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PRESS RELEASE

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The Kevin Spacey Foundation (KSF) announces the winners of the UK KSF Artists of Choice Awards 2017.

The Kevin Spacey Foundation (KSF) has announced the winning recipients for its **UK KSF Artists of Choice Awards 2017** – their flagship funding and mentoring initiative for artists in the genres of Theatre, Dance, Film and Musical Theatre. Epitomizing KSF's aim of 'sending the elevator back down'.

Recipients of the **KSF Artists of Choice Awards 2017** will receive £10,000 in funding, year-round support and mentoring by established industry practitioners. Applications were taken from hundreds of emerging artists from across the UK with a shortlist of just 16 invited to interview and audition for a panel of industry experts including Tamara Rojo, Jamie Lloyd, Clive Rowe, Laura Pitt-Pulford, Tamara Harvey, Roy Williams, Sita McIntosh and Kobna Holdbrook-Smith. The winning recipients are as follows:

In the **UK FILM** category: **Saeed Taji Farouky** and **Candle and Bell** with *Strange Cities Are Familiar*, a film about memories, guilt and resilience. Telling the story of Ashraf, a Palestinian father living in the UK, struggling to deal with experiences that haunt him: the promises he couldn't keep, the family he couldn't protect. Saeed is a Palestinian-British filmmaker and artist. He has been writing and directing documentaries and short fiction on themes of colonialism, conflict and human rights since 2004. This is his second film with Candle & Bell

"When you're making films outside the mainstream, making radical work and hoping that it can have an impact, what you crave more than anything is support. Mentorship. You need a family around you that can provide guidance and validation. That's what the KSF award means to me: a confirmation that, yes, what you're doing is worthwhile."

In the **UK THEATRE** category: **The Wardrobe Ensemble** with *Education, Education, Education*, a theatrical love letter to the schools and teachers of the 1990's. Asking the big questions about a country in special measures, exploring what we are taught and why, and where responsibility lies. *Education, Education, Education* is a co-production with Royal & Derngate Northampton and Shoreditch Town Hall, supported by Arts Council England. It will open at the Pleasance at the Edinburgh Fringe this summer. The Wardrobe Ensemble are a group of Bristol-based theatre artists working together to make new plays that dissect the twenty-first century experience, consisting of nine core members, one producer and a constantly growing community of associate artists.

"KSF gave us our first ever grant back in 2013 so we are all thrilled to be supported by them again, on our biggest project yet. This will be invaluable to Education, Education, Education, allowing us to work with lots of brilliant collaborators and reach new audiences - we can't wait to get started."

In the **UK DANCE** category: **Holly Blakey** with *Some Greater Class* is a live dance performance exploring connectivity, class and gender, exposing the subtle and not-so-subtle dynamics of contemporary pop culture and its context. Created in collaboration with musicians Gwilym Gold and Darkstar and produced by Georgina Harper in association with Box Artist Management, *Some Greater Class* is Holly's first independent production. As a choreographer, music video director and artist Blakey brings a unique perspective and this award will support the re-imagining of the work for new spaces and a series of tour dates around the UK including Latitude Festival, Southbank Centre and The Lowry.

This year's Dance recipient will also benefit from additional support from Studio Wayne McGregor as part of their FreeSpace programme, a major new artist development and community engagement programme offering artists studio space free of charge.

"I am over the moon to have received this award from KSF. It will allow me to open a bigger dialogue into dance's position in the world as it is today, questioning our assumptions and expectations. I am so excited to bring these ideas and questions to new audiences around the UK with the support of KSF"

In the **UK MUSICAL THEATRE** category: **Silent Uproar** with *A Super Happy Story (About Feeling Super Sad)* is a cabaret musical about depression in collaboration with Olivier Award Winning writer Jon Brittain (Rotterdam) with Matthew Floyd Jones (Frisky & Mannish). It's a fun, silly and sad show that explains, sings, and throws glitter at how it's OK to not feel OK. Silent Uproar is a Hull-based new writing company. Commissioning writers to create playful and provocative work to help make the world a little less shit.

"KSF's support will not only provide us with the support to create our most ambitious production so far, but it will allow us as a company to grow, and therefore it will help us strive towards our vision of developing and championing bold and provocative new writers and their stories"

Full Panel

KSF Artists of Choice panel members included some of the most exciting and respected creatives working in the industry today, including:

Film

Founder **Kevin Spacey**, Director of Europe for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science **Carola Ash**, Tiger Aspect's **Ben Cavey**, actress **Jo Christie**, film critic **Rhianna Dhillon**, screenwriter **David Klass**, production designer **Dan Leigh**, Development Consultant at Buccaneer Media **Matthew Telfer** and screenwriter **Ben Vanstone**.

Theatre

Playwright **Samuel Adamson**, playwright **Adam Brace**, actor **Michael Cumpsty**, actor **Kobna Holdbrook-Smith**, actor **Jenny Jules**, theatre director **Jamie Lloyd**, WhatsOnStage's **Sita McIntosh**, theatre director **Charlie Westenra**, playwright **Roy Williams**, the Public Theater's **Stephanie Ybarra** and playwright **Anna Ziegler**.

Dance

Bgirl, dancer and choreographer **Ephrat "Bounce" Asherie**, dancer and choreographer **Ivan Blackstock**, Artistic Director Southpaw Dance Company **Robby Graham**, Artistic Director Studio Wayne McGregor & Resident Choreographer of The Royal Ballet **Wayne McGregor CBE**, co-director of The Ailey School **Melanie Person**, Lead Principal and Artistic Director of the English National Ballet **Tamara Rojo**, dancer, choreographer, reviewer and actor **Gus Solomons Jr**, performer, curator and dance writer **Charmaine Warren**, choreographer **Jonathan Watkins** and Artistic Director Phoenix Dance Theatre **Sharon Watson**.

Musical Theatre

Choreographer **Alistair David**, actor **Killian Donnelly**, songwriting team **Zina Goldrich (Composer)** and **Marcy Heisler (Lyricist)**, Artistic Director Theatr Clwyd **Tamara Harvey**, Musical Director **Theo Jamison**, ASCAP'S **Michael Kerker**, The Stables' **Neil Marcus**, Sony/ ATV's **George Maloian**, actress and singer **Laura Pitt-Pulford**, actor and singer **Clive Rowe** and composer/ lyricist **Maury Yeston**.

The Kevin Spacey Foundation (KSF): *'Sending the elevator back down.'*

www.kevinspaceyfoundation.org

We identify emerging artists who have a unique voice and artistic vision and give them the training and resources they need to fully express themselves. By sending the elevator back down to the next generation of artists we build a broader community of people who are empowered to give voice to ideas and concepts that enlighten and enhance the human experience. At present we work in three ways:

1. KSF LEARNING - Creating bespoke education projects for at-risk youth, encouraging aspiration and best-practice teaching techniques for educators to learn from.
2. KSF GRANTS — Enabling the creation of new work by emerging artists, offering them the financial means and mentoring needed to succeed as our **KSF Artists of Choice**.
3. KSF SCHOLARSHIPS - Offering financial assistance to those unable to afford a university education partnering them with world-class universities for the duration of their study.

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