

ALLEY THEATRE

FOR RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACTS:

Whitney Spencer, Public Relations & Communications Manager (whitneys@alleytheatre.org)

713-315-5454

Arts-based Community Development Investment for Houston

The Alley Theatre one of 89 National Endowment for the Arts Our Town projects selected nationwide

HOUSTON— National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu announced 89 awards totaling \$6.89 million supporting projects across the nation through the NEA's Our Town program. The Alley Theatre is one of the recommended organizations for a grant of \$125,000 to support the launch of a city-wide Latino Theatre Initiative, El Zocalo. The NEA received 274 eligible applications for Our Town this year and will make grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000.

"The arts reflect the vision, energy, and talent of America's artists and arts organizations," said NEA Chairman Jane Chu. "The National Endowment for the Arts is proud to support organizations such as the Alley Theatre, to cultivate vitality in their communities through the arts."

"This award marks the beginning of the Alley's long-term initiative to engage with Houston's large and growing Latino population. *Misa Fronteriza* is a timely piece that tackles the challenging subject of US/Mexico border relations with sharp, compelling humor. We look forward to presenting the play on our stage and bringing the arts outside of our theatre walls into the community," said Alley Theatre Managing Director Dean Gladden.

El Zocalo, a city-wide Latino Theatre Initiative, will bring ongoing performances and workshops to Houston's Latino neighborhoods to facilitate civic participation and community cohesion through theatre. The first year of the El Zocalo program includes performances of *Misa Fronteriza*, a satirical comedy about life near the US/Mexico border, that will be performed in community centers including Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts (MECA), Talento Bilingüe de Houston, BakerRipley (formerly Neighborhood Centers Inc.), and the Alley Theatre as part of the the University of Houston's Mitchell Center for the Arts' CounterCurrent Festival. In addition to performances, the Alley's Education and Community Engagement team will work with the artists to organize residencies and workshops to foster long-term, in-depth dialogues around telling the communities unique stories. El Zocalo establishes new spaces for Latino theatre that might otherwise feel marginalized by larger arts institutions and provides a platform for creative, compassionate discourse within Houston's Latino populations.

For a **complete list of projects** recommended for Our Town grant support, please visit the NEA web site at www.arts.gov. The NEA recently relaunched the [creative placemaking web page](#) which has significant resources.

To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEASpring17**.

ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE: The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading not-for-profit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company led by Artistic Director Gregory Boyd and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. Home to a Resident Company of actors, the Alley creates a wide-ranging repertoire and innovative productions of classics, neglected modern plays, and premieres. Alley All New, the initiative to commission and develop new work year round, features the Alley All New Festival each season presenting workshops and readings of new plays and musicals in process. Additionally the Alley serves 65,000 students annually with award-winning education and community programs including in-school arts integration residencies, school tours and student matinees. A recipient of the Special Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre, the Alley has brought productions to Broadway, 40 American cities including New York's Lincoln Center and internationally to London, Berlin, Paris, and St. Petersburg throughout its 70 year history.

After a year-long, \$46.5 million renovation during the 2014-15 season, the Alley Theatre now has one of the most technically advanced non-profit theatre complexes in the nation. With more than 450 performances in 2016-2017, the Alley will produce more shows than all other performing arts organizations in the Houston Theater District combined.

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