



Mimbre presents



The Exploded Circus

A new production for 2018

Creation dossier 08/2017

INDEX

The Exploded Circus At A Glance	p 3
About Mimbres	p 4
About The Exploded Circus	p 5
Director's Statement	p 6
Inspiration and Moodboard	p 7
Creative Team	p 8
The Story So Far	p 10
General and Logistic Information	p 11
Additional Activities	p 12
Marketing	p 13
Producing Details	p 14
Contact Information	p 15

The Exploded Circus At A Glance

The Exploded Circus is an all-female circus production celebrating the prowess and poetic possibilities of hyper-physical performance to connect with issues around change, belonging and hope.

Creative Team

Concept: Mimbre

Director: Lina Johansson

Set and Costume Design: Loren Elstein

Sound Design: Quinta

Rig design and build: Barnz Munn

Lighting Designer: TBC

Performers: Final cast list confirmed October 2017

Partners

Supported by Arts Council England Strategic Touring grant

Strategic Touring Partners for 2018:

- Imagine Luton
- Imagine Watford
- Worthing Theatres
- Merchant City Festival, Glasgow
- Brewhouse Arts Centre, Burton
- Lancaster Arts

Residency and production support by 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space

Calendar

- Concept Development: Residency at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space, October 2015
- Set Development: 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space, January 2018
- Creation Rehearsals: London, 9th April - 11th May 2018
- Production Week: Pavilion Theatre, Worthing, 13th - 17th May 2018
- Premiere: Pavilion Theatre, Worthing, 18th - 20th May 2018

About Mimbre



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 builds relationships with broad, non-traditional audiences and participants, creating unexpected moments in unusual spaces and reclaiming some beauty within the urban environment.

Formed in 1999 and female-led, the creative and performance pedigree of Mimbre's Artistic Directors Lina Johansson and Silvia Fratelli have earned the company a notable reputation for innovation and creativity. The company has received NPO/Core funding from Arts Council England since 2006 in recognition of the company's innovative approach and contribution to excellence within the performing arts. Mimbre's previous performances *Sprung*, *Trip-tic*, *The Bridge*, *Until Now*, *Bench* and *If I could I would* have toured widely and been performed across four continents.

In 2015 Mimbre was commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company to create *Wondrous Strange* for the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare Celebrations and Mimbre's Artistic Directors have worked with organisations such as the Roundhouse, National Centre for Circus Arts, National Theatre Wales, the Royal Opera House and English National Opera on exciting external artistic collaborations.

Every year Mimbre reaches 20,000 - 30,000 people through shows, youth programmes and professional development training.

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. *The Exploded Circus* explores 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?

**Director's
Statement**

'Conflicts may be the sources of defeat, lost life and a limitation of our potentiality but they may also lead to greater depth of living and the birth of more far-reaching unities, which flourish in the tensions that engender them'

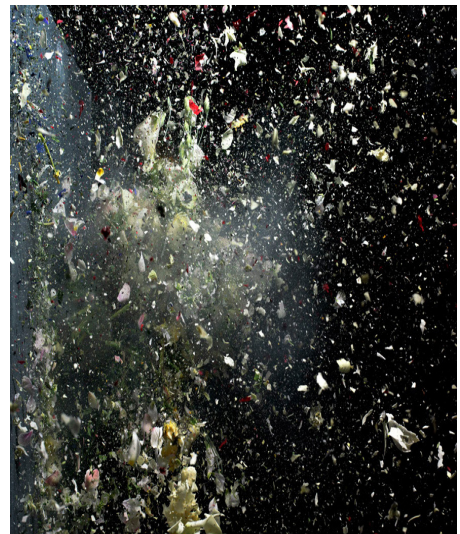
Karl Jaspers

“ 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 microcosm. Be it Brexit, global warming or refugee crisis, there is a strong feeling of change and upheaval around us and I want to use the performance to reflect as well as imagine - what could be, how would we grow something new and different. Instead of just being worried about the uncertainty around us, leave the audience as much filled with wonder, reflections and a feeling of hope.

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.

I'm excited to develop the show with an exceptional cast of female performers, to allow space both for individual flourish as well as Membre's signature strong ensemble work. The risk and trust inherent in circus - the falls and the balances of the acrobats - allows me to explore a physical narrative that the audience feel in their bodies as much as they follow it with their minds. "

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, Mimbre, 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 the UK's finest female physical performers, chosen because of their commitment to devising work and developing performances that cross the boundaries between different artforms, celebrating risk, innovation and direct and accessible connections to audiences. We are waiting to confirm details with our last two cast members and will announce the full cast in October 2017!

The Story So Far



The visual idea and story for *The Exploded Circus* have been developed through a close working relationship between director Lina Johansson and designer Loren Elstein, who have collaborated together on productions for the Royal Shakespeare Company, National Centre for Circus Arts and the Roundhouse, as well as Mimbre productions *Wondrous Strange* and *A Room Of Her Own*.

The first seed for the *The Exploded Circus* was planted at the end of a period of artistic research into our perception of time and the idea of freezing a moment which otherwise passes too fast to be noticed. Inspired by artworks such as Cornelia Parker's installation *Exploded Shed*, David Spriggs' *Half Explosion* and Ori Gersht's *Time after time* photographs, we started fantasising about exploding people's romantic idea of circus and catching that moment mid-air. Apart from the visual beauty of it, the natural questions that followed were of course why the explosion had taken place, what it meant, how the circus performers would take the change and what would happen next.

In a residency at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space in Newbury autumn 2015, the visual ideas and questions were explored by six circus performers and a storyboard grew out of the findings, the narrative often taking different turns from what we first had expected, the visual element and physical language finding its own path.

