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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 1, 2011

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## SUNDANCE INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES PROJECTS SELECTED FOR 2011 THEATRE LAB TO BE HELD AT THE BANFF CENTRE

### A RECORD 31 ARTISTS INVITED FROM THE UNITED STATES, KENYA, MEXICO AND TANZANIA

NEW YORK, NY — Sundance Institute today announced the artists and projects selected for its 2011 Theatre Lab to be held at The Banff Centre in Alberta, Canada, from March 27-April 17. The centerpiece of Sundance Institute's Theatre Program, the Theatre Lab is a three-week developmental retreat designed to provide a private, creative environment for playwrights, directors, composers and librettists to devise and refine new work with the support of creative advisors, full casts and rehearsal space. This year, Sundance has 31 fellows or generative artists, including playwrights, composers, directors and creative teams. Sundance Institute is grateful for the assistance of the Performing Arts Residency program at The Banff Centre.

The 2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at the Banff Centre:

#### ***Africa Kills Her Sun (Tanzania/Kenya)***

An Adaptation of *Africa Kills Her Sun* by Ken Saro-Wiwa  
Mrisho Mpotu, adapter/performer  
Irene Sanga, adapter/performer  
Elidady Msangi, composer  
Gilbert Lukalia, assistant director/performer  
Indhu Rubasingham, director

Ken Saro-Wiwa (1941-1995) was hanged by the Nigerian dictatorship for his activism on behalf of his Nigerian Ogoni people. The original text is a condemned man's last letter to his loved one. Mpotu and his team are adapting this text and using his poetic style in Kiswahili to combine it with slam poetry and storytelling to talk about corruption and abuse of power in contemporary Africa. Partnering with UK-based director, Rubasingham, the team will develop Sundance Institute's first all-Kiswahili theatre project. *Africa Kills Her Sun* was previously workshopped at the 2011 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab on Manda Island, Kenya, as part of the theatre program's charter lab for east African artists.

#### ***Annie Bosh is Missing (U.S.A.)***

Janine Nabers, playwright  
Trip Cullman, director

A family is swept into their own storm of violence and misunderstanding when Annie, a 22-year old recovering drug addict, returns home to Houston in the midst of Hurricane Katrina aftermath. Unable to communicate with her estranged family, Annie ventures out into the turbulent city around her looking for a connection as the rift between Annie and her family worsens. Nabers was a playwright at the 2010 Sundance Institute Playwrights Retreat at Ucross and 2010 member of Ars Nova's Play Group, and Cullman developed Adam Bock's *A Small Fire* at the 2010 Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at MASS MoCA.

***Froggy (U.S.A.)***

Jennifer Haley, playwright  
Matt Morrow, director

When Froggy spots her long lost lover in a bootleg video game, she embarks on a quest that takes her from Los Angeles to a ghost town in the Mojave Desert, where she finds herself in a dangerous intrigue with a shady production company and ghosts from her past. Told in voiceover and tableau, this noir thriller was born from the Haley's fascination with graphic novels. *Froggy* was written at the Millay Colony for the Arts and previously workshopped at the Page 73 Productions Summer Residency at Yale.

***Light Years to the Delling Shore (U.S.A.)***

Sam Marks, playwright  
Director TBA

At an upscale country house in the secluded woods Thomas, a very successful novelist, and his old grad school chum Frank, a struggling writer, have decided to spend a night catching up and have brought along their college-age daughters. The men's fraught history and competitiveness collides with their daughters' desire to establish themselves, and avoid replicating their fathers' damaged relationship. But soon the young women enter the fray as the bad behavior spins out of control over wine, cheese, and literary games.

***Like Water For Chocolate (Mexico & USA)***

Lila Downs, composer  
Paul Cohen, co-composer  
Quiara Alegria Hudes, bookwriter  
Ted Sperling, co-director  
Jonathan Butterell, co-director  
Michael Levine, designer  
Michael Curry, puppet designer

*Like Water for Chocolate* is a musical adaptation of the best-selling 1989 novel by Mexican author Laura Esquivel. Making her musical theater debut, Mexican singer-songwriter Downs wrote the songs with her long-time collaborator Cohen, and the script is by Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-nominee Hudes. *Like Water for Chocolate* incorporates Mexican cooking and the power of food, the magical realism of Mexican folk tales, and both contemporary and ancient theater techniques.

