

AUGUST 16, 2010  
**PRESS**

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**ALWAYS FRESH  
ALWAYS FREE**

## **The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston names Valerie Cassel Oliver as new Senior Curator**

HOUSTON, TX (August 16, 2010)—The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is pleased to announce that Valerie Cassel Oliver has been promoted to Senior Curator, effective October 1, 2010. Cassel Oliver joined the CAMH in 2000 as an Associate Curator and has served as Curator at CAMH since 2006.

According to CAMH Director Bill Arning: “Valerie Cassel Oliver’s exhibitions at CAMH demonstrate curating at its very best, mixing engaging artworks that speak to both art world scholars and the enthusiastic public. The fact that Valerie is a native Houstonian makes her an even easier selection as CAMH’s new Senior Curator. She is an authentic voice whose passion is compelling. Her vision and first-rate scholarship are what CAMH needs to get to the next level as a globally-recognized contemporary arts institution.”

In her role as Curator at CAMH, Cassel Oliver has organized numerous exhibitions including her debut exhibition *Splat Boom Pow! The Influence of Cartoons in Contemporary Art* (2003); *Double Consciousness: Black Conceptual Art Since 1970s* (2005); and *Black Light/White Noise* (2007), which featured light and sound works created by two generations of black artists. Her 2008 exhibition *Cinema Remixed and Reloaded: Black Women Artists and the Moving Image since 1970* was nominated by the United States section of the International Art Critics Association (AICA/USA) in the “digital media, video, or film” category. Co-organized by Dr. Andrea Barnwell-Brownlee, director of the Spelman College Museum of Fine Art, the exhibition featured the contributions of black women artists to the cinematic and visual arts arenas, and was presented in Atlanta in two parts (2007/2008) and at CAMH.

“I have enjoyed tremendous support from my colleagues, directors, and trustees in past endeavors, and I look forward to this next phase in my tenure at CAMH. I am thrilled to join Director Bill Arning in sustaining the Museum’s status as a destination for all things contemporary in this city and beyond, and to support its mission of being a dynamic and accessible venue to encounter and learn about the art of our times,” said Cassel Oliver.

Cassel Oliver’s most recent exhibition *Hand+Made: The Performative Impulse in Art and Craft* (2010), explored the innovative means by which artists, through the integration of performance, expand the traditional boundaries of art and craft. Currently, Cassel Oliver is organizing a retrospective of work by Fluxus artist Benjamin Patterson and a twenty-year survey of work by painter Donald Moffett. *Benjamin Patterson: Born in the State of FLUX/us* opens November 6, 2010, at CAMH and will be on view through January 2011, and *Donald Moffett: Twenty Years* is scheduled for November 2011.

In addition, Cassel Oliver has organized several solo exhibitions including the first museum solo exhibitions in the United States for Ghada Amer, Su-en Wong, Demetrius Oliver, Robert Pruitt, Xaviera Simmons, and Jennifer West (on view at the CAMH through September 26, 2010).

In 2009, Cassel Oliver was one of ten curators in the nation to have been chosen through a rigorous panel selection process to participate in the fellowship program of the Center for Curatorial Leadership (CCL), a distinguished organization that trains curators for leadership positions. She was also the recipient of the prestigious Curatorial Fellowship Award from the Getty Foundation, which funded the initial research for the Benjamin Patterson exhibition.

**CAMH**



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Prior to her tenure at the CAMH, Cassel Oliver was director of the Visiting Artists Program at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (1995 - 2000) and Program Specialist at the National Endowment for the Arts (1988 - 1995). In 2000, she was selected as one of a team of curators to organize the Whitney Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

Cassel Oliver is a native Houstonian. She received a BS from The University of Texas at Austin and an MA in Art History from Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Cassel Oliver assumes the role of Senior Curator from Toby Kamps, who announced in July 2010 that he accepted the position of Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Menil Collection, Houston, effective October 1, 2010. Kamps' final exhibition at CAMH will be *Answers to Questions: John Wood & Paul Harrison*, February 12-April 24, 2011.

### **CAMH MISSION**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is an idea and a place shaped by the present moment. The Museum exemplifies the dynamic relationship between contemporary art and contemporary society through its exhibitions, public and educational programs, and publications. The CAMH provides the physical and intellectual framework essential to the presentation, interpretation, and advancement of contemporary art; it is a vibrant forum for artists and all audiences, and for critical, scholarly, and public discourse.

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### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, at the corner of Montrose and Bissonnet, in the heart of Houston's Museum District. Hours are Wednesday 11am-7pm, Thursday 11am-9pm, Friday 11am-7pm, Saturday and Sunday 11am-6pm. Admission is always free. For more information, visit [www.camh.org](http://www.camh.org) or call (713) 284-8250.