From this research a storyboard for *The Exploded Circus* has been developed - allowing the physical skills to weave a narrative told without text. A soundtrack will be composed by Quinta from within the rehearsal room, incorporating sound technologies such as Makey Makeys to create part of the sound design from within the movement of the set itself.

General and Logistic Information

The Rig

We will tour *The Exploded Circus* with a purpose-made, self-standing rig integrated into the design. This means the performance can tour to venues who don't normally have the capability for circus rigging, as well as non-conventional performance spaces (town halls, old markets, warehouse spaces).

The performance can also be presented in a circus tent. We have negotiated a deal with Chipperfield Circus who are providing a tent for Imagine Luton and Imagine Watford, including putting it up and managing the tent for the duration of the hire. Please contact us for further information about this option.

Draft Technical Specifications

- Performance space needed is 9 x 8 metre, with 6 metres height clearance. However, the set is shaped as a cakeslice and less wide at the back compared to the front, so can potentially fit onto a smaller stage depending on configuration.
- Our self-standing rig will hold all the design elements as well as the weight-bearing aerial circus equipment. The rig will be built out of scaffolding poles and a truss made out of a mix of aluminium and steel.
- The rig will be secured either through floor points (where possible) or with water ballast.
- Weight of rig estimated around 500kg max spread across 4 or 6 floor points
- Get-in 1 ½ days - to include light and sound tech.
- Get-out ½ a day.
- Programmer to provide crew to support get-in and get-out.

The Exploded Circus is not created yet so above specifications are indicative. If you have a space which seems close to the requirements but does not quite meet them, please contact us as there might be variations in the design which would make it possible.

On the Road

There is a total of 10 people on the road

- Six Circus Performers
- Company Stage Manager
- Technical Stage Manger
- Rigger
- Director or Producer

Travel will be calculated for 10 people from London, currently forecasted as 1 small truck, 1 van and 1 car or train fee for 5 people. Parking needs to be provided for all vehicles.

Additional Activities

We are interested in exploring options in how we can help the festivals to optimise use of the performance space or tent where appropriate and bring added value, profile and income to the festival. Outside of performances the set holds its own right as an installation, providing a beautiful backdrop and could for example be used as:

- A cafe
- A pop-up bar or festival club
- Space to host workshops, talks, discussions, spoken word, music or floorbased cabaret performances

Workshops

We are developing a set of workshops as part of the development of the production, suitable for young people or adults. Using Mimbres' eight years of experience to deliver accessible workshops, we will use circus, physical theatre and visual arts/design to explore some of the big questions which form the core for *The Exploded Circus*: How do we connect with others, how can we trust others? What does society mean? What inventions of modern 'civilisation' do we value the most? Which ones could we easily let go of? If the world as we knew it fell apart, what would we miss the most?

We could deliver this as a:

- 2 hour taster workshop or
- 1 day workshop or
- 5 days residency with a small performance at the end by the participants.

The workshops could be run at schools, youth clubs, theatres or with community partners. Mimbres have run a youth programme in Hackney since 2008 and are happy to share our experience in how to best set up a workshop and how to engage 'hard to reach' participants.

Costs for these workshops would be in addition to the performance costs (please request quotes if interested).



Marketing



As part of our Strategic Touring project to reach new audiences, we will develop extensive marketing materials, including:

- High-quality publicity shots and promotion videos, flyers and posters.
- Short series of videos from the creation process, including interviews with the performers and the creative team.
- A microsite where the audience can follow the creation and behind the scenes footage of *The Exploded Circus* rehearsals.
- Creative challenges where the audience can engage proactively with the artistic process.
- Visual marketing ideas for venues and festivals with mini-installations of the exploded set in foyer or outside, dressing-up boxes, social media filters and so on.

In 2018 *The Exploded Circus* will be further profiled by the PR machine supporting the Circus250 celebrations - www.circus250.com

Producing Details

Timeline for Production

- Autumn 2017: Making of a model box alongside refinement of the storyboard and choreographic ideas for each scene. From this the final design of the self-standing rig will be developed and built by Barnz Munn from Pirates of The Carabinas.
- January 2018: rig and design built and adapted to optimally complement the performers' movements and skills, during a two-week residency at 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space.
- April - May 2018: Production rehearsals in London.
- 13th - 17th May 2018: Production week in Worthing.
- 18th May 2018 : Premiere at Worthing Theatres.

Partnerships and Funding

The Exploded Circus is funded through Arts Council England's support of Mimbres' project 'Expanding Circus Audiences' through Strategic Touring. It is developed in partnership and supported by Imagine Luton and Imagine Watford Festivals, Merchant City Festival, Worthing Theatres, Lancaster Arts and Burton Brewhouse - all of whom are presenting *The Exploded Circus* during summer or autumn 2018 (final dates available on request as soon as confirmed). Additional support is provided by 101 Outdoor Arts Creation Space.

95% of funding is in place with final funding streams pending confirmation. We welcome any additional co-producers interested in supporting the artistic development.

Bookings

We welcome bookings and 'pre-buying' for summer 2018, with available dates between 5th - 12th June, 3rd - 29th July, and potential dates from 7th of August onwards, please be in touch for exact dates and availability. We are then planning a second tour from mid October until November 2018 and for the show to be available for touring in 2019.

**Contact
Information**



Lissy Lovett, Producer
lissy@mimbre.co.uk
Tel: 0207 6131 068

Lina Johansson, Artistic Director
lina@mimbre.co.uk
Tel: 0207 6131 068

www.mimbre.co.uk
facebook: mimbreacro
twitter: @mimbre_acro
insta: @mimbreatrobats



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**