



Museum Careers: Pathways and Opportunities

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Alexandra Poterack

Director of Academic Programs

museum-academic@risd.edu

RISDMUSEUM.ORG



Working... in museums

- Curatorial
- Education
- Registration
- Conservation
- Design
- Digital Content
- Installation and exhibition design
- Exhibitions management
- DEI advocacy
- Visitor services
- Security
- Fundraising, grant writing, donor relations and marketing
- Photography
- ... *and more*

with museums

- Public performances and workshops
- Research residencies and fellowships
- Curatorial project collaborations
- Teaching artist roles
- Acquisition and/or exhibition of work



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Skills applicable to all roles:

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Adaptability
- Ability to balance theory with practicalities
- Critical view of museums' origins and histories
- Comfort with nuance and ambiguity
- Systems thinking



Curators research, study, and interpret art, caring holistically for a particular area of a museum's collection. In larger institutions, curators' areas of responsibility are highly specialized. Curators acquire works for the collection and they conceptualize and develop exhibitions/galleries. They write and speak extensively for various audiences and collaborate with living artists and communities.

Curators in art museums typically have education in art history, art, history or museum studies. An advanced degree (MA, Ph.D., etc.) in art history, art, or a related area is required for most curatorial roles in museums.

















Skills:

- Knowledge of art history
- Curiosity and commitment to continued investigation
- Strong writing skills
- Keen visual sense
- Comfort in social settings
- Communication (listening, public speaking)



You may also be interested in:

- Academia (research and teaching as a professor)
