SAM SEATTLE ASIAN ART MUSEUM
SEATTLE ART MUSEUM
OLYMPIC SCULPTURE PARK

Seattle Art Museum
Biography of Director Mimi Gardner Gates

Mimi Gardner Gates joined the Seattle Art Museum as director in May 1994. A scholar of Asian Art with a strong interest in Chinese painting, ceramics and the history of ornament, she had formerly served as director of the Yale University Art Gallery.

Gates received her B.A. in Asian history from Stanford University; an Honors diploma in Chinese Language and Culture from the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes, Paris; an M.A. in Oriental and Chinese studies from the University of Iowa; and a PhD. in Art History from Yale University.

She began her tenure at Yale University Art Gallery in 1975, serving as Curator of Asian art through 1987 and as director from 1987 to 1994. Under Gates' direction, Yale's art gallery created a conservation studio, added a department of European and Contemporary art, expanded its collections and embarked on an ambitious program of exhibitions, many of which were organized by faculty and students. While at Yale, Gates also taught courses in Chinese art history and museum studies.

At Yale, Gates helped organize numerous Chinese Art exhibitions, and contributed to several publications including *Bones of Jade, Soul of Ice: The Flowering Plum in Chinese Art* (1985) and *The Jade Studio.* For the China Institute, New York, she organized *The Communion of Scholars: Chinese Art at Yale* (1981).

At the Seattle Art Museum Gates co-curated the exhibition and co-authored the accompanying publication *Porcelain Stories, From China to Europe* (2000), and worked with then-curator Jay Xu to organize the groundbreaking exhibition *Ancient Sichuan: Treasures from a Lost Civilization* (2001).

During her tenure at SAM, Gates has led the museum forward, organizing major exhibitions, publishing scholarly publications and embarking on significant capital projects, including the establishment of a conservation studio, renovations to the Seattle Asian Art Museum in Volunteer Park, creation of the Olympic Sculpture Park and an expansion of the downtown museum that will eventually triple its size.

Gates served as president and trustee of the Association of Art Museum Directors, chaired the Federal Indemnity panel (1999–2002) at The National Endowment for the Arts, and sits on the Advisory Board of the Getty Leadership Institute and the Governing Board of the Yale University Art Gallery. In addition, she serves as a Board member for the Northwest African American Museum, the Greater Seattle YWCA, Downtown Seattle Association and Copper Canyon Press. Gates is an affiliate faculty member at the University of Washington.