

The Art Institute of Chicago

Head of Interpretation

The Art Institute of Chicago is a world-renowned art museum housing one of the largest permanent collections in the United States. It is encyclopedic in nature with strong holdings across all media, all traditions, and all ages. The Art Institute is particularly recognized for its extraordinary Impressionist, Modern, Contemporary and American collections, among other aspects of its holdings. In addition to displaying its permanent collection, it typically mounts 35–40 special exhibitions per year. The museum draws between 1,400,000 and 1,800,000 visitors a year and has a membership of 100,000. Its annual operating budget is approximately \$110 million.

The Art Institute of Chicago seeks a Head of Interpretation to lead interpretive projects and planning across the museum as well as related visitor research and project evaluation. The Head of Interpretation plays a critical role in the Art Institute's long-range plan, improving the visitor experience and igniting connections between 21st-century audiences and works of art, spanning 4000 years of creativity. In close collaboration with curators, educators, conservators, editors, designers, digital producers and others, s/he establishes and is responsible for project goals, in print or digital, leading the Museum's Content Committee and developing innovative, inclusive ways to engage visitors with collections and exhibitions. S/he experiments with new accessible approaches, and continually assesses and revises these with internal and external research partners. S/he works in partnership with the Head of Digital Experience and Access, the digital learning producer, editors, and educators to shape the content, and direction of digital programming and interactive projects for various audiences. The Head of Interpretation ensures ongoing communication with staff around all projects. S/he is also in ongoing communication with colleagues across the field, sharing strategies and helping to establish the Art Institute as a leader in visitor experience and content interpretation.

The ideal candidate is a creative thinker and a skilled leader and facilitator. S/he is a compelling writer who possesses the ability to develop content strategy and content, manage teams and multiple projects simultaneously, edit content with sensitivity, work with external partners, and form productive and collaborative relationships across the museum's departments.

Primary Responsibilities

- Develop museum-wide strategies for visitor-facing content and its presentation across the museum, including the digital space.
- Work collaboratively with curators to establish interpretive goals for exhibitions and collection displays. Secure buy-in and institutionalize approaches through effective communication with staff, including documentation, ongoing consultation, and regular presentations.
- Lead the Museum's Content Committee and manage and facilitate 8–10 cross-departmental working groups per year in preparation for major exhibitions and installations.
- Lead the review and editing of content, work collaboratively with editors, curators, and others. Provide final content and advise on placement for permanent collection and special exhibition wall text and labels with an eye to visitor engagement and accessibility.
- Establish and sustain a dynamic collaborative relationship with the Head of Digital Experience and Access and others in that Department on the design of visitor-facing digital initiatives, both in-gallery and online.
- Produce (and/or) review content for digital platforms such as apps, interactive kiosks, audio guides, and interpretive video projects.
- Experiment with new interpretive approaches and work with research partners to evaluate constantly evolving solutions; share results from research with peers in the museum and across the field.
- Seek and work with internal and external experts at the outset of each project to ensure inclusive access for people with disabilities, meeting or exceeding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- Participate in related visitor-facing initiatives, including way-finding improvements and assessment of ephemeral materials such as maps, signage, and guides.
- Supervise educators, support staff, and interns; maintain schedules and manage vendor relationships.

Qualifications

- Masters degree required, Ph.D. preferred; demonstrated command of art historical content.
- Minimum 5 years experience leading and facilitating content strategy and communication within the context of an organization and across multiple platforms, including digital.
- Knowledge of cutting-edge strategies and tools for engagement with content and proven ability to communicate effectively with a broad audience through creation of public-facing, accessible materials, including demonstrated awareness of design approaches and strategies to make content accessible to people with disabilities.
- Superior writing and editing skills, particularly for voice and tone; excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Superior project management skills, including meeting facilitation and time-management.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, as demonstrated by implemented ideas or approaches.
- Demonstrated experience, ability, and desire to collaborate with colleagues from multiple departments and disciplines.
- Demonstrated ability to work strategically and effectively with research partners and vendors.
- Desire to work in a fast-paced and mission-driven environment.

Please apply online at <https://hrweb.artic.edu/recruit/applyjob.html>

The Art Institute of Chicago is an equal opportunity, equal access employer fully committed to achieving a diverse and inclusive workplace.