



Executive Director
Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University
Norfolk, Virginia

THE SEARCH

Founded in 2016 by art collectors and philanthropists Carolyn and Richard Barry, the Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University is a cultural and educational destination on Old Dominion University's main campus in Norfolk, Virginia. As collectors, the Barrys pursue multiple collecting passions: hers for historical dolls and automata, his for nineteenth-century maritime painting, and, together, modern American painting and contemporary art glass, with this last category numbering hundreds of pieces.

Thanks in large part to the recent addition of two significant art glass collections, the Museum is undergoing a \$25 million expansion and is anticipated to reopen in spring 2027. The expansion adds five new galleries, an event space, and an education workshop on the first two levels, and a new administrative suite and secured storage on the third level.

In advance of the reopening, the Museum seeks a visionary, collaborative, and transformative leader to serve as the next Executive Director. The Executive Director will be responsible for leading the Museum's day-to-day operations, supervising its staff of five full-time employees, cultivating donors and spearheading fundraising, and overseeing the development of programming pertinent to the University's academic and community outreach missions. The Museum Board enjoys active participation by the President, Vice Provost, and other senior university officials.

The executive recruiting firm Isaacson, Miller has been retained to assist in the recruitment of the next Executive Director. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

BARRY ART MUSEUM

The mission of the Barry Art Museum is to serve as a cultural hub at Old Dominion University that advances the understanding of diverse forms of art through collecting, display, interpretation, and research. It strives to communicate the results of these endeavors to the widest possible audience through publication, exhibition, educational programs, and collections stewardship.

The Barrys' initial \$37 million gift to establish the museum is the largest donation to the University to date. It allowed for the construction of a 24,000 square foot building that serves as a gateway to the University's campus, an endowment, and the core of its operating budget. Designed by the architecture firm Saunders + Crouse of Virginia Beach and erected by the construction firm Clancy & Theys, the building opened to widespread acclaim in fall 2018. The Museum's most distinctive feature, a two-story curtain wall of channel glass, serves as the backdrop to an eleven-foot Dale Chihuly chandelier that beckons visitors to engage with the works of art glass exhibited within the four large galleries and a double height sculpture court that define the original interior.

Following the donation of more than 160 pieces of art glass from noted collectors Leah and Richard Waitzer in 2022, the promised gift of nearly 180 pieces from noted glass collectors Harold and Myra Weiss, and the ongoing collecting support from the Barrys, the Museum embarked on a \$25 million capital campaign to double its footprint and enlarge its endowment. The three-story addition has been designed and is currently under construction by the same teams that designed and built the original building. The channel glass façade will continue across several sections of the addition, most notably at the top. As part of the expansion, the Chihuly Studio will double the size of the Chihuly chandelier.

More information about the Museum and the construction project may be found at: <https://barryartmuseum.odu.edu/barry-art-museum-expansion/>.

Collections

Glass: The Museum's glass collection features internationally renowned contemporary designers and artists, spanning the full arc of the American studio glass movement. Some of the artists represented include Harvey Littleton, Dale Chihuly, Benjamin Moore, Richard Marquis, Lino Tagliapietra, Dante Marioni, Dan Dailey, Howard Ben Tré, Karen LaMonte, Stanislav Libenský and Jaroslava Brychtová, Debora Moore, and Toots Zynsky. Numerous other contemporary international glass artists are represented as well. The combined and growing Barry, Waitzer, and Weiss collections total more than 500 art glass works.

Modern American Painting and Sculpture: The Barrys' core collection of paintings focused on early American modernist masters, including Arthur B. Carles, Marsden Hartley, Morgan Russell, John Marin, Alfred Maurer, Hugh Breckenridge, George Luks, George Bellows, Hans Hofmann, John Chamberlain, Frank Stella, Helen Frankenthaler, Blanche Lazzell, and Rockwell Kent. More recent Museum acquisitions include large scale paintings by Jules Olitski and Helen Frankenthaler, and mixed-media sculptures by Nancy Graves, Frank Stella, and Karen LaMonte. The Barrys often chose paintings to enhance and interact with the glass sculptures.

Dolls and Automata: Nineteenth-century French fashion dolls, French babes (child dolls) and German character dolls are especially well-represented in the collection. Dolls are interpreted and presented as art objects, stimulating a variety of interdisciplinary exhibitions and cross-cultural dialogues and reflections. The 2025 United Federation of Dolls Clubs' annual convention was held in Norfolk and brought close to one thousand people to Norfolk and to the museum. The Barry Art Museum is the only art museum in the United States with a permanent gallery dedicated to the art of the doll. It has proven to be a very popular gallery.

