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Media Contact: Cate Boehm
cboehm@artsbma.org

Birmingham Museum of Art Announces Jade Powers as Contemporary Curator

The Birmingham Museum of Art (BMA) is pleased to announce the appointment of Jade Powers as its Hugh Kaul Curator of Contemporary Art. Powers brings with her an extensive background in contemporary art, as a curator, educator, and art historian. She arrives at the BMA from the Harn Museum of Art in Gainesville, Florida where she has served as curator of contemporary art since 2022, and officially began her new position at the BMA in early September.



“It brings me tremendous pleasure to welcome Jade to our team,” says Graham C. Boettcher, R. Hugh Daniel Director of the Birmingham Museum of Art. “Her rich knowledge of global contemporary art combined with her proven track record of meaningful and engaging exhibitions will be an invaluable asset to the museum as we continue to build our flourishing contemporary collection around the community we serve.”

During her tenure at the Harn, Powers managed the activities of the contemporary art department, including installations, acquisitions, and exhibitions. She helped acquire 20 gifts and purchases for the contemporary art collection, the vast majority of which represented work by female artists and artists of color, thereby advancing the museum’s goal of diversifying the collection. An upcoming exhibition developed under Powers’

direction focuses on innovative art-making practices and highlighting works by Sam Gilliam, Kehinde Wiley, El Anatsui, Patrick Bongoy, Leslie Dill, Kiki Smith, and Grace Hartigan.

Prior to her time at the Harn Museum of Art, Powers served as assistant curator of contemporary art at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri, where she developed nine permanent collection exhibitions. Outstanding projects included *Deconstructing Marcus Jansen*, a show that investigated the stylistic techniques of painter Marcus Jansen and placed him in dialogue with Robert Rauschenberg, William de Kooning, Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist, David Smith, John Steuart Curry, Jim Dine, and Romare Bearden. The exhibition *Abstracted Wonders: The Power of Lines* highlighted artistic movements within abstract art and debuted two sketches from Josef Albers’ *Structural Constellations* series. Additionally, *Child’s Play: An Exploration of Adolescence*, a show focused

on the Freudian concepts that humans can trace their compulsions back to their childhood, and includes works by Nathaniel Donnett, Julie Blackmon, and Kojo Griffin.

While serving as the 2017 - 2018 Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellow at the Saint Louis Art Museum in Missouri, Powers conducted research for an exhibition, *The Shape of Abstraction: The Thelma and Bert Ollie Memorial Art Collection which honored a large gift of abstract art by African American artists recently acquired by the Saint Louis Art Museum.*

Powers holds a BA in art history and religious studies from DePauw University, and an MA in religious studies, with a focus on post-colonial theory, from Indiana University.

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About the Birmingham Museum of Art

Founded in 1951, the Birmingham Museum of Art has one of the finest collections in the Southeast. More than 27,000 objects displayed and housed within the Museum represent a rich panorama of cultures, including Asian, European, American, African, Pre-Columbian, and Native American. Highlights include the Museum's collection of Asian art, Vietnamese ceramics, the Kress collection of Renaissance and Baroque paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts from the late 13th century to the 1750s, and the Museum's world-renowned collection of Wedgwood, the largest outside of England.