

LA JOLLA PLAYHOUSE ANNOUNCES JACOLE KITCHEN AS RECIPIENT OF 2025/2026 DIRECTOR FELLOWSHIP

La Jolla, CA – La Jolla Playhouse has named Jacole Kitchen as the recipient of its 2025/2026 Director Fellowship position. She begins her two-year appointment in April 2025.

Established in 2023, the Playhouse's biennial Director Fellowship offers recipients the opportunity to gain artistic experience, with substantial interaction with all departments, guest artists and community members. Each fellowship is designed to be customizable to the recipient's needs and passions, culminating in a directing slot in a future Playhouse subscription season. Fellows receive a full salary and benefits and play an active role in the Playhouse's day-to-day activities, participating in such new play development programs as the DNA New Work Series, the immersive and site-responsive WOW program, the Performance Outreach Program (POP) Tour and other Learning and Engagement initiatives.

"Having worked alongside Jacole for nearly a decade, I've had the perfect vantage point to watch her immense growth as an artist and leader," said Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse. "Her increasing success as a freelance director makes this the perfect opportunity for her next steps. La Jolla Playhouse is deeply committed to supporting the next generation of theatremakers, and as our Directing Fellow, Jacole will take her experience in both directing and community engagement to even greater heights."

Jacole Kitchen has served as the Director of Arts Engagement and In-House Casting at La Jolla Playhouse since 2016, where she has fostered relationships to provide opportunities in the arts for populations who may not have otherwise had the freedom to explore their talents, including members of military/veteran community, unsheltered populations and artists with disabilities. Kitchen is also a freelance director with credits including *Suburban Black Girl* by Zakiya Urbi Young (Outside In Theatre), *The Hula-Hoopin' Queen* by Gloria Bond-Clunie (Seattle Children's Theatre), *Manny and the Wise Queens* by Idris Goodwin (Oceanside Theatre Company), *Our Town* (bilingual version – Mira Costa College), *Cardboard Piano* by Hansol Jung (Diversionary Theatre), *An Iliad* by Lisa Peterson and Denis O'Leary (New Village Arts), along with three readings in the Playhouse's DNA New Work Series readings and three Performance Outreach Production (POP) Tours: *Jin vs the Beach* (2023), *Pick Me Last* (2020) and *Light Years Away* (2018). She has also served as Assistant Director on the Playhouse productions of *Guards at the Taj*, *Tiger Style* and *Escape to Margaritaville*. jacolekitchen.com

As Kitchen moves to this new position, the Playhouse's Learning and Engagement Department will now be overseen by Bridget Cavaiola Stone, who has served as the Playhouse's Director of Learning since 2020. Hannah Reinert, who has served as the Playhouse's Learning and Engagement Manager since 2022, will become the Playhouse's Associate Producer and Local Casting Director; and Learning and Engagement intern Ebony Erickson will take on the role of Learning and Engagement Manager.

La Jolla Playhouse is a place where artists and audiences come together to create what's new and next in the American theatre, from Tony Award-winning productions, to imaginative programs for young audiences, to interactive experiences outside our theatre walls. Founded in 1947 by Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire and Mel Ferrer, the Playhouse is currently led by Tony Award winner Christopher Ashley, the Rich Family Artistic Director of La Jolla Playhouse, and Managing Director Debby Buchholz. The Playhouse is internationally renowned for the development of new plays and musicals, including mounting 120 world premieres, commissioning 70 new works, and sending 37 productions to Broadway – including the currently running hits *The Outsiders* and *Redwood* – garnering a total of 42 Tony Awards, as well as the 1993 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre.