

## **Crowded Fire Theater, Gritty City Rep, and Ubuntu Theater Project**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF THE HIVE PROJECT A BOLD COLLABORATION BETWEEN THREE OF THE BAY AREA'S MOST REVOLUTIONARY THEATER COMPANIES**

**San Francisco Bay Area - Crowded Fire Theater (CFT), Gritty City Rep (GCR), and Ubuntu Theater Project.** A cohort of three theaters announced today an unprecedented joining of forces to cross-pollinate their audiences with the launch of **The Hive**, a collaborative project between Crowded Fire, Gritty City Rep, and Ubuntu Theater Project, supported by a grant from the Zellerbach Family Foundation.

The Bay Area is home to a vibrant community of over 400 theater organizations, and yet, it is rare for organizations to share resources and audiences. At a time when theater audiences are shrinking and aging out, and younger generations struggle to see the relevance of theater, theater companies tend to live in a place of scarcity and competition: for resources, for ticket buyers, for attention.

The Hive Project theaters' artists speak to a new generation of theatergoers, and their leadership is committed to sharing in new ways. With missions rooted in community, representation, and collaboration, the Hive Project theaters have come together to subvert the scarcity model and collaborate in a deep and real way.

"This is a unique and tremendous opportunity for us," says **Crowded Fire Artistic Director Mina Morita**, "to begin the process of changing the genetics of our theater community -- encouraging a more inclusive sharing culture. This is how each of our artistic communities are shaped, and the value from which we choose what we produce...the artists we champion, so now we want to encourage this dynamic across our organizations and within our audiences to create a thriving ecosystem of theater-appreciation and theater-making."

The Hive Project has caught the attention of Bay Area arts funders, and was recently awarded a grant from The Zellerbach Family Foundation. With the Foundation's support, Hive Project theaters will be able to cross--pollinate their most loyal supporters, encouraging them to become ambassadors who awaken other theater -lovers. Special events for Hive members, attended by the artistic directors of all three theaters, will provide insights into the productions and the theater companies themselves. Subsidized

tickets, along with travel and childcare stipends, will be available to ensure that this opportunity is accessible to all.

Says **Ubuntu Theater Project Artistic Director Michael Moran**: “We’re starting to create a sense of community around theater in the Bay that is beyond just A company - it starts to be a synergy among like-minded organizations that are striving for the same goals. Maybe in slightly different ways, but it’s all after the same end: to bring people together, particularly people who have been disenfranchised and who might think theater is ‘not for them’ -- but then they see our plays and realize ‘oh this is absolutely for me.’”

“I feel super honored to be in collaboration with other theater companies doing cutting edge work,” adds **Gritty City Rep Artistic Director Lindsay Krumbein**, “and with a real commitment to putting voices and images and ideas on stage that have been traditionally marginalized, excluded, ignored. There’s a real hunger for the kind of work that all three of these theater companies are doing, and The Hive Project will solidify the cooperation that was already happening.”

Interested in becoming an inaugural Hive member? Reach out to [BAYhiveproject@gmail.com](mailto:BAYhiveproject@gmail.com) and tell them about your favorite production at one of the three theaters!

## **COLLABORATING THEATERS’ MISSION STATEMENTS**

**Ubuntu Theater Project** tells stories that matter, and creates theatrical performances and trainings that intentionally bring diverse participants together. Ubuntu is a Zulu proverb that means ‘I am because we are. I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours.’ The Ubuntu Theatre Project is a collective of artists committed to creating compelling work that unearths the human condition and unites diverse audiences through revelatory, heart-pounding theater.

**Gritty City Repertory Youth Theatre** is a rigorous, pre-professional training program in Oakland where East Bay youth of color have a standing platform for artistic expression. Gritty City Repertory inspires young adults to risk and explore, developing leadership, confidence, and compassion for their human family through the production of powerful theatre. We believe theatre is a natural and exciting community experience that builds empathy and connection amongst the players and the audience. We increase theatre attendance of young people and people of color in Oakland through edgy, accessible, relevant work, impacting our growing community in ways that are lasting and profound.

**Crowded Fire Theater’s** ensemble produces poetic, bold theater created by new and contemporary artists. We seek to engage our community by producing adventurous work, innovative in structure, which addresses the diverse political and social concerns of our audiences.

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