



## About Mimbre

Mimbre is based in Hackney, London and have performed 10 different shows nationally and internationally. Every year, we reach 20,000-30,000 people through shows, youth programmes and professional development training.

Our work is commissioned by established organisations such as the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Roundhouse and the National Centre For Circus Arts. Our Joint Artistic Directors, Lina Johansson and Silvia Fratelli also lend their expertise and collaborate with organisations such as Garsington Opera, National Theatre Wales and the Royal Opera House on exciting external projects.

Since 2006, our core funding has come from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation: a recognition of the company's innovative approach and contribution to excellence within the performing arts. Other streams of funding include our local council, grants from Trusts and Foundations, commissions, performance fees and private donations.





## **Mimbre's Artistic Vision**

Mimbre create nuanced, breathtaking and highly-skilled acrobatic theatre. We use movement, high physicality and circus innovatively as a physical language to illuminate human connections and promote a positive image of women.

With an artistic voice that is physical and accessible, Mimbre build relationships with broad, non-traditional audiences and participants, creating unexpected moments in unusual spaces and reclaiming some beauty within the urban environment.

Our performances and participation programme reach beyond social, financial and cultural boundaries and find fresh ways to engage, encourage and inspire people, showing that the impossible can be possible on a local, national and international level.



## About The Exploded Circus

The Exploded Circus is an all-female contemporary circus production with a highly visual narrative that uses the scene of a devastated circus and its performers as an allegory to explore what we perceive as society and how we might rebuild it were our world to collapse.

The show invites audiences into a moment where an explosion has been frozen in time, the remnants of a circus caught mid-air - with everything from the circus ring, sequins, and fairground horses suspended above the ground.

Featuring acrobatics, aerial work, juggling and other specialist skills the performance weaves a physical story told without words; where six circus performers have to find their own order in the chaos and create a new normal, exploring themes around change, belonging, community, and what being human means to us. If we had a chance to redo what we think of as civilisation what would we change, what would we keep, could we make something better?

# Inspiration and Moodboard





## **Creative Team**

The concept for The Exploded Circus was born in 2014 from two creative explorations between director Lina Johansson, designer Loren Elstein and composer Quinta during residencies at La Brèche creation centre in France and 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space in Newbury.

The three female artists have found a strong link in their artistic approach and outlook and see the collaboration as an essential place where they can grow and support each other to create something extraordinary.

### **Lina Johansson, Director**

Mimbre's Joint Artistic Director, who as well as directing for Mimbre has been expanding the theatrical possibilities of circus, movement and high physicality in collaborations with theatre and dance directors such as Michael Boyd, Nigel Jamiesson, Rob Tannion and Struan Leslie. In 2016 alone Lina Johansson directed Wondrous Strange, a physical re-imagination of Shakespeare's plays, commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company; worked as Associate Director for National Theatre of Wales and Wales Millennium Centre on the City of the Unexpected in Cardiff as well as choreographing for Eugene Onegin at Garsington Opera.

### **Loren Elstein, Production Designer**

Loren Elstein is an international designer for theatre, opera and film. She trained at NIDA in Sydney where her designs for Loot secured her the Australian Production Design Guild Award for Best Design and the William Fletcher Foundation Grant for Excellence in Design 2013. Developing a strong profile as designer in her own right, Loren Elstein's theatre and film work most recently includes: Primetime (Royal Court Theatre, Director Roy Alexander Weise); Stone

Face (Finborough Theatre, Director Roy Alexander Weise); The End of Longing (Co-Costume Design and Associate Set Design, Playhouse Theatre, Director Lindsay Posner); and Wondrous Strange (RSC, Director Lina Johansson).

Shaping Loren's career has also been her work as Assistant Designer with award-winning Anna Fleischel, including her contribution as Assistant Designer for Hangmen (Royal Court and Wyndhams Theatre), written by Martin McDonagh, which won the Olivier Award for Best Set Design 2016, the Evening Standard Award 2016 and the Critics Circle Theatre Award 2016.

### **Quinta, Composer**

Quinta is a London-based experimental music-maker and multi-instrumentalist, with particular interests in improvisation, non-conventional scoring, electronic interfacing and new instruments. She explores extended techniques (mainly for strings) and graphic notation. As well as her solo projects, she has collaborated with a range of critically-acclaimed and innovative artists, including Bat for Lashes, Patrick Wolf, Scanner, Lou Rhodes, Penguin Café, Ockham's Razor, Mimbres, and flagship contemporary dance company, Rambert, where she was 2015/16 composer-in-residence. She is one quarter of all-female experimental arts collective, Collectress, who released their first album, Mondegreen in 2014.

