



Museum of Contemporary  
Art Detroit

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**Appointment Reflects MOCAD's Dedication to the Next Generation of Leaders  
in Contemporary Art and Public Programming**

**Larry Ossei-Mensah Joins Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) as  
New Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator**



Photo Credit: Andrew Boyle

DETROIT, MI — **The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit**'s Executive Director **Elysia Borowy-Reeder**, and Founder, Founding Director, and Board President **Marsha Miro**, are pleased to announce the appointment of **Larry Ossei-Mensah** as the museum's **Susanne Feld Hilberry Senior Curator**. Ossei-Mensah comes to MOCAD after serving almost a decade as an independent curator, cultural critic, and co-founder of **ARTNOIR**, a global collective of culturalists who design experiences aimed to engage this generation's dynamic and diverse creative class.

As an independent curator, Ossei-Mensah has organized exhibitions, programs and events in partnership with a variety of organizations around the globe in cities in like New York, Johannesburg, South Africa and most recently Rome, Italy where he co-curated with Serena Trizzino a group show at Anna Marra Contemporanea that included Derrick Adams, Firelei Baez, Paul Anthony Smith, Abigail DeVille, Alexandria Smith, and William Villalongo. Ossei-Mensah has also organized projects that have included exhibitions at Aljira in Newark and an ongoing collaboration entitled *Selections* with Elizabeth Dee Gallery in New York City highlighting emerging artists from Harlem, Washington Heights and The South Bronx. The multitude of artists that Ossei-Mensah has collaborated with throughout his career has focused on engaging individuals whose practice generates a robust and timely dialogue via the lens of contemporary art and culture. Some of these artists include Sanford Biggers, Peter Williams, ruby amanze, Lucia Hierro, Hugo McCloud, Brendan Fernandes, Genevieve Gaignard, Jen Liu, Jillian Mayer, and Derek Fordjour, among others. Most recently, Ossei-Mensah co-curated a solo presentation of Allison Janae Hamilton's work with Susan Cross at MASS MoCA entitled "PITCH". The exhibition creates an evocative discourse that centers around southern landscape, labor and cultural production.

"Larry Ossei-Mensah is a rising star, whose recent work at MASS MoCA demonstrates a brilliant and complex approach to contemporary art and public programming," says Executive Director Elysia Borowy-Reeder. "As we expand our commitment to larger exhibitions and innovative programming, Larry brings a unique expertise in this area and his keen eye for curating with culturally inclusive nuance will further strengthen our program. We are excited to welcome Larry to MOCAD and usher his voice into our programming. We are profoundly grateful to the Susanne Feld Hilberry Endowment for the Arts and the Ford Foundation for recognizing talent and supporting a young museum that dreams big."

As a writer, Ossei-Mensah has contributed to a plethora of publications and has written about Mickalene Thomas, Federico Solmi, Toyin Ojih Odutola, Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Yinka Shonibare Kehinde Wiley, Lorna Simpson, and street artist JR, among others. Through co-founding ARTNOIR, Ossei-Mensah has organized programs with artists, authors, and organizations such as Arthur Jafa, Wangechi Mutu, Julie Mehretu, Nina Chanel Abney, Hank Willis Thomas, Yaa Gyasi, Knopf, Random House, New Museum, National Sawdust, The New York Times, Harvard, NYU, Tumblr, and Black Lives Matter. Ossei-Mensah was the 2017 Critic-in-Residence at Art Omi and currently serves as a mentor in the New Museum's cultural incubator program, NEW INC designed to explore new ideas at the intersection of art, technology, and design.

"I'm humbled and honored to have an opportunity to join the MOCAD family. After a decade of working independently as an advocate for artists, across the spectrum, the Senior Curator role at MOCAD is a natural progression for me as I enter the next chapter of my career," says Ossei-Mensah. "I've always been committed to working in a manner that is culturally responsive to our times and utilizes contemporary art as a tool to heighten our awareness and understanding not only about the world around us, but also ourselves. I'm looking forward to collaborating with my colleagues at

MOCAD to cultivate projects and experiences that not only amplify the magic of Detroit, but also serve as a bridge between the city and the world.”

As the Museum approaches its twelfth anniversary, Ossei-Mensah’s appointment as Senior Curator reflects the Museum’s continued focus on diversity and the next generation of leaders—from artists shaping contemporary art and the future of culture to young philanthropists and activist supporters. MOCAD has grown into a leading international cultural destination.

