



PUSH

a theater play based on the novel by Sapphire

PUSH is a theater play based on hip-hop poet Sapphire's award-winning novel by the same name. It tells the story of Precious, an illiterate teenager who has been systematically abused and mistreated by her parents. After she becomes pregnant by her father for the second time, she is forced to leave school. Precious ends up at an alternative school, where with the help of a dedicated teacher, she learns to read and write. In doing so, she finally gets a grip on her life and discovers the power of words, of friendship, and of herself.

In MC's theater-adaptation, the audience is directly involved in the performance. They sit in a circle around the actors and participate in the piece. This innovative approach makes the painful subject matter accessible and allows room for some much needed comic relief without compromising the serious and tragic implications of Precious' life story.

At heart, PUSH is about empowerment, and empowerment was an important motive for MC to produce this play. With PUSH, MC wants to make issues like illiteracy, teenage mothers and incest subjects for discussion by young people. We performed PUSH in theaters but also at schools where the play was embedded in an educational project. There was a 2-hour workshop leading up to

the performance and an extensive review and evaluation afterwards.

This series of performances quickly drew interest from abroad. For example, PUSH toured in Suriname twice. From February to June 2008, more than 2,000 school children saw the play and took part in MC's education program. In Suriname, we collaborated with the Stop Violence against Women Foundation, a local centre of expertise on sexuality. This joint venture was of important value for the education program. The openness created by the educational workshops in dealing with the disturbing theme of the play stimulated young people to share their own stories and experiences. Some young people (both girls and boys) recognized themselves in the story of Precious.

Filmmaker Nina Jurna (Fawaka Creations) made a documentary about MC's first tour of PUSH in Suriname. The documentary, entitled *PUSH No Tan Tiri* recently won an award for *Best Film Feature* at the PAHO Caribbean Media Awards (co-organised by Unicef and UNDP).

In the 2010-2011 season, PUSH will once again tour the Netherlands. There is also interest in PUSH from the Netherlands Antilles and Barbados.

PUSH on Grahamstown Festival, South-Africa:

Theatre-adaptation Mariëlle van Sauers, **Director** Marjorie Boston, **Actors** Mariëlle van Sauers, Marjorie Boston, Jennifer Sint Jago, **Education** Johan van Aalst, **Production** Donna Muller
Sound & light Claes Meijer, **Photography** Daniel J. Ashes

July 7	11:30 AM	Glennie Fest	July 10	11:30 AM	Glennie Fest
July 8	13:30 PM	Glennie Fest	July 11	13:30 PM	Glennie Fest
July 9	19:30 PM	Glennie Fest			

Glennie Fest is on Hill Street in Grahamstown, South Africa

The PUSH tour in Grahamstown was made possible by the program INTERACTIONS SA-NL. This program is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and executed by Theater Instituut Nederland and Music Centre the Netherlands: www.interactions-sa-nl.com | **More information about PUSH on www.mconline.nl**