Whitechapel Gallery

Archivist

Recruitment Pack



Joy Gregory, *Cinderella Tours Europe (Cadiz)*, 1998-2001. Digital C-type photographic print
© Joy Gregory / Courtesy the artist

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of **Archivist** at Whitechapel Gallery.

We are looking for an Archivist to join us at Whitechapel Gallery. Someone who loves caring for collections and sharing the pleasure of a good discovery. Someone who is curious about people and their stories and enjoys helping others explore them.

Whitechapel Gallery has been part of East London since 1901. Our archive holds the stories of the artists, exhibitions and communities who have helped make the Gallery what it is today. Some will be familiar. Others are waiting for someone to take a closer look.

As our Archivist, you will care for this history and help people feel welcome to explore it. From supporting someone's first visit to helping a researcher find a missing piece, you will bring patience, knowledge and a friendly approach. We would love to hear from you if you enjoy looking after collections and helping people find their own connections with the past.

Whitechapel Gallery

Installation View, *Zineb Sedira: Dreams Have No Titles*, 15 February –12 May 2024, Whitechapel Gallery, London. Photo: Damian Griffiths

About Whitechapel Gallery

Whitechapel Gallery is a ground-breaking arts institution located in the heart of London's East-End – one of the most diverse and creative quarters in the world. Locally embedded and globally connected, the Gallery was founded in 1901 to enrich the cultural offer for the people of East London.

Our historic building, which incorporates the former Whitechapel Public Library, houses six exhibition spaces, a fully equipped auditorium, a variety of study and studio spaces as well as a specialist bookshop and café.

Over the years, the Gallery has played host to some of the world's most significant and visionary artists, showcasing art from across the globe, including China, Brazil and the Islamic world. Our diverse artist roll call includes: **Barbara Hepworth (1954) • Jackson Pollock (1958) • Lee Krasner (1965) • Helio Oiticica (1969) • David Hockney (1970) • Gilbert & George (1971) • Eva Hesse (1979) • Frida Kahlo (1982) • Sonia Boyce (1988) • Cindy Sherman (1991) • Alfredo Jaar (1992) • Kiki Smith (1995) • Tony Cragg (1997) • Nan Goldin (2002) • Sophie Calle (2010) • Zarina Bhimji (2012) • Hannah Höch (2014) • Emily Jacir (2015) • William Kentridge (2016) • Theaster Gates (2021) • Nicole Eisenman (2023) • Zineb Sedira (2024) • Peter Kennard (2024) • Donald Rodney (2025) • Hamad Butt (2025) • Joy Gregory (2025).** We are equally committed to supporting local artists and communities, many of whom come from, or reflect, the many migrants that have made Whitechapel and its surrounding areas their home.

From ground-breaking solo shows to thought-provoking group and thematic exhibitions, the Gallery's focus on bringing artists, ideas, and audiences together, remains as important today as it did over a century ago.

Installation View, *Gavin Jantjes: To Be Free! A Retrospective 1970 – 2023*, 12 June –1 September 2024, Whitechapel Gallery, London. Photo: Damian Griffiths



Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our Vision

Whitechapel Gallery will play a significant role in leading social and cultural change, building on our pioneering history as a vital public space for urgent, often under-represented, perspectives and working in collaboration with our communities to shape a more open, equal and imaginative society.

Our Mission

Whitechapel Gallery is a ground-breaking public art institution rooted in the East End of London. For over 125 years we have been bringing local and global artists, audiences and communities together through radical art and ideas, helping to create new possibilities for thinking, feeling and dreaming.

Our Values

- **Public**: *We are a public, cultural, social, and civic space that is open and accessible to everyone. We are proud to be a pioneering East End cultural institution that is locally embedded and globally connected. We take our responsibility as a public art institution seriously, believing that we have an accountability and duty of care towards all our stakeholders. We want our building to be an inspiring, soulful and intimate destination; a haven for anyone interested and curious about contemporary culture*.

