

# LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## LACMA APPOINTS CURATOR TO LAUNCH AFRICAN ART PROGRAM



(Los Angeles, December 1, 2011)—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has named Dr. Mary (Polly) Nooter Roberts Consulting Curator of African Art to help launch a program and establish a gallery dedicated to the arts of Africa. Dr. Roberts is Professor of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA, and will continue her full-time teaching position while consulting for LACMA. She was Senior Curator of the Museum for African Art in New York from 1984–1994 and Deputy Director and Chief Curator of the Fowler Museum at UCLA from 1999–2008. Additionally, she was a guest curator at LACMA for the 2008 exhibition *Tradition as Innovation in African Art*.

The goal of Dr. Roberts's appointment is to bring greater visibility to African arts in Southern California, while creating programmatic linkages between LACMA and UCLA. As LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director Michael Govan states, "We have looked forward to launching a program for African art for several years and the timing seems right. We are excited to work with Polly Nooter Roberts as we explore new ways of understanding and presenting the richness of African artistic expression."

Dr. Roberts has conducted research in a number of African countries and many European and American museums and private collections. She has curated such major exhibitions as *Secrecy: African Art that Conceals and Reveals* (1993) and *Memory: Luba Art and the Making of History* (1996), both

at the Museum for African Art, and *A Saint in the City: Sufi Arts of Urban Senegal* (2003) at the Fowler Museum. All three shows traveled to several museums, and the latter two received major book awards. Her more recent exhibitions include *Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art* (Fowler Museum, 2007); *Tradition as Innovation in African Art* (LACMA, 2008); and *Continental Rifts: Contemporary Time-Based Works of Africa* (Fowler Museum, 2009). In 2007, Dr. Roberts was decorated by the Republic of France as a Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters for her promotion of francophone African artists. She holds a PhD in Art History from Columbia University.

### **African Art at LACMA**

LACMA's growing collection of African art is diverse in form, material, and purpose. Works include masks and figures of wood and ivory, metalwork, textiles, beaded crowns, stools, and body adornments. Notable in the collection are a bronze plaque depicting a seventeenth-century official of the Benin Kingdom; a *boli* figure from Mali; and a selection of works from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Explore the collection online at [www.lacma.org/art/collection/african-art](http://www.lacma.org/art/collection/african-art)

### **About LACMA**

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing *Transformation* project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

**Location and Contact:** 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | [lacma.org](http://lacma.org)

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

**General Admission:** Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

**Free General Admission:** Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

**Image caption (page 1):** Photo by Caro

**Press Contact:** For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at [press@lacma.org](mailto:press@lacma.org) or 323 857-6522.

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