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**PUSH DANCE CO. AND MUSEUM OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA PRESENT  
WORLD PREMIERE OF RAISSA SIMPSON'S *MIXED MESSAGES*  
MULTI-MEDIA DANCE/THEATER/FILM PERFORMANCE INSTALLATION  
EXAMINES MIXED-RACE IDENTITIES**

**MAY 21-29 AT MUSEUM OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN SAN FRANCISCO**

San Francisco, March 3, 2011—The vibrant diversity of contemporary multi-racial communities takes center stage in dance, film, spoken word and interaction as Push Dance Company and the Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) present the world premiere of choreographer/director Raissa Simpson's *Mixed Messages* in eight performances May 21-29 throughout the stunning public spaces of MoAD in San Francisco. The performance/ installation will take place throughout MoAD's public spaces including galleries, atrium and stunning multi-story glass staircase on the building's Mission Street façade, intermingling performers and public.

Performances will be given Saturday, May 21, at 2 pm and 4 pm; Sunday, May 22, at 1 pm and 3 pm; Saturday, May 28, at 2 pm and 4 pm; and Sunday, May 29, at 1 pm and 3 pm. MoAD is located at 685 Mission Street in San Francisco. For more information about *Mixed Messages*, visit [www.pushdance.org](http://www.pushdance.org) or [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org).

Simpson uses her own internal and external experiences, perceptions and observations of what it feels like and means to be mixed race as the jumping off point for *Mixed Messages*. Deftly weaving in intergenerational and inter-community voices and visions into this mix, she has created a complex, multi-layered and dynamically evolving work about the subject that presents a kaleidoscope of angles and perspectives. Mixed race is rarely seen, discussed, or presented in a public setting, and *Mixed Messages* provides an opportunity to examine issues the surround and affect us all.

Co-created by Simpson's Push Dance Company and 3rd Street Youth Center & Clinic, *Mixed Messages* has been commissioned by the San Francisco Arts Commission. Its title refers to the slang term, "mixed," referring to a person

or communities that share one or more ethnic backgrounds. The work features choreography and direction by Raissa Simpson, film and interviews of members of San Francisco's multiracial community, soundscape by El Kool Kyle, lighting by award-winning designer Elizabeth Mendana and sets designed by Marlene Sagana Ingram. Dr Albirda Rose and Dr. Catherine Macklin will lend their voice and research of diaspora to the work's sound score. Five Company dancers will be joined by more than ten youth performers from Bayview, Albirda Rose's Village Dancers and San Jose. The group will create large-scale tableaux building mythical creatures in an urban environment weaving groups together and creating images that make us re-examine race and a world that favors absolute.

### **About Raissa Simpson and Push Dance Company**

Founded in 2005, Push Dance Company (Push) has embraced new media and technology to express its cross-cultural perspectives. Under the direction of Raissa Simpson, the company dares to work with visual artists alongside pyrotechnic dancing, music collaborations, community projects & touring to critical-acclaim. Within the past year alone, Simpson and Company have performed at the Joyce Theater in New York, mounted the world premiere of *Black Swordsman Saga* (formerly *Great Integration: A Chamber Hip-Hop Opera*) and returned to the San Francisco Black Choreographers Festival.

The hip-hop generational modern dance company has distinguished itself through its dedication to athleticism- bringing art to the people. Recently the company has toured & performed at the Washington Ensemble Theater (Seattle), Laney College (Oakland), 418 Project (Santa Cruz), Dance Mission Theater (SF), Cowell Theater (SF), ODC Commons Theater (SF), Museum of the African Diaspora (SF) & San Jose State University where, the company was awarded the "Peoples Choice" award honor. The company has offered master classes, workshops and performance opportunities to students at UC Santa Cruz, Berkeley High School, CounterPulse, Alonzo King Lines Dance Center, ODC School and many more. Additionally, the company has formed community partnership with 3rd St Youth Center & Clinic in Bayview Hunters Point offering underserved youth positive creative outlets of expression.

The core subjects of Simpson's multidisciplinary works address race, gender, identity, history, and the digital divide. Her choreography has spearheaded Push's re-visioning to make work that directly impacts people within the community. Push has three areas of programming: 1) create non-traditional dances through innovative collaborations; 2) bring together non-dancers with professional artists through community projects; 3) mark the importance of belonging to the national dance community through touring.

Push is recipient of Theatre Bay Area's CA\$H Grant, CHIME (Choreographers in Mentorship Exchange); Residencies at the Garage Artspace and Zaccho Dance Theater; two San Francisco Arts Commission's Arts & Communities: Innovative Partnerships and four consecutive Zellerbach Family Foundation awards with one in combination with William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation.

### **About the Museum of the African Diaspora**

The Museum of the African Diaspora (MoAD) is a San Francisco based nonprofit organization that was conceived as a cornerstone of the economic and cultural revitalization of downtown San Francisco. Since it opened in December 2005 MoAD has become an anchor with its neighbors, the San Francisco MoMA, the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, Zeum, and the Contemporary Jewish Museum, in making this dynamic cultural corridor a premier cultural destination.

As a dynamic, world class institution, MoAD brings people of all ages, ethnicities and backgrounds together so they can enjoy, study and appreciate, through enriching exhibitions, public and educational programs, the culture, history and art of people of African descent within the United States and throughout the world. MoAD is uniquely positioned as one of the only Museums in the world focused exclusively on African Diaspora culture and on presenting the rich cultural products of the people of Africa and of African descendant cultures across the globe. For more information, please visit the website [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org).

### **Tickets and information**

Tickets for the world premiere performances of *Mixed Messages* are priced \$12 general admission, \$10 advance, \$5 for MoAD members, and may be purchased at <http://pushdance.eventbrite.com>. For more information, visit [www.pushdance.org](http://www.pushdance.org) and [www.moadsf.org](http://www.moadsf.org)