

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ST. PETE

The Museum of Fine Arts, St Petersburg Embarks on a New Era with Strong Leadership, Dynamic Programming, and a Mission-Driven Mindset.

Anne-Marie Russell, named Executive Director & CEO effective immediately, brings entrepreneurial experience and a wealth of knowledge, expertise, and passion to the MFA and St. Petersburg community.



ST. PETERSBURG, FL (March 17, 2023) – [The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg](#) (MFA) today announces Anne-Marie Russell as Executive Director and CEO. Russell joined the MFA in September 2022 as Interim Executive Director.

As Executive Director and CEO, Russell will be responsible for continuing the successful momentum of the MFA, providing leadership and support to the accomplished staff to ensure the museum maintains the high-quality experience for which it's celebrated, from curating exciting exhibitions to delivering engaging community programs to preserving works of art for generations to come. In her first six months at the MFA, Russell has been pivotal in reshaping the museum's structure, processes, and focus to support the core mission. Her keen leadership and experience as a museum director have proven invaluable during her short time with the MFA.

"Anne-Marie brings a highly informed understanding of professional art museum practice, an inclusive, community engagement approach, and a deep and abiding passion for art," said Dimity Carlson, Chair of the Board of Trustees. "Always mission-oriented, she has compelling ideas about how the MFA can further engage, educate and excite our community. Such thoughts led to the recent creation of the Museum Studies Institute, which provides the opportunity to re-examine the role of the encyclopedic museum in society, re-animate the MFA with thoughtful yet entertaining programs, and involve our community in the conversation along the way. Anne-Marie is the ideal person to lead us into our next chapter."

Over the past several months, Russell has worked alongside museum staff and the Board of Trustees to harmoniously bring together the wide range of extraordinary offerings at the MFA—great exhibitions, dynamic programming, mission-driven retail opportunities, delicious culinary sensations, fun social events, and community engagement collaborations—and activating them to create innovative and holistic art experiences. This momentum carries forward as the museum prepares for the opening of *Gio Swaby: Fresh Up* at the Art Institute of Chicago and the announcement of the [EXPO CHICAGO Northern Trust Purchase Prize](#) in April.

"I'm honored and inspired to be stepping into the Executive Director and CEO role at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg," states Russell. "I look forward to working with the museum's dedicated board and incredible staff, our members, constituents, colleagues, and supporters to continue bringing excellent exhibitions and dynamic programming to our St. Petersburg and greater Tampa Bay communities. I am especially inspired by our community's commitment to art and ideas. The overwhelming response we've had to our current programming season is a testament to the remarkable people who make up this community, and their interest in topical content. Our guest speakers have been equally impressed by our enthusiastic and involved audiences. We look forward to continually expanding and inspiring engagement in the community as we embrace the freedom to re-imagine how art museums can better serve our society."

Russell brings more than 25 years of expertise in cultural production leadership, both institutional and entrepreneurial, to the MFA. She received a BA in cultural anthropology from the University of Colorado at Boulder and an MA in art history from the University of Arizona. She was the inaugural Executive Director of the Sarasota Art Museum and previously the Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tucson. Before joining the MFA, she was the founding Executive Director for Architecture Sarasota. In addition to her vast museum and nonprofit leadership roles, Russell is a

respected and award-winning documentary film director and entrepreneurial business leader who has utilized new technologies to make art accessible to wider audiences. Her educational leadership is demonstrated through her role in co-designing, leading, and teaching a unique MA program at Christie's auction house, in addition to her teaching positions at the University of Arizona. Russell joined the MFA as Interim Executive Director in September 2022 and is the seventh director in the MFA's history.

Related News:

[MFA Unveils New Opportunities to Engage Audiences with Dynamic Winter-Spring Programming Season](#) and Special Exhibitions



Russell has placed a reignited focus on reengaging the community with exciting, entertaining, and mission-driven educational programming. Announced in February, the Winter-Spring Programming Season at the MFA features prominent figures in the art world, including Jerry Saltz, Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, Maira Kalman, and Billy Collins, as well as MFA Curators. Much of the programming ties directly back to Russell's dedication to revisiting the vision of Founder Margaret Acheson Stuart, a commitment to making art from around the world, and throughout time, available to all in our community.

The new programming season includes several new series, including *Museum Studies Institute*, *Art Now*, *The Story of Art*, *In Conversation*, and *By Design*. Each program allows audiences to delve deeper into the MFA Collection, garner different perspectives from experts, and reflect on how current issues impact the art museum space and our lives.

In addition to the recently announced [Winter-Spring Programming Season](#), the MFA has several new special exhibitions lined up, including [Shashin: Japanese Photographs from the Meiji era, 1870–1900](#) and [Lasting Impressions: Japanese Prints from the Read-Simms Collection](#).

MFA Prepares for Opening of *Gio Swaby: Fresh Up* at the Art Institute of Chicago Aligned with [EXPO CHICAGO and the Northern Trust Purchase Prize](#)



Gio Swaby, *Pretty Pretty 8 (detail)*, 2021, Thread and cotton fabric on Muslin, Museum purchase in honor of James G. Sweeney

On the heels of the successful [debut solo museum exhibition](#) of multidisciplinary artist Gio Swaby (b. 1991, Nassau, Bahamas) at the MFA, the Art Institute of Chicago will open [Gio Swaby: Fresh Up](#) on April 8, 2023. This exhibition, co-organized between the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg and the Art Institute of Chicago, features bodies of work by Gio Swaby spanning 2017 through 2021. Employing the portrait genre and a range of textile-based techniques, Swaby explores the intersections of Blackness and womanhood. MFA Senior Curator of Contemporary Art Katherine Pill co-curated this exhibition with the Art Institute of Chicago Chair and Christa C. Mayer Thurman Curator of Textiles Melinda Watt.



The opening of *Gio Swaby: Fresh Up* at the AIC coincides with **EXPO CHICAGO**, the International Exposition of Contemporary and Modern Art, taking place April 13–16 at Navy Pier's Festival Hall in Chicago. EXPO CHICAGO features leading international galleries alongside a premier platform for contemporary art and cultural programming. In December 2022, EXPO CHICAGO and Northern Trust announced the annual [Northern Trust Purchase Prize](#), awarded to three institutions for the tenth-anniversary edition of the fair. The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg was named one of three museums to win the 2023 Northern Trust Purchase Prize, alongside the Seattle Art Museum and the Saint

Louis Art Museum.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg (MFA) at 255 Beach Drive NE is one of the largest encyclopedic art museums in Florida. The collection includes works of art from ancient times to the present day and from around the world, including ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, Native American, European, American, and contemporary art. The photography collection is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast. For more information, please visit mfastpete.org and follow @mfastpete on social media.

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