ON THE BOARDS ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Betsey Brock Steps Down as Executive Director After Successfully Stewarding Organization Through the Pandemic

Arts Leader Catherine Nueva España Joins the Influential Live Art Institution as Interim Executive Director

On the Boards (Rachel Cook, Artistic Director; Betsey Brock, Executive Director; John Hoedemaker, Board President; Jasmine Jamilah Mahmoud, Board Vice President) today announced that Betsey Brock has decided to step down from her position as Executive Director in February 2022. Catherine Nueva España, a seasoned and widely respected arts leader who recently led Velocity Dance Center and EarthCorps, and who currently serves as a Washington State Arts Commissioner, will join On the Boards as Interim Executive Director while the Board of Directors conducts a national search for a permanent Executive Director. She will work closely with Artistic Director Rachel Cook and the Board of Directors to ensure the organization meets its artistic, operational, community, equity, and financial goals.

Brock departs On the Boards having stewarded it through the worst phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since March 2020, she has played a leadership role in closing and reopening the institution’s building in Seattle; developing health and safety protocols; communicating shifts to staff, Board, and other stakeholders; accessing necessary relief funds through grants, individual contributions, and loans; retaining and insuring staff; and honoring artist contracts. Now that On the Boards and the field at large are on more secure footing, she has chosen to take time to recover and catch up on time with her family. She will become Director of Development at Seattle Arts & Lectures in February.

“I have adored working at On the Boards, and am honored to have served as Executive Director of this extraordinary place. I cherish the interdisciplinary range of artists and the thrilling, innovative work they make here. Rachel’s work with artists like Faye Driscoll, Dana Michel, Timothy White Eagle Turner, and Pamala Z—to name just a few—continues to inspire me,” says Brock. “On the Boards is financially strong and well-positioned to continue growing this season and beyond. Catherine Nueva España has the skill, insight, and perspective needed to catapult On the Boards forward. She joins a staff and Board that are awe-inspiringly smart and passionate. You’ll find me in the seats as an audience member frequently and for years to come.”

Brock began her tenure at On the Boards in February 2014, as Director of Individual Giving. Her role grew to include External Relations in 2016, and she became On the Boards’ first Executive Director in June 2017. Among her many contributions: Brock hired Artistic Director, Rachel Cook after a national search; expanded On the Boards’ role and influence as a commissioner and producer of new performance, with a focus on long-term project development, residencies, and showcases; expanded viewership of OnTheBoards.tv; completed W.A.G.E. (Working Artists for the Greater Economy) certification; advanced equity by creating clearer policies around hiring, salary transparency and investing in training; and strengthened On the Boards’ connections with peer organizations across North America.
Board President John Hoedemaker says, “We a tremendously grateful for Betsey’s passion, dedication and contributions to On the Boards over the past eight years, which have put our organization on strong artistic and financial footing. We will always treasure her as a valued audience and community member. We are also thrilled to welcome Catherine as interim executive director. Catherine has an established track record in the arts community nurturing people and organizations so that they can flourish and better serve their communities.”

Nueva España most recently served as Interim Executive Director at EarthCorps, a Seattle-based environmental leadership nonprofit. Since moving to Seattle from San Francisco Bay Area in 2017, Catherine has supported the work of artists and arts organizations, including running the Springboard for the Arts program at 501 Commons, serving as a King Street Station Station Advisor for the Seattle Office of Arts and Culture, participating in local, state, and regional grant panels, and on community advisory groups. During her time as Executive Director at Velocity Dance Center, she liaised frequently with On the Boards, as the two organizations have a shared mission to elevate performing artists through residencies and other creative supports. She brings to the team her 25 years of experience in the arts, organizational management, business development, and facilitation.

Interim Executive Director Catherine Nueva España says, “I have long supported On the Boards as an audience member, a donor, and a colleague to staff and board members. I look forward to joining the organization at such a pivotal moment in time and to support the staff and board on their continued journey of taking even more artistic risks while continuing to be fiscally responsible and advancing equity and accountability.”

Artistic Director Rachel Cook says, “Betsey has been an incredible leader at On the Boards. She has steered the ship through a series of transitions and for the past two years of this pandemic (no small feat!) with a sense of humor and tenacity for supporting artists and art. I am deeply grateful to her as a colleague, friend, and co-leader. She will be dearly missed in the day-to-day, but I know she will continue to stay engaged with On the Boards as an audience and community member. I wish her the best in this next chapter of her career!”

About On the Boards
As one of the leading organizations of its size and focus in the United States, OtB produces unique performance projects by leading artists and creates one-of-a-kind experiences for our audiences. The organization makes significant investments in the performing arts community to help increase the quality of new work created. It contributes to the vitality of arts and culture in its region by helping launch and continue the careers of some of its most promising artists while growing audiences for experimental performance.

Since its inception, OtB has featured seminal performances by artists including Laurie Anderson, Bill T. Jones, The Wooster Group, Spalding Gray, Dumb Type, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Sankai Juku, Gisèle Vienne, Bruno Beltrão, chelfitsch, Romeo Castellucci, John Jasperse, Jan Fabre, Back to Back Theatre, Faustin Linyekula, Mark Morris, Pat Graney, Dayna Hanson, Amy O’Neal, Reggie Watts, Zoe Scofield & Juniper Shuey, and Crystal Pite.

OtB fulfills its mission by supporting artists from the Northwest and beyond through new commissions and existing work presented online and in person. It provides local artists, selected by Artistic Director
Rachel Cook, with residencies that include rehearsal space, development support, project management, dramaturgical and curatorial feedback, and advocacy to create new and exciting projects. Its publishing platform, OntheBoards.tv, is a one-of-its-kind portal that features HD performance films and contextual educational material to deepen audiences' understanding of the field of contemporary performance.

OtB offers a range of resources and events that provide in-depth information and complimentary social experiences to frame the art on its stages and create dynamic access for its audiences. When gathering in person is possible, Studio Suppers and post-show events provide patrons with ample opportunities for socializing, and OtB creative partnerships with other arts leaders in Seattle nurture a more robust and connected creative community. Online contextual tools such as a curatorial journal, artist interviews, essays and reviews enable better understanding and discussion of the work OtB presents while Q&A sessions and master classes provide direct access to artists.

On the Boards is located on the traditional territory of Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Duwamish Tribe (Dkhw Duw’Absh). We aim to honor these communities, past, present, and future.

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