



## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear friends,

In 2016–17 the ICA was guided by the publication of our new five-year strategic plan, *A Radical Welcome*. The plan takes its name from a speech by artist Anna Deveare Smith, who spoke of “hope, radical hospitality, and kindness”—ideals at the core of our vision of a museum that creates space for art to invite, educate, incubate, and catalyze civic engagement.

Ten years after we opened our “new” home on the Boston waterfront, we find ourselves in a transformed neighborhood. But while some vistas have closed, others are opening up. As we explored new modes of growth and dynamism, we looked not only to our immediate surroundings but across the harbor to East Boston, just six minutes by boat but physically disconnected from much of the city.

In March, we announced our plan to open a seasonal space in the Boston Harbor Shipyard and Marina in East Boston, and we have been thrilled with the response. Located in a former copper pipe facility, the Watershed will provide a raw, industrial venue for art unlike any other in Boston. Each summer, beginning in 2018, the Watershed will showcase a new immersive art project. Ambitious and perhaps unexpected, this cross-harbor connection is central to our ideals of art, civic life, and urban vitality, building upon our decades-long history of public art that brings together landscape, history, and contemporary art. We look forward to viewing Boston from the other side of the harbor, to activating this already very lively neighborhood in a new way, and especially to welcoming visitors from all over Boston to our new space, free of charge.

Another initiative of our strategic plan is to increase access to the museum, particularly for historically underserved populations. As you’ll see throughout this report, exhibitions, collections, performances, and education programs address this goal through diverse artistic content, aesthetics, perspectives, and experiences. Additionally, in early 2017, the ICA began offering free admission on Monday holidays, and the results were dramatic. While Presidents’ Day 2016 saw 272 visitors, this year we welcomed 2,435. Memorial Day brought 426 people in 2016 and a record-breaking 2,941 in 2017. We saw the biggest increase in new visitors from East Boston, Roxbury, and Dorchester—and we look forward to welcoming everyone on both sides of the harbor.

A total of 232,000 people participated on-site at the ICA this past year, up from 216,000 the prior year. An additional 1.7 million people participated through online platforms, extending the reach, influence, and engagement of the ICA and building reciprocity with online communities around the world.

In the galleries, we presented works peaceful and provocative, reflective and complex, cerebral and inspiring, by artists hailing from near and far. Liz Deschenes’s first midcareer survey presented 20 years of boundary-pushing photography, with meditative works that explore light and the mechanics of seeing. Concurrently, celebrated artist Nalini Malani combined Eastern and Western imagery in an enthralling, room-size video installation.

*First Light: A Decade of Collecting at the ICA* celebrated the remarkable works we’ve acquired in our first 10 years of



acquisitions. A group curatorial effort spanning the entire east side of the museum, the exhibition was divided into chapters highlighting the strengths of the collection: from mediums such as fiber art in the “Soft Power” chapter to The Barbara Lee Collection of Art by Women to deep holdings by artists such as Louise Bourgeois and Nan Goldin. At the center of it all, three monumental works anchored the show: Paul Chan’s *1st Light*, Cornelia Parker’s *Hanging Fire (Suspected Arson)*, and a newly acquired, 57-foot-long installation by Kara Walker, *The Nigger Huck Finn Pursues Happiness Beyond the Narrow Constraints of Your Overdetermined Thesis on Freedom—Drawn and Quartered by Mister Kara Walkerberry, with Condolences to the Authors*. In December, we activated the exhibition with a free community day in celebration of 10 years on the waterfront (and 80 in Boston!), including performances, activities, demonstrations, and a hands-on “hearts for art” activity where even our youngest visitors could identify their favorite works on view.

*The Artist’s Museum* drew out the collecting theme, in an exhibition that considered how artists—from Christian Marclay to Xaviera Simmons—collect, process, and create with images they encounter and acquire. A companion initiative, the Object Project, looked at the unexpected collections of notable Bostonians and allowed viewers to share their own experiences of collecting through images shared to our social media platforms and stories woven into an ICA-produced podcast.

On the Sandra and Gerald Fineberg Art Wall, British artist Gillian Wearing presented a work made up of photographic self-portraits, many digitally enhanced to age her; a provocative work, it exposes the complicated relationship between identity, aging, forensics, and technology. The 2017 James and Audrey Foster Prize showcased four local artists and collectives: Sonia Almeida, Jennifer Bornstein,

Lucy Kim, and Véréna Paravel and Lucien Castaing-Taylor, all of whom have had international, but not significant local, exposure.

*Nari Ward: Sun Splashed* gave us a timely opportunity to delve into issues of immigration, citizenship, belonging, and justice. Organized by the Pérez Art Museum Miami, this vibrant exhibition by the Jamaican-born artist captivated visitors with its inspired use of found, altered, and transformed objects. The participatory work *Naturalization Drawing Table* invited visitors on select days and evenings to undergo a simulated immigration experience.

Ward was one of several artists who spoke directly to audiences through our Artist’s Voice program this year. Artists Carol Bove, Liz Deschenes, Abelardo Morell, Nicholas Nixon, and Kara Walker also took part, as did authors Damian Duffy and John Jennings, whose graphic novel, *Kindred*—an adaptation of Octavia Butler’s gripping 1979 novel—we featured in our annual citywide ICA Reads program. Deschenes and Ward also spoke extensively about their work in ICA-produced videos and on our Mobile Guide, as did Gillian Wearing, while *Foster Prize* artists Sonia Almeida and Lucy Kim both allowed crews in for filmed studio visits—all materials, among others, that provide access and entry for a wide range of audiences.

Access and activation were also central to our performance roster this year. In *ON DISPLAY: A Movement Installation* by Heidi Latsky, dancers of varying body types and abilities performed on the Harborwalk and Vivien and Alan Hassenfeld Harborway. Summer programming also included spirited DJ Nights, while perennial favorite Harborwalk Sounds drew enthusiastic crowds and activated our outdoor areas, as did monthly First Fridays and the family-friendly Free Fun Fridays, sponsored annually by the Highland Street Foundation.



## 2016–2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Main-stage productions by Big Dance Theater, Maria Hassabi, Alessandro Sciarroni, and Beth Gill showed the formal breadth of captivating performance being created today, while works like *A Letter to My Nephew* by Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company married formal concerns with the sociopolitical and the personal. A longtime friend of the ICA, Jones also generously met with the ICA Teens to share thoughts on art, self, and perseverance.

ICA Teens were active throughout the museum and beyond, as they interviewed Jones, worked with Nari Ward to install his unforgettable *We the People* work, traveled to Mass MoCA to work with artist in residence Wes Sam-Bruce, hosted events for thousands of Boston-area teens, and took part in dozens of courses, new-media workshops, and other programs, many of which are free and/or offer credit for Boston Public School students. Our remarkable teens also launched a timely new program this year, the Current. Created at teens' request in response to the ongoing atmosphere of trauma, violence, and racial injustice, this program provides opportunities for young people to gather and discuss social issues through the arts, with teens moderating.

Our nationally recognized Teen Convening has grown in scope and reach, with regional, ICA-supported convenings this year at the Art Institute of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Contemporary Austin in Texas, Crystal Bridges Museum in Arkansas, High Museum in Atlanta, Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, and Ogden Museum in New Orleans. The 2016 Teen Convening, *After the Bell*, focused on the unique benefits and vitality of after-school programs that prioritize active learning, self-direction, collaborative experiences, and creative freedom.

For younger ICA visitors, we partnered with artists Susannah Lawrence and Bennie Flores Ansell to create hands-on art projects

in our Bank of America Art Lab, while families continue to stream in for free programming during monthly Play Dates, Monday holidays, and vacation weeks.

The ICA continues to build and nurture partnerships in and around Boston, with special focus on East Boston, site of the new ICA Watershed, where we've been meeting actively with community groups, schools, historians, artists, and youth organizations in advance of our opening in summer 2018.

New initiatives this past year also included social programming, such as ICA After 5 on Friday nights, to engage students and young professionals; needed improvements to the accessibility of our media materials including visitor-friendly Mobile Guide content and captioning of all ICA-produced video; and increased social media engagement designed to increase points of entry for all audiences.

An equally significant initiative this year was the newly formed Acquisitions Circle. This new group provides much-needed funds for the acquisition of curatorially recommended works of art. The ICA made three purchases through the generosity of the Acquisitions Circle, including works by Sadie Benning and Henry Taylor that have already gone on view. The year's 29 additional acquisitions include works by Mark Dion, Lucy Kim, Nalini Malani, Dana Schutz, and Nari Ward. Works by Nancy Graves, Jenny Holzer, and Sarah Sze made their debuts in the exhibition *ICA Collection: New Acquisitions*.

This work is all possible because of extraordinary generosity, philanthropy, and commitment by the ICA's exemplary Board of Trustees, Advisory Board, Avant Guardian Society, Founders' Circle, Ars Longa Society, Director's Circle, Acquisitions Circle, James Sachs Plaut Society, ICA Fund supporters, and members.



## 2016–2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Our individual supporters once again demonstrated their extraordinary generosity. Support from individuals rose 29 percent this year over last, and we are grateful for your critical and foundational gifts. Your focus on artists and audiences, excellence and education, learning and leadership, ensures that we continue to meet our goals for impact, community, and ongoing contributions to our city and our field.

Converse returned this year as the Presenting Sponsor of ICA Summer programming, supporting music, dance, and art all season long. *First Light* received significant support from Christie's, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Fiduciary Trust, as well as many individual donors. Major support for *The Artist's Museum* was provided by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, and Barbara Lloyd; the Mellon Foundation's grant also assisted with the development of two major exhibitions in fiscal year 2018: *Mark Dion: Misadventures of a 21st-Century Naturalist* and *Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today*. Other major institutional support came from the Barr Foundation; the Barr-Klarman Arts Capacity Building Initiative; the Institute of Museum and Library Services, which made possible an exciting upgrade to the ICA Teens website; the Massachusetts Cultural Council (which receives support from the State of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts); the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund (a program of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, administered through a collaborative arrangement between MassDevelopment and the Massachusetts Cultural Council); the Surdna Foundation; and the Rowland Foundation.

Corporate support was up over last year as well. John Hancock, UNIQLO, and other corporations steadfastly supported our work with teens, First Republic supported the 2017–18

performing arts season, and The Northern Trust Company again generously sponsored our Director's Circle. Saks Fifth Avenue supported the James and Audrey Foster Prize and Annual Women's Luncheon, and Duane Morris continues to provide support as the ICA's Official Counsel. These partners, and many others, have the thanks and gratitude of the entire organization.

Our museum—like museums across the country—has taken on a new urgency this year: as a place and forum for sharing, debating, protesting, presenting, and interrogating ideas about art, history, culture, and society. Over the past year, we brought together cultural and community leaders to share “Powerful Words” following the summer of racial violence and trauma. We joined with fellow Boston-area museums in vocal support of the National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities; we offered the museum for an official immigration ceremony in which 137 people from more than 50 countries became U.S. citizens—one of the most moving experiences I've had at the ICA; and we continue to invite and address robust, often difficult dialogue on the issues that define our moment in history.

Museums are places to gather and find community, and I am grateful for the community that together we have built at the ICA, and that we continue to nurture and grow. The exhibitions, programs, and gatherings you see in these pages are the product of much hard work and collaboration, and I thank our staff, boards, leadership, volunteers, teens, and artists for all the work they've done and put out into the world this year.

My very best,

Jill Medvedow  
*Ellen Matilda Poss Director*



## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR AND PRESIDENT

To the ICA community:

It is with great pleasure that we share our Annual Report for the fiscal year 2017, a year rich with new innovations, ideas, and vision.

Ten years after it moved to the waterfront, the ICA celebrates its commitment to the many communities we serve, with inspiring exhibitions, commissions, performances, opportunities for learning and connection, and scholarly contribution. We hope you will review with pride this year in the life of our treasured institution.

Thank you for your support, commitment, and passion for the ICA.

Our best,

James Foster, *Chair, Board of Trustees*

Chuck Brizius, *President, Board of Trustees*