



Smart Museum announces five curatorial appointments

Wu Hung, Christine Mehring, Leslie Wilson, Laura Steward, and Issa Lampe appointed to curatorial positions at the University of Chicago's art museum

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago announces five curatorial appointments: UChicago professors **Wu Hung** and **Christine Mehring** have each been named Adjunct Curator and will both advise on Museum programming and acquisitions and produce the occasional major exhibition. In addition, **Leslie Wilson** has been named the first Curatorial Fellow for Diversity in the Arts, a two-year curatorial fellowship that is designed to help expand the professional fields of art history and museum practice to include individuals from traditionally underrepresented populations. **Laura Steward's** position as Curator of Public Art has fully transitioned to the Smart Museum to allow for continued growth of site-specific commissions and public art across the University's campus. Finally, **Issa Lampe**, in addition to serving as Director of the Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry at the Museum, has been named Deputy Director for Academic and Curatorial Affairs.

"The Smart Museum is committed to writing the future of university art museums and the role they play in our communities. These exciting appointments bolster our ability to tap into the great scholarly strengths of the University of Chicago, shape ambitious public programs that extend beyond the walls of the museum, and foster projects that have the potential to shape the future of our field," said **Alison Gass**, the Dana Feitler Director of the Smart Museum. "I'm thrilled that Wu Hung, Christine, Leslie, Laura, and Issa will add their unique perspectives and experiences to our curatorial team."

Wilson will begin on January 3, 2019. The other appointments are effective immediately.

Wu Hung, Adjunct Curator

Wu Hung was previously Consulting Curator at the Smart Museum and is the Harrie A. Vanderstappen Distinguished Service Professor of Art History and the College, Director of the Center for the Art of East Asia, and Special Advisor to the Provost for the Arts in Asia at the University of Chicago. As a scholar, he has published widely on both traditional and contemporary Chinese art and has experimented with different ways to integrate these conventionally separate phases into new kinds of art historical narratives. He is also a renowned international curator and has curated more than 50 exhibitions in the United States, China, and other countries. He is currently working on *The Allure of Matter: Material Art from China*, a major touring exhibition co-organized by the Smart Museum that will be presented at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (summer 2019), Smart Museum and Wrightwood 659 (winter 2020), Seattle Art Museum (summer 2020), and Peabody-Essex Museum (Fall 2020). The exhibition is the latest in a series of contemporary Chinese projects he organized as a consulting curator at the Smart, including *Transience* (1999), *'Canceled'* (2000), *The Art of Mu Xin: Landscape Paintings and Prison Notes* (2002), *Between Past and Future: New Photography and Video from China* (2004), *Displacement: The Three Gorges Dam and Contemporary Chinese Art* (2008), and *Inspired by the Opera*:

Contemporary Chinese Photography and Video (2014). In February he received the College Art Association's 2018 Distinguished Scholar award. He will deliver the 68th Annual A. W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, in spring 2019. He holds a PhD in art history and anthropology from Harvard University and an MA from the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing.

Christine Mehring, Adjunct Curator

Christine Mehring is Chair and Professor in the Department of Art History at the University of Chicago. She works on abstraction, postwar European art, and the cross-over between art and design. In 2016–2017, she served as faculty director for “Concrete Happenings” to mark the completion of a multi-year collaboration with Christian Scheidemann to research, conserve, and re-site Fluxus artist Wolf Vostell's *Concrete Traffic* (1970), now installed in the entrance to a parking garage adjacent to the Smart Museum. On that occasion, she also co-curated the Smart Museum exhibition *Vostell Concrete 1969–1973*. Before arriving in Chicago, she organized other exhibitions at the Yale University Art Gallery and Harvard University's Busch-Reisinger Museum. At UChicago, Mehring serves on the Provost's Arts Steering and Campus Art Committees, the board of the Gray Center for Arts and Inquiry, and the Council of the University Senate. She co-chairs the Provost's Committee on Urban Architecture and Design, and, over the past year, co-organized the University's Sawyer Seminar on Urban Art and Urban Form. She has written for *Artforum*, *Grey Room*, *October*, *Art Journal*, *Parkett*, and *Texte zur Kunst*, and exhibition catalogues for the Museum of Modern Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Tate Modern, the New Museum, the Dia Art Foundation, The Renaissance Society, and other institutions. Most recently she wrote the catalogue for the exhibition currently on view at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York, “Ellsworth Kelly: Color Panels for a Large Wall.” She holds an MA and PhD in art history from Harvard University, and an MA in art history and criticism from Stony Brook University.

