

The logo for DEFACED, featuring the word "DEFACED" in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

The Flynn Announces New Executive Director, Jay Wahl

BURLINGTON, VT — Jay Wahl, producing artistic director at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, has been hired as executive director of the Flynn. He succeeds Interim Executive Director Charlie Smith, who began in January 2020.

Wahl joins the Flynn after 11 years at the Kimmel Center, an inclusive organization that engages the Philadelphia region's diverse communities through performance and education. Wahl served as an international liaison and advocate for the Kimmel Center and the Philadelphia arts community, programming and producing a wide range of performances, and spearheading efforts to bring diverse and inspiring artists to the city. In particular, Wahl is an expert in commissioning and facilitating works in public spaces, using unconventional platforms as a means of challenging the hierarchies, assumptions, and biases of traditional arts organizations. He was also artistic director of citywide biennial event the Philadelphia Festival of the Arts (2011, 2013, 2016, 2018), which increased and broadened access to the arts by bringing performances directly to neighborhoods across the city. To support this work, Wahl helped to grow and steward funding sources, including from the European Commission, the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Mid-Atlantic Foundation, and the Wyncote Foundation, raising funds in excess of \$1 million.

Through his work in Philadelphia, Wahl created and led multiple residency programs in jazz and theater, resulting in numerous world premieres and providing incubator space for developing work with local and national artists. Wahl



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“We are very excited to have Jay join us,” said Flynn Board Chair Staige Davis. “His experience, creativity, and innovative spirit will help us to thrive as we emerge from the pandemic to bring live performance back to our audiences.”

In recognition of the hiring, the Flynn Board is challenging our donor community to match an exceptionally generous \$275,000 contribution by the Miller Foundation. This campaign is intended to honor Burlington philanthropists Bobby and Holly Miller, and serve as a welcome to Wahl with a major show of community support. Donations will be used to support operations and creative innovation under Wahl’s leadership over the coming year.

The Flynn has been at the center of Vermont’s cultural landscape for 90 years, from its earliest days as a vaudeville house through five decades as a premier movie theater. Today, the Flynn is an acclaimed performing arts and education center, recognized internationally for its exceptional artistic, educational, and community outreach activities; its world-class