



## **ABASEH MIRVALI APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND CHIEF CURATOR OF MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART SANTA BARBARA**

*Mirvali Launches the Next Phase in MCASB History with Expanded  
International Programming and Plans for a New Museum*

**Santa Barbara, CA – October 18, 2018** – Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) announced today that it has appointed Abaseh Mirvali as its new Executive Director, Chief Curator, and CEO effective immediately. In this role, Mirvali will work closely with the MCASB staff and its Board of Trustees, as well as the wider Santa Barbara and greater Los Angeles communities to advance the mission of the Museum regionally, nationally, and internationally. In addition to setting the curatorial vision for the institution, Mirvali will also launch MCASB's expansion to a new location in Santa Barbara's ocean-facing Funk Zone arts district.

Mirvali brings with her more than 15 years of experience working as an internationally-respected director and independent contemporary art and architecture curator and project producer. Her professional background includes previous roles as the Executive Director of the Colección/Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City from 2005-2008. There, Mirvali fortified and developed one of the most distinguished collections of contemporary art held by a private institution in Latin America. Mirvali also served as the CEO and Executive Director of Denver's Biennial of the Americas for its 2013 edition, establishing the vision for their exhibitions, public art projects, and urban architectural interventions as well as its policy programs. Earlier in her career, Mirvali served as Senior Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador for Culture and Education, creating innovative art and educational programming led by the Embassy of the United States in Mexico City. Mirvali has also collaborated with renowned cultural institutions, artists, and architects around the globe as well as served on the boards of various cultural and educational organizations in cities including Bogotá, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Istanbul, Milan, New York, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Turin, and Vienna, as well as Berlin and Mexico City, where she was most recently based.

"Abaseh is a visionary leader and curator whose deep expertise and incredible relationships with artists and institutions around the world will prove invaluable to MCASB," said Jacquelyn Klein-Brown, Board President, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. "With her international perspective and hands-on approach, the entire board is delighted to have Abaseh's innovative vision for transformation and growth to shape the future of MCASB."

"I am tremendously excited to be joining Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara at this incredible moment in the Museum's trajectory," stated Abaseh Mirvali. "I have met an incredibly special group of

people with an immense commitment to this Museum and their community. It is an honor that, in me, they see the right partner to realize a shared vision for the future of MCASB. I am looking forward to collaborating with the MCASB family and the Santa Barbara and international cultural communities, to present an expanded vision of what a museum can provide in our times.”

In addition to conceptualizing the new curatorial and programmatic vision for MCASB, Mirvali will work with the Museum’s Board and staff to launch a capital campaign and plan for the construction of a new stand-alone building on property that the Museum purchased in 2017 with support from the Hutton Parker Foundation. In preparation for the new museum, Mirvali will draw on her extensive experience both conceiving projects and delivering impactful exhibitions. She will also create new collaborative opportunities that will further develop the Museum’s connections with Santa Barbara and beyond in the next chapter of its history.

### **About Abaseh Mirvali**

Abaseh Mirvali is an internationally recognized independent contemporary art and architecture curator and project producer with a career-long commitment to civic engagement and public service through innovative collaborations between contemporary art initiatives and the community at large.

This includes roles as the Executive Director of the Colección/Fundación Jumex Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City from 2005-2008. There, Mirvali fortified and developed one of the most distinguished collections of contemporary art held by a private institution in Latin America. Mirvali also served as the CEO and Executive Director of Denver’s Biennial of the Americas for its 2013 edition, establishing the vision for the overall program including its public art projects, and urban architectural interventions as well as its policy programs. Earlier in her career, Mirvali served as Senior Advisor to the U.S. Ambassador for Culture and Education, creating innovative art and educational programming led by the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City. Mirvali has also collaborated with renowned cultural institutions, artists, and architects around the globe in cities including Berlin, Buenos Aires, Bogotá, Brussels, Rio de Janeiro, Turin, Vienna, Mexico City, Milan, New York, Sao Paolo, and Istanbul.

Most recently, Mirvali curated the show of Dubai-based Iranian artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian, presented at the 13,000-square-foot OGR - Officine Grandi Riparazioni in Turin, Italy (2018) accompanied by an exhibition text and catalog published with Corraini Edizioni. In 2017, Mirvali was one of the invited curators at the curated by\_vienna festival in Vienna, Austria, where she curated a show of Austrian artist Dominik Steiger, and Berlin-based Iranian artist Shirin Sabahi. Her publication, “The relationship between the transcendental and the tangible. The use of gold and its meaning in the work of Mira Schendel, Mathias Goeritz, and Liliana Maresca,” is part of the exhibition catalog, *A Tale Of Two Worlds: A Dialogue between the MMK Collection and the History of Experimental Latin American Art, 1940s – 1980s*.

In 2016, Mirvali curated the first project in Latin America of Toronto-based Iranian artist Abbas Akhavan, which consists of a permanent intervention on FLORA ars+natura’s rooftop in Bogotá, Colombia. In 2015, Mirvali curated the first exhibitions in Latin America of the Turner Prize winner artist Simon Starling, which were presented in the Luis Barragán House and Studio, and the Experimental Museum El Eco, in Mexico City from January to April and co-edited the book *Simon Starling: A–Z*, with Mousse Publishing.

She also served as special Projects Director for newly emerging Galeri Manâ in Istanbul (2011-2012), where Mirvali curated four exhibitions and publications (Reflecting on Reflection group show, Pawel Althamer: Six Sculptures, Alexander Wagner: solo show, and Abbas Akhavan: solo show) focusing on the development of the artists' practice in relation to the gallery's architecture and history and its coexistence with the neighborhood—one which has a long-standing political, social, and cultural DNA.

Born in Iran and raised in San Francisco, Mirvali has been based in Berlin and Mexico City for the last 15 years.

#### **About Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara**

Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara (MCASB) is a non-profit, non-collecting museum dedicated to the exhibition, education, and cultivation of the art of our time. Formerly Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF), MCASB is the premier venue for contemporary art between Los Angeles and San Francisco. MCASB is located at the Paseo Nuevo Upper Arts Terrace in downtown Santa Barbara, CA.

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#### **Media Contacts:**

Lauren Sharp  
Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara  
805.966.5373 x108  
[lsharp@mcasantabarbara.org](mailto:lsharp@mcasantabarbara.org)

Racheal Campbell/Ilana Simon Rubin  
Resnicow + Associates  
212-671-5158/720-746-9552  
[rcampbell@resnicow.com](mailto:rcampbell@resnicow.com) / [irubin@resnicow.com](mailto:irubin@resnicow.com)