- **Permeable:** *We are a place of reciprocal exchange and connection; an open, permeable institution that spills beyond its walls and learns with and through our many communities. We offer an open-hearted, open-minded space for artists, ideas and audiences to come together.*

- **Bold:** *We are proud to work with artists and ideas that address the key issues and concerns of our times. We focus on amplifying under-represented voices, women-identifying artists and artists of colour, championing their contribution to contemporary art and society.*

- **Collaborative**: *We believe that collaboration and collective endeavour fosters creativity, expands capability and increases productivity, and we actively seek equitable partnerships that create opportunities for artists, contributors and audiences to shape what we do.*

- **Caring**: *We promote and support a culture of care, respect, trust and accountability, and are dedicated to safeguarding the long-term future and sustainability of Whitechapel Gallery, artistically, environmentally and economically.*

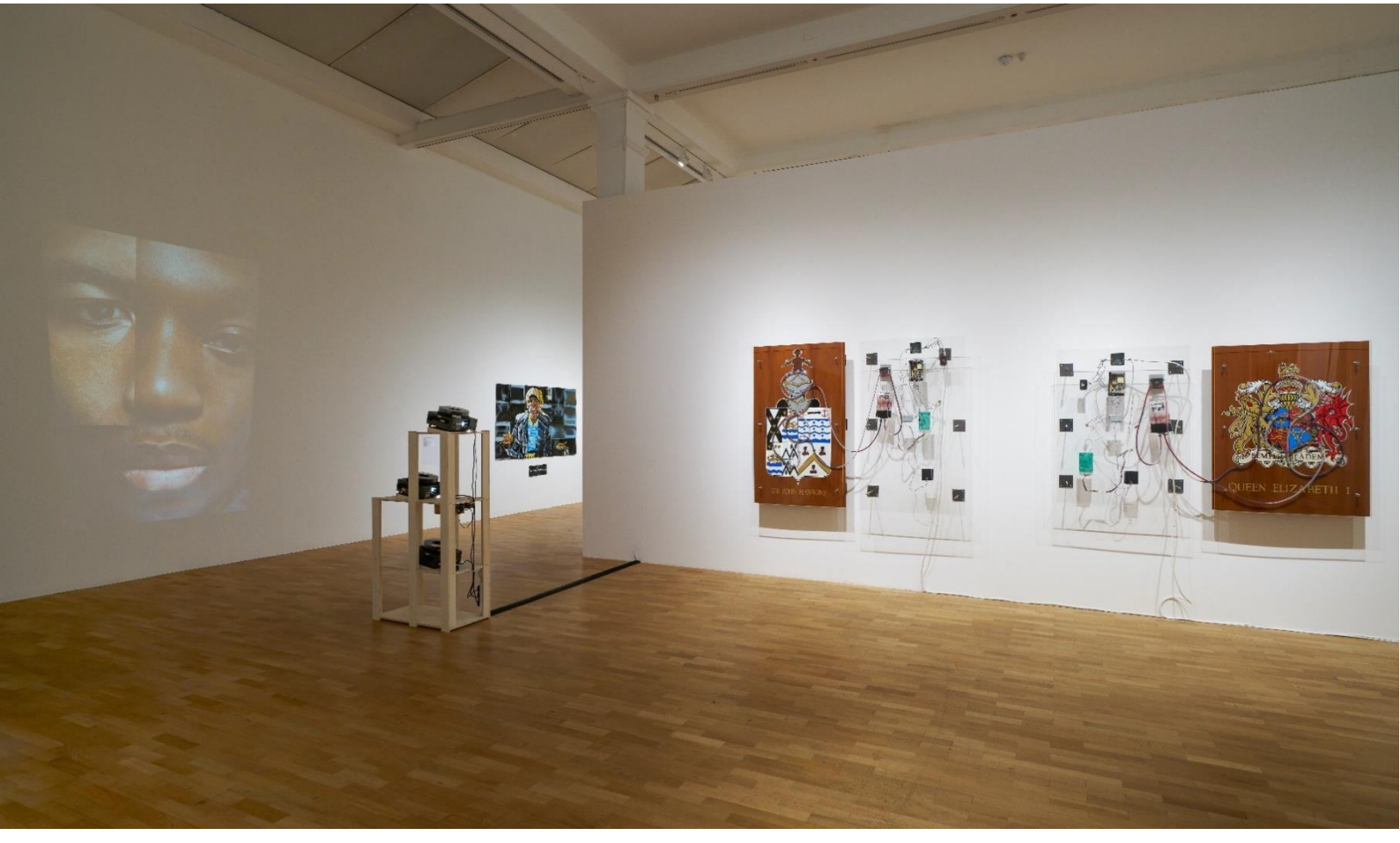
Our Programme

Whitechapel Gallery's acclaimed multi-disciplinary programme is presented seasonally and comprises a mix of free and ticketed exhibitions, displays and public events. These build on Whitechapel Gallery's legacy as a pioneering and radical arts institution, celebrated for its leading work in arts education and renowned for supporting some of the world's most visionary artists at crucial points in their careers.

We aim to reflect, inform and shape vital artistic and cultural trends through solo and thematic exhibitions live performance, screenings, open-calls and new commissions with a focus on showcasing under-represented voices, women-identifying artists and artist of colour from the UK and across the globe. Most exhibitions are accompanied by publications that deepen understanding of the work of participating artists, while also contributing to building new critical scholarship and revising established art histories. Each season we also host a range of accompanying public talks, events, workshops, festivals, lates and other initiatives that expand thinking around contemporary art and ideas.

Learning and outreach sit at the heart of the Gallery and emphasis close collaboration with local families, schools and communities, who we value as key stakeholders in our organisation. We offer inclusive creative opportunities for young people (especially those aged 15-24) in East London; working with local state primary, and secondary, school pupils and teachers in Tower Hamlets and Newham; and offering platforms for artists and artistic communities, especially those from marginalised backgrounds.

Installation view: *Donald Rodney: Visceral Canker*, 12 February – 4 May 2025. Photo: Above Ground Studio



