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BRECKENRIDGE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS RETURNS AUGUST 11–20, 2017

Featuring U.S. premieres, Colorado debuts and Breckenridge exclusives

**With works and performances by artists from around the world, including
Craig Walsh, Casus Circus, Héctor Esrawe + Ignacio Cadena, Polyglot Theatre,
Rhannon Giddens, Close-Act Theatre, Itchy-O, and more**

BRECKENRIDGE, CO (May 4, 2017) – The **Breckenridge International Festival of Arts (BIFA)** returns to the high country with its celebration of adventure, play and creativity from **August 11–20, 2017**. From human-sized ants and a psychedelic marching band to pterodactyl-like street puppets and gigantic spinning tops, BIFA offers an exhilarating program of extraordinary events in spectacular places and spaces across Breckenridge, Colorado.

Inspired by themes of environment and mountain culture, the 10-day festival brings together a variety of performances, exhibitions, screenings, workshops, talks and surprise collaborations, with an eclectic mix of music, dance, film, visual arts and family entertainment. Dozens of scheduled events, indoors and outdoors, ticketed and free, are showcased at venues and sites throughout town.

“We are very excited to bring back BIFA this year, where we get to introduce audiences to some of the best artists from around the world and from our own backyard,” said Robb Woulfe, President and CEO of Breckenridge Creative Arts, the festival’s producer. “Our third season continues our tradition of offering a number of see-it-here-first experiences, including art spectacles that are U.S. premieres, Colorado debuts and Breckenridge exclusives.”

Tickets for festival events go on sale on **Monday, June 12** and may be purchased in person at the Riverwalk Center Ticket Office at 150 W. Adams Avenue, by phone at (970) 547-3100, or online at breckcreate.org.

Featured 2017 BIFA performances and exhibitions include: Australian digital artist **Craig Walsh** with the U.S. premiere of his renowned tree projection artwork, **Monuments**; the interactive design installation **Los Trompos** by contemporary Mexican designers **Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena**; the 30-plus member avant-garde musical troupe **Itchy-O**; a screening of **Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*** accompanied live by the **Breckenridge Music Festival Orchestra**; a work entitled **Ants by Polyglot Theatre** that brings giant insects into a public space for a mix of roving performance and large-scale interaction with kids and adults; a return engagement by the Dutch performance troupe **Close-Act Theatre** with their new street spectacles of **Birdmen and PerQ**; violinist, banjo player and neo-folk songstress **Rhiannon Giddens**; and the internationally recognized Australian company **Casus Circus** with the U.S. premiere of their thrilling new acrobatic show, **Driftwood**.

In addition to the core festival attractions listed above, BIFA brings back its popular **Trail Mix** series, which combines art, music, hiking and biking along the trails of Breckenridge through free outdoor concerts and environmental installations. This year's series, presented on Illinois Creek, Iowa Hill and Moonstone trails, features 27 pop-up musical performances with accompanying artworks by **Sarah Langsam, Michael McGillis** and **Nikki Pike**. Also as part of BIFA's visual arts program, two separate eco-themed exhibitions will be on display—one entitled **Contemplative Environments** by artists **Pamela Olson and Kelly Yarbrough**, installed at Old Masonic Hall, and another by multi-media artist **Kia Neill**, whose work **Ephemeral Pathways** will be featured in the gallery of the Breckenridge Theater. The festival will also present **Tree-o**, a performance art installation in the forest featuring three musicians -- cellist **Russick Smith**, violinist **Karen Lauffer** and mandolinist **Kevin Larkin** – performing a series of free concerts with the trio perched aloft upon the trees.

Another nature-inspired program new to the festival lineup this year is **Acoustic Flow**, a blissed-out mix of music and wellness that features a mini-concert with free outdoor classes in yoga, meditation and healing arts. Held on the Riverwalk Center lawn along the relaxing shores of the Blue River, the series include five mind-body-spirit sessions accompanied with live music, ranging from classical to contemporary.

Additionally, the **Breckenridge Arts District** serves as the heart of BIFA, bringing together studios, galleries, performance spaces, public art and historic landmarks that animate and populate a vibrant cultural corridor in downtown Breckenridge. For the 10 days of the festival, the Arts District's campus becomes an interactive hub of creativity, offering free workshops, demonstrations, artist talks and hands-on activities for all ages.

Recognized as one of the top mountain resort destinations in the world, Breckenridge is a beautiful and historic Colorado town that attracts over a million visitors yearly. Nestled in the heart of the Central Rocky Mountains, the town offers year-round activities to please outdoor enthusiasts, vacationing families and cultural travelers. In April 2017, Breckenridge was named the #1 small community (10,000 or less) in SMU's National Center for Arts Research third annual Arts Vibrancy Index; it ranks more than 900 communities across the country, examining the level of supply, demand, and government support for the arts in each city.

As an umbrella organization that promotes arts, culture and creative experiences, Breckenridge Creative Arts (BCA)—or BreckCreate for short—is responsible for the successful management of a series of programs, properties and partnerships which collectively animate and populate a cultural corridor in the heart of

downtown Breckenridge. BCA's signature events include the Fire Arts Festival, WAVE: Light + Water + Sound, Street Arts Festival, Breckenridge International Festival of Arts (BIFA) and the annual Día de los Muertos celebration. From quality performing and visual arts to the development of the Breckenridge Arts District, a Colorado-Certified Creative District, Breckenridge Creative Arts is a transformative force for Breckenridge and the greater Summit County community.

Funding for the Breckenridge International Festival of Arts is generously provided by the Town of Breckenridge, with additional media support from Mountain Living.

