



Position Specification

Kenyon College

Director & Chief Curator, Gund Gallery

Position Specification

Ref: Director & Chief Curator, Gund Gallery
Kenyon College

Our Client

Kenyon College

Founded in 1824, Kenyon College is a private liberal arts college in Gambier, Ohio. One of the premier liberal arts institutions in the nation, Kenyon's mission is to build strong foundations for lives of purpose and consequence. Kenyon harnesses the transformative power of a liberal arts education – engaging in spirited, informed, and collaborative inquiry – to form a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the world and all who inhabit it. The student body consists of approximately 1,730 students who come from 49 nations and 48 U.S. states.

As Kenyon enters its third century, it has undertaken a number of initiatives to reinforce and advance its mission to build strong foundations for lives of purpose and consequence. Under President Decatur's leadership, Kenyon has attracted its most diverse and academically talented incoming classes in history. In 2017, Kenyon became a member of the American Talent Initiative, a coalition of colleges working to expand access and opportunity by graduating 50,000 additional highly talented lower-income students by 2025. Efforts like this, combined with an ensemble of Kenyon programs aimed at increasing diversity and fostering inclusion, support Decatur's commitment to building educational communities that talented students from all backgrounds can access, and where they thrive.

With an average class size of 15 and a 10:1 student-to-faculty ratio, Kenyon provides its students with an intimate, individualized education from some of the nation's leading minds, many of whom describe themselves as "partners in inquiry" to their students. Nestled along the Kokosing River, Kenyon's 1,000-acre campus allows members of the Kenyon community to enjoy the tranquility of nature, all while bolstered by the resources of one of the nation's most formidable educational institutions. The College's campus blends seamlessly into the village of Gambier, and half of its 1,000 acres constitute Kenyon's "living laboratory," a network of green centers and trails. One of the few U.S. colleges where 100% of students live on campus, Kenyon boasts a close-knit, diverse community where students and faculty build connections that last a lifetime.

The Gund Gallery

Gund Gallery's mission is to celebrate the power of art as a critical centerpiece of Kenyon's liberal arts mission and its community. The Gallery is building a national/international reputation for deep, meaningful academic exploration of critical topics through contemporary art. Gund Gallery champions the best art and artists of the 20th and 21st centuries via an active exhibition schedule, expanding permanent collection, and formal and informal learning experiences. The aim is not just to exhibit and collect the best of contemporary art, but to demonstrate how these works relate to/comment on ideas that are most important for our time and ideas that are enduring.

Completed in 2011 and named for 1963 Kenyon alumnus Graham Gund, a noted architect, philanthropist, and collector, the Graham Gund Gallery is a dynamic, light-filled, 31,000 square-foot space dedicated to expanding ways of seeing and learning. The contemporary, three story building houses a 6,100-square-foot flexible main exhibition space, a 136-seat Community Foundation Theater, and three classrooms including the Edric seminar classroom, the Kresge traditional classroom, and the Meier-Draudt Curatorial Classroom for the close study of artwork. It also provides museum-dedicated preparation and storage

spaces as well as offices and a visual resource center for Kenyon's Department of Art History. The building, exhibitions and programs and its programs are the central focus of part of a larger campus initiative to expand access to art and visual culture for the College's student body, faculty, and staff along with the surrounding community.

The Gund Gallery Collection launched with inaugural gifts from Gund Gallery board members. In 2014, 80 additional works of eminent artists of the 20th and 21st centuries were generously donated by Graham '63 and Ann Gund, further securing the collection's growth. The collection now includes works by Romare Bearden, Bernd & Hilla Becher, Ingrid Calame, Dale Chihuly, Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Antony Gormley, Philip Guston, Jacob Lawrence, Roy Lichtenstein, Paul Manship, Laura McPhee, Henry Moore, Kenneth Noland, Claes Oldenberg, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, Faith Ringgold, James Rosenquist, and Joel Sternfeld. While the majority of the Gund Gallery collection is housed within the gallery itself, permanent, semi-permanent and temporary public art installations are managed by the Gund Gallery staff and regularly appear on campus.

