

CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES – OVERVIEW & RESOURCES

Careers in Museums

EXHIBITION INSTALLATION

Typical tasks:

- handling, moving, hanging and installation of works of art
- arrangement of lighting
- packing and unpacking of works of art for shipment
- mounting of wall text and other exhibition components

Initial Requirements:

- BA degree
- Artistic training and/or other mechanical skills such as carpentry

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Typical tasks:

- creation of publicity materials (print, digital, and increasingly social media)
- planning of public events and outreach activities
- engaging and developing relationships with local and national media

Initial Requirements:

- BA degree (second major in Communications may be useful as would the certificate in public and professional writing)
- Strong writing and oral communication skills
- Web design useful, web and social media management essential
- Computer graphic skills useful

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Typical tasks:

- working with the board and director to advance the educational mission of the institution
- cultivating relationships with schools and other institutions
- designing programs for other audiences, broadening the reach of the institution into the community

Initial Requirements:

- BA degree. Eventually, masters in education or certification in education might be necessary
- Language skills might be useful, particularly Spanish if seeking positions in museums in urban areas in the U.S.
- Strong writing and oral communications skills
- Some experience with event planning might be useful

DEVELOPMENT

Typical tasks:

- work to establish substantive and productive relationships between the institution and potential private and public (individual or corporate) donors (would work closely with the director and board).
- grant writing
- fund raising

Initial Requirements:

- BA degree. 2nd major or minor in business or economics might be useful. Certificate in public and professional writing might be useful.
- Strong writing and oral communication skills.
- Eventually, MBA or MA in arts management might be desirable.

CURATORIAL:

Typical tasks:

- working closely with art objects
- researching – expanding knowledge about the collection
- planning and conceptualizing exhibitions
- writing exhibition catalogues
- preparing loan agreements (working closely with registrar's office)
- engaging with scholars in the field who seek to study or use objects in the collection

Requirements:

- MA, but often PhD in art history
- Advanced research and writing skills
- History of scholarship in a specialized field of study
- Foreign language aptitude (reading and speaking fluency)

ADMINISTRATION:

Typical tasks:

- providing administrative support to museum staff
- assist in daily museum operations – could involve providing direct assistance to operations of education, development, curatorial and other departments

Initial Requirements:

- Bachelors degree
- MA in Museums Studies, MA in Art History and/or PhD in art history required for top executive positions.
- Fundraising skills
- Strong communication skills (writing and oral), but also ability to lead a team, work well with others
- Clerical skills – fluency with current computer software and programs (databases, spreadsheets)

Some examples of administrative positions:

- Registrar's Office: responsible for the management of the collection – keeping track of all objects housed in the collection, overseeing the legal and practical details when loaning or borrowing works of art for exhibition, ensuring works of art travel safely between organizations.
 - o BA required, typically with major in art history or studio arts. MA in museum studies sometimes useful.
 - o Foreign Language skills often useful – responsible for communicating with arts institutions throughout the world.
- Reproductions: work to ensure photographic and digital reproductions of works of art in the collection are circulating properly (following copyright law). Work with the public to provide legal rights to use of images of works in collection
- Publications: work with curatorial department and director's office to oversee all institutional publications, including newsletters and magazines, exhibition catalogues.
 - o BA required. Majors in art history and English writing useful. MA in art history or English writing may be necessary.
 - o Advanced writing skills.
- Retail: work to establish profitable retail activity – museum stores, online retailing.
 - o BA required. Second majors or minors in business or economics might be useful. Business management experience desirable.

