

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **BRAVE: The Festival of Risk and Failure**

Toronto's first multidisciplinary arts festival to celebrate failures, risks and triumphs  
July 12–29, 2018

[Watch the Teaser](#)

**Toronto, ON (June 12, 2018)** – Harbourfront Centre is excited to introduce a fresh and daring new festival that will push the boundaries of what it means to be brave. Presenting some of the world's most courageous and outlandish artists, thinkers, writers and musicians, the inaugural **BRAVE: The Festival of Risk and Failure** asks the question: If all we have to fear is fear itself, why be afraid?

Encompassing 18 days of free and ticketed programming throughout Harbourfront Centre from July 12 to 29, **BRAVE** will include such headliners as the unabashed filmmaker of cult classics *Hairspray* and *Cry-Baby*, **John Waters**; multit talented surgeon-turned-comedian who is dubbed the "Jon Stewart of the Arab world," **Bassem Youssef**; and musician and motivational speaker **Bif Naked**. Living on the edge and creating important work in the face of remarkable odds, these exceptional artists bravely share their funny, sad, and piercing stories filled with the risks, failures and triumphs that have made them the daring people they are today.

"We're presenting **BRAVE** because the only way that new ideas can be created is by rejecting existing ones," said Director of Cultural Engagement, Laura McLeod. "Bravery is having the strength to face fear, and it demands risking failure in order to succeed. All of the artists participating in this exciting festival are fearless and defiant. Some are flame-throwers, others exiled from their homes and native lands, but all of them are brave enough to disrupt the status quo."

In addition to ticketed shows, **BRAVE** will also present a diverse slate of FREE concerts, movie screenings, stand-up comedy, dance, storytelling, visual arts and special events. Offerings include **Exiled at Night**, a late-night extravaganza taking over the Artport Gallery with live performances, installations, DJs and surprises (July 28); the Canadian debut of the **Museum of Failure** (opens June 23), a quirky pop-up exhibition direct from Sweden that celebrates the notorious marketing missteps, experiments and failures of big corporations; must-see performance by world renowned artist, activist and Queen of Live Loops, **Māmā Mhirangi**, who weaves live loop, vocals, instruments and percussion, beat-boxing and storytelling that speaks to environmental and Indigenous women's issues; and an opportunity to tell your own story of bravery and triumph to poet and author **Ronna Bloom**, who will then create a personalized poem for you on the spot.

For more information about **BRAVE: The Festival of Risk and Failure**, go to [harbourfrontcentre.com/BRAVE](http://harbourfrontcentre.com/BRAVE). Tickets start at \$20, and are available for purchase online at [harbourfrontcentre.com](http://harbourfrontcentre.com), in-person or by calling the Harbourfront Centre Box Office at 416 973 4000.

### **BRAVE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- **An Evening with John Waters – Thursday, July 12, 7:30pm (\$65+)**  
Join John Waters as he discusses his influential body of work and the many boundaries and buttons that continue to push audiences. Enjoy a candid and titillating conversation about his misfit adventures, standing up for the underdog and how he came to create cult classics like *Pink Flamingos*, *Hairspray*, *Cry-Baby* and *Female Trouble* that shattered taboos.
- **Bif Naked: How I Came to Love Myself Today – Friday, July 20, 7:30pm (\$20)**  
A survivor of a drug overdose, sexual abuse and cancer, Bif Naked is sure to inspire as she shares her remarkable story of strength and resilience, told with humour, naked honesty and outrageous optimism. She will also perform songs from her most recent album, *Bif Naked Forever: Acoustic Hits and Other Delights*.
- **Bassem Youssef: The Joke is Mightier than the Sword – Thursday, July 26, 7:30pm (\$65+)**  
The surgeon-turned-comedian and creator of the Middle East's first-ever political satire show shares his thoughts on the political climate that led to the Arab Spring, its parallels to the current state of American politics and how propaganda lays the foundation for dictatorial regimes, tackling difficult subjects with wit, intelligence and charm.

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## FREE BRAVE PROGRAMMING

### Music

- **Ramy Essam – Friday, July 27, 9:30pm**  
One of the loudest youth voices and a true advocate for a progressive and modern Egypt, Ramy Essam takes audiences on a musical journey with his Egyptian and English rock songs.
- **Ana Tijoux presents Roja y Negro – Saturday, July 28, 9:30pm**  
Having been born in Paris to exiled Chilean parents who fled the brutal dictatorship of Pinochet, this Grammy-winning rap musician has emerged as a voice for disenfranchised Latinos everywhere.
- **Thomas Mapfumo and The Blacks Unlimited – Sunday, July 29, 5:30 pm**  
One of the best-known artists in African music, Mapfumo is a musical-political force in the struggle for self-rule in Zimbabwe, where he was forced into exile for more than a decade before being released in 2017.

### Comedy

- **Tellin' It Like It Is: Cathy Jones and Gina Yashere – Friday, July 20, 7:30pm**  
Award-winning actress and comedy legend Cathy Jones steps out of her comfort zone with UK-based *Last Comic Standing* star Gina Yashere during a new comedy sketch featuring stand-up, improv, personal stories and more.
- **We Ain't Terrorists: Ali Hassan and Dave Merheje – Thursday, July 21, 9pm**  
Ali Hassan and Dave Merheje come together for a superlatively funny evening of stand-up comedy with an honest and hilarious examination of culture, stereotypes, misconceptions and the challenge of just fitting in.

### Visual Arts

- **Ola Volo – Beginning Thursday, July 12**  
A new Harbourfront Centre commission for the summer of 2018, renowned Kazakhstan-Canadian artist Ola Volo transforms the World Café building into an elaborate mural drawn from history, multiculturalism and folklore.
- **Sean Martindale – Beginning Thursday, July 12**  
Toronto artist Sean Martindale creates large-scale, public art that opens conversation about community and global issues. Site-wide installations include a life-sized cardboard statue of Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei.

### Film

- **John Waters Marathon – Thursday, July 12 to Monday, July 25, various times**  
Enjoy a showcase of the work from one of cinema's leading innovators, featuring screenings of films such as *Pink Flamingos*, *Serial Mom*, *Cecil B. Demented* and many more.
- **He Hated Pigeons – Friday, July 13, 8pm**  
Canadian filmmaker Ingrid Veninger builds on notions of serendipity, risk and impermanence during this feature film accompanied by a live improvised score. Presented by Punk Films and the CFC Slight Music Residency.

### Family

- **The Breadwinner – Sunday, July 15, 3pm**  
This Oscar-nominated animated film is about a headstrong Afghanistan girl who disguises herself as a boy in order to provide for her family. The screening will open with a live performance of Afghan music by composer and instrumentalist Qais Essar. Additional family-friendly film screenings include *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* and *The Wizard of Oz*.
- **The Main Ingredient Silent Disco – Saturday, July 14 to Sunday, July 29, various times**  
Let loose at a silent disco, dancing to different live DJs via wireless headphones. Give your inner soul a moving moment on a silent dance floor.

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#### About Harbourfront Centre

Harbourfront Centre is a registered, charitable not-for-profit cultural organization operating a 10-acre campus on Toronto's central waterfront. A leading international centre for contemporary arts, culture, and ideas, we inspire audiences and visitors with a breadth of bold, ambitious and engaging experiences. Twitter: @HarbourfrontTO Instagram: @harbourfrontcentre

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