

OPEN POSITION DESCRIPTION

MUSKEGON MUSEUM OF ART

Muskegon, Michigan

DIRECTOR OF THE BENNETT PRIZE FOR WOMEN FIGURATIVE REALIST PAINTERS

The Muskegon Museum of Art (MMA) is seeking a qualified professional to serve in the newly created position of Director of The Bennett Prize for Women Figurative Realist Painters/Bennett Schmidt Curator of Women's Art.

The creation of this position coincides with the construction of The Bennett-Schmidt Pavilion, an addition to the current Muskegon Museum of Art doubling its size to 57,570 square feet in order to feature exhibits dedicated to the work of women artists. This expansion reflects the MMA's position as the sponsoring museum for The Bennett Prize for Women Figurative Realist Painters, an honor it has held since the creation of The Prize in 2018.

The Bennett Prize for Women Figurative Realist Painters is a biennial, juried art competition that awards \$50,000 to one woman artist to create her own solo exhibition and awards an additional prize of \$10,000 to a woman painter for achievement in figurative realism. The Prize is intended to encourage women artists who have historically been underrepresented in the art world and to showcase and promote figurative realism. The Director of The Bennett Prize will be responsible for the organization, coordination, and management of all Bennett Prize activities and the associated exhibition *Rising Voices*, including overseeing the logistics of the competition and the call for entries, gathering the information for the exhibition and associated catalogue, overseeing the design of the catalogue and, in conjunction with MMA staff, overseeing the installation of the exhibition at the MMA and the logistics of the traveling exhibition. Given the national scope of The Prize, the incumbent must have significant skill in coordinating with other institutions and individuals, including museums, art galleries, consultants, and awardees.

Additionally, the person selected for this position, in conjunction with the Executive Director of the museum, will contribute to the women-focused programming of the MMA, including the selection, design and logistics of exhibitions of the work of women artists sponsored by the museum. The incumbent will support the curation of the work of women artists in the MMA permanent collection, including those contained in The Bennett Collection, a gift of over 150 contemporary and historic paintings of women by women being given to the museum by the Texas-based collectors, Steven Alan Bennett and Dr. Elaine Melotti Schmidt.

The ideal candidate will have significant experience, preferably 5 or more years, in and with museums, art exhibitions, and arts management and will have an understanding of and experience with managing a collection of art objects, mounting museum exhibitions that include all types of art, and the creation of promotional materials related to such exhibitions, including accompanying scholarly catalogues. A Master of Arts degree in museum studies or administration, museum science, museology, or art history is preferred. Alternatively, the appropriate candidate might have a Master of Fine Arts degree in an artistic discipline with accompanying experience in a museum setting. Lesser education, but not less than a bachelor's degree, with offsetting experience may be considered for the right candidate.

This full-time position will report directly to the Executive Director of the MMA and will be housed in the MMA's principal facility in downtown Muskegon, Michigan. The position will have pay appropriate to the education and experience of the chosen candidate and will include a full package of health and welfare benefits equal to that of other similarly situated members of the MMA staff. Given the need for the incumbent to interface with fellow museum staff members as well as the community, opportunities for remote work will be limited. It is expected that the incumbent will make the Greater Muskegon area their home.

The Muskegon Museum of Art is one of the Nation's premier art museums with a dynamic and motivated staff. Situated on the shore of Lake Michigan, the MMA is a renowned Western Michigan cultural institution dedicated to showcasing the visual arts. Founded in 1912, the MMA has a permanent collection in excess of 5,000 objects, with a deep focus on painting, particularly the work of 19th and 20th century American artists. In addition to its permanent collection, the MMA from time-to-time showcases works from other institutions and private collections and received global accolades for its recent exhibition of the photographs and academic work of the ethnographer of American Indian culture, Edward S. Curtis. More recently, the MMA has gained significant recognition as a leader in promoting the work of women artists and has been the sponsoring museum for The Bennett Prize for Women Figurative Realist Painters since the inception of The Prize.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Director of The Bennett Prize

1. Responsible for the management of The Bennett Prize for Women Figurative Realists and accompanying exhibition including coordination and overseeing of related logistics, call for entry, catalog, exhibition installation, and related tasks.
2. Work collaboratively with MMA staff and any external marketing firms on the Bennett Prize marketing and strategy.
3. In conjunction with MMA staff, coordinate The Bennett Prize exhibition opening activities, including artist travel and accommodations, reception logistics, and workshops.
4. Oversee and coordinate associated traveling exhibitions, as well as securing additional exhibition venues, in accordance with nationally accepted museum practices.

The Bennett-Schmidt Curator of Women's Art

1. Working with the Executive Director and in coordination with MMA staff, contribute to and develop women-focused exhibitions and programming for the MMA.
2. Curate the work of both the women artists of the MMA Permanent Collection and the Bennett Collection.
3. Work collaboratively with the Curator of Education in preparing interpretive materials accompanying these exhibitions.
4. Present related public programs and lectures and conduct training sessions for docents and other volunteers around the Bennett Prize and Women-focused exhibitions and programming.
5. Work with the Executive Director, Director of Collections and Exhibitions, and Collections Committee to enhance women artist representation in the MMA permanent collection.

Other Duties

1. Participate in external activities; represent The Bennett Prize and the Museum at scholarly, public and social events, both internal to the Museum and in the community and region.
2. Participate in MMA fundraising events such as (but not limited to) the annual Gala.

3. Contribute to the strategic discussions regarding acquiring items for the Museum's permanent collection.
4. Assist in the development of the annual exhibition budget.
5. Work collaboratively with other MMA staff to achieve Museum objectives.
6. Other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS/EXPERIENCE REQUIREMENTS:

The successful candidate will possess the following:

1. A Master of Arts degree in museum studies or administration, museum science, museology, or art history is preferred. Alternatively, the appropriate candidate might have a Master of Fine Arts degree in an artistic discipline with accompanying experience in a museum setting. Lesser education, but not less than a bachelor's degree, with offsetting experience may be considered for the right candidate. Previous experience in at least two comparable museums strongly preferred.
2. Significant Experience, preferably 5 or more years, in and with museums, art exhibitions, and arts management.
3. Direct and demonstrable success in exhibition planning and execution and the creation of promotional materials related to such exhibitions, including accompanying scholarly catalogues.
4. An understanding of and experience with managing a collection of art objects.
5. Proven ability and success in organizing/overseeing scholarly, public and social events.
6. Proven ability to work in collaboration with a variety of people.
7. Proven aptitude for creative thinking, flexibility, and sensitivity to diverse constituencies.
8. Strong budgeting and organizational skills.
9. Excellent written and verbal communication competencies.
10. A proven record of dynamic and strong leadership skills.
11. Current knowledge of museum standards and practices.
12. Competency with computer word processing, databases, and other business/office/museum software programs.

SALARY: \$60,000 - \$70,000 plus generous benefit package.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION:

Please submit cover letter, resume, and three professional references to:

Kirk Hallman, Executive Director
Muskegon Museum of Art
296 W. Webster Ave
Muskegon, MI 49440

Application materials can be emailed to khepler@muskegonartmuseum.org by **February 14, 2024**.