

# Media Release

Sept. 18, 2015

**Media only:**

Kelly Carnes 202.633.2825: [carnesk@si.edu](mailto:carnesk@si.edu)

**Media website:** <http://www.hirshhorn.si.edu/press/>

## Hirshhorn Elects Four New Trustees to Build Largest Board in a Decade

*New Members Hail from Worlds of  
Art, Business, Design, Journalism and Philanthropy*

The Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden is pleased to announce the election of four new trustees this week. The addition of David Appel of Toronto; Marcus Brauchli of Bethesda, Maryland; Theaster Gates of Chicago; and Sheri Schlesinger of Los Angeles brings the total membership of the board to 21, up from 12 in 2013. The 12 new members (three former members have transitioned off the board) are from Jakarta, Dubai, New York, Connecticut and New Mexico, in addition to the locales already listed.

Of particular note, internationally recognized artist Theaster Gates replaces Ann Hamilton as the artist representative on the board. Gates has gained wide acclaim for his innovative practice of using art to foster community engagement.

"We are thrilled to have seen our board double in size this past year," said Peggy Burnet, chair of the museum's board. "It is a reflection of new energy and momentum at the Hirshhorn. In the first year of Melissa Chiu's tenure as director, fundraising is up 50 percent, board support has increased 75 percent and, most important, museum attendance is up 27 percent. We feel very optimistic about the future and our ability to fulfill our mission locally, nationally and globally."

"We are succeeding in our goal of creating a diverse board with strong representation in Washington and all regions of the U.S., as well as a growing base of support around the world," said Dan Sallick, chair of the board's nominating and governance committee. "It is this mix of backgrounds and experiences that will help make the museum stronger. And just as we are glad to welcome members who are new to the Hirshhorn, we are proud of the service and generosity of long-term trustees such as Robert Lehrman, John Pappajohn and Ginny Williams, who have given a combined 50 years of service to the museum."

"We are delighted to be adding Theaster Gates to the museum's board. It is critical to have the artist's voice at the table," said Chiu. "We want to thank Ann Hamilton for her many years of committed board service and are excited to have Theaster's perspective to help shape the museum's future. Our goal as we grow the board is to seek out new ideas at the same time that we maintain institutional memory."

The museum is also building out more institutional support beyond the board level. In 2015, the Hirshhorn started both an International Council and a Washington Collectors Committee to bring more people passionate about art, collecting and arts education into the museum.

## About the New Board Members

**David Appel** is a Canadian businessman with a long career in law, business and government service. He is president of David Appel Investment Consultants, Ltd., having started the Toronto-based firm while also serving as the director and executive vice president of Canmont Investment Corporation. He has served as the director of Pharmex, a public company that manufactures generic drugs, and has acted as a consultant to ENS Bio Logicals, Inc. Prior to moving to Toronto, he was senior partner in the Montreal law firm Appel, Golfman and Lehrer, and he served with the Quebec Consumer Protection Office. Appel serves on the boards of the Shaw Festival, the National Theatre School of Canada and the Toronto Foundation for Student Success. He is a member of the 20th Century Acquisition Committee at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and he has served on the boards of Canadian Stage, the Desrosiers Dance Theatre and the National Ballet of Canada.

**Marcus Brauchli** is co-founder and managing partner of North Base Media, a partnership that invests in journalism-related media and technology companies. He also is a consultant to Graham Holdings Co., parent company of the education group Kaplan, Inc.; *Slate*, *Foreign Policy* and other media. Brauchli was previously a vice president of the Washington Post Co. and executive editor of *The Washington Post*. Before joining the *Post*, he was *The Wall Street Journal's* top editor. He has served on the boards of the Overseas Press Club of America; the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Hong Kong; the Knight-Bagehot Fellowships at Columbia University and the International Center for Journalists. He is chairman of the Arthur F. Burns Fellowship, a U.S.-Germany exchange program. He was on the advisory board of the Prix Pictet in photography. He also is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Economic Club of New York and the World Economic Forum's Global Agenda Council on the Future of Media, Entertainment & Information.

**Theaster Gates** is an American social practice and installation artist. Born and raised in Chicago, he continues to live and work in the city's South Side. He is the founder of the nonprofit Rebuild Foundation and is currently a professor in the Department of Visual Arts and director of the Arts and Public Life initiative at the University of Chicago. His work examines issues of urban planning, religious space, craft, and racial identity. He is committed to the revitalization of poor neighborhoods through the combination of urban planning and art practices. Gates has exhibited and performed at the Studio Museum in Harlem, the 2010 Whitney Biennial, the Whitechapel Gallery in London, Punta della Dogana in Venice, the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany, among others. Since 2012 he has been listed among *ArtReview's* hundred most powerful people in the art world.

**Sheri Schlesinger** is a Los Angeles-based philanthropist dedicated to improving community through education in science and the arts. From 1978 to 2008 she was owner and chief executive officer of Schlesinger & Associates, an interior design and architecture firm. She is a retired affiliate of the American Society of Interior Designers. She is also the founder and chairwoman of the board of Genesis Academy, past national lay chair of the One Family Fund and retired board chair of Aleinu. She is a major collector of modern, established and emerging artists from the 1920s to the present. Her collection includes national and international artists in all mediums.