

# Leslie A Brothers

## Director Ulrich Museum of Art | Wichita State University

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Museum professional, director, curator, and educator with over 25 years of experience and innovation in academic, municipal, state and national art museums dedicated to promoting arts and culture to a diverse range of communities.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

### **2018-present / Director**

Edwin A. Ulrich Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Wichita State University

I joined the Ulrich Museum of Art to answer a call for a need to connect the Museum more deeply to the campus through research, and teaching while continuing to enrich, through Museum programs, the University's connection to the community. Identifying the way forward as "Future Now at the Ulrich," I initiated a re-branding of the Museum gathering together our broad and diverse constituency to build a sense of ownership and belonging. Our process was based in inquiry, asking questions like how we can minimize barriers to the Museum functioning as a resource for deep and holistic learning experiences for everyone. In response I introduced a new series of exhibitions entitled *Solving for X*. In the series X equals challenging issues in the world that people care about like sustainability, accessibility or representation. The content features visualizations of campus-wide research related to those topics. The exhibitions have been extremely popular because they are universally relevant, accessible, and they matter both to furthering public access to scholarship on campus and to opening pathways to understanding art.

### **2001-2018 / Director**

McDonough Museum of Art, YSU's Center for Contemporary Ideas, Art, Education & Community  
Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio

As Director of the McDonough Museum of Art for seventeen years, I led a transformation of the museum from a modest venue for faculty and student work to a broad-based interdisciplinary institute of community engagement. Early on with the involvement of key campus and community stakeholders, we established our 20/20 vision plan for building and sustaining relevance for arts and culture through civic engagement using flexible and accessible programming to address topics that matter to people and respond to basic human needs. We formed relationships with over 60 community organizations and businesses including: Ursuline Sisters HIV/AIDS Ministry, Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, Youngstown Business Incubator and America Makes, to advance the role of artists and community members in addressing human and social issues in contemporary life. Most essentially, we positioned the Museum as a locus for integrating and expanding cross-disciplinary and community views, creating a meeting ground for shared ideas. I presented over a decade of transformative experiences in a TEDx talk, outlining a roadmap to innovation in audience, university and community engagement. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAzd8fn8ABc>

### **1995-2000 / Curator of Contemporary Art**

Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

As Curator of Contemporary Art I had the opportunity to develop and curate groundbreaking shows by artists whose work was linked to studio and design programs as well as emerging technologies central to the School of Art and Design and the larger experimental nature of the campus. Managed all aspects of the Museum's twentieth-century art program and developed the vision and mission for the Contemporary Art Series and growing collection of Contemporary Art.

Formed and nurtured the EWG, Exhibitions Working Group made up of members of the larger campus representing units in the arts, humanities, and sciences. EWG's challenge was to begin to rethink the cultural function of an art museum within a university setting and the responsibilities it had to academic, civic, and regional constituencies. Established campus-wide relationships, particularly with members of the

Beckman Institute for Advanced Sciences and Technology, to further investigation of the university art museum's function as forum and public access point for the community to connect to ongoing research across campus. Regularly partnered with I Space and other Chicago area arts institutions.

1995-2002

**Museum Assessment Program (MAP) site reviewer**

American Association of Museums, Washington, D.C.

1995-2000

**Advisor, Student Internship and Volunteer programs**

School of Art and Design, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois

1994

**Archivist, Ulm Archive**

Tomás Gonda Design Work, Library, and Papers, New York, New York

1990-1995

**Curator / Collections Manager**

Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Curated exhibitions and developed related educational programs working closely with faculty and students enrolled in the Museum Studies Program. Cared for and electronically catalogued the permanent collection.

1991

**Curatorial Assistant**

Department of Prints & Drawings, Brooklyn Museum of Fine Arts, Brooklyn, New York

1989-1990

**Curatorial Assistant**

Department of Photography, The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia

1988-1989

**Independent Curator**

The Sellman Collection of African Art, Virginia Union University, Richmond, Virginia

1984-1987

**Assistant to the Director**

Lucien Goldschmidt, Inc. Gallery, New York, New York

A commercial gallery specializing in old master prints and drawings, illustrated rare books and rare book bindings. Managed exhibitions, wrote catalogue entries for publications and maintained client relationships.

## **EXHIBITIONS & PUBLICATIONS**

### **——SELECTED CURATED EXHIBITIONS WITH PUBLICATIONS**

**2018-present / Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita State University**

Solving for X Exhibition Series where X = Sustainability, Accessibility and Representation

*Acid Mine Drainage: Working to Improve Passive Remediation Systems*

*GuideBeacon: wayfinding and multisensory access to works of art for people who are BVI and mobility impaired*

*Slaying the Gerrymander:*

*Fire in the Paint Locker*, Kevin Mullins Retrospective, catalogue

**2017-2001 / McDonough Museum of Art, Youngstown State University**

*Salon de Fleurus*, a re-imagining of Gertrude Stein's famed early 20<sup>th</sup> century Paris salon at 27 Rue de Fleurus, an international traveling exhibition.

