Position Specification

Director and Chief Executive Officer

Grand Rapids Art Museum

2022
POSITION SPECIFICATION

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<th>Position</th>
<th>Director and Chief Executive Officer</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Grand Rapids Art Museum</td>
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<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Grand Rapids, MI</td>
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<td>Reporting Relationship</td>
<td>Board President</td>
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<td>Website</td>
<td><a href="https://www.artmuseumgr.org/">https://www.artmuseumgr.org/</a></td>
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THE OPPORTUNITY

From the heart of downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, the Grand Rapids Art Museum (GRAM) serves as a cultural beacon and a civic anchor in a city with a rich creative culture, an active arts and culture network, and a variety of exciting public art and community events. For the last decade, the GRAM has evolved through significant and rewarding change, including numerous capital improvements and new relationships both locally and nationally that resulted in a series of successful exhibitions. Today, the GRAM is well-positioned for a bright future of new endeavors.

Working in partnership with GRAM’s Board of Trustees, the Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will join and lead a dynamic team committed to the mission of connecting people through art, creativity, and design. This is an exciting and pivotal moment to drive the next chapter and beyond for an institution that celebrates and showcases dialogue and stimulates debate within the community to promote civic discourse and creative ideas. The CEO will partner and align with GRAM’s leadership team to propel the Museum toward realizing its strategic goals and becoming an even bigger convenor of the Grand Rapids community, the State of Michigan, and audiences beyond as well.

THE ORGANIZATION

GRAM has served the Grand Rapids community for over a century, providing unique platforms for creativity, learning, discovery, and engagement with the arts. The Museum building, designed by Kulapat Yantrasast/WHY Architects, opened in 2007, and is internationally known for its distinguished design and LEED® Gold certified status. It sits adjacent to Rosa Park Circle, a public park designed by Maya Lin in 2000. GRAM has an operational budget of ~$5.2M and is in the first year of a five-year strategic plan, which is built upon five strategic priorities: 1) Strengthen GRAM’s community focus by integrating and prioritizing diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) into the core practices of the Museum; 2) Cultivate an organizational culture that engages and empowers Board, staff, and volunteers; 3) Create exceptional art and learning experiences; 4) Expand access to the arts through community outreach; and 5) Strengthen financial and operational sustainability.

Through dynamic changing exhibitions and a rotating installation of the permanent collection’s over 6,400 objects, GRAM presents works of art from regional, national, and international artists and institutions across a wide range of artistic media, styles, and periods. Exhibitions and collection presentations are shaped to be inclusive, participatory experiences, enhanced with artist talks, panel discussions, interactive gallery spaces, and community partnerships developed by cross-departmental staff teams and community input. Exhibitions, learning programs, and social events lay the foundation for learning opportunities for all ages, with special emphasis on early childhood learning, school programs, young creative professionals, and Alzheimer's patients.
Providing exceptional learning experiences is at the heart of GRAM's community impact. With a strong suite of educational programs and transformative learning initiatives, GRAM serves as an extension of the classroom, and a platform for art-integrated education. GRAM's art education programs serve thousands of children, students, and teachers each year, and are built upon strong partnerships with early learning centers, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, libraries, and other community organizations across West Michigan and beyond. GRAM's learning programs help promote self-expression, creativity, empathy, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and analytical skills.

GRAM's new Creative Learning Center (CLC), a re-imagining and expansion of the original Education Center, will open in January 2023, with a focus on expanded capacity for tours, hands-on activities, classes, and workshops. It will provide a dedicated space for self-directed learning for all ages, as well as enhanced access to the lobby and galleries. With the completion of the CLC, the new Director and CEO will have the opportunity to shape the future of the former retail space in the Museum building, as part of an expanded retail and earned income plan.

In addition, a new Community Gallery will be launched in early 2023, with a vision shaped by a Community Gallery Task Force and broad input from various constituents. GRAM's public programming provides inclusive art experiences for people of all ages. The weekly Drop-in Studio and monthly studio workshop programs offer hands-on art experiences, while guided tours for different age groups provide enriching, interactive experiences. The Museum further engages its audiences through artist talks, panel discussions, Family Days, GRAM on the Green (outdoor summer concert series), yoga, and a dynamic calendar of seasonal and exhibition-specific programming.

THE CITY
Grand Rapids, Michigan is located between Detroit and Chicago, and is nested amongst strong mid-sized and university museums in Michigan, providing significant opportunities for professional and artistic exchanges. It is a vibrant city that emphasizes collaboration and honors diversity. Arts, history, and culture are among the top attractions.

WHAT YOU'LL DO
GRAM's Board and staff are seeking transformational leadership as the Museum moves forward to build and broaden the role of GRAM within the community. The Director and CEO will have responsibility for implementation of the Museum’s mission and vision, serving as chief strategist, fundraiser, and spokesperson. Many of the key functions will be shared with the Deputy Directors who are responsible for each functional area. The Director and CEO will set the agenda for the Museum and develop a strategic planning process and operational policies. Ultimately, the successful candidate will be accountable for responsibly operating the Museum within the budget approved by the Board.

