

# WHITNEY

Whitney Museum  
of American Art  
Press Office

99 Gansevoort Street  
New York, NY 10014

pressoffice@whitney.org  
(212) 570-3633

# PRESS RELEASE

## THE WHITNEY MUSEUM ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT OF CAROL MANCUSI-UNGARO AS THE MELVA BUCKSBAUM ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CONSERVATION AND RESEARCH



**New York, NY, August 8, 2023** — The Whitney Museum of American Art announces the retirement of Carol Mancusi-Ungaro as the Melva Bucksbaum Associate Director for Conservation and Research after an extraordinary twenty-two years at the Whitney. Mancusi-Ungaro has proven to be a singular influence in the field of conservation research whose work as a leading scholar spans the fields of art history, contemporary art, and museology. Following her retirement on October 1, Matt Skopek will succeed Mancusi-Ungaro as the Melva Bucksbaum Director of Conservation.

In 2001, Mancusi-Ungaro joined the Whitney and initiated the first conservation program in the Museum's history. Through her leadership, the department has become a central arena for engagement with art and artists. The internationally recognized Artist Documentation Program (founded by Carol in 1990 at the Menil Collection and in partnership with the Whitney) has enabled conservators to record the artistic ideas and intentions of dozens of artists in the

Whitney's collection, allowing the Museum to better and more appropriately preserve its works. Mancusi-Ungaro's artist-centric conservation philosophy has quickly spread throughout the museum world.

Extolling Mancusi-Ungaro's career Adam Weinberg, the Alice Pratt Brown Director of the Whitney, said, "It has been a joy to work with Carol over the last two decades. Her influence has been three-pronged: throughout the Whitney Museum where she revolutionized our understanding and care of art and enabled us to recover artworks that were thought to be irretrievably lost through the degradation of their materials; throughout the US where she has been one of the foremost and frequently consulted leaders in the field of contemporary art conservation; and internationally where her philosophy, conservation research, and practice have influenced the next generation of conservators."

Mancusi-Ungaro's impact extended beyond her behind-the-scenes role. Her achievements included overseeing the conservation of Alexander Calder's monumental *Circus*; the creation of the first-ever museum Replication Committee; the establishment of the Whitney's first Conservation Committee (under the stewardship of Rick and Monica Segal); the formation of media preservation initiatives (with the support of Robert Rosenkranz); and co-curating in 2018 with Christiane Paul, Curator of Digital Art, *Programmed: Rules, Codes, and Choreographies in Art, 1965–2018*.

Mancusi-Ungaro has received numerous awards, most recently the 2021–22 Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome and the 2016 Forbes Prize, which is considered the highest international honor in art conservation. In 2009, she was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, marking the Academy's first public recognition of the importance of art conservation. Carol has published essential works on major American artists, including Mark Rothko, Jackson Pollock, Jasper Johns, Brice Marden, and Barnett Newman. In addition to these accomplishments, she has taught at Yale University, Harvard University, and New York University and continues to be a generous mentor and consultant to many young conservators in the field.

Upon her departure from the Whitney, Mancusi-Ungaro will focus on other interests including a book she has been writing on her two decades-long working relationship with Cy Twombly.

Matt Skopek will assume the position of the Melva Bucksbaum Director of Conservation on October 1, 2023. Matt joined the Whitney in 2007 and assisted in the building of the staff and the design of the impressive Bucksbaum, Leary, Scanlan Conservation Center. Matt received an MA and Advanced Certificate of Conservation from Buffalo State College and served as an intern at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the North Carolina Museum of Art, and the Museum of Modern Art where he continued as a post-graduate fellow. During his tenure at the Whitney as the Cy Twombly Conservator of Paintings, he has executed complicated treatments of works such as Barkley Henricks' *Steve* and Brice Marden's *Number One*. He has conducted extensive research on the work of Robert Motherwell and Roy Lichtenstein as well as the early work of Carmen Herrera and Robert Rauschenberg. He recently co-organized a Getty Conserving

Canvas symposium, co-hosted by the Harvard Art Museums, the Whitney, and the Museum of Modern Art. Along with fellow conservators, Matt participates in the Replication Committee and works with other departments across the institution on issues pertaining to loans, exhibitions, and collection care.

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## PRESS CONTACT

For press materials and image requests, please visit our press site at [whitney.org/press](https://www.whitney.org/press) or contact:

**Ashley Reese, Director of Communications**

Whitney Museum of American Art

(212) 671-1846

[Ashley\\_Reese@whitney.org](mailto:Ashley_Reese@whitney.org)

**Whitney Press Office**

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## 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 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 ninety 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, 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.

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## VISITOR INFORMATION

The Whitney Museum of American Art is located at 99 Gansevoort Street between Washington and West Streets, New York City. Public hours are Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 10:30 am–6 pm; Friday, 10:30 am–10 pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 10:30 am–6 pm. Closed Tuesday. Visitors eighteen years and under and Whitney members: FREE. Admission is pay-what-you-wish on Fridays, 7–10 pm. COVID-19 vaccination and face coverings are not required but strongly recommended. We encourage all visitors to wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth throughout their visit.

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