**Fag Break** by Rebecca Askew

**Fag Break** is a game

**Fag Break** is a piece of music

**Fag Break** is a piece of theatre

**Fag break** is a site specific event

Four collaborators follow sets of instructions and play a game that results in the performance of a unique improvised composition inspired by the history of their surroundings.

Two musicians are placed at the centre of a large spiral of squares marked out on the floor. In each square there is an object. Two players start outside the spiral and work their way in towards the centre as the game progresses.

The music always begins with the same sound, that of the roll of the first player’s dice on the floor. That player moves the number of squares shown on the dice. What object they find in the space they land on and how they choose to interact with it, determines what happens next.

For Plovdiv 2019 (European City of Culture), performer/composer, Rebecca Askew was commissioned to devise a piece for an audience of two in a small room. Fusing her commitment to participatory arts with her experience of performing John Zorn’s game piece *Cobra*, she wrote **Fag Break** as a fun way for musicians and non-musicians to explore the dynamic between improvisation and “playing by the rules”, whilst experiencing the history of a space in a new way.

The first performance in a **former tobacco** **factory** included lighters, cigarettes and echoes of Otis Redding’s “Cigarettes and Coffee”. The hammers, nails and cakes accompanied by blown bottles and recipes read out loud in the second performance (Folkestone Quarterhouse) reflected the space’s history as a **beer shop, building firm and bakery.**

The performances to date have shown that **Fag Break** provides permission and a space for adult non-musicians and musicians to play together and be creative within given constraints, which sometimes resulted in some delightfully surprising responses!

**Fag Break** has been played in a gallery space as part of a promenade event, and in a theatre space to a ticketed audience. It has the capacity to be adapted to a variety of performance situations, although the minimum playing area is five and a half square metres.

To see excerpts visit [www.rebeccaaskew.co.uk/fag-break](http://www.rebeccaaskew.co.uk/fag-break)