

## Syracuse University Art Museum Announces New Curator

Melissa Yuen, PhD will begin her post December 1, 2021

For immediate release



The Syracuse University Art Museum is very pleased to announce the appointment of Melissa Yuen, Ph.D. as the museum's new curator. Yuen, a curator and art historian, comes to Syracuse from the Sheldon Museum of Art, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and will join the museum staff on December 1, 2021.

Vanja Malloy, director and chief curator of the museum states, "Dr. Yuen shares our passion for the mission of an academic museum to act as a university-wide connector that supports curricular engagement, research, and experimental learning. Through her work at other university museums, including the Sheldon Museum of Art and the Cantor Arts Center, she has applied her academic rigor to bring new insights to the art collection that forge interdisciplinary conversations about important topics, such as housing inequity. I am delighted to welcome her to the museum's staff and look forward to working with her in shaping the museum's exhibition program."

As curator of the Syracuse University Art Museum, Yuen will be responsible for conducting scholarly research, generating exhibitions, and facilitating access and awareness of the museum's permanent collection of more than 45,000 objects, which surveys the international history of printmaking and has extensive holdings in photography and social cartooning, as well as strong collections in 18th, 19th and 20th-century American and European painting and sculpture. Yuen's appointment allows the museum to expand many of its established curatorial and educational programs, including the inaugural Art Wall Project which commissions emerging contemporary artists to create site-specific installation each academic year.

Yuen's most recent role is the associate curator of exhibitions at the Sheldon Museum of Art, where she is part of the museum's leadership team. At the Sheldon, she is responsible for generating all exhibition content for the museum's thirteen galleries, which are re-installed twice each academic year. In Spring 2021, she partnered with several Lincoln nonprofits and University of Nebraska-Lincoln units to address eviction and housing affordability through the organization of the exhibition, *Barriers and Disparities: Housing in America*, which explored selected moments in the history of inequitable access to shelter.

Prior to her role at Sheldon, she served as the curatorial fellow for European and American Art to 1900 at Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University. In 2017 at the Cantor, Yuen co-organized the exhibition “Rodin: The Shock of the Modern Body” with Elizabeth Kathleen Mitchell, interim co-director, McMurtry curator, and director of the curatorial fellowship program, to celebrate the centenary of Rodin’s death. Featuring almost 100 works, the installation highlighted how Rodin made the figurative sculpture modern by refining the expressive capacity of the human form.

Yuen holds a Ph.D. in Art History from Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, with a specialization in Italian Renaissance and Baroque art. Her research was supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Fondazione Lemmermann (Rome), and culminated in her 2017 dissertation, “The Young Mattia Preti in Rome: Style, Baroque Painting, and the Art Market, c. 1630-1653.”

In addition to Yuen’s curatorial background, her study room and classroom teaching experiences at academic museums such as the Sheldon and the Cantor have prepared her to research and present the Syracuse University Art Museum’s objects to members of university and greater civic community. Her experience training docents and students on new seasons of exhibitions, presenting lectures to faculty and students and serving as a liaison for Sheldon’s curricular engagement with the University of Nebraska community, strongly align with the Syracuse University Art Museum’s initiative to position and communicate the museum as a center for research and teaching.

“I am excited about the role of Curator at the Syracuse University Museum of Art,” Yuen stated, “as it will provide the opportunity for me to engage with a global collection of art and develop exhibitions that can foster interdisciplinary conversations on the university’s campus...and I am energized by the museum’s mission [to serve] as the university’s ‘museum-laboratory’ and [its] commitment to diversity and inclusion.”

### **About the museum**

The Syracuse University Art Museum is a teaching museum located on campus that acquires and preserves important works of art and uses its extensive collection to serve as a museum-laboratory for exploration, experimentation, and discussion. The Museum strives to foster diverse and inclusive perspectives by uniting students across campus with each other and the local and global community, engaging with artwork to bring us together and examining the forces that keep us apart. It welcomes all visitors to experience its exhibitions and public programs that promote original research, creative thinking, and increased mindfulness. The museum is always free to all. For more information and to plan your visit, go to [museum.syr.edu](http://museum.syr.edu).

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