

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**FIRST OF THE ANDREW W. MELLON UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWS IN CURATORIAL TRAINING
ANNOUNCED BY FIVE MAJOR AMERICAN MUSEUMS**

The Art Institute of Chicago, the High Museum of Art, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), and the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art are pleased to announce the first class of fellows designated for The Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Curatorial Fellowship Program, which provides specialized training in the curatorial field for students across the United States from diverse backgrounds. The students start their fellowships this fall.

The fellowship initiative is generously supported by a grant of \$2,073,000 from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. A National Fellowship Coordinator based at LACMA, the institution to which the grant was made, has been working with regional coordinators to execute the program across all of the museums. The fellowship seeks to make a critical impact on American art museums by developing gifted curators who are committed to engaging with the full spectrum of museum audiences. Fellows will participate in The Andrew W. Mellon Undergraduate Curatorial Fellowship Program throughout their undergraduate career, with the goal of continuing their education through graduate work. The program is open to freshman and sophomore students, enrolled in undergraduate programs located near the partner museums, representing historically underrepresented groups in the curatorial field or who support the goal of promoting inclusive, pluralistic museums.

Ten students from across the country have been selected for this intensive program, following Summer Academies—consisting of workshops, tours, field trips and networking events with museum professionals—that were held at each museum over the summer. The selected students are (bios start on p. 3):

- Art Institute of Chicago: **Sarah Molina**, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; curatorial mentor, Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston associate curator of Japanese art. **Sheridan Tucker**, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago; curatorial mentor, Sarah Kelly Oehler, Gilda and Henry Buchbinder associate curator of American art.
- High Museum of Art: **Luis David Blanco**, Emory University; curatorial mentor, Michael Rooks, Wieland Family curator of modern and contemporary art. **Christy Nitzanah Griffin**, Georgia State University; curatorial mentor, Stephanie Mayer Heydt, Margaret and Terry Stent curator of American art.
- Los Angeles County Museum of Art: **Nicolas Orozco-Valdivia**, Pomona College; curatorial mentor, Stephen Little, curator and department head of Chinese and Korean art. **Lilia Rocio Taboada**, University of California, Los Angeles; curatorial mentor, Leslie Jones, curator of prints and drawings.
- The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston: **Jennifer Cernada**, Rice University; curatorial mentor, Mari Carmen Ramirez, Wortham curator of Latin American art and director, International Center for the Arts of the Americas. **Stormy Hamilton**, Texas Southern University; curatorial mentor, Alison de Lima Greene, curator of contemporary art and special projects.

- The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: **Myles Cheadle**, University of Missouri-Kansas City; curatorial mentor, April Watson, curator of photography. **Issac Logsdon**, Kansas City Art Institute, curatorial mentor, Stephanie Knappe, Samuel Sosland curator of American art.

The selected fellows participate in a multiyear program that provides hands-on experience inside a museum setting, such as working with curators and staff on exhibitions, collections, and programs. Designed as a series of ongoing summer internships at the museum, followed by continued engagement during the academic school year, the program provides museum mentors and a stipend to the fellows. Mentors will work with students to enrich the academic experience and to increase exposure to the museum environment while broadening the students' understanding of art and art history.

"At the Art Institute, we are energized by the opportunity to work with our inaugural Mellon undergraduate fellows as well as those who will follow them in coming years," said Douglas Druick, President and Eloise W. Martin Director of the Art Institute of Chicago. "The students bring fresh, new perspectives to the museum context, and we expect to learn as much from them as they do from us. They have already impressed us with their commitment to making an impact in the world through their work in museums, and we are delighted that our staff and encyclopedic collections can play a part in nurturing their professional aspirations."

"This program offers the very special opportunity for these undergraduate students to gain a true understanding of how museums work and for art institutions to become more inclusive and representative of the communities they serve," said Michael E. Shapiro, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr. director of the High Museum of Art. "We look forward to bringing these students' diverse perspectives and fresh ideas to the High and to helping to foster their future leadership in the field."

"LACMA's wide-ranging collection of works from across time and the globe is a reflection of the many and ever-changing perspectives of our audiences. In an increasingly globalized society, it is imperative that a museum's curatorial vision also represent the multiplicity of stories art can share," said Michael Govan, LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director. "We look forward to welcoming our fellows to the museum, and to connecting the next generation of curators with mentors on our staff."

Gary Tinterow, MFAH Director, commented: "It is exciting for all of us at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, to participate in this intensive program to train curators for the future of our field, and have these new fellows take part in the museum's mission. With Houston's extraordinary and exhilarating diversity anticipating changes that will affect the rest of the nation, it is especially fitting that we will play a role, with our partners, in creating this opportunity for students who have previously been underserved."

Julián Zugazagoitia, CEO and Director of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, commented: "At the Nelson-Atkins, we believe that this fellowship will have an enormous impact on our next generation of curators. Having seen the vibrant participants in the Summer Academy, I know this project is already having impact with our current ranks who are inspired by the potential of the fellows. In Kansas City, we are in the heart of America at a crossroads of diverse perspectives and cultures. We are grateful for the Mellon Foundation's generous support in helping shape future curatorial scholarship, and we are excited to welcome these talented students."

