

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ST. PETE

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MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG WELCOMES DR. JANE L. ASPINWALL AS CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

ST. PETERSBURG, FL (August 2, 2021) — The Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg is thrilled to announce esteemed photography specialist and scholar Dr. Jane L. Aspinwall has joined its staff as Curator of Photography. She will be working with the museum’s photography collection, which is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast, with more than 15,000 images, ranging from rare, early daguerreotypes and salt prints to major modern and contemporary works.

Aspinwall was previously at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art as its Curator of Photography and Collections Supervisor. As one of the first members of its Photography Department — created in 2007 with the gift of the internationally-recognized Hallmark Photographic Collection — Aspinwall oversaw exceptional acquisitions, developed nearly 25 thought-provoking exhibitions, and presented ground-breaking scholarship in the medium of photography. She was directly involved in growing the photography collection from 6,500 objects to more than 15,000 works and facilitated the development of a rapid imaging process, allowing easier access to those holdings.

“The MFA’s photography collection is a wonderful hidden gem, and I am thrilled to have the opportunity to apply my expertise to transform it into a major resource for smart, original exhibitions, collaborative projects, and programming that furthers our understanding of our collective history,” Aspinwall said. “The MFA has everything I could ask for: friendly and knowledgeable colleagues, a vast and significant photography collection, wonderfully supportive donors, and a motivated director interested in developing the best photo program in the Southeast.”

Aspinwall’s curatorial experience is comprehensive and diverse, with achievements such as major publications that have added new scholarship to the field; a wide variety of significant traveling exhibitions; and years of experience in working with donors and collectors to build a world-class collection. In addition, she has always been on the forefront of innovations in collection accessibility and care. Aspinwall is a renowned expert in 19th-century photography and her most recent project, *Golden Prospects: Daguerreotypes of the California Gold Rush* stands as the definitive source on the subject. A long proponent of lesser known and

underrepresented artists, Aspinwall is committed to studying and showing work by women, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and non-Western photographers.

“With a remarkable career which has focused upon the history of photography; an extraordinary track record in scholarly publications and exhibitions; and with invaluable experience in organizing and developing a large collection like our own, Dr. Aspinwall will be a huge asset to the MFA,” said MFA Senior Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Dr. Stanton Thomas. “We believe her rich experience in both curatorial and collections makes her the ideal scholar to activate our own expansive holdings.”

Kristen A. Shepherd, Executive Director and CEO added, “Dr. Aspinwall’s impressive career is widely known and respected, and the MFA is honored to have her as a part of our curatorial team. Her wealth of expertise will help us continue to shape and elevate the MFA’s photography collection for future generations to experience.”

Aspinwall holds a PhD and MA in the History of Art and Humanities (University of Missouri-Kansas City) and an MBA in Arts Management (University of Missouri-Columbia).

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

The MFA at 255 Beach Drive NE is St. Petersburg’s first art museum, and houses the largest encyclopedic art collection in Florida. The collection includes works of art from ancient times to the present day and from around the world, including ancient Greek and Roman, Egyptian, Asian, African, pre-Columbian, Native American, European, American, and contemporary art. The photography collection is one of the largest and finest in the Southeast. Kristen A. Shepherd is the Executive Director and CEO. For more information, please visit mfastpete.org and follow @mfastpete on social media.

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