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UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY APPOINTS NEW DIRECTOR, MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT

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The University of Sydney has appointed Michael Dagostino to the role of Director, Museums and Cultural Engagement, looking after the University's prestigious Chau Chak Wing Museum and Seymour Centre, as well as cultural outreach activities.

With more than 25 years in the contemporary arts sector – most recently at the Campbelltown Arts Centre - Mr Dagostino will start the role in March, taking over from Director David Ellis, who is retiring after 20 years at the University.

University of Sydney Vice-Chancellor Mark Scott congratulated Mr Dagostino on being appointed to the position, noting the high calibre of applicants and extensive recruitment process.

“The University has a very rich cultural community and at its heart is the landmark Chau Chak Wing Museum, which showcases our extraordinary collections encompassing art, antiquities, natural history, science, ethnography and photography. It's a wonderful asset, open free of charge to all,” he said.

“Since commencing his Directorship at Campbelltown Arts Centre Michael has commissioned and curated a number of ground-breaking exhibitions and projects while expanding its artist-led programs to engage with different communities. I look forward to him bringing his unique vision to the university.

“I also want to express my deep gratitude to David. His critical contribution to the creation of the Chau Chak Wing Museum is a fitting highlight and culmination of the years he has spent strengthening the connection of the collections of the Macleay Museum, Nicholson Museum and University Art Gallery to each other and to the University, especially for use in teaching and object-based learning. During his tenure visitor numbers to the collections grew from 10,000 in 2003 to over 120,000, pre-COVID.”

Mr Dagostino said: “The Chau Chak Wing Museum is the custodian of some of Australia's oldest collections and I am excited about working in a university museum context, which generates opportunities to establish links between students, academics, artists and the collections.

“I also have big aspirations for the Seymour Centre's 50th anniversary in 2025 and am thrilled to be leading the centre at a time when recovery for the live performance community is so important after the COVID shutdowns.”

Retiring Director David Ellis also extended his congratulations to Mr Dagostino, welcoming him to the University: “Michael has done wonderful things bringing art to diverse communities and I know he will help grow the reputation of the museum as a cultural icon that contributes to the education of young people and the cultural economy of Sydney.”

Mr Dagostino began his career with fellow artist Michael Lindeman at Michael and Michael Visual Art Project Management, developing a robust curatorial approach for emerging practices. He was the inaugural Director of the Parramatta Artists’ Studios, where he developed an innovative hub for emerging artists.

He is on the boards of Artspace (as chair), Accessible Arts, FBi Radio, and the Sydney Writers’ Festival. He has held leadership positions on the NSW State Government Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee, Western Sydney Arts Alliance and Sydney Cultural Network.

Attached image: Michael Dagostino at the University of Sydney. Further images available on request.

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