

Collections Manager & Conservator

Museum of West African Art

Overview:

The Museum of West African Art, Edo (MOWAA) is an independent, charitable organisation that supports initiatives in cultural heritage, art, and archaeology. Our ambitions span the delivery of world-class research, educational and scientific goals, aligned with a cultural and economic regeneration of the city more broadly. This involves the creation of a cultural district in the heart of Benin City, with an emphasis on communal spaces, an inclusive environment, and the integration past and present heritage. The Creative District will be anchored by the first building – the Pavilion, a collections and research facility.

Our Mission

Our mission is to conserve and make accessible a collection of art and antiquities for the education, enjoyment and wellbeing of visitors locally and from around the world. Our ambition is to create a world class collection of exemplary West-African art and support museum development and conservation practice across the region through facilities and expertise of the Pavilion. We will provide the highest standard of collections care and public engagement programming, ensuring MOWAA supports the growing contemporary arts scene in Africa and the rebirth of the great artistic and creative traditions of Benin.

Our Collection Facility

Currently under construction, the Pavilion building is due for completion at the end of the first quarter of 2024. The Collection Facility will be designed to ensure it responds flexibly to incoming collections, supports materials and archaeological research, and caters to the conservation needs of MOWAA's own collection as supports museums and archives in the wider region. In line with MOWAA's ecosystem building ethos, it will prioritise sustainable management practices that respond to local climates and enhance the professionalization of conservation capabilities at home.

EMOWAA's systems will be guided by International Council of Museums (ICOM) standards, UNESCO and regulations of Nigeria's National Council of Museums and Monuments (NCMM). MOWAA will work collaboratively with these bodies and host communities to share learnings, promote advancements in museum practice on the continent and advocate for policies based on local experiences and research.

Key Responsibilities:

As Collections Manager and Conservator, you will be responsible for the care and management of a large and varied collection of fine art, historic objects, documents and photography, and coordinate collections management activity and resource planning for MOWAA.

As a technical lead, you will lead on the planning and delivery of collections management operations across the museum, with an initial focus on the set up of collections management protocols before a focus on day-to-day collections care and access. As part of supporting the establishment of the Collections Facility, you will interface with museum practitioners, suppliers and private collection owners to ensure proper systems are in place to achieve MOWAA's collection building and programming ambitions.

You will be expected to lead on the introduction of new working practices, standards and a cohesive approach to collections management across the facility's specialist functions. This will include the planning and delivery of conservation training programmes and workshops, which you will drive as the key liaison person with partnering institutions.

Working closely with MOWAA's curators and advisors, you will contribute to the development of MOWAA's custody and care protocols as part of collection development. As the collection grows, you will facilitate access to collections, contribute to programme delivery, review process and procedure, and oversee Health and Safety compliance relating to collections' access. This includes planning for the potential transfer and re-housing of collections in the future.

Your responsibilities are as follows:

- Oversee the design and fit out of the storage facilities at the Pavilion, liaising with suppliers, museum practitioners and the architects involved in the design and construction of the facility
- Develop MOWAA's operational policies to enable a responsible, practical and sustainable approach for how physical objects are transferred, stored, recorded and cared for within the Pavilion
- Plan and manage large-scale collections moves and storage projects, loans programme and aspects of exhibitions activity
- Oversee day-to-day collections management operations, including object documentation and movement, security and maintenance of the stores.
- Liaise with the Technology lead, to ensure the structure and interface between our physical and digital collections management system address the relevant fields and are operationally aligned
- Contribute specialist knowledge to the Pavilion exhibition project team and subcontractors
- Work alongside the Director to plan and manage resources across the Collection Facility to establish priorities, and where relevant, commission and supervise external contractors
- Contribute to planning and delivery of the Pavilion's learning and outreach programme, including access projects, giving talks to local groups, dealing with public enquires and promoting our collections work
- Contribute to the development of funding applications related to collections care and access
- Support the design and establishment of training programmes, with an initial focus on conservation and collections management
- Attend appropriate training and keep abreast of developments in collections management approaches

Terms and Conditions:

- Rolling contract, subject to initial six-month probation and annual review
- Full time preferred. Part time arrangement possible, with a minimum time commitment of 50%
- Competitive fee to be determined based on experience, negotiable

To apply, submit your CV and cover letter to careers@EMOWAA.com by July 30, 2023. Enquires should also be sent to the same address. In your cover letter, kindly indicate whether you are available full or part time.