

Syracuse University

Syracuse University Art Museum – Executive Director

Syracuse University seeks a visionary and dynamic museum professional to lead the Museum and oversee outstanding exhibitions, collections, research, visual arts education, and exceptional visitor experiences for the University community and the Syracuse community at large.

BACKGROUND

The SU Art Museum is a point of pride for Syracuse University, featuring one of the top ten largest academic museum collections in the United States and providing a rich academic resource for faculty, students, and alumni. It serves the culturally vibrant communities of Syracuse and the Central New York region as well as New York City through its exhibitions and programming at the Louise and Bernard Palitz Gallery at Lubin House.

The Museum plays an active educational role on campus. Its galleries and study rooms function as learning sites, and its expansive collection is a teaching and research tool that serves students and faculty from all schools and colleges on campus. The Museum hosts approximately 250 class visits per year and works closely with faculty from a wide range of academic departments.

Museum staff also collaborate with faculty to curate curriculum-focused exhibitions, offering students the opportunity to learn about the work of the Museum and to contribute their perspectives to the interpretation of the Museum's collections. The Museum also hosts a Faculty Fellows Program, a stipend-supported opportunity that guides faculty from diverse departments on how to incorporate object-based teaching and research into their existing course syllabi and provides ongoing curricular and instructional support.

The SU Art Museum is a member of the Coalition of Museum and Art Centers (CMAC), a vibrant consortium of visual art centers across campus. The SU Art Museum also offers Photography and Literacy Project, which promotes critical thinking, self-expression, literacy, and self-esteem for youth in the Syracuse City School District.

BY THE NUMBERS

The SU Art Museum serves as the steward of a collection of more than 45,000 objects that spans 5,500 years, is global in geographic scope (including Europe, the Americas, East Asia, South Asia, and West Africa), and represents a diversity of media (including works on paper, paintings, sculpture, photography, ceramic, textiles, and glassware). The collection also features gifts from artists, including content from studios and complete print catalogs.

Recent collecting efforts have focused on supporting the University's curriculum and introducing greater racial and gender diversity into the Museum's holdings. Since 2019, purchases have prioritized contemporary artworks by Black and Indigenous artists.

In addition to the Executive Director, the Museum employs seven full-time [staff](#) that work closely with advisors throughout the University to optimize the physical space, including exhibition galleries and collections storage, and to improve physical and digital accessibility of the Museum's collections. The Museum has an annual operating budget of approximately 1.5 million, excluding additional University support and benefits from the advice and advocacy of a ten-member Advisory Board who work as ambassadors for the Museum alongside the Executive Director and staff to advance the interest of the Museum and Syracuse University.

The Executive Director reports to the Associate Provost for Strategic Initiatives in the Office of Academic Affairs.

Syracuse University is a private, international research university located in the geographic heart of New York State, with a global footprint, and over 150 years of history. The scope of Syracuse University is a testament to its strengths: a pioneering history dating back to 1870; a choice of more than 200 majors, 100 minors, and 200 advanced degree programs offered across the University's 13 schools and colleges; over 15,000 undergraduates and over 6,000 graduate students; more than a quarter of a million alumni in 160 countries; and a student population from all 50 U.S. states and 123 countries.

BASIC FUNCTION

The Executive Director provides comprehensive artistic vision, administration, leadership, and oversight of the Museum staff. The Executive Director works to secure the Museum's position as an innovative leader among academic art museums; champions the importance of the visual arts, arts education, curatorial practice, and scholarship; ensures that the Museum connects with and is accessible to the local community; and oversees Museum collections, exhibitions operations, finances, and fundraising (in collaboration with the University). The Executive Director is the SU Art Museum's public advocate and ambassador and is an active partner to the Advisory Board, the University community, and broader arts constituents locally, nationally, and internationally.

Given the Museum's importance as an educational and cultural asset, the University's leadership is poised to invest in and support the Executive Director's bold strategic vision for the SU Art Museum. The Executive Director will redefine the role of an academic museum in the 21st century and reinforce its role as a destination on campus, in the city of Syracuse, and in the Central New York region as a place of welcome, stimulation, and contemplation for students, faculty, staff, and the citizens of Syracuse and beyond for years to come.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will be empowered and expected to:

- Oversee all museum operations in order to provide strategic and collaborative leadership and vision.
- Develop and maintain the University art collection, oversee the production of high quality exhibitions, publications, scholarship, and other programs for the SU Art Museum and Palitz Gallery. Support the academic mission to increase awareness and appreciation for the arts for students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the general public.
- Provide leadership, vision, and guidance and supervise the activities of seven full-time including Associate Director, Curator, Curator of Education, Registrar, Assistant Registrar and Provenance Researcher, Preparator, and Administrative Specialist, in addition to part-time staff, graduate assistants, and interns.
- Create a strategic plan with Board and staff to address museum mission, vision, and goals for the next five years.
- Implement appropriate policies governing conservation, documentation, security, and storage of, as well as physical and digital access to, the collection.
- Plan for the long-range development of programs and activities and direct the administrative and operational activities of the Museum.
- Develop and expand on opportunities that emphasize community engagement.

