

Assistant Curator: Special Projects

Background

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Sophie Calle, William Kentridge, Sarah Lucas and Walid Raad.

With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room and bookshop, the newly expanded Gallery is open all year round, so there is always something free to see.

The Gallery is a touchstone for contemporary art internationally, plays a central role in London's cultural landscape and is pivotal to the continued growth of the world's most vibrant contemporary art quarter.

Role

The Assistant Curator: Special Projects works across several Gallery departments and maintains effective relationships with various external stakeholders in order to deliver these projects strategically and efficiently. The post holder is responsible for the significant budgets attached to each project, and co-ordinates project teams comprising both internal colleagues and external project team members.

Exhibitions

The Assistant Curator: Special Projects works with both the Development and Exhibitions teams on the realisation of projects with artists, lenders, supporters and other stakeholders; delivering modern and contemporary exhibitions, commissions and special projects, including the organisation of transport and insurance; registrar duties; and the coordination of publications.

The Assistant Curator: Special Projects is responsible for the project management and delivery of one of the Gallery's most important long-term partnership projects: the Max Mara Art Prize for Women. The Max Mara Art Prize was established in 2005, and provides a platform for a female artist to work and study in Italy and to display their work in the Gallery. The role will involve acting as the central point of contact and coordinating

Job description

activity across the Exhibitions, Communications and Development departments to ensure the smooth delivery of this major project.

In addition to the Max Mara project, the Assistant Curator: Special Projects assists with the delivery of the Whitechapel Gallery's annual Fundraising Gala Art Icon; specific responsibilities include the auction and artwork elements involved, liaising with the honoured Art Icon artist, and delivering a commemorative publication.

Accountability

The Assistant Curator: Special Projects is line managed by a Curator, and a member of the Development Team where required.

Duties and Responsibilities:

General

- Provide support to the Exhibitions Department, from the research and development stage of a project through to its realisation
- Liaise with artists and their representatives, arts institutions and funders
- Liaise with all Whitechapel Gallery departments including Communications, Education, Development and Operations to secure a smooth flow of information
- Monitor and maintain budgets for specific exhibitions and exhibition catalogues meticulously and in timely fashion. This includes obtaining estimates, raising purchase orders, processing invoices, maintaining digital and physical budget files and liaising with the Finance Department and budget holders
- Manage trainees, interns and other freelance employees as well as supervise departmental work placements

Exhibition and project organisation and administration

- Research loans and liaise with the Curators to prepare loan documentation, administer loan requests and ensure loan conditions are fulfilled
- Compile condition and packing reports to museum standard, keeping records of movement and condition of works and liaise with conservators and couriers when necessary
- Organise exhibition-related transport, which includes updating shipping lists, obtaining estimates of costs, and monitoring customs documentation, liaising with shippers and the exhibition Curator
- Coordinate the insurance of works of art, either commercially or through the Museums and Galleries Government Indemnity Scheme, and compile and file insurance claims in the event of loss or damage of work
- Issue contracts to partner organisations, artists, curators and authors in consultation with the Department
- Maintain files and correspondence as well as archiving past exhibition files
- Assist the production of catalogues and limited editions

- Collate and copy-edit texts; research, request, store and return images and obtain copyright permissions for use in publications and communication materials, including website
- Compile information for labels and text panels, write interpretative material for the season guide, website and exhibition where applicable
- Deal with routine enquiries, maintain databases (Raiser's Edge, FilemakerPro and Excel) and process responses to exhibition proposals with other members of the exhibitions team
- Assist with private views and other Whitechapel Gallery events including speaking at events where appropriate

