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For Immediate Release

Contact: Steven Padla / [press@artidea.org](mailto:press@artidea.org)

**INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS  
CO-DIRECTORS  
LIZ FISHER AND TOM GRIGGS  
WILL STEP DOWN IN 2021**

**Liz Fisher** and **Tom Griggs**, Co-Directors of the **International Festival of Arts & Ideas**, today announced their intentions to retire in 2021 and to lead a two-year plan to ensure a smooth transition of new Festival leadership, for which Chairman of the Board **Gordon Geballe** has commenced an international search.

Liz Fisher has served as Managing Director of the Festival since 1998. Tom Griggs has served as Director of Development since 2014. In 2017, they were appointed Co-Directors, along with Chad Herzog (who departed the Festival earlier this summer). In that time, they have continued to focus on their own areas of expertise, while equally sharing executive leadership responsibilities.

Fisher and Griggs will remain in their positions as Co-Directors fulltime through the completion of the Festival's 25th Anniversary Season, running June 13–27, 2020, and continue to participate in the operations of the organization through Festival 2021 to ensure a smooth transition of leadership.

“Tom and I are at similar stages in our lives and professional careers, and we have been very open with each other as we have considered the next chapters of our lives,” said Liz Fisher. “When we both realized we were getting ready to retire, it felt right for us as partners and for the Festival itself to plan to hand off leadership together.”

Tom Griggs continued, “The Festival has meant so much to both Liz and me personally, not to mention to the hundreds of thousands of Festival audiences from around the world—and our own backyard—and some of the world’s most dynamic artists and thinkers. It’s thrilling that our last full season will mark 25th Anniversary of Arts & Ideas, and we can hardly wait to share what we have in store!”

“On behalf of Board members, past and present, we thank Liz and Tom for their remarkable leadership,” said Gordon Geballe. “Individually and together, their tenures have been marked by keen intelligence, infectious joyfulness, and an extraordinary commitment to delivering the best Festival experience possible year after year for artists and audiences alike. We especially appreciate their dedication to implement the Festival’s values and the love they have given all

with whom they interacted. They are special people and will be missed; we hope we see them at Festivals well into the future.”

The international search will launch in the coming weeks for the Festival’s new executive leadership. The search will be guided by Arts Consulting Group and led by its President, Dr. Bruce D. Thibodeau.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Co-Director **Liz Fisher** is the Managing Director of the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, a leadership position she has held since 1998. Before moving to New Haven, she spent two years in Atlanta, Georgia, where she contracted and managed the highly acclaimed \$40 million Cultural Olympiad at the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. Her background is in circus; she began touring with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus when she was 17. For more than twenty years she toured with and managed a series of circuses, spending the last four as the Associate General Manager of New York’s Big Apple Circus. She is married to John Fisher, Executive Director of the Shubert Theater and serves on the board of Saint Martin de’Porres Academy.

Co-Director **Thomas Griggs** served on the Board for seven years before joining the staff as Director of Development for the International Festival of Arts & Ideas in 2014. Prior to the Festival, Mr. Griggs worked in the Yale-New Haven Hospital Office of Development, where he oversaw Corporate and Foundation Giving. He has also enjoyed successful careers in realty and banking, the latter for more than 20 years, in various branch and management positions at People’s Bank, Telephone Banking, and People’s Corporate University. He has served the field on various local and national boards and committees, including Gateway Community College (2009-present), The Connecticut Alliance for Arts Education (1996-2004), the National Governance Committee of The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (2001-2003), Creative Arts Workshop (1990-2015), the City of New Haven Cultural Affairs Commission (2001-2007), and has also dedicated his time to the New Haven Preservation Trust, New Haven Symphony Orchestra, Long Wharf Theatre, Shubert Theater, Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce, as well as serving as an Associate Fellow of Yale University’s Branford College. He holds a bachelor’s degree from the University of Connecticut School of Business and an MBA from the University of New Haven.

## **MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF ARTS & IDEAS**

**The International Festival of Arts & Ideas** is a year-round organization that culminates with an annual celebration of performing arts, lectures, and conversations each June in New Haven, Connecticut. The Festival convenes leading artists, thought leaders, and innovators from around the world for 15 days of dynamic public programs to engage, entertain, and inspire a diversity of communities. More than 85% of Festival programs are free to the public, including events that feature some of the most influential jazz, classical, dance, and theater artists of our time.

The Festival takes place in venues and open spaces in downtown New Haven, in the heart of the northeast corridor, two and a half hours south of Boston and 90 minutes north of New York City.

The Festival’s programs have an impact throughout the year and include additional performances, educational opportunities, and the annual Visionary Leadership Award. The Festival was established in 1996 by Anne Calabresi, Jean M. Handley, and Roslyn Meyer. They

envisioned an annual celebration in New Haven—a city steeped in a rich array of cultural and educational traditions—distinguished from other arts festivals by its fusion of the arts with events centered on sharing ideas.

The Festival is presented with major support from Yale University, The City of New Haven, The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, Connecticut Office of the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

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