



KIMBERLY DREW

On Contemporary Art, Activism, and Navigating Creative Careers

Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at 7 p.m.
Friends of the USC Libraries Lecture Hall
Doheny Memorial Library 240
University of Southern California

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ◉ Kimberly Drew (b. 1990) is an art writer, curator, social media influencer, and fashion icon.
- ◉ She is a voice for equity, accessibility, representation, and justice in the art world.

“It’s my biggest and grandest hope for the future of art that we really start to serve communities better—thinking more abundantly . . . When we’re thinking about accessibility with a capital A, we’re thinking about how abundant lives can be.”—Kimberly Drew

ISSUES OF EQUITY IN THE MUSEUM WORLD

While museums are becoming more diverse, people of color are still underrepresented on museum staffs, especially at the highest levels. According to a study conducted in 2018 by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Association of Art Museum Directors, the American Alliance of Museums, and Ithaka S+R, from 2015 to 2018:

- ◉ Among institutions that participated in the survey, the percentage of African American curators doubled—but from 2 percent to 4 percent.
- ◉ The percentage of women in executive positions (director, CFO, and CEO) went from 57 percent to 62 percent.
- ◉ There was only a 1 percent increase in the number of people of color in executive positions.

In 2018, 35 percent of new hires at U.S. museums were people of color, up from 26 percent in 2015.

Kimberly Drew has also drawn attention to issues of pay equity in the art world, noting that when she left the Met, she still had not reached the salary level of the white man who had held her position two years prior.

“Blackness is a technology in and of itself. The way we survive and thrive has always been contingent on building technologies against the system that sets us up to fail.”—Kimberly Drew in an interview for *The Lenny Letter*

There is also the wider issue of low pay for the vast majority of people who work in arts institutions, and typically very large gaps between the pay of directors, chief curators, and the rest of museum staffs. Issues of low pay and lack of workplace fairness have prompted a wave of museum staffs to vote to unionize in recent years, including, in L.A., the staffs of MOCA and the Marciano Art Foundation. MOCA's leadership decided to support the union, while Marciano's fired the entire Visitor Engagement team after they voted to unionize.

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- Is there an aspect of art or culture that is not yet well represented in the media spaces you engage with? Is there something you could make to change that?
- Have you experienced art institutions as accessible or inaccessible to you? How so?
- What do you think Drew means by "When we're thinking about accessibility with a capital A, we're thinking about how abundant lives can be"?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Kimberly Drew on Instagram
@museummammy
- *Black Contemporary Art*
blackcontemporaryart.tumblr.com
- The Underground Museum
theunderground-museum.org
- CA African American Museum: CAAM
caamuseum.org
- Women's Center for Creative Work
womenscenterforcreativework.com

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

STACY WILLIAMS of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this evening's event. Those with a call number (e.g., books) are physical items which you can find in our campus libraries. Those without a call number (e.g. e-books, journals, and databases) are electronic resources, which you can access through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

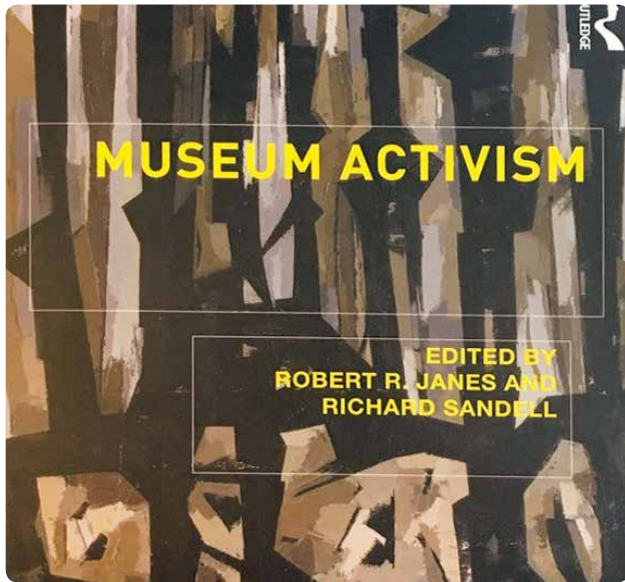
RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Höner, Julia, Kerstin Schankweiler, and Marion Eisele. *Affect Me: Social Media Images in Art*. Leipzig, Germany: Spector Books, 2017.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N8243.S67 A34 2017
- Janes, Robert R., and Richard Sandell. *Museum Activism*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: AM7 .M847 2019

