

Harn Museum of Art Director Rebecca M. Nagy Announces Retirement

GAINESVILLE, FL, Nov. 1, 2017—After 15 years as director of the Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida, Rebecca M. Nagy has announced she will retire from her position in the summer of 2018.

Nagy was appointed director of the Harn in July 2002. Under her leadership, the Harn has become essential in the cultural and academic life of UF and the Gainesville community, as well as increased its collections and visibility of exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Significant building expansions have been completed under her direction. These include an 18,000-square-foot wing with galleries for contemporary art, classrooms and a café in 2005 and a 26,000-square-foot wing for the exhibition, conservation and study of Asian art in 2012.

Art in the Harn's collections has increased from approximately 4,700 to 11,100 works—more than doubling the amount of art available for display, research and teaching. That growth has allowed the Harn to loan numerous works of art to other institutions and organize original exhibitions that travel to other venues across the nation.

Transformative strategic planning focusing on community engagement and immersing art into UF academics has resulted in a steady increase of numbers served to more than 100,000 visitors per year. Membership has reached record highs with over 6,000 individual members, of whom more than 2,000 are UF students. Harn staff has grown from three curators overseeing the collections to six curators overseeing the major collecting areas of African, Asian, modern and contemporary art and photography. The education department has also grown to include an Education Curator of Academic Programs, whose goal is to collaborate with campus departments and colleges in order to incorporate art into student learning experiences.

Since Nagy's appointment, endowments supporting acquisitions and programs at the Harn have grown to a total current market value of \$19.2 million. This includes 22 new endowments added since her appointment worth an estimated current market value of \$8.48 million.

"It has been an honor to lead the Harn through significant growth in what feels like a very short amount of time," Nagy said. "My years here have provided challenges, rich rewards and much joy and satisfaction. There are great things ahead for the Harn. I leave secure in the knowledge that my colleagues' passion, energy and dedication to excellence will thrive under new leadership."

Throughout her career, Nagy has curated exhibitions, published articles and exhibition catalogues, and lectured widely about medieval, contemporary and African art. For the Harn, she co-organized the exhibition "Continuity and Change: Three Generations of Ethiopian Artists" (2007) with Achameleh Debela and produced the accompanying catalogue, and worked with an international curatorial team from the Harn and the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Belgium to organize the traveling exhibition "Kongo across the Waters" (2014). She also collaborated with Susan Cooksey to co-curate "Deep Roots, Bold Visions: Self-Taught Artists of Alachua County" (2012).

Nagy has served as a trustee of the Association of Art Museum Directors, is immediate-past-president of the Florida Art Museum Directors Association and currently serves on the board of the Florida Association of Museums. She is an editor for the scholarly journal "African Arts." Nagy is an emerita board member of Gainesville's Matheson History Museum and a former board member of the Arts Council of the African Studies Association, Art in Public Places Trust of Gainesville and Alachua County, Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club of Gainesville and Gainesville Women's Forum.

Prior to her appointment as director of the Harn, Nagy spent 17 years at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh, where she concluded her tenure as associate director of education while also serving as curator of African art. From 1988 through 2002, she also served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she was awarded her doctorate in art history in 1983. Nagy was a lecturer in the department of art and art history at the Cleveland Museum of Art from 1982 to 1985.

"I have seen the results of Nagy's determination to make the Harn's collections and exhibitions accessible for all," said Joseph Glover, UF provost and senior vice president of academic affairs. "Her exemplary leadership has ensured the Harn will continue to enrich lives in our community for generations to come."

The search firm Russell Reynolds and Associates has been selected to conduct a national search for the next director and a search committee has been assembled with the goal of having the new director ready to step in when Nagy retires.

About the Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art

Founded in 1990, the Harn Museum of Art is an integral part of the University of Florida. The Harn contributes to an interconnected, international community by integrating the arts and culture into curricula throughout the university's system of colleges and centers. Its holdings include more than 11,100 works in five main collecting areas: Asian art, African art, photography, modern art of the Americas and Europe, and international contemporary art. The museum also has noteworthy collections of Oceanic and Ancient American Art and works on paper. In addition to rotating installations drawn from its permanent collection, the Harn organizes traveling exhibitions, public lectures, panel discussions, academic symposia, and educational programs for adults, students, and children.

The Harn Museum of Art, at 3259 Hull Road in Gainesville, Florida, is part of the University of Florida's Cultural Plaza, which is also home to the Florida Museum of Natural History and the Phillips Center for the Performing Arts. Admission is free. Hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. The museum is open until 9 p.m. the second Thursday of every month for Museum Nights. The Camellia Court Café is open Tuesday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information call 352-392-9826 or visit harn.ufl.edu.

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