

**Briscoe Western Art Museum
San Antonio, Texas**

Position Description

Museum Preparator

Reports To:	Exhibition Manager
Fair Labor Standard Act Status:	Non-exempt/Full-Time position
Department:	Exhibition
Salary range:	\$19.00 - \$22.00 per hour (commensurate with experience)

POSITION SUMMARY

The Briscoe Western Art Museum encompasses an approximately one and one-quarter acre campus with nearly 60,000 square-feet of building space, including the renovated historic 1930 library building and the newly constructed Jack Guenther Pavilion, along with the McNutt Sculpture Garden and premiere San Antonio River Walk frontage.

The Museum Preparator supports the planning, fabrication, installation, maintenance, deinstallation, movement, packing, and storage of works of art and exhibition components throughout the Museum. Reporting to the Exhibitions Manager, the Preparator is responsible for applying professional museum standards and appropriate materials, equipment, and techniques to the safe handling and presentation of works of art and cultural objects.

The position plays a central role in permanent collection installations, temporary and traveling exhibitions, *Night of Artists*, gallery rotations, and outdoor sculpture. Responsibilities include art handling; packing and unpacking; installation and deinstallation; fabrication; mount making; rigging; gallery preparation; exhibition lighting (as needed/directed); audiovisual and digital-media installation; object movement; and maintenance of exhibition furniture, tools, equipment, and storage areas.

The Museum Preparator works collaboratively with Exhibitions, Collections, Curatorial, Facilities, Security, and other Museum staff, as well as visiting artists, couriers, contractors, art handlers, and vendors, to ensure that exhibitions are completed safely, professionally, efficiently, and in accordance with established museum standards.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Exhibition Installation & Art Handling

- Lead and execute the preparation, installation, maintenance, and deinstallation of permanent, temporary, traveling, and special exhibitions.
- Safely handle, move, install, deinstall, pack, unpack, and store works of art and cultural objects using appropriate museum-standard materials, tools, equipment, and techniques.
- Install two- and three-dimensional works, including framed works, sculpture, objects, decorative arts, and other collection materials using appropriate hanging systems, mounts, hardware, and security devices.
- Plan and execute complex object movements and installations in collaboration with the Exhibitions Manager and Collections Manager/Registrar.
- Assist with object condition examinations and documentation before and after movement, packing, installation, and deinstallation as directed by Collections staff.
- Complete local pickups and deliveries of works of art and assist with loading and unloading fine-art transportation vehicles.

- Work with visiting couriers, artists, lenders, fine-art shippers, and contract art handlers during installation and deinstallation.
- Assist with the preparation and installation of the Museum's annual Night of Artists exhibition and sale and other major Museum installations.
- Maintain professional standards for art handling and object safety in galleries, collection storage, loading areas, and off-site storage facilities.

Exhibition Fabrication & Gallery Preparation

- Fabricate and install pedestals, platforms, display furniture, temporary walls, object supports, wall mounts, storage fixtures, and other exhibition components.
- Assist with the design and fabrication of custom mounts and supports in consultation with Collections staff and, when appropriate, conservators or specialized mount makers.
- Prepare galleries for installation, including patching, sanding, painting, wall preparation, layout, hardware installation, and final gallery finish-out.
- Install exhibition graphics, vinyl, signage, labels, dimensional lettering, and other interpretive elements.
- Assist with installation and integration of audiovisual, digital, interactive, and multimedia exhibition components.
- Read and work from exhibition plans, elevations, floor plans, technical drawings, object layouts, and installation instructions.
- Maintain inventories of exhibition furniture, pedestals, cases, mounts, hardware, packing materials, tools, and related equipment.
- Build and maintain appropriate storage racks and supports for artwork and exhibition materials as assigned.

Rigging, Equipment & Safety

- Safely operate appropriate lifting and material-handling equipment, including pallet jacks, carts, lifts, gantries, hoists, dollies, ladders, scaffolding, and other approved equipment for which the employee has received appropriate training.
- Assist in planning and executing rigging and movement of large or heavy works, including outdoor sculpture, using approved equipment and qualified personnel.
- Inspect tools, lifting equipment, rigging components, ladders, and related equipment before use and report unsafe or damaged equipment.
- Follow Museum safety procedures and applicable workplace safety requirements when using tools, machinery, lifts, ladders, chemicals, paints, adhesives, and other materials.
- Maintain clean, organized, and safe work areas, shops, loading areas, galleries, and exhibition storage spaces.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment and safe work practices.

