concept of a wellness seminar.

Dripping Tap Theatre will use the space to put on an experimental piece featuring buffon ballerinas interacting with the audience.

Elsewhere on site, **Adrenalism** will be presenting a satirical street theatre show about the climate crisis, toxic masculinity, violence and green washing. And **SALTYDOLLS** return to Hidden Door with *THAT'S CLASS*, a responsive piece exploring themes of class and meritocracy.



Hidden Courtyard from a previous festival on King's Stables Road PHOTO Chris Scott

Spoken Word

Among those taking to the Pianodrome stage is **Ale de Luis** who will perform a collection of English poetic retellings of Spanish and Latin American myths and legends.

Sean Wai Keung will be making a bit of a mess during *KNEAD*, where he tells stories of mixed-identity and bread-sharing while mixing, kneading and baking bread in front of the audience.

Imogen Stirling will perform extracts from *LOVE THE SINNER*,

her collection of long-form spoken poetry with sung sections.

Oliver Robertson, who started performing spoken word during lockdown, will perform a selection of his poetry recounting tales from his upbringing in the East End of Glasgow.

And **Miss Leading** presents *Another Universe*, a poetic imagining of alternative lives set against the backdrop of lockdown.

Details of programme and tickets are here on the [Hidden Door website](#).

Hidden Door has steadily grown in size and reputation since it began in 2014, when it cleared out the abandoned **Market Street vaults** to run a 9-day arts festival showcasing local creative talent. In 2015 the festival moved to a hidden courtyard behind **Kings' Stables Road**, and returned in 2016, attracting over 12,000 visitors to experience a wealth of art, poetry, theatre, cinema, dance and music. In 2017 the festival breathed new life into the old **Leith Theatre**, attracting rave reviews and critical praise for resurrecting "Scotland's best new live music venue", winning **VisitScotland's Thistle Award** for "Best Cultural Event".

In 2018, the festival returned to Leith Theatre, also taking up residence in the derelict former **State Cinema**, just around the corner. A farewell weekend event took place at Leith Theatre in 2019.

During the pandemic, Hidden Door put on a series of online events, and returned with a bang to live events for a five-day outdoor event at **Granton Gasworks** in 2021.



Fireworks at the gas tower in Granton, Edinburgh, Scotland.
PHOTO Fabio Scalici