



Mimbre presents



The Exploded Circus

A new production for 2018

Creative dossier
02/2018

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Eric Richmond,
Design by
longarm.co.uk
P2 - *The Exploded Circus* model box,
Photo and design
Loren Elstein

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The Exploded Circus At A Glance

Join an all-female cast at the moment where an exploded circus has been frozen in time. Featuring breath-taking acrobatics, aerial feats and masterful juggling, *The Exploded Circus* is a story of change, hope and belonging.

Creative Team

Director | Lina Johansson

Production Designer | Loren Elstein

Composer | Quinta

Lighting Designer | Amy Mae

Aerial Choreography Consultant | Mélissa Colello

Cast

Trick bike, slack rope | Alice Allart

Aerial hoop, physical theatre | Farrell Cox

Contortion, dance trapeze | Ruby Gaskell

Acrobatics, slack rope, Chinese hoops | Arielle Lauzon

Silks, trapeze, rope | Rebecca Rennison

Juggling, object manipulation | Lynn Scott

Partners & support

The Exploded Circus is supported by an Arts Council England Strategic Touring grant, The Foyle Foundation, PRS Foundation, 101 Outdoor Art Creation Space and Circus250.

Strategic Touring Partners for 2018:

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

Calendar

R&D | October 2015, 101 Outdoor Art Creation Space, Newbury

Set Development | 19 February - 2 March 2018, 101 Outdoor Art Creation Space

Creation Rehearsals | 9 April - 11 May 2018, London

Production Week | 13 - 17 May 2018, Pavilion Theatre, Worthing

Premiere | 18 - 20 May 2018, Pavilion Theatre, Worthing

Tour Dates | For latest 2018 tour dates please see page 15

About Mimbre

Photo
Mimbre's *Until Now*
Image by
Eric Richmond,
Design by
longarm.co.uk



Mimbre is a female-led contemporary circus company. They use their unique blend of physicality and narrative to tell intimate stories about human connections.

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.

Formed in 1999 and female-led, the creative and performance pedigree of Mimbre's Artistic Directors Lina Johansson and Silvia Fratelli has earned the company a notable reputation for innovation and creativity. Mimbre 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* to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's legacy. The show has toured in the UK and Europe.

Mimbre's Artistic Directors regularly work with organisations such as the **Roundhouse**, **National Centre for Circus Arts**, **National Theatre Wales**, **Royal Opera House** and **English National Opera**, among many others, on exciting collaborations.

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

About The Exploded Circus

Image
*The Exploded
Circus* Concept
Illustration, by
Loren Elstein



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

Featuring a breath-taking mix of acrobatics, surprising aerial feats, and masterful juggling, *The Exploded Circus* weaves a story told without words, where six female performers have to come together to seek order in the chaos and create a new normal. With striking imagery and subtle humour, the show explores themes around change, hope and belonging.

'simple ...delicate charm' - The Times on Membre's show *Until Now*

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 the refugee crisis, there is a strong feeling of change and upheaval around us. I want to use the show to reflect, as well as imagine what could come from this change and how we can use it to grow. I want audiences to feel the palpable uncertainty around us, but also nurture 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 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 Mimbres signature strong ensemble work. The risk and trust inherent in circus - the falls and the balances of the performers - allows me to explore a physical narrative that the audience can feel in their bodies as well as follow with their minds. "

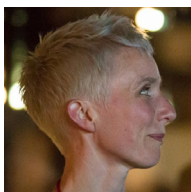
Inspiration and Moodboard

Photos
Various artists



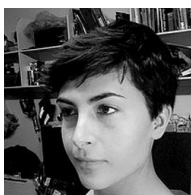
Creative Team

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 Pôle National des Arts du Cirque 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

Lina Johansson founded Mimbire together with Silvia Fratelli and Emma Norin in 1999 with a vision of creating strong acrobatic choreographies with women. As Joint Artistic Director of Mimbire, Lina leads on the company's vision and artistic programme, including Mimbire's programme for local young people. Lina also works on collaborations and external projects with other theatre companies, venues and creatives, as a director, specialist choreographer and movement director. Lina's directing credits for Mimbire include *If I could I would*, *Bench*, *Falling Up* and RSC commissioned *Wondrous Strange*. She directed *Mergence* and *Polymer* for the **National Centre for Circus Arts**. Her acrobatic choreographer credits include *Boris Gudinov* (**Royal Shakespeare Company**), *Orfeo* (**National Opera House & Roundhouse**), *Aida* (**Improbable and English National Opera**). She was an Associate Director for *City of the Unexpected* (**National Theatre Wales and Wales Millennium Centre**).