Exhibition Lighting

- Responsible for the installation, focusing, adjustment, maintenance, and documentation of gallery and exhibition lighting.
- Work with the Exhibitions Manager and Collections staff to establish appropriate lighting levels based on object type, conservation requirements, exhibition design, and visitor experience.
- Operate and maintain gallery lighting systems and related equipment and maintain an accurate inventory of fixtures, lamps, accessories, and replacement components.
- Adjust lighting for permanent collection rotations, temporary exhibitions, special installations, and gallery changes.
- Assist in monitoring light-sensitive materials and maintaining appropriate illumination levels in consultation with Collections staff.

Collections & Storage Support

- Assist the Collections Manager/Registrar with collection inventories, object movements, location tracking, condition documentation, and storage projects.
- Maintain appropriate standards of organization, cleanliness, accessibility, and object safety in on-site and off-site collections storage.
- Safely move objects into and out of storage and maintain appropriate physical separation, padding, supports, and storage systems.
- Assist with packing and unpacking incoming and outgoing loans and permanent collection objects.
- Assist with construction and maintenance of storage furniture, racks, screens, shelving, and object supports.
- Immediately report observed changes in object condition, evidence of pests, environmental concerns, water intrusion, physical damage, or other potential threats to collections.

Outdoor Sculpture

- Assist with the inspection and routine care of outdoor sculpture throughout the McNutt Sculpture Garden and Museum campus.
- Perform approved routine cleaning of outdoor sculpture according to established Museum procedures.
- Assist qualified conservators or trained staff with periodic maintenance and protective waxing of outdoor bronze sculptures when appropriate.
- Document and report changes in condition, corrosion, surface coatings, structural concerns, vandalism, irrigation exposure, biological growth, or other issues affecting outdoor sculpture.
- Assist with installation, relocation, rigging, and deinstallation of outdoor sculpture as required.

Gallery & Exhibition Maintenance

- Conduct routine inspections of galleries and installed exhibitions to identify lighting issues, loose hardware, damaged exhibition furniture, failing graphics, object-security concerns, or other maintenance needs.
- Maintain pedestals, cases, walls, barriers, mounts, graphics, and other exhibition components throughout the duration of an exhibition.
- Perform appropriate housekeeping of artworks, exhibition furniture, and gallery surfaces in coordination with Collections staff.
- Coordinate with Facilities staff regarding building maintenance or repairs that could affect artwork, exhibition spaces, environmental conditions, or visitor safety.
- Ensure appropriate security hardware and object-protection measures are installed as directed.

Planning, Vendors & Administration

- Collaborate with the Exhibitions Manager, Director, curators, Collections Manager/Registrar, and other appropriate staff in planning exhibition layouts, object placement, fabrication, lighting, and installation requirements.
- Develop practical and cost-effective solutions to exhibition design, fabrication, installation, storage, and object-movement challenges.
- Obtain estimates and coordinate with approved vendors and contractors for equipment, fabrication, materials, supplies, rentals, and specialized services.
- Assist with developing installation schedules, material lists, equipment requirements, and project budgets.
- Provide direction to contract art handlers, temporary preparators, installers, and other personnel as assigned by the Exhibitions Manager.
- Maintain appropriate documentation related to installations, lighting, fabrication, equipment, and exhibition projects.
- Participate in the development and implementation of Museum standards and procedures related to exhibition installation, collections safety, art handling, and workplace safety.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree in Art History, Studio Art, or related field preferred.
- 3–6 years related experience.
- Thorough knowledge of procedures and materials used for art handling, packing, installation/de-installation, storage, mount making, rigging, gantry, wrapping and transport.
- Advanced skills in the use of power tools, wood/metal shop machinery, and/or lifting apparatuses.
- Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access, Outlook) proficient.
- Demonstrated interest in American and Western American art, history, and culture.
- Ability to multi-task and prioritize with little or no supervision.
- Ability to solve complex problems within budget restrictions and tight deadlines.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Must be detail-oriented, organized, and a team player.
- Must have valid driver's license.
- Working knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite and elevation software is a big plus.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Position requires periods of physical activity, including lifting at least 25 pounds, and pushing 75 pounds with the assistance of a cart. Evening, weekend, and holiday work is required.

Interested parties can send a cover letter and resume to email:

info@briscoemuseum.org

Subject: Museum Preparator