

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NOVEMBER 27, 2002

MADNESS AND ARTS 2003

World Festival

UNIQUE NEW FESTIVAL COMING TO HARBOURFRONT CENTRE

(Toronto, Ontario) The world's first arts festival devoted to celebrating creativity and mental health will take place at Harbourfront Centre March 21 to 30.

Madness and Arts 2003 World Festival will showcase more than 100 artists from eight countries around the world – actors, dancers, musicians, painters, writers – all with one thing in common: their work explores mental health issues.

The nine day event which has been three years in the making also includes an international art show as well as a series of lectures, seminars and workshops, all presented by the Workman Theatre Project of Ontario and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in association with Harbourfront Centre.

“There has never been anything quite like this before,” said Lisa Brown, founder of the Workman Theatre and one of the festival's originators. “Madness and Arts is a unique opportunity for people to see wonderfully talented artists and to learn more about an issue that is seldom in the public eye.

“We think the festival will be so successful it will evolve into a biennial event,” she said.

Among the performers: Ryuzanji & Company, Japan's leading underground theatre company; Y Touring Company, from the U.K.; Germany's Theatre Sycorax; a 10-person band from La Orquesta de los Pacientes del Hospital Psiquiatrico de la Habana, and internationally renowned dance choreographer Rosanna Gamson and many others. Participants will be attending the festival from the U.K., Japan, Germany Denmark, the United States, Cuba and Australia as well as Canada.

The visual art show, which will take place at the York Quay Gallery at Harbourfront Centre throughout the festival is really four shows in one with:

- selections from Being Scene, the annual year-long art exhibit of the Workman Theatre Project in partnership with Ontario's Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- representation from Toronto-based Creative Works Studio
- pieces from The Living Museum, the Queens, New York, gallery at the Creedmoor Psychiatric Centre, and

- works from Gallery Gachet, of Vancouver, which provides support to artists with health issues.

The festival will feature several well-known keynote speakers, each with special understanding of the connections between creativity and the mental illness. It will also host three panel discussions and a series of hands-on workshops where visitors will get the opportunity to learn more about a whole host of arts, including clowning, mask-making, dance movement and improv.

The Workman Theatre Project is a not-for-profit arts company that brings together people who have experienced mental illness with professionals from Toronto's active arts community. Since 1990, it has created more than 20 theatrical productions, presents the annual Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival along with the annual Being Scene art exhibit and provides training and support to its members.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) was created in 1998 through the successful merger of the Addiction Research Foundation, the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, the Queen Street Mental Health Centre and the Donwood Institute.

CAMH, the largest mental health and addiction facility in Canada, is a public hospital providing direct patient care for people with mental health and addiction problems, as well as a research facility, an education and promotion and prevention services across the province. CAMH is a teaching hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto and the World Health Organization.

-30-

For more information, please contact:
Lynn M. Russell
Unique Views
416-531-7770

Please check our website at: www.madnessandarts.com