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## DEPARTMENT OF CONTEMPORARY ART AND MFA PROGRAMS

### Biographies

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**Edward Saywell** is Chair of the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art and Head of the Department of Contemporary Art and MFA Programs, a position that he assumed in 2007. Saywell is responsible for overseeing the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art and expanding its contemporary programming, as well as integrating the contemporary arts presented in the Museum's galleries, film series, concerts, and lectures and courses within the broader encyclopedic scope of the MFA's mission. He has organized exhibitions, including *Bharat Ratna: Jewels of Modern Indian Art* in 2009 and the forthcoming survey (September 2011) of *Ellsworth Kelly: Wood Sculpture*. Saywell joined the MFA in September 2006 as Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings. Prior to the MFA, he worked for nine years at Harvard University Art Museums, where he was the Charles C. Cunningham, Sr., Curatorial Associate of Drawings, responsible for guiding the Drawing Department's acquisitions of modern and contemporary art. He has also curated a number of contemporary art presentations including exhibitions on the sculptor Christopher Wilmarth, the painters Alfred Jensen and Forrest Bess, and a number of group shows of contemporary drawings. Saywell received his MA at the University of St. Andrews in art history and modern history as well as an MA in combined historical studies from Warburg Institute, University of London.



**Jen Mergel** is the Robert L. Beal, Enid L. Beal and Bruce A. Beal Senior Curator of Contemporary Art at the MFA. She is responsible for expanding the Museum's curatorial strategy to build contemporary collection holdings as well as developing thematic presentations, including the inaugural installation of the new contemporary galleries in the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art. Since joining the Museum in February 2010, she organized the exhibition *Kristin Baker: New Paintings* and will present an exhibition of new works by Jedediah Caesar in December 2011. Prior to joining the MFA, she was associate curator at Boston's Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), where she organized a number of exhibitions, including *Tara Donovan*, the artist's first museum survey; *Acting Out: Social Experiments in Video*, and *Charles LeDray: workworkworkworkwork*. Mergel served in various curatorial capacities for the 2004 Whitney Biennial in New York, the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, and at the Addison Gallery of American Art at Phillips Academy, Andover. She received a BA in visual and environmental studies from Harvard University and a MA from Bard's Center for Curatorial Studies. Mergel has authored essays and interviews in numerous publications; taught at Harvard University and Boston University; served as a guest lecturer, curator and juror at many national organizations; and reviewed art in France and Taiwan on invitation by their cultural embassies.

### Additional Members of the Department of Contemporary Art and MFA Programs

**Emily Zilber** is the MFA's first Ronald L. and Anita C. Wornick Curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts. Since joining the Museum in October 2010, she has built upon the MFA's already vibrant program of contemporary decorative arts, craft, and design, including developing a presence for this material in the inaugural installation of the renovated Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art. Key to this endeavor is the Daphne and Peter Farago Gallery, a dedicated space for modern and contemporary craft, design, and decorative arts, which will open in September with an exhibition of studio craft from the Daphne Farago Collection. Prior to joining the MFA, Zilber was assistant curator at Cranbrook Art Museum at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, overseeing the museum's renowned collection and organized numerous exhibitions and artist projects, including a major retrospective on the ceramist Richard DeVore, *Mark Newport: Superheroes In Action*, and the group show *Noun, Verb, Adjective: Cranbrook Defines Craft*. Zilber also served as coordinating curator for the installation of traveling exhibitions including *Craft in America: Expanding Traditions*. She has edited and written for numerous publications, and speaks regularly on topics related to 20<sup>th</sup>-century and contemporary decorative arts, craft, and design. Zilber holds a BA in art history from The University of Chicago and an MA from the Bard Graduate Center for Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture.

**Al Miner**, Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art, joined the MFA in September 2010. His first exhibition at the Museum will examine the work of photographer and video artist Ori Gersht, scheduled for 2012. Prior to the MFA, Miner was the curatorial assistant at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Smithsonian Institution's museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Washington, DC. During his five years at the Hirshhorn, Miner curated major projects and commissions by artists Dan Graham and Yoko Ono, served as coordinating curator for the first North American retrospective of the work of the German artist Blinky Palermo, and managed the major two-part exhibition, *The Cinema Effect*. Miner's prior experience with contemporary art and museums also includes work at the Maier Museum of Art in Virginia, Artists Space in New York City, and the Godwin-Ternbach Museum at Queens College in New York City. He has also been recognized for his writing and independent curatorial projects. Additionally, Miner's passion for the art and artists of our time stems from his own background and practice as an artist. He has received fellowships from the Goethe-Institut in Washington, DC, the American Association of Museums (AAM), the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the Smithsonian Institution. Miner graduated from Randolph-Macon College in Virginia with a BA in studio Art in 1998 and an MFA from Queens College, CUNY, in 2000.

**Carter Long** has served as the Katharine Stone White Curator of Film and Video since 2009, overseeing the programming and presentation of hundreds of screenings a year. He joined the MFA in 2004, holding positions in the Department of Member and Visitor Services before becoming the operations manager for film in May 2008. In addition to screening contemporary international cinema, restored classics, American independent films, and retrospectives by international filmmakers, Long coordinates a number of film festivals throughout the year, including the Boston French Film Festival, now in its 16th year at the Museum, the Boston LGBT Festival, in its 27th year, and festivals that celebrate the art of film from Turkey, Iran and South-East Asia, among others, plus special screenings with visiting artists and events relating to special exhibitions. Long holds an MA in Critical Theory of English Literature from Sussex University, England, where he graduated with distinction, and a BA in English from the University of New Hampshire.

**Lois Solomon**, Head of Lectures and Courses, selects speakers for the MFA's many public programs, attended by more than 15,000 visitors per year. Participants in the popular adult lecture series have ranged from authors Robert Hughes and Patti Smith, to photographers Mario Testino and Hiroshi Sugimoto, and contemporary artists Kara Walker and Terry Winters. In addition, Solomon organizes The Ruth and Carl J. Shapiro Celebrity Lectures, which brings visual and performing artists, critics, and writers who are leaders in their fields to the Museum. The 2010 program, celebrating the opening of the MFA's Art of the

Americas Wing, featured American cultural icons, including choreographer Paul Taylor, *Mad Men* creator and producer Matthew Weiner, and filmmaker Ken Burns. In addition to lectures, Solomon develops courses on various topics designed to enhance the experience of viewing special exhibitions or the appreciation of the Museum's permanent collection. Prior to joining the MFA, Solomon was director of training and development at Tyco Electronics, M/A-Com, and owned her own consulting and training company providing services to corporations and colleges. She received her M.Ed from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, an Executive MBA from Babson College, and her BS from the University of Illinois, Champaign Illinois.

**Jasmine Hagans** has been Manager of Lectures, Courses, and Concerts at the MFA since October 2010, booking all musical groups that perform at the Museum and managing logistics for more than 100 lectures and courses each year. Hagans programs concerts in the MFA's new Shapiro Family Courtyard and is responsible for scheduling the summer's Elaine and Jerome Rosenfeld Concerts in the Courtyard series, which brings world, folk, and indie music to the Museum's Calderwood Courtyard. The opening of the Linde Family Wing for Contemporary Art will provide new opportunities to expand the concert program, featuring music as well as multidisciplinary performances and experiences. Hagans began her career as a percussionist and has worked at numerous Boston music venues, acted as a tour manager, designed stage lighting systems, and worked at music management and booking agencies in Boston and New York City from 2004-2009. After graduating summa cum laude from Northeastern University with a BS in music with a concentration in music industry and minors in history, urban studies, and business administration, Hagan taught English in Seoul, South Korea.

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