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RELEASE**

# PRESS RELEASE

Harrison Ford to present PEN Center USA's prestigious  
Lifetime Achievement Award to Joan Didion

PEN Center USA also set to honor Kickstarter, Chris Hedges,  
and Sonia Nassery Cole

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Literary Awards Festival will be held  
at the Beverly Hills Hotel on October 14, 2013

**Beverly Hills, CA:** PEN Center USA, a literary nonprofit based in Beverly Hills, is proud to announce the honorees for The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Literary Awards Festival, to be held on October 14, 2013, at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

Journalist and novelist **Joan Didion** will receive the Lifetime Achievement Award, which will be presented by **Harrison Ford**. Ford says, "Joan Didion is a literary icon. She's also been a dear friend of myself and family for 40 years. I'm honored to have been asked to present her with the PEN Center USA's Lifetime Achievement Award."

Other festival honorees include **Chris Hedges**, who will receive the First Amendment Award, **Kickstarter**, who will receive the Award of Honor, and filmmaker **Sonia Nassery Cole**, who will receive the Freedom to Write Award.

The evening will also feature the presentation of the Literary Awards, which include one thousand dollar cash prizes and honor the best writing in the western states in eleven genres. A distinguished panel of writers, editors, critics, and journalists judge the Literary Awards.

**Joan Didion** is a journalist and novelist known for such best-selling works as *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*, *Play It as It Lays*, and *The Year of Magical Thinking*, which won the National Book Award for Nonfiction in 2005. She has won the Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters from the National Book Foundation and recently received the National Humanities Medal from President Obama.

**Chris Hedges** is a best-selling author, notably of *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*; *Death of the Liberal Class*; and *Days of Destruction, Days of Revolt*. He is a senior fellow at The Nation Institute, and has taught at Columbia University, New York University, and Princeton University. He has reported from more than fifty countries for *The Christian Science Monitor*, NPR, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *The New York Times*, where he was part of a team of reporters awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 2002.

**Sonia Nassery Cole** is a lifelong advocate for her native country, Afghanistan. She is the founder of the Afghanistan World Foundation and her film *The Black Tulip* was Afghanistan's official entry for Best Foreign Language Film for The 83<sup>rd</sup> Annual Academy Awards.

Founded by Perry Chen, Charles Adler, and Yancey Strickler, **Kickstarter** is a for-profit company that acts as a fundraising platform for independent musicians, artists, and designers. Since its launch in 2009, more than 4.6 million people have pledged over 737 million dollars, funding more than 46,000 creative projects.

The PEN Center USA 2013 Literary Award winners include Ramona Ausubel, Fiction: *Nobody is Here Except All of Us* (Riverhead Trade); Amanda Auchter, Poetry: *The Wishing Tomb* (Perugia

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Press); Seth Rosenfeld, Research Nonfiction: *Subversives* (Picador); Joy Harjo, Creative Nonfiction: *Crazy Brave* (W.W. Norton & Co.); Philip Boehm, Translation: *An Ermine in Czernopol*, originally by Gregor von Rezzori (NYRB Classics); Michael Harmon, Children's Literature: *Under the Bridge* (Knopf Books for Young Readers); Ed Leibowitz, Journalism: "The Takeover Artist" (*Los Angeles Magazine*); Dan O'Brien, Drama: *The Body of an American*; Mark Boal, Screenplay: *Zero Dark Thirty*; Danny Strong, Teleplay: *Game Change* (HBO).

For more information on The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Literary Awards Festival, please contact PEN Center USA at [awards@penusa.org](mailto:awards@penusa.org).