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## **California College of the Arts announces new chair and two new board members joining its Board of Trustees**

### **Appointments bring diverse expertise in design education and cultural strategy to support CCA's mission and impact**

**San Francisco, CA—June 25, 2025**—California College of the Arts (CCA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Calvin B. Wheeler, MD, as its new Board Chair, along with the addition of two new board members: Sarah Thornton, PhD, and Luis Rico-Gutierrez, effective July 1, 2025. These strategic appointments strengthen CCA's governance with leaders who bring extensive experience in cultural institutions, design education, and strategic planning.

Dr. Wheeler, who has served on CCA's board since 2001, brings over four decades of leadership and community engagement to his new role as Board Chair. Thornton, a renowned writer, cultural critic, and strategist, and Rico-Gutierrez, an accomplished design educator and administrator, join the board as CCA continues to expand its impact.

"These appointments reflect our commitment to bringing diverse perspectives and deep expertise to CCA's leadership," said CCA President David C. Howse. "We are incredibly grateful to Lorna Meyer Calas for her exceptional leadership as Board Chair since July 2021. Her vision and dedication have been instrumental in guiding CCA through a period of significant growth and transformation. I am thrilled to welcome Calvin in his new role, as well as our new trustees Sarah and Luis, who will be welcome additions to the board as we continue to evolve and strengthen our position as a leading institution for creative education."

The new board leadership will help guide the institution's strategic initiatives while supporting its commitment to fostering creativity, critical thinking, and cultural engagement.

### **Leadership Rooted in Excellence and Innovation**

**Calvin B. Wheeler, MD**, the newly appointed Board Chair, serves as a consultant at the Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine. He was previously the Regional Medical Director of Undergraduate & Graduate Medical Education for Kaiser Permanente Northern California. With over 40 years in healthcare leadership, Dr. Wheeler has been with Kaiser Permanente since 1984, where he practiced Pediatric Neurology and the sub-specialty of Epilepsy for 32 years. He served in the roles of regional sub-chief of pediatric neurology, Assistant Physician-in-Chief and Physician-in-Chief of the KP Fremont Medical Center and

Greater Southern Alameda Area. Having served on the board of TPMG for 18 years, he also serves on the boards of National Medical Fellowships (NMF), Health Career Connection (HCC), and the UCI alumni association. Beyond his medical career, Dr. Wheeler has deep ties to the Bay Area arts community—he and his wife, Sarajane, own CaSaj Gallery, which, after 20 years in brick-and-mortar form, is now an e-commerce business. Dr Wheeler has been on the faculty at Boston University, Harvard University, UCSF, and now KP BJT SOM.

**Sarah Thornton, PhD**, brings internationally recognized expertise in art world dynamics and cultural hierarchies. As the author of critically acclaimed books such as *Seven Days in the Art World* and *Tits Up: The Top Half of Women's Liberation*, Thornton is a storyteller with deep insights into the role of artists and designers in society. Her experience as chief writer on contemporary art for *The Economist* and her role as a former professor at various institutions, including CCA, will enable her to contribute meaningfully to the college's strategic direction. Thornton has been an advisor to Jessica Silverman, the San Francisco gallerist, since 2011. She holds a BA in Art History and a PhD in Sociology of Culture and has lectured worldwide on cultural value.

**Luis Rico-Gutierrez** joins the board as the distinguished Dean of the College of Design at Iowa State University, where 2,200 students and 150 faculty and staff in seven departments nurture a comprehensive design ecosystem determined to enhance how we live, work, and thrive. An architect whose career spans three continents, he previously served as Associate Dean at Carnegie Mellon's College of Fine Arts, where he co-founded the Remaking Cities Institute, demonstrating the power of connecting academic expertise with community knowledge. As a Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council, Rico-Gutierrez is recognized internationally for advancing excellence by connecting people, disciplines, and cultures.

### **About California College of the Arts**

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through art, architecture, design, and writing in the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area. CCA offers undergraduate and graduate programs across multiple disciplines, fostering an environment where creative innovation and critical thinking converge.

The college's expanded campus, designed by world-renowned architecture firm Studio Gang and completed in fall 2024, features 82,300 square feet of additional space for teaching, making, and presenting art in a continuous indoor-outdoor environment. CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, the college's nonprofit exhibition venue and research institute, continues to commission and showcase new work by emerging and established artists from around the world.

For more information about California College of the Arts, visit [cca.edu](https://cca.edu).