

# SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

## SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART ANNOUNCES DEPARTURE OF OSHMAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR S. SAYRE BATTON

San José, CA (February 11, 2025) – The Board of Trustees of the San José Museum of Art (SJMA) and S. Sayre Batton, the Oshman Executive Director, announced today that Batton will step down from her position effective May 31, 2025, to manage independent projects. Sayre provided over nine years of dedicated service to the Museum, including eight years as the Oshman Executive Director. The Museum will conduct a national search for her replacement.

During her tenure as Oshman Executive Director, the Museum presented over 50 exhibitions, including notable highlights such as *Kelly Akashi: Formations, 2022* (curated by Lauren Schell Dickens); *Hito Steyerl: Factory of the Sun, 2021–2022* (curated by Kathryn Wade); *With Drawn Arms: Glenn Kaino and Tommie Smith, 2019–2020* (curated by Lauren Schell Dickens); *Rina Banerjee: Make Me a Summary of the World, 2018* (co-curated by Lauren Schell Dickens and Jodi Throckmorton with Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts); *Dinh Q. Lê: True Journey Is Return, 2017* (curated by Rory Padeken); *This Is Not a Selfie, 2017* (guest curated by Deborah Irmas with Los Angeles County Museum of Art), and *Diana Al-Hadid: Liquid Cities, 2017* (curated by Lauren Schell Dickens) which helped expand SJMA’s reputation both in the Bay Area and beyond. Under her leadership, SJMA hosted groundbreaking exhibitions that might not otherwise have traveled to the region, such as *Beauty–The Cooper Hewitt Design Triennial*; *Yolanda López: Portrait of the Artist*; and *Christina Fernandez: Multiple Exposures*.

“Batton has been an extraordinary leader and visionary for SJMA. Under her guidance, the Museum elevated its mission, organized impactful exhibitions, and achieved significant milestones. We are deeply grateful for her invaluable contributions in driving our mission of being a borderless museum, and wish her great success in this next chapter,” said Tammy Kiely, Co-President of SJMA. Wanda Kownacki, Co-President of SJMA added, “Thanks to her leadership, SJMA is well-positioned to continue thriving as a vibrant cultural destination for San José, the Bay Area, and beyond.”

Batton played a pivotal role in refocusing SJMA’s commitment to acquisitions. This vision will be fully realized in March 2025, when SJMA unveils its newly renovated main floor galleries dedicated to showcasing the Museum’s permanent collection—a milestone in its 55-year history. The inaugural exhibition, *Tending and Dreaming: Stories from the Collection*, will feature iconic works such as Louise Nevelson’s *Sky Cathedral* (1957) and Hung Liu’s *Resident Alien* (1988), alongside recent acquisitions of significant artworks by Tishan Hsu, Yolanda López, and Sarah Sze.

“It has been an honor to serve as the Oshman Executive Director of SJMA and contribute to strengthening its collections, programs, and connection to the community,” said S. Sayre Batton. “Working alongside a talented staff and an inspiring group of trustees has been a privilege. The debut

of Tending and Dreaming is particularly meaningful to me, as it reflects our vision of making SJMA's collection more accessible and presenting the Museum as a dynamic, living space for all. With this inaugural exhibition, many of the aspirations I've held with the curatorial team for the Museum have come to fruition. While the decision to step away was not easy, I am proud to be leaving on a high note, with great pride in what we have accomplished together."

Under Batton's leadership, SJMA experienced remarkable institutional growth. The Museum deepened relationships with donors, community partners, universities, and visitors, while securing increased support from corporations, prominent national foundations and federal government agencies. Notably, SJMA's arts education programs received substantial investments to ensure free admission for youth, students, and educators. Batton also led strategic and long-term planning initiatives including a substantial investment in staff professional development and digital collaboration and was instrumental in securing SJMA's re-accreditation with the American Alliance of Museums.

## **SUPPORT**

Operations and programs at the San José Museum of Art are made possible by principal support from SJMA's Board of Trustees, a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José, and the Lipman Family Foundation; by lead support from the Adobe Foundation, the California Arts Council, Toby and Barry Fernald, Brook Hartzell and Tad Freese, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Richard A. Karp Charitable Foundation, Tammy and Tom Kiely, the Knight Foundation, Evelyn and Rick Neely, Yvonne and Mike Nevens, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Skyline Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and the SJMA Director's Council and Council of 100; and with significant endowment support from the William Randolph Hearst Foundation and the San José Museum of Art Endowment Fund established by the Knight Foundation at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

## **SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART**

The San José Museum of Art (SJMA) is a modern and contemporary art museum dedicated to inclusivity, new thinking, and visionary ideas. Founded in 1969 by artists and community leaders, its dynamic exhibitions, collection, and programs resonate with defining characteristics of San José and the Silicon Valley—from its rich diversity to its hallmark innovative ethos. The Museum offers lifelong learning for school children and their educators, multigenerational families, creative adults, university students and faculty, and community groups. SJMA is committed to being a borderless museum, essential to creative life throughout the diverse communities of San José and beyond.

SJMA is located on Plaza de Cesar Chavez at 110 South Market Street in downtown San José, California. The Museum is open Thursday 4–9pm; Friday 11am–9pm; Saturday–Sunday 11am–6pm. Admission is \$20 for adults, \$15 for seniors, and free to members, college students, youth and children ages 17 and under, and school teachers (with valid ID). Admission is free from 6–9pm on the first Friday of every month. For up-to-date information, call 408.271.6840 or visit [SanJoseMuseumofArt.org](http://SanJoseMuseumofArt.org).

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