

Press Release



Left: Ernestine White-Mifetu (Photo: Raphael Mifetu).
Right: Abigail L. Dansiger (Photo: Jonathan Dorado).

Brooklyn Museum

The Brooklyn Museum Appoints New Curator of African Art and Director of Libraries and Archives

The Brooklyn Museum is pleased to announce two new appointments to the Curatorial Affairs team. **Ernestine White-Mifetu** has been appointed Sills Foundation Curator of African Art, and **Abigail L. Dansiger** has been appointed Director of Libraries and Archives. Both started at the Museum on March 1, 2022.

“We’re thrilled to welcome Ernestine and Abby to the Brooklyn Museum team. Both dynamic experts in their fields, they are joining the Brooklyn Museum at an incredibly exciting time as we prepare for the building of our new permanent African Art galleries and for the Museum’s two hundredth anniversary,” says Anne Pasternak, Shelby White and Leon Levy Director, Brooklyn Museum.

In her role as Sills Foundation Curator of African Art, White-Mifetu will be instrumental in developing permanent galleries dedicated to the Museum’s Arts of Africa collection. The Brooklyn Museum has one of the largest collections of African art in the United States, with over 6,000 works spanning 2,500 years and representing more than one hundred cultures. As the Museum moves from fundraising for the new galleries into the next phase of architectural planning, White-Mifetu will lead the reinstallation with a focus on expanding the canon through new interpretations. She will also spearhead initiatives to activate the collection and augment traveling shows with key works while the galleries are being completed. With twenty years of experience working with contemporary visual and performance art of the African continent and its diaspora, White-Mifetu will bring the Brooklyn Museum’s extensive collection of African art to life by telling new stories and building connections for today’s audiences and the local Brooklyn community.

“I am deeply appreciative of the opportunity to showcase the vast and varied ways in which African creatives have, through time, expressed their personal, local, and global

lived realities,” says White-Mifetu. “The Arts of Africa collection, ranging from the historical to the contemporary, will serve as a vital springboard to generate meaningful conversations amongst visitors of all generations and cultures.”

As Director of Libraries and Archives, Dansiger will utilize the Museum’s vast Libraries and Archives to engage the public, advance research, and promote equity by broadening access to information and scholarship. The Brooklyn Museum has one of the oldest and largest museum libraries in the country, with holdings that range from historical texts on ancient Egypt to fashion sketches and artists’ books. In addition, the Museum’s Archives organize and preserve the institution’s history, allowing researchers to find important information related to the collection and the museum field. Dansiger will oversee the Libraries’ combined holdings of nearly 300,000 volumes and the Archives’ more than 3,200 linear feet of records, leading critical work to make these materials more accessible to researchers worldwide.

“I was raised by two proud Brooklynites and lived here myself for ten years before venturing out West. I am beyond thrilled to return to a city so dear to my heart and join the amazing team at the Brooklyn Museum,” says Dansiger. “It will be my honor to serve our communities, both locally and globally, by supporting their research and interpretation of our unique collections and history.”

Ernestine White-Mifetu

White-Mifetu joins the Museum after serving as the director of the William Humphreys Art Gallery, one of South Africa’s three national art museums, where she oversaw strategic management and operations. In her capacity as the institution’s chief curator, she was also responsible for developing curatorial and public engagement programs that ensured equitable representation of artists from a broad range of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Previously, she served as the curator of contemporary paintings and sculpture at the Iziko South African National Gallery and as the deputy chairperson of the Artistic Committee for South Africa’s National Arts Festival (NAF). During her tenure as the curator of visual and performance art for NAF, White-Mifetu created programs and exhibitions that focused on the transformative power of the arts and public engagement among diverse audiences. She currently serves as a board member of the International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art (CIMAM). She holds an M.F.A. in fine art and a B.A. (honors) specializing in curatorship from the University of Cape Town, South Africa; a B.A. in fine art from Purchase College, State University of New York; and a master printer certification from the Tamarind Institute, New Mexico.

Abigail L. Dansiger

Dansiger most recently served as the head of library and archives at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), where she implemented the institution’s first integrated library system and online catalogue—migrating over fifty thousand records to a cloud-based platform—as well as its first collection management system for archives. While at FAMSF, she also launched a professional oral history program by establishing a partnership with the Oral History Center of the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to that, she held roles at the Academy of Art University Library in San Francisco and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She has contributed to numerous publications and presentations, including the 2020 Google Arts & Culture exhibition *125 Years of the de Young*. She holds a B.F.A. in photography from the School of Visual Arts and received her M.L.I.S. from San José State University.