



American Federation of Arts

For Immediate Release

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JULIA BROWN APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS

Serena Rattazzi to Retire as Director on October 31, 2000

New York, New York —Gilbert H. Kinney, president of the board of trustees of the American Federation of Arts, announced today that Julia Brown, formerly curator of special exhibitions at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, will assume the position of AFA director effective November 1, 2000. Serena Rattazzi, who has held the position for ten years, will retire on October 31, 2000.

Kinney commented, "Julia Brown's exceptional experience, abilities, and qualities made her the clear choice to succeed Serena Rattazzi as the director of AFA. Julia has excelled in a variety of capacities in the arts—notably as a museum director, curator, and fundraiser—and we are delighted that she will now apply her considerable talents to the AFA."

Jan Mayer, chairman of the board, said, "Serena's extraordinary vision, high standards, and leadership have helped make the AFA the success it is today. During her tenure, the organization and its programs, services, and activities expanded and diversified to better serve the evolving needs of museum members and, thereby, the art community as a whole. While it is not easy to replace Serena, we are confident that in Julia we have a person of consummate professionalism and vitality."

Rattazzi joined the AFA as director in 1990, after serving as the associate director of the Brooklyn Museum of Art. During her tenure, the quality and scope of the AFA programs broadened dramatically. In addition to adding an education division in order to provide educational components to all the AFA exhibitions, Rattazzi developed the highly regarded Directors Forum, a Curators Forum to be launched in the spring 2001, and the Technical Assistance Program. She oversaw the successful completion of several major fundraising efforts, including the Campaign for the Second Century and, in 1999, a capital campaign allowing for the complete renovation of the building that serves as the AFA headquarters. Under her direction, over 150 exhibitions—showcasing a range of subjects from antiquities to contemporary art—were organized and traveled to member museums in North America and, most recently, Europe.

Rattazzi commented, "Being director of the AFA is one of the greatest jobs in the art world. The past ten years have been the best in my professional life and I am most grateful to the board for having given me this

opportunity. The time is right, however, for new leadership and I know Julia will guide the AFA and its extraordinary staff to new excellence.”

Brown said, “Having admired the AFA for a long time, I am thrilled to be taking on this responsibility and am very grateful to the board members for their support. These are exhilarating and challenging times for museums and the communities they serve and for the AFA and its members. I share the AFA’s commitment to nurturing public interest in art and enveloping the widest audience possible. I eagerly anticipate building on the AFA’s distinguished legacy and many achievements.”

The daughter of a diplomat, Brown was raised in England and Asia. Upon graduating from Sarah Lawrence College in 1972, she joined the National Gallery of Art as a docent in the Education Department. She served six years with the General Services Administration in Washington, D.C., first as an art historian with the Federal Arts Project Survey and later as project manager of the Art-in-Architecture Program.

After beginning her curatorial work in 1980 at The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, she became founding curator for The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, where she was named senior curator and, in 1985, director of the Inaugural Year Exhibition.

Brown served as director of the Des Moines Art Center from 1987 through 1991. During her tenure, she initiated long-range strategic planning, built a development department, expanded fundraising activities, and developed new exhibitions and educational programming. She was responsible for the acquisition of works by Louise Bourgeois, Dan Flavin, Eva Hesse, Donald Judd, Anselm Kiefer, Robert Ryman, Joel Shapiro, and Cy Twombly, among others; the commissioning of major works by Sol LeWitt, Bruce Nauman, and Richard Serra; and the creation of a sculpture park adjacent to the museum.

She became an independent curator in 1991 and, from 1995 through this spring, was responsible for organizing the Guggenheim’s international exhibitions. Since March, Brown has been developing books on contemporary art for Phaidon Press and managing large-scale art commissions for federal buildings around the country on behalf of the General Services Administration.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS: The American Federation of Arts is the nation’s oldest and most comprehensive non-profit art museum service organization. Founded by an act of Congress in 1909, the AFA provides its more than 550 member institutions with traveling art exhibitions and educational, professional, and technical support programs developed in collaboration with the museum community. Through these programs, the AFA seeks to strengthen the ability of museums to enrich the public’s experience and understanding of art.