The Gund is defined by its commitment to unparalleled quality as an artistic institution, and its commitment to enriching the lives of Kenyon's students and the broader public. Through a variety of innovative programs, the Gund Gallery has become an integral part of the experiences of many Kenyon students, faculty, and other community members. The Gund Gallery Associate Program now offers 60 Kenyon students per year an opportunity to work with museum professionals and participate in all aspects of museum work, including behind-the-scenes operations, curatorial research and planning, collection maintenance and educational outreach. Associates lead tours, curate exhibitions, assist in developing programs, and more; many Gund Gallery Associates continue on to have successful careers in the arts. Traditionally, each year the Gallery has exhibited the work of senior Studio Art majors produced in their capstone experience as well as work produced by Studio Art faculty. Art Loan, a program which allows students to choose works of art to enjoy and critically study in their dorm rooms for a semester, fosters an appreciation of art as students learn to care for the works, interpret their meanings, and come to understand the intrinsic power of art. Additionally, the Gallery welcomes children and families for special programs meant to encourage understanding of exhibition themes, exploration of important works of art, and creative hands-on activities connected to exhibitions, collections, and visiting artists.

The Gund Gallery has an operating budget of approximately \$1.2 million and a staff of 6 full-time and 2 part-time employees. The Gallery has a 15-member Board of Directors. As the Gund Gallery approaches its tenth anniversary, the institution is in search of a Director & Chief Curator to lead into its next phase of growth and accomplishment.

The Role

Reporting directly to the President of the College and working closely with the Board of Directors of the Gund Gallery, the Director & Chief Curator provides overall leadership and management for Gund Gallery, including curatorial and programming, care of the collection, and active collaboration with faculty, students, and Gallery staff.

The Director will provide strategic and collaborative leadership and vision, effective management, and academic inspiration to the Gund Gallery. In the daily operations of Gallery, the Director and Chief Curator

will ensure the Gallery's mission is clearly understood, that its strategic objectives are fully articulated and effectively pursued, and that Kenyon faculty and students as well as the broader community see and utilize the Gallery as a core learning resource. The Director and Chief Curator will champion exhibitions and programs consistent with, furthering, and enhancing Kenyon's commitment to diversity and inclusion. The Director and Chief Curator has primary responsibility for all aspects of the Gallery's operation and management, including fiscal and personnel management, as well as for raising funds to support the Gallery. The Director and Chief Curator will facilitate the work of the staff and support their professional development and growth.

The leader of the Gund Gallery will foster productive relationships with faculty across disciplines on campus. Across all aspects of the Gallery's work, the Director and Chief Curator will cultivate a culture of inclusion and proactively foster opportunities for engagement with and expression of diverse identities, perspectives, and creative practices. The Director and Chief Curator works in close communication with a Board of Directors to review overall operations, formulate policies, and develop fundraising strategies and program initiatives to fulfill the Gallery's mission. The Director also works in close collaboration with the college's Office of Advancement to raise operating and endowment funds to support Gund Gallery.

In collaboration with academic and administrative departments on campus, the Director and Chief Curator proactively engages students through teaching, exhibitions and related programming. They also represent the Gallery to diverse constituencies, including faculty and students, alumni and friends of the College, public audiences throughout the region, and the museum profession at large.

Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will be a curator, scholar, or educator. The next Director and Chief Curator will be an energetic, collaborative, and forward-looking leader who fully embraces the Gallery's contribution to the educational mission of Kenyon College. The Director must exemplify a dedication to students and learning, a passion for the arts, and a combination of intellectual curiosity and depth. They must exhibit a deep knowledge of art and the ability to lead, collaborate with, and motivate a diverse community and team of staff, faculty, students, and other partners. The candidate will be a partnership-builder, strategic leader, and vocal proponent of the Gallery and its work.

Dynamic and articulate, this leader should leverage existing connections in the art world while building new relationships with partner institutions, members of the Kenyon community, and others who may help the Gallery advance its mission. They will respect the expertise of staff and faculty, and highly value the contributions to the Gallery from key donors while considering new avenues for growth, whether through acquisitions, hiring, or more.

