



## **San Francisco Art Institute Announces New Leadership of Board of Trustees**

**San Francisco, CA (January 22, 2021)** – San Francisco Art Institute announces the election of Lonnie Graham as Chair of its Board of Trustees. An artist, photographer, cultural activist and a graduate of SFAI (MFA 84'), Graham has been a member of the Board since July 2020 and was an Adjunct Professor at SFAI in 2002 and 2016. He is a Pew Fellow and Professor of Art in Photography at Pennsylvania State University and Executive Director of The PhotoAlliance in San Francisco. Graham was formerly Acting Associate Director of the Fabric Workshop and Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and also served as Director of Photography at Manchester Craftsmen's Guild in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, an urban arts organization dedicated to arts and education for at risk youth.

Graham succeeds Pam Rorke Levy, who has been on the Board since 2013 and served as Chair since July 2018. Beginning in 2019, under Levy's leadership, the Board initiated a multi-pronged campaign to keep SFAI open despite years of declining enrollment and rising costs. In summer 2019 she and the Board convened a joint strategic task force of staff, Board, and consultants to develop new revenue streams that would offset dwindling tuition revenue, including the sub-leasing of the school's Fort Mason campus, efforts that provided a foundation for SFAI's record-breaking fundraising effort in 2020. When SFAI faced foreclosure in spring 2020, Levy led SFAI in restructuring its long-term debt, negotiating a loan buyout with the University of California that enabled the institution to avoid foreclosure. The restructure has provided six years of runway to rebuild enrollment and cash flow. As a result of these efforts, SFAI was able to retain its tenured faculty and continue teaching degree students uninterrupted throughout the pandemic, as well as engaging in a community-wide initiative to reimagine the institution's programs and business model. Levy will remain on the Board through the end of January to support Graham through his transition into the role of Board Chair.

Graham said, "As we move forward, I would like to see the San Francisco Art Institute continue to cultivate and sustain experimentation and innovation in the fine arts as we imagine an inclusive and collaborative educational environment."

Levy added, "As SFAI begins to reimagine itself for a new era post-pandemic and actively recruits for fall 2021, Lonnie Graham is the perfect candidate for the role of Board Chair. He has experienced firsthand the transformative effects of an education at SFAI, and with over 40 years of involvement at SFAI – first as a student, then as faculty, now on the Board – no one understands the potential of this institution better than he does. He is uniquely qualified to help SFAI address its areas of improvement and build on its strengths, uniting the community around common goals."

In addition, the Board has elected John Marx as Vice Chair of the Board. Marx, AIA, who has been a member of the Board since September 2020, is a co-founding principal and chief artistic officer of Form4 Architecture in San Francisco, responsible for developing Form4 Architecture's design vision and philosophical language. He has widely lectured on the topics of design, placemaking, emotional meaning and cultural vibrancy in Silicon Valley and places as diverse as Korea, Italy, Austria, Australia, Canada and the Technion in Israel. His design work and writing have been published in over 100 national and international publications.

Marx commented, "I look forward to helping to sustain SFAI, which, as a fiercely independent and deeply compassionate school of art, is in a critical position to help us heal and guide us back to a culture of integrity and inclusion."



Marx succeeds Bonnie Levinson and Jeremy Stone as Co-Vice Chairs, who have served in that role since 2020 and 2019 respectively. Levinson served on SF AI's Board from 2012 to 2018, and was named Trustee Emeritus in 2018. She resumed her active role on the Board in 2020 on an interim basis to support leadership through a period of transition and rebuilding. Levinson will return to her position as Trustee Emeritus and continue to provide leadership to SF AI's Development Committee. Stone has performed many roles at SF AI over the past four decades, most recently rejoining the SF AI Board in 2019 to lead efforts to rebuild SF AI's fundraising programs. She has been elected as Trustee Emeritus and will likewise continue to serve on SF AI's Development Committee.

### **About San Francisco Art Institute**

Founded in 1871, SF AI is one of the country's oldest and most prestigious institutions of higher education committed to the practice and study of contemporary art. SF AI fosters creativity and original thinking in an open, experimental, and interdisciplinary context, and has played a central role in many contemporary art movements including Abstract Expressionism, Bay Area Figuration, Color Field, California Funk, and the Mission School. Celebrated artists and thinkers who have studied or taught at SF AI include Angela Davis, Bruce Conner, Carlos Villa, Ansel Adams, Mark Rothko, David Park, Lynn Hershman Leeson, Mildred Howard, George Kuchar, Richard Diebenkorn, Jay DeFeo, Catherine Opie, Joan Brown, Cristobal Martinez, Toba Khedoori, Mike Henderson, Barry McGee, Alicia McCarthy, and Kehinde Wiley. Other notable alumni include the photographer Annie Liebovitz and Academy Award-winning director Kathryn Bigelow.

### **General Information**

For general information, the public may visit [sfai.edu](http://sfai.edu) or call (415) 749-4563. SF AI is located at 800 Chestnut St., San Francisco, CA.

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