

ART BRIDGES

Chief Executive Officer

Art Bridges makes collections of American Art more accessible to more people in more places. The Board seeks a Chief Entrepreneur/Innovator/Executive to:

- *shape programs, infrastructure and incentives that increase sharing of American art, resources, knowledge and interpretative perspectives; and*
- *challenge structural and other impediments to the public's access to American Art through advocacy, partnerships and funding programs.*

VISION

[Art Bridges](#) was created in 2017 by arts patron and philanthropist Alice Walton as an operating foundation that shares outstanding works of American Art with those that have limited access to our country's most meaningful works. Her inclusive vision centers on forging collaborations in all regions of the country with museums and arts institutions of all sizes, and with collectors, thought leaders, academics, educators, field influencers, artists and arts funders. Themes at the core of Art Bridges include a view of art as an enlightening and empowering force in our society; respect for local audiences and institutions; and a dedication to broadening public access to art for everyone without exception.

In its first year of operation, the organization has advanced its mission by supporting over 30 projects that have engaged nearly 160 partners in cooperative exhibition, education and public programming initiatives. These proof-of-concept projects have advanced the mission of Art Bridges while exploring various project investments to identify those with the greatest impact on forging a sharing ecosystem among collecting and exhibiting arts institutions.

With the hiring of a new CEO, Art Bridges will expand its infrastructure, workflows and value proposition within the American Art ecosystem to diversify beyond such strong reliance on grants that take the form of project investments. The new CEO will be an evangelist for sharing the great art of America, have an understanding of the practices and attitudes that underpin exhibitions and exchanges of works, be a deal-maker that partners embrace, and will not hesitate to challenge old rules in ways that inspire greater collaboration and new thinking about sharing works of art.

Says [Alice Walton](#), "Outstanding artworks are in museum vaults and private collections; let's make that art available to everyone. We want to support partner institutions in expanding and deepening their connection with audiences. This is about engaging communities through providing access and learning opportunities, as well as allowing for experimentation in exhibition development."

BASIC FUNCTION

Art Bridges was shaped to have grantmaking and operating components. The CEO's success will be evaluated by the Board based on her/his ability to invent and productively manage the non-grantmaking operations of the foundation to achieve Art Bridges objectives as well as the Foundations ability to serve its partners. All participating partners must feel invested and supported by the Foundation's efforts.

Upon its founding, Art Bridges began investing in projects that enable works to travel and be exhibited in regions far removed from major metropolitan art collecting centers. This continues and is being managed by a small team that will come under administrative leadership of the CEO. The current team has significant experience in managing this activity, and grantmaking workflows and standards are already well established.

The new CEO's central challenge is to build out the non-grantmaking operating components of this operating foundation into a set of compelling services that are in demand across the sector. These components are not yet defined, although some elements are in place and new components are being developed in real-time.

The CEO is specifically charged with:

- Creating a strategic vision for Art Bridges as an operating foundation, with an accompanying strategic plan to accomplish short and long-term goals;
- Establishing and overseeing institutional partnerships by acting as the key connector to museum directors, collectors, donors, foundations and partners across America;
- Overseeing and managing financial records and budget, including payment processing, R&D costs, administrative expenses, and annual support;
- Establishing and maintaining strong identity, brand presence, and media (digital and analog); oversee all media relations;
- Serving as primary liaison with the Art Bridges Board, Terra Foundation and contracted partner, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art
- Establishing and maintaining a strenuous evaluation and reporting system for partners and for Art Bridges.

Working with Art Bridges, [Crystal Bridges](#) and partner team members, the CEO will define and deliver an irresistibly valuable set of Art Bridges services and support within the ecosystem that collects and exhibits American Art. Museums, curators, scholars, funders, educators and academics should all highly prioritize their association with Art Bridges based on its non-grantmaking value proposition.

The CEO's success will be evaluated accordingly.

OPERATIONS

Art Bridges service modules and supporting infrastructure will be shaped to address specific challenges and impediments to sharing and exhibiting great works of American Art in places removed from collecting centers. Current analysis indicates that these challenges cluster along at least six areas of endeavor, including:

- **Access to Collections** – The vast majority of America's visual art is rarely experienced by the visiting public. Works are concentrated in major urban centers, and most works are warehoused in museum collection cold-storage. Stored works are an unutilized, indeed hidden, part of our cultural heritage. Art Bridges aims to develop agreements and partnerships that take works out of storage so that they are exhibited and experienced. Long-term, The Board is also interested in providing a framework for institutions to share works more actively and more broadly.
- **Access to Curatorial Excellence, Diverse Interpretive Perspectives and Education Content** – Smaller museums and galleries in remote locations across America do not necessarily have access to the curatorial, interpretative and education programming expertise or resources required to develop the strongest exhibitions and associated programs. Art Bridges will partner with institutions to develop approaches that: respect diverse audience cohorts in different regions of the country, incorporate local perspectives into exhibitions, and design exhibitions and programs with reference to museum best practices.
- **Exhibition Project-Accounting, Management and Controls** – Exhibition projects can be quite complicated to orchestrate, budget and administer. Art Bridges will develop a lean

project management infrastructure to coordinate the activities of all partners to an exhibition project.

