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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WHO: Tellin' Tales Theatre

WHAT: Six Stories Up in the Art Institute

WHEN: Fridays, November 6 & 13 at 7:30 pm  
Saturdays, November 7 & 14 at 7:30 pm  
Sundays, November 8 & 15 at 2 pm

Sign language interpreted and audio described show November 8

WHERE: Athenaeum Theatre  
2936 N. Southport Ave., Chicago (Lincoln & Southport)  
Public transit: Lincoln Ave. bus or Brown line stop at Wellington

TICKETS: \$22 Adults / \$17 Students  
( Ticket prices include \$2 Athenaeum Restoration Fee)  
Group rate available  
Call: 1-773-935-6875  
Go online: [athenaeumtheatre.org](http://athenaeumtheatre.org)

**MIDDLE SCHOOL KIDS EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF ART ON THE HUMAN SPIRIT  
IN TELLIN' TALES THEATRE'S *SIX STORIES UP IN THE ART INSTITUTE*—  
OPENING NOVEMBER 6 AT THE ATHENAEUM THEATRE.**

CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER 12, 2015—What constitutes a masterpiece? Tellin' Tales Theatre in partnership with ADA25 Chicago brings together middle school kids, their adult mentors, and artists with mental and developmental disabilities from Bridgeport's Project Onward to answer this question. The result is a moving, often hilarious look at the lives of six great masters and how their struggles and artwork mirror those of the Project Onward artists and the lives of the apprentices themselves. This riveting show is completely written, performed and produced by

children and adults with and without disabilities. Original artwork will be created by Project Onward artists.

### **About the Mentoring Program**

Six Stories Up is an annual mentoring program developed by Tellin' Tales Theatre where middle school children and their mentors write and star in a full-length play with the theme changing every year. This year's *Six Stories Up in the Art Institute* is the final production of Tellin' Tales Theatre's 19<sup>th</sup> season. Earlier this year, ADA25 Chicago challenged Tellin' Tales to change the game to more fully realize the Americans with Disabilities Act's promise of inclusion, equality, independent living and full participation for people with disabilities. In August, storytellers were paired with middle school students with and without disabilities. Each team was given the mission to explore the life and work of one great master\* and compare him or her with a Project Onward artist. In early September, mentors and their apprentices came together to link the six vignettes and draft a final script. All participants will perform *Six Stories up in the Art Institute* under the direction of Artistic Director Tekki Lomnicki, assisted by Sue Nunamaker.

*\*artists being explored include Rousseau, Picasso, Toulouse-Lautrec, Basquiat, Kandinsky, Kahlo and Van Gogh*

### **About the Cast and Crew**

The cast and production team of *Six Stories in the Art Institute* is an exciting mix of ethnicity and ability. Mentors include Stephen Donart, Sr. Shannon Fox, Michael Herzovi, Matthew Kopp, Tekki Lomnicki and Rosemary Postula. Apprentices include Jessie Bowers, Lizzy Brahin, Emily Buell, Elizabeth Sprecher, Abad Viquez and Calvin Wiersum, Carl Ulaszek spearheads set design aided by Project Onward artists; Matthew Wycislak and Kathryn Rydz design masks and props; and composer, Chris Errera creates the original score. Internationally recognized artist David Lee Csicsko created the memorable poster for this year's Six Stories Up production as he has for each prior year's Six Stories Up.

### **About Tellin' Tales Theatre**

*The mission of Tellin' Tales Theatre is to shatter barriers between the disabled and able-bodied worlds through the transformative power of personal story. We bring together children and adults from both communities to share their stories in theatrically innovative productions and programs to promote awareness, understanding and acceptance.* Artistic Director Tekki Lomnicki has led storytelling programs for Gallery 37 and After School Matters for over a decade. The idea for the initial *Six Stories Up* came from her work with these programs, which included students with and without disabilities. Lomnicki, herself a person with a disability, took the process a step further to include adult mentors with disabilities. *Six Stories Up in the Art Institute* is a result of this mix, and strives to remove all barriers between artists, including ethnicity, gender and ability.

### **Tellin' Tales Theatre's 2015 Season:**

#### **Angels and Demons—Adult solo performance**

Lifeline Theatre's Fillet of Solo, January 2015

#### **DiverCity—Solo works by adult performers with disabilities**

Frontier Theater, May 2015

#### **Phobias—Adult solo performance**

Prop Thtr, July 2015

#### **Monsters Under the Bed—A reading by Tellin' Tales Theatre's young adult writers**

Prop Thtr, July 2015

#### **Six Stories Up in the Art Institute—Mentoring program and show**

Athenaeum Theatre, November 2015

*Six Stories Up in the Art Institute* is geared toward adults and children age ten and up. The show runs approximately 90 minutes with one intermission.

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