### **Performers**

The performers are drawn from some of London's finest female physical performers, chosen because of their commitment to devising work and developing performances that cross the boundaries between different art-forms, celebrating risk, innovation and direct and accessible connections to audiences. The performers are all from different parts of the world but have made London their home.

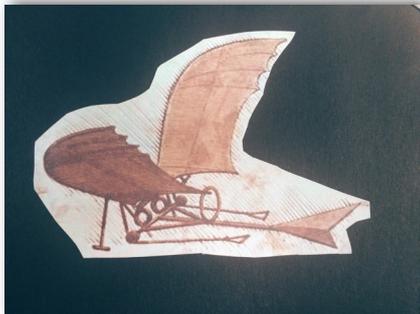
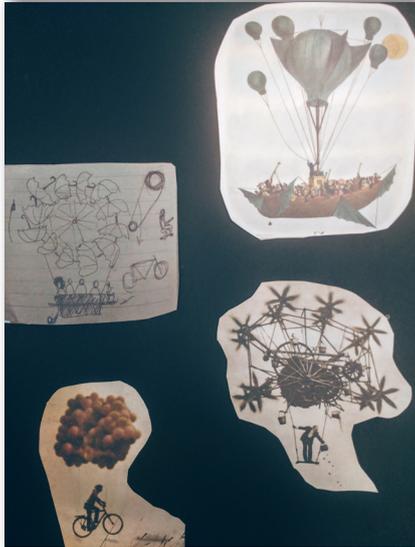
## Director's Statement

*" The Exploded Circus pulls together several different strands of how I've been exploring circus as a director and choreographer: mixing spectacle and visual impact with heart and personal stories.*

*The set design provides a choreographic playground for me to blend the work in the air and on the ground and use the full palette of circus skills. With a feeling that the world around us is on the cusp of big changes, I want to create a performance reflecting on this in a microcosmos.*

*I'm excited to develop this show with an exceptional cast of female performers, to allow space both for individual flourish as well as Mimbres signature strong ensemble work. The risk and trust inherent in circus allows me to explore a story that the audience feel in their bodies as they follow it with their minds – the falls and the balances of the acrobats being both real and symbolic. "*

# Elements from the Storyboard



## Timeline and General Information

The Exploded Circus will premiere in spring 2018, to coincide with the 250th anniversary of circus. It will go on the road thereafter with 10 people (six performers, and four crew). The Exploded Circus is being designed with a self-contained rig and can be performed in theatres, a circus tent, or in more unconventional venues such as old town halls, markets or empty buildings.

Alongside the performance, we will offer a set of accessible workshops suitable for young people and adults, in schools, youth clubs, theatres or with community partners. We are also developing options to capitalise on our unusual set outside of performance times by using it as a dramatic backdrop to host additional events such as pop-up bars, workshops, talks, music performances, or festival clubs.

**Summer 2017:** Final development stage for model box and storyboard

**November 2017:** Creation of self-standing rig and set-design, second R&D

**March - May 2018:** Production

**May 2018:** Premiere

**May 2018 - November 2018:** Tour

We plan further touring of The Exploded Circus, nationally and internationally in 2019.





## Workshops, Digital, and Audience Development:

A programme of accompanying activities is available to engage with audiences in a variety of ways both before, during and after the tour, including workshops, family taster sessions for circus skills, treasure hunts, model box making and other creative challenges.

An exciting programme of digital content will be produced and disseminated, allowing the audience to follow and contribute to the creation through online artistic provocations and regular glimpses from the rehearsal room.

Using Mimbres's 8 years of experience to deliver accessible workshops, we will use circus, physical theatre and visual arts to explore some of the big questions at the core of The Exploded Circus.

We can deliver two hour taster workshop, one day workshop or five day residency with a small performance at the end by the participants. The workshops can run at schools, youth clubs, theatres or with community partners. We are happy to share our experience in how to best set up workshops and how to engage 'hard to reach' participants.

We can also use the Circus250 celebration to weave the history of circus throughout the workshops. We are also very open to working with local artists through their artform.

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