



Contact:
Lisa Davis, 801/230-9399
lisadavisslc@att.net

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Alexandra Hesse Promoted to Executive Director of The Leonardo

SALT LAKE CITY, Dec. 9, 2011—The Leonardo’s Associate Executive Director Alexandra Hesse has been promoted to the position of Executive Director.

The Leonardo’s former Executive Director Peter Giles, joined The Leonardo shortly after the BODY WORLDS exhibition in 2009. Giles will continue to be involved as a board member and in assisting with fundraising and strategic counsel.

“We are lucky to have had Peter Giles as the executive director of The Leonardo for so long,” said Will West, chair of The Leonardo Board of Directors. “With his background and experience, he was the right person at the right time to get this fantastic museum off the ground. It would never have happened without him, and we are grateful he fulfilled his commitment to see the project to completion and opening. Even as he returns to his home in California, we will continue to be blessed by his influence as he has agreed to serve on the board of directors and help guide The Leonardo.”

Hesse joined The Leonardo in 2006 to oversee development of the museum’s exhibits, programs and visitor experience. She is responsible for shaping the unique, multidisciplinary mission of the organization and has been heavily involved in every aspect of its development, including the business plan, fundraising, partnerships and managing staff.

In 2008, Alex brought in and ran the incredibly successful BODY WORLDS exhibition, which attracted almost 300,000 visitors. Since joining The Leonardo, Alex has also developed significant relationships in national and international museum, art, science and technology communities, enabling The Leonardo to attract world-class content an programming and experts.

“Alex has proven herself integral to advancing the forward-thinking goals of The Leonardo,” said Salt Lake City Mayor Ralph Becker. “With her stellar track record, and outstanding credentials, I look forward to watching this new institution grow under her leadership.”

Before coming to The Leonardo, Alex held management roles with the Salt Lake and Sydney Olympic organizing committees, as well as the Stills Gallery in Sydney, Australia's foremost multimedia art and contemporary photography gallery. At the gallery, she gained experience in the contemporary and international art world, giving her a unique perspective and set of skills.

Alex holds a master of business degree from the University of Sydney and a master of science degree from the University of Mainz, Germany, where she was valedictorian.

She also holds a certificate in art history and theory from the University of Sydney, and a certificate of Professional Designation, Journalism UCLA. Alex was awarded postgraduate scholarships from the International Olympic Academy in Olympia, Greece, and from the University of Mainz.

In addition to her position at The Leonardo, Alex serves on board of the Center for Interdisciplinary Art and Technology at the University of Utah, and on the Salt Lake Community College's School of Arts Communication and New Media Advisory Board. She was awarded a "30 Women to Watch" designation by Utah Business Magazine in 2010, and is fluent in English and German.

"The leadership at The Leonardo isn't going to skip a beat as we transition to our new Executive Director Alexandra Hesse," continued West. "Alex has been managing the day-to-day creation of the Leonardo, and it is her vision that has created the museum. We are incredibly fortunate to have her waiting in the wings to take over as Peter moves from a daily staff role to the board. I have no doubt that under Alex's leadership, the Leonardo will grow and fulfill its purpose of inspiring creativity and innovation."

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The Leonardo

Located in the heart of Salt Lake City at the Library Square TRAX stop, The Leonardo is a first-of-a-kind museum connecting science, technology and creativity. For more information, please visit www.theleonardo.org.