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The Center for Fiction Names Lydah Pyles DeBin as Executive Director

New York, NY — The Center for Fiction is pleased to announce that Lydah Pyles DeBin has been named Executive Director of the organization. Ms. DeBin joins The Center for Fiction from Literary Arts in Portland, OR where she served as Deputy Director from 2017 until August of this year. Beginning in September, she succeeds Interim Co-Executive Directors Leslie Griesbach Schultz and Betsy Smulyan, who assumed the roles in January after the departure of The Center’s prior Executive Director, Traci Lester.

Ms. DeBin’s passion for fiction has guided her career, first as a National Accounts Manager for Penguin Young Readers Group, Simon & Schuster, and Random House and then as a leader at Literary Arts. During her Literary Arts tenure—first as Director of Development and Marketing before rising to Deputy Director—the organization became the fastest-growing literary nonprofit in the Pacific Northwest, with Ms. DeBin’s aptitude for fundraising fueling revenue growth each year. She has been a key driver of deep strategic planning focused on resource development for a sustainable, inclusive, and bold vision for a thriving creative community.

“Extraordinary for her firmness of purpose, judicious temperament, and bright charisma, Lydah Pyles DeBin is poised to lead The Center for Fiction to new heights as its next Executive Director,” said Erroll McDonald, Chair of the Board of Directors. “Throughout her career, Lydah has earned the respect of her colleagues for her vision, integrity, and team building. The board is confident that her impressive suite of talents and skills will inform The Center’s continued efflorescence.”

Ms. DeBin joins The Center for Fiction at an exciting time in the organization’s 202-year-old history. Since The Center’s move from Manhattan to its newly built, state-of-the-art, downtown Brooklyn headquarters in 2019, it has continued to expand its reputation as one of the country’s foremost not-for-profit cultural organizations, offering a variety of experiences for readers and writers.

- In the past year, as its membership has increased by more than two hundred percent, The Center’s one hundred or so literary programs have featured such writers as Jennifer Egan, Abraham Verghese, Barbara Kingsolver, Roxane Gay, and Colm Tóibín.
- Its advocacy of early-career writers continues to intensify through its annual The Center for Fiction/Susan Kamil Emerging Writer Fellowships and The Center for Fiction First Novel Prize.

- Its two dozen Reading Groups have included “Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*,” “The Horrors That Haunt Us: Gothic Novels by Women Writers,” and “Decolonizing Science Fiction.”
- Its three dozen Writing Workshops have offered instruction in, among other subjects, “Writing the Anthropocene: “A Climate Fiction Workshop,” “The Supernatural and Folklore as Fantasy in Fiction,” and The Sentence is the Story”
- Its Writers Studio has accommodated more than one hundred writers.
- Its KidsRead/KidsWrite program has serviced more than one thousand New York City public school children.
- Its bookstore has been hailed as one of the best in the world.

“I am honored to join The Center for Fiction as Executive Director at this momentous time in the history of the organization,” said Ms. DeBin. “I thank the community for trusting me to be a partner in leadership as we work together to uncover what will be next for this vital institution. During the search process, I met a staff and board who are dedicated to The Center’s mission and passionate about fiction’s ability to foster empathy, curiosity, connection, and discussion. I feel enormous excitement about what we can build together.”

The Center for Fiction is thrilled to welcome Lydah Pyles DeBin to the team, and it looks forward to her leadership as we continue to serve Brooklyn and beyond.

About The Center for Fiction

[The Center for Fiction](#) is a literary nonprofit that brings diverse communities together to develop and share a passion for fiction. Founded in 1821 as the Mercantile Library of New York in Manhattan, the organization is now based in the heart of the Brooklyn cultural district, with a 18,000-square-foot facility that offers New Yorkers an immersive cultural experience centered on reading and writing. Throughout the year, The Center for Fiction provides a vast array of public programming, reading groups, and writing workshops. The First Novel Prize and Emerging Writer Fellowships help build literary careers, and KidsRead/KidsWrite programs inspire an early love of reading and writing in public school students with author-led events. In recent years, the organization’s programming has expanded to include storytelling in all its forms, integrating music, theater, dance, film, television, and the visual arts into its exploration of the best of fiction throughout history and today.

Learn More: <https://centerforfiction.org>

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