



North Carolina Museum of Art

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MEDIA CONTACT

Karlie Marlowe | (919) 664-6750

karlie.marlowe@ncdcr.gov

North Carolina Museum of Art and Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art Announce Two New Curators

Raleigh, NC—The North Carolina Museum of Art announces two new hires, for both the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) in Raleigh, NC, and the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) in Winston-Salem, NC, an affiliate of the NCMA.

Jared Ledesma joins the team as curator of 20th-century art and contemporary art. He will work closely with Chief Curator and Curator of Contemporary Art Linda Dougherty to strengthen the NCMA's 20th-century and contemporary art program across the People's Collection, exhibitions, and outdoor projects in the Ann and Jim Goodnight Museum Park. Maya Brooks was promoted to assistant curator of contemporary art; this new position builds on her past two years of experience as the Mellon Foundation Assistant Curator at the NCMA. Together these positions will also oversee the exhibition program for SECCA.

"I'm excited for Jared and Maya to share their expertise across the state of North Carolina, helping us shed light on new narratives and engage voices across cultures, lived experiences, and perspectives," said NCMA Director Valerie Hillings. "They both value local artists and showcasing our state's creative communities, an area of importance for the NCMA and SECCA."

These positions are part of a curatorial team of 10 responsible for building, researching, presenting, and publishing on the People's Collection, organizing and coordinating exhibitions, and participating in a wide range of educational and community programs across both museums.

"As curators who are focused on storytelling, inclusivity, and support for living artists, Jared and Maya are a perfect fit for our shared mission and goals," said SECCA Director Bill Carpenter. "I believe our members and visitors will appreciate their energy, kindness, and depth of knowledge, and our community will gain truly collaborative partners within the creative economy."

Ledesma comes to the NCMA from the Akron Art Museum, where he led its curatorial department as senior curator, and the Des Moines Art Center, where he oversaw acquisitions by Edie Fake, Louis Fratino, Zoe Leonard, Alfredo Ramos Martinez, Carrie Moyer, Catherine Opie, Sheila Pepe, and Hedda Sterne as an associate curator. While there, he also organized exhibitions including *Manos: Latin American Art from the Des Moines Art Center's Collections*, *Between Vertical and the Horizon: Japanese Works on*



Paper, Queer Abstraction, and I, too, am America. Prior to this role, Ledesma held curatorial and administrative positions at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Richmond Art Center in Richmond, CA. He has a BA and an MA in art history from San Francisco State University.

"Over the past 10 years, I have built a career at institutions that vary by size, scope, collection, and the publics they serve. In my work I pursue the elevation of all artistic voices and aim to uncover lesser-known narratives, stemming from my identity as a member of the LGBTQ and Latinx communities," said Ledesma. "I am thrilled to apply this perspective toward creating inviting art exhibitions and programming at the NCMA, shaping its internationally renowned People's Collection, and furthering the bold exhibition history of SECCA."



During her tenure as Mellon Foundation Assistant Curator, Maya Brooks served as lead curator for NCMA exhibitions including *To Be Young: Coming of Age in the Contemporary* and *The Altered Environment*, and played an assisting role in *NC Artist Connections: The Beautiful Project*, *Stephen Hayes*, and *Hồng-Ân Trương* and *Fault Lines: Art and the Environment*. Brooks received her BA in anthropology with an art history minor at UNC-Chapel Hill in 2018 before completing her MA in history at UNC Greensboro in 2020.

"Serving as the Mellon Foundation Assistant Curator helped develop my understanding of what curatorial work could look like for my

interdisciplinary background, going from anthropology to history, to being engulfed in art and art history," said Brooks. "I appreciate that I got to lean into the different facets of my background and overall personality in that prior role and continue that work in a broader context at both the NCMA and SECCA."

The NCMA's growing contemporary collection includes works by national and international artists such as El Anatsui, Yoan Capote, Leonardo Drew, Jeppe Hein, William Kentridge, Yayoi Kusama, Simone Leigh, Hung Liu, Hugo McCloud, Roxy Paine, Ursula von Rydingsvard, Yinka Shonibare, Elias Sime, Hank Willis Thomas, Mickalene Thomas, Marie Watt, and Kehinde Wiley. The NCMA regularly presents modern and contemporary art exhibitions, with recent shows featuring Wim Botha, Leonardo Drew, Heather Hart, Stephen Hayes, Candida Höfer, Frida Kahlo, Moataz Nasr, Georgia O'Keeffe, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, and Lina Iris Viktor.

A noncollecting center for contemporary art in Winston-Salem, NC, and since 2007 a partner institution of the NCMA, SECCA has a distinguished history of originating and presenting exhibitions and projects featuring local, regional, national, and international contemporary artists, most recently including Elizabeth Alexander, Lonnie Holley, Jillian Mayer, Babette Shaw, and Freeman Vines. An ongoing series *Southern Idiom* highlights the work of local artists.

Images captions, top to bottom:

Headshot of Jared Ledesma, NCMA curator of 20th-century art and contemporary art, courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of Art

Headshot of Maya Brooks, NCMA assistant curator of contemporary art, courtesy of the North Carolina Museum of Art

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About the North Carolina Museum of Art

The North Carolina Museum of Art's collection spans more than 5,000 years, from antiquity to the present, making the institution one of the premier art museums in the South. The Museum's collection provides educational, aesthetic, intellectual, and cultural experiences for the citizens of North Carolina and beyond. The 164-acre Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature through site-specific works of environmental art. The Museum offers changing special exhibitions, classes, lectures, family activities, films, and concerts.

The Museum is located at 2110 Blue Ridge Road in Raleigh and is home to the People's Collection. It is the art museum of the State of North Carolina, under the auspices of Governor Roy Cooper; an agency of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, guided by the direction of Secretary D. Reid Wilson; and led by Director Valerie Hillings.

About SECCA

The Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), an affiliate of the NCMA and division of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, offers a front-row seat to the art of our time through exhibitions, experiences, and education programs with a focus on regional working artists. Founded in 1956 and located on the scenic James G. Hanes estate in Winston-Salem, SECCA offers unique large-scale indoor and outdoor settings for exploring the intersections of contemporary art and culture. SECCA is located at 750 Marguerite Drive in Winston-Salem. Recent exhibiting artists include Kara Walker, Lonnie Holley, Elizabeth Alexander, Esteban Cabeza de Baca, Freeman Vines, Jillian Mayer, and Antoine Williams. An ongoing *Southern Idiom* exhibition series highlights the work of Winston-Salem artists. Learn more at <https://secca.org>.