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SMU'S MEADOWS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS ANNOUNCES
RECIPIENTS OF SECOND ANNUAL MEADOWS PRIZE
International Arts Residency Awarded To Two Artists for 2010

DALLAS (SMU) -- The Meadows School of the Arts at Southern Methodist University has selected two recipients for the second annual 2010 Meadows Prize arts residency: playwright and performer Will Power and choreographer Shen Wei.

Inaugurated in October 2009, the Meadows Prize is presented each fall to up to two pioneering artists. It includes support for a four-to-eight-week residency in Dallas, in addition to a \$25,000 stipend. In return, recipients are expected to interact in a substantive way with Meadows students and collaborating arts organizations, and to leave a lasting legacy in Dallas, such as a work of art that remains in the community, a composition or piece of dramatic writing that would be performed locally, or a new way of teaching in a particular discipline.

A veteran of theatre, film and television, Will Power has won multiple awards for his work, which bridges the gap between the spoken word of hip-hop and traditional theatre. Power's work in Dallas will be a partnership between the Meadows School of the Arts and the Dallas Theater Center. He will be in Dallas for two periods of residency – three weeks each – in 2011. During his residency he will lead workshops for Meadows theatre students, for DTC's resident acting company and for local high school students. He will also write/develop a new theatre piece intended for production at the DTC, possibly in their 2012-13 season.

Shen Wei is an acclaimed choreographer, director, dancer, painter and designer whose many honors include the MacArthur "Genius" Award. As the artistic director of New York-based Shen Wei Dance Arts, he is widely recognized for his defining vision of an intercultural, interdisciplinary and original mode of movement-based performance. Shen Wei's works use visual and storytelling elements from the theater, Chinese opera, and traditional and contemporary art to create what one reviewer called "a fascinating fantasy in movement." For each work created with his company, Shen Wei also develops the sets, costumes and make-up designs. Shen Wei's residency in Dallas will take place over winter-spring 2012. It will include a new work choreographed for SMU dance students, to be presented at their 2012 Spring Dance Concert. In addition, the Meadows School has partnered with TITAS, which plans to present Shen Wei Dance Arts in concert at the Winspear Opera House in early 2012.

"We've taken risks with the Meadows Prize," says José Antonio Bowen, dean of the Meadows School. "Rather than give it to someone who already has a Pulitzer Prize, we are trying to commission a work that will debut in Dallas, and then win the Pulitzer, or a

Tony or an Oscar. These are artists who will challenge Dallas, but they are also artists who are challenging the art world; that is where the action is. We are very excited to not only help bring two new works to Dallas, but also two new models of how artists work. Will Power will work with SMU students and with our community partners to generate new material, perhaps for his new commission, but also to show our students how they can turn their own stories into powerful human drama. This aligns perfectly with the school's mission to increase our community outreach and help artists develop relevance.

“Shen Wei is a beautiful mix of old and new, East and West. His creative process is holistic, and provides a role model for our students – we have been trying to help them learn how dancers, musicians and artists can work together to create new aesthetic experiences. Movement, sight and sound are all a part of how we engage audiences. This new commission will allow students not only to be part of something brand new, but also to be a part of the creative process that we hope they will emulate.”

The first two winners of the Meadows Prize, announced in October 2009, were Grammy-winning contemporary music ensemble eighth blackbird and New York-based public arts organization Creative Time. Eighth blackbird's residency has taken place Oct. 17-23 and Nov. 15-19, 2010, and will continue February 24-27 and March 27-30, 2011. Their residency has focused on developing new curriculum that will help musicians become more entrepreneurial and engaged in their own career plans. It is part of a new Meadows School initiative that includes the launch of the nation's first minor in arts entrepreneurship.

Creative Time's residency has taken the form of three visits to Dallas to meet with a wide range of members of the art community, including artists, collectors, gallery and museum executives, critics, government officials, educators and others. It will culminate in spring 2011 with a public conference at which Creative Time will present their recommendations for growing and nurturing the arts in Dallas.

