

## KCAI Appoints Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar to be the next Nerman Family President

Following a unanimous vote by the Kansas City Art Institute (KCAI) Board of Trustees, Ruki Neuhold-Ravikumar, Acting Director of the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Museum of Design, was named the 25th President of Kansas City Art Institute and will begin her term July 1, 2022.

A proven administrator, educator, and thought leader, Ruki was selected following a seven-month national search by the firm Isaacson Miller. KCAI's Presidential Search Committee was led by Trustees and Co-Chairs Herb Kohn and Laura Flanigan, who organized a diverse committee of 18 trustees, faculty, staff and alumni committed to finding the best leader for the college. Ruki will succeed Nerman Family President Tony Jones, who will retire on June 30, 2022.

Ruki currently manages more than 100 full-time employees and a collection of 215,000 design objects spanning 31 centuries. She has previously served as the Director of Education for Cooper Hewitt, Associate Provost of Education and Access and the Acting Under Secretary for Education at the Smithsonian Institution. She led the Smithsonian's response to the nation's distance learning needs with a pan-institutional team. Prior to that, she worked extensively in higher education at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma where she advanced from professor in graphic design to director of graduate programs and associate dean of the College of Arts & Design. Ruki is also an award-winning graphic designer.

"Ruki brings a tremendous amount of experience to the college," said Sue Nerman, chair of the board of trustees. "She embodies a creative resiliency and dynamic spirit that is the essence of KCAI. Her innovative approach to learning and teaching, strong leadership skills, and commitment to community partnerships is exactly what KCAI needs to lead us into the next chapter."

Following her appointment, Ruki said, "I am so elated to be a part of the KCAI community. The commitment of KCAI's faculty, staff and board of trustees to nourish the bold ambitions of students to tackle the complex challenges of the world is inspiring. I am honored to take on the role that bears the Nerman family name and lead KCAI into its next phase of evolution."

Originally from Chennai, India, she received her MFA in graphic design from Iowa State University and BFA in the history of fine art and drawing and painting from the Stella Maris College in India. Ruki also has an executive education certificate in business from Yale University and a certificate in museum studies from Northwestern University. She is married to Patti Neuhold-Ravikumar, president of the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Ruki has held multiple leadership roles at American Institute of Graphic Arts and was named an AIGA Fellow in 2015 by the Oklahoma Chapter. She has won numerous awards and recognitions including the prestigious 2021 Design Achievement Award from Iowa State College of Design.

Enthusiasm for this appointment was felt throughout the Board, and described by chair Sue Nerman, who stated, "On behalf of the KCAI community, I want to take this opportunity to both welcome Ruki to Kansas City, and thank retiring President Jones. For seven years, Tony has worked tirelessly as a champion for this college and led a complete transformation of the campus. Thanks to his efforts, the school is poised for great things ahead."

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