*Tastemakers, A Progress of Love*, collectors and their stories

*Changing Cities Changing Views*, in collaboration with Kent State University, catalogue

*GOTTA HAVE IT*, exhibition and benefit auction for the McDonough Museum Trust

*Voices of the Valley* recorded by StoryCorps, Joint project together with 7 partner organizations recording 70 community leaders, installed in the Museum and broadcast to the region – now located in the Library of Congress

*Re-Shaping Ideas, Ingenuity in 3D Technology*, 3D Printing exhibition and workshops in partnership with national and international leaders in this technology, attracting over 2000 visitors and participants

*Living as Form (the Nomadic Version) – Youngstown Projects*, Expansion of Nato Thompson / Creative Time international project, the Museum included over 20 Mahoning Valley venues to provide a broad look at a vast array of socially engaged practices in fields ranging from theater to activism, and urban planning to visual art

*Paramount Project*, Connecting to the restoration and renovation of the Paramount Theater, a multi-media installation of community memorabilia and future vision

*Dreaming Awake the Town Hall Project with Acconci Studio*, The Museum as Town Hall – over 8,000 square feet of gallery space opened for free public use to non-profit organizations, foundations, community groups, neighborhood associations, as well as the University. A transformation of the Museum into a public use space creating a new context for public interaction and mutual understanding

*Acconci Studio: SPOTLIGHTS/SPOTS OF CLOTHING, PRODUCTS & FURNITURE – BUILDINGS, PLAZAS & LANDSCAPES – STREETS & VEHICLES & AIR...*, site specific installation of 10 projected animations for the McDonough Museum of Art

*CINDER works by Susanne Slavick*, the artist borrows and builds images from the art and architecture of the invader and the invaded. Scenes of construction and cultivation painted over digitally manipulated photographs of devastation across the former Islamic Empire, catalogue

*Yoko Ono's IMAGINE PEACE BILLBOARD*, A collaboration with Yoko Ono, New York

*In the Land of Nod: Six New York Projects*, organized in collaboration with Caren Golden Fine Art, New York City, catalogue

*Sleight of Hand*, John Hawthorne, Linda Laino, Michael Moseley, Catherine Roseberry, Rob Womack, Renee Zettle-Sterling, catalogue

*Diario (Diary)*, Elsa Mora, organized in collaboration with Magda Gonzalez-Mora, Independent Curator, Havana, Cuba, catalogue

*Turning Toward Yellow Mountain*, A retrospective exhibition by Feng Jianqin in collaboration with Nanjing Arts Institute, Nanjing China, catalogue

*Overflow*, George Fitzpatrick, Erik Neff, Dan Tranberg, Douglas Max Utter, catalogue

*China, Levels of Discernment*, Corinne Bishara Bako, Richard Mitchell, John Pascarella, catalogue

*Dancing the Orange*, Liliane Luneau, Enid Williams, Paul Yanko, catalogue

#### 2000-1995 / **Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**

Insook Choi, *Voices in Ruins, A Sound Installation*, David Dorsky Gallery, New York, catalogue, traveling

*Exhibition Working Group Projects: Cecilia Vicuña, Joe Goode, Fred Wilson*. CD-ROM

*Wunderkammer, A Chamber of Curiosities*, Selections from 25 campus collections

*The Poetics of Space*, A Selection of Modern Paintings and Glass from the permanent collection

Terry Adkins, *After Flame*, Contemporary Art Series #20, catalogue, traveling

Glen Davies, *Signs of the Times*, Contemporary Art Series #19, catalogue, traveling

*Twist and Shout, Art of the 60's and 70's from the Permanent Collection*

Murielle Neudecker, "Never.Eat.Shredded.Wheat., Map Show," I-Space Gallery, Chicago

*REGARDE: New Video from France*, I-Space Gallery, Chicago

*Reading Room and Artists' Book Fair*, Contemporary Art Series #18, catalogue, traveling

Michael De Jong, *Borrowed Paradise*, Contemporary Art Series #17, catalogue, traveling

Bill Viola, *The Messenger*, Contemporary Art Series #16, catalogue, traveling

Gael Stack, *Mild Warnings*, Contemporary Art Series #15, catalogue, traveling

*Eros Botanicus, Watercolors by Jacqui Morgan*, catalogue, traveling

*Concerned Theatre Japan: The Graphic Art of Japanese Theatre*, CD-ROM, international traveling

