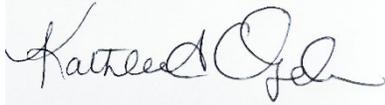




City of Seattle Boards & Commissions Notice of Appointment

Appointee Name: Michael Gaston		
Board/Commission Name: Seattle Film Commission		Position Title: Position 11: Immersive and Emerging Technology Businesses
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appointment OR <input type="checkbox"/> Reappointment		City Council Confirmation required? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Appointing Authority: <input type="checkbox"/> City Council <input type="checkbox"/> Mayor <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: Seattle Film Commission		Term of Position: * 4/24/2025 to 4/23/2028 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Serving remaining term of a vacant position
Residential Neighborhood: West Seattle	Zip Code: 98146	Contact Phone No.: [REDACTED]
Background: Michael Gaston is a nationally recognized leader in emerging media and modern storytelling, with a decade-long track record of shaping popular culture. His work has earned industry awards, built global audiences in the millions, and sparked discourse that inspires equal parts admiration and outrage — including sustained attacks from the alt-right, which he considers an accidental credential. He has held top executive roles including CEO of Cut.com and HiHo Kids, President of StageTEN Studios, and Chief Creative Officer of NBAT2, the groundbreaking joint venture between the NBA and Take-Two Interactive. His projects have been featured on TED, in The Wall Street Journal, on The Daily Show, and across other major cultural platforms — often in contexts that make executives nervous and creatives feel seen. He currently serves as Executive Creative Director at Spotify, where he helps bring video podcasts to Netflix and expands how stories move across platforms. Gaston joins the Seattle Film Commission committed to elevating the region’s creative economy, championing bold voices, and pushing the boundaries of what storytelling from the Pacific Northwest can be.		
Authorizing Signature (original signature): 		Appointing Signatory: Kat Ogden Chair, Seattle Film Commission
Date Signed (appointed): 1/5/2026		

*Term begin and end date is fixed and tied to the position and not the appointment date.

Michael Gaston

Creative Executive | Brand Builder | Social Storyteller

Apologies for my LinkedIn profile. It's mostly performance art.

[REDACTED] | New York, NY

Former CEO of Cut.com and Chief Creative Officer of NBAT2 (NBA x Take-Two Interactive), I bring 15+ years of experience building culturally resonant brands and campaigns that live at the intersection of sport, style, and storytelling. I've scaled teams from 3 to 50+, developed IP that captured billions of organic views, and turned launches into global cultural moments. From viral studio brands like Cut and HiHo to next-gen live and interactive platforms, I've consistently delivered creative ecosystems that convert passion into participation.

EXPERIENCE

Chief Creative Officer

NBAT2 Media (NBA x Take-Two Interactive), New York NY | 2024 - 2025

Recruited to lead the creative vision for NBAT2, a joint venture redefining basketball culture at the intersection of sports, gaming, and entertainment. Built the brand from zero to launch, overseeing content strategy, talent development, narrative frameworks, and IP creation.

- Built the brand from scratch for a joint venture between the NBA and NBA 2K; led end-to-end development of creative identity, narrative framework, and content strategy.
- Spearheaded a 1,000-piece content rollout across, social, experiential, and video channels, including category-level storytelling and seasonal activations.
- Led a cross-functional creative team of 25+ across copy, design, video, and animation.
- Developed internal brand voice and messaging playbooks
- Drove retail partner integrations and supported storytelling strategy for brand launches.
- Introduced GenAI tools to explore efficiency in copy and content creation workflows.

Founder & CEO

Cut.com, Seattle, WA | 2015 - 2020

- Built one of the internet's most successful digital studios, producing viral formats like *100 Years of Beauty* and *HiHo Kids*; scaled channels to 30MM+ subscribers. And 1B organic views a month.
- Directed campaign and launch creative for consumer product spinouts, including Truth or Drink, a breakout card game distributed through online and retail channels.
- Led a 50-person team across creative, operations, and sales; oversaw hiring, playbook development, and daily workflow management.
- Partnered with Netflix, MTV, and Showtime on IP development and platform integrations.
- Developed branded content campaigns for Microsoft, Disney, and Robinhood.

President

StageTEN Studios, Toronto, CA | 2020 - 2022

Recruited to demonstrate the potential of StageTEN's platform as an interactive storytelling powerhouse.

- Developed hybrid content formats blending livestream tech with unscripted storytelling.
- Produced an experimental live and interactive episode of *Wild 'n Out* for MTV.
- Built and led the creative team; spearheaded a full brand refresh for *StageTEN*.
- Executive Produced the live launch of Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion's *WAP* music video on YouTube.

