Institute of Contemporary Art
University of Pennsylvania

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ICA Philadelphia Appoints Akilah Child as Director of Communications and Content

Image by Ness Lee courtesy of ICA Philadelphia.

Philadelphia, PA—March 18, 2025—The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (ICA) has appointed Akilah Child as Director of Communications and Content, effective February 2025. A strategic communications leader with nearly two decades of experience in brand development, storytelling, and audience engagement, Child joins ICA to spearhead innovative content strategies that amplify the voices of contemporary artists and expand the museum's reach nationally and internationally.

"With a passion for storytelling and a deep understanding of how contemporary institutions can meaningfully engage audiences, Akilah brings an invaluable perspective to ICA," said **Hallie Ringle**, Interim Director and Daniel and Brett Sundheim Chief Curator. "As a museum that has long served as a laboratory for the new—where artists like Agnes Martin, Teresita Fernández and Carl Cheng had groundbreaking early exhibitions—ICA thrives on risk-taking. Akilah's vision for communications aligns with our mission to challenge audiences, spark dialogue, and push the boundaries of contemporary artistic discourse."

In her new role, Child is a key member of ICA's leadership team, overseeing branding, marketing, media relations, content development, and digital storytelling. She will lead the creation of a dynamic brand identity and develop strategies that inspire curiosity, deepen engagement, and position ICA at the forefront of contemporary art discourse. Through cutting-edge digital storytelling, audience development initiatives, and high-impact media campaigns, Child is committed to ensuring that artists remain at the center of ICA's communications efforts.

"I'm excited to join ICA as it expands its commitment to storytelling and digital engagement. This shift recognizes content as a powerful tool to amplify artists' voices, deepen audience connections, and shape meaningful conversations around contemporary art. I look forward to building on ICA's legacy and exploring new ways to inspire curiosity and dialogue," stated **Child**.

Child brings extensive experience from leading contemporary art institutions, having driven high-profile campaigns, rebranding efforts, and digital engagement strategies. As Director of Communications and Marketing at MOCA North Miami, she secured national and international media coverage, enhanced the museum's visual identity, and led cross-institutional initiatives like a Miami Art Week panel series with Howard University. Previously, as a senior communications strategist at the Art Gallery of Ontario, she transformed digital engagement by launching *Foyer*, the museum's first digital publication, and spearheaded audience development and rebranding efforts to align AGO's messaging with contemporary cultural conversations.

Beyond her institutional work, Child is recognized as a mentor and thought leader in arts communications. She has been a featured speaker at OCAD University, Sheridan College, and other academic and professional forums, sharing insights on museum communications, content strategy, and the evolving relationship between art and public engagement. She is deeply committed to mentoring emerging arts professionals, supporting communications leaders, artists, and curators in developing impactful storytelling, brand strategy, and audience engagement approaches.

As Child joins ICA, currently on view through April 6 is *Carl Cheng: Nature Never Loses* is the first comprehensive survey of Carl Cheng's innovative, multidisciplinary work from the 1960s to today, showcasing his exploration of identity, technology, and ecology. Also on view is *Entryways: Nontsikelelo Mutiti,* the first project in a new series commissioning artists to transform the ICA façade in partnership with Maharam, with Mutiti reimagining the windows by blending African hair braiding patterns, hair clips, and traditional ironwork symbols.

About the Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

The Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (ICA Philadelphia) is a global hub for contemporary art and ideas. Free and open to all, ICA Philadelphia is dedicated to supporting artistic practices across disciplines and to serving as a laboratory for risk-taking, community-building, and knowledge-creation. Since 1963, ICA Philadelphia has championed the University's commitment to cultivating the next generation of imaginative creators and thinkers.

Through commissions, exhibitions, programs, publications, and special projects, ICA Philadelphia fosters bold experimentation, curiosity, and discovery. Learn more at icaphila.org.

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