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Six Directors Selected for Sundance Institute | LUMA Foundation Theatre Directors Retreat in Arles, France

Only Theatre Director-Centered Residency of its Kind



Sulayman Al Bassam | Timothy Douglas | Jackson Gay | Joseph Haj | Theodora Skipitares | Liesl Tommy

New York, NY — Six theatre directors will participate in the fourth **Sundance Institute | LUMA Foundation Theatre Directors Retreat** in Arles, France, July 18 through July 31. The Retreat is part of the Institute's year-round work with the theatre community and is one of 24 residency Labs the Institute hosts each year for independent artists in theatre, film, new media and episodic content.

Under the supervision of Theatre Program Artistic Director Philip Himberg, Producing Director Christopher Hibma and Program Associate Anne Kauffman, the Retreat is the only theatre director-centered residency of its kind. The 14-day artist retreat complements other Theatre Program initiatives by providing specific resources to directors in the field, including meeting the identified need for more opportunities to exchange ideas and practices with other mid-career, freelance directors.

For the first time this year, the Fellows will have the opportunity to engage with Festival D'Avignon, one of the oldest and most prominent theatre and performing arts festivals in the world. They will attend international performances and meet privately with festival leadership. In addition, the Fellows will also have access to the Rencontres D'Arles, which is a global photography exhibition.

Philip Himberg, Artistic Director of the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, said, "We are excited to continue our fourth collaborative year with the LUMA Foundation, which augments our long and deep history supporting playwrights. It is rare for directors to find opportunities to share experiences and find inspiration for upcoming projects. We are also thrilled that this year's group will attend Festival D'Avignon, an opportunity that dovetails beautifully with the Sundance Theatre Program's ongoing MENA Initiatives, and comes at the heels of our recent U.S./MENA Theatre Lab in Marrakech."



Directors selected for the 2016 Sundance Institute | LUMA Foundation Theatre Directors Retreat are:

Sulayman Al Bassam is widely recognized as one of the world's leading contemporary Arab theatre makers. His work explores themes of identity between the Arab-Islamic world and the West. Sulayman's current projects include his original plays *In The Eruptive Mode*, a series of monologues for women written in reaction to the popular uprisings in the Middle East, which premiered in Kuwait City earlier this year, and *Petrol Station*, a dystopic trans-border narrative set to premiere at The Kennedy Center in March 2017.

Timothy Douglas has directed over 100 productions at renowned companies such as American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, Downstage (New Zealand), Guthrie Theater, the Mark Taper Forum/Center Theatre Group, and Steppenwolf. He currently serves as an Associate Artist at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, where recent projects include the world premiere of Keith Josef Adkins' *Safe House*. Timothy also directed the world premieres of August Wilson's *Radio Golf* (Yale Rep), Rajiv Joseph's *The Lake Effect* (Silk Road Rising; 2014 Jeff Award -- Best New Work) and Nathan Alan Davis' *Dontrell Who Kissed the Sea* (Theatre Alliance; six Helen Hayes Award nominations). He earned his MFA at the Yale School of Drama.

Jackson Gay is on faculty at Columbia University, Sarah Lawrence College and Primary Stages ESPA School of Theater. She is the recipient of the Jonathan Alper Directing Fellowship at Manhattan Theatre Club, the Williamstown Theater Festival Directing Fellowship and the Drama League's New Directors/New Works Fellowship. Jackson's recent work includes a co-adaptation of *Much Ado About Nothing* with Kenneth Lin (Cal Shakes), Suzanne Vega's *Lover, Beloved* (Rattlestick West), *These Paper Bullets!* (Yale Repertory Theatre/Atlantic Theater Company/Geffen Playhouse), Suzanne Heathcote's *I saw My Neighbor...* (Berkshire Theatre Group & New Neighborhood), Lucy Thurber's *The Insurgents* (Labyrinth Theater Co), and *3C* (Rattlestick), and Thurber's *Transfers* (New York Stage & Film). Upcoming projects include Chekhov's *Three Sisters* (Studio Theatre / New Neighborhood) and Lisa Lampanelli's *Stuffed* (Women's Project Theater), premiering Off-Broadway this fall.

Joseph Haj was named by *American Theatre* magazine as one of the 25 theater artists who will have a significant impact on the field over the next quarter century. He currently serves as Artistic Director of the Guthrie Theater. Prior to the Guthrie, he served as Producing Artistic Director at PlayMakers Repertory Company. Joseph was the 2014 recipient of The Zelda Fichandler Award, as well as the recipient of the NEA/White House Council Millennium Grant, awarded to 50 of America's finest artists.

Theodora Skipitares is an award-winning interdisciplinary artist and theater director based in New York City. Trained as a sculptor and designer, she is the author/director of 25 performance works, each featuring documentary texts, original music, video, and as many as 300 puppet figures. She is a resident artist at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. Ms. Skipitares has worked and taught master classes in India, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, and Iran. She is an Associate Professor at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

Liesl Tommy is a New York-based director with an active career around the country. She is a Program Associate at Sundance Institute Theatre Program and Artist Trustee with the Sundance Institute's Board of Trustees. She most recently directed the Broadway premiere of Danaï Gurira's *Eclipsed*, which earned 6 Tony Award nominations. Her Off-Broadway credits include *The Good Negro* (The Public), *The Urban Retreat* (The Public), *Informed Consent* (Primary Stages), *Appropriate* (Signature Theatre), and *Angela's Mixtape* (Ohio Theater). Regional work includes *Melancholy Play: A Chamber Musical* (Trinity Rep), *Kid Victory* (Vineyard Theatre), *Party People* (Berkeley Rep), and *Peggy Pickit Sees the Face of God* (Volcano Theatre). Liesl is a recipient of the Lucille Lortel Award, Obie



Award, Lillian Hellman Award, Susan Stroman Award, and Alan Schneider Director Award. She is a native of Cape Town, South Africa.

The Sundance Institute Theatre Program is supported by an endowment from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, with generous additional support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Time Warner Foundation; Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art; Perry and Martin Granoff; LUMA Foundation; National Endowment for the Arts; The Shubert Foundation, Inc.; Wendy vanden Heuvel; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; and Joan and George Hornig.

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](#).

The LUMA Foundation

The LUMA Foundation was established in 2004 by Maja Hoffmann in Switzerland to support the activities of independent artists and pioneers, as well as institutions working in the fields of visual arts, photography, publishing, documentary, and multimedia. The foundation commissions, produces and supports challenging artistic projects combining a particular interest in environmental issues, human rights, education, and culture in the broadest sense. LUMA Arles is a new experimental contemporary art center that brings together artists, researchers, and creators from every field to collaborate on multidisciplinary works and exhibitions. Located south of Arles' historic city center, the project repurposes the industrial ruins of a 10-acre rail depot and introduces a new public park at the Parc des ateliers.

The central team of designers for the project includes Frank Gehry who has designed a new Arts Resource Center building, Selldorf Architects entrusted with the renovation and conversion of two former rail facilities into new exhibition spaces, and landscape architect Bas Smets who is responsible for the landscape design. While the opening of the main building at the Parc des Ateliers is scheduled for 2018, an artistic program developed in collaboration with LUMA Arles Core Group of artistic consultants—Tom Eccles, Liam Gillick, Hans Ulrich Obrist, Philippe Parreno, and Beatrix Ruf—is presented periodically in the already inaugurated venues of La Grande Halle, Les Forges and La Mécanique Générale. www.luma-arles.org

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