

## Academy Art Museum

### Senior Curator

***The Academy Art Museum seeks to hire a Senior Curator who will enhance the Museum's mission and reputation by organizing high-quality exhibitions of national, regional, and local significance and strategically grow the Permanent Collection. The Senior Curator will also have a leadership role in the development of a state-of-the-art collection storage annex with a historical legacy.***

Founded in 1958, and with an annual operating budget of \$1.6 million, the [Academy Art Museum](#) (AAM) is a small museum that punches above its weight. As the only art museum on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the museum takes seriously its mandate to expose local audiences to visual art experiences that are intellectually rigorous, accessible, and engaging. With its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and resulting tributaries that create more shoreline in Talbot County than the entire west coast of the United States, the region is full of natural beauty and is known for its vibrant culinary and arts communities and its charming historic downtown. Located one hour from Baltimore, 1.5 hours from Washington, DC, 2 hours from Philadelphia, and 3.5 hours from New York City, Easton is also an ideal location to visit other major museums, galleries, and artist studios.

The museum is well-supported by 27 Board Members and 10 full-time, 7 part-time staff, has a growing endowment of ~\$7 million, and is in excellent financial health, with reserve funds for ambitious projects that exceed the operating budget. Since 1958, AAM has served as the region's artistic locus. Today, it operates in a 24,000 square foot complex, is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, and draws 30,000-45,000 visitors annually. In January 2023, the museum eliminated its admission fee to provide barrier-free access to everyone.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Academy Art Museum collection contains 1,700 artworks, including prints and drawings by Mary Cassatt, Pablo Picasso, and Kiki Smith; photographs by Berenice Abbott, Ansel Adams; Graciela Iturbide, Lisette Model, and Zanele Muholi, and works by pioneering African American artists, including Leonardo Drew, Sam Gilliam, Martin Puryear, and Renee Stout, among others. In 2008, AAM was selected as the Maryland recipient of The Dorothy and Herbert Vogel Collection. With its relatively young and small collection, AAM is in the unique position of actively shaping holdings that represent a fuller historical narrative through the inclusion of diverse artists. Each year the museum spends \$40-70K on acquisitions and accepts an average of 30 donations of artworks through its relationships with private collectors and initiatives such as Museum Exchange.

Each year, the museum organizes between 8-12 original exhibitions for its three main galleries composed of approximately 3,000 square feet of space. The exhibitions, which are drawn from the collection, as well as institutional and private loans, cover a range of themes and art from the 17<sup>th</sup> century to today. The museum also hosts in its main galleries an annual member and student show, as well as the Plein Air and Waterfowl community-based exhibitions. The annual budget for the exhibition slate ranges from \$80-120K. In spring 2023, the museum established a special fund for ambitious curatorial projects that exceed the operating budget.

The museum has benefited from a partnership with Art Bridges Foundation, which generously funds the transportation of loans of works by major artists and has subsidized related

educational programming, as well as relationships with the National Gallery of Art, High Museum, and Virginia Museum of Fine Art, institutions that share works from their collections to enhance AAM's shows.

Since 2017, the museum has implemented an annual Artist-in-Residence program in which artists receive housing, resources, and a capstone exhibition and catalogue. The initiative is fully funded through Summer 2028. In fall 2021, the museum began commissioning immersive, large-scale projects in the Atrium designed to enrich the visitor experience with visually captivating installations for all ages.

In January 2023, the museum announced an exciting capital project – the development of a state-of-the-art collection storage facility adjacent to the museum. The 5,000 square foot space is slated to break ground in winter 2024 and open one year later. AAM has engaged Brooklyn-based architect GRT to design the space. While the interior of the space will serve a purely administrative function, the exterior of the building will serve as an outdoor exhibition space featuring a display of artifacts uncovered in a series of archeological excavations on the site that tell the story of Henny and James Freeman. The Freeman's are the first documented free Black landowning family in Easton, who lived on the plot from 1787-1828. The site is located in a historic neighborhood called The Hill, an early free Black settlement in the country. When complete, AAM's annex will enable the museum to better care for its collection and serve as an important stop for public engagement on The Hill Community Walking Tour. The Curator will play an important role in this expansion project. To learn more about the project, listen to Director Sarah Jesse and archeologist Jay Lunze discuss the project on [WYPR's On the Record](#).

