

Philadelphia Museum of Art

The Philadelphia Museum of Art
Director and Chief Executive Officer
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

THE SEARCH

The Trustees and the Search Committee of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (PMA) seek an exemplary leader, for one of the world's great art museums in the heart of one of the nation's great cities.

History

The Philadelphia Museum of Art was founded in 1876, the year of the nation's centennial, in the city that launched the Declaration of Independence. In 1928, in an exultant moment, the Museum opened its East Terrace doors, crowning the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and overlooking Center City. Since then, it has grown into an artistic campus made up of the landmark main building; the [Ruth and Raymond G. Perelman building](#); the Rodin Museum; and two fine eighteenth-century houses in Fairmount Park: [Mount Pleasant and Cedar Grove](#). The Museum was intended to express the city's highest aspirations and it has succeeded. Its plazas and steps are essential sites for both protests and celebrations; for the Pope's visit and the Super Bowl celebration; for Black Lives Matter marches; for the Philadelphia Orchestra's bi-centennial concert; and for Rocky, running the steps. It has become a beacon to the city and the entire metropolitan region, a magnet for talent and for civic and donor commitment. It is the iconic image of Philadelphia.

In 2004, facing the need for significant capital repairs and more public areas, the Museum hired Frank Gehry to design a Master Plan. In a careful, sympathetic design, Gehry created a multi-staged effort to repair the essential infrastructure and open circulation so as to engage the Museum with its visitors. In the earliest phase, between 2004 and 2017, the Museum invested roughly \$300 million in moving loading docks, art handling, garages, partial renovations, and other pure support functions, with very modest debt. It followed with the "[Core Project](#)," which took four years of construction, cost \$233 million, and opened to wide critical acclaim on May 7, 2021. The building required fundamental systems upgrading—electrical, heating, water, air handling, and networking—all of which have been accomplished. Gehry's design opened and, in some cases recovered, 90,000 square feet of re-imagined public spaces and galleries. It includes a rebuilt West Terrace, now the Robbi and Bruce Toll Terrace, a renovated Lenfest Hall, which has long served as the principal entrance to the Museum; a new public space, the Williams

Forum, which serves as the setting for a wide range of special occasions and activities and connects the ground floor to the upper levels; and the Vaulted Walkway, a 640-foot-long corridor that spans the entire width of the building and has not been open to the public for nearly 50 years. The renovation makes possible a completely different experience of the building, an architectural effort to welcome people, taking care of visitors on the ground floor, and opening circulation to new, creative, and expanded exhibitions.

The Museum welcomes everyone. Over half of its visitors come from the U.S. and international visitors come regularly, drawn by its artistic reputation. Overall, the visitors skew young and diverse. The Museum has focused on engaging millennials and by 2020, the average age of adult visitors was 32. Two-thirds of all visitors are 18 to 45 years old. Roughly a third of all visitors are Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), a number that rises to two-thirds from the city of Philadelphia. The percentage of non-white visitors has doubled over the last 10 years, reflecting, for the first time, the demographics of the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA), and a direct result of focused community outreach, and *Pay What You Wish* admission on Friday nights and first Sundays. As the Museum reached broadly and embraced its civic mission, it attracted a creative and inspired staff who brought the arts to life, luring visitors—through scholarly study and creative play—to discover the spirit of imagination that art inspires.

The Collection

In the century and a half since its founding, the Museum has acquired, through the work of its curators and from devoted and generous collectors, one of the world's great encyclopedic collections, making it a museum of "magic and majesty." The collection features one of the finest gatherings of American, Asian, and European art anywhere. It curates its collection through eight departments: American Art; Contemporary Art; Costume & Textiles; East Asian Art; European Decorative Arts and Sculpture; European Painting; Prints, Drawings & Photographs; and South Asian Art. The curators work closely with a highly regarded conservation department, whose skills are essential to a museum of its stature.

The Museum contains the most important public collection of [Auguste Rodin's sculpture](#) in the United States; the world's largest Marcel Duchamp collection; superb [Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings](#), including Paul Cézanne's *The Large Bathers*, Vincent van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, and important works by Mary Cassatt, Edgar Degas, Claude Monet, Berthe Morisot, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Paul Gauguin, Camille Pissarro and Edouard Manet; the greatest collection of sculpture by [Constantin Brancusi](#) outside Europe; and the second largest collection of [arms and armor](#) in the United States.

