

**Review: EKO**

**By Amber Roderick**

## ***EKO* at Theatre Royal Plymouth**

*EKO* is an audio-visual composition and production by New York based artist Kurt Hentschläger. This is not a normal show, so be prepared to immerse yourself in this unique experience for an interesting, but quick, theatre trip.

Kurt Hentschläger creates immersive, audio-visual installations and performances. His work has been described as visceral and immersive. The idea is that it physiologically affects the viewer's experience. In 2010 he won the Quartz Media Art Award in Paris. He was commissioned in 2012 as part of the Cultural Program of the 2012 London Olympics / London Festival, to create CORE, a largescale symphonic installation.

The production starts with 15 minutes of complete darkness, with the audience focussing purely on the abstract loud sounds. No light, no movement, no actors, just noise. For the second half of the production, multiple quick images flash on the big screen, leaving your eyes enjoying the shapes for a while after, before they slowly fade away. The idea is to erase your perceptual boundaries, and with not a lot going on, the audience is forced to focus entirely on the sounds and flashes of animations on the wall display. The absence of light encourages the viewer to completely trust the art, whilst feeling hidden yet exposed in your chair. As an audience member, it is requested that you turn off your phone and smart watches, as any sound or light will ruin the experience. You are also warned that this is not suitable for people who fear the dark, or who have claustrophobia.

This production takes place in The Drum at Theatre Royal Plymouth. The unique audio-visual performance, which is in complete darkness, started in 2019 and has reignited in 2022. It could easily be argued that this is an art exhibition rather than theatre. Either way, if you are a regular theatre goer, why not push yourself out of your comfort zone, and work it out for yourself?