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## **Hugo House names Rob Arnold Acting Interim Executive Director**

*--Indigenous Poet takes leadership role--*

SEATTLE—Mar. 3, 2021—Following the resignation of former Executive Director Tree Swenson on February 19, Hugo House has named Rob Arnold as acting interim executive director. For the past three years, Arnold has served as Hugo House’s events curator and program director. In his expanded role, Arnold will oversee Hugo House operations until an interim ED can be named, in addition to his previous duties.

In the last full year of operation pre-COVID, 2019, Arnold’s events programming featured the voices of 365 different performers. Of those, 128, or 35 percent, were BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) individuals. Then in 2020, when COVID hit, these events went virtual, and 163 performers were featured, of which 86, or 53 percent, were BIPOC individuals.

Arnold has spent the past decade in publishing and literary advocacy, previously serving as a literary agent with Aevitas Creative Management and Associate Director of PEN New England, among other roles. He is also a published poet with poems that have appeared in *Ploughshares*, the *Gettysburg Review*, *Hyphen*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Yes Poetry*, and the *Ocean State Review*, among others.

Hugo House recently released its spring catalog of classes, 122 in total, with five classes offered tuition-free, including “Social Justice Education with Illustrated Books,” “the BIPOC Writers Toolkit,” and the Spanish language class “Ver Para Crear,” presented in partnership with Seattle Escribe. All classes are now online.

According to Arnold, “Hugo House is on the cusp of making real, impactful change, which will require building a racial equity lens into all of our programs. Our next major priority is hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Consultant to guide us through this critical work, which we are absolutely committed to. Regaining trust is essential, and we will be communicating directly and transparently with our beloved writing community through regular status reports, as well as inviting their participation wherever possible.”

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### **About Hugo House**

Hugo House opens the literary world to everyone who loves books or has a drive to write—giving people a place to read words, hear words, and make their own words better through writing classes, readings and events, and residencies.

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[Facebook.com/HugoHouse](https://www.facebook.com/HugoHouse)

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Our physical location is closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic; all our programs currently operate online.