- Develop the physical footprint of the building to achieve the mission of the Museum.
- Oversee accreditation and application of professional practices.
- Develop and administer use and care of the permanent collection for viewing at the University, in New York. Work with all appropriate departments at the University to maintain the exhibition and collection storage facilities.
- Develop budget recommendations, maintain records, approve expenditures, manage endowment resources, and interview and select staff.
- Strengthen philanthropic support and partner with the Advisory Board and the Syracuse University Office of Development to increase major gift fundraising and attract new institutional and individual donors.
- Account for budget planning and controlling expenditures for the art collection. Prepare annual documentation of a multi-million-dollar University asset for financial/accounting departments/risk management. Prepare reports for use of restricted funds.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will possess many of the following professional and personal qualifications, characteristics, and experiences:

- **Advanced degree in art history or related field** (Master's required, Ph.D. preferred) and several years of experience in a senior-level administrative role in a museum or similar environment, or an equivalent combination of experience and education.
- **Highly developed creative problem solving, persuasion, and negotiation skills.** Excellent written and verbal communication skills. Ability to use these skills to develop existing and forge new relationships with faculty and local, regional, national, and international communities to advance the aims of the Academic Strategic Plan at Syracuse University and increase public impact and collaboration among stakeholders at the University and in the local and regional communities.
- **Proven museum experience**, including executing exhibitions, publications, and programming. Experience overseeing collections, operations, fundraising efforts, public relations, marketing initiatives, and budgets. Preference given to candidates who gained these experiences while working at a museum on an academic campus.
- **Administrative and operational sophistication:** A record of effective management of physical, human, and financial resources. A deep understanding of and interest in financial and budget oversight and the interplay of institutional priorities, planning, resource requirements, and revenue generation. Substantial and successful fundraising experience; additional professional experience that reflects the development of robust support networks.
- **Demonstrated knowledge of current trends** and conversations within the museum field including equity-oriented practices that center community voices.
- **Extensive knowledge of and experience with professional practices of collection care** and management.
- **Extensive knowledge of the American Alliance of Museums accreditation process.** Preference given to candidates with experience successfully completing the accreditation process.
- **Experience working successfully with boards, faculty councils, and student groups.**

- **Significant record of successful fundraising** through philanthropy and grants.
- **Commitment to academic culture and a desire to contribute to the same:** broad vision and curiosity; boldness of ideas. A keen and informed interest in the work of faculty, students, and departments and a desire to support and amplify their goals. Demonstrated orientation to collaboration, cooperation, and exchange.
- **Leadership qualities:** An audacious thinker with a record of successful executive leadership, including visionary thinking, strategic planning and implementation, board and community engagement, and program development and assessment.
- **Commitment to diversity, inclusion, and accessibility:** A record of dedication to and success in the advancement of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. Ability to model and establish a culture of mutual respect, transparency, and empowerment.
- **Professional qualities:** A management style that relies on open and responsive communication and reflects the highest professional and ethical standards. A collaborative approach to decision making combined with a sense of energy, enthusiasm, and an entrepreneurial capacity to move things forward. A direct but diplomatic style. Consistency, maturity, and composure in presentation and interpersonal dealings.
- **Personal qualities:** Intellectual and emotional integrity, empathy, curiosity, and creativity. Confidence; comfort with ambiguity; patience and persistence. Openness to the opinions of others, coupled with independent thought. Honesty, tact, generosity, perspective, and good humor.

COMPENSATION

Salary Range: \$150,000 - \$175,000 annually.

To apply, nominate others, or for further information, please contact:

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EEO Statement

Syracuse University is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution. The University prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, creed, religion, sex, gender, national origin, citizenship, ethnicity, marital status, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, veteran status, or any other status protected by applicable law to the extent prohibited by law. This nondiscrimination policy covers admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs, services, and activities.

Commitment to Supporting and Hiring Veterans

Syracuse University has a long history of engaging veterans and the military-connected community through its educational programs, community outreach, and employment programs. After World War II, Syracuse University

welcomed more than 10,000 returning veterans to our campus, and those veterans literally transformed Syracuse University into the national research institution it is today. The University's contemporary commitment to veterans builds on this historical legacy, and extends to both class-leading initiatives focused on making an SU degree accessible and affordable to the post-9/11 generation of veterans, and also programs designed to position Syracuse University as the employer of choice for military veterans, members of the Guard and Reserve, and military family members.

Commitment to a Diverse and Inclusive Campus Community

Syracuse University maintains an inclusive learning environment in which students, faculty, administrators, staff, curriculum, social activities, governance, and all other aspects of campus life reflect a diverse, multi-cultural, and international worldview. The University community recognizes and values the many similarities and differences among individuals and groups. At Syracuse, we are committed to preparing students to understand, live among, appreciate, and work in an inherently diverse country and world made up of people with different ethnic and racial backgrounds, military backgrounds, religious beliefs, socio-economic status, cultural traditions, abilities, sexual orientations and gender identities. To do so, we commit ourselves to promoting a community that celebrates and models the principles of diversity and inclusivity.