

Press Release

Staff Announcement

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston Appoints New Curatorial Leader



New CAMH Senior Curator and Director of Public Art, Allison Glenn. Photo by Rena Young.

(HOUSTON, TEXAS—May 25, 2021) Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (CAMH) announces the appointment of Allison Glenn as Senior Curator and Director of Public Art, the latest addition to CAMH’s executive leadership team. In her new role, Glenn will provide senior leadership for CAMH’s curatorial team, encompassing exhibitions, public projects, and artist-driven initiatives in the public realm; both within and beyond the walls of the Museum. Glenn will join CAMH on August 1, 2021.

CAMH Executive Director Hesse McGraw said, “CAMH is thrilled to welcome Allison to lead our curatorial and public art initiatives. Allison brings one of the most vital international curatorial voices to Houston—her vision is uniquely rooted both in deep trust of artists and care for community. Allison will chart an adventurous path for CAMH that elevates artists, authentically engages diverse audiences, and achieves meaningful civic impact.”

“I am thrilled to step into the role of Senior Curator and Director of Public Art at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston,” said Glenn. “My role at CAMH will advance the museum’s world-renowned contemporary art program, broadening it to include collaborative engagements within and across museums, institutions, and publics in Houston and beyond. Working with multiple publics and diverse communities continues to be an important part of my work, and this leadership role at CAMH will afford the scope of vision to include directing a public art program that expands, decenters, and relocates the museum as a site. I look forward to joining the incredible team at CAMH, and to building upon the influential legacy of former Senior Curator Valerie Cassel Oliver—a curator I profoundly admire.”

Allison Glenn is a curator and writer deeply invested in working closely with artists to develop ideas, artworks, and exhibitions that respond to and transform our understanding of the world.

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Media Contact

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CAMH Mission

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston presents extraordinary, thought-provoking arts programming and exhibitions to educate and inspire audiences nationally and internationally.

General Information

Contemporary Arts Museum Houston is located at 5216 Montrose Boulevard, in the heart of Houston's Museum District.

Hours are Wednesday 12–6PM, Thursday 12–9PM, Friday 12–6PM, Saturday 12–6PM, and Sunday 12–6PM. Admission is always free. For more information, visit CAMH.ORG or call 713.284.8250.

Recently, Glenn received substantial critical and community praise for her curatorial work in the groundbreaking exhibition at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky titled *Promise, Witness, Remembrance*. The exhibition reflects on the life of Breonna Taylor, her killing in 2020, and the year of protests that followed—in Louisville and around the world—exploring the dualities between a personal, local story and the nation's reflection on the promise, witness, and remembrance of too many Black lives lost to police brutality and murder. About the exhibition, Holland Cotter, co-chief art critic of *The New York Times* said (in an April 11, 2021 article), "As far as I know, *Promise, Witness, Remembrance* is the only large-scale institutional show to date that addresses the important episode in our contemporary national history that Taylor's violent death, and the communal reaction to it, represent." *Promise, Witness, Remembrance* remains on view at the Speed Art Museum through June 6, 2021.

CAMH Board Chair Dillon Kyle said, "Allison's appointment at CAMH represents a watershed moment for the Museum at a time we are moving swiftly beyond our walls to truly engage the civic life of our community and city. Her vision will enable great strides in CAMH's efforts to grant artists a greater role in making change—we know that artists are needed now more than ever, and we can't wait to see the energy and dynamism Allison will bring to her role, the Museum, and our community."

At CAMH, Glenn assumes a role last held by Valerie Cassel Oliver over a legendary 16-year tenure (2001–2017). Glenn will work closely with Executive Director Hesse McGraw, and recently appointed leaders Deputy Director Janice Bond, and Director of Finance and Strategic Resources Seba Raquel Suber in re-imagining one of the country's longest running kunsthalle (non-collecting) Museums. Now 72-years-old, CAMH is renowned for pioneering the leading edge of contemporary art, often staging first-ever solo exhibitions, and projects later recognized as pivotal to art history. Glenn will be a key driver envisioning a Museum that moves fluidly beyond its walls, that is present and responsive to the urgent issues of our time, and that realizes the catalytic potential of contemporary art in society. In her words, "museums can get it right," through direct and reciprocal engagement with audiences. In her role she will lead a dynamic and

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internationally acclaimed curatorial team including Curator Rebecca Matalon, and Assistant Curator Patricia Restrepo.

“CAMH’s intentional programming, partnerships, and civic participation both within the Houston arts ecosystem and around the world continues to expand and deepen,” said Deputy Director Janice Bond. “As we continue to evolve as a museum, it is both timely and necessary to enlist more thought partners and leadership who prioritize the people, communities, and legacies connected to and affected by the artistic programming we produce. How CAMH shows up in the world and in our society is vital and we’re proud to have Allison Glenn be a part of that evolution.”

Currently the Associate Curator, Contemporary Art at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art (Bentonville, Arkansas), Glenn curates exhibitions across the contemporary program at Crystal Bridges and the Momentary, a new contemporary art space and satellite of Alice Walton’s iconic museum. Since joining the Museum in 2018, Glenn has worked with artists at all stages of their careers around themes of history, temporality, language, site, and identity.

Glenn was a member of the formidable curatorial team for *State of the Art 2020*—a massive survey of work being created from across the country—which opened simultaneously at Crystal Bridges and the Momentary. In addition, she spearheaded the adaptation of *Hank Willis Thomas: All Things Being Equal... (2020)* at Crystal Bridges, the first comprehensive survey of the artist’s work, organized by the Portland Art Museum. Glenn has further shaped how public sculpture activates and engages the museum’s 120-acres of Ozark woods with outdoor exhibitions such as *Color Field (2019)*, a sculpture exhibition that activated a contemporary gallery and the Museum’s lush North Forest. Featuring fourteen sculptures by eleven contemporary artists, including Sarah Braman, Sam Falls, Odili Donald Odita, and Jessica Stockholder, *Color Field* debuted at Crystal Bridges before traveling to Artis-Naples, the Baker Museum, Florida (2020) and University of Houston, Texas (2020–2021).

Glenn’s current work for Crystal Bridges includes the upcoming projects *Rashid Johnson: The Bruising: For Jules the bird, Jack and Leni*, which recently opened in Crystal Bridges North Forest;

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Bethany Collins: Cadences, a sound installation opening June 26, 2021 in Crystal Bridges North Forest and galleries; and *Cauleen Smith: Space Station, Radiant Beyond the Sun*, opening June 26, 2021 at The Momentary.

Following her transition, Glenn and CAMH will continue to collaborate with Crystal Bridges through upcoming exhibitions and public projects planned for late 2021 and 2022. Glenn stated, "I have wholeheartedly enjoyed my time in the Northwest Arkansas region, and look forward to continuing to collaborate with Crystal Bridges and the Momentary in my new role."

Glenn has a decade of experience in the field. She was the Manager of Publications and Curatorial Associate for Prospect New Orleans' international art triennial *Prospect.4: The Lotus in Spite of the Swamp*. In 2015, Glenn was a Curatorial Fellow with the City of Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Experience in Chicago also includes a Research Fellowship with Theaster Gates' Dorchester Projects, and Program Manager at the Arts Incubator in Washington Park, as part of Gates' Arts + Public Life initiative at the University of Chicago. Her writing has been featured in numerous exhibition publications, including The Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Prospect New Orleans Triennial, The Studio Museum in Harlem, and Princeton Architectural Press, and she has contributed to *ART PAPERS*, *Hyperallergic*, *ART21 Magazine*, amongst others.

Glenn is a member of Madison Square Park Conservancy's Public Art Consortium Collaboration Committee, and sits on the Board of Directors for ARCAthens, a curatorial and artist residency program based in Athens, Greece and the Bronx, New York. She received dual master's degrees from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in Modern Art History, Theory and Criticism and Arts Administration and Policy, and a Bachelor of Fine Art Photography with a co-major in Urban Studies from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.