

# SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

Oshman Executive Director

San Jose Museum of Art

San Jose, California

## THE SEARCH

The San Jose Museum of Art (SJMA) seeks an energetic, collaborative, and charismatic leader to serve as the Oshman Executive Director (Director).

Founded in 1969 by artists and community leaders, SJMA is the premier modern and contemporary art museum in Silicon Valley. Its dynamic program, which balances socially relevant traveling exhibitions with critically engaging shows drawn from a collection of more than 2700 works, resonates with the defining characteristics of the city—from its rich diversity to its hallmark innovative ethos. The Director of the San Jose Museum of Art is responsible for providing the leadership and management to oversee the strategic and operational functions of the Museum. The Director will bring vision, passion, leadership, and operating experience that will continue to increase the Museum's impact on the community and SJMA's contribution to the world of contemporary art.

San Jose Museum of Art has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, to assist in the recruitment of its next Director.

## SAN JOSE MUSEUM OF ART

The San Jose Museum of Art's mission is to nurture empathy and connection by engaging communities with socially relevant contemporary art. The Museum's goal is to become a borderless museum, essential to creative life throughout the communities of San Jose and the Silicon Valley.

In 1969, a small group of San Jose citizens gathered to transform the beautiful old library, threatened with demolition, into a fledgling art gallery. The democratic, grassroots spirit of this community movement has forever shaped the character of the San Jose Museum of Art, which remains dedicated to new thinking and visionary ideals. Projects touch on timely topics from migration and identity to artificial intelligence and include significant original exhibitions by both nationally and internationally acclaimed artists, as well as emerging and under-recognized practitioners. SJMA's collection plan prioritizes community relevance and public access, placing particular priority on acquiring works that reflect the cultural heritages and lived experiences of the regional landscape. SJMA hosts two popular annual free community days, Día de Los Muertos and Lunar New Year, in addition to numerous other community-focused annual events. The popular First Friday program collaborates with many local community partners and musicians, while

offering free open galleries to the public. Currently open to the general public Thursday through Sunday, the Museum welcomes about 50,000 visitors on-site annually. SJMA is the largest provider of in-school arts education in Santa Clara County, engaging school tours throughout the week on-site and an additional 25,000 students off-site, often offering the first art museum experience for countless students in the South Bay.

SJMA was awarded re-Accreditation in 2023, and benefits from the insight and generosity of a 25-member Board of Trustees, has a dedicated team of 30 full-time and 30 part-time staff, approximately \$12.8M in invested funds, including a \$1.5M endowment from the Knight Foundation, and an operating budget of about \$6 million. Please visit <https://sjmusart.org/> to learn more about the museum.

## CURRENT CONTEXT

The San Jose Museum of Art has marked a series of notable achievements, reflecting its growing recognition and influence within the contemporary art landscape both regionally and nationally. This past fiscal year alone, it was rated [Best Museum in Silicon Valley](#), raised over \$1M at the Gala + Auction, increased the number of Title 1 students served by 33%, and reached over 8,000 teachers through the [Education Sketchbook](#) e-newsletter.

The next Executive Director will build upon the Museum's strategic plan for 2023-2027, which outlines four clear objectives:

1. Develop a far-reaching creative presence throughout Silicon Valley and beyond
2. Embrace the Museum's potential to serve as an incubator of change by becoming a gathering space for diverse communities and cross-disciplinary interests
3. Redefine the Museum structure through an equity lens
4. Grow SJMA's operating budget commensurate with the stature and significance of San Jose and Silicon Valley

## ROLE OF THE OSHMAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Oshman Executive Director works in partnership with experienced staff and the Board of Trustees to oversee all aspects of the institution, including institutional vision and purpose; exhibitions and programs; physical, financial, and human resources; civic and community engagement; and implementing the 2023-2027 strategic plan. The Executive Director will ensure the financial health of the Museum through fundraising, earned revenue pursuits, and building upon the growth of the institution over the last ten years to increase the endowment.

Reporting to the President of the Board of Trustees, the Director will advance both San Jose and current trends in the museum realm and be an innovator who brings fresh ideas that will drive the organization to achieve its strategic goals. They will have deep leadership experience, excellent communication skills, and proven fundraising experience.

In addition to its professional staff, SJMA values its part-time staff of art educators and dedicated community of volunteer docents. With the Chief Development Officer role currently filled on an interim basis, the incoming Executive Director will have the opportunity to appoint a permanent senior development leader as a colleague and partner. The Director has five direct reports: Deputy Director, Director of Design and Operations, Registrar, Chief Curator, and the Executive Assistant and Board Liaison.

## KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE OSHMAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the San Jose Museum of Art looks to the future, the incoming Executive Director is expected to address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges as key priorities.

