Ellen Salpeter Directs the New ICA Miami
By Millicent Young

In early 2017, Ellen Salpeter was named Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Miami, following the exit of Alexander C. Lamont, whose leadership transformed the museum into one of the most dynamic and internationally recognized cultural institutions in the country. Salpeter, who holds degrees from Barnard College, New York University, and the University of Southern California, is a seasoned leader in the arts field with over 20 years of experience advancing the missions of a wide range of nonprofit arts organizations, working to strengthen community outreach and engagement, increase cultural partnerships, and build diverse audiences and financial bases of support.

Prior to the Jewish Museum, Salpeter was the Director of Heart Initiatives. Her achievements at the art museum were the management of its strategic planning process and its rebranding, including new graphic identity, award-winning website and innovative digital outreach and engagement, increase cultural partnerships, and build diverse audiences and financial bases of support. At ICA Miami, Salpeter oversees the museum’s calendar of exhibitions and forthcoming move to its new, permanent home in the Miami Design District. She is also spearheading its sustainability of the new institution.

In 2015, she helped to forge a new institutional vision, and expand the museum’s mission, adding thousands of square feet of additional gallery space, creating a dedicated education space; The Builders Association, a New York-based organization that maintains and preserves Donald Judd’s permanently installed living and working spaces, libraries, and archives in New York; and The Drawing Center, and Artist’s Space, among others, providing strategic management and development services as well as short- and long-term strategic planning.

Salpeter currently serves on the boards of the Judd Foundation, BRAT, and Artist’s Space, among others, providing strategic management and development services as well as short- and long-term strategic planning.

Previously, Salpeter was Director of Thread Waxing Space from 1994 through 2000, a nonprofit arts and education space in New York that presents works of art not ordinarily accessible to youth audiences in the nation. For over a decade, Salpeter led Heart Initiatives Youth Program Award, the highest honor for out-of-school youth programs in the nation. She was also the founder of The Brooklyn Center of Contemporary Music, a nonprofit public traveling exhibition and education programs. She also served as Co-Founder and Vice President of BRAT, a nonprofit public youth arts programs in the nation.

She also was a member of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs’ Advisory Board of STREB Laboratory for Action Mechanics (SLAM), a community space and performance venue based on stories drawn from contemporary life; and she co-chaired the Advisory Board of the STREB Center for Action Mechanics, a community space and performance venue. Salpeter has served on the boards of the Judd Foundation, The Drawing Center, and Prospect Park Zoo—which she helped to found in 2001. For over a decade, Salpeter led Heart Initiatives, an innovative and award-winning nonprofit devoted to promoting social change through the arts.

Throughout her career, Salpeter has been recognized with a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award, the highest honor for OOS youth programs in the nation; the Governor’s Award for Arts and Cultural Affairs by the State of New York, the highest honor for arts leadership within the state. She was also named one of the Top 50 Influencers in the Cultural Field by USA Today; one of the 100 Most Influential Women in the Arts by New York Magazine; and one of the Top 10 Culture Change Makers by ARTnews. She also serves on the boards of the Judd Foundation, The Drawing Center, and Artist’s Space, among others, providing strategic management and development services as well as short- and long-term strategic planning.