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Harn Museum of Art Appoints New Curator of Contemporary Art

GAINESVILLE, FL, Feb. 7, 2022—The Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida is pleased to announce the appointment of Jade Powers as Curator of Contemporary Art following a nation-wide search. Powers will assume her new position on Apr. 1, 2022. She joins the Harn from the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri where she curated more than ten permanent collection and special exhibitions since being appointed



Jade Powers, New Curator of Contemporary Art,
Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida
Photograph by Kenny Johnson

as Assistant Curator in 2018. Exhibition highlights include *Dyani White Hawk: Speaking to Relatives* (2021), *Well-Read: Artists Inspired by Literature* (2021), *Dawoud Bey: Selections from Night Coming Tenderly, Black* (2020), and *Deconstructing Marcus Jansen* (2018). In her role, Powers implemented acquisitions of contemporary art, co-authored and managed the *Dyani White Hawk* exhibition catalog, and was instrumental in the launch of the Kemper’s new “Young Friends” collector group.

Before joining the Kemper Museum, Powers was the 2017-2018 Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellow at the Saint Louis Art Museum. There, she created the first museum-wide gallery guide to comprehensively highlight works by artists of African descent and began research for the exhibition *Shape of Abstraction* (2019), showcasing a gift of more than 80 abstract works by African American artists. Powers implemented public programs including the panel *If It Wasn’t for the Women: Science, Shape, and Self*, as well as presented gallery talks, guided tours and created a teacher workshop to help educators add information about abstract art by African American artists to their curriculum.

“We are so excited to welcome Powers into the curatorial department and look forward to collaborating with her on acquisitions of global contemporary art as well as fostering her creative ideas in developing new exhibitions at the Harn,” said Dulce Román, Chief Curator and Curator of Modern Art.

Powers received her MA (2015) in religious studies at Indiana University (Bloomington, Indiana), with a focus on contemporary Asian art and culture. In addition to her previous curatorial experience, she has been a Visiting Critic at Washington University St. Louis, University of Kansas, and the Kansas City Art Institute, a Juror for several artist

awards, as well as a Visiting Lecturer for the MFA graduate seminar at the University of Kansas. In December 2018, she was included in Culture Type's "28 Art Curators to Watch," an article highlighting Black curators who are making significant contributions to the museum field.

"Powers' curatorial and academic experience align perfectly with the Harn's new strategic goals of providing meaningful, art-centered opportunities for all University of Florida students across academic disciplines, as well as our community across the greater Gainesville area," said Lee Anne Chesterfield, Harn Museum of Art Director. "We are so pleased to welcome her during this exciting time when the Harn will be expanding our programming and the museum itself with a new wing."

Powers will lead the development and interpretation of the Harn's contemporary collection, featured in the 6,500-square-foot gallery within the Mary Ann Harn Cofrin Pavilion and adjacent Bob and Nancy Magoon Garden. The contemporary collection includes more than 2,000 objects of international art in all media including exemplary works from major contemporary art movements and works by established and emerging artists from around the world.

"I am excited to join the Harn's talented team and build upon the museum's history of bringing art to visitors for more than thirty years," said Jade Powers, New Harn Curator of Contemporary Art. "I look forward to putting my passion and education to work by connecting the community with global contemporary art fostering dialogue and exploration."

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 13,300 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, Ancient American Art and works on paper. In addition to rotating installations drawn from its permanent collection, the Harn organizes traveling exhibitions and virtual 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 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. Sunday. For more information visit harn.ufl.edu.

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