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PRESS RELEASE
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Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (M HKA) Announces its New Artistic Team

M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp – is pleased to announce its new artistic team. After Nav Haq recently became Associate Director, now Anne-Claire Schmitz and Joanna Zielińska are appointed as Senior Curators.

M HKA heads into a new phase of its existence, with the Flemish government having engaged for a new building that will finally give M HKA a fully developed museum infrastructure, therewith enabling it to sustain and further develop the level of international excellence expected of it.

M HKA's General Director Bart De Baere will focus the core of his attention towards this ambitious new civic and institutional project, scheduled to open in 2027. Nav Haq has been appointed as Associate Director at the end of last year, with responsibility for the further development and orientation of the artistic programme at M HKA. Now the new team has been completed with Anne-Claire Schmitz and Joanna Zielińska. They bring new vitality to the future programme at M HKA.

Associate Director

Nav Haq has been Senior Curator at M HKA since 2012, where he has organised monographic exhibitions of artists including Harald Thys & Jos de Gruyter, Kerry James Marshall, Otobong Nkanga, Joseph Beuys, Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin and Laure Prouvost, amongst others. In stepping up to this new role he will take responsibility for its Department for Artistic Presentations which incorporates the curatorial office, production team, and the museum's film hub De Cinema run in collaboration with partner organisation De Studio. He brings eight years of experience working at the museum, and undertakes overall responsibility for developing M HKA's artistic vision for the coming years.

He is presently preparing the exhibition MONOCULTURE – A Recent History taking place at M HKA in Summer 2020.

Senior Curators

Anne-Claire Schmitz and Joanna Zielińska are the new Senior Curators at M HKA. Together with Nav Haq, Schmitz and Zielińska will develop the future programme of exhibitions and artistic projects at the museum. With their wealth and diversity of experiences, they seek to bring new thinking and methodologies to M HKA.

Anne-Claire Schmitz is a curator based in Brussels. In 2019, she curated Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys' exhibition *Mondo Cane* for the Belgian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. From 2012 until the summer of 2019, she was committed to developing and programming La Loge, a non-profit organisation dedicated to contemporary art, architecture and theory located in Brussels. Schmitz was also previously Curator at Witte de With, Rotterdam.

Joanna Zielińska is an art historian and exhibition maker with specialism in performance and performativity. From 2015 to 2020, she was the Head of the Performing Arts Department at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. Zielińska was also previously Chief Curator at Cricoteka, the Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor in Kraków, Poland, and was Artistic Director at the Znaki Czasu Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA) in Toruń, Poland from 2008-2010.

Notes to Editors:

Bart De Baere says:

"This is for me a 'queen's sacrifice', as they say in chess, giving up much of what I profoundly enjoy, being close to the art and artists that made me take this path. But the horizon offered to us by the Flemish government, of a new building that finally offers a full-scale museum infrastructure – and therewith implies a full-scale organisation – needs to be taken seriously. Developing that will take the coming years and requires full attention. You can't always combine everything, or you become cross-eyed. Meanwhile M HKA will remain operational and that requires a full focus too. I'm happy Anne-Claire, Joanna and Nav came aboard, they'll now make our real future, our software for further commitment to art."

Nav Haq says:

"I'm delighted to have been invited to step up to this new role. After working at the museum for the last eight years as a Senior Curator, I'm committed to guiding M HKA's artistic vision in this phase gearing up to the new institution. I will seek to develop ambitious new programming together with my new colleagues Anne-Claire and Joanna, who have demonstrated their capabilities for creating adept and imaginative projects. We will endeavour to engage qualitatively with artists in producing a programme that is generative, meaningful and relevant. Looking forward to it."

Anne-Claire Schmitz says:

"I am happy to join M HKA as part of a new curatorial think tank formed with my colleagues. I am looking forward to contributing all together to the future of the institution; it's position, attitude and artistic programme. I wish for a programme vision expressing engagement, ambition, generosity, creativity and focus, and I feel excited about this challenging mission."

Joanna Zielińska says:

"As a long-time admirer of M HKA's programme and collection (to which I have humbly contributed the artists' novels collection as part of The Book Lovers collective since 2011), I feel honoured to join its artistic team as a Senior Curator. I wish to contribute knowledge I have produced in my professional trajectory via research and experience working at the crossover between the visual and performing arts (introducing notions such as performativity and fiction). A central aspect will be the active engagement with local audiences and the connection with the lively Flemish art scene, whilst at the same time contextualising it in the wider international art discourses. Engaging with the new curatorial projects and challenges to come motivates me greatly and makes me extremely excited."

