



Position Specification

Gibbes Museum of Art
President and Chief Executive Officer

About the Gibbes Museum of Art

The Gibbes Museum of Art anchors the cultural landscape in Charleston, South Carolina, providing the community's residents and visitors with deep connections to both local and global art since its doors opened in 1905. Believing that art is the difference between merely existing and being truly alive, the Gibbes aims to celebrate and examine its heritage and future with special exhibitions; a permanent collection of over 7,000 artistic works, comprised of paintings, miniature portraits, works on paper, photographs, Charleston-made furniture and silver, decorative art objects, and sculpture; various programs and collaborations that explore the rich cultural and historical tapestry of this region and beyond. Beyond this emphasis lies a commitment to exhibiting broader American and global art to the public, as well as providing a variety of educational opportunities, lecture series, and visiting artist programs. This array of programs and offerings has successfully solidified the Gibbes' impact as a hub of profound artistic experiences as well as a space for learning and personal development. It is a place of strong community engagement. This past year, the Gibbes achieved museum reaccreditation from the American Alliance of Museums. This is the highest national recognition afforded to institutions across the country. Accredited since 1972, the Gibbes is one of only 17 museums accredited in South Carolina.

While local history plays a vital role in the museum's identity, progress and inclusion are also at the center of the Gibbes' vision for the future. Its diversity, equity, access, and inclusion (DEAI) programs have been met with resounding engagement from the Gibbes' broad communities, who have fully embraced the museum's passion for creating a space that truly reflects the world in which it resides. Collaboration with and support of artists are also core to the Gibbes' mission and impact. The museum's 1858 Prize for Contemporary Southern Art is awarded to artists whose work contributes to a new understanding of art in the South, demonstrating the museum's commitment to going beyond the display of the South's artistic roots to fostering the development of its artistic future.

The Gibbes Museum of Art operates on an annual budget of approximately \$4 million, with an endowment of \$4.7 million. While the endowment has seen considerable growth in recent years, more than double in size since 2018, the museum is committed to increasing the endowment further. The museum's board of directors are highly engaged and committed to the Gibbes' success, and the same can be said of the museum's 25 staff members. The museum is also supported by its growing volunteer auxiliary groups such as the Women's Council, who volunteer time and talent for events and programs to benefit the Gibbes and support its mission, and Society 1858, a group of young professionals who support the museum with social and educational programs made for up-and-coming art patrons. The Gibbes' property is co-owned equally by the City of Charleston and the Carolina Art Association, a non-profit founded in 1858, which owns the art collection. As the museum looks to the future, which includes an acquisition of a neighboring building as part of a 7,000 square foot expansion, it envisions itself as a landmark of cultural growth, community connectivity, and an increasingly visible presence in the broader American visual arts environment.

Today, the Gibbes has garnered numerous accolades since reopening and during the pandemic for enhancing cultural tourism and contributing to its economic resiliency and growth. In 2019, the Gibbes received the prestigious SC Governor's Award for the Arts recognizing the organization for outstanding achievement and contributions to the arts and the Chamber of Commerce's Beacon Award given to a structure that elevates aesthetics and improves quality of life for the region. It has also been named the best museum in South Carolina by USA Today, and one of the top museums in Charleston by the Travel Channel.

Mission & Vision

The Gibbes Museum enhances lives through art by engaging people of every background and experience with art and artists of enduring quality; collecting and preserving art that touches Charleston; and providing opportunities to learn about, enjoy, discover, and be inspired by the creative process.

The Gibbes Museum proves that art has the power to enhance and transform lives. We are the crucial setting for active and creative immersion in the world of art and artists. We present relevant and dynamic programs originating from our collection, research, exhibitions, artist studios, and classrooms. We strive to reflect on the vast diversity of the communities we serve through our visitors, members, volunteers, Board of Directors and staff and to present our collection and educational experiences in new settings that will reach all those communities. A visit to Charleston is not complete until you experience the Gibbes.

Committed to excellence in all that we do, the Gibbes values, supports, and promotes:

- An exceptional, diverse team of staff and trustees;
- Interactive and creative educational experiences;
- Responsible fiscal management;
- Strong fundraising and membership programs; and
- Ongoing commitments to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion.

