



Carolyn Muzzy Director
Colby College
Waterville, ME

THE SEARCH

Colby College, one of the nation's premier liberal arts institutions, pairs the enduring strengths of a liberal arts education with an ambitious vision for the future. Known for its academic rigor, student-centered ethos, and culture of innovation, the College offers an environment where faculty, students, and staff collaborate across disciplines to advance knowledge, cultivate creativity, and address complex societal challenges. At the intersection of Colby's academic mission and public life, the Colby College Museum of Art (the Museum) activates its exceptional collections and acclaimed exhibitions to transform teaching, research, and creative practice. The Museum is a national leader among academic art museums, combining the scholarly rigor of a teaching museum with the ambition, collection, scale, and influence of a major cultural institution.

Significant growth in recent years—including expanded facilities, major acquisitions, and the continued evolution of the Lunder Institute for American Art—has elevated the Museum's profile and broadened its impact. Positioned as both a premier destination for American and contemporary art and a catalyst for interdisciplinary inquiry, the Museum plays a critical role in shaping the intellectual, artistic, and civic life of the College, region, and the field. The Museum seeks a dynamic, collaborative, and engaging leader to serve as the Carolyn Muzzy Director and lead the Museum into its next ambitious chapter.

The Director will be passionate about the role of art in American society. They will be an engaging and visionary leader adept at building relationships with a wide range of constituents, including students, faculty, administration, artists, residents, community members, members of the Colby College Board of Trustees and Museum Board of Governors, collectors, and donors. The Director will continue to build a distinctive national profile for the Museum and expand connections with major art museums around the U.S. and globally, as well as with other academic and peer institutions.

The Colby College Museum of Art has retained the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller, to assist in the recruitment of its next director. Please direct all applications, nominations, and inquiries to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

THE COLBY COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART

Founded in 1959, the Colby College Museum of Art is a leading academic art museum with renowned strengths in American and contemporary art that distinguish it among peer university and standalone institutions nationwide. While the holdings in American art are encyclopedic in scope, the Museum has strong holdings from European masters such as Goya, Picasso, Matisse, Rembrandt, Courbet, and Degas, and a smaller but important collection of prehistoric Chinese art.

The Museum employs over 30 full-time and approximately 20 part-time staff. Its mission is deeply tied to that of the College through partnerships with the faculty, students, and surrounding communities. Colby class visits to the Museum grew by 27 percent from 2019 to 2026, with more than 1,200 classes across 28 academic departments visiting the museum over that period, generating nearly 18,300 student interactions. In 2024–25 alone, the museum hosted more than 200 class visits, with especially strong engagement from the sciences.

The Museum organizes and presents ten to twelve exhibitions a year, many with accompanying publications, as well as major traveling shows. Several shows have been cited as groundbreaking in their curatorial practices and revelatory in the insights gleaned about the artists and their artistic practices. In the past decade, the Museum has grown rapidly and now encompasses nearly 40,000 square feet of exhibition space and, since 2021, has expanded to include two sites in downtown Waterville: [Greene Block + Studios](#), where the Lunder Institute for American Art is part of a broader creative hub that includes working artists and flexible spaces for exhibitions, performances, and community programming; and the Museum's [Joan Dignam Schmaltz Gallery of Art](#) within the [Paul J. Schupf Art Center](#), which brings together visual and performing arts, film, and arts education. Artistic programming also extends to [the Island Campus](#), formerly the home of Betsy and Andrew Wyeth, and to Colby's Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts.

During the Dare Northward Campaign, the Museum's holdings have expanded from 6,000 to nearly 11,000 works. Over the last five years, the Museum has lent more than 100 works from its collection to leading institutions in the United States and Europe, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Musée d'Orsay, and Tate Britain.

