

# WING LUKE MUSEUM

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## **The Wing Luke Museum Announces New Executive Director, Joël Tan**

Seattle, WA - The Board of Directors of the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience is proud and excited to announce the appointment of its new Executive Director, Joël Tan, following a 6-month nationwide search.

Joël Barraquiel Tan (siya/he/him) was born in Manila and later immigrated with his family to the United States to escape martial law. His dynamic career has reflected his lifelong commitment to racial equity, social justice and creative expression, evident in his three plus decades of experience in cultural advocacy and leadership in the arts, public health, civic engagement, community development, and sustainable tourism.

Since 2015, Joël has lived on Hawai'i Island and served as Executive Leader for the East Hawaii Contemporary Arts Center, Kalanihonua Retreat Center, and Touching the Earth. In 2018, he helped establish Vibrant Hawai'i, a collective impact network of leadership across diverse sectors working at the systemic level to eliminate Hawai'i Island's 55% poverty rate.

Prior to that, Joël served as the Director of Community Engagement at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA), San Francisco's premier contemporary arts venue for 11 years. He created YBCA's award-winning civic engagement DEI initiatives inspired by the community arts curatorial model developed by the Wing Luke Museum under former executive director, Ron Chew.

Joël's contributions to arts leadership and public health are documented in Kenneth Foster's book *Arts Leadership: Creating Sustainable Arts Organizations* (Routledge) that details his work to bring DEI and innovation to a majority white arts organization and Eric Wat's *Love Your Asian Body* (UW Press) that details the founding years of Los Angeles's Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team Health Center and the arts-based strategies they championed to shape HIV/AIDS services. Additionally, Joël was Hawai'i Island's 2018 Pride Grand Marshall, and, in 2008, was featured in Out magazine's top 100 most influential LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Joël holds a Bachelor of Arts in Ethnic Studies from the University of California at Berkeley and a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing and Literature from Antioch University. He is currently working on a Master of Family Therapy degree at Northcentral University.

"On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are thrilled to have Joël's vision, creativity, and importantly, unequivocal commitment to using arts and culture to share and celebrate the stories and contributions of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, and advance racial equity and social justice." adds Jill Nishi, Board Co-President and Search Committee Co-Chair.

Joël follows the tenure of retired executive director, Beth Takekawa, and her 24 years of dedicated service to the Wing Luke Museum during a time of enormous growth and national prominence. The board is confident Joël will continue the museum's storied legacy.

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“Joël is a changemaker and his positive energy, passion and good humor are infectious. We can’t wait for him to get to know our amazing and beloved community of supporters, members and donors and for them to get to know Joël,” adds Ellen Ferguson, Board Co-President and Search Committee Co-chair.

The Wing Luke Museum board is excited to introduce Joël at the museum’s annual dinner and auction “**Weaving Generations**” on Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at Sheraton Grand Seattle. Tickets for this in-person and virtual hybrid event are available at <https://digitalwingluke.org/auction2022>. All are welcome.

The board would also like to express its deepest gratitude to Deputy Executive Director, Cassie Chinn, for her unwavering leadership, dedication and guidance as Interim Executive Director during the search process. Joël’s first day as Executive Director is April 15, 2022.

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## About the Wing Luke Museum

For over 50 years, the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience (WLM), a Smithsonian Affiliate and National Park Service Affiliated Area, has held the distinguished honor of being the only museum in the country to tell the diverse stories of all Asian Pacific American cultures. WLM strengthens Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) voices by lifting up community members’ stories, elevating AAPI artists, and creating and practicing a nationally respected, community-centered approach to programming. A local and national treasure, the Wing Luke Museum serves as a cultural anchor in Seattle’s Chinatown-International District.