

Archivist

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, Lucian Freud, Gilbert & George and Mark Wallinger.

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 Whitechapel Archive Collection, dates back to 1901 and includes materials relating to over 800 exhibitions, including artists' correspondence, photographic documentation, catalogues, and other materials relating to the history of the Gallery. These are of great scholarly value in that they chart the introduction and impact of some of the most important individuals and movements in 19th, 20th and 21st century.

The conservation and management of the Archive as a recognised historic collection; the animation of its materials, ensuring that they are made accessible and enjoyable to the widest possible public.

Accountability

The Archivist is line managed by the Curator: Archive Gallery.

Job description

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Job Description

Duties and Responsibilities

- To be responsible for managing the current environmental storage conditions in the archive repository and to alert and liaise with the appropriate Gallery departments to ensure the safety of the collections.
- To devise and produce a Collecting Policy, a Records Management Policy and a Lending Policy for the archives.
- To provide and manage the public service for all users of the archive: Hosting and assisting researchers, answering telephone and email enquiries, invigilating the Foyle Reading Room and the Archive Gallery when there is no attendant. In addition, to reproduce material with the use of a photocopier or scanner and to issue Reproduction and Copyright agreements.
- To manage the loans of archive material that are requested by institutions and to issue relevant agreements. Occasionally, to act as courier supervising archive material at other institutions.
- To be responsible for the outstanding ongoing cataloguing of archive material with the use of Modes software, taking in to consideration the Gallery's central role in contributing to a wide research community.
- To work with the Curator Archive Gallery and other Archive staff to identify materials which are in need of conservation. To work with Gallery staff to identify ongoing record series for permanent preservation within the archive.
- To work with Exhibitions and Operations to develop appropriate and robust systems for the management of semi-current records and the retention and preservation of electronic record keeping.
- To work with Development to identify and develop bids to appropriate funding streams to support and extend the archives maintenance and exhibition programme.
- To represent and promote the Whitechapel Gallery Archive through talks, tours, meetings, production of articles and membership of appropriate professional and art institutions as requested.
- To manage volunteers and interns working at the archive. To support specialised volunteers who are working with the Books Collection and are managed by the Director's office and train them to list and shelve books at the Reading Room's library.
- Working with the Curator Archive Gallery and Assistant Curators to identify and access materials for displays and exhibitions as requested.
- To develop a future digitisation programme for the collections and to work with the Curator Archive Gallery, Communications and Operations to display and maintain website content and online finding aids.

Other

- Any other relevant duties as deemed necessary by the Curator: Archive Gallery
- Represent Whitechapel Gallery at public events, meetings and networking on behalf of the organisation

Person Specification

Essential

- Either a Master's degree or other postgraduate qualification in Archives and/or Records Management, which is recognised and accredited by the Archived and Records Association (ARA)
- Three years of work experience in institutional archives
- Sound knowledge of recognised archival standards and practice, including those relating to archival cataloguing (ISAD(G), ISAAR(CPF) for example
- Excellent communications and presentation skills
- Proven good IT skills including Word, cataloguing databases, Excel, Powerpoint and e-mail
- Strong administrative and organisational abilities with close attention to detail
- Tact, confidence, and maturity to liaise with a wide range of people
- Ability to work to deadlines and as part of a team
- A willingness and ability to work well both autonomously, including lone working on occasions, and as part of a small but busy team;
- A willingness to fetch and carry boxes, heavy files and other material with the appropriate training and equipment

Desirable

- A degree in Fine Arts, Art History, History, Library Studies or other relevant discipline.

Conditions of Work

- Contract: Permanent, 4 days a week with the possibility of increasing to 5 days a week after 12 months.
- Hours of work: Tuesday-Friday 9.30am – 5.45pm, plus occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu.
- Salary: Pro-rata of £26,000 to 27,000 per annum, depending on experience.
- The period of notice is 2 months in writing on either side
- 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 4% of your gross salary provided as employers' pension contribution (3 months after start date or when probation has been successfully completed, whichever is later)
- Research trips to international art events in addition to exhibition related travel
- Discount from the Gallery bookshop
- Discount from the Whitechapel Café/Bar
- Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications
- Training opportunities
- £200 annual travel grant (pro rata equivalent for part time staff)
- Option to participate in Computer Share Voucher Childcare Voucher scheme.