

NEWS RELEASE

REBECCA HORN, JIŘÍ KYLIÁN, YOUSSEU N'DOUR, MARTIN SCORSESE, WOLE SOYINKA AND KATE VALK SELECT YOUNG ARTISTS FOR GLOBAL MENTORING PROGRAMME

Geneva, 29 May 2008 – Six talented young artists from Argentina, Australia, Honduras, Japan and the United States have been chosen by Rebecca Horn, Jiří Kylián, Youssou N'Dour, Martin Scorsese, Wole Soyinka and Kate Valk to work with them for a year of individual mentoring and collaboration on the **Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative 2008-2009**, it was announced today in London.

“We are delighted that this outstanding group of emerging artists from around the world is able to join us in this journey of discovery,” said Rebecca Irvin, head of the Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative at Rolex. “We welcome them to the programme.”

The six Protégés in the 2008-2009 cycle of the Arts Initiative are:

•Dance: Jason Akira Somma (Selected by Jiří Kylián)

American dancer/choreographer Jason Akira Somma, aged 28, merges dance and visual arts in an imaginative way, breaking down the boundaries between these art forms. His wide-ranging work includes performances at such iconic New York venues as the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) and the Dance Theater Workshop, a dance-themed video and a recently commissioned film, which he will direct and choreograph. Jason Akira Somma and Jiří Kylián plan to collaborate on a new work celebrating Nederlands Dans Theater's 50th anniversary in 2009.

•Film: Celina Murga (Selected by Martin Scorsese)

Celina Murga, 35, from Buenos Aires, has been recognised in Argentina and beyond for her poignant cinematic style. In 2002, she directed her debut feature, *Ana y Los Otros (Ana and the Others)*, which has been acclaimed at film festivals, including Venice and Toronto. She is now in post-production on a second feature, *Una Semana Solos (A Week Alone)*. Celina Murga will work with Martin Scorsese during the shoot of his new film.

•Literature: Tara June Winch (Selected by Wole Soyinka)

Tara June Winch, 24, an Australian of Aboriginal, Afghan and English heritage, began writing at the age of 17. Her first novel, *Swallow the Air*, published in 2006, was an immediate critical success and won several Australian literary awards. She hopes that, with Wole Soyinka's guidance, she will complete her second manuscript, continue her journey along "a path of maturation and wholeness...and add to the wealth of indigenous literature".

•Music: Aurelio Martínez (Selected by Youssou N'Dour)

Composer/performer Aurelio Martínez, 37, from Honduras, is one of the leading figures of the threatened Garifuna culture that fuses African and Caribbean-Indian roots. In 2004, he was named "Newcomer of the Year" by AfroPop Worldwide for his first solo album, *Garifuna Soul*. A member of the Honduran National Congress, he is both a cultural and political spokesperson. Aurelio Martínez will tour with Youssou N'Dour in Europe and then travel to Africa, exploring together the roots of their musical traditions.

•Theatre: Nahuel Emiliano Perez Biscayart (Selected by Kate Valk)

Aged 22, Argentinian actor Nahuel Perez Biscayart has already appeared in dozens of films, plays and television productions, earning accolades for his characterisations. His performances include roles in plays as varied as Shakespeare and Cocteau. He starred in the 2007 film *La Sangre Brota (Blood Appears)* and won Best Actor awards for his performance in the coming-of-age film, *Glue*. Nahuel Perez Biscayart will spend time working with Kate Valk and the Wooster Group in New York.

•Visual Arts: Masanori Handa (Selected by Rebecca Horn)

Masanori Handa, 28, is one of Japan's fastest-rising contemporary artists. His first solo exhibition, an installation entitled *White Beach-Green Pine/Nuclear Plant-Gourds*, at the Kodama Gallery in Tokyo in 2005, is an example of his large-scale projects that connect apparently far-fetched things in a dynamic way and demonstrate the effects of human intervention on nature. Masanori Handa will move to Berlin to work with Rebecca Horn for nine months.

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative is the world's most prestigious artist development programme, unique in its artistic and geographic reach. Founded in 2002, the Arts Initiative brings talented young artists together with renowned figures in all fields of the arts for a year of individual guidance. The master artists who have participated as Mentors are: John Baldessari, Tahar Ben Jelloun, Sir Colin Davis, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, William Forsythe, Stephen Frears, Sir Peter Hall, David Hockney, Toni Morrison, Mira Nair, Jessye Norman, Álvaro Siza, Julie Taymor, Saburo Teshigawara, Mario Vargas Llosa, Robert Wilson and Pinchas Zukerman.

“Through the encouragement and support of distinguished masters across the arts over the last six years, we are beginning to see the fruits of this programme emerge,” Rebecca Irvin said. “Young artists are expressing their talent in new ways; artists who are often working outside conventional frameworks of support are getting new opportunities; the eminent figures who give their time so generously are enjoying the experience of developing new creative relationships to enrich their practice. We at Rolex are proud that we are able to play our part in making this happen.”

For further information on the **Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative**, visit **rolexmentorprotege.com**. Texts and high-resolution photos can be downloaded from the website press room.

Press Enquiries:

Ms. Jill Morrison

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative

P.O. Box 1311

1211 Geneva 26

Switzerland

rmp@rolex.com

Tel: +41 22 302 22 00

Fax: +41 22 302 25 85