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Melissa Venator named assistant curator of modern art bringing added strength to major SLAM collections area

ST. LOUIS, April 4, 2023—The Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) announced today that Melissa Venator has been appointed as assistant curator of modern art. An expert in modern German art—a cornerstone of SLAM’s collection, with more than 2,500 objects by artists from Germany, Austria and Switzerland—Venator will be the first curator at the museum to have a specific focus on and strength in this important part of its collection.

Venator started at the museum in June 2019 as the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellow for Modern Art. During her fellowship, Venator worked on the forthcoming book “German Expressionism: Paintings at the Saint Louis Art Museum.” She most recently curated the exhibition “[Day and Dream in Modern Germany, 1914–1945](#),” which showcased SLAM’s rich collection of modern German prints, drawings and photographs to show how different artists responded to their changing world. She was a co-curator of the 2020 exhibition “[Storm of Progress: German Art after 1800 from the Saint Louis Art Museum](#),” which presented 120 key collection works of the last 200 years.



Melissa Venator

“Melissa’s expertise in 20th-century German art has and will continue to bring deeper insight to such an important part of our collection,” said Simon Kelly, the museum’s curator of modern and contemporary art. “This new position will allow her to build upon the work she’s done during her fellowship in researching German Expressionist art at SLAM, while continuing to extend our ability to present new exhibitions and generate new scholarship.”

Prior to joining SLAM as a Mellon Fellow, Venator served as the Stefan Engelhorn Curatorial Fellow in the Busch-Reisinger Museum at Harvard Art Museums. During that time, Venator curated the 2019 exhibition “[Hans Arp’s Constellations II](#),” which featured a monumental, site-specific relief designed by Arp for the Harvard Graduate Center in 1950. She also authored [the first English monograph](#) on German artist Carl Grossberg.

In 2016, Venator completed her doctoral dissertation at Rice University on experimental light art made in 1920s Germany. She also received a master’s degree in art history from the University of Pennsylvania, master’s degrees in arts administration and business administration from Southern Methodist University, and an undergraduate degree in art history from the University of Texas at Austin.

The Saint Louis Art Museum is one of the nation’s leading comprehensive art museums with collections that include works of art of exceptional quality from virtually every culture and time period. Areas of notable depth include Oceanic art, ancient American art, ancient Chinese bronzes and European and American art of the late 19th and 20th centuries, with particular strength in 20th-century German art. Admission to the Saint Louis Art Museum is free to all every day. For more information, call 314.721.0072 or visit [slam.org](#).