



Louis Grachos Appointed Executive Director of SITE Santa Fe

Grachos Brings 30 Years of Experience in the Museum Field And Particular Expertise in Working with Artists and Community Collaborators

Santa Fe, NM—March 18, 2021—SITE Santa Fe announced today that it has appointed Louis Grachos as its new Phillips Executive Director. Grachos currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer and JoAnn McGrath Executive Director of the Palm Springs Art Museum, a position he has held since 2019. Over the course of his 30-year career, Grachos has come to be recognized for his forward-looking vision, experience in fundraising, and extensive work with artists and community collaborators. His appointment marks a return for the seasoned leader, who previously served as SITE’s Director from 1996 to 2003. Grachos will take up his new role in summer 2021.

Grachos joins SITE at an exciting moment, with the organization celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2020 and looking to further enhance its commitment to contemporary artists from the region and across the globe through new commissions, collaborations, and presentations. He will work closely with Clara Samayoa, SITE’s Director of Finance and Administration who has served as the Interim Director, and SITE’s staff and Board of Trustees to reinvigorate the organization’s curatorial and public program coming out of the pandemic, with a particular focus on developing new creative partnerships that embrace the Santa Fe community and amplify the work of a wide range of artists. He will also work collaboratively with the SITE team to finalize and begin implementing the organization’s Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion (DEAI) plan, which the organization began developing in 2020 and will serve as a critical guide to evolving SITE’s vision, approaches, and initiatives, both internally and externally.

“We are delighted to welcome Louis back to SITE. During his prior tenure, he played a pivotal role in establishing SITE as a dynamic platform for contemporary art. As SITE has grown over the last 25 years, it has retained its commitment to experimentation, to dialogue, and to supporting the ambitious and innovative work of today’s artists,” said Marleen De Bode, Chair of the Board of Trustees at SITE Santa Fe. “We know that Louis’s incredible experience in developing collaborations and new models for engagement will be invaluable as we work to continue to uplift the voices of artists from varied backgrounds and experiences and to foster conversations with our many audiences.”

“I have always treasured the community in Santa Fe, which is so rich in cultural experiences and creative innovation. SITE Santa Fe has for 25 years been an important part of this vibrant landscape, placing artists at the core of all of its work and embracing the dynamism of both local and global voices. To return to SITE Santa Fe now is such an incredible opportunity and point of excitement for me. I am so looking forward to working collaboratively with the SITE Santa Fe team to create new opportunities for artists as well as new and exciting ways for the public to connect with bold and ambitious art,” said Grachos.

Grachos most recently served as the CEO and JoAnn McGrath Executive Director of the Palm Springs Art Museum, where he has overseen the institution's three major sites and led it through the challenging pandemic period. He was responsible for the stewardship of the museum's collection of over 12,000 works, which is strong in objects from across modern and contemporary art, architecture, and design. This included Grachos's successful effort to acquire the Aluminaire House, a historic prototype residence created by Albert Frey and A. Lawrence Kocher in 1931, which will be reassembled on the museum grounds later this year.

Previously, from 2013 to 2019, Grachos served as the Ernest and Sarah Butler Executive Director and CEO of The Contemporary Austin. While there, he greatly expanded the museum's curatorial and public program, presenting the work of emerging and established artists such as Ai Weiwei, Janine Antoni, Carol Bove, Tom Friedman, Rodney McMillian, Wangechi Mutu, Jessica Stockholder, Do Ho Suh, and SUPERFLEX, among many others. He also led several critical construction projects and capital campaigns, launched an international program of contemporary outdoor sculpture at the Betty and Edward Marcus Sculpture Park, and established the Suzanne Deal Booth / FLAG Art Foundation Prize for contemporary artists. Grachos also served as the Executive Director of the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, from 2003 to 2012.

"I look forward to working with Louis and our team to rebuild a sustainable SITE after the global pandemic, to furthering its mission and impact, and to completing the organization's DEAI plan. Louis's history in Santa Fe and his experience in leading organizations through change are vital in this process, especially at this 25th year juncture and as we look to the future," said Samayoa.

About SITE Santa Fe

SITE Santa Fe is guided by its mission to nurture innovation, discovery, and inspiration through the art of today. It opened in 1995 to present what was then the only international biennial of contemporary art in the United States, and one of only a handful of biennials around the world. From the beginning SITE has supported new developments in contemporary art, expanding the traditional role of the museum and encouraging exploratory approaches. Its exhibitions serve as platforms for emerging and established artists and are complemented by an extensive public and educational outreach program, bringing global attention to Santa Fe and the American Southwest as a vibrant hub for art. In 2017, SITE completed a successful \$12 million building and endowment capital campaign that enabled it to construct a new award-winning building, designed by SHoP Architects, that has greatly expanded its physical capabilities and enhanced its capacity to serve the Santa Fe community. More information about SITE Santa Fe can be found at <https://sitesantafe.org/>.

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