

NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release: October 17, 2019**



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### **Ellen F. Salpeter Appointed President and CEO of Westbeth, New York**

New York, NY – On behalf of the Westbeth Board of Directors, JP Versace, Chair of the Board, announced today that Ellen F. Salpeter has been appointed the institution's first President and CEO. With more than two decades of experience leading cultural institutions, Salpeter was most recently Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami (ICA Miami), where she oversaw the completion and opening of the Museum's acclaimed new permanent home in the city's Design District, as well as the development of the institution's collections, exhibitions, and programs, including its Art + Research Center. Her appointment to a new leadership position at Westbeth anticipates the institution's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020 and signals its ambition to play an even more vital role in New York's ever changing cultural landscape.

Since opening in 1970, Westbeth has been lauded as an international model of cultural development and enlightened adaptive reuse of an industrial site. Housed in the sprawling former Bell Laboratories complex, it was created to provide artists across disciplines – visual, performing, literary – and their families with affordable housing and essential studio space, yielding a creative community and an urban hub. Occupying an entire square block in the historic West Village of Manhattan, Westbeth's multi-building complex has been an important artists' oasis within a rapidly changing city. Today, the institution is poised to serve an even broader and more diverse array of artists, as well as other cultural organizations and related entities, to ensure Westbeth's continued contributions to New York City's stature as a center of cultural production.

As President and CEO of Westbeth, Salpeter will lead this landmark organization through its next phase of institutional growth and position it for future generations of artists and the arts-engaged public. Throughout her career, Salpeter has been dedicated to serving art and artists while forging alliances among cultural, civic, and educational organizations for community benefit.

Under Salpeter's guidance, ICA Miami completed its new permanent home and sculpture garden; planned and implemented an opening roster of internationally acclaimed exhibitions, educational programs, and public events; and expanded and diversified its base of support across many constituencies. The Financial Times of London described ICA Miami's new home as "an amazing creation," and the Art Newspaper observed that "while many museums have education programs, the ICA's is notably ambitious."

Patricia Jones, who has served as Interim Executive Director since March of 2018, will step down from that position and remain a member of Westbeth's Board of Directors.

"We are delighted to welcome Ellen, whose depth of experience in the cultural sector and her enduring commitment to artists, community engagement and outreach make her the perfect choice as the first

President and CEO of Westbeth,” said JP Versace, Chair of the Board, Westbeth. “Her vision and leadership will be invaluable as we enter this pivotal 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary milestone and next chapter for Westbeth.”

“I am honored and excited for the opportunity to help take Westbeth into the future,” said Salpeter. “I’m particularly excited to join an institution whose mission is to serve a community of artists, dancers, musicians, actors, writers, and film makers whose creative endeavors greatly enrich New York’s character and have relevance and resonance beyond the city’s limits. While continuing to provide affordable housing, studio space, and dynamic programming, Westbeth can also be an even more vital, accessible, and inclusive center of cultural activity for all. Building on the extraordinary legacy and vision of its founders and leadership over the past five decades, Westbeth will continue to address the needs of living artists in a rapidly changing art world, neighborhood, and city while bringing others to its doorstep to engage and benefit from the unique world contained within the complex.”

“As we enter Westbeth’s 50<sup>th</sup> year, Ellen will play a critical role in shaping the future of this institution that has positively impacted so many artists here in New York City,” said Roger Braimon, President, Westbeth Artists Residents Council (WARC), and Westbeth Board Member. “On behalf of WARC and all of the residents, I am thrilled that Ellen will be joining the Westbeth community.”

### **About Ellen Salpeter**

For more than two decades, Ellen Salpeter has worked in leadership positions to advance the missions of a wide range of nonprofit arts organizations, working to strengthen community outreach and engagement, increase cultural partnerships, and build audiences and financial bases of support.

As Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, Salpeter led the completion and grand opening of the museum’s permanent home in the Miami Design District. During her tenure she advanced the institution’s long-term vision, expanded its Board of Trustees, and developed a strategic blueprint for the institution’s future sustainability. Together with the Board of Trustees, she helped the museum achieve its initial \$75-million goal for a campaign supporting its new building, operations and exhibitions. Working collaboratively with the museum’s staff, Salpeter oversaw the development of ICA Miami’s collections, exhibitions, and programs, including the launch of the Art + Research Center and the museum’s inaugural year of programming, featuring the opening exhibition *The Everywhere Studio* and solo exhibitions dedicated to Terry Adkins and Donald Judd, among others. Salpeter was co-curator of *Donald Judd: Paintings*, which was the world’s first museum exhibition dedicated to 14 rarely exhibited or published paintings by the landmark American artist.

