



My word is my bond

Throgmorton Restaurant and Bar, London
15 March, 22 March and 5 April

LATE FRIDAY EVENING I FIND myself standing behind the London Stock Exchange shouting at my friend. She's screaming at me for giving her phone number to a man in a bar. "But no" I yell, "I wouldn't really give him your number. One of the digits was wrong." She's not persuaded. "He could work it out. I don't trust you." This was not a regular Friday night – the location (the City), the vibe (City Boy bacchanalia) and the feeling that I ended up acting out of character. This was the curious effect of an interactive performance event *My word is my bond* by artists FrenchMottershead. During the evening twenty-five 'micro-performers' joined fifty ticket-holders in a bar – most of us watching each other to see what was going to happen. Other people wandered down from the bar upstairs: watching, drinking, talking. Just like being in a bar on a Friday night but as the hours passed it became less wary and more confrontational.

My guests and I were confident that we could tell who the micro-performers were but in entering conversations we became confused. It was like being in an online chatroom where you feel you can do anything *because you are anonymous*, even though we were in a public space. Having interviewed the artists beforehand, I knew to look out for small escalations in the behaviour of the micro-performers. The surprise was the way my own behaviour and that of my guests changed. This was social experiment as art; a performance where you had to take responsibility for yourself, or feel cheated, wanting your £5 back, as some of the audience did. It was not so much "we are all performers" as "we are all wankers in a bar" – but of course it's up to us to choose how much of a wanker.

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