



Todd Caissie (Osage), Executive Director, Montclair Art Museum

Montclair Art Museum Appoints Todd Caissie as Executive Director

MONTCLAIR, N.J. — The Montclair Art Museum (MAM) has announced the appointment of Todd Caissie (Osage) as its Executive Director. Dr. Caissie, who was named Deputy Director on July 1, 2025, and Interim Director on Jan. 1, 2026, officially assumes the leadership role this month and follows the retirement of Ira Wagner, who led the Museum as Executive Director since 2020.

Former Executive Director Ira Wagner began his tenure at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and successfully guided the Museum through one of the most challenging periods in its history. Beyond ensuring institutional stability, he strengthened exhibitions, expanded educational access, advanced major collection installations, and deepened community ties. He noted, “I am enthusiastic about Todd’s vision for the future of MAM and look forward to seeing the Museum build on its many strengths as it continues to grow as a thriving and vital cultural institution under his leadership.”

The appointment of Caissie marks a pivotal moment of transformation as the Museum launches an institution-wide effort to present world-class exhibitions that build community connection, raise its profile, and cement its status as a cultural landmark. Bringing over a decade of leadership across museum operations, arts education, and cultural heritage, Caissie will oversee the Museum’s artistic vision, operations, and finances. Key priorities include driving fundraising, membership, and attendance, amplifying the programming at Montclair Art Museum School of Art, and fostering meaningful collaborations with local artists and community partners.

Caissie steps into the role alongside recently appointed Chief Curator Kate Kraczon. Together with the Board and staff, they will drive dynamic programming that bridges the Museum's renowned holdings—including its historic American and Native American art collections—with contemporary creative practices, placing a strong emphasis on emerging and underrepresented artists while weaving the Museum more deeply into the fabric of the community.

“It is an honor to lead the Montclair Art Museum into its next era,” said Caissie. “Museums are vital civic spaces meant to inspire and bring people together, but there is a major shift happening in how audiences engage with culture. People aren't just looking for information—they are seeking meaning, inspiration, and community. MAM is uniquely positioned to answer that call with our world-class collections, dynamic art school, and innovative programming.”

“Traditionally, museums are object-driven and function like black holes—accumulating art while gatekeeping narratives. I envision MAM functioning like an exploding sun,” Caissie added. “We are blasting our art, resources, and educational programs beyond our neoclassical walls and directly into local communities. My plan is to meet people where they live and create a people-centered museum.”

Caissie brings extensive experience in arts administration, non-profit management, and strategic development to the role. A member of the Osage Nation, he leads with a deep dedication to inclusive storytelling and community-centered leadership. During his tenure as Deputy and Interim Director, he strengthened internal operations, expanded institutional partnerships, and deepened local civic engagement across Essex County and New Jersey. His accomplishments include establishing a unique Young Collector's Circle, the development of an upcoming Museum center that addresses art and wellness, and forging new non-profit partnerships that yield highly acclaimed, sold-out events.

“Todd's appointment is the natural next step for the Montclair Art Museum,” said Christine James, President of the Montclair Art Museum's Board of Trustees. “We recognize that the way people experience and interact with cultural institutions has dramatically changed, and we are ready to meet people where they are and pull them in.”

About Todd Caissie, Ph.D.

Before joining the Montclair Art Museum as Deputy Director in 2025, Caissie served as Director of the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum in Canada, a board member of the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers, and was selected as a grant panelist for the National Endowment for the Arts' Museums Program. An enrolled member of the Osage Nation, his academic background includes an MA and PhD from Rutgers University, where he held two Andrew Mellon Curatorial Summer Internships and taught in the Art History Department.

He also earned BAs from Stony Brook University and Hunter College. Caissie has curated exhibitions in the US and Canada and previously collaborated with MAM as an advisor on the *Interwoven Power: Native Knowledge/Native Art* reinstallation.

Before entering the cultural sector, Caissie spent over a decade as an Executive Search Consultant in Tokyo and New York, which included the position of Country Head for the Japan office of a Fortune 100 company, and managing an extensive team.

About the Montclair Art Museum

The Montclair Art Museum (MAM) champions American and Native American art, past and present. Through bold exhibitions, hands-on programs, and deep community ties, MAM sparks creativity, connection, and conversation. Guided by its core values of respect, collaboration, education, and inclusion, the Museum is a vibrant hub where art meets ideas and everyone is invited.

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