

Curator

Job description

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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 Zarina Bhimji, Sophie Calle, Peter Doig and William Kentridge.

With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, restaurant and bookshop, the 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.

Exhibitions Programme

Six museum standard galleries presented over two floors feature modern and contemporary art from around the world, in a programme of approximately ten major exhibitions per year. They include temporary exhibitions that celebrate established figures or provide a platform for emerging artists and tendencies; new, site-specific commissions; displays of works from important British and international collections; and material drawn from the Whitechapel's historic Archive.

Exhibitions Department

The Exhibitions Department realises an ambitious programme of temporary exhibitions and commissions including the production of catalogues and limited editions to accompany these events. In addition, the Department is closely involved with an MA Curating Art and Public Programmes in partnership with London South Bank University. The Department consists of the Chief Curator, two Curators, four Assistant Curators, Curatorial Assistant, Head of Exhibition Design and Production,

Gallery Manager, Head of Curatorial Studies and Curator: Archive Gallery and Archivist.

Role

The Curator takes responsibility for the conceptual development, organisation and co-ordination of exhibitions and publications assigned by the Director and Chief Curator, including budgetary management and fundraising. The Curator contributes ideas to the Gallery's programme, liaises with other internal departments as appropriate and represents the Whitechapel Gallery at relevant networking events.

Accountability

The Curator is line managed by the Chief Curator and has responsibility for two Assistant Curators.

Duties and responsibilities

Curatorial

- Contributing to the delivery of the Whitechapel Gallery's curatorial vision through feeding into programming discussions, the curation of exhibitions, utilising contacts with artists and organisations and knowledge of issues in contemporary art and culture.
- Developing the curatorial thesis for designated projects by researching and selecting works, liaising with artists and external curators.
- Taking responsibility for the authoring, commissioning, editing and production of specific exhibition catalogues, guides, labels and wall texts.
- Proposing imaginative ways of providing contextual material for exhibitions and events, eg. print, film, video etc.
- Developing installation plans in consultation with the Gallery Manager and Chief Curator.

- Drawing up exhibition-specific budgets. Monitoring and controlling these and ensuring that any variances are communicated in a timely manner.
- Working with the Senior Editions Officer to identify and plan future limited editions.
- Taking responsibility for drafting applications to private, public and individually sourced funders for exhibitions/projects, in consultation with the Development Department.
- Supplying information on designated exhibitions to the Development and Communications team for inclusion in sponsorship proposals, press releases and marketing campaigns
- Working with Education on devising a public events programme to complement projects; delivering talks and taking part in symposia, both organised by the Whitechapel Gallery and other organisations.
- Ensuring the proper flow of exhibition information across departments.
- Representing the Gallery at networking events, including talks for sponsors, funders etc.

Organisational

- Overseeing loan negotiation and administration, ensuring that all loan conditions are fulfilled, in liaison with the Gallery Manager.
- Overseeing transport arrangements including the monitoring of the tendering process to ensure advantageous terms and conditions.
- Overseeing the adequate fine art insurance cover through commercial insurance and applications to the Museums and Galleries Government Indemnity Scheme. Advising colleagues on insurance terms and conditions.
- Securing touring venues for projects originated by the Whitechapel Gallery; overseeing the administration and transport arrangements for exhibitions while on tour.

- Issuing appropriate contracts to partner organisations, artists, curators and authors in consultation with the Managing Director and Chief Curator.
- Responding to approaches from outside individuals and organisations.
- Line managing staff incorporating supervising their day to day activities, training and annual appraisals.
- Recruiting and managing Exhibition staff in liaison with the Senior Administrator, fulfilling the Whitechapel's Equal Opportunities policy.

Other

- Deal with any other duties as deemed necessary by the Chief Curator.
- Represent Whitechapel Gallery at public events, meetings and networking on behalf of the organisation.

Personal Specification

Essential

- Educated to post-graduate degree (or equivalent) or able to demonstrate equivalent knowledge or training gained through experience in Art History and Theory or Practice.
- Extensive experience of working with artists.
- Specialist knowledge of contemporary art, with strong research and publication record of expanding art historical narratives and advancing under-represented perspectives.
- Significant curatorial experience in a museum or public gallery or as an independent curator.
- Extensive knowledge of contemporary art, artists and art world networks.
- Confident public speaker, able to represent the Gallery and its programmes to diverse audiences.
- Ability to work as part of a team and independently, remaining calm under pressure.
- Excellent communication and accuracy in written communication.
- Impeccable writing skills with proven record of high-quality research and critical art writing.

- Good negotiation skills and the ability to handle sensitive situations with diplomacy.
- Experience of managing complex projects and budgets within an organisational context.
- Commitment to advancing the issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts and culture sector.

Desirable

- Experience of publishing
- Knowledge of history of modern art

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Whitechapel Gallery is undertaking a major policy review to address systemic discrimination; and considering what part we can play in reforming the arts sector overall. We are auditing our programmes, our staff and our audiences to assess successes and failures and bring about reform and innovation. Our Action Plan is guided by staff, but also draws on the experience of external organisations dedicated to combating racial injustice and social inequality. We want our workforce to represent all sections of the community and expect all our workers to have a strong commitment to work with the Gallery in creating an equal, diverse and inclusive workplace. Our ambition is to reflect society and to create a diverse, inclusive and welcoming environment for all to experience art

Conditions of Work

- Full time permanent position.
- Hours of work: 9.30am – 5.45pm, Monday - Friday plus some occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu.
- Starting salary: £32,000 to £33,000 per annum, depending on experience.
- The period of notice is 3 months in writing on either side.
- Probation period: 6 months.

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

- 25 days annual holiday (pro rata for part-time staff).
- Option of 4% of your gross salary provided as employers' pension contribution.
- Discount from the Gallery bookshop (subject to availability).
- Discount from the Townsend Restaurant (subject to availability).
- Discounts on editions (one per edition, subject to availability) and publications (subject to availability).
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- Annual research/travel grant.
- Training opportunities.
- Access to Employee Assistance Programme – 24/7 telephone and online resources.
- Flexible Working