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Silkroad Appoints Alicia Robinson as its First Director of Education and Social Impact

Boston, MA — Silkroad, the non-profit arts and social-impact organization that is home to the Grammy Award-winning musical ensemble founded by cellist Yo-Yo Ma and now led by Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, announced today the appointment of Alicia Robinson as its first Director of Education and Social Impact. In this role, Robinson will advocate for and ensure that Silkroad’s artistic programs and educational initiatives—Silkroad Connect, Global Musician Workshop, Arts and Passion-Driven Learning Institute, university residencies, and more—fully align with the organization’s mission and values, and are grounded in social impact and justice.

Executive Director Kathy Fletcher stated, “we are beyond fortunate to have found someone with a proven track record of excellence in education and demonstrated commitment to equity and justice. Silkroad has spent a great deal of time reimagining the organization over the course of the past year and we are excited to bring on Alicia as a leader in this work.”

As Director of Education and Social Impact, Robinson will be responsible for the creation, implementation, and evaluation of mission-driven education programs offered by Silkroad throughout the year. These include Silkroad Connect, which is a new program designed to promote systemic allyship with underrepresented communities. Robinson will also spearhead Silkroad’s residencies at universities by building a roster of teaching artists; designing college course curricula in partnership with university music programs; and developing social-impact goals for these residencies. Additionally, Robinson will oversee Silkroad’s annual conferences, including the Global Musician Workshop and the Arts and Passion-Driven Learning Institute.
“I am thrilled to join Silkroad at such a pivotal time in both the organization and the country,” said Robinson. “While many organizations are talking about equity and impact, Silkroad is actually doing the work. I plan on using my decade-plus years of experience in arts education to amplify voices in communities of color, while also helping to break down systemic barriers to access of Silkroad’s programming. It is truly an honor to serve communities that extend beyond my hometown of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and it will be my privilege to bring the same level of passion and commitment to this role as I have in my previous position.”

Prior to Silkroad, Robinson served as Director of Performing and Visual Arts for Bridgeport Public Schools, where she was committed to providing equal access to high-quality and culturally responsive arts programming during and after school for all students. She worked to secure grants, donations, and community partnerships for the district’s arts programs, helping to narrow the opportunity gap prevalent in Fairfield County and across the state of Connecticut.

“As I am extremely saddened by the loss of Alicia from my team, I am excited for her,” shared Michael J. Testani, Superintendent of Bridgeport Public Schools. “She has earned this opportunity to expand her talent and have an impact on so many kids across the country. She is a creative and innovative leader, who understands the importance of providing all children with opportunities to learn and grow. Alicia has done so much for kids here in Bridgeport and I look forward to seeing how much more she will accomplish in her new role.”

A seasoned educator, Robinson has devoted her career to meeting the diverse learning needs of students by creating kinesthetic, social, and collaborative educational experiences through arts and technology integration. Her exemplary work in the arts education space has earned her numerous accolades, including Project Longevity’s Black History Community Award in 2021, the City of Bridgeport’s Living Legend Award in 2020, Greater Bridgeport NAACP’s Berry Gordy Award in 2018, The Links, Inc.’s Excellence in Education Award in 2017, and Fairfield County Community Foundation’s Beard Excellence in Teaching Award in 2016.

About Silkroad

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for radical cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In an innovative experiment, he brought together musicians from the lands of the Silk Road to co-create a musical language founded in difference, thus creating the foundation of Silkroad: both a touring ensemble comprised of world-class musicians from all over the globe and a social impact organization working to make a positive impact across borders through the arts. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad leads social impact initiatives and educational programming alongside the creation of new music by the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble.

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