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## Art in General Appoints Laurel Ptak As Its Executive Director



Photo by Jasphy Yiran Zheng

**New York—February 9, 2017**—Art in General today announced the appointment of Laurel Ptak as the nonprofit’s new Executive Director. Ptak, who has extensive curatorial experience and currently serves as Director and Curator at the artist-founded space Triangle in New York City, will begin her new role at Art in General on February 13, 2017. Ptak will oversee artist engagement and curatorial direction for Art in General’s New Commissions and International Collaborations programs, as well as the organization’s operations and fundraising initiatives. Ptak will also develop the upcoming *What Now?* symposium, which explores timely issues in artistic and curatorial practice through panel discussions and artist interventions, in collaboration with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics, and will conceptualize other such programs in the future. Building on Art in General’s legacy and commitment to contemporary artists in the U.S. and abroad, Ptak will focus on further enhancing the scope of the organization’s creative

collaborations with artists and partner institutions and growing its programs to represent an ever more dynamic range of work.

“Laurel has a keen eye for art and artists, and is deeply committed to bringing to the fore groundbreaking new work and creative practices. Her curatorial experience and approach combined with an incredible institutional acumen make her the ideal choice to take Art in General into its next chapter,” said Roya Khadjavi Heidari, Co-president of Art in General’s Board of Directors. “We are delighted to have her vision and expertise as we continue to enhance our programs, and the ways in which we engage with artists, partner organizations, and the public. We are particularly attuned to global discussions, and are especially enthusiastic about Laurel’s ideas and ambition for our international programs.”

“Art in General offers an essential platform for highlighting the perspectives, ideas, and practices of artists of diverse background and vision, and I have long been a follower and admirer,” said Ptak. “Artists, now more than ever, have an important role to play in our ongoing public discourse, helping to pave the way for common ground and mutual understanding. I am thrilled to be joining the team, and I look forward to

working with the board and staff to extend opportunities to an even broader scope of voices, to engage our audiences on the issues most relevant to art and contemporary life.”

During her time as Director and Curator at Triangle, from 2014-2017, Ptak launched a series of new artists commissions, residencies, public programs, and curatorial initiatives, both locally and globally. In particular, she strengthened Triangle’s ties to a global network of artist-founded institutions throughout Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East, in what is known as the Triangle Network. She is also responsible for Triangle’s role as a fellow institution of the 11<sup>th</sup> Gwangju Biennale. Further, Ptak, who led Triangle’s operations and fundraising, increased the organization’s budget by more than 50% in her three-year tenure, supporting the expansion of artist-focused programs.

Ptak has previously held positions at major non-profit art institutions in New York City and abroad, including as Curator at Tensta Konsthall in Stockholm, Curatorial Fellow at Museo Tamayo in Mexico City, and within various departments at MoMA PS 1 and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. In 2014, Ptak co-founded the award-winning Art+Feminism Wikipedia-Edit-A-Thon, which confronts gender disparities online and their effects on public forms of knowledge. Edit-a-thons are organized yearly at the Museum of Modern Art, and co-organized by thousands of art institutions and universities around the world to review and make strategic edits to art-related Wikipedia entries.

A career-long advocate for the importance of small-scale, artist-founded and alternative art spaces, Ptak has collaborated on projects and talks with organizations as diverse as The Barber Shop in Lisbon, Gasworks in London, Kadist Foundation in San Francisco, Interference Archive in New York, SALT in Istanbul, and Taipei Contemporary Art Center in Taiwan, among many others. Her curatorial vision has been recognized through a range of awards and fellowships, including those with Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and Eyebeam in New York, and in 2014, *Foreign Policy* magazine named her a Leading Global Thinker.

Ptak currently serves as professor in the graduate programs in Curatorial Practice at The School of Visual Arts and Art, Media and Technology at The New School in New York City. She holds an M.A. from The Center For Curatorial Studies at Bard College and B.A. from Hampshire College.

Art in General’s 2017 season features exhibitions and projects that explore a range of issues pertaining to land and politics. The Brooklyn-based nonprofit is currently hosting a series of workshops and events with artist Juanli Carrion, whose work examines culinary traditions as part of a conversation about economic colonization and perceived cultural homogenization in the Americas. In March, it will present the first New York solo exhibition for arts collective Postcommodity, which will feature a large-scale sculpture and audio works that highlight the use of decoys by U.S. Border Patrol. The 2017 edition of the *What Now?* symposium, in April, will engage in broad-based discussion on the subject of land and its relationship to social, political, cultural, and economic histories and contemporary realities.

### **About Art in General:**

For more than 35 years, Art in General has supported working artists, recognizing their essential contributions to public discourse and the creation of vibrant and engaged communities. Through its New Commissions and International Collaborations programs artists are given financial support to produce ambitious new projects, as well as invaluable guidance on conceptualizing, executing, and promoting their exhibitions and collaborations. Work produced through these programs is presented at Art in General’s gallery in DUMBO as well as at partner organizations in New York and abroad. Each year, Art in General

also hosts the *What Now?* symposium, a two-day event that invites artists, curators, writers, thought leaders, and the public to engage with timely and critical issues in artistic and curatorial practice. Art in General has a long and illustrious history of working with emerging and underrepresented artists that have gone on to critical acclaim, and offering support that will have a lasting positive impact on artists remains the cornerstone of its vision and program.

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**Located:** on the ground floor at 145 Plymouth Street, Dumbo, Brooklyn, NY 11201

**Open:** Tuesday-Saturday, 12-6pm

**Admission:** Free

**General Support** of Art in General is provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services; the New York State Council on the Arts with support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; the Toby D. Lewis Donor Advised Fund of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland; the Cowles Foundation, and by individuals. This program is also supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.

**The New Commissions Program** is made possible by the Trust for Mutual Understanding; National Endowment for the Arts; Jerome Foundation; Ruth Ivor Foundation; and the Milton and Sally Avery Foundation. Support has also been provided by: Commissioners' Circle leaders Elaine Goldman, Jeffery Larsen and Joseph Bolduc; Commissioners' Circle supporters Richard Massey, and David Solo; and Commissioners' Circle members Nader Ansary, Rob Colangelo, Don Erenberg, Taymour Grahne, Roya Khadjavi-Heidari, Mary Lapides, Leslie Ruff, Steve Shane, and Diana Wege.

**The *What Now?* Symposium**, and accompanying book series from 2015-2017, is generously supported by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (MA-10-14-0304-14).

For additional information, please contact:

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