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THE BREATH PROJECT ANNOUNCES LINEUP FOR INAUGURAL VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

In partnership with San Diego Repertory Theatre and 23 other theater companies across the country, the free festival will feature 24 world premiere works created by multidisciplinary theater artists of color that are all 8 minutes and 46 seconds in length

The Breath Project was formed in response to the current global spotlight on racial injustice against Black people

— October 24 & 25, 2020 —

SAN FRANCISCO (October 7, 2020)—Today, **The Breath Project**—a new theatrical initiative formed by Artistic Director and Co-Founder **Gamal Abdel Chasten** and Co-Founder **Marieke Gaboury** in response to the current global spotlight on racial injustice against Black people—announced the lineup for the inaugural **The Breath Project Virtual Festival** being held on **Saturday, October 24 (2 p.m. PT/5 p.m. ET and 5 p.m. PT/8 p.m. ET) and Sunday, October 25 (5 p.m. PT/8 p.m. ET)**. In partnership with **San Diego Repertory Theatre** and 23 other theater companies across the country, the free festival will feature 24 world premiere works created by multidisciplinary theater artists of color that are all 8 minutes and 46 seconds in length. In the wake of the death of George Floyd, the 8 minutes and 46 second time frame has become a symbol for the racial injustice faced by countless members of the Black community across the United States. To RSVP for The Breath Project Virtual Festival, visit tinyurl.com/tbp-festival-2020. Ticketholders will be sent a link to view the festival approximately one hour before it begins.

“We received many inspiring submissions from around the country to be housed in our archive, and a third of those will be featured at the virtual festival,” said **Chasten**. “The range of works we received was vast, and included more traditional theatrical presentations and those that challenged the idea of what is theater in this moment of isolation. It is my hope that when people visit our website, attend the virtual festival, or follow and support our vision, they will have their boundaries pushed and their ideas challenged, and that, in the process, we change the face of American theatre.”

“The Breath Project 2020 has collected social and cultural phenomena that addresses the racial realities of today,” said REP Playwright-in-Residence Herbert Siguenza, one of the curators of the project.

Following a call for entries in August 2020, over 65 original works—ranging from monologues and slam poetry to puppetry and dance activism—were submitted. From those entries, a diverse panel of artists of color selected the 24 works that will comprise the inaugural festival. All works that have met the required submission guidelines will be archived on **The Breath Project** website.

The 24 selected works (*in alphabetical order*) are:

- **Mhir Agrawal / Gamal Chasten** – “Say Hello Stewart”
- **Aldo Billingslea** – “3 Story Walk Up”
- **Alumni Theater Company** – “Perspectives”
- **Ananya Dance Theatre** – “Just Breathe”
- **James Brunt** – “Waiting for Death”
- **Giovanny Camarena** – “Don’t Be Afraid”
- **The Char’Actors** – “The Cycle”
- **Tyharra Cozier** – “Breath”
- **El Colectivo de Dramaturgos de Puerto Rico** – “inhala – exhala”
- **Henri Franklin** – “Views of Color in 8:46”
- **Yetta Gottesman** – “Oh, Maria”
- **Ilasiea Gray** – “Acting While Black”
- **David Guster** – “Nice to Meet You”
- **Candice Handy** – “Black Quarantine Date”
- **Harvey** – “Breonna’s Prayer”
- **Gabrielle Jackson** – “The Ballad of Jacob Blake”
- **Angela G. King** – “8:46”
- **Bruce Lemon, Jr.** – “The Act of Ownership”
- **Anthony Sky Ng-Thow-Hing** – “Transcending Isolation: Hope”
- **Josh Richardson** – “Choosing Sides”
- **Derek J. Snow** – “The Ballad of the Dying Body or The Breath to Say”
- **Jessica Gabrielle Thomas** – “Glow | Eternal”
- **Bil Wright** – “Pulse”
- **David Zayas / Gamal Chasten** – “I Just Don’t Know”

The Breath Project seeks to build a more equitable theater community in the country and to actively dismantle structural racism in the American theater through a three-pronged mission: **Art, Action, and Advocacy**.

- **Art**

In partnership with organizations and artists across the nation, **The Breath Project** will create, develop, and support original theatrical works, created by BIPOC artists. The work that is housed by **The Breath Project** will be used as a tool for education and advocacy, as a living time capsule of this moment in history.

- **Action**

The Breath Project is working to build relationships between local artists and theaters in their community and region, creating more opportunities for BIPOC theater artists, technicians, and administrators throughout the country. Working across national partnerships, **The Breath Project** will seek to end the notion that plays by BIPOC artists fulfill a quota or check a box for a theater, and instead become an organic and permanent part of the American Theater landscape.

- **Advocacy**

The Breath Project will work to support the organizations that produce, fund, and support the American Theater to eliminate the racism and biases that exist in our institutions and business practices.

