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Balboa Art Conservation Center Names New Executive Director

(San Diego, CA, October 27, 2020) - The Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC), the western region's premier and only nonprofit art conservation center, is thrilled to announce that it has hired cultural heritage champion and experienced arts administrator Leticia Gomez Franco as its next Executive Director. She will start in early December.

"I am incredibly honored and humbled to lead BACC as its new Executive Director and committed to the possibilities in this new position," Gomez Franco said. "Conservation centers play a pivotal role in ensuring the objects that make up our historical cultural inheritance survive the times. Let us dare to reimagine our role as more than caretakers of objects, but also of the stories they keep, the societies they represent, and the people they exclude. Let this be the moment we shift — along with the world — into the uncharted territory of inclusivity. As the leading conservation center in the west, the small but mighty team at BACC is ready to engage communities, demystify the field of conservation, stimulate dialogue, and usher the work into a more inclusive framework."



BACC's new Executive Director, Leticia Gomez Franco.

A seasoned arts professional with deep roots in the San Diego community, Gomez Franco's commitment to preserving culture, as well as her hands-on experience with exhibitions, artists, and communities, were some of the elements that the hiring committee of BACC's Board of Trustees found most engaging. Her background in reimagining spaces, decentralizing narratives, and engaging collective knowledge makes her uniquely positioned to expand on programs like those BACC has recently launched to engage with the broader community. Not surprisingly, RISE San Diego nominated her for a 2020 Inclusive Leadership In Action (ILIA) Award in the "culture shifter" category and the

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National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures has awarded Gomez Franco two fellowships: one for advocacy in 2019 and another for leadership in 2015.

BACC's Board President, Karen Coutts, said, "Leticia Gomez Franco's background and perspective are an excellent complement to the expertise of our world-class conservators. With Leticia at the helm we are reaffirming the importance of the work we do every day in conservation and preservation while moving to diversify our audiences and expand our work to new communities."

Gomez Franco most recently served as the Senior Arts and Culture Funding Manager of the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture where she administered over \$11 million in grants for community arts organizations, reenvisioned programming guidelines and, in the last few months, made dynamic shifts to administrative processes in response to the global health crisis. She was instrumental in forging long-term systemic change to ensure the City serves and responds to all of its diverse communities. A fan of the literary arts, Gomez Franco was behind the launch of the City's first Poet Laureate program, as well.

Before joining the City of San Diego, Gomez Franco served as Director of Programs and Lead Curator for the New Americans Museum, an institution dedicated to preserving and presenting the immigrant experience, and established The Front: A Collaborative of Art, Culture, Design and Urbanism as a formal art gallery and leading binational laboratory of creative thought in the world's most trafficked border region, San Ysidro/Tijuana. As an accomplished curator she has developed more than forty exhibitions at various museums and galleries. Her independently curated work has elicited nationwide press and attention, as well.

Gomez Franco holds a master's degree in Curatorial Theory from the Liberal Arts and Sciences program of San Diego State University, and a bachelor's in English and Chicana/o Studies from the University of California, Berkeley.

BACC is one of the first art conservation centers that was established in the United States and Leticia Gomez Franco's hire is another step in the organization's transition to a new business and leadership model as supported by the Mellon Foundation's Comprehensive Organizational Health Initiative. BACC's previous Executive Director, Janet Ruggles, retired at the end of 2019 after 37 years of dedicated service to the Center.

For more information, or to request images or an interview, please contact Staci Golar at sgolar@bacc.org or call 619.236.9702.

About the Balboa Art Conservation Center

With 45 years of experience, the Balboa Art Conservation Center (BACC) is the western region's premier non-profit art conservation facility, offering museum-quality conservation treatments, investigative technical imaging and analysis, and extensive preservation services for institutions and individuals. A nonprofit organization, BACC is located in the heart of Balboa Park. Learn more at www.bacc.org

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