

**For immediate release**

MASS MoCA  
1040 MASS MoCA Way  
North Adams, Massachusetts 01247  
Contact: Jenny Wright  
jwright@massmoca.org

## **MASS MoCA receives \$650,000 Leadership in Art Museums grant**

### **Grant from a consortium of foundations – Alice L. Walton Foundation, Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and Pilot House Philanthropy – accelerates MASS MoCA’s commitment to racial equity by supporting new leadership positions**

**North Adams, MA, May 3, 2023** – MASS MoCA has received a Leadership in Art Museums (LAM) grant for \$650,000 over five years from a consortium of philanthropic partners that will support the creation of two new leadership positions within MASS MoCA: a Director of Public Programs & Engagement — the first in MASS MoCA’s nearly 25-year history — and an additional full-time Curator. This philanthropic initiative is a collaboration between the Alice L. Walton Foundation, Ford Foundation, Mellon Foundation, and Pilot House Philanthropy to support racial equity in art museum leadership roles. MASS MoCA is one of 19 recipients, which include The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Perez Art Museum, Miami.

“The funding is catalytic for MASS MoCA in advancing aspirations to build the diversity of our leadership, and to enhance access for the communities we serve,” said MASS MoCA’s director, Kristy Edmunds. The multi-year grant will support a percentage of full-time salaries over a five-year period, along with operating funds for the work these leaders will undertake in their new roles.

“This generous grant will provide immediate discretionary support to seed the programs and approaches these new leaders will need to bring their work and lives at MASS MoCA into fullest expression,” said Edmunds. “The funds are flexible by design to allow for research and development for approaching their work and/or engaging artists for long-lead projects, while enabling MASS MoCA the time for long-term resource development to sustain the salaries for two important new positions that will add to MASS MoCA’s growth and vitality in the region and our field at large.”

MASS MoCA appointed Lisa Dent as its inaugural Director of Public Programs in January. With nearly 30 years of experience in the field managing departments of small, mid-size, and large organizations through the lens of inclusion, equity, and anti-oppression, Dent will generate and oversee public programming that amplifies and enhances MASS MoCA's visual and performing arts offerings through programs in creative and cultural practices often found outside of exhibition-making and performance presentations. With the introduction of this role, MASS MoCA's existing Education Department will fold into Public Programs, enabling Dent in her new role to continue MASS MoCA's K-12, college, and adult programming, and build upon long standing partnerships with local, regional, and national organizations in authoring new initiatives. The position reports to the Director and serves as part of the MASS MoCA's organization-wide leadership team.

"MASS MoCA is an incredible institution with a unique position in Berkshire County," says Dent. "I'm excited to be able to collaborate with Kristy Edmunds, the board of trustees, and the entire staff to create unique experiences with the arts for all."

The new Curator, as yet to be appointed, will join the Visual Arts Department—currently composed of three full-time curators—and will report to Chief Curator Denise Markonish. They will be responsible for curating exhibitions, community engagement efforts, and artist-driven projects, as well as developing programs and publications in relation to their work. The Curator will engage with institution-wide planning efforts, while also expanding MASS MoCA's reach and reputation through travel, speaking engagements, and participating in field-wide initiatives. A search will begin for this position in 2025.

"Our goal is to empower both of these new leadership roles from the beginning by providing seed money to experiment as they onboard and ground themselves within the MASS MoCA team, facilities of scale, and audiences, while integrating their networks," said Edmunds. "This visionary gift will make it possible to accelerate MASS MoCA's commitment to racial equity by bringing new colleagues into leadership positions through a deeply experiential process developed through feedback from curatorial practitioners from diverse scholarship, ways of knowing, and cultural realities."

### **About MASS MoCA**

MASS MoCA is one of the world's liveliest centers for making and enjoying today's most evocative art. With vast galleries and a stunning collection of indoor and outdoor performing arts venues, MASS MoCA is able to embrace all forms of art: music, sculpture, dance, film, painting, photography, theater, and new, boundary-crossing works of art that defy easy classification. Much of the work we show in our light-filled spaces, on our technically sophisticated stages, and within our lovely network of late 19th-century courtyards is made here during extended fabrication and rehearsal residencies that bring hundreds of the world's most brilliant and innovative artists to North Adams all year round. For more information about MASS MoCA, visit [www.massmoca.org](http://www.massmoca.org).