

## Susan Stoops Steps Down as Curator of Contemporary Art

*Stoops led the department for fifteen years, transforming the Museum's contemporary art collection and exhibition program*

Worcester, MA – October 31, 2014 – The Worcester Art Museum (WAM) announced today that Susan Stoops, the Curator of Contemporary Art, will leave the position in December 2014. Since joining the Museum in 1999, Stoops has been integral to shaping WAM's contemporary art program by introducing key acquisitions to the collection as well as an innovative roster of exhibitions. During her tenure, Stoops also served as Interim Chief Curator, from 2004 to 2005, and again from 2012 to 2014, overseeing all of the Museum's curatorial departments. Her curatorial focus has encompassed a wide span of contemporary international art, and has advanced scholarship in the field, especially through her work supporting female artists and feminist practice. Stoops' last day at the Museum will be December 3, 2014.

“Susan has made an indelible impression on the Museum, elevating the presence of contemporary art in our galleries and organizing a rigorous series of thought-provoking exhibitions,” said WAM's Director Matthias Waschek. “In addition to supporting female artists in a deep and sustained way, Susan has been a tireless advocate of the regional arts community, and a hallmark of her work is Susan's outstanding rapport with artists – a real rarity in the field – which has greatly informed her projects in Worcester.”

Stoops was responsible for overseeing the 2011 renovation of the Art Since the Mid -20<sup>th</sup> Century galleries, and launched a series of rotations that have introduced new contemporary themes and concepts to visitors. Likewise, Stoops transformed the collections of the Worcester Art Museum through a series of significant acquisitions by artists such as Louise Bourgeois, LaToya Ruby Frazier, Nan Goldin, Zhang Huan, Yun-Fei Ji, Martin Kippenberger, Jim Lambie, Sol LeWitt, Sharon Lockhart, Christian Marclay, Elizabeth Murray, Alice Neel, Shirin Neshat, Sigmar Polke, Martha Rosler, Kiki Smith, Bill Viola, Kara Walker, and Suara Welitoff.

From *BLOWUP: Recent Sculpture and Drawings by Heide Fasnacht*, in 2000, through the recently-opened *Polly Apfelbaum—Nevermind: Work From the 90s*, Stoops has curated a long series of unprecedented exhibitions for the Museum, introducing the work of Jennifer Reeves, Tony Feher, Ambreen Butt, Lily van der Stokker, David Thorpe, Louise Bourgeois, Martha Rosler, Annette Lemieux, Carrie Moyer, Jill Slosberg-Ackerman, among others to Worcester audiences, as well as numerous thematic exhibitions, most recently *You Are Here* (2013), conceived around a new acquisition by Gillian Wearing. *The Wall at WAM* has activated the Renaissance court through a wide variety of installations, ranging from projects by Denise Marika, Julian Opie, Jim Hodges, and Charline von Heyl to the current mural by Robert and Shana ParkeHarrison. Her writings include such critical publications as catalogues on Louise Bourgeois, Rona Pondick, and Nancy Spero, and her forthcoming essay on Polly Apfelbaum. Stoops also conceived of the Jeppson Idea Lab, a series that presents single or small selections of objects from WAM's permanent collection to engage viewers in the Museum's conservation, curatorial, and other scholarly work, in addition to launching one of the Lab's first projects on Michael Benson's *Carina Nebula*.

### **ABOUT THE WORCESTER ART MUSEUM:**

Founded in 1898, the Worcester Art Museum serves Worcester and the broader region. The Museum houses an encyclopedic collection of paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, photography, prints, drawings, and new media. WAM's collection has historically been strongest in European Renaissance paintings, but with recent acquisitions and donations, like Veronese's *Venus Disarming Cupid* and the integration of the collection from the Higgins Armory Museum, it continues to diversify and expand its curatorial and

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programmatic offerings. Symbolized by the opening of the Salisbury Street doors in 2012, the Museum continues toward its goal of accessibility for all visitors.

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