

Diverse City presents



Mid Life

Mid Life pauses three fierce women at a moment in time - the Menopause. Their bodies are changing and they have something to say. *Mid Life* unpacks real-life stories of loss, joy and transformation.

Hold tight. There's a change coming.

Three Fierce Women

Claire was the south east of England disco dancing champion in 1982. Surely, she can't be menopausal.

Jacqui's busy looking after the grandkids and keeping an eye on her ex-partner's mum but there's some stuff she needs to get off her chest.

Karen lives alone by the sea. She's a survivor.

They are the midlife women - the unpaid carers, the up-all-nighters, the emotional load bearers, the shoulders to cry on, the school-runners and the piece-picker-upers.

Join them as they unpack their lives hoping to find a way through the loss, mess, despair, frustration, freedom, joy and possibility of the middle years.

***'There is no greater power in the world
than the zest of a postmenopausal woman.'***

Margaret Mead



Photography ©Alexa Ledecy

The Story

Mid Life pauses three women in a moment in time. Three women whose bodies are changing and who feel they have something to say. Three women, at the midpoint, deciding how to think and feel about what came before, what to take with them as they move forward and what to leave behind. They voice their fears – of children leaving, of relationships ending, of parents dying, of their own mortality – and try to accommodate their losses. They get down into the muck and talk about sex, desire, rage, and flooding.

Mid Life explores the unspoken realities of the menopause and asks why they are unspoken- who gains from the silence? Reclaiming female midlife is a political act and we invite our audience, men and women, old young and of course in the middle, to join us on the journey – sharing their experiences on the way. *Mid Life* will transform.

The Show

Drawing on honest stories from real women, we'll use audio recordings, projections and imagined scenes. The show contains testimonies from 50 women from Bristol interviewed over a 5 year period. We'll hear from women of colour, straight and queer women and the women who paved the way – our mothers and grandmothers. And there'll be music and dancing. Fierce dancing. But, like midlife, the show is often hilarious, sometimes absurd, hopefully liberating and occasionally sublime.

Creative Access

All shows will have BSL interpretation and audio description.

Images

Visit the [Diverse City website](#), or view [this Dropbox folder](#) for some examples of Mid Life creative imagery, plus behind the scenes at the sharing of Mid Life in November 2018.

Feedback

Audience feedback from sharing of Mid Life, November 2018:

"It was a very cathartic morning, just to hear your stories, and to feel like there was hope at the end of this crazy mid life tunnel."

"I think it's a really important and powerful piece you are making."

"Your reciting of the names of the women going back in your family and asking us to repeat the exercise was thought-provoking and I'm going to have a conversation with my Mum as a result of that."

Diverse City

Mid Life is a Diverse City production. Diverse City is an award-winning organisation committed to diversity and equality in the arts. We are an engine of artistic and social change.

Our mission is to make extraordinary shows that represent the world as it actually is. We want to break barriers and transform performance to change the lives of performers, audiences and communities. Our dream is a world where all identities are respected and valued.

The Mid Life Creative Team

Lucy Richardson, Director. Lucy is a director, dramaturg and educator. Her directorial credits include *The Strongbox* by Stephanie Jacob for VAULT 2018, *The Woman Who Cooked her Husband* by Debbie Isitt starring Alison Steadman, *The Quick* by Stephanie Jacob and *Heart Speak* by Zawe Ashton at The Arcola for Clean Break.

Sheila Chapman, Writer. Sheila won the Bridport Prize for her first novel, *The Unbelonging of Taksheel Chaturvedi* in 2016 and is writing a second, *In the Days that Came After*; a tale of two marriages, the credit crisis and grief and desire in mid-life. She is represented by A.M Heath.

Isabel de Salis, Consultant. Isabel is a medical anthropologist and psychotherapist. Her recent research based at Bristol University explores the diverse range of experiences and perceptions of midlife and menopause among women living in the Southwest.

Jacqui Beckford, Actor. In addition to being a performer and trained dancer, Jacqui is one of the most experienced and well-known British Sign Language Interpreters in the UK.

Claire Hodgson, Actor. Claire is a Theatre, Dance and Circus Director. She founded Diverse City in 2005 and is the co-founder of Extraordinary Bodies, the UK's leading professional integrated circus company. Claire was a Clore Fellow in 2012 and was awarded an MBE in 2016 for services to inclusion in the Performing Arts.

Karen Spicer, Actor. Karen has 30 Years acting experience. Her TV credits include Coronation Street, Emmerdale and Heartbeat. She starred in the C4 film, *Who Killed Simone Valentine* and as a stage actor has worked with theatre companies including Graeae, Trestle, Red Ladder, Theatre Centre and Roundabout.

We are looking for Co-Producing partners

Mid Life is ready for Co-Producing partners to support the development and premiere of this new show, available from early 2020.

We are looking for venues to tour

The show will be for small-scale studio spaces and non-theatre spaces with black out facilities from early 2020. Suitable for all audiences, recommended for 14+ years, targeted particularly to women, their families and friends, partners and colleagues.

For more information

Contact Claire Hodgson: Claire@diversecity.org.uk 07795 247 216