

Ucross Appoints William Belcher as Director of Development and External Relations

Belcher's hire is part of a larger strategy to merge development and communications functions, increase visibility and support

NEW YORK—October 29, 2018 — Ucross, one of America's most prestigious artist residency programs and a creative laboratory for the arts based in Wyoming, today announced that award-winning writer, teacher, speaker, and accomplished development professional William Belcher has accepted the role of Director of Development and External Relations.

Belcher will lead Ucross's fundraising and communications efforts in an overall push to raise the organization's national profile and expand its support network. He has designed a comprehensive, multi-year fundraising engagement plan that supports Ucross's mission and vision for the future. Immediate goals include a redesign of the Ucross website and implementation of special events in key regions such as New York, Los Angeles, Jackson Hole, and Santa Fe. Earlier in 2018, Belcher had served as a development consultant for Ucross, teaming up with Ucross Vice President Steve Jimenez to produce the foundation's successful New York Gala & Awards Dinner, which was held in June at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall.

"Over the course of 35 years, Ucross has earned its stellar reputation in the creative community by offering the world's most dedicated artists the gift of uninterrupted time for focused work, within the vast space of our location on the High Plains," said Sharon Dynak, President of Ucross. "We've seen the transformative impact Ucross has on artistic achievement, and with Bill's help, we're thrilled to spread our message far and wide, highlighting the accomplishments of our distinguished alumni."

"Arts organizations like Ucross play an instrumental role in the creation of new work. By supporting writers, composers, choreographers, and visual artists like Ucross does, we are also contributing to an ongoing dialogue about art and culture," Belcher said. "I first visited Ucross a year ago, and I was hooked — it truly is a unique and inspiring experience. I'm thrilled to join the Ucross team at this point in its history."

Located in northeastern Wyoming at the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains, Ucross is situated on a 20,000-acre working cattle ranch at the confluence of three creeks. Its connection to the land and its vast open spaces have proven to be inspirational and uniquely generative for artists. Ucross has been home to ten Pulitzer Prize winners, eight MacArthur "genius" grantees, seven Tony Award winners, six National Book Award winners, and two Academy Award winners. Through its residencies, partnerships, and support of emerging artists, it continues to have an impact on the cultural dialogue of the country and the world.

During his 18 years in the field, Belcher has raised more than \$68 million for the arts, humanities, and higher education. In 2017, he founded Wordhorse Strategies, LLC, a fundraising and donor communications firm that specializes in helping nonprofit arts organizations improve their development operations. Prior to creating Wordhorse, Belcher served as Director of Development at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams, MA and Director of External Affairs at The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls, NY. Belcher has also served on several boards, including the world-renowned Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs, NY, and the Hubbard Hall Center of Arts and Education in Cambridge, NY. Among other publications, his debut novel *Lay Down Your Weary Tune* was published by Other Press (NY) in 2016.

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ABOUT UCROSS

Located in northeast Wyoming at the foothills of the Bighorn Mountains, Ucross fosters the creative spirit of deeply committed artists and groups by providing uninterrupted time, studio space, living accommodations, and the experience of the majestic High Plains, while serving as a responsible steward of its 20,000-acre ranch. Residencies are awarded to 100 artists each year. Ten artists are in residence at one time, typically a mix of four visual artists, four writers, and two composers.

Since its establishment in 1981, Ucross has provided more than 2,000 residencies to writers, visual artists, and composers, including such distinguished fellows as Annie Proulx, Terry Tempest Williams, Colson Whitehead, Elizabeth Gilbert, Ann Patchett, Ricky Ian Gordon, Bill Morrison, Theaster Gates, Anthony Hernandez, and recent Academy Award and Tony Award winners Benj Pasek and Justin Paul. Ucross's organizational partners include the Sundance Institute Theatre Program, the Herb Alpert Award in the Arts, the Pew Fellowships in the Arts, the Alliance of Artist Communities, the PEN/Hemingway Award for Debut Fiction, and others.

In addition to nurturing individual artists, Ucross serves as a multidisciplinary laboratory for creative thought. Each year, Ucross sponsors educational programs, exhibitions, and events. The Ucross Foundation Art Gallery is a significant cultural resource for surrounding communities. For further information, visit www.ucross.org.

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