Prior to ICA Miami, Salpeter served as Deputy Director, External Affairs for the Jewish Museum in New York. While there she helped forge a new institutional vision, expanded and diversified the museum’s audiences and fundraising streams. Salpeter oversaw development, community engagement, visitor experience, marketing, communications, and special events and was responsible for raising funds annually across contributed revenue sources. Among her achievements at the Museum were the management of a two-phase strategic planning process, and the completion of an \$8-million campaign to support its near-term implementation.

In 2001, Salpeter was the Founding Director of Heart of Brooklyn, a partnership of leading cultural institutions located in central Brooklyn, including Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Children’s Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park, and Prospect Park Zoo. For over a decade, Salpeter led Heart of Brooklyn’s award-winning initiatives, which broke new ground for

community development and cultural partnerships. The organization was recognized with a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the highest honor for out-of-school youth arts programs in the nation; a Neighborhood Achievement Award presented by Mayor Michael Bloomberg; and was selected as a Finalist in The New York Times Nonprofit Excellence Awards.

Previously, Salpeter was Director of Thread Waxing Space, a nonprofit arts and education space in New York that presented works of art not ordinarily accessible to the public, and supported emerging artists. During the course of her career, Salpeter has consulted for a range of cultural organizations, including Judd Foundation, Streb, The Drawing Center, and Artist's Space, among others, providing strategic management and development services as well as short and long term strategic planning.

Salpeter currently serves on the boards of the Judd Foundation, the artist foundation dedicated to the legacy of American artist Donald Judd; Participant, Inc., an alternative arts and education space; The Builders Association, a New York-based performance and media company; and is an Advisory Board member of STREB Laboratory for Action Mechanics (SLAM), a community space and performance venue for artistic experimentation, and the Brooklyn Arts Council. She has taught visual arts administration as an adjunct professor at New York University School of Continuing and Professional Studies.

Born in New York City, Ellen Salpeter has a degree in International Management from Georgetown University.

### **About Westbeth**

Westbeth Artists' Housing, located in Greenwich Village, provides affordable live-work space for artists and affordable space for nonprofit arts groups in New York City at its historic site at the former Bell Laboratories campus. Westbeth was conceived in 1967 by Jacob Kaplan (Founder of the JM Kaplan Fund) and Roger Stevens (then Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts). Designed by architect Richard Meier, the former Bell Telephone Laboratories headquarters was converted into 384 live-work studios, along with commercial spaces including an art gallery, artists' studios, and courtyard. It was the first and largest public and privately financed conversion of an industrial complex into housing for artists in the United States.

Merce Cunningham, noted choreographer and dancer, had his studio and offices at Westbeth for more than 40 years, from 1971 up to the time of his death in 2012. The Westbeth Playwrights Feminist Collective, one of the first feminist theater groups in the country, was also founded at Westbeth. Previously, it was an early home of New York City's first LGBT synagogue. Westbeth is currently home to major cultural organizations including the New School for Drama, The Martha Graham Center of Contemporary Dance, and the School for Poetic Computation. The Westbeth Artists' Residents Council currently programs cultural events, presenting the work of both resident and non-resident artists as well as partnering with cultural institutions for exhibitions and performances.

Westbeth Artists Housing has been home to a number of influential artists, musicians and performers including Diane Arbus – whose suicide in 1971 caused a stir in the community – Robert Beauchamp, Paul Benjamin, Karl Bissinger, Barnaby Ruhe, Black-Eyed Susan, Joseph Chaikin, David Del Tredici, Robert De Niro Sr., Vin Diesel, John Dobbs, Gil Evans, David Greenspan, Bob Gruen, Moses Gunn, Barbara Hammer, Hans Haacke, Spencer Holst, Irv Teibel, Gayle Kirschenbaum, Anita Kushner, Ralph Lee, Hal Miller, Lorraine O'Grady, Herman Rose, Barbara Rosenthal, Muriel Rukeyser, Tobias Schneebaum, Anne Tabachnick, Tod Culpan Williams, and Rachel Williams.

In 2009 Westbeth was added to the National Register of Historic Places and in 2011 became a New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Historical Landmark. The organization will mark its 50th Anniversary in 2020 with a year of programs and celebrations. For more information visit [www.westbeth.nyc](http://www.westbeth.nyc).