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HIGH CONCEPT LABS WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AS IT CELEBRATES 10-YEAR ANNIVERSARY

CHICAGO, March 20, 2019 — High Concept Laboratories NFP (HCL), a Chicago-based arts service organization and artist incubator, today announced that Sharon Hoyer has joined HCL as its new director, and Yolanda Cesta Cursach has joined as artistic director. Together they will be responsible for advancing HCL’s innovative artist programs and developing new community collaborations as the organization celebrates its 10-year anniversary in 2019-2020.

“High Concept Labs has built itself over the past decade on a spirit of artistic innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship,” said Peter Taub, HCL board co-chair. “I can think of no better way to build our next phase than welcoming Sharon and Yolanda to the team. Their combined expertise and track record of success will be invaluable for growing HCL into the next decade - and beyond.”

Hoyer brings nearly 15 years of experience as a business leader, cultural critic, and creative professional in Chicago, most recently as general manager of Dill Pickle Food Co-op, a community-owned grocery, where she led the organization through a successful, massive relocation and expansion project. She serves as the dance editor for Newcity Magazine, where she has been a dance and performance writer since 2007. In her role at HCL, Hoyer will be responsible for organizational management and growth and strategic planning in partnership with the board of directors.

Cesta Cursach is an independent curator of contemporary theater, dance and music, including more than two decades as curator with the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. She serves as chairperson, curator, and facilitator roles with the Chicago Dancemakers Forum, the Chicago Latino Theater Alliance, Bodies of Work (producer of the International Festival of Disability Arts and Culture), the Maggie Allesee National Center for Choreography, and Southern Exposure: Performing Arts of Latin America Program of the NEA. As artistic director, she will be responsible for creative strategy and program implementation for HCL’s Sponsored Artist, Institutional Incubation, and the advancement of inclusive community and international partnerships.

“For artists who don’t fit into a mold, it can be hard to find a space to try bold, new ideas. Over the past 10 years, High Concept Labs has truly become that space,” said Hoyer. “With my background in both arts and business, I’m honored to join HCL, engage in these conversations with our audiences, and find new ways to connect artists with real opportunities in Chicago.”

Hoyer follows in the footsteps of HCL's outgoing executive director, Steven Wang, who joined HCL in 2015, helping scale the organization from a warehouse studio space into a dynamic arts service organization. In early 2019, he moved abroad to pursue new entrepreneurial initiatives, but remains as an adviser to Hoyer and HCL.

"I am absolutely delighted that Sharon is taking over the helm at HCL," said Wang. "With her background in growing a local business, along with her knowledge and connections with the Chicago arts community, I could not imagine a better person for this role. Combined with Yolanda's expertise and experience, they will be able to grow the organization further, and in ways we could not have imagined only a few years ago. I look forward to watching the organization's next chapter unfold."

About High Concept Laboratories NFP

High Concept Laboratories NFP supports artists and facilitates dialogue between artists, audiences, and staff members. This increases access and transparency to the artistic process and fosters transformational experiences in an environment of experimentation and discovery.

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