

## NEWS RELEASE

### FINALISTS ANNOUNCED FOR ROLEX ARTS INITIATIVE

#### **19 Emerging Talents Chosen from Worldwide Pool of Artists; In May, Six Will Become Protégés to Collaborate with Rebecca Horn, Jirí Kylián, Youssou N'Dour, Martin Scorsese, Wole Soyinka and Kate Valk**

**Geneva, 11 April 2008** – Rolex announced today the names of 19 young artists who have been chosen as finalists, from among 124 candidates around the globe, in the fourth cycle of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative, which pairs emerging talents with masters in their field for a year of one-to-one collaboration.

Following a worldwide search by independent panels of experts, these 19 individuals – 10 women and nine men from 10 countries – are currently being interviewed by the Mentors who will each choose one of them as a Protégé for the 2008-2009 mentoring year.

The six Protégés – one in each of the six disciplines in the Rolex programme encompassing all the arts – will be announced at a press briefing in London on 29 May.

These young talents will be guided by the exceptional artists who will serve as Mentors in the year ahead: Rebecca Horn (visual arts; Germany), Jirí Kylián (dance; Czech Republic), Youssou N'Dour (music; Senegal), Martin Scorsese (film; United States), Wole Soyinka (literature; Nigeria) and Kate Valk (theatre; United States).

“These 19 finalists, chosen in a rigorous evaluation process, are among the world’s most exciting and interesting young artists,” said Patrick Heiniger, Chief Executive Officer of Rolex SA. “Rolex is delighted to highlight their exceptional talent.”

The finalists, listed by discipline, are:

**Dance:** Mr Mohamad Arifwaran Bin Shaharuddin (Malaysian, living in Germany, 30), Mr Thomas Noonan (American, living in Germany, 24) and Mr Jason Akira Somma (United States, 27);

**Film:** Ms Joana Hadjithomas (Lebanese, living in France, 38), Mr Yuhang Ho (Malaysia, 36) and Ms Celina Murga (Argentina, 35);

**Literature:** Ms Petrina Crockford (United States, 27), Ms Vanessa Garcia (United States, 28), Ms Courteney Petrosino (United States, 28) and Ms Tara June Winch (Australia, 24);

**Music:** Ms Mariana Baraj (Argentina, 37), Mr Aurelio Martínez (Honduras, 37) and Ms Martha Redbone (United States, 34);

**Theatre:** Mr Ahmad Fahmi Bin Mohamed Fadzil (Malaysia, 27); Ms Diana Fidelia Flores Palacios (Mexico, 29) and Mr Nahuel Emiliano Perez Biscayart (Argentina, 22);

**Visual Arts:** Ms Nazgol Ansarinia (Iran, 28), Mr Michel Groisman (Brazil, 35) and Mr Masanori Handa (Japan, 28).

Although only six of them will be Rolex Protégés, all 19 finalists have had the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the Mentor in their discipline. Since the 2002 launch of the Rolex Arts Initiative, such meetings have often led to valuable opportunities for finalists to advance their artistic work or careers.

Anonymous nominating panels, including international artists, institutional leaders and professionals, in each of the six disciplines search for potential protégés worldwide – artists do not apply directly to the programme. The 19 finalists of the current cycle – whose average age is 30 – were selected by the panels of experts from 124 nominated candidates in 38 countries. There were 20 candidates in dance, 25 in film, 22 in literature, 17 in music, 19 in theatre and 21 in visual arts.

The official mentoring year begins in June 2008 and concludes in June 2009. During this year of creative collaboration, the Mentors will provide individual guidance to their respective Protégés, giving these gifted young artists an unprecedented opportunity to learn, create and grow outside the constraints of financial pressures and marketplace demands. Each pair will decide the most effective way of interacting.

Working with expert teams of artistic advisors around the globe, Rolex organises the entire biennial Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative from its headquarters in Geneva. An extraordinary roll-call of artists has already taken part as Mentors. They 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. The creative results of the programme extend globally, developing a growing community of talented artists of the new generation under the auspices of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative.

Further information on the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative can be found at [rolexmentorprotege.com](http://rolexmentorprotege.com).

**Press Enquiries:**

Ms Jill Morrison

The Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative

P.O. Box 1311

Switzerland

[rmp@rolex.com](mailto:rmp@rolex.com)

Tel: +41 22 302 76 88

Fax: +41 22 302 25 85