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Sundance Institute Announces Acting Company and Creative Advisors for 2016 Theatre Lab in MENA

***Grey's Anatomy* Star Sandra Oh, *The King and I*'s Hoon Lee, Deanna Dunagan, Hala Omran and Raeda Taha Among Actors Traveling to Morocco in May for Three Weeks of New Play Development**

Lab Kicks Off Institute's New, Multi-Year Initiative Supporting International Artists and Cross-Cultural Exchange

New York, NY — Sundance Institute today announced the acting company, dramaturgs and creative advisors participating in its pilot **Theatre Lab** in the MENA region, including Sandra Oh, Hoon Lee, Deanna Dunagan, Hala Omran and Raeda Taha. The Lab, held in Morocco next month, is part of the Institute's international cultural exchange programs for independent artists and will kick off a new, multi-year commitment to support artists from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). For the Lab, the Institute will provide promising, fresh voices from the U.S. and MENA region with a rigorous artistic retreat and new opportunities for cross-cultural discovery, artistic reflection and creative experimentation.

Under the supervision of Sundance Institute Theatre Program Artistic Director Philip Himberg and Producing Director Christopher Hibma and led by Middle East/North Africa Manager Jumana Al-Yasiri, the annual Theatre Lab, normally held in Utah, will be in Morocco this year. For over the past three decades the Lab has provided critical support and development to productions, including the two most recent Tony Award winners for Best Musical, Lisa Kron and Jeanine Tesori's *Fun Home* and Robert L. Freedman and Steven Lutvak's *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, as well as titles such as *ToasT*, *Appropriate*, *Circle Mirror Transformation*, *An Iliad*, *The Lily's Revenge*, *The Good Negro*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Passing Strange*, *Stuck Elevator*, *Spring Awakening*, *Laramie Project*, *I Am My Own Wife*, and Amer Hlehel's *TAHA*.

The Lab supports a diverse group of emerging theatre-makers developing new work for the stage, with a focus on creative exploration and original storytelling. For the three-week Lab, the Institute provides key support and resources to Fellows, including artistic and professional guidance from creative advisors, dramaturgs and actors from the U.S. and MENA region, time and space in an immersive environment where artists can see their work take shape and collaborate with their international peers to build supportive artist relationships. The Lab culminates in a closed presentation of each project for Lab participants, followed by a collaborative feedback session. For the Lab, the Institute will collaborate with Royal Air Maroc, Dar al-Ma'mûn, Sahara Experiences and the Morocco National Tourist Office.

This year's participants are from Australia, Belgium, France, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Syria, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United States, and bring experience from diverse creative backgrounds.



Acting Company

Helen Al-Janabi, Marinda Anderson, Racha Baroud, Zouheir Ait Benjeddi, Deanna Dunagan (*August: Osage County*), Mohamed Fergani, Peter Friedman (*The Nether*), Ron Cephas Jones, Francis Jue, Hoon Lee (*The King and I*), Yara Bou Nassar, Sandra Oh (*Grey's Anatomy*), Hala Omran (*La Porte du soleil*), Christine Osuala, Perle Palombe, Reynaldo Piniella, Will Pullen, Raeda Taha (*Where can I find someone like you, Ali?*), Sharon Washington (*Dot*), EJ Zimmerman

Creative Advisors

Moukhtar Kocache, Lynn Nottage (*Ruined*), Indhu Rubasingham (Tricycle Theatre)

Dramaturgs

Abdullah Al-Kafri (Ettijahat), Janice Paran, Chrystèle Khodor, Christian Parker (Columbia University)

Artists-In-Residence

Deborah Asimwe, Hamza Boulaiz (with Said Harrassi), Paola Lázaro

Production and Stage Management

Cyd Cahill, Nadia Elboubkri, Adil El Filali (Production Manager), Jad Hakawati, Melanie J. Lisby, Ana Verde

As previously announced, the projects selected for the 2016 Theatre Lab in MENA are:

Crave

by Sarah Kane

Adapted & directed by **Marion Lécrivain**

Translated by **Zakaria Alilech**

Narrated using video clips, soundscapes and a documentary made with residents of Marrakech, this Moroccan adaptation of Sarah Kane's *Crave*, brings together four actors around an endless dinner where the poetry of the moment mixes with the reality of the city.

Lécrivain is a French actress and director based in Marrakech, where she's pursuing different artistic collaborations in theatre and film. Marion has directed works by Jean-Luc Lagarce, Peter Handke, William Shakespeare, Georges Feydeau and Didier-George Gabily. As an actress, she has trained under the direction of Valérie Donzelli, Mia Hansen-Løve, Philippe Minyana, Frederic Maragnani and Elisabeth Hölzle.

Alilech is a translator from Morocco. His experience as a translator includes a Moroccan adaptation of *West Side Story*, based on the city of Tangiers where he lives. He is a translator, dramaturg and actor on the developing production, *Crave*.

