



MINNESOTA
MUSEUM of
AMERICAN ART

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Laura Wertheim Joseph Named Curator of Exhibitions for Minnesota Museum of American Art



St. Paul, MN, July 25, 2019: Minnesota Museum of American Art (the M) is pleased to announce that Twin Cities-based curator and art historian Laura Wertheim Joseph has been named the museum's Curator of Exhibitions. She will assume her new role at the M beginning August 19.

She has a track record of producing widely resonant exhibitions—something vitally important for the M at this moment of institutional growth and transition. As curatorial advisor for the Diane and Alan Page collection, she organized the 2018 exhibition *Testify: Americana from Slavery to the Present*, a nationally acclaimed show that was the highest-attended in the history of the Minneapolis Central Library. In 2016, she

curated *A Feast of Astonishments: Charlotte Moorman and the Avant-Garde* for the Block Museum of Art in Evanston, IL, which was named one of the best exhibitions in the country by the New York Times. She is currently curating *Harriet Bart: Abracadabra and Other Forms of Protection* for the Weisman Art Museum.

"She will be a stunning addition to the M's curatorial team," says M executive director Kristin Makhholm. "Along with her rich experience curating shows at museums like the Block Museum at Northwestern University and the Plains Art Museum in Fargo, she brings a deep well of art historical knowledge that will guide us as we prepare to open 13,000 more square feet of galleries devoted to the M's permanent collection of American art in 2020."

The M's Board Chair, Robyne Robinson, says, "Laura is the perfect choice for a museum like the M. She's a curator who understands that the past is always moving. And in a time where positionality is an urgent concern, we need a curator who knows when to use her vast experience, and then complement and support those undervalued sources of wisdom. I'm excited for her arrival on staff, and for what she will bring to the M."

Joseph received her PhD from the University of Minnesota, where she specialized in contemporary art, with a focus on feminism, gender, and performance studies. She has written and lectured widely on contemporary art, and served as a curatorial advisor for institutions around the country. Before coming to the M, she served as Gallery Director at Interact Center for the Visual and Performing Arts, working to advance recognition and opportunities for artists challenging perceptions of disability.

“It takes visionary and impactful leadership, a dedicated and hard-working team, and deep community support to take something nearly defunct and transform it into a dynamic 21st-century art museum,” Joseph says. “I’m delighted to be part of the M’s exciting future, and I am looking forward to working closely with the M staff, artists, and members of the community to explore new models for organizing exhibitions that are both responsive and relevant.”

Minnesota Museum of American Art is one of the oldest visual arts organizations in Minnesota, with roots stretching back to the 19th century. Based in St. Paul, the M currently holds more than 5,000 artworks that showcase the unique voices of American artists, guided by the belief that art should reflect the constantly shifting landscape that defines the American experience. The M just opened its new museum facility in the Historic Pioneer Endicott in December 2018 and will expand further, with additional permanent collection galleries, in 2020.

Hours * Free Admission

Monday & Tuesday – Closed

Wednesday, Friday, Saturday & Sunday, 11 – 5 | Thursday, 11 – 8

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