



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Kitchen Theatre Company Names Emily Jackson as New Artistic Leader

**Ithaca, NY – Kitchen Theatre Company’s Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Emily Jackson as the next Producing Artistic Director beginning July 1, 2024.** A familiar face to Kitchen patrons and the Ithaca theater community, Ms. Jackson brings a wealth of experience and passion to her new role.

Emily Jackson’s familiarity with and dedication to Kitchen Theatre Company is evident. At the beginning of her professional career, Emily was an Artistic Fellow at KTC. After that, she served as the Artistic Associate for two seasons. She has directed and performed on the mainstage, managed Front of House operations, and played integral roles in marketing, development, and season planning. Outside of work at Kitchen Theatre Company, Emily is a bold director and arts administrator with a proven record of producing theater and championing new work in New York City and across the country. Currently, as the Associate Producing Artistic Director, she has been working closely with Interim Producing Artistic Director **Rachel Lampert** in preparing for this transition.

“We are all thrilled that Emily is returning to lead the theater. It feels like such a natural progression,” said Barry Chester, President of the Board of Directors. “We are grateful to Rachel, who stepped in to lead us through a difficult time, and excited that the theater is now positioned well enough to allow Rachel to step down and Emily to take the helm.”

“It’s been an extraordinary year and a half for me,” said Lampert. “One thing that kept me focused was the knowledge that Emily was considering the position. I thank all our patrons and supporters who returned and helped get things moving ahead. I cannot think of a better person than Emily Jackson to lead the theater and forge its future.”

Jackson’s knowledge of Kitchen Theatre Company operations, its supporters, and the City of Ithaca is a significant asset, as is her personal connection to the theater. Emily will be joined in this new chapter by her husband, Tyler M. Perry, who will assume the role of Director of Production. The two met in 2012 at the Kitchen when Jackson was assisting directing and Perry was the lighting designer for *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. They celebrated their wedding at the Kitchen in 2018 and will move back to Ithaca full-time this July with their two young children, Luma and Rocco, and their two small dogs.

Perry has designed over 30 productions at Kitchen Theatre Company, including the set, lighting, and projection design for this season’s opening production of *Monsters of the American Cinema*. A graduate of Ithaca College, he is also an educator and mentor.



“In addition to gaining this fantastic artistic and administrative powerhouse team,” adds Chester, “Rachel will stay on and join the Board of Directors. We have been working to ensure a smooth transition in leadership and continuity for our patrons and supporters.”

“In early conversations with Rachel and the Board, I mentioned that it would be hard to overstate what taking on this role would mean to me personally and professionally,” said Jackson. “To lead an organization with a 30+ year history of producing excellent work with a diverse group of artists in a community that values ‘important conversations’ is one amazing thing. To do it alongside my husband, as parent-artists, and in a place that has shaped me as a person is an honor. I look forward to the bold, intimate, and engaging plays we will make, to being a part of the thriving arts ecosystem in Ithaca, and to ensuring Kitchen Theatre Company has a sustainable future in the seasons to come.”

The public will have an opportunity to meet Emily and Tyler at the Kitchen’s Spring Gala: Recipe for the Future. The new leaders will be introduced with food, drink, video, and song at this event on March 30. Tickets for the gala are on sale now at [www.kitchentheatre.org/galatix](http://www.kitchentheatre.org/galatix).

Follow Kitchen Theatre Company on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/kitchentheatre) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/kitchentheatre) and sign up for our newsletter at [www.kitchentheatre.org/newsletter](http://www.kitchentheatre.org/newsletter) to get updates on additional opportunities to meet the new leadership. Please contact Rachel Lampert at [rachel@kitchentheatre.org](mailto:rachel@kitchentheatre.org) or (607) 272-0570 with questions and requests.

Kitchen Theatre Company is Central New York’s Off-Broadway theater, housed in a LEED-certified building in Ithaca’s West End/Southside neighborhood. Founded in 1991, KTC has produced over 225 mainstage plays, including 35 world premieres. We create bold theater in our intimate 98-seat space engaging our vital and diverse community. Important conversations happen in the Kitchen!

**Note to editors:** Full biographies for Emily Jackson and Tyler M. Perry are below. [Linked here](#) are photos of Emily Jackson and Tyler M. Perry for you to use. Please credit photographer Brian Mihok.

**Emily Jackson** is an artist and organizer who gathers groups of humans and shares well-made stories. Her directing work focuses on collaboration, fundamental theatricality, and character-driven narratives.

Emily’s directing credits include for The Musical Multiverse and Forager Theatre Company: *Jenna Todd: The Demon Waitress of Fleet Street*; Kitchen Theatre Company: *I and You*, *The Soup Comes Last*, *Physics Fair*, *Count Me In*; for Holmdel Theatre Company: *Little Women the Musical*; for Cider Mill Playhouse: *Urinetown*, *Stage Kiss*; for Fordham University: *Into the Woods*; for Sanguine Theatre Company: *Jessica*; Hamlet Isn’t Dead: *Julius Caesar*.