International in its scope and reputation... of all London's galleries, it remains the one that is truly of the people [...] The Whitechapel is at the apex of London's extraordinary contemporary art scene.

- The Financial Times

In these polarized times, giving people a space to explore objects, perform and play, alone and with strangers, feels like a radical, exhilarating preposition.

- ARTnews

This is the place to promote a belief in the good of art.

- The Independent

Excellently unmuseumlike.

- The Guardian

Sculpting Conversations, 14 June – 3 September 2023, Whitechapel Gallery, London. Photo: Manuel V



The Role of the Archivist

Purpose of the Role

We're looking for a qualified Archivist to refresh and reinvigorate our approach to the Whitechapel Gallery Archive. You will be passionate about the preservation of the collection, ensuring it is catalogued, cared for and acts as a catalyst for programming and public engagement. Working closely with colleagues in the Participation team, you will help to create and experiment with new ways that artists and audiences can engage with archive materials and use our Reading Room. Your work will underpin how staff, artists and visitors understand the history of Whitechapel Gallery, how it connects with wider artistic and social developments, and how it might shape the institution's future programme and practices.

This is a unique opportunity to contribute to one of London's most dynamic cultural institutions, supporting its mission to make art accessible and relevant to diverse audiences. The role demands a dedicated, detail-oriented professional with a passion for archives, strong technical expertise, and a commitment to inclusion and collaboration.

Accountability

The Archivist is line managed by the Director of Participation.



Numbi Fest, 15 June 2024.
Photo: Rehan Jamil

The Archive

The Whitechapel Gallery Archive Collection is of significant historic value, featuring materials over 130 years' old, offering insights into the Gallery's history and changing approaches to artistic practices and cultural programming. It includes letters, photographs, rare catalogues and records of over 800 exhibitions. The archive also provides insights into political and social developments in East London – from materials relating to Suffragette actions and anti-fascist movements of the 1930s to celebrations of Bengali culture in the 1970s. The archive's current public service was established in 2009, when Whitechapel Gallery expanded to take over the former Whitechapel Public Library (1892-2005), which had been a crucial civic service in East London. Over recent months, Whitechapel Gallery staff, alongside external Archivists, artists and researchers, have been sharing exciting ideas, insights and case studies to help shape the future direction of this historic resource.

