



For Immediate Release

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WOOLLY MAMMOTH ANNOUNCES ANDREW W. MELLON FOUNDATION PLAYWRIGHT RESIDENCY AWARD FOR ROBERT O'HARA

WOOLLY COMPANY MEMBER RECEIVES \$185,000, THREE-YEAR GRANT TO JOIN ARTISTIC STAFF FULL-TIME

(Washington, DC) In December 2012, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in New York awarded a \$185K playwright residency grant to support a new full-time position at **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** for playwright/director and Woolly Company Member **Robert O'Hara**, through December 31, 2015.

One of 14 residency award recipients announced last month, O'Hara directed *In the Continuum*, which was presented at Woolly in 2006, and wrote the Woolly world premieres *Antebellum* (2009) and *Bootycandy* (2011). He joined Woolly's Artistic Company in 2011. Now, as a full-time staff member, he will play an integral role in season planning and the artistic development of new work and emerging talent. He will also direct productions, represent the theatre locally and nationally to artists and supporters, facilitate pre- and post-show discussions, and support Woolly's Connectivity Department to create dynamic events surrounding each show. Meanwhile, as an ambassador for Woolly, O'Hara will cultivate relationships with national and international festivals and venues to broaden Woolly's profile and impact; and, through his affiliations with contemporary playwrights, will scout new work to be considered for production at Woolly. Finally, his residency will include the development and world premiere of his newest play—*Zombie: The American*, a futuristic thriller about a White House literally haunted by America's past—commissioned through Woolly's innovative \$4 million fundraising effort, **Free the Beast!**

"Robert O'Hara is a signature Woolly artist, one of the most provocative playwrights in America, and I'm incredibly grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for this opportunity to draw him even more closely into the Woolly family," says Woolly Artistic Director Howard Shalwitz. "The core of his residency will be the continued development of *Zombie: The American*—which had an initial reading at Woolly just a few weeks ago—and other new works cooking in the playwrighting part of Robert's brain. But over the next three years, the multi-faceted Mr. O'Hara will also contribute to Woolly as a director, as a core member of our artistic planning team, and as a liaison to our company, our community, and the national theatre field. Our relationship with Robert has already yielded three big artistic successes, and we're excited to see how his residency influences—in unpredictable ways—both Robert's and Woolly's artistic evolution."

"I'm incredibly honored and excited about this Residency," says Robert O'Hara. "It will allow me to grow as a playwright, but more specifically as an overall artist. I'd like to thank The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for this rare opportunity to work closely with the visionary founding Artistic Director, Howard Shalwitz, and his extraordinary team at Woolly. They have been a constant support and well of creativity for me and my work."

ABOUT ROBERT O'HARA

Robert O'Hara received 2010 Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding New Play for *Antebellum*. He wrote and directed the world premiere of *Insurrection: Holding History* at the New York Shakespeare Festival, which received the Oppenheimer Award for Best New American Play and was subsequently published by both TCG and Dramatist Play Service. He rewrote *The Wiz* (revival at LaJolla Playhouse, directed by Des McAnuff) and ACT/Zeum recently produced his play, *Good Breeding*. *Bootycandy* premiered at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in 2011, and will be presented at Philadelphia's Wilma Theater later this season. *Etiquette of Vigilance* premiered at Steppenwolf Theatre Company and *Brave Brood* and *American Maul* have been produced around the country. He is currently under commission from Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and Royal Exchange Theater in Manchester, England. He has been awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship, TCG Extended Collaboration Grant, NEA/TCG Fellowship, a Van Lier Fellow at New Dramatists, the first Mark Taper Forum Sherwood Award, and the TANNE Award for Exceptional Body of Work. He has been commissioned by LaJolla Playhouse, The McCarter Theatre, NEA, Mark Taper Forum, Theater Emory, Theatres De Mimes, Le Theatre L'Odeon, and Theaterworks/USA. He has been an Artist in Residence at the American Conservatory Theater, New York Shakespeare Festival, Theater/Emory, and O'Neill Theater Festival, as well as an Endowed Chair at UCSD, Visiting Professor at DePaul University School of the Arts, UChicago, and Tufts. He has served on the OBIE Jury, various NEA/TCG juries, and Pew Fellowship juries. He is currently an Adjunct Professor at NYU/Tisch School of the Arts Undergraduate Department. Several of his plays have been published in anthologies and separately.

This season, Robert O'Hara will direct Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* at Arena Stage, co-produced with Houston's Alley Theatre.

To learn more about Robert O'Hara, please visit www.robtohara.com.

ABOUT THE RESIDENCY AWARD

Commencing this January, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation program will provide three years of salary, benefits, and a flexible research and development fund for an American playwright at each selected theater. The initiative developed from the Foundation's longstanding commitment across disciplines to provide institutional support to generative artists and to improve both developmental processes and prospects for the continued life of new works.

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ABOUT WOOLLY

Now in its 33rd Season, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company continues to hold its place at the leading edge of American theatre. Acknowledged as “one of the most influential outposts for the best new American plays” (*The Washington Post*), and “known for its productions of innovative new plays” (*The New York Times*), Woolly Mammoth is a national leader in the development of new works and one of the best known and most influential mid-sized theatres in America.

Woolly Mammoth’s Season 33 has been titled ***My Roots, My Revolution***. The season includes a group of unforgettable characters who choose whether to embrace their legacies, run from them, or invent a whole new future. Works include Kristoffer Diaz’s *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Sept 3 – Oct 7), Mia Chung’s *You for Me for You* (Nov 5 – Dec 2), Danai Gurira’s *The Convert* (Feb 13 – Mar 10), Mike Daisey’s *American Utopias* (Mar 25 – Apr 21), and Aaron Posner’s *Stupid Fucking Bird* (May 27 – June 23). This holiday season featured Shenoah Allen and Mark Chavez’s *The Pajama Men: In The Middle of No One* (Dec 11 – Jan 6).

www.woollymammoth.net

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