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CAFAM ANNOUNCES LEADERSHIP TRANSITION

Director Maryna Hrushetska to Step Down December 30



LOS ANGELES, CALIF. – November 22, 2010 – After reviving an ailing Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) and establishing a more solid foundation for the institution, Maryna Hrushetska will step down as Director effective December 30, after six years of service. Hrushetska, who previously worked in international finance, will be starting her own cultural consultancy firm focused on global heritage and cultural understanding projects.

“While I am leaving CAFAM, its mission of promoting cultural understanding has become my life’s passion and purpose. I have been deeply touched by the dedication, creativity and generosity of so many wondrous souls and will be forever changed by this experience,” said Hrushetska.

Hrushetska was hired on March 2005 to lead major revitalization efforts at CAFAM. She came to the museum during a precipitous time in its history. After a string of five directors in eight years, the museum was struggling to rebuild its membership, strengthen its programming and return to profitability.

With the support of the board, she professionalized the staff; restructured the administration for efficiency; and revitalized the curatorial direction of the museum, re-orienting it closer to the founding spirit of cultural exploration and progressive ideas. “My goal was to expand the traditional frame of craft and folk art in a way that was innovative, contemporary and unifying. I see increasing cultural literacy as a powerful tool to strengthen community and spark creativity. Community-based organizations that reflect and celebrate our diversity are the future,” said Hrushetska.

Under Hrushetska, CAFAM underwent a remarkable change, growing the organization and re-establishing its relevance to the community. A new logo introduced a CAFAM that was more contemporary, fun and energetic. Partnerships with non-traditional curators and the museum’s out-of-the-box programming continually reflect this new direction, which has received much praise and support from the community and funding institutions.

Just this year, CAFAM launched Folk Art Everywhere (FAE), an innovative community outreach program. Designed as a cultural treasure hunt, FAE planted cultural objects from one ethnicity in another ethnic venue, taking the art out of the museum and into people’s daily lives. The project earned CAFAM a three-year grant from the James Irvine Foundation, exceeding the museum’s initial proposal for just one year.

FAE is just one of the many engaging programs Hrushetska has introduced. In the past six years, she oversaw 37 exhibitions celebrating over 80 cultures. During her term, attendance increased 67 percent, with 38 percent increase in revenues. The museum shop, which operated at a loss, increased profitability 180 percent.

“Maryna has brought new life and a burst of energy to CAFAM in her six years. Today we are stronger, more focused organization dedicated to working toward the common good in our global village called Los Angeles. Our future is a bright one,” said Chairman of the Board Wally Marks III.

An executive search funded by the James Irvine Foundation is currently under way through the services of San Francisco-based Museum Management Consultants, Inc. in San Francisco. In the meantime, Hrushetska and the CAFAM board have laid the groundwork for a smooth transition by forming a strategic planning committee, updating the museum’s bylaws and strengthening the board. A successor should be announced by the end of December.

About CAFAM

The Craft and Folk Art Museum has long been part of the city’s cultural fabric. The museum was founded in 1965 by the late Edith R. Wyle with her husband Frank S. Wyle. Often called the high priestess of folk art and crafts, Edith R. Wyle opened a bohemian café that served over 50 kinds of omelets and offered an international array of folk art and contemporary crafts. The Egg and The Eye became a popular community gathering place and a trusted source of exotic gifts.

In 1973, it reorganized into a nonprofit institution, offering artist-led workshops and educational programs. Known for taking risks, early shows were held at CAFAM for now well-established artists like Frank Romero, Otto Natzler and Sam Maloof. CAFAM was also the home of Los Angeles' first multi-cultural festival, the International Festival of Masks, until 1998.

Because a shrinking world requires an expanded mind, CAFAM champions cultural understanding by encouraging curiosity about our diverse world through the universal lens of art. Our exhibits and programs serve as a catalyst for the exploration of art and ideas that reflect our ever-changing community.

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