Whitechapel Gallery

Director's Assistant

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 joining Whitechapel Gallery as Director's Assistant.

Whitechapel Gallery was established in 1901 in East London – home, then as now, to working class and migrant communities – with the aim of bringing "the finest art of the world to the people of the East End". Over a century later, that founding purpose continues to shape our work and our relationships with artists, audiences and the communities around us.

In 2026, we celebrate our 125th anniversary. It is an opportunity to reflect on our pioneering history and look ahead to the Gallery's future. We believe in the role art can play in firing up our imaginations, reflecting our lived experiences and opening new possibilities for thinking, feeling and dreaming.

Our commitment to under-represented artists and to an inclusive, accessible programme remains central to that vision. Alongside our exhibitions, talks and events, we are taking forward an ambitious capital project to transform our historic building for the benefit of audiences, artists and staff.

The Director's Assistant will join us at an important moment. This is a role I value enormously, with trust, good judgement and thoughtful communication at its heart. Working closely with me, you will keep the Director's Office organised and responsive, ensuring that commitments are met, information reaches the right people and important matters receive the attention they need. The care and judgement you bring will allow me to give my time and attention to the Gallery's artistic and organisational priorities.

You will also be an important point of connection between the Director's Office, colleagues, Trustees, artists and partners. Whether preparing for a Board meeting, responding to an artist or following up a project decision, your work will shape how people experience the Gallery. Supporting our Trustees with clear information and well-organised meetings will contribute directly to good governance and informed decisions.

Through the WG125 Capital Project, you will help maintain the records, communication and follow-through needed to turn plans into progress. This will give you an opportunity to contribute to a lasting chapter in the Gallery's history, working alongside colleagues and the wider project team.

I hope you will find this a rewarding place to bring your experience, share your ideas and continue learning. We welcome people with different backgrounds and perspectives who share our curiosity about art and our commitment to the Gallery's public purpose.

Thank you for taking the time to consider joining us. If this role speaks to your interests and experience, I would be very pleased to hear from you.

Gilane Tawadros
Director

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) •Veronica Ryan (2026) • Cecilia Vicuña (2026)**
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.*

