



FREDERIK MEIJER Gardens & Sculpture Park

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MEIJER GARDENS ANNOUNCES HIRING OF CHIEF CURATOR

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., – March 29, 2022 – Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park is honored to announce the appointment of Suzanne Ramljak (Ram-yac) as Chief Curator. A seasoned curator and art historian, Ramljak will oversee Meijer Gardens' expanding exhibition program and acquisitions for the permanent collection.

"I am exceedingly pleased to announce that Suzanne Ramljak has joined as Chief Curator," said David Hooker, President & CEO, Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park. "In this newly created position, she will lead our efforts to acquire and site sculpture and to curate engaging sculpture exhibitions," Hooker added.

"Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park reflects founders Fred and Lena Meijer's preferences in art and gardens. Lena focused her attention on gardens, while Fred was more interested in sculpture," said Hooker.

"Ramljak is ideally suited to help us realize Fred Meijer's desire to create a world-class sculpture program. In addition, in this role she will serve as an officer of the institution."

Ramljak comes to Meijer Gardens from the American Federation of Arts in New York City, where as curator for 10 years she organized numerous traveling museum exhibitions. Her own exhibition projects have centered on modern and contemporary sculpture, including *Natural Wonders: The Sublime in Contemporary Art*, *Case Studies: Art in a Valise* and the forthcoming *Mark Dion and Alexis Rockman: Journey to Nature's Underworld*. Ramljak has also worked in the curatorial departments of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, Detroit Institute of Arts and University of Michigan Museum of Art.

Along with her broad curatorial background, Ramljak has extensive publishing and writing experience. She was editor of *Sculpture* magazine for five years and held the editorship of *Glass Quarterly* and *Metalsmith* magazines. Ramljak has published widely on contemporary art. Her writing on sculpture includes monographic essays on artists Louise Bourgeois, Michele Oka Doner, John Grade and Beverly Penn, among others. She has authored several books including *On Body and Soul: Contemporary Armor to Amulets* and, most recently, *Loaded: Guns in Contemporary Art*.

A Michigan native, Ramljak earned a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in art history from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, where she also served as arts writer for the *Ann Arbor News*. Ramljak pursued doctoral work and earned a Master of Philosophy in art history from the Graduate School, City University of New York, with dissertation research on the *Venus de Milo* in 20th-century art.

"I am delighted to join the outstanding team at Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park to advance the mission of inspiring appreciation of sculpture and the natural environment," Ramljak said. "It is my fortune to be arriving during a time of impressive growth at Meijer Gardens and at a moment in our culture when the bracing forces of art and nature are more essential than ever."

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park recently underwent a major \$115 million expansion project that adds new major architectural features and renovations to current facilities, and greatly enhances the arrival, admission, and overall experience for guests. Primarily designed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects | Partners, the expansion project responds to significant growth in guest attendance and programming since Meijer Gardens first opened in 1995 and acts as a place of arrival and an introduction to the gardens as an institution. Artist Jaume Plensa was commissioned to create *Utopia*, a site-specific sculpture for the interior of the Garden Pavilion in the new Welcome Center. The Sculpture Galleries are also completely renovated and expanded, opening again to the public April 1 with the exhibition *Yinka Shonibare CBE: Planets in My Head*.

[Photo available here.](#)

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About Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park, one of the world's most significant botanic and sculpture experiences, was recently listed in the top 100 most visited museums in the world and the 30 most visited museums in the United States by *The Art Newspaper*, the leading global art news publication. Education programs welcome 80,000 students and guests each year. Culinary Arts & Events offerings include weddings, corporate meetings and award-winning catering. The 158-acre main campus features Michigan's largest tropical conservatory; one of the country's largest interactive children's gardens; arid and Victorian gardens with bronze sculptures by Edgar Degas and Auguste Rodin; a carnivorous plant house; outdoor gardens, including a replica 1930s-era farm garden; an eight-acre Japanese garden featuring contemporary sculpture; and a 1,900-seat outdoor Amphitheater Garden, showcasing an eclectic mix of world-renowned touring musicians each summer. The permanent collection highlights hundreds of sculptures from internationally acclaimed artists Magdalena Abakanowicz, El Anatsui, Louise Bourgeois, Alexander Calder, Mark di Suvero, Marshall Fredericks, Henry Moore,

Michele Oka Donor, Beverly Pepper, Jaume Plensa, Auguste Rodin, Richard Serra, Yinka Shonibare CBE and Ai Weiwei, among others. Indoor galleries with changing sculpture exhibitions have hosted shows by Jonathan Borofsky, Edgar Degas, Jim Dine, Laura Ford, Richard Hunt, Rebecca Louise Law, Pablo Picasso, George Segal and others.

Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park promotes the enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of gardens, sculpture, the natural environment, and the arts.

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