

# TERRA

FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

## Sharon Corwin Appointed President & CEO of Terra Foundation for American Art

*Corwin comes to the Terra Foundation from the Colby College Museum of Art, bringing extensive experience with presenting, researching, and promoting American art*

**Chicago, IL—February 26, 2020—**The Terra Foundation for American Art announced today that it has appointed Sharon Corwin as its new President and CEO, following an international search that began last year. Corwin currently serves as the Carolyn Muzzy Director and Chief Curator of the Colby College Museum of Art, a position she has held since 2006; she is also a professor in the College’s art department. As director, Corwin is responsible for leading the museum through a period of significant transformation, which included the expansion of its facilities and the donation of more than 1,600 works of American art by collectors and philanthropists Peter and Paula Lunder. Corwin’s appointment follows the March 2019 announcement that Elizabeth Glassman, who has led the Terra Foundation for almost 20 years, would be stepping down in 2020. Corwin will start at the foundation in September 2020.

“We are thrilled to welcome Sharon to the Terra Foundation knowing that her passionate engagement with and promotion of American art will make her a successful leader at the organization,” said Joseph P. Gromacki, chair of the Terra Foundation board of directors and senior partner at Jenner & Block LLP. “Sharon’s background and history creating opportunities for dialogue and scholarship around the visual arts convey her existing commitment to the foundation’s mission, making her the obvious choice to lead the Terra Foundation forward into its next chapter. Sharon’s experience aligns with the foundation’s more than 15-year dedication to enlivening American art through exhibitions, scholarship, and the robust use of its collection in Chicago, the US, and around the world. In welcoming Sharon and looking to our future with tremendous excitement, I express our deep gratitude to Elizabeth Glassman, who has transformed the foundation into the impactful organization it is today, bringing engaged conversations and thoughtful programs on American art globally.”

A leading scholar of American art with a strong interest in modernism and photography, Corwin began at Colby as the Lunder Curator of American Art in 2003, before being appointed the museum’s director and chief curator in 2006. During her tenure she supervised the doubling in size of Colby’s art collection to more than 10,000 works, worked with donors to more than double the museum’s endowment principal, and increased the operating budget to support a larger array of initiatives. Among her most important accomplishments was the expansion of the museum’s facilities with the construction of the Alford-Lunder Family Pavilion, which opened in 2013.

In 2017, Corwin led the founding of the Lunder Institute for American Art, a collaborative initiative with the Colby College Museum of Art that supports innovative research and creative production to expand the boundaries of American art. The Lunder Institute enhances engagement with the museum’s holdings in American art—a collection Corwin has grown to

include works by Marsden Hartley, Agnes Martin, Jackson Pollock, Alma Thomas, Jaune Quick-to-See-Smith, Zilia Sánchez, Maya Lin, and Henry Taylor. Under her leadership the museum's collection and exhibitions have been successfully integrated into the College's curriculum in innovative ways. Corwin has also led the museum's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity across all platforms of its mission, including its collection, programs, audiences, staff, and board.

"I have spent the majority of my professional life working on exhibitions and projects that highlight American art, and I can think of no better opportunity than to join the Terra Foundation for American Art," said Sharon Corwin. "Elizabeth Glassman has built the Terra Foundation into a powerhouse in the field, developing new ideas and approaches and creating experiences with American art for audiences both within the US and around the world. I am excited to build on her work nationally and internationally, to seek out innovative partnerships, and to embrace further an expanding definition of American art in ways that reflect its diverse histories. I look forward to starting at the foundation, and also to following the continued successes of the Colby College Museum of Art."

During her time at Colby, Corwin was responsible for organizing several exhibitions, including *Alex Katz/Moby-Dick* (2019–20), *Theaster Gates: Facsimile Cabinet of Women Origin Stories* (2019), and *American Modern: Abbott, Evans, Bourke-White* (2011). She has also published exhibition catalogues, books, and essays, including the forthcoming collection of artist interviews, *Five American Painters: Conversations with Alex Katz, Yvonne Jacquette, David Driskell, Rackstraw Downes, and Lois Dodd*. Prior to arriving at Colby, Corwin was the Acting Assistant Director at the Mills College Art Museum and, before that, a Faculty Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley, where she taught courses in art history. A graduate of New College of Florida, Corwin earned both her M.A. and Ph.D. in the History of Art at the University of California, Berkeley.

"I am delighted to welcome Sharon to the Terra Foundation," said Elizabeth Glassman. "She has long been committed to energizing the conversation around American art, and her accomplishments at the Colby College Museum of Art point to her strengths as a leader. A cornerstone of the Terra Foundation is the belief that art is a powerful tool for engaging people's hearts and minds and for building mutual understanding throughout communities in the US and across the globe. It can serve as a catalyst for necessary conversations about the world around us. I believe that Sharon will continue to build upon the platforms that make such activities possible."

### **About Terra Foundation for American Art**

Since it was established in 1978, the Terra Foundation for American Art has been one of the leading foundations focused on art of the United States. Headquartered in Chicago, through its grant program, collection, and initiatives, it is committed to fostering exploration, understanding, and enjoyment of American art among national and international audiences. To further cross-cultural dialogue on American art, the foundation supports and collaborates on innovative

exhibitions, research, and educational programs. Implicit in such activities is the belief that art has the potential both to distinguish cultures and to unite them. [terraamericanart.org](http://terraamericanart.org)

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