Maritime Paintings: Norfolk is major seaport given the area's proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, the Chesapeake Bay, and the James, York, and Elizabeth Rivers. Thus, the maritime paintings hold a special place in the community's imagination. Noted artists within the collection include Archibald Cary Smith, Robert Salmon, Montague Dawson, James Buttersworth, Thomas Buttersworth, Edward Moran, James Gale Tyler, and Antonio Jacobsen.

OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Established in 1930 as a branch of the College of William and Mary and located in Norfolk, Virginia, Old Dominion University (ODU) offers 228 undergraduate, graduate and professional programs to more than 23,000 students through in-person and digital coursework. ODU's campuses feature contemporary, state-of-the-art facilities, and its cutting-edge programs and excellent faculty attract students from across the country and around the globe.

In December 2021, Old Dominion University was named a Research 1, or R1 institution, indicating "very high research activity," from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. Its business and research initiatives contribute \$3.8 billion annually to Virginia's economy.

The July 2024 merger between Old Dominion University and the Eastern Virginia Medical School has led to an expanded, comprehensive institution that boasts a 15:1 student-to-faculty ratio, allowing students to work closely with over 900 distinguished teacher-scholars and over 500 professional faculty across nine academic colleges, three interdisciplinary schools, and a medical school.

Academic programs in the literary, performing, and visual arts are housed in the College of Arts and Letters, whose annual Literary Festival and the Diehn Concert Series routinely attract national and international artists and performers. The College's Baron and Ellin Gordon Galleries house a renowned collection of artworks by twentieth-century self-taught artists and hosts rotating exhibitions by contemporary, faculty, and student artists. The Barry Art Museum engages faculty members and students from across the University and strives to reach the widest possible array of disciplines and audiences through its exhibitions, programs, and events.

NORFOLK AND THE HAMPTON ROADS REGION

Water is at the heart of Hampton Roads. Positioned along the Chesapeake Bay, the Atlantic Ocean, and crisscrossed by rivers like the James, Elizabeth and York, it is a region that blends rich heritage, coastal beauty, a diversified economy, and vibrant cultural energy. Hampton Roads is home to over 1.8 million residents across 15 distinct localities, including Norfolk, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Portsmouth, Suffolk, Newport News, Hampton, Williamsburg, Jamestown, and Yorktown.

The City of Norfolk, where ODU and the Museum are located, is the historic, urban, financial, and cultural center of Hampton Roads and serves as a living laboratory for faculty and student experiences across a wide array of educational and cultural institutions and attractions. In addition to ODU, the region has more than 30 local universities, colleges, and trade schools including Norfolk State University, Tidewater Community College, Virginia Wesleyan University, Hampton University, and William & Mary.

Culturally, the region boasts the Virginia Opera, the Virginia Stage Company, the Virginia Symphony, the Virginia Arts Festival, The Virginia Zoo, the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, the Chrysler Museum of Art, Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Mariners' Museum, alongside vibrant annual festivals and abundant natural beauty.

Known increasingly as the "City of Glass," Norfolk is home to America's largest existing community collection of public glass, through the holdings of the Chrysler Museum of Art and its expanded, 33,000 square foot Perry Glass Studio, the Barry Art Museum, the Perry Glass Collection at the Glass Light Hotel, and, opening soon, the Norfolk Botanical Gardens, whose Perry Conservatory will integrate works by Dale Chihuly with its collection of rare and endangered plants.

Home to significant indigenous tribes, the Hampton Roads region is the birthplace of America with numerous historic sites, from First Landing Park in Virginia Beach, where Captain John Smith and the first European settlers first came ashore, and Colonial Williamsburg, original site of the longest serving elected legislature in America, to Yorktown, scene of the close of the American Revolution.

During the Civil War, the Battle of the Monitor and the Merrimac took place in the Hampton Roads shipping channel and escaped enslaved peoples found refuge at Fort Monroe.

Norfolk serves as the principal seaport for the Commonwealth of Virginia, the North American headquarters for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), more than 200 international companies, the world's largest maritime industrial base, and the world's largest naval base. In fact, with a total of 15 installations, the region is home to over 80,000 active-duty military personnel. It is also Southeastern Virginia's premiere medical center, which comprises of Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, the region's only Level-1 trauma center, and the Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters (CHKD), the state's only free-standing, full-service pediatric hospital.

