



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

Issued: August 2018

Experts' take on sex, drugs and the dark net set to turn heads

Sex in advertising, a compassionate drugs policy and the dark side of the internet are some of the provocative topics academics will explore at this year's Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

More than 40 researchers from universities across the UK – including the University of Edinburgh – will take part in the Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas from 3-26 August.

By blending research findings with comedy, the series offers fresh perspectives on a range of topics, and aims to engage audiences in discussions about important issues.

The implications of sexualised advertising is the focus of PhD student Kat Rezai's show. During the event, the Napier University student will ask whether sexual themes in adverts sell products or influences behaviours.

University of Edinburgh scholar Anna Ross' *Doing More Drugs* event explores whether paying greater heed to drug users' personal experiences might lead to policies built on compassion, rather than retribution and punishment.

Andreas Zaunseder of the University of Aberdeen will suggest that the dark net can help people to have more control over their privacy. He will argue that we can learn from geeks and criminals usually associated with this anonymous space on the internet.

Further events in the series cover topics such as doping in elite sports, issues around fake news and stigmas around talking about death.

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas launched as part of the Festival Fringe in 2013. It is organised with support from Fair Pley Production Company and the Beltane Public Engagement Network – an initiative across Edinburgh's four universities that encourages researchers to engage with the public.

Each show will be compered by stand-up comedian and Fringe veteran Susan Morrison, who said: "The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas brings provocative ideas to the public, sparking conversations that challenge audiences and presenters alike. Lively, fun and stimulating, it is a wonderful show that entertains, engages and educates. This year's programme is absolutely fantastic, with the most amazing range of subjects."

The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas takes place twice a day from 3 - 26 August at 1:30pm and 8:10pm at The Stand's New Town Theatre. Tickets vary from £7-£10 and are available on the Outstanding Tickets website <https://www.outstandingtickets.com/cabaret-of-dangerous-ideas>

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