Participation at Whitechapel Gallery

Guided by a new strategy finalised in 2024, the Participation Programme is a testing ground for art and ideas. We hold space for participants of all ages through a brave, exploratory and experimental programme, developed in collaboration with artists, audiences and creative partners.

Our intergenerational programme spans early years activities, work with local schools, social, creative and professional development opportunities for young people, and life-long adult learning opportunities. Projects are artist-led and multi-disciplinary, offering participatory experiences beyond formal education.

We aim to build upon a radical history of pioneering educational practices at Whitechapel Gallery and are grounded in our distinctive urban location on Whitechapel High Street within Tower Hamlets – the youngest, fastest-growing and most densely populated borough in England.

We embed community engagement across our programme, prioritising local audiences and collaborations with East London partners, informed by long-term relationships and mutual exchange.

With confidence and integrity, we platform artists and ideas that explore the social and political issues facing us today. We advocate for creative learning and socially engaged practices as they are needed more than ever before.

The current Participation Department comprises:

Director of Participation
Curator: Families Programme
Curator: Schools and Teachers
Curator: Youth Programmes
Curator: Public Programmes
Archivist

Key Responsibilities

Institutional Archive

- To oversee a consistent and integrated process for archiving internal Gallery materials, ensuring records with long-term historical value are successful captured for the Gallery's archive, and providing clear guidance on record care, retention and disposal for internal teams.
- To align the process for the preservation of digital materials with broader IT processes, working with colleagues in the Operations team.
- To work with colleagues across all departments to ensure best practice is communicated and embedded.

Care for the Collection

- To be responsible for conserving the archive as a recognised historic collection – managing the storage of items, including considerations of environmental conditions, maintenance, security and risk management, in accordance with relevant best practice and standards, including BS EN 16893: 2018 and BS4791: 2017.
- To review policies, procedures and standards for the archive in line with best practice and relevant legislation, such as Data Protection, Copyright, and Designs and Patents Acts.
- To be responsible for the ongoing cataloguing of archive material to current archival standards, including particularly ISAD(G) using AtoM (Access to Memory) Collection Management System software.
- To assess the preservation needs of physical and digital archival items and, where required, arrange specialist conservation work.
- To further develop the digitisation programme for the collection, supported by the display of content online.

Public Engagement

- To work with the Director of Participation and other colleagues to develop an ambitious engagement strategy for the archive, utilising insights from the Gallery's recent research and consultation into this resource.
- To manage public access for all users of the archive – hosting and supporting in-person researchers, answering telephone and email enquiries, and invigilating the Foyle Reading Room.
- To work closely with colleagues in the Participation team to develop a broad range of ways in which public audiences can engage with archive materials, with a particular focus on creating local partnerships, archive-related programming, and engaging East London communities.
- To work with colleagues across all departments to develop new ways in which the Foyle Reading Room can be used by artists, audiences and programme partners, ensuring the space is integrated within the public spaces of the Gallery.
- To work with colleagues across all departments to help develop and deliver plans for Whitechapel Gallery's 125th anniversary programme in 2026-27.
- To undertake relevant research into the history of materials within the archive to support programming, public engagement and researchers' enquiries.
- To represent and promote the archive through talks, tours, participation in relevant networks, and membership of appropriate professional bodies.
- To manage any loans of archive material that are requested internally or by other national and international institutions with relevant agreements. Occasionally, to act as a courier supervising the transport and installation of archive materials at other institutions and venues.
- To respond to external requests for image reproduction, issuing relevant copyright agreements and finalising payments.

Other

- To work with the Gallery's Development team to identify and develop applications for appropriate funding opportunities linked to the archive.
- To oversee the archive's budget.
- Any other duties as directed by the Director of Participation.



