

FemFest 2016: Transformation **Turning Life-Changing Stories into Transformative Theatre**

Winnipeg, August 18, 2016 – Sarasvati Productions will once again, put female artists and their captivating stories centre stage at FemFest 2016: Transformation. The 14th annual festival of life-changing plays by women for everyone, will take over the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film, treating audiences to a week of enthralling performances. This year's festival runs from September 17 to 24 and features an array of fantastic artists from across Canada.

Kicking things off is our Opening Night Cabaret, featuring everything from aerial acrobatics by Ruth Baines, high-energy contemporary dance from Gearshifting and poi dancer, Jennifer Genest to a film screening of *Crash Site* by Indigenous film-maker Sonya Ballantyne. Hosted by Lara Rae of the Winnipeg Comedy Festival and jam-packed with diverse artists from different backgrounds, the annual variety show is a smorgasbord of entertainment.

FemFest 2016 also presents the world premiere of *The Seduction Theory* by Vancouver playwright, Sherry MacDonald. The FemFest 2015 Bake-Off audience choice winner and recipient of the 2016 Special Merit Award from Theatre BC Playwriting Competition, *The Seduction Theory* examines our societal structures and damaging treatment of young underprivileged girls.

This year's presented pieces include artists from Toronto and Vancouver:

Miss Understood – produced by the frank theatre company (Vancouver, BC): Antonette Rea has survived horrific experiences of marginalization and abuse as a transgender person. *Miss Understood* is a theatrical poem based on her inspiring life story, with text lifted from Antonette's poetry. *Miss Understood* was nominated for a Jessie Award for Outstanding Original Script.

Morro and Jasp do Puberty - Produced by U.N.I.T. Productions (Toronto, ON): Clown sisters Morro and Jasp hope to take out the taboo surrounding female bodily functions with this comedic look at coming of age.

Mouthpiece - Produced by Quote Unquote Collective (Toronto, ON): In the wake of her mother's death, *Mouthpiece* follows one woman, for one day, as she tries to find her voice. It explores the inner conflict that exists within a modern woman's head: the push and the pull, the past and the present, the progress and the regression.

FemFest 2016 also features our annual Bake-Off playwriting competition, where selected playwrights have eight hours and three key elements to write a 10-minute piece and win audience votes. The festival also features nightly readings of SHORTs from the Shortlist, with a special Full SHORTs Showcase on September 24 at 3pm.

FemFest runs from **September 17-24, 2016** at the **Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** (at the University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street). Tickets are \$15 for single shows and a full festival pass available for \$50. FemFest welcomes all audience members to join the celebration of female artists and enjoy the local and national art scene. For more information, please visit www.femfest.ca.

About Sarasvati Productions: Founded in Winnipeg in 2000, we seek to inspire artists and audiences through the use of theatre and to provide a place where artists can develop, showcase their skills and celebrate their creativity. FemFest has been up and kicking since 2003 and to date has showcased hundreds of artists!