



Artists Repertory Theatre

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Leslie Crandell Dawes

ldawes@artistsrep.org | 503.241.9807 x131

AIYANA CUNNINGHAM NAMED THE NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR AT ARTISTS REP

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

PORTLAND, OREGON – June 27, 2023 Artists Repertory Theatre is thrilled to announce the appointment of Aiyana Cunningham as its new Managing Director. Cunningham has more than 15 years experience with Portland theatre groups, bringing vast experience, deep passion for the arts, and proven leadership skills to the job. These are paramount for guiding Artists Repertory Theatre into a new era of excellence and community engagement.

Aiyana's wealth of local knowledge and expertise comes from holding key leadership roles at places such as Portland Center Stage and Portland Playhouse. As the Development Director at the Playhouse, Aiyana stewarded a \$1M campaign to secure the purchase of the Playhouse's space. Her impressive background in theatre administration, as well as her commitment to cultivating strong community support will serve Artists Rep's transition well. "I'm looking forward to having a partner in leadership who has deep roots in Portland's theater ecosystem, as well as a successful track record and love of implementing big ideas," says **Artistic Director Jeanette Harrison**. Cunningham's understanding of the industry, combined with her dedication to fostering inclusive and diverse artistic environments, aligns perfectly with Artists Repertory Theatre's mission.

Cunningham's tenure as Managing Director will see her spearhead strategic planning, financial management, and operational oversight. She will work closely with the Board of Directors, staff, and the wider ART community to ensure the continued success and growth of Artists Repertory Theatre. Working alongside Artistic Director, Jeanette Harrison, Cunningham will partner to support the artistic vision and board objectives. Additionally, Cunningham will initially work

closely with current Executive Director, J.S. May, who is moving out of his daily management role to focus entirely on completing the fundraising for ART's new building. "I couldn't be happier to have Aiyana join Artists Rep. Her exceptional experience with capital campaigns as well as her commitment supporting local artists and excellence with promoting ambitious projects will make her a wonderful partner alongside Jeanette."

Aiyana Cunningham expressed their excitement about joining Artists Repertory Theatre, stating, "I am honored and thrilled to become part of Artists Repertory Theatre. This organization has a long-standing commitment to artistic excellence and community impact, and I look forward to building upon its strong foundation. Together, we will champion the transformative power of theatre."

The Board of Directors at Artists Repertory Theatre has expressed great confidence in Cunningham's ability to lead the organization to new heights. **Board Chairperson, Pancho Savery**, said, "We are delighted to welcome Aiyana as our new Managing Director. Her vision, leadership, and commitment to equity align perfectly with ART's values. We are confident that under her guidance, Artists Repertory Theatre will continue to thrive and evolve."

As Artists Repertory Theatre's new Managing Director, Aiyana Cunningham will assume her responsibilities on July 12th. The theatre community eagerly awaits her arrival and the fresh perspective she will bring to the organization's artistic endeavors.

ALJP Consulting led the executive search process, in partnership with a diverse search committee of stakeholders. Francesca McKenzie, Consultant at ALJP, said of the appointment, "Aiyana was the clear choice for this leadership role due to the glowing reviews and unabashed excitement we received from the ART community. Her enthusiasm and passion for the work, as well as her commitment to stewarding a culture of care, will usher in an innovative, provocative, and inclusive new chapter for Artists Repertory Theatre." The search committee included: Pancho Savery, Jeanette Harrison, Melory Mirashrafi, Meg Schenk, Lava Alapai, Norma Dulin, Michael Szporluk, Michael Davidson, and Josie Seid; the search was led by McKenzie, supported by ALJP Principal Kim Davis. Over 100 candidates nationwide applied for the role, and the process incorporated feedback from a wide variety of board, staff, resident artists and other members of the ART community.

About Aiyana Cunningham

Aiyana Cunningham (she/her/them) Aiyana Cunningham is a strategic arts leader driven by the transformative power of our collective stories. Over the past 15 years she has been an activator and connector in Portland's theater community, holding leadership and staff positions at organizations driving change and producing innovative work including Profile Theatre, Portland Center Stage, and The Red Door Project. Aiyana will be leaving her position as Development Director at Portland Playhouse. Through this work she has acquired significant connections within the local cultural ecology, and gained strong knowledge of operational excellence and

funding resources. She has built a network of healthy relationships with artists, community partners, significant donors, and our most engaged audience members — all of which she is thrilled to continue stewarding in her new role as Artists Repertory Theatre’s Managing Director. Aiyana is excited to join a talented team that is dedicated to delivering ART’s mission and values. She’s honored to support the creative vision of Artistic Director Jeanette Harrison, and to work alongside Jeanette to lead a thriving company. Aiyana will also work closely with J.S. May in completing the RISE Capital Campaign, funding the renovation and return to ART’s home theater on SW Morrison. She looks forward to working with the many people invested in ART’s bright future as the company expands its presence as a cultural anchor that produces provocative work with an unparalleled commitment to creative incubation.

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 72nd 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/>

ABOUT ALJP CONSULTING

ALJP Consulting is a black-owned, woman-owned, mission driven firm specializing in executive search, strategic planning, board coaching and development, facilitation, and equity, diversity and inclusion strategy for the arts and beyond. ALJP was founded in the Summer of 2019 to fill a need in the arts and culture field for consulting firms dedicated to creating an industry ecosystem that looks like the world in which we live. While reimagining the Arts and Culture Sector, we put inclusion and equity at the heart of our consulting practice. Current and recent clients include: Manhattan Class Company (MCC), The Field, Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center (PAC), New York Theatre Workshop, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, The Flea, Noor Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, American Repertory Theater at Harvard University, Philadelphia Theatre Company, Penumbra Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, Pasadena Playhouse, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Marin Theatre Company, The Broad Stage, Remy Bumpo Theatre Company, Pivot Arts, Bronx Council on the Arts, Arts Council of Greater New Haven, Visual AIDS, and Trinity Repertory Company. aljpconsulting.com

###