Loren Elstein | Production Designer

Loren Elstein is an international designer for theatre, opera and film. She trained at NIDA in Sydney where her design for *Loot* secured the Australian Production Design Guild Award for Best Design and the William Fletcher Foundation Grant for Excellence in Design 2013. Theatre, film and dance work includes: *Unruhe* (**Theater Trier Chor**), *Terror* (**Lyric Hammersmith**, Associate Design), *Hidden* (UK Tour), *The Ugly One* (**Park Theatre**); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (**The Old Vic**, Associate Set Design, Co-costume Design), *Rent* (20th Anniversary Tour, Costume Design), *Hangmen* (**Royal Court, Atlantic Theatre New York**, Associate Design), *Primetime* (**Royal Court Theatre & Tour**), *Stoneface* (**Finborough Theatre**), *The End of Longing* (**Playhouse Theatre**, Associate Design), *The Man Who Almost Killed Himself* (**Summerhall, Edinburgh Festival Fringe**), *Ten Women* (**Ovalhouse**). Opera designs include: *La Traviata* (**Longborough Festival Opera**), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (**Theater Trier**), *Pia de Tolomei* (**English Touring Opera**), *The Water Palace* (**Tête à Tête Festival**).



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**, **Mimbire** 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.



Amy Mae | Lighting Designer

Amy Mae is a Lighting Designer based in London. Amy made her West End debut with Tooting Arts Club in association with Cameron Mackintosh as the lighting designer for their critically acclaimed **Sweeney Todd** on Shaftesbury Avenue. She won the 2015 **Knight of Illumination Award** in the Musical category for this show. **Sweeney Todd** transferred to New York in 2017 where Amy received nominations for the Lucil Lortel Award and a Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Lighting Design. She is currently nominated for an **Offie Award** for her work on *Babettes Feast* at **The Print Room** and has been shortlisted for the Arts Foundation Award 2018. She graduated from the University of Winchester with a BA (Hons) in Stage Management and Performing Arts. This gave her a broad insight into the world of performance, both onstage and behind the scenes. After graduating, Amy studied at RADA. She gained a Merit after studying a Postgraduate Diploma in Stage Electrics and Lighting Design.



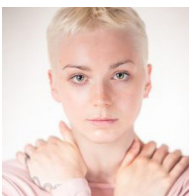
Alice Allart | Performer

Alice Allart is a circus artist who specialises in trick cycling, slack rope and object manipulation. She is strongly influenced by visual art, cinema and literature, which gives her work a bold visual identity. French born, she pursued her training at London's National Centre for Circus Arts (NCCA) where she graduated in 2010. Since then she has toured with various international companies (**Stumble Dance Circus, Keziah Serreau, Ilmatila, Osborne&What**) as well as creating work under her own name with her company **Bikes and Rabbits**.



Farrell Cox | Performer

Farrell Cox is a Physical Theatre actress and aerialist. She trained at East 15 Acting School, Dell Arte International School in California and with renowned clown Philippe Gaulier. Farrell has had the pleasure of working with Quinny Sacks, Helen Parlor, Lea Anderson and Danny Boyle. Credits include: *The Tree* (**Highly Sprung**), *Tarzanna* (**The Gramophones**), *Alice's Adventures Underground* (**Les Enfants Terribles**), *Penguin! Elephant!* (**Goblin theatre**), *The Lost Carnival* (**LAS Theatre**), **Charles Chipperfield Circus**, London 2012 Olympic ceremonies, **You Me Bum Bum Train**.



Ruby Gaskell | Performer

Ruby is a diverse circus artist, aerialist and performance maker, graduating in 2017 from the National Centre for Circus Arts, where she specialised in Dance Trapeze. She is also skilled in contortion, movement and character play. She has experience in performing solo aerial work, duo aerial and ground based acrobatic ensemble. Her creative flare in her work results in the creation of unique, visually exciting acts. She has a highly creative eye, and holds a first class degree in Theatre Design.

