

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**August 5, 2009**



***I. Am. Here.***

**PlatteForum's ArtLab**

**+**

**University of Colorado Denver  
& Labyrinth**

**Denver, CO—August 5, 2009** — On Friday and Saturday August 14 & 15, 2009 at 7:00pm join the youth of PlatteForum's ArtLab, in collaboration with Labyrinth and the University of Colorado Denver as they present a staged reading of "*I. Am. Here.*" This original play created and performed by Denver's own youth explores the struggles and triumphs of high school life in an urban public school. Not amused by the various high school melodramas (*High School Musical, Twilight, 90210*) "*I. Am. Here.*" is a response to the Hollywood cliché and provides the audience with a raw taste of what it takes to survive a day in today's high school. ArtLab youth offer an insightful, poignant and honest examination of today's complex teenage life. Despite living in a world of Facebook and Twitter, youth today fight to be heard and recognized. "*I. Am. Here.*" is a voice that must be seen and heard.

Performed by the culturally diverse group of high school youth that created the stories, "*I. Am. Here.*" is also an autobiographical look at their own struggles and triumphs as high school students in Denver. The play follows the teens through a day at school, full of hall sweeps, hanging out, and humorous discussions about the truth of the opposite sex. These teenagers present an honest face to urban teenage struggle that includes teenage pregnancy, alcoholism at home, interracial dating, economic hardship, and violence. "*I. Am. Here.*" dives into race issues that shape the lives of students' choices and beliefs. The youth don't ask, but demand that you engage in their sometimes raw, sometimes touching...yet always-accurate portrayal of high school life.

Created from a summer of script workshop assignments improvisation, and autobiographical performances called "autodramas," this original play is written by ArtLab youth with playwright Craig Volk, Associate Professor of Theater, Film and Video Production at the University of Colorado Denver; and directed by Jose Mercado, Assistant Professor of Theater, Film and Video Production, University of Colorado Denver.

**Staged Readings**

**When: Thursday and Friday, August 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm**

**Where: Arts Building, Room 278 Auraria Campus Denver**

*Located in between to St. Cajetan's Center and the Library*

**Cost: \$5 Adults \$3 Students PG-13 Content**

**About ArtLab**

ArtLab works to instill responsibility, reward achievement, inspire new confidence and encourage goals. This innovative program utilizes the arts, mentorship, and structured facilitation to encourage the development of academic, personal, and professional success within our youth in the Denver community. Interns within the program are paid a stipend during the school year and hourly wages during the intensive summer internship.

During the summer students concentrate their work on a theatrical production in collaboration with University of Colorado, Denver and the Labyrinth Arts Academy. Through this production Interns present issues and ideas; convey their own personal voices through persuasion and entertainment; and explore their own understanding of their generation in a complex and multi-cultural world. In doing so, Interns learn the value of self-expression; further develop interpersonal communications skills; and experience the indispensable freedom of inquiry and expression. This

process is creative, organic, and highly dependent on structured and respectful interactions with fellow students in the program.

### **About PlatteForum**

PlatteForum's mission is to create, provide, and advance arts and cultural opportunities to people of all ages in the Denver area, including performances, exhibitions, workshops, and presentations, that serve to enlighten and entertain the public, especially at-risk youth and low-income families. To this end, PlatteForum will engage in the following objectives in meeting its mission: (i) to be an urban laboratory for the creation of art where master artists of all genres work side-by-side with youth and people of all ages incorporating both traditional and experimental art forms; (ii) to collaborate with other arts, cultural, and educational organizations; (iii) to provide opportunities for the public to observe and participate in the process of making and presenting works of art; and (iv) to be an advocate for the advancement of new artistic genres.

### **About University of Colorado Denver, College of Arts & Media**

As the first college in Colorado devoted exclusively to arts and entertainment, the [College of Arts & Media](#) (CAM) at the University of Colorado Denver embraces the influence of modern trends on traditional art forms. Located on UC Denver's downtown campus, CAM is at the heart of Denver's thriving, dynamic arts community. The college uses the latest technology to encourage its students to discover new forms and contexts. CAM is one of 13 schools and colleges at UC Denver. The University offers more than 100 degrees and serves more than 28,000 students in Metro Denver and online. For additional news and information, please visit the [UC Denver newsroom](#).

### **Location**

PlatteForum is located at 1610 Little Raven St., Suite 135 in Riverfront Park, Denver.

Call to schedule a free tour.

Information about PlatteForum and the Creative Residency Program can be found online at <http://www.platteforum.org> or by calling 303.893.0791.

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High-resolution images available by calling 303.893.0791

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### **PlatteForum**

Youth. Artists. Community.

*Transform lives through art.*

### **We Believe:**

Through the creative process, PlatteForum gives hope and direction to underserved youth who collaborate with master artists from around the world. This experience transforms the lives of the youth, the artists and the community.