



NEWS

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Penn Live Arts Appoints Leah Falk as Director of Education and Engagement

(Philadelphia – October 25, 2022) — **Penn Live Arts (PLA)** at the University of Pennsylvania has appointed **Leah Falk**, a higher education professional and published author, as Director of Education and Engagement, a new position for PLA. Falk will provide strategic leadership, program direction, and operational oversight for PLA's extensive education and engagement activities on the Penn campus and in the Philadelphia community.

"We are delighted to welcome Leah to Penn Live Arts as our new Director of Education and Engagement," said PLA Executive and Artistic Director **Christopher Gruits**. "Her broad experience in education, the arts, and communities positions her well to build strong relationships with Penn faculty and Philadelphia teachers and conceptualize innovative programming and partnerships. In particular, we are excited that she will also develop the initial scope and plan for our new student career support initiative."

"I'm thrilled to be joining the Penn Live Arts team," said **Falk**. "I'm looking forward to taking a deep dive into PLA's rich and diverse programming and exploring ways that the Penn and Philadelphia communities can be in conversation with great performance both in and beyond the theatre."

Falk will oversee PLA's inclusive community outreach, K-12 education, and engagement efforts including the PLA Director's Student Advisory Council, the Student Discovery series of daytime performances for Philadelphia region schoolchildren, the Philadelphia Children's Festival, and all free or low-cost educational events that serve 10,000 Philadelphia area youth annually. In addition to managing current programming she will be responsible for planning and launching PLA's student career support initiative.

Leah Falk (she/her) is a writer, program administrator, and educator passionate about the power of the arts to engage community creativity. She most recently directed the Rutgers-Camden Writers House, where she built community-engaged literary programming for a wide range of constituents. She has taught writing at Rutgers-Camden, Interlochen Center for the Arts, and the University of Michigan, and was a teaching artist and workshop facilitator for InsideOut Literary Arts and NY Writers Coalition.

The author of two poetry collections, *To Look After and Use* and *Other Customs and Practices*, Falk's work has received support from the Vermont Studio Center, Asylum Arts, the Sundress Academy for the Arts, and the Yiddish Book Center. She served on the board of Emerging Arts Leaders: Philadelphia in 2018-19.

Falk holds an M.F.A. in Creative Writing from the Helen Zell Writers Program at the University of Michigan and a B.A. from Oberlin College. She began her career as an AmeriCorps VISTA. Born and raised in Pittsburgh, she lives in South Philadelphia with her family.

Penn Live Arts, Celebrating 50 Years

Penn Live Arts (PLA), the leading presenter of innovative and transformative performing arts experiences in Philadelphia, celebrates the 50th anniversary of its home, the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, in the 2022-23 season. A vital resource for the performing arts at the University of Pennsylvania, PLA is an artistic crossroads joining Penn and the greater Philadelphia region through world-class music, dance, theatre, and film on campus and at venues throughout the city. Penn Live Arts' extensive history of commissioning and championing artists has fostered important creative work by theatre legend Hal Prince, new music composers

Philip Glass and Steve Reich, boundary-pushing choreographers Paul Taylor, David Parsons and Moses Pendleton, jazz greats Hugh Masekela, Terence Blanchard and Branford Marsalis, and many more. For younger audiences, the Student Discovery series offers weekday matinees and the annual Philadelphia Children's Festival, established in 1985 as the first event of its kind in the nation. Penn Live Arts emphasizes artistic and intellectual excellence and diversity in its offerings; prioritizes broad inclusiveness in the artists, audiences and groups it serves; and expands arts access by actively engaging a wide range of audiences and inclusive communities from campus, the West Philadelphia neighborhood and the surrounding region.

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