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Seven Global Theatre Artists Convene at Sundance Institute Playwrights & Composers Retreat at Ucross Foundation

Artist-Centered Residency Supports Theatrical Writing in Development



L-R: Hassan Abdulrazzak, César Alvarez, C.A. Johnson, Sylvan Oswald, Polly Pen, Celine Song and Josh Wilder.

New York, NY — Seven theatre artists have gathered for the nineteenth annual Sundance Institute Playwrights & Composers Retreat at Ucross Foundation in Wyoming, currently underway from February 5 to February 23, 2018. Designed to support theatrical writing in its earliest stages, the residency is dedicated to uninhibited creativity, peer mentorship and professional growth.

This year's group of artists includes playwrights, composers, and cross-genre theater makers. At the residency, blocks of solo creative time are augmented with organic, collaborative conversations where participants reflect on process and the world in which they are creating new stories.

"This year's global cohort of artists bring a broad array of divergent approaches and unique creative visions, but are united by the artistry and craft evident in their compelling and timely work," said **Philip Himberg**, Artistic Director of Sundance Institute's Theatre Program. "We are thrilled to be able to bring this dynamic group of theatrical makers to the Ucross Foundation space." Sundance Theatre Program's Literary Manager **Ignacia Delgado** will be in attendance, managing the residency and providing hands-on feedback to artists as requested.

For the second year as part of a multi-year commitment to an exchange with artists from the Middle East and North Africa to support and amplify the development of contemporary theatre from the region, the Institute welcomes Iraqi-British author **Hassan Abdulrazzak** to the Ucross Residency. The Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art supports the presence of MENA artists at Theatre Labs and Residencies.

The retreat is one of 25 residency Labs the Institute hosts each year for independent artists in theatre, film, new media and episodic content, and is made possible through the generosity of the Ucross Foundation. Over 90 artists have benefitted from time at Ucross Foundation with the Theatre Program in the last nineteen years, including Charlayne Woodard, Jeanine Tesori, Doug Wright, Annie Baker, Adam Guettel, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins and Tanya Saracho.



The 2018 Sundance Institute Retreat at Ucross Foundation artists are:

Hassan Abdulrazzak (playwright)

Hassan Abdulrazzak's plays include *Baghdad Wedding* (Soho Theatre, 2007), *The Prophet* (Gate theatre, 2012), *Love, Bombs and Apples* (Arcola Theatre, 2016 and UK tour) and *And Here I Am* (Arcola Theatre, 2017 and UK tour). He has contributed to several anthologies including *Iraq+100: Stories from a century after the invasion* (Comma Press, 2016). He is the recipient of George Devine, Meyer-Whitworth and Pearson theatre awards as well as the Arab British Centre Award for Culture.

César Alvarez (playwright/composer lyricist)

César Alvarez is a New York-based composer lyricist and playwright. Recent credits: *FUTURITY* (Soho Rep/Ars Nova, 2016 Lortel Award for Outstanding Musical, A.R.T., Walker Center, Mass MoCA); *An Octoroon* (Soho Rep, TFANA. Drama Desk Nomination); *Good Person of Szechwan* (Foundry Theater, Public Theater. Drama Desk Nomination). In development: *NOISE* (NYU); *The Elementary Spacetime Show* (FringeArts/UArts, NYU); *The Universe is a Small Hat* (Babycastles, Sarah Lawrence College). 2016 Jonathan Larson Award Recipient. César is Artistic Director of Polyphone, a festival of new musicals at University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA.

C.A. Johnson (playwright)

C. A. Johnson's plays include *Thirst*, *The Climb*, *All the Natalie Portmans*, *An American Feast*, *Mother Tongue* and *Elroy Learns His Name*. She's an alumna of the Dramatists Guild Fellowship, The Civilians R&D Group, The Lark's 2016 Van Lier Fellowship, and the PlayPenn National Conference. She is a Core Writer at The Playwrights Center, a member of The Working Farm at SPACE on Ryder Farm, and a Rita Goldberg Playwrights Workshop Fellow at The Lark.

Sylvan Oswald (multimedia artist)

Sylvan Oswald creates plays, texts, publications, and video. His most recent project, *High Winds*, is an artists' book co-created with graphic designer Jessica Fleischmann and published by X Artists' Books, which he has adapted for performances at Abrons Arts Center and the LAX Festival produced by Los Angeles Performance Practice. He is an assistant professor of playwriting at UCLA's School of Theater, Film & Television and an alum of New Dramatists.

Polly Pen (composer)

Polly Pen writes musicals. Her works (often in collaboration) include *Bed and Sofa* (Vineyard Theatre, NYC/Finborough Theatre, London), *Goblin Market* (Vineyard Theatre), *The Night Governess* (McCarter Theatre), Arlington (Magic Theatre/Vineyard Theatre), *Embarrassments* (Wilma Theater) and *The Dumb Cake* (radio musical for NPR). Honors include an Obie, the Richard Rodgers Award, the Gilman/Gonzalez-Falla Award and the Flora Roberts Award for a distinguished body of work. Polly teaches at NYU's Graduate Musical Theatre Writing Program.

Celine Song (playwright)

Celine Song is a member of the Public Theater's 2016-2017 Emerging Writers Group, a member of Ars Nova's 2014-2015 Play Group, and Playwrights Realm's 2017-2018 Writing Fellow. Her play *Endlings* was a part of the Kilroys list 2017, and *Tom & Eliza* was a semifinalist for the 2016 Relentless Award. She has been awarded residencies from: the Millay Colony, the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Edward F. Albee Foundation. She holds an M.F.A. from Columbia.

Josh Wilder (playwright)



Josh Wilder is a playwright from Philadelphia. His work has been developed and produced at various theaters including The Fire This Time Festival, New York Theatre Workshop, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, Kennedy Center, and Milwaukee Rep. His play *LEFTOVERS* will be premiering this season at Boston's Company One Theatre this July. Josh is MFA candidate in Playwriting at Yale School of Drama.

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; National Endowment for the Arts; Wendy vanden Heuvel; John and Marcia Price Family Foundation; LUMA Foundation; The Shubert Foundation, Inc.; The Harold and Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust; Wyncote Foundation; Richenthal Foundation; The Carrie Louise Hamilton Foundation; JTS Fund at the New York Community Trust; and Francena T. Harrison Foundation.

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 *Boyhood*, *Swiss Army Man*, *Manchester By the Sea*, *Brooklyn*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Life*, *Animated*, *Sonita*, *20 Feet From Stardom*, *Beasts of the Southern Wild*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Sin Nombre*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder* and *Fun Home*. Join [Sundance Institute](#) on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Ucross Foundation

Founded in 1981 by Raymond Plank, Ucross Foundation is a nonprofit organization that operates an internationally known retreat for visual artists, writers, composers, and choreographers. Located on a 20,000-acre cattle ranch in northeastern Wyoming, Ucross provides living accommodations, studio space, uninterrupted time and the experience of the extraordinary High Plains landscape to competitively selected individuals. Ucross supports individuals whose work reflects innovative thinking, a depth of creative exploration, and the potential for significant future accomplishments. A number of residents have won recognition such as the Pulitzer Prize, Tony Award, National Book Award, MacArthur Fellowship, Guggenheim Fellowship, USA Artist Fellowship and many other honors. Through its Residency Program, art gallery, and associated activities, Ucross Foundation actively seeks to support an appreciation for vibrant human creativity and aims to cast a reflection into the future from the cultural mirror of our lives and times.

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