

INFORMATION

2018 CURATOR BIOGRAPHIES:

Gabriel Ritter, Curator, Focus

Gabriel Ritter assumed the role of Curator and Head of Contemporary Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) in May 2016. Since that time, Ritter has organized *Now Where Were We?*, an encyclopedic reinstallation of the Contemporary permanent collection galleries in collaboration with LA-based artist Dave Muller. Upcoming projects at Mia include a three-month long residency and solo exhibition with New York-based artist Aliza Nisenbaum, as well as the first U.S. museum survey for acclaimed Japanese artist Shinro Ohtake. Prior to his appointment at Mia, Ritter served as the Nancy and Tim Hanley Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the Dallas Museum of Art for four years where he oversaw the long-running *Concentrations* series focusing on internationally emerging and underrepresented artists including Lucie Stahl, Margaret Lee, Chosil Kil, Slavs and Tatars, and Stephen Lapthiphophon. Ritter specializes in postwar and contemporary Japanese art and served as the co-organizing curator for the exhibition, *Between Action and the Unknown: The Art of Kazuo Shiraga and Sadamasa Motonaga* (2015) and editor of the accompanying scholarly catalogue. In 2013, he was selected as one of the first non-Japanese curators for the triennial exhibition *Roppongi Crossing 2013: OUT OF DOUBT* at the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo. Ritter holds a Ph.D. in art history from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he also earned his M.A. in art history.

Jen Mergel, Curator, Platform

Jen Mergel is an independent curator based in Boston, Massachusetts and currently serves as Vice President, Programming, for the Association of Art Museum Curators, an international membership organization that provides advocacy, awards for excellence and professional development to advance the art curatorial profession. From 2010–2017, Mergel served as the Beal Family Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she was also the Interim Chair of the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art. Among her many exhibitions there were: *Permission to be Global/Prácticas Globales*, the MFA's first exhibition of contemporary art from Latin America; the survey *Shinique Smith: BRIGHT MATTER*, including a 70-foot mural in downtown Boston; *Lee Mingwei: Sonic Blossom*, the first ongoing interactive performance art exhibition in MFA history; and *Darkness Made Visible: Derek Jarman and Mark Bradford*. Mergel graduated summa cum laude in Visual and Environmental Studies with a thesis in sculpture from Harvard University and received her M.A. from Bard's Center for Curatorial Studies in Art and Contemporary Culture. Upcoming projects include new scholarship for Jeffrey Gibson's first comprehensive monographic catalogue, released May 2018 on the occasion of his forthcoming touring survey *Jeffrey Gibson: Like a Hammer* organized by the Denver Art Museum, and the launch of cross-institutional exhibitions as Founding Director of the Curatorial Network Accelerator of Boston.

Naomi Beckwith, Chair, Curatorial Leadership Summit

Naomi Beckwith is the Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, where her exhibition and book projects focus on the impact of identity and multi-disciplinary practices for shaping contemporary art. Prior to the MCA, Beckwith held positions at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia and the Studio Museum in Harlem. Her numerous exhibitions include *The Freedom Principle: Experiments in Art and Music, 1965 to Now* and *30 Seconds off an Inch*, both considering the persistent resonance of black cultural practices across contemporary art internationally. She has been an early champion of such rising artists as Rashid Johnson, Jimmy Robert, Keren Cytter, The Propeller Group, and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye. Beckwith has contributed to numerous publications and served on the jury of the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. She holds a BA in History from Northwestern University and an MA with Distinction from the Courtauld Institute in London. Upcoming projects include the first major survey of the work of groundbreaking, multidisciplinary artist Howardena Pindell, co-curated by Beckwith and Valerie Cassel Olive and opening in spring 2018 at the MCA.