

Director of Commercial Enterprises

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, Zarina Bhimji and William Kentridge.

With exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, and historic archives presented across beautiful galleries; education resources, art courses, a restaurant and bookshop, the Gallery is open all year round, with something free to see for all.

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 Director of Commercial Enterprises will oversee a renowned programme of artists' editions; a critically acclaimed publishing house with global distribution; art courses; hire of spaces in a listed building; and the Koenig Bookshop and Townsend Restaurant franchisees.

The role will maximize commercial income from the Whitechapel Gallery's intellectual property, brand and physical assets; and develop and expand its e-commerce activities.

You will apply your skills and experience to meet the unique challenges of delivering a successful commercial operation for a not-for-profit organisation, and to respond with innovation to the post-pandemic environment. You will also lead, inspire and motivate your team to meet ambitious annual targets.

Job description

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The Director of Commercial Enterprises line manages the Head of Editions and the Head of Publications and other freelance and ad hoc staff. S/he also liaises with management at the Koenig Bookshop and Townsend Restaurant.

The Director of Commercial Enterprises is part of the Senior Management Team and contributes to strategic policy for the whole institution.

Activities managed by the Director of Commercial Enterprises fall within the remit of Whitechapel Ventures Ltd, the Gallery's commercial trading subsidiary. All profits are donated as unrestricted funding in support of the Whitechapel Gallery's charitable mission and objectives.

Accountability

The Director of Commercial Enterprises is accountable to the Managing Director, and to the Board of Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited.

Duties and Responsibilities

Overview

In collaboration with the Managing Director and Director, and under the guidance of the Board of Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, the Director of Commercial Enterprises will develop strategy and policy to grow the artists' editions programme, the publication of catalogues and scholarly anthologies, art courses, venue hires and franchisee relations, to maximize the commercial return of the Gallery's assets. Through this they will significantly contribute to the Gallery's financial sustainability.

Working with the Managing Director and Director they will ensure that all commercial activity is in line with and supports the mission and vision of the Whitechapel Gallery.

As part of the senior management team, they will contribute to policy development and the wider strategic management of the organization, including adherence to policy initiatives and standards set by the Gallery's principle funder, Arts Council England.

Commercial income generation and development

Work with the Whitechapel Ventures team to strategically develop commercial activities:

Maximise the profile and sales of artists' editions through new commissions, in house displays and art fairs; and liaise with the Allied Editions consortium.

Ensure the financial success of exhibition catalogues, artists' books and the *Documents of Contemporary Art* anthologies co-published with MIT Press through promotion and profitable distribution partnerships.

Manage the franchise contract for the on-site restaurant, working with the contractor to maintain high standards of service, develop promotional initiatives, maximize profit share and ensure adherence to contract terms.

Manage the book shop franchise contract, oversee Gallery publication supplies, bought-in merchandise ranges and ensure adherence to contract terms.

Lead on the development and production of a commercially viable merchandise range for sale in the bookshop and online.

Maintain strategic oversight of the venue hire business and create opportunities as public health regulations permit, organizing resources to ensure high-quality delivery and event profitability.

Work with curatorial colleagues to deliver a profitable programme of commercial courses in line with the Gallery's objectives.

Take a strategic financial lead on developing the Gallery's e-commerce business.

Develop and strategically manage new commercial activities:

Identify opportunities to maximize on the Gallery's assets and brand, in line with the organizational mission and objectives.

Pitch new income generating activities to the Director and Managing Director with detailed research and assessments of commercial viability, including cost analyses and income forecasts.

Strategic implementation and monitoring

Work with the Marketing team to promote and sell commercial products and services through a range of communications channels.

Strengthen relations with established customers and identify and grow new markets.

Work with the Director of Communications to oversee the commercial aspects of brand management, development and marketing.

Strategize to convert Gallery visitor attendance to maximum spend.

Work with the Managing Director to agree business plans and set targets, in the context of annual budgets and financial strategy

Support the Whitechapel Ventures team in achieving ambitious annual income targets.

Liaise monthly with the Managing Director to review and monitor trading performance against targets.

Report quarterly to the Ventures Board on performance and targets.

Produce evaluation and feasibility reports as required.

Proactively identify improvements to processes and systems to increase efficiency and profitability.

Maintain an up-to-date awareness of industry developments and the wider commercial landscape, including external opportunities to cross-sell and promote the Gallery's services and products, and attend relevant events such as industry conferences and conventions.

Line management

Oversee the work of the Head of Editions, which includes:

- Commission, production and delivery of artists' limited editions
- Managing on-line and in-house sales opportunities, mail order and stock management
- Managing presence at UK and international Art Fairs
- Collaborating with the Allied Editions consortium
- Supporting the Head of Editions in managing their team of two

Oversee the work of the Head of Publications, which includes:

- Development, production and delivery of the *Documents of Contemporary Art* publication series and ad hoc publications
- Contract negotiation with co-publishers
- Managing relations with national and international distributors
- Stock management, movements & reprints; including exhibition catalogues
- Identifying and managing additional sales opportunities

To revive post pandemic venue hires through internal staff resources or potentially the future appointment of an Events Manager, whose work will include:

- Managing existing venue hire clients & attracting new ones
- Negotiating hire of spaces alongside the public programming
- Upselling venue hire adjuncts including equipment, catering and staffing

General staff management:

- Mentoring and pastoral care of Ventures staff; supporting continuous personal and professional development
- Schedule and oversee departmental and one-to-one meetings
- Interview new personnel and conduct performance reviews in line with organisational guidelines, and with HR deal with any other personnel matters arising
- Actively foster and contribute to a positive working environment

Personal Specification

Essential

- Experience of and passion for the visual arts
- An understanding of the challenges delivering a successful commercial operation within a not-for-profit organisation, where the aims of the organisation must be sensitively upheld and strengthened through all offerings and revenue streams
- A proven track record in sales and marketing or other commercial activity with specific profit and loss responsibility
- Proven budget management skills
- Knowledge of e-commerce
- Strong supplier management and negotiation skills
- A strong entrepreneurial spirit and appetite
- Demonstrable experience of managing and developing a team
- Strong communication skills to inspire and inform
- The integrity, diplomacy and professional skills to work effectively on cross-team initiatives

Desirable

- Commercial experience within the Museums, galleries, heritage or culture sector
- Understanding of the contemporary art market
- An understanding of publishing
- Knowledge of retail merchandise production
- Contract management experience

Conditions of Work

Permanent contract

Hours of work: 9.30am – 5.45pm, plus some occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu. Part-time, flexible, and job share working arrangements will be considered around a minimum total of 4 days per week.

Starting salary: £45,000 full time equivalent

Probation period: 6 months

The period of notice is 3 months in writing on either side, 3 weeks during the probation period

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

25 days annual holiday (pro rata for part-time staff)

You will be eligible to participate in the group personal pension scheme, with an employer contribution of 5% of your gross salary

£200 annual travel grant (pro rata equivalent for part time staff)

Discount from Whitechapel Gallery bookshop

Discount from the Whitechapel Gallery Townsend Restaurant

Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications

Training opportunities

Access to Employee Assistance Programme