

# Northwestern

MARY AND LEIGH

BLOCK MUSEUM OF ART

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## Kate Hadley Toftness to oversee Grants Program and Special Projects at the Block Museum of Art



Kate Hadley Toftness, The Block Museum of Art's newly appointed Grants Manager and Special Project Associate

Photo Credit: Sara Pooley

**EVANSTON, Ill.** --- The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University is pleased to announce the appointment of Kate Hadley Toftness as Grants Manager and Special Projects Associate. Toftness will cultivate the Museum's growing foundation and funder relationships and oversee projects which extend the impact and reach of the Block Museum's work. This strategic development position will focus on partnering with funders to advance the unique interdisciplinary and community-based tenants of the museum's mission.

Toftness most recently served as Archival Collections and Public Engagement Manager for Rebuild Foundation, an arts non-profit on the South Side of Chicago led by artist Theaster Gates. In 2015, she orchestrated the installation of Gates' major collections in their long-term home at the new Stony Island Arts Bank—the opening of which coincided with the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial. Toftness established the Arts Bank's core programs, including Community Cataloging, Reading the Black Library, and Glass Lantern Slide Night. Each program was designed to be led by neighborhood residents and often relied on artists as expert interpreters.

“At Rebuild Foundation, Kate proved herself an innovative and nimble arts administrator, driven by broad picture thinking and the desire to create more dynamic relationships between the organization and its stakeholders. We are looking forward to the impactful ideas she will bring to our own projects and to our corporate, foundation and government relations.” notes Lisa Corrin, the Block Museum's Ellen Phillips Katz Director.

Toftness received her bachelors from Yale University and an interdisciplinary humanities masters from the University of Chicago with a focus on art history and creative writing. She has previously held positions as Assistant to the Director of Collections and Education at the Yale University Art Gallery, implementing the Mellon Foundation funded Collection Sharing Initiative, and as Curatorial Intern for Academic Outreach at the Smart Museum of Art at the University of Chicago. Toftness is also the cofounder of the Chicago Archives + Artists Project, an initiative that connects artists and writers with archives that give space to voices on the margins.

Block Museum Board of Advisors member Kate Ezra, served as Nolen Curator of Education and Academic Affairs at Yale University Art Gallery, where she worked closely with Toftness. “Kate knows first-hand the potential of university art museums to activate campus life using art as a springboard for exploring ideas. This will enable her to advance the Block Museum's vision as an innovative and collaborative partner on Northwestern's campus and beyond.” says Ezra

“I believe that access to museums creates powerful connections between individual expression and shared experience,” says Toftness. “I am thrilled to be returning to a university art museum particularly as the Block models new ideas about the expanded role of the museum on campus and in the Evanston and Chicago region.”