



## **Palm Springs Art Museum Appoints Elizabeth Armstrong as Executive Director**

*Armstrong Brings 25 Years of Experience in Developing Innovative Museum Practices and Exhibitions*

**PALM SPRINGS (Nov. 14, 2014)** – The Board of Trustees of Palm Springs Art Museum announced today the appointment of Elizabeth Armstrong as its JoAnn McGrath Executive Director. Most recently the Founding Curator of Contemporary Art at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (MIA), Armstrong brings more than 25 years as a curator as well as broad experience in developing best museum practices, fundraising, strategic planning, and management. She will begin her new position in January 2015.

Armstrong will succeed Dr. Steven Nash, who has led the museum since 2007 through a major period of growth, including the establishment of two satellite locations: Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert, and Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion, which opened to the public on November 9, 2014.

“Palm Springs Art Museum has reached a pivotal moment, and Elizabeth Armstrong brings the right mix of curatorial vision and museum management experience to lead the museum into its next phase,” said Harold Meyerman, Chairman of Palm Springs Art Museum Board of Trustees. “We have followed a non-traditional model for expansion, growing to fit the needs of the community in different locations, and Liz’s creative approach to museum best practices will help us build on this and take the museum in new and exciting directions.”

During her tenure at the MIA, Armstrong founded the museum’s Center for Alternative Museum Practice (CAMP), a lab for innovative and experimental programming at the museum, which has spawned a diverse range of successful programs. She also established the first program of contemporary art at the encyclopedic museum and raised \$4 million for new acquisitions.

Armstrong’s appointment at Palm Springs Art Museum marks a return to Southern California. She previously served as the Acting Director and Chief Curator at the Orange County Museum of Art, where she initiated the landmark *California Biennial*

program, and was the Senior Curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, where she expanded the museum's Latino audiences and grew its holdings of Latin American art.

"I've always been interested in art's relationship to society at large, as well as in the unique aspects of California art and culture," Elizabeth Armstrong said. "I'm thrilled to return to California to take the helm of Palm Springs Art Museum and to have the opportunity to explore new ways to integrate the museum into the cultural life of this vibrant community."

Armstrong has curated numerous exhibitions, including *Global Remix I: What is Sacred?*; *More Real: Art in the Age of Truthiness*; and *Until Now: Collecting the New (1960-2010)* at the MIA; *Mary Heilmann Retrospective*; *Birth of the Cool: California Art, Design, and Culture at the Midcentury*; and *American Moderns: Villa America, 1900–1950*, at the Orange County Museum of Art; and *Ultrabaroque: Aspects of Post Latin American Art* at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego.

She has also edited and authored essays for dozens of publications on contemporary art, including her award winning *Birth of the Cool* book, *Girls' Night Out*; and *David Reed: Motion Pictures*, and is a frequent lecturer.

Armstrong earned a Master of Arts degree in the History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley. She also holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. In 2007, she was one of ten curators selected nationwide to participate in the inaugural year of the Center for Curatorial Leadership in partnership with Columbia Business School in New York City.

### **About Palm Springs Art Museum**

Palm Springs Art Museum is the largest cultural institution in the Coachella Valley and includes three locations in Palm Springs and Palm Desert. The flagship building is located in downtown Palm Springs and features compelling art exhibitions, a vast permanent collection, and the 433-seat Annenberg Theater, all in a 150,000 square foot, architecturally-significant building. Palm Springs Art Museum Architecture and Design Center, Edwards Harris Pavilion features exhibitions and programming that explore the rich topics of architecture and design. Palm Springs Art Museum in Palm Desert is an 8,400 square foot, Silver LEED-certified building named The Galen that presents rotating exhibitions and special collections. It is surrounded by the four-acre Faye Sarkowsky Sculpture Garden featuring important sculpture works. Admission to the Palm Desert location is now free to the public, generously underwritten by Helene V. Galen. For more information, call 760-322-4800, visit [www.psmuseum.org](http://www.psmuseum.org), and follow the museum on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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