

Bruce Museum Names Robert Wolterstorff as New Executive Director



Robert Wolterstorff, the newly appointed Susan E. Lynch Executive Director and CEO of the Bruce Museum in Greenwich, CT.

GREENWICH, CT, April 12, 2019 – The Bruce Museum today announced that its Board of Trustees has appointed Robert Wolterstorff as The Susan E. Lynch Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer.

This leadership appointment will take effect June 1 and follows the previously announced retirement of Peter C. Sutton after an 18-year career as Executive Director of the Bruce.

Wolterstorff has served as Executive Director of the Bennington Museum in Vermont since 2012, leading the 167-year-old museum through a well-received curatorial makeover. In addition to overseeing improvements to its gallery spaces and innovative re-installations drawing from the museum's collection of 40,000 objects, Wolterstorff spearheaded a series of changing exhibitions that resonated with museum members and attracted new audiences.

The 2016 exhibition, *Milton Avery's Vermont*, increased attendance by more than 40 percent, growth that was surpassed in 2017 with *Grandma Moses: American Modern*. Positive reviews and strong attendance continued in 2018 with *Thinking About Extinction and Other Droll Things*:



BRUCE MUSEUM
One Museum Drive • Greenwich, CT 06830-7100
203.869.0376 • www.brucemuseum.org

Press Release

Recent Prints and Drawings by Edward Koren, an exhibition in the museum's Works on Paper gallery featuring *The New Yorker* cartoonist, who resides in Vermont.

Wolterstorff deepened the Museum's involvement in 20th-century art by creating a new Bennington Modernism Gallery to highlight the achievements of the circle of now-famous abstract painters and sculptors associated with Bennington in the 1960s: Helen Frankenthaler, Kenneth Noland, Jules Olitski, Larry Poons, David Smith, Tony Smith, and Sir Anthony Caro.

Two things Wolterstorff is most proud of during his tenure as Executive Director are the exhibition *3D Digital: Here and Now*, which focused on the innovative digital manufacturing in Bennington, and a recurring series of one-night living tattoo exhibitions, which has brought new audiences to the museum.

An architectural historian with a passion for contemporary art and Victorian design, Wolterstorff previously served as Director of the Ebenezer Maxwell Mansion in Philadelphia. As Executive Director of Victoria Mansion in Portland, Maine, from 1998 to 2010, Wolterstorff secured key grants for architectural preservation, forged strong relationships with major donors, and completed two capital campaigns for improvements to the National Historic Landmark.

"We are fortunate to have someone with Robert's experience and qualifications to step into the role as leader of the Bruce," says Jan Rogers Kniffen, Chair of the Board of Trustees. "The Museum has embarked on its transformative, \$60 million capital expansion and renovation project, which includes \$15 million of added support to the Museum's Endowment. Robert has a proven track record not only as the creator of innovative, cross-disciplinary exhibitions but also as a museum administrator capable of completing successful capital projects."

The Campaign for the New Bruce will more than double the size of the Museum, from 30,000 square feet to 70,000 square feet, adding education and community spaces and significantly expanding its space for permanent and temporary installations of art, science, and natural history exhibitions. The centerpiece of the New Bruce is a three-story addition to be integrated with the current structure. Designed by the New Orleans firm of Eskew + Dumez + Ripple, the building will open to Bruce Park and feature a façade of cast stone and glass inspired by the striated walls of Connecticut's historic rock quarries.

"Peter Sutton has done incredible things during his 18 years here," says Kniffen. "The exhibitions he created brought national attention to the Museum, and he has positioned the Museum for an exciting future. The Board shares a genuine appreciation for his vision and leadership, and we wish Peter well as he transitions to his new role as Director Emeritus."

Says Sutton, "I look forward to working with Robert to introduce him to our talented staff and dynamic institution."



The New Bruce project – the first since a \$4.3 million expansion in 1992 – began with the expansion of and improvement to the Museum’s parking lot in the fall of 2018. The next phase of construction is expected to proceed in the fall of 2019 with the renovation of the current changing gallery spaces.

“I’m thrilled to be joining the Bruce Museum and its team of an energized staff and forward-thinking Board who are leading it into the future,” says Wolterstorff. “It’s hard to leave the Bennington Museum, just when it is also on the verge of dramatic changes. But what draws me to the Bruce is the incredible – really unparalleled – opportunity to create a new museum. It’s not just the new building by an important national architect. It’s also the opportunity to be involved in forming significant new collections, a new attitude, and new ways that the Museum will connect with its community. That’s tremendously exciting! That is what is bringing me here.”

Wolterstorff earned a master of fine arts and a doctorate in art history from Princeton University, where he wrote his dissertation on the 18th-century neoclassical architect Robert Adam. He has a master’s in art history from Williams College and a bachelor’s in biology from Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Over a 27-year career in the arts and museum leadership, Wolterstorff has also held curatorial and research positions at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Clark Art Institute, the Williams College Museum of Art, and the college’s Chapin Rare Book Library. He served as a trustee for the New England Museum Association from 2006 to 2015 and is currently on the board of the Williamstown Art Conservation Center. Wolterstorff and his wife, Mari Jones, have two children, a son in college and a daughter in high school.

Patricia Chadwick, Chair of the Succession Committee, said, “We believe Robert is the ideal person to help us achieve our long-held dream of a New Bruce for our members, the residents of Greenwich, and the greater community this Museum has served since 1908, when Robert Moffat Bruce deeded his property to the Town of Greenwich, stipulating that it be used as ‘a natural history, historical, and art museum for the use and benefit of the public.’”

####

About the Bruce Museum

The Bruce Museum is a community based, world-class institution highlighting art, science, and natural history in more than a dozen changing exhibitions annually. The permanent galleries feature the natural sciences that encompass regional to global perspectives. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years, the Bruce plays an integral role in the cultural life of area residents and attracts approximately 70,000 visitors annually, reaching out to families, seniors, students, and community organizations. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Museum is also a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. The Bruce Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5



BRUCE MUSEUM
One Museum Drive • Greenwich, CT 06830-7100
203.869.0376 • www.brucemuseum.org

Press Release

pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. For additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit brucemuseum.org.

Media Contact: Scott Smith, Director of Marketing and Communications, 203-413-6735 or ssmith@brucemuseum.org.