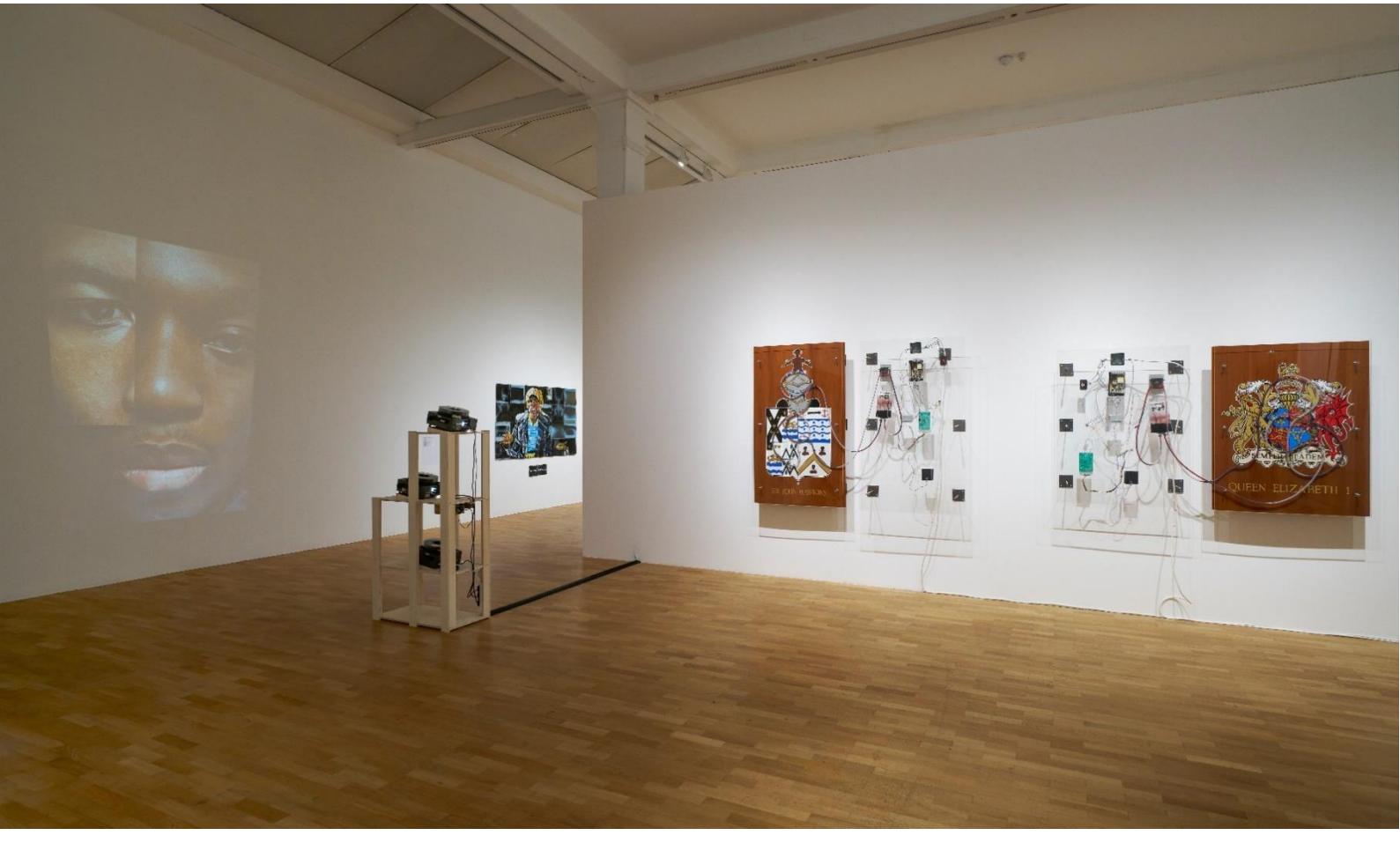
Our Programme

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



The Role of the Director's Assistant

Purpose of the Role

The Director's Assistant provides administrative and organisational support to the Director and helps to ensure the smooth running of her office. The role manages the Director's diary, travel and correspondence, supports Board and committee administration, and maintains good communication with colleagues, Trustees and external contacts.

The role also supports the Director's special projects and provides project coordination for the WG125 Capital Project. This involves coordinating project information, meetings and records, following up actions and keeping the project team informed of progress.



Numbi Fest, 15 June 2024.
Photo: Rehan Jamil

Key Responsibilities

Support for the Director

- Be the first point of contact for enquiries to the Director. Prioritise correspondence, respond where appropriate and draft communications on her behalf.
- Manage the Director's diary and competing commitments. Ensure she has the papers, briefings and practical information needed for meetings and engagements.
- Arrange travel, accommodation and related meetings. Prepare reports, briefings and presentations as required.
- Maintain clear communication between the Director, senior management, colleagues, Trustees, funders and other external contacts.

Governance and office administration

- Arrange the annual schedule of Trustee, committee and team meetings, management reviews and one-to-ones.
- Coordinate Board and committee papers, including contributions to the quarterly organisational report. Liaise with Trustees and monitor their terms of service.
- Maintain accurate and confidential files, records and administrative systems for the Director's Office. Keep the Director's cultivation list up to date with colleagues in other departments.
- Monitor the Director's Office budget and administer expenses, credit card receipts and financial records.

WG125 Capital Project

- Liaise with colleagues, consultants, contractors and the design team to support project planning and delivery.
- Maintain project records, including Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage files, drawings, minutes and approvals.
- Arrange project and Steering Committee meetings, partner meetings, site visits and design reviews.
- Take minutes, maintain the action register and follow up agreed actions. Support the project team and Steering Committee to meet agreed milestones.
- Track progress against the project timetable and raise risks, delays or other issues with the appropriate manager.
- Assist with reviewing design documents against the project brief and flag matters requiring further review. Contribute to project communications and reporting.

