

American Visionary Art Museum (AVAM) Director

The American Visionary Art Museum seeks a dynamic creative leader to succeed the Founder at an unconventional and interactive art museum and education center for self-taught outsider art and oversee outstanding exhibitions, programs and education that combine art, science, philosophy and humor underscored by a focus on creative acts of social justice and betterment.

THE AMERICAN VISIONARY ART MUSEUM (AVAM) is a one-of-a-kind interactive museum that has been Congressionally-designated as "America's official national museum, education center, and repository for self-taught and intuitive artistry."

Founded in Baltimore in 1989 and opened in 1995 by Rebecca Hoffberger with her late partner/former husband, art collector and philanthropist, LeRoy E. Hoffberger, the American Visionary Art Museum has secured a national and international reputation for award-winning creativity and architecture.

The visionary Founder, Director, and Primary Curator, Rebecca Alban Hoffberger has led AVAM for the past 26 years with passion, artistry, and innovation and has been called "a creative force for good." AVAM's impact doesn't come solely from the art it features. Under Hoffberger's direction, every exhibition has had a strong focus on wellbeing, explored in collaboration with global experts, be they Nobel laureate or indigenous leader. The 26 year-long thematic exhibitions have focused on gaining a deeper communal understanding of all those great influential powers that most impact the quality of human life, such as: character, religion, money, food, government, sex, water, parenting, genocide, hope, climate change, sleep, compassion, and what constitutes authentic joy & healing. The emphasis grows out of a cornerstone statement from Hoffberger that has become the museum's credo: "Creative acts of social justice constitute life's highest performance art," and the bedrock belief that intuitive intelligence crowns and enables all evolutionary human invention.

The American Visionary Art Museum nurtures the freedom to dream, supports the creative process, and engages audiences with provocative and transformational exhibits. According to the Board Chair Christopher Goelet, "For 26 years AVAM has given intuitive, outside artists and creators a prominent stage to share their own visions and stories in ways that change perspectives, as well as hearts and minds." AVAM has marketed Baltimore to the world – it has an internationally respected brand, a set of well-established and well-attended exhibitions and programs, a strong alumni base of artists, and a dedicated board and staff.

Hoffberger has curated memorable exhibits over the years. European Union Ambassador Stavros Lambrinidis, an ardent AVAM supporter, said he was particularly impressed by the current exhibit, "**The Secret Life of Earth**" which warns about the fragility of life on the planet. "The exhibit did not just highlight in the most effective way the scale of the problem, it also opened our eyes to the creativity and innovative spirit we possess as humans to overcome

American Visionary Art Museum Director

it. We left uplifted and empowered.” Baltimore writer, filmmaker and visual artist John Waters is one of the museum’s biggest fans, and says of Hoffberger, “She has given the world the perfect museum to celebrate Baltimore’s reputation as a welcoming home to eccentric artistic outsiders. The statue of Divine watches over the international visiting guests with benevolence and the same understanding Rebecca has for all artists who don’t fit in. Rebecca is passionate, obsessive in her drive, and nobody else could have made this place become such a major tourist destination.” Rebecca Hoffberger will curate her final exhibit entitled **"Healing & The Art of Compassion (And the Lack Thereof!)"** which will be on view October 9, 2021 - September 4, 2022. This 26th mega-exhibition will center on the twin forces for creating greater good in society: healing and compassion.

The architecturally award-winning American Visionary Art Museum is located on a 1.1 acre wonderland campus in Baltimore’s Inner Harbor. Three renovated, historic, industrial buildings house wonders created by farmers, housewives, mechanics, retired folk, the disabled, the homeless, as well as the occasional neurosurgeon—all inspired by the fire within. From carved roots to embroidered rags, tattoos to toothpicks, the visionary transforms dreams, loss, hopes, and ideals into powerful works of art.

AVAM’s extensive educational offerings provide artistic, experiential-based programs and curriculum for students, families, and members of the public, both on its campus and throughout the Baltimore metropolitan region. AVAM’s Founding Seven Education Goals and Mission Statement are included in the American Alliance of Museums’ book of Best Museum Practices, and have been modeled nationally by other major museums and organizations dedicated to enabling the potential of young people.

AVAM’S SEVEN EDUCATION GOALS

1. Expand the definition of a worthwhile life.
2. Engender respect for and delight in the gifts of others.
3. Increase awareness of the wide variety of choices available in life for all –particularly students.
4. Encourage each individual to build upon his or her special knowledge and inner strengths
5. Promote the use of innate intelligence, intuition, self-exploration, and creative self-reliance.
6. Confirm the great hunger for finding out just what each of us can do best, in our own voice, at any age.
7. Empower the individual to choose to do that something really, really well.

Consistently, AVAM has been hailed by leading news, travel and trade publications as the most desirable destination in Baltimore, throughout Maryland and far beyond. Both in 2018 and 2019, USA Today cited AVAM as “Best Museum in Maryland,” and the New York Times confirmed that the museum “deserves all of the praise that has been heaped upon it since it opened,” while CNN declared that AVAM is “one of the most fantastic museums anywhere in America.” Just this

American Visionary Art Museum Director

month, AVAM won in three categories of the Best of the *Baltimore Sun's Readers' Choice Awards*: Activities & Arts; Best Museum; and Best Tourist Attraction. And days ago, John Oliver, star of the HBO series *Last Week Tonight with John Oliver* and an avid art collector, selected AVAM as one of the winners of his "Last Week Tonight's Masterpiece Gallery" and "Last Week Tonight's Gallery of Cultural Enrichment" from over 1000 competitors.

