



SILKROAD

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Photo by Shannon Nallan

Ben Hartley Appointed Executive Director of Silkroad

Boston, MA — [Silkroad](#) announced today the appointment of Ben Hartley to the position of Executive Director, beginning on May 15, 2023. Hartley was selected through an international search process that drew interest from more than 400 applicants. He succeeds Kathy Fletcher, who left the position in December 2022 to lead the Wellfleet Preservation Hall in Massachusetts and has remained involved with Silkroad's fundraising and artistic initiatives as Senior Advisor.

Hartley was most recently Executive Director of the National Arts Club in New York City, a nonprofit and members club with a mission to foster and promote public interest in the fine arts. He led the Club through a five-year strategic plan that included upgrades and renovations to its landmark building, the development of a comprehensive fundraising infrastructure, and the evolution and creation of arts programming with a stronger focus on diversity and inclusiveness.

Previously, Hartley held leadership positions with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Arts and Design, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. He also served as President of Louise Blouin Media, Vice President of Ruder Finn Arts & Communications Counselors, and as a consultant for international brands such as BMW, Cartier, and PepsiCo.

“We are thrilled to welcome Ben Hartley to Silkroad,” stated Board of Directors Chair Lori Samuels. “He is a visionary leader with a passion for the arts and a track record of excellence in nonprofit management. With decades of experience working in the arts sector, Ben has a deep understanding of the power of the arts to create empathy, foster understanding, and inspire change. He has a unique talent for building and nurturing relationships and partnerships across diverse communities, and his innovative thinking and creativity will be invaluable to us.”

As Silkroad’s Executive Director, Hartley will lead the global-reaching arts organization into its third decade as it undertakes new and ambitious artistic projects envisioned by Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens. Top amongst them is the first national tour of [American Railroad](#), slated for debut in November 2023. He also will collaborate with Silkroad’s world-renowned artists and dedicated staff to strengthen and expand its educational and social impact programs, which include [Silkroad Connect](#), the annual [Global Musician Workshop](#), and [university residencies](#).

Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens said, “I’m so happy to welcome Ben Hartley to the Silkroad family! A longtime supporter of the Ensemble, he embodies the ethos of everything we represent. From his ability to build artistic aligned relationships to his experience in strategic planning, I look forward to seeing what new paths can be forged for Silkroad with Ben at the helm.”

Of his appointment, Hartley shared, “I’m honored to be joining Silkroad, working closely with Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, the artists, staff, and board. Silkroad has a remarkable history and an exciting future. When musicians bring together divergent sounds and traditions for a harmonious and uplifting journey of joy, conversations, and understanding, the world is a better place. I look forward to building on the incredible legacy established by Yo-Yo Ma and the Silkroad artists as we take a new road into the future.”

About Ben Hartley

Ben Hartley is an executive with over two decades of entrepreneurial acumen and extensive experience building, advising, and leading cultural organizations, global media companies, and start-ups. Hartley has developed and overseen omni-channel operations in marketing, finance, business development, fundraising, and management roles, both within the corporate and nonprofit worlds.

Hartley was most recently the first Executive Director of the National Arts Club and took on the task of reinvigorating the 125-year-old New York-based arts institution. In previous nonprofit roles, Hartley has been the Deputy Director at the Museum of Arts and Design; Director of Corporate Sponsorships and Communications at the Guggenheim Museum; and was responsible for developing the “Global Partners,” a multi-year, multi-million-dollar partnership with major corporations, as well as working on the strategic planning team for the Guggenheim museums in Bilbao, Berlin, and Las Vegas. Through his consulting business, Hartley has also worked with nonprofits, including Desert X, the List Center for the Visual Arts, and the New York Foundation for the Arts.

In the corporate world, Hartley has been President of Louise Blouin Media (publishers of *Art + Auction*, *Modern Painters*, *Gallery Guide*, and online platform Artinfo.com), overseeing an editorial, sales, finance, consulting, digital, and administrative staff in eight countries;

International Managing Director of the online auction site, Auctionata; and Vice President at Ruder Finn Arts & Communications Counselors. As a consultant, Hartley has also worked with corporate clients ranging from the international launch of the PepsiCo artist-focused brand LIFEWTR and Art Basel to BMW, Cartier, Deutsche Bank, Merrill Lynch, and Siemens.

Hartley served as a Fulbright Specialist in Cambodia in 2022 and subsequently became the Chair of the International Committee of Epic Arts, a Cambodian-based arts, education, and social justice NGO working with people with disabilities. Hartley regularly speaks at arts leadership conferences and has been featured on numerous arts- and management-focused podcasts.

Hartley was born in Sydney, Australia and has lived in London, Paris, and made his home in New York for the last 25 years. He graduated from the University of New South Wales, Australia with a Bachelor of Arts and received his Master of Fine Arts, Performing Arts Management from Brooklyn College, City University of New York.

About Silkroad

Yo-Yo Ma conceived Silkroad in 1998, recognizing the historical Silk Road as a model for radical cultural collaboration—for the exchange of ideas, tradition, and innovation across borders. In an innovative experiment, he brought together musicians from the lands of the Silk Road to co-create a musical language founded in difference, thus creating the foundation of Silkroad: both a touring ensemble comprised of world-class musicians from all over the globe and a social-impact organization working to make a positive impact across borders through the arts.

Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Rhiannon Giddens, Silkroad leads social impact initiatives and educational programming alongside the creation of new music by the Grammy Award-winning Silkroad Ensemble.

To learn more, visit silkroad.org and @silkroadproject on social media.

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Media Contact:

Camille Cintrón Devlin
571.317.9317
pr@camillecdevlin.com