

on stage



James Berlyn and *Flush* creator Janet Carter play a mock game of strip poker in *Proximity*.
Picture: Marcus Whisson

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Close up and personal theatre

A RADICAL new micro-festival is giving Perth theatregoers the chance to forego the everyday communal experience of live art for a one-on-one encounter of their own.

From a private tap dance to a risqué game of strip poker, *Proximity* takes adventurous attendees to all corners of The Blue Room Theatre – office space, kitchen, theatre, dressing room, bar and even the male toilets – on an experimental exploration of the finer details of human relationships.

"It's a unique and special gift for an audience member to have a performance just for them," co-curator Sarah Rowbottom said.

"Our project – comprising 12 performances by 12 WA artists

from varied backgrounds – started with my co-creator James Berlyn, who made his own one-on-one work. He then wanted to create an opportunity for others in the arts community to make similar works.

"We believe the program will open people's minds to what performance is and what it can be."

Sarah says one-on-one performance is not a new form. Hailing from the '60s, it became popular in the UK about 15 years ago.

She warns *Proximity*-goers to come with an open mind and a strong sense of adventure.

"The strip poker session called *Flush* is about testing your limits," Sarah said. "You enter the bar and Janet Carter (a visual artist leading the act) asks you to take off

your shoes.

"She tells you the rules of poker and then you play. She gauges your comfort level and you are constantly negotiating what item of clothing is going to go next.

"Another performance called the *Union* was created by Renae Coles, who gives you a consultation in the office about becoming a union member. The union is for those who have suffered a small injustice such as getting a parking fine they feel they shouldn't have to pay, and the way they combat the injustice is to make a punk song."

■ *Proximity* is at The Blue Room Theatre, Northbridge on February 5, 12 and 19.

Sara Fitzpatrick