A detailed schedule of featured BIFA events follows. For the most up to date information, please visit: breckcreate.org/bifa. For more information on some of the signature attractions, please visit these links:

Craig Walsh // craigwalsh.net

Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena // esrawe.com

Itchy-O // itchyo.com/

Polyglot Theatre // polyglot.org.au

Close-Act Theatre // closeact.nl

Rhiannon Giddens // rhiannongiddens.com

Casus Circus // casus.com.au

Featured BIFA Artists + Projects (asterisk denotes a U.S. or Colorado premiere)

Los Trompos*

by Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena

Aug 7–Oct 22 | On View Daily

Arts District campus | FREE

Los Trompos, or 'the spinning tops,' is a joyful interactive art installation by contemporary Mexican designers Héctor Esrawe and Ignacio Cadena. Inspired by the popular children's toy, each woven top has a unique shape inspired by nature and traditional Latin American design, architecture and folk art. Five of these colorful, large-scale sculptures will be on display on the Arts District campus through October. Los Trompos on loan from Scottsdale Public Art, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Ants*

by Polyglot Theatre

Aug 10–13 | 11 am, 12 pm, 2 pm

Blue River Plaza | FREE

Ants is an interactive roving performance which has giant Ants bringing children together in a gentle and intriguing landscaping project. Faced with hundreds of giant bread crumbs and three big insects, children are irresistibly drawn in to discover what the Ants want them to do. Ants is an enchanting investigation into the nature of work and children's relationship with their environment.

Contemplative Environments

by Pamela Olson + Kelly Yarbrough

Aug 10–Sep 6 | On View Daily

Old Masonic Hall | FREE

A mixed media exhibition that brings the outdoors in, creating a space to contemplate the fragility of our environment and how it resonates with our consciousness.

Ephemeral Pathways

by Kia Neill

Aug 10–Sep 6 | On View Daily

Breckenridge Theater | FREE

An exhibition of photo based collage inspired by the Rocky Mountains that hints at an ephemeral experience that is not only seen, but felt.

Tree-o*

Aug 10, 17, 18, 19, 20 | 12–12:30 pm

Location TBA | FREE

Elevating music to new heights, Tree-o features three musicians -- cellist Russick Smith, violinist Karen Lauffer and mandolinist Kevin Larkin – in a series of free concerts held in the forest, high among the pine boughs and branches. A performance art installation, each musical session features instrumental melodies performed with the trio perched aloft upon the trees.

Itchy-O

Aug 11 | Support acts start at 6pm; Itchy-O set at 8:15 pm

Tiger Dredge Lot | FREE

Denver-based Itchy-O is a 30-plus-piece performance band that draws its inspiration from many cultures that include Japanese Taiko drumming, Chinese Lion dancing, Mexican street processions, ancient esoteric symbology and American drum corps. A blazing aural assault from the darkest depths of Colorado, Itchy-O is a wholly immersive, musical experience on a massive scale. Presented in conjunction with the Breckenridge stage of the Colorado Classic.

Monuments*

by Craig Walsh

Aug 11–20 | 8:30–11 pm

Locations TBA | FREE

Internationally acclaimed projection artist Craig Walsh creates a haunting synergy between the human form, natural environment and the act of viewing. Moving images transform trees into sculptural portraits surveying the immediate surroundings. For his Breckenridge engagement, Walsh will create tree projection portraits featuring three local subjects—historian Maureen Nicholls, biking enthusiast Jeff "Westy" Westcott and dancer Zoe Gallup—that will travel to a series of in-town locations throughout the 10 nights of BIFA.

Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush**

with Breckenridge Music Festival Orchestra

Aug 12 | 7:30 pm

Riverwalk Center | \$45, \$40, \$30

Jayce Ogren, conductor

Charlie Chaplin's favorite film, *The Gold Rush*, is presented on the big screen with the accompanied score performed by members of the BMF Orchestra. A story of the race for gold and hope for a new life illuminates the four destinies of an adventurer, a dancer, an outlaw and a tramp in the great North. Co-presented with Breckenridge Music Festival.

Birdmen + PerQ*

by Close-Act Theatre

Aug 16, 18, 19 | 5 pm + 8:30 pm (Birdmen)

Aug 15, 17 | 11 am + 1:30 pm (PerQ)

Blue River Plaza | FREE

Large, illuminated pterodactyl-like creatures descend upon Blue River Plaza and roam through the streets of downtown Breckenridge. Created by Dutch artists Close-Act Theatre, Birdmen is a spectacular piece of street theater that features stilt-walkers outfitted as strange, enlightened beings that inhabit and animate our public space. The company also performs PerQ, a choreographed drumming show featuring percussionists dressed as 19th century soldiers. Birdmen performs on the evenings of Aug 16, 18 and 19; PerQ performs on the afternoons of Aug 15 and 17.

Rhiannon Giddens

Aug 17 | 7:30 pm

Riverwalk Center | \$35

With soulful musicality, singer, violinist, and banjo player Rhiannon Giddens is considered one of the most promising voices in American roots music. After helming Grammy Award-winning string band Carolina Chocolate Drops, Giddens broke out as a solo performer and continues her mission to create a vibrant new life for old-time music. She appears at BIFA in support of her newest album, Freedom Highway.

Driftwood*

with Casus Circus

Aug 18–19, 7:30 pm; Aug 20, 2 pm

Riverwalk Center | \$20 Adults, \$10 Kids

Performing seemingly impossible feats of brute strength, Casus Circus is an internationally recognized Australian company that has traveled worldwide with their mesmerizing acrobatics and aerial stunts. Having received stellar reviews at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and winning Best Circus at Festival d'Avignon, this highly skilled quartet makes their Colorado debut at BIFA, where they will test the limitations of the human body in stunning displays of flexibility.

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