Beyond its exhibitions, the museum programs its five art-making studios and Performing Arts Auditorium with over 100 artmaking classes for adults, monthly lectures and concerts, weekly school tours, daily summer art camps, bi-monthly family days, a paid high school internship program for a cohort of up to 13 teens per year, and an annual Craft Show that draws over 60 makers from around the country.

The Curator reports to Director Sarah Jesse. A Curatorial Assistant and a small team of independent contractors that handle framing and art preparation support AAM's exhibitions.

### **MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Senior Curator will have the following major responsibilities:

#### **Exhibitions**

- Conceptualize, plan, and develop original exhibitions that meet the museum's scholarship and audience development goals
- Maintain a 3-year Exhibition Plan through creative strategic thinking and research, development and communication with individuals and institutions for loans and traveling shows
- Oversee and lead the design, production and installation of exhibitions working with support staff and contract preparators and framers
- Prepare text relating to all curatorial areas for press promotion, Academy magazine, and Museum website; research and write interpretive exhibition materials that are accessible to the general public

- Develop, plan, and produce exhibition publications, when budgeted
- Train the Front Desk staff and Docent Corps with information about exhibitions and the Permanent Collection
- Liaise with the Permanent Collection and Exhibitions Committee Chairs and members as the staff representative; plan meetings and agendas
- Develop professional relationships with artists, dealers, private collectors and art specialists, as well as fellow museums, galleries, colleges, universities and art foundations regionally and nationally
- Oversee management of incoming and outgoing loans, condition reporting, exhibition proposals and agreements, gift agreements and other departmental records and archives relating to exhibitions
- Work with the development department to pursue grants relating to curatorial projects

### **Collections**

- Help facilitate the execution of a state-of-the-art collection storage facility and re-housing the collection
- Work closely with the Curatorial Assistant in implementing professional collections management practices to oversee the care and development of the Museum's Permanent Collection
- Develop an Acquisitions Plan with a targeted, strategic outlook on the growth of the Permanent Collection
- With Director, pursue and propose significant acquisitions to the Permanent Collection through the process outlined in the Collections Management Policy
- Progress an institutional de-accessioning program
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records in Collector Systems, and supervise the organization of the storage vault, frame shop and other spaces that house collections; oversee relocation of works to the new annex
- Undertake an annual inventory of the Permanent Collection
- Periodically update institutional policies relating to collections and exhibitions

### **General and Administrative**

- Write, maintain and oversee the annual departmental budget
- Supervise the Curatorial Assistant, write annual performance review
- Work with Director to develop lectures, artist talks, and behind-the-scenes tours
- Give tours, lectures and private visits for the public, Collection Society, new Trustees and other members, individuals and groups
- Plan and manage the program of the Collection Society and Emerging Collector Circle, developing special private collection visits, behind-the-scenes tours, artist talks, and other special experiences

- Travel when budgets permit to appropriate art fairs, auctions, art gatherings and events to develop relationships that benefit the Museum

### **IDEAL EXPERIENCE**

The Senior Curator should have the following type of experience and qualifications:

- Bachelor's Degree in Art, Curatorial Practice, Museum Studies, Art History, or a related field, Master's Degree preferred
- 2+ years of experience developing and implementing exhibitions at a professional museum with a Permanent Collection, or an equivalent institution
- An enthusiastic passion for a broad range of art periods
- Excellent research, verbal and written communication skills (for general public and scholarly audiences)
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and ability to excite a diverse general public
- Self-motivated but highly collaborative and inclusive
- A demonstrable history of integrating values of diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and inclusive approaches within organizations and programs

### **SALARY AND BENEFITS**

\$75,000 - \$85,000, plus relocation stipend

Competitive benefits package, including an annual contribution to a Simplified Employee Pension Plan

For more information please contact:

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