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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS ACQUIRES RIGHTS TO "PERSEPOLIS"
CURRENTLY IN-PRODUCTION

Sony Pictures Classics announces their plans to release in North America, "Persepolis," the animated feature currently in production in France, based on Iranian author Marjane Satrapi's internationally best-selling and award-winning comic book autobiography, Persepolis and Persepolis 2.

Marjane Satrapi and Vincent Paronnaud co-wrote and are co-directing the film, which is produced by Marc-Antoine Robert and Xavier Rigault of 2.4.7. Films, and executive produced by Kathleen Kennedy of the Kennedy/Marshall Company, in co-production with France 3 Cinema. The film started production in October 2005, and is scheduled for completion in April 2007. Hengameh Panahi of Celluloid Dreams is handling international sales on the film.

"Persepolis" is the poignant coming-of-age story of a precocious and outspoken young Iranian girl that begins during the Islamic Revolution. We meet nine-year-old Marjane when the fundamentalists first take power – forcing the veil on women and imprisoning thousands; follow her as she cleverly outsmarts the "social guardians" and discovers punk, ABBA and Iron Maiden, while living with the terror of government persecution and the Iran/Iraq war; then on to Austria as a teenager, where her parents send her to school in fear for her safety and, she has to combat being equated with the religious fundamentalism and extremism she fled her country to escape.

Marjane eventually gains acceptance in Europe but finds herself alone and horribly homesick, and returns to Iran to be with her family, though it means putting on the veil and living in a tyrannical society. After a difficult period of adjustment, she enters art school and marries, continuing to speak out against the hypocrisy she witnesses. At age twenty-four, she realizes that while she is deeply Iranian, she cannot live in Iran. She then makes the heartbreaking decision to leave her homeland for France, optimistic about her future, shaped indelibly by her past.

The French version of the film is voiced by Chiara Mastroianni as Marjane, as well as Catherine Deneuve, Danielle Darrieux and Simon Abkarian. An English version of the film will be recorded as well.

Michael Barker and Tom Bernard, Co-Presidents of Sony Pictures Classics state "Marjane Satrapi's book is a major work that has enlightened millions worldwide. We are confident Marjane will transform her book into a movie that is timely, personal, political, and technologically on the cutting edge. The involvement of

our friends Kathleen Kennedy and Hengemeh Panahi will further insure quality and success. It is a privilege to be part of this important film."

At the prospect of "Persepolis" being distributed to North American and international audiences, Marjane Satrapi notes, "I observe with some sadness that five years after publishing my book Persepolis, my country is still, indeed more than ever, in the spotlight. "Persepolis" has become not just about me telling my story. It is universal, immediate and necessary."

Executive Producer Kathleen Kennedy enthuses "I'm immensely excited to be involved with "Persepolis." With her illustrated memoir, Marjane gives us the universal story of a young girl struggling to understand the world around her while providing a specific and altogether prescient window into the political, cultural and religious history of Iran. Marjane writes — and draws — with such insight, wit and humanity that she makes the tragedy of war and the tumult of the Islamic Revolution accessible to audiences of any background. I'm proud to be a part of bringing her remarkable experiences and inimitable voice to life on film.

Producers Marc-Antoine Robert and Xavier Rigault of 2.4.7. Films say "Since its development, two years ago, Kathleen Kennedy, as executive producer on the project, Celluloid dreams for the international sales and Diaphana for French theatrical distribution have been a great support to us. Having Sony Pictures Classics comforts us in the idea that the destiny of Marjane Satrapi, beyond its singularity, shall meet a universal audience and has a strong potential. As a young production company, we are definitely proud to have such partners with us."

Marjane Satrapi was born in 1969 in Rasht, Iran, and currently lives in Paris. She has written several children's books and her commentary and comics appear in newspapers and magazines around the world, including *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker*. Her most recent graphic novel, embroideries, is an entertaining and enlightening look into the sex lives of Iranian women.

2.4.7. Films is a new company created by Marc-Antoine Robert and Xavier Rigault, who have both had long experience in the French film industry, particularly in production for the former and theatrical distribution for the latter. "Persepolis" is 2.4.7.films' first project and has been met with much excitement and invested interest from many professional and institutional partners in France. Marc-Antoine Robert and Xavier Rigault are also working on a number of other projects still in development.

Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall formed The Kennedy/Marshall Company in 1992. The Kennedy/Marshall Company's productions include "Snow Falling on Cedars," directed by Scott Hicks; "A Map of the World," starring Sigourney Weaver and Julianne Moore; "The Sixth Sense," starring Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osment; "The Bourne Identity" and "The Bourne Supremacy" starring Matt

Damon; M. Night Shyamalan's "Signs," "Seabiscuit," the true story based on Laura Hillenbrand's bestselling book and directed by Gary Ross; "Munich" directed by Steven Spielberg; and "Hoot," based on the book by Carl Hiaasen.

Prior to establishing The Kennedy/Marshall Company, Frank produced "Raiders of the Lost Ark" while Kathleen produced "E.T." They then co-founded Amblin Entertainment with Steven Spielberg in 1982 and produced films such as "Poltergeist," "The Color Purple," the "Back to the Future" trilogy, "The Bridges of Madison County," "Twister," and "Jurassic Park: The Lost World."

In addition, Kathleen served as executive producer on "Schindler's List," and produced "A.I.: Artificial Intelligence."

Upcoming Kennedy/Marshall projects include, "The Bourne Ultimatum," the third in the Bourne series of movies and "Benjamin Button," based on a F. Scott Fitzgerald short story.

Celluloid Dreams is an independent international sales, production and distribution company based in Paris, with offices in, Toronto and London. The company specializes in promoting and distributing award-winning films created by talented directors from all over the world. Known for its acumen in discovering as well as nurturing talent, Celluloid debuted first works by François Ozon, Takeshi Kitano, the Dardenne brothers, Gaspar Noe, Walter Salles, Jafar Panahi, Jacques Rivette, Kore-Eda Hirokazu, Jia Zhangke, Laurent Cantet, Jacques Audiard and Bent Hamer, among others. In 2005 Celluloid Dreams began its expansion into English language fare and has a growing number of high profile projects on its slate including Kenneth Branagh's epic interpretation of Mozart's 'The Magic Flute', Todd Haynes' Bob Dylan film 'I'm Not There', 'Lantana' director Ray Lawrence's 'Jindabyne', Oscar Winning® Bille August's 'Goodbye Bafana', Enfant terrible Harmony Korine's Mister Lonely and Writer and editor of 'The Straight Story' Mary Sweeney's 'Campfires Buring' among many more. Celluloid has a library of more than 250 titles and acquires an average of 20 to 30 new films every year.

HIGH RESOLUTION IMAGES FROM THE FILM CAN BE DOWNLOADED AT:

www.press.sonyclassics.com

user id: press password: sonyclassics

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