



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Jameel Curator, Contemporary Middle East

Division: Research & Collections

Department/Section: Asian Department/ Middle Eastern Section

Reporting to: Senior Curator, Middle East

Background

The V&A is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance. It houses the national collections of watercolours, furniture and woodwork, miniatures, sculpture, silver, jewellery and metalwork. It has a strong reputation in dress and fashion and increasing standing in the contemporary field. It also has outstanding collections from the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and East Asia which are curated by the Asian Department.

The Middle Eastern collection at the V&A consists of around 20,000 objects, which cover the period from the rise of Islam in the 7th century to the present. The formation of this collection, begun in the 1850s, reflects the admiration of the Museum's founders for the principles they detected in Islamic art and design. The acquisitions made over the last 160 years have created one of the largest collections of its kind, and one of the most important in terms of quality and range.

Since 2003 our work with this collection has been greatly enhanced by projects funded by the Jameel family and now carried out in partnership with Art Jameel. Our joint aim is to give prominence to the Museum's Middle Eastern collection and to emphasise its value for the contemporary world. The most notable results have been the re-opening of the main display for the Islamic Middle East as the Jameel Gallery in 2006, and the inauguration of the Jameel Prize in 2009. This international award for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition, held once every two years, has now reached its fifth edition.

Purpose of the post

A permanent position as a Curator for the contemporary Middle East is available in the Asian Department. The post-holder will be responsible for delivering the Jameel Prize and for the Museum's engagement with contemporary Middle Eastern art and design through displays, events, research and acquisitions. The V&A is looking for someone with a sound academic background in a related discipline who has the skills and ambition to develop this aspect of the Museum's work.

The Curator will be part of the team responsible for the care, research, display and interpretation of the Middle Eastern collection. The post-holder will contribute to the broad range of curatorial and administrative activities undertaken by staff in the department including those related to the maintenance and development of the collection, galleries and

stores. S/he is expected to be actively involved in the Museum's contemporary initiatives and programmes and to serve on cross-Museum committees and teams as required.

Main tasks

1. To be responsible for the Jameel Prize, managing the selection process and curating the exhibition of the finalists' work, which the V&A circulates as an international touring exhibition.
2. To promote the Jameel Prize and other relevant V&A programmes by developing content for the Museum website, by commissioning the films that accompany the exhibition, by writing for external publications and by speaking to the media and to the public.
3. To liaise with the many internal and external stakeholders in the Jameel Prize, including the nominators, the judges, and the shortlisted artists and designers and their representatives, as well as with Art Jameel and the venues for the international tours.
4. To conduct research on contemporary developments in the art, craft and design of the Middle East, to develop areas of expertise that complement those of other curators in the Department, and to act as a specialist in these areas on behalf of the Museum.
5. To take curatorial responsibility for relevant areas of the Middle Eastern collection and to further develop the Museum's collection of contemporary art, craft and design from the Middle East through appropriate acquisitions.
6. To contribute to the care, documentation, interpretation and display of objects within the Middle Eastern collection, demonstrating commitment to making them available through publications, loans, exhibitions and electronic media.
7. To integrate practitioners from the Middle East and their work into the V&A's presentation of the contemporary world of art and design, contributing to the Museum's programme of study days, conferences, residencies, Friday Late events and commissions.
8. To participate in the Museum's international work with the Middle East, co-operating with British, Middle Eastern and other international institutions to develop events, displays and training programmes for both practitioners and museum professionals.
9. To work to ensure that the V&A provides a world-class visitor and learning experience by helping to maintain and improve existing galleries and stores, and by contributing to the development of the Museum's future gallery, storage and public access projects and to the programme of exhibitions and display.
10. To provide an efficient service for enquiries and opinions to specialists and the general public, to provide access to objects from both galleries and reserve collections, to teach classes and run handling sessions, and to deliver gallery talks and lectures.
11. To manage loans as allocated and act as a courier as required.