There are exceptional American paintings, sculptures, furniture, silver, and ceramics—including the remarkable creations of the Shakers and Pennsylvania Germans. Its period rooms and architectural ensembles from around the world have become emblematic of the Museum. The reinstallation of more than 800 works in the early American galleries incorporates a more inclusive range of narratives centered on Philadelphia, dating from William Penn's first meetings with the Lenape people in the

late 17th century and including fresh connections with the Caribbean and Central and South America, as well as highlighting the role of African Americans in the city's cultural life.

In our time, the PMA has developed a growing collection of contemporary works. The recent show, [New Grit: Art & Philly Now](#), has a focus on Philadelphia, highlighting 25 artists with a strong connection to the city. It grapples with personal, social, and political issues from Black Lives Matter to immigration to mass incarceration. The Director, Timothy Rub, described the exhibition as "a love letter to Philadelphia."

Over the decades, the Museum has proved inventive and daring. It creates large, traveling, and shared exhibitions that attract local, national, and international acclaim. In recent years, it has developed new digital technologies that reach millions of visitors, beyond the ordinary, geographic constraints.

A Civic Institution

The Museum has become a preeminent cultural institution in large measure because it is synonymous with Philadelphia and the region. Philadelphia is the nation's sixth-largest city. It is a majority-minority city. It is home to a dense collection of universities, cultural institutions, hospitals, biomedical research institutes, and a vibrant economy of large and small businesses, many of them powered by the city's scientific and biomedical inventions. It gains strength in every decade and improves regularly. It sits in the Delaware Valley, at the center, economically, socially, and culturally, of a population of over six million residents. The leadership of the entire metropolitan area have, for generations, adopted the Museum, and generous local donors have built its collections, endowment, and its civic purpose. In this next chapter, a new Director will inherit generations of goodwill and the power of a great city in the heart of a prosperous region.

Initiatives to Prepare for the Transition

In 2019, it was revealed that a former manager had sexually harassed employees and that another had physically abused staff. The staff demanded a more safe, diverse, fair, and inclusive workplace. The Board and senior management moved, promptly and vigorously, to rebuild trust and improve results. To address serious staff issues, the Board hired a consulting firm that specializes in building inclusive workplaces and launched a comprehensive cultural assessment, followed by a thorough strategic review with virtually all Board members participating.

The Museum created a DEIA training program for both the Board and Staff, moved to diversify the Board, and established the [Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access](#) in 2020. In June 2021, the Museum appointed its first Miller Worley Deputy Director for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access. In this newly established position, the chief diversity officer is responsible for developing and overseeing a comprehensive strategy to achieve the institution's goals of becoming more inclusive, more welcoming, and creating a more equitable workplace culture that better reflects the diversity of Philadelphia, its

region, and the global communities that the Museum serves. The staff of the PMA has also voted for union representation and negotiations for a first contract are underway.

The Education department runs highly varied and inventive programs, experimenting digitally with audiences of all ages. For many years, the Museum has been intimately involved with the School District of Philadelphia and continues to provide leadership in public arts education. The addition of new educational space, allied to funding from the capital campaign, will give the education department the means to greatly expand the program. The curators and the education staff see the collection as an opportunity for intellectual development and creative entertainment in everyone, but especially in children.

To prepare for a transition in leadership, the Board has created interim management, led jointly by the Chief Financial Officer and General Counsel, and in addition to negotiations for a new union contract, has engaged the staff in dialogue, and continues its successful work on the fundraising campaign. With new contributions, the endowment grew and stands today at roughly \$600 million.

THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Forty-five million people live within 200 miles of the city, putting Philadelphia at the core of the country's wealthiest and most densely populated area. The impressive collection of universities and medical centers have helped to spawn a growing, entrepreneurial economy that has become steadily more prosperous. The City attracts people nationally and globally and is served by a fine and accessible airport, offering 500 daily departures to 130 non-stop destinations in the country and around the world. Philadelphia boasts a vibrant culture rich with history, entertainment, and sports; new, varied, and outstanding dining; outdoor activities; and splendid arts. The City offers several other fine museums, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Opera and the Ballet, and an impressive mix of well attended theater companies. Philadelphia has more public art than any other city in the nation. Nearly 4,000 massive murals grace the walls and display the essence of neighborhoods in Philadelphia.