### Lead a Compelling Vision for the Museum

- Effectively align and execute an artistic vision, strategic plan, and stakeholder connections so that the sum is made strong by its component parts.
- Identify and pursue strategic opportunities for growth - across audiences, partnerships, and impact- positioning the museum for its next chapter as a leading cultural institution in the region.
- Communicate an infectious passion for contemporary art within San Jose, with civic and art world partners, and that inspires others.
- Expand SJMA's reach from regional impact with a strong international program, to international impact with strong regional relevance and identity. Support a cohesive culture while avoiding insularity.
- Champion museum best practices and uphold SJMA's status as an AAM-accredited museum, Charity Navigator 4 Star Rating, Guidestar Platinum Transparency Rating, and elected membership in the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) and Contemporary Art Museum Directors (CAMD).

### Strengthen and Diversify the Museum's Financial Position

- Enjoy and embrace converting strangers into supporters and funders, especially those new to art. Lead fundraising and friend-raising efforts to achieve financial goals, increase lead gifts, broaden visitor and patron communities, and develop strategic partnerships and collaborations that foster giving.
- Focus on short-term and long-range financial planning that includes developing an annual budget for board approval and effectively executing the plan to ensure a strong and stable financial foundation for the Museum.
- Direct the Museum's operations, ensuring alignment of revenue opportunities, development, exhibitions & programming, staffing and operating expenses.
- Apply financial acumen and experience with complex organizational budgets to actively manage daily operations and ensure a vital and healthy museum.
- Increase endowment to ensure financial sustainability commensurate with growth.
- Actively strengthen ties to and investment from the City of San Jose and its leaders.

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### **Collaborate with the Board, Staff, and Broader Communities to Steward Key Relationships**

- Be the face of SJMA in the broader civic community. Fortify relationships with key members of the Bay Area, California and national art community, including institutional peers and leaders.
- Serve as a key translator between the arts and broader civic and business communities, making a compelling case for the Museum's role in San Jose's ongoing development and building enthusiasm for its mission through accessible, forward-thinking engagement.
- Practice generational attentiveness, keeping loyal members engaged while cultivating meaningful connections and opportunities with rising generations and diverse communities.

### **Support and Develop Dedicated Staff**

- Uphold and maintain a flourishing, inclusive, and accessible culture.
- Enhance and increase internal communication and engagement to and among staff.
- Supervise, recruit, and retain a highly qualified and motivated professional staff, building accountability through clear expectations, annual performance reviews, and providing development and enrichment opportunities.
- Apply organizational and managerial acumen to ensure internal operations are efficient and energizing for staff.

## **QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

While no one person may embody all, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities.

- 5+ years of relevant leadership experience, preferably in a nonprofit art collecting museum. Strong interpersonal and leadership skills: decisive, confident, empathetic, flexible.
- Strong record of success in fundraising, grant writing, membership, and audience development.
- Financial acumen and experience in managing budgets.
- Demonstrated knowledge of the standards and best practices for museums and non-profits.
- Strength in communication skills, including public speaking and written communications.
- Excellent planning, organizing, and operational management skills.
- Show a proven commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion, including the recruitment and retention of staff and Board.
- Willingness to work a variable schedule, including weekends and evenings, when needed.
- BA degree required and an advanced degree preferred in Museum Studies, Art History, or related disciplines, as well as Business.

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply to jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

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## COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a permanent, full-time position located in San Jose with a targeted starting salary range of \$250,000 – \$300,000, commensurate with experience.

Located in the heart of Silicon Valley, San Jose blends innovation, cultural richness, excellent weather, and an exceptional quality of life. As the largest city in Northern California, it boasts diverse neighborhoods with an evolving downtown filled with restaurants, theaters, and entertainment. With over 300 days of sunshine a year, residents enjoy easy access to outdoor recreation, from hiking in the nearby Santa Cruz Mountains to weekend trips to the coast. As part of a forward-thinking and creative community, the San Jose Museum of Art is a cornerstone in the city's emerging civic center and offers a unique opportunity to engage in contemporary art in a city intent on shaping the future.

## APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via [the Isaacson, Miller website](#).

Sarah James, Arianna Williams, Siobhan Hanley  
Isaacson, Miller

*SJMA aspires to deep learning, practice, and implementation of the principles and strategies of equity, inclusion, empathy, and diversity. As a cultural institution aiming to create welcoming, borderless spaces, we devote particular attention to reducing inequities and barriers to access for historically and culturally underrepresented, misrepresented, or negatively impacted communities.*

*The Museum supports these ideals, both internally and externally, by building an equitable and inclusive workplace, lifting underrepresented voices and stories through its exhibitions, education, and public programs, and embedding inclusive practices into its education programs and community partnerships.*