

# The Museum of Modern Art

## MoMA APPOINTS UGOCHUKWU-SMOOTH C. NZEWI AS THE STEVEN AND LISA TANANBAUM CURATOR

**NEW YORK, March 6, 2019**—The Museum of Modern Art announces the appointment of Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi as the first Steven and Lisa Tananbaum Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture. His responsibilities will include participating in the Museum’s acquisitions program, the installation of the collection galleries, and the development of special exhibitions and catalogues. He will join the Museum on July 22, 2019.

“I am pleased to welcome Smooth to the curatorial team at MoMA,” said Ann Temkin, The Marie-Josée and Henry Kravis Chief Curator of Painting and Sculpture. “A highly accomplished scholar and curator of African art, Smooth will bring an important perspective as we expand our collection holdings and gallery presentations in new directions across the Museum.”

“I am honored to join MoMA as it continues the necessary task of telling an expansive and more inclusive story of 20th- and 21st-century art,” said Nzewi. “I look forward to collaborating with colleagues across departments in addressing historical gaps through purposeful acquisitions, advancing new programs and exhibitions that address previously unexplored narratives that enrich our knowledge of global art, and, ultimately, in writing the next chapter in the history of this institution.”

Nzewi is currently the Curator of African Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art, where he organized the upcoming exhibition *Second Careers: Two Tributaries in African Art* (October 20, 2019–March 8, 2020) and co-organized, with Emily Liebert, *Ámà: The Gathering Place* (August 2–November 24, 2019), a site-specific commission by Nigerian artist Emeka Ogboh.

From 2013 to 2017 Nzewi was the Curator of African Art at Dartmouth College’s Hood Museum, where he organized exhibitions including *Eric van Hove: The Craft of Art* (2016), *Inventory: New Works and Conversations around African Art* (2016), *Ukwara: Ritual Cloth of the Ekpe Secret Society* (2015), and *The Art of Weapons: Selections from the African Collection* (2014). Nzewi’s acquisitions for the Hood collection include important works by artists such as Kader Attia, Candice Breitz, Ibrahim El-Salahi, Julie Mehretu, and Obiora Udechukwu. Previously, Nzewi was a fellow at the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

Nzewi has contributed essays and chapters to a range of publications, including “Anthropology of Practice: Artists of Africa and the Ethnographic Field in Contemporary Art,” in *Alternative Art and Anthropology: Global Encounters*, edited by Arnd Schneider (London: Bloomsbury, 2017) and “A Nigerian Tradition of Independent Art Spaces/Initiatives,” in *New*

*Spaces for Negotiating Art and Histories in Africa*, edited by Kerstin Pinther, Ugochukwu-Smooth C. Nzewi, and Berit Fischer (Berlin: LitVerlag, 2015).

Nzewi received a BA in sculpture from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and a postgraduate diploma in the African Program in Museum and Heritage Studies from the University of Western Cape. He subsequently received a PhD in art history from Emory University.

Press Contact: Olivia Oramas, [olivia\\_oramas@moma.org](mailto:olivia_oramas@moma.org)  
Press Office, [pressoffice@moma.org](mailto:pressoffice@moma.org)

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