The City remains accessible and affordable, compared to its cousins in the North and South. *U.S. News and World Report* ranked Philadelphia in the top 15 Best Affordable U.S. Destinations. The combination of a robust culture, an expanding economy, rich transportation nodes, and affordable living has attracted young people. Philadelphia's population of millennials is growing at a faster rate than in any of the nation's 30 largest cities.

FINANCE AND PHYSICAL PLANT

In 2015, the Museum launched the public phase of [*It Starts Here: The Campaign for the Philadelphia Museum*](#) with \$190 million raised in the silent phase. As of September 2021, the Campaign has raised \$557 million against a goal of \$525 million. \$258 million is targeted to pay for the Core Project renovations, with \$251 million raised. \$150 million is targeted to the endowment, with \$142 million

raised. The remainder will pay for special initiatives. The campaign followed an earlier phase that raised \$100 million for support functions that needed relocation.

For FY21, the Museum had an annual budget of \$50 million, a sharp decrease from pre-pandemic levels. Like most museums, the PMA shut its doors in 2020 and saw substantial losses in gate revenue. The Museum welcomed 150,000 visitors, compared with nearly 800,000 two years before. It reluctantly offered voluntary retirements, and then furloughed and laid off some staff.

For FY22, the Museum has a budget of \$62 million. In FY21, the dramatic drop in attendance led to a corresponding drop in earned revenue, which went from \$17.2 million in FY19 to \$8.4 million in FY21. Earned revenue is projected to rise to 27% of total revenue in FY22, or \$15 million, a few points below the long-term historical average. In FY21, the museum received one-time Federal Aid, consisting of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, Employee Retention Credits (ERC), and Shuttered Venue Grant, which provided a one-year respite. Like all museums, the PMA will need careful financial management in the immediate future.

The Museum operates six buildings. They are all owned by the City of Philadelphia but are operated entirely by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, a Pennsylvania not-for-profit corporation. The vast majority of the collection is owned by the PMA, and the Museum has for decades managed and displayed the John G. Johnson Collection, which consists of 1,279 paintings that were bequeathed to the City of Philadelphia in 1917. The PMA takes full responsibility for all finances and programs in all the buildings. Each of them required renovation, some for improvement and some for depreciation, and the Museum invested substantially in renovations over the last decade. The main building has several phases of the Master Plan that remain, some modest portions of which are repair and maintenance, though most of the plan is for improvement. Most of the main building and all of the remaining buildings are in excellent repair. The Trustees and donors have attended faithfully to a magnificent physical plant.

As a City-owned building, the City of Philadelphia annually provides \$5.4 million in operating support and covers approximately \$3.4 million in utilities. Due to the pandemic, this subsidy was reduced by \$510,000. The City has also committed a total of \$16 million towards the capital renovation, which was also reduced during the pandemic from the original \$32.5 million commitment. The museum has periodically received capital improvement grants through the state, totaling \$9.7 million towards the capital renovation.

The Museum's endowment, a focus of the current comprehensive campaign, has grown significantly over the last few years, with an additional \$142 million raised in gifts and pledges. The investments have had excellent results and the current value stands at \$600 million. The Museum carries construction debt of \$116 million, nearly all of which will be funded through current campaign commitments.

The annual operating budget shrunk from pre-pandemic levels of \$59 million to \$46 million in FY21, but as the Board anticipates recovery, and the need to invest in the Museum, the FY22 budget is \$62 million. The Museum is currently preparing a multi-year outlook through FY25, which will help serve as a roadmap

towards expanded programming and increased revenues as it recovers from the pandemic. This will take energetic and careful management. Fundraising for the Museum has been exceptionally strong, with \$557 million raised against an external goal of \$525 million, and an internal goal of \$575 million. The campaign is expected to be completed by 12/31/22, if not before, and now stands as the largest fundraising campaign for any cultural organization in the history of Philadelphia. The Museum has enjoyed strong support from individuals, foundations, corporations, and state and federal government.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in the recruitment of this important leader. All inquiries, nominations, and applications should be directed in confidence as noted at the end of this document.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR A NEW DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Through a difficult time, the PMA has stayed focused. The Museum persisted and opened the Gehry Core Project renovation in May. The Board and leadership believe in the value of long-term planning, careful execution, and successful fundraising. The Board feels strongly that all the fundamentals remain firmly in place, that the Museum has extraordinary assets and that it has taken action to prepare the way for a new Director. The PMA stands at the brink of a transformative moment, with excellent opportunities for growth, greatly improved inclusion, and invention. Armed with state-of-the-art facilities, a world-renowned collection, a passionate and talented staff, generous donors, an iconic image, and the learnings of the last few years, the next Director will usher the PMA into a new chapter, a time to further motivate staff, to engage the community and the city, to manage the finances, to invent and create, and unleash the joy and the beauty of the art.

