

The Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) Vice President for Exhibition and Gallery Planning

ROM seeks an exhibitions planning professional to shape and continually update the museum's rolling 3 to 5 year schedule of art, culture and nature exhibitions.

The Vice President will provide and continually update ROM's comprehensive understanding of global museum exhibitions and trends, maintain an international network of exhibition partners, and work in close collaboration with curatorial, engagement, education and financial executives.

Important will be: credibility with the field's curatorial and exhibition leaders; a strong understanding of the strategic and financial impacts of exhibition decisions; facilitating cross-departmental collaboration; and exhibition and gallery planning attuned to the interests, lifestyles and activities of Toronto residents, visitors and partner institutions.

BACKGROUND

The [Royal Ontario Museum](#) is Canada's largest museum and houses one of the world's great permanent [collections](#) of art, cultural objects and natural history specimens. The museum is committed to a trans-disciplinary, visitor-centered exhibition approach that presents artworks, objects and specimens in ways that reflect different viewpoints and perspectives. An incredibly diverse range of exhibitions and collections spanning the globe and cutting across time make the ROM an inspiring and indispensable public resource.

The ROM annually presents 7-9 major exhibitions of varying scale. These are presented in 4 large exhibition spaces ranging in size from 4,000 to 18,000 sq ft, and in smaller galleries. Half of the ROM's exhibitions are developed in-house, and half are sourced from museums internationally. Exhibitions are a fundamental component of the ROM's mission to help visitors understand the past, make sense of the present, and work together to build a shared future. Exhibitions are the ROM's most important expression of its mission, range in cost from CA\$300,000 to CA\$4 million, and are essential as drivers of attendance, community embrace and revenue.

The ROM welcomes approximately 1,350,000 visitors annually, has a membership of over 32,000 households and an annual operating budget of about CA\$65 million, about half of which is supported by revenue from admissions, programming and events/concessions. Over 550 full- and part-time staff and 1,200 volunteers and docents support the ROM. One of the ROM's overarching objectives is to be perceived as a must-visit institution by audiences across Canada and internationally, and by 2028 to be viewed as a leading model for 21st century museums to emulate in terms of audience engagement, [exhibitions](#), and [programming](#).

The **Vice President for Exhibition & Gallery Planning** holds a key leadership position in shaping the ROM's world-class exhibition and permanent gallery programs, by:

- developing the long-range exhibition and gallery improvements calendar and budgets;
- building and managing individual exhibition development schedules and budgets; and
- managing the ROM's international traveling exhibition program.

BASIC FUNCTION

Leading a 20-person department that includes exhibition planners, project managers, preparators and support staff, the Vice President functions as the orchestration nexus for all exhibition and gallery planning decisions. The position reports to the Deputy Director for Engagement and interacts regularly with the CEO and the leadership of the Curatorial,

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Exhibition & Gallery Development, Collections Management, Visitor Experience, Facilities, Finance and Communications departments to orchestrate delivery of the museum's overall exhibition program. Accurate expense, attendance and revenue forecasting and management will be integrated into all Exhibition and Gallery Planning activities.

DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT:

- As head of the exhibition planning department, directs and supervises a team of exhibition planners, project managers, preparators, and support staff; makes assignments to effectively manage human resources; both challenges and supports staff in implementing an exhibition program and gallery improvements that address the ROM's strategic goals.
- Works collaboratively with ROM leadership colleagues to leverage the exhibition program in support of fundraising/philanthropy, marketing and communications, programming, learning, and inclusion.
- Continually works with ROM colleagues to improve systems and processes and the overall workplace environment.
- Makes presentations to the ROM Board of Directors, particularly the Collections, Exhibitions, and Research Committee.

DEVELOPING THE EXHIBITIONS & GALLERY CALENDAR:

- Drives executive group discussions and decision-making around exhibition selection, scheduling, and budgets. The VP will take particular note of practices and audience dynamics at museums globally, and will focus on delivering an engaging series of exhibitions that drive attendance in a financially responsible way.
- Schedules and sets agenda for review meetings which include reviewing exhibition proposals of interest and proposed gallery changes; facilitates exhibition and project selection process; builds a strong and balanced 3-5 year schedule; and surfaces and settles unresolved openings/conflicts on the exhibition calendar.
- As part of the exhibition and gallery review process, assesses risk (in cost/benefit terms), reviews constraints and evaluates the feasibility of staging various exhibitions; develops preliminary expense, revenue and attendance budgets for each individual exhibition; ensures that all affected departments participate and contribute to the review process.
- Serves as the central coordinating point on the long range exhibition and gallery planning calendar; serves as the central coordinating point on the exhibition and gallery improvements programs.

EXHIBITION PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- In consultation with the Vice President for Exhibition & Gallery Development, builds a detailed exhibition project schedule for each approved exhibition and gallery project, and oversees project alignment with the master schedule.
- Builds preliminary budgets for all approved exhibitions and gallery projects in consultation with colleagues in other departments. Tracks individual and consolidated exhibition budgets through planning and production, including tours of traveling exhibitions.
- Manages all contract negotiations for borrowed exhibitions and develops and negotiates contracts for all ROM organized traveling exhibitions. Additional contract work may include

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letters of agreement with living or installation artists as needed or in situations where a standard loan agreement will not suffice.

- Develops/maintains rapport with counterparts at peer institutions worldwide, keeping an ear to the ground for exhibitions available for travel. Attends Bi-annual meetings of the North American Exhibition Organizers and the International Exhibition Organizers and other gatherings to foster dialogue and networking.
- Leads exhibition production team in establishing appropriate protocol for gallery floor and installation/deinstallation management on a case by case basis for all exhibitions.
- Manages RFP processes and all contracts, MOUs, agreements, contracts and such for external designers, other exhibition vendors, partners, venues, etc as required, with support from project managers

TRAVELLING EXHIBITION PROGRAM

- Develops/maintains rapport with counterparts at peer institutions worldwide. Develop a financially responsible plan to bring to the ROM those exhibitions that advance the museum's mission, provide a rich experience for visitors, share ROM scholarship, and drive museum attendance and membership.
- Help shape marketing collateral and communication describing the unique aspects of ROM travelling exhibitions, in ways that advance awareness of the ROM's scholarship and collections. Identifies museums and others who might be interested in ROM's travelling collections, and engages interested parties.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Minimum 10 year experience in museum exhibition planning, preferably in a large collecting institution active on the international stage with particular emphasis on art, culture and the experiences of diverse peoples; experience across boundaries of art, culture, nature and science would be advantageous; deep understanding of different practices associated with exhibiting objects and collections is important;
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many internal and external sources, and able to analyze and formulate disparate information into sound, well-organized plans
- Strong existing relationships with other major museums, and familiarity with the work of exhibition thought leaders, and others involved globally in shaping audience experiences of art, culture and nature; a person with a track-record of shaping an exhibition schedule that excites visitors and elevates attendance figures;
- Demonstrated expertise in complex project management and budgeting; experience managing museum professionals, staff and vendors; a strong embrace of diverse perspectives and interests; a strong, hands-on background in exhibition workflows, project management, procedures, controls, and in-process status reporting;
- Outstanding oral and written communication skills, including the means to address issues in non-confrontational ways; the credibility to serve as an effective ROM spokesperson; experience working with scholars, curators, artists, scientists, educators and others in an

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inventive, entrepreneurial spirit; emotionally mature with a sense of humor and an ability to maintain balance and perspective.

- A talent for planning, prioritizing, organizing and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level who welcomes accountability, is results-oriented and adept at seeing and conveying the big-picture

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