Museum job postings and resources:

- American Association of Museums: <http://www.aam-us.org/>
- Museum Jobs: <http://museumsjobs.com/>
- Global Museum – Museum-related news headlines, museum studies guidance and classifieds: www.globalmuseum.org
- Museum Employment Resource Center: <http://museum-employment.com/>
- Museum Job Resources Online: <http://www.algonquincollege.com/museum/jobres/index.html>
- Smithsonian Institution:
 - o <http://www.si.edu/Interns>
 - o <http://www.si.edu/ofg/>
 - o <http://www.sih.si.edu/>
 - o Museum Studies Resources from the Smithsonian Institute: <http://museumstudies.si.edu/>
- Association of Academic Museums and Galleries: <http://www.aamg-us.org/>
- The Association of Art Museum Curators: <http://www.artcurators.org/>
- New York Foundation for the Arts: www.nyfa.org
 - o see their classifieds section for job postings and other opportunities

Careers in the Commercial Sector

ART GALLERIES AND AUCTION HOUSES

Typical tasks:

- Sales
- Maintaining relationships with artists, discovering new artists
- Planning displays and exhibitions
- Researching works of art
- Writing gallery catalogues
- Maintaining relationships with buyers and clients
- Art appraisal

Requirements:

- BA, with major in art history, history or studio arts useful. Second major or minor in business, communications or economics useful.
- MA or PhD may be necessary depending on gallery and desired position
- Good communication and networking skills
- Sales and business management experience

Job postings and resources:

- Art Dealers Association of America: <http://www.artdealers.org/>
- National Art and Antique Dealers Association of America: <http://www.naadaa.org/>
- New Art Dealers' Alliance: <http://www.newartdealers.org/>
- Sotheby's: <http://www.sothebys.com/en.html>
- Christie's: <http://www.christies.com/>

CAREERS IN ACADEMIA – Colleges and Universities

Typical tasks:

- Teaching undergraduate and possibly graduate courses in art history
- Advising students
- Article and book-length research projects
- Grant writing
- Academic administration

Requirements:

- PhD in Art History¹

¹ A PhD in art history is an approximately seven-year commitment (normally, it takes two years to receive the Masters degree and pass the comprehensive examinations, and another five to complete the dissertation – research and writing). Foreign language fluency is essential – language study should begin as early as possible for those who think they may pursue a PhD degree. Most universities require that you are fluent in one foreign language to be accepted into the program and you will be expected to learn at least one other language before graduating. You will also be expected to produce a dissertation, a book-length research project that contributes original research to your field.

- Advanced research and writing skills (publications are required for professional advancement, securing tenure). Research skills should include the ability to engage directly with archives and primary sources.
- Teaching experience (initially acquired during graduate school as a teaching assistant or through adjunct teaching)

Job postings and resources:

- College Art Association: www.collegeart.org
- *Chronicle of Higher Education*: www.chronical.com
- H-Net Job Guide: <https://www.h-net.org/jobs/home.php>
- HigherEdJobs: <http://www.higheredjobs.com/>
- Academic Keys for the Fine Arts: <http://finearts.academickeys.com/>

NOTE: Art History majors are often well positioned to seek a career in education at the elementary and secondary school level. Only private secondary schools will hire an applicant without teaching certification and a bachelors degree. (See the National Association for Independent Schools for more information: www.nais.org.) Students interested in careers in elementary or secondary school education are encouraged to consult with Pitt's School of Education for guidance as early as possible. (www.education.pitt.edu.) Students can seek undergraduate coursework and some degrees in education while at Pitt. For those seeking to apply to certification or masters programs in education after graduating, it might be advised to double major in another discipline: History, Political Science, Economics, English literature or writing, a foreign language, Sociology, Anthropology, a natural science, Psychology... other options are available depending on the area of teaching in which you are interested.

OTHER USEFUL WEBSITES FOR PROFESSIONAL PLANNING:
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Cultural Resources Network: <http://www.eculturalresources.com>

HireCulture – A free, searchable database of arts, humanities, and science employment opportunities in Massachusetts: www.hireculture.org

Federal Employment and Service:

www.usajobs.gov

- note they have a special section dedicated to students and recent graduates

www.makingthedifference.org

<http://www.bestplacetowork.org/BPTW/rankings/>

www.wherethejobsare.org