Given that the Director will also serve as the Chief Curator, the ideal candidate will have significant curatorial and exhibition planning experience in addition to familiarity with educational programming, operations, fundraising, public relations and/or marketing, and budget management. Ideally, they will possess experience in strategic planning within an organization, as well as a track record of successful fundraising. The candidate must be able to establish credibility and build fruitful working relationships with the faculty.

The successful candidate will embrace the Kenyon College and Gambier community professionally and personally, enjoying the opportunity to live in a beautiful, close-knit setting surrounded by nature. Belief

in liberal arts education will be central to their identity, and they will consider the Gallery a critical vehicle for artistic education, expression, and enjoyment. They will enhance the visibility of the Gallery both on and off-campus and will work to build on the tremendous success the institution has seen during its first decade of existence. The new Director & Chief Curator will lead with integrity, creativity, and passion, and will unite staff, Board members, and other stakeholders as they work to achieve a set of shared goals for the Gallery.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Strategic Vision

- The ideal candidate will be an innovative and strategic thinker, bolstered by charisma but tempered by operational acumen and an understanding of the dynamics of institutional change.
- This leader will be enthusiastic about engaging proactively and meaningfully with students. They will also be able to develop productive and mutually fulfilling relationships with the Kenyon College faculty across disciplines.
- This person will be conversant with the key issues facing academic museums broadly, particularly in terms of strategies for engagement with student bodies and faculty in fulfilling the teaching mission of museums, partnerships with other arts organizations and community stakeholders, and more. They will help the Gallery to refine its vision for audience development and its strategic focus around this endeavor going forward.
- This leader will recognize and deeply value the Gallery's history and those individuals who have made the institution's success possible. They will also look to the future and consider additional ways in which the Gallery may acquire new works. With a creative and innovative curatorial eye, they will consider how the Gallery may introduce unique exhibitions, programming, and other artistic endeavors.

Management of Teams and Resources

- The candidate will be able to meaningfully unite constituents in efforts to execute the strategic vision for the Gallery.
- They will foster a culture of enthusiastic collaboration, mutual respect, teamwork, and empowerment. They will respect, encourage, and celebrate the achievements of the team while also holding all members accountable to mutually agreed-upon goals. The successful candidate will demonstrate experience attracting, retaining, and motivating a diverse and talented staff.
- They will approach the financial oversight of the Gallery with an even-handed and reasoned approach to budgetary decision-making in full transparency and collaboration with the Kenyon College administration, reporting to the President on the operations and budgetary performance of the Gallery.

Communicating, Influencing, and Building Relationships

- The Director will be an inspirational, charismatic, and passionate communicator who can expand upon existing support for the Gallery and build additional connections to advance the Gallery's

mission. A consensus-seeking, yet decisive leader, they will effectively unite constituents as they carry out the Gallery's initiatives within the College community and beyond.

- They will be able to build productive relationships with Board members and other loyal supporters of the Gallery, and will ensure that the Gallery follows governance best practices while fostering a culture of collaboration and partnership. They will have a comprehension of the Board's advisory role and how it functions within the broader College framework.
- They will enhance the visibility of the Gallery with alumni, students, community members, and more. They will be a champion of the Gallery's importance to Kenyon's overall mission and will ensure that the College's administration is aligned around the Gallery's goals. They should recognize the value of Kenyon's close-knit community and should understand the importance of their role within that community.
- The candidate will have the skills necessary to, in partnership with the Board and the College's Advancement team, increase and diversify financial support from alumni, individual donors, foundations, and other potential supporters. They will engage their professional network to further the Gallery's endeavors and continue to enhance its reputation in the broader art community.

Passion for and Distinction in the Arts

- The candidate will exhibit a distinct point of view and passion for art and art history. They will possess the intellectual rigor and gravitas to interact with Kenyon College faculty and students from a scholarly perspective.
- The ideal candidate will be an extraordinary curator who will inject fresh ideas into the Gallery's curatorial practice in addition to its broader programming strategy. They will consider all artistic endeavors as intertwined with the College's educational mission and will be a passionate spokesperson for the power of art in education.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout the process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants with a CV and brief expression of interest.

Katherine Armstrong and Michael Singleton
Consultants to the Search Committee
Russell Reynolds Associates
GundGallery@russellreynolds.com