

For Immediate Release
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**The Living Word Project Presents the 7th Annual
Living Word Festival
*RACE IS FICTION***

**Produced by the Resident Theater company of Youth Speaks and
Curated by Artistic Director Marc Bamuthi Joseph
Featuring New Performance Works, Live Music, and a Host of Outreach
Activities Including Workshops, Panels, and a Live Graffiti Battle**

October 17-25, 2008 in San Francisco and Oakland

*Featured Artists and Participants Include Mos Def, Marc Bamuthi Joseph,
Goapele, Chinaka Hodge, Rafael Casal, Daveed Diggs, Nico Cary, Jason Samuels-Smith,
The Kev Choice Ensemble, SF Jazz Youth All-Stars and
Guillermo Gómez-Peña and La Pocha Nostra*

SAN FRANCISCO—September 17, 2008—Youth Speaks is pleased to announce the 7th Annual Living Word Festival, *Race is Fiction*, will take place in San Francisco and Oakland from October 17-25, 2008.

The Festival, produced by the Living Word Project (the resident theater company of Youth Speaks) is curated by acclaimed artist, activist and educator **Marc Bamuthi Joseph**, and features new commissioned performance works, live music, and a host of outreach activities that include workshops, speaker sessions, literary panels, educational activities, and more.

The 7th Annual Living Word Festival features the premiere of *War Peace: The One Drop Rule*, a youth driven hip hop theater piece that imagines the Bay Area as a potential war zone in a time of protracted drought. Directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph, *War Peace* is collaboratively written and performed by **Chinaka Hodge, Rafael Casal, Daveed Diggs**, and **Nico Cary**. Now in their early 20s, these four artists boast work published in journals such as *McSweeney's* and *Newsweek*, hold performance credits that include appearances on Russell Simmons' Def Poetry for HBO, and hold undergraduate degrees from Berkeley, NYU, and Brown. They all grew up participating in programs by Youth Speaks, the nation's leading nonprofit presenter of spoken word performance, education, and youth development programs.

War Peace features an original score by the **SF Jazz Youth All-Stars**, while Emmy award winning choreographer and tap sensation **Jason Samuels-Smith** joins the cast and performs a percussive tap and modern movement vocabulary to underscore the work's spoken language.

"The Living Word Festival is committed to presenting groundbreaking new interdisciplinary work rooted in spoken word," said Festival Curator Marc Bamuthi Joseph. "*War Peace* is another extraordinary new work that manipulates the spoken

word form and introduces other collaborators and artistic disciplines to complete their narrative scope.”

War Peace is the Living Word Project’s eighth, verse-based interdisciplinary work, and joins critical successes such as *the break/s*, *In Spite of Everything*, and the Robert Moses’ Kin collaboration *Cause*. *War Peace* takes place at Theater Artaud on Thursday and Friday, October 23 and 24.

Additional programming on October 23 and October 25 is *Unbuckled, Uncensored*, a new solo work by spoken word pioneer **Regie Cabico**, directed by playwright, poet, actor, director, and founding member of the Pomo Afro Homos, **Brian Freeman**. In *Unbuckled, Uncensored*, queer Filipino artist Cabico traces his life from his Catholic family roots and dreams of Broadway musicals to the spoken word slam scene and back again.

Also on October 24 the Living Word Festival presents *Animal Farm*, a new work by dancer and choreographer **Jacinta Vlach** and **Liberation Dance Theater**. This collaboration with cinematographer Bruce Francis Cole and beat composer Willie Adams takes its inspiration by the novel of the same name.

On Saturday, October 25, The Living Word Festival presents the San Francisco premiere of *Mapa/Corpo 3: Interactive rituals for the new millenium*, a new work by acclaimed performance artist, writer, activist, and educator **Guillermo Gómez-Peña** and La Pocha Nostra at Theater Artaud at 7pm.

The Living Word Festival’s Workshops & Educational Activities

The Living Word Festival kicks off on October 17, with workshops and performances co-hosted by SF Green Festival, Global Exchange, and Grind 4 Green at the Museum of the African Diaspora (MOAD) in downtown San Francisco. The workshops are followed by a lunchtime outdoor concert with **Goapele** and the **Key Choice Ensemble** at Yerba Buena Gardens at 12:30pm. That evening at 7pm, local literary icons, **Adam Mansbach** and **Jeff Chang** participate in a literary panel and conversation around the theme “Race is Fiction” at the Oakland Museum.

The Festival’s outreach activities continue on October 18, when the Living Word Festival presents *red black and GREEN*, an Environmental Caucus and Concert at deFremey Park in Oakland. The thematic focus of the day will be eco-equity, committed to the position that poor communities and communities of color be logistically and psychologically included into the new, clean and green economy.

The day will feature the **2nd Annual Estria Invitational Living Word Graffiti Battle**, a partnership with Samurai Graffix and Tumis. Twenty contest participants will be given a 6x8 foot canvas, biodegradable materials, and non-aerosol, non-toxic paint and will be charged with creating environmentally themed, graffiti style tags around the park. The work will be sold at a silent auction to benefit Youth Speaks. An outdoor performance in the park featuring Los Rakas and a special guest will be held concurrently.

The day also features **Bamboo Architecture**, an educational partnership with Global Exchange that will teach youth about the environmental strength of bamboo, and charge them with building bamboo structures (to be later displayed at the San Francisco Green Festival in November.)

About the Living Word Festival

The Living Word Festival is an annual community gathering of artists, educators, presenters and performers focusing on literary performance and literacy education. Founded by Youth Speaks under the direction of Marc Bamuthi Joseph, the Living Word Festival is committed to exploring new modes of literary performance, and to engaging and supporting artists who are breaking the boundaries of hip-hop theater and spoken word theater.

Partners for this year's Living Word Festival include Yerba Buena Gardens Festival, MOAD, Ella Baker Center, Global Exchange and the SF Green Festival.

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Living Word Festival 2008

RACE IS FICTION

October 17-25, 2008

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2008

10am

Museum of the African Diaspora

685 Mission Street (at Third), San Francisco

Workshops and performances co-hosted by

SF Green Festival, Global Exchange, and Grind for the Green.

12:30pm

Yerba Buena Gardens

760 Howard Street, San Francisco

Lunchtime outdoor concert with Goapele and Kev Choice Ensemble

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18

11am-5pm

red black and GREEN

Environmental Caucus and Concert at deFremey Park (aka Little Bobby Hutton Park)

1651 Adeline Street

Oakland, CA

Featuring the 2nd annual Estria Invitational Living Word Graffiti Battle, Bamboo

Architecture, skateboard and low rider bike expo, presented by Hood Games, and a free outdoor musical concert featuring Los Rakas and Mos Def.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23

7pm

"War Peace: The One Drop Rule", Featuring Jason Samuels Smith, Directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph and "Unbuckled, Uncensored" by Regie Cabico, Directed by Brian Freeman

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24

7pm

"War Peace: The One Drop Rule", Featuring Jason Samuels Smith, Directed by Marc Bamuthi Joseph and "Animal Farm" by Jacinta Vlach and Liberation Dance Theater.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25

7pm

"Mapa/Corpo 3: Interactive rituals for the new millennium" Featuring Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Roberto Sifuentes, Violeta Luna and a local acupuncturist and "Unbuckled, Uncensored" by Regie Cabico, Directed by Brian Freeman.

TICKETS AVAILABLE AT:

415.863.9834 or www.brownpapertickets.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT WWW.YOUTHSPEAKS.ORG