

## ADAM LERNER NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PALM SPRINGS ART MUSEUM

**Lerner will join the museum in summer 2021**

The Board of Trustees of Palm Springs Art Museum has announced the appointment of **Adam Lerner** as the museum's incoming JoAnn McGrath Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer. Lerner will begin his new position July 15, 2021. He previously served as the Mark G. Falcone Director and Chief Animator of the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver (MCA Denver) from 2009-2019.

"Adam is one of the art world's most respected and imaginative curators and program developers," says **Jane Emison**, Chair of Palm Springs Art Museum's Board of Trustees. "We are thrilled that a person of his singular talent and vision will be guiding our museum. Adam's proven record of developing organizations and inspiring his supporters makes him a perfect fit for our museum, which is poised for its next level of evolution as it grows along with the vibrant community of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley. I'm particularly inspired by Adam's reputation for being an extraordinary mentor who nurtures talent among his staff."



Before becoming the Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Denver, Lerner was the founder and Executive Director of The Laboratory of Art and Ideas at Belmar until The Lab merged with the MCA Denver in March 2009. He was also Master Teacher for Modern and Contemporary Art at the Denver Art Museum from 2001 to 2003.

Prior to his arrival in Colorado, Lerner served as Curator of the Contemporary Museum, Baltimore. Previously, he was a pre-doctoral Fellow at the Smithsonian Museum of American Art, specializing in 20th-century American sculpture.

“I’m honored to take the helm of Palm Springs Art Museum as the institution and the region are both on course for tremendous growth” Lerner says. “I am looking forward to building on the success of my predecessors, and cultivating a dynamic and inclusive institution that is relevant not only to the art world but also to everyone who lives in the Coachella Valley.”

Executive Vice Chair **Craig Hartzman**, who led the search committee for this position, noted: “We are delighted that Adam will be joining Palm Springs Art Museum as its new executive director at this important moment. The committee identified and evaluated an impressive group of candidates nationwide; Adam stood out as an exceptional museum professional known for his many talents, including his creativity and innovative programming, his mentorship of staff and colleagues, and his highly effective working relationships with board and community members. Adam’s broad spectrum of knowledge and his keen interest in popular contemporary culture will serve both the museum and the community at large very well.”

At MCA Denver, Lerner developed an institution that combined scholarly exhibitions with an inviting energy that attracted wide audiences. Having taken over just after the completion of the museum’s new building, he tripled attendance within ten years, doubled the operating budget, and attracted large numbers of visitors through robust public programming. Placing a strong emphasis on Mexican and Latinx art and culture, he transformed the institution into one of the premier showcases for contemporary Mexican art among U.S. museums. This lively mix of programming helped cultivate the next generation of museum goers, making unprecedented inroads with the previously under-represented 25-34-year-old audience, who became the museum’s largest demographic group.

Under his leadership, MCA Denver earned a leadership role among peers by producing groundbreaking exhibitions traveling to multiple venues, including an exhibition of early Jean-Michel Basquiat works that had never been exhibited in a museum previously, and the first museum survey exhibition of artist Senga Nengudi. MCA Denver also developed a major career retrospective of Mark Mothersbaugh and co-produced the retrospective of Marilyn Minter, both of which traveled to art museums throughout the country. In addition to presenting the work of emerging and established contemporary artists, Lerner has consistently presented unconventional art museum subjects, such as the early history of graffiti writing, Emory Douglas’ illustrations for the Black Panther newspaper, and the everyday spectacles of the 1970s theatrical group the Cockettes.

Lerner and his life partner, Melissa Shelton, will reside in Palms Springs beginning in August.

For more information about Palm Springs Art Museum exhibitions, programs, and events, please visit [psmuseum.org](http://psmuseum.org) or call (760) 322-4800.