



For Immediate Release

May 6, 2022

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MANAGING DIRECTOR EMIKA ABE TO DEPART WOOLLY MAMMOTH THEATRE COMPANY IN JUNE

(Washington, DC) Managing Director **Emika Abe** has announced that she will not renew her contract with Woolly Mammoth and will be departing the theatre at the end of June 2022. She came to Woolly from the Alliance Theatre (Atlanta, GA), where she had been the associate managing director.

“The decision to leave Woolly at this time was extremely difficult,” shares Abe. “In the last three years, I have had the opportunity to partner with a visionary leader in Maria Manuela Goyanes; I have had the utmost support of a fantastic board; I have gotten to work alongside a passionate staff; and I have produced shows on our stage, in the community, and online that have made an impact on our artists, audiences, and on me. And yet, this strange and challenging time of the pandemic has pushed me to evaluate the different components of my life, and it is time for me to make more space for other passions and interests, both personal and professional. I am proud to leave the organization in a strong position, both artistically and financially. I continue to believe so deeply in Woolly Mammoth and the people it attracts, and I look forward to supporting the theatre in a different capacity in the years to come.”

Emika joined Woolly Mammoth in October 2019, and shortly thereafter, helped lead the organization through the never-before-seen challenges the pandemic wrought on the theatre industry. She secured more \$2.5 million in government funding which allowed Woolly to continue to operate and make impactful art throughout the pandemic, such as the world-premiere five-theatre co-production of *THIS IS WHO I AM*, a live theatrical Zoom presentation; and Woolly on Demand, a series of collaborative digital productions.

During her tenure, Emika spearheaded a new strategic plan for Woolly. Under her leadership, Woolly increased both BIPOC representation on the board and access for audiences of different abilities and financial means; launched the Miranda Family Fellows program; and produced the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *A STRANGE LOOP*, now on

Broadway. Most recently, Woolly held its most successful fundraising event in the history of the organization, and announced its audacious 2022-2023 season. In laying the groundwork for transformative policies and practices that address systemic oppressive practices in theatre, Emika has worked to set up Woolly to be a change leader in the industry.

“We are grateful to Emika for her transformative leadership and incredible vision,” says **Chris Babb**, president, Woolly’s board of directors. “Her ability to keep Woolly committed to its mission and able to serve our staff, artists, and patrons during a time of overwhelming uncertainty was no small feat. We will miss her and support her wherever her new path leads. We at Woolly look forward to building upon her successes as we begin our next chapter with new leadership alongside Maria Manuela Goyanes.”

“Woolly would not have navigated the pandemic successfully without Emika Abe, no question,” says Artistic Director **Maria Manuela Goyanes**. “Her legacy at Woolly Mammoth is most certainly deep, given how much she helped us continue to make theatre and thrive in such an uncertain time. I’m excited for whatever this next chapter brings, and send her so much love and support. Woolly has a bright future because of Emika, and I am looking forward to building on her work with our next managing director.”

Woolly’s board of directors has designated a task force to identify and secure an interim managing director. The board has selected Tom O’Connor Consulting Group to lead the search to fill the role permanently.

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ABOUT WOOLLY

Woolly Mammoth creates badass theatre that highlights the stunning, challenging, and tremendous complexity of our world. For over 40 years, Woolly has maintained a high standard of artistic rigor while simultaneously daring to take risks, innovate, and push beyond perceived boundaries. One of the few remaining theatres in the country to maintain a company of artists, Woolly serves an essential research and development role within the American theatre. Plays premiered here have gone on to productions at hundreds of theatres all over the world and have had lasting impacts on the field. Co-led by Artistic Director Maria Manuela Goyanes and Managing Director Emika Abe, Woolly is located in Washington, DC, equidistant from the Capitol and the White House. This unique location influences Woolly’s investment in actively working towards an equitable, participatory, and creative democracy.

Woolly Mammoth stands upon occupied, unceded territory: the ancestral homeland of the Nacotchtank whose descendants belong to the Piscataway peoples. Furthermore, the foundation of this city, and most of the original buildings in Washington, DC, were funded by the sale of enslaved people of African descent and built by their hands.

ABOUT TOM O'CONNOR CONSULTING GROUP

Tom O'Connor Consulting Group is a New York City-based arts consultancy offering organizational development, executive search, marketing strategy, and leadership coaching services exclusively for arts organizations — with a sharp focus on audience engagement, equitable culture, and sustainable revenue. Its consultants have decades of experience both advising and working within arts organizations across the globe, with unique first-hand knowledge that enables them to help make lasting change and sustain its forward movement. For more information, visit www.tomocgroup.com.

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