



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Art in General Appoints Irene Mei Zhi Shum as Executive Director



NEW YORK – February 4, 2020 – Art in General is pleased to announce the appointment of Irene Mei Zhi Shum as Executive Director. Shum will oversee artist engagement and the curatorial direction of Art in General’s New Commissions and International Collaborations programs, as well as the organization’s operations and fundraising initiatives. She will start in spring 2020.

Shum states, “It is an honor to lead Art in General and to build upon its reputation as an innovative and inclusive artists’ space that has debuted and launched the careers of many who have gone on to shape the discourse of contemporary art. I am very excited by the opportunity to plan the organization’s 40th anniversary in 2021, to support emerging talent, to produce new art, and to once again contribute to the cultural life of New York City.”

Shum joins Art in General from the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas where she served as the Associate Curator of Contemporary Art since 2018. Her exhibition, *Contemporary Focus: Trenton Doyle Hancock* was recently cited as one of “The 10 Best Houston Museum Shows of 2019” by the *Houston Chronicle* / Associated Press. Prior to this, from 2007 to 2018, she was

the inaugural curator of Philip Johnson's Glass House in New Canaan, Connecticut where she implemented the arts initiative, introducing exhibitions, music and dance performances to the site; most notably the large-scale art installations *Fujiko Nakaya: Veil* (2014) and *Yayoi Kusama: Narcissus Garden* (2016), as well as a sound performance by famed composer Ryuichi Sakamoto and German artist alva noto, that was recorded and released as *Glass* (Noton, 2018). Shum's programs and exhibitions have been widely published with reviews and editorial features in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Artforum*, *Architectural Record*, *Interior Design*, *Metropolis*, *Galerie*, *Cultured*, *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Town & Country*, *Rolling Stone*, *Pitchfork*, *Resident Advisor*, among others. Shum is a graduate of Barnard College, Columbia University and Yale University School of Architecture, and previously held positions at The Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, and New Museum of Contemporary Art.

"We are delighted to welcome Irene Mei Zhi Shum to Art in General," co-presidents Leslie Ruff and Roya Khadjavi Heidari said. "This is a particularly exciting time to join the organization as we look back and celebrate our 40th anniversary, while planning ahead for our future. Irene's experience in creating content, building organizational capacity, and strategic planning make her the ideal candidate for the position of Executive Director. Her work is thoughtful, fearless, and fun. We look forward working with her."

Shum succeeds Laurel Ptak, whose tenure at Art in General was defined by critically-acclaimed programs and exhibitions that emphasized the social and political urgencies with artists and collectives including Zach Blas, Chim↑Pom, Duane Linklater, Sondra Perry, Postcommodity, Aliza Shvarts and others that significantly grew the institution's audience. Ptak will serve as faculty in the Curatorial Practice graduate program at the School of Visual Arts and is launching a new curatorial initiative, Publics and Counterpublics.

Art in General

Founded in 1981, Art in General is a nonprofit organization that assists local and international artists with the production and presentation of new work through its New Commissions and International Collaborations programs. Art in General has a long history of supporting artists early in their careers, from Glenn Ligon (1991), Marina Abramović (1993), Byron Kim (1994), Gabriel Orozco (1994), and Sharon Hayes (2004) in the 1990s and early 2000s to Jill Magid (2014) and Basim Magdy (2015) more recently. Art in General is often at the forefront of giving artists their first New York exhibitions. New Commissions artists have gone on to be included in the Whitney Biennial, documenta, Istanbul Biennial, and the Venice Biennale, among others, as well as in exhibitions at major institutions in New York and abroad, such as MoMA, the New Museum, and the Tate Modern.

To request high resolution images and for other press questions, please contact:
press@artingeneral.org

Art in General

145 Plymouth Street
Brooklyn, New York 11201
Phone: (212) 219-0473
www.artingeneral.org
Facebook: @artingeneral
Instagram: @art_in_general
Twitter: @ArtinGeneral