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## CHRISTINA DE LEÓN JOINS COOPER HEWITT AS ASSOCIATE CURATOR OF U.S. LATINO DESIGN

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Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum is pleased to announce the appointment of Christina De León as associate curator of U.S. Latino design, effective Feb. 6, 2017. In this newly created position, supported by the Latino Initiatives Pool, administered by the Smithsonian Latino Center, De León is responsible for researching modern and contemporary U.S. Latino design for the collection, as well as developing exhibitions, public programs and digital content to raise awareness of Latino design.

“Christina is an exciting, new curatorial voice within Cooper Hewitt and the entire Smithsonian. An accomplished scholar, she will help ensure that we continue to enrich and expand the narrative of U.S. Latino design, as well as broaden our ability to engage with an enthusiastic and diverse audience,” said director Caroline Baumann. “I’m very grateful to the Latino Initiatives Pool for supporting this essential position, which amplifies the rich contributions and widespread influences of Latin America on design’s historical continuum.”

“The Smithsonian Latino Center ensures that the contributions of the Latino community in the arts, history, national culture and scientific achievement are explored, presented, celebrated and preserved throughout the Smithsonian,” said Eduardo Díaz, director, Smithsonian Latino Center. “Christina’s important work will expand visibility for U.S. Latino designers and foster increased engagement on Latino-themed design publications, exhibitions and public programs.”

Prior to joining Cooper Hewitt, De León served as associate curator at the Americas Society in New York, where she conducted curatorial research and assisted in organizing a number of 19th-century, modern and contemporary art and design exhibitions and publications, including “Xul Solar and Jorge Luis Borges: The Art of Friendship,” “Unity of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt and the Americas” and “Moderno: Design for Living in Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, 1940-1978.” Most recently, she co-curated the 2016 exhibition, “Told and Untold: The Photo Stories of Kati Horna in the Illustrated Press.” She also helped establish La Experiencia Medieval, the first bilingual gallery program at The Met Cloisters.

De León holds a master’s degree in museum studies from New York University and a bachelor’s degree from Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Bard Graduate Center where her research interests lie in the material culture and decorative arts of the Americas, specifically the impact of international modernist principles on the development of regional visual vocabularies during the post-war era.

Upon her appointment, De León commented, “I am delighted to join Cooper Hewitt as the first associate curator of U.S. Latino design. I’ve long admired the museum’s collection and programming, especially the recent Diseño series that heralds the impact of Latinos on American design. I look forward to expanding this dialogue through my research, programming and collaborations with the broader Smithsonian community.”

## **ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM**

Founded in 1897, Cooper Hewitt is the only museum in the United States devoted exclusively to historic and contemporary design. Housed in the renovated and restored Carnegie Mansion, Cooper Hewitt showcases one of the most diverse and comprehensive collections of design works in existence. The museum's restoration, modernization and expansion has won numerous awards and honors, including a Lucy G. Moses Preservation Award from the New York Landmarks Conservancy, a Gold Pencil Award for Best in Responsive Environments and LEED Silver certification. Cooper Hewitt offers a full range of interactive capabilities and immersive creative experiences, including the Cooper Hewitt Pen that allows visitors to "collect" and "save" objects from around the galleries, the opportunity to explore the collection digitally on ultra-high-definition touch-screen tables, and draw and project their own wallpaper designs in the Immersion Room.

For further information, call (212) 849-8400, visit Cooper Hewitt's website at [www.cooperhewitt.org](http://www.cooperhewitt.org) and follow the museum on [www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt](https://www.twitter.com/cooperhewitt), [www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt](https://www.facebook.com/cooperhewitt) and [www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt](https://www.instagram.com/cooperhewitt).

## **ABOUT THE SMITHSONIAN LATINO CENTER**

The Smithsonian Latino Center ensures that Latino contributions to arts, sciences and humanities are highlighted and advanced through the development of exhibitions, publications, public programs, research, museum collections, digitally-based content and educational opportunities at the Smithsonian and its affiliated organizations across the U.S. For more information, visit [www.latino.si.edu](http://www.latino.si.edu).

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