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NORTHWEST FILM FORUM ANNOUNCES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Signaling commitment to the fresh energy Courtney Sheehan has infused into Northwest Film Forum as Artistic Director, the Board of Directors announces Sheehan as the new Executive Director of Seattle's most comprehensive film arts organization. Over the last two and a half years, as Program Director and then as Artistic Director, Sheehan increased box office and ramped up audience engagement through compelling curation, partnerships and live events. As Executive Director, she will guide vision and strategy by overseeing artistic programs and services, operations, finances, and fundraising activities.

Board President, Peter J. Vogt credits Sheehan for her shrewd understanding of the shifting sands beneath arts nonprofits and movie theaters. "In a time when people can pipe whatever programming they want into their home theaters, a film arts organization needs to rethink its value to the community. Courtney is really good at building relationships, understanding the importance of new ideas, and celebrating the kind of art that draws people together."

The Film Forum's revitalized vision has turned around a box office in decline with an eclectic mix of 500 film screenings, 50 public conversations and industry events, 50 visiting filmmakers, 20 live film scores and 5 multidisciplinary live show commissions since Sheehan came on board. The organization has also donated hundreds of hours of venue space and staff time to community groups across the city. In 2015, Sheehan produced the Frye Art Museum's *Genius* Film Festival and was named one of ten "Artists of the Year" by *City Arts*.

At the national art house theater conference before Sundance, keynote speaker Emily Best (Seed & Spark) remarked: "[Sheehan] is much more than a curator; she acts as a facilitator – allowing community leaders of all kinds bring in their audiences to watch and discuss what really matters to them."

Recent program partnerships include KEXP, Civilization, Fandor, Brick Lane Records, the University of Washington, the Seattle Documentary Association, and the Social Justice Fund, among many others. In March, the Film Forum and Brick Lane Records awarded animator Neely Goniodsky a \$5,000 production grant as part of [Cue Northwest](#), a project that connects local filmmakers and musicians. Guest programmer Gina Basso (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art) is programming a summer slate of new and archival films, and choreographer Paige Barnes presents the world premiere of [PALMS](#) in July.

"I have been so driven by the creative freedom to pursue bold projects and collaborate with our city's inspiring hive mind of thinkers, makers, and doers," Sheehan said. "Discovering great, new independent films has always been our mission, and today we are discovering new ways to connect people through a range of media arts. My goal as Executive Director is to realize Northwest Film Forum's momentous potential as a critically needed space for equitable access to art."

As the Film Forum begins a new chapter, the organization invites input from the public in a [survey](#). A happy hour and meet and greet with Sheehan will be held on 5/31 at 6pm at Northwest Film Forum.

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About Northwest Film Forum

Northwest Film Forum's mission is to discover and champion the work of visionary filmmakers, and to engage the general public and artists alike in deeper exploration of art of film. The Film Forum is Seattle's premier film arts organization, screening over 200 independently made and classic films annually, offering a year-round schedule of filmmaking classes (including summer camps for young people), and supporting filmmakers at all stages of their careers. nwfilmforum.org