

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art Director of Exhibitions & Collections Management

The Director/CEO seeks a senior exhibitions & collections management professional to orchestrate compelling visual art experiences embraced by diverse communities, and steward the care and safekeeping of the museum's vast collections.

BACKGROUND

For more than 175 years, the Wadsworth has inspired audiences as Connecticut's flagship visual arts institution. The global arts community knows the museum not only for peerless collections, but also as a place of engaging programming. Dynamic and varied special exhibitions have captured the public's interest for nearly a century, enriching conversations surrounding art of the past and the art of today.

An active acquisitions program and generous patrons have enabled the Wadsworth's collections to grow from the original core group of 87 paintings to more than 50,000 high-quality works of art representing a broad range of cultures — from Mediterranean antiquity to the art of our times in a wide array of media. The museum is home to one of the finest collections of European Baroque through 19th Century art, American art and material culture, and remarkably rich 20th Century art holdings in areas such as Surrealism, Conceptual Art, sculpture, and post-WWII abstraction. The quality of the collection is known globally, making the Wadsworth a premier lender to museums worldwide. Museum staff are sought out by global arts leaders as consortium and thought partners. The Wadsworth's last nine exhibitions have garnered national press and critical acclaim.

The museum is financially strong, with a balanced annual operating budget of about \$10m prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The value of the Wadsworth's investment base exceeds \$102 million of which \$88 million is an endowment comprised of unrestricted and restricted operating funds as well as restricted funds for the purchase of art. More than half of the museum was renovated in a \$33M capital project between 2010 and 2015. Described as "stunning and astute" by the New York Times, the project renewed the museum's historic structures with an eye toward an improved visitor experience. It added 17 new galleries and additional special exhibition space now totaling more than 50,000 sq. ft. plus fundamental upgrades to multiple collection storage areas. Other repair and replacement programs are ongoing, and there is an emerging plan for incremental capital improvements to interior and exterior public spaces over the coming five years.

Hartford, CT is a place of immense artistic vitality and diversity, home to people of various cultural backgrounds, lifestyles, experiences and interests. In common with so many historic cities, Hartford is actively reshaping itself to thrive in the 21st Century. Positive energy centers around the Wadsworth, and a wide spectrum of cultural and entertainment offerings that include the historic homes of Mark Twain and Harriet Beecher Stowe, the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts and an emerging, eclectic dining scene. Located in the center of a stunningly beautiful region, US News recently ranked Hartford as one of the top 25 [Best Places to Live for Quality of Life in the United States](#).

ROLE

The Director of Exhibitions & Collections Management holds a key leadership position in shaping the Wadsworth's world-class exhibition and permanent gallery programs, including:

- developing long-range exhibition and gallery improvements;
- shaping exhibition calendars and budgets;

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- managing, conserving, and imaging the collection;
- publications management;
- managing loans, exhibition commitments and programs.

Reporting to the Director/CEO (who serves as chief curator), the Director of Exhibitions & Collections Management leads a 10-person department that includes conservation, registration and museum design functions.

PROJECT PLANNING

- Propels discussion and decision-making around exhibition selection, scheduling, and budgets, focusing on delivering an engaging series of exhibitions in support of constituent engagement.
- Promotes creative use of a dedicated planning studio for project design and management.
- Develops and supervises exhibition production, resolving complex aspects of installations with various departments when needed; obtains consensus on installation schedules to meet exhibition deadlines including management of exhibition-related loan requests.
- Works closely with the Director of Museum Services and Director of Curatorial Special Projects to realize major collection related initiatives such as reinstallation, rationalization of storage areas, and creation of a collections study room. Coordinates with museum services on exhibition build specifications and construction.
- As part of the exhibition and gallery review process develops preliminary expense, revenue and attendance budgets for each individual exhibition, ensuring that all affected departments participate and contribute to the review process.
- Manages RFP processes and all contracts, MOUs, agreements and such for external designers, other exhibition vendors, partners, venues, etc. as required, with support from project managers.
- Assesses risk (in cost/benefit terms), reviews constraints and evaluates the feasibility of staging various exhibitions; serves as the central coordinating point on the long-range exhibition and gallery planning calendar.

LEADS WORK GROUP

- Guides, supervises, and mentors staff, directing the activities of the departments under her/his supervision to fulfill the museum's strategic and artistic objectives. Makes assignments to effectively manage human resources.
- Assures adherence to the collections management policy and supervises the work of those who document, store, handle, pack/unpack, transport, and insure all works of art entering and leaving the museum, and tracks their movements within the museum at all times.
- Leads exhibition production team in establishing appropriate protocols for gallery changes and installation/de-installation management on a case-by-case basis for all exhibitions.
- Works with colleagues and Director's office to establish potential venues for Wadsworth-organized exhibitions. Organizes and distributes exhibition proposals to proposed venues. Serves as liaison to venues for in-bound and out-bound traveling exhibitions; provides venues with checklists, agreements, labels, press releases, credit lines, images (including approval of image usage) as needed. Obtains final reports after the close of each exhibition, and maintains traveling exhibition documentation.

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- Interfaces with the Curatorial Committee of the Board of Trustees on exhibitions and collections policy matters.

PUBLICATIONS & COLLABORATIONS

- For in-house publications, schedules meetings with designers, submits manuscripts to outside editors, designers, and indexers; assigns ISBN numbers; manages print production, organizing and tracking materials at all stages in the process. Manages list of all plates, figures, and photo credits and maintains all caption information.
- Drafts and negotiates all guest curator and guest artist exhibition-related contracts, guest author contracts, publication and distributor contracts, and contracts for outside venues. Works with appropriate departments, including Finance, to formulate language and establish fees as needed.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate should have the following experience and qualifications:

- Minimum 7 years of experience in museum exhibition planning, preferably in a collecting institution of similar scale.
- Deep understanding of different practices associated with exhibiting objects and collections is important; a person with a track-record shaping an exhibition schedule that excites visitors and elevates attendance figures.
- A good listener and strategist; comfortable receiving input from many internal and external sources, able to analyze and formulate disparate information into sound, well-organized plans.
- Strong existing relationships with other museums would be advantageous, and familiarity with the work of exhibition thought leaders, and others involved in shaping audience experiences of art, culture and nature; international experience is advantageous.
- 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; 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 spokesperson.

For more information, please contact:

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