The [Lunder Institute for American Art](#) was established in 2017 through the generosity of Peter and Paula Lunder and the Lunder Foundation. It supports innovative research, scholarship, and creative production that expands the boundaries of American art. Longtime benefactors in the field of American art, Peter and Paula Lunder have also made possible the acquisition of over 1,800 works. These unprecedented gifts have enhanced the Colby Museum's position at the forefront of American art and have informed

the Museum's educational mission. The Lunder Collection also contains one of the world's foremost holdings of artwork by James McNeill Whistler, with more than 370 prints, drawings, and paintings representing a comprehensive survey of Whistler's career across media, plus nearly 150 rare books, journals, photographs, and archival materials composing the Museum's Whistler reference collection. The Museum also has among the world's largest collections from the artists Richard Serra, Alex Katz, and Terry Winters, as well as one of the most comprehensive career collections of John Marin in an academic museum, befitting the Museum's long and fruitful connections to individual artists and collectors.

Free and open to all, the Museum seeks to advance the College's entrepreneurial approach to intellectual inquiry, creativity, and innovation on behalf of the college's educational and research mission, while enriching the region's cultural and community life, and contributing at the highest levels to the field of American Art.

ROLE OF THE CAROLYN MUZZY DIRECTOR

Reporting to President Greene and working closely with an engaged and supportive Board of Governors, the Carolyn Muzzy Director will align the Museum with the College's mission and vision and oversee all aspects of leading the institution internally and externally. The Museum is guided by the belief that art is not merely something to observe. It is a powerful lens through which we understand society. Artists help us interpret the American experience—indeed, the human experience—and the Director will play a critical role in ensuring that those insights are brought to life through thoughtful exhibitions, scholarship, and educational engagement.

The Director will serve as a visible, engaging, and effective partner and advocate for the critical role the arts play in Colby College's overall educational and public mission and in the art world more broadly. Their excellent leadership experience, communication skills, and proven fundraising acumen will position the Director as an innovator who brings fresh ideas to the extraordinary opportunity Colby affords on multiple fronts.

Working closely with President Greene, the Director will serve as a strategic partner who can advance ambitious institutional goals while bringing thoughtful prioritization, sound judgment, and organizational discipline to complex initiatives.

The Museum Board of Governors is an exceptional resource for the Director. Comprised of arts leaders, collectors, artists, and professionals from across a wide spectrum, the Board provides guidance to the director and supports the Museum in myriad ways. A successful Director will continue to nourish this Board while continuing to attract new members to it who can propel the Museum forward.

The Museum and its Board of Governors have taken on an initial planning process for expanding the museum, with the help of [Toshiko Mori Architect](#). The expansion of the Museum will take many forms, including a focus on creating a robust campus art program, which has been launched with a [wonderful gift from Ann Beha and Rob Radloff](#). It will include the expansion of its collections and financial resources

to support them. The Museum complex will need to continue to grow and evolve over time to support new programs and an expanding collection. At this moment, the opportunities for global partnerships are ripe and have the potential to expand the reach and impact of the Museum.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE CAROLYN MUZZY DIRECTOR

As the Colby College Museum of Art looks to the future, the incoming Director is expected to prioritize the following interrelated opportunities and challenges.

Lead a capacious vision for the museum's next chapter

- Articulate and advance a compelling vision that builds on the Museum's extraordinary foundation while identifying strategic opportunities for growth, innovation, and impact across audiences, programs, partnerships, and collections
- Shape and communicate a long-term vision for facilities, collection stewardship, storage, conservation, staff workspace, and public engagement as the Museum enters a significant period of master planning and growth
- Support and mentor an outstanding team of professionals while recruiting exceptional talent for positions such as the chief curator, the curator of public art, and two full-time development professionals
- Elevate the Museum's profile and influence nationally and internationally while maintaining its distinctive role as a cultural anchor for Colby, Waterville, and the state of Maine
- Further integrate art throughout the Colby experience, leveraging the Museum's singular position within the College to foster interdisciplinary engagement, intellectual inquiry, and cultural enrichment
- Embrace a forward-looking and entrepreneurial approach to art museum leadership, balancing thoughtful stewardship with a willingness to take calculated risks, explore new ideas, and shape conversations across the broader art world
- Build the systems and structures necessary to support the Museum's continued growth while preserving its agility and culture of innovation

