

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**THE SUGAR HILL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF ART + STORYTELLING
APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR, LAUREN KELLEY**

NEW YORK, NY, June 2, 2017—The Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling announces the appointment of Lauren Kelley as Director and Chief Curator, effective immediately. Prior to joining the Museum in 2013 as Associate Director of Curatorial Programs, Kelley was the founding director of Prairie View A&M University's art gallery. At the Sugar Hill Children's Museum, Kelley developed the Museum's curatorial and public programs, and launched the Museum's Artist-in-Residence program which she will continue to lead. Since the Museum's opening in October 2015, she has organized all of the Museum's exhibitions including the work of established and emerging artists, and artists with ties to Harlem and Northern Manhattan. Kelley has played a key role in the strategic growth of the organization and has been instrumental in elevating the Museum's outreach efforts to the artist community.

An artist and resident of Harlem, Kelley is a 2015 Creative Capital Award winner and a 2011 Louis Comfort Tiffany Award recipient. In 2007, she was a recipient of an inaugural Altoids Award through the New Museum. She has been a resident artist at the Skowhegan School, the Museum of Fine Arts Houston, the Glassell School's Core Program, the Marie Walsh Sharpe Foundation's Studio Program and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Kelley's work has been exhibited at the New Museum (New York), Spelman College Museum of Fine Arts (Georgia), Sikkema Jenkins & Co. (New York), and the Contemporary Art Museum Houston (Texas). Last fall, Kelley's video art was included in the Parisian Film Festival's "Cinema Different," at the Pompidou Center (Paris). Kelley holds a Masters in Fine Arts from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

"We are delighted to have Lauren at the helm of the Sugar Hill Children's Museum. As an integral--and founding--member of the senior staff since 2013, Lauren's visionary and inclusive approach to the arts shaped the development of Museum programs as well as outreach to artists and the local community. I have no doubt that under her leadership the Museum will continue to flourish as a model of creative place making and as an incubator for the dreams and aspirations of young children and families from Sugar Hill and beyond." – said Ellen Baxter, Board Chair of the Sugar Hill Children's Museum, and Executive Director of Broadway Housing Communities, Inc.

Additionally, the Museum announced that Jennifer Ifil-Ryan has been promoted to the newly created position of Deputy Director and Director of Creative Engagement, effective immediately. Formerly the Museum's Associate Director of Education and Community Engagement, Ifil-Ryan has been responsible for implementing the Museum's distinctive educational mission which prioritizes the creative and cognitive development of young visitors ages 3-8 and their families, including bringing the Reggio Emilia educational approach to material exploration in the Museum's Studio Labs, exhibitions, and public programming. In her new role, Ifil-Ryan will build on the Museum's robust partnership with the on-site Sugar Hill Museum Preschool to develop and model innovations in arts education through a social justice lens, and expand the Museum's educational footprint. Ifil-Ryan will also play a key role developing equitable learning environments through the arts toward establishing a sense of efficacy and self-determination in marginalized communities.

The Sugar Hill Children's Museum has served more than 22,000 visitors in its first 18 months of programming, and provides intensive arts education programs for local public, charter and independent schools and early childhood centers. Rooted in the belief that social and economic transformation is possible through immersive engagement in the arts, the Museum continues to expand its programming at the Museum and within the local community through partnerships with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, Cool Culture, the Northern Manhattan Arts Alliance, and others.

Kelley said, "I am excited to continue building upon the work that we started in 2014. I look forward to more ambitiously celebrating the cultural heritage of Sugar Hill and advancing the social justice mission of Broadway Housing Communities. The need to dilate imaginations (art) and perspectives (storytelling) has always been critical to ensuring societal health, but this is especially true now, in our community's and our nation's narrative. As a cultural institution, the Sugar Hill Children's Museum is poised to not only continue serving as a 'second home' to local families, but grow as a site for all (children as well as adults) to explore our inter-connectedness, self-determination, and how access to ideas/empathy/light/color/aesthetics engenders a world where anyone can thrive."

ABOUT THE SUGAR HILL CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF ART & STORYTELLING

The Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling is the cultural capstone of the Sugar Hill Project in Harlem, a mixed use community revitalization initiative developed by Broadway Housing Communities, a nonprofit organization based in West Harlem and Washington Heights. The Museum offers year-round art exhibitions, storytelling series, art-making workshops and an early childhood arts education curriculum. Museum programs are designed to nurture the curiosity, creative spirit and cognitive development of three- to eight-year-old children, building the language, literacy and critical thinking skills that lead to lifelong learning.

The Sugar Hill Children's Museum of Art & Storytelling is located at 898 St. Nicholas Avenue at 155th Street in New York City. Hours are Thursday through Sunday, 10am to 5pm. Admission prices vary; children under the age of 9 are always free. For more information on the Museum, please visit www.sugarhillmuseum.org.

To connect with the Sugar Hill Children's Museum via Social Media, follow us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/sugarhillmuseum](https://www.facebook.com/sugarhillmuseum) and using @sugarhillmuseum on Instagram and Twitter.

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