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## **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company announces Kristen Jackson as Associate Artistic Director**

**Jackson's appointment marks Woolly's deep commitment to Connectivity's community and civic engagement work**

*(Washington, D.C)* **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** today announces the appointment of **Kristen Jackson to Associate Artistic Director and Director of Connectivity**, a new dual role within the organization that began with the 2022-23 season. Jackson works closely with **Artistic Director, Maria Manuela Goyanes**, to further develop Woolly's Connectivity program in support of Woolly's wider artistic and strategic vision.

Jackson has served as the Connectivity Director at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company since 2014, a role created in 2009 to align Woolly's artistic work with its social and political missions through community-led artistic programming, audience enrichment, community engagement, and educational opportunities. Merging Jackson's existing role with the position of Associate Artistic Director enhances Woolly's profound commitment to community interdependence (mutual reliance) and relationship-building in every facet of its work and strengthens Jackson's ability to holistically advance Woolly's mission.

“I’m thrilled by the opportunity to think about my role at Woolly more expansively, throughout our institution,” says Jackson. “During my time with Woolly, I have worked to deepen relationships with our community partners, moving from the traditional arts partnership model, which can be transactional, to one that is transformational for all involved. Connectivity must be woven into the fabric of all we do—with deep partner relationships and a focus on our local and civic issues.”

“Kristen has made an indelible impact during her time at Woolly Mammoth, and this promotion honors how central she is to our success, especially with her work in our DC community,” shares Goyanes. “She is an important thought leader on the Artistic team as well as across the organization. I think the world of her and am excited to help her ambitions for Connectivity and Woolly Mammoth reach their maximum potential.”

#### **CONNECTIVITY FROM 2009-PRESENT**

Woolly’s Connectivity department was created in 2009 when, after nearly 30 years as a new play producer, Woolly began asking hard questions about how it could take its work and impact on the field to a higher level. Woolly held a national conference: *Who’s in Your Circle: Theatre, Democracy and Engagement in the 21st Century*, from which Connectivity was created to link Woolly’s artistic mission to its social and civic work. At the outset, Connectivity was ambitious about the impact of theatre on American culture and society, proactive in drawing audiences to new, innovative work, and enhancing the theatrical experience for patrons by providing additional avenues and opportunities for engagement and joining the Woolly family.

Since her appointment in 2014, Jackson has continued Woolly’s role in furthering understanding and empathy across perceived and real differences. Under her leadership, Woolly’s Connectivity work has grown to prioritize longitudinal, reciprocal, and long-lasting community relationships. To that end, she launched the Connectivity Core Partner Program during Woolly’s 2020-2021 season, building long-term, mutually-beneficial relationships with

local and regional organizations that share Woolly's values around inclusion, anti-racism, social justice, and the power of art.

Some Connectivity success stories under Jackson's leadership include:

- Spearheading the launch of the [Miranda Family Fellows \(MFF\) program at Woolly Mammoth](#). This collaboration with the Miranda Family Fund is an ambitious workforce development program designed to provide talented candidates from historically excluded communities — especially those who self-identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color — with the resources and training necessary to build their careers as arts administrators or theatre practitioners.
- Providing a monthly space for spoken word at Woolly Mammoth in collaboration with Core Partner Spit Dat, DC's longest running open mic. Woolly also partners with Spit Dat on Spit Dat Academy, a dynamic program of workshops to support the growth of the next generation of spoken word and performance artists. In collaboration with the Lead Up, Lead Out program in DC's Department of Corrections, Spit Dat Academy is currently teaching writing and presentation skills to incarcerated persons, supporting them in harnessing the power of their stories.
- Born out of Spit Dat Academy, Woolly presented [Homegrown](#) with Core Partner Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus (THEARC) in the Anacostia neighborhood. This performance weaved together poetry, storytelling, hip hop, and verse to answer the question, "What is home to you?" After the project's success, Jackson worked with *Homegrown*-featured-artist O-Slice in developing her solo show *19*. This theatrical hip-hop and spoken word show was presented by Woolly Mammoth at THEARC in June 2022 to nearly sold-out crowds.
- During Woolly Mammoth's recent run of *AIN'T NO MO'*, Jackson oversaw the organization's first Black Out Performance. In this performance, an intentionally all-Black-identifying audience was invited to experience and discuss the play together. This intentional healing space prioritized the needs of Black-identifying audience members to be seen and celebrated in a theatre space and process complex questions about race

and belonging while in community. This performance was nearly sold-out and provided an experience for the cast and audience unlike any other.

### **ABOUT WOOLLY**

The Tony Award®-winning **Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company** creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. For over 40 years, Woolly has maintained a high standard of artistic rigor while simultaneously daring to take risks, innovate, and push beyond perceived boundaries. One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves an essential research and development role within the American theatre. Plays premiered here have gone on to productions at hundreds of theatres all over the world and have had lasting impacts on the field. Currently co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Interim Managing Director Ted DeLong, Woolly is located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol and the White House. This unique location influences Woolly's investment in actively working towards an equitable, participatory, and creative democracy.

Woolly Mammoth stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples. Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands.

### **CONNECTIVITY AT WOOLLY MAMMOTH**

Woolly Mammoth's nationally acclaimed Connectivity department was founded in 2009 to link Woolly's artistic mission with its social and political mission. Woolly Mammoth's core values of radical inclusion and anti-racism are at the center of this work.

Connectivity represents the potential and ambition of Woolly Mammoth to be a place for people to come and engage with the most thought-provoking and challenging questions of our time. Through its Connectivity work, Woolly Mammoth pursues deep, transformative relationships with its partners in the community, provides a platform and support for local artists, and reimagines the ways audiences can interact with the work onstage. Connectivity is integral to Woolly's mission to radically redefine theatre as a catalyst for an equitable, creative, and engaged society — expanding the work beyond the stage and into the world.

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