

## Circumference

All the info you could ever want to know! (A DVD is available on request for perusal.)

### What is “Circumference”?

*...it is then, as Ms. Gleby is announcing to the entire gym class that I've scored lower on the Presidential Physical Fitness Test than any student in the history of Cheese Creek Junior High, “lower even than the retards”, she barks, that I decide it. I can't take this anymore. My body and I are getting a DIVORCE. Oh, it can hang there below my chin if it really wants to, but I will no longer speak to it or look at it or even acknowledge its presence. We are finished! Forever! Okay okay, I guess we might need to share custody of my mouth, cuz of nutrition and all, but other than that, I will live the rest of my life as a HEAD. A floating head. That won't be so bad...right?*

Award-winning Minneapolis actor/writer Amy Salloway weaves together the horrors of junior high gym class and a last-ditch battle for body acceptance two decades later in this mostly-autobiographical solo comedy about size, sweat...and exercising your demons. Fearlessly honest, hilarious and surprisingly universal, “**Circumference**” goes where no “women’s-issue show” has gone before.

### Circumference development:

**Circumference** is the third solo production from Minneapolis-based actor, writer and storyteller Amy Salloway (**Does This Monologue Make Me Look Fat?, So Kiss Me Already, Herschel Gertz!**), and is largely based on the year Salloway spent trying to get insurance approval for gastric bypass surgery in a final, desperate effort to obtain a socially-acceptable body.

*“I've been fat my whole life”, Salloway states, “and the outside world’s reaction to my size has shaped everything else about me...the years of ‘cow’, ‘whale blubber’, ‘lardass’ and ‘ugly’ built me into someone with very low self-esteem; someone who believed what she was shown -- that nothing she could offer internally (intelligence, humor, creativity) could ever compensate for the body that housed those qualities.”* Salloway’s attitude changed when she discovered the Size Acceptance movement upon moving to Seattle in 1992, and she threw herself into “fat activism”. However by the time she relocated back to Minneapolis in 1999, she felt beaten down by the increased vilification of obesity, and the public judgments that just wouldn’t quit. Though she’d once campaigned against the health risks of gastric bypass surgery, Salloway finally sought out a surgeon in an effort to create a body that would earn her love instead of ridicule or invisibility.

**Circumference** begins as the theatricalized version of “Amy” begins jumping through the hoops her insurance requires for surgery approval, including food diaries and trips to the gym – which give her flashbacks (literally) to 7<sup>th</sup> grade Phy Ed class at Cheese Creek Junior High, and the roots of her antagonistic relationship with her body (portrayed as an actual character– punky, chain-smoking and foul-mouthed). As Amy is forced into constant, daily interactions with the uncooperative body she insists she long ago “got a divorce from”, her understanding of its worth and capacity slowly changes, until, in a final, ironic plot twist, her efforts to “get rid of her body forever” become the very force that unexpectedly unite her with it.

Though **Circumference** depicts a character battling self-loathing and giving a thumbs-up to the idea of radical surgery, the show *isn't* anti-fat and pro-bariatrics (if you haven't figured it out already, Salloway doesn't go through with gastric bypass in real life or in the play). Nor is it entirely a rallying cry for size activism. Says Salloway, “**Circumference** is intended to be a balanced, non-partisan look at how our culture shapes what we think about our bodies. It's not about being rock-solid in your self-love, or knowing exactly what you do and don't want for your body, healthwise, politically – it's about the long journey towards maybe getting to that place. If the character of 'Amy' didn't have a journey to travel – then there wouldn't be a play.”

**Circumference** does make a strong case for eradicating weight-based prejudice, and for following the “Health At Every Size” philosophy. The show has garnered praise from fat activists, bariatric surgery patients, and individuals with eating disorders, all of whom attest that the story onstage resonates with the issues in their own lives.

### **Performance History:**

**Circumference** appearances have included:

- \* The 2006 Atlantic Fringe, Halifax, NS as a work-in-progress (“Best of Venue”)
- \* The 2007 Minneapolis Fringe, Mpls, MN as a work-in-progress (“Must See”)
- \* The Actors Theatre of MN Fringe Invitational, St. Paul, MN
- \* The SPACE for Creativity, New Richmond, WI
- \* Old Arizona Studio, Minneapolis, MN
- \* The Her-icane Go Diva Festival, Saskatoon, SK
- \* Stage North, Washburn, WI
- \* The 2008 Ottawa Fringe Festival, ON
- \* The 2008 Wakefield Piggyback Fringe, Wakefield, QC
- \* The 2008 Winnipeg Fringe Festival, MB (“Best of Fest”)
- \* The 2008 Calgary Fringe Festival, ALB (“Top Five Shows to See”)
- \* The 2008 Victoria Fringe Festival, BC
- \* Six Figures Theatre's Artists of Tomorrow Festival, NYC
- \* The University of Rhode Island

- \* OpenStage Theatre, Harrisburg, PA
- \* The 2009 Berkshire Fringe, Great Barrington, MA
- \* The 2009 Edmonton Fringe, AB

### **Technical Notes:**

**Circumference** is one act, 70 minutes. It contains about 18 light cues and 26 sound cues; the lighting cues are optional, but the sound cues are *necessary* to the plot of the show.