Yong Soon Min, *Bridge of No Return*, Contemporary Art Series #14, catalogue, traveling

Rainer Gross, *Fingertip-Tingling*, Contemporary Art Series #13, catalogue, traveling

Wendy Jacob & Temple Grandin, *The Squeeze Chair Project*, Contemporary Art Series #12, catalogue,

Michèle Blondel, *Dans la Zibeline du Zob*, Contemporary Art Series #11, catalogue, traveling

Greg Colson, *Transfigured Things*, Contemporary Art Series #10, catalogue, traveling

Jenni Lukac, *Kaddish and 10<sup>th</sup> Day*, Contemporary Art Series #9, catalogue, traveling

Carrie Mae Weems, *Sea Islands & Africa Series*, catalogue, traveling  
Elliott Green, *Twisted Melodies*, Contemporary Art Series #8, catalogue, traveling  
*20th Century Works on Paper: From Pop to Postmodernism*, Selections from the permanent collection  
William Larson, Contemporary Art Series #6, catalogue  
Steve Hudson, Contemporary Art Series #5, catalogue

#### 1994-1991 / **Anderson Gallery, Virginia Commonwealth University**

William Fick, *Hooligans*, catalogue  
*The Gift*, A Selection of work from the permanent collection  
Tomás Gonda, *A Life in Design*, catalogue, international traveling  
*Anonymity & Identity*, catalogue, traveling  
*Private Stories, Selections from the de la Burdé Collection of Contemporary Art*, catalogue

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (selected projects)**

#### 2020-2018 / **Ulrich Museum of Art**

The Ulrich Museum of Art joins other museums around the globe in recognizing that everyone has the right to participate in the cultural life of the community. *Solving for X = Accessibility. GuideBeacon: wayfinding and multisensory access to works of art for people who are BVI and mobility impaired.*  
A series of exhibitions organized by the Ulrich Museum of Art in collaboration with university scholars in all disciplines across campus to create visualizations of their research. The objective is to explore the potential for the Museum to make accessible to the public the fascinating and important research taking place on campus by creating visual pathways to understanding.

#### 2018-2001 / **McDonough Museum of Art**

**NEA Our Town Grant** awarded August 2016

*INPLACE* is an Innovative Plan for Leveraging Arts through Community Engagement. It is the single largest grant ever awarded to the University's College of Creative Arts and Communication. *INPLACE* came together over the course of three years and is a unique model for creative problem solving in the city. It focuses current planning initiatives and resources in targeted locations to draw on the compounding effect of placemaking strategies. It asks artists, designers and urban planners to act as civic partners in developing creative solutions for placemaking challenges in the city such as Wayfinding, Green Infrastructure, Parking, Lighting and Technology. Five projects were selected for funding by the *INPLACE* core support group made up of local and national Urban Planners, Art Professionals, Architects, Designers and Public Art Consultants.

Living as Form Youngstown, Four Projects:

**MYTOWN: understanding how place matters to local youth** – a joint photo project with youth from the Ursuline Sisters “Just for Kids” program. Thirteen middle and high school students worked with a professional photographer, youth educators, museum professionals and community thinkers and doers to question how place matters to local youth. MYTOWN is on view in the Museum's Satellite Gallery in the Youngstown Regional Airport.

**Community Conscience: A Digital Mural Project – a collaboration with the Juvenile Justice Center of Mahoning County**, students from YSU's Graphic Design Program worked together with Judge Dellick, attorneys, court officers, social workers, psychologists, youth involved in the JJC, their parents and guardians to create murals for the walls of the county's juvenile court including courtrooms and hearing offices depicting themes of community, social justice, respect for the rights of individuals, the institutions that protect those rights and related subjects. The project is ongoing.

**Dreaming Youngstown: An Open Library of Possibilities** – place-specific brainstorming sessions led to over one hundred ideas: some grand, some simple, some radical, and some fantastical. The project brought together people from all walks of life to collectively dream and envision the kinds of interactions, services, physical structures, and experiences they want in their lives. The aim of the project was not to develop a plan for Youngstown, but rather to widen the span of possibilities.

**Youngstown Complaints Choir** – part of a worldwide movement providing a snapshot of private and civic life in participating cities. <http://www.complaintschoir.org/>

**eXcel: Extra Curricular Electronic Media** – one of about 150 Youth Media Programs in North America. This program was established in 2002 in partnership with the Ursuline Sisters HIV/AIDS Ministry specifically targeting inner-city at-risk youth.

**Media that Matters Youth Media Film Festival from New York** – featuring video shorts produced by students participating in the Museum's eXcel program.