Exhibitions

The Gibbes facilitates artistic experiences for visitors through its annual six to eight exhibitions. In January-April of 2024 the Gibbes, in association with Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and Oak Spring Foundation presented *Rory McEwen: A New Perspective on Nature* to its largest audience. Notable recent contemporary art milestones include Fred Wilson's OMNISCIENCE sculpture (2022) and Un/Natural Selections Wildlife in Contemporary Art (2023), a collaboration with the National Museum of Wildlife Art. Historical exhibitions have featured works by artists like Edward Hopper and Robert Rauschenberg, highlighting Charleston's evolving urban landscape and its appeal to generations of artists. The museum also connects Charleston to broader American culture with exhibitions from the permanent collection like A New Deal: Artists at Work (2022) and A Day at the Beach (2018), a lively arrangement of art depicting oceanside leisure in America. The Gibbes' scope doesn't end at America's borders, with its globally-sourced offerings including the *Charleston Collects* series, debuted by the South Asian Art exhibition (2018-2019) and most recently featuring Devotion and Fantasy: Witchcraft and the World's End (2020-2021), a series of 15th- and 16th-century depictions of fantastical and provocative scenes from Germany and the Low Countries.

Collection

Drawing from over 7,000 individual pieces of art, the Gibbes interprets a collection that spans four centuries of American Art. The museum's commitment to showcasing local artistic heritage is built upon a foundation of works from artists with profound ties to the city of Charleston, including Mary Roberts, Charles Frasier, Jonathan Green, Alice Smith, Jeremiah Theus, Ned I. R. Jennings, Merton Simpson, Henrietta Johnston, Mary Jackson, Jasper Johns, and William Melton Halsey, among others. Three notable parts of the Gibbes' collection which are central to its distinctive identity are its set of over 400 rare Japanese woodblock prints, one of the most significant compilations of its kind in the American Southeast, the Miniature Portrait Collection, an assortment of over 600 items which celebrate Charleston's artistic significance as the birthplace and, for a brief era, unofficial capital of the American miniature portrait scene, and The Rivers Collection of Decorative Arts.

Education & Lecture Speakers

An important catalyst for community engagement with art through personal exploration and creation, the Gibbes' educational offerings regularly draw crowds of art enthusiasts and novices alike, from children to the city's senior population. These programs range from the art-centric, such as sketching classes and specially curated tours, to more community-fostering, such as holiday markets and a collaboration with a local Pilates studio. As part of its upcoming planned physical expansions, the museum aims to maximize the potential of the renovated facility by expanding its exhibition spaces to meet the current and future needs for showcasing contemporary art. This aim includes the continuation of the Gibbes Distinguished Lecture Series, a beloved and prestigious series of lecture speakers, including with individuals such as Spike Lee who recently spoke at the Gibbes about his relationship with the visual arts to an unprecedentedly large crowd.

In 2023 the Gibbes initiated a community engagement ideation program designed to bring people from many different backgrounds and walks of life together to learn what works of art in the collection mean to them personally and communally. The project entitled *Centering Art / Voices*, which took place over two separate weeks was designed to inform the Museum of more inclusive, diverse, accessible, and creative ways to present artwork from the permanent collection in preparation for the 120th anniversary of the Gibbes in 2025 and upcoming expansion plans.

Art Charleston

Among the past year's achievements was the launch of Art Charleston. The only festival of its kind in Charleston with a specific focus on celebrating the visual arts, Art Charleston has brought together several signature events to create a week full of arts programming, dining, dancing, and fundraising. The festival has raised over \$500K through its fundraisers and ticket sales for educational programming, and in turn, has provided more than \$250K in economic support to local vendors and businesses, exemplifying its synergetic relationship with the Charleston community.

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility, and Inclusion

Since formed in March 2021, the Gibbes Museum of Art's DEAI Committee is comprised of Board members, staff, volunteers, and community representatives, with a mission to increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in the culture of the Gibbes Museum of Art. Starting in January 2022, the Gibbes committed to DEAI skill development for Gibbes' leadership, staff, and volunteers. Further plans include the expansion of representation of typically underrepresented demographics in the museum's membership, staff, board, suppliers, as well as the artists whose works are displayed in the museum. The DEAI committee aims to convene valuable discussions surrounding how to accurately represent all sides of the American Southeast's history, as well as engage audiences which accurately represent all facets of Charleston's highly demographically diverse society.

Charleston

The Gibbes is often considered the crown jewel of South Carolina's visual arts offerings. The Gibbes is far from alone in the broader cultural environment and is complemented by other arts and culture institutions such as: the world-renowned Spoleto Festival USA, the Charleston Symphony, the Charleston Music Hall, the new International African American Museum, the historic Dock Street Theater, Charleston Library Society, the South Carolina Aquarium, Charleston Jazz, the Charleston Gaillard Center, an elegantly designed 1800-seat performing arts hall and venue space, the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art, the Sottile Theater, the North Charleston Coliseum & Performing Arts Center, and The Charleston Museum, America's first museum. The fourth fastest-growing city in the country according to the US Census Bureau, with a metropolitan area population now exceeding 900,000, Charleston is often described as a vibrant, energetic gem of the lower Atlantic coast. Attracting nearly eight million tourists annually – a demographic which comprises 60% of the Gibbes' visitors – as well as being the home of the regionally prominent College of Charleston, the city is no stranger to a crowd of worldly, inquisitive visitors.

Charleston has been dubbed Silicon Harbor because of both a strong connection to its identity as a port city as well as its booming tech and innovation centers. Charleston's rich history has been complemented in recent years by excitement towards a bright future and an influx of young professionals and families; it was ranked as the ninth-best performing economy in America by the Milken Institute. Known for some of the region's best private high schools, public gardens, architectural sites, and culinary offerings, the city is the destination of choice for many hoping to experience the best of the American Southeast's culture, whether as a tourist or new resident.

Offering a mild climate, some of the state's most beloved beaches, as well as a local love of boating, parks, and gardens, Charleston is an ideal city for those who enjoy an equal connection to history and to nature-related experiences. Recurring local events include: the Charleston Marathon; the Charleston Literary Festival; Charleston Wine + Food Festival; the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE), the nation's largest gathering of artists, craftsmen, collectors, and sports enthusiasts and celebration of nature through fine art, entertainment and special events; the Charleston International Film Festival; MOJA Arts Festival, a celebration of African American and Caribbean arts; the annual House and Garden Tours sponsored by the Historic Charleston Foundation and the Charleston Preservation Society; Piccolo Spoleto; and, as previously mentioned, Spoleto Festival USA, an international 17-day performing arts festival, to name just a few. According to recent U.S. Census Bureau data the Charleston metro area's population is growing three times faster than the U.S. average. More than 40 people move to the region daily, and the median age is 38.5. Approximately 63% of residents identify as White or Caucasian, 23% identify as Black or African American, and 7% identify as Hispanic or Latino. As more people become part of this community, the region continues to grow its capacity to innovate, engage, and entertain. Although Charleston still maintains much of its heritage and cultural identity, it has evolved dramatically from simply a historical town and quiet vacation destination to a diverse and contemporary cosmopolitan city.

To learn more about the Gibbes Museum of Art's, visit the following links:

- [10-Year Strategic Plan](#)
- [Plan for Increasing DEI](#)
- [2023-2024 Annual Report](#)

The Role

Reporting directly to the Board, the President and Chief Executive Officer is responsible for promoting and strengthening the Gibbes Museum of Art's mission, honing its strategic vision, furthering its thriving programming and community engagement, ensuring its financial health, and being the public representative of the Gibbes. As the Gibbes celebrates its legacy of impact and looks ahead to the future, the CEO will help the museum continue to grow and evolve as a major museum and pillar of impact and inclusivity in the Charleston community, the region, and beyond.

With a passion for and expertise in art and the role of art museums today, the CEO will be an engaging and inspiring leader adept at building relationships with a wide range of constituents including the Board, staff, the City of Charleston, community partners, artists, donors, and other stakeholders. With strong communication and interpersonal skills, they will serve as the public face of the museum, engage with the community, and build partnerships with stakeholders, donors, and other cultural institutions. Bringing an entrepreneurial spirit balanced by a strong sense of fiscal responsibility, the CEO will identify and execute strategic priorities. Operating with a tightly knit, highly engaged staff, the CEO will empower, manage, and cultivate outstanding personnel. In partnership with the Gibbes Board, the CEO will continue to shape the institution's future and drive the museum forward to continued impact.

The CEO will be a champion of the Gibbes' values and impact with regards to diversity, equity, access, and inclusion. Reflecting Gibbes' commitment to engaging with broad audiences, the President and CEO will build upon the exemplary relationship Gibbes has forged with the Charleston community as a cultural focal point and leader in the city and the

region. With a commitment to collaboration, the President and CEO will continue to broaden the accessibility of the Gibbes. They will ensure that the museum is at the forefront in identifying and successfully responding to opportunities and be committed to proactively forging cooperative partnerships with the City of Charleston and other partners, locally and globally. The President and CEO is the Gibbes' primary spokesperson and the champion of the museum's mission and programs to internal and external audiences alike.

Critical to the President and CEO's success will be the ability to fundraise effectively in coordination with the Board and team. They will promote staff talent and expertise in support of the Museum's goals and will encourage the team and Board to take an active role in representing the institution. Ensuring a wide range of donors feel included and involved, the new President and CEO will increase and diversify financial support from individual donors, foundations, and corporations for annual operations, capital projects, and growth of the Museum's endowment. All of the above actions will be taken in order to further the Museum's mission, interests, and reputation.

Candidate Profile

The President and Chief Executive Officer of the Gibbes Museum of Art will demonstrate a passion for art history, a collaborative leadership style, the ability to think creatively and strategically, business acumen, and entrepreneurial drive. The successful candidate will have demonstrated success managing teams and resources. Direct experience with exhibition management, public programming, operations, fundraising, public relations and/or marketing, and budget management are all desirable. The next CEO will have a track record of resource-building with significant creativity and clarity of purpose. Strong interpersonal skills are critical, especially the ability to attract, motivate, and manage a talented and diverse staff and an engaged Board. The candidate will have proven their ability to lead, collaborate with, and motivate a diverse community, as well as build consensus amongst varying constituencies. The candidate should be a dynamic and effective communicator and enthusiastic listener.

In terms of the performance and personal competencies required for the position, we would highlight the following:

Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Track record as an innovative thinker. They will have the vision, creativity, intuition, and judgment to lead their institution forward.
- The inclination to seek and analyze data from a variety of sources to support decisions and to align others with the organization's overall strategy.
- The ability to effectively balance opportunities for change with an understanding of the pace of change that the museum is capable of handling in order to create realistic goals and implementation plans that are achievable and successful.
- Ability to set a clear vision for the museum's future and develop a strategic plan that aligns with its mission.

Expertise in the Arts

- Substantive knowledge of and expertise in art history, including art of the Southeast, which could be demonstrated through academic study and/or first-hand experience working in the museum field.
- The ability to engage passionately in the mission of the institution and to articulate the importance of the museum to the communities it serves.
- Demonstrated commitment and the ability to envision broadly how museums can be hubs for discourse about inclusion, diversity, tolerance, and understanding of differences.

Advancement

- Capability to expand an institution's funding base with a clear track record in fundraising – including from individual, corporate and foundation funders – as well as through fresh pathways for earned income, in support of annual operations, capital projects, and endowment growth.
- The ability to engage major donors in the Charleston philanthropic community and nationally.
- Proven success in forging and maintaining mutually productive relationships with peer institutions and partners.

Management of Teams and Financial Savvy

- The ability to attract and recruit top talent, motivate staff, delegate effectively, celebrate diversity within the team, and manage performance, as well as to apply employee coaching as a development focus on helping employees enhance their skills, performance, and professional growth.
- The ability to persevere in the face of challenges and exhibit a steadfast resolve and relentless commitment to high standards.

- A listener who is self-reflective and aware of their own limitations; leads by example and drives the museum's performance with an attitude of continuous improvement by being open to feedback and self-improvement.
- The ability to set clear and challenging goals while committing their institution to strong performance; tenacious and accountable in driving results.
- Proven financial savvy and business acumen, including ability to carefully steward organizational assets, balance budgets, manage financial planning and resource allocation, and make smart decisions with limited financial resources.

Inclusive Leadership

- Deep personal commitment to diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in all aspects of their work and awareness of and respect for diverse cultures and perspectives.
- Track record of building and championing teams that are substantively diverse and reflective of the diversity of the community their institution serves.
- Demonstrated personal and professional track record of inclusive leadership, displaying cultural competence while operating in an environment with a range of diverse constituents and communities.

Relationship Building, Communication, and Collaboration

- Exceptional interpersonal skills; demonstrated ability to build strong relationships with others; strong emotional intelligence; and an ability to communicate clearly and persuasively with Board, staff, and other key stakeholders internally and externally.
- Ability to inspire confidence and articulate a compelling vision for the museum's future.
- Track record of encouraging others to share the spotlight, visibly celebrating and supporting the success of staff.
- Ability to nurture a productive, engaged relationship with state and local entities, especially City Council, the Mayor's office, and their staff. Experience collaborating effectively and proactively with public entities (e.g. city, state, etc.) is a plus.
- A skilled manager able to motivate teams to perform to their highest potential while demonstrating self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to reach consensus among multiple constituencies.

Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at gibbesmuseumCEO@russellreynolds.com with a CV and brief explanation of interest.

The Gibbes Museum of Art is an equal opportunity employer and considers all candidates for employment regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, creed, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation.