

**MEDIA CONTACT**

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## Press Release

### **MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM PROMOTES SENIOR STAFF MEMBER**

#### ***Jessica Hanson York to Take the Helm; Rob Sidner Retires after 29 Years***

**San Diego — May 9, 2022** — After 29 years with Mingei International Museum, Executive Director Rob Sidner is passing the torch to Deputy Director and Chief Advancement Officer Jessica Hanson York. The announcement was made Saturday night at a celebration honoring Sidner's 16 years of inspirational leadership.

"There is no better person to lead this organization than Jessica," explained Sidner. "Having worked side-by-side with her for over ten years, I have seen how well she embraces the Mingei philosophy. She has the experience, passion, warmth and talent to lead our team forward."

"I'm thrilled that it's time to move on and that it's time for new leadership. I'm just eager to watch what happens with Mingei and with a new director, and our new exhibitions and chief curator as well as with all of the new staff. The museum is full of possibilities and full of promise. I'm eager to watch it unfold and believe the museum is on the cusp of some very important things."

Hanson York takes over at a momentous time as Mingei is riding the wave of a successful transformational renovation project led by local architect Jennifer Luce, LUCE et studio. She played a key role in the fundraising and oversight of the capital project, helping raise over \$47 million. Reopened last September, the Museum has already experienced success welcoming over 73,000 visitors into its new space and received a 2022 Design Award from the American Institute of Architects New York for its extensive renovation.

Choosing a new leader is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The hiring committee, led by trustee Abby Weiss, first convened in late 2020. The group determined that the right candidate was someone they already knew well.

"The Board looked for a forward-thinking chief executive with the appropriate balance of passion for our mission, experience in museum management, and leadership ability," explained Weiss. "We were so fortunate that a member of the executive team has all these personal attributes, years of pertinent experience and demonstrated leadership abilities. And she knows our collection, our staff and our donors and every inch of the renovated building. Jessica will be a superb steward of the Mingei mission. "

"In addition, Rob Sidner had the foresight in making sure Jessica is absolutely prepared for the new role. Having the foresight and ability to implement a succession plan is the envy of every nonprofit," Weiss added.

Hanson York joined Mingei International Museum in 2011 after serving as Director of External Affairs & Marketing at The New Children's Museum downtown. While there, she oversaw the creation of the brand and managed the grand opening in 2010. A career nonprofit professional with over 20 years of experience in strategic communications, fundraising, operations and social-impact programming, Hanson York has proven her ability to develop programs, relationships and strategic initiatives that engage and build audiences, grow revenue and inspire philanthropic support.

A Connecticut native and graduate of Emerson College, she has been a San Diego resident since 2005. She received a MA in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from USD and currently serves as Adjunct Faculty member. She also worked with the San Diego Museum Council, the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, and KPBS Radio and Television.

Her role will be crucial to Mingei's future. With a reimagined facility, new outreach and engagement programs, and a fresh artistic approach, the Museum is positioned to strengthen its community ties and role as a cultural anchor in Balboa Park.

The Museum's Board of Trustees Chairman, Maureen King shares, "For over a decade, Jessica has understood, been passionate about and embraced the mission of Mingei. Her succession to the directorship of the Museum will be seamless. Her leadership style is strategic, gracious and collaborative, and I look forward to seeing the creative heights to which Jessica will move Mingei."

In accepting the post, Hanson York noted, "I am humbled and thrilled to lead Mingei into its next chapter. As someone who has spent my career in locally-focused nonprofits, I believe that art can play a meaningful role in building community. I look forward to continuing to work with my innovative colleagues at the Museum to develop and deliver inclusive, accessible exhibitions and experiences that are relevant to our growing audience." She added, "With a focus on human creativity and craft traditions that are a source of cultural identity and pride, Mingei has the potential to become a meaningful community resource for our diverse region."

Hanson York lives in Point Loma with her husband, 13-year-old daughter and dog Weasley.

## **ABOUT MINGEI INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM**

Located in San Diego's Balboa Park, Mingei International Museum collects, preserves and exhibits folk art, craft and design from all eras and cultures of the world. Within a newly reopened facility that includes an education center, theater, shop, restaurant and plenty of free, accessible public space, the Museum offers inspiring exhibitions and diverse community and educational programs to more than 100,000 visitors a year. As the presenter of San Diego Design Week and a partner to over 50 local artists and art and cultural organizations, Mingei puts celebrating creativity at the core of its mission through workshops, film festivals, lectures and more. Mingei is a nonprofit institution funded by admission, individuals, and institutional support.

[Mingei.org](http://Mingei.org)

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Photo credit: Katie Gardner, Mingei International Museum