12. To assist in the provision of specialist information and advice to the Government and the major grant-giving bodies, including the Export Licensing Reviewing Committee, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the National Heritage Memorial Fund, and the Art Fund.
13. To seek out and assist in opportunities to generate support and income for the Department and the wider Museum.
14. To undertake in a flexible manner such other duties as the Keeper and senior staff may require.
15. Be committed to health and safety and ensure familiarity with all of the Museum's health and safety policies and procedures.
16. Be security conscious, ensure familiarity and co-operation with all Museum security procedures and ensure you wear a security pass at all times when on museum premises.
17. Promote equality and diversity in all aspects of your work by developing and maintaining positive working relationships, ensuring that colleagues are treated fairly and with respect/dignity and actively contributing to developments that support the museum's strategy for widening access, inclusion and diversity.

Person Specification

Essential requirements:

1. A degree or post-graduate degree (or equivalent) in a relevant field, demonstrable expertise in the modern and contemporary Middle East
2. Experience of work within a museum, gallery or archive.
3. Engagement with the broader issues currently being debated in studies of the Middle East, particularly those affecting modern and contemporary art, craft and design, and an ability to see the ways in which these might be introduced into displays intended for diverse audiences.
4. Experience in the handling and display of art objects or a keenness and capacity to learn these skills.
5. Strong observation skills and a capacity to organise and structure written and visual information.
6. The ability to express complicated ideas simply to a variety of people, both orally and on paper, and a strong commitment to communicate specialist knowledge to a wider audience.
7. To be a clear and imaginative thinker, with interest in developing ideas and creating

opportunities.

8. Evidence of good organisational skills and attention to detail in all aspects of work, particularly record keeping, combined with drive, patience, good humour, self-motivation and common sense.
9. The ability to work collaboratively as part of a team, persuading others, contributing ideas, developing other people's ideas and sharing responsibility.
10. Excellent computer skills, including experience of databases, and an ability to manage information in traditional and digital forms systematically and accurately.

Desirable requirements:

1. A working knowledge of Arabic or other major Middle Eastern language, and a willingness to undertake language training as needed.
2. A knowledge of one or more appropriate European languages.
3. A record of publication in a relevant field.
4. Experience of managing a project at an international level.
5. Experience of educational projects with communities of diverse cultural backgrounds.
6. Experience of working on exhibitions.
7. Experience of managing research projects and academic events.

OTHER INFORMATION

Hours/Salary:

Net working hours (i.e. excluding meal breaks) are 36 per week.

The salary for this role will be £27,385 – £32,914 per annum. Salaries are reviewed on an annual basis.

Annual leave:

28 days plus 8 days public holidays

Pension benefits:

You will be auto enrolled into the Museum's Group Personal Pension Scheme and have the opportunity on completion of Probation to an enhanced pension provision, including an employer contribution of 10%.

Other benefits:

Non-contributory life assurance policy (to value of 4 x annual salary)

An interest free season ticket or bicycle loan is available after three months.

Free entrance to all the major museums and exhibitions in London as well as many others.
Subsidised staff restaurant
Discounts on purchases in V&A shops

Application process:

Please apply online via the V&A's website at www.vam.ac.uk/jobs

If you are having technical difficulties applying online, please use the online chat functionality which can be found on the bottom right hand side of the form. Alternatively, you can contact **Vacancy Filler** directly on **01509 236434**, and quote the role reference number and your application number (if known). Please note, Vacancy Filler are contactable, Monday – Friday between 9.00am – 5.00pm.

If you have any queries regarding the role and/or the V&A's recruitment process, you can email us – contacthr@vam.ac.uk or telephone us on 020 7942 2937 (Working hours Monday – Friday 9.00am – 5.00pm).

Closing date for receipt of applications is 9.15am Tuesday 23 April 2019

Interviews to be held 15 or 17 May 2019

Interview expenses will not be paid unless there is a prior agreement.