Position Specification

Director
Bowdoin College Museum of Art
www.bowdoin.edu/art-museum

Our Client
The Bowdoin College Museum of Art in Brunswick, Maine comprises one of the oldest college art collections in the nation and began with a gift of 70 paintings and a portfolio of Old Master drawings bequeathed to the College by James Bowdoin III in 1811. Housed in the recently-restored Walker Art Building originally designed by Charles Follen McKim of McKim, Mead and White, the Museum is a vital resource for the campus and community. Above all, the Museum is a teaching facility, the core of its mission to keep its rich collections within immediate reach of Bowdoin students, faculty, scholars, and art lovers, and to mount exhibitions with an institutional as well as a local, and national appeal. Its emphasis on the study of original objects as part of the Bowdoin curriculum makes the Museum the ultimate cross-disciplinary and multicultural enterprise. Classes from sociology to environmental studies along with art history and visual arts make extensive use of works in the collection. The current collection encompasses more than 14,000 objects in categories including Ancient; European; American; Non-Western; Modern & Contemporary; and Prints, Drawings and Photography.

Bowdoin is an independent, nonsectarian, coeducational residential, undergraduate liberal arts institution founded in 1794. It is located in Brunswick, Maine, a town of 21,000 on the Maine coast. Study at Bowdoin leads to a bachelor of arts degree in one of over 40 departmental and interdisciplinary majors. Bowdoin enrolls approximately 1,700 students from across the country and around the world.

The College is nearing completion of a $250 million campaign focused, in part, on physically and programmatically integrating the visual and performing arts throughout the campus. In addition to the Walker Art Building restoration and expansion, Bowdoin’s new 290-seat Studzinski Recital Hall complements the 2000 renovation of Pickard Theater inside Memorial Hall and the adjacent construction of Wish Theater to create two main performance spaces for the College. The Museum’s place on the College quad is complemented not only by these venues but also the Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum and Arctic Studies Center.

The award-winning $20.8 million renovation and expansion of the Museum of Art was completed in 2007 and designed by architects Machado and Silvetti Associates of Boston. It integrates the Museum’s traditional features with a dramatic new entry pavilion, an inviting glass curtain wall, and a complete renovation of the entire interior of the building. The renovation and expansion increased the Museum's total space by 63%, from 19,980 to 32,550 square feet, adding seven new galleries, increased storage, and
flexible instructional space. The Museum is now poised to play a dramatic role in the intellectual life of the campus and take on a leadership role amongst collegiate museums. The Museum has an annual budget of approximately $1.2 million, an endowment of approximately $17.6 million, a full-time staff of 9, and a part-time staff of 2. The College’s overall endowment is approximately $820 million. For more information please visit the museum’s website at www.bowdoin.edu/art-museum/.

The Collection
The Museum’s collection is impressively broad and spans the ancient world to the 21st century. While the collection has particular strengths in American art and antiquities, it also has excellent examples of artworks representing periods in the history of western art ranging from the Gothic through the Renaissance and Baroque. The Museum also possesses a small, but significant collection of non-western art that spans ten centuries. The American collection features one of the most important groups of colonial and Federal portraits, with presidential portraits of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison by Gilbert Stuart and works by Robert Feke, John Singleton Copley, Joseph Blackburn, and Rembrandt Peale. It also includes works by 19th- and 20th-Century American artists such as Mary Cassatt, Thomas Eakins, John Sloan, Marsden Hartley, Cindy Sherman, Bruce Nauman, Glenn Ligon, and Kiki Smith, and an archive of artifacts and memorabilia from Winslow Homer’s studio. The antiquities collections contain over 1,800 Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, and Byzantine objects, and constitute one of the most comprehensive compilations of ancient art in any small college museum in North America.

The Role
The Director will provide the curatorial oversight, strategic leadership, and management expertise for the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Reporting to the Dean for Academic Affairs of the College, the Director will oversee all curatorial, development, education, external relations, finance, and administrative departments and staff. The Director will ensure that BCMA’s mission is clearly understood and that its vision is fully articulated and attained. He or she will be an inspiring, energetic, and collaborative leader who will fully embrace the museum’s contribution to the educational mission of Bowdoin College through exhibitions, programming, and engagement with curricular initiatives. In sum, the Director will act as an intellectual and cultural catalyst on the campus and will build productive relationships with the faculty and administration, students, and alumni, as well as the broader arts community. He or she will represent the Museum’s interests to the public and embrace a leadership role in the arts and cultural community in the state of Maine and beyond. In addition, the Director will play a key role in fundraising, working closely with the College’s development team to secure the resources needed to support both ongoing operations and new initiatives.

Key Priorities
The Director’s priorities will be to:
Thoroughly understand all facets of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, its collections, and its role on the campus and in the broader community; gain a comprehensive knowledge of the museum’s and the college’s history, culture, staff, finances and operations, planned exhibitions, education and public programs, and base of financial support;

Forge a strong, collaborative relationship with the faculty and administration, students, alumni and Trustees, and the greater cultural and artistic community in the state of Maine; oversee and contribute to the creation of a vibrant exhibitions and programming schedule that draws upon the collective talents and expertise of the College;

Working with the college community, develop a shared vision for the Museum that builds upon the strengths of the collection, the support of the alumni base, and the expertise of faculty and staff to more fully realize the educational mission of the College and to increase local and national awareness of the Museum’s programs and collections;

Through innovative exhibitions, programming, outreach activities and educational initiatives including artists residencies and collaborations with visiting artists, build an increased base of support for the Museum;

Work with the College’s development staff to coordinate and strengthen financial support for the Museum; get to know individual alumni and encourage them to share their ideas, resources, and contacts to further strengthen the museum’s contributions to the College and to the broader visual arts community.

Candidate Profile

The successful candidate will be someone with previous curatorial and administrative experience in an arts museum or visual arts-related organization. The candidate must exemplify a love of learning, an intellectual curiosity, and a passion for the visual arts and be willing and eager to share all of these qualities with the students, faculty, administration, and alumni of the College. The successful candidate should also demonstrate success in cultivating relationships with diverse constituencies and be an articulate, dynamic, and effective communicator. Ideally, the candidate will have had previous experience developing and implementing an institutional vision within an organization and building public or private support for these efforts. Experience attracting, motivating, and managing a talented staff is preferred. A Master's degree in art, art history, or other relevant discipline is required, a Ph.D. is ideal. Connections to a national and international network of artists, scholars, critics, and other arts professionals who can be called upon to enhance programmatic excellence is a plus.

To apply for this position please send a letter of interest and resume to bowdoin-dir@russellreynolds.com, Attention: Laurie Nash/Paul Chou.