Strengthen connections across Colby, Waterville, and beyond

- Serve as a visible and influential ambassador for the Museum, cultivating strong relationships across the College and ensuring the Museum remains deeply embedded in the academic, cultural, community, and campus life of Colby
- Build and sustain meaningful partnerships with the Board of Governors, Colby leadership, artists, cultural organizations, academic institutions, collectors, donors, and community leaders that expand the Museum's reach, relevance, and impact
- Deepen the Museum's engagement locally and regionally while broadening its national and international networks, creating new opportunities for collaboration, scholarship, and public engagement across the art world

Advance awareness, impact, and the continued growth of the Museum's premier collection

- Strengthen relationships with established and emerging collectors, artists, donors, and arts leaders to extend the Museum's profile and contribution across the global art community
- Bring an expansive and intellectually curious approach to collection-building, embracing opportunities to broaden representation, perspectives, and areas of artistic inquiry while adhering to institutional best practices
- Partner with Museum leadership and governance bodies to cultivate deeper engagement among trustees and advisors through expertise, passion, and influence in the arts
- Improve alignment across the Museum and the Lunder Institute for American Art, leveraging the distinctive strengths, partnerships, scholarship, and audiences of both entities while building a more integrated institutional strategy

Energize philanthropic support and steward institutional resources

- With an understanding of generational shifts in the philanthropic landscape as well as trends in institutional giving nationally, the Director will hire a team of advancement professionals and take a strategic approach to cultivation that diversifies and grows the financial base of support for the Museum, and partner closely with College leadership and advancement colleagues to align fundraising priorities with the Museum's strategic ambitions and long-term sustainable growth
- Develop and advance initiatives that grow the Museum's profile, endowment, expand programmatic resources, and support investment in talent, collections, exhibitions, and innovation
- Ensure the responsible stewardship of financial, physical, and reputational assets while positioning the Museum for continued growth and impact

Empower and develop a high-performing staff

- Foster a collaborative, mission-driven culture that empowers staff, encourages creativity, and supports excellence across all areas of the Museum's work
- Invest in the recruitment, development, and retention of exceptional talent, creating opportunities for professional growth and leadership advancement while inspiring them to deliver their best work
- Establish staff priorities that balance entrepreneurial thinking with sustainability, helping the Museum staff focus resources where they can have the greatest impact
- Champion an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming environment for staff, volunteers, faculty, students, visitors, and the community

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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

- A passion for American art, artists, and ideas with the ability to build rapport with and command the respect and support of artists, collectors, curators, colleagues, and the public
- Demonstrated record of success in fundraising, collection development, and board engagement
- Well-established knowledge of and networks in the art world, including emerging trends, artists, collectors, and institutions
- Experience leading within an academic museum, university museum, or similarly complex mission-driven cultural institution, coupled with a sophisticated understanding of how collections, exhibitions, teaching, scholarship, community engagement, and institutional priorities intersect
- A compelling communicator and relationship builder with the credibility, emotional intelligence, and strategic judgment necessary to engage artists, collectors, donors, governors, trustees, faculty, students, community members, and senior institutional leaders
- Demonstrated experience creating an environment where every visitor feels welcomed and inspired to engage with art and ideas.
- Impressive multitasker, who nonetheless can prioritize and sequence objectives to enable clear execution for self and others; Impactful planning, organizing, and operational management skills
- An advanced degree in art or art history, museum education, arts management, or other relevant field or research area is preferred
- An infectious sense of optimism and potential, urgency, and enthusiasm for the task at hand

As no one ever meets 100 percent of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This role is a permanent, full-time position located in Waterville, Maine, with an expected starting base salary in the range of \$280,000 to \$320,000, commensurate with experience and qualifications for the position.