***Stuck Elevator (U.S.A.)***

Aaron Jafferis, writer  
Byron Au Yong, composer  
Chay Yew, director

Based on the true story of an undocumented immigrant who survived 81 hours in a Bronx elevator, this comic-rap-scrap-metal-music-theatre work follows Guang's increasingly fantastic attempts to escape a 4' x 6' x 8' metal box. As he climbs into memories, nightmares, and impossible futures, he is cooked into a morsel of Orange Beef and mugged by a bursting bladder. Taking charge, Guang transforms into Takeout Man, battles his prison guard, flies paper airplane menu letters to his family, and leads an army of bicycle deliverymen. Suspended between the upward mobility of the American dream and the downward plunge

into an empty abyss, *Stuck Elevator* travels between refuge/prison, freedom/safety, and voice/silence for our superhero. The text will be in Mandarin and English.

***Untitled Worlds Fair Play (U.S.A.)***

Made by The Debate Society

Hannah Bos, writer

Paul Thureen, writer

Oliver Butler, director

Chicago 1893: The Zoopraxiscope, cracker jacks and neon lights. The Ferris Wheel, hootchy-kootchy... hell they even had the hamburger! On the eve of a glowing new century, something terrible happens in a humble two-story home. And everything ends. Chicago 1933: When The Fair returns 40 years later, so do the unfinished histories of everything that could have been. And so things begin for the hermit upstairs and the mysterious look-a-like below. Play-making company The Debate Society creates a haunted world of forgotten futures, a rotting building and the spirit of invention.

***Wild with Happy (U.S.A.)***

Colman Domingo, playwright

Robert O'Hara, director

Gil plans to toss his mother's ashes at the place where she was most happy...Disneyworld! In this dark comedy about death, ritual and tradition, Domingo (*A Boy and His Soul, Up Jumped Springtime*) explores the surreal, bizarre and outrageous comedy that lies in everyone's search for answers as they try to deal with death and healing. Domingo was previously a member of the 2009 Theatre Lab acting company as well as an actor in Sundance Institute-supported projects *Passing Strange* and *Well* on Broadway.

"The artists and plays selected this season are among the most dynamic, diverse and innovative that Sundance Institute has supported in its 30-year history", said Philip Himberg, Producing Artistic Director of the Institute's Theatre Program. "These eight works challenge traditional forms and include work written in Kiswahili, Spanish and Mandarin The Sundance Institute Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre will offer artists an unparalleled opportunity – three weeks of in-depth exploration of their scripts in an extraordinary retreat atmosphere."

The playwrights, directors and composers will work with a respected staff of dramaturgs and creative advisors. Dramaturgs include Marge Betley, former literary manager of Geva Theatre, playwright and dramaturg Kim Euell, Sundance Institute Theatre Program artistic associate Roberta Levitow, and freelance dramaturg Otis Ramsey-Zoe. Mame Hunt, Karan Kandel, Janice Paran and Stephen Wadsworth served as the 2011 Theatre Lab Advisory Committee.

"The diversity of projects and advisors illustrates the scope of Sundance Institute's work around the world," said Keri Putnam, Executive Director, Sundance Institute. "We are thrilled to be working with The Banff Centre, an organization of like mind and purpose, and are excited to be hosting some of the greatest artists working in theatre today."

Under the guidance of Producing Artistic Director Philip Himberg, more than 85% of the work coming out of the Program's labs has found professional production at theatres across the United States, Mexico and Europe. Recent productions of Sundance Institute-developed work include: *Passing Strange* by Stew and Heidi Rodewald, which won the 2008 Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, *Circle Mirror Transformation* by Annie Baker, *The Lily's Revenge* by Taylor Mac, and *A Small Fire* by Adam Bock. The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.

**Sundance Institute**

Sundance Institute is a global nonprofit organization founded by Robert Redford in 1981. Through its artistic development programs for directors, screenwriters, producers, composers and playwrights, the Institute seeks to discover and support independent film and theatre artists from the United States and

around the world, and to introduce audiences to their new work. The Institute promotes independent storytelling to inform, inspire, and unite diverse populations around the globe. Internationally recognized for its annual Sundance Film Festival, Sundance Institute has nurtured such projects as *Born into Brothels*, *Trouble the Water*, *Son of Babylon*, *Amreeka*, *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Spring Awakening*, *I Am My Own Wife*, *Light in the Piazza* and *Angels in America*. [www.sundance.org](http://www.sundance.org)

### **The Banff Centre**

The Banff Centre is Canada's creative leader in arts and culture. A post-secondary learning institution located in the heart of the Canadian Rockies, The Banff Centre's mission is *Inspiring Creativity*. In this powerful mountain setting, exceptional artists and leaders from around the world create and perform new works of art, share skills and knowledge in an interdisciplinary environment, explore ideas, and develop solutions in the arts and leadership. The Banff Centre supports international creative residencies in opera, ballet, contemporary dance, music, and visual and literary arts. [www.banffcentre.ca](http://www.banffcentre.ca).

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