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**VCU School of Arts Dean Emeritus Joseph Seipel to serve as interim ICA director**

**RICHMOND, Va. (Jan. 16, 2018)** – Virginia Commonwealth University announced today that Joseph H. Seipel, dean emeritus of the VCU School of Arts, has agreed to serve as interim director of the university's Institute for Contemporary Art.

Seipel will fill the role left vacant by Lisa Freiman, who announced last week that she was stepping down as director to focus on scholarly projects at VCU.

Seipel retired from VCU in 2016. Under his leadership the VCU School of Arts rose to and then maintained its position as the top public arts and design school in the country, as ranked in U.S. News & World Report's Best Graduate Schools. He was an early advocate of the ICA, serving as the co-chair of the committee that chose renowned architect Steven Holl to design the building. Seipel also played an important role in the initial ICA concept, planning and fundraising.

Most recently, Seipel was interim dean of the School of Art and Design at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Interrupting his more than 40 years as a professor and administrator at VCU, and before becoming dean of the VCU School of the Arts, Seipel served as a vice president at the Savannah College of Art and Design for two years.

"I look forward to working with the energetic and highly professional members of the ICA staff who already are well on their way to opening this world-class institute," Seipel said.

Gail Hackett, Ph.D., provost and vice president for academic affairs at VCU, said Seipel "brings exceptional and proven leadership to the ICA as it conducts an expedited national search for the next director of the institute."

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**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](http://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](http://www.vcu.edu) and [vcuhealth.org](http://vcuhealth.org).*