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Washington Project for the Arts Names Sarah Gordon Executive Director



Photo by E. Brady Robinson

(For Immediate Release: October 14, 2026) Today the Board of Directors of **Washington Project for the Arts (WPA)** announces the appointment of **Sarah Gordon** as its next Executive Director. Gordon, a curator and arts leader with 25 years of experience in Washington's museums, universities, and arts agencies, will begin her new role in December. She succeeds Travis Chamberlain, whose appointment WPA announced in July 2023.

Now in its 50th year, WPA is a trailblazer among the region's contemporary art institutions. Founded in 1975, WPA supports experimental, collaborative, and artist-organized projects, including exhibitions, performances, public programs, publications, and community-based initiatives. For five decades, WPA has framed conversations about contemporary art and artist support in Washington and beyond.

"Sarah's curatorial experience as well as her clear commitment to the Washington DC visual arts community makes her the ideal leader to direct WPA into its next 50 years," said Washington Project for the Arts Board of Directors Co-Chair Mike Hickok. "She is just the professional WPA needs to champion the artists it serves."

"Washington Project for the Arts has been at the core of DC's unique and dynamic visual arts community for 50 years," notes Gordon. "I look forward to building on WPA's legacy as a hub of engagement, exchange, and advocacy in the nation's capital and beyond."

WPA will introduce her to the artist community at one of its signature fundraisers Art Night on Thursday, October 15, hosted by architecture and design firm Hickok Cole. The Board thanks Jocelyn Sigue for leading WPA as Interim Executive Director during the search, and for her continued service to WPA's artists and community.

About Sarah Gordon

Gordon has devoted her career to the Washington, DC, visual arts community. She served as Curator at the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, curated exhibitions of contemporary art at the American University Museum, Art Museum of the Americas, and Photoworks at Glen Echo Park, and is a co-founder of the visual arts professional group artconnexDC.

Gordon also spent over a decade at major DC museums and research centers, including the National Museum of African American History and Culture, the National Gallery of Art, and Dumbarton Oaks. Gordon is author of *Indecent Exposures: Eadweard Muybridge's Animal Locomotion Nudes* (Yale Press, 2015) and numerous other book chapters and essays, including two recent articles on New Deal murals in Washington, DC.

Gordon has taught at American University, George Washington University, and Smith College. She holds an MA and PhD from Northwestern University and a BA from the University of Michigan.

About Washington Project for the Arts

Founded in 1975, Washington Project for the Arts (WPA) is a leading contemporary arts organization dedicated to supporting artists and the development of experimental, collaborative, and artist-organized work. Artists shape and curate WPA's programming, which spans exhibitions, performances, public programs, publications, and community-based initiatives.

For five decades, WPA has played a distinctive role in Washington's cultural landscape, presenting more than 500 exhibitions, 1,000 performances, 700 lectures, workshops and symposia, 250 screenings, and 58 public art projects. Its history includes work with generations of influential artists and curators in Washington and beyond, including William Christenberry, Gene Davis, Sam Gilliam, Howardena Pindell, Adrian Piper, Joyce Scott, Zanele Muholi, and many others.

WPA has also been recognized for defending artistic expression, most notably when it presented Robert Mapplethorpe's *The Perfect Moment* in 1989 after the Corcoran Gallery of Art canceled the exhibition. Today, WPA continues that legacy as an artist-centered platform for experimentation, dialogue, and creative exchange, connecting Washington's artistic community with national and international conversations in contemporary art.

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Supporters

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