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GAMM THEATRE NAMES RACHEL WALSH AS ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

WARWICK, RI (September 6, 2022) – **The Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theatre** (The Gamm) is pleased to announce the **appointment of Rachel Walshe as associate artistic director**, effective this 2022-23 season. Walshe has directed and served as dramaturg on numerous Gamm productions since 2010, and is also the theater's resident scholar. As an assistant professor of performance at URI, she has focused her work on women writers and new play development.

Gamm Artistic Director Tony Estrella called Walshe's appointment a "fait accompli and long overdue" given her significant artistic contributions to The Gamm over many years. He noted that her affiliation with the organization goes back to 1999 when, as a student at the University of Rhode Island, she assistant directed Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*.

"Beyond her contributions as an individual and an artist, Rachel has been integral to our success across the organization. For many years, her insights have been fundamental to everything from season planning to production management. She has also been an important voice in helping us navigate the challenges facing the theater and our entire industry during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic," Estrella said. "This is the easiest decision we have ever made."

As a co-architect of the **Gamm Fellowship Program**, Walshe will continue to expand that program and deepen The Gamm's connections to the state's public institutions of higher learning: **Rhode Island College, Community College of Rhode Island** and the **University of Rhode Island** (URI).

"The Gamm has long been my creative home and given me a place in which to develop two of my greatest passions: education and world-class theater," Walshe said. "As someone with my feet firmly in both higher education and professional theater, I'm always looking for opportunities where these two essential institutions overlap. How can we develop and retain the next generation of groundbreaking theater artists? How can The Gamm be an incubator for those artists and enrich a robust theater ecology in Rhode Island?"

Walshe said she sees her new role at The Gamm as an extension of her work at URI.

"I joined the URI faculty with a mission to increase access to a career in theater for working-class kids like me. As a young person, the theater was an elite cultural resource that was off-limits for the children of bartenders, mechanics, wage workers, and the like. Teaching at a public institution gives me the ability to develop young people for whom the theater may also seem out of reach. This is an opportunity to wed that mission to The Gamm's, whose mission is to enrich the civic and cultural life of the community," she said.

ABOUT RACHEL WALSH

Rachel Walshe is a graduate of the University of Rhode Island, Oxford University (Rhodes Scholar), and DePaul University where she received an M.F.A. in directing in 2008. Rachel has directed many productions at The Gamm including Theresa Rebeck's *Mauritius*, David Lindsay-Abaire's *Good People*, Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn*, William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. She most recently directed Martyna Majok's

Ironbound and will direct Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Sweat* in November. She is also The Gamm's resident scholar. Walshe served as visiting artistic director for Perishable Theatre's 2009-10 season, where she produced the 13th Annual Women's Playwriting Festival. She is also a longtime company member of Chicago's Rivendell Theatre Ensemble where she directed the Joseph Jefferson Award-nominated *These Shining Lives* and served as artistic director of Fresh Produce, a new play development program. She is an assistant professor of performance at the University of Rhode Island, as well as The Gamm's new associate artistic director.

ABOUT THE GAMM THEATRE

Founded in 1984, the non-profit Gamm Theatre is proud to tell stories that entertain, provoke, and engage seriously with the most important issues of our time. The Gamm further serves the public with educational programming that enriches the cultural and civic life of our community. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Tony Estrella and Managing Director Amy Gravel, The Gamm is a regionally recognized, award-winning theater and a proud member of New England Area Theatre (NEAT), a bargaining unit of the Actors' Equity Association.

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