



The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Taps Holly Bass to Lead National Turnaround Arts Program

Washington, D.C. (March 18, 2019)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts announces that multi-disciplinary performance and visual artist, writer and director Holly Bass will lead the [Turnaround Arts](#) program as its new National Director. Starting this week, she will help Turnaround Arts continue to thrive and grow, as it infuses Priority and Focus Schools with arts-based learning as a strategy to help improve overall school reform efforts.

“The Kennedy Center is thrilled to welcome Holly Bass to our Education division,” said Jeanette McCune, Director of School and Community Programs at the Kennedy Center. “Holly is a wonderful addition to our leadership team, and she shares our dedication to realizing the vision that every child across the country might one day have access to high-quality, equitable, relevant arts education. Turnaround Arts is a critical part of the Center’s national arts education portfolio, and we look forward to the many positive impacts that Holly’s expertise is sure to have on all of our school and community programs.”

Over the course of her broad-ranging career, Bass has worked as a communications consultant and journalist, an artist specializing in community engagement, and an educator for both adult and youth programs. Her work has been presented at spaces such as the Kennedy Center, the Smithsonian museums, the Seattle Art Museum, Art Basel Miami Beach, and the South African State Theatre. Throughout her career, she has approached art in new, creative ways that open the medium up to more people. A gifted and dedicated teaching artist, she directed year-round creative writing and performance programs for Washington, D.C.’s Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, and facilitates workshops around the world.

“The Kennedy Center, with its long history of showcasing world-class artists, its national platform and deep understanding of the value of arts education, is the ideal home for Turnaround Arts,” said Bass. “I’m excited for the opportunity to lead an incredible team that is passionately working to transform American education and revitalize school communities with an infusion of the arts. I look forward to helping to both sustain and expand this incredible program, as it continues to bolster the efforts of schools, teachers, students, and communities nationwide.”

As National Director, Bass will work with the Kennedy Center Education team, local Turnaround Arts program directors in [17 states and the District of Columbia](#), more than [80 high-profile Turnaround Artist mentors](#), and Turnaround Arts schools from Hawai’i to Rhode Island. Turnaround Arts is based on the premise that high-quality, integrated arts education can strengthen school reform efforts, boost academic achievement, and increase student engagement in schools facing some of the toughest challenges in the country.

Bass succeeds Kathy Fletcher, who has been with Turnaround Arts since the program’s founding as a pilot program in 2012, and who has accepted a new role as the Kennedy Center’s Director of Creative Leadership Initiatives. Fletcher shepherded Turnaround Arts from its start, testing a hypothesis that the arts could act as a tool to help support overall school reform efforts in eight pilot schools, to today’s program working in 79 schools across the country. She also oversaw the program’s transition from its birthplace in the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, chaired by Michelle Obama, to its home at the Kennedy Center.

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About Turnaround Arts

Turnaround Arts, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, bolsters reform efforts at Priority and Focus-designated schools (PK-8) through the strategic use of the arts. Designed to impact every hallway, classroom, staff member, and student in the school, the program fuels whole-school transformation. As part of Turnaround Arts, schools receive an array of arts education services designed to increase chances of success, engage communities, and raise the visibility of their achievements. Turnaround Arts works with 79 schools in 17 states and the District of Columbia. <http://turnaroundarts.kennedy-center.org>

About Education at the Kennedy Center

From our stages to classrooms and communities across the country, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts sets a standard for arts learning. Working through model programs and a nationwide network of partners, American's cultural center harnesses the power of the arts to address education challenges, accelerate best practices, and uplift citizen artists. With customized learning opportunities offered in all 50 states, 29 countries, and globally through its online resource ArtsEdge.com, the Center offers customized programs that directly impact more than 1.4 million students and indirectly impact millions more. On September 7, 2019, the Kennedy Center will open the REACH, an immersive arts and learning center with dedicated arts education space, including classrooms and the Moonshot Studio, a hands-on learning experience where young visitors and their families can "try on" arts experiences. For more information, please visit kennedy-center.org/education/.

Media contact: Lora Bodmer, lora@deep-communications.com, 307.690.1630