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Society of Architectural Historians Announces Ben Thomas as Executive Director

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"I am thrilled for the opportunity to lead this prestigious organization and am grateful for the trust that the SAH has placed in me to guide the society into the future," said Ben Thomas, incoming executive director of SAH. "I look forward to working with SAH's leadership, members, and talented and committed staff to fulfill and expand the organization's mission and goals."

Thomas comes to SAH from the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), where he leads a team that oversees a membership of nearly 6,000 individuals including professionals in archaeology and related disciplines, students, and archaeology enthusiasts; over 100 AIA Local Societies in the United States, Canada, and Europe; multiple grants, fellowships, and awards programs; and national and global outreach programs. From 2004 to 2008 he served as education and outreach coordinator for AIA.

Notable projects Thomas has completed at the AIA include a redesign of the National Lecture Program (NLP), a series that brings top scholars from North America and abroad to present on current archaeological topics. With his team, he transformed the NLP into a financially self-sustaining lecture series that includes virtual programs and features a diverse slate of speakers presenting on previously underrecognized topics. Working with committee members and staff, he was responsible for the complete restructuring of the AIA's Site Preservation program, which provides grants that support preservation and conservation efforts. The program now focuses on outreach and engagement that involves local communities in the planning, implementation, economic development, and long-term strategies for the protection of sites. In 2011 Thomas created International Archaeology Day, which is now celebrated in over 27 countries by more than 500 organizations that host events that reach over 250,000 people worldwide. During his tenure, the AIA has expanded its institutional affiliations and partnered with multiple organizations including the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) and the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) on outreach efforts, advocacy issues, and meeting participation.

Thomas earned his PhD in archaeology from Boston University in 2005 with a focus on ancient Maya architecture and settlement planning. Since 2005 he has been a faculty member in the Liberal Arts and Sciences Department at the Berklee College of Music and was recently promoted to the rank of associate professor. He has taught courses on Mesoamerican art and archaeology, art history, and artistic space. At national and international conferences, Thomas has organized and participated in sessions that explore how cultural sites are presented to the public, how site exp