Max Mara Art Prize for Women

- In collaboration with a Curator, deliver the biennial exhibition display of the Max Mara Art Prize for women, including liaising with and supporting relevant Gallery departments, within agreed budget, timeframe and project scope
- In collaboration with a Curator, produce and deliver any possible publication accompanying the exhibition display, including liaising with relevant Gallery departments or contractors
- With the Development and Communications teams, maintain effective communications with the commercial partner representatives throughout each edition of the prize, ensuring they are regularly informed of the artist's progress and development, progress of the exhibition and any coverage the artist receives in the media
- Manage the partnership and negotiations over contract and agreements, with input from the Development team and Managing Director
- Co-ordinate the artist's residency in Italy in collaboration with the commercial partner and its representatives, including accommodation, payment of expenses and providing general advice and support to the artist throughout her residency
- Co-ordinate the selection of Judges/Judging schedule/ liaison with short-listed artists/ liaison with winning artist
- Co-ordinate the announcement event for the winning artist, in liaison with the Development Events Manager
- Support the Communications team in generating press coverage of the Prize, including ensuring Communications are aware of the progress of the residency and exhibition, and facilitating contact between Communications and the artist and Max Mara representatives.
- In collaboration with the representatives of the commercial partner, organise and co-ordinate the transfer of the exhibition from Whitechapel Gallery for display at the Collezione Maramotti, Reggio Emilia. This may include the organisation of public events around the display in Italy.
- Report to Curator and Director of Development when required

Whitechapel Gallery Art Icon:

- Act as liaison between the Exhibitions department and the Art Icon Project Team, feeding back to Exhibitions regularly
- Act as liaison between the Art Icon artist and the Art Icon Project Team, including securing loans for displayed works if appropriate with a commercial gallery and subsequent exhibition coordination

- Produce and edit a publication of the Art Icon's career to date, with the Design and Production Manager
- Manage the charity auction of art works and the procurement of donated lots, including artist liaison, framing, transportation and display
- Assist the Art Icon Project Manager in liaisons with the Auction House on lots, including setting estimates and reserves
- Work with the online auction partner to ensure that lots are presented for sale, distributed, and can be purchased easily in advance and on the night
- Communicate information in a timely manner to the Communications team to enable marketing opportunities with auction artworks
- Work with the Art Icon Project Manager to manage the auction and artwork management budget

Other

- Represent the Whitechapel Gallery at public events, meetings and networking on behalf of the organisation
- Any other duties as requested by the Line Managers

Person specification

Essential:

- A relevant degree or post-graduate degree in Art History or Curating
- Significant experience of exhibition planning, organising and installation and of working directly with artists, gallerists and curators
- Experience with the care and handling of art works, including condition reporting and packing procedures
- Excellent organisation skills and impeccable attention to detail
- Good proven computer skills with experience of Microsoft Office, and FileMaker
- Confident, diplomatic and discreet with the ability to represent the Gallery at the highest levels
- Ability to work as part of a team and independently, remaining calm under pressure, and to quickly find your feet in a fast-paced work environment
- Ability to multi-task and manage several projects simultaneously
- Experience of print production
- Good writing skills and experience of publishing in print and/or online
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Good negotiation skills and the ability to handle sensitive situations with diplomacy
- Experience of project management and leading project teams with multiple stakeholders within budget and timeframe
- Proven ability to effectively manage senior stakeholders and volunteers, both internally and externally
- Ability to travel

Desirable

- Experience of working in a commercial art context
- Experience of fundraising and sponsor relationships within the arts sector
- Italian language skills

Conditions of Work

- Fixed term contract: 18 months (with the possibility of becoming permanent depending on performance), full time, 5 days/week, within this allowing for work from home as well as occasional periods of travel and evening work
- Hours of work: 9.30am – 5.45pm, plus some occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu.
- Starting salary: £26,000pa
- The period of notice is 2 months in writing on either side, 1 week during probation period
- Probation period: 6 months

In addition, the benefits you are eligible to receive are, subject to availability:

- 25 days annual holiday (pro rata for part-time staff)
- Option of 5% of your gross salary provided as employers' pension contribution
- Discount from Whitechapel Gallery bookshop
- Discount from the Whitechapel Gallery Refectory
- Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications
- Training opportunities
- Annual research/travel grant of £200 (pro rata equivalent for part time staff)
- Option to participate in the Busy Bees Childcare Voucher scheme