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BCA Announces Kristi Keefe As New Chief Executive Officer; Wishes Emily Foster Day Well In Her New Position; Welcomes Zaquia Mahler Salinas As New Member of Senior Team

Kristi Keefe to become BCA Chief Executive Officer as her fellow Co-Executive Director Emily Foster Day departs to Massachusetts College of Art and Design. BCA also welcomes Zaquia Mahler Salinas as its new Senior Director of Artist Programs & Residencies.

BOSTON, MA — Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) has some important leadership news! Kristi Keefe, the current BCA Co-Executive Director will become Chief Executive Officer of BCA. BCA Co-Executive Director Emily Foster Day (she/her) is transitioning from BCA to Massachusetts College of Art and Design to assume the role of Vice President of Advancement and Executive Director of the MassArt Foundation. BCA is also thrilled to welcome Zaquia Mahler Salinas (she/her) as its new Senior Director of Artist Programs & Residencies.

Keefe has been at BCA for over 20 years, serving as Interim Director in 2016, Chief Operating Officer from 2016–2019, and Co-Executive Director since 2019. Keefe will assume the role of Chief Executive Officer in mid-April, 2024. Since 2019, both Keefe and Foster Day have led BCA through a series of challenges — most profoundly the COVID-19 pandemic — and together subsequently shepherded the safe and successful reopening of the organization in 2021. During Foster Day’s nine-year tenure, BCA has also seen an expansion of its programming, including the inception of the ACTivate Residency, the BCA Studio Residency, the highly popular Boston Art Book Fair, and #HellaBlack. And under their joint leadership, BCA has committed to a profound transformative re-alignment of its service to Boston’s artists and audiences that is deeply rooted in racial equity.

“I am delighted to announce Kristi Keefe as Chief Executive Officer for BCA,” said Jennifer Pinck, Chair of the BCA Board of Directors. “Kristi’s tenure at BCA lends her the knowledge, experience, and commitment



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to the organization that will be critical to our success in the coming years. As Co-Executive Director since 2019 Kristi has navigated BCA through uncharted territory and has been instrumental in positioning BCA for a promising future. I want to also thank Emily for the leadership, creativity, and innovation she has shown this past decade. Her contributions to BCA have been incredible and I wish her well in her next position at MassArt.”

“It has been an honor to work in partnership with Emily for the past nine years, and I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished as Co-Executive Directors,” said Keefe. “Emily has helped create innovative ways to expand our residencies for all artists and aligned our programming with our vision for racial equity. I’m excited to work with such a strong senior leadership team, staff, and board to deepen the work we have jointly undertaken over the past five years. I look forward to more fully aligning our physical spaces with our core residencies and expanding our partnerships so we can make Boston a vibrant space for all artists.”

“Kristi and I have always shared the unshakeable belief that BCA is a unique and special place,” said Foster Day. “And that this organization has an essential role to play in our vision to help make Boston a place where artists can live and thrive. It has been a pleasure to work alongside Kristi and a dedicated and passionate staff and board, all of whom show up each day with energy, creativity, and care.”

BCA is also thrilled to welcome Zaquia Mahler Salinas (she/her) as our Senior Director of Artist Programs & Residencies. As a Senior Director, Mahler Salinas is now also the [fourth member of the senior leadership team](#) who are all supporting Keefe during this leadership transition. Mahler Salinas will also play a key role on the senior leadership team to ensure that BCA programs align with the strategic vision of the organization and the professional needs of Boston-based performing and visual artists at its center. Mahler Salinas will also provide leadership over several signature initiatives, including core residency programs in visual arts, dance, and theatre; short-duration lab residencies in dance and interdisciplinary arts; signature community events like the Boston Art Book Fair and #HellaBlack; and free year-round public programs and exhibitions.

“We are very excited to welcome someone as accomplished and talented as Zaquia to BCA,” said Keefe. “Her vision and deep experience building programs that create access and equity in the arts will further strengthen our residencies and programs. Her leadership in this role will make BCA even more effective in helping Boston’s artists thrive.”

Mahler Salinas is a Chicana/Palestinian dance artist, educator, and arts administrator hailing from San Diego. She believes that revolution is possible through a collective awakening to mindful art practice, and that artists are critical for building a better world. Her work is grounded in emergent strategy, community, and the magic of collaboration.

“I am grateful for this opportunity to join the BCA community, and develop a meaningful relationship with the Boston arts scene,” said Mahler Salinas. “I am looking forward to supporting the vision for artist programs at BCA, particularly exploring the possibilities for transformative artist residency experiences that instigate thoughtful engagement with the larger arts scene and the greater Boston community.”

Mahler Salinas holds a BA in Dance from UC Santa Barbara, an MFA in Dance: Creative Practice from Saint Mary’s College of California, and a certificate in Nonprofit Management from the University of San Diego. In 2018, Zaquia co-founded DISCO RIOT, a nonprofit movement-arts organization that works to support independent dance artists while advancing the dance scene in San Diego and beyond. She has been awarded various artistic residencies, including a 2019 residency in Bethlehem, Palestine where she focused on dance as a form of cultural, embodied resistance.



ABOUT BOSTON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) supports working artists to create, perform, and exhibit new works; develops new audiences; and connects the arts to community, and has for over five decades engaged the creative community for the public good. While the organization's physical residence is in the historic South End, BCA touches every part of Boston's cultural ecosystem. A leading force in the city's cultural community, BCA has supported thousands of individual artists, small organizations, and performing arts companies, who add depth and dimension to the Boston arts ethos. Through residencies and programming, BCA serves as an epicenter for an expanding cohort of artists working across all disciplines and has catalyzed careers by providing fertile ground for experimentation and artistic risk-taking. To learn more about Boston Center for the Arts, visit bostonarts.org.

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