

Tacoma Art Museum Executive Director

The Board seeks a transformative executive director to build upon TAM's 80+ years of Pacific Northwest arts leadership to create engaging exhibitions and programming, grow revenue, and meaningfully engage Tacoma's diverse community in cultural dialogue and participation.

BACKGROUND

[Tacoma Art Museum](#), founded in 1935 and currently located on the homelands of the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, opened a beautiful building in downtown Tacoma in 2003 that features five expansive exhibition spaces displaying a permanent collection of 4,500 works of art.

Tacoma Art Museum transforms communities by sharing art that inspires broader perspectives and cultivates a compassionate future. Named by USA Today as one of the "Top 10 Great Places to See Art in Smaller Cities," Tacoma Art Museum (TAM) has developed a national reputation for presenting art in a thought-provoking yet accessible manner, with a strong commitment to Northwest art through its acquisition and exhibition programs. In addition to dynamic exhibitions, nationally touring shows, and historical retrospectives, TAM serves the diverse communities of the region through innovative programming and learning opportunities for all ages, including free community festivals and events.

TAM is proud to showcase a diversity of artwork and artists; this includes exhibitions curated exclusively by TAM curators, touring shows, and explorations of the Museum's permanent collection. TAM's permanent collection features Northwest Art, Western Art, Studio Glass, Northwest Studio Jewelry, European late nineteenth and early twentieth century painting, and Japanese woodblock prints. Past exhibitions have included French Impressionism, 19th- and early 20th-century artists of the American Southwest, Frida Kahlo, Zhi Lin: In Search of the Lost History of Chinese Migrants and the Transcontinental Railroad, and the Kinsey Collection of African American Art & History. Throughout the year, TAM hosts free educational programs and cultural festivals for over 6,000 youth, families, and 60,000 members of the general public.

Since opening the current location, TAM has received two generous collection gifts including the construction of two additional wings; the Museum's footprint has grown from 50,000 to 75,000 square feet. In 2014, TAM opened the Haub Family Collection of Western American Art, one of the nation's premier western American art collections, with approximately 300 works spanning 200 years.

The second significant expansion came in 2016 with the gift of the Rebecca and Jack Benaroya Collection of Northwestern and international studio art glass along with important paintings and sculptures by renowned regional artists.

TAM operates in a 66,000 square foot facility (with 19,500 square feet of gallery space, in addition to other education and public spaces) open to the public six days a week. The museum has an annual budget of \$4.7 million, a 30 member Board with 11 officers, 28 full-time and 17 part-time staff, about 1,774 active members, and annual attendance of about 30,833 with roughly half attending at no cost and others gaining admittance through tickets. The endowment amounts to about \$20 million, which is comprised of a diversified investment portfolio. The endowment will increase to \$5 million after the successful conclusion of the current campaign.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & ANTI-RACISM

TAM strives to be a welcoming place where all members of the staff and community experience belonging. This includes creating a culture that respects employees' views and experiences. Equity requires transparency and partnership. A willingness to foster creativity, excellence, and collaboration is what makes TAM better.

The Executive Director must not only commit to this task, but also perform the work needed to ensure it is fostering an environment that values and aligns with these efforts.

BASIC FUNCTION

Reporting to the Board, the Executive Director should be an inspiring public advocate for the arts with proven fundraising ability and a commitment to expanding TAM's outreach to diverse and underserved audiences through innovative and culturally relevant programming. The museum's leader is accountable for financially strengthening and growing TAM while leading all aspects of the museum's exhibitions, programs and operations. The Executive Director is the museum's chief strategist, advocate, fundraiser, and business manager. He/she/they must foster an environment that values differences, promotes transparency, creates psychological safety, and a sense of belonging for both museum staff and museum visitors.

TAM has a values-based and strategic commitment to aggressively advancing a culture of **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA)** at the museum. Success in pursuit of the above priorities must be informed by an overarching goal of connecting to the incredibly diverse peoples of the region. It is not enough to have increased attendance, greater funding or a stronger staff for TAM; it is equally important that attendance reflect a diverse audience, that financial support also comes from different peoples in the region, and that staff become more reflective of people of different cultures and perspectives. TAM's Board defines success not only by whether goals are reached, but also how they are reached.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will have the following major responsibilities:

- ***Continue building a reputation as a distinctive, exciting, thought-provoking museum*** to explore the art and material culture of the Northwest, North America and the world through exhibitions and other programming; effectively manage and expose TAM's collections through exhibitions and programming, encouraging curatorial research and innovative exploration of the cultural heritage of our world;
- ***Build and manage a high-functioning organization committed to financial stability***, and guide the short and long-term financial decisions related to the museum's business, including but not limited to exhibitions, collections, facilities, and the use of new technologies;
- ***Engage the Board of Trustees in strategic planning and key strategic decision-making*** on mission, vision, values of the organization, oversight, and funding the organization's annual, endowment, and capital priorities;

- ***Cultivate a strong professional team***, understanding staff contributions, strengths and concerns; through an open communication style, instill a sense of partnership and cohesion across the organization; reinforce a culture of excellence by adhering to the highest standards of museum practice; effectively use museum resources;
- ***Build and diversify contributed and earned income*** through active outreach and aggressive donor solicitation; financially and operationally strengthen TAM by stewarding a development function that engages all staff and Board members in various fundraising activities; build membership and attendance to ticketed events;
- ***Cultivate relationships with existing and new key*** stakeholders in the community in order to enhance and develop support for programs, including partnership opportunities with other museums and arts, educational and cultural institutions locally, nationally and internationally, and with local artists, community and business leaders;
- ***Serve as an articulate, passionate, and persuasive spokesperson for the museum***; represent TAM to all of its constituencies, funders, the public, government and private agencies, and the media;
- ***Provide thoughtful executive leadership*** that is inclusive, transparent, and empowering in a manner that supports and guides the organization’s mission and diversity, equity, inclusion, and access initiatives;
- ***Develop a systematic plan to strengthen and enrich TAM’s collection*** through careful acquisitions and developing relationships with collectors that may lead to these gifts.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

The Executive Director should have the following type of experience and qualifications:

- Museum management experience or associated institution known for innovative programming, curatorial excellence, and strong ties with the community;
- Background in collection, contemporary art, and/or educational and public programming;
- An individual with a passion for connecting the public with art, who will enjoy engaging Tacoma and surrounding community members in TAM’s work;
- Proven ability to develop and execute financial strategies; a detailed understanding of operations and financial management (including revenue and expense models), particularly in a museum or similar environment;
- A track record of engaging donors, community leaders, artists and curators, educators, and the museum’s board to strengthen the museum;
- A team builder – confident and competent, with strong skills in management and leadership; one who understands the subtleties of motivating and directing a diverse group of personalities with different work styles;
- Demonstrated commitment to supporting the Museum’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) framework;

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- Experience managing relationships and navigating various social and cultural contexts, including work with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, those of different religious traditions, various gender identities, and people with different abilities and perspectives will be an advantage;
- Strong analytical, problem-solving, and strategic thinking skills;
- Strong verbal and written communication skills with experience in public speaking/presentation;
- Ability to work and maintain the Museum brand values: innovative, passionate, civic-minded, gracious, approachable;
- A leader adept at planning, prioritizing, organizing and following through; a hard worker with a high energy level who welcomes accountability; a good listener and strategist who is comfortable receiving input from many sources; a team player and team builder; someone who enjoys working in close collaboration with staff, Board and community members; able to connect with a broad spectrum of community members and partners; a person with a sense of humor and perspective.

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