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SPEED ART MUSEUM NAMES KATHLEEN V. JAMESON, PH.D., AS NEW DIRECTOR

Veteran museum leader returns to Louisville as Kentucky's oldest and largest art museum prepares for its 2027 Centennial

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — September 9, 2026 – The Speed Art Museum today announced the appointment of **Kathleen V. Jameson, Ph.D.**, as its new Director. Jameson officially began her role on September 8.

A museum leader, scholar, and arts advocate with more than three decades of experience, Jameson brings extensive expertise in museum leadership, curatorial work, fundraising, strategic planning, and community engagement.

As Kentucky's oldest and largest art museum, the Speed has served as an important cultural institution for Louisville and the Commonwealth for nearly a century. Jameson joins the Museum at a significant moment as the Speed approaches its 100th anniversary in 2027 and looks ahead to its next century of service, scholarship, and community connection.

"Dr. Jameson brings exactly the combination of experience, vision and leadership we believe the Speed needs at this important moment," said John Crockett, Chair of the Speed Art Museum Board of Trustees. "She understands museums from every angle – from scholarship and collections to fundraising, governance, and community engagement. Just as importantly, she has a meaningful connection to Louisville and to the Speed itself. As we approach our Centennial, the Board is excited to welcome Kathleen back to this community and is confident in her ability to lead the Museum into its next chapter."

Jameson has held senior leadership roles at several major American art museums. She most recently served as Executive Director of the James A. Michener Art Museum, the internationally regarded home to Pennsylvania Impressionism and American art, where she strengthened collections development, organized numerous exhibitions, expanded community support, and led efforts to address infrastructural needs.

Previously, Jameson served as President & CEO of The Mint Museum in Charlotte, where she oversaw collections development, exhibitions, community engagement, scholarship, and fundraising. She also led organizational restructuring and governance reforms, oversaw the development of strategic plans, and established the museum's inaugural digital media program, contemporary architecture and design series, and a major Latino and Latin American initiative.

Earlier in her career, Jameson held several leadership and curatorial roles at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, including Assistant Director and Director of Program Support, as well as positions in Photography, Prints & Drawings and 20th-Century Special Projects. Her work there included long-range institutional planning and oversight of a major international architect search.

Jameson's appointment also marks a return to Louisville and to an institution with important ties to the beginning of her career. While earning her master's degree at the University of Louisville, she studied American Art and Architecture and worked with former Speed Art Museum Director Peter Morrin, an experience she has described as formative to her career.

"Returning to Louisville and to the Speed is deeply meaningful to me," said Jameson. "My time here as a graduate student helped shape both my scholarship and my career in museums, and I have always valued the Speed's commitment to artistic excellence and connection. I am excited to work with the Museum's staff, Board, artists, supporters, and community as we build on nearly a century of history and look ahead to what the Speed can mean for Louisville, the Commonwealth, and the region.

Jameson added that her early priorities will include listening closely to staff and community partners, strengthening the Museum's connections throughout the region, advancing the Speed's artistic and educational mission, and preparing for the opportunities presented by the Museum's Centennial year.

"The Centennial is an extraordinary opportunity not only to celebrate the Speed's history, but also to think ambitiously about its future," Jameson said. "Museums are at their best when they bring art, ideas and people together. I look forward to helping the Speed deepen those connections, welcome new audiences, and continue to be a place where people can learn, discover and feel a sense of belonging."

A scholar of American art and the history of photography, Jameson specializes in late-19th- and early-20th-century American art, with additional expertise in works on paper. She studied American Art and Architecture at the University of Louisville and continued that focus in her doctoral studies at the University of Delaware.

Jameson previously served as Scholar-in-Residence at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and is a National Arts Strategies Chief Executive Program Fellow. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Delaware, an M.B.A. from Rice University, an M.A. from the University of Louisville and a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin.

She was formally introduced to the community during a September 9 press conference at the Speed, with remarks from Crockett, Kentucky Lt. Governor Jacqueline Coleman, Louisville Mayor Craig Greenberg and U.S. Congressman Morgan McGarvey. Community leaders, artists, civic leaders, cultural partners, trustees, and supporters of the Museum were also in attendance.

About the Speed Art Museum

The Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, is the state's oldest and largest art museum and has served as a vital cultural resource for the Louisville community and the wider region for nearly 100 years. The Speed's ever-growing encyclopedic collection, timely exhibitions and community-driven programming explore contemporary issues and inspire meaningful personal experiences through the transformative power of art, sparking new conversations and creating opportunities for dialogue. Located on the campus of the University of Louisville but operating as an independent nonprofit institution, the Speed provides visitors from around the world with opportunities to engage with art through public and academic programs, screenings at the Speed Cinema, family offerings in the Art Sparks interactive learning gallery, and more. Fulfilling its mission of inviting everyone to celebrate art forever, the Speed is committed to creating a welcoming and accessible space for the community. For more information, visit speedmuseum.org.



Photo credit: Alex Brumley

Photo Cutline: Newly appointed Speed Art Museum Director Kathleen V, Jameson, Ph.D, poses in front of an iconic Alice Neel painting, entitled *Priscilla Johnston*, 1966. Part of the museum's permanent collection.

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