

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART APPOINTS KATE LEWIS AS THE AGNES GUND CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF THE DAVID BOOTH CONSERVATION CENTER AND DEPARTMENT

NEW YORK, NY, JANUARY 31, 2017—The Museum of Modern Art announces the appointment of Kate Lewis as The Agnes Gund Chief Conservator of the Museum’s David Booth Conservation Center and Department. In this role, she will provide key professional and intellectual leadership for the Museum’s well-established conservation program; oversee the department’s strategic planning and facilities; assess and apply new technologies for treatment and research; collaborate closely with curatorial and senior staff across the Museum; and manage all aspects of collection care, documentation, and research work. Ms. Lewis succeeds James Coddington, who retired last December.

A versatile museum conservator with two decades of experience across conservation specialties including paper, photographs, and time-based media, Ms. Lewis has served as MoMA’s Media Conservator since 2013. As Chief Conservator, she will continue to oversee a major initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for long-term preservation strategies of media-based works. The five-year program, begun in 2016, centers on training post-graduate fellows and a robust program of collaborative professional training.

“I am confident that Kate will provide exemplary leadership to the Museum’s Conservation Department in order to ensure that its vital work will continue in advancing our state-of-the-art conservation program, and in developing the most innovative conservation practice and scientific research,” said MoMA Director Glenn D. Lowry.

“I am thrilled and honored to be given this opportunity, and am very grateful to the staff and trustees who have entrusted me with this position,” said Ms. Lewis. “This is an exciting time for conservation at MoMA, thanks to the exceptional generosity of the recent endowment by David Booth, and I look forward to building upon the department’s reputation for excellence. Over the past three years, I have gained great respect for my conservation colleagues and am eager to support them in my new role.”

Ms. Lewis brings to this position a strong background and extensive experience as a media conservator. From 2005 to 2013 she was a time-based media conservator at Tate, London. At MoMA, she has focused on documentation, expanding best practices for storage and exhibition of media works, and oversaw the successful implementation of a new digital repository. Her experience also includes collaboration in international projects focused on education and advocacy, including the TechFocus Workshop series organized by the American Institute for Conservation’s Electronic Media Group, providing detailed technical education in media art, and

Voices in Contemporary Art (VoCA) a non-profit organization addressing the production, presentation, and preservation of contemporary art through dialogue with artists.

She is a graduate of the Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London with a B.A. in Art History (1994) and earned her M.A. with distinction in the Conservation of Works of Art on Paper (1997) from the University of Northumbria, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The David Booth Conservation Center and Department

In 1958, The Museum of Modern Art founded the first conservation department devoted solely to the care of modern art. Since that time, the Museum has been a leader in the uniquely challenging field of modern and contemporary art conservation. The Museum continues to embrace the innovative materials and practices of today's most daring artists while simultaneously expanding the limits of conservation practice and research to ensure safekeeping of new work for future generations. In 2016, the department and its facilities were named The David Booth Conservation Center and Department to recognize the extraordinary generosity of Trustee David Booth whose gift will support the vital work of the department and enable the advancement of a state-of-the-art conservation program. The responsibilities of The David Booth Conservation Center and Department, which now includes six sections—painting, sculpture, paper, photographs, media and performance, and scientific research—encompasses performing hands-on treatment; engaging in in-depth research on artists' methods and materials; advising on environmental controls throughout the Museum's buildings in Manhattan, Queens, and Pennsylvania; and ensuring safe exhibition, travel, packing, storage, and installation practices to prevent damage and degradation of the collection. Conservation treatment is performed as required, and conservators regularly work with curators to discuss treatments as well as the conservation needs and priorities of each curatorial department. Treatment decisions use an interdisciplinary approach incorporating art historical information, consultation with the artist when appropriate, and rigorous scientific analysis. Research projects are often tied to upcoming exhibitions, new acquisitions, collection installations, areas of special interest, or designing solutions to conservation challenges.

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