

## FemFest and the Winnipeg Public Library Team Up to Challenge Stereotypes

**Winnipeg, August 28, 2017** – FemFest 2017: *Coming of Age* is excited to celebrate its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary with unique initiatives that engage the public. For the first time the festival will offer The Human Library™ in partnership with The Winnipeg Public Library! The Human Library, or “Menneskebiblioteket” in Danish, began in Denmark in the spring of 2000 and has gone on to produce events in over 25 countries. The event was designed to challenge readers’ stereotypes by putting them in a one-on-one dialogue with human ‘books’, demonstrating the power of not “judging a book by its cover”.

For the first time FemFest will follow the example of other national theatre festivals by including this exciting experience in the line-up. Sarasvati Productions and the Library will host a wonderful array of Manitobans for the catalogue of Human Books. The event is free and runs **September 21<sup>st</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017** on the second floor of the **Millennium Library, 251 Donald Street** (4-8 PM on Thursday, 1-4 PM Friday and Saturday). Readers (the public) may “borrow” a book for up to thirty minutes of conversation. The event features Human Books on a wide range of topics, from new immigrants to Canada to the modern Indigenous struggle to the challenges of living with mental illness. The books come from all different walks of life, but are united by their struggle against stereotyping or prejudice. By putting faces to important issues, the Human Library is designed to foster positive discussions and answer readers’ questions.

The Human Library is part of Sarasvati Productions’ mandate to show experimental and transformative theatre that presents significant social issues. Some of the books featured include local comedian Lara Rae; the creator of Artbeat Studio, Nigel Bart; and Black Space Winnipeg founder Alexa Potashnik. In addition to presenting her play *Watching Glory Die*, master Canadian playwright and FemFest guest artist Judith Thompson will also take part as a book on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

In addition to co-hosting The Human Library, FemFest is taking over the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film for eight days of exciting performances. The theme of this year’s festival is “Coming of Age” and 15 years of programming will be celebrated. FemFest 2017 will present Judith Thompson’s *Watching Glory Die*, produced by Mulgrave Road Theatre. Other productions include *Two Indians* by emerging playwright Falen Johnson and Ivan Coyote’s *Tomboy Survival Guide*, a heartfelt memoir backed by a live band. Plus the annual opening cabaret and live readings.

FemFest runs from **September 16-23, 2017** based out of **the Asper Centre for Theatre and Film** (at the University of Winnipeg, 400 Colony Street). Tickets are \$15-\$20 for single shows and a full festival pass is 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 visit our website: [www.femfest.ca](http://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!*

