Candidate Pack
Curator of Decorative Arts
Full Time, 40 hrs per week
Permanent Contract
Introduction

The Wallace Collection is an internationally outstanding collection which contains unsurpassed masterpieces of paintings, sculpture, furniture, arms and armour and porcelain. Built over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the Marquesses of Hertford and Sir Richard Wallace, it is one of the finest and most celebrated collections in the world. So that it could be kept together and enjoyed by generations of visitors, the collection was given to the British Nation in 1897 and opened to the public in June 1900. It was an astonishing bequest and one of the greatest gifts of art works ever to be transferred into public ownership. The museum is internationally famous for its collection of French eighteenth-century art, Arms and Armour and for its Old Master paintings.

The museum is managed by the Director Dr Xavier Bray, who reports to a board of Trustees appointed by the Prime Minister, and is financed by a combination of grant-in-aid from central government and self-generated income.

We aim to engage with and diversify our audience and, before the pandemic, we attracted over 450,000 visitors a year to the museum.
Our priorities

The Collection is committed to providing access to as wide a public as possible and to helping visitors engage with this diversity. Our goal is to create a place of understanding, cultural pluralism, curiosity and learning. To do this, we plan to create a world-class visitor experience for all ages which stimulates engagement with our collection through a new programme of exhibitions, major gallery refurbishments and an enhanced and expanded digital presence.

Our strategic priorities are to:

- To maintain, research and preserve the Collection for future generations;
- To broaden and deepen visitor engagement, connecting with audiences onsite and digitally;
- To build and support a strong exhibition programme;
- To lay a strong financial foundation for the future; and
- To embark upon a Masterplan programme to transform the museum.
Role summary

The Curator of Decorative Arts is part of the Curatorial Team and is managed by the Director of Collections and Research. The main purpose of the role is to provide curatorial expertise in the care, documentation and research, presentation and interpretation of the decorative arts collections at the Wallace Collection.

The Wallace Collection contains an extremely fine holding of decorative arts, including perhaps the finest collection of French eighteenth-century decorative art outside France.

As a member of the Collections and Research Directorate, the postholder will also play a role in the wider work of the Wallace Collection, contributing to projects and public programmes and supporting fundraising and income generation.
Role description

Knowledge and Expertise

- Demonstrate strong knowledge and expertise in Decorative Arts; think across collections and disciplines related to curatorial remit; apply intellectual curiosity and critical thinking to develop knowledge of contexts for objects and collections.
- Develop with the Director of Collections and Research an agreed programme of research and dissemination using incisive and critical thinking to make an impact on, or advance the subject; be an active contributor to the Wallace Collection’s research culture.
- Undertake accurate cataloguing and documenting to develop the Collection Management System (currently MuseumPlus) and to ensure the information is kept up to date and accessible to the public; support with any relevant digitisation project.
- Advise on loans in and out and oversee relevant curatorial aspects, including valuations and undertaking courier duties, as required; provide advice to Government and Arts Council when required - e.g. Acceptance in Lieu, the Cultural Gifts Scheme, Export Licences matters and valuations.
- Respond to both routine and complex and specialist enquiries relating to the Decorative Arts collection; and supervise public access to objects in the Collection and the Library and Archive.
- Liaise with peers in regional and national museums as well as international museums; participate in relevant networks.
- Devise, propose and plan scholarly conferences and study days associated with the permanent collection or temporary exhibitions and displays.
- Working with Conservation and Collections Care colleagues, agree storage and conservation plans for relevant collections; proactively support colleagues with object moves.

