

Gailearaí Ealaíne
Crawford
Art Gallery

Job Description



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Courtyard, Crawford Art Gallery, Artistic impression. GA

Introduction

Crawford Art Gallery, a National Cultural Institution post-redevelopment, will become a distinctive landmark for Cork City and the wider region – a place for encounter, a destination, a venue and a base for experiencing ambitious artistic programmes and meaningful engagement with diverse audiences.

Role Purpose

The Head of Programming & Collection is a new senior leadership role responsible for shaping and delivering the Gallery's artistic vision. The role works collaboratively across the organisation to bring the Gallery's exhibition, Collection, conservation, education, research and public programmes into meaningful dialogue with diverse audiences, while embedding learning, participation and creative engagement across all aspects.

The Head of Programming & Collection will lead the strategic planning, development, research, execution and evaluation of Crawford Art Gallery's programmes, and the interpretation, activation and presentation of the Gallery's Collection.

Reporting to the Director and serving on the Senior Leadership Team, the post-holder will lead the development and delivery of programmes in collaboration with Curators, the Registrar, the Production Manager, the Head Technician, the Learn and Explore Manager, and Conservation, ensuring that learning, participation and public engagement are integrated across the Gallery's artistic programming and the presentation of the Collection.

The role requires a balance of Museum curatorial and collection management knowledge; leadership, ambition, and experience; people management; strategic planning; and programme delivery, with a strong emphasis on collaboration, audience development, and partnership working at local, national, and international levels.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Programming

- Lead the development and implementation of the Gallery's programme and Collection strategy, ensuring delivery in line with the Gallery's Strategic Plan
 - Oversee the full programme, including exhibitions, commissions, collections-related programming, Learn & Explore initiatives, programme talks, creative events and digital programming, both on and off site
 - Provide strategic leadership for Learn & Explore, ensuring that learning and participation are integrated into programme development from inception and that lifelong learning, creativity and meaningful engagement are supported for audiences of all ages, backgrounds and abilities
 - Develop a national and international strategy for creative relationships and partnerships
 - Develop multi-year artistic programming that reflects the opportunities presented by the expanded and redeveloped Gallery, its new public spaces, and the enhanced visitor experience.
 - Lead the strategic interpretation, research and activation of the Collection, ensuring it remains central to the Gallery's artistic vision, programming and public engagement.
 - Work closely with the Head of Public Engagement to ensure that interpretation and visitor experiences are developed using an integrated, audience-centred approach.
 - Provide strategic leadership to the Learn and Explore Manager, ensuring that learning and participation are integral to artistic planning, exhibition development, interpretation and public programming.
- Champion innovative programming that engages with current cultural, social and environmental issues, ensuring relevance for existing and future audiences
 - Contribute at a senior level to organisational strategy, policy development, institutional planning, and communications, including during the capital redevelopment and transition.
 - Provide strategic leadership throughout the redevelopment and transition period, contributing to operational readiness, gallery planning, and commissioning opportunities to ensure the Gallery's successful reopening in 2028.
 - As Head of Programming & Collection, design and deliver dynamic, inclusive, and thought-provoking programmes that foster meaningful dialogue and participation between the Gallery's collection and audiences. You will connect exhibitions to people, ideas, and the present moment, ensuring the Gallery is not only visited but also felt, debated, and remembered.
 - Foster a culture of artistic ambition, collaboration and innovation, ensuring that the Gallery's programming enhances its national and international reputation and contributes to visitor growth, audience engagement and participation, and long-term organisational stability.

Key Responsibilities

Artistic Leadership

- Lead the development of the Gallery's artistic vision, ensuring that programming and the Collection reflect Crawford Art Gallery's ambitions as a National Cultural Institution.
- Ensure leadership in artistic priorities, acquisitions, commissions and long-term programme planning, in collaboration with the Director and the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensure the Gallery's artistic programming addresses emerging cultural, social and environmental issues while maintaining high standards of curatorial excellence.

