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Contact: Santiago Pazos, spazos@hammer.ucla.edu

Scott Tennent, stennent@hammer.ucla.edu

Hammer Museum Names Zoë Ryan as its New Director



Photo: Constance Mensh

(Los Angeles, CA) — Marcy Carsey, chair of the Hammer Museum at UCLA's Board of Directors, announced today the appointment of **Zoë Ryan** as the next director of the museum.

This appointment follows the 2023 announcement of longtime director Ann Philbin's retirement, following 25 years of leading the museum. Philbin will step down in November 2024; Ryan will take over on January 1, 2025.

Ryan comes to the Hammer Museum from the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at the University of Pennsylvania, where she has been the Daniel W. Dietrich, II Director since 2020. In this role, Ryan has overseen a critically acclaimed program of exhibitions; spearheaded the creation of an annual art commission; and expanded public engagement efforts with a focus on building partnerships with the university, museums, and arts organizations locally, nationally, and internationally. Ryan also oversaw the development and realization of a new strategic vision for ICA, which reinvigorated the institution's community engagement and commitment to collaboration, experimentation, and learning as its guiding values. From 2006–2020, Ryan was the John H. Bryan Chair and Curator of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago, where she set the vision for collecting and exhibiting modern and contemporary architecture and design, overseeing a collection of more than 250,000 objects, including works on paper, textiles, architectural models, furniture, and photography. In 2014, Ryan was the curator of the second Istanbul Design Biennial, *The Future is Not What it Used to Be*.

"I am thrilled to welcome Zoë to the Hammer Museum and look forward to her leadership and collaboration with the museum's board, staff, UCLA, and the many artists who make up the Hammer's

community,” said **Marcy Carsey**. “Zoë is a leader known for building support for daring and ambitious projects and her steadfast commitment to artists. We’re very excited for her to bring these skills to the Hammer.”

“The Hammer Museum is one of the most exciting museums in the country. It has had an electrifying effect on Los Angeles’ ascendance as a global arts capital,” said **Zoë Ryan**. “With its experimental exhibitions and dynamic public programs, the Hammer has set the pace for museums to engage with the critical issues of our time, whether politics, climate change, and justice and equity for all. Annie Philbin has had an extraordinary impact in making the Hammer an internationally influential institution; I am thrilled and honored to lead this museum and be a part of the vibrant creative communities of Los Angeles.”

Current Hammer director **Ann Philbin** said, “It has been the most extraordinary journey of my life to lead the Hammer Museum for the last 25 years, and I am excited to hand the baton to Zoë Ryan to lead the museum into its next chapter. Zoë is a truly great choice and will be supported by a brilliant staff, a committed board, a vibrant university ecosystem, and an incredible community of artists. I wish her nothing but success.”

“The Hammer Museum is a linchpin of the arts at UCLA and within our city, with an international reputation for excellence and experimentation,” said UCLA Interim Chancellor **Darnell Hunt**. “I am exceptionally pleased to welcome Zoë and excited to see how she will advance the Hammer’s ambitious programming and propel the museum into its next era.”

Lionel Popkin, interim dean of the UCLA School of the Arts and Architecture, said, “We are excited to welcome Zoë to the UCLA Arts community. Her cross-disciplinary curiosity and intellectual rigor will undoubtedly enrich the creative and intellectual fabric of our school and campus, and we’re confident that her leadership will take the Hammer Museum to new heights.”

During Ryan’s tenure at ICA, she oversaw *Ulysses Jenkins: Without Your Interpretation*, which was co-organized with the Hammer Museum and co-curated by Meg Onli (formerly of the ICA) and Erin Christovale (Hammer Museum). The exhibition was presented at ICA in fall 2021 and at the Hammer in spring 2022.

Throughout her career, Ryan has earned a reputation as a leader who builds support for experimental ideas and projects, champions artists and designers, creates programs that connect with audiences, and builds strong teams and organizational culture. At ICA, with her focus on the arts as a catalyst for social and cultural change, Ryan expanded the institution’s reputation as a launchpad for contemporary art, research, and ideas across all disciplines.

An active lecturer, Ryan has taught graduate courses in design history and theory at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Illinois at Chicago, and has served as a panelist nationally and internationally, including in her native London. Upcoming projects include a co-edited volume of writings by Cuban-Mexican designer Clara Porset, many translated into English for the first time (Concordia University Press, 2024). Additional projects have included the exhibition and catalogue *In a Cloud, in a Wall, in a Chair: Six Modernists in Mexico at Midcentury* (2019); the edited volume *As Seen: Exhibitions that Made Architecture and Design History* (2017); and major survey exhibitions of the work of

architects and designers, including Christien Meindertsma, Studio Gang, Bertrand Goldberg, Konstantin Grcic, Max Lamb, and the Ambiguous Standards Institute.

Ryan is a member of the Design Trust International Advisory Council, Hong Kong; the board of advisors for MAS Context; and the executive committee of the International Confederation of Architecture Museums. She earned an MA in art history from Hunter College, City University of New York, and a BA in art history from University of Sussex.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum is part of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, and offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art. It holds more than 50,000 works in its collection, including one of the finest collections of works on paper in the nation, the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the Made in L.A. biennial, the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under-recognized artists. The exhibitions, permanent collections, and nearly 300 public programs annually— including film screenings, lectures, symposia, readings, music performances, and workshops for families—are all free to the public.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free. Hours: Tuesday–Thursday & Saturday–Sunday 11 a.m.–6 p.m.; Friday 11 a.m.–8 p.m. Closed Mondays and national holidays. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking is \$8 for the first 3 hours (maximum \$22), or \$8 flat rate after 5 p.m. Valet parking is available at the Lindbrook Drive entrance for \$15. Visit hammer.ucla.edu for details or call 310-443-7000.

Free Admission at the Hammer Museum is courtesy of Marcy Carsey, the Erika J Glazer Family Foundation, and the Anthony & Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation.