

The San Diego Union-Tribune.

Skirball VP named new director of ArtPower!

Veteran LA arts executive Jordan Peimer takes over UCSD-based presenter

By [James Chute](#) [\(/staff/james-chute/\)](#) 4 p.m. Sept. 2, 2014



Jordan Peimer. Photo: Timothy Norris, courtesy of Skirball Cultural Center

UC San Diego today named Jordan Peimer as the new executive director of ArtPower!, the university's primary campus presenter of music, dance and film.

His first day is Oct. 6.

Peimer currently serves as vice president and director of public programs for the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles. He replaces Martin Wollesen, who left UCSD last year to become director of the University of Maryland's Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center.

"This is an exciting time for ArtPower! and for the UCSD campus as a whole," said Gary Ratcliff, vice chancellor-student life and a member of the search committee. "Jordan's appointment reflects the university's value of the arts and ArtPower! as a convener, a catalyst for student engagement, and as a beacon and showcase for artistic expression in our region."

At the Skirball, where he worked for 18 years, Peimer developed many series and festivals, including the Sunset Concerts (focused on global music), Viva! (an exploration of Latin and Jewish life) and Zeitgeist (a festival looking at Jewish life in the new Europe).

Under Peimer's leadership, the Skirball emerged as a major presenter of music and performance in the Los Angeles area.

"I've had a lot of opportunities here, and it's been a great place to be," Peimer said by phone from his office in Los Angeles. "But working in a university environment is something I've wanted to do for a long time. I'm really interested in doing artist-residency models in a way I can't do them at the Skirball.

"And San Diego is a city I've always liked a lot. I visit frequently, so it just made so much sense; it's almost like I didn't have to think about it."

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and UCLA, Peimer was co-artistic director of the Highway Performance Space in Santa Monica and served as a performance consultant for dance companies and other cultural institutions (including the J. Paul Getty Museum) before joining the Skirball.

“I’m really interested in engagement,” Peimer said. “And one thing that has been fundamental since my days at Highways is I’m very interested in how people use artforms to express their identity and express their beliefs, their world view and their experiences.

“We as audience members can just learn so much, see so much, and experience things that we never could in our daily lives, through the arts.”

That philosophy would seem ideally suited to ArtPower!, which under Wollesen, and for the past year, interim director Kathryn Martin, embraces a diverse range of performers and performances, whether the Vietnamese composer/performer Tri Minh (Oct. 15), the North Africa-originated Nile Project (Feb. 7, 2015) or the Brazilian singer/songwriter Thalma de Freitas (April 10, 2015).

“Are you familiar with the term ‘confirmation bias’?” Peimer asked. “Confirmation bias is the concept that we all see the world and interpret the facts around us to confirm our own world views.

“I am very interested in working with artists who will help students expand their experiences and give them the opportunity to see a larger slice of the world. College is a time to to be exposed to as much as you can and the arts are critical to that.”

Peimer was selected after a yearlong search by a committee comprised of community members — representing the donors who help support ArtPower!’s roughly \$1.5 million budget — and UC San Diego students, staff and faculty.

“I am thrilled to welcome Jordan to UC San Diego,” said Susan Narucki, a music department professor. “He has been an important voice in the Southern California cultural scene for decades and is committed to the transformative power of the arts. Jordan reflects the innovation that is UC San Diego. He will engage students, faculty and community alike in a fascinating conversation about all that the arts can be — and I certainly look forward to working with him.”

© Copyright 2015 The San Diego Union-Tribune. All rights reserved.