

Tananbaums endow curator position at Block Museum of Art

Million-dollar gift will support Northwestern's modern and contemporary art program

EVANSTON -- The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University has announced the receipt of a major endowment from Lisa (WCAS '86) and Steven Tananbaum in support of its modern and contemporary art program. The \$1 million gift will permanently establish the position of the Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art.

"Lisa and Steven Tananbaum are deeply devoted to public appreciation of the art of our time and are dedicated supporters of Northwestern and its commitment to making the arts part of the educational experience of all of its students," said Lisa Corrin, the Block Museum's Ellen Philip Katz Director. "We are extraordinarily grateful to them for this visionary gift."

Janet Dees will be the inaugural Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art. Dees joined the Block team in 2015 from SITE Santa Fe, where she served as the Eugene Thaw Curatorial Fellow, assistant curator and curator of contemporary art. Earlier this year, she curated the Block's "If You Remember, I'll Remember" exhibition. She is currently preparing the 2018 exhibition "Experiments in Form: Sam Gilliam, Alan Shields, Frank Stella." Dees is completing a Ph.D. in art history at the University of Delaware, focusing on the performance art of Linda Montano and Adrian Piper.

The Block has received recent acclaim for its presentation of contemporary art and partnerships with living artists. 2016/2017 programs have included residencies by interdisciplinary artists Jen Bervin, Dario Robleto and Pedro Reyes, each inspired by engineering and technology, as well as a lecture series featuring global museum directors such as Bisi Silva of Centre of Contemporary Art Lagos, Abdellah Karroum of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art and Thom Collins of the Barnes Foundation in Philadelphia. Modern and contemporary art has become a strong through line of the Block's curatorial program, including recent museum commissions from Kader Attia, Marie Watt and Geof Oppenheimer and exhibitions focusing on the work of Tseng Kwong Chi, Wangechi Mutu, Terry Adkins and Carrie Mae Weems.

Northwestern has identified discovery and creativity as strategic priorities, shaping innovative solutions to global issues and developing new forms of creative expression, and the Block Museum is uniquely poised to serve these core institutional values.

“The Tananbaums’ gift will help advance our capacity to present major exhibitions and to commission new work by artists working internationally who will be invited to campus to interact with faculty and students and be nourished by the extraordinary resources of Northwestern,” notes Corrin. “Our faculty and students across the University are extremely enthusiastic about engaging with artists and the creative process. The Block’s contemporary program is also adding to the vibrancy of Chicago’s cultural scene.”

“We are thrilled to support the Block Museum of Art in its commitment to serve as a dynamic, imaginative and innovative teaching and learning resource for Northwestern University,” state Steven and Lisa Munster Tananbaum. “It is our hope that students from every discipline will have the opportunity to interact and learn more about contemporary art and artists as this reflects different views and the culture of our times.”

Lisa Munster Tananbaum is a 1986 graduate of Northwestern’s Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences, where she majored in political science with interdisciplinary interests in art history and studio art. Following graduation, she worked in commercial real estate as well as public administration. She has served as co-chair of the New York Regional Campaign Committee for We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern, co-chair of the Northwestern University Leadership Circle New York Regional Board and as a long-term member of the Women’s Initiative of Northwestern. In addition to her service on the Block Museum board of advisors, she is a member of the Art and Design Committee at MOMA, the advisory board of the Institute of Contemporary Art University of Pennsylvania and the board of the Israel Museum.

Steven Tananbaum is founder, managing partner and chief investment officer of GoldenTree Asset Management LP. A graduate of Vassar College, he is a past trustee and supports the school’s Tananbaum Family Leadership Program for Work and Development, a summer fellowship opportunity. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and is a member of the Painting and Sculpture Acquisitions Committee for MOMA.

Lisa and Steven Tananbaum are significant collectors of postwar and contemporary art, appearing frequently on ARTnews’ “Top 200 Collectors” list. Their collections include painting, sculpture and video by such artists as Brice Marden, Ellsworth Kelly, Frank Stella, Willem de Kooning, Gerhard Richter, Takashi Murakami, Andreas Gursky and Damian Hirst. In 2014, the couple was honored as collectors at the fifth annual Bruce Museum Icon Awards in the Arts. As philanthropists, the Tananbaums also have supported The Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Norton Museum of Art, among many others.

This endowment is the couple’s second gift to Northwestern University, after supporting the Summer Internship Grant Program, to fund undergraduate student internships. Both gifts support We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern. The funds raised through the campaign are helping realize the transformational vision set forth in Northwestern’s strategic plan and solidify the University’s position among the world’s leading research universities. Information for We Will. The Campaign for Northwestern is available online.