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Hammer Museum Appoints Michael Wellen as Chief Curator and Regan Pro as Chief of Learning, Engagement, and Research



(Los Angeles, CA)—The Hammer Museum at UCLA today announced two key appointments to its leadership team. **Michael Wellen** will take on the role of Chief Curator for the museum; and **Regan Pro** will assume the newly created role of Chief of Learning, Engagement, and Research.

Reporting to museum director **Zoë Ryan**, Wellen and Pro join a leadership team as primary drivers of the museum’s program alongside **Naoko Takahatake**, Director and Chief Curator of the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, who has been with the Hammer since 2023.

Michael Wellen is currently Senior Curator of International Art at Tate Modern, where he has worked since 2016. Wellen has organized critically acclaimed exhibitions at Tate Modern, including *Philip Guston* (2023), *Lubiana Himid* (2021), and *Takis* (2019, co-curated with Guy Brett). He is currently finalizing an exhibition on Ana Mendieta, slated to open at Tate Modern in July 2026. As Chief Curator at the Hammer, Wellen will lead the contemporary exhibitions and collections programs, Hammer publications, and the museum’s registrar and preparator teams.

A seasoned arts leader and educator, **Regan Pro** was most recently the inaugural Deputy Director of Public Programs & Social Impact at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art. Prior to that, she was the Kayla Skinner Deputy Director of Education & Public Engagement at the Seattle Art Museum, where she worked for more than a decade. In both roles she developed key community partnerships, learning initiatives, and inclusive experiences. At the Hammer, Pro will take on a newly created position leading the strategic vision for the museum’s acclaimed public programs and community partnerships, as well as K-12, family, and university initiatives.

Hammer Director **Zoë Ryan** said, “I am delighted to welcome Michael and Regan, two recognized leaders in the field, to the Hammer. Their deep commitment to artists and audiences, as well as to experimentation, scholarship, and learning, will have a tremendous impact on the museum and the communities we serve. Michael possesses a reverence for and knowledge of the Los Angeles artist community paired with an international perspective, which will fuel an expansive approach to our exhibitions, collections, and research. Regan brings a commitment to building deep and inclusive relationships with communities through dynamic collaborations and programs that will support and strengthen our existing program and deepen our impact with audiences.”

Wellen will officially join the Hammer starting April 6. Pro will begin March 2.

BIOS

MICHAEL WELLEN

Michael Wellen is Senior Curator, International Art, at Tate Modern where he is in charge of all aspects of the displays of the collection across the museum. He leads the curatorial team in building free exhibits, which receive over 4 million visitors annually. As a specialist in 20th-Century and contemporary art from Latin America, Wellen led Tate’s Latin American Acquisitions committee from 2016 to 2022. He implemented a collecting strategy to address long-standing art historical omissions and to provide wider, more nuanced views of visual cultures from the Global South and its diasporas. He brought into the collection major works by Belkis Ayón, María Magdalena Campos-Pons, Paulo Nazareth, Abel Rodríguez, Fernando Palma Rodríguez, Rubem Valentim, and many others. Aiming to expand the mediums Tate collects, he led the acquisition of the largest selection of Ana Mendieta filmworks in a public museum, computer-based work of Eduardo Kac, a live performance by Tunga, and textiles, notably Cecilia Vicuña’s large-scale Quipu Womb and “arpilleras,” the anonymous patchwork pictures made in the 1970s by women living under dictatorship in Chile. These acquisitions introduced new display strategies, including the exhibition and research program “A Year in Art,” which involved showing the transnational and transhistorical impact of the military coup in Chile in 1973. In 2025 he curated the latest in this ongoing series, “A Year in Art: 2050,” looking at artists’ visions for the future, featuring works by historic artists Umberto Boccioni, El Lissitzky, and the Vorticists in dialogue with contemporary artists Ayoung Kim, Toyin Ojih Odutola, and Andra Ursuta.

Before joining Tate Modern, Wellen worked as Assistant Curator of Latin American and Latino Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston from 2011-2016, where he worked with Dr. Mari Carmen Ramírez on exhibitions, acquisitions, research and a variety of publications related to the MFAH Latin American Art Department.

In 2024 Wellen was awarded a Center for Curatorial Leadership Fellowship. He holds a BA in History and Anthropology from Rutgers University and an MA and PhD in Modern and Contemporary Art with a focus on Latin America, both from the University of Texas at Austin.

REGAN PRO

Regan Pro is an arts leader, strategist, facilitator, and culture builder who centers her practice on cultivating inclusive and high-achieving learning spaces. She was most recently the inaugural Deputy Director, Public Programs & Social Impact at the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, where she served as

part of the executive team building a new museum in Los Angeles. She oversaw learning initiatives, community partnerships, audience engagement, and public programs, and led the development of bold strategies to increase accessibility and relevance, engaging new audiences from the varied communities of Los Angeles to international audiences for the new museum.

Until 2021, Pro was the Kayla Skinner Deputy Director of Education & Public Engagement at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), where she worked for over a decade designing experiences for 150,000 audience members annually focused on creativity and inclusion. Program highlights included co-launching a city-wide collective impact model for equitable arts education, leading program planning and implementation for the reopening of the Seattle Asian Art Museum, and developing the museum's first interpretative technology department.

Prior to SAM, Pro worked at arts and cultural spaces across the United States including the Frye Art Museum, Path with Art and the Addison Gallery of American Art. She held research and teaching positions at leading arts education organizations including Project Zero, University of Washington, and the National Arts Learning Collaborative. She has presented nationally and internationally and most recently was the keynote speaker for the Queensland Museum Conference in Australia.

Born in New York and raised in Seattle, Pro lives in Los Angeles with her family. She graduated with her bachelor's in art history from Wesleyan University and her master's in arts education from Harvard University.

ABOUT THE HAMMER MUSEUM

The Hammer Museum is part of the School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA, and offers exhibitions and collections that span classic to contemporary art. It holds more than 50,000 works in its collection, including one of the finest collections of works on paper in the nation, the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts. Through a wide-ranging, international exhibition program and the biennial, Made in L.A., the Hammer highlights contemporary art since the 1960s, especially the work of emerging and under recognized artists. The exhibitions, permanent collections, and nearly 300 public programs annually—including film screenings, lectures, symposia, readings, music performances, and workshops for families—are all free to the public.

HAMMER MUSEUM INFORMATION

Admission to all exhibitions and programs at the Hammer Museum is free. Tuesday-Sunday: 11am to 6pm. Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Boulevard at Westwood, Los Angeles. Onsite parking \$8 (maximum 3 hours) or \$8 flat rate after 5 p.m. Visit hammer.ucla.edu for details or call 310-443-7000.