Emily is committed to the complete life cycle of developing and producing new work. Nothing encapsulates this more than her experience with *They Promised Her the Moon* by Laurel Ollstein: she



was an actor in the original workshop production at The University of Oklahoma, produced a reading of a new draft at Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY, and, in her last project before the COVID-19 pandemic, Emily served as the Assistant Director under Giovanna Sardelli, director, for the regional professional premiere at TheatreWorks Silicon Valley.

A trusted thought partner in development settings, Emily has been in residency with playwrights Darrel Alejandro Holnes and Kyle Bass at Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts in Ithaca, NY, served as a member of the Lark's Literary Wing, and has adapted the work of Italian playwright Dacia Maraini.

Recently, Emily worked with Walking on Water Productions in Ithaca, NY, helping to launch their inaugural WoW's Now new musicals festival. She consulted on the submission process and directed a staged reading of *Extended Stay* by Jenny Stafford and Scotty Arnold this fall. *Extended Stay* was selected as the festival winner. Emily will lead a continued development process with the creative team and then direct the first full production in the summer of 2025.

In addition to directing, Emily is a bold arts administrator with a proven record of producing theatre and championing new work in New York City and the regions. Most recently, Emily served as the artistic director of Sanguine Theatre Company, a 501(c)(3) organization that produces world premiere plays. She organized Sanguine's cornerstone program, Project Playwright, a festival that receives more than 430 submissions annually. Under her tenure, Sanguine had a successful off-Broadway run at 59E59 Theaters with theatre provocateur Brian Dykstra's world premiere, *Education*.

Before that, Emily served as the Artistic Associate and Director of Audience Services for Kitchen Theatre Company in Ithaca, NY. There, she helmed the new play development series curating the slate of artists, establishing partnerships with community organizations to support the program, and meeting budgetary and funding requirements. Throughout the season, Emily orchestrated play-specific audience engagement events, hosted talkbacks, led classes at community learning centers, and mentored artistic and administrative fellows.

Emily continues to grow her theatrical practice. Recently, she has taken Nicole Brewer's Foundational Course in Anti-Racist Theatre, The Drama League's The Other Side of the Table: Audition Techniques for Directors and The Direction Forward: Anti-Racism for Directors & Creatives, and Roundabout Theatre Company's Directing Sociopolitical Theatre with Jess McLeod. These courses have given her a practical set of tools and a greater, humbler understanding of how to better center equity in her work.



Emily lives in New York City with her husband, Tyler M. Perry, a lighting designer and theatre educator, two dogs, Frankie and Stella, and her young children, Luma and Rocco, with whom Emily hopes to share her love of great stories.

BFA: The University of Oklahoma

Social media: @emcowja Website: [www.emilyjackson.org](http://www.emilyjackson.org)

**Tyler M. Perry** is an award-winning designer for theatre, television, and live events. He believes theatre should bring forth stories of a breadth of people and themes in a uniquely theatrical way, encouraging audiences to engage their imagination and bring their point of view. The conversations that are created within a stimulated and committed audience should be amplified and explored to exercise community and empathy.

Tyler's work spans all scales of production. His most recent projects included set designs for a national television broadcast, BravoCON Live in Las Vegas, and a brand new television network, Sports Talk on Amazon Prime, as well as a regional theatre production of *Ring of Fire* at Florida Repertory Theatre, and an independent theatre production of *tick, tick...BOOM!* with Forager Theatre Company. Tyler brought a high level of care, preparation, and artistry to all these projects. He leverages imagination and technical craft to center the audience's experience and response.

Regional theatre is the cornerstone of Tyler's theatre experience. His work has been seen across the country at theatre such as Kitchen Theatre Company (Ithaca, NY), Florida Repertory Theatre (Fort Myers, FL), Northern Stage (White River Junction, VT), Hope Summer Repertory Theatre (Holland, MI), Geva Theatre Center (Rochester, NY), Ocean State Theatre (Warwick, RI), and Cider Mill Playhouse (Endicott, NY). With these opportunities, Tyler took on the task of art-making and storytelling for a particular audience. He returns to many of these theatres because of his efforts to engage with and understand the communities for which he is creating. This goes even further when he works in community theatres, such as Running to Places (Ithaca, NY) and Riverdale Rising Stars (Bronx, NY), where Tyler connects with the community uniquely, creating personal connections and building relationships.

Tyler is also a committed teacher and mentor at the middle- and high-school level (Technical Theatre Director, Riverdale Country School) and undergraduates (Lecturer, Ithaca College and Queensborough Community College). His teaching philosophy pairs with his artistic philosophy by centering the student, accepting their experience, giving them choice and agency in their learning, and facilitating the achievement of their goals. As an arts educator, he helps students communicate and craft their unique perspectives while teaching them to be self-reflective, independent theatre-makers and leaders.



Equity, Integrity, and Sustainability are the three pillars of Tyler’s approach to his work. With these ideals, he recognizes the importance of humanity in all his interactions and decision-making. He models a spirit of thoughtfulness and consistent self-reflection and improvement, fostering the artistic excellence of individuals and the organization.

BFA: Ithaca College - Theatrical Production Arts, Design

MFA: University of Idaho - Theatre Arts, Lighting Design

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