

# A Western

a performance  
by Action Hero

Action Hero is the collaboration of artists Gemma Paintin and James Stenhouse. They are a UK-based company working in Bristol, and have been working together since 2005.

Action Hero have developed a reputation as a company making work of exceptional quality that is challenging, invigorating and innovative but entirely accessible.

A Western was Action Hero's first piece, beginning its life in 2006 as a 10 minute 'scratch' performance. After finishing the piece in 2007, it toured extensively across the UK with the support of Arts Council England. A Western was selected for the British Council Edinburgh Showcase in 2009, and subsequently toured in Europe and the US, Brazil, Thailand and Australia .

A Western is a performance for a bar. Within the space we locate our valley, our saloon, our empty street. We find our audience and together we make A Western.

The audience cheat at cards, beg our hero to love them and then shoot him down. We apply the ketchup blood. We wear the cowboy hats. We want the scene where our Hero walks into a bar and everyone stops talking. We want the scene where the whore begs to be loved. We want the scene where our hero dies along and drawn out death.

A Western collides the immediacy and intimacy of live performance with the epic emotional experience of the cinematic blockbuster, a celebration of a failure to capture the true size and majesty of the Wild West. It is an experiment with the relationship between an audience and an event, a re-imagining of everyday landscapes that we inhabit.



**“Resolutely off-kilter but  
entirely accessible...brilliant”**

**Metro**

**“beautifully executed and  
incredibly exciting”**

**Total Theatre**

**“This is a beautiful pipe dream of a show-  
one that places the audience at its heart”**

**★★★★ Guardian**

# Brief Technical Overview

**50 mins**

**2 on the road**

**no freight required \***

## Technical Rider

Use of PA

CD player

1 vocal mic (SM58) with boom stand mixer

1 operator for the show (the operator must be in the performance space)

Lighting - use of existing lighting in the bar area.

Possible need of additional birdies (or similar discreet lighting) to highlight mic area

## Set up/down time

We require minimum 30 minutes technical time in the space prior to performance with a technician

Set up time is 1 hour

Set down time is 30 minutes

## Special requirements

We require a minimum of half a day in the space prior to performance for rehearsal (the space can remain open to the public in this time)

We will be using a small amount of ketchup.

If there is more than one performance we will need to wash and dry our costume between performances

If the performance is outside the UK we may ask the venue or festival to provide a small child's bicycle

A Western is a site responsive piece. When touring, the work will be re-made for each venue, according to the specifics of that space. Although the piece takes place in a public space, it is not an intervention and is always performed for an invited audience who become complicit in the creation of the piece. The bar area needs to remain free from unnecessary disruption whilst the performance takes place.

We generally work with the natural lighting of the bar space, and have a few basic sound requirements.

\* For international touring, no freight is required if a child's bicycle and a small table can be provided. Otherwise, the freight is under 20kg. We are happy to drive to venues within 1600km of the UK, bringing all our props by car.

A Western is a performance for a bar. The bar needs to be open and serving alcohol during the performance. The piece works best when the audience can come to the bar in advance and have a drink before the show starts for at least 30 mins, and be able to stay around afterwards.

The ideal bar space will have some or all of the following: Some steps (even just one or two) in the space or visible from the space. Interesting features in the space, for example different levels, a large staircase, big windows to outside, lots of doors...

## Contact Us

For national & international touring, and to see footage of the show, contact Gemma on  
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