



HIGH MUSEUM OF ART ATLANTA

1280 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E. • ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309

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**LAUREN TATE BAEZA APPOINTED FRED AND RITA RICHMAN CURATOR OF
AFRICAN ART AT HIGH MUSEUM OF ART**

*A noted curator and Africanist, Baeza is currently director of exhibitions for
Atlanta’s National Center for Civil and Human Rights*

ATLANTA, Oct. 27, 2020 — The High Museum of Art today announced the appointment of Lauren Tate Baeza as its Fred and Rita Richman curator of African art. Baeza, who is the director of exhibitions at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights in Atlanta, brings a wide range of experience as a curator and Africanist working with museums and international aid organizations. She will join the High on November 9.

“Lauren’s depth of experience in not only museums but also community organizations focused on education and outreach, and her considerable accomplishments as a curator, scholar and leader, make her uniquely positioned to guide the future of our African art department,” said Rand Suffolk, Nancy and Holcombe T. Green, Jr., director of the High. “We look forward to working with her to further our efforts to build a robust exhibition program and exceptional collection of African art that will continue to resonate with the High’s diverse audiences.”

Baeza will oversee the African art department, including related exhibitions and programs, as well as its collection of more than 1,100 objects dating from ancient through contemporary times. The holdings reflect the continent’s deep, rich history as well as contemporary innovations and include extraordinary examples of masks and sculpture alongside exceptionally fine textiles, beadwork, metalwork and ceramics. To represent the depth and breadth of the African diaspora, the High’s broader collections also feature works by artists of African ancestry, including African American artists, that highlight cultural bonds throughout the Black Atlantic world and beyond.

Added Kevin Tucker, the High’s chief curator, “We are delighted to welcome Lauren as the new curator of African art and share in her knowledge of the fields of African art and cultural history. With both her expertise and collaborative spirit, we know she will contribute greatly to the collective efforts of the High’s curatorial program and, through her endeavors and scholarship, further enrich the field of African art interpretation and expand our efforts to illuminate the international impact of African art.”

As a scholar, Baeza has researched African political and economic phenomena through the lens of cultural geography, specifically examining the spatial history of food culture and artistic practices within the continent and across the Atlantic.

During her tenure at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights (2018-2020), Baeza maintained the Center's two ongoing installations in its American Civil Rights Movement and Global Human Rights Movement galleries and organized 16 temporary exhibitions and installations, including "Fragments," a collaboration with celebrated designer Paula Scher, featuring passages from Dr. King's handwritten speeches and letters. An advocate for the efficacy of art to address some of the world's most challenging issues, Baeza presented artist panel discussions at the Center and led the #artforequaldignity social media campaign to ensure inclusion of artists alongside politicians and human rights experts in social justice work.

From 2018 to 2020, Baeza also curated the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection, featuring approximately 10,000 items, and managed the James Allen and John Littlefield Collection. Prior to joining the Center for Civil and Human Rights, she served as executive director of the APEX Museum in Atlanta, which interprets and presents history from an African American perspective to celebrate the contributions of African Americans to the world.

"This is a very exciting time for the field," said Baeza. "There are numerous incredibly talented artists living and working on the continent with increasing visibility. I look forward to creating a dialogue between their work and the impressive artifacts in the High's African art collection. I'm honored to join such a sharp curatorial team and to meaningfully contribute to a premier arts institution in my hometown."

About Lauren Tate Baeza

An Atlanta native, Lauren Tate Baeza is a curator and Africanist with a background in international aid organizations and museums. Since 2018, she has served as director of exhibitions at the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, as the curator of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King Jr. Collection and as manager of the James Allen and John Littlefield Collection. In addition to maintaining the Center's two permanent exhibits, Baeza organized 16 temporary exhibitions and installations for the cultural institution, including "Fragments," a collaboration with celebrated designer Paula Scher. She also partnered with Art for Amnesty, Oculus, ESPN, the City of Atlanta, the State of Georgia, consulates and nonprofits to create exhibits that used the visual arts to engage a range of civil and human rights issues, such as voting rights and the legacy of lynching and racial uprisings in the United States.

In addition to her curatorial and museum work, Baeza led and consulted with environmental and community development initiatives in Kenya and Uganda. She has also taught seminars and presented lectures at the Nafasi Academy in Tanzania, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Georgia State University and California State University and published articles with ART PAPERS and the Institute for Food and Development Policy (Food First). In 2018, Atlanta Tribune: The Magazine selected her as a "Women of Excellence."

Baeza holds a Master of Arts in African studies from the University of California, Los Angeles; a Bachelor of Arts in Africana studies with a cultural studies concentration from California State University, Northridge; and a certification in curatorial studies from Sotheby's Institute of Art.

About the Fred and Rita Richman Curator of African Art Position

Baeza's position was endowed by Fred and Rita Richman, longtime supporters of the High who began donating artwork to the Museum in 1972. Since then, they have been instrumental in the African art department's growth, donating more than 500 artworks to this collection. A generous 2014 gift allowed the Museum to expand its African art galleries, which are named in their honor.

About the High Museum of Art

Located in the heart of Atlanta, the High Museum of Art connects with audiences from across the Southeast and around the world through its distinguished collection, dynamic schedule of special exhibitions and engaging community-focused programs. Housed within facilities designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Richard Meier and Renzo Piano, the High features a collection of more than 17,000 works of art, including an extensive anthology of 19th- and 20th-century American fine and decorative arts; major holdings of photography and folk and self-taught work, especially that of artists from the American South; burgeoning collections of modern and contemporary art, including paintings, sculpture, new media and design; a growing collection of African art, with work dating from prehistory through the present; and significant holdings of European paintings and works on paper. The High is dedicated to reflecting the diversity of its communities and offering a variety of exhibitions and educational programs that engage visitors with the world of art, the lives of artists and the creative process. For more information about the High, visit www.high.org.

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