



LOCAL ARTS ADVOCACY GROUP HIRES FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Felicia Shaw, long-time arts professional, to take the helm and set priorities

SAN DIEGO – January 19, 2023 - Founded in 1989, the **San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition** has been on the front lines of arts advocacy efforts and has worked tirelessly to help ensure that the arts in San Diego continue to thrive. **Felicia Shaw**, immediate past Board Chair, took over the newly created role of Executive Director in January. Previously entirely volunteer-run, the member services organization has been the voice of the arts community and has fought for stable funding by the City of San Diego called “Penny for the Arts.” It has expanded its purview to become the local partner of California Arts Advocates on state issues and Americans for the Arts on national issues. The organization was most recently at the forefront of the effort to create a County-wide Arts Commission and spearheaded a campaign to help arts groups survive and thrive during the COVID shutdown.

Shaw was most recently Executive Director of the Women’s Museum of California (WMC). As a seasoned veteran of the nonprofit arts and culture community, she led this nearly 40-year old institution toward its next chapter of growth. Her work helped strengthen the Museum’s ability to memorialize the accomplishments of remarkable and inspirational women. She will continue with that organization as a consultant to help with fund development and organizational transition as it seeks to hire her replacement.

“The start of a new year is a great time for new beginnings. I’m looking forward to establishing a bold agenda for SDRACC in 2023 that will help build a stronger coalition of creative workers throughout our region,” Shaw explained. “I am grateful to all the SDRACC board members past and current for their hard work over the years. In addition, I am proud of my accomplishments with the WMC and know that their future is bright.”

“The engagement of our first-ever paid executive sends a strong message that we are serious about working to ensure a strong creative sector,” explained Arts and Culture Coalition Board Member Matt D’Arrigo. “We have long relied on the extraordinary effort of our volunteers and Steering Committee and now we have someone at the helm who can take our initiatives to another level.”

“Felicia’s leadership and expertise helped move the Women’s Museum forward through challenging times and we are forever grateful for her work on our behalf. We wish her the best of luck and know that she will continue to have an impact on our organization and the entire arts community,” said Sandra Maas, WMOC Board chair.

A seasoned professional in the field of nonprofit arts management, Felicia’s career has spanned more than 30 years and has included an executive leadership position with the Regional Arts Commission of St. Louis, and director positions with the San Diego Foundation and City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture. Throughout her career, Felicia has led a number of wide-ranging change initiatives with a focus on regional cultural planning, cultural tourism, arts education, diversity, equity and inclusion, and support to individual artists.

A life-long advocate for the arts, Felicia currently serves on the boards of Californians for the Arts and California Arts Advocates and is a member of the San Diego Art Prize Advisory Committee. Prior to these appointments, she served on the boards of Grantmakers for the Arts, CERF+, and as Chair of the United States United Arts Federation, a national advisory committee of Americans for the Arts. She is an active volunteer and contributor to arts, culture and women’s organizations and fulfills her commitment to philanthropy as a member of Women Give San Diego. A graduate of Northwestern University with a degree in Communications, Felicia completed additional undergraduate study at UC San Diego with a focus in art history, theory and criticism and completed the two-year Museums Studies Program at Palomar College. She is also an alum of LEAD San Diego (2002) and the James P Shannon Leadership Institute (2015).

Shaw lives in Azalea Park, a neighborhood of City Heights with deep roots in San Diego’s arts community.

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