Executive Producer & Brand Consultant

Various (MTV, Spotify, Girlfriend Collective, APM), Remote / Global | 2021 - 2023

- Rebranded *APM Studios* redefining mission, vision, values, and creative direction
- Developed social-first formats for MTV and social-first campaigns and content strategies for other youth and culture brands.
- Helped Spotify to integrate Parcast and Gimlet teams under Spotify Studios
- Directed copy and creative tone systems for B2C and B2B verticals

Creative Director → Advisor

Say Studios, Seattle + New York + Toronto (Remote) | 2024-2025

Co-founded a narrative-first studio producing premium fiction formats designed for digital-native platforms. Say creates binge-worthy, emotionally intelligent series that live at the intersection of streaming drama, creator culture, and platform native storytelling.

- Developed original IP strategy focused on serialized, genre-forward storytelling optimized for short-form video ecosystems.
- Recruited the founding creative team and advised on brand identity, position, and growth model.
- Transitioned to an advisory role in late 2024 while remaining involved in strategic feedback and creator development.
- Say's debut slate includes high-concept, cliffhanger-driven series aimed at Gen Z and young millennial audiences.

Co-Founder & Creative Director

OKAF, Remote / Global | 2023 - Present

Creative collective dedicated to producing provocative, eventized, viral projects that challenge norms and shape culture. OKAF operates at the intersection of art, satire, and social commentary — with projects spanning narrative performance, disruptive campaigns, and genre-defying children's books.

- Built a creative studio focused on experimental storytelling, AI tools, and immersive narrative design.

EARLY ROLES: Executive Creative Director at *SFST*; Senior Video Producer at *Stripes39*; Director at *Rogue Scholar*; Video Production Manager at *CBS Radio*

CORE STRENGTHS

- Social-First Storytelling & Platform-Native Formats
- Brand & IP Development
- Business Development
- Creative Team Leadership and Mentorship
- Format, Creative, Business, and Platform Strategy
- Brand Voice & Narrative Systems
- Cross-Functional Stakeholder Collaboration

SELECT PRESS & SPEAKING

- *Executive produced WAP digital rollout for Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion.*
- *Speaker at Vidcon, Creative Mornings, and The Next Web.*
- *Featured in Forbes, RollingStone, WSJ, TED, and TMZ*

EDUCATION

University of Washington — B.A., English & The Humanities | 2005

Seattle Film Commission

11 Members: Pursuant to Ordinance 126678, *all* members subject to City Council confirmation, **3**-year terms:

- **5** City Council-appointed
- **5** Mayor-appointed
- **1** Other Appointing Authority-appointed (specify): Commission

Roster:

*D	**G	RD	Position No.	Position Title	Name	Term Begin Date	Term End Date	Term #	Appointed By
2	M	5,6	1.	On-screen talent	Lowell Deo	4/24/2024	4/23/2027	2	Mayor
6	M	2	2.	Film industry labor unions	Davis R. Powell	4/24/2025	4/23/2028	1	Mayor
1	M	7	3.	Advertising and creative agencies	Michael Huang	4/24/2023	4/23/2026	1	Mayor
6	M	N/A	4.	Commercial producers or production companies	Tom Florino	4/24/2024	4/23/2027	2	Mayor
2	F	5	5.	Film schools, film programs, or film educators	KD Hall	4/24/2025	4/23/2028	1	Mayor
1	M	4	6.	Post-production companies and personnel i.e., editors, composers, post-supervisors	Champ Ensminger	4/24/2023	4/23/2026	1	City Council
6	F	4	7.	Film production crew	Kat Ogden	4/24/2024	4/23/2027	2	City Council
6	M	3	8.	Film festivals or film content distribution companies	Lawrence Alexander III	4/24/2025	4/23/2028	1	City Council
6	M	N/A	9.	Film location managers	Mark Freid	4/24/2023	4/23/2026	1	City Council
2	M	N/A	10	Film organizations for underrepresented communities	Anthony Tackett	4/24/2024	4/23/2027	2	City Council
1	M	4	11.	Immersive technology	Michael Gaston	4/24/2025	4/23/2028	1	Commission

SELF-IDENTIFIED DIVERSITY CHART

	SELF-IDENTIFIED DIVERSITY CHART												
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)		
	Male	Female	Transgender	NB/ O/ U	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Other	Caucasian/ Non-Hispanic	Pacific Islander	Middle Eastern	Multiracial
Mayor	4	1			1	2				2			
Council	4	1			1	2				2			
Other	1				1								
Total	9	2			3	4				4			

Key:

*D List the corresponding *Diversity Chart* number (1 through 9)

**G List *gender*, M= Male, F= Female, T= Transgender, NB= Non-Binary O= Other U= Unknown

RD Residential Council District number 1 through 7 or N/A

Diversity information is self-identified and is voluntary.