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Contemporary Art
Museum St. Louis

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WASSAN AL-KHUDHAIRI NAMED CHIEF CURATOR
OF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM ST. LOUIS**

Al-Khudhairi begins her new position August 1, 2017



May 1, 2017 (St. Louis, MO) – Lisa Melandri, Executive Director of the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM), today announced the appointment of Wassan Al-Khudhairi as CAM’s new Chief Curator, concluding a nationwide search.

“I am so delighted to have the chance to work with Wassan,” said Melandri. “She has extraordinary breadth of experience and global knowledge of the contemporary art world, which is seamlessly balanced with her attention to local and regional communities and audiences. We are grateful to have her vision and abilities at CAM and in St. Louis.”

Currently the Hugh Kaul Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Birmingham Museum of Art in

Alabama, Al-Khudhairi was recently appointed as one of the guest curators for the 2017 Asian Art Biennial, to be held in Taiwan this fall. Her most recent exhibition, *Third Space / shifting conversations about contemporary art*, explores connections between the American South and the Global South and includes such renowned artists as Kerry James Marshall, Ebony Patterson, Mark Bradford, José Bedia, and William Christenberry.

“We are experiencing an important moment in museums today,” said Al-Khudhairi. “There is an urgency to think critically about the role and responsibility of art institutions. I am excited to have the opportunity to consider what this means for CAM and St. Louis. I look forward to working closely with the exceptional team at CAM to build and shape an engaging and ambitious program that has roots locally but engages with artists and ideas nationally and internationally.”

Al-Khudhairi was born in Kuwait to Iraqi parents. She has lived in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, England, California, Georgia, Egypt, Qatar, Korea, and Birmingham, Alabama. Previous positions have included Co-Artistic Director at the Gwangju Biennale Foundation in South Korea; and Founding Director of Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Qatar. She has also held positions at the Brooklyn Museum, British Museum, and the High Museum of Modern Art. Al-Khudhairi studied at the Getty

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Leadership Institute at Claremont Graduate University and holds degrees from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies and Georgia State University.

At the Birmingham Museum Al-Khudhairi co-curated an initiative called *shift*, a temporary platform for social change that served as a satellite space in downtown Birmingham. The program was designed to bring contemporary programming beyond the walls of the museum, engaging new audiences, expanding the museum community, and working with local artists in more non-traditional ways. As Founding Director of Mathaf, she was responsible for establishing the museum's artistic program as well as overseeing policy development, acquisitions, and managing the museum's collection. She co-curated Mathaf's inaugural exhibition, *Sajjil: A Century of Modern Art* and curated *Cai Guo-Qiang: Saraab*.

Wassan Al-Khudhairi begins her position at the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis on August 1, 2017.

About the Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis

The Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (CAM) presents, supports, and celebrates the art of our time. It is the premier museum in St. Louis dedicated to contemporary art. Focused on a dynamic array of changing exhibitions, CAM provides a thought-provoking program that reflects and contributes to the global cultural landscape. Through the diverse perspectives offered in its exhibitions, public programs, and educational initiatives, CAM actively engages a range of audiences to challenge their perceptions. It is a site for discovery, a gathering place in which to experience and enjoy contemporary visual culture. CAM is located in the Grand Center Arts District.



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