

THE BMA EXPANDS CURATORIAL DEPARTMENT FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

Jessica Bell Brown and Leila Grothe are joining the BMA's curatorial team

BALTIMORE, MD (October 28, 2019)—The Baltimore Museum of Art (BMA) today announced the appointment of Jessica Bell Brown and Leila Grothe as Associate Curators for Contemporary Art, expanding the museum's contemporary department. Brown most recently served as the Consulting Curator at Gracie Mansion Conservancy, where she spearheaded the organization of the much-acclaimed show, *She Persists: A Century of Women Artists in New York, 1919-2019*. Grothe joins the BMA after having held the position of Associate Curator at the Wattis Institute at the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, where she focused on commissioning new work by emerging and mid-career artists whose practices have yet to receive significant attention, including Rosha Yaghmai, Yuki Kimura, and Melanie Gilligan. Brown and Grothe will both assume their responsibilities at the BMA on November 18, 2019.

"In their work as curators, educators, and scholars, Jessica and Leila have both shown incredible prescience in bringing to light the voices and innovations of a wide range of artists spanning the 20th into the 21st century. Their diverse and complementary areas of research and passion for expanding our collective understanding of the relationship between art and society will prove essential to the BMA's ongoing success," said BMA Dorothy Wagner Wallis Director Christopher Bedford. "They join the BMA at moment of widespread change and great creative ferment, as we continue to place major emphasis on diversity, equity, and access as the critical lenses for all we do at the Museum. We look forward to working with Jessica and Leila in this mission."

Prior to serving as the Consulting Curator at Gracie Mansion Conservancy in New York with First Lady Chirlane McCray (2018-2019), **Jessica Bell Brown** was the Museum Research Consortium Fellow in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at The Museum of Modern Art (2016-2017). There, she worked on the 2017 Robert Rauschenberg retrospective *Among Friends*, contributed to the museum's publications, and co-founded a quarterly series of museum-wide gallery talks called #ArtSpeaks. Earlier in her career, she held positions at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (2013) and Creative Time (2012). Brown holds an M.A. in Art History from Princeton University and a B.A. in Art History from Northwestern. She is currently completing her Ph.D. on post-war abstraction in the post-civil rights decade at Princeton University.

In addition to her curatorial responsibilities as the Associate Curator at the California College of the Arts' Wattis Institute in San Francisco (2014-2019), **Leila Grothe** has been a guest lecturer and advisor to the CCA Curatorial Practice graduate program. Previously, she worked as the inaugural Director for Curatorial Affairs for the 500 Capp Street Foundation (2015-2016). She has also served as the collections manager for the Alexandra Bowes Collection (2014-2015) and the Joyner/Giuffrida Collection (2013-2014), the Assistant Director of External Affairs at Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts (2010-2012), and as a project manager for Creative Time in Dallas (2009-2010). Grothe holds an M.A. in Curatorial Practice from California College of the Arts and a B.A. in Art History with Honors from Southern Methodist University.

The contemporary department at the BMA is led by The Eddie C. and C. Sylvia Brown Chief Curator **Asma Naeem**. Brown and Grothe join Senior Research & Programming Curator **Katy Siegel** and Associate Curator **Cecilia Wichmann** in the department. Associate Curator for Prints, Drawings, and Photographs **Leslie Cozzi**, who joined the museum last year from the Hammer Museum, also curates contemporary exhibitions. The department is further supported by

Cynthia Hodge-Thorne, the inaugural Meyerhoff-Becker Curatorial Fellow, and **Stella Hendrix**, the Souls Grown Deep Foundation Fellow.

THE BALTIMORE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1914, The Baltimore Museum of Art is a major cultural destination recognized for engaging diverse audiences through dynamic exhibitions and innovative educational and community outreach programs. The BMA's internationally renowned collection of 95,000 objects encompasses more than 1,000 works by Henri Matisse anchored by the famed Cone Collection of modern art, as well as one of the nation's finest holdings of prints, drawings, and photographs. The galleries showcase an exceptional collection of art from Africa; important works by established and emerging contemporary artists; outstanding European and American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts; significant artworks from China; ancient Antioch mosaics; and exquisite textiles from around the world. The 210,000- square-foot museum is also distinguished by a grand historic building designed in the 1920s by renowned American architect John Russell Pope and two beautifully landscaped gardens featuring an array of 20th-century sculpture. The BMA is located in Charles Village, three miles north of the Inner Harbor, and is adjacent to the main campus of Johns Hopkins University. General admission to the BMA is free so that everyone can enjoy the power of art.

VISITOR INFORMATION

General admission to the BMA is free. Special exhibitions may be ticketed. The BMA is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. The museum is closed Monday, Tuesday, New Year's Day, July 4, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The BMA is located at 10 Art Museum Drive, three miles north of Baltimore's Inner Harbor. For general museum information, call 443-573-1700 or visit artbma.org.

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