Eve's Song

By **Patricia Ione Lloyd**

Director **Timothy Douglas**

We're all born with our very own song, but in a world that constantly has to be reminded that black lives matter, some songs are silenced too soon. A middle-class African-American family is battered by the daily onslaught of subtle and not-so-subtle indignities. The fierce bonds of love that hold them together start to fray, as each one gets pushed closer and closer to their breaking point.



Lloyd is a current New York Theater Workshop fellow, alumni of the 2015 Emerging Writers Group at the Public Theater, resident playwright at the University of Mumbai, Brown University (through the Africana Studies Department) and the International Theatre & Literacy Project in Tanzania. Her work has been developed by The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Labyrinth Theater, Red Bull Theatre, Dixon Place, Classical Theatre of Harlem, Downtown Urban Theatre Festival, New York LGBT Center and the Fire This Time Festival. She is the recipient of the New Professional Theatre's Emerging Playwright Award and best play award from the Downtown Urban Theatre Festival.

Happy New Fear

Written & Performed by **Rima Najdi**

Audio-visual design by **Ana Nieves Moya**

Sound design by **Kathy Alberici**

Director **Mark Brokaw**

Madame Bomba has a fake red TNT bomb strapped to her chest. The bomb cannot explode, and she cannot get rid of the bomb. She only responds with questions, since she does not have any answers. Her psyche is a bit complex. She is aware that the fake red TNT bomb she carries evokes fear and suspicion, but she thinks that she lives in a country where most people are familiar with such emotions, so she decides not to hide them anymore.

Najdi is a Lebanese performance artist based in Berlin. She works across disciplines including performance, video, installation and design. Much of the motivation in her work stems from the curiosity to research the production of propositions that challenge and occupy the spaces between the self and the other, reality and fiction, physicality and emotion.

Ana Nieves Moya (La Manchega) is a visual artist based in Berlin. She creates audio-visual work that explores the fusion between modernity and tradition in music and dance. She has a Fine Arts degree from the University of Castilla-La Mancha and holds an MA in Visual Arts and Education from the University of Granada. In 2013, she co-founded Kater Krank Productions, where she produces short films, videos and commercial spots.

Them

By **Anna Akkash**

Director **Junaid Sarieeddine**

This elegiac play brings together five women all grieving the men they lost because of the on-going war in Syria. In this poetic journey, the stage is a funeral room for reminiscing and mourning; while the absent father, husband, son and lover all become synonyms of an unbearable void caused by historical violence.

Akkash is an award-winning Syrian playwright with a BA in Theatre Studies from Damascus and an MA in Cultural Sciences and Performing Arts from Tunis. Anna lives in Damascus where she regularly works with the Syrian National Theatre as a dramaturg and director. She also writes scripts for television and short films, and translates books and studies on theatre from Russian and English to Arabic.

The Treasurer

By **Max Posner**

Directed by **David Cromer**



She's broke, she's spending his money, she needs a nursing home. He bikes to work, he is her son, he is the treasurer. A very private portrait of a son and his mother, and the world that has changed around them, written by his son and her grandson.

Posner is a Brooklyn-based playwright. His play *Judyt* premiered in September (Page 73 directed by Ken Rus Schmoll). He has received the Helen Merrill Emerging Playwright Award, Heideman Award, MacDowell Colony Fellowship and Page 73 Fellowship. His plays have been developed at Playwrights Horizons, Atlantic Theater Company, Clubbed Thumb, Soho Rep, Ars Nova, MTC, NYTW, Roundabout, South Coast Rep, American Theater Company, Williamstown and SPACE on Ryder Farm. His work has been commissioned by Playwrights Horizons, South Coast Repertory and the Brooklyn Youth Chorus. Max was born and raised in Denver and studied at Brown and Juilliard.

Cromer most recently directed *The Effect*, at the Barrow Street Theatre, where he also directed *Our Town* and *Orson's Shadow*. Additional NY Credits include *Women or Nothing* at The Atlantic Theater Company, *Really Really* at MCC, *The House of Blue Leaves* and *Brighton Beach Memoirs* on Broadway, *When the Rain Stops Falling* and *Nikolai and the Others* at Lincoln Center Theater, and *Adding Machine* at the Minetta Lane.

Verveling (Boredom)

Choreographed & directed by **Amar Al-Bojrad**

Composed by **Guy Van Nueten**

Performed by **Sheila Rojas**

Verveling is a dance piece exploring the theme of boredom. Boredom is something that adults do not want to admit to, only children will. One's life should be absorbing, interesting and productive. Boredom became part of us, but we learned to deal with it, to accept it, and now we even consider it a positive element in our lives.

Al-Bojrad is an Iraqi choreographer and dancer based in Antwerp. He studied dance at the Academy of Fine Arts in Baghdad before joining the dance company Iraqi Bodies and touring Europe and the Middle East with the acclaimed production *Crying of my Mother*. Later on, he collaborated on the Dutch Dance Festival Award-winner performance, *Insomnia*. Most recently, he's worked on *1979*, *WDSASE* and *Solitary Confinement*.

