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PRESS CONTACTS:

For Mural Arts:

Kaitlyn Haney, Signature 57  
215-514-6495 or [khaney@signature57.com](mailto:khaney@signature57.com)

**Mural Arts Philadelphia Names David Gest as Chief Operating Officer**  
*Former pro bono attorney joins nation's largest public art program to oversee operations & offer strategic oversight of transformative projects that ignite change*

**Philadelphia, PA – December 1, 2022** – [Mural Arts Philadelphia](#), the nation's largest public art program, today announced David Gest as the organization's new Chief Operating Officer (COO). An attorney and former Partner in the Real Estate Department at the AmLaw 100 law firm Ballard Spahr LLP, which has provided pro bono legal counsel to Mural Arts for decades, Gest worked on notable Mural Arts projects [Open Source](#), [Monument Lab](#), and [Site/Sound: Revealing the Rail Park](#), as well as contracts for mural installations throughout Philadelphia. The Washington, D.C. native brings extensive experience managing staff, consultants, and design professionals and collaborating with community groups and city officials on major real estate developments and pro bono initiatives.

“David is not coming to Mural Arts as a stranger; he knows a number of staff, is familiar with many parts of our work, and has a deep appreciation and respect for our organization and all it does in Philadelphia and beyond,” said **Jane Golden, Executive Director of Mural Arts Philadelphia**. “His intelligence is matched by his ability to empathize and understand other points of view, along with his sensitivity to the many critical issues facing our world right now.”

As the second-highest ranking executive at Mural Arts under Golden, Gest will oversee the organization's day-to-day operations, specifically the financial and administrative components such as budgets, systems, protocols, contracts, and compliance, as well as human resource management, program and project divisions, and field operations. He will also provide strategic oversight for the execution of Mural Arts' overarching mission to use the transformative power of participatory public art as a vehicle for social change that results in a more just and equitable Philadelphia.

"I'm very excited to begin work with Mural Arts, an organization I have admired for many years," said Gest. "I've always been impressed by the passion and dedication that Jane Golden and the entire Mural Arts staff bring to their work, and I am constantly amazed by the breadth and depth of their efforts. I look forward to joining the team and advancing the important mission to achieve positive social change through art."

Before becoming an attorney, Gest worked as a consultant for a leading historic preservation consulting firm in California. In addition to a J.D. from Columbia University, Gest holds a Master of City Planning degree, focusing on community and economic development, from the University of Pennsylvania School of Design and a B.A. in architecture and urban studies from Yale University. He has also served on the board of the Philadelphia-based Community Design Collaborative, which coordinates pro bono design services for local community groups and nonprofit organizations.

While at Ballard Spahr, Gest was an active member of their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council, which promotes DEI initiatives related to recruitment, retention, client service, and business development. Drawing from that experience, as Mural Arts' COO, Gest will be a devoted collaborator and thought partner to the organization's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Committee, which examines organizational policies and practices to determine implicit and explicit systemic inequities, implements constructive changes that promote an equitable and inclusive workplace, and ensures the organization recruits, selects, and retains staff who reflect the rich diversity of the City of Philadelphia.

To download a headshot of David Gest, please [click here](#).

### **About Mural Arts Philadelphia**

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 35 years, Mural Arts have united artists and communities through a collaborative and equitable process, creating over 4,000 artworks that have transformed public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts aims to empower people, stimulate dialogue, and build bridges to mutual understanding through projects that attract artists from Philadelphia and around the world and programs that focus on youth education, restorative justice, mental health and wellness, and public art preservation. Popular mural tours offer a firsthand glimpse into the inspiring stories behind Mural Arts' iconic and unparalleled collection, which has earned Philadelphia worldwide recognition as the "Mural Capital of the World." For more information, call 215-685-0750 or visit [muralarts.org](http://muralarts.org). Follow us on social media: [@muralarts](#) on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#), [MuralArtsPhiladelphia](#) on Facebook, and [phillymuralarts](#) on YouTube.

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