

Thursday, January 10, 2019

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: New Museum Staff Forms Union

NEW YORK — We, the staff at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, are forming the New Museum Union (NewMuU-UAW Local 2110)—joining fellow cultural workers at the Museum of Modern Art, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the New York Historical Society, and elsewhere—because we take great pride in the Museum’s legacy and we are committed to its success, its health, and its future growth.

We have come together from across all the Museum’s departments to collectively improve our conditions. Forming a union will enable us, as well as future New Museum employees, to effectively advocate for changes in staff conditions that will make the New Museum a stronger and more sustainable institution. We believe in the New Museum and its mission; we want it to succeed. But we also recognize a need for critical changes at this moment in the Museum’s growth.

We have asked that the Board of Trustees and New Museum management respect our right to organize without interference and bargain with us in good faith for a fair contract. Unfortunately, the Museum has chosen to mount a harsh anti-union campaign, retaining a Kentucky-based [anti-union consulting firm, Adams Nash Haskell & Sheridan](#), to try to present the union as something other than what it is: a community of coworkers coming together to collectively better our conditions and ensure the Museum’s future as a beacon of equity and progressive values.

When Marcia Tucker founded the New Museum in 1977, she envisioned an institution that did away with hierarchies—not only in the art exhibited, but in the structure of the Museum itself. Her aim, as she wrote in 1990, was to work toward “a collaborative, self-critical, and ‘transparent’ organizational model.” As a museum and as a community, we are distinguished by our dedication to diversity and progress. The Museum’s mission centers intersectional feminist concerns and cross-cultural dialogue, and our exhibitions, programs, and initiatives aim to model inclusivity and access. As the New Museum Union, we ask, above all, that these ideals be mirrored in the Museum’s working conditions, hiring practices, wages, and benefits. We believe that fair compensation and transparency for all workers throughout the Museum is essential to ensuring its diversity, reducing turnover, and strengthening the New Museum community: salaries, wages, and benefits at the Museum must be sustainable for *everyone*, regardless of the privileges afforded them by race, class, or gender.

Our choice to come together to form a union arises from our dedication to the New Museum. Our communications with the Museum have been presented with the utmost care and respect. In fact, we chose not to make the process public at first in order to give Museum management time to consider this new development and to respond in a way that aligns with the Museum’s history and values. We have been given no choice but to publicly combat the outright propaganda and disinformation being disseminated by ANHS.

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