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PHOTO CAPTION: Robert van Leer

PHOTO CREDIT: Ineke Oostveen

**WALLIS ANNENBERG CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS
NAMES
ARTS LEADER
ROBERT VAN LEER
ITS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**van Leer's Breadth of International Experience in Arts Leadership and Programming
Includes Most Recent Role as Senior Vice President of Artistic Planning for
the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.,
and Managing Director of Nederlands Dans Theater in The Hague**

Van Leer Assumes Leadership Post at The Wallis on April 1, 2023

(Beverly Hills, CA, March 9, 2023) – **ROBERT VAN LEER**, an exceptionally accomplished arts administrator highly respected for his breadth of experience with renowned arts organizations in the United States and Europe, has been named Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, announces The Wallis Board Chair Michael Nemeroff. Van Leer assumes the leadership post at The Wallis, located in Beverly Hills, California, and distinguished as one of the country's leading performing arts venues, on April 1, 2023.

Most recently, van Leer served as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts' Senior Vice President of Artistic Planning. In overseeing a \$90 million budget, he expanded Kennedy Center's classical and contemporary programming, including the addition of Hip Hop Culture and Social Impact. Additionally, he led the vision for the 2019 transformative addition of REACH, the Kennedy Center's first-ever expansion, with flexible indoor and outdoor performance space designed to nurture new artists and expand community. Van Leer began his arts administration career at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York and worked in London as an executive administrator at the Wigmore Hall then as Head of Music and Arts Projects at the Barbican Centre. Subsequently, he became Managing Director of Nederlands Dans Theatre (NDT), where he re-envisioned the mission of the company as a leading international creative ensemble. He also led Wonderbird UK, a boutique cultural consultancy that advised cultural and corporate clients on social, cultural, and fundraising policy.

“The Wallis’ search committee and our dedicated Board of Directors are confident Robert van Leer is the most qualified person to lead The Wallis in its next evolutionary stage,” says Nemeroff, who helmed the international search. “As an extremely talented performing arts executive, having run performing arts centers and built teams in various CEO, Managing Director, and senior level leadership roles, he has had the experience and impact we sought. His artistic planning and presenting work has been at the highest levels. He is also tremendously skilled in strategic planning, community relations, fundraising, and board development. As The Wallis heads into its 10th Season, we’ve undergone tremendous artistic growth and achieved notable fiscal and organizational stability, so we believe that Robert, with his visionary leadership, keen creative thinking, and broad world view, will build upon that solid foundation, further elevating The Wallis as a cultural institution of international renown.”

Wallis Board Member David Bohnett, who is Chair of the Executive Committee, served on the search committee, and is also a Kennedy Center Trustee, says, “Having worked together with Robert van Leer in my role at Kennedy Center, I know that he is a sophisticated, very experienced arts administrator and a perfect fit for The Wallis at this time in its development. His network of relationships with creative talent and executive leadership in the arts is multi-disciplinary and global. A true community builder, he is driven by a firm belief in the power of the arts to create change, shape society, and uplift underrepresented voices.”

“Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts is an extraordinary organization with a well-deserved reputation for excellence and innovation,” says van Leer. “I am honored to assume its leadership and shepherd The Wallis at this exciting time in its history. I look forward to having the opportunity to thoughtfully shape organizational strategies that go beyond the stage and build upon The Wallis’ exceptional artistic, educational and community programs. At this point in my career, I am thrilled to be moving to Los Angeles and committing myself to the Wallis and the creative life of this diverse, complex and ever-changing city.”

Van Leer, who is a native of Rochester, New York, holds a B.F.A. from Carnegie-Mellon University and earned an advanced certification from Columbia University Graduate School of Business, National Arts Strategies Chief Executive Program. He also earned a postgraduate degree in landscape design at the UK’s Inchtald School of Design. Additionally, he participated in the National Arts Strategies Chief Executive Programs at Harvard Business School, The University of Texas, Austin, and the University of Michigan Stephen M. Ross School of Business, which bring together cohorts of CEOs who are working to lead change in their organizations, communities and in the cultural field. Van Leer has extensive experience providing board and executive-level leadership, having worked with Americans for the Arts, Association of Performing Arts Professionals, International Society for the Performing Arts, and the Performing Arts Center Consortium.

Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts, which opened in 2013, is named after philanthropist Wallis Annenberg whose original \$25-million dollar donation was instrumental in transforming the former Beverly Hills post office building into an arts complex, and her strong support continues to this day. The Wallis is a dynamic cultural hub and community resource where local, national and international artists share their artistry with ever-expanding audiences. It is committed to robust and distinctive presentations and education programs curated with both creativity and social impact in mind. Distinguished by its eclectic programming that mirrors the diverse landscape of Los Angeles and its location in the entertainment capital of the world, The Wallis has produced and presented more than 350 theater, dance, music, film, cabaret, conversation, and family entertainment programs since its doors opened in October 2013. Hailed

as “au courant” (*LaLa Magazine*), The Wallis was lauded by *Culture Vulture*, which proclaims, “If you love expecting the unexpected in the performing arts, you have to love The Wallis.” Its programming has been nominated for 79 Ovation Awards and nine L.A. Drama Critic's Circle Awards. The campus itself, a breathtaking 70,000-square-foot facility, celebrating the classic and the modern, has garnered six architectural awards. Designed by acclaimed architect Zoltan E. Pali (SPF:architects), the restored building features the original 1933 Beverly Hills Post Office (on the National Register of Historic Places), which serves as the theater's dramatic yet welcoming lobby, and includes the contemporary 500-seat, state-of-the-art Bram Goldsmith Theater; the 150-seat Lovelace Studio Theater; an inviting open-air plaza for family, community and other performances; and GRoW @ The Wallis: A Space for Arts Education, where learning opportunities for all ages and backgrounds abound. Together, these elements embrace the city's history and its future, creating a performing arts destination for L.A.-area visitors and residents alike.

For more information about The Wallis, please visit: TheWallis.org.

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