

Crowded Fire Theater

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Contact: David Hyry (415) 864-3547
daldenh@aol.com

CROWDED FIRE THEATER ANNOUNCES ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

SAN FRANCISCO (October 28, 2014) – Crowded Fire Theater (CFT), one of the Bay Area's most innovative and critically acclaimed producers of new plays, today announced an upcoming change in leadership. After six seasons at its helm, Marissa Wolf will be leaving the position of Artistic Director at the end of Crowded Fire's 2014 Season. Wolf took over artistic leadership of the company in 2008 after founding Artistic Director Rebecca Novick's departure a year prior. She heads the company along with CFT Managing Director Tiffany Cothran. Executive Producing Director

"I know I speak for the entire Board when I say how lucky we have all been -- board, staff, resident artists, and the Bay Area theater community -- to have had Marissa as a colleague and inspiration," said Board Chair Peter Glazer, upon hearing of Wolf's planned departure. "People of her talent and grace are rare in this business, and we are thrilled to be able to send her into the next phase of what will be, without question, a brilliant career. Now we are left with the exciting task of taking Crowded Fire into its next adventure with Marissa's tenure as our model of artistic excellence, professionalism, integrity, and mutual trust."

Under Wolf and Cothran's leadership, Crowded Fire has grown significantly, more than doubling its budget, securing a critical new Equity contract for union actors, and deepening support for new play development through the formalization of *The Matchbox: Commissioning and Development Program*. Foundation support has increased as well.

CFT is known for taking bold artistic risks and supporting artists, including emerging playwrights, early in their careers. Recent producing successes commissioned and developed at CFT under Wolf's tenure include *The Late Wedding* and *The Hundred Flowers Project* by Christopher Chen, and *The Taming* by Lauren Gunderson. National playwrights with whom the company has premiered work in the Bay Area include Thomas Bradshaw, Christina Anderson, and Young Jean Lee.

Wolf will depart in December at the close of the company's 2014 season and following Crowded Fire's annual Matchbox Reading Series, introducing four new plays in progress to Bay Area audiences. During the Matchbox Reading Series the company will announce its 2015 mainstage season selected by Wolf, her last official act for a company that will bear her mark for years to come.

"Expect fearless and arresting programming with some familiar faces and a host of new artists as well," says Cothran of the upcoming season. "The Crowded Fire team of Resident Artists are gearing up to deliver powerhouse productions representing an array of diverse voices in 2015, in other words, a quintessential CFT season!"

Wolf is leaving San Francisco for the newly created Director of New Works position at Kansas City Rep. Crowded Fire is working with a transition management consultant to assist the Board of Directors in the hiring of a new Artistic Director in a national search, the details of which will be announced next month. A Search Task Force is in place, led by Board Chair Glazer, which includes representatives of the Board, Staff, and Resident Artists. In the interim, Cothran will assume the role of Executive Producing Director and oversee operations, in consultation with the Board of Directors, as the company moves into its 2015 season. “Marissa is leaving us with an amazing new line-up in place and a noteworthy legacy upon which a new artistic leader can build,” says Cothran. “This is an incredible opportunity for a new Artistic Director, and also an exciting opportunity for us as an organization continuing to grow. Change is a powerful and exhilarating force and everyone at Crowded Fire is eager to begin this new chapter.”

Executive Producing Director Tiffany Cothran is available for questions at tiffany@crowdedfire.org