

PRESS RELEASE



Jane Panetta. Photograph Scott Rudd



David Breslin. Photograph Scott Rudd

WHITNEY ANNOUNCES TWO CURATORIAL PROMOTIONS

NEW YORK, July 31, 2019 – The Whitney Museum of American Art announced today that two of the Museum’s curators are receiving promotions and taking on new roles, effective mid-October. David Breslin will become the Museum’s first Director of Curatorial Initiatives and Jane Panetta will succeed him as Director of the Collection.

Scott Rothkopf, Senior Deputy Director and Nancy and Steve Crown Family Chief Curator, remarked, “David and Jane truly exemplify the best of the Whitney’s spirit in their generous dedication to artists and our community. Since arriving at the Museum, David has been instrumental in shaping the Whitney’s program through the development and display of its collection. As the inaugural Director of Curatorial Initiatives, he will bring his broad talents and interdisciplinary thinking to help advance and innovate our artistic mission.” Rothkopf continued: “In her nine years at the Whitney, Jane has lent her scholarly expertise to an array of exhibitions and acquisitions ranging from the mid-twentieth century to the present, as seen in our current Biennial. Her close rapport with artists makes her the perfect steward of a collection rare among major museums in that more than half of the artists represented are living and working today.”

Since joining the Whitney in 2016 as DeMartini Family Curator and Director of the Collection, Breslin has spearheaded the Museum’s collection-related activities, from curating a series of important collection exhibitions to overseeing acquisitions. Working closely with his curatorial colleagues, he has organized or co-organized four collection displays, including *Where We Are: Selections from the Whitney’s Collection, 1900–1960*, *An Incomplete History of Protest: Selections from the Whitney’s Collection, 1940–2017*, and two currently on view: *Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s* and *The Whitney’s Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965*. In 2018, he co-curated (with David Kiehl) the landmark retrospective *David Wojnarowicz: History Keeps Me Awake at Night*.

In the new role of DeMartini Family Curator and Director of Curatorial Initiatives, Breslin will work closely with the Chief Curator on overseeing areas of the curatorial department and the development of the Whitney's exhibition program. Collaborating with departments across the Museum, Breslin will direct key curatorial initiatives that further the Whitney's broader artistic vision, such as the Museum's Indigenous Artists Working Group, on which he is the curatorial lead. He will continue to curate exhibitions, make acquisitions, and will remain a member of the senior management team charged with strategic planning for the institution.

Breslin commented, "I'm thrilled to take on this new opportunity, amplifying the ideas, approaches, and passions of the Whitney's incredible curatorial team. The Whitney's mission always has been to foster the work of artists. The initiatives we take on embrace that history while preparing for a future that reflects the dynamic and changing contours of American art and culture."

Panetta is currently an associate curator and is the co-curator (with Rujeko Hockley) of the 2019 Whitney Biennial, now on view at the Museum. Since coming to the Whitney, she has made important contributions to the Museum's program and its collection. Her involvement with collection displays includes, most recently, her curating of *Fast Forward: Paintings from the 1980s* (2017) and serving on the curatorial team for the downtown Whitney's inaugural exhibition *America Is Hard to See* (2015). Panetta has contributed broadly to the development of the Whitney's contemporary program, curating solo projects with Juan Antonio Olivares and Njideka Akunyili Crosby, among others. In addition, she has stewarded the acquisition of works by younger artists such as Nina Chanel Abney, Maggie Lee, and Jamian Juliano-Villani, as well as historical figures including Norman Lewis, Rosalyn Drexler, and Jack Whitten.

In her new role as Curator and Director of the Collection, Panetta will lead the curatorial department's collection team and oversee the Museum's acquisitions and displays of its holdings. With Kim Conaty, the Steven and Ann Ames Curator of Drawings and Prints, she will co-direct an unprecedented long-term strategic plan for the Whitney's collection, which launches this fall with the support of the Henry Luce Foundation. Panetta will continue to curate exhibitions, focusing on collection displays, and will co-direct the Whitney's Emerging Artists Working Group, with Christopher Y. Lew, the Museum's Nancy and Fred Poses Curator.

Panetta said, "I am exceedingly excited to be taking on this new role at the Museum as Director of the Collection. I look forward to working even more closely with the extraordinary collection that is at the heart of the institution and that has been deeply important to me since joining the Museum."

