

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **SEATTLE ART MUSEUM APPOINTS JOSÉ CARLOS DIAZ AS DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR ART**

Specialist in contemporary art to oversee artistic program  
including leading team of eight curators

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SEATTLE - The Seattle Art Museum (SAM) announced today that José Carlos Diaz will be the museum's Susan Brotman Deputy Director for Art, following an extensive international search. Since May 2016, Mr. Diaz has served as the Chief Curator at The Andy Warhol Museum, part of the Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. He will assume his position with SAM in July. He succeeds Chiyo Ishikawa, who retired in 2020 after 30 years at the museum.

In his role at SAM—comprising the downtown Seattle Art Museum, the Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, and the Olympic Sculpture Park on the downtown waterfront—Diaz will oversee the museum's artistic program, leading eight curators and other staff in exhibitions, collections, publications, and libraries to present dynamic and relevant art in support of SAM's mission.

"I could not be more thrilled to welcome José to the museum to take up this crucial role," says Amada Cruz, SAM's Illsley Ball Nordstrom Director and CEO. "He is a visionary scholar and leader who is brimming with exciting ideas about our artistic program, including deepening our connections with local artists and communities. It is a huge moment for SAM, as we continue to navigate an ongoing pandemic and look to a brighter future."

"This role aligns with my passion for curatorial collaboration and artistic excellence," says Diaz. "My professional experience has centered on the cross-pollination of museum collections, contemporary culture, and public art, so SAM's vast collections across three locations and its team of diverse curators offer me a unique opportunity. I hope to unify the institution's offerings and



collaborate closely with the many communities in Seattle to explore a broad range of themes and ideas.”

Prior to joining SAM, Diaz served since 2016 as the Chief Curator at The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh. A specialist in contemporary art, multidisciplinary programming, and an expert on Andy Warhol, he has organized noteworthy exhibitions at The Warhol including *Paola Pivi: I Want It All* (2022); *Becoming Andy Warhol* (2021); *Fantasy America* (2021); *Grace Jones: A Taste of Grace* (2021); *Farhad Moshiri: Go West* (2018); *Andy Warhol: Revelation* (2020), on view at the Brooklyn Museum until June 19; and *Andy Warhol Kyoto* (2022), opening September 19 in Japan. Special projects include commissions by Jordan Eagles, Typoe, and Naama Tsabar.

Prior to his role at The Warhol, Diaz was the Curator of Exhibitions at The Bass in Miami Beach, where he commissioned public artworks by Kathryn Andrews, Sylvie Fleury, and Athi-Patra Ruga; curated the travelling group exhibition *GOLD* (2015); and organized *One Way: Peter Marino* (2014). Diaz also held positions at Tate Liverpool, working on various exhibitions including Doug Aitken’s first public artwork in the UK and at the Liverpool Biennial where he worked on Tania Bruguera’s *Arte Catedra de Conducta*. In 2003, Diaz tenured as curatorial intern at The Rubell Museum in Miami and launched a nomadic project called Worm-Hole Laboratory.

Born in Miami, he received a BA in Art History from San Francisco State University and a MA in Cultural History from the University of Liverpool. Diaz was a 2018 Fellow at the Center for Curatorial Leadership (CCL) and chaired the Curatorial Leadership Summit at The Armory Show in 2020. He currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the Association of Art Museum Curators (AAMC).

**Photo credit:** Alexis Gideon.

## **ABOUT SEATTLE ART MUSEUM**

As the leading visual art institution in the Pacific Northwest, SAM draws on its global collections, powerful exhibitions, and dynamic programs to provide unique educational resources benefiting the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond. SAM was founded in 1933 with a focus on Asian art. By the late 1980s the museum had outgrown its original home, and in 1991 a new 155,000-square-foot downtown building, designed by Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, opened to the public. The 1933 building was renovated and rededicated as the Asian Art Museum in 1994, and it reopened on February 8, 2020, following an extensive renovation and expansion. SAM’s desire to further serve its community was realized in 2007 with the opening of two stunning new facilities: the nine-acre Olympic Sculpture Park (designed by Weiss/Manfredi Architects)—a “museum without walls,” free and open to all—and the Allied Works Architecture designed 118,000-square-foot expansion of its main, downtown location, including 232,000 square feet of additional space built for future expansion. The Olympic Sculpture Park and SAM’s downtown expansion celebrated their tenth anniversary in 2017.

From a strong foundation of Asian art to noteworthy collections of African and Oceanic art, Northwest Coast Native American art, European and American art, and modern and contemporary art, the strength of SAM’s collection of approximately 25,000 objects lies in its diversity of media, cultures, and time periods.