



Artists Repertory Theatre

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# **JEANETTE HARRISON NAMED THE NEW ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT ARTISTS REP**

**ART's Board of Directors approved  
the recommendation by the search committee for next Artistic Director**

**PORTLAND, OREGON – Sept 19, 2022** Artists Repertory Theatre (ART) is pleased to announce that Jeanette Harrison has been selected as the next Artistic Director. Harrison transitions into the role starting October 1, 2022, following a national search led by Arts Consulting Group (ACG) after the departure of Dámaso Rodríguez earlier this year. Well known in the San Francisco Bay Area as the co-founder and Artistic Director of the award-winning AlterTheater, Harrison developed the ground-breaking AlterLab playwright residency program and has led more than 25 new plays to world premiere productions. Harrison's award-winning work coupled with her approach and dedication to developing and producing new plays, as well as a deep commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, make her the ideal creative leader; only the third Artistic Director in ART's 41 year history.

Jeanette served as the Artistic Director of AlterTheater for seventeen years, where her work has been recognized with 11 Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards, and 4 Theatre Bay Area Awards, as well as multiple nominations and finalists. Under Jeanette's leadership, AlterTheater launched the AlterLab new play development & production program aimed at supporting a diverse group of artists in a yearlong residency allowing them to take creative risks. AlterLab's First Look and World Premiere productions won regional and/or national awards, were listed on multiple "Best of the Year" critics' lists, and were honorable mentions, finalists, or semi-finalists for various national awards. "I'm very excited by the synergy that already exists—separately, Artists Rep and I have already supported many of the same artists, and I look forward to what we can do together," said Jeanette. Among the AlterLab productions were *Ghosts of Bogotá* by Diana Burbano, a Rella Lossy Award winner and ART Mercury Company member, and Larissa FastHorse's *Cow Pie Bingo* (Theatre Bay Area Award winner) and *Landless* (USA Pen Literary Award in Drama; nominated for Best New Script from Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle). Another

of FastHorse's plays, *The Thanksgiving Play*, was commissioned and first produced in April 2018 by ART; it is heading to Broadway in Spring 2023.

Harrison continues, "The arts are one of the most powerful tools for change. And how great it is to know that if we tell stories of Black joy, if we laugh with contemporary Native characters trying to fall in love, if we put stories onstage that celebrate the complicated, messy lives of three-dimensional people, that we are helping to move that needle on justice, on equity. I love that Artists Rep is already committed to this kind of work, that they, too, were a supporter of Larissa FastHorse, who went on to become the first Native playwright produced off-Broadway; that Artists Rep has supported Diana Burbano, who has rapidly made a name for herself in creating messy and successful professional Latinas. These are women and artists who I deeply respect and admire, and I look forward to getting to know more of the voices who call Portland home."

In addition to directorial duties, Jeanette has co-authored *Feathers And Dots, Dots And Feathers* with Sharmila Devar, a half-hour single camera comedy about family and cultural identity. It has received developmental support from LA SkinsFest's Native Writers program and CBS. Jeanette was also selected for LA SkinsFest's inaugural Native American Animation Lab, where she developed *Little Drummer Girl*. When asked about her work, Jeanette said, "I'm deeply inspired by the multi-year study Reclaiming Native Truth. My takeaway is that accurate representation in media of contemporary Native Americans can have the biggest effect on changing Native lives, impacting things from suicide rates among Native youth to health and education outcomes."

Board Chair Pancho Savery, says of Harrison, "ART was the first LORT theatre in the United States to hire a Latino AD; a leading-edge decision. ART continues its commitment to break new ground and create space for extraordinary theatre from new voices by hiring Jeanette." She believes in combating invisibility and harmful representations by telling contemporary, complex Native stories written by Native authors. Jeanette, a Native New Yorker of Onondaga descent, will be ART's first Native American woman named Artistic Director.

Jeanette will harness the power of theater to create empathy and build bridges across divides of experience, perspective, wealth, ethnicity, to build stronger, more just, more equitable, more compassionate communities. Her vision is to maintain and develop new artistic alliances with playwrights and theatres locally and nationally, including the development of a robust arts education program. One of her most significant achievements is the Arts Learning Project for Native Youth (ALP4NY) program, which offers virtual, hybrid, and in-person arts programming to Native youth, centered in Nevada and California, and serving youth from New York to Washington state. Harrison stressed, "I look forward to finding more ways for Artists Rep to be a creative problem-solver for issues facing our local community. I'm especially looking forward to building more relationships between Artists Rep and community groups working to make Portland a better, more equitable, more just, place to live and work."

