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Contact: Christina Villacorte, (213) 447-1277

Email: cvillacorte@bos.lacounty.gov

Contact: Jethro Rothe-Kushel, (213) 479-6970

Email: jrothe-kushel@bos.lacounty.gov

Supervisors Create First LA County Arts Department

The Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to create the first Los Angeles County Arts Department. Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas and Board Chair Sheila Kuehl coauthored the [motion](#) with broad support from arts funders, creators and institutions.

“With a new arts department, we can further elevate the impact of the arts on our community, culture, and economy,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “The importance of the creative industries cannot be overstated, particularly in Los Angeles. Creativity is one of our most essential economic assets.”

According to the 2017 Otis Report on the Creative Economy, the total creative output generated by industries within the region’s creative economy was \$190 billion in 2015. It also employed 759,000 people, which accounted for 1 in 8, or about 15 percent, of all private wage and salary workers in the region.

“Los Angeles County contains an unparalleled wealth of arts and culture. It makes sense that we establish a County department to support arts and culture. With this motion, we will provide the capacity for a robust department that can strengthen the arts and expand our commitment to cultural equity and inclusion,” said Supervisor Kuehl.

“This is a historic moment in the arts for this region,” said LA County Arts Commission Executive Director Kristin Sakoda. “It is world-class and community-based and there is still more to come!”

The LA County Arts Commission was initially established in 1947. It has grown in the last 70 years since from solely supporting local music performances to supporting hundreds of nonprofit organizations and functioning as a full-service local arts agency.

Throughout the decades, the Commission’s role has expanded to include innovative and meaningful programs including working with school districts throughout the County to develop and implement a strategic plan to integrate arts into K-12 public schools. It also administers the Civic Art program, where artists are aligned with capital projects to bring aesthetics and programming to the community in which the project is located.

It also oversees the iconic Arts Internship Program. To date, more than 2,000 college and university students participate in a paid internship for ten weeks during the summer in arts organizations and venues throughout the County.

“A County Department can make a deep impact in providing workforce training and advancing cultural equity and inclusion efforts,” said Stacy Lieberman, Deputy Director of The Broad.

The new County Department will retain the Arts Commission as an advisory body and will begin its transition by July 1, 2018.

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