ANDREW W. MELLON UNDERGRADUATE CURATORIAL FELLOWS

Art Institute of Chicago



Sarah Molina is a Morehead-Cain scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She majors in art history and minors in philosophy, politics, and economics. Her interests in social justice and art history prompted her to start an education initiative that connects public high-school students to the discipline of art history. She has recently followed an interest in medieval cartography to the archives of Oxford and Istanbul on a research grant. In her free time she enjoys writing poetry and also holds creative-writing workshops at local homeless shelters. Her curatorial mentor is Janice Katz, Roger L. Weston associate curator of Japanese art.



Sheridan Tucker is a student at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Majoring in visual critical studies, she enjoys researching culturally diverse issues surrounding art. Inspired by community activism and art accessibility, Sheridan hopes to engage and make a positive impact in her community and beyond through art awareness and appreciation. A native Chicagoan, Sheridan hopes to one day become a curator at one of Chicago's premier museums. Sarah Kelly Oehler, Gilda and Henry Buchbinder associate curator of American art, is her curatorial mentor.

High Museum of Art



Luis David Blanco is currently attending Emory University, pursuing majors in art history and international studies. Luis is originally from Miami and recently moved to Atlanta to attend Emory. A self-taught painter, Luis is fascinated with most art movements throughout history and is particularly fond of contemporary art and film. As a fellow for the High Museum of Art, he is excited to put forth all his knowledge and creativity into the program over the next two years. While at the High Museum, Luis' curatorial mentor is Michael Rooks, Wieland Family curator of modern and contemporary art.



Christy Nitzanah Griffin is an art major with a concentration in art history and a minor in German at Georgia State University. Nitzanah was born in Minneapolis and raised in Miami. She has worked as a gallery assistant at Georgia State University's Welch School Galleries and volunteers annually for *ART PAPERS* Art Auction. As the producer and editor for the "Dinner and Discussion" series, she invites artists and art professionals to her home and conducts both formal and informal interviews. While at the High Museum, Nitzanah's curatorial mentor is Stephanie Mayer Heydt, Margaret and Terry Stent curator of American art.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art



Nicolas Orozco-Valdivia is an art history/studio arts dual major at Pomona College. Early exposure to art and artists at Los Angeles cultural institutions such as Plaza de la Raza, Self-Help Graphics, and Avenue 50 Studio made him think about the relationships between cultural production, institutions, and communities. He has pursued this interest as a high-school intern at LACMA, as a participant and support-staff member in the Smithsonian Latino Center's Young Ambassador Program, and as a curatorial intern at the Pomona College Museum of Art. Stephen Little, curator and department head of Chinese and Korean art, is his curatorial mentor.



Lilia Rocio Taboada is a third-year undergraduate in the department of world arts and cultures at UCLA, with an emphasis in visual culture and critical ethnography. She also plans to graduate with additional minors in art history and Chicana/o studies. Her main aesthetic interest is in Latin American arts, both contemporary and pre-Columbian. Raised in Central Mexico and the San Francisco Bay Area, Lilia has volunteered with children's programs in the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco and the San Francisco African American Art and Culture Complex. Most recently, she has been a Hammer Museum Student Educator. Her curatorial mentor is Leslie Jones, curator of prints and drawings.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston



Jennifer Cernada is an art history major at Rice University in Houston. She is a first-generation American from Miami. Jennifer began her studies at Rice with the intent to major in biochemistry and cell biology, but an art history course during her first semester awakened her passion for art. As a freshman, Jennifer excelled in a graduate-level art history course titled "Latin American Bodies: On Modernism," taught by Fabiola Lopez-Duran. Jennifer's curatorial mentor is Mari Carmen Ramirez, the Wortham curator of Latin American Art.



Stormy Hamilton is pursuing a B.A. in art at Texas Southern University. Prior to enrolling at TSU, Stormy studied welding and metal fabrication at Minneapolis Community and Technical College. Volunteering at the University Museum at TSU under the guidance of Alvia Wardlaw inspired Stormy to learn more about art history and the curatorial field. Stormy will be working with curatorial mentor Alison de Lima Greene, curator of contemporary art and special projects, and researching the work of John Biggers, who established the art department at TSU in 1949.

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art



Myles Cheadle is pursuing a degree in art history at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. As an artist with a lifelong appreciation of jazz, Myles first displayed his work publicly in the exhibition *Ella: First Lady of Song* at the American Jazz Museum in 2012. Myles soon began devoting more time to the American Jazz Museum, and he became interested in curatorial work while assisting with the planning, design, and marketing for the permanent collection, as well as for the exhibitions *Beyond Words* and *American Sabor: Latinos in U.S. Popular Music*. Myles currently has studio space in the Drugstore, a collaborative effort among 20 artists in the old Katz Drugstore in Kansas City. His curatorial mentor is April Watson, curator of photography.



