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Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts Announces Leadership Change

—Steven Young Lee, who has successfully led the internationally recognized creative center dedicated to the ceramic arts for 15 years, will transition to director emeritus and special projects manager—

Helena, Mont. (November 15, 2021) – After 15 years at the helm of the world-renowned [Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts](#), Steven Young Lee has announced that he is transitioning from his current leadership role as resident artist director to the newly created role of director emeritus and special projects manager. The Bray, in partnership with Arts Consulting Group, will begin a search for its new executive director this month.

During his tenure as the organization's leader and resident artist director, Lee has guided The Bray through a period of exceptional growth and evolution. His achievements include the successful completion in 2021 of a \$6 million capital campaign to support a new education and research facility, administrative offices, sales gallery and visiting artist housing; increasing by 60% applications to The Bray's [artist-in-residence program](#); introducing new community outreach programs, including partnerships with Theaster Gates, Cannupa Hanska Luger, Raven Halfmoon and Manchester Craftsmen's Guild; increasing direct financial support for residents and visiting artists, with funds raised specifically to support makers of color at the Bray; and overseeing the organization's rebranding efforts, which were [announced](#) this month. He also helped develop a new strategic plan for the organization that includes an increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion at The Bray and in the international ceramics community.



"It has been the opportunity of a lifetime to help guide The Bray these past 15 years, and I'm tremendously proud of all we have accomplished in that time. I also feel more confident than ever about The Bray's organizational strength, stability, and future as a leading creative center in the international ceramics community," said Lee. "The time is right for new leadership and ideas, and I am thrilled to support the new executive director, who will lead The Bray in its next phase of growth and vision."

“Steve's impact during his time leading the Bray is immeasurable. It is felt in every corner of our organization, from his mentorship of fellow artists, to his commitment to increasing diversity, equity and inclusion in the international ceramics community, to his steady hand in navigating our organization through the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Sue Tirrell, Board chair. “The Bray is deeply grateful for all Steve has contributed to the tremendous growth and stability that the organization is experiencing now, and we’re thrilled that he will continue to play a key role as The Bray works to foster excellence in the ceramic arts.”

As director emeritus, Lee will help transition the management and artistic leadership of The Bray to the incoming director, and will continue to help build the organization’s foundation and maintain relationships with key donors.

Lee will also be the organization’s first special projects manager. In this role, he will continue to cultivate relationships with strategic artistic partners. Working through the education program, Lee will serve as liaison with these partners to help establish innovative programs that further The Bray’s reach into underserved communities to reimagine approaches to ceramic education, design, skill-training and artistic development.

“I’m excited to continue my work with The Bray around our impactful artist partnerships, including that with Cannupa Hanska Luger and Raven Halfmoon on developing an indigenous earth lodge on campus,” said Lee.

A renowned artist whose work has been featured by the Smithsonian Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, the Portland Art Museum and others, Lee will remain in Helena with his family. In addition to supporting The Bray, he plans to dedicate time to his own studio practice.

About the Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts

The Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts, known as The Bray, is a public, nonprofit creative center solely dedicated to the ceramic arts. Founded in 1951 by brickmaker Archie Bray, the mission of The Bray is to enhance commitment to, and investment in, the ceramic arts. Located in Helena, Mont., near the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, the 26-acre former brickyard serves as a gathering place for emerging and professional ceramic artists. Its programs include an international artist-in-residence program, workshops and community classes, curated exhibitions, an on-site and virtual sales gallery, and a ceramic supply facility that provides “Bray Clay” and technical support to artists from around the world. archiebray.org

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