



VIA ART FUND APPOINTS BROOKE DAVIS ANDERSON AS INAUGURAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Brooke Davis Anderson. Photo: Jay Potter

(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE) BOSTON, June 16, 2021 – VIA Art Fund today announced the appointment of **Brooke Davis Anderson** as the non-profit organization's inaugural Executive Director, effective September 1, 2021.

"We could not be happier to welcome Brooke Davis Anderson to the VIA Art Fund family. Brooke is a seasoned art world professional whose wide-ranging yet singular career exemplifies inclusion and collaboration, guiding principles in the founding of VIA. Her national networks and commitment to expanding philanthropy in the arts through rigorous patron engagement resonate strongly with our own collective, democratic ethos. We have much to gain from Brooke's experience and expertise in serving today's artists, and I look forward to working with her to deepen our impact," said Bridgett Evans, VIA Art Fund President, Founder and President.

In a statement, Anderson said, "I am excited to join an organization that is ambitious about supporting artists and one that aligns so nicely with my values and my background. VIA Art Fund is enthusiastic about the multiple conversations in the 21st century art world, all while being unafraid of taking risks, just like the artists it supports," said Anderson upon her appointment. "I am thrilled to join an organization that is collaborative and adventurous, and I cannot wait to get started."

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Chosen after an extensive national search facilitated by Phillips Oppenheim, Anderson brings to VIA nearly thirty years of arts and cultural leadership experience in which she has cultivated numerous community collaborations, developed programs and exhibitions, and delivered financial stability and growth. She most recently served as the Edna S. Tuttleman Director of the Museum at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA) in Philadelphia. Her tenure at PAFA featured numerous community collaborations, successful fundraising campaigns for the institution's endowment as well as museum exhibitions, collections, and programming. She significantly increased the visibility of contemporary art by reimagining the landscape of the oldest American art museum. Central to her leadership was expanding and making elastic the American art story previously told at PAFA to now include women artists and artists of color.

In 2019, Anderson received the Art for Life award from Philadelphia-based Rush Philanthropic Arts for her dedication to a vibrant retelling of the American story and diversity in the arts.

Anderson led Prospect New Orleans as its Executive Director from 2013-2017. It was here that she and VIA first collaborated on a project led by Franklin Sirmans which featured the artwork of Charles Gaines. At Prospect she worked in partnership with the Board of Directors and guest artistic directors to build that iteration of the triennial exhibition into a highly acclaimed international art event that connected to its local community. During her tenure, Anderson led all aspects of the organization, and spearheaded a range of new initiatives intended to build relevancy in New Orleans.

From 2010 to 2012 Anderson was the inaugural Deputy Director of Curatorial Planning at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). In this role, she oversaw the Watts Towers Conservation and Community Collaboration, and the "Curatorial Diversity Initiative," a Mellon-funded pilot program aiming to change the demographics of professionals in museums across the nation. Both celebrated programs continue to flourish ten years later.

Anderson was founding Director and Curator of The Contemporary Center at the American Folk Art Museum in New York from 1999 to 2010, where she curated countless exhibitions (most notably projects on Martin Ramirez, Henry Darger, and other contemporary artists). Here, Anderson continued her commitment to demonstrating the porous nature of art history and created context for work by self-taught artists in contemporary art discourse.

Earlier in her career, Anderson was the first full-time Director of the Diggs Gallery, and Assistant Professor of Fine Arts, at Winston-Salem State University (WSSU) in North Carolina. Her eight-year tenure at WSSU was defined by growth in all areas – audience, publicity, budgets, and programming. The university established an endowment in her honor and the community newspaper bestowed upon her the honorary title of "Curator of African American Art".

Anderson has also been an Adjunct Instructor at Columbia University and at City College of New York; and Guest Curator at the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid.

She has authored several books and numerous articles.



ABOUT VIA ART FUND

Since its founding in 2013, VIA Art Fund has built a national coalition of dedicated individual philanthropists and family foundations who have awarded over \$6 million in grants and gifted or partially gifted over 40 works of art to US museums. VIA Art Fund supports contemporary visual art through a series of co-mingled philanthropic partnerships that exemplify our grantmaking core values of Artistic Production, Thought Leadership, and Public Engagement. Partnering directly with artists, curators, and cultural institutions around the world, VIA Art Fund awards grants for innovative artistic endeavors in various forms, from the production of new work for exhibition and institutional acquisition, to symposia, educational programs, publications, and scholarly journals. VIA Art Fund stands apart in the landscape of contemporary arts funding as a collective, democratic initiative that connects art patrons with today's most visionary cultural producers.

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