Van Nueten is a composer and musician from Belgium. A graduate of the Antwerp Royal Conservatory, he worked for well-known houses in the Benelux such as Toneelhuis, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, Les Ballets C de la B, de Filharmonie en Paleis. For the latter he wrote the musical *Soepkinders* in 2005, for which received a Flemish Musical Award. He also writes music for different award-winning feature films. In 2009 he releases his first solo-piano album, called *Merg*, followed by *Pacman* in 2013 and *Music for a Small Orchestra* in 2015.

Rojas is a dancer and choreographer from Mexico. She has been a featured performer in over sixty works of dance, theater and opera, working with a national and international roster of choreographers and directors such as Wouter Van Looy, Tony Orrico, Trisha Brown, Vicente Silva, Vivian Cruz, Andrea Catania, Rolando Beatie, Diana Theocharidis, Alicia Sánchez, Juliana Faesler. In 2012 the newspaper *El Universal* selected her as one of the 10 best dancers of Mexico.

White Lightning

By **Sam Marks**

Directed by **Kip Fagan**



White Lightning takes place in a dilapidated boxing gym underneath a senior citizen center in New Jersey. The play tracks the brief career of Alex, an emotionally stunted amateur boxer who learns to fight from Max, a gifted middle-aged trainer who is in increasingly desperate straits. Max also trains Hector, a young golden glove winner with a shot at a pro career. As the fighters practice, spar and prepare for bouts, they find hope and opportunity inside the gym. But the intensely personal partnership among the three men is threatened by challenges outside the ring—particularly the issue of race—that are a greater obstacle than any opponent.

Marks' productions include *The Delling Shore* at the Humana Festival, *The Old Masters* at Steppenwolf's First Look, *The Old Masters* at the Flea Theater, *The Joke* at Studio Dante, *Brack's Last Bachelor Party* at 59E59, *Nelson* and *The Bigger Man* with Partial Comfort Productions. He is a playwriting Fellow at the Huntington Theater. He attended Sundance Institute's 2011 Theatre Lab at The Banff Centre. A former Golden Gloves boxer, he currently teaches playwriting at Harvard.

Fagan most recently directed Ike Holter's *Exit Strategy* in a co-production with Primary Stages and Philadelphia Theatre Company, and Sheila Callaghan's *Women Laughing Alone With Salad* at Woolly Mammoth. NYC credits include world premieres by Sheila Callaghan, Christopher Durang, Jesse Eisenberg, Halley Feiffer, Sam Hunter, Greg Keller, Sam Marks, Heidi Schreck, Tommy Smith, Reggie Watts and Ariel Stess, at theatres including Playwrights Horizons, Rattlestick, Clubbed Thumb, Cherry Lane, Page 73, The Flea and PS122.

Wild Goose Dreams

By **Hansol Jung**

Directed by **Leigh Silverman**

Nanhee is a North Korean defector whose family was left behind in North Korea. Minsung is a South Korean "goose father" whose family has left him behind in South Korea. Nanhee and Minsung find each other on the internet. A story about modern aspirations and its betrayals, *Wild Goose Dreams* explores the miracle of quiet intimacy among the noise of the contemporary world.

Jung is a playwright from South Korea. Productions include *No More Sad Things*, which premiered at Sideshow Theatre, Chicago and Boise Contemporary Theatre and *Cardboard Piano* at the Humana Festival 2016 at Actors Theater of Louisville. Commissioned by Playwrights Horizons, Ma-Yi Theatre and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has had works developed at Lark, New York Theatre Workshop, MacDowell Colony, Royal Court, Berkeley Repertory Theatre and O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. She has translated over thirty musicals for award-winning productions in Seoul, South Korea. She is a proud member of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab and received her MFA from Yale.

Silverman is a two-time Obie winner and directed the *Encores!* and Broadway productions of Jeanine Tesori's *Violet*, which received a Tony Award nomination. Other Broadway credits include David Henry Hwang's *Chinglish*, Lisa Kron's *Well* and Andrew Lippa's *Wild Party* for Encores. She has directed over 30 Off-Broadway world premieres and has received Lortel and Drama Desk nominations.

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Sundance Institute

Founded in 1981 by Robert Redford, Sundance Institute is a nonprofit organization that provides and preserves the space for artists in film, theatre, and new media to create and thrive. The Institute's signature Labs, granting, and mentorship programs, dedicated to developing new work, take place throughout the year in the U.S. and internationally. The Sundance Film Festival and other public programs connect audiences to artists in igniting new ideas, discovering original voices, and building a community dedicated to independent storytelling. Sundance Institute has supported such projects as *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *The Invisible War*, *The Square*, *Dirty Wars*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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