Presenting and Interpreting

- Participate in the development of permanent and temporary displays, including the Wallace Collection Masterplan, using subject and collections knowledge.
- Work collaboratively with Digital & Audiences, Conservation and Collection Care to create innovative and engaging interpretation throughout the galleries.
- Participate in the development of exhibitions as required, including proposing exhibitions or acting as the internal curator working with guest curators: this will involve carrying out or supervising due diligence and provenance research on incoming loans.
- Participate in the development of material for publication in print and online, enhancing the museum’s reputation through strong narratives and engaging storytelling; contribute to photography and digitisation programmes.
- Collaborate with colleagues in Digital & Audiences on the development of their programmes, contributing content as required.
- Represent the Wallace Collection through participation in professional and social networks and visits, as well as in the national and international academic and cultural sector as required, regularly lecturing and presenting to broad range of audiences.
Teamwork and Collaborating
- Foster excellent relationships across all teams at the Collection; proactively engage with the overall aims of the Collection and contribute to these.
- Respect colleagues through transparent and timely communication.
- Manage any relevant conservation or research projects, including acting as budget holder when dedicated project budgets exist.
- Supervise (when funded and as required) any assistant curators, fellows, volunteers or interns supporting curatorial work to ensure their contribution is focused and recognised.
- Develop knowledge of potential funding sources and relevant prospects and donors and assist in the development of cultivating existing and potential donors in collaboration with the Development Team; support Development by playing a key role in stewarding relevant prospects, donors and other funders.
- Oversee evening events when needed by the Venue Hire team.
- Ensure familiarity with relevant legislation (access, health and safety, GDPR, FOI) and commit to good practice and adherence to Wallace Collection policy.
- Undertake projects or responsibilities as delegated by senior colleagues which might involve working outside of normal hours, and will change from time to time.

The above job description is intended to be an outline of the duties and responsibilities for this role. This is not exhaustive, and it is likely to change over time. You may be expected to undertake other duties that are commensurate with this role.
## Person specification

### Essential
- A demonstrable record in the study of Decorative Arts with a specialization in at least one of the strong specific areas of the Collection (i.e., 18th-century French furniture or porcelain, maiolica, Renaissance works of art, etc)
- A demonstrable interest in, and enthusiasm for telling stories about collections through temporary and permanent collection displays, exhibitions, publications, learning and engagement. A track record of having contributed to displays and/or exhibitions, or equivalent experience.
- Responsiveness to opening up the collections to a broad audience, including non-traditional users.
- Ability to communicate knowledge of specialist field to a range of audiences while maintaining high scholarly standards; good writing skills, with sound knowledge of English grammar and syntax.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a diplomatic manner; ability to collaborate as part of a team, to progress a variety of projects simultaneously and to work flexibly and calmly under pressure.
- Practical and organisational skills; meticulousness, a keen attention to detail in all aspects of work, particularly record keeping; experience of handling materials with care and sensitivity to their physical properties.
- Highly motivated and able to demonstrate initiative. Good time management skills. An ability to set priorities, manage a number of tasks concurrently and function with limited supervision.
- Demonstrable computer skills and ability to manage information systematically and accurately.
- Demonstrate flexibility and the ability to manage multiple tasks.

### Desirable
- Knowledge of appropriate languages.
Salary, benefits and working hours

The salary for this role is between £40,000 and £45,000 per annum dependent on skills and experience.

Holiday Entitlement
The post-holder will receive 25 days paid annual leave plus bank holidays and 2.5 ‘privilege’ days.

Employees are also offered the following benefits:

- **Membership of an Occupational Pension Scheme**
  - Alpha - a defined benefit occupational pension scheme (28.97% employer contribution)
  - Partnership pension account - a stakeholder pension
- **Interest free loans after six months satisfactory service**
  - Interest free season ticket loan
  - Cycle to work loan
- **Eye Tests with additional contribution towards prescription if required**
- **Occupational Health Service**
- **Annual Flu Jab**
- **Full access to a free and confidential Employee Assistance Programme**
  - Services available 24/7 and 365 days per year to all employees
  - Free therapy service of up to six sessions per issue, per year (each session lasts 45-50 minutes)
- **First Aiders**
- **Access to Mental Health First Aiders**
- **Enhanced Parental Leave (where eligible)**
- **Training and Development Opportunities**

For this post, the normal working week is a five day week, Monday to Friday. The normal working day will be 09.00 to 17.00. However, some flexibility will be expected as the need to do occasional evening and weekend duties will be required.
How to apply

Please complete the Application Form, and the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form, following the links provided on our website. Please note the equal opportunities form is used for monitoring purposes only and does not form part of the selection process. Both forms should be emailed to recruitment@wallacecollection.org by midnight 30/06/2024. Please note late applications or applications via a CV will not be considered.

Interviews for the role will take place on week commencing, 08/07/2024. Candidates who have been shortlisted for interview will be contacted after the closing date. Due to the large number of applications we receive, it will not be possible to contact or give feedback to candidates who have not been shortlisted for interview.

Start date: As soon as possible

Appointment to the role is subject to a satisfactory Basic Disclosure check. The Wallace Collection is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.