Hampton Roads has a diverse and rich natural environment, being intertwined with the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay, and Norfolk alone has 167 miles of shoreline. It has a four-season climate with numerous opportunities for outdoor activities in its four major wildlife refuges and many parks as well as an affordable cost of living.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the Barry Art Museum looks to its future, the Executive Director will address the following interrelated opportunities and challenges as key priorities:

Increase the Museum's visibility and positioning in Hampton Roads.

The Executive Director will be committed to the Barry Art Museum's role in serving the University, the local community, and the arts and culture of the region. The Executive Director will represent the Museum as an active arts leader and partner in the greater community. In addition to serving as the face of the Museum, the Executive Director will prioritize outreach to connect expansively with audiences and facilitate welcoming relationships. Through serving a unique role in the community, the Museum will raise its own profile and further the role of the arts in the region.

Create a strategic vision and drive goals and outcomes.

The Executive Director will lead the Museum's next chapter with a vision that is ambitious. This includes identifying and implementing short- and long-term goals and assessment measures that will maximize the potential of the new facility. The Museum is entering a new organizational phase that will require deeper strategic thinking beyond that of a startup. The Executive Director will ensure excellence in exhibitions, collections, programmatic content, and engagement, with clear objectives for measurable success.

Ensure long-term financial sustainability through increased fundraising.

The Executive Director will broaden the supporter base and inspire new champions among individuals, corporations, and foundations. The Museum is at a transitional moment, maturing from an early founder-led phase to a sustainable long-term vision with the opening of the new facility. As the Museum's chief advocate, the Executive Director will compellingly communicate impact, demonstrate the Museum's value to the local community, the Hampton Roads region, and the broader field. With an understanding of generational shifts in the regional philanthropic landscape as well as trends in institutional giving in the arts nationally, the Executive Director will have a strategic approach to cultivation that diversifies and grows the financial base of support.

Lead, develop, and empower a high performing team.

The Museum is home to a team of dedicated professionals. The Executive Director will be responsible for building and developing museum staff, demonstrating a full understanding of their work, thereby promoting institutional cohesion and a shared sense of the Museum's future. The Executive Director will be a values-driven leader who maintains clear communication, including through delegation of responsibilities and appropriate authority, maintaining transparency in decision-making, and regular supportive interaction with the full team. The Executive Director will be present and attentive to internal management to mentor and support senior staff.

Sustain and deepen collaboration across campus.

As a key architectural element of ODU, the Museum's presence provides significant opportunity to engage across campus. The Executive Director will attend to strong existing partnerships and extend collaboration with new partners across the University. The Executive Director will foster engagement, instruction, consultation, and enjoyment that centers the ODU community's needs and synergies through exhibitions, workshops, internships, and programmatic opportunities. The Executive Director will be a University citizen who understands what it means to be a museum housed alongside a research university.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The next Executive Director should hold a master's or terminal degree in the arts or a related field and be conversant with trends in modern and contemporary American art as well as the Studio Art Glass movement.

Additionally, the successful candidate will embody most, if not all, of the following professional qualifications and personal qualities:

- At least five years' experience working in a gallery or museum setting with increasing levels of responsibility and evidence of vision, effective leadership, including personnel management, budget oversight, and strategic planning
- Demonstrated experience in programmatic or institutional innovation leading to organizational transformation for the Museum's next chapter
- An enthusiastic approach to community engagement
- Demonstrated excellence in oral and written communication skills
- Demonstrated creativity, curiosity, vision, and compassion in approaching the role of the museum in contemporary society, maintaining relationships with existing partners, and forging connections with new ones
- A deep understanding of museum best practices, including collections management, exhibition development, community engagement, and educational programming
- A strong record of success in developing donor relations and fundraising
- A captivating passion for art and enthusiasm for the collecting areas of the Museum
- Ability to communicate effectively with others, receive feedback, and manage conflict, while advocating core values
- Interest in and capacity to work well in an academic/higher education environment and make creative connections with faculty, staff, and students
- An open and collaborative approach to management, building capacity among staff

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a full-time, on-site position located in the Hampton Roads Region with a targeted starting salary range of \$175,000 - \$225,000. The successful candidate will also receive Virginia Commonwealth public employee benefits. The projected starting date is July 1, 2026.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of 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/barry-art-museum-old-dominion-university/executive-director>.

Claire Hennessey, Ryan Leichenauer, Christina Errico
Isaacson, Miller

It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide equal employment, educational and social opportunities for all persons, without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), national origin, gender, age, veteran status, disability, political affiliation, sexual orientation or genetic information. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University would supersede any conflicting information in this document.