Located on the Kennebec River, [Waterville](#) is a college town in Maine with a population of 17,000. A vibrant community in a gorgeous natural environment, Waterville offers a blend of small-town charm, a sophisticated arts scene, and a growing food culture. The mountains of western Maine and the spectacular Maine coast can be reached in under an hour. Portland, the largest city in Maine and home to some of the country's best restaurants, is just over an hour away. The region is also home to the internationally acclaimed Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, an artist-founded and artist-led residency program, which draws emerging and established artists from around the world and further enriches the area's vibrant creative ecosystem.

COLBY COLLEGE

Founded in 1813, Colby is among the nation's most selective colleges and universities and is ranked at the very top for its generous financial program for students from low- and middle-income backgrounds. As a leader in innovation, Colby College translates its vision into reality through interdisciplinary collaboration, critical thinking, and civic commitment, preparing students to be thoughtful leaders and engaged global citizens. Colby delivers an intimate, highly rigorous academic experience rooted in deep exploration and integrated studies. Serving a diverse student body of 2,400, Colby pioneers human-centered discovery through the Davis Institute for Artificial Intelligence—the first cross-disciplinary institute of its kind at a liberal arts college—while DavisConnects ensures every student has access to high-impact internships, research, and global experiences. Colby also advances solutions to pressing societal challenges through its newly established [Center for Resilience and Economic Impact](#), which brings together faculty, students, policymakers, and community leaders to strengthen economic opportunity and community vitality in Maine and beyond.

The academic rigor is matched by world-class infrastructure, including the Gordon Center for Creative and Performing Arts, the Colby College Museum of Art, and the 350,000-square-foot Harold Alfond Athletics and Recreation Center. In September 2025, the College announced a \$150-million lead commitment for a new science complex that will catalyze half a billion dollars in investment in science and technology. Underpinning this momentum is Colby's commitment to a culture and work environment that enables faculty and staff to perform their best work and contribute meaningfully to the College's mission. Construction is underway on the [Levine's Discovery Headquarters](#), a center for entrepreneurship and innovation in fields as diverse as the performing arts, public policy, biosciences innovation, climate and the environment, and artificial intelligence.

Colby's commitment to excellence also extends off campus, spearheading the \$250-million revitalization of downtown Waterville, which includes two new art centers, a 200-student residential complex with a

programmatic focus on civic engagement, an award-winning hotel, and a soon-to-be developed high-performance computing hub to serve the state of Maine. The arts have been at the center of this revitalization, which has resulted significant population increases for the city, a stronger tax base, and 40 new businesses opening in the downtown corridor.

A passionate and invested advocate for the arts, President Greene has made the arts a defining pillar of Colby's identity. He has similarly focused on ensuring Colby is a magnet for talent and a place where all can do extraordinary work. This dedication to workplace excellence has earned Colby recognition as one of the Best Places to Work in Maine, the only college in the state to receive this recognition. Colby's innovative and ambitious fundraising campaign, [Dare Northward](#), supports deeper connections between the College and the world, as well as a fully inclusive experience for all Colby students. The campaign is currently approaching \$1.2 billion raised, making it the most successful campaign of any liberal arts college, while providing resources to support strategic priorities, student opportunities, faculty excellence, and campus innovation. Learn more about the Colby experience through the voices of its faculty and staff [here](#).

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, Ben Tobin, Arianna Williams, and Alaine Small
Isaacson, Miller

Colby is a private, coeducational liberal arts college that makes personnel decisions on the basis of the individual's qualifications to contribute to Colby's educational objectives and institutional needs. The principle of not discriminating on the basis of race, color, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, pregnancy, parental or marital status, national or ethnic origin, caste, political beliefs, or disability unrelated to job requirements is consistent with the mission of a liberal arts college and the law. Colby is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and operates in accordance with federal and state laws regarding nondiscrimination.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Colby College. 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 Colby College would supersede any conflicting information in this document.