

Gallery Technical Manager

Background

For over a century the Whitechapel Gallery has premiered world-class artists from modern masters such as Pablo Picasso, Barbara Hepworth, Jackson Pollock and Frida Kahlo to contemporaries such as Zarina Bhimji, Sophie Calle, Theaster Gates and William Kentridge.

With beautiful galleries, exhibitions, artist commissions, collection displays, historic archives, education resources, inspiring art courses, dining room 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

Role

The Gallery Technical Manager assists the Head of Exhibition Design and Production in taking care of all works of art entrusted to the gallery. This includes managing the installation, de-installation and maintenance of exhibitions, displays and individual works of art. They work with the Head of Exhibition Design and Production to ensure that the galleries, workshop and art store are all maintained to the highest standards.

The Gallery Technical Manager will take direct responsibility for managing the installation and de-installation of a programme of up to 9 projects and displays annually. They will work closely with colleagues in the Exhibitions and Education Departments to support the delivery of the programme to the highest standard.

The Gallery Technical Manager will also work closely with the Operations Team on exhibition handover, building, security and health & safety issues. They will be expected to operate as a Duty Manager as required during installation periods.

Job description

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Accountability

The Gallery Technical Manager is, in the first instance, line-managed by the Head of Exhibition Design and Production and will assist in the management of a team of freelance technicians for the installation and de-installation periods.

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Duties and Responsibilities

Installations

- Plan, organise and preparing all necessary equipment, display and other installation requirements with the Exhibitions and Education Teams as well as external curators and artists.
- Manage all Education Projects installation requirements with support from the Head of Exhibition Design and Production.
- Work with artists as well as the Exhibitions and Education Teams to produce new work as required.
- Oversee external contractors in the construction of exhibition architecture and design, as required.
- Organise and supervise the work of freelance technicians.
- Liaise with the Assistant Curators of both Exhibition and Education programmes with regards to logistics for the transport, delivery and collection of art works to and from the gallery.
- Oversee the loading/unloading, packing/unpacking and handling of art works, liaising with curators, couriers and conservators in a manner consistent with Whitechapel protocols.
- Lead on conservation within the gallery, supervising condition checking and working with the Assistant Curators to identify specific requirements for incoming/outgoing artworks on loan.
- Ensure the proper display and maintenance of artworks, including conservation adequate cleaning, the monitoring of environmental conditions and appropriate communication thereof, as well as liaising between the relevant departments to ensure proper preventive conservation for any objects in care of the Gallery.
- Liaise with the Operations Manager on exhibition Health & Safety issues, maintaining a Health & Safety conscious environment throughout installations and ensuring that all access requirements and the needs of disabled visitors are met.
- Draft and maintain records of risk assessments and method statements for individual projects.
- Liaise with the Exhibitions and Operations Teams with regard to exhibition specific security requirements to ensure an appropriate standard of invigilation is maintained in the galleries.

Maintenance

- Provide a systematic handover of exhibitions to the Operations team informing them of specific AV and invigilation duties.
- Regularly monitoring the exhibitions to ensure that they are maintained to the highest standards.

- Assisting the Head of Exhibition Design and Production and Operations Manager to ensure that building maintenance standards are met, with reference to the galleries and stores.
- Take responsibility for the Art store and AV store to provide a conservation sensitive environment for artworks to be handled and stored.

Administration

- Organising and maintaining project files for specific exhibitions, including correspondence with lenders, artists, technicians and contracted service providers.
- Assisting in drawing up installation plans and schedules including the procurement of technician's services.
- Drawing up and managing installation budgets, informing Curators and the Administration and Finance Team of any key variances.
- Assist in the ratification of all installation budgets making sure they are balanced throughout installations and resolving invoices promptly.
- Providing training for Whitechapel staff in the conservation and handling of art as necessary.
- Helping to maintain a clear installation directory of contracted services.

General

- Representing the Gallery at relevant public and networking events.
- Assisting when necessary with the set-up of events and gallery hires in the building.
- Any reasonable duties that may be requested by the Head of Exhibition Design and Production.

Person Specification

Essential

- Proven experience of art handling and exhibition installation management to high standards.
- Strong practical abilities, including hands-on skills such as basic carpentry, and competence with tools.
- Strong organisational, administrative and verbal and written communication abilities.
- Good management and supervisory skills and experience.
- Up-to-date knowledge and experience of working with new ICT technology
- Strong affinity with contemporary art and artists, as well as interest in Education, access to the arts and community programmes.
- Strong awareness of conservation requirements for artworks of different ages and media.
- The ability to act with tact and diplomacy with individuals from a variety of situations and backgrounds.
- Good level of skills in Microsoft Word, Excel and email.
- Practical awareness of health and safety issues.

Desirable

- Training in art handling.
- Experience of using CAD and databases.
- Experience of monitoring budgets.
- Experience of working in/maintaining a historic exhibition space.
- Knowledge and experience regarding the installation and uses of AV equipment in an exhibitions context.

- A degree in fine art or a related discipline.

Conditions of Work

- Permanent Contract: Full Time
- Hours of work: 9.30am – 5.45pm, Monday to Friday, plus some occasional weekend and evening work, which will be compensated by time off in lieu.
- Starting band: £30,000 - £33,000, depending on experience.
- The period of notice is 2 months in writing on either side.
- Probation period: 6 months.
- 25 days annual holiday (pro rata for part-time staff).

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

- 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.