



NikNak at Deep Time, Edinburgh

into whirring foghorns while Resina appears and disappears on stage, playing keys and collapsing into an extended climax. It's an exciting performance but overextended at points, especially given the weightiness of the theme. AKA HEX (Aisha Devi and Slikback) bring the evening full circle, as Devi's sharp, angelic vocals trail hard Drexciyan breaks while somehow emanating a punk essence.

A highlight of the festival is Rainy Miller's *Joseph, What Have You Done?*, a crushing audiovisual performance that opened with droning synths gradually giving way to augmented, Auto-Tuned vocals, layered over moving images. Miller himself emerges on stage 15 minutes in, hood up, gripping the mic like a preacher's cane. He seems to drift in and out of the performance and the audience, appearing in the back rows and on the floor. Throughout, a fragmented internal falsetto monologue speaks to a post-traumatic state of mind, capturing the anxiety and brutality of the present. In this edition, Unsound captures something generational – a collective unraveling of illusions.

In a world shaped by ongoing wars, trauma is no longer an anomaly but a defining condition. The festival doesn't just acknowledge this, but embodies it, structuring an emotional arc from nostalgic hope to reluctant clarity. Each act engages with time differently – whether considering an imagined past, dismantling identity in the present, or mourning a future already lost. Letting go of illusions is not a relief; it is a horror, an unmasking of the world's systems as they are, greedy, bloodthirsty and devoid of empathy. The youth in attendance, for whom the last decade has been defined by instability, seem to understand this. There is no clean resolution – only survival within the collapse.

In the aftermath, the crowd head to an abandoned bank currently functioning as the nightclub Reset. There, DJs MIMI, CRYSTALLMESS, Lee Gamble and others keep the crowd dancing until the early hours of the morning. This experience too is something we can share.

Xenia Benivolski

### Deep Time: Basquiat & Cage 8424

Fruitmarket, Edinburgh, UK

In 1984, when New York art world darling Jean-Michel Basquiat was 23 – he would be dead only four years later – Edinburgh's Fruitmarket gallery showed the first UK exhibition of his paintings. Upstairs, drawings and books were on show from composer John Cage. 40 years later, Fruitmarket celebrates this historic double whammy with a four night festival in their honour. Now in its second year, Deep Time is curated this time around by experimental vocalist and movement artist Elaine Mitchener. Mitchener wanted to imagine a conversation between Basquiat and Cage, involving artists who orbited around them or with whom they shared a "Venn-diagram connection".

While the 1984 press gushed over the 72 year old Cage, their response to the young Black American's politicised graffiti was withering in a way that could now be read as straightforward racism. Mitchener responds with two opening night premieres that she created with dancer/choreographer Dam Van Huynh. *Graffiti Bodies* references Basquiat's 1981 painting *La Hara* (Puerto Rican slang for cop) about police brutality, and *Moving Eastman* is about composer, pianist and singer Julius Eastman, an openly gay Black artist in a predominantly white scene. Inspired by Basquiat's and Eastman's "fearlessness and honesty", Mitchener doesn't so much dance to the electronic music – buried at first then rising in visceral, ear pummelling surges – as become a pulsing embodiment of it, an astonishing fusion of a cappella song, ragged breathing and shaking limbs. Repeating Eastman's lines about "emancipating myself from myself" and being "black to the fullest, a musician to the fullest, a homosexual to the fullest", she inhabits him and his questing, blurring and symbiotic approach to different art forms, a stylistic overlap with Basquiat and Cage.

Experimental turntablist NikNak takes the Cage and Basquiat conversation brief more literally, letting us hear their voices side by side, although they probably never met.

In her dazzling blur of technical flair and dry humour, she samples archive interviews, letting silences, time stretches and repetition echo their views on art and, in Basquiat's case, patient bemusement at dumb questions during an interview.

Japanese sculptor/sound artist Rie Nakajima takes a more tangential, playful approach. Her neat miniature city of battery-operated gadgets whirrs and vibrates. Mesmerizing, serene textures of silicon, sheet metal and a bin lid gong recall Cage and Basquiat's love of found objects and sounds, as well as Cage's transformative appreciation of Zen Buddhism.

Anton Lukoszeviev is interviewed by journalist Kate Molleson in Fruitmarket's wonderful brick warehouse, while the faint sound of rumbling trains and platform announcements bleeds through from nearby Waverley station. Lukoszeviev, the founder of the ensemble Apartment House, named after John Cage's *Apartment House 1776*, reminisces about Cage and Merce Cunningham's West Village home, and how the former was fascinated, rather than disturbed, by shrill car alarms outside his home.

After hearing the tape journals of artist and AIDS activist David Wojnarowicz, Apartment House perform musical "derangements" of three Theoretical Girls songs, time travelling us back to late 70s no wave New York, stretching the bendy, porous membranes of the Fluxus movement via polytonal keyboards, shrieking balloons and a cello scraped over the warehouse floor.

Cage loved ancient Gaelic and Celtic music, and his Scottish connections are explored on night three with a newly commissioned performance of his *Scottish Circus*. Eddie McGuire, who performed at Cage's exhibition opening in 1984 with traditional Scottish group The Whistlebinkies, revisits a piece that Cage designed for players to perform, not as a group, but as individuals. So Brighde Chaimbeul and Allan MacDonald's smallpipes, Aidan O'Rourke's violin, Bashir Saade's ney flute, Sean Shibe's lute, Sodhi's tabla and Simone Seales's cello take fluid, non-hierarchical turns to collectively lift a 1478 pibroch (pipe music) piece to stunning heights.

Deep Time looks both backwards and forwards. Absent artists from history share space with an all Black, all female panel for the last night. After Mitchener's Rolling Calf celestial skronk trio perform "Gold Griot/Griot's Refrain", inspired by Basquiat's painting of a West African storyteller, impressive multi-instrumentalist petals (Petero Kalulé) joins Mitchener onstage with NikNak and writer/lecturer Esi Eshun to talk about Black Time – not linear, but free from past and future. Bold curating now about bold curating then, Deep Time runs deep and feels vital with satisfying, intermingling art forms.

Claire Sawers

### Alexander von Schlippenbach Trio

Cafe Oto, London, UK

Since emerging in the 1960s, Alexander von Schlippenbach has maintained two key projects, Globe Unity Orchestra and his trio with Evan Parker and Paul Lovens. When the