

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CONTACT:** Pamela DiSalvo Lepley

VCU University Relations

Phone: (804) 828-6057

Email: pdlepley@vcu.edu**VCU Institute for Contemporary Art director steps down***Lisa Freiman to pursue major scholarly work*

RICHMOND, Va. (Jan. 11, 2018) — Virginia Commonwealth University announced today that Lisa Freiman, Ph.D., has stepped down as director of the Institute for Contemporary Art, effective immediately. Freiman, who has served as the ICA's inaugural director since 2013, led the institutional vision and planning for the ICA, which opens in April 2018.

Freiman remains a tenured faculty member of the VCU School of Arts and will be completing a scholarly work, a monograph on artist Claes Oldenburg, and then returning to the classroom to teach in her area of expertise.

Freiman has been a tireless advocate of the ICA. During her tenure as director, the ICA successfully completed a \$37 million capital campaign and launched an endowment campaign to sustain its future. She also built the ICA's administrative and curatorial staff, co-curated the inaugural exhibition, "Declaration," and formed a national advisory board at the ICA of respected individuals in the arts and business sectors, among many other accomplishments.

Gail Hackett, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs at VCU, said Freiman is to be commended for her leadership in shaping the ICA and setting it up for success. "And we especially appreciate how Lisa advanced the university's commitment to diversity and inclusion in the arts and worked to integrate the strategic goals of the university into the ICA," Hackett said.

"It has been a tremendous honor to serve as the inaugural director of the ICA over the past five years and to have the opportunity to shape an institution from the ground up," Freiman said. "With the completion of the capital campaign last fall, the launch of the endowment campaign and a dynamic roster of exhibitions and programs in place for the opening and beyond, I would like to turn my attention to some projects that I had to put on hold. Now that we have built out our curatorial and administrative staff, I am confident the ICA is in good hands."

Interim leadership of the ICA will be announced shortly and a national search will be launched over the next few months for the next director of the ICA.

###

About the Institute for Contemporary Art

The Institute for Contemporary Art at Virginia Commonwealth University is a noncollecting institution that will showcase a fresh slate of changing exhibitions and programs. The ICA will be a place to explore new ideas, providing an open forum for dialogue and collaboration across the region and the world. Mirroring the increasing emphasis on cross-disciplinary studies across VCU, the ICA will create a new environment for artists and scholars from around the world to test unconventional and challenging ideas. As a university-wide resource, it will engage an international network of contemporary artists and organizations while encouraging collaborations between audiences and contemporary artists and with VCU departments, faculty, students, and the Richmond community. The ICA will be an agile, responsive institution that offers a broad range of artistic perspectives from across the world, with the goal of questioning assumptions and encouraging critical discourse. Additional information on opening programming will be available in the coming months. For more information on the ICA, please visit ica.vcu.edu

About VCU and VCU Health

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 220 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Seventy-nine of the programs are unique in Virginia, many of them crossing the disciplines of VCU's 13 schools and one college. The VCU Health brand represents the health sciences schools of VCU, the VCU Massey Cancer Center and the VCU Health System, which comprises VCU Medical Center (the only academic medical center and Level I trauma center in the region), Community Memorial Hospital, Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU, MCV Physicians and Virginia Premier Health Plan. For more, please visit www.vcu.edu and vcuhealth.org.