

Where are you at with the project?

Recovery Town is a raucous comedic scrapbook of addiction and recovery as told by the adult child of an addict. My debut solo show Recovery Town was set to preview at Vault Festival 2020 but was cancelled due to coronavirus. The show is a semi-autobiographical story about how a girl called Max comes to terms with her mum's alcoholism and recovery. The location is an absurd small town in the depths of the English countryside - a place groaning with addicts attending or avoiding one of the three recovery centres it's home to. Writing from the perspective of a kid of an addict (KoA) and as a KoA, has been a journey for me. I thought I was writing a show about my mum's recovery. By the time I finished, I had written a comedy about my own recovery from trauma - something most of us can relate to. I'm in the middle of a re-write adapting Recovery Town for a podcast audience. The monologue I have presented is a cut back version of a 10 minute story: the journey from London to Recovery Town when I found out my mum had been given three weeks to live.

Why do you believe in it?

This show has been a labour of love and to be truthful, some fear and loathing. So much of storytelling around addiction gets it wrong. Often alcoholics are fringe characters, or charming drunks, or the tortured antagonist plural in TV shows. We see them as bad guys or misunderstood good guys. Rarely do we see the Jekyll and Hyde reality of addiction. This piece democratises addiction. Proof that any of us can end up on a park bench hugging a litre of strongbow if life leads us in that direction. Most at risk are kids of addicts themselves. So, the show explores Max's own predisposition to addiction. And it's funny. The denial. The over-responsibility. The recklessness. KoAs are walking contradictions: we make excellent subjects for comedy. The situation breeds absurdity. Mostly, I believe in this show because it's the piece of writing I needed but never saw. I've seen a lot of shows about addiction, historically and as research, but never one that has shown the light and the dark, the funny and the heartbreaking, the sober and the drunk. It became a story that took such a hold of me, that writing it became an exorcism of sorts. I have interviewed other KoAs to draw out the common experiences we share. This show is an honest account of addiction and recovery that doesn't focus on the addict. It's like Ab Fab if Eddie got sober and was serious about it, told from the perspective of Saffy, but instead of being a dowdy buzzkill, Max is a spunky, psychedelic popping twenty something who hides behind a chronic comedy defence mechanism and an inability to commit. Addiction is funny and awful and hopeful and heartbreaking and affects almost everyone in some direct or indirect way.

Why are you excited about developing it for Telly?

From the beginning, I wrote Recovery Town with a view to develop it for TV. I have been writing the pilot over lockdown. Storyline A follows Max, storyline B follows Pip, Max's mum and storyline C follows Pip's new friends from AA. While the addict climbs back into sobriety so must her family stop licking their wounds and take their lives off hold too. We learn about the history of the maternal relationship through the narrative of recovery. To my knowledge, it hasn't been done before. I know, if given the opportunity, I would do this story justice.