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DASH appoints artist Heather Peak as CEO and Artistic Director

- **Artist Heather Peak appointed as CEO and Artistic Director of DASH, the Disabled-led visual arts organisation**
- **Heather is known internationally for her artistic practice, being one half of duo Heather Peak and Ivan Morison**
- **Heather will lead DASH in a period of development and expansion, alongside pursuing her artistic practice**

DASH, the Disabled-led visual arts organisation, has appointed Heather Peak as its new Artistic Director and CEO.

As an artist with an international profile, Heather is best known for her work as one half of artist duo Heather Peak and Ivan Morison. Heather will continue to pursue a personal artistic practice alongside her work leading and developing DASH.

In assuming this role at DASH, Heather will also become the co-chair of New Art West Midlands, the regional Contemporary Visual Arts Network, of whom DASH is now the regional host. Further roles within New Art West Midlands will be announced over the next few months

Heather Peak, CEO and Artistic Director of DASH, comments, “I am beyond thrilled to be appointed the new CEO and Artistic Director of DASH. This is a hugely meaningful and important step in my artistic practice. I look forward to holding a thriving, fair and equitable work environment where possibility and care are centred alongside advocacy and art making.

“I am delighted to be able to share the knowledge from my 20 years as a practicing artist in a meaningful and purposeful way to inspire, and support, Disabled, D/deaf and neurodivergent artists, arts workers and audiences through this extraordinary opportunity.

“DASH will cultivate space for transformative artistic work and I’m deeply ambitious and intensely driven for DASH and it’s Disabled, D/deaf and neurodivergent arts community in this complex world we live in.”

Heather Peak is an artist who has established an ambitious collaborative practice over the past twenty years, which draws together visual art, architecture and social practice. Heather has exhibited widely across UK, Europe, Australasia, North and South America and Asia. Her work has been commissioned by Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wysing Arts Centre, Whitechapel Art Gallery, Tate Modern, National Theatre of Wales, The Hepworth Wakefield and London's Southbank Centre among many other. She also represented Wales at the 52nd Venice Biennial.

Heather works collaboratively with Ivan Morison and together the pair have taught, mentored and supported many artists, architects, students and communities over the past 20 years.

Craig Ashley, Chair of DASH Board of Trustees, comments: "We are delighted and so excited to welcome Heather Peak as DASH's new Artistic Director and CEO. As an internationally acclaimed artist, Heather brings a creative practice that consistently inspires and engages people and communities, alongside an incredible wealth of knowledge and experience of partnership working within and beyond the arts and cultural sector. Her curious and adventurous approach will take DASH into new territory and bring a step change to the organisation at the national and international level."

Peter Heslip, Director of Visual Arts, Arts Council England comments: "We congratulate Heather on her appointment. DASH has established a national and international reputation as a progressive catalyst for talent and ambition. Many artists and curators have benefitted from the opportunities it creates at key moments. As one of few disabled led visual arts companies in the country, its leadership and influence are never more vital in stimulating change in the sector. The appointment of an artist to lead DASH at this pivotal moment sends a very positive message about value and vision, and Arts Council England is looking forward to working with Heather and the board."

DASH is a Disabled-led visual arts organisation that creates new work and develops meaningful opportunities for disabled artists. To date, DASH has chalked up two decades of important work with representation and collaboration at its heart. From programmes for Young Disabled Artists through to shaping strategic roles for Disabled curators, DASH's work has helped to support Disabled people at all stages of a creative practice.

Disabled people remain significantly underrepresented as audiences, participants, creatives, and decision-makers across the arts and creative industries. Under Heather's leadership, and with increased investment from Arts Council England over the next three years, DASH plans to step up our efforts to tackle the causes and symptoms of this systemic inequality.

Amongst its many areas of work, this year sees the return of the **Future Curators Programme**, in which Newlyn Art Gallery & Exchange (Cornwall), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton), Arts Catalyst (Sheffield), MIMA (Teeside), Wysing Arts Centre (Cambridge) and Midland Arts Centre (Birmingham) will appoint a Disabled curator for a one-year residency programme.

Heather joins DASH after the retirement of long-standing Artistic Director, Mike Layward.

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For more information contact Helen Stallard on Helen@helenstallard.co.uk or call 0774 033 9604

Images:

An image of Heather can be downloaded here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/xjnx99ob9nqsn33/Heather%20Peak%2C%20image%20by%20Ivan%20Morison.jpg?dl=0>

Image Credit:

Heather Peak, pictured wearing a T-shirt printed on residency at Artlab Contemporary Print Studio, University of Central Lancashire, titled 'Autist Hold'. Shot on location in artist's woodland, part of the Celtic Rainforest Wales rewilding program. Photo credit Ivan Morison

Notes for Editors:

About DASH:

DASH is a Disabled-led visual arts charity. It creates opportunities for Disabled artists to develop their creative practice. These opportunities take many forms, from high quality commissions to community based workshops, the work it creates is centred around its vision and mission.

DASH works with artists, audiences, communities and organisations to challenge inequality and implement change.

With a history of work including visual arts, dance, theatre, live arts and festivals in Shropshire since the mid-1990s, DASH became a limited company and registered charity in 2001 and in 2004 secured revenue funding from Arts Council England. In 2009 DASH took the decision to specialise its work in visual arts, while expanding its geographical boundaries.

During the last ten years DASH has undertaken truly ground-breaking work – projects that have challenged perceptions, fostered and mentored new Deaf and Disabled artists, encouraged professional development and helped to engineer change in the sector.

DASH partners and funders include Arts Council England, Garfield Weston, and Art Fund. DASH is a member of the Plus Tate Network.

www.dasharts.org

New Art West Midlands is the Contemporary Visual Arts Network for the West Midlands region. Our purpose is to strengthen and develop the contemporary

visual arts sector in the West Midlands, working collectively to safeguard the future of artists and our sector as a whole.

<https://cvan.art/regions/west-midlands/>

More details about Heather Peak can be found at www.peakmorison.org