



LAXART Hires Hamza Walker as new Executive Director

The Board of Directors of LAXART is pleased to announce the appointment of Hamza Walker as the organization's new Executive Director. Walker will begin his new post on October 1, 2016.

Walker, Co-Curator of the acclaimed 2016 edition of the Hammer Museum's *Made in L.A.*, was most recently both Director of Education and Associate Curator at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago and Adjunct Professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His hiring marks a key turning point for the organization, as LAXART, after marking its tenth anniversary, continues with its upcoming series of exhibitions, public programs, and events.

"I am honored to be at the helm of one of LA's premiere non-profit spaces, to build on its legacy of supporting Los Angeles' extraordinarily dynamic arts community, and to confront the challenges unique to alternative spaces," said Walker. "I can't get Sun Ra's 'Fate in a Pleasant Mood' out of my mind."

Charlie Pohlad, Co-Chair of LAXART's Board of Director, notes, "Hamza's vision and overarching strategy to further evolve LAXART were wonderfully insightful and compelling. That, coupled with twenty years of groundbreaking programming at the Renaissance Society and his recent work at *Made In L.A.*, make Hamza the ideal person to lead LAXART into its second decade."

LAXART

Solveig Øvstebø, Executive Director and Chief Curator of the Renaissance Society, said of Walker's transition, "In more than 20 years at the Renaissance Society, Hamza's curating and writing have made an immeasurable impact on the institution, on Chicago, and on the field of contemporary art. He will be missed dearly here at the Ren, but we want to be the first to congratulate him and LAXART, which will be greatly enriched by his unmatched intellect and wit."

About Hamza Walker:

Since 1994, Hamza Walker has been Director of Education and Associate Curator at the Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, a noncollecting museum devoted to contemporary art. He was co-curator (along with Aram Moshayedi) of the 2016 Los Angeles biennial *Made in L.A.* at the Hammer Museum. Recent exhibitions include, *A Painting Is A Painting Isn't A Painting* (2015) at KADIST in San Francisco, *Wadada Leo Smith, Ankhration: The Language Scores 1967 - 2015*, which he co-curated with John Corbett at the Renaissance Society, *Teen Paranormal Romance* (2014) and *Suicide Narcissus* (2013) two thematic group exhibitions both mounted at the Renaissance Society. He has contributed reviews and art criticism to Parkett, and Artforum, in addition to numerous catalogue essays.

Prior to his position at the Renaissance Society, he worked as a public art coordinator for Chicago's Department of Cultural Affairs. For several years before its closing, he served on the board of Randolph Street Gallery and is currently on the boards of Noon, an annual publication of short fiction, and Lampo, a nonprofit presenter of new and experimental music. He is the recipient of the 1999 Norton Curatorial Grant and the 2004 Walter Hopps Award for Curatorial Achievement. In 2010 he was awarded the Ordway Prize for contributions to the field in the form of writing and exhibitions.

About LAXART:

LAXART is an independent nonprofit art space presenting experimental exhibitions and public art initiatives offering the public access to a new generation of artists and curators supporting both risk and dialogue producing new work for new audiences inciting the conversation on contemporary art in Los Angeles animating dynamic relationships between art, artists, and audiences enhancing the cultural landscape of Los Angeles by supporting challenging work reflecting the diversity of the city.

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Photo by Dawoud Bey.

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