

JULIA MARCIARI-ALEXANDER APPOINTED PRESIDENT OF THE SAMUEL H. KRESS FOUNDATION

New York, NY, April 3, 2024 – The Samuel H. Kress Foundation, an important supporter of the study and presentation of European art, architecture, and archaeology in the United States, announced today that it has appointed Dr. Julia Marciari-Alexander as its new president. The selection of Marciari-Alexander follows a comprehensive search led by the Foundation’s Board of Trustees that began after the announcement in March 2023 of the pending retirement of the Foundation’s long serving president, Max Marmor. Marciari-Alexander, who currently serves as the Andrea B. & John H. Laporte Executive Director and CEO of the Walters Art Museum, in Baltimore, will begin her role at Kress in Fall 2024.

Carmela Vircillo Franklin, Chair of the Kress Foundation’s Board of Trustees, said “We are so excited to welcome Dr. Julia Marciari-Alexander to the Kress Foundation, and to benefit from her knowledge and outstanding leadership in the art world. During more than a decade at the Walters Art Museum, Julia has demonstrated a passion for the insightful presentation of art, for promoting its scholarship, and for cultivating new audiences, which very much aligns with Kress’ mission and values. We are confident that under her guidance, Kress will continue to thrive and set new benchmarks in the support and promotion of European art history.”

Dr. Marciari-Alexander will come to the Kress Foundation from a distinguished career in art museums. Her tenure at the Walters Art Museum has been characterized by significant growth in the museum’s endowment, ambitious and acclaimed exhibitions that have been driven by curators and educators recruited during her tenure, and that have been supported by new initiatives aimed at enhancing diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion within the museum and its wider community. Of particular note have been the recent and widely acclaimed exhibitions *Ethiopia at the Crossroads*—the first major art exhibition in America to examine an array of Ethiopian cultural and artistic traditions from their origins to the present day—and the opening of *Across Asia: Arts of Asia and the Islamic World*, a reconceptualized installation of the Walters’ important Asian and Islamic collections featuring some 500 works.

“I am thrilled to be able to bring my breadth of experience from a career spent in both the academy and museums to Kress, whose philanthropic mission is dedicated to deepening understanding of the creative past in order to expand our views of our present and future,” said Dr. Marciari-Alexander. “At a time when contemporary art so often dominates the headlines and conversations about the art world, I continue to believe that understanding the art of the past should be an integral part of research, scholarship, and teaching, as well as part of museums’ focus on exhibitions, acquisitions, and scholarship. I look forward to building upon the Kress Foundation’s important legacy, in the U.S. and internationally, and exploring innovative ways to expand Kress’ impact in what is a rapidly evolving cultural landscape.”

Steven Nelson, Chair of the Board's Search Committee, added, "Julia brings to the Kress Foundation a critical combination of scholarly acumen, tactical experience, and visionary leadership, which make her an ideal choice to lead the Kress Foundation into its next century. Search processes are always so useful for identifying not just different candidates for a position, but also for hearing how a candidate sees the future of your organization. With Julia, we know that we have found someone who believes in our longstanding mission and focus on European art, architecture, and archaeology from antiquity to the early 19th century, and who sees opportunity for us to evolve our approach in order to expand Kress' impact and benefit for scholars, museums, and audiences."

Prior to joining the Walters Art Museum in 2013, Marciari-Alexander served as Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs at The San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA), where she oversaw a systematic re-envisioning and reinstallation of the museum's collections, including its Art of East Asia galleries, which was the largest renovation of any of the SDMA's spaces in more than a decade. During her time at SDMA, she also served as the Interim Co-Director (2009-2010) and Interim Deputy Director for Education (2010-2011). Before relocating to San Diego, Marciari-Alexander worked at the Yale Center for British Art from 1997-2008, serving in multiple roles, including Associate Director for Programmatic Affairs and Associate Director for Exhibitions and Publications. In addition to curating many exhibitions and producing or contributing to a number of catalogues while there, she also taught numerous courses in the history of art.

Marciari-Alexander has a Ph.D in History of Art from Yale University (1999) and an M.A. in French Literature, New York University (1992), following the completion of her B.A. in Art History and French at Wellesley College (1989). Marciari-Alexander recently served as President of the Association of Art Museum Directors' (AAMD) Board of Trustees, and has been engaged with a number of other entities promoting the arts, including serving as an Assessor for the annual William MH. Berger Prize for excellence in the field of British Art History, and serving on the boards of the Maryland Citizens for the Arts and the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance.

About the Kress Foundation

The Samuel H. Kress Foundation was founded in 1929 by Samuel H. Kress (1863-1955), who donated his remarkable collection of historic European art to more than forty academic and municipal art museums in the US and Puerto Rico as "a gift to the nation." Its abiding mission is to sustain and carry out the original democratic vision of its founder. Kress supports the work of individuals and institutions engaged with the appreciation, interpretation, preservation, study and teaching of the history of European art and architecture from antiquity to the dawn of the modern era. Kress serves the field of art history as practiced in American art museums and institutions of higher education, and in an array of research centers and libraries throughout the world. Kress further supports training and research in art conservation as well as the professional practice of art conservation. Today, Kress makes grants in defined program areas and offers professional

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development fellowships for historians of art and architecture, art conservators, art museum curators and educators, and art librarians.

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