Leslie Wilson, Curatorial Fellow for Diversity in the Arts

Leslie Wilson will take a leave from her position as Assistant Professor of Art History at Purchase College, SUNY, where her teaching and research focuses on the global history of photography, modern and contemporary art from Africa and the African diaspora, American art post-1900, and museum and curatorial studies. Her current book project charts the development and popularization of color photography in South Africa, from its inception in the early twentieth century to contemporary practice. From 2015 to 2017, she was a 24-Month Chester Dale Predoctoral Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. She has held curatorial internships at the Art Institute of Chicago, Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis, and the St. Louis Art Museum and contributed book reviews to *African Arts* and *caa.reviews*. She holds a PhD in art history from the University of Chicago and a BA from Wellesley College.

Laura Steward, Curator of Public Art

Laura Steward has served in a part-time capacity as Curator of Public Art at the University of Chicago since 2017. In her expanded role now fully embedded in the Smart Museum, she will oversee both a broad program to commission artists to create temporary works that engage in scholarly and student life as well as the placement and activation of the University's collection of public art. Last fall, she

organized a large-scale, multicolored pyrotechnic artwork by Cai Guo-Qiang as part of “Nuclear Reactions—1942: A Historic Breakthrough, An Uncertain Future,” an extended series of events and discussions at the University of Chicago marking the 75th anniversary of the first controlled, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction. Future projects include a new site-specific commission by Anne Hamilton in partnership with the University’s Oriental Institute Museum and a sound art festival that explores some of the many thresholds, gateways, and passageways on the University’s South Side campus. Prior to her arrival in Chicago, Steward held positions at the Santa Fe Institute, SITE Santa Fe, and MASS MoCA, and taught at Williams College and Bennington College. She is a graduate of Harvard College and the Williams/Clark Program in the History of Art.

Issa Lampe, Deputy Director for Academic and Curatorial Affairs

Issa Lampe joined the Smart Museum in February 2018 to open the Feitler Center for Academic Inquiry. The Center’s mission is to integrate the study of original works of art into the academic life of the University of Chicago across all disciplines through teaching with the collection, curricular exhibitions, and student research opportunities. Lampe started her career with a PhD in Art History from Harvard University and an Assistant Professorship at the American University before developing a professional interest in museum education for academic audiences. She has taught courses at five universities and has a ten-year record of innovation and leadership at university art museums, most recently at the Yale University Art Gallery and Stanford’s Cantor Art Center. This fall, she takes on additional leadership responsibilities at the Smart Museum as Deputy Director for Academic and Curatorial Affairs.

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About the Smart Museum of Art

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago is a site for rigorous inquiry and exchange that encourages the examination of complex issues through the lens of art objects and artistic practice. Through strong community and scholarly partnerships, the Museum incorporates diverse ideas, identities, and experiences into its exhibitions and collections, academic initiatives, and public programming. The Smart first opened in 1974. Admission is always free.

Mission

The Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago opens the world through art and ideas.

Smart Museum of Art

The University of Chicago
5550 S. Greenwood Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
773.702.0200
smartmuseum.uchicago.edu
smart-museum@uchicago.edu

Hours

Tuesday–Sunday, 10 am–5 pm
Thursday evenings until 8 pm

Galleries are closed Mondays and holidays.

Admission is always free. All are welcome.