



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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DESERT X ANNOUNCES

SECOND EDITION TO OPEN FEBRUARY 9, 2019

EXPANDED CURATORIAL AND EXECUTIVE TEAM

NEVILLE WAKEFIELD TO REMAIN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR; JENNY GIL APPOINTED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

AMANDA HUNT AND MATTHEW SCHUM JOIN AS CO-CURATORS



From left: Co-Curator Matthew Schum, Executive Director Jenny Gil, Artistic Director Neville Wakefield, Co-curator Amanda Hunt, photo courtesy Desert X.

Palm Springs, Calif., – The *Desert X* Board of Directors announced today that its highly anticipated second edition will open February 9, 2019 through the end of April 2019 with an expanded curatorial and executive leadership team. Returning Artistic Director **Neville Wakefield** is joined by Director of Education & Public Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles **Amanda Hunt** and Los Angeles-based independent writer and curator **Matthew Schum** as co-curators. **Jenny Gil**, appointed as Executive Director, was most recently with Faena Art, Miami, and in her new position is charged with overseeing the exhibition's administration and management to ensure the long-term stability of the organization.

The second iteration of the recurring international contemporary art exhibition will again activate California's desert landscape through site-specific installations by renowned international contemporary artists.

"The board and I are thrilled Neville Wakefield is continuing as our Artistic Director. His inspired vision and sincere empathy for the desert and the community are qualities we wanted to reengage for 2019," said Desert X President and Founder Susan Davis. "With the addition of Jenny Gil, who brings enormous expertise and international knowledge to the organization, and with the talents of Amanda Hunt and Matthew Schum, we have a team in place that will enrich and broaden the next *Desert X* and possibly make it an even larger success than our first."

"The inaugural *Desert X* was both an honor to work on and an extraordinary journey into the unknown with some of the most significant artists working today. I could not have anticipated the overwhelming response to the exhibition, and the lure of the desert and its endless possibilities continue to inspire me," said Desert X Artistic Director, Neville Wakefield. "I want to delve even further into its potential and Amanda and Matthew bring valuable experience and a deep understanding and passion for presenting work in response to landscape, place and larger social and environmental issues."

*Desert X 2017* garnered international critical and popular acclaim for an exhibition of site-specific artworks and installation projects by some of today's most recognized international contemporary artists, including Doug Aitken, Lita Albuquerque, Jennifer Bolande, Will Boone, Claudia Comte, Jeffrey Gibson, Sherin Guirguis, Norma Jeane, Glenn Kaino, Gabriel Kuri, Armando Lerma, Richard Prince, Rob Pruitt, Julião Sarmiento, Phillip K. Smith III and Tavares Strachan. It attracted an audience of more than 200,000 diverse and multi-generational, local and international visitors over nine-weeks. The exhibition engaged millions across social and digital media channels and was the recipient of multiple awards for its extensive education and community programs and partnerships, which enrolled hundreds of local and national volunteers, docents, educators, and students.

Prior to her position as Director of Exhibitions at Faena Art, Jenny Gil, M.A., now based in Palm Springs, was Executive Director of the International Committee of Modern Art Museums (CIMAM) in Barcelona, Spain. From 2008 to 2015, she was Founder and Director of Ninetofive, a contemporary art production bureau in Barcelona. Gil has contributed to international art publications, including *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Madrid; *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona and *Papers d'Art*, Girona.

Amanda Hunt, M.A., is Director of Education & Public Programs at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Past appointments include Associate Curator at The Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, and Curator at LA><ART, Los Angeles, where she helped coordinate the 2012 Pacific Standard Time Public Art and Performance Festival for The Getty Research Institute, and *Made in L. A. 2012*, the Hammer Museum's first Los Angeles biennial. At the Studio Museum, Hunt produced exhibitions including *A Constellation*, *Black Cowboy*, and in 2016 commissioned *inHarlem: Kevin Beasley, Simone Leigh, Kori Newkirk, Rudy Shepherd*, a public sculpture initiative (in partnership with the New York City Parks Department). In 2014 Hunt was the first non-regional curator of the Portland Biennial of Contemporary Art.

Matthew Schum, Ph.D, is an independent writer and curator based in Los Angeles, who worked with Wakefield on *Elevation –86 Death Valley*, a site-specific exhibition based on the 1964 Wilderness Act. In 2015 Schum initiated a series of exhibitions entitled the MYSYYPYN - each iteration is a look at the colonial interior of the U.S., guided by intersecting histories along the Mississippi River. Past MYSYYPYN exhibitions have included artists Damien Davis, Duane Linklater, Nyeema Morgan, Kelly Sena, and Aaron Spangler, among others. Schum was editor for Mark Boulos' first artist monograph (Hatje Cantz, 2017) and served as Curator at LA><ART, Los Angeles, from 2012 to 2015, producing exhibitions with David Hartt, Eamon Ore-Giron, Isabelle Cornaro and others. Schum has published articles with *Flash Art*, *Artforum*, *Witte de With Review*, *Mousse* and *X-TRA*.

*Desert X* is funded by its Board of Directors, by philanthropists well known to the desert community, and by its Founding Members. It has received generous support from cities, organizations and corporate entities in the region. The organization's Board of Directors includes creative and cultural professionals from a cross-section of disciplines and backgrounds who are working internationally and within the local community in contemporary art, music, film and philanthropy.

**To get involved and support *Desert X* as a benefactor or sponsor, please contact [jenny@desertx.org](mailto:jenny@desertx.org)**

#### **ABOUT DESERT X ARTISTIC DIRECTOR NEVILLE WAKEFIELD**

Neville Wakefield records, documents and shapes the culture he lives in. As a creative director, writer, curator and commentator on contemporary art and culture, he combines objects, images, action and thought into provocative syntheses. Wakefield has served as the senior curatorial advisor for MoMA PS1 and curator of Frieze Projects. He served as creative director for *Tar Magazine* and for *Playboy's* special projects / A-Z Edition and the March 2016 re-launch. Commercially, he was the global curator for Nike's Flynit Line, the designer of limited-edition luggage for Rimowa and has commissioned skateboard decks for Supreme. Recent curatorial projects include *Somos Libres* in collaboration with Mario Testino with iterations in Italy and Peru as well as founding *Elevation 1049*, a site-specific biennial in Gstaad, Switzerland. Concurrent projects include the re-launch of the iconic Los Angeles-based Rudi Gernreich label to be completed in 2018.

#### **ABOUT *DESERT X***

*Desert X* is produced by Desert Biennial, a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) charitable organization founded in 2015. Its mission is to bring the finest international artists to the Coachella Valley to create art, engage viewers, and focus attention on the Valley's environment — its natural wonders as well as socio-political-economic issues that make it vibrant, curious, and exciting, while also focusing attention on the creative energy of the participating artists and their work. For more information and upcoming events, visit [www.desertx.org](http://www.desertx.org).

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