Sarah Ganz Blythe, a highly respected curator, educator, and scholar with more than 25 years of museum experience, will be the new Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University interim Provost John Manning announced today. Ganz Blythe is joining Harvard from the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD Museum), where she is currently Deputy Director, Exhibitions, Education, and Programs. She will take her post as director on August 12.

“We are delighted that Sarah Ganz Blythe has agreed to become the Elizabeth and John Moors Cabot Director of the Harvard Art Museums beginning this summer,” Manning said. “Sarah brings to her role not only great knowledge, creativity, judgment, and leadership experience, but also a deep commitment to teaching, learning, collaboration, and engagement with our museums’ extraordinary communities. Especially with the opportunities presented by the vast increase in public attendance since the Harvard Art Museums began offering free admission last June, Sarah’s experience and leadership perspective will serve Harvard and the museums well in this exciting time in their history.”
Ganz Blythe has held leadership positions at the RISD Museum for the past 15 years, including serving as its interim director from 2020 to 2023. In this role, she led the institution through the pandemic to its current state, with rebounded attendance, expanded board participation, a balanced budget, a robust traveling exhibition program, an increase in acquisitions by underrepresented artists, and refurbished galleries.

In addition to the RISD Museum, she has worked in curatorial and educational positions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, both in New York City. During her time as an undergraduate at Wellesley College, she was a conservation intern at the Harvard Art Museums. Her deep connections to the museums have continued throughout her career including serving as a Visiting Committee member in both 2017 and 2020.

“As a student, my experiences with the Harvard Art Museums revealed the profound rewards of engaging deeply with and thinking expansively about art,” Ganz Blythe said. “I am thrilled to return and have the opportunity to guide this dynamic institution as it collaborates with students, faculty, staff, artists, and community partners.”

Ganz Blythe holds a B.A. in Art History from Wellesley College and a Ph.D. in Modern Art from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. Her thesis, Promising Pictures: Utopian Aspirations and Pictorial Realities in 1890s France, was published under advisor art historian Linda Nochlin.

“Sarah brings a breadth of perspective, built throughout an impressive career, to this important role at Harvard,” said interim President Alan M. Garber. “Among her many strengths, her creativity in engaging students and her passion for teaching ensure that the museums will extend their excellence as an academic and cultural resource as they enter a new era.”

Ganz Blythe is an active scholar who has taught at Brown University, Wellesley College, and RISD, and has published widely throughout her career on the complicated histories of museums, art pedagogy, and underrepresented women artists. Her publications include Why Art Museums? The Unfinished Work of Alexander Dorner with Andrew Martinez (MIT Press, 2018) and Nancy Elizabeth Prophet: I Will Not Bend an Inch with Dominic Molon and Kajette Solomon (Yale University Press, 2024). She has received numerous awards and fellowships including in 2024 the Kress Foundation/Association of Art Museum Curators Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome.

“As an institutional leader, Sarah listens with care and embraces differences of perspective, all the while seeking opportunities for integration and mutual regard,” said Robin Kelsey, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean of Arts and Humanities and a member of the search committee. “In this moment, I can think of no better person to lead the Harvard Art Museums, an institution dear to so many on this campus and beyond.”

Ganz Blythe’s appointment is the culmination of an extensive nationwide search with outreach to hundreds of stakeholders in collaboration with a university-wide search advisory committee. She will succeed Martha Tedeschi, who is retiring from her post on June 30 after leading the Harvard Art Museums since July 2016.

“I look forward to building on Martha Tedeschi’s achievements and joining the remarkable staff engaged in original research, generative learning, and open engagement,” Ganz Blythe said.

The Harvard Art Museums—the Fogg Museum, Busch-Reisinger Museum, and Arthur M. Sackler Museum—are dedicated to advancing and supporting learning at Harvard University, in the community, and around the world. The museums have played a leading role in the development of art history, conservation, and conservation science, and in the evolution of the art museum as an institution.
The museums’ collections comprise a quarter million works that span from ancient times to the present, and from the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean, and Asia. The Special Exhibitions Gallery presents important new research on artists and artistic practice, and the University Galleries are programmed in consultation with Harvard faculty to support coursework.

The Harvard Art Museums receive support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

**Hours and Admission**

Open Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm; closed Mondays and major holidays. Admission is free to all visitors. For further information about visiting, including general policies, see harvardartmuseums.org/visit.

**For more information, please contact**

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