



## Mobius Dance Company flip life on its head

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Interview By Kate Sole » This is Local: London

When most dancers cite their idols you expect names such as Darcey Bussell, Mark Morris or Matthew Bourne to roll off the tongue. Not so for Kate Mason, artistic director and founder of Mobius Dance Theatre. *"Mobius has got a slightly absurd look on normal things and everyday life," the Sheffield-born Laban Dance Centre graduate tells me. "I have always been inspired by acts like Vic (Reeves) and Bob (Mortimer), and shows such as Green Wing and Smack the Pony, that kind of unhinged humour, while physically we are always experimenting with the different avenues you can use your body and almost taking that to the next step.* She adds: *"My imagination is constantly on the run, from doing little plays in front of my parents to the various talent assemblies I have been involved in and now Mobius, and that is a constant thread of my work."* This combination of a wild imagination and a quirky sense of humour is ever present in Mobius' brand new work, *Such is Life*, which premieres at the Millfield Arts Centre next week. Speaking about the show, Kate, who is now based in Warwickshire, tells me: *"It's about life, the challenges that get thrown at us, different situations between lovers, family, friends, and laughing at ourselves and the normal things we all go through. We are taking everyday life and flipping it on its head."*

The piece features five talented performers from high profile companies, including Frantic Assembly, De la Guarda and Punch Drunk, who will present three works – *The Root of It*, *Pressure Gauge* and *Performing Monkey*. The pieces explore moving on from the past, tensions in a relationship and the pressure to succeed, all drawn together through a clear narrative. *"You are not going to see something abstract, it's very accessible and theatrical," says Kate, who for the first time since Mobius was founded in 2002 will not appear in the show. "It's more like a play in three acts, as opposed to three separate performances. The idea is as soon as the audience sit in the theatre we want to keep them on a journey, we want them to really get to know the characters, almost like sitcom characters, and just engage with them and follow the story."*

Central to *Such is Life*, is the set, created by designer Helen Scarlett O'Neil, which comprises of a wall of four 8ft high by 4ft wide sections featuring rungs, doors and giant building blocks, like *"a playground for adults"*. *"I have always loved heightening everyday situations and emotions,"* says Kate, who is also a successful performer in her own right. *"Rather than just telling someone "I'm angry", I want to know how you show that physically, and this set gives us a lot of potential to explore that."*

Keen to tell an "honest" story, Kate tells me the three sequences have all come from her own experiences, revealing she would probably relate most to the slightly neurotic and chaotic characters. *"We want to make people laugh and connect with the characters. You might fall in love with one and see yourself in another. "The caretaker at our rehearsals sat and watched us and he said: 'Oh, that's just like me and my wife,' it was lovely to hear, really brilliant that he made that connection. I think people will be blown away."*