Curatorial & Public Engagement Oversight

- Provide senior curatorial leadership, ensuring high-quality research, interpretation, publications, learning resources and public-facing content that reflect the gallery's artistic vision and the collection's significance as a National Cultural Institution.
- Champion inclusive, audience-centred approaches to programming, learning and interpretation, in line with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- Support innovative programme models that expand access and deepen engagement across diverse audiences and communities.
- Champion innovative learning and engagement approaches that connect the collection with all communities, ensuring that engagement and participation are integral to the gallery's artistic vision.

- Curate experiences, not just events. Build programmes spanning talks, performances, digital content, learning initiatives, and cross-disciplinary collaborations.
- Bring in voices from outside the institution, such as artists, activists, technologists, and communities, and enable them to shape and contribute to the programme.
- Collaborate with stakeholders locally, nationally and internationally
- Lead with curiosity and courage. Champion programming that asks questions, challenges perspectives, and reflects the complexity of contemporary, diverse society.
- Translate vision into delivery. Turn ambitious ideas into well-executed, high-quality experiences delivered on time, on budget, and with impact.
- Grow audiences meaningfully. Expand reach without compromising depth. Build loyalty, relevance, and genuine engagement across diverse communities.
- Champion innovative approaches to interpreting and activating the collection through exhibitions, research, publications, digital initiatives and partnerships, ensuring its continued relevance and accessibility to diverse audiences.
- Ensure programming reflects environmental, sustainability, accessibility and inclusion by embedding these principles throughout planning and delivery.

Key Responsibilities

People Management & Team Leadership

- Lead, manage and support the artistic teams (including Curatorial, Collection, Registrar, Conservation, Production Manager, Learn and Explore, and Head Technician), fostering an integrated approach to programming, learning, research and public engagement.
- Set clear objectives, support professional development, and ensure effective performance management in line with public service requirements and best-practice international gallery models
- Promote cross-departmental collaboration with Operations, Finance, Marketing and Communications, Audience Development, and Visitor Services.
- Lead and inspire a team. Create an environment where ideas flourish, risks are embraced, and people can do their best work.
- Provide strategic leadership for the Gallery's creative team, fostering collaboration, innovation, accountability and continuous improvement

Financial & Operational Management

- Forecast and manage programming budgets, ensuring effective financial planning, monitoring, control, and value for money.
- Oversee the scheduling, resourcing and delivery of programmes, ensuring compliance with governance, procurement, health and safety, and risk-management requirements.
- Contribute to and oversee funding applications, sponsorship proposals and partnership agreements for programmes.
- Support the Director in securing philanthropic support, sponsorship and external funding for programming, publications and strategic Learn and Explore initiatives.
- Ensure effective operational planning for programming, in collaboration with gallery teams, to deliver projects safely, efficiently and to the highest professional standards.
- Monitor and evaluate programme performance, audience outcomes, financial performance and organisational impact, using evidence and insights to inform future planning and continuous improvement.

Key Responsibilities

Partnerships & External Relations

- Build and maintain strong relationships with artists, curators, lenders, cultural institutions, and other stakeholders at local, national, and international levels.
- Represent the Gallery professionally at national and international events, networks and forums.
- Support the Director with stakeholder engagement, reporting and advocacy as required.
- Develop strategic partnerships with museums, galleries and other external partners to enhance the Gallery's reputation, extend its reach and create opportunities for collaboration, participation, touring exhibitions, research and commissioning.
- Act as an ambassador for the Gallery, promoting its artistic vision and strengthening its standing as one of Ireland's leading National Cultural Institutions.
- Work closely with the Director to cultivate relationships with donors, sponsors and key stakeholders to support the gallery's artistic ambitions and long-term sustainability

Governance, Compliance & Reporting

- Ensure programming activities comply with public-sector governance standards, internal policies, and recognised best practices in sustainability.
- Prepare high-quality reports, briefings and presentations for the Director, the APSC (Artistic Policy Subcommittee), the Board, the Department and external stakeholders as required.
- Contribute to organisational reporting, including annual reports and strategic reviews.
- Ensure that programming, collection activities and artistic partnerships are delivered in line with the highest standards of governance, ethical practice, accountability and public service values.
- Monitor and evaluate programme performance against agreed strategic objectives, audience outcomes, financial performance and organisational KPSs, reporting regularly to the Director and the Senior Leadership Team.

