







Johanna Burton. *Photo Erin Leland*

[Johanna Burton](#), a closely watched curator who is currently the executive director of the Wexner Center for the Arts in Columbus, Ohio, will be new executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles. She will begin in the newly created role on November 1.

In a statement, Burton said, “MOCA’s artist-centered mission dovetails with my own commitment to creating platforms that foster artistic innovation and emphasize deep connections to audiences. By pursuing these goals and supporting the efforts of MOCA’s team, I’m looking forward to extending the museum’s legacy while strengthening bonds both within the institution and with the public.”

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Burton joined the Wexner in early 2019 after its longtime director, Sherri Geldin, retired. In May, she hired Kelly Kivland away from the Dia Art Foundation in New York to be the Wexner’s chief curator and director of exhibitions. Prior to the Wexner, Burton was the Keith Haring director and curator of education and public engagement at the New Museum in New York since 2013 and organized one of the museum’s most acclaimed shows, “Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon,” and she helped relaunch its “Critical Anthologies in Art and Culture” books series. She had previously been director of the graduate program at Bard College’s Center for Curatorial Studies and associate director for the Whitney Museum’s Independent Study Program.

Earlier this year, the museum announced that it would be restructuring its senior leadership, with [Klaus Biesenbach](#), the then-director, becoming artistic director and a search beginning for an executive director to work alongside him. (The two positions jointly report to the museum’s board of trustees.) At the time, MOCA board chair Maria Seferian [told](#) the *Los Angeles Times* that the new structure “makes great sense for the strong future of the museum.”

As executive director, Burton will be tasked with the institution’s daily management and operations, as well as “establishing key strategic, institutional and capital priorities, long range planning as well as the implementation and advancement of critical initiatives of the museum, including IDEA [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility] and other staff-forward initiatives,” according to an internal letter published by the *L.A. Times* at the time of the position’s creation. Though Biesenbach and Burton will both work to fundraise for MOCA, its development department will report to Burton. In his role, Biesenbach is in charge of the institution’s programming and exhibitions as well as of its permanent collection.

In a statement, Biesenbach said, “I am excited to have such a strong partner in Johanna and eagerly look forward to collaborating with her. I have great respect for the integrity, perspective, and expertise Johanna will bring to our collective work serving MOCA’s team, constituencies and artists, its increasingly large and diverse public, and all residents of Los Angeles. I am looking forward to focusing my work as Artistic Director to further expand MOCA being the experimental, innovative,

influential and boundary-breaking museum of contemporary art that it has been since its inception.”

Source: [Closely Watched Museum Director Johanna Burton Named Executive Director of L.A. MOCA](#)