

# Katie Mitchel

## Short Practitioner Guide

### *Short Biography*

Having started her career at the Kings Head Theatre in London, she has since gone to work for companies such as Paines Plough, Royal Shakespeare Company and The Royal National Theatre. Her work is as varied as her employers, having directed Uncle Vanya, The Cat in the Hat and Sarah Kane's Cleansed. Her work has been described as bring able to polarise an audience like no other.

### *Short Style Overview*

Her work is fuelled by an intensity of emotion, realism of acting and creating a distinctive world of the play. Her approach is heavily influenced by Stanislavski's System. But her approach could be called extreme naturalism. Rehearsals are long and intensive psychological investigations into characters. Naturalism is just one aspect of Mitchell's theatre: feminism, deconstruction of the text and an increasingly immersive use of multimedia have become equally important over recent years. She pushes boundaries with theatre and experimenting with techniques. She has incorporated video into live theatre, experimented with opera and even created a new language.

### *Influences*

- Pina Bausch (German Choreographer who blended movement, sound and stage set with performers in a style now known as Tanztheatre)
- Siobhan Davies (Influential choreographer from London and founder of Siobhan Davies Dance)
- Stanislavski (Russian Theatre Practitioner synonymous with Naturalism)

### *Work in Focus*

Her exciting, engaging and exhilarating style of working has led her to directing and producing a wide-ranging number of different plays and productions. Her work has included directing work by Sarah Kane, Simon Stephens, Samuel Becket and Anton Chekhov.

She was commissioned by the National Theatre (UK) to create five short films based on the character of Ophelia from Hamlet. Each film is about her life off stage but each film is also approached from a different practitioner: Stanislavski, Brook, Brecht, Artaud and Grotowski. The five videos provide a fascinating and clear way of comparing and contrasting the approaches these different practitioners would take on the same stimulus.

I have collated the Five Truths here on YouTube for you to watch: <https://youtu.be/2OD7phopWWk>

I have collated a YouTube playlist of interviews with Katie Mitchel for you to watch:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCt\\_Olq6e24SjhHYDyNr-VYhZxZdsxbbk](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLCt_Olq6e24SjhHYDyNr-VYhZxZdsxbbk)

If you've got an hour, here is an interview with Katie Mitchel in which she talks a lot about her theatre work and how she creates her work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6KYWNh62Xo>

### *Useful Links*

Excellent Biography on her work: <http://www.theheroinecollective.com/katie-mitchell/>

Article about her recent work in Europe: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jan/14/british-theatre-queen-exile-katie-mitchell>

Thorough introduction to Katie Mitchell: <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/an-introduction-to-katie-mitchells-theatre>

Katie Mitchells work at The National Theatre: <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/katie-mitchells-work-nt>

BBC Bitesize Practitioner Focus: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zvph2sg/revision/5>

The Method behind the madness: Katie Mitchell, Stanislavski, and the classics:  
<https://academic.oup.com/crj/article/7/3/400/2366229>