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## BLOCK MUSEUM NAMES ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ENGAGEMENT AND CURATOR OF PUBLIC PRACTICE

EVANSTON, IL — Northwestern University's Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art has appointed Susannah Bielak its first Associate Director of Engagement and Curator of Public Practice.

Bielak, a practicing artist who most recently served as Associate Director of Public and Interpretive Programs at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, will develop interdisciplinary programming that connects the Block's art exhibitions, permanent collection, and online endeavors to the world beyond the museum. Bielak will also lead initiatives engaging the Block as a teaching museum and host for cross-disciplinary and civic dialogue—furthering the Block's mission to use art as a springboard for exploring issues and ideas.

Bielak will draw upon her extensive experience as a university educator and arts administrator as she forges innovative collaborations both within and outside Northwestern. In addition, she will oversee the Block's communication strategies and enhance its use of social media to encourage audience participation.

"Susy brings a breadth of experience in engaging diverse audiences," said Lisa Graziose Corrin, the Block Museum's Ellen Philips Katz Director. "Her appointment reflects the Block Museum's commitment to bringing artists, the Northwestern community, and the public together in a meaningful dialogue."

At the Walker Art Center Bielak directed the museum's Target Free Thursday Nights; produced panel discussions, performances, and other projects in association with curators and artists; and created interpretive materials in a broad array of media. Bielak also helped oversee Open Field, the Walker's annual summer program centered on audience participation, which includes artists' residencies, family programs, and more than 100 events organized by members of the public.

"As head of public programs at the Walker, Susy created programming that blended the intellectual rigor of the scholar with the speculative poetics of the artist," said Sarah Schultz, Director of Education and Curator of Public Practice at the Walker. "Her enthusiasm and inventiveness in making art relevant and alive will find a perfect home at the Block Museum."

Bielak has frequently worked with university faculty and students. During her time at the Walker, she taught a University of Minnesota graduate seminar that used the museum

as a studio, served as internal faculty for the Minneapolis College of Art and Design's course Class in Residence, and collaborated with faculty from Georgia Tech and the University of Minnesota's School of Architecture on the interdisciplinary course Kitchen Lab. Before joining the Walker, Bielak earned an MFA from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), where she also served as Associate Director of Art and Technology and curriculum developer at UCSD's Sixth College. Bielak developed workshops, lectures, gallery tours and other programs with departments throughout the university as well as local museums and social service organizations. While there, she founded a gallery focused on contemporary art speaking to course themes.

She also spent more than four years as the program manager for Arts Midwest, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit, where she coproduced the first binational conference for state and regional arts leaders from the United States and Mexico, and designed a framework for a \$1.1 million public art program in those two countries.

Bielak says the position at the Block is an extraordinary match with her experience and skills.

"The Block brings together arts, pedagogy and interdisciplinarity—passions that drive my work," she said. "Similarly, Northwestern's strategic goals of integrating learning and experience and connecting with community speak to my own background and interests."

Bielak takes up her new position in October.

For more information about the Block Museum, visit <http://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu>.