

The Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) today announced that Bonnie Pitman will step down from her position as the Museum's Eugene McDermott Director in May 2011 for health reasons. Ms. Pitman will continue to work with the Museum and its Board of Trustees on special projects through April 2012, and will help with the search and transition to the new director. The Museum concurrently announced that Olivier Meslay will serve as the interim director. Mr. Meslay currently holds the joint position of Senior Curator of European and American Art and the Barbara Thomas Lemmon Curator of European Art.

"We have been incredibly fortunate to have had Bonnie in a leadership role at the Museum for more than a decade. She is an inspiring and visionary leader and has been a tremendous force for innovation and growth at the Museum," stated John Eagle, President of the DMA Board of Trustees. "We deeply regret that her tenure could not be longer, but her health and well-being must come first and we accept her decision. We remain grateful for her dedication and service to the DMA and to the greater Dallas community."

"The ten years I have spent at the Dallas Museum of Art have been the most professionally and personally rewarding of my career," said Pitman. "As the Eugene McDermott Director and before that as Deputy Director, it has been an honor to work with the creative and dedicated staff and trustees of the DMA to transform our institution. The DMA is poised to be the center of this great city's cultural life for many decades to come. I look forward to assisting the Board, Olivier and the staff with the transition and appointment of a new director."

Ms. Pitman joined the DMA as Deputy Director in 2000 and assumed her current role as Director in 2008. Her tenure at the Museum is distinguished by her development of innovative collection-based programming and her dedication to curatorial excellence and community engagement. In a time of economic uncertainty, Ms. Pitman has led the Museum to the completion of its Campaign for a New Century, which raised \$187 million in support of its endowment and programs.

Under Ms. Pitman's leadership, the Museum has continued to enhance and expand its encyclopedic collection, which serves as the foundation of the DMA's public programs, with the addition of more than 3,500 works since 2000. These acquisitions include outstanding works of ancient American art, South Asian art, Indonesian tribal arts, and American 19th- and 20th-century silver and furniture; paintings by French masters Paul Signac, Edouard Vuillard, and Gustave Caillebotte and German expressionist Ernst Ludwig Kirchner; and works by contemporary artists David Altmejd, Olafur Eliasson, Jim Hodges, Bruce Nauman, Charles Ray, and Yayoi Kusama.

Ms. Pitman has directed the DMA's engaging exhibition program, bringing major touring exhibitions to the Dallas community, such as *J. M. W. Turner* and *Luc Tuymans*; organizing collection-based exhibitions, such as *African Masks: The Art of Disguise* and *All the World's a Stage*; and organizing and touring critically acclaimed exhibitions, including the current *Gustav Stickley and the American Arts & Crafts Movement* and *The Mourners* (with the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon, in association with FRAME). She also spearheaded the conception and creation of the Center for Creative Connections, a groundbreaking interactive and innovative learning environment, as well as other popular education and public programs, including Late Nights, 100 HOURS, and smARTphone tours, to provide greater access to the Museum and its collections.

During her tenure as director, the DMA further invigorated its mission through a multi-year surveying of its audiences that was used for the development of new programmatic strategies

for engaging the community. This research and the resulting initiatives are documented in the recent book *Ignite the Power of Art*, co-written by Ms. Pitman, which provides an important new model for how museums can provide more enriching experiences for diverse audiences. In putting this research into practice, the DMA's attendance has grown more than 100% and more than half of these visitors participate in education and public programs. This research followed Ms. Pitman's watershed report from the 1990s, *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums*, which radically reframed how museums interact with their communities and set industry standards for best practices in the field.

"Bonnie's vision and tremendous contributions have extended beyond the Dallas Museum of Art to the museum field at large," said Eagle. "On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we thank her for her intelligence and her commitment, which have allowed us to better serve our audiences and have encouraged and inspired her peers to engage the public in exciting and meaningful ways."

The Museum is forming a search committee to begin the process of appointing the next Eugene McDermott Director of the Dallas Museum of Art.

About the Dallas Museum of Art

Located in the vibrant Arts District of downtown Dallas, Texas, the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) ranks among the leading art institutions in the country and is distinguished by its innovative exhibitions and groundbreaking educational programs. At the heart of the Museum and its programs are its global collections, which encompass more than 24,000 works and span 5,000 years of history, representing a full range of world cultures. Established in 1903, the Museum today welcomes more than 600,000 visitors annually and acts as a catalyst for community creativity, engaging people of all ages and backgrounds with a diverse spectrum of programming, from exhibitions and lectures to concerts, literary readings and dramatic and dance presentations.

The Dallas Museum of Art is supported in part by the generosity of Museum members and donors and by the citizens of Dallas through the City of Dallas/Office of Cultural Affairs and the Texas Commission on the Arts.