Richard Dedomenici, FrenchMottershead, Grace Surman, and Oreet Ashery, are amongst a crop of emerging UK live artists whose work stretches the boundaries of what performance can be.

Cathy Butterworth reports:

For many live artists working in the UK today, the interplay between public and private spaces is a major area of conceptualisation. From interventions into daily life in city centres, to intimate encounters between artists and their audiences, live art practices encourage a number of strategies for subverting notions of where public and private spaces begin and end. As a result, they invite audiences to take a closer look at the everyday and familiar.

The potential for live art not only to entertain but to provoke, telesize, engage, inspire, challenge and unsettle, makes it well positioned to draw new audiences, and empower those who have been marginalised within the cultural mainstream. 28-year-old Richard Dedomenici is an emerging artist whose works challenge, notions of democracy, bureaucracy and the public realm. At the Edinburgh Festival Fringe last year, he dressed a highly visible jacket and, posing as a city official, told people that due to a new ‘Permitting of Monument Change’, all who walked within the parameters of the city’s Royal Mile would have to £1.5 GBP fine automatically deducted from their mobile phone account. In order to have the fine waived, the discarded recipient of the fine was to phone a special help line. This charge of the call was £1.5 GBP.

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Live Art Live in 2004, Dedomenici arrived in the city the day after ex-Shadow Minister for the Arts, John Bercow, had visited in an attempt to make amends for his now notorious ‘get over the kebab’ speech and+ at the City Chambers of Peterborough, in what was termed ‘Johnson’s first apology’. Some accepted my apology, others threatened to break my legs,” Dedomenici recalls.

Dedomenici’s acts of civil disobedience ask pertinent questions of society and the element of risk in his confrontation interventions adds an unpredictable layer to his work, which contributes to its visibility. In meeting to audiences that may not even realise they are experiencing a live art event, Dedomenici broadens the scope of how few people have begun to understand what performance can be. His sharp sense of humour allows him to push the limits of his interactions with the public: meaning him to challenge, provoke, and, in some cases that people may not respond to were truly presented in a more traditional performance context.

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