NEWS RELEASE

Institute of Contemporary Art Announces New Staff Appointments Across Museum Departments

July 2, 2019

The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) at the University of Pennsylvania announced today the appointment of three new full-time staff: Elizabeth Chong, Visitor Services Coordinator; Michele Pierson, Development Administrative Coordinator; and Natalie Sandstrom, Programs Coordinator. In addition, two existing full-time members of staff are taking on new roles: Lauren Downing has been appointed Executive Assistant to Amy Sadao, the Director of ICA; and Caitlin Palmer is the new Curatorial Administrative Coordinator. In their new positions spanning departments across the Museum, these five members of ICA staff will provide essential support to the institution and its continued commitment to ensuring accessibility to the arts for all. These appointments are effective immediately.

“We are thrilled to bring on such a dynamic group of museum professionals. Their diverse backgrounds will strengthen our team and, as a result, ICA audiences are assured a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive experience when they visit” said Amy Sadao, ICA Daniel W. Dietrich II Director.

Elizabeth Chong, Visitor Services Coordinator in the Department of Public Engagement, works closely with Penn students who perform key functions at ICA as front desk staff and docents, while also creating attendance and publication sales reports. Chong is also an artist, and previously interned and apprenticed at the Fabric Workshop and Museum, and worked in Visitor Services at The Rosenbach Museum and Library, both in Philadelphia. She is a graduate of Cranbrook Academy of Art where she received her MFA.

Michele Pierson, Development Administrative Coordinator, provides administrative support to the Development department and assists in executing ICA’s fundraising program. Pierson also provides critical assistance to stewardship and special events, including the annual Gala, ICA Board meetings, and Board and Donor Club events. Pierson joins ICA following an artist residency in West Philadelphia through the Neighborhood Time Exchange Program. Previously, she worked for several cultural institutions throughout Philadelphia, including the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Wagner Free Institute of Science, and
Philadelphia’s Magic Gardens, in development and visitor engagement. She graduated from Spelman College with a B.A. in Studio Art and Art History.

Natalie Sandstrom, Programs Coordinator, works on initiatives within the Public Engagement department. She provides planning and support on public programs, community outreach, and audience development and education, as well as oversees ICA signature programs. Prior to ICA, Sandstrom interned at the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery and Artforum magazine. She is a contributing writer for artcritical.com and the Philly Artblog, and her writings will be featured in the forthcoming book For Love or Money: Confronting the State of Museum Salaries. She is a graduate of Smith College, where she majored in English, minored in Art History, and completed a concentration in Museum Education.

Lauren Downing takes on the new role of Executive Assistant to the Director, representing ICA’s Daniel Dietrich II Director Amy Sadao. In this position, Downing supports in the cultivation of relationships with internal and external stakeholders, organizing museum staff events and ICA’s work-study and internship programs, as well as tracking the museum’s strategic planning process. Downing joined ICA in 2014 as Curatorial Assistant and is a co-owner of Ulises, a local bookshop and curatorial platform focused on artists’ books and independent art publications. Before moving to Philadelphia, she was the Assistant Director of Ion, a contemporary art and design gallery in State College, PA. Downing graduated from the Pennsylvania State University where she triple-majored in Art History, Finance, and French, with a minor in International Business, and recently completed her M.A. in the History of Art at the University of Pennsylvania.

Caitlin Palmer moves into the newly-formed role of Curatorial Administrative Coordinator, where she works closely with the ICA curatorial team to fully support and facilitate key functions of the department, which includes supporting the development and editing of interpretive materials, monitoring exhibition and travel budgets and schedules, and distributing exhibition catalogs. Before joining ICA as Office Coordinator in 2017, she served as Gallery Manager of Savery Gallery and held internship positions at ICA and Second State Press. Also an artist, Palmer’s work has been shown at Zilkha Gallery in Middletown, CT, and at Little Berlin and Tiger Strikes Asteroid, both in Philadelphia, and is in the permanent collection of Wesleyan University. Palmer graduated from Wesleyan University in 2013 with High Honors for her printmaking thesis *temporal states*, a BA in the Science and Society program, and a minor in International Relations. She is currently completing her M.S. in Nonprofit Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania.

The appointment of these five new members of staff comes at a critical time for ICA, as they prepare to open three new exhibitions on September 13: Michelle Lopez: Ballast & Barricades, the first major institutional exhibition of Michelle Lopez; Colored People Time: Banal Presents, the compelling final chapter in the ground-breaking three-part exhibition Colored People Time, that will feature new and recent work by Sable Elyse Smith, Cameron Rowland, and Carolyn Lazard; and arms ache avid aeon: Nancy Brooks Brody/Joy Episalla/ Zoe Leonard/ Carrie Yamaoka: fierce pussy amplified, an exhibition illuminating the unique output created by Nancy Brooks Brody, Joy Episalla, Zoe Leonard, and Carrie Yamaoka, the four artists who formed the New York-based queer art collective fierce pussy.
ABOUT THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania is a non-collecting institution presenting exhibitions at the forefront of contemporary practice and culture that challenge audiences to think in new ways. The ICA is free for all to engage and connect with the art of our time. Since its founding in 1963, ICA has served as a laboratory for the new, introducing and supporting the production of urgent and important contemporary art, beginning with ICA's inaugural show of paintings by Abstract Expressionist Clyfford Still, followed by the first museum show of works by Andy Warhol in 1965. Throughout its history, ICA has been instrumental in identifying and developing many promising artists before they attained prominence within the international art world, some of whom include—in addition to Warhol—Laurie Anderson, Richard Artschwager, Vija Celmins, Karen Kilimnik, Barry Le Va, Glenn Ligon, Robert Mapplethorpe, Agnes Martin, Pepón Osorio, Tavares Strachan, and Cy Twombly.

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GENERAL INFORMATION
ICA IS LOCATED AT:
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MUSEUM HOURS
WEDNESDAY, 11AM–8PM
THURSDAY- SUNDAY, 11AM–6PM

ICA IS ALWAYS FREE. FOR ALL.

FREE ADMISSION IS COURTESY OF AMANDA AND GLENN FUHRMAN.