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Media Contact:
Kirsten Schmidt, (949) 759-1122 ext 207
kschmidt@ocma.net

Orange County Museum of Art appoints Dan Cameron as Chief Curator

NEWPORT BEACH, CA—The Orange County Museum of Art (OCMA) today announced the appointment of Dan Cameron as Chief Curator. With more than three decades of organizing acclaimed exhibitions of contemporary art throughout the United States and abroad, Cameron's experience and perspective will strengthen the museum's curatorial program and bring a major new voice into the artistic community of Southern California. Among his many accomplishments, Cameron was the first U.S. commissioner for the *Aperto* section at the 1988 Venice Biennale; in 1994 he curated *Cocido y Crudo* at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid, the most comprehensive exhibition of new international art ever presented in Spain; in 2003 he presented *Poetic Justice*, the 8th Istanbul Biennial; and in 2008 he launched *Prospect New Orleans*, the largest biennial of international contemporary art in the United States. His appointment begins January 2012, coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Orange County Museum of Art.

Cameron's appointment follows nearly a decade of substantial growth and accomplishment in OCMA's curatorial program. Over the last eight years the museum has organized nine exhibitions of modern and contemporary art that have traveled to twenty-two museums in the United States, Europe, and Canada, an unprecedented record of achievement for a museum of OCMA's size and key indicator of the museum's leadership in the field. During this period, the museum's California Biennial has become a major event in the art world and helped establish the careers of hundreds of artists. The museum's collection has also grown significantly, building on the strength of its holdings in post-1950s California art, and expanded into national and international contemporary art, particularly the work of artists presented in the exhibition program. Cameron's extensive knowledge of global artistic developments, unparalleled international network, and innovative curatorial practice will further propel the museum into the spotlight and enhance its reputation as one of the most progressive and dynamic museums in America. During his first year, Cameron will focus on the *2013 California Biennial*, organize the first major exhibition of modern and contemporary art from Orange County collections, and begin planning for a series of exhibitions that

advance the museum's goals of collaborating with visionary artists and institutions, recognizing the future of art as it emerges, and producing projects that place contemporary art within broader social and cultural contexts.

Prior to founding Prospect New Orleans, Dan Cameron was Senior Curator at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York from 1995 until 2006, where OCMA Director Dennis Szakacs also served as Deputy Director from 1996 to 2003. While at the New Museum, Cameron organized a groundbreaking series of survey exhibitions devoted to important, yet at the time under-recognized artists including Carolee Schneemann, Faith Ringgold, Adrian Piper, Martha Rosler, William Kentridge, Cildo Meireles, Mona Hatoum, Doris Salcedo, Paul McCarthy and Carroll Dunham among many others. In the years since, major museums around the world have presented exhibitions by the artists first championed by Cameron while at the New Museum and in the many thematic and biennial exhibitions he has organized as an independent curator since 1984. In 2008 Cameron was invited by Szakacs to guest-curate *Peter Saul* for the Orange County Museum of Art, the artist's first survey exhibition and the only exhibition in the United States named to both the *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* Best of 2008 lists.

Commenting on Cameron's appointment, OCMA Director Dennis Szakacs stated "I've known, admired, and worked with Dan over many years and am delighted that he will come to OCMA as Chief Curator. He's one of the most accomplished contemporary art curators in the world and his energy, passion, intellectual curiosity, and ability to make the case for contemporary art's relevance within our broader culture are unparalleled. In every sense Dan has always led rather than followed, taken risks rather than played it safe, and amplified the voice of artists as creative individuals. We are the right platform, and this is the right time and place for his talents to flourish. I eagerly await Dan's arrival and the impact that he will undoubtedly make in Southern California."

Dan Cameron has been professionally active since 1980. In 1982 he organized *Extended Sensibilities* for the New Museum, the first-ever museum exhibition of contemporary gay and lesbian art in the United States. In 1986 he organized the exhibition *Art & its Double* for the Fundacion 'la Caixa' in Barcelona and Madrid, the first museum exhibition in Europe to present the work of Robert Gober, Peter Halley, Jeff Koons, Haim Steinbach, and Philip Taaffe, and is today considered one of the most important exhibitions of new American art in Europe. During this period, Cameron also began investigating contemporary art in Spain, and was the first international critic to write about, among others, the work of Juan Munoz, Susana Solano, and Juan Usle. And at the 1988 Venice Biennale he oversaw the installation of an exhibition that introduced the work of Barbara Bloom, Carroll Dunham, Robert Gober, Ilya Kabakov, Mike Kelley, Allan McCollum, Tatsuo Miyajima, and Yasumasa Morimura, among others.