Biographies**Nav Haq**

Nav Haq is Associate Director at M HKA, responsible for the development of its artistic programme. From 2012 – 2019 he was Senior Curator at M HKA. He was previously Exhibitions Curator at Arnolfini, Bristol (2007-2012) and Curator at Gasworks, London (2004-2007). Haq has organised numerous monographic exhibitions with artists such as Hassan Khan, Cosima von Bonin, Shilpa Gupta, Imogen Stidworthy, Harald Thys & Jos de Gruyter, Otobong Nkanga and Cevdet Erek, as well as significant overviews of work by Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, Joseph Beuys, Kerry James Marshall and Laure Prouvost. Has was curator of the 2017 edition of the Göteborg International Biennial of Contemporary Art titled On Secularity and Contour Biennial 2007, Mechelen, Belgium. Other group exhibitions have included Superpower: Africa in Science Fiction (2012); Museum Show – a major historical survey of (semi-fictional) museums created by artists (2011); and Lapdogs of the Bourgeoisie: Class Hegemony in Contemporary Art, co-curated with Tirdad Zolghadr (2006-09). At M HKA he co-curated the group exhibition Don't You Know Who I Am? Art After Identity Politics in 2014, and curated the interdisciplinary exhibition Energy Flash: The Rave Movement. Haq is on the editorial board of the online research platform for the L'Internationale confederation of European museums (www.internationaleonline.org) and an editor at Afterall journal. In 2012, he was recipient of the Independent Vision Award for Curatorial Achievement, awarded by Independent Curators International, New York.

Anne-Claire Schmitz

Anne-Claire Schmitz is a curator based in Brussels and has now been appointed Senior Curator at M HKA. In 2019, she curated Mondo Cane the exhibition by Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys for the Belgian Pavilion at the 58th Venice Biennale. From 2012 until the summer of 2019, she was committed to the conception and development of La Loge, a privately initiated non-profit organisation in Brussels. As the founding director and curator of this small-scale institution for art, architecture and theory, she had the privilege to imagine its positioning, public role and artistic programme. At La Loge, she developed various project formats: discursive live programmes such as Leonard Koren & guests and Open Perspectives on Oskar Hansen; group exhibitions such as Voici des Fleurs and Pastoral Myths as well as a range of solo exhibitions with Andreas Angelidakis, Sophie Nys, Roe Ethridge & Zin Taylor, Kate Newby, Sven Augustijnen, Peter Hutton, Emily Wardill, Michael Beutler, Gareth Moore, Jef Geys and Arvo Leo among other artists. Prior to this, she was a curator at Witte de With, Centre for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam, where she curated major public commissions and group exhibitions. Alongside her main commitments, she has regularly been invited to curate exhibitions for other institutions. Among them, Les Bons Sentiments, the 19th Fondation d'entreprise Ricard Prize (Fondation Ricard, Paris, 2017), Individual Stories – Collecting as Portrait and Methodology (Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, 2015) and Un-Scene II (WIELS, Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels, 2012).

Joanna Zielińska

Joanna Zielińska is an art historian and exhibition maker with specialism in performance and performativity. She has now been appointed Senior Curator at M HKA. Her practice is centred around theatre, performance, performative literature, and visual arts. She is also interested in generating discussion on the identity and activity of the 21st-century museum. From 2015 to 2020, she was the Head of the Performing Arts Department at the Ujazdowski Castle Centre for Contemporary Art in Warsaw. She is the former Chief Curator at Cricoteka, the Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor in Kraków, Poland, where in 2014 she curated the inaugural exhibition for the opening of the institution's new building and the performance programme Nothing Twice. Joanna was also the former Artistic Director at the Znaki Czasu Centre of Contemporary Art (CoCA) in Toruń, Poland, where she curated its programme from 2008–2010. Since 2011, she has been working on a long-term research project The Book Lovers focusing on artists' novels, in collaboration with artist David Maroto. Its central question is how a literary genre such as the novel becomes a medium in the visual arts. The Book Lovers comprises a growing collection of artists' novels and a parallel online database (both in collaboration with M HKA), and has been complemented with a series of exhibitions, performances, publications, and a pop-up book store, hosted by institutions such as: De Appel, Amsterdam; Raven Row, London; Whitechapel Gallery, London; CCA Glasgow, and the EFA Project Space; New York, among others.

More information:

Albane Paret

Club Paradis

+32 (0)476 57 37 82

albane@clubparadis.be