



## THE PRESENCE OF THE PAST: PETER ZUMTHOR RECONSIDERS LACMA CURATOR BIOS

### LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director: Michael Govan

Michael Govan joined the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) as Chief Executive Officer and Wallis Annenberg Director in 2006. In this role, he oversees all activities of the museum, including art programming and the *Transformation* campaign, an ambitious, multi-faceted building project that is expanding, upgrading, and unifying the museum's eight-building, twenty-acre campus, most recently including the addition of the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Exhibition Pavilion. Since Mr. Govan's arrival at LACMA, he has pursued his vision of contemporary artists interacting with the museum's historic collections, as evidenced by John Baldessari's installation of the exhibition *Magritte and Contemporary Art*; Jorge Pardo's innovative gallery design for the museum's permanent collection of ancient Latin American art; and Franz West's installation design for an exhibition of the museum's recently acquired collection of art of the Pacific Islands.

As part of LACMA's *Transformation*, Mr. Govan has additionally orchestrated the commission and installation of the artist projects that dot the museum's campus, beginning with Chris Burden's *Urban Light* (2008), Barbara Kruger's *Untitled (Shafted)* (2008), Robert Irwin's evolving palm garden and, most recently, Michael Heizer's *Levitated Mass* (2012). Under Mr. Govan's leadership, the museum acquired by donation or purchase more than 10,000 works for the permanent collection, including one of the most significant private collections of the art of the Pacific Islands assembled in the twentieth century; the Marjorie and Leonard Vernon Collection of photography—3,500 prints that form one of the finest histories of photography from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; a collection of more than 500 examples of fashionable European dress and accessories dating from 1700 to 1915; and a number of significant individual gifts. LACMA was also the recipient of the Lazarof Collection, 130 works recognized as consummate examples of modern painting and sculpture.

From 1994 to 2006, Mr. Govan was President and Director of Dia Art Foundation based in New York City, where he spearheaded the creation of the critically acclaimed, 300,000-square-foot Dia: Beacon, a museum in New York's Hudson Valley that houses Dia's renowned collection of art from the 1960s to the present. Dia's collection itself nearly doubled in size during Mr. Govan's tenure.

Known for his curatorial work as well as for his museum leadership, Mr. Govan co-curated the acclaimed touring exhibition *Dan Flavin: A Retrospective*, organized by Dia in association with the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. The exhibition concluded its international tour at LACMA, where it was on view in summer 2007.

Prior to Dia Art Foundation, Mr. Govan served for six years as Deputy Director of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. In that capacity, his work extended to Guggenheim branches in New York, Venice, and Bilbao. While at the Guggenheim, he organized numerous major exhibitions and produced related scholarly publications, including the multi-disciplinary *The Great Utopia: The Russian and Soviet Avant-Garde, 1915-1932*, and oversaw the reinstallation of the museum's collection galleries.

Michael Govan was born in 1963 and grew up in Washington, D.C. He holds a B.A. in Art History from Williams College, in Williamstown, Massachusetts, where he served as Acting Curator of the Williams College Museum of Art. Before continuing his studies at the University of San Diego, Mr. Govan studied Renaissance art in Italy.

### **Wendy Kaplan**

Wendy Kaplan has been Department Head and Curator, Decorative Arts and Design, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) since 2001. Previously, she held curatorial positions at the Wolfsonian-Florida International University in Miami, Glasgow Museums in Scotland, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. A leading expert on late nineteenth- to mid-twentieth-century design, she has authored, co-authored, or edited many books on the subject such as The Arts & Crafts Movement in Europe and America: Design for the Modern World (2004), Leading "The Simple Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain (1999), Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1996), Designing Modernity: The Arts of Reform and Persuasion, 1885-1945

(1995), The Arts and Crafts Movement (1991; French edition 1999), and "The Art that is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America (1987; reprint 1998), as well as organized major exhibitions on these subjects. She is the co-curator of the exhibition *California Design, 1930-1965: "Living in a Modern Way"*, which opened at LACMA in October 2011, and is presently on an international tour to Pacific Rim countries. Together with LACMA Director Michael Govan, she is the co-curator for the exhibition *The Presence of the Past: Peter Zumthor Reconsiders LACMA*.