**REA+CH artist in residence program** – established in 2002 in partnership with the Ursuline Sisters HIV/AIDS Ministry specifically targeting inner-city at-risk youth.

Tours and School visits – presenting the **Visual Thinking Strategy (VTS)**, a non-intrusive method of group interaction linked to the development of aesthetic learning. The Visual Thinking Strategy trains people to make an evidence-founded, reasoned argument, based on careful looking. The ultimate goal of VTS is for people to receive meaning – something of use in their own lives – by looking at art.

**Kids in Action** Program at the Museum with the Rich Center for Autism

## —TEACHING POSITIONS

2001-2017

**Adjunct Professor**, Department of Art, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio  
Issues in Contemporary Art, Theory and Practice; Senior Seminar - Professional Practice; university-wide Special Topics Courses: Tastemakers A Progress of Love; Come Closer: the Portrait in Contemporary Photography; From Uruk to SimCity: the aesthetic development of cities and the transformative role of artists, designers, architects and artistic movements through time and place; The Community Artist: Reconsidering the Role of Aesthetics in Social Reform

2000-2001

**Visiting Professor**, Department of Art, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois  
American Art-Depression to Disco, Recent Art, Foundations of Inquiry-Thinking Like Leonardo  
MFA Seminar-Consciousness and Community: The Artist Citizen  
Art History Seminars-Image and Understanding: Explorations into Visual Experience

1995-2000

**Adjunct Professor**, School of Art and Design, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Video Art – Survey, Developing Visual Literacy and Creative Thinking Skills, Museum Studies, New Media – Artists on the Edge

1990-1995

**Adjunct Professor**, School of the Arts, Art History, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia  
Museum Studies, Arts Administration, Issues in Contemporary Art

## **FUNDRAISING**

2020-2001

City of Wichita Cultural Funding Grant  
Humanities Kansas, National Endowment for the Arts  
Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission  
INPLACE \$100k NEA Our Town Grant with Center for Urban Studies  
Ohio Arts Council Sustainability and Project Grants (16 years of funding)  
Pollock, Swanston, Watson & Wean Foundations  
NEA Exhibition Project Grants  
Lannan Foundation  
Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Inc.  
IMS Conservation Project Support  
IMS General Operating Support  
Illinois Arts Council Grant  
French-American Endowment for Contemporary Art Étant Donnes  
NEH Exhibition Grant  
French Cultural Services, Chicago  
Goethe Foundation, Chicago  
Cultural Services of Holland, New York  
Japan Foundation Grant  
Research Board Grant  
Miller Visiting Scholar Award

## **SYMPOSIA / PANELS / LECTURES / CONFERENCES**

2018-2001

Mattering is Key to Innovation in the University Art Museum – A Model for Developing Civic Engagement  
TEDx talk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAzd8fn8ABc>  
Arts Means Business Panel Discussion, Panelist  
Business Journal State of the Arts Panel Discussion, Panelist  
Havana Cuba, sponsored by the International Studies Program, Visiting Curator  
Public discussion entitled “Working Locally/Thinking Globally,” at the Cleveland Institute of Art, Panelist

1999-1998

ARTSCI 99 Nurturing Collaboration, Conference, New York City, Art & Science at the Millennium: Why Now? Panelist  
Reinventing the Museum, Forum for Contemporary Art, St. Louis, Lecture  
American Association of Museums Conference, Los Angeles, Reinventing the University Art Museum, Chair  
College Art Association Conference, Cleveland, Laboratory, School, PR Tool: Curatorial Concerns in the University Art Museum, Chair

1995

Virginia Association of Museums Conference, Collections Management Affinity Breakfast,  
RUA-User? Software Solutions for Collections Management, Chair  
Virginia Association of Museums Workshop Series, Fund-Raising Inside & Out  
The Staff (Curatorial) Perspective, Guest Speaker

1994

Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, Getting the Work Done, Volunteers: A Vital Resource,  
Guest Speaker

## **EDUCATION**

M.A. Art History: 20th Century Art & Criticism, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, 1991  
Thesis: Dondero's Anti-Modern Art Theory & Criticism 1949-1956  
B.A. Art History, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, 1985  
French, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, 1985  
Certificate in Women's Studies, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, 1985  
Certificat des études, La Sorbonne, Paris, France, 1982

## **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

Kansas Leadership Edge Fellow  
Honolulu's East-West Center Summer Institute, Fellow  
Phi Kappa Phi, Member and honoree for community service  
Center for Working Class Studies, Affiliate  
Association of Academic Museums and Galleries  
American Alliance of Museums, Member  
College Art Association, Member  
ASCI, Art & Science Collaborations, Inc., Member