



YOUR SEXTS ARE SHIT: OLDER BETTER LETTERS

Your SEXTs Are Shit: Older Better Letters is the new solo show from Rachel Mars.

It is an intimate, funny, filthy and moving show that triangulates the sex and love letters of long dead artists, contemporary sexts and a meditation on the construction of the queer female body. What role does writing have in creating our sexual identity? How do we write ourselves and for whom? How have newer, faster communication methods changed the way we write desire?

The show features an array of letters from dead writers, artists and a monk. They include James Joyce, Frida Kahlo, Georgia O'Keeffe, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mozart and Radclyffe Hall. I read them, and they are accompanied by slides of footnotes providing background information about the writers and the context they were writing in. The second element is a powerpoint of sexts sent to me by anonymous donation from platforms like whatsapp, Grindr and good old text message. The final element is a personal narrative about how I came to own and write my own female queer sexual desires.

BACKGROUND

In June 2016, immediately after the Brexit vote I was depressed and in upstate New York. In order to cheer me up, performer Scott Sheppard read me some of Joyce's sex letters to Nora Barnacle. They were extremely explicit and surprisingly beautiful. On my return I got in touch with two sexologists, Jana Funke and Lena Wanggren – who helped me to unearth sex letters dating back centuries. I also researched with friends and colleagues about how they were using short-form text communication to seek out - and maintain -sexual relationships. I did a call out for screenshots of sexts, and curated them to form one of the three elements of the work. I also knew I wanted to include some personal information, especially as queer female desire is often invisible and un-discussed. The result of all three elements is a kind of queer live archiving of longing, communication and the writing of pleasure.

FEEDBACK FROM PROGRAMMERS

"The provocative title was certainly beneficial in selling the show, as it attracted people into the building for the first time, in particular those aged 17-35 years old. The show although simple in concept, packs a punch emotively and politically- the bar was full after each show with audiences discussing opinions and personal stories around sexuality, gender and human connection. Rachel's ability to hold the space allowed the audience to move past being audibly shocked, embarrassed and amused, to an empathetic and engaged connection to the material."

Christie Hill, BAC.

PRESS

★★★★ [THE GUARDIAN](#) - SHOWS WE RECOMMEND

A triumphant Show...dripping with uninhibited desire.

★★★★ [FEST](#)

Mars raises a toast to the human libido, elevating the carnal alongside the cerebral. In her hands, intimate human connection seems such a wondrous thing. Stirs your soul as much as your senses.

★★★★ [EDFEST MAGAZINE](#)

What at first seemed to be a comedy show poking fun at the differences in historical and modern sexting, instead becomes a historical insight into sex and the queer narratives that are so easily lost within history.

★★★★ [THE LIST](#)

★★★★ [EMILY JUPP](#)

OUTSTANDING SHOW - [FRINGE REVIEW](#)

You won't see anything quite like this on the Fringe.

<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/may/02/sex-letters-james-joyce-frida-kahlo-marcel-proust-on-show>

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Tate Modern, London – June 2017 | NOW 18 – The Yard Theatre, London - Jan 2018

BAC London - June 2018 | Royal Exchange, Manchester May 2019

Summerhall, Edinburgh Aug 2019 | South Street Reading | Birmingham Literature Festival | The Junction, Cambridge | Lancaster Arts | The House, Plymouth | Falmouth University

BSL & Access

The show has twice been performed with integrated BSL interpretation, and this is something I like to offer where possible.

I can also provide copies of the script in advance to audience members who would like to follow the text live during the performance, on ipad or phone.

EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

I run education workshops to accompany the show. These are hands-on devising/creation workshops for students, artists and people interested in performance. The workshop explores using found texts and their translation from page to performance, ending in short performances devised by participants. It also considers the ethics of using your own, and other people's personal correspondence in performance.

MARKETING PACK

A full marketing pack is available, including all copy, photos, links to trailers, suggested twitter and FB activity and suggested audiences to target.



Rachel Mars is a multi-award winning theatre maker. Her show OUR CARNAL HEARTS won a Total Theatre Award for Innovation in 2017, and the company she co-runs - Mars.tarrab - were the 2017 Oxford Samuel Beckett Trust Award winners for ROLLER at the Barbican. She is a regular on BBC Radio 2, and a fellow of the Birkbeck Centre for Contemporary Theatre.

www.rachelmars.org

Contact:

Rachel Mars - Rachel@rachelmars.org
0044 (0)7855 776 991

TECH NEEDS

From the venue:

End on performance space

2 Projection Surfaces

Projector

Music Playback (through Qlab on company laptop)

Basic LX – plan available

1 Mic and stand

1 White Table

Company provides:

5 Practical Lamps (all PAT tested)

Slide projector, Laptop for onstage powerpoint operation.

1 Chair, 1 small chest of drawers

We can tour with Lighting/Sound Operator or use an in-house person, depending on the venue.

Get in – one day, get out, 30 mins.

EXAMPLE STAGE SET UP:

