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## **Rachel Storm to Lead Community Engagement at KAM Krannert Art Museum Reshapes Museum Education at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

Champaign, Ill. (June 29, 2022) -- Krannert Art Museum (KAM) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is re-envisioning its approach to education and public programming with renewed focus on developing deep connections with local communities in addition to its work with university students and faculty and K-12 educators in the region. U of I alum [Rachel Lauren Storm](#) will lead this fresh approach through a new position as Assistant Director of Community Engagement and Learning.

Storm brings significant experience in community engagement to this position at the museum, said Museum Director [Jon L. Seydl](#). “I’m overjoyed that she will be guiding this transformative work. Rachel has long demonstrated a clear social justice vision that emphasizes intersectionality, co-created programming, and a belief that the arts are a vital way to connect with communities,” he said.

Storm served as Arts and Culture Coordinator for the City of Urbana for the past 5 years, directing various initiatives for the Urbana Arts and Culture Commission and Program.

She believes that “reflexive work in arts and culture invites us to take honest stock of where our creative sectors have succeeded or failed to meet our communities, ensuring our museum work is ever more accessible, inclusive, and engaged.”

Under Storm’s leadership, Urbana Arts and Culture Commission facilitated the renaming and revised mission of the program to deliberately commit to uplifting cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts.

She is excited to continue this work at Krannert Art Museum, where she has partnered on the community exhibition *Pandemics as a Portal to Change* and the Arts CO+RE-funded *Disability Aware Cities*, KAM’s collaboration with Applied Health Sciences, the City of Urbana, and PACE, Inc., an independent living center for people with disabilities.

“Locally, I am eager to continue to cultivate strong relationships with a diversity of local communities and neighborhoods--from afterschool programs to classrooms, and cultural groups to organizational partners,” Storm said.

Storm previously served as Assistant Director of the Women’s Resource Center in the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Relations in the division of Student Affairs at U of I, where she managed educational programs, taught courses, and served as a confidential counselor and advocate for student survivors of trauma, skills she hopes to bring to bear at KAM.

In Urbana she has initiated or sustained many collaborative programs including *Artist of the Corridor*, *Murals on Glass*, *the Urbana Sculpture Program*, *Art at the Market* concerts, and the *ART NOW!* TV series, *Young Artist's Studio* elementary art education program, *Urbana's Utility Box Mural Program*, *Urbana's Downtown Get Down* summer festival, *the Great ARTDoors*, *Cinema & Sound*, *Art in Transit*, *Culture Fest*, and the AARP-funded *Growing Community Public Arts Initiative* placing public art and creative amenities in community gardens. Storm also launched the City of Urbana's landmark Poet Laureate Program and Youth Poet Laureate Programs--some of the first in the state of Illinois.

Storm earned BA('09), M.Ed. ('12), and Ph.D. in Education Policy, Organization, and Leadership ('20) from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, where her research focused

on global studies in educational policy, restorative/transformational justice, and trauma-informed practice. Her experience in and outside of the classroom centers inclusion, accessibility, and public engagement—areas she hopes to emphasize in connecting KAM to all communities and creating a museum space that is welcoming to everyone.

### **About Krannert Art Museum**

Krannert Art Museum (KAM) promotes a vibrant exchange of ideas in the visual arts. Located at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, KAM is the second largest general fine arts museum in Illinois. More information can be found online at [kam.illinois.edu](http://kam.illinois.edu).

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