

LACMA APPOINTS DEPARTMENT HEAD AND CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Los Angeles—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Franklin Sirmans to the position of Terri and Michael Smooke Department Head and Curator of Contemporary Art. Previously, Sirmans served as curator of modern and contemporary art at The Menil Collection in Houston and curatorial advisor at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, an affiliate of the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

LACMA CEO and Wallis Annenberg Director Michael Govan noted, "Franklin's perspective as an established critic, editor, and writer and his wide-ranging interest in contemporary art will make him an invaluable asset to the museum. He joins LACMA during a period of great energy and growth as our campus continues to evolve and our curatorial ranks expand."

In concert with Sirmans's appointment, the museum will shift the boundaries between modern and contemporary art with the latter focusing on works created during the last four decades. His recent exhibition—*Face Off: A Selection of Old Masters and Others at The Menil Collection*—juxtaposed past and present artworks and is of particular relevance to LACMA's ongoing dialogue between contemporary art and art history. Further, Sirmans is well known for his interest in reaching outside of traditional visual art parameters into music, performance, and popular culture. At LACMA, he will continue to straddle boundaries in this regard and will use his significant editorial and publication experience to strengthen the museum's publishing initiatives.

Sirmans has organized notable exhibitions such as *NeoHooDoo: Art for a Forgotten Faith* at The Menil, which traveled to P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, an affiliate of MoMA, New York and Miami Art Museum; and *Basquiat*, which originated at the Brooklyn Museum and traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles as well as the Museum of Fine Arts Houston. Prior to working at The Menil, Sirmans was an editor at Flash Art and prior to that he worked in the publications department of Dia Center for the Arts. He was recently named one of the inaugural Gold Rush Awards recipients from Rush Philanthropic for contributions to social awareness through the arts, and he is the 2007 David C. Driskell Prize Winner. Sirmans graduated with honors from Wesleyan University.

Sirmans stated, "LACMA is a museum with strong leadership and most importantly a unique and vital vision, one that will challenge what it means to be a museum or what museums can be in the twenty-first century. I am proud to join an incredible team of curators throughout the museum and especially excited to work with those within the department. It's an incredible time for the arts in Los Angeles. For curators, artists, collectors and most importantly museumgoers, Los Angeles is vibrant and ripe with contemporary art and artists who aim to expand the discussion on contemporary art, and I believe that we at LACMA can be a crucial focal point within that constellation."

The announcement of Franklin Sirmans joining the curatorial team at LACMA comes on the heels of the August appointment of Britt Salvesen as the Department Head and Curator of the Wallis Annenberg Department of Photography, and the Department Head and Curator of Prints and Drawings. In the last six months other key curatorial hires have included Christine Kim, Associate Curator, Contemporary Art; Edward Robinson, Associate Curator, Wallis Annenberg Department of Photography; and Elizabeth Williams, Assistant Curator, Decorative Arts and Design.

Sirmans will begin in his new role at LACMA on January 1, 2010.

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 new contemporary museum on its campus, BCAM. 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.

General Information: LACMA is located at 5905 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA, 90036. For more information about LACMA and its programming, call 323 857-6000 or visit lacma.org.

Museum Hours and Admission: Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, noon-8 pm; Friday, noon-9 pm; Saturday and Sunday, 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday. Adults \$12; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+ \$8; children 17 and under are admitted free. Admission (except to specially ticketed exhibitions) is free the second Tuesday of every month and on Target Free Holiday Mondays. After 5 pm, every day the museum is open, LACMA's "Pay What You Wish" program encourages visitors to support the museum with an admission fee of their choosing.

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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