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Edinburgh Theatre

Etiquette

★★★★★ Assembly @ Aurora Nova, Edinburgh

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Lyn Gardner
Saturday August 18, 2007
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Have you ever been in the middle of a conversation and suddenly felt as if you were in a film or a play? Have you ever wished that life had a script that you could follow? Then Etiquette, a table-top performance for two, is the show for you. It is an opportunity to star in your own already scripted drama in front of everyone waiting in the Aurora Nova cafe for the next show to be called. The strange thing is that, like an actor on the stage, you become entirely oblivious to the audience.

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It works like this: you sit opposite your chosen partner at a small table holding various objects including two small figures, a tiny plastic house, a phial of blood and some chalk. You both don headphones through which you are told what to say and act out. This series of scenarios borrows from sources including Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and the films of Jean-Luc Godard and John Cassavetes.

Etiquette goes beyond the merely quirky to explore the gap between language and meaning: what happens in a relationship when we don't have time to plan what we say? We think of a conversation as being an exchange, but in reality it is often nothing of the kind. Etiquette makes you respond and, in doing so, creates a hyper-reality - even though you know it's fiction.

By creating an entirely private space in the public setting of a cafe, something extraordinary happens. The piece works in a transformative way akin to Tim Crouch's *An Oak Tree*. Like all theatre, you only know what the experience was like for you: I left knowing that I had both shared something and been entirely alone.

- Until August 27. Box office: 0131-623 3030.

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