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The Contemporary Dayton Announces New Sustainability Initiative, Expanded Board Leadership, Strategic Growth Plans, and Executive Transition

DAYTON, OH — July 14, 2026 — The Contemporary Dayton today announced a series of initiatives that position the organization for a dynamic new chapter centered on financial sustainability, artistic excellence, community engagement, and long-term institutional growth.

The announcement follows a significant turning point for the organization. Working in partnership with Board leadership and community partners, Executive Director **Eva Buttacavoli** recently negotiated a new strategic partnership that will reduce organizational expenses by approximately **\$500,000 over the next five years**. The agreement addresses one of the organization's largest operating expenses, strengthening its financial foundation while allowing greater investment in artists, exhibitions, public programs, and community engagement.

The organization has also expanded its leadership capacity through the addition of **four new members to its Board of Directors** and the formation of **Board-led Working Groups** involving more than **thirty community volunteers**, including artists, business leaders, healthcare professionals, educators, and civic stakeholders. Together, these groups will help shape the organization's next strategic plan through three primary areas of focus: **organizational sustainability and advancement; artist support and program excellence; and community engagement and strategic partnerships**.

Building on this momentum, The Contemporary Dayton is launching a comprehensive strategic planning process that will guide its next phase of growth while strengthening its founding mission to **advance art for the community and a community for artists**. Today, the organization is recognized for presenting museum-quality contemporary art while making it welcoming and accessible to broad audiences. It has earned a reputation for bringing nationally and internationally recognized artists together with local and regional talent, enriching the cultural life of Dayton while creating meaningful opportunities for artists to exhibit, connect, and grow professionally.

After fifteen years as Executive Director, Buttacavoli will step down from her role at the end of 2026 to expand her art appraisal and consulting practice. She will continue supporting the organization during a six-month transition period in the temporary role of **Director of Advancement & Transition**, focusing on major donor stewardship, institutional continuity, fundraising strategy, and leadership onboarding. Her

departure concludes a distinguished **35-year museum career** dedicated to advancing artists, expanding access to contemporary art, fostering arts education for audiences of all ages, and strengthening the institutions that serve their communities.

As part of the transition plan, the organization has appointed **Heather Jones**, its current Curator and Director of Programs & Engagement, as **Interim Director & Chief Curator** from July through December 2026 while a search is conducted for a new Executive Director. The organization also announced a new **Development Coordinator** position to strengthen annual fundraising, membership, sponsorship, grants administration, and donor engagement.

During her tenure, Buttacavoli helped build upon the organization's strong foundation by expanding its institutional capacity, strengthening museum operations and exhibition practices, deepening community partnerships, and elevating The Contemporary Dayton's regional profile. The organization completed a **\$1 million capital campaign** and relocation to the historic Dayton Arcade, adopted the name **The Contemporary Dayton** to more clearly reflect its mission, better represent the artists and audiences it serves, and strengthen its identity within the national network of contemporary art centers and museums. Additional milestones included securing major support from the **Ohio Arts Council**, **National Endowment for the Arts**, and **The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts**; implementing integrated donor management, retail, communications, website, social media, and digital engagement systems; developing **The Contemporary Dayton Shop (The CoSHOP)** as a year-round platform supporting artists through retail and exhibitions; and hiring the organization's first professional curator.

The Contemporary Dayton also strengthened its role as both a presenter and champion of contemporary artists, expanding opportunities for exhibitions, public art, commissions, and community partnerships. The organization developed major collaborations with the **Downtown Dayton Partnership** and the **City of Dayton**, including **Five Rivers MetroParks' River Run Mural**, downtown's **ArtWraps**, and the **8/4 Memorial** commemorating the 2019 Oregon District tragedy. It also facilitated significant installations and commissions with **Premier Health**, **Dayton Children's Hospital**, the **University of Dayton's Roger Glass Center for the Arts**, and other regional partners, creating new opportunities for artists while bringing contemporary art into public and civic spaces.

"These accomplishments have always been about building a stronger institution for artists and for our community," said Buttacavoli. "Over the last several years, we have worked hard to stabilize and strengthen the organization while expanding our role as a cultural partner in downtown Dayton. We are entering this next chapter with renewed energy, an engaged Board, extraordinary community leadership, strong partnerships, and a clear vision for the future."

"The Contemporary Dayton is entering this next phase from a position of strength," said Board leadership. "Eva's leadership has helped position the organization for long-term success, and we are grateful for the foundation she has helped build. With new Board leadership, engaged community volunteers, strengthened partnerships, and a thoughtful transition plan in place, we are excited to build upon this momentum and shape the next chapter of The Contemporary Dayton."