

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, ST. PETERSBURG

CURATOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY



Located along the beautiful downtown waterfront of St. Petersburg, Florida, the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, (MFA) is a collecting museum serving more than 120,000 annual residents and visitors to the Tampa Bay area since its founding in 1965. The MFA is proud to present the only comprehensive art collection on Florida's west coast, spanning 5,000 years of civilization in about 20,000 objects from antiquity to today. Highlights include masterpieces from Monet, Corot, Morisot, O'Keeffe, De Kooning, Rauschenberg, Whistler and others; a sculpture garden; a glass gallery featuring works by Tiffany, Steuben, and Chihuly; and one of the largest and most respected photography collections in the Southeastern United States.

In a growing city with multiple museums and a thriving cultural life, the MFA provides the broad context into which all the other local arts organizations fit. The MFA presents a wide variety of art experiences across the spectrum of time and culture – from blockbusters to provocative contemporary exhibitions by emerging artists and scholarly shows that illuminate the depth and beauty of the museum's growing collection. With 17,000 square feet in collections galleries and 7700 square feet for temporary exhibitions (including a more intimately scaled Works on Paper gallery) the MFA brings art to life as no other museum in the Tampa Bay area can. In addition to its robust exhibition program, the MFA engages its community through exciting public programs and events, and serves our students through youth programs and a partnership with the Pinellas County School System. About 6,000 public school students attend the MFA each year as part of their 6th grade social studies curriculum.

OVERVIEW

Under the supervision of the Curator of Exhibitions and Collections, the Curator of Photography will manage all aspects of the Museum's curatorial program for photography, including interpretation, exhibition, and activation of the Museum's diverse collection in this area. The Curator of Photography advances interest in the subject as an important part of art history and contemporary art.

In collaboration with the Executive Director and the Curator of Collections and Exhibitions, and based upon academic training and connoisseurship in the field, she/he develops related programming on photography and its history. This position participates in the varied aspects of the Curatorial Department's activities, including curating and organizing exhibitions within the Museum; serving as in-house curator and subject expert for exhibitions organized by fellow institutions; researching and publishing the collection; cultivating and stewarding donors; building relationships within the community; and developing traveling exhibitions.

The Museum of Fine Art's holdings of photography include over 16,000 works, making it one of the Southeast's largest collections of this medium. The holdings are particularly rich in 20th century photographs, including works by Stieglitz, Steichen, Weston, Adams, Arbus, Penn, Bourke-White, Winogrand, Halsman, Siskin, Mapplethorpe, and Lange. The Museum is presently planning a major reorganization of the photography collection to better address the strengths of these holdings. The Curator of Photography will create and implement a long-term strategy to assess, catalogue, and activate this collection.

WORK SCHEDULE

- Monday – Friday, 9am – 6pm. Evening and weekend work as needed.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES include the following:

- Coordinating with the Executive Director and Curator of Collections and Exhibitions to plan and manage the development of the photography collection, exhibitions, related curatorial programs, and departmental staff;
- Developing a plan for the full cataloguing of the photography collection, including digitization for online access, and the proposed reorganization of the Museum's holdings into two distinct areas: Fine Art Photography and the History of Photography;
- Developing important, creative, scholarly exhibition projects, including major collaborative efforts with national partners;
- Originating, developing, and publishing exhibition catalogues, scholarly articles, and related works, in both print and digital formats;
- Actively engaging with contemporary photographers as well as critics, galleries, and dealers to keep current within the field;
- Researching the holdings to further the identification, documentation, or authentication of the photography collection, and developing appropriate object records in accordance with current professional standards;
- Functioning as the Museum's liaison for a reimagined photography support group and working with them on programming;

- Identifying, cultivating, and stewarding museum donors with an interest in photography to increase support for acquisitions, exhibitions, and programs;
- Maintaining current knowledge of the art market to conceive and pursue strategic objectives of gifts, bequests, commissions, and purchases to develop and refine the photography holdings;
- Regularly and effectively communicating and working with museum staff, trustees, colleagues, and others to enrich, expand, and otherwise facilitate the program of photography to ensure that related content is accurately conveyed and represented;
- Working with collections staff and outside consultants to anticipate collections care and conservation needs for holdings;
- Collaborating with education staff to develop and produce interpretive strategies and accompanying materials for collections-based projects and special exhibitions, ensuring didactic and other exhibition materials represent both deep knowledge and scholarship as well as reflecting best practices in audience development and engagement;
- Conducting training for docents, including exhibition and gallery walk-throughs and general art history education for new docents related to the history of photography and fine art photography;
- In conjunction with program staff and others, helping to develop and participating in public programs on the collection and relevant special exhibitions, including new opportunities for community outreach;
- Presenting engaging gallery talks and scholarly lectures at the museum, with educational partners, and at professional conferences;
- Respond to scholarly and public inquiries related to the collection;
- Meet all responsibilities with the highest ethical and professional standards.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

Years of Experience	5-10 years
Education	Art History, with Specialization in the History of Photography
Degree or Formal Training	Ph.D.

Additional Experience:

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including ability to effectively communicate with internal and external stakeholders
- Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues in a team-orientated environment;
- Track record of thought-provoking exhibitions based upon museum holdings;

- Track record of national collaborations, traveling exhibitions, peer-edited journal articles, or other scholarly publications;
- Experience in creating strategies for the growth, organization, and activation of a large and varied photography collection;
- Ability to discern objects of art historical significance vs. works with historical value;
- Charismatic public speaker, and enthusiastic fundraiser and ambassador for the collection, encouraging support for projects, acquisitions, and programs
- A working knowledge of the care, handling, storage and preservation of the various types of photographs from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century.
- Ability to engage diverse audiences, from the specialist to the non-specialist;
- Ability to energetically manage a diverse and challenging workload and to work under pressure to meet deadlines while maintaining a positive attitude and providing exemplary service to colleagues and patrons;
- Ability to work independently and to carry out assignments to completion within parameters of standard accepted practices;
- Familiarity with and adherence to standard museum practices.
- Excellent computer proficiency (MS Office – Word, Excel, and Outlook).

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Able to sit for extended periods of time on a daily basis.
- Able to lift up to 10 lbs.
- Able to carry files or other office equipment occasionally.
- Able to constantly operate a computer and other office productivity machinery.
- Able to frequently communicate with guests and co-workers about museum events and exhibits. Must be able to exchange accurate information in these situations.
- Able to converse with artists of national and international standing frequently.
- Able to safely and successfully perform the essential job functions consistent with the ADA, FMLA, and other federal, state and local standards, including meeting qualitative and/or quantitative productivity standards.
- Able to maintain regular, punctual attendance consistent with the ADA, FMLA and other federal, state and local standards.

This job description indicates in general terms, the type and level of work performed, as well as the typical responsibilities of this position. Management reserves the rights to modify, change, add or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job. Nothing in this position description changes the at-will employment relationship between Museum of Fine Arts and its employees.

Please send letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and salary expectations to:
PhotoCurator@mfastpete.org

No phone calls please.