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Oklahoma Contemporary Builds Leadership Team for Future Arts Campus

Oklahoma Contemporary's Founder and Board President Christian Keesee recently handpicked two New York professionals to spearhead the art organization's growth: Artistic Director Jeremiah Matthew Davis moved into his position in January, and Curatorial and Exhibitions Director Jennifer Scanlan began Feb. 8. Along with Executive Director Donna Rinehart-Keever's management team, Davis and Scanlan will guide the organization's visual and performing arts and arts education efforts at the state fairgrounds and be instrumental in planning the upcoming opening of a new arts campus at NW 11th and Broadway.

Davis will oversee Oklahoma Contemporary Art Center's multidisciplinary program of exhibitions, performances, installations and education initiatives as well as efforts at Marfa Contemporary, the organization's space in Marfa, Texas. Scanlan will provide leadership and strategic direction for curatorial programming at Oklahoma Contemporary.

"In its new location, we expect Oklahoma Contemporary to be a cultural destination not only for Oklahoma City, but our region," Keesee said. "Certainly the new leadership of Oklahoma Contemporary is just as important and well connected as any other young cultural institution in our region. I am excited to see our programming take shape and to watch this new team use their energy and resources to bring a whole new level of excitement to Oklahoma City's arts and cultural offerings."

"Watch out," Keesee warns, "these kids are bright and have the contacts to get things done."

"Jeremiah and Jennifer offer both national expertise in the performing and visual arts and an understanding of Oklahoma and the needs of our community. They bring diverse experience, strong academic backgrounds and far-reaching visions to our organization. We couldn't be more excited to add them to our team."

Although born and raised in Oklahoma, Davis joins Oklahoma Contemporary directly from New York. He was mostly recently resident dramaturg at Woodshed Collective, which Gothamist recently named one of the best theater companies in New York. *Empire Travel Agency*, one of the company's recent immersive performance installations, was included in The Guardian's top-10 list of New York theater in 2015.

Davis has collaborated with prominent artists from diverse disciplines, including Tony Award-winning designer Christine Jones, *Sleep No More* producer Randy Weiner, international composer Andile Khumalo and emerging installation artist Cosmo Whyte. In addition, he has demonstrated a sustained commitment to arts access and arts education, from volunteer work in Brooklyn public high schools to his continuing tenure as faculty member at the Todoroff Conservatory. He has also taught theater students at New York University, Barnard and Columbia.

"I am excited to bring my passion for art, culture and education back to my home state," Davis said. "I'm honored to lead Oklahoma Contemporary's outstanding team and to serve our core mission, 'art for all.' I share this vision of inclusiveness, and I believe deeply in the power of art to build bridges between diverse communities. Especially

given our expanding interdisciplinary programming, I'm looking forward to the many opportunities here for growth and collaboration."

Davis has also worked in various creative and production capacities for high-profile events for such companies as AMC, TimeWarner, Goldman Sachs, Microsoft and Schlumberger. He has a BA from Bennington College and an MFA in Dramaturgy from Columbia University, where he was Dean's Fellow.

Scanlan is originally from St. Paul, Minnesota, but has spent the last 16 years in New York. For the past three years she has been working as an independent curator with an interdisciplinary practice, focusing on contemporary art and design. Recent exhibitions included *Pathmakers: Women in Art, Craft and Design, Midcentury and Today* at the Museum of Arts and Design in New York City and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.; *Made for You: New Directions in Contemporary Design* at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art at SUNY New Paltz; *Twists and Turns: Sasha Stoyanov* at Tulsa's 108 Contemporary; and *Back to Eden: Contemporary Artists Wander the Garden* at the Museum of Biblical Art in New York.

"Our upcoming exhibitions will make Oklahoma Contemporary part of a national conversation in the visual arts, by bringing in important artists with widespread recognition, as well as highlighting and supporting regional artists," Scanlan said. "Our goals are to engage the community at all levels, to inspire our visitors, and to make them an active part of the art experience. Oklahoma City is clearly in a time of exciting growth, and I'm looking forward to being a part of the expanding visual arts scene here."

Prior to working independently, Scanlan was associate curator at the Museum of Arts and Design, where she organized a number of exhibitions, most recently *Playing with Fire: 50 Years of Contemporary Glass*. Scanlan has lectured internationally and has taught at Courtauld Institute of Art Summer School in London, England, and at Parsons The New School for Design. She has a BA in art history and Italian from Vassar College and an MA in the history of decorative arts, design and culture from the Bard Graduate Center in New York.

Currently located at State Fair Park, Oklahoma Contemporary is dedicated to keeping art accessible with free exhibitions and public programs, outreach to underserved communities and scholarships for youth arts classes and camps. The organization has raised more than \$14.8 million in support of its new campus, planned to become a new north gateway to downtown Oklahoma City. The 4.6-acre arts campus will be home to a new 50,000-square-foot building, a renovated 10,000-square-foot building, a three-block arts park and space for outdoor exhibitions, education programs and public performances. The campus is expected to draw an expected 75,000 annual visitors for major contemporary art exhibitions and attract about 20,000 youth and adult students each year.

"Oklahoma Contemporary is poised to complete the cultural landscape of Oklahoma City," Rinehart-Keever said. "Jennifer and Jeremiah will be integral in building the future of arts and arts education in our community."

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Jeremiah Matthew Davis, Jennifer Scanlan and Donna Rinehart-Keever are available for interviews. Contact Lori Brooks (lbrooks@okcontemp.org or 405-951-0000) for details. A media kit including this press release, high-resolution portraits of Davis and Scanlan and renderings of the new arts campus is available at bit.ly/OCLeadershipHires. Past press releases and additional information are archived at oklahomacontemporary.org/about/media.

About Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center: Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center is a regional 501(c) (3) nonprofit organization that encourages artistic expression in all its forms through education and exhibitions. Founded in 1989 by businessman and philanthropist Christian Keese and Kirkpatrick Foundation Director Marilyn Myers, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center offers contemporary arts exhibitions throughout the year, free to the

public, as well as youth art camps, adult art classes, workshops and lectures. Marfa Contemporary is the organization's first regional extension.