

# Assistant Curator

Application Pack

Closing date: 10:00am on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023



# Whitechapel Gallery

Whitechapel Gallery was founded in 1901 to present “the finest art of the world to the people of the East End, London”. Over one hundred and twenty years later, Whitechapel Gallery is renewing its founding mission under the directorship of Gilane Tawadros, recognising our unique role as a pioneering art institution that sits in the heart of London’s East End and our global, diverse communities. Successive waves of migrants have shaped the distinctive character of the Whitechapel Gallery and its surrounding area. Generations of artists and makers have lived and worked in the area contributing to its creative vibrancy. We are proud to be a contemporary visual arts organisation that is locally embedded and globally connected.

In 1939, **Pablo Picasso**’s iconic painting, *Guernica*, made its first and only visit to Britain, and artist premiers are as diverse as **Barbara Hepworth** (1954) and **Jackson Pollock** (1958), **Helio Oiticica** (1969) and **Gilbert & George** (1971), **Eva Hesse** (1979), **Frida Kahlo** (1982) and **Sonia Boyce** (1988), **Sophie Calle** (2010) and **Zarina Bhimji** (2012), **Emily Jacir** (2015) and **William Kentridge** (2016), **Theaster Gates** (2021) and **Nicole Eisenman** (2023). Influential surveys include *This is Tomorrow* (1956), *Liberty, Equality and Sisterhood* (1978), *From Two Worlds* (1986), *Woven Air* (1988) *Live in Your Head* (2000), *Back to Black* (2005), *Adventures of the Black Square* (2015) and *Electronic Superhighway* (2016).

This is an exciting time to join Whitechapel Gallery as it moves into the next phase of its development. You will be part of a dynamic, dedicated and caring team committed to making contemporary art and ideas accessible to the broadest possible audience, putting artists and ideas at the centre of everything we do.

Whitechapel Gallery is a non-profit educational charity funded by Arts Council England and supported by trusts and foundations, individuals and organisations whose investments enable us to achieve our ambitions.



**Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

We want our workforce to represent all sections of the community and expect all our workers to firmly commit to working with the Gallery to create 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.



## Assistant Curator

### **Role**

Working closely with the Head of Exhibitions and the Director, Gilane Tawadros, the Assistant Curator, will help to deliver our mission to put artists and audiences at the heart of everything we do. The successful candidate will be a dynamic, engaged and knowledgeable curator with extensive experience of exhibition-making. They will relish the opportunity of working collaboratively with artists, external curators and partners, nationally and internationally as well as with colleagues across the Whitechapel Gallery.

They will help shape and deliver the future artistic programme, devise specific exhibitions, projects and publications, and articulate the ideas and issues that inform contemporary practice through public talks and writings. They will work with other members of the WG team to ensure that our programme (both physical and digital) engages meaningfully with diverse audiences, locally and globally. They will also be engaged with modern and contemporary art history from a global perspective and have an understanding of wider visual culture.

The Assistant Curator will work alongside all members of the Exhibition team, other colleagues in the Gallery, and the professional art world to ensure an efficient running of the exhibitions programme.

### **Accountability**

The Assistant Curator reports to the Head of Exhibitions.

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### **Job description**

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## About you

Essential qualities include:

- A relevant degree in Art History or Curating, or relevant equivalent education and experience
- Minimum of three years' experience of arts administration in a public gallery or museum, or close equivalent, especially loan administration, international shipping, insurance and customs
- A strong knowledge of contemporary artistic practices and debates
- Experience of working with artists
- Excellent organisation skills and impeccable attention to detail
- Good computer skills with experience of Word, Excel and Access
- Experience of maintaining and managing budgets
- Ability to work as part of a team and independently, managing competing priorities and deadlines
- Flexibility and ability to multi-task
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Good negotiation skills and the ability to handle sensitive situations with diplomacy
- Experience with the care, handling and installation of art works, including condition reporting and packing procedures

Qualities that are desirable for this job role include:

- Experience in editing and print production
- A relevant postgraduate qualification

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Support the Director and Head of Exhibitions:

### **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, Operations/Visitor Services, HR, Finance and Ventures to secure a smooth flow of information.
- Assist in monitoring and maintaining budgets for specific exhibitions, exhibition catalogues and limited editions. This includes obtaining estimates, raising purchase orders, processing invoices, maintaining digital and physical budget files and liaising with the Finance Department and budget holders.

### **Registrar**

- Research loans and liaise with the Head of Exhibitions and Gallery Technical Manager to prepare loan documentation, administer loan requests and ensure loan conditions are fulfilled.
- Compile condition and packing reports, keeping records of movement and conditions of works and liaise with conservators and couriers when necessary.
- Organise exhibition-related transport, which includes; updating shipping lists, obtaining estimates of costs, liaising with shippers and monitoring customs documentation.
- 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.
- Oversee the administration and transport arrangements for specific exhibitions on tour and act as a courier for touring exhibitions when necessary.
- Draft, seek approval for and 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.

## **Exhibitions organisation and administration**

- Assist the Gallery Technical Manager in sourcing and liaising with suppliers and subcontractors.
- Work with artists, members of the Exhibition and Education Departments, and external curators to research, organise and deliver high quality, compelling and distinctive exhibitions.
- Collate and copy-editing texts; researching, requesting, storing and returning images and obtaining copyright permissions for use in publications and communication materials.
- Assist in the production of catalogues and limited editions.
- Compile information for labels and text panels, writing interpretative material for the season guide, website and exhibition where applicable.
- Arrange accommodation, travel and per diems for visiting artists, couriers etc.
- Compile and send invitations for exhibition guest lists in collaboration with Development and Communications
- Manage exhibition contacts on database and private view/ dinner pro formas.
- Deal with routine enquiries, maintain databases (Raiser's Edge, filemaker pro 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.
- Lead tours of the Gallery and its exhibitions when required.

## **Other**

- Represent Whitechapel Gallery at public events, meetings and networking on behalf of the organisation.
- Ad hoc research projects for the Director.
- Any other duties as requested by the Head of Exhibitions or Director.
- Keep up to date with professional best practice.

## **Conditions of Work**

- Contract: permanent
- Hours of work: full-time  
Monday to Friday, 9:30am – 5:45pm, with one hour for lunch
- Salary: from £29,000 per annum, contingent on experience
- The period of notice is 2 months in writing on either side
- Probationary period: 6 months
- Due to the nature of the job, some evening and weekend work will be required, as well as occasional travel. This will be compensated by time off in lieu.

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

- 25 days annual leave, plus statutory bank holidays (pro-rata)
- Eligibility to participate in the group personal pension scheme, with the Gallery contributing 5% of your gross annual salary
- Discount from the Gallery bookshop (subject to availability)
- Discount from the Townsend Restaurant (subject to availability)
- Discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications (subject to availability)
- Training opportunities
- £200 annual travel grant (pro-rata)
- Free entry to a range of arts organisations across the UK
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme