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COLUMBUS MUSEUM ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR

Columbus, GA- Fray McCormick, The Columbus Museum's President of the Board, announced the selection of Marianne Richter as the Director of the nationally known American art and history museum today. Chosen after a national search, Richter's appointment was unanimously approved at the Museum's Board of Trustees' meeting November 18. The Muscogee County School Board approved the appointment at their December 8 meeting.

Richter will join the Museum on February 18, 2015. She currently serves as Director of the Swope Art Museum in Terre Haute, Indiana, a museum of American art known especially for its Edward Hopper painting and its strong American Regionalist collection.

"Marianne Richter is a highly qualified leader with the experience and credentials to implement our Strategic Plan and to bring lively new-art programming and enhanced public engagement to The Columbus Museum," said McCormick. "The Board is excited about her new ideas, leadership, curatorial skills, and strong track record at other art museums. She also has successful experience with outreach, fundraising and expanding her museum's young-professionals group. Marianne has both the administrative skills and academic credentials to take The Columbus Museum forward to even greater success."

Previous to her current position in Indiana, Richter served as Operations Manager and previously Curator at the Briscoe Western Art Museum in San Antonio, Texas. The Briscoe was a start-up museum which opened to the public after Richter moved the Swope in 2011. From 1995 to 2008, Richter served as Curator at the Union League Club of Chicago, a private club with an important art collection. There, she organized many exhibitions of Chicago and national contemporary artists, including *Out of Line: Drawings by Illinois Arts*, organized in collaboration with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and *Grace: New Work by Tony Fitzpatrick*. She also opened the Club's collection to the public for the first time during her tenure. Richter has also held positions as Curator of American Art at the Dayton Art Institute, Ohio; and Supervisor of Education at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. She has curated more than 30 exhibitions, produced many publications, and lectured widely on American art.

Richter reached doctoral candidacy in art history at the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she specialized in 20th century American art. She holds a Master of Arts in art history from the University of Delaware and is a 1983 graduate of Oberlin College, where she was an art history major and history minor. Richter also attended the Winter Institute in American decorative arts at Winterthur Museum and Gardens in Delaware. "She is well equipped to integrate art and history in new ways at our museum," added McCormick.

"I am honored and excited to lead The Columbus Museum," said Richter. "The Museum has wonderful collections and programs, and the Board is looking for new ideas. I look forward to working with the Board, staff, volunteers, members, and the broader Columbus community to lead the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The plan calls for increased outreach and collaboration with partner organizations here, which I fully endorse. The Museum is a beloved treasure and major economic asset to the region, and I am excited to become part of the community."

She added, "I am impressed by the commitment of the Museum's board and staff and am eager to begin working with this talented group. I look forward to relocating to Columbus and collaborating with community organizations, schools and colleges, the tourism industry, business community, and state and local officials to ensure that the Museum remains a significant force in the development of the region."

She continued, "The Museum runs vital programs for school children and families, and I value and want to build on the relationship with the Muscogee County School District. I also am delighted to move closer to family members living in Georgia and to explore my new city, including the RiverWalk and the many new Uptown activities."

Early next year, events will be announced for community members to meet Richter and learn more about what is new at the Museum.

Richter will take the reins from Tom Butler, who has served as Director for the past 20 years. The Board saluted his many accomplishments at an event in his honor on November 18, after Butler's final board meeting. Butler will retire at the end of this month.

The Search Committee was co-chaired by Elizabeth Ogie and Kathelen Amos, and in addition to McCormick, it included nine other Trustees and stakeholders with a distinguished and diverse array of experience: Dr. A. C. Alvarez, Dr. Philip L. Brewer, Charlotte Hare, Dexter Jordan, Mary Lu Lampton,Carolynn Obleton, Marleen De Bode Olivie, Dr. Steve Sharp, and Wade (Trip) Tomlinson. For the national search, it retained Marilyn Hoffman of Museum Search & Reference, an executive-search firm in Manchester, NH, and Boston.

The Columbus Museum is the second largest general museum in Georgia and is unique for its dual concentration on American art and regional history. While carrying forth its mission to bring American art and history to life for the communities of the Chattahoochee Valley, the Museum serves as a hub of community learning and enjoyment. Through an educational approach, the Museum strives to ignite creativity, inspire critical thinking, and spark conversation. For more information about the Columbus Museum, please visit www.columbusmuseum.com or call 706.748.2562.

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