Theaters partnering with **The Breath Project** include (*in alphabetical order*): **Alabama Shakespeare Festival** (Montgomery, AL); **Alumni Theater Company** (Pittsburgh, PA); **Cherry Lane Theatre** (New York, NY); **Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park** (Cincinnati, Ohio); **City Theatre Company** (Pittsburgh, PA); **Cornerstone Theater Company** (Los Angeles, CA); **Curious Theatre Company** (Denver, CO); **Detroit Public Theatre** (Detroit, MI); **Dorset Theatre Festival** (Dorset, VT), **Face Off Theatre** (Kalamazoo, MI), **Flat Rock Playhouse** (Flat Rock, NC); **Flint Repertory Theatre** (Flint, MI); **Kumu Kahua Theatre** (Honolulu, HI); **Marin Theatre Company** (Mill Valley, CA); **Network of Ensemble Theaters** (National Service Organization); **Palo Alto Children's Theatre** (Palo Alto, CA); **Pillsbury House Theatre** (Minneapolis, MN); **Portland Center Stage** (Portland, OR); **Rude Mechs** (Austin, TX); **San Diego Repertory Theatre** (San Diego, CA); **Southern Rep Theatre** (New Orleans, LA); **Studio Theatre** (Washington DC); **Two River Theater** (Red Bank, NJ); and **Western Michigan University Department of Theatre** (Kalamazoo, MI).

For more information on The Breath Project, visit thebreathproject2020.com.

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ABOUT GAMAL ABDEL CHASTEN

Artistic Director/Co-Founder, The Breath Project

Gamal is an actor, poet, writer, composer, activist, and a founding member of Universes Theater Ensemble. His latest projects are *The Land Of Lost Socks (a children's story)*, commissioned by The Palo Alto Children's Theater and *AmericUS* (Universes, commissioned by Cincinnati Playhouse. He is currently in development for his solo production of *Crawfish*. His work in Theater spans over 25 years. Along with Universes, he has co-written and/or acted in *The Ride* (PS 122, 1996), *Slanguage* (New York Theater Workshop, 2001), *Rhythmicity* (Actors Theater of Louisville), *Ameriville* (Victory Garden Theater, 2006). Individual writing credits include *Let Bygones Be*, (2010 Humana Festival's Ten Minute Play series), *The Last Word* (PS 122), *God Took Away His Poem* (Labyrinth Theater Barn Series), *The Black Mann Act/The Trail of Jack Johnson/Vaudeville Show* (New Orleans reading), *The Wall* (New Orleans Fringe Festival), and *Badge* (Just Theater 2013 residency). Directing credits include: *The Last Word* (Austin, TX); *Articulation* (at Company One, Boston, MA); *Innerviews* (by Full Circle at NY's Dance Theater Workshop). Additional acting credits include: *Brother* (by Lisa Ebersole at The Elm Theater); *Zombie Town* (Southern Rep @ Le Chat Noir). Awards/Affiliations: 2008 U.S. Cultural Ambassador with the U.S. State Dept./Jazz at Lincoln Center - Rhythm Road Tour; New York Theatre Workshop Usual Suspect. Publications: UNIVERSES' The Revolution will be Live! (2020 release- TCG Books), 2018 Dell' Arte Prize of Hope, Writers Corp Teacher Anthology (City Lights Books 2009); SLANGUAGE in The Fire This Time (TCG Books); Featured on the covers of *American Theater* magazine (2004) and *The Source* magazine (2000).

ABOUT MARIEKE GABOURY

Co-Founder, The Breath Project

As a Theatre Specialist for the City of Palo Alto, Marieke is delighted to be a part of the team that supports performing arts programs for youth in the Bay Area. A California native who has happily returned home, Marieke spent some years in New Orleans, where she was the Manager of Institutional Development for the New Orleans Ballet Association, as well as Managing Director of Southern Rep, one of the only professional theatre companies in Louisiana. Her move to New Orleans followed 13 years in New York City, where she was Producing Director of LABYRINTH Theater Company, the member-driven

Off-Broadway collective which developed and produced new work by both emerging and distinguished, award-winning theatre artists. Marieke is still a member of LAB.

About San Diego Repertory Theatre

San Diego Repertory Theatre (San Diego REP) produces intimate, provocative and inclusive theatre. Founded in 1976, San Diego Repertory Theatre is downtown San Diego's resident theatre, promoting an interconnected community through vivid works that nourish progressive political and social values and celebrates the multiple voices of our region. The company produces and hosts over 550 events and performances year-round on its three stages at the Lyceum Theatre. Since moving to the Lyceum, The REP has produced 54 main stage productions by Latino playwrights, and more than 45 world premieres. The company has received more than 200 awards for artistic excellence from the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle, Patté Theatre Awards, NAACP, Backstage West, Dramalogue and StageSceneLA. In 2005, the San Diego Theatre Critics Circle presented The REP with the Craig Noel Award "For 30 Years of Artistic Dedication to Downtown and Diversity." San Diego Repertory Theatre feeds the curious soul. To learn more about San Diego Repertory Theatre, to purchase tickets, or make a donation, visit sdrep.org. Join us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter (@SanDiegoREP).

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