



Position Specification

**Melvin & Bren Simon Director,
Indianapolis Museum of Art**

2023



POSITION SPECIFICATION

Position	Director, Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA)
Organization	Newfields
Location	Indianapolis, IN
Reporting Relationship	President and CEO of Newfields, Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette
Website	IMA Website

NEWFIELDS HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

On November 7, 1883, an exhibition of 453 works by 137 artists opened at the English Hotel on the downtown Indianapolis Circle. It was the first exhibition organized by the Art Association of Indianapolis, which well-known suffragette May Wright Sewall, her husband Theodore, and a small group of art-minded citizens had formed a few months earlier. In the process, they wrote the mission statement that spelled out their intentions: to enrich lives through exceptional experiences with art and nature. The success of that exhibition, which attracted sizable crowds throughout its three-week run, established the Art Association as a viable factor in the local cultural scene and led to more exhibitions, as well as lectures, and eventually a campus featuring both a museum and an art school.

In 1969, the Art Association changed its name to the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA) — a precursor to its move the following year from its longtime home on the campus of the John Herron Art Institute at 16th and Pennsylvania Streets into a new building at 38th Street and Michigan Road.

The Indianapolis Museum of Art is complemented by The Garden, the heart of which is the Oldfields estate, a National Historic Landmark, thanks to the generosity of Ruth Lilly, Josiah K. Lilly and their family, whose intent was to create a home for art in nature. A subsequent addition of 100 acres of adjacent natural land along the banks of the White River has been reimagined as The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park featuring outdoor works of art set among woodlands, wetlands, and meadows. In 2009, J. Irwin Miller and Xenia Simons Miller donated the Miller House and Garden, located in Columbus, IN, to the institution, ensuring that this National Historic Landmark, which epitomizes the international Modernist aesthetic, could be enjoyed by the public.

In 2017, The Indianapolis Museum of Art announced the unification of the entire campus under one name — Newfields, A Place for Nature and the Arts. By leveraging Newfields' indoor and outdoor spaces year-round, the organization has a different story than many arts and cultural institutions nationwide. Following this change, a new organizational structure created the role of President and CEO of Newfields in addition to two Director roles who oversee the vision and collaboration of the Gardens and Museum respectively.

In 2021, Newfields' Board of Trustees announced the organization's comprehensive Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access (DEIA) action plan following its own internal and public reckoning with racial and social injustice. Developed to be inclusive of input from employees, board members, and community members, the current plan reflects the organization's deep commitment to advancing DEIA values, policies, and practices institution-wide and across Newfields' relationships with the community. Newfields made a commitment to enhance representation in exhibitions and programming by earmarking \$20 million in endowment funds dedicated to new acquisitions of art created by Black, Indigenous, and artists of color, and artists from other historically marginalized backgrounds. Building trust and stronger relationships with the people of Indianapolis is a top priority and



the organization recognizes that this will take time. The most recent status report can be found [here](#).

In 2022, [Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette](#) joined the organization as President and CEO of Newfields. Under Dr. Burnette's leadership, Newfields is executing a strategic plan revolving around their mission statement, *"To enrich lives through exceptional experiences with art and nature"* and the core values of stewardship, inclusivity, service, and excellence.

THE IMA DIRECTOR OPPORTUNITY

The IMA Director will lead the museum's artistic vision and strategy for the future and will bring to life what the International Council of Museums defines as the role of a museum today:

"A museum is a not-for-profit, permanent institution in the service of society that researches, collects, conserves, interprets and exhibits tangible and intangible heritage. Open to the public, accessible and inclusive, museums foster diversity and sustainability. They operate and communicate ethically, professionally and with the participation of communities, offering varied experiences for education, enjoyment, reflection and knowledge sharing."

The next Director will leverage the IMA's institutional history, impressive collection and exhibitions, strong financial position, engaging educational and community programs, and beloved constituents. In 2007, Bren Simon and her late husband Melvin made a generous donation to permanently endow the Director of the IMA position, to ensure the Museum has enough resources to recruit and support the strongest quality of candidates for this vital role. The IMA sets high expectations and innovates to exceed the expectations of guests, employees, volunteers, and donors. Success is measured in the number of minds engaged, spirits elevated, and consciences raised.

Today, the IMA is one of the largest encyclopedic art museums in the country spanning 5,000 years of art history, along with active exhibitions and education programs that far surpass anything the Art Association's founders could have imagined. With the privilege of serving as home to a world-class encyclopedic art collection comes the responsibility of caring for and preserving that collection for generations to come. At the heart of this mission of care and preservation are two talented teams—a traditional comprehensive Conservation department and a state-of-the-art Conservation Science Lab. Since 2020, 81 objects have been treated by the conservators.

