

Creative Manchester and Drama at The University of Manchester present

The Actions

A play by Andy Smith

The Actions is a unique play that is designed to be read, performed and then discussed by a group of people rather than presented by actors on a stage. The play tells a story of a group of political activists, and presents questions about how we participate in democracy, and how far we might go or need to go (as individuals and groups) to create and affect social change. At the centre of the play and project are questions about *acting*, in both a practical theatrical sense as well as in terms of a broader social and democratic agenda.

The play has been written and developed by Andy Smith, an award-winning theatre-maker and Lecturer in Theatre Practice. Since the first performance of the work in 2017 the play has been performed in many situations and contexts – with students and community groups as well as in theatres.

Thanks to support from Creative Manchester, we have been now been granted the opportunity to pilot the play in schools, and undertake eight performances in schools in the Manchester area. We are currently seeking partners to participate in the project. We'd like to perform the play with pupils aged 15 to 18 (year 10 and sixth form) in groups of between 15 and 30 at a time.

As the play will be read out loud by the participants, it needs no special space or time to set up. A circle of chairs in a classroom or appropriate quiet space is all that is needed.

The project has employed two 'host' figures, Nick Kane and Georgia Brown (both recent graduates of the University of Manchester Drama department). For each performance, one of them will arrive at your school with copies of the play. After setting up the room, they will introduce the project, invite the pupils to read it, and then encourage a discussion about the ideas and themes that it presents. The whole experience should last around an hour.

The play would be suitable for Drama students (the form is inspired and linked to Brecht), but we are keen to not limit it to this area. We would like to work with students of Politics, English, History and Citizenship for example. The play could work with several classes across a whole year group, or equally well with a particular group of students as part of a particular or specific group or project. Whatever you feel might be suitable or of particular interest to your school.

We hope that you might be interested in a performance or performances of the play in your school. If you would like to talk about how we make this happen, would like to read the play first, or have any questions please contact Andy Smith (Lecturer in Theatre Practice) and Sonja Bernhard (Outreach Officer, School of Arts Languages and Cultures) on the details below.

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