

Nasher Sculpture Center

Search for the Director
Nasher Sculpture Center
Dallas, Texas

To be an international focal point and catalyst for the study, installation, conservation and appreciation of modern and contemporary sculpture.

THE SEARCH

The Nasher Sculpture Center (“the Nasher”), home to one of the finest collections of modern and contemporary sculptures in the world, seeks a creative, mission-driven, and community-centered leader to serve as its next Director. Featuring the Raymond and Patsy Nasher Collection of more than 300 masterpieces intentionally curated from across the globe, the Nasher strives to be an international focal point and catalyst for the study, installation, conservation, and appreciation of modern and contemporary sculpture.

The Nasher has been a source of cultural and architectural pride in Dallas since its opening in 2003. An early Renzo Piano museum, the Nasher is centrally located on a landscaped 2.4-acre site adjacent to the Dallas Museum of Art in the Dallas Arts District. The Museum serves approximately 70,000 visitors annually with 55 full- and part-time employees and an annual operating budget of approximately \$11 million. This is a compelling opportunity to join a thriving organization with an important collection in the heart of a diverse city committed to supporting the arts. The Director will lead an internationally renowned organization, joining a close-knit operation dedicated to enhancing the appreciation of this excellent and very personal collection and the equally personal and enriching experience one enjoys when surrounded by art.

The Director thus will be a passionate advocate for the transformative power of modern and contemporary sculpture with the ability to inspire and persuasively communicate that power to diverse audiences. They will have proven natural leadership, charismatic communication skills, high intellect, and a commitment to and interest in active civic participation in the Dallas community and beyond, with demonstrated knowledge and experience securing philanthropic support. Internally, the Director will continue to nurture the unique culture of care amongst staff, with artists, and with the Board of Directors, which is fortunate to have direct representation from Nasher family members, as well as a keen ability to

assess the Nasher's financial performance, health, and ongoing sustainability to ensure operational excellence and implementation of best practices.

The Nasher Sculpture Center has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, 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 NASHER FAMILY COLLECTION

The Nasher Family Collection was built on the foundation of a love story dedicated to family, community, and the transformative power of sharing art with the world. Raymond and Patsy Nasher relocated to Dallas in the 1950s with nothing but a dream. They worked tirelessly in various real estate endeavors while growing their family, and in 1960 they decided to create a shopping center out of a cotton field. This idea evolved into NorthPark Center that, when it opened, was the biggest climate-controlled retail center in the world. Now home to more than 200 stores and restaurants with a cinema and branch of the Dallas Public Library, it is the 20th largest shopping center in the United States. NorthPark was intentionally built with famed architects Harrel & Hamilton, now known as Omniplan, to include art as an essential aspect of the interior landscape, receiving the American Institute of Architects Award for 'Design of the Decade – 1960s'. The entrepreneurial spirit of the Nasher family is embodied in the history of free public access to the collection at NorthPark Center.

While Raymond and Patsy Nasher had always been art enthusiasts and had collected various art forms, the focus on sculpture was inspired by Patsy who wanted to explore an art form that was less expensive, harder to collect, and resonated with the Nasher family story of building something out of nothing. Patsy acquired one of their earliest sculptures, Jean (Hans) Arp *Torso with Buds* (1961), as a birthday present for her husband and the collection blossomed from there. By the late-1960s, the Nashers had made their first significant acquisitions of modern sculpture. These included two major bronzes by Henry Moore, *Three Piece No. 3: Vertebrae* (1968) and *Two Piece Reclining Figure No. 9* (1968, no longer in the Collection), and Barbara Hepworth's large and powerful *Squares with Two Circles (Monolith)* (1963, cast 1964). In rapid succession, they went on to acquire works by, among others, Joan Miró, Alexander Calder and Isamu Noguchi.

These works set a high standard for acquisitions to follow and excited them about the prospect of surrounding themselves with great art in their home. Raymond liked the idea that he might use sculptures to enliven spaces in his commercial real estate developments and eventually began to rotate groups of works through the family's highly successful NorthPark Center. The Nashers' guiding principle for acquisitions was simple: the works had to move them personally. During the 1980s, the collection grew at an accelerated pace. Outstanding works by many of the great masters of modern sculpture were added. Simultaneously, the Nashers became more deeply involved with work by living artists, exhibiting an eclectic and adventuresome taste that embraced diverse and sometimes challenging objects. By 1987, the Nasher Collection had gained international recognition and was one of the first exhibitions in the Dallas

Museum of Art's new downtown building. The Collection was subsequently presented in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; the Forte di Belvedere, Florence, Italy; and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Israel.

Piece by piece, slowly and carefully over time, and with deliberate study and research, the Nasher Family Collection was built. After the passing of Patsy Nasher in the late 1980s, the family began to consider how to share their collection with the world. This inspired the creation of the Nasher Sculpture Center in the heart of the family's beloved community of Dallas, where the collection resides to this day.

THE NASHER SCULPTURE CENTER

The Nasher Sculpture Center is dedicated to celebrating and promoting modern and contemporary sculpture, offering a direct connection between art and the public, providing space for the community to engage in reflection and dialogue about art in all its forms, culture, and society. Designed by famed architect Renzo Piano and landscape architect Peter Walker, the visually stunning 55,000-square-foot building is divided into five pavilions with three central pavilions on the main floor serving as galleries, while the outer two accommodate offices and public space, including a café. The lower level includes a smaller gallery for the display of light-sensitive works, a conservation lab, educational and research facilities, and an auditorium that opens to a terraced garden. In addition to the indoor galleries, the one-and-a-half-acre sculpture garden features approximately 25 large-scale sculptures. A variety of mature foliage, including magnolias, cedar elms, live oaks, crepe myrtles, willows and holly, defines intimate viewing spaces and creates 'outdoor rooms' intended for quiet reflection and contemplation of the featured works.

While the collection focuses on modern and contemporary sculpture, the Nasher has adapted to resonate with the community of North Texas and be responsive to the evolution of the field of sculpture. Exhibitions blend the historical artists in the collection with works by living artists in the local Dallas community and globally, presenting 3-5 original exhibitions annually. The collection has also continued to grow with a particular commitment to expanding the diversity of voices and perspectives represented within it. Over 100 works by women, LGBTQ+, and BIPOC artists have been added to the collection in the last 10 years. Diversity, equity, access, and inclusion (DEAI) at the Nasher goes beyond stated expressions of support. The Nasher actively explores ways to put their commitments to these principles into action and has outlined tangible goals to continue their work championing the deeply held belief that art is for everyone, and is a powerful tool to forge human connections and help better understand each other and ourselves. For more information on the Nasher's commitment to DEAI, [please explore here](#).

Globally, the Nasher has broadened its reach and reputation through the [Nasher Prize](#). Established in 2015, the Nasher Prize is an award dedicated exclusively to excellence in contemporary sculpture. An international jury of renowned museum directors, curators, artists, and art historians who have expertise in the field and varying perspectives on the subject select Nasher Prize Laureates every two years. The

profile of the jury is one that garners great respect, with over 200 professionals in the field sharing nominations for consideration.

The Nasher is deeply engaged with the local community in Dallas and more broadly throughout North Texas. What began as an academically minded institution with research-based programming has expanded in recent years to focus on public and community programming. The Education Department serves over 11,000 students through school tours each year, with an additional several thousand engaged through access and outreach programming. With such a dynamic and tactile collection, access programs are incredibly innovative and the Nasher is a founding member of a sensory consortium for children on the autism spectrum, in addition to collaborating with the Dallas Museum of Art on programming for community members with Alzheimer's. The Nasher hosts robust programming beyond the Collection, including 'Til Midnight, which offers a movie screening and live music the third Friday of every month. Nasher Public, a public art initiative inspired by the success of an innovative approach to [engage local artists during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), is a series of exhibitions presenting work by emerging and established artists in a newly constituted gallery space directly accessible from the Nasher's entrance foyer. The Public Gallery is open to the public free of charge during museum operating hours, and viewable through the expansive windows during off hours. The building is also highly sought after as a special event venue, offering Wolfgang Puck as the exclusive caterer for the café and all hosted events. For more information on the Nasher, [please explore here](#).

Staff

It would be difficult to overstate the depth of staff commitment to and pride in The Nasher Sculpture Center. The Nasher has developed a strong cultural identity as a place of high professionalism and one that advances creativity, innovation, equity, and access. The departments of External Affairs, Education, Finance and Operations, Registration, Conservation, and Visitor Experience are comprised of 39 full-time and 16-part part-time staff. Many staff have been with the Nasher since it first opened, with average tenures exceeding 10+ years with the organization. Envisioned and executed by a family, it is often described as operating like one.

Finances

As mentioned, the annual operating budget is approximately \$11 million. The Nasher Sculpture Center is generously supported by the Nasher Foundation. Currently, the annual draw from the Foundation is 50-60%, with the remaining funds supported through earned ticket sales and private event rentals in addition to \$3-4 million annually from raised individual and institutional philanthropic support.

Location

Dallas, Texas is the fourth-largest and fifth-most diverse metropolitan area in the United States, boasting a population that exceeds 6.8 million and the nation's largest urban arts district. [The Dallas Arts District](#)

(DAD) is a nonprofit organization that has served as the primary representative and steward for the 118+ acre district since 1984. The Dallas Arts District is comprised of world-class museums and a luminous cluster of performing arts spaces, including the [Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center](#), the [AT&T Performing Arts Center](#), [The Perot Museum of Nature and Science](#), the [Dallas Museum of Art](#) and the [Crow Collection of Asian Art](#) in the Trammell Crow Center. Dallas is home to four professional sports teams and offers easy access to a range of outdoor activities throughout the region. With the Trinity River, White Rock Lake, almost 400 parks, and over 125 miles of urban hiking and biking trails, the city provides abundant opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, and the city has been named one of the Greenest Cities in the world. In an entrepreneurial city full of imagination, the possibilities for partnership, collaboration, and community engagement are endless.

ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

Reporting to the Nasher's seven-member Board of Directors, the Director will sustain the Nasher family legacy of showcasing modern and contemporary sculpture that is globally representative and advance the Museum's important mission. The Director will lead a passionate and dedicated team toward forward-thinking initiatives with direct community impact. As the Museum's public face, the Director will nurture relationships with artists locally and globally, donors, community partners, and stakeholders, elevating the Nasher's profile and reach.

The Director is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Nasher, including its administration, employees and volunteers, financial operations, fundraising, public profile, and development of its collection and related scholarship. The role provides leadership and assistance to the Board of Directors in accomplishing the Museum's mission and continuation of the Nasher family legacy.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE DIRECTOR

In order for the Nasher to meet its many ambitions, the Director must address the following opportunities and challenges:

Strategically lead the Nasher to its next chapter of influence and impact

The Director will join a thriving institution poised for even greater relevance and international recognition. The Director will build on the Nasher's momentum, including its relationship with artists, the community, and the prestige of the Nasher Prize, while continuing its supportive and inclusive internal culture. The Director will advance a vision undergirded by intellectual rigor that is resourceful, engaging, and inclusive, continuing to leverage the permanent collection as well as showcasing original and rotating exhibits.

Creatively enhance financial resources to support the Nasher's important mission

In a changing landscape of financial support for arts and cultural organizations, the Nasher Sculpture Center is fortunate to receive generous financial support from the Nasher Foundation, but it is not enough to carry out all the Museum's ambitions. The Director will be tasked with strategically examining and creating a sustainable business model that reflects the evolution of the organization, ultimately decreasing the draw from the Foundation and growing the endowment.

The Director will be a recognized presence in the civic life of Dallas, raising the Museum's profile as the face of the organization. This leader should have experience cultivating donors and will work to grow the Nasher's charitable assets by enhancing existing funds and generating new ones to support and sustain community outreach and education efforts, the Nasher Prize, and the intentional development of new exhibitions that leverage the existing collection. An enterprising spirit and interest in the Texas philanthropic landscape will be an appreciated skill for the new leader as they consider opportunities for financial diversification and increased impact.

Maintain a close working relationship with the Board of Directors

A key priority for the incoming Director will be establishing strong relationships with the Nasher's Board members to facilitate and inspire a mutually supportive and productive partnership. They will find ways to navigate the nuance of working with a Board with direct participation from the founding family who are intimately invested in the success of the organization. The Director will also continue to grow and cultivate the Program Advisory Committee (PAC), an important asset to the Nasher's governance structure. The Director will align their vision and strategic insights with Board priorities, actively engaging the Board as appropriate in efforts to promote, fundraise, and build the Museum, optimizing respective interests and strengths.

Authentically engage the local community to continue a mutually beneficial relationship

The Nasher is well known and highly regarded in the Dallas and North Texas community. The next Director will be an integral figure and representative in the community and will have the opportunity to continue strengthening existing relationships and building future collaborations, including with local schools and other organizations to supplement and improve arts education programs, particularly in underserved areas. The Director will engage with the vibrant arts ecosystem of Dallas, including its Arts District members, local artists, corporate and civic leaders, and peer institutions, and contribute to the cultural enrichment of a growing and diverse community. Their leadership will be instrumental in fostering community connections and continuing the rich legacy of the Nasher in Dallas and beyond.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

While no one individual will embody every quality, the successful candidate will bring many of the following professional and personal qualifications:

- A palpable passion for art and the possibilities that modern and contemporary sculpture create as a respected voice and leader in the field.
- Experience executing best standards and practices in the museum field and ongoing professional service; knowledge of collections care and management.
- Experience leading, serving, and working with a Board.
- A record of success in fundraising and relationship building with individuals, corporations, government, and other granting organizations; ability to lead the development team and donor relations.
- Experience working with a variety of constituencies to create and support mutually beneficial partnerships and other externally focused initiatives.
- A fair, collaborative, empathic, and transparent leadership style that engenders trust and support among Nasher staff.
- The ability to communicate well and work cooperatively and effectively with staff, Board members, external stakeholders, and the visiting public.
- A record of successful executive leadership, including effective management of human, physical, and financial resources, and a keen understanding of budget oversight.
- A record of dedication to and success in advancing diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. Ability to model and establish a culture of mutual respect, transparency, and empowerment.
- Intellectual and emotional integrity, critical listening, perspective, and, ideally, good humor.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

This is a permanent, full-time position in Dallas, Texas with a targeted starting salary range of \$400 – 450 thousand.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Confidential inquiries, nominations/referrals, and resumes/curriculum vitae can be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Sarah James, Courtney Wilk-Mandel, Hannah Moore, Siobhan Hanley
Isaacson, Miller

[Director, The Nasher Sculpture Center](#)

The Nasher Sculpture Center is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate in the hiring of personnel on the basis of race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, protected veteran status, disability status, or any other characteristic protected by law.