

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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New Sarasota Sound Stage and Post Production Facility Inspires Partnership Between WEDU PBS, Semkhor Networks, and Ringling College of Art and Design



*WEDU's production team documents the making of a web series being directed by **Dylan McDermott** and filmed by Ringling College students. The segment will air in August on WEDU ARTS PLUS. The web series will premiere in early 2017.*

Sarasota, FL (June 2, 2016) — Sarasota's new professional soundstage and commercial post-production complex at Ringling College of Art and Design may still be under construction, but the facility is already inspiring powerful partnerships.

WEDU PBS, Semkhor Networks, and Ringling College of Art and Design announced today that they have signed a letter of intent to develop a wide ranging collaboration centered on the new sound stage and post production facility which is slated to be fully operational in 2017. The first large stage will open later this year. The new facility is designed to take full advantage of the rapid advancements in digital production and distribution with the flexibility to support a wide range of content production.

"We look forward to developing this partnership with Semkhor Networks and Ringling College of Art and Design. The new studios in Sarasota will provide an additional base of operations for WEDU that will enable us to expand our programming from this region," stated **Susan Howarth**, WEDU President & CEO.

Ringling College and Semkhor have developed a unique alliance that is at the forefront of digital production working with a wide range of recognized talent. The projects being discussed range from ongoing web series to traditional television. The approximately 40,000 square foot state-of-the-

art professional soundstage and film and television post-production complex is tied to the college's academic needs and is expected to attract a broad range of commercial production, as well as WEDU productions. When complete, the college will conduct filmmaking classes and students will work on any commercial productions that use the complex.

"The possibility of working with WEDU in the new facility is exactly what we were hoping for. Their range of productions will help jumpstart the success of the project as will their experience," said **David Shapiro** of Semkhor. Shapiro will work with the college to operate and manage the commercial aspect of the facility. "This project will help boost regional economic development and provide professional-level experience and connections for Ringling students who will learn by being part of those productions."

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The partnership is already creating opportunities. WEDU's production team was in Sarasota this week documenting the production of a web series being directed by **Dylan McDermott**, a Golden Globe winning actor and director. McDermott is working with Ringling College film students to shoot and film a web series in Sarasota. WEDU will profile the behind-the-scenes development of the web series during an upcoming episode of **WEDU ARTS PLUS**. The web series directed by McDermott will premiere in early 2017.

"We've enjoyed working with WEDU on a variety of projects in the past. This new collaboration represents an outstanding opportunity for Ringling College students to gain an additional layer of production and writing experience and we welcome the chance to work closely with them in the new facility," said **Larry Thompson**, President of Ringling College.

ABOUT WEDU PBS

WEDU is West Central Florida's leading PBS station reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of multi-media platforms including: television programming, station website, www.wedu.org and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU's focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (Source: Survey Sampling International (SSI), January 2016). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU visit www.wedu.org; WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter (@wedupbs) or call (813) 254-9338.

ABOUT SEMKHOR NETWORKS

SEMKHOR is a media and technology company focused on digital content production and distribution. It provides consulting services centered on integrating the entertainment industry into a wide range of projects. It also is co-investing, with Ringling College, in the new 40,000 square foot sound stage and post production facility as well as executive producing a slate of original, celebrity based web series.

ABOUT RINGLING COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

For nearly 85 years, Ringling College of Art and Design has cultivated the creative spirit in students from around the globe. The private, not-for-profit fully accredited college offers the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in eleven disciplines and the Bachelor of Arts in two. The College's rigorous curriculum employs the studio model of teaching and immediately engages students through a comprehensive, first-year program that is both specific to the major of study and focused on the liberal arts. The Ringling College teaching model ultimately shapes students into highly employable and globally aware artists and designers. For more information please visit the Ringling College website at www.ringling.edu, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) or call 941.351.5100.

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