


MEMORANDUM

To: Academic Deans, Faculty, and Staff
From: C. L. Max Nikias 
Date: April 29, 2010
Subject: Appointment of Rochelle Steiner as Dean of the
USC Roski School of Fine Arts

Office of the Provost

C. L. Max Nikias
Executive Vice President
and Provost

Malcolm R. Currie Chair
in Technology and
the Humanities

On behalf of President Sample, I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Rochelle Steiner** as dean of the USC Gayle Garner Roski School of Fine Arts. Dr. Steiner is a curator of contemporary art and a writer based in New York City, having organized more than 60 major art exhibitions and large-scale public art projects, including Olafur Eliasson's *The New York City Waterfalls*, which is one of the most ambitious works of public art to have been realized to date. Her appointment as dean is effective August 1, 2010.

Recognized as a visionary leader, Dr. Steiner currently consults for the Miami Art Museum (MAM). In this capacity, she works closely with MAM's trustees, director, curators, and educators to develop a multi-year plan for the collection, exhibitions, education programs, and interpretation strategies, all while the museum prepares to move into a new building, designed by architects Herzog and de Meuron.

From 2006 to 2009, Dr. Steiner was Director of the Public Art Fund in New York. Under her leadership, the non-profit organization commissioned 35 public art projects with established and emerging international artists, including *The New York City Waterfalls*. Her other major projects include commissions and exhibitions by Chris Burden, Anish Kapoor, Sarah Lucas, Damian Ortega, Sarah Morris, and Sarah Sze, all presented in New York City's outdoor public spaces.

From 2001 to 2006, Dr. Steiner served as Chief Curator at the Serpentine Gallery in London. She curated one-person and group exhibitions with internationally acclaimed artists, including Glenn Brown; John Currin; Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset; Ilya and Emilia Kabakov; Ellsworth Kelly; Takashi Murakami; Gabriel Orozco; Nick Relph and Oliver Payne; Cindy Sherman; and Rirkrit Tiravanija.

From 1996 to 2001, she was Associate Curator of Contemporary Art at Saint Louis Art Museum, where she organized the large-scale group exhibition *Wonderland*, which included new works by Ernesto Neto, Olafur Eliasson, Jennifer Steinkamp, and others. She also organized the Museum's *Currents* contemporary exhibition

series, which included one-person shows with Peter Doig, Tom Friedman, Elizabeth Peyton, Gary Simmons, among many others.

Dr. Steiner earned a Ph.D. in Visual and Cultural Studies and a master's degree in Comparative Arts, both from the University of Rochester. She earned a B.A. in English and Advertising from Syracuse University. In 2009, she was one of 10 fellows selected from American museums for the Center for Curatorial Leadership program, in association with Columbia University Business School Executive Education program.

Dr. Steiner has published more than 50 essays and interviews with artists, and these have appeared in numerous exhibition catalogues, journals, and magazines, including *Parkett, Modern Painters, Art Review*, and *World of Interiors*, published in the United States and Europe.

Upon arriving at USC, Dr. Steiner will find a vibrant School of Fine Arts, one that plays a key role in the university's academic and cultural life. Founded in 1895, the school is the oldest art program in the region, and is noted for its richly varied programs, ranging from the mastery of traditional skills to cutting-edge scholarship and exploration of the newest frontiers in contemporary art. The school's renowned faculty provide students with a well-balanced education in the creative, interpretive, and critical processes essential to practicing art. In lectures, seminars, and studio meetings, 50 full-time and part-time faculty energetically challenge the fixed notions of art and culture. The school offers B.F.A. and B.A. degrees, and master's degrees in fine arts (M.F.A.) and public art studies (M.P.A.S.). The school maintains strong relationships with a wide range of Southern California's exceptional museums, galleries, and cultural institutions, as well as art and design professionals.

The school's lofty standing is due—in no small measure—to its current leadership, and I want to warmly acknowledge Dean **Ruth Weisberg** for her outstanding service as dean. She has led the school since 1995; during her tenure, the school was named for alumna Gayle Garner Roski through the largest endowment gift given to an arts school in the United States, and the school's endowment increased by a factor of five. Its space allocation grew by 50% with the addition of a building for Graduate Programs and Advanced Photography, and Dean Weisberg facilitated the naming of a number of the school's studios, laboratories, and programs. Since 1995, the school's full-time and adjunct faculty more than doubled, while first year applications rose from 97 to 366 in 2010. We all applaud Dean Weisberg's exceptional accomplishments as dean and look forward to her continued contributions as a valued member of the school's faculty.

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Before closing, I would also like to salute the stellar work of the dean search advisory committee. Dean **Robert Cutietta** of the USC Thornton School of Music chaired the committee, and **Barry Glassner**, executive vice provost, served as vice chair. The dean search advisory committee also included Professors **Jud Fine, Ange-Marie Hancock, Margaret R. Lazzari, Haven Lin-Kirk, Susan Metros, Richard Meyer, Howard Rodman, and Charlie White.** **Gayle Garner Roski**, a great supporter of the school and a member of its Board of Councilors, served as my advisor, and the executive search firm **Isaacson, Miller** coordinated the national search. The dean search advisory committee carefully considered the credentials of more than 70 qualified candidates, and our thorough discussions ultimately led to Dr. Steiner's appointment.

Please join me in congratulating Rochelle Steiner on her appointment as dean of the USC Roski School of Fine Arts, and in welcoming her to our academic community, which is deeply enriched by the creativity of the many artists on our faculty. We all look forward to her arrival this summer.

cc: Steven B. Sample
Robert Abeles
Todd R. Dickey
Martha Harris
Elizabeth Garrett
Michael Jackson
Barry Glassner
Board of Councilors, USC Roski School of Fine Arts