

MoCADA



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**651 ARTS AND MoCADA  
(THE MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN DIASPORAN ARTS)  
JOIN FORCES AND ANNOUNCE DEPELSHA MCGRUDER AS NEW CEO**

**March 15, 2018 - Brooklyn, NY - 651 ARTS and MoCADA** (the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts) today announce that the two organizations are joining forces to create a new contemporary arts institution. As part of the evolving Brooklyn cultural district, this arts institution is committed to bringing first voice perspectives to the curation, support, presentation, production and resourcing of contemporary African Diasporan art, cultural expression, and social impact themes and will occupy 20,000 square feet at 300 Ashland Place.

“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.’ This African proverb captures the spirit of this alliance,” stated Kevin Johnson, current Board Member and former Board Chair (2007-2016) of MoCADA. “We are excited about the collective impact the joined organizations will bring to the local community and the world at large,” continued Andrea E. Smith, Board Chair of 651 ARTS. “By coming together, we will continue the legacy and draw upon the strength of these two landmark Brooklyn institutions while also embodying future, forward possibilities with new and shared resources.”

Depelsha McGruder has been named CEO of the arts institution. McGruder comes with more than 20 years executive experience. She is the Founder of Moms of Black Boys United, Inc. and MOBB United for Social Change, Inc. McGruder previously served as Senior Vice President of Programming for BET Networks and as Senior Vice President of Business Operations for CENTRIC, a cable television network for which she led the launch and rebranding as a network designed for Black women.

“Throughout my career, I have held a deep appreciation for the role and importance of art and artists in our society. I have been motivated by opportunities to create sustainable platforms for people of color to have our voices heard and our experiences documented,” said McGruder. “I look forward to working with the board to build a space that elevates and celebrates African Diasporan culture and its impact and influence on our community in Brooklyn and beyond.”

McGruder earned her BA from Howard University and an MBA from Harvard Business School. In addition to BET Networks, she has held executive positions at MTV Networks and Accenture and began her career as a local TV journalist. McGruder also serves on the boards of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and The Billie Holiday Theater.

“We are delighted to have Depelsha at the helm. She has a superb record of leadership and service. Her vast experience in business development and strategy will be an invaluable asset in fulfilling the vision and mission of this organization,” said Randall L. Sawyer, Board Chair of MoCADA. “We also want to genuinely thank outgoing Executive Directors James Bartlett (MoCADA) and Shay Wafer (651 ARTS) for their outstanding contributions while at the helm of these organizations, their vision to collaborate and create a new future for the organizations and for their work during this transition.”

### **About 651 ARTS**

**651 ARTS**, founded in Brooklyn in 1988, is committed to developing, producing and presenting performance and cultural programming from the African Diaspora, with a primary focus on contemporary performing arts. 651 ARTS serves the cultural life of New York City, with a particular focus on Brooklyn, one of America's most culturally diverse communities.

### **About MoCada**

**The Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)**, founded in Brooklyn in 1999, has a mission to use the visual arts as a point of departure for exploring new artistic production across a variety of disciplines. Through exhibitions and programming, MoCADA incites dialogue on pressing social and political issues facing the African Diaspora, and fosters a dynamic space for the creation and continuous evolution of culture.

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Visit us @ [www.mocada.org](http://www.mocada.org) + [www.651arts.org](http://www.651arts.org)

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