Person Specification

Essential

- A post-graduate qualification in Archives and Records Management or equivalent from an Archives and Records Association (ARA) accredited course.
- Experience in management of mixed archive collections, with applied knowledge of packaging requirements, climatic considerations, emergency response procedures and handling.
- Experience in storing, cataloguing and exhibiting archival materials supported by awareness of relevant standards.
- Proficiency in using AtoM (Access to Memory) Collection Management System or an equivalent system.
- Good understanding of relevant legislation affecting archives.
- Excellent administrative and organisational abilities.
- Good communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Proven IT skills, including Microsoft Office and cataloguing databases.
- Ability to work both independently and collaboratively, working closely with colleagues across multiple departments.
- Commitment to advancing issues of equality, diversity and inclusion in the arts and culture sector.
- An enthusiasm for the Vision, Mission, Values of Whitechapel Gallery, and the ethos of the Participation team.
- Right to Work in the UK.

Desirable

- Experience working in an archive-related role in a gallery, museum or heritage organisation, with direct responsibility for records management.
- Knowledge of diverse communities in East London.
- An interest in modern and contemporary art.
- Experience developing archive-related programming engaging diverse audiences.

Conditions of Work
Contract: Permanent
Hours of work: Full time, 36.25 hours per week, Monday-Friday 9:30am-5:45pm (with one-hour unpaid lunch)
Salary: £34,500 per annum
Probationary period: 3 months with a maximum extension of 2 months
Notice period: 3 months. During the probation period the notice is 1 week in writing on either side.
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.
DBS: An enhanced DBS is required for this role.

Benefits
Annual Leave
Staff are entitled to 25 days' paid holiday, plus statutory bank holidays. Annual leave entitlement is increased every 3 years by an additional day, capped at 5 days.
Pension Scheme
All staff are eligible to participate in the group personal pension scheme
Employee Assistance Programme
All staff have access to our Employee Assistance Programme, which includes a 24/7 compassionate helpline, expert advice and up to six free counselling sessions.
Enhanced family leave – maternity, paternity and carer's leave
Training Opportunities and Travel Grant
We offer a range of training opportunities and learning programmes, including apprenticeships. To support your development and encourage exchange with peers, staff are eligible for a £200 annual travel grant (pro-rata).
Discounts
Staff receive discounts from the Gallery bookshop and from the café, both subject to availability. Staff receive discounts on editions (one per edition) and publications (subject to availability). Staff are entitled to a 75% discount on Gallery 2 hire (the hire fee element only) and 50% on all other spaces, both subject to availability.
Cycle to work Scheme
For the benefit of both you and the environment, you can loan a bike through a Cycle to Work scheme.
Exhibitions
For each exhibition at Whitechapel Gallery, staff are invited to a guided tour by a curator. Most major museums and galleries in London, and some beyond, grant free entry to exhibitions on presentation of your staff card.
Events

Staff can request one complimentary ticket for their own use for each public event at the Gallery, subject to availability.



Recruitment Information

How to apply

Please return the application form in PDF format to recruitment@whitechapelgallery.org In the email's subject line, type your full name followed by the job title.

We would be grateful if you would fill in and return the Diversity Monitoring form with your application. When the application is received, the Diversity Monitoring form is removed and does not form part of your application. The information from these forms helps us monitor our recruitment campaign's effectiveness.

Unfortunately, due to the volume of applicants for advertised positions, we cannot contact unsuccessful candidates or give feedback on application forms. If you are still waiting for a response from us by the advertised interview date, please assume that your application has been unsuccessful.

Access for people with disabilities

Please contact us at 020 7539 3320 or via recruitment@whitechapelgallery.org if you cannot complete this form electronically or would like further access information. We accept video applications and audio applications. We are committed to offering an interview to disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria for the job. By 'minimum criteria' we mean that the individual must provide us with evidence in their application form, which demonstrates that they meet the qualifications, skills or experience defined as desirable in the Person Specification.

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.

Deadline for applications: 10:00am on Monday, 30 November 2026

Interviews: Monday, 14 December 2026 and Tuesday, 15 December 2026

Living Wage Foundation

disability confident COMMITTED


THE WORLD IN
WHITECHAPEL
Whitechapel Gallery