

CalArts

Executive Director CHANEL Center for Artists and Technology

Through artistic practice, we transform ourselves, each other, and the world...

THE SEARCH

California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) invites applications for a bold, visionary, and innovative leader to serve as the inaugural Executive Director of the CHANEL Center for Artists and Technology (CCAT). This is a rare opportunity to shape a groundbreaking initiative at the intersection of art, technology, and global cultural innovation. The Executive Director will lead CCAT through its formative five-year grant, guiding its strategic direction, cultivating its public presence, and ensuring its seamless integration within CalArts and the larger technology and art world ecosystem. As both an internal connector and external ambassador, the Executive Director will bridge academic programs, faculty, students, and administrative functions with a dynamic network of global partners, industries, and institutions. The ideal candidate will bring deep ties to the creative industries (including film, art, music, and design), credibility within academia and among potential nonprofit partners, and experience navigating international and cross-cultural contexts, drawn possibly from interface with governments or in diplomatic arenas.

Founded through a partnership with the CHANEL Culture Fund, CCAT aims to be a visionary hub for interdisciplinary collaboration. It brings together artists, technologists, academics, and industry leaders to foster innovation across visual, performing, media, and literary arts. At its core are two primary research nodes, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning and Digital Imaging, which serve as platforms for creative exploration and knowledge generation. CCAT integrates advanced tools and software into its programming, enabling artists to incorporate emerging technologies into their practices. Deeply connected to a global network of museums, universities, and tech companies, the Center facilitates collaboration and resource sharing across Southern California and beyond. Through exhibitions, presentations, and partnerships, CCAT will actively share its innovations with the public, contributing to broader cultural and technological discourse.

CalArts has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in identifying the inaugural Executive Director for CCAT. Applications, nominations, and inquiries should be directed as outlined at the end of this description.

CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF THE ARTS

As the first higher education institution in the nation to offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in the visual and performing arts, CalArts is in the top tier of highly competitive art schools. Established in 1961 by Walt and Roy Disney, CalArts emerged with a bold new paradigm for arts education, the kind not seen since the Black Mountain College experiment of the 1930s that promised freedom to create with boundless imagination, unfettered by conventional expectations. Offering a curriculum that is at once imaginative and rigorous, CalArts continues to distinguish itself as a leader in arts education, nurturing and respecting students as artists, offering remarkable interchange with faculty across disciplines, and encouraging students to cross-pollinate and inspire each other.

CalArts has a multidisciplinary approach to its studies of the arts through six schools: Art, Critical Studies, Dance, Film/Video, Music, and Theater. CalArts encourages students to explore and recognize the complexity of the many aspects of the arts. It is supported by a distinguished faculty of practicing artists and provides its Bachelor and Master of Fine Arts students with the hands-on training and exposure necessary for an artist's growth.

Located on a campus 25 miles north of Hollywood in the Santa Clarita Valley, CalArts has helped fuel several movements in the arts, its graduates fanning out internationally in every major arts arena. It now holds a prominent place in the exploding arts scene in Los Angeles, where a critical mass of emerging artists and professional colleagues both come from the ranks of CalArts alumni.

In addition to the main campus, CalArts operates the Roy and Edna Disney CalArts Theater (REDCAT), an interdisciplinary contemporary arts center for innovative performances and exhibitions in downtown Los Angeles. The institute also provides arts education to underserved youth in the area through the Community Arts Partnership and maintains strong ties with an array of educational partners globally.

To learn more about CalArts, please visit their website at <https://calarts.edu/>.

THE CHANEL CENTER FOR ARTISTS AND TECHNOLOGY

The [CHANEL Center for Artists and Technology](#) (CCAT) at CalArts is a unique initiative that positions artists at the forefront of shaping the evolving technologies that define our world. Rooted in CalArts' legacy of interdisciplinary collaboration, CCAT extends this tradition by integrating rapidly advancing technologies—such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital imaging—into creative practice and research. Through its dual focus on experimentation and knowledge creation, CCAT fosters new models of partnership and cultural advancement, empowering artists to lead in the development of future technologies and their societal impact.

CCAT will foster research, experimentation, mentorship, and the creation of new knowledge by connecting students, faculty, artists, and technologists—the thinkers and creators whose expertise and

vision will define the future—with new technology and its applications. CCAT builds on CalArts’ legacy as a cross-disciplinary art school, where experimentation in visual arts, music, film, performing arts, and dance has been nurtured since the institution’s founding. In this signature program, artists will be empowered to use technology to shape creativity across disciplines—and, ultimately, to shape a better world.

The position is grant-funded by the CHANEL Culture Fund for the CHANEL Center for Artists and Technology at CalArts for a five-year period. This funding supports a range of strategic priorities, including infrastructure investments such as equipment and technology, as well as staffing, stipends for visiting artists and technologists, and other essential operational costs.

