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The Theater Offensive's True Colors Youth Troupe Receives Grant from National Endowment for the Arts \$15K to Help Fund True Colors' First National Tour

BOSTON—National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu has approved more than \$82 million to fund local arts projects across the country in the NEA's second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2017. Included in this announcement is an Art Works award of \$15,000 to The Theater Offensive's True Colors OUT Youth Theater to commission the troupe's first national tour focusing on transgender youth of color.

"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 True Colors in serving their communities by providing excellent and accessible arts experiences."

"We are thrilled to continue the national influence and reach that True Colors is able to have with LGBTQ youth and within the performing arts community," said TTO Executive Artistic Director Abe Rybeck. "The hard work and boldness of True Colors youth has been recognized time and again, and this generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts provides us with the exciting opportunity to take our work beyond Massachusetts for the first time, and help LGBTQ youth and their allies across the country."

The Creative Action Crew will be bringing performances of ***The Heart of the Matter*** to a national stage in late 2017/early 2018. ***The Heart of the Matter*** will be an innovative new piece of LGBTQ youth theatre created by the True Colors: Creative Action Crew youth ensemble. The work focuses on connecting intergenerational audiences to LGBTQ youth of color narratives--contemporary and historical--to illuminate and engage with the LGBTQ youth experience of today. It utilizes immersive, participatory performance strategy to challenge theatrical conventions and confront audiences with adult, white, middle class culpability in the oppressive systems LGBTQ youth face.

This national tour will take place on the heels of an exciting time: in 2016 True Colors was awarded the National Arts & Humanities Youth Programs Award from First Lady Michelle Obama at the White House. This award is the highest recognition of programs in the field of Creative Youth Development. True Colors was the first-ever LGBTQ program to receive this prestigious award.

To join the Twitter conversation about this announcement, please use **#NEASpring17**. For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, go to arts.gov.

About True Colors: Out Youth Theater

True Colors: Out Youth Theater was established in 1994, focused on providing an opportunity for LGBTQ youth and their allies to write and perform plays based on their personal stories. True Colors provides year-round programs in playwriting, production and performance for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning youth and their straight allies, ages 14 and above. In 2016, True Colors received the National Arts & Humanities Youth Programs Award from First Lady Michelle Obama. This award is presented by the President's Committee on the Arts & the Humanities to programs that exhibit excellence in the field of Creative Youth Development. For more information on True Colors and The Theater Offensive, visit www.thetheateroffensive.org.