Representation and special projects

- Represent the Director's Office in correspondence, when welcoming visitors and at internal and external events.
- Support research, exhibition and consultancy projects, including occasional assistance with loan requests and responses to proposals.
- Help organise staff Christmas and summer events. Manage or mentor trainees in the Director's Office as required.



Person Specification

Essential

- Substantial experience of supporting a Director or senior leader as a PA or Executive Assistant, with a strong record of managing a demanding office and working with senior external contacts.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Able to draft thoughtful, accurate correspondence on behalf of the Director, prepare clear briefings and capture decisions and actions precisely.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the confidence to build effective relationships with colleagues, Trustees, artists, funders and external partners. Able to adapt their approach and represent the Director's Office with warmth and professionalism.
- Experience of supporting Board and committee governance, including preparing papers, taking accurate minutes, following up agreed actions and handling confidential matters with discretion.
- Excellent judgement, tact and discretion. Able to handle sensitive information, recognise when a matter needs the Director's attention and respond appropriately on her behalf.
- Outstanding organisational skills, with experience of managing complex diaries, travel arrangements and competing commitments. Able to anticipate what is needed, prepare ahead and respond calmly when plans change.
- Initiative and a strong sense of responsibility for their work. Able to work independently, resolve practical problems and follow through on commitments without repeated prompting.
- Consistently high standards of accuracy and attention to detail, including when working under pressure or to tight deadlines.
- Experience of coordinating meetings and projects, maintaining reliable records, tracking progress and following up actions. Able to identify delays or gaps and bring them to the right person's attention.
- Confidence in managing competing requests and agreeing realistic priorities, while maintaining good working relationships across the organisation.

- Strong working knowledge of Outlook, Word, Excel and databases, with the ability to maintain well-organised shared files and improve administrative processes.
- An informed interest in contemporary visual art and a clear understanding of the Gallery's public purpose.
- Willingness to support occasional evening and weekend events and travel, within agreed working arrangements.

Desirable

- Experience of supporting a capital, architectural or infrastructure project, or familiarity with RIBA stages and design documentation.
- Experience of working in an arts, cultural or charitable organisation.
- Competence or fluency in another language.

General Responsibilities

- Maintain confidentiality and follow Gallery policies, including data protection, safeguarding and health and safety.
- Work collaboratively and contribute to a respectful and inclusive working environment.
- Take part in regular reviews with the Director to agree priorities, review progress and discuss support and development needs across both areas of work.
- Undertake other duties appropriate to the role as reasonably requested by the Director.

Conditions of Work
Contract: Permanent
Hours of work: Full time, 36.25 hours per week, Monday to Friday, 9:30am–5:45pm, with a one-hour unpaid lunch break. We also welcome applications from candidates seeking a four-day working week, with hours and salary adjusted pro rata. We recognise the importance of balancing work with caring and other commitments and are happy to discuss working arrangements. Hybrid working is available according to the requirements of the role.
Salary: £37,000
Probationary period: 3 months with a maximum extension of 2 months
Notice period: 2 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.

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

Whitechapel Gallery is committed to a fair, respectful and welcoming workplace. Rooted in the diverse communities of East London, we want our workforce to reflect the communities we serve and welcome applications from people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

We recognise that barriers to working in the arts remain. We are committed to fair recruitment, valuing the skills and experience each person brings, and creating an environment where colleagues can contribute and feel they belong.

Everyone working at the Gallery shares responsibility for putting this commitment into practice through their decisions, behaviour and relationships. We expect discrimination to be challenged and everyone to be treated with dignity and respect.

Deadline for applications: 12 noon on 30 November 2026

Interviews: 8 December 2026

Living Wage Foundation

disability confident COMMITTED


THE WORLD IN
WHITECHAPEL
Whitechapel Gallery