THE ROLE

Reporting to the Office of the President, the Executive Director is responsible for leading the CHANEL Center for Artists and Technology, creating a strategic vision and advancing its cutting-edge work at the intersection of art and technology in alignment with CalArts’ broader mission. They will champion the Center’s goals, intentions, and achievements while maintaining a respected presence within both domestic and international communities in their field. This role ensures programmatic excellence through rigorous evaluation, sound financial oversight, and effective administration while identifying and pursuing strategic opportunities for CCAT’s growth.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Drive CCAT’s strategic direction as a convener of people, ideas, and resources.

The Executive Director will guide the execution of CCAT’s mission, ensuring its groundbreaking work in art and technology is effectively implemented and widely recognized. This role requires a leader who can align vision with action—managing complex operations supported by an eight-figure grant, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and serving as a central connector among artists, technologists, institutional partners, and global communities. They will ensure CCAT’s initiatives are important, sustainable, scalable, and aligned with the strategic priorities of CalArts and the CHANEL Culture Fund.

Establish a strong operational foundation and lead CCAT with clarity and accountability.

The Executive Director will be responsible for building the foundational infrastructure of CCAT, assembling an agile, high-performing team, defining roles and expectations, and creating clear systems that support excellence across all areas of the Center’s work. This includes inspiring and recruiting top talent from researchers and creators working at the intersection of art, science, and technology who will drive CCAT’s agenda forward. As with any entrepreneurial endeavor, the role requires deft multi-tasking, oversight of strategic planning, budget development, and strict adherence with grant and institutional requirements.

Shape the future of CCAT through rigorous evaluation, resource stewardship, and visionary expansion.

As mentioned, the Executive Director will ensure the Center's programs are innovative, sustainable, and designed for impact. This includes overseeing financial and administrative operations, evaluating program effectiveness, creating short-term and long-term goals, and identifying new areas for strategic growth.

As the primary liaison between CCAT and the CHANEL Arts & Culture team, the Executive Director will balance concurrent priorities, foster a strong and collaborative relationship, and ensure open, consistent communication between CHANEL Arts & Culture and the CCAT team. The Executive Director will be responsible for aligning strategic goals and facilitating seamless coordination across both teams.

Serve as a strategic communicator and thought partner to the President in advancing CCAT's visibility and influence.

The Executive Director will help shape and execute CCAT's external communications strategy, ensuring the Center's work is visible, accessible, and aligned with institutional goals. As a collaborator and thought partner to the President, the Executive Director will help steward key relationships across CalArts, industry, and global communities—building bridges between artists, technologists, and civic leaders. This role requires a leader who can convene diverse voices, foster meaningful dialogue, and represent CCAT with clarity, purpose, and strategic insight.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Background and credibility in the arts, technology, or their intersection, with a demonstrated level of accomplishment
- A minimum of 10 years of related work experience, preferably at a leadership level, dealing with the arts, technology, or at their intersection
- Deep commitment to the multidisciplinary nature and academic model of CalArts
- Creative and innovative thinker with a forward-looking perspective on the future of the arts
- Proven effective relationship builder and partnership manager
- Strong organizational skills; effective under pressure and able to manage competing demands
- Internationally engaged and at ease, including with governments and in the diplomatic arena
- Respected and well-connected within the fields of art and technology or some relevant combination therein, with commensurate professional networks
- Excellent, inclusive, and astute communication skills

- Proven ability to lead and motivate teams to foster a collaborative and high-performing work environment; demonstrated expertise in performance management to attain results
- Strong project management skills with experience in planning, executing, and delivering projects on time and within budget; experienced in managing financial operations reliant on grant funding
- Adaptability and resilience in fast-paced, dynamic startup or entrepreneurial environments
- Possessing sound judgment and integrity with excellent problem-solving skills and the ability to proactively identify and resolve challenges; decisive
- Proficiency in both English and a second language strongly preferred

EDUCATION

- A graduate or professional degree in a related field preferred in arts, education, and/or technology.

COMPENSATION

The posted salary range for this position is \$180,000 - \$200,000 and is commensurate with experience.

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: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/california-institute-arts-CHANEL-center-artists-and-technology/executive-director>

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Isaacson, Miller

California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) seeks to employ faculty and staff who can engage our diverse communities of learners at the highest levels of artistic endeavor and critical thinking. Across the range of practitioners from artists to scholars and librarians, we welcome candidates who possess a demonstrated worldview and cultural competency to support teaching and mentoring undergraduate and graduate students of varied backgrounds, capabilities, perspectives, social identities, and gender expressions. CalArts is an equal opportunity employer.