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Tiffany Fairall named Chief Curator at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum;

Colette Pecenka appointed as Curator of Exhibitions and Education

July 25, 2019 (Mesa, AZ) – Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum, owned and operated by the City of Mesa as part of Mesa Arts Center, is pleased to announce Tiffany Fairall as Chief Curator and Colette Pecenka as Curator of Exhibitions and Education. With over twenty years of museum experience, Fairall previously served as Curator of Exhibitions at Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum and was the museum's Associate Curator from 2006-2016. Pecenka, who brings 20+ years arts administration experience in a variety of roles, previously served as the museum's registrar and arts education specialist from 2010-2016.

"Tiffany's leadership in curatorial efforts will continue to have a profound impact on Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum's exhibitions," says Cindy Ornstein, Executive Director of Mesa Arts Center and Director of Arts and Culture for the City of Mesa. "We are beyond pleased to have her take the helm in the role of Chief Curator."

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Fairall has organized a variety of exhibitions that demonstrate her interest in popular culture and social commentary, most notably being *Jazz It Up! Jazz Inspired Art from Today* along with Faith Ringgold's *Jazz Stories* (2019), *We the People: Contemporary American Figurative Art* (2018); *AltRealities: The Fantastical Worlds & Creatures of Contemporary Artists* (2017), *Boundless: The Book Transformed in Contemporary Art* (2015), *Messin' with the Masters* (2013) and *Beneath the Skin: Artwork Inspired by Tattoos* (2008). In March 2016, Fairall proposed and oversaw the installation of *Desert Rose (Nuevas Generaciones)*, the museum's now iconic 35-foot mural landmark by local legend El Mac.

Of the appointment, Fairall says, "I'm thrilled to have this opportunity to continue some of the amazing programs and exhibitions Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum is known for and bring forward my own curatorial flare and vision. As an Arizonan, I am interested in featuring local talent...fellow creatives from this state, transplants as well as those who have migrated elsewhere. I often hear people sarcastically comment, 'There is no culture in Arizona!' I hope to show that Arizona has as much sophistication as both coasts but with amiable accessibility. I am also passionate about providing a platform for marginalized voices and see contemporary art as a powerful catalyst for socially relevant topics that are minimized or absent in the mainstream dialogue."

In Summer 2018, Fairall played a significant role in bringing the large-scale installation of *Fantastic Planet* to Mesa which corresponded with the human figure themed exhibitions of Patti Warashina, Rachel Bess, Colin Chillag, Marilyn Szabo as well as the invitational, *We the People*. Fairall is heading up several upcoming projects, including an ambitious social

collaboration and installation by award-winning artist Cannupa Hanska Luger (Summer 2020), among many others. “Tiffany has her finger on the pulse of timely and relevant issues, trends and artists of the contemporary world, and she successfully pushes the boundaries of what a contemporary arts museum can offer,” said Robert Schultz, Assistant Director of Mesa Arts Center and City of Mesa Arts and Culture. “We’re excited to support Tiffany and Colette as they transition into these new roles.”

Prior to this appointment, Fairall served as the Curatorial Assistant/Assistant Registrar for the ASU Art Museum, where she implemented events and programming for the Ceramics Research Center and helped manage the museum’s collection and exhibitions. A Regent Scholar, Fairall received her MA and BA in Art History as well as her BFA in Graphic Design from Arizona State University.

Pecenka most recently served as an Arts Consultant for the Mayo Clinic and an Arts Specialist for the Phoenix Airport Museum, where she designed, co-curated and managed arts exhibitions, public art installations and special projects for 30 gallery spaces throughout Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, Deer Valley Airport, Goodyear Airport and Sky Harbor Rental Car Center. She holds a BA in Ceramics and a MA in Elementary Education and Teaching, both degrees from Arizona State University.

Fairall began her tenure in March 2019; Pecenka was appointed in April of 2019.

Mesa Arts Center is located at 1 East Main Street in downtown Mesa, Arizona.

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About Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum at Mesa Arts Center

Mesa Arts Center’s (MAC) mission is to invite all people to create and discover entertaining, challenging and diverse art and arts experiences within joyous, dynamic and welcoming environments. As part of Mesa Arts Center, Mesa Contemporary Arts Museum (MCA Museum) showcases the best in Contemporary Art by emerging, nationally and internationally recognized artists. MCA Museum provides support and advancement to artists through solo, group and juried exhibitions. MCA Museum’s free admission and strong engagement programs provide visitors with free school and public tours, a robust docent program and free artist talks.