

Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester Curator of Contemporary Art

The Memorial Art Gallery at the University of Rochester seeks a contemporary art expert to curate permanent collection installations and temporary exhibitions that advance the Museum's mission, visibility, scholarship, and audience development goals.

Founded in 1913 by arts patron Emily Sibley Watson, the Memorial Art Gallery (MAG) at the University of Rochester (UR) has played a central role in the cultural life of Rochester, New York and is considered one of the finest regional art museums in the country. Held in trust by the University of Rochester but located four miles off campus, MAG is one of the few university-affiliated art museums in the country with a dual purpose to serve the academic community and the public.

MAG's mission is to connect people, inspire fun, and ignite discovery through art. The original building, a Renaissance style "jewel box," opened to the public in 1913. The museum expanded in 1926 with a basilica-style Fountain Court flanked by side galleries that now permanently houses, among many art historical treasures, the only vintage Italian baroque organ in the United States, which is played regularly by students and faculty of UR's renowned Eastman School of Music. In 2013, the ten-acre Centennial Sculpture Park opened with major sculptural commissions. In spring 2023, a major expansion of this Park completed the museum's frontage along University Avenue in the vibrant Neighborhood of the Arts. MAG includes a restaurant, retail shop, library, conference facilities, a 300-seat auditorium, and the Creative Workshop, a community art school, within 106,000 square feet of interior space.

With a collection of nearly 13,000 works spanning 5,000 years, the museum is a unique educational center committed to broadening understanding of world cultures, art, and history.

In the past eight years, MAG has grown the modern and contemporary program and art collection dramatically, with a recent gift of \$4 million, the largest gift in MAG's history, to permanently endow the Curator of Contemporary Art position and to further support the contemporary art program.

Education has always been central to the museum's mission. MAG offers a robust schedule of lectures, concerts, tours, social events, and family activities as well as studio art classes for 3,000+ children and adults annually. The museum welcomes between 7,000 and 10,000 PreK-12 students from more than 30 school districts into the museum each year. The Expanded Learning Collaboration with Rochester City School District brings more than 550 elementary students to MAG on weekly visits over a four-week period to enable deep engagement with the museum and its Creative Workshop (Rochester's community art school).

The annual Halloween party, Museum of the Dead, and regularly offered DeTours are fun, alternative ways to explore MAG's art offerings, and they regularly sell out. Art and Observation, developed in coordination with the University of Rochester's Medical School, uses MAG's permanent collection to help develop the diagnostic skills of medical students. Several other creative and innovative programs take place at MAG. Among them are the popular, community-partner-organized, and free Celebration Days that highlight diverse cultures and feature, for example, African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native American, and Pride themes.

In the past eight years, MAG's annual budget has grown from \$5 million to \$11 million, which includes a direct subsidy from the University. MAG has an endowment of about \$80 million with

an annual budget of \$1.2 million designated for acquisitions. In a typical year, MAG welcomes 185,000-235,000 visitors.

ABOUT ROCHESTER

Rochester combines small-town accessibility with big-city services. Amidst some of the most beautiful scenery in the United States, residents enjoy a housing market known for great bargains, short commute times, world-class cultural and entertainment offerings, and a fast-growing innovation economy poised to thrive in the 21st century.

Rochester’s economy benefits from many advantages, including an ample supply of fresh water from Lake Ontario and the pristine Finger Lakes, a central location among the population centers of the Northeastern United States and the innovative foundations laid by such firms as Kodak, Xerox, and Bausch and Lomb. A host of colleges and universities, including the University of Rochester and the Rochester Institute of Technology, produce an educated workforce and generate cutting-edge research that drives the city’s innovation and technology sectors.

Rochester offers a host of cultural attractions, entertainment options, and events for just about every interest and pastime, including classical music, professional sports, and music and arts festivals and includes Geva Theater Center, Eastman Museum and Eastman School of Music (also affiliated with the UR), the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and the annual Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival. The Strong National Museum of Play is home to the National Toy Hall of Fame, and the annual Lilac Festival harkens to Rochester’s early history as the Flower City. The city’s rich history as a center for civil rights and social justice remains an important element of Rochester’s legacy and a continues to draw visitors to such places as the Mount Hope Cemetery, the final resting place of Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Reporting to the Curator in Charge, the Curator of Contemporary Art has expertise in modern and contemporary art, especially of the past 20 years, and a strong network of relationships among artists, gallerists, collectors, and professional colleagues. The Curator serves as an active and visible member of the local, national, and international arts community and as an outward-facing presence in the art world, engaging in community and public engagement both inside and outside the institution, as well as effectively leading and managing teams that develop exhibitions, installations, and special projects.

- Develops, manages, and stewards permanent collection of contemporary art in galleries and publications.
- Conducts original research, selects objects, presents, and makes recommendations for acquisitions, deaccessions, and gifts to the Art Committee.
- Prioritizes and provides oversight for conservation treatments.
- Originates, develops, and presents temporary exhibitions; organizes and coordinates temporary loan exhibitions as related to areas of expertise and responsibility; obtains loans from other institutions and private individuals.
- Originates concepts, conducts original research, selects objects, collaborates with team consisting of curatorial colleagues, educators, exhibition designers, and facilities on

interpretation, display, presentation, and installation.

- Works with educators, when appropriate, and IT staff (or outside digital interactive designers) to develop programs and in-gallery engagement tools.
- Produces and contributes to publications supporting the collection and exhibitions, including scholarly essays and texts in addition to gallery text.
- Collaborates closely with educators and the Marketing and Engagement team to create and support programming to enhance community engagement with the contemporary art collection and exhibitions.
- Gives public lectures on exhibitions and permanent collection displays as well as lectures to community groups, docents, and provisional docents as well as University of Rochester faculty and students.
- Engages in advancement efforts to support curatorial priorities, such as actively seeking and cultivating collectors and donors for both funding and gifts of art; identifies and writes grant proposals to support MAG's exhibitions, permanent gallery installations, and collections stewardship initiatives.
- Visits private collections and creates development reports; leads trips with collectors and patrons to art fairs, art galleries, museums, and private collections nationally and internationally.
- Represents the museum at national and international art fairs, biennials, exhibition openings, and other contemporary art world events.
- Supports the execution of the initiatives of the Strategic Plan with special attention to MAG's DEAI focus.

IDEAL QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will have/be:

- An advanced degree in art history and at least five years of experience in an art museum, visual arts organization, or arts center in a curatorial role
- A minimum of 5 years of experience in research or museum environment with knowledge of conservation, installation, and interpretive techniques; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Demonstrated knowledge of and passion for contemporary art and artists, including local and regional artists, and for exploring new directions in the fields of contemporary art and museums.
- Strong interpersonal skills with a proven ability to interact respectfully, collegially, and professionally with colleagues, other employees, donors, and lenders.
- Deeply committed to promoting the diversification of artists and audiences and to considering acquisitions and programs through the museum's DEAI strategic initiative.
- Demonstrated ability to work closely with artists to realize exhibitions and projects.
- Superb written and verbal communication skills.

Curator of Contemporary Art

- Highly organized working style and ability to juggle a variety of deadlines and commitments simultaneously.
- Ability to maintain the highest ethics as they relate to all aspects of curatorial endeavors and to understand and maintain the highest levels of confidentiality.

The salary range for this role is \$59,197-82,888. Compensation includes an excellent benefits package and relocation expenses.

The Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages applications from people of color, persons with disabilities, women, and LGBTQ+ applicants.

For more information please contact:

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