### **ABOUT LARRY OSSEI-MENSAH**

Larry Ossei-Mensah was born in Harlem and raised in the Bronx, NY. Ossei-Mensah received his B.A. in Management from Clark University, MBA from Les Roches School in Switzerland, in addition to being an alumni of the Independent Curators International (ICI) Curatorial Intensive and Stanford’s Impact Program for Arts Leaders. Ossei-Mensah has published essays such as artists as *Mohamed Bourouissa* for the “Prospect 3: Notes for Now”, Federico Solmi for “The Good Samaritans” at the Rochester Contemporary, and Meschac Gaba for the Studio Museum upcoming exhibition “Black Refractions” among others. His most recent projects include: *Hear/Here*: Samora Pinderhughes, Nina Chanel Abney, Aja Monet, Ambrose Akinmusire at National Sawdust (2018), *Peter Williams: With So Little to be Sure of at the CUE Art Foundation* (2018), *Lucia Hierro: Mercado at Elizabeth Dee Gallery* (2018), *COMM I ALT I SHIFT at Aljira* (co-curated with Dexter Wimberly - 2017), *Race & Revolution: Still Separate - Still Unequal* at Smack Mellon (co-curated with Katie Fuller - 2017 to Present). Ossei-Mensah is a recent recipient of the Warhol Foundation grant for his upcoming exhibition in 2019 at MOAD in San Francisco entitled *Coffee, Rhum, Sugar, Gold: A Postcolonial Paradox* co-curated with Dexter Wimberly. You can follow Larry Ossei-Mensah on social media at @Youngglobal (Instagram/Twitter).

### **ABOUT THE POSITION**

The Senior Curator position is named for Susanne Feld Hilberry who was metropolitan Detroit’s leading contemporary art dealer for nearly 40 years, and the person who first proposed that MOCAD be established. Throughout her career, Susanne was committed to protecting and nurturing our city’s cultural life. She was intimately connected to the Detroit artist community, but also sought out and exhibited brilliant avant-garde art from many parts of the world for Detroiters to see and discuss. The Susanne Feld Hilberry Endowment for the Arts was established shortly after her death in 2015. The endowment’s mission is to support the visual arts and arts education, especially within the realm of contemporary art. Its first significant act was to endow the senior curatorial position at MOCAD, to honor Susanne’s pivotal role in the Museum’s founding and celebrate her contribution to contemporary art in Detroit. The MOCAD Senior Curator’s mission is to expand on those early efforts, and create a continuing forum that helps the Detroit community engage in a discussion of the important matters of our time.

### **ABOUT MOCAD**

The Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (MOCAD) is an innovative addition to Detroit’s vibrant Midtown neighborhood, and functions as a hub for the exploration of emerging ideas in the contemporary arts. As a non-collecting institution, MOCAD is responsive to the cultural content of our time, fueling crucial dialogue, collaboration, and public engagement. The Museum is located between the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and the Detroit Institute of the Arts, Wayne State University, and the College for Creative Studies. The cavernous 22,000 square foot building, a former auto dealership, has been simply renovated to maintain its raw historic character.

MOCAD's ambitious series of public programs includes lectures, musical performances, films, literary readings and educational activities for area youth. Mobile Homestead, by late artist Mike Kelley, is a permanent artwork located on the grounds of the Museum. It is both a public sculpture and a private, personal construction – based on the artist's childhood home on Palmer Road in Westland. The ground floor serves as a community event space by and for a diverse public, as Kelley intended. MOCAD is generously supported by individual members, private and corporate foundations, and government agencies. More information can be found at [mocadetroit.org](http://mocadetroit.org).

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## MUSEUM CONTACTS:

Elysia Borowy-Reeder  
Executive Director  
[eborowy@mocadetroit.org](mailto:eborowy@mocadetroit.org)

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Mike Kelley's Mobile Homestead is commissioned by Artangel in association with MOCAD, LUMA Foundation and Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts with the generous support of the Artangel International Circle. Support for Mike Kelley's Mobile Homestead is provided by the Mike Kelley Foundation for the Arts and the MOCAD Leadership Circle.

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More information can be found at [mocasdetroit.org](http://mocasdetroit.org).*

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**Our mailing address is:**

Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit

4454 Woodward Avenue

Detroit, MI 48201

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