

## Memorial Art Gallery Announces the Appointment of McPherson Director of Academic Programs

ROCHESTER, NY Monday, September 28, 2020—The Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester is excited to announce that as of September 28<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Nile Blunt is the new McPherson Director of Academic Programs. A native of New Jersey who has lived in a variety of locations throughout the U.S. and abroad, Dr. Blunt comes to MAG with nearly a decade of experience in museum and arts education. He holds a BA in History from American University and an MA and PhD in History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Throughout his career, Blunt has worked as an educator, curator, and museum administrator. Most recently, he served as the Head of School Programs at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas. In this position, he was responsible for all museum initiatives designed for student and teacher audiences. Blunt oversaw the School Visits Program, which serves over 45,000 K–12 students every year, the “Crystal Bridges in the Classroom” school partnership program, teacher professional development, and online/distance learning. He also administered the Windgate Educational Excellence through the Arts Endowed Fund and directed Windgate initiatives. Moreover, Blunt developed and fostered impactful relationships and fruitful partnerships with education and community leaders both within the Northwest Arkansas region and across the nation. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Blunt created and directed the “Bridging the Gap Video Series,” a collection of over fifty arts engagement videos that explore and teach the skills of close looking and art interpretation.

“I am thrilled to begin my tenure as the McPherson Director of Academic Programs,” said Blunt. “I am a firm believer in and deeply passionate about the power of art to transform lives and to broaden the worldview of learners of all ages. I am excited to be at MAG because of the extraordinary potential to find new and exciting ways to activate its incredible collection and resources to impact the lives of students at the University of Rochester, in the City of Rochester, and the greater region.”

Jonathan Binstock, MAG’s Mary W. and Donald R. Director, stated, “we conducted an international search for the McPherson Director position, with strong applicants from a number of U.S. states and Canada. I could not be more thrilled about Nile’s arrival in Rochester. His expert knowledge of American history and his experience at Crystal Bridges, renowned as a pioneering institution in arts education and school programs, make him ideally suited to enrich and strengthen MAG’s academic and educational programs in the years ahead.”

Trained as a historian with a focus on visual and material culture, Blunt is interested in the integration of the arts throughout the humanities and sees myriad possibilities for the roles that the fine arts can play in teaching, learning, and conducting research within the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Directing the Academic Programs Department at MAG will enable Blunt to take on new challenges and opportunities in arts education and programming for a broad and diverse audience that will encompass kindergarteners through graduate students.

### About The Memorial Art Gallery

The Memorial Art Gallery showcases visual art from antiquity to the present day, including the outdoor public Centennial Sculpture Park. In addition to its permanent collection, MAG offers a year-round schedule of special exhibitions, lectures, concerts, tours, after-hours social events, and family activities.

Admission: \$15; senior citizens, \$12; college students with ID and children 6–18, \$6. Always free to members, University of Rochester faculty/staff and students, and children 5 and under. Half-price general admission Thursdays from 5–9 pm is made possible in part by Monroe County. For more information, call 585.276.8900 or visit [mag.rochester.edu](http://mag.rochester.edu).

