

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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San Diego ART Matters Names Bob Lehman as New Executive Director
Lehman to Lead Region's Leading Arts Advocacy Organization

San Diego, CA – San Diego ART Matters (SDAM), the region's leading arts advocacy and service organization, announced the appointment of Bob Lehman as its new executive director, effective November 10, 2025. Lehman succeeds Felicia Shaw, who will assume a new role at SDAM overseeing special projects, strategic initiatives, and advancement.

Lehman brings more than two decades of leadership in nonprofit arts management and a proven record of organizational growth to the position. In his previous role as executive director of the San Diego Museum Council, Bob guided the organization through a period of significant expansion. He was credited with tripling membership, enhancing accessibility initiatives, and strengthening advocacy for more than 100 cultural institutions across the region, including 30 cross-border partners in Baja California.

In his new role, Lehman will help steer SDAM's continued growth as a regional advocate for arts and culture amidst a shifting funding and policy landscape. In 2026, SDAM will focus on advancing opportunities for artists and arts organizations, especially those in rural, unincorporated, and underserved communities in San Diego County.

"Hiring Bob as the next executive director of San Diego ART Matters is a major win for our arts and culture community and our regional overall," said James Halliday, Interim Chair of SDAM. "A thriving creative ecosystem needs passionate and determined advocates and champions. Having both Bob and Felicia at SDAM brings tremendous capacity and vision to the organization. Their combined experience and perspectives on the work will sustain the momentum generated by the accomplishments of the past year and help us build a foundation for the organization's long-term success."

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Bob Lehman expressed enthusiasm about joining SDAM in this next phase of my career. “I’m honored to lead an organization that has done so much to champion San Diego’s vibrant creative sector,” Lehman said. “Together with Felicia and the SDAM team, I look forward to building stronger partnerships, amplifying local voices, and ensuring that arts and culture thrive in every corner of our region.”

Felicia Shaw added, “Bob and I are already connected at the hip in so much of our work - through statewide leadership roles with California for the Arts and California Arts Advocates and as appointees to the County of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture. Having him join SDAM is an easy fit and natural transition in leadership,” she said.

About San Diego ART Matters:

San Diego ART Matters, formerly the San Diego Regional Arts and Culture Coalition, was founded in 1989 to promote the public value of the arts and boost support through advocacy and service. Today, SDAM acts as a convener, connector, and communications hub for San Diego’s creative sector, which believes that collective power begins with the act of speaking with one voice.

For more information regarding SDAM, visit www.sdartmatters.org.

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