The American Visionary Art Museum has achieved this acclaim despite having the most modest operating budget of all of Maryland's 13 major cultural institutions. With an annual budget of \$3 million, AVAM draws 100,000 - 125,000 visitors per (non-Covid) year. It has 31 full and part-time employees, a 13 member Board of Directors, and 150 volunteers.

BASIC FUNCTION:

The Director will bring to AVAM the artistic vision, kindness, dedication to social justice, entrepreneurial energy, creativity, drive, fundraising and arts marketing-savvy and joy in engaging public support of artmaking that was embodied by the Founder and that is a driving force in a city that values creativity.

Reporting to the Board, the Director will provide leadership, vision and management and ensure that AVAM continues to evolve its well-respected international artistic, educational and community programs and debt-free status. The Director will drive public and private support for its mission of fostering "creative acts of social justice" as "high performance art."

With this idea in mind, the Director position is explicitly open to diverse candidate profiles. Such may include: polymaths, entrepreneurs, artists, scientists, educators, curators, museum directors, think tank pioneers, social justice warriors, arts fundraisers, arts lovers, major arts collectors, and others of diverse backgrounds with a passion for AVAM's mission, a kindred track record of success, and an onsite knowledge of and affection for the American Visionary Art Museum.

The Director's overall responsibilities include:

- Advocate persuasively for the arts and social justice and connect to a wide ranging audience in a meaningful way.
- Plan, coordinate and direct AVAM operations which include carrying out the policies and programs as determined by AVAM's mission statement, educational goals, collections management and curatorial guidelines, and all other museum policies.
- Create or oversee the process of creating AVAM's annual and special exhibition vision and theme.
- Oversee annual, special and permanent exhibition design and installations.
- Oversee AVAM's permanent collection ensuring best practice for storage, collections management, conservation and preservation.
- Seek and cultivate community partners for AVAM exhibition and program partnership opportunities.
- Oversee the AVAM budget including planning, preparing, monitoring and administering.

American Visionary Art Museum Director

- Oversee AVAM's financial function including approval of journal entries, review of monthly activity and participate in AVAM's annual audit.
- Plan, direct and implement AVAM's fundraising efforts, from prospect identification and targeting to cultivation, solicitation and recognition, in collaboration with the Board of Directors and staff.
- Work with staff and other marketing and communications professionals to drive awareness of AVAM programs and artists among patrons, donors, influencers and the general public through events, public programs, and digital media.
- Help to build diversified contributed and earned revenue streams; focus on raising money to build the Museum's endowment.
- Cultivate relationships with major stakeholders for the purpose of fundraising, including major gifts, special projects, operations and development of the museum collection.
- Work with the Board and staff to develop AVAM's strategic vision and strategic plan to advance AVAM's mission and objectives, and to promote revenue, sustainability and growth.
- Assist in the search, selection, evaluation and orientation of new AVAM Board Members.
- Demonstrate effective staff development and organizational skills in areas such as hiring, coaching, collaboration, problem solving and goal setting. Empower internal staff to think, act and plan in a collaborative manner.
- Strengthen the organization's management practices in ways that advance art-making, while providing artists with support for their creative process.
- Joyfully engage supporters regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Build upon the strong accomplishments of AVAM's Founding Director while asserting the continued relevance and impact of AVAM to instigate important conversations that bear on issues of social justice and authentic artistic expression.

IDEAL QUALIFICATIONS

- Be an ardent proponent of this unique national museum's Founding Mission and Seven Education Goals.
- Be a big thinker who has done inventive things.
- Be a lifelong student of visionary thought – from ancient philosophy to cutting edge science and a passionate champion for social justice.
- Be a polymath with wide-ranging knowledge and learning.
- Understand Art, Art History, Social Justice, Museum Management, Fundraising Principles and Techniques, Donor & Board Relations, Public Relations, Exhibition Design and Installation, Artwork Conservation & Preservation, and Museum Publications.
- Be knowledgeable in outsider and visionary art.
- Be a wholehearted subscriber to the continuance of AVAM's signature thematic exhibitions.

American Visionary Art Museum Director

- Provide evidence of successful art exhibition installation and public programming.
- Show competence in managing museum operations and finances.
- Demonstrate ability to supervise, as well as work successfully with museum staff, Board, volunteers and diverse public constituencies.
- Be an engaging public speaker and gifted writer/storyteller and lobbyist.
- Demonstrate a strong record of success in fundraising and audience development.
- Be a strong oral and written communicator who will have a positive presence across all media, and in a variety of interpersonal settings, to effectively position the Museum in sometimes challenging times.
- Have a sophisticated understanding of digital technology and its application in the museum context.
- Respect and resonate with AVAM's existing culture of compassion and empathy. Be passionately curious, know how to have fun, and sincerely love people. Be in full possession of an innate sense of wonder and play.
- Be able to demonstrate a track record of harmonious creative leadership.
- Be a good listener and strategist; a partner able to flexibly collaborate with people and organizations with diverse expertise, experience, cultures and personalities.
- Be an individual who realizes that flexibility and creativity are necessary to respond to the uncertainty that the events of 2020/21 have imposed on the world and recognizes that the Museum will continue to be impacted by Covid-19 and that incorporating the tenets of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access is essential to sustaining the Museum.

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