At the beginning of the 1990s, Cameron began an extended period of curatorial research in South America and the Caribbean. Soon after, in his second of three large exhibitions in Spain, *The Savage*

Garden (1991), he presented new room-scale installations by then-emerging U.S. artists Barbara Bloom, Ann Hamilton, Christian Marclay and Charles Ray. Within this exhibition, the projects by Felix Gonzalez Torres and Meyer Vaisman particularly underscored the complex cultural ties between their respective countries of birth (Cuba and Venezuela) and post-colonial Spain. With his third major Spanish exhibition in 1994—*Cocido y Crudo* at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid—Cameron worked closely with 70 artists from 40 countries including Marlene Dumas, Martin Kippenberger, Gabriel Orozco, and Rirkrit Tiravanija. In 2010, on the 25th anniversary of the Reina Sofia's inauguration, a survey of art critics in Spain voted *Cocido y Crudo* the most important exhibition in the museum's history.

Cameron's appointment follows an international search that was led by OCMA Trustee Dr. James Pick, the Chair of the museum's Chief Curator Search Committee and Chair of the museum's Collection Committee. Pick stated, "Dan Cameron is an acclaimed curator who can build on the vibrant exhibition history of OCMA, significantly enhance the museum's collection, energize conversations, reach out to the cultural communities of Orange County, California, and beyond, and continue his renowned curatorial accomplishments. We welcome him."

Cameron's approach to the museum's program, particularly the *2013 California Biennial*, will be informed by his experience organizing large international biennials around the world. In 2003, Cameron presented *Poetic Justice*, the 8th Istanbul Biennial, which featured dozens of site-specific projects by such artists as David Altmejd, Monica Bonvicini, Kendell Geers, Ann Hamilton, Trenton Doyle Hancock, Jorge Macchi, Nalini Malani, Mike Nelson, Doris Salcedo, Shazia Sikhander, Monika Sosnowska, Jennifer Steinkamp, Do-Ho Suh, Fiona Tan, and Pascale Martine Tayou. Following Istanbul, Cameron organized the 2005 edition of *ev+a*, an international exhibition in Limerick, Ireland and served as curator for the 2006 Taipei Biennial, called *Dirty Yoga*. Cameron's most ambitious undertaking since leaving the New Museum in 2006 was the founding and artistic direction of *Prospect New Orleans*, conceived as a means of bridging the gap between the city of New Orleans in its post-Katrina state of neglect and disrepair. With 80 artists from more than 40 countries participating, *Prospect.1* opened in 2008 and led to a smaller, regional spin-off in November 2010, titled *Prospect.1.5*. The second edition of the Biennial, *Prospect.2*, opened in October 2011.

According to Dan Cameron, "I've been an ardent fan all my life of art made in southern California, and as both curator and writer, I've been fortunate to work with a number of remarkable artists from the region over the years, including Edward Ruscha, Paul McCarthy, Mike Kelly, John McCracken, Diana Thater, Jennifer Steinkamp, Mark Bradford, Gajin Fujita, Sean Duffy, Al Ruppertsberg, Millie Wilson, Kaz Oshiro, Karl Haendel, and many others. The history of the Orange County Museum of Art, going back to the days when Chris Burden had his first big survey exhibition there, is at the heart of southern California's history of artistic innovation, and I am very proud to be able to join Dennis' and the Board's vision for the future."

In addition to his curatorial projects, Cameron is one of the most widely published art critics in the world,

with several hundred book, magazine, and catalog essays to his credit. Among these are critical essays on Carlos Alfonzo, Janine Antoni, Matthew Barney, Sergei Bugaev/Afrika, Monica Bonvicini, Luca Buvoli, Cai Guo-Qiang, Wim Delvoye, Braco Dimitrijevic, Willie Doherty, Jimmie Durham, Elmgreen & Dragset, Christian Marclay, Tatsuo Miyajima, Matt Mullican, Vik Muniz, Jun Nguyen-Hatsushiba, Pepon Osorio, Perejaume, Pierre et Gilles, Alexis Rockman, Edward Ruscha, Meyer Vaisman, Xavier Veilhan, and Sue Williams.

As contributing editor at *Arts Magazine* from 1983 to 1990, he wrote essays championing the work of such artists as Ross Bleckner, Peter Halley, Rebecca Horn, Carolee Schneemann, On Kawara, Jannis Kounellis, Mike Kelley, John McCracken, Sherrie Levine, Jim Nutt, David Salle, Peter Saul, and Philip Taaffe. From 1990 to 1995, Cameron contributed another widely read monthly column, 'The Critical Edge,' to *Art & Auction*.

Cameron is a frequent lecturer at museums and university campuses around the world, and he currently serves on the Advisory Board of the Hermitage Artists' Retreat in Sarasota, Florida and is a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors for the U.S. Biennial Inc., which hosts Prospect New Orleans.

Museum Information

The Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach is located at 850 San Clemente Drive in Newport Beach, California. Hours are 11 am to 5 pm, Wednesday through Sunday, with extended hours Thursdays from 11 am to 8 pm. Admission is \$12 adults; \$10 seniors and students; children twelve and under and OCMA members are free. All facilities are handicapped accessible. For more information, call 949.759.1122 or visit www.ocma.net.