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# Dispatches from The Fringe - Exit Strategy yields a low return on investment

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Exit Strategy  
Makeshift Ensemble

## Exit Strategy by Makeshift Ensemble

Rating: ★★★★★

An [exit strategy](#) is a business term referring to the manner in which a company quits or exits the market or a country. In *Exit Strategy*, Makeshift Ensemble applies this idea to human behavior and choice, with particular emphasis on immigration. The result is part theatre, part game, part lecture and part animation. Yet despite a strong central idea, some clever moments and having some important things to say, the parts just don't come together in *Exit Strategy*.

*Exit Strategy* begins with the audience being presented with red and green, laminated cards and an envelope upon arrival. These are used to determine certain choices to be made throughout the performance. As the show begins a string quartet plays, accompanied on flute by Leah Hearne, one of the shows two performers. Stage right, Eszter Némethi sits quietly. Once the quartet exit, one by one, the audience is presented with their first choice: whom would they like to listen to? For the next ninety minutes games, Game Theory, animation and explanation are provided in an attempt to investigate Cork, Hungary, immigration and choice and can business models be applied to understanding human behavior?

There are some incredibly clever moments and a wonderfully rich metaphor at the heart of *Exit Strategy*. With its use of overhead projections, it had the feel at times of a business pitch made on acetates. An early choice involving a ticket to another play was a stroke of genius, making the choice immediate, relevant and with definite stakes. As too was the explanation of Game Theory via a Mexican Standoff. The metaphor of the boiling frog was simple and incredibly potent. But these moments were few and far between. Interspersed were long, rambling passages on Hungarian footballers, the advantages and disadvantages of living in Cork and a battery of explanations on Game Theory, Prisoners Dilemma and the overly complicated game being played with the audience. Throughout, dialogue was loose and unfocused as Hearne and Némethi presented two sides to every argument. The two animated sequences served little purpose and felt self-indulgent. As pace dragged the really interesting and significant things got swallowed up in irrelevances that dragged them down. Consequently, the emotional honesty near the end lost much of its impact and *Exit Strategy* seemed unsure of itself as a result.

There can be no doubt that this work has immense, personal significance for these two performers. But it felt at times as if its significance overwhelmed them, detracting from the work which needed to be sharper, shorter and simpler. This was a pity for *Exit Strategy* has some really interesting and important things to say about the personal and political as it impacts upon the immigrant. As it currently stands *Exit Strategy* feels like an early draft. But an early draft of what could potentially be a powerful and significant work.

Exit Strategy runs at The New Theatre until September 14th. Doors open at 1.00 p.m. Admission is €14.00.



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