The Search Committee seeks a Director and Chief Executive Officer who is the equal to its history, who can bring superb management, a history of demonstrated success and creative invention to the staff and the visitors, and who will help this venerable institution to invent the future. The specific challenges and opportunities for the Director and CEO include the following:

Define PMA's vision and lead achievement of strategic goals throughout the Museum

In close consultation with the Board, staff, and community stakeholders, the Director will create and execute a comprehensive vision for the future of the PMA. The leadership should articulate clear goals that are ambitious, measurable, and achievable and that make essential choices for the Museum. The Director will empower the senior leadership team and will create a collaborative and efficient decision-making process that enables execution and accountability. It will be a priority to maintain the Museum's curatorial excellence and reputation while being innovative in navigating the role of art museums in the changing landscape of the future. In this next decade, the Museum will need a vision that inspires and unifies Museum Board, staff, and its stakeholders and that brings a sense of joy and excitement to the Museum's work.

Fortify the Museum's financial sustainability through capable and attentive management of both revenues and expenses

For long-term sustainability, the Museum must achieve a balanced budget in its operations. Success on the financial front will require new revenue, which will come from growth in audience, successful fundraising, a larger endowment, and increased earned net revenue from highly varied sources, including creative efforts to monetize digital initiatives. The Museum will need, as well, to attend carefully to its expenses and to achieve operational efficiencies. In FY21, the PMA reduced staff by 100 positions. As it turns to the future, it will need to organize for maximum program effect and to make careful, accurate, and strategic choices.

Extend the Museum's admirable history of philanthropic giving

The PMA has had great fundraising success as it nears the completion of the capital campaign, the largest cultural campaign in Philadelphia's history. The Museum has built extraordinary loyalty among its donors and it anticipates similarly large fundraising projects will follow, to complete the Frank Gehry master plan, expand program and exhibition spaces, and build the endowment to support the PMA's growth. In the aftermath of this campaign, the leadership will need, in consultation with the staff and the Board, to amplify annual fundraising and to plan carefully for the next iteration of philanthropy.

Champion DEIA for the Museum and the greater community

In both direct leadership and through guidance and support for the Deputy Director for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA), the Director and CEO will ensure a comprehensive strategy is in place to achieve the institution's goals of becoming more inclusive and creating a fully equitable workplace culture that reflects the diversity of Philadelphia and the global communities that the Museum serves. By embracing DEIA as essential to all aspects of PMA, the Director will lead with these values, both internally and externally. It will be critical to model and prioritize how diversity, equity, inclusion, and access are infused in decision-making across the Museum.

Enhance and deepen audience development and audience engagement

In the last decade, the PMA worked hard to build a larger, younger, and more diverse audience. The pandemic interrupted that work. In the next chapter, the Museum needs a comprehensive approach to revive its audience, improve revenue, activate more of its extensive collection, and craft stories that inspire diverse audiences. The Museum has great natural resources in the buildings, in the newly renovated galleries, in the collections, and in its educational and curatorial staff.

The Museum has attracted new audiences, globally, nationally, in the region, and within the changing communities of Philadelphia. It can once again, as the pandemic wanes, revive and enhance the work.

Join the digital age

The pandemic starkly revealed the importance of digital communication. The Museum reached out broadly, using the resources at hand, exploring the possibilities, but these efforts are at an early stage. Universities and cultural institutions and media companies have all invested heavily in new learning science, finding impressive ways to engage students and audiences, and gaining both loyalty and revenue. Given the size and dimension of the collection and the work done by curators and the education staff, the PMA has a considerable opportunity, but it will take investment and ever greater sophistication to draw the audiences that it desires.

