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April 19, 2018

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THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION ANNOUNCES FIRST CHIEF DIVERSITY OFFICER



WASHINGTON—The Phillips Collection is pleased to announce the appointment of Makeba Clay as Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) to lead its institutional inclusion strategy. The new role at the museum marks another major progression in the Phillips’s move to institutionally operationalize its commitment to diversifying its staff and board, exhibitions, programs, and partnerships. The creation of this executive role is championed by museum leadership and the museum’s Board of Trustees. Clay will report directly to the museum’s Director and Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Dorothy Kosinski.

In 2013, an official Diversity Statement was adopted as part of the museum’s strategic plan. Staff has worked intensively since 2016 in an Inclusion and Diversity Task Force to instrumentalize changes in the museum’s programs and facilities, and to engage experts and coaches in exploring unintended biases with the entire staff. In addition, the museum follows a formalized philosophy to acquire and show works by largely underrepresented groups including women, minorities, and members of the LGBTQ community. The CDO is charged with advancing the strategic priority of diversity and inclusion, which includes leading a major institutional push to promote change around the workforce, policies, and processes of the museum. The role will provide a vision and strategy for robust community engagement, which includes enhancing the museum’s current partnerships and creating new connections.

“This is a truly pivotal moment for the museum world but also for the Phillips as we approach our 100th anniversary,” said **Dorothy Kosinski, Director of The Phillips Collection**. “Duncan Phillips embraced a philosophy of diversity and inclusion as part of the museum’s cultural DNA. Makeba’s expertise and leadership will enable us to build upon the strong foundation we have established and better reflect on our exhibitions, programs, board, and the diverse populations we serve.”

“The Phillips is a pioneer as one of the first museums in the country to include a Chief Diversity Officer as part of the senior management team,” said **Ms. Clay**. “I’m honored and excited to lead the effort that will integrate diversity and inclusion into our broader organizational strategy, which will enable us to be

more intentional in our efforts to attain far greater diversity across the museum and also foster a more inclusive workplace.”

A nationally recognized leader with more than 20 years of experience in the field, Clay has developed a significant track record of transformational contributions toward organizational equity, diversity, and inclusion goals in higher-education and cultural organizations, including American University, Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, College of Southern Maryland, Princeton University, University of Maryland, and others. She was bestowed the *Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award* by *INSIGHT Magazine* in 2015, and is a well-respected speaker for both national and international professional associations and conferences.

Funding for this position was made possible by a generous grant from the Sherman Fairchild Foundation. The funding enables a paid fellowship program and series of paid internships. By removing barriers to access, the Sherman Fairchild Fellowship Program will work to build a more accessible pathway to the museum profession for individuals from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds in the field. These and other innovative strategies demonstrates the unwavering commitment of the Phillips to increased diversity, and will allow the Phillips to play a positive and active role in the industry-wide conversation surrounding the inequity reflected in museum staffs, boards, and programming.

ABOUT THE PHILLIPS COLLECTION

The Phillips Collection, America’s first museum of Modern art, presents one of the world’s most distinguished Impressionist and American Modern art collections. Including paintings by Renoir and Rothko, Bonnard and O’Keeffe, van Gogh, Diebenkorn, Daumier and Lawrence, among others, the museum continues to actively collect new acquisitions, many by contemporary artists such as Wolfgang Laib, Whitfield Lovell, and Leo Villareal. Its distinctive building combines extensive new galleries with the former home of its founder, Duncan Phillips. The Phillips’s impact spreads nationally and internationally through its highly distinguished special exhibitions, programs, and events that catalyze dialogue surrounding the continuity between art of the past and the present. Among the Phillips’s esteemed programs are its award-winning education programs for educators, students, and adults; well-established Phillips Music series; and sell-out Phillips after 5 events. The museum contributes to the art conversation on a global scale with events like Conversations with Artists and the International Forum. The Phillips Collection values its community partnerships with the University of Maryland—the museum’s nexus for academic work, scholarly exchange, and interdisciplinary collaborations—and THEARC—the museum’s new campus serving the Southeast DC community. The Phillips Collection is a private, non-government museum, supported primarily by donations.

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