

**City of Los Angeles  
Department of Cultural Affairs**

***CURRENT:LA FOOD***

**Lead Curatorial Team and Committee Biographies**

**Elsa Longhauser** established the ICA LA, formerly known as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), as an epicenter of artistic and intellectual energy and innovation. As executive director, Longhauser continues to identify pioneering artists and thinkers and forge new connections among artists, curators, and audiences. The exhibitions she supports and organizes bring international, national, and local artists to the Museum and add essential voices to the chorus of contemporary art. During her tenure as director of the Galleries at Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia from 1983 to 2000, Longhauser focused on three key artistic practices: important American artists, European artists who had not yet been shown in the United States, and outsider artists whose work merited sustained scholarly inquiry yet had not previously been placed in a fine-art context. Her extensive work in this field led to her collaboration with the renowned curator Harald Szeemann on an encyclopedic exhibition and catalogue for the American Folk Art Museum in New York, *Self-Taught Artists of the 20th Century* (Chronicle Books, 1998). In 2000, when Longhauser came to SMMoA—a non-collecting museum of contemporary art in a diverse, cosmopolitan city—it was the perfect laboratory for developing what she calls “a collection of ideas”. Since then, she has continually diversified the museum’s curatorial voice, inviting the collaboration of distinguished guest curators as well as international scholars, performers, and activists.

**Asuka Hisa** has developed unique public engagement programs for the ICA LA, formerly known as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), since 1998. Prior to SMMoA, she taught art to youth in France and to students of the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District. Over the years, she has created a number of acclaimed and award-winning programs: *Wall Works*, *Cause for Creativity*, *Park Studio*, and *ARTransmissions*. In 2012, *Wall Works* received the Excellence in Museum Education award from the California State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the California Association of Museums. She collaborates with ICA LA’s curatorial staff and director Elsa Longhauser to produce exhibition programs and multi-disciplinary presentations titled *A Collection of Ideas*. She received her B.A. from Barnard College and her National Diploma of Art from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in France. As an artist, she has exhibited in Europe and in Los Angeles. She is the past President of the Museum Educators of Southern California (MESOC). In 2003, she received the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres from the French Ministry of Culture. In 2007, she was appointed to the Arts Commission of the City of Santa Monica and formed the Arts and Learning Committee in 2009. She is on the board of Automata Arts, an avant-garde puppetry and film organization. She also sits on the Arts and the Urban Fabric committee for the City of Santa Monica Arts Commission.

**Jamillah James** is Curator at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA). Previously, she was Assistant Curator at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, and organized exhibitions and programs for Art + Practice in LA’s Leimert Park. Past exhibitions include *John Outterbridge: Rag Man* (co-organized with Anne Ellegood), *Njideka Akunyili Crosby: The Beautiful Ones*, *Two Films by Akosua Adoma Owusu*, *Selections from the Brockman Gallery Archives*, and *Charles Gaines: Librettos: Manuel de Falla/Stokely Carmichael* (with Ellegood). At

the Hammer, she organized *A Shape That Stands Up* at Art + Practice, *Hammer Projects: Njideka Akunyili Crosby, Charles Gaines: Gridwork 1974–1989* (with Ellegood; curated by The Studio Museum in Harlem); and assisted Connie Butler on the exhibition and publication *Mark Bradford: Scorched Earth*. Previously, James has held curatorial positions at the Studio Museum in Harlem and Queens Museum, and has independently organized exhibitions, performances, and screenings throughout the US and Canada since 2004. Her writings have been included in *Artforum* and the *International Review of African American Art*, and featured in exhibition catalogues for the ICA LA, the Leslie-Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art in New York, the Hammer Museum; the Nasher Museum at Duke University, and the Studio Museum, among others. James is an adjunct professor in the Graduate Art Department at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, and regularly lectures on curating, contemporary art, and professional development for artists at various colleges and institutions across the country.

**Diana Nawi** is an independent curator based in Los Angeles. Most recently, she has organized *Adler Guerrier: Conditions and Forms for blk Longevity* at the California African American Museum. She previously served as Associate Curator at Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) for five years, where she curated major exhibitions and organized newly commissioned projects with artists including Yael Bartana, John Dunkley, Iman Issa, Bouchra Khalili, LOS JAICHACKERS, Shana Lutker, and Nari Ward. Prior to joining PAMM, Nawi worked as an assistant curator on the Abu Dhabi Project of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation and served as a fellow at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago and the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art. Nawi's writing has appeared in publications for the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore, MOCA GA, Marrakech Biennial, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, Museum Villa Stuck, National Gallery of Jamaica, New Museum, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Studio Museum of Harlem, among others. Most recently Nawi was selected (with Naima Keith) to organize Prospect.5, the next edition of the New Orleans triennial (Fall of 2020).

**Lauren Mackler** is a French / American curator and graphic designer based in Los Angeles. In 2010, she founded Public Fiction, a forum to stage exhibitions and performances by contemporary artists, a year later she founded the PF journal with the same mission in print. Mackler has organized Public Fiction exhibitions at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) LA, the Hammer Museum, The MAK Center for Art and Architecture's Schindler House, Artissima LIDO in Turin, Italy, and Frieze Projects in New York, among others. She is currently the Managing Editor of *SubLevel*, CalArts' literary magazine out of the School of Critical Studies, and has been faculty at the School of Visual Arts in New York, the Graduate Department of Art at UCLA, and Otis College of Art and Design. Mackler is a contributor to various periodicals, catalogues, and artist monographs. She is also a founding member of the Artists Acquisition Club, a non-profit which collectively-collects works by artists' artists and gifts them to institutions. In 2015, she was awarded the Rome Prize by the American Academy in Rome.

**Marco Rios** is a Los Angeles-based artist who works in sculpture, photography, video, and performance. He received his M.F.A. in Studio Art from the University of California, Irvine and his undergraduate degree from Otis College of Art and Design in Los Angeles. His work has been exhibited at LACMA; Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions; Artists Space, New York; Estacion, Tijuana, Mexico. Previous exhibitions include *Death's Boutique* at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; *Mixed Signals*, a traveling exhibition organized by ICI; *This is Killing Me*, a group exhibition at MASS MoCA; *Despair Beyond Despair*, a solo project at LAX

ART, Los Angeles; and the 2008 California Biennial at Orange County Museum of Art. Recently, he had his third solo exhibition "*S*" is for Sincere formerly formally "*F*" is for Fake at Simon Preston Gallery, NY; a solo project *Anatomy of an Absent Artist* at Santa Monica Museum, CA; and an outdoor public project at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis. In 2007, he was a recipient of the California Community Foundation Fellowship. In 2008, he was selected as one of the James Irvine Foundation Visions from the New California awardees, and in 2009 awarded an ARC grant from The Durfee Foundation. Most recently he was awarded an Art Matters grant in 2016.

Marco Rios is represented by Simon Preston Gallery in NY and has been Gallery Curator of The Luckman Gallery at The Luckman Fine Arts Complex at Cal State LA since 2010.

For more information about ***CURRENT:LA***, please visit:

<http://www.currentla.org/>

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### **About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)**

As a leading, progressive arts and cultural agency, DCA empowers Los Angeles's vibrant communities by supporting and providing access to quality visual, literary, musical, performing, and educational arts programming; managing vital cultural centers; preserving historic sites; creating public art; and funding services provided by arts organizations and individual artists. Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA's mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making, public art, community arts, and strategic marketing and development. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

For more information, please visit [culturela.org](http://culturela.org) or follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/culturela](https://facebook.com/culturela); Instagram [@culture\\_la](https://www.instagram.com/culture_la); and Twitter [@culture\\_la](https://twitter.com/culture_la).

### **About the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA)**

The Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (ICA LA) is a new museum located in Downtown Los Angeles. ICA LA's revelatory exhibitions of works by international artists, dynamic public programs, and inclusive community partnerships reflect the diversity of Los Angeles and the world, fostering critique of the familiar and empathy with the different.

Designed by the interdisciplinary practice wHY under the leadership of Kulapat Yantrasast, the museum's 12,700 square-foot facility features 7,500-square-feet of exhibition space, as well as areas for public programs, offices, and special projects.

ICA LA's mission is to support art that sparks the pleasure of discovery and challenges the way we see and experience the world, ourselves, and each other. Founded in 1984 as the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), ICA LA builds upon a distinguished history of fostering artistic experimentation with bold curatorial choices and connecting with various communities via timely, meaningful, and engaging public programs. ICA LA is committed to making contemporary art relevant and accessible for all. Admission is free.