TIMELINE: KIMBERLY DREW'S CREATIVE CAREER (SO FAR)

- 2010** While a student at Smith College, interns at the Studio Museum in Harlem, where she works with director and curator Thelma Golden
- 2011** Founds the Tumblr blog *Black Contemporary Art*
- 2012** Receives a BA in art history and African American studies from Smith
- 2012–15** Jobs at Creative Time, *Hyperallergic*, The Studio Museum, and the art gallery Lehmann Maupin
- 2015** Hired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art as the Associate Online Community Producer; stays at the Met for three years, ultimately as the Social Media Manager
- 2016** Curates the White House's Instagram account during the South by South Lawn music festival; organizes the Black Art Incubator with Taylor Renee Aldridge, Jessica Lynne, and Jessica Bell Brown.
- 2018** Leaves the Met to pursue her own creative projects full-time
- 2019** Writes, speaks, and posts about art all over the world, designs a sneaker, models, and much more
- 2020** Has two books coming out: *Black Futures*, co-edited with Jenna Wortham, and *This Is What I Know About Art*, an illustrated book for young adults

“[W]hen I started *Black Contemporary Art*, I knew probably 10 artists’ names, and I built from there up into the 5,000 artists [...] on the site right now. But it really started as a small idea and became something so much bigger.”— Kimberly Drew in a speech at the American Alliance of Museums’ 2019 Conference



- ◉ Matejic, Nicole. *Social Media Rules of Engagement: Why Your Online Narrative Is the Best Weapon During a Crisis*. Milton, Australia: Wiley, 2015.

E-BOOK

- ◉ Message, Kylie. *Museums and Social Activism: Engaged Protest*. New York: Routledge, 2014.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: AM7 .M466 2014
- ◉ Thompson, Nato. *Seeing Power: Art and Activism in the 21st Century*. Brooklyn: Melville House Publishing, 2015.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: NX180.P64 T49 2015
- ◉ Wexler, Alice, and Vida Sabbaghi. *Bridging Communities through Socially Engaged Art*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
ARCHITECTURE AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY: N72.A76 B75 2019

DISSERTATION

Wood, Catherine, Jessica Luke, Mike Murawski, and Walter Parker. "Visitor Trust When Museums Are Not Neutral." ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2018.

<http://search.proquest.com/docview/2084518889>

RECOMMENDED JOURNAL ARTICLES

- ◉ Cossu, Alberto. "Beyond Social Media Determinism? How Artists Reshape the Organization of Social Movements." *Social Media + Society* 4, no. 1 (January 2018).
- ◉ O'Neill, Mark. "Museums and Social Activism: Engaged Protest." *Museum Worlds* 2, no. 1 (January 1, 2014): 249–250.
- ◉ Steinhauer, Jillian. "Museums Have a Duty to be Political." *The Art Newspaper*, March 20, 2018.
- ◉ Williams, Mary Elizabeth. "A Noble Balancing Act: Museums, Political Activism and Protest Art." *Museum International* 69, no. 3–4 (2017): 66–75.

RECOMMENDED DATABASES

Arts & Humanities

This database features hundreds of titles covering art, architecture, design, history, philosophy, music, literature, theatre, and cultural studies.

Artstor

Provides access to over a million high quality images of art and photography, with descriptions and provenance. Also includes images in the fields of anthropology and architecture.

ProQuest Central

Serves as the central resource for researchers at all levels. Covers more than 160 subjects areas and is one of the largest aggregated databases of content that includes scholarly journals, trade publications, magazines, books, newspapers, reports, and videos.