Issac Logsdon attends the Kansas City Art Institute and plans to major in art history and ceramics. Issac participated in a number of exhibitions in or near Louisville before beginning classes at KCAI, including St. James Court Art Show, 2012; Norma E. Brown Gallery, 2013; Vault 1031 Gallery, 2013; Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft, 2013; Carnegie Center for the Arts, Parade (solo show) 2013, with more to come. Issac is an avid traveler; in the past year he visited Louisville, Red River Gorge in Kentucky, San Diego, Chicago, Milwaukee, Cincinnati, Fort Collins, Colorado Springs, Taos, and Albuquerque. Issac's curatorial mentor is Stephanie Knappe, Samuel Sosland curator of American art.

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The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About the Art Institute of Chicago

The Art Institute of Chicago is a world-renowned art museum housing one of the largest permanent collections in the United States. An encyclopedic museum, the Art Institute collects, preserves, and displays works in every medium from all cultures and historical periods as well as hosts special exhibitions. With a collection of more than 260,000 art works and artifacts, the museum has particularly strong holdings in Impressionist and Post-Impressionist painting, early 20th-century European painting and sculpture, contemporary art, Japanese prints, and photography. The museum's 2009 addition, the Modern Wing, features the latest in green museum technology and 264,000 square feet dedicated to modern and contemporary art, photography, architecture and design, and new museum education facilities. In addition to displaying its permanent collection, the Art Institute mounts approximately 40 special exhibitions per year and features lectures, gallery tours, and special performances on a daily basis.

Location and Contact: 111 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603 | (312) 443-3600 | www.artic.edu

About the High Museum of Art

The High is the leading art museum in the southeastern U.S. With more than 14,000 works of art in its permanent collection, the High Museum of Art has an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American and decorative art; significant holdings of European paintings; a growing collection of African American art; and burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, photography, folk art, and African art. The High is also dedicated to supporting and collecting works by Southern artists. For more information about the High, visit www.high.org

Location and Contact: 1280 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30309 | (404) 733-4400 | www.high.org

About the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)

Since its inception in 1965, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography, in addition to representing Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today LACMA is the largest art museum in the western United States, with a collection that includes over 120,000 objects dating from antiquity to the present, encompassing the geographic world and nearly the entire history of art. Among the museum's strengths are its holdings of Asian art, Latin American art, ranging from pre-Columbian masterpieces to works by leading modern and contemporary artists; and Islamic art, of which LACMA hosts one of the most significant collections in the world. A museum of international stature as well as a vital part of Southern California, LACMA shares its vast collections through exhibitions, public programs, and research facilities that attract over a million visitors annually, in addition to serving millions through digital initiatives, such as online collections, scholarly catalogues, and interactive engagement at lacma.org. Situated in Hancock Park on over 20 acres in the heart of Los Angeles, LACMA is located between the ocean and downtown.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036 | (323) 857-6000 | www.lacma.org

About the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH)

Founded in 1900, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is among the 10 largest art museums in the United States. Located in the heart of Houston's Museum District, the MFAH comprises two gallery buildings, a sculpture garden, theater, two art schools, and two libraries, with two house museums, for American and European decorative arts, nearby. The encyclopedic collection of the MFAH numbers some 65,000 works and spans the art of antiquity to the present.

Location and Contact: 1001 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77005 | (713) 639-7300 | www.mfah.org

About the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

The Nelson-Atkins in Kansas City is recognized nationally and internationally as one of America's finest art museums. The Nelson-Atkins serves the community by providing access and insight into its renowned collection of more than 33,500 art objects and is best known for its Asian art, European and American paintings, photography, modern sculpture, and new American Indian and Egyptian galleries. Housing a major art research library and the Ford Learning Center, the Museum is a key educational resource for the region. The institution-wide transformation of the Nelson-Atkins has included the 165,000-square-foot Bloch Building expansion and renovation of the original 1933 Nelson-Atkins Building. The Nelson-Atkins is committed to connecting people of all ages with meaningful art experiences. Through its partnerships with Kansas City community, civic, and cultural organizations and the national and international arts community, The Nelson-Atkins welcomes and engages the diverse population of Kansas City and the surrounding region with enriching exhibitions, cultural programs, and educational activities.

Location and Contact: 4525 Oak Street, Kansas City, MO 64111 | (816) 751-1278 | www.nelson-atkins.org

About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation currently makes grants in five core program areas: Higher Education and Scholarship in the Humanities; Scholarly Communications; Arts and Cultural Heritage, International Higher Education and Strategic Projects; and Diversity. Within each of its core programs, the Foundation concentrates most of its grantmaking in a few areas. Institutions and programs receiving support are often leaders in fields of Foundation activity, but they may also be promising newcomers, or in a position to demonstrate new ways of overcoming obstacles to achieve program goals. Our grantmaking philosophy is to build, strengthen and sustain institutions and their core capacities, rather than be a source for narrowly defined projects. As such, we develop thoughtful, long-term collaborations with grant recipients and invest sufficient funds for an extended period to accomplish the purpose at hand and achieve meaningful results.