The 2022/23 Artists Repertory Theatre season is presented by Robert & Mercedes Eichholz Foundation, James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation, Regional Arts & Culture Council, Shubert

Foundation, Arts Consulting Group, Joseph E. Weston Public Foundation/OCF, and Oregon Arts Commission/NEA/State of Oregon/Business Oregon.

### **About Jeanette Harrison**

Jeanette Harrison (she/her) is a director, actor, writer, and producer who in 2004 co-founded the award-winning AlterTheater in the San Francisco Bay Area. At AlterTheater, she architected the ground-breaking AlterLab playwright residency program. She has shepherded more than 25 new plays to world premiere productions. She directed AlterTheater's world premiere of AlterLab commission *Landless* by Larissa FastHorse (USA Pen Literary Award in Drama), and the multi-Theatre Bay Area award-winning production *The Amen Corner* by James Baldwin. She also co-directed (with Ann Brebner) AlterLab-developed *The River Bride* by Marisela Treviño Orta, which went on to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival's 2016 mainstage season. With AlterTheater she appeared onstage in *Fool for Love* (directed by the original Old Man, Will Marchetti), *After the Fall*, *Owners*, *Intimate Apparel*, *References to Salvador Dali Make Me Hot*, and in the Bay Area premieres of *Sex Parasite*, *Two Sisters and a Piano*, and in the world premieres of *Thirst*, and *A Man, his Wife, and his Hat* (one of two finalists for the USA Pen Literary Award in Drama, now published by Samuel French as *The Hatmaker's Wife*). She has worked in casting, theater education, and worked onstage, on-camera and off-camera in both the non-profit and commercial entertainment industry. She has worked with Native Voices at the Autry, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Cutting Ball Theatre (...and *Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi* by Marcus Gardley, winner of Best Production and Best Ensemble from the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle), Berkeley Rep, Aurora Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, Magic Theatre, Theatre Rhino, San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, Actors Theatre of Sonoma County, Sonoma County Rep, Golden Thread Productions, Woman's Will, Playhouse West, and Combined Art Form Entertainment (C.A.F.E.), among others. She has taught at the University of Southern California's School of Dramatic Arts, Santa Clara University, and College of Marin. She has written two television pilots about family and cultural identity, *Little Drummer Girl*, developed in Native American Media Alliance's inaugural Animation Lab, and *Feathers And Dots*, *Dots And Feathers* (with Sharmila Devar), which received developmental support from the LA SkinsFest's Native Writers Group in partnership with CBS. She also directed the upcoming feature film *Snag* by Tara Moses.

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### **ABOUT ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE**

[ARTISTS REPERTORY THEATRE'S \(Artists Rep or ART\)](#) mission is to produce intimate, provocative theatre and provide a home for a diverse community of artists and audiences to take creative risks. Artists Rep (est. 1982) is Portland's oldest professional theatre company and has become a significant presence in the U.S. regional theatre with a legacy of world, national, and regional premieres of provocative new work with the highest standards of stagecraft. In 2016, ART became the 72<sup>nd</sup> member of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and is an Associate Member of the National New Play Network (NNPN). Plays developed by ART have subsequently been produced in New York, Chicago, London, and throughout the country. Recognition for ART developed plays includes the Dramatists Guild Foundation Award, the Edgerton New Play Award, NEA Funding, the Mellon Foundation National Playwright

Residency Program, American Theatre Magazine's Most-Produced Plays, and coverage in the New Yorker and the New York Times. In 2021, the Oregon Media Production Association (OMPA) honored Artists Rep with the Creative Innovation Award for the company's pivot to digital mediums in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. ART recognizes that we are a predominately white organization and operate within systemic racism and oppression, and that silence and neutrality are actions of complicity. We commit ourselves to the work of becoming an anti-racism and anti-oppression organization, and will [work with urgency](#) to end racial inequities in our industry and our culture. To learn more about our organization and programs, please visit <https://artistsrep.org/about/>

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