Working in collaboration with GRAM's Deputy Directors, primary areas of responsibility include institutional advancement, Board and community relations, effective management of staff, budget oversight, setting and maintaining educational and curatorial standards, cultivating fundraising opportunities, guiding fundraising programs, and promoting the Museum's interests locally, regionally, and nationally.

The successful candidate will oversee and guide the following functions:

**Community-Building and External Relations**
The Museum has earned a strong position within the civic energy of the city, with its Staff and Board active within local, regional, and national organizations, panels, and advisory committees. Having become a major convenor of organizations and community members,
the GRAM has established partnerships with the following groups: Experience GR, City of Grand Rapids Master Planning Commission, Cranbrook National Advisory Board, National Endowment for the Arts, Michigan Art Education Association, National Art Education Association, Association of Art Museum Directors, Art Museum Development Directors Association, and Midwest Museums Association among others. The Director and CEO will:

- Serve as the chief spokesperson and actively promote the work of the institution through speaking engagements, conferences, symposia, and other forms of media.
- In collaboration with senior leadership, engage with and steward relationships with key stakeholders and volunteers that bring energy to the Museum, collections, programs, and seasonal experiences.
- In collaboration with senior leadership, foster relationships with other museums, cultural institutions, public school systems, private and parochial schools, universities, and colleges, including their respective art, art history, and art education departments.

**Organizational Leadership**

- Develop and implement a cohesive business strategy through successful partnership and collaboration with the GRAM team.
- Recruit, mentor, support, and retain a diverse staff from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- Operationalize the organization’s stated commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion (DEAI) by implementing policies and procedures – inclusive of compensation, benefits, and work conditions – to ensure a culture of mutual respect, safety, and belonging.

**Finance and Advancement**

- Work with the Board and Deputy Directors to develop annual budgets and maintain a sound financial plan for the institution.
- Secure funding from individual, corporate, foundation, government, and other partners to build upon and diversify the current financial portfolio.
- Regularly evaluate and identify new opportunities to diversify funding (earned and contributed) and assess feasibility to execute based on organizational capacity.

**Curatorial and Educational**

As part of the Strategic Plan, the permanent collection and its refinement and expansion plays a significant role in the Museum’s future. The new Director and CEO will play a key role in shaping and implementing the next Collection Plan and its impact, and will work with the Deputy Directors to:

- Develop and implement strategies for the overall direction of artistic and educational programming, including but not limited to exhibitions; collection development; research, generation, and dissemination of content in varied forms; education, interpretation; and outreach.
- Hire, lead, and retain curatorial and educational staff that will maintain an excellent exhibition and education programming that is innovative, diverse, and accessible.
- Oversee the building and maintaining of a permanent collection in accordance with Board Collections Management Policy and the Museum Mission.

**Board Development and Governance**

GRAM’s Board of Trustees is comprised of a diverse and lively cross-section of leaders in the community, representing corporations, foundations, and industry sectors. The Director and CEO will:

- Cultivate productive working relationships with current board members alongside
senior leadership and develop relationships with potential board members, bringing diverse voices, perspectives, and lived experiences to the Museum.
• Provide timely updates, reports, and performance metrics regularly to the Board.

WHO YOU ARE
GRAM seeks an ambitious and visionary leader who combines intellectual curiosity with practical execution skills. Successful candidates will demonstrate in-depth leadership and management experience and the ability to develop and maintain a high-performing team capable of achieving the Museum’s short- and long-term goals. With passion for museums and a commitment to their role in public discourse, civic engagement, and the celebration of humanity in all its expressive forms, you should bring knowledge of and deep passion for visual art, together with experience in museum administration and/or cultural organizations, and fluency and comfort with engaging across a diverse constituency.

Critical qualifications include:

• Commitment to and keen understanding of nonprofit management and finance, ideally within a museum or cultural organization setting
• Passion for and knowledge of a wide variety of art, design, and creativity
• Experience and/or comfort serving as the chief storyteller including fundraising responsibilities
• Ability to build institutional culture that values diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion
• Ability to build and maintain effective relationships within a large network of diverse external partners with varying levels of expertise and engagement
• Demonstrated success building positive, effective, and collaborative environments
• Exemplary communication skills, written and verbal
• A good manager of assets – people, money, and time
• Experience or exposure to board governance
• Expertise in managing organizational complexity
• High standards of personal and professional ethics and integrity

EDUCATION
Bachelor’s degree required; advanced degree preferred

Please send cover letter and CV/resume to the attention of Dayna Keene, Senior Associate, Nonprofit, Philanthropy and Social Enterprise Practice, Korn Ferry Executive Search at Dayna.keene@kornferry.com
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