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Alison Gass. Photo: San José Institute of Contemporary Art.
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SAN JOSÉ INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ART NAMES ALISON GASS DIRECTOR

Alison Gass, a Bay Area native, contemporary art curator, and museum administrator, is returning to California to head the San José Institute of Contemporary Art (SJICA). She joins the institution amid preparations to celebrate its fortieth anniversary this fall and during a period of temporary closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gass most recently served as head of the University of Chicago’s Smart Museum of Art, which she helmed from May 2017 to September 2019. She also previously served as chief curator and associate director for exhibitions and collections at the Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University and as a member of the leadership team that opened the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University.

“Ali is a widely renowned leader in the field of contemporary art and museums,” Gordon Yamate, chair of the SJICA board of trustees, said in a statement. “We were impressed by her demonstrated commitment to offering opportunities for artists to create immersive and site-specific work, which is a real hallmark of the SJICA’s program.”

Gass will succeed Cathy Kimball, who has led the institute for more than twenty years and will take up the post on July 1. Commenting on her appointment, Gass told the *San Francisco Chronicle*: “There could not be a more important time to support artists and determine how to create experiences to help people be inspired, engage challenging topics and feel part of a community.”

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