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***DETROPIA PREMIERES ON INDEPENDENT LENS ON
MONDAY, MAY 27, 2013 ON PBS***

***Award-winning Documentary Offers Unique Look at the Troubled Times and Indomitable
Spirit of the Motor City***

"The most moving documentary I've seen in years. Both an ardent love letter to past vitality and a grateful salute to those who remain in place."

– David Denby, *The New Yorker*

(San Francisco, CA) – Detroit was the birthplace of the middle class, an industrial utopia where anyone who worked hard enough could experience the American Dream. Today, Detroit is on the brink of bankruptcy. In the past ten years, this iconic Midwestern city has lost 25 percent of its population and 50 percent of its manufacturing jobs. Local officials are in the midst of the most dramatic “downsizing” of an American city ever seen: demolishing thousands of homes, consolidating massive tracts of excess land, cutting basic services, and even encouraging Detroiters in the most marginal neighborhoods to move. Detroiters who have stuck with the city are at the breaking point. Despite these desperate conditions, there is still an allure to Detroit artists; curious outsiders flock to the city in search of inspiration and opportunity.

Produced and directed by Heidi Ewing and Rachel Grady (*12th & Delaware, Jesus Camp*), *Detropia* premieres on *Independent Lens*, hosted by Stanley Tucci, on Monday, May 27, 2013 at 10 PM ET (check local listings).

Detropia is a cinematic tapestry that chronicles the lives of several Detroiters trying to survive and make sense of what is happening to their city: the owner of a blues bar, a young blogger, an auto union rep, a group of young artists, an opera impresario, and a gang of illegal “scrappers.” This unlikely chorus illuminates the tale of both a city and a country in a soul-searching mood, desperate for a new identity.

“Our film – part love letter, part cautionary tale – enters the world of Detroiters who could leave if they wanted, but have chosen to stick with a city that so desperately needs them,” says Ewing and Grady. “They represent the resilience of Americans who are facing a quickly changing world. We are thrilled to share their story with the rest of the country.”

How Detroit rebuilds itself will set an example for countless other post-industrial cities with similar fates. Today the entire country is watching to see if this storied metropolis has the courage, creativity, and grit to reinvent itself.

To learn more about the film, visit the *Detropia* companion website (<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/detropia>), which features information about the film, including an interview with the filmmaker and links and resources pertaining to the film's subject matter. The site also features a Talkback section, where viewers can share their ideas and opinions, preview clips of the film, and more.

About the Participants

Tommy Stephens is a retired school teacher and owner of the Raven Lounge.

Crystal Starr is a blogger and barista at Café 1515, where she holds a monthly salon called Culturenomics.

George McGregor is president of UAW Local 22.

Steve and Dorota Coy are visual and performance artists who live in Detroit. Together they make up The Hygenic Dress League, an art project meant to send up capitalism and corporate America.

David Dichera is general director of the Michigan Opera Theater.

About the Filmmakers

HEIDI EWING (Director/Producer) was born and raised in the Detroit area, and grew up around her family's manufacturing business. *Detropia* is her fourth feature-length documentary film and is close to her heart. Her directing partner, a private investigator turned filmmaker called **RACHEL GRADY (Director/Producer)**, has produced and directed a wide variety of documentaries for HBO, PBS, The Discovery Channel, MTV, and A&E. She and her directing partner, Rachel Grady, are best known for directing *Jesus Camp*, a searing look at the Christian right through the eyes of children. The film was nominated for the 2007 Academy Award® for Documentary Feature. The duo made their feature doc debut in 2005 with *The Boys of Baraka*, which follows inner city boys to a boarding school in rural Kenya. The film was nominated for an Emmy® and aired on POV. The directing team recently collaborated with other high-profile, nonfiction filmmakers for the 2009 omnibus documentary film *Freakonomics: The Movie*, based on the bestselling book. Their controversial *12th & Delaware*, a compelling portrait of the battle between a crisis pregnancy center and an abortion clinic, debuted at Sundance in 2010, won a Peabody Award, and aired on HBO.

About Independent Lens

Independent Lens is an Emmy® Award winning weekly series airing on PBS. The acclaimed anthology series features documentaries united by the creative freedom, artistic achievement, and unflinching visions of independent filmmakers. Presented by the Independent Television Service

(ITVS), the series is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), a private corporation funded by the American people, with additional funding provided by PBS, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the MacArthur Foundation. The senior series producer is Lois Vossen. More information at www.pbs.org/independentlens. Join *Independent Lens* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/independentlens.

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