



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 8, 2016

Contact: Ian Gillingham
Press & Publications Manager
503-276-4342
503-334-6893 (after hours)

Grace Kook-Anderson Appointed Curator of Northwest Art

PORTLAND, Ore.—Brian Ferriso, the Marilyn H. and Dr. Robert B. Pamplin Jr. Director of the Portland Art Museum, today announced the appointment of Grace Kook-Anderson as the Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Curator of Northwest Art.

Kook-Anderson was most recently the Curator of Contemporary Art at the Laguna Art Museum in Laguna Beach, California, and has spent the last year as an independent curator and freelance writer in Portland. Previously she was curator and exhibition organizer on a number of projects, including *Amateurs* (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco), and *The Land Mark Show* (Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico), among others, and served as assistant to the chief curator at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. She holds undergraduate degrees in art history and art practice from University of California, Berkeley, and a master's degree in curatorial practice from California College of the Arts in San Francisco.



Kook-Anderson assumes her role on January 9, 2017, and will be responsible for the care, research, exhibition, and growth of the Northwest art collection, including the organization of the biennial Contemporary Northwest Art Awards. She fills the position left vacant

by Bonnie Laing-Malcolmson, who retired earlier this year. The collection, housed primarily in the Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Center for Northwest Art, brings the Museum's regional collection to the forefront, tracing the history of Northwest art from the late 19th century to today.

The two-floor Center is home to works from the collection, as well as historic and contemporary exhibitions that celebrate the Northwest's history and culture. Arlene Schnitzer is a passionate advocate of Northwest art, as was her late husband, Harold. This enthusiasm is reflected in their endowment of the Curator of Northwest Art, donations supporting the acquisition of art, and gifts of art to the Museum. Arlene Schnitzer, who was once an art student in the galleries that bear her name, was instrumental in elevating the national and international profile of Northwest artists.

This vast collection of Northwest art distinguishes the Portland Art Museum from other cultural institutions in the region. The collection is rich in a variety of works by past and present artists living and working in Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Washington, and Wyoming. Together, these historical and contemporary objects depict a visual narrative of the Northwest while providing insight to significant works by artists such as Northwest School members Carl Morris, Morris Graves, and Mark Tobey, legendary Oregon artist C.S. Price, and the acclaimed Jacob Lawrence, who is best known for depicting important moments in African-American history. Thanks to a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, the entire Northwest art collection is now available online.

"I am thrilled by the appointment of Grace Kook-Anderson as the Arlene and Harold Schnitzer Curator of Northwest Art," said Brian Ferriso, the Portland Art Museum's director and chief curator. "Grace's highly regarded tenure as the Curator of Contemporary Art at the Laguna Art Museum, coupled with her recent work in Portland as an arts writer and critic, make her an ideal candidate to lead our important mission of evaluating and celebrating our region's historical and burgeoning visual arts scene."

During her six years at the Laguna Art Museum, Kook-Anderson organized nearly 30 exhibitions, including the creation and curation of the *ex.pose* contemporary art program, a space dedicated to a single artist that has strong parallels to the Portland Art Museum's APEX gallery, which she will manage. She expanded the exhibition calendar

from one year to three years, served as interim education curator, developed public programs, engaged in fundraising, authored and contributed to multiple publications, and acquired many important pieces for the collection. She also presented *Best Kept Secret: UCI and the Development of Contemporary Art in Southern California, 1964-1971* as part of the Getty's 2011/12 *Pacific Standard Time Initiative: Art in LA 1945-1980*.

Since moving to Portland, Kook-Anderson has immersed herself in the local arts community, working as a curator, writer, and instructor at Portland State University, participating in portfolio reviews, and serving as a committee member for Converge 45.

"Having closely followed the Portland Art Museum for the last several years, I am very excited to be part of the talented staff of the museum," Kook-Anderson said. "I look forward to collaborating with fellow curatorial and educational staff, deepening my knowledge of the collection, expanding the scholarship of historical Northwest art up to the present time, and actively engaging with regional artists in the context of a broader art scene."

About the Portland Art Museum

The seventh oldest museum in the United States, the Portland Art Museum is internationally recognized for its permanent collection and ambitious special exhibitions drawn from the Museum's holdings and the world's finest public and private collections. The Museum's collection of more than 45,000 objects, displayed in 112,000 square feet of galleries, reflects the history of art from ancient times to today. The collection is distinguished for its holdings of arts of the native peoples of North America, English silver, and the graphic arts. An active collecting institution dedicated to preserving great art for the enrichment of future generations, the Museum devotes 90 percent of its galleries to its permanent collection. The Portland Art Museum recognized both Native American art and Photography as fine art years earlier than peer institutions, with a commitment to collection in these areas and the dedication of permanent galleries for displaying the work. This ongoing commitment is demonstrated in the arc of Native American exhibitions in 2016 and 2017 and a new space for showcasing Contemporary Native Art.

The Museum's campus of landmark buildings, a cornerstone of Portland's cultural district, includes the Jubitz Center for Modern and Contemporary Art, the Gilkey Center for Graphic Arts, the Schnitzer Center for Northwest Art, the Northwest Film Center, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Center for Native American Art. With a membership of more than 22,000 households and serving more than 350,000 visitors annually, the Museum is

a premier venue for education in the visual arts. The Portland Art Museum welcomes patrons with disabilities. For information on exhibitions and programs, call 503-226-2811 or visit portlandartmuseum.org.

The Portland Art Museum welcomes all visitors and affirms its commitment to making its programs and collections accessible to everyone. The Museum offers a variety of programs and services to ensure a quality experience and a safe, inclusive environment for every member of our diverse community. Learn more at portlandartmuseum.org/access.



###

PRESS CONTACT: Ian Gillingham, ian.gillingham@pam.org, 503-276-4342

PRESS RESOURCES: <http://portlandartmuseum.org/press>