

Forman Arts Initiative

ADJOA JONES DE ALMEIDA NAMED INAUGURAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF FORMAN ARTS INITIATIVE



Photo Credit: Danny Perez

Philadelphia, PA, February 8, 2024 — **Forman Arts Initiative (FAI)** is pleased to announce the appointment of **Adjoa Jones de Almeida** as its inaugural Executive Director. Jones de Almeida joins FAI after working at the Brooklyn Museum for over ten years, where she initially served as Director of Education before her promotion to Deputy Director for Learning and Social Impact. In this new role, Jones de Almeida will lead FAI in expanding their programmatic reach throughout Philadelphia, building partnerships with artists, civic leaders, and organizations, and presenting exhibitions and cultural programs that showcase the city’s diverse artistic community.

“We are thrilled to announce Adjoa as the inaugural Executive Director of Forman Arts Initiative,” said Jennifer Rice and Michael Forman, Co-Founders of FAI. “Her profound experience in museum education, coupled with her dedication to community-based organizations, aligns perfectly with our mission of enriching the cultural fabric of Philadelphia. Adjoa has a long history of working within communities to best understand and support their needs, and we are excited to see how her thoughtful approach can deepen FAI’s work throughout the city.”

As recently as January of this year, Jones de Almeida oversaw the opening of the Brooklyn Museum’s new Toby Devan Lewis Education Center and co-curated *Artland: An Installation by Do Ho Suh and Children*, which launched as part of the reopening celebrations. Also of note was Jones de Almeida’s

implementation of the Museum's Social Action Framework, which included the establishment of Project Reset, an arts-based education program for people charged with low-level misdemeanors as a means to avoid court and a criminal record, developed in partnership with the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and the Center for Justice Innovation.

"I am honored to be named the inaugural Executive Director of Forman Arts Initiative," said Adjoa Jones de Almeida. "FAI's call to mobilize community and uplift arts and culture in Philadelphia resonates deeply with my longstanding commitment to activating the arts as a vehicle for personal and collective transformation. I'm particularly inspired by how initiatives like Art Works and Public Works can forge bridges across diverse stakeholders in Philadelphia—including local communities, artists, arts organizations, government agencies, civic leaders, and funders—to celebrate the city's uniqueness, and to collectively find solutions to its most pressing concerns. As I step into this new role, I look forward to tapping into these powerful networks to grow FAI's impact and reach."

In addition to her work at the Brooklyn Museum, Jones de Almeida co-founded Sista II Sista (SIIS), a Brooklyn-based organization that, for over ten years, brought together working-class women of color, with a focus on promoting the development and leadership of young women for personal and social change. While living in Bahia, Brazil, in 2008, Jones de Almeida co-founded Diáspora Solidária, a community-based collective dedicated to fostering social and environmental justice, artistic expression, and youth development.

Jones de Almeida's appointment follows an extensive national search driven by Isaacson, Miller. Her arrival coincides with FAI's third round of Art Works, a \$3,000,000 grantmaking program to support cultural organizations and artists working in partnership with BIPOC and other historically under-resourced communities throughout the city, as well as the upcoming launch of the second iteration of Public Works, a residency program that pairs artists and Philadelphia government agencies to develop artwork that forges new connections between the agency and the communities they serve.

About Adjoa Jones de Almeida: Adjoa Jones de Almeida is the inaugural Executive Director for Forman Arts Initiative (FAI) in Philadelphia. Throughout her career, she has focused on arts and culture as vehicles for social justice. After graduating from Brown University in 1995, Jones de Almeida received a Fulbright scholarship to research community schools and cultural identity in Bahia, Brazil, which resulted in the publication of the article, *Unveiling the Mirror: Afro-Brazilian Identity and the Emergence of a Community School Movement* (2003, *Comparative Educational Review*). In 1996, she helped to create Sista II Sista (SIIS), a collective dedicated to supporting young women of color in Brooklyn to develop personal and collective power through Summer Freedom Schools and creative community organizing projects. Reflecting on her experiences working ten years with that organization, Jones de Almeida contributed to the award-winning anthology *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex* (2007, Boston: South End Press). In 2005, she earned her MA from Columbia University/Teachers College in International Education Development,

investigating global popular education movements. From 2006-2013, Jones de Almeida lived in Arembépe, Bahia, where she co-founded a community based collective, Diáspora Solidária, committed to social and environmental justice, youth development, and artistic expression. From 2013-2024, she worked at the Brooklyn Museum, where she served as Director of Education, and later as Deputy Director for Learning & Social Impact, helping to reimagine the role of museums in people's lives. During her tenure, she expanded access to school partnerships in Central Brooklyn, built pipelines for teens and emerging professionals, and developed innovative collaborations centering the needs and perspectives of people of color and working-class communities. She also launched the Museum's Social Action Framework and helped develop its Museum on Wheels initiative, as well as several social justice partnerships centered on climate change and mass criminalization.

About Forman Arts Initiative: Forman Arts Initiative (FAI), founded by Michael Forman and Jennifer Rice, is dedicated to supporting community-based arts and creativity in Philadelphia through programming, convening, and advocacy. Over the coming years, FAI will serve as a platform to connect, mentor, and support artists and organizations around Philadelphia to deepen and to grow the rich cultural heritage of Philadelphia's communities. Since 2021, FAI has been working in partnership with the Philadelphia Foundation to distribute \$3 million in unrestricted funding over five years to community artists and organizations in the Greater Philadelphia Area through a new grantmaking program called [Art Works](#). More FAI initiatives for the city will unfold in the coming months and years. Forman Arts Initiative collaborates closely with [DVDL](#), an agency of cultural strategists, to facilitate the programming and ongoing development of FAI. For more information, visit www.formanartsinitiative.org.

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