

# fierce

The  
Corner Shop



*“The idea for this work came a few years ago when I noticed a lot of contemporary performances had young people in them, and the works were being made for an adult audience. I started out thinking about the moral and ethical minefield of working with children and about how the adults who worked with them perhaps behaved very differently in private. I was also interested in how the simple presence of a young person could change the meaning of something or amplify the meaning, the tension and the vulnerability of a situation. Working with children is a heavily regulated process, with a lot of decisions being made by adults in order to protect the young people involved. I found that situations often teetered on the edge of shame: shame as an indirect theme when works discussed subjects like sex and sexuality; shame sometimes inadvertently projected on the artist who worked with children by regulators, the media and the public; and shame also inadvertently felt by the young person when they are told, for example, not to wear a particular item of clothing in rehearsal because it is ‘inappropriate.’ These are observations told to me by practitioners working in the field in Australia and the UK. It all made me wonder about the adults who worked with children, the adults who set the standards in working with young people and the adults who decided what a safe space for children is, while also negotiating the desires to make a work of art. Among other things, it made me wonder if a theatre is a safe space and made me question the relationship between language and the (sexualised) body and between naming and authority.”*

- **Nicola Gunn, *Working With Children***