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Media Contacts:

Karla Loring 312.397.3834 kloring@mcachicago.org

Erin Baldwin 312.397.3828 ebaldwin@mcachicago.org

Images: www.mcachicago.org/media

MICHAEL DARLING IS NAMED NEW CHIEF CURATOR OF MCA CHICAGO



Madeleine Grynsztejn, Pritzker Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), Chicago, announced today that **Michael Darling** has been appointed the new James W. Alsdorf Chief Curator, concluding a comprehensive international search. Darling is currently the Jon and Mary Shirley Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Seattle Art Museum (SAM) and plans to assume his new responsibilities at the MCA on July 12, 2010.

"Michael Darling is the perfect creative leader to evolve the MCA as a preeminent contemporary art destination in terms of reputation, influence, relevance, and visibility," said Grynsztejn. "I am looking forward to joining with Michael to realize a compelling new vision for the MCA. We share the same goal to forge an artist-activated platform that engages audiences by producing art, ideas, community, and conversation around the creative process. His exhibitions and acquisitions are always innovative and relevant, yet grounded in a larger art historical framework, and fueled by his distinctive passion, knowledge and integrity."

"Michael is an exceptionally well-respected, intelligent, and open-minded individual who is a very prescient choice for chief curator," said Mary Iltelson, Chair of the MCA Board of Trustees. "He is a versatile curator who understands the importance of presenting the art experience in an approachable manner for the audience."

Darling said, "I am honored to lead the MCA's curatorial team and to build on the museum's momentum. I look forward to actively participating in the cultural community of Chicago -- a world-class city with a long-standing appreciation for the vanguard -- and balancing a local perspective with a global outlook. I am excited to advance the MCA's tradition of groundbreaking exhibitions and programming into a 21st-century multidisciplinary museum model."

As curator of modern and contemporary art at SAM, Darling played a pivotal role in the reopening of the expanded downtown museum that tripled the space for contemporary art. He began the SAM Next contemporary art series in 2008 to identify new artistic talent such as Enrico David, who was later nominated for the prestigious Turner Prize. He organized numerous distinguished, thought-provoking exhibitions including *Target Practice: Painting Under Attack, 1949-78*; *Thermostat: Video and the Pacific Northwest*; and *Su-Mei Tse: East Wind* that pushed their respective artistic mediums. His most recent projects include *Kurt*, an exhibition that examines the influence of Seattle's Kurt Cobain on the arts; the exhibition *Alexander Calder: A Balancing Act*; and exhibits on the work of filmmaker Nicolas Provost and designer Geoff McFetridge. Darling has expanded SAM's collection holdings in international contemporary art with important acquisitions by artists such as Daniel Buren, Rashid Johnson, Gabriel Kuri, Rivane Neuenschwander, Adrian Paci, Eileen Quinlan, Sterling Ruby, and Simon Starling. He was recently awarded SAM's Patterson Sims Fellowship for 2009-10.

Prior to SAM, Darling was associate curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, where he curated the exhibitions *Roy McMakin: A Door Meant as Adornment*, *Sam Durant*, and *Painting in Tongues*, a survey of emerging artists with novel new approaches to painting. He also organized *Superflat* in collaboration with the artist Takashi Murakami that attracted nearly 100,000 visitors. Darling co-curated *The Architecture of R.M. Schindler* in 2001, which won the International Association of Art Critics "Best Architecture or Design Exhibition" award, and merit awards for interior architecture from the Southern California AIA and the California Council of the AIA. Acquisitions at MOCA included works by Mark Grotjahn, Paul McCarthy, Wangechi Mutu, Lucy McKenzie, and Dave Muller.

Darling has worked as an independent writer and curator, contributing essays on art, architecture, and design to publications including *Frieze*, *Art Issues*, *Flash Art*, and *LA Weekly*. He received his BA in art history from Stanford University, and his MA and PhD in art and architectural history from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Darling frequently serves as a panelist, lecturer, and guest curator on contemporary art and architecture. He will move to Chicago with his wife, Lisa Darling, and their two children.

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Photo by Julian Calder.

The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (MCA) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization accredited by the American Association of Museums. The MCA is generously supported by its Board of Trustees; individual and corporate members; private and corporate foundations; and government agencies including the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. The Chicago Park District generously supports MCA programs. Air transportation is provided by American Airlines, the Official Airline of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

The MCA is located at 220 E. Chicago Avenue, one block east of Michigan Avenue. The museum and sculpture garden are open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm and Tuesday from 10 am to 8 pm. The museum is closed on Monday. Enjoy free admission every Tuesday. Free Tuesdays in April, May, and June 2010 are brought to you by Anne and Burt Kaplan. Free Tuesdays in July and August 2010 are brought to you by Ovation TV and Comcast Cable. Suggested general admission is \$12 for adults and \$7 for students and seniors. Children 12 years of age and under, MCA members, and members of the military are admitted free. Information about MCA exhibitions, programs, and special events is available on the MCA website at mcachicago.org or by phone at 312.280.2660.