Full bios of Will Power and Shen Wei, and additional background on the Meadows Prize, follow:

WILL POWER

Will Power is an award-winning playwright and performer. His searing drama *Fetch Clay, Make Man*, starring Ben Vereen, had its world premiere at the McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, N.J., in January 2010 under the direction of Tony Award-winning director Des McAnuff. Power's adaptation of the Greek tragedy *Seven Against Thebes*, retitled *The Seven*, enjoyed a successful Off-Broadway run at the New York Theatre Workshop in 2006 and The La Jolla Playhouse in 2008. His solo show *FLOW* was featured in New York's Hip Hop Theater Festival before touring nationally and internationally to critical acclaim. Power is the 2010-2011 AETNA New Voices Fellow at Hartford Stage, where he is also under commission. His numerous awards include a

United States Artist Prudential Fellowship, a Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, the TCG Peter Zeisler Memorial Award, a Jury Award for Best Theatre Performance at the HBO US Comedy Arts Festival, a Drama Desk Award nomination, and the Trailblazer Award from The National Black Theater Network. Power's numerous film and television appearances include The Steven Colbert Report (Comedy Central) and Bill Moyers on Faith and Reason (PBS). Originally from the Fillmore District in San Francisco, Will Power currently resides in Beacon, New York, with his wife Marla and their two children.

SHEN WEI

Born in Hunan, China, in 1968, Shen Wei left home at the age of nine to study Chinese opera in almost total seclusion. Over the next eight years he mastered the xiao sheng (young male) role, along with the disciplines of traditional Chinese ink painting and calligraphy. He also studied Western visual art from Neo-Classicism to Surrealism and Abstract Expressionism, which gave rise to a sensibility that led to modern dance. In 1991 he became a founding member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, the first modern dance company in China. In 1995, when offered a fellowship to move to New York to study with the Nikolais/Louis Dance Lab, he gave up the comfort and stability of a state-subsidized life in the arts and, with \$500 in his pocket, few friends, and three words of English ("yes", "no" and "thank-you"), he set out to make a new life in the U.S.

Following his debut at the American Dance Festival that same year, his work was soon seen in Taiwan (1996), at New York's Asia Society (1997), at the Stockholm Dance House (1999), the Brighton Arts Festival (2000), the Edinburgh Festival (2000), and at the Millennium Moves Festival (Germany, 2000). In July 2000 he formed Shen Wei Dance Arts (SWDA) with performances of *Near the Terrace* at the American Dance Festival. In 2003 his company made its New York debut at the Lincoln Center Festival. For the past 10 years, Shen Wei Dance Arts has toured extensively on five continents. Shen Wei has created 11 new works for SWDA: *Near the Terrace Part One* (2000), *Folding* (2000), *Behind Resonance* (2001), *Near the Terrace Part Two* (2001), *Rite of Spring* (2003), *Connect Transfer* (2004), *Second Visit to the Empress* (2005), *Map* (2005), *Re- Part I* (2006), *Re- Part II* (2007), and *Re- Part III* (2009). The entire *Re-Tryptich* premiered at Alice Tully Hall in 2009, opening the Lincoln Center Festival. In 2008, Shen Wei was commissioned to choreograph part of the Opening Ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics. In July 2010, he premiered a piece for Les Ballets de Monaco, which incorporated film he created for the piece and utilized a fully electronic score. In September 2010, he created choreography for the Rome Opera's production of Rossini's *Moise et Pharaon*, which premieres in December 2010.

In recognition of these achievements, Shen Wei has been honored with the MacArthur "Genius" Award and John Simon Guggenheim and United States Artist Prudential Fellowships. He has received six commissions from the American Dance Festival, two from Het Muziektheater Amsterdam, two from the Lincoln Center Festival, and two from

the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. SWDA has been honored with residencies at the John F. Kennedy Center, Syracuse University and Duke University. As a visual artist independent of Shen Wei Dance Arts, Shen Wei is a painter, designer and photographer. A series of paintings created in conjunction with his ballet, Rite of Spring, were first exhibited as part of the company's New York debut at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2003. In October 2006, the paintings toured with the company at the Hong Kong New Vision Festival, and in July 2007 they returned to New York in tandem with the company's performance there of Second Visit to the Empress as part of the Lincoln Center Festival. His book of photography, Tibet, was created to raise awareness of that region. Its proceeds support the Pandedajie School and Dickey Orphanage in Lhasa.

ABOUT THE MEADOWS PRIZE

The Meadows Prize replaced the Meadows Award, which was given annually from 1981 to 2003 to honor the accomplishments of an artist at the pinnacle of a distinguished career. Meadows Prize recipients must be pioneering artists and scholars with an emerging international profile, active in a discipline represented by one of the academic units within the Meadows School: advertising, art, art history, arts administration, cinema-television, corporate communications, dance, journalism, music and theatre. The Meadows Prize is sponsored by the Meadows School and The Meadows Foundation, in partnership with the new AT&T Center for the Performing Arts and local Dallas arts organizations.

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