

Art Gallery of Ontario names Julian Cox its new Chief Curator

Cox to join the AGO from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco starting in January 2018

TORONTO — October 12, 2017 — The **Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO)** is pleased to announce that **Julian Cox** has been appointed its new **Chief Curator**. With 25 years of museum experience, the British-born Cox—who is currently the Chief Curator and Founding Curator of Photography for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF)—begins his tenure in January 2018, pending approval of authorization to work in Canada. In his capacity as Chief Curator, Cox will also become the Gallery's second Deputy Director, joining Alicia Vandermeer, Deputy Director and Chief Advancement Officer.

"Julian is joining us at a pivotal moment in the AGO's history," said **Stephan Jost**, the AGO's Michael and Sonja Koerner Director and CEO. "We face exciting opportunities as our audiences expand and we continue our evolution into a 21st-century museum. His strong leadership and curatorial sensibilities will help us ignite and sustain passionate and timely conversations through art, both locally and globally."

Since 2010, Cox has directed FAMSF's renowned curatorial team working across two museums, the de Young and the Legion of Honor. As Chief Curator, he led curatorial activities in art of the Americas, Oceania and Africa, Ancient art, European Paintings and European Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Prints and Drawings, American art, contemporary art and international textiles and costume. He has also overseen FAMSF's conservation, library and publications staff. Cox has considerably strengthened FAMSF's curatorial endeavours in photography—his field of expertise—leading a robust program of exhibitions and scholarly projects, and increasing the collection by almost twenty per cent to more than 5,000 works. Cox has also published and lectured extensively, giving recent presentations on American civil rights and media culture at the Cincinnati FotoFocus Biennial and on photography and social activism at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

"I'm thrilled to be joining the AGO, and I look forward to working closely with its talented staff and ambitious Board, who share a mutual commitment to seeing the institution increase its impact on the national and international stage," said **Julian Cox**. "Toronto's vibrant civic energy and dynamic multicultural character are immensely appealing to me. There will be much to learn and experience, and I can't wait to get started."

Cox will lead the Gallery's curatorial team in designing meaningful art experiences that embrace multiple—and often challenging—points of view. He will focus on exhibition planning in addition to developing the AGO's significant collections, positioning Toronto and Ontario's rich artistic landscape in the widest context possible to ensure the Gallery is inclusive and welcoming, and better reflects the diversity of the communities it serves.

Cox will lead the AGO's publishing department and its curatorial team of ten, including:

- **Kenneth Brummel**, Assistant Curator of Modern Art
- **Julie Crooks**, Assistant Curator of Photography
- **Alexa Greist**, Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings
- **Sophie Hackett**, Curator of Photography
- **Wanda Nanibush**, Curator of Indigenous Art
- **Kitty Scott**, Carol & Morton Rapp Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art
- **Caroline Shields**, Assistant Curator of European Art
- **Sasha Suda**, Curator of European Art and R. Fraser Elliott Chair, Prints and Drawings Council

- **Georgiana Uhlyarik**, Fredrik S. Eaton Curator of Canadian Art
- **Adelina Vlas**, Associate Curator of Contemporary Art

“Julian has a strong track record of meaningful collection-building, exhibitions and publications like *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956-1968* (High Museum of Art, 2008), as well as solo shows by Julia Margaret Cameron, Danny Lyon, Sheila Pree Bright, Anthony Friedkin and others,” said AGO Curator of Photography **Sophie Hackett**. “These demonstrate his commitment to scholarship, to working with local artists, and his ability to recognize how exhibitions can channel a particular cultural moment. Julian’s appointment will help us further amplify the AGO photography department’s activities here in Toronto and internationally, and Assistant Curator of Photography Julie Crooks and I are very much looking forward to working with him.”

“Julian’s commitment to themes of civic engagement is particularly relevant at this time in our history, and I look forward to seeing him lead the AGO’s curators with that approach in mind,” continued **Jost**. “His global perspectives and connections come to us at a moment when we are exporting much more of Canada to the world. He is an important addition to the AGO Leadership Team as we work to ensure that the Gallery is place that reflects the communities we serve.”

Responding to Cox’s impending departure, the Director and CEO of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco expressed his support. “We are very happy for Julian in his pursuit of this next step in his career,” said **Max Hollein**. “In the past seven years he has brought tremendous leadership to FAMSF, curated award-winning exhibitions, and greatly strengthened our collection. He certainly will be missed but we know we have a great friend at the Art Gallery of Ontario.”

ABOUT JULIAN COX

Julian Cox is an internationally renowned curator, writer and museum administrator. Over seven years as Chief Curator and Founding Curator of Photography for the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), he has curated several exhibitions of significance, including *Danny Lyon: Message to the Future* (2016-17), *Janet Delaney: South of Market* (2015), *Anthony Friedkin: The Gay Essay* (2014), *Eye Level in Iraq: Photographs by Kael Alford and Thorne Anderson* (2013), and *Real to Real: Photographs from the Traina Collection* (2012). He also served as a contributing curator for the critically acclaimed exhibitions *The Summer of Love Experience: Art, Fashion, and Rock and Roll* (2017) and *Keith Haring: The Political Line* (2014).

Prior to that appointment, Cox served as Curator of Photography at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia, during which time he significantly expanded its permanent collection of photographs and enhanced its reputation in the field. He organized such exhibitions as *Harry Callahan: Eleanor* (2007), *Road to Freedom: Photographs of the Civil Rights Movement, 1956–1968* (2008), *The Portrait Unbound: Photographs by Robert Weingarten* (2010) and *Signs of Life: Photographs by Peter Sekaer* (2010), accompanied by critically acclaimed scholarly publications.

Before joining the High Museum, Cox served for 12 years in several positions in the Department of Photographs at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, working closely with the Getty’s esteemed Founding Curator of Photography Weston Naef. His work at the Getty included the exhibitions *André Kertész: A Centennial Tribute* (1994), *Alfred Stieglitz: Seen and Unseen* (1995–1996), *Julia Margaret Cameron: The Creative Process* (1996–1997), *The Making of a Daguerreotype: Images and Artifacts* (1998), *Spirit into Matter: The Photographs of Edmund Teske* (2004) and *The Photographs of Frederick Sommer: A Centennial Tribute* (2005). Prior to that, he worked at the National Museum of Photography, Film and Television in Bradford, England, and the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

Born in London, England, Cox earned a Master of Philosophy degree in the history of photography from the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth in 1990, preceded by a Bachelor of Arts degree in art history from the University of Manchester, England.

ABOUT THE AGO

Located in Toronto, Canada's largest city of 6.5 million, the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) is one of the largest art museums in North America. The AGO's collection of close to 95,000 works ranges from cutting-edge contemporary art such as *Untilled* by Pierre Huyghe to European masterpieces such as Peter Paul Rubens's *The Massacre of The Innocents*; from the vast collection by the Group of Seven to works by established and emerging Indigenous Canadian artists; with a photography collection that tracks

the impact of the medium with deep holdings of works by artists such as Garry Winogrand and Diane Arbus; and with focused collections in Gothic boxwood miniatures and Western and Central African art. Drawing on this collection—as well as collaborations with museums around the world—the AGO presents wide-ranging exhibitions and programs, taking special care to showcase diverse and underrepresented artists. A major expansion designed by Frank Gehry in 2008 with lead support from the family of Ken Thomson makes the AGO a highly-photographed architectural landmark. Visit ago.ca to learn more.

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