



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 29 June 2017

The Board of Directors of Workman Arts, one of the largest and longest-running multidisciplinary arts and mental health organizations in the world, is announcing the retirement of Lisa Brown, its inspired founder and inspiring Executive and Artistic Director, after 30 years of leading the organization. Workman Arts empowers artists who receive mental health services by providing professional support, arts training, public performance and exhibition opportunities, while educating the public and challenging social prejudice about mental health through the arts. Lisa's model has been replicated nationwide and internationally.

Lisa started as a psychiatric nurse at the Queen Street Mental Health Centre, providing frontline care to patients. In 1987, inspired by her patients' capabilities and recognizing the need to offer an artistic outlet, she started Workman Arts as a troupe of eight artists, mounting its first Canadian mainstage performance, *Innerspeak*. From this humble beginning to the present, it has been Lisa's vision, perseverance and persuasion that allowed Workman Arts to expand into an organization of over 300 member artists, spanning the breadth of artistic disciplines. Lisa's enduring vision has most recently allowed Workman Arts to scale its best-in-class model by partnering with organizations in other communities with plans to realize the same level of support for their local artists.

"When you try to imagine just how many artists have been empowered by Workman Arts and in turn, how many people have been positively impacted by the art that came from that empowerment, the mind boggles," said Patrick Manley, Board of Directors Chair at Workman Arts. "What Lisa has created, through an uncompromising passion and commitment for artists and their work, shows just how much can be done when you pursue what you love with abandon."

Under Lisa's leadership, Workman Arts launched the annual Rendezvous with Madness Film Festival, screening exceptional international films accompanied by engaged panel discussions that challenge perceptions on mental health and addiction issues. Being Scene, Workman Arts' annual Visual Arts Exhibition, The Madness and the Arts World Festival, provincial touring companies of youth-oriented productions of the plays *Vincent* and *Rocks in My Pockets*, and the Mad Couture Catwalk, a presentation of wearable art at the Art Gallery of Ontario, are just a few examples of Lisa's outstanding productions.

"Lisa Brown's pioneering work at the intersection of arts and mental health has sparked discourse, challenged stereotypes and broken down personal, professional and social barriers for artists," said Lori Spadorcia, VP of Communications and Community Engagement at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). "CAMH is a proud partner of Workman Arts, and a huge fan of Lisa's work and legacy."

Lisa's accomplishments at Workman Arts have garnered the highest levels of recognition including the Governor General's Meritorious Service Medal in 2004, Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012, an Ashoka Fellowship in 2013, and culminating in 2014 with her appointment to the Order of Canada.

"I have been privileged to work with the most incredible and extraordinary artists throughout my 30 years with Workman Arts", said Lisa Brown. "I look forward to Workman Arts' continuing success as it develops to the next level and have the utmost faith in the artists, staff, and the board."

The Board, staff and the artists of Workman Arts thank Lisa for all the hard work, commitment, and compassion that has allowed the organization to accomplish what it has in the past, to be what it is today, and to have unlimited potential for the future.

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