About the Curators

David Breslin came to the Whitney from the Menil Drawing Institute, where he created an ambitious program of exhibitions and public and scholarly events and helped to shape the design of the Institute's new facility. At the Menil, Breslin curated *The Precarious* (2015–2016), a focused look at works in the collection indebted to the collage tradition, *Harold Ancart: There Is No There There* (2016), and *The Condition of Being Here: Drawings by Jasper Johns* (2018–2019). He also oversaw work on the catalogue raisonné of the drawings of Jasper Johns and grew the collection with acquisitions of works by artists including, among others, Trisha Brown, John Cage, Lee Mullican, Amy Sillman, Nancy Spero, Danh Vo, and Jack Whitten. Prior to the Menil, Breslin served as the associate director of the research and academic program and associate curator of contemporary projects at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, MA.; he also oversaw the Clark's residential fellowship program and taught in the Williams College Graduate Program in the History of Art. Breslin co-edited *Art History and Emergency: Crises in the Visual Arts and Humanities* (Yale University Press, 2016), a volume that grew from a Clark Conference he organized with art historian Darby English.

Breslin has edited numerous exhibition catalogues and authored essays on a range of artists including Paul Thek, Cady Noland, Valentin Carron, and Pablo Picasso, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Amherst College, a master's in art history from Williams College, and a Ph.D. in the history of art and architecture from Harvard University.

Jane Panetta joined the Whitney in 2010 after spending several years in the Museum of Modern Art's Painting and Sculpture Department, where she worked closely on the exhibitions *James Ensor* (2009, organized by Anna Swinbourne) and *Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years* (2007, organized by Kynaston McShine and Lynne Cooke). Prior to the Museum's move downtown, Panetta collaborated on *Signs & Symbols* (2012, curated by Donna De Salvo), as well as contributing to *Robert Irwin: Scrim Veil—Black Rectangle—Natural Light, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York [1977]* (2013, curated by De Salvo). As a member of the curatorial team for *America Is Hard to See* (2015), the Museum's inaugural presentation in its downtown location, Panetta contributed to the Museum's deep analysis and rethinking of its collection. She has organized presentations of contemporary artists including

Njideka Akunyili Crosby: Before Now after (Mama, Mumm and Mamma) (2016) and *Mirror Cells* (2016; with Christopher Y. Lew) and contributed to the written scholarship of those projects.

Panetta serves as a member of Madison Square Park's Public Art Consortium. She earned a B.A. (in History) from Haverford College and an M.A. (in Art History) from Hunter College.

About the Whitney

The Whitney Museum of American Art, founded in 1930 by the artist and philanthropist Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney (1875–1942), houses the foremost collection of American art from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Mrs. Whitney, an early and ardent supporter of modern American art, nurtured groundbreaking artists at a time when audiences were still largely preoccupied with the Old Masters. From her vision arose the Whitney Museum of American Art, which has been championing the most innovative art of the United States for more than eighty years. The core of the Whitney's mission is to collect, preserve, interpret, and exhibit American art of our time and serve a wide variety of audiences in celebration of the complexity and diversity of art and culture in the United States. Through this mission and a steadfast commitment to artists themselves, the Whitney has long been a powerful force in support of modern and contemporary art and continues to help define what is innovative and influential in American art today.

Current and Upcoming Exhibitions at the Whitney Museum of American Art

Spilling Over: Painting Color in the 1960s	March 29–August 18, 2019
2019 Whitney Biennial	May 17–September 22, 2019
The Whitney's Collection: Selections from 1900 to 1965	Opens June 28, 2019
Jason Moran	September 20, 2019–January 5, 2020
Order and Ornament: Roy Lichtenstein's Entablatures	Opening September 27, 2019
Rachel Harrison Life Hack	October 25, 2019–January 12, 2020
Alan Michelson: Wolf Nation	October 25, 2019–January 12, 2020
Pope.L: Instigation, Aspiration, Perspiration	Opens October 10, 2019
Making Knowing: Craft in Art 1950–2019	November 22, 2019–January 2021
Vida Americana: Mexican Muralists Remake American Art, 1925–1945	February–May 2020
Agnes Pelton: Desert Transcendentalist	March 13–June 21, 2020
Julie Mehretu	June 26–September 20, 2020
David Hammons: Day's End	2020
Jasper Johns	Opens Fall 2020

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Museum hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 10:30 am to 6 pm; Friday and Saturday from 10:30 am to 10 pm. Closed Tuesday except in July and August. Adults: \$25. Full-time students, visitors 65 & over, and visitors with disabilities: \$18. Visitors 18 years & under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. For general information, please call (212) 570-3600 or visit whitney.org.

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