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Newly-appointed Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator Dr. Ionit Behar. Photo by Maria Ponce Berre

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The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago Appoints Dr. Ionit Behar as Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator

CHICAGO—The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago today announces the appointment of Ionit Behar, PhD, as Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator, a position endowed in 2012 by philanthropists Marilyn and Larry Fields. Grounded in Latin American and Latinx art—understood not as a fixed category but as an expansive, contested, and continually shifting field—Dr. Behar is deeply invested in rethinking canonical histories by centering artists, practices, and forms of labor that have been historically excluded. Her curatorial practice is shaped by a methodology that moves across cultural, linguistic, and disciplinary contexts, emphasizing long-term collaboration with artists and research-driven exhibition-making. Dr. Behar will join the museum on February 9, 2026.

"Ionit brings to this role a remarkable combination of intellectual rigor, curatorial insight, and an unwavering commitment to the communities that are at the heart of the MCA's mission. At the MCA, we have long envisioned the museum as a space where art is experienced, interpreted, and co-authored with the public," said Dr. Joey Orr, Deputy Director and Chief of Curatorial Affairs, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago. "We are confident Ionit's appointment will further strengthen the MCA's legacy as a home for artists, audiences, and communities."

"It has been a dream of mine to work at the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago since I arrived in the city more than fourteen years ago. Over that time, the MCA has been a site of profound, often life-changing encounters with art, and I have long admired the work of the curators and colleagues—past and present—who have shaped its vision," Dr. Behar said. "I am deeply grateful for and honored by the opportunity to join the museum at this moment. I look forward to collaborating with staff across departments and to continuing my commitment to supporting Chicago-based artists alongside artists working internationally."

Previously, Dr. Behar served as a Curator at DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, where she organized solo and group exhibitions including *Alice Tippit: Rose Obsolete* (2026), *Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle: A Want for Nothing* (2025), *Selva Aparicio: In Memory Of* (2024), *Life Cycles: DePaul Art Museum Collection* (2023), *A Natural Turn: María Berrio, Joiri Minaya, Rosana Paulino, and Kelly Sinnapah Mary* (2022), *Solo(s): Krista Franklin* (2022), *Claudia Peña Salinas: Quetzalli* (2021), and *LatinXAmerican* (2021). Recent independent projects include *Del Otro Lado* (2023) at O'Hare International Airport; *50 años* (marking 50 years since the military coup in Uruguay) (2023) at SUBTE, Montevideo; and *Nelly Agassi: No Limestone, Nor Marble* (2022) at the Chicago Cultural Center. She previously served as Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at Spertus Institute, Chicago, and as a Research Assistant for *Hélio Oiticica: To Organize Delirium* (2017) at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Dr. Behar holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Illinois at Chicago, an MA in Art History, Theory, and Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Tel Aviv University.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART CHICAGO

The Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Alliance of Museums. The MCA interweaves exhibitions, performances, collections, and educational programs while providing a place for audiences to contemplate and discuss contemporary art in pursuit of a creative and diverse future. The MCA believes in the values of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) as a platform to enact structural change. The museum is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations, including the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and government agencies. The MCA acknowledges support from the Illinois Arts Council. The MCA is a proud member of Museums in the Park and receives major support from the Chicago Park District.

[The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue](#) and is open 10 am to 5 pm Wednesday to Sunday and Tuesdays from 10 am to 9 pm. Tuesday evenings (5-9 pm) are free for Illinois residents. The museum is closed on Mondays. Admission is free for all youth 18 and under, members of the military and veterans, and MCA members. Free admission for anyone 18 and under is generously provided by the Lefkofsky Free Under 18 Fund. Find more information about MCA's exhibitions, programs, and special events at mcachicago.org or 312.280.2660.



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