Engage and lead civic Philadelphia and its community organizations

The Philadelphia Museum is the symbol for cultural life in Philadelphia, the region, and for the whole Delaware Valley. It has partnerships with the city government, with the state, with the schools, and with many of the other cultural institutions in the region. For its own parochial purposes and fundamental mission, the Museum needs to attend, faithfully and creatively, to all its potential partners. It needs to draw the political leadership more into its orbit. It needs to serve even more school children and their teachers. It can create synergies through collaborative programming, creatively undertaken with other local cultural institutions. It needs to further enhance and ensure an excellent working relationship with community groups and community organizations, who may find the majesty of the buildings unwelcoming but find the magic alluring. The Museum has a straightforward opportunity to engage fully and provide leadership throughout the civic community of the region. For both market and mission purposes, it should maximize its opportunities and engage the widest possible range of civic Philadelphia.

Complete the Master Plan

The Museum has just finished the “Core Project,” the largest phase of the Master Plan, the foundation of the whole. The Plan was created as a decision tree, with choices at each stage. The remaining parts include an auditorium, which the Museum does not now have, a badly-needed new home for the education department, the renovation of the upstairs galleries, and the creation of new, expansive galleries underneath the East Terrace. The leadership estimates costs ranging from \$20 million for the smallest project to \$200 million or more for the largest. In the next decade, the Museum leadership will need to choose its highest building priorities, balanced against the need for increased support for the endowment and staff and programs.

Lead and develop a high-performing team and ensure ongoing excellence

The Director will lead a team of highly skilled and steadfastly committed staff. The senior management team includes a mix of staff new to their leadership roles and those who are more seasoned. There is an eagerness for change among the team and a desire for an innovative vision. The Director will demonstrate a full understanding of and respect for the entire Museum workforce and will promote cohesion and an actively shared excitement for future possibilities. The successful candidate will provide guidance and

support as needed to their direct reports, ensuring that high standards of excellence are achieved throughout the organization.

Building upon the DEIA work the Museum has embraced will be essential to continue to build trust, accountability, and belonging in the internal culture. The next Director must establish a positive, equitable, and accountable working environment. The ability to transparently set goals and maintain clear lines of communication will be essential to increase collaboration and efficiency. A successful leadership approach will set the tone for confidence and commitment among staff and a collegial culture across all departments. The Director will continually seek opportunities to support staff in professional development to increase capacity and ultimately enhance the reach of the Museum's mission. The Museum needs an ambitious, professional workplace that is joyously united in serving its mission and community

QUALIFICATIONS & EXPERIENCE

The Philadelphia Museum of Art seeks an inspiring, resilient, seasoned, and astute leader of the utmost integrity with a demonstrable track record who will build trust and respect and invigorate all of the Museum's constituencies.

While no one person will embody all of them in equal measure, the search committee seeks candidates with the following proven experiences, characteristics, and abilities:

- A deep commitment to the mission and values of PMA, and the ability to communicate a passion for art, the collection, and the institution;
- A track record as a successful champion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access throughout an organization;
- The ability to inspire and coalesce a variety of internal and external stakeholders towards common goals and vision;
- A passion for and proven ability to raise funds in comparable organizational contexts. Ability to deepen existing relationships as well as cultivate new sources of funding;
- Strong financial management record, on both the income and expense sides of the ledger;
- Experience in large-scale project management including capital campaigns and large-scale capital improvements;
- Demonstrated success in leading and motivating a team, fostering cross-departmental collaboration, communication, and collective and individual accountability;
- A commitment to transparency and consultation, coupled with decisiveness;

- A history of community and civic engagement;
- Highly attuned interpersonally, including the ability and inclination to build and sustain relationships based on empathy, trust, and mutual accountability.

TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent electronically to the following via www.imsearch.com/8198:

John Isaacson, Lisa Savereid, Ryan Leichenauer, or Tiffany Weber
Isaacson, Miller
263 Summer Street, Floor 7
Boston, MA 02210
www.imsearch.com/8198

At the Philadelphia Museum of Art, we actively seek to employ a diverse group of people who embody our organizational values. PMA welcomes and encourages individuals of all backgrounds to apply, especially those from marginalized and underrepresented groups in the museum field, who are inspired by its shared purpose and enjoy working collaboratively with others.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is proud to be an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, ancestry, citizenship or immigration status, color, disability, ethnicity, familial status, gender identity and/or expression, genetic information, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other protected status.