

For Immediate Release

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World's First Tourette's Superhero Makes Portland Début Touretteshero at the Echo Theater, May 4, 5, 11 & 12

"An absolute delight: moving, warm, generous and sparkling with the absurdly hilarious interjections of a woman who has both Tourette's syndrome and an extremely Pythonesque sense of humour." –

The Guardian

May 4, 5, 11, & 12, 2018 — Boom Arts, Portland's source for thought-provoking global theatre, welcomes UK arts and disability justice collective Touretteshero to Portland for a series of events in early May. Join us for programs celebrating the ways local and visiting artists with disabilities, in Touretteshero's words, "save the world from unnecessary dullness." All events are offered as "relaxed," meaning that audiences are welcome to move or make sound as they need to; and ASL interpretation and other accommodations will be provided. Programs include:

- ***Stand Up, Sit Down, Roll Over:*** four one-of-a-kind evenings of highly irreverent stand-up from one of Europe's most distinctive voices in arts and disability justice, accompanied by varying programs of short performances by local and visiting artists, plus conversation. Each evening will begin at 7:30pm. Tickets can be purchased at www.boomarts.org, by calling (866) 811-4111, or at the door. Tickets for all shows are \$12 students; \$20 general admission; and \$30 premium reserved. **Location: Echo Theater, 1515 SE 37th Ave, in Portland, Oregon.**

Featured Artists in Conversation include:

- **Friday, May 4:** Jan Derbyshire, Vancouver-based artist and comedian and facilitator/consultant for Canada's Deaf, Disability, and Mad Arts sector
- **Saturday, May 5*:** Portland's own Disability Art & Culture Project, Artistic Director Kathy Coleman, and the Inclusive Arts Vibe Dance Company
*Audio Description offered on this date. Other dates may be available upon request; please email info@boomarts.org)
- **Friday, May 11:** Portland-based multidisciplinary performance project Wobbly Dance and documentary filmmaker Cheryl Green
- **Saturday, May 12:** Portland-based performer Little Clown Big Shoes plus TBD

- ***Heroes of the Imagination***: an afternoon of free, fully accessible, multi-sensory drop-in activities for disabled and non-disabled children (and their grown up sidekicks) created and facilitated by Touretteshero and featuring superhero-themed activities. **Sunday, May 6, 2-5pm at Echo Theater**. Heroes of the Imagination is wheelchair accessible; a roaming American Sign Language interpreter and an audio describer will be on hand to make sure everyone can get involved; and a “chill space” will be set up for anyone who needs a break. Over the course of the afternoon, children will discover their powers, create their own superhero identity, and use their imaginations to change the world. Free, no registration required.
- **"Laughter, Access, Diversity, & Inclusion: Jess Thom, Changing the World One Tic at a Time:"** This public talk by Touretteshero's Jess Thom is presented in partnership with Disability Art & Culture Project as part of Dis/Representation: Evolving Disability Conversations series. In her thoughtful, funny, and groundbreaking presentation, Ms. Thom will speak about making visible the hidden barriers that exclude disabled people, and others, from public spaces. Whose responsibility it is to adapt to our culture? What are our preconceptions about disability? How can disability be reconceptualized as a springboard for creativity and spontaneity? How does diversity and inclusive thinking benefit all of us? **Tuesday, May 8, 6-7:30pm at Central Library**. Free, no registration required.

Boom Arts, Echo Theater, and Disability Art & Culture Project are committed to creating fully inclusive environments for all attendees. Please contact the Boom Arts team with any additional requests at info@boomarts.org.

- All events are "Relaxed": move or make sound as you need to
- Wheelchair-accessible venue
- ASL interpretation provided
- Audio Description available on May 5th
- Scent-free: we request that those attending refrain from using scented body care products
- All are welcome

JESS THOM Writer, artist and part time superhero, Jess Thom co-founded [Touretteshero](#) in 2010 as a creative response to her experience of living with Tourettes Syndrome. Touretteshero celebrates the humour and creativity of Tourettes and shares it with as wide an audience as possible. In 2014 Jess co-devised *Backstage In Biscuit Land*, which debuted at the Edinburgh Fringe that year, winning the Total Theatre Award for Best Emerging Company. She has written in the mainstream and disability press including *The Guardian*, *The Observer* and *Disability Now*. In 2012 she published *Welcome to Biscuit Land – A Year In the Life of Touretteshero*, with a foreword by Stephen Fry. Jess has spoken widely about her life with Tourettes, including a TEDx talk on at the Royal Albert Hall and the Annual Disability Lecture at St John's College Cambridge. Jess graduated from London's Royal College of Art in 2005.

Boom Arts' mission is to imagine new social and political possibilities through live performance.

Visit us: www.boomarts.org, facebook.com/boomartspdx, [@boomartspdx](https://twitter.com/boomartspdx)

This presentation is sponsored by Don & Mary Blair

Community partners: Echo Theater, Multnomah County Library, Disability Art & Culture Project

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