



## International Board Candidates

### Darcy Troy-Pollack

MGM Resorts International

Vice President, Immersive Experiences & Content Partnerships

Primary Location: United States

*Running for 1<sup>st</sup> term*



#### Markets served:

- Asia
- Middle East
- North America

#### Industry Experience:

- Brand Activations
- Casinos Hotels
- Live Events
- Other
- Theme Parks
- Traveling Exhibits

### ABOUT THE APPLICANT:

I feel very fortunate to be considered for this Board. It would be in be incredibly gratifying (and fun!) to be part of the leadership of a group of people who share my sense of curiosity and excitement about the world of immersive experiences, and who also value the joy and connectivity they can bring to guests.

I have been on non-profit boards in the past, serving for 10 years on the Board of Trustees of PS Arts (a non-profit arts organization), 10 years on various alumni boards at Yale, and four years on the Executive Forum of the NRDC. In all cases, I was deeply passionate about the organizations, and I recognize how important that is. Although I am (very) new to the TEA, there is no question regarding my deep dedication to and love for our industry. I would like to join the Board in particular to help educate and evangelize about emerging forms of immersive experiences outside of traditional theme parks. I am fascinated by entirely new formats we have seen come to life in the past few years (Meow Wolf, TeamLab, Sleep No More), and how even those are now evolving and merging to become entirely new formats (Particle Ink, Department of Wonder).

In addition to this, I will admit that I love an intellectual challenge, and the idea of digging into the strategic objectives of TEA with the goal of helping to shape and move those forward... that really excites me.

Finally, I have been looking to build a broader global network outside of the US/UK. Cross-pollination – culturally and creatively – that is where our next great ideas, and great markets, will emerge. I would love to learn more and be inspired more by colleagues and creators from around the world.

I began my career in themed entertainment when LBE was still nascent. As the second person hired into what was then called Sony Retail Entertainment, I played a key role in the early development of Sony's Metreon, and as such had a front row seat as the world of LBEs transitioned from museum exhibits and arcades to IP-driven experiences just shy of theme park quality (Where the Wild Things Are play experience) and next generation game play (Moebius arcade). From there I co-founded two retail-entertainment concepts (Ridemakerz and Scribble Press), consulted, and even worked at a "games for good" mobile gaming start-up where I brought on strategic partners like National Geographic and Smithsonian. But through all those years I stayed in touch with our Creative Director from Sony – Bob Weis.

When Bob became President of Imagineering, I was honored that he called me and brought me along. At Disney I helped Bob launch a New Experiences group within WDI, with the goal of exploring how Disney could look in physical space outside the berm. It was just at that time that creativity in immersive was exploding, and my brain exploded along with it! I started doing deep dives into everything that was being developed, and it was that experience that brought me to my role at MGM Resorts. Here I lead creative development for our non-traditional entertainment, and in this role I am fortunate to see almost everything, since almost everyone wants to be in Vegas! I have developed extraordinary relationships, and I do think I have one of the best views in the world into everything going on in immersive and LBE.

Additionally, as I mentioned above, I do have past Board experience. It is probably worth mentioning that at both PS Arts and Yale I was elected to Executive Committee positions. So hopefully that means they saw something of value in my contributions!

To be totally transparent, I am quite new to TEA. At WDI, I never joined because everyone else already had! But I have joined and of course also was a panelist at the last TEA Inspire, which I thoroughly enjoyed!

As for my personal interests... Travel and hiking - and of course immersive experiences!

## **VISION FOR THE TEA**

This is a very difficult question to answer since I have not yet immersed myself enough to understand TEA's vision, goals and challenges. But in advance of fully understanding that context, my instinct is that I would like to see TEA embrace a broader spectrum of themed entertainment, one in which LBE/immersive is not an outlier, but a valuable contributor to creativity and economics in the space. In particular, I would like to see more programming targeting urban entertainment districts, integrated resorts and standalone LBEs. (I am quite curious to learn more about the MAPIC program just announced!), and I would like to invite more immersive experience creators to present and to join. Immersive theater creators like Felix Barrett (Sleep No More) and Tom Maller (Peaky Blinders Immersive), competitive socializing entrepreneurs like Jeremy Simmonds (Swingers), game play experts like Matt DuPlessie (Level99) and Alex Patterson (Beat the Bomb) and immersive experience creators like David Hutchinson (Monopoly Lifesized). I am a



big believer in creative collisions, and I think we all would have much to learn from each other!

## **SKILLS AND CORE COMPETENCIES**

I think first and foremost I bring energy and excitement. As I said, I do love our industry! But additionally, I believe I bring a uniquely deep perspective on LBE/immersive and on how themed entertainment can integrate and enliven urban environments. Finally, one of my “superpowers” (as Luc Mayrand would say) is connecting ... connecting people, ideas, places. Our world sits on a 3-legged stool of Concepts, Real Estate and Funding, and I am very proud that I have been able to develop good relationships across all those “legs”. My rolodex is quite hefty and includes some of the best creative minds, most of the executives controlling Hollywood IP, as well as some key funders in the space. I love putting good people and good ideas together, and being able to do that in the forum of TEA would be especially satisfying!



August 1, 2023

When Darcy Pollack asked me to recommend her for nomination into the International TEA, I was no less than thrilled. Thrilled for our industry and growth of our business, and the growth of the relevance and development of the TEA. In the last few decades there are few people I have met that I hold in as high an esteem as I do Darcy. She is both incredibly creative and highly strategic. She has the ability to think outside the box on all kinds of new initiatives, and on top of that, she has an uncanny ability to spot talent, to network, and to connect organizations together, making them more vibrant, more successful.

I have worked with Darcy through Sony as well as through Disney and other organizations, and she always very quickly becomes an incredibly valuable and collaborative member of any team, and she is always very highly regarded and sought after for her advice and ideas.

A case in point is the work that she and I performed at Disney, developing international projects for new markets, including India. It is quite unusual for someone to just suddenly understand another country and another culture, but when we approached India, Darcy, as usual, jumped in with tremendous enthusiasm and passion, traveled there multiple times, and within just a few months had already made tremendous contacts for Walt Disney Imagineering within the Indian development culture and had already been insightful into how to improve our creativity for a new market.

This kind of unique strategic and creative behavior is just tremendous and I can't wait to see how much growth Darcy will be able to bring to the International Committee. I look forward to answering any additional questions about Darcy that I can, and it would be a pleasure to work with her as part of the TEA International Committee. Congratulations on such an unbelievable candidate.

Bob Weis

Global Leader, Entertainment Gensler

Former President Walt Disney Imagineering