



MARCH 8–11 NYC

PRESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEW YORK - JUNE 7, 2017

THE ARMORY SHOW ANNOUNCES CURATORS FOR 2018 FAIR AND SUMMIT TO FOSTER CURATORIAL LEADERSHIP

Gabriel Ritter and Jen Mergel to Curate Expanded Focus and Platform Sections Respectively; Naomi Beckwith to Chair New Curatorial Summit

The Armory Show announced today **Gabriel Ritter**, Curator and Head of Contemporary Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia), and **Jen Mergel**, formerly the Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, as curators for the 2018 fair.

The Armory Show also announced the inauguration of a curatorial leadership summit to take place during the 2018 fair, chaired by **Naomi Beckwith**, Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. The summit will bring together over a dozen of the world's most prominent curators for a daylong program aimed at cultivating new ideas and developments within the curatorial landscape.

Ritter will oversee the fair's **Focus** section, comprised of solo- and dual-artist presentations of new or rarely seen work by today's most relevant and compelling artists. Mergel will develop ambitious artists projects for **Platform**, which debuted in 2017 as a section devoted to large-scale and site-specific artworks that respond to the fair's vast industrial space on Piers 92 & 94.

Ritter and Mergel were selected after an extensive review of candidates from across the United States and Europe. "Ultimately, we selected curators that have strong institutional affiliations and experience building collections in the United States," says **Benjamin Genocchio**, Executive Director of The Armory Show.

"I am thrilled to lead the fair's critically acclaimed Focus section next year," remarks Ritter. "I look forward to working with The Armory Show team to present a diverse and thought-provoking group of artists that includes both historically underrepresented figures as well as some of today's most urgent voices."

Ritter was appointed Curator and Head of Contemporary Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia) in May 2016 and has since organized *Now Where Were We?*, an encyclopedic reinstallation of the Contemporary permanent collection galleries in collaboration with LA-based artist Dave Muller. Prior to Ritter's appointment to the Mia, he served as Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the Dallas Museum of Art for four years.

Mergel says "I am pleased to join The Armory Show as the curator for Platform. The Platform section is an exceptional opportunity to commission and present large-scale artworks in a unique venue, and I greatly look forward to selecting and working with the artists and participating galleries to realize installations of great significance and relevance in 2018."

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 group for the art curatorial profession. From 2010-2017, Mergel served as Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where she stewarded over 350 acquisitions for the museum's collection, including major works by El Anatsui, Lynda Benglis, Mark Bradford, Tara Donovan, Anish Kapoor, Christian Marclay, Ernesto Neto, Martin Puryear, R.H. Quaytman and Fred Wilson, among others.

"Set in the heart of the world's art capital, The Armory Show has a unique opportunity to facilitate dialogue among international thought leaders in the curatorial profession," notes **Nicole Berry**, Deputy Director of The Armory Show. "We are thrilled work with Gabe and Jen on Focus and Platform, and to inaugurate this new curatorial summit with Naomi, further developing the fair's role as an incubator for new ideas and practices among the world's top curators."

In 2018, The Armory Show will double the size of this year's Focus section, following the critical success of last's year's Focus, entitled *What Is To Be Done?* and curated by Jarrett Gregory. The Platform section, which debuted last year with *An Incident*, curated by Eric Shiner, will also expand, allowing for more artist commissions and site-specific artworks.

"The growth of these curated sections and the introduction of a curatorial leadership summit reflect The Armory Show's core identity as a place for presenting new ideas and strong curatorial viewpoints," remarks **Genocchio**. "Building on the success of the 2017 fair, we are thrilled to work with Gabe, Jen and Naomi to place artists and curators at the center of the fair once again, creating an exciting place of discovery for our over 65,000 visitors."

Beckwith, Mergel and Ritter join a list of prominent curatorial talent with whom The Armory Show has engaged in recent years including **Philip Tinari**, Director of the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in Beijing; **Omar Kholeif**, Manilow Senior Curator at the MCA Chicago and most recently **Jarrett Gregory**, curator at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington D.C. and **Eric Shiner**, former Director of The Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Armory Show

The Armory Show is New York's premier art fair and a definitive cultural destination for discovering and collecting the world's most important 20th and 21st century art. Staged on Manhattan's Piers 92 & 94, The Armory Show features presentations by leading international galleries, innovative artist commissions and dynamic public programs. Since its founding in 1994, The Armory Show has served as a nexus for the international art world, inspiring dialogue, discovery and patronage in the visual arts.

Gabriel Ritter

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 Lapthisophon. 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

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

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.

Important Information for Media

Press Materials

To download press images, [click here](#).

For recent news about The Armory Show, [click here](#).

To browse and download images of the 2017 fair, [click here](#).

VIP Preview Day (Invitation only)

Wednesday, March 7, 2018

Public Days

Thursday, March 8–Sunday, March 11, 2018

Press Contacts

Audrey Rose Smith, Communications Director, The Armory Show

+1 646 616 7433

a.smith@thearmoryshow.com

Gina Nanni, Company Agenda

+1 212 358 9516

armory@companyagenda.com