

# PuSh International Performing Arts Festival

January 17–February 3, 2019 | [pushfestival.ca](http://pushfestival.ca)

## Introduction for patrons with sight loss

**salt.** by SELINA THOMPSON (from the UK)

At center stage is a square table made of natural wood that comes up to Selina's waist, like an altar or stand up work space.

On top is a white mortar and pestle, a clear glass bottle of water that contains a sprig of rosemary, and an incense stick, which is burning. Hanging above the table is a large white triangle made of three fluorescent tube lights like you might find in an office.

There is a single shelf beneath the table. On this shelf there are a pair of clear safety goggles, a large, worn sledgehammer with a light wooden handle, and a pair of white safety gloves.

Underneath the table, hidden in the shadows is a large 50 pound chunk of pink rock salt. Some nights, it is quite sparkly and light. Other nights it looks much darker, more like a slab of meat. It is naturally occurring salt from the Himalayas.

On the left side of the stage are four lush, tropical houseplants, 3 feet high. They surround a high wooden chair - a little like a stool but with a back. On the right is a microphone in a stand with a rotting funeral wreath at its base. The wreath is made of local weeds.

There is a wide strip of sea blue velvet on the right but around the rest of the stage is black. The stage is in darkness except for a light in the middle, which illuminates Selina, stood at the altar. Selina is wearing a white sleeveless, floor length dress. The dress is made of heavy linen fabric, starched, and thick, and looks slightly old - as though it is perhaps from another time. Selina is average height, and fat - she is a black woman with shoulder length dreadlocks. She is wearing heavy black work boots, and no make-up or jewellery.

When the audience enter the space, Selina is already waiting on stage, stood behind the altar, and in front of the large white triangle. The incense is lit, so there are wisps of smoke blowing across the stage. She waits silently and still, until the audience has settled.

Once Selina has introduced herself to the audience, (about 5 minutes in) she will pour a libation from the glass water bottle that contains the rosemary, onto the stage floor.

There will sometimes be pauses in transitions between segments of the story. Quite often there will be music at these points, and Selina will be catching her breath.

There are two instances of video during the show. The first will be a clip from Desmonds. You will be able to hear the characters speaking. The woman speaking will be a black woman in her late 50s, wearing a plum lipstick, and a shoulder length, black wig. The man speaking will be a black man, who looks a little scruffy. He will be wearing a pork pie hat, and will have a beard and moustache. They are in a barbershop, in Peckham, London, in the early 90s.

The second video will be a clip from *The Harder They Come*, a Jamaican movie. It shows a black man with a short afro swimming in the sea towards a boat. He tries to reach it, but does not make it. The movie then cuts to a clip of him washing up on the shore, with water dripping from his hair, to the sand beneath his head. There is no sound during this video clip, as Selina will be speaking.

Both these movie clips are projected onto the sea blue velvet.

Shortly after the performance begins, (about ten or twelve minutes in, after having told a story about her grandmother ) Selina will roll the slab of rock salt out to the front of the stage. She will then smash it into nine large pieces, with a sledgehammer.

Throughout the show she breaks it apart with a sledgehammer. As the piece continues, she places 9 of the larger pieces across the front of the stage, using each piece to represent a person or force in the story, and smashing them with the sledgehammer each time they are referenced. Right after that, music plays. This is one of those moments when Selina catches her breath. She then tells a story about her father, as she starts to sweep up all the salt with a large broom she will bring on from off stage.

Twice during the show - once when talking about the hold (womb, tomb, bowel) and another time when she has reflected on visiting a grave, Selina grinds small pieces of salt with the mortar and pestle. At one point she reflects on monuments, and pours the salt from the mortar, onto the altar, where it sits in a small, sparkling mound.

At the end of the show - after Selina has told a story about dogs, she will remove her work boots and socks. She will arrange those, three large chunks of salt, the wreath and the microphone in the centre of the stage. When she stands here, she is bathed in a golden light.

If you are sitting in the front row, there will be a pair of safety glasses underneath your chair. Selina explains that people sitting in the front row need to put them on when she does. If you want to sit in the front row and you are not coming to the show with a friend who can let you know when to put the goggles on, please get in touch with us at [access@pushfestival.ca](mailto:access@pushfestival.ca) and we will make sure a volunteer can support you.

The show runs from January 24th till 26th at the Performance Centre in the Roundhouse Community Centre . The price is \$39, including all fees and taxes & the VocalEye Member Rate is \$28.20

**For more information on shows that are accessible to people with vision loss, download the info sheet by clicking [here](#) (for the PDF version) and [here](#) (for the DOC version)**

For full details and to discuss accessibility needs please contact:

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