

Honolulu Museum of Art

Media contacts:

Lesa Griffith
(808) 532-8712; Fax: (808) 532-8787
E-mail: lgriffith@honolulumuseum.org

Scott Whelden
(808) 532-8719
E-mail: swhelden@honolulumuseum.org

MUSEUM SAYS FAREWELL TO DIRECTOR STEPHAN JOST AS HE HEADS TO ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

He leaves the museum with a balanced budget, refreshed exhibition program, expanded art education program and increased membership

HONOLULU, HAWAII (Jan. 27, 2016)—Stephan Jost, the Director of the Honolulu Museum of Art, today was appointed the Michael and Sonja Koerner Director and CEO of the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto, Canada. It is the largest art museum in Canada.

Jost's last day at HoMA will be March 11, and the Board of Trustees will immediately begin a search for his successor. The Executive Committee of the museum's Board of Trustees has appointed Allison Wong, Deputy Director of Operations and Administration, as Interim Director.

Jost joined the Honolulu Museum of Art in 2011, with the vision to make the museum a transformative, accessible place that reflects and strengthens its community. Under his leadership, the museum's finances dramatically improved, with debt and pension obligations reduced by 85 percent; the education program has expanded its reach and capacity, serving more than 30,000 students and adults through tours and classes annually; membership has doubled since 2013, with the majority of new members under the age of 40; and he has made key hires that have resulted in an energized operation and visitor experience.

“In his almost five years here, he brought a clear vision to the museum, helping solidify the merger of the Honolulu Academy of Arts and The Contemporary Museum, strengthening its relationship with city and state leadership, and systematically tackling tasks to improve the visitor experience and education outreach,” says Vi Loo, President of the HoMA Board of Trustees. “We are appreciative and proud of Stephan's accomplishments here at HoMA. Stephan will bring his dynamism and expertise to the Art Gallery of Ontario. We wish him every success and congratulate him on his appointment.”

Honolulu Museum of Art
900 S Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96814
808-532-8700

www.honolulumuseum.org

Honolulu Museum of Art
Spalding House
2411 Makiki Heights Drive

Honolulu Museum of Art
First Hawaiian Center
999 Bishop Street

Honolulu Museum of Art
School
1111 Victoria Street

Honolulu Museum of Art
Doris Duke Theatre
Entrance on Kinau Street

One of the museum's major achievements during Jost's tenure was the rebranding of the merged Honolulu Academy of Arts and The Contemporary Museum as the Honolulu Museum of Art. Jost oversaw the melding of the two staffs and operations into a seamless whole with Deputy Director Allison Wong. But he is perhaps most proud of expanding the museum's audience. He greatly increased accessibility to the museum by lowering the cost of a basic membership to \$25 and making admission free for all children age 17 and under to the museum and its theater. The result is a huge boost in public engagement, with 299,500 people visiting the museum and attending education programs in 2014. Membership is at an historic high at 13,000—a 62 percent increase since the change in the cost to join.

Jost's conviction that art enriches lives led to the museum's Art School strengthening ties with neighborhood schools and the Micronesian community. Today English Language Learner students from Ka'ahumanu Elementary School visit the Art School weekly, McKinley High School students work as assistant teachers, and a Micronesian Festival celebrating the region's culture is now in its third year and growing, bringing new audiences to the museum.

With the board's support, Jost appointed the first ever curator of the arts of Hawai'i, putting more emphasis on the islands' own art and offering increased exhibition opportunities for Hawai'i-based artists. While working with a limited budget, he conceived of playful, engaging exhibitions, such as *Tattoo Honolulu* and *Harajuku: Tokyo Street Fashion*, that expanded the public's notion of what art is. Working with curators, Jost has bolstered the museum's collection by securing important art gifts by such artists as Roy Lichtenstein, George Segal, and Ken Price. And he put the museum at the forefront of art repatriation, returning Indian and Native American works in the past year.

Jost also made significant changes to the museum's staff structure and culture, creating an Advancement Department and hiring Deputy Director Hathaway Jakobsen to oversee it. Jost worked closely with Jakobsen to increase support of the museum by major donors, improve visitor experience, and develop museum strategies.

"I learned a great deal from Stephan over the past two and half years and we should all be grateful for the good work he has done to move us in new directions that will impact the museum for years to come," says Jakobsen.

Less glamorous, but no less important to the museum was Jost's overhaul of the museum's accounting system, working with Director of Finance Wei Robertson, resulting in an accurate, timely, transparent budget.

“Leading the Honolulu Museum of Art has been a deep honor,” says Jost. “The success of the last few years is the result of an extraordinary staff, dedicated Board of Trustees, and an engaged audience. It has been an exciting challenge working to frame important issues and the museum’s future direction and strategy with the museum’s board. The decision to leave HoMA was difficult to make—living and working in Honolulu has been an incredible learning experience—but I am honored to have the opportunity to head Canada’s premier art museum, in a city where I have family. I am grateful to everyone I have worked with to bring HoMA to a place where it is poised to have a successful future.”

Jost succeeds Matthew Teitelbaum, who left the AGO last June to become Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Previous directors of the AGO include Glenn Lowrey, who is now director of the Museum of Modern Art.

Allison Wong says she is “honored to be named Interim Director, and will work to make this transition period seamless as we stay on mission. Working closely with Stephan has been a great privilege. He has created a roadmap and has set the bar high for achieving our goals. Along with our senior management team, we will continue to increase audience engagement and develop programs that ensure the Honolulu Museum of Art plays a significant role in our community.”

About the Honolulu Museum of Art

One of the world’s premier art museums, the Honolulu Museum of Art presents international caliber special exhibitions and features a collection that includes Hokusai, van Gogh, Gauguin, Monet, Picasso and Warhol, as well as traditional Asian and Hawaiian art. Located in two of Honolulu’s most beautiful buildings, visitors enjoy two cafés, gardens, and films and concerts at the theater.

In 2011, The Contemporary Museum gifted its assets and collection to the Honolulu Academy of Arts and in 2012, the combined museum changed its name to the Honolulu Museum of Art.

Locations:

Honolulu Museum of Art: 900 S. Beretania Street

Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House: 2411 Makiki Heights Drive

Honolulu Museum of Art School: 1111 Victoria Street

Honolulu Museum of Art at First Hawaiian Center: 999 Bishop Street

Honolulu Museum of Art Doris Duke Theatre: 901 Kinau Street (at rear of museum)

Website: www.honolulumuseum.org

Phone: 808-532-8700

Hours:

Honolulu Museum of Art: Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Sun. 1-5 p.m.; closed Monday.

The Honolulu Museum of Art Café: lunch only, Tues.-Sat., 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Honolulu Museum of Art Spalding House: Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sun. noon-4 p.m.

Spalding House Café: lunch only, Tues.-Sat. 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

Admission (permits entry to both museums on the same day):

\$10 general admission; children 17 and under are free.

Admission is free to: shop, cafés, Robert Allerton Art Library, and the art school

Free days: First Wednesday of every month

Bank of Hawaii Family Sunday: The museum is free to the public on the third Sunday of the month, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., courtesy Bank of Hawaii.