Please note: The above is a general guide to the key duties and responsibilities of the role and is not an exhaustive description. Other duties and responsibilities appropriate to the role may be assigned from time to time.



Culture Night, Crawford Art Gallery. Provision (pre development)

Eligibility Requirements

Essential Eligibility Requirements

A qualification at minimum Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

(or NARIC Ireland Foreign Qualifications equivalent) in Art History, Fine Art, Visual Culture, Curatorial Studies or a cognate discipline;

and

A minimum of 5 years' relevant experience in programming, managing Collections, curatorial practice and visual arts management, including leading or managing a team.

Professional Experience

- Proven track record of leading complex artistic and cultural programmes within a public-facing organisation.
- Demonstrated experience in leadership, collaboration, and managing teams, budgets, and multiple stakeholders.
- A strong track record of designing and delivering cultural or public programmes across the visual arts and related disciplines.
- Demonstrated experience leading organisational change, strategic transformation or major cultural initiatives within a museum, gallery or comparable cultural institution.
- Experience of leading interpretation or public engagement programmes in a museum, gallery or cultural organisation
- A distinct point of view on what a national cultural institution should be in today's world.
- The ability to balance creativity with operational rigour.
- A commitment to collaboration, inclusion, access, and relevance.
- Articulation skills and an excellent ability to prioritise and manage conflicting demands
- Experience in developing strategic partnerships and collaborating with artists, cultural organisations and external stakeholders

Eligibility Requirements

Skills & Competencies

- Strong strategic thinking and leadership skills appropriate for the Assistant Principal level.
- Excellent communication, influencing and relationship-management skills.
- High level of organisational, planning and problem-solving skills.
- Strong understanding of public service values, accountability, and governance.
- Proven track record in budgeting and financial accountability
- Emotional intelligence, sound judgement, and a collaborative instinct.
- Ability to inspire and lead through periods of organisational change and transformation
- Highly developed strategic judgement, political awareness and the ability to build productive relationships across Government, the cultural sector and wider stakeholder networks.

Knowledge

- Extensive knowledge of visual arts practice, museum and gallery programming, and audience engagement.
- Understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion principles in programming.
- Knowledge of public-sector operating environments is desirable.
- Knowledge of national and international gallery practice, collection stewardship, artistic commissioning and cultural policy.

Desirable Requirements

- Experience of working with national collections, galleries, touring exhibitions, or international partnerships.
- Experience in visual art programming and commissioning.
- Understanding of Learn and Explore practices and delivery
- Experience contributing to organisational change or capital redevelopment projects.
- Experience in commissioning publications, research projects or major artistic collaborations

Eligibility Requirements

What Success Looks Like

- Programmes and Collection establish Crawford Art Gallery as a cultural destination
- New audiences feel this is a place for them and return.
- Artists and collaborators actively seek opportunities to collaborate with Crawford Art Gallery
- The Gallery is regarded as a living cultural space rather than a static one.
- The Collection is presented in an innovative and meaningful way, connecting works that invite discussion and debate
- Programming contributes significantly to the gallery's reputation, visitor growth, public value and long-term sustainability.
- Learn & Explore programmes are recognised for excellence, reaching increasingly diverse participants and making the Collection more accessible, relevant and inspiring.

WHY THIS ROLE MATTERS

- This role will shape the artistic identity of the renewed Gallery, ensuring that its Collection and programming inspire curiosity, creativity and public dialogue, and strengthen Crawford Art Gallery's standing as a leading National Cultural Institution.
- Working in partnership with the Director and the Senior Leadership Team, the Head of Programming and Collection will play a central role in realising an ambitious artistic vision.

If you're excited about the idea of shaping how art connects with people at scale and with purpose, we'd like to hear from you.

