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**Archives of American Art Announces
Erin Jenoa Gilbert as Curator of African American Manuscripts and
Rayna Andrews as Archivist for its African American Collecting Initiative**

*Three-year full-time positions and summer internships
funded with support from the Henry Luce Foundation*

Washington, DC...The Smithsonian's [Archives of American Art](#) (the Archives) announced two recent appointments today: Erin Jenoa Gilbert assumes a new position as Curator of African American Manuscripts and Rayna Andrews has been appointed Archivist of its three-year African American Collecting Initiative (the Initiative). Launched in April 2017 with a \$575,000 grant from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Initiative aims to build upon the Archives' existing collections by and about African American artists. The grant supports two full-time positions and one paid internship each summer to help maintain the Initiative's efforts through 2020.

Drawing on her background as a curator of contemporary, modern, and African American art, Gilbert will develop a strategy for substantially increasing the collections of papers of and about African American artists and will travel nationally to acquire collections. Andrews will organize and catalogue the current collections and new acquisitions. Her work will result in the creation of online finding aids for scores of the Archives' collections on African American art. These finding aids will greatly increase access and usability of the collections and will serve as critical resources for those performing research in the field.

Recruited from groups historically underrepresented in the field of art history, the interns will assist the work of Gilbert and Andrews and help with research and processing new acquisitions and creating finding aids. The Archives currently holds the papers of more than 50 African American artists including Romare Bearden, Sam Gilliam, Adrian Piper, Horace Pippin, William H. Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Gwendolyn Knight, Alma Thomas, Bob Thompson, and Charles White.

Archives of American Art Director Kate Haw said, “We are delighted to welcome Erin and Rayna who bring significant depth of scholarship, experience, and enthusiasm to help the Archives launch this important project. Working with our new colleagues, the Archives will broaden and diversify the representation of African American art and artists in its collections. We are deeply grateful to the Henry Luce Foundation for their generous support and enabling these new positions.”

Before joining the Archives, Gilbert was an independent curator. She has served as Director of Kruger Gallery; Manager of Community Engagement, Audience Development, and Adult Programs at The Studio Museum in Harlem; and Associate Director of the Leadership Advisory Committee at The Art Institute of Chicago. During her tenure at the Studio Museum, Gilbert produced more than 60 critical discussions of contemporary African and African American art featuring internationally acclaimed artists and curators, including the Museum’s Director Thelma Golden, artist Glenn Ligon, and architect David Adjaye.

Having lived in the U.S., Malawi, and the U.K., Gilbert is familiar with issues of national identity, migration, and immigration and has explored the relationship between art, power, and politics in her curatorial projects. Recent exhibitions include *Zohra Opoku: Draped Encounters/Beyond Visage*, *Sienna Shields: Invisible Woman* and *Phoebe Boswell: Transit Terminal*. Gilbert earned a B.A. in political science and a B.A. in African and African American studies from the University of Michigan and her M.A. in contemporary art from the University of Manchester.

Andrews was previously the Archives Assistant at the University of Pennsylvania Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts and Digital Projects Assistant for the College Women Project at Bryn Mawr College Special Collections. She has an MLIS in archival studies from Pratt Institute and a B.A. in comparative literature from Bryn Mawr College.

Archives of American Art

Founded in 1954, the Archives of American Art fosters advanced research through the accumulation and dissemination of primary sources, unequalled in historical depth and breadth, that document more than 200 years of the nation’s artists and art communities. The Archives provides access to these materials through its exhibitions and publications, including the *Archives of American Art Journal*, the longest-running scholarly journal in the field of American art. An

international leader in the digitizing of archival collections, the Archives also makes more than 2.5 million digital images freely available online. The oral-history collection includes more than 2,300 audio interviews, the largest accumulation of in-depth, first-person accounts of the American art world.

Henry Luce Foundation

The [Henry Luce Foundation](#) was established in 1936 by Henry R. Luce, the co-founder and editor-in-chief of Time Inc., to honor his parents who were missionary educators in China. The Foundation seeks to bring important ideas to the center of American life, strengthen international understanding, and foster innovation and leadership in academic, policy, religious and art communities. The Luce Foundation pursues its mission today through the following grant-making programs: American Art; Asia; Luce Scholars; Theology; Higher Education; the Henry R. Luce Initiative on Religion in International Affairs; Public Policy; and the Clare Boothe Luce Program for women in science, mathematics and engineering. A leader in arts funding in the United States, the Luce Foundation's American Art Program was established in 1982 to support universities, museums and arts organizations in their efforts to advance the understanding and experience of American and Native American visual arts through research, exhibitions, publications, and collection projects. The American Art Program has distributed over \$172 million to some 428 museums, universities, and organizations in 48 states, the District of Columbia, and internationally.

The Henry Luce Foundation is a long-time supporter of the Archives of American Art's mission to foster research by collecting, preserving and making available a diversity of primary source material documenting the history of the visual arts in the United States.

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