

Job Posting: Curatorial Research Assistant

The Tom Thomson Art Gallery in Owen Sound, Ontario is seeking a Curatorial Research Assistant to work with the Senior Curator and curatorial team. This is an auspicious time for a recent graduate of an art history, studio art or curatorial studies program to gain valuable experience and contribute in a real way to the success of the curatorial team. 2017 represents a very important year for The Tom Thomson Art Gallery, packed with ambitious exhibitions and other specifically developed programming to mark the 50th anniversary of the Gallery, the 100th anniversary of Thomson's death and the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

Under the direction and research goals of the Senior Curator, the Curatorial Research Assistant will provide valuable support to our curatorial team relative to all aspects of developing exhibitions from initial concept through research, coordination, and practical aspects such as shipping and installation. Communication skills are also an asset as the candidate will be responsible for the development of texts and supplemental materials to communicate to specialized and general audiences, including augmented materials that can be accessed by viewers on smart devices and on our Website.

The Curatorial Research Assistant will also work with the Curator of Temporary Exhibitions to assist with organization and installation of several off-site art projects. S/he will be introduced to exhibition planning and the role that exhibitions play whether within the Gallery or off-site. S/he will also assist the Exhibitions Coordinator with unpacking, installation and label production during a change-over between exhibitions.

A significant amount of time will be allocated for the Curatorial Research Assistant to research on Canadian art, artists and history for a major exhibition project entitled "Pouring Tales" that will explore the less commonly known or frankly ignored histories of Indigenous peoples, immigrants, women, LGBTQ, war, English and French settlers, the Canadian landscape and ecologic concerns — in essence, our country's stories of pride and shame and the contemporary Canadian artists who explore those stories in their work. The Curatorial Research Assistant will research and collect data through library and Internet research, and possibly structured interviews or other project specific methodology. S/he will interpret and synthesize, and hopefully make connections to other collected data/stories. The work developed here will form the basis of an exhibition that will take place in 2020 and is expected to tour the country. S/he will conduct additional research towards other exhibitions in development.

The Curatorial Research Assistant will benefit from the mentorship of a senior professional and three other highly-experienced museum professionals and will gain knowledge related to the complexity of the functions of a contemporary art museum. The Assistant will learn both long-term planning and the practical aspects of developing and mounting exhibitions. Specifically, the Curatorial Research Assistant will receive supervision and training from professional Gallery staff and will develop specific skills in communicating concepts about art, working with the public, social media marketing and Web publishing, project development and management, and most particularly, in research and writing. The Curatorial Research Assistant will also be expected to provide occasional back-up to front desk staff and to publish one 800-word article about an exhibition presented by the Gallery and another article that documents her/his internship experience for The Sun Times (Owen Sound newspaper). This opportunity will provide skills applicable to further studies, and later, in entry-level positions at public and commercial galleries.

The Senior Curator is fluently bilingual and would be equally comfortable in working with a candidate whose mother tongue is French and having him/her produce the research in either English or French. The 800-word article would be equally welcome in French for a French publication. However, the candidate will need to have good oral facility of English in order to communicate with other staff.

The Tom Thomson Art Gallery (The TOM) is a national cultural attraction, dedicated to the innovation and spirit of iconic artist Tom Thomson (1877 – 1917), strongly identified with the Group of Seven whose images are virtually synonymous with the very idea of 'Canada.' Our national identity is forged and fortified by our awareness and understanding of historical figures like Thomson, whose artwork has been described as being the "visual equivalent of our national anthem."

With over 50,000 visitors each year, and another 70,000 visitors to our off-site programming (both of which are expected to double this year), the TOM is the region's main disseminator of contemporary art and provides a unique experience for its audiences. The TOM celebrates excellence in the visual arts locally, nationally and internationally, through exhibitions of historical and contemporary art, education programs and the enrichment and interpretation of its significant permanent collection. The TOM supports Thomson's legacy through programs such as "Canadian Spirit" involving galleries, organizations and businesses across the country. The Gallery acknowledges that it is located on the traditional territories of the Chippewas of Nawash and Saugeen First Nation and works closely with First Nations artists and communities to develop and exhibit contemporary Aboriginal artists and to ensure that First Nations are part of the artistic and social dialogue of all of our programming wherever possible.

In this dynamic place where audiences and art merge, the Gallery's award-winning educational programmes foster a life-long enjoyment and appreciation of art and its creation. Using a variety of interpretive techniques, both traditional and

innovative, we cultivate this relationship between our visitors and art. Exhibitions are accompanied by informative materials and tours are conducted by trained guides. Interactive displays, demonstrations and new technologies enable us to reach new audiences in exciting ways, showcasing the art of today and influencing the art of tomorrow. Admission to the TOM is free and all of our educational community programming is also free.

Ideally, the Candidate will have:

- Excellent research skills
- Excellent communication skills in written and oral forms
- Strong interest in contemporary Canadian art
- Good knowledge of Canadian history
- Ability to work independently and to be self-directed
- Strong interpersonal skills – for communication with Gallery patrons, staff and artists
- Ability to work with a team and/or with diverse groups of people
- Open to taking direction and a willingness to learn
- Organized yet adaptable
- A keen attention to detail and the ability to multi-task;
- Microsoft Office, Website publishing, and social media
- Bilingualism in both official languages is an asset (Senior Curator is fluently bilingual. Written work may be conducted in either language but candidate must have intermediate verbal comfort in English).

The applicant will have either an art history and studio arts training or a museum studies background. A solid education in art history will provide context in the understanding of contemporary art, Canadian history in order to research contemporary artists whose works are informed by historic and current events in this country. In addition to this experience and aptitude, a background in studio art means that the Curatorial Research Assistant comes with experience (or at least prior knowledge) on artistic/material processes and how they can inform an artist's creative process. A candidate with a background in both of these fields will understand the importance of doing any assigned task with accuracy and conscientiousness and s/he will have a predisposition to have great respect for both museum standards and the artworks being handled.

Preference will be given to candidates pursuing a Master's Degree in Fine Arts, Museum Studies or Art History or are entering their fourth year of a Bachelor's program in these fields. However, all candidates with the above skills are strongly encouraged to apply.

The successful candidate will be paid \$14 per hour and will work 35 hours per week, Tuesdays to Saturdays, from September 6 and ending on March 11 (with possible extension to March 31), 2018.

Applications including a resume, cover letter and writing sample(s) must be received in writing by August 15, 2017 to:

Christian Bernard Singer

Senior Curator

Tom Thomson Art Gallery

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Owen Sound, Ontario N4K 4K4

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The Gallery is an equal opportunity employer committed to providing accommodation in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.