- **Knowledge Capture, Reuse and Sharing** – For many works and collections there is a wealth of existing knowledge, and scholarship on individual works, artists or art movements can also be advanced in the course of orchestrating exhibitions across the country. Art Bridges aims to encourage knowledge sharing, capture and reuse, and will incorporate such programs into its project framework.
- **Transportation Logistics and Conservation** – Works must be prepared, moved, hung and exhibited with great care, and this inevitably impacts works in certain ways. Handling, transportation and conservation is a significant expense, as is the cost of insurance. Art Bridges will develop partnerships, programs and services that address these issues.
- **Professional Development within the Ecosystem for American Art** – With exhibition projects, and with greater sharing of works and knowledge, will come educational opportunities for students across America, and new career development opportunities for museum and arts professionals. Art Bridges will work with partners to maximally exploit such opportunities.

Supporting all Art Bridges activities and partners will also be:

- **Co-op marketing and communications** initiatives that draw positive public, donor and patron attention to Art Bridges partners, collections, works, exhibitions and projects;
- **Public and insider advocacy** and evangelism for Art Bridges as a hub for cooperation. This include regularly organizing events, workshops and roundtable discussions designed to convene leaders in the field with the aim of breaking down barriers to sharing and exhibiting works across the country.
- **Definition of redeployable projects** so that successful approaches can be repeated in different geographies and with different works.
- **Evaluation and metrics** to provide quantitative/qualitative assessment of each Art Bridges program against the overarching goal of the organization and the overall effect of the Foundation's efforts over time.
- **A lean administrative infrastructure** so that in the first 4 years 70% of annual spending on operating components of Art Bridges delivers concrete benefits in terms of making American Art more accessible to more people in more places. After the first 4 years, the goal is to increase this to over 85%. Long term, administrative infrastructure not directly allocated to advancing client projects should absorb no more than 15% of the annual Art Bridges budget.

Implementing an appropriately scaled web-based (and mobile) tech infrastructure will be a major part of the above vision. Such a platform will integrate collections administration, knowledge sharing, partner coordination and project accounting & workflow features.

Art Bridges does not have the luxury of planning for years prior to acting, and is currently driving a range of projects that take works out of the vaults of collections for exhibition. The CEO is expected to be a roll-up-your sleeves manager, able to immediately assess the state of play, develop long-term plans while delivering in-process projects, and transition to a rational management footing that integrates short and long-term projects into a rational strategy.

The CEO will grow and manage a highly motivated self-directed team, and collaborate with Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art as a primary partner in launching Art Bridges. S/he will ensure that the organization defines and achieves growth targets and evaluates its impact.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The CEO will be an innovator and entrepreneur with credibility in the world of American Art, who is firmly grounded in the real world of operations, systems and responsible financial management, with evidence of:

- Proven senior-level business and leadership experience, problem solving, and financial acumen; experience in rapidly evolving an operating entity; demonstrated ability to build productive partnerships; a track record deploying financial, administrative, infrastructure, and human resources to achieve specific outcomes.
- Demonstrated track record of developing and implementing growth strategies that include new technologies, architecting software as a service that supports workflows designed for particular outcomes (in this case in the form of exhibition projects).
- Experienced facilitator and catalyst for new ideas; a leader/influencer; a track record of attracting partners - financial and otherwise; ability to develop effective, productive relationships with others, including museums, academics, government entities, businesses, collectors, nonprofits, community leaders and advocates from a variety of communities.
- Intrepid yet tactful; determined yet respectful of others' concerns, with the flexibility and creativity needed to find alternative ways to reach objectives when barriers arise; a skilled negotiator who does not drive themselves or others into a corner.
- Decisive with the organizational sensitivity to gain the support and confidence of the Board; a team builder and collaborator, one who trusts and empowers the leadership team and understands the subtleties of recruiting, motivating, directing and retaining a diverse group of personalities with different work styles.
- An individual with outstanding human qualities and deep-seated values toward advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion; one who is straightforward, shares information easily, listens as well as offers advice, and respects the abilities of others.
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including excellent public speaking skills for formal and extemporaneous presentations.
- An individual possessing a sense of humor, and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.

For more information please contact:

Mark Oppenheim
(415) 762-2640 or marko@moppenheim.com

David Santore
(310) 943-9355 or davids@moppenheim.com

m/Oppenheim Associates
425 Market Street, Suite 1020
San Francisco, CA 94105