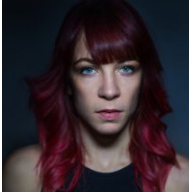


Arielle Lauzon | Performer

Arielle has known since the age of six that she wanted to be a circus performer. This French-Canadian native from Gatineau competed for 11 years as a gymnast across Quebec and the United States. In 2012, she attended the professional programme at the Circus School of Quebec where she specialised in hoop diving

and slack rope. She received her diploma in 2016 and has since performed in Canada with the **Festival Montreal Complètement Cirque**, **Cirque Eloize** and taken part in many other shows in France and the United States. Arielle is a powerful acrobat and dynamic artist; she has no trouble lighting up the stage.

Rebecca Rennison | Performer



Rebecca comes from a professional dance background having studied at LIPA. She now works as an aerial artist, always craving a dance quality and movement fluidity in the air. She loves to be a part of the ever-developing circus community from traditional to contemporary work.

Credits include: *SOHO* (**Stufish Productions**, The Peacock Theatre), *Dracula* (**Upswing & The New Vic Theatre**), The London Cabaret Club, *Home* (**Hikapee**), Circus Krone Germany, P&O Azura World Cruise, Circus Maximus Festival and Glastonbury Festival.

Lynn Scott | Performer



Lynn Scott has been working as a juggler and circus performer since the completion of her training at the National Centre for Circus Arts in 2013. She has worked internationally as a solo performer and with the likes of **Gandini Juggling**, **Upswing** and now **Mimbre**. Travelling as far afield as Taiwan and Peru and, closer to home, completing tours around the UK and Europe.

The story so far

Photos
Time after time by
Ori Gersht
Exploded Shed by
Cornelia Parker

The visual idea and story for *The Exploded Circus* has been developed through a close working relationship between director Lina Johansson and designer Loren Elstein, who have collaborated on productions for the **Royal Shakespeare Company, National Centre for Circus Arts, the Roundhouse**, as well as Mimbres 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 perceptions of time and the idea of freezing a moment which 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 would the circus performers 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. A storyboard grew out of the findings, the narrative often taking different turns from what we first had expected, the visual elements and physical language finding their own path.

From this research a storyboard for *The Exploded Circus* has been developed - allowing the physical skills to weave a narrative told without words. 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 possibilities 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 Chippendale Circus who are providing a tent for **Imagine Luton** and **Merchant City Festival**, including putting up and managing the tent for the duration of the hire. Please contact us for further information about this option.

Draft Technical Specifications

- Minimum performance space needed is 9x9 metre, with 7 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 is designed so no outrigging or ballast is necessary.
- 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 specification are indicative. If you have a space which seems close to the requirement 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 of the road

- Six Circus Performers
- Technical Operator
- 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 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 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 offering a set of workshop programme alongside the production, suitable for young people or adults. Using Mimbres eight years of experience in delivering accessible workshops, we will use circus, physical theatre and visual arts/design to explore some of the big questions which form the core of *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 can 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 workshops 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 foyers or outside, dressing-up boxes, social media filters and so on.

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

Tour Details

Pavilion Theatre, Worthing

Fri 18 – Sun 20 May, Fri & Sat 8pm, Sat & Sun matinee 2:30pm
<https://worthingtheatres.co.uk/whats-on/circus/>
01903 206 206

Curve Theatre, Leicester

In discussion dates to be announced
<http://www.curveonline.co.uk/>
0116 242 3595

The Lowry, Salford Quays (Pencil)

Sat 16 - Sun 17 June
<https://www.thelowry.com/events/>
0843 208 6000

Imagine Luton, Luton

Sat 23 - Sun 24 June
<http://www.imagineluton.co.uk/>
Watford Palace box office 01923 225671

Carmarthenshire Theatres, Carmarthenshire

Fri 27 - Sat 28 July
<http://www.theatrusirgar.co.uk/index.php/en/whats-on>
0845 2263510

Merchant City Festival, Glasgow

Fri 10 - Sun 12 August
<https://www.merchantcityfestival.com/>
0141 287 8985

Winchester Theatre Royal, (Pencil)

Fri 07 - Sat 08 September

Gravity Fields Festival, Grantham (Pencil)

Wed 26 - Sat 29 September
<https://www.gravityfields.co.uk/>
01476 40 61 58

Change Festival / Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry (Pencil)

Fri 02 - Sat 03 November
<https://www.changefestival.org>

Lancaster Arts, Lancaster

November TBC
<https://www.lancasterarts.org/>
01524 594151

The Brewhouse, Burton upon Trent

November TBC
<http://www.brewhouse.co.uk/>
01283 50810

Contact Information



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