

NEWS

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SARAH SCHULTZ NAMED DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND CURATOR OF PUBLIC PRACTICE



Sarah Schultz

Minneapolis, February 1, 2012-- Sarah Schultz has been named Director of Education and Curator of Public Practice at the Walker Art Center. Schultz has been the Walker's Director of Education since 2000. The new title reflects the evolution of the Walker's pioneering education department and recognizes Schultz's leadership around several important public initiatives.

In 2010, Schultz and her team organized the Walker's Open Field, the first in a series of summer-long experiments in how museums can engage the public in new ways. Inspired by models of the commons, crowd-sourcing, collective action, and new forms of socially-engaged art practice, Open Field opens the museum to the public and artists together by using four acres of adjacent green space to create an alternative public park--a type of cultural commons with social interaction and creative participation as its guiding philosophies. Open Field hosts over 100 activities each summer season, created and led by interested members of the general public alongside invited artists-in-residence and activities generated by the Walker.

In addition, under Schultz's leadership, the Walker has had significant involvement and participation in several major civic projects such as the Next Generation of Parks (in partnership with the Minneapolis Parks Foundation and the University of Minnesota) to envision the potential of these important public spaces for the Twin Cities, and the Hennepin Avenue Cultural Corridor project, which seeks to strengthen the identity and activity along one of Minneapolis's most vibrant thoroughfares.

As Curator of Public Practice, Schultz will develop projects with artists whose work is situated in and activated by the public realm, engage other civic partners to help define the nature and quality of public life in the community, and create learning opportunities that expand our understanding of contemporary art's impact on the public sphere.

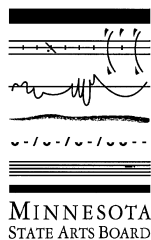
"By naming a Curator of Public Practice, the Walker is underscoring its commitment to expand and enrich the relationship of the museum with its surrounding communities, to invest as a partner in the betterment of civic life in the region, and to explore important philosophical, cultural, and

ethical ideas in how the public sphere can be a space of practice and engagement for contemporary artists and audiences," said Andrew Blauvelt, the Walker's Chief of Communications and Audience Engagement.

The Walker's long relationship to the community is reflected in its founding as a public art center in 1940. Since that time, its education department has evolved from a community art school in the 1940s to an ambitious trailblazer, connecting artists with communities in partnership with the Walker's multidisciplinary programs in the visual, performing, and media arts; establishing the nation's first program to engage teens interested in contemporary art; directing the activities of mnartists.org, the first statewide online resource open to any Minnesota artist; and pioneering work with K-12 teachers for ArtsConnectEd.org, the online collections resource and curriculum development tool; or its work using the art experience to enrich the lives of Alzheimer's patients and their caregivers.

Schultz has been the Walker's Director of Education and Community Programs since 2000, following three years as Associate Director of Public and Teen Programs. For 15 years, she has been involved in the Walker's efforts to deepen the institution's commitment to serve broad audiences and create innovative programs that engage visitors with contemporary artists and art forms. She has contributed essays to *Expanding the Center: Walker Art Center and Herzog & de Meuron* and *Sustainable Museums: Strategies for the 21st Century* and is currently editing the forthcoming publication *Open Field: Conversations on the Commons*, which explores the meaning of public practice for cultural institutions. In 2009 she was as a Museum Scholar at the Getty Research Institute, examining new models of cultural participation, artistic practice, and the history of museum education. She holds an M.B.A from the State University of New York-Binghamton and an M.A. in art history from the University of Minnesota.

Premier Partners



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The Walker Art Center is located at 1750 Hennepin Avenue—where Hennepin meets Lyndale—one block off Highways I-94 and I-394, in Minneapolis. For public information, call 612.375.7600 or visit walkerart.org.