



FERTILITY FEST 2018

Fertility Fest is the world's first arts festival dedicated to fertility, infertility, modern families and the science of making babies, led by experienced arts producers and former IVF patients Jessica Hepburn and Gabby Vautier, alongside a steering group of the UK's top fertility and arts experts including Fertility Network UK's very own Anya Sizer.

Fertility Fest will be back for its second edition at the Bush Theatre in London (8th – 13th May). Tickets are now on sale www.fertilityfest.com



In 2018, Fertility Fest will be back for its second edition at the Bush Theatre in London (8th–13th May). Tickets are now on sale. Over 150 world-class artists and fertility experts will share the stage in a unique programme of events, entertainment, discussion, debate, support and solidarity about making (and sometimes not making) babies today.

Jessica and Gabby present two very different outcomes of fertility treatment. Gabby is the mother of three-year-old twin girls after going through four rounds of IVF. And Jessica went through eleven rounds of unsuccessful treatment, which she wrote about in her first book, *The Pursuit of Motherhood*, and will be explored further in her new book, *21 Miles: Swimming in Search of the Meaning of Motherhood*, which will be published to coincide with Fertility Fest in May. Gabby and Jessica hope that by bringing the arts and science together, the festival will improve the understanding of the emotional journey of people who struggle to conceive, and ensure that the fertility profession is delivering better patient care for everyone whatever their fertility story, however it ends.

One of the strands of the festival this year will explore how it feels to have to turn to IVF to create your family. In the session entitled 'The Doctor In The Bedroom', Izzy Judd – wife of McFly's Harry Judd and author of the bestselling memoir *Dare to Dream* – will be sharing what's it like when you struggle to conceive and your fairytale life starts to fall apart. And photographer, Sophie Ingleby, will be talking about her moving project, *SEED*, which documents the journey of the fertility patient. They will be joined on stage by two of the UK's leading fertility consultants, Dr Jane Stewart (Newcastle Fertility Centre) and Dr James Nicopoullos (Lister Fertility Clinic), who will be disclosing how it feels to be that doctor in the bedroom!

The festival will also be exploring the often overlooked male experience of infertility, including a screening of *The Crossing*, written and directed by Jack King, which tells the fictional story of Terry whose relationship breaks down as a result of infertility; and also Thomas Webb's new documentary film, *The Easy Bit*, which explores the real-life

experiences of men who are struggling to conceive.

There will also be sessions dedicated to coping with unsuccessful treatment. In 'When ART doesn't work', poet Julia Copus will be performing *Ghost Lines*, her poetry cycle which was shortlisted for the Ted Hughes Award; and film-maker, Katie Barlow, will be sharing excerpts from her ongoing documentary film-project *Without Child*. In a session on pregnancy loss – 'The M Word: Miscarriage not Motherhood' – award-winning visual artists Foz Foster and Tabitha Moses will explore their experiences with Professor Lesley Regan, President of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and one of the world's leading voices on miscarriage. And on Wednesday 9th May, there will be a special event held in association with Fertility Network UK entitled 'There's More To Life Than Having Children', hosted and chaired by Fertility Network's Catherine Strawbridge.

There will also be a strand of discussion about parenting after IVF because for some the experience never goes away. In 'No Longer Extraordinary' Anna Furse, award-winning theatre director and her daughter, Nina, will be talking about their project *To The Moon And Back* - a daughter born from IVF and her mother in reflective dialogue. And Gareth Farr - playwright and dad to IVF twins - and Matthew Dunster - theatre director and dad to IVF triplets - will be showcasing the development of a new piece that explores what it means to be part of the IVF generation. They will be joined by Dr Sophie Zadeh from the University of Cambridge's Centre for Family Research, which is dedicated to investigating parent-child relationships, which have resulted from assisted conception. During the week of the festival there will also be a parent and baby club with a difference (only IVF babies allowed!), which will feature Saskia Boujo, creative force behind the 'IVF and Proud' merchandise brand; and Helen Davies, author

of *More Love To Give*, her story of secondary infertility. The festival will also explore some of the bigger societal topics around fertility and infertility including 'What Comes First: The Career or the Egg?', 'Race, Religion and Reproduction' and 'The Queer Family.'

Parallel to the festival, Jessica and Gabby are also launching a ground-breaking fertility arts education project for young people in schools involving a selection of Fertility Fest artists. The project, entitled *Modern Families*, is part of the British Fertility Society's Fertility Education Initiative and is being delivered in collaboration with University College London's Institute for Women's Health and Cardiff University's School of Psychology. It is driven by Gabby and Jessica's passion to ensure that young people receive a more rounded and robust understanding of human fertility, so they have the best chance of creating the families they want - with or without children, and with

or without reproductive science. The project hopes to influence the government's current consultation into the personal, social and health education curriculum following the compulsory introduction of relationship and sex education in schools.

It is Gabby and Jessica's hope, that through their work they will bring together people, whatever their fertility story. Fertility Fest is for patients thinking about, in the middle of, or beyond fertility treatment. It's for fertility professionals. And it's for people who are just plain curious about the subject. It's for adults who are living with or without children. And it's for young people who hold the future of the human race in their hands. They invite you to come along this May.



Clockwise from left: Fertility Fest 'The Exhibition' - Gina Glover; 'Embryo Cell Division Blossom'; performance of 'Reproduction'; Gabs and Jess Fertility Fest organisers