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# Kr-36

by Erica Crompton

This week The Event, a sixteen-day city celebration of exhibitions and performances by ten visual art organisations in Birmingham, puts the art into the heart of the country.

Charting the rise in artistic anthropology in Birmingham, the BCAF (Birmingham Contemporary Art Forum) have organised The Event to document what has been described by those in the know as the next Arts Lab, the Brummy avant-garde arts scene of the late seventies.

Together, ten organisations and their armies of artists will show a cocktail of cultural influences and colour and a strong sense of identity that in some cases is strengthened by a David and Goliath style attitude.

But not all the work focuses solely on reflecting the vibrancy of the second city. Fictional art group a.a.s. claim to be completely imaginary. There are, I'm told three or four of them in the collective. Perhaps. And that number increases and decreases depending on who is involved at any given time, each new secret agent being fully initiated on signing up.





For The Event a.a.s present KR-36, a two-week urban interactive game and participant-led art performance which aims to incorporate the entire population of Birmingham.

Like an underground language developed in plush squats, secrecy and subterfuge are an integral part of the work. Don't rely on being a bystander for a full experience of this. Instead, to really get a look in, take part. Just dial the given number (below and on The Event's website), arrange to participate and you'll be blessed with the opportunity to write your own story and curate your own piece.

But you'll only get past the mobile gatekeeper if you're up for taking part in the initiation, another secret so far as we can gather. The Event's website hints that onlookers outside the performance (the whole of Birmingham, remember) might get an eyeful of wacky behaviour.

If a.a.s are up for it so you should be too. The anonymous framework of artists work with whatever is appropriate at the time – installation, video, live art, audio – anything goes in the transdisciplinary genre of which they are part.

By involving other people in their work they believe terms like artist, audience, and performer are only ever provisional. a.a.s only talk through negotiators that speak on their behalf. So this week's chance to get close to the elusive artists is a rare one. Take part and get ready to make a real art of yourself.

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