#### **The technical and staging needs of the show are as follows:**

- A playing space at least 15 feet wide and 12 feet deep;
- Lighting that will illuminate the entire playing area (this can be regular ceiling lights, or actual theatre lighting instruments);
- A CD player with easy pushbutton operation (play, pause, forward, etc.) and full-room amplification system;
- A sturdy, squarish upholstered living-room style chair;
- A plain wooden or metal chair, or short backless bench;
- A technician to run both lights and sound, or TWO Technicians, one for each component. (The show does not come with its own technician.)
- Three hours to run a tech rehearsal.

**Circumference** would work BEST on a floor-level or only-slightly-raised stage where the audience is close to the performance area (that is, not huge, distant, elevated prosceniums); however, the show can adapt to other spaces as well.

**Circumference** includes adult language and sexual situations; it is appropriate for ages 16 and up.

### **Booking Information:**

**Circumference** can be booked for as many or as few performances as meet your needs; there's no minimum audience size, and no rules regarding ticket prices – you're welcome to use the show as a fundraiser, benefit, ticketed presentation, free event, whatever you'd like, as long as performer fees are covered.

#### **These include:**

- A performance fee in the range of \$800.00-\$1350.00 (see below),
- Economy-class round-trip airfare including baggage fee,
- Local transportation (taxis or rides) to and from the performance site,
- A small per diem for food or other necessities, and
- A place to stay (hotel, dorm or homestay in a pet-free and smoke-free environment).

However, as fees can vary based on location, tour schedule, agency involvement and number of performances (for example, airfare can be split if you're block booking with another presenter in the area), please contact Amy Salloway to discuss specifics, at [amysalloway@mindspring.com](mailto:amysalloway@mindspring.com), or **(612) 298-5772** .

Discussions after the performance are always free, and welcome! Workshops and residencies can be provided for an additional fee. Potential workshops include:

- Creative writing/ creative non-fiction
- Monologue and storytelling basics
- Turning personal story into solo performance
- The “Creating Original Performance” Workshop (a 3-6 hour progression of writing and improv exercises designed to lead participants in brainstorming and creating original, autobiographical material for the page or the stage...REALLY fun, and a fabulous, relaxed way to get to the heart of active, charismatic personal narrative)
- Improvisation – long or short form, basic to advanced
- Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed games and exercises.

When you’re ready to book a show, you’ll be provided with a Technical Rider and Contact, which detail in greater depth the show needs, publicity information and fee schedules.

### **Artist Bio:**

Minneapolis-based actor/writer/solo performer **Amy Salloway** has been called “hilariously self-loathing”, “gifted at creating comedy from pain and embarrassment” and “the voice for all of us who were picked last for kickball”. A lifelong fan of educational and issue-oriented theatre, she spent years as an actress at science museums and living history centers and in touring shows about deforestation, natural resources and child-abuse prevention before taking the plunge and creating original plays around the themes closest to her – body image, family dysfunction, discrimination and bullying, and the search for self-worth. Her three one-woman comedies (“**Does This Monologue Make Me Look Fat?**”, “**So Kiss Me Already, Herschel Gertz!**” and “**Circumference**”) all began their lives in the Minnesota Fringe Festival, and have gone on to tour to Fringes, solo festivals, colleges, organizations and theatres in the US, Canada and beyond. Cumulatively, their stops have included the UNO Festival in Victoria, BC; Cape May Stage’s Flying Solo Series; Open Stage Theatre in Harrisburg, PA; StageNorth Theatre in Washburn, WI; Six Figure Theatre’s Artists of Tomorrow series in NYC; the Her-icane Festival of Women’s Theatre in Saskatoon; the Baltimore Creative Alliance; the Jewish Museum of Maryland; the Columbus GLBT Theatre Festival (where Amy won “Best Script” and “Best Solo Show”); the International TeatroNetto Festival of Solo Performance in Jaffa, Israel; and the Fringes in Thunder Bay, Halifax (Best of Venue), Ottawa (“Must-See Show”), Orlando (“Must-See Show”), Cincinnati (Critic’s Pick), Calgary (“Top 5 Shows To See”), Victoria, Vancouver (Pick of the Fringe), the Berkshires, and Winnipeg (Best of Fest, 2006 and 2008).

Amy’s performed her work on MPR’s “In the Loop” and CBC’s “Definitely Not The Opera”, and as part of the Twin Cities monologue collective Rockstar Storytellers. She’s also been a theatre instructor and playwright for Interact

Center for the Arts – a theatre company for artists with disabilities -- where she served as lead writer for two company-developed musicals: “**Future Perfect**”, and “**The Broken Brain Summit**”. She was awarded a VSA Artist Recognition Grant in 2007.

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