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Maryhill Museum of Art announces Amy Behrens as new Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer

- A new era for Maryhill Museum of Art is about to begin with dedication to the culture of the next generation of visitors and future donors, broadening its programs and exhibits to engage new audiences -

GOLDENDALE, Wash., June 26, 2023 — [Maryhill Museum of Art](#), one of the most fascinating cultural destinations in the Pacific Northwest, is announcing the appointment of Amy Behrens as executive director and chief executive officer following a search process by Hagel Executive Search. Behrens succeeds Colleen Schafroth, who is retiring.

“We selected Amy Behrens to lead Maryhill Museum of Art into the next era because of her remarkable experiences positioning a regional museum and landmark to elevate interpretive dialogue among diverse audiences,” said **Maryhill Museum of Art Board President Laura Muehleck** of Yakima, Washington. “With her leadership, Maryhill will continue to preserve our permanent artistic and historic collections – and broaden our programs with a rich array of exhibits and enrichment opportunities that will engage new audiences and cultivate multigenerational membership commitment.”



Behrens joins Maryhill Museum of Art in August 2023 after serving as executive director at [Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens](#), a nationally-registered historic site and visitor destination for arts, education, and botanical gardens in Southern California. During her tenure, annual membership subscriptions more than doubled and cultural programs grew and diversified from less than 50 to nearly 150 events annually. Behrens successfully navigated organizational and financial pathways to stability for the nonprofit during critical business interruptions due to COVID-19 and a landslide. She increased the operating budget by nearly

half a million dollars over a four-year period and achieved Casa Romantica's highest-ever fundraising revenues.

"I was drawn to Maryhill Museum of Art because what can be imagined and created here, alongside the striking rugged beauty of the Columbia Gorge, can be realized nowhere else – innovation here is a product of the place," said **incoming Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer Amy Behrens**. "This museum's extraordinary collections and landmarks are poised to empower unspoken generations of visitors to think critically and create personally-relevant connections. My priorities, shared by the Maryhill Museum Board, are to deepen our educational programs which are the heart of our mission, renew connections with our Gorge communities, improve our historic infrastructure, and strengthen the financial sustainability of this wonderful museum."

Behrens previously held positions as interim associate director of Ace Gallery, one of the largest gallery-held collections of blue-chip fine art in the western United States, and gallery manager of River Gallery (formerly Carl E. Smith Gallery) in Los Angeles and Laguna Beach. As a complement to her arts administration skill set, she has also held management roles in marketing and branding. Behrens holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Visual Communication from Laguna College of Art and Design.

As a member of the Orange County Arts Agency, Behrens curated artistic and interpretive exhibits highlighting Casa Romantica's permanent collection and archives. An interpretive exhibition curated for the John Wayne International Airport in 2019-20 was seen by up to six million visitors.

Behrens established partnerships with public-private agencies such as the Mexican Consulate in Santa Ana, the Orange County Public Library System, and the Vietnamese American Association of Letters and Arts to engage diverse audiences with supportive, relevant cultural programs and no-cost learning and scholarship opportunities. She led initiatives to make the visitor experience more convenient and inclusive with strategic adoption of digital applications, multilingual way finding, and ADA capital improvements as well as new programs and marketing campaigns to retain underrepresented visitors to the cultural center.

Colleen Schafroth Retirement

Outgoing Executive Director, Colleen Schafroth, [who announced her retirement in March 2023](#), worked for the Museum for 37 years. Beginning her tenure as executive director in 2001, Schafroth led the addition of the \$10 million Mary and Bruce Stevenson Wing, dedicated in 2012, the \$3.6 million renovation of the historic building between 2001-2003, as well as a stucco renovation campaign in 2016. Schafroth's leadership resulted in the accreditation of the Museum by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) in 2002. Schafroth was instrumental in negotiating a wind-energy partnership that has generated more than \$100,000 annually for the museum since it was implemented in 2009 and deftly navigated the museum through the extremely difficult COVID-19 pandemic. "We are extremely grateful to Colleen and her staff over the years for the stable and responsive leadership that has designed the strong foundation for Maryhill's next 100 years," said **Board Chair Laura Muehleck**. Members and friends

are invited to a retirement party for Schafroth on Sunday, August 13 at Maryhill Museum of Art in the education room from 2:00-5:00 p.m.

“It has been my great honor working for Maryhill Museum of Art for the past 37 years, a place that will always be in my heart,” said **Schafroth** who noted her emphasis at Maryhill was educational and, especially, in reaching out to students, which is what she is proudest about, as well as Museum Week, the Summer Art Institute and her curatorial work with chess sets. “The museum will be in good hands with its new executive director, and I look forward to seeing its next chapter.”

******* MEDIA PLEASE NOTE *******

Downloadable images of Amy Behrens and Maryhill Museum of Art [available here](#).

2023 Exhibitions information [here](#). Annual events [here](#).

For general background information on Maryhill Museum of Art, download our **Fact Sheet**. Information about Maryhill’s history can be found [here](#). Learn more about the [museum building](#) here.

If you’d like to be added to our press list, please email publicrelations@maryhillmuseum.org.

ABOUT MARYHILL MUSEUM OF ART:

Housed in a glorious Beaux Arts mansion on 5,300 acres high above the Columbia River, Maryhill Museum of Art opened to the public May 13, 1940 and today remains one of the Pacific Northwest’s most enchanting cultural destinations. The museum was founded by Northwest entrepreneur and visionary Sam Hill, who purchased the property and began building the house with dreams of establishing a Quaker farming community. When that goal proved untenable, Hill was encouraged by friends Loïe Fuller, Queen Marie of Romania, and Alma de Bretteville Spreckles to establish a museum.

Maryhill Museum of Art boasts a renowned permanent collection, rotating exhibitions of the highest caliber, and dynamic educational programs that provide opportunities for further exploration by visitors of all ages. On view are more than 80 works by Auguste Rodin, European and American paintings, objects d’art from the palaces of the Queen of Romania, Orthodox icons, unique chess sets, and the renowned Théâtre de la Mode, featuring small-scale mannequins attired in designer fashions of post-World War II France. Baskets of the indigenous people of North America were a collecting interest of Hill; today the museum’s Indigenous People of North America Gallery represents nearly every tradition and style in North America.

Maryhill’s William and Catherine Dickson Sculpture Park features more than a dozen large-scale works by Northwest artists. The Maryhill Overlook is a site-specific sculpture by noted Portland architect Brad Cloepfil; nearby are Lewis and Clark interpretive panels. Four miles east of Maryhill is a life-sized replica of Stonehenge, Stonehenge Memorial, which Sam Hill built to memorialize local men who perished in World War I. Stonehenge

Memorial was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2021. Nearby, the Klickitat County War Memorial honors those who have died in the service of their country since World War I.

The museum was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. In 2001 the museum was listed as an official site of the National Historic Lewis and Clark Trail and in 2002 was accredited by the American Association of Museums. In 2012 the museum opened the Mary and Bruce Stevenson Wing, a 25,500 square foot expansion that is the first in the museum's history. The new wing boasts the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust Education Center, a collections storage and research suite, a new cafe and terrace, and the Cannon Power Plaza with an installation of sculpture, and sweeping views of the Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood in the distance. Maryhill gratefully acknowledges the Indigenous Peoples on whose ancestral homelands we gather, as well as the diverse and vibrant Indigenous communities who make their home here today. Learn more [here](#).

For more information visit:

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