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THE FINE ARTS WORK CENTER NAMES SHARON POLL NEXT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PROVINCETOWN, MA – March 22, 2021 – The Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC), announces today that **Sharon Polli** will serve as the nonprofit arts organization's next Executive Director. She will begin her tenure on May 10, 2021.

Polli currently serves as the Executive Vice President of BRIC in Brooklyn, NY, a 40+-year leading arts, cultural and media institution in the heart of the Brooklyn Cultural District.

Polli was identified as the preferred candidate of the Work Center's Executive Search Committee through an extensive nationwide search led by **Arts Consulting Group (ACG)** which began in October, 2020. The recommendation to hire Polli was enthusiastically endorsed by the members of the Search Committee and formally accepted by a unanimous vote of the Board of Trustees during a Special Meeting.

"The Search Committee was presented with an impressive talent pool, thanks to the efforts of ACG," said **Lynne Kortenhaus**, Search Committee Chair and President of the Board of Trustees. "Sharon's passion for the Work Center's mission and her vision for the future stood out as a clear choice to lead FAWC. We are thrilled to welcome Sharon as the next Executive Director of the Fine Arts Work Center."

"Nearly two decades ago, I first explored the thriving Provincetown artistic community and was awestruck by its vibrancy," commented **Sharon Polli**. "I believe in the vital role that the Fine Arts Work Center plays in supporting emerging talent in the arts and literature, and I am extremely honored to join the outstanding team at FAWC. Through a deep listening and reflection process, I look forward to engaging everyone involved in this creative community to work together to promote equity and accountability, advance the mission of FAWC and amplify the vision and values of the community of artists and writers we serve."



SHARON POLL - Photo: Nechama Photography

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FINE ARTS WORK CENTER IN PROVINCETOWN
24 Pearl Street Provincetown, MA 02657 508.487.9960 FAWC.ORG

The Fine Arts Work Center is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Work Center facilities are accessible to people with disabilities.

ABOUT SHARON POLLİ

Sharon Polli, Executive Director of the Fine Arts Work Center as of May 10, 2021, has dedicated her professional career to advancing artistic voices and creating equitable opportunities for emerging and mid-career artists, performers and media makers.

Since 2016, Polli has served in key leadership positions at BRIC, a leading cultural center and creative catalyst for the visual and performing arts, media and civic action in Brooklyn, NY. Through her work as Chief Revenue Strategist to Vice President of Advancement and most recently as Executive Vice President, Polli developed long-term strategies for financial support and partnerships to ensure BRIC's continued ability to create cultural programming that is accessible and provide substantial support to artists in their efforts to develop work and reach new audiences. She drove growth in all revenue sectors (individual, foundation, government and corporate) to increase and sustain BRIC's \$15M annual budget. In 2020, she oversaw the launch of a \$1M fund in response to COVID to support BRIC's pivot to virtual programs while ensuring no lay-offs in its 100+ full time staff.

Polli is a collaborative change-maker. She worked with the Board of Directors and the Executive Staff at BRIC to transform a neglected city-owned building into BRIC's new multidisciplinary arts center in the heart of the Brooklyn Cultural District. She played a key role in reimagining artist-centered initiatives and raised funding from leading philanthropic partners to support the growth and expansion of a multidisciplinary residency program with an annual cohort of thirty artists. She also played a pivotal role in BRIC's commitment to building a stronger and more diverse artistic community reflective of Brooklyn by fostering conversations across disciplines, with a special focus on artists of color and underrepresented artists.

Prior to BRIC, Polli was the Deputy Executive Director of Groundswell, New York's leading community public art organization. During her tenure from 2014-2016, Polli was responsible for strengthening the operations and systems to support a growing \$2M budget and expanded 14-member staff. She ensured the implementation of the organization's social justice impact model engaging more than 1,000 youth and 50 community-based partners. She was instrumental in the participatory process to develop an organization-wide strategic plan and produced videos and educational guides in partnership with PBS to elevate youth perspectives on street harassment and the complex relationship between police and young men of color.

At both BRIC and at Groundswell, Polli held earlier positions as Director of Development, as well as Marketing and Communications. She launched a \$5M fundraising campaign for BRIC House to create its first reserve fund and an artistic growth fund to support programming initiatives.

Polli's 20-year career has also included being Editor of CreateNYC, New York City's first ever city-wide Cultural Plan. Through a public engagement process that reached 200,000 participants, Polli witnessed first-hand the impact of issues of equity and inclusion, access to artists live/work space, and neighborhood preservation. She has been an Executive Committee Board member of the Downtown Brooklyn Arts Alliance and collaborated with organizations such as the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Mark Morris Dance Group, Theatre for a New Audience, and The Center for Fiction to develop neighborhood-wide strategies to support New York City cultural workers and artists in the face of increased pressures from gentrification, the pandemic and the economic recession. Polli is a Coro Leadership New York alumni and participant in intensive training programs at the New York City Cultural Advocacy and Equity Program and the American Express Leadership Academy/Center for Creative Leadership.

Polli is Co-Chair of the Board of Directors of Theatre of the Oppressed NYC, an organization which partners with communities fighting against oppression to inspire transformative action through theatre. She is a graduate of Carleton College.

"We are delighted to welcome Sharon to the Fine Arts Work Center and look forward to having such an accomplished and engaging leader to guide FAWC through this next chapter," said Interim Executive Director **Margaret Murphy**.

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ABOUT THE FINE ARTS WORK CENTER

The Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown (FAWC) was founded in 1968 by a group of artists, writers and patrons, including **Fritz Bultman, Salvatore and Josephine Del Deo, Stanley Kunitz, Phil Malicoat, Robert Motherwell, Myron Stout, Jack Tworkov and Hudson D. Walker**, among others. The founders envisioned a place in Provincetown, the country's most enduring artists' community, where artists and writers could live and work together in the early phase of their careers. The founders believed that the freedom to pursue creative work within a community of peers is the best catalyst for artistic growth. The Work Center has dedicated itself to this mission for over 50 years.

Today, FAWC is internationally known for its acclaimed, long-term residency **Fellowship Program** for emerging artists and writers. Each year FAWC offers residencies – the gift of time, space and community – to twenty Fellows selected from over 1,500 applications worldwide. From October to May, the Work Center gives the Fellows living and workspace, a modest stipend and each other. The only thing asked in return is that they focus on new work while they are in residence.

In addition to the Fellowships, the Fine Arts Work Center offers **Returning Residencies** for former Fellows, **Collaborative Residencies** for visiting artists and writers, an open-enrollment **Summer Workshop Program** in visual arts and creative writing, the **24PearlStreet Online Writing Program** as well as virtual programming year-round.

The restoration of the year-round vitality of Provincetown as an historic artists' community lies at the heart of the Work Center's mission. All of its programs are dedicated to enhancing this heritage. Each year, nationally recognized artists and writers are brought to Provincetown for lectures, readings and exhibitions, all free and open to the public and enjoyed by thousands of people in the community.

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