

TACOMA ART MUSEUM

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Executive Director Named at Tacoma Art Museum



Tacoma, WA—Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) welcomes David Setford as its new Executive Director. Setford brings over 30 years of experience in museums and other arts organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom as a curator, director/administrator, and fundraiser. With an entrepreneurial and community-driven approach, Setford has also been instrumental in organizing exhibitions on a diverse array of iconic artists such as Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Georgia O'Keeffe, Gordon Parks, Frida Kahlo, Andrew Wyeth, as well as Northwest artists Jacob Lawrence and Dale Chihuly.

Setford's original expertise was in 19th and 20th century European Art, and later he added a passion for 20th century American Art. "I'm so excited to be moving to Tacoma and the Pacific Northwest, and joining the Tacoma Art Museum," says Setford. "TAM is a real gem, renowned across the country for its progress over the last 20 years, as well as for its amazing collections. I am delighted and inspired by the fact that I will be working with such a committed board, staff, and collectors and stakeholders such as the Haub and Benaroya families."

Setford comes to TAM from his tenure as the Executive Director of the Spanish Colonial Arts Society and Museum of Spanish Colonial Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. His role there encompassed fundraising, community engagement, and collaborating on and raising the profile of exhibitions and programs at the museum to attract a wider cross-section of the local community as well as tourists. In addition, Setford organized three contemporary art markets for over 250 local artists, jewelers, and craftspeople, as well as significant education programs in schools, throughout the community, and at the museum.

"I have found that exhibitions and programs which excite and engage are at the very core of a museum's potential to be at the heart of its community. I look forward to engaging new audiences and non-traditional visitors through education and outreach," stated Setford. "The exhibition of photographs of Frida Kahlo (*Espejo Espejo: Fotografías de Frida Kahlo*), which we brought to the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art, tripled attendance and related income and served as a catalyst for fantastic community engagement. I look forward to continuing with similar efforts at TAM."

Setford arrived in the United States with a love for glass as a medium, and was then struck by the depth of creativity in the American Studio Glass movement. He developed a deep admiration for the work of Dale Chihuly, William Morris, Cappy Thompson, Ginny Ruffner, Toots Zynsky, Howard Ben Tré, and many others. Over the years Setford was involved with several exhibitions by studio glass artists and for a while managed Artform, an innovative art fair that was mostly devoted to art by these groundbreaking artists. “I am particularly excited to be coming to TAM where all the collections are very familiar to me,” he said. “I also look forward to strengthening our partnership with the Museum of Glass.”

“The board of trustees is thrilled to have David lead the museum at this time when TAM is securing its presence on the national stage,” said TAM’s Board President Bill Driscoll. “After an extensive international search, the Trustees and I are pleased to have found the strongest candidate in David Setford.” TAM’s Chief Curator and Deputy Director Rock Hushka shared, “David brings his passion and commitment to extraordinary collections and exhibitions coupled with a deep commitment to providing access to museums.”

Setford will start his role at TAM on March 5, taking the place of community business leader and Interim Executive Director Mark Holcomb. Setford said with anticipation, “Community engagement is absolutely crucial. I look forward to continuing TAM’s momentum while helping TAM cement its place as a leading regional and national institution through outreach, partnerships, exhibitions, collections development, and financial sustainability.”

Press are invited to schedule an interview with the new Executive Director, contact Adrienne Edmonson at: AEdmonson@TacomaArtMuseum.org

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About Tacoma Art Museum

Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) is an anchor in the city’s downtown and a gathering space for connecting people through art. TAM serves the diverse communities of the Northwest through its collection, exhibitions, and learning programs, emphasizing art and artists from the Northwest and broader western region. TAM’s collection contains over 5,000 works, including the largest retrospective museum collection of glass art by Tacoma native Dale Chihuly, the most significant museum collection of jewelry by Northwest artists, key holdings in 19th century European and 20th century American art, and one of the finest collections of Japanese woodblock prints on the West Coast. In 2014, TAM welcomed a gift of 295 works of western American art in the Haub Family Collection, one of the premier collections in the nation and the first major western American art museum collection in the Northwest. The Haub gift included funding for new galleries; the Haub Family Galleries opened in 2014. In January 2016, TAM announced the gift of the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Collection, including 225 works of art. The gift also includes funding for the Benaroya wing, expected to open in early 2019. TAM welcomes you to come explore the galleries and relax in our serene light-filled architecture—your perfect destination for shopping, art-making, dining, and inspiration.

HOURS – Tuesdays–Sundays 10 am–5 pm, Third Thursdays 10 am–8 pm; Third Thursdays free 5–8 pm.

ADMISSION – Adult \$15, Student/Senior (65+) \$13, Family \$40 (2 adults and up to 4 children under 18), Children 5 and under free. TAM Members; active duty military, reservists, veterans, and their families always free.

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