One recent conservation project will make a significant impact on the IMA and on the field as a whole. The team is in the process of examining four paintings by Camille Pissarro (1830-1903), two by his son Lucien (1863-1944), and one by his son Georges (1871-1961) to compare materials and techniques employed by the Pissarros over four decades. By studying the ways Camille's technique changed throughout his career in comparison to the evolution of his sons' techniques, will allow the team to better understand and present these masterpieces. At the conclusion of this project, research will be publicly accessible via a free online catalogue.

The museum is home to 41,866 objects in the permanent collection. The next Director will build on the reimagination of the galleries initiated through the Visioning Project, a 3-year project funded by former Board member Kay Koch. For example, the Clowes Pavilion is a newly reimagined space after a multi-year renovation. The reinstalled space includes a state-of-the-art LED ceiling that evokes an outdoor space in the heart of the museum, surrounded by beloved works from the Clowes Collection. Favorites like Rembrandt's Self-Portrait, and the Raphael-designed tapestry, The Miraculous Draught of Fishes, are shown alongside objects from other parts of the IMA's permanent collection, such as Duvor (Communal Cloth) by the Ghanaian sculptor El Anatsui. Building on the theme of reimaginings, the museum will debut soon a refreshed installation of pieces from the United States, which will provide new context to how artists, critics, and the public approached American art for over 200 years. The next Director will also continue to champion the Museum's efforts to be a destination place for all types of art while envisioning new ways to highlight the collection's contemporary art.



In addition to the beloved permanent collection, the IMA boasts a robust program of special art exhibitions. Two recent, notable exhibitions include [We. The Culture: Works by The Eighteen Art Collective](#) and [Stephen Sprouse: Rock | Art | Fashion](#).

Community partnerships and educational opportunities make the IMA fun and vibrant. 24,300 guests have attended Free First Thursday since the program was expanded in April 2021. During the last two years, 8,000 school-aged children have visited Newfields through a field trip. In partnership with Crown Hill Neighborhood Association, Riverside Civic League, and Mapleton – Fall Creek Neighborhood Association, a new Neighborhood Membership began providing free access to neighborhood residents and families. More than 200 residents have signed up since the launch.

Fulfilling the mission of Newfields to connect art and nature, the Director will collaborate closely with the Director of the Gardens. Of note, is a recent gift provided by a longtime patron and former trustee, Kent Hawryluk, who is funding the arrival of sculptural installations to enliven Newfields' Virginia B. Fairbanks Art and Nature Park.

The IMA continues to be a cultural treasure for Indianapolis. The next Director and staff will be committed to leaving the museum better than found - richer in beauty, more welcoming to all communities, and ever more relevant to guests.

THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

Newfields is seeking a Director of the IMA who will lead a vibrant, accomplished staff dedicated to the preservation of its renowned collection and present dynamic, awe-inspiring experiences to all. Communicating regularly with the President and leading conversations with the Board of Trustees and Board of Governors at the President's request, the IMA Director will manage the IMA's staff and budget that directly support the art collection and art-related programming and work to increase representation from women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ artists within the art collection and related programming that serves the entire spectrum of visitors to the Museum, Newfields, and its website and social media.

Key responsibilities will include:

Curatorial and Educational

The permanent collection and its refinement and expansion plays a significant role in the Museum's future. The Director will play a key role in shaping and implementing the next Collection Plan and its impact, and will work to:

- Oversee collections support, conservation, conservation science, design, exhibitions, interpretation, photography, and registration.
- Encourage and empower scholarly work that enriches the collection and its reputation and storytelling potential.
- 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 excellent exhibition and educational programming that is innovative, diverse, and accessible.
- Implement a renewed docents program and the development of new educational/pedagogical approaches for a greater breadth of learning.
- Manage the cultivation, care, and preservation of the Permanent Collection in accordance with the Museum Mission.

Community-Building and External Relations

- Serve as the spokesperson for the IMA, inspiring and engaging community conversation that will invigorate the Museum's mission and goals.
- Alongside the President of Newfields, build and nurture lasting relationships with supporters, members, and friends of IMA and the broader Newfields entity.



- Forge partnerships with a wide range of peer organizations and cultural institutions on the local, national, and global stage.

Organizational Leadership, Assessment and Management

- Develop and implement a cohesive business strategy through successful partnership and collaboration with the Newfields President and IMA staff.
- Conduct annual performance evaluations and provide regular feedback for all direct reports and their teams.
- Recruit, mentor, support, and retain a diverse staff having a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- Foster the organization's stated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) by implementing policies and procedures – inclusive of compensation, benefits, and work conditions – to ensure a culture of mutual respect, safety, and acceptance.

Finance and Advancement

- Serve as the IMA's primary leader and advocate to develop annual budgets and maintain a sound financial plan for the Museum within the broader institution.
- In concert with the Executive team, 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 prospects for fiscal success based on organizational capacity.

THE EXPERIENCES AND CHARACTER OF THE DIRECTOR

The successful candidate will demonstrate superlative and thoughtful management experience and the ability to build and lead a world class art museum. The IMA Director will bring demonstrated leadership experience with museums, fluency engaging across an encyclopedic collection, and a global perspective. The Director will be responsible for developing and maintaining a high-performing team capable of achieving the Museum's goals. The successful individual will bring a trailblazing, transformative, cutting-edge vision for the museum's collection, programming, and delivery. In addition, the Director will bring the ability to forge reciprocal and sustainable partnerships and build community relationships.

Qualifications, knowledge, and abilities include:

- Senior-level museum leadership experience in an art museum of size and complexity similar to the IMA; combined with a knowledge of and a commitment to the distinct structure and mission of Newfields.
- Knowledge of the art world and its key players regionally, nationally, and internationally; an ability to translate this into innovative and meaningful collaborations, exhibitions, and prospective acquisitions for the IMA.
- Demonstrated effectiveness managing people, operations, and budgets in a complex organization.
- Ability to plan, set the standards for, and administer museum programs, such as collections, acquisitions, exhibition development, educational and public programs, and community outreach.
- Evidence of building and nurturing relationships with staff members and other individuals – from the art engaged to those unengaged, potential visitors, along with dedicated volunteers, artists, funders, and collectors.
- Strong propensity for public speaking, story-telling, and effective communication as the spokesperson and ambassador for the IMA – internally as its advocate and externally amongst key constituents.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication skills; and the ability to generate awareness of, excitement for, and appreciation of the Museum's mission.
- Aptitude for fundraising and history of successful experience cultivating relationships and soliciting financial and art gifts from individuals, foundations, and corporations.



Other skills include:

- Decisive and resourceful; an active and engaged individual who leads by example; and is personally and professionally committed to Indianapolis, the IMA, and Newfield’s mission, goals, and programs.
- Ambitious and courageous; committed to accepting the challenge of tough conversations and topics and a personal and professional dedication to excellence.
- Demonstrated effectiveness in creating space and developing programs and policies that support a culture of acceptance, diversity, and inclusive excellence.
- Skilled leader who can delegate, manage, and prioritize activities and responsibilities with clarity and confidence combined with strong interpersonal and teamwork skills.
- Ability to process a high volume of information across disciplines and departments, providing leadership and support to senior staff.
- Creativity in problem solving and ability to make decisions quickly and soundly.
- Adaptable approach and ability to exemplify composure under pressure.
- Ability to foster an organizational culture that supports intra-organization teamwork and collaboration.
- Experience with strategies and best practices for employee engagement and effective communication across the institutional hierarchy.

EDUCATION

Candidates of all degree and academic certification levels are welcomed. Candidates with the requisite professional experiences, skills, and values outlined in this position specification are encouraged to apply.

COMPENSATION

The estimated salary range for this position is \$250-280K.

THE SEARCH PROCESS

Newfields engaged Korn Ferry to organize and coordinate for the next Director of the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The Search Committee will partner with Korn Ferry to assess a diverse slate of potential candidates and reach a consensus on the selection of the Director of the IMA through a highly inclusive, national search process.

The Search Committee consists of the following members:

- Dr. Colette Pierce Burnette, President and CEO, Newfields
- Julie Goodman, President and CEO, Indy Arts Council
- Kent Hawryluk, President and CEO, MBX Biosciences
- Dr. James Lemler, President, Allen Whitehill Clowes Charitable Foundation
- Sherry Peglow, Director of Registration, Newfields
- Artur Silva, Visual Artist and Filmmaker; Visiting Assistant Professor, DePauw University
- Dr. John Teramoto, Curator of Asian Art, Newfields
- Frederick Wallace, Chief Conservator and Director of Conservation, Newfields
- Jonathan Wright, Ruth Lilly Director of the Garden and Fairbanks Park, Newfields

All inquiries may be directed to the Korn Ferry team at Newfields-IMADirector@kornferry.com.



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Newfields has more than 300 employees, interns, and fellows in a wide range of positions within various areas including conservation, curatorial, advancement, education, natural resources and security. The organization employs full-time, part-time and seasonal personnel within an inclusive and creative environment.

Newfields is an equal opportunity employer committed to a policy to recruit, retain and promote without regard to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, national origin, age, veteran status, disability, genetic information or any other protected category. This commitment extends to all aspects of employment.

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