

# ARENA STAGE MEDIA RELEASE

Molly Smith Artistic Director Edgar Dobie Managing Director Zelda Fichandler Founding Director

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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### POLLY CARL TO BECOME DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN VOICES NEW PLAY INSTITUTE AT ARENA STAGE AT THE MEAD CENTER FOR AMERICAN THEATER

(Washington, D.C.) Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater announces **Polly Carl** will join the company in a new position as **Director of the American Voices New Play Institute** (AVNPI) beginning July 1, 2011. As director, Carl will develop and direct all existing staff and activities of the Institute, as well as support the artistic planning, production, development and study of new work by Arena Stage. This position reports to Arena Stage Associate Artistic Director David Dower.

The American Voices New Play Institute at Arena Stage is designed as a center for research, development and dissemination of effective practices, programs and processes for new play development in the American Theater. The Institute includes a suite of interrelated programs, all of which are built upon innovative models currently operating in the field that demonstrate potential for replication in other communities. For more information visit [www.arenastage.org/new-play-institute](http://www.arenastage.org/new-play-institute).

“David Dower and I are thrilled to announce the appointment of Polly as director of the Institute,” shares Artistic Director Molly Smith. “She brings with her a wealth of experience working with writers, as a sharp producer and midwife for new work. Her drive, intelligence and commitment to new work will be an exciting turning point for the Institute, and we’re delighted to have her vision and experience at the helm of all the Institute produces. Her appointment marks an important step in Arena’s continuing evolution as a center for American theater.”

Leading up to this point, Carl has been a consultant for the Institute and has contributed her expertise in new play development through participation in the Institute’s national convenings. She became the editor of *HowlRound*, the Institute’s journal for the new play sector in November 2010, and was a member of the Steering Committee for January 2011’s four-day convening *From Scarcity to Abundance: Capturing the Moment for the New Play Sector*, as well as a moderator for one of the gathering’s panels.

“I’m very excited for the opportunity to work with Arena Stage and the current Institute staff to build a vibrant and vital Institute for the new play sector of the American theater,” contributes Carl. “For almost 15 years now, I have been committed to supporting new work and American playwrights. My passions will be well suited to the mission and aspirations of the Institute.”

Prior to becoming the Director of the American Voices New Play Institute, Carl was Steppenwolf Theatre Company’s Director of Artistic Development, where she produced Steppenwolf’s Garage Series including the First Look Repertory and a new partnership with the Northwestern University. Carl oversaw new play development and commissions, and participated in season planning. Recent dramaturgy includes: Lisa D’Amour’s *Detroit*, Bruce Norris’ *A Parallelogram*, Laura Eason’s *Sex With Strangers*, and Mat Smart’s *Samuel J and K*. Prior to Steppenwolf, Carl served 11 years at the Playwrights’ Center—seven as Producing Artistic Director. At the Center Carl programmed the Ruth Easton Lab and served as the Lab’s lead dramaturg. Carl

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has sat on numerous boards, panels and committees including the Steinberg Advisory Committee to select their distinguished playwright award—the Mimi, the NEA Theater panel and the MAP Fund panel. She is also the Editor for *HowlRound: The Journal of the American Voices New Play Institute* at Arena Stage. Her Ph.D. in Comparative Studies in Discourse and Society is from the University of Minnesota.

***Arena Stage at the Mead Center for American Theater*** is a national center dedicated to the production, presentation, development and study of American theater. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Molly Smith and Managing Director Edgar Dobie, Arena Stage is the largest company in the country dedicated to American plays and playwrights. Arena Stage produces huge plays of all that is passionate, exuberant, profound, deep and dangerous in the American spirit, and presents diverse and ground-breaking work from some of the best artists around the country. Arena Stage is committed to commissioning and developing new plays through the American Voices New Play Institute. Now in its sixth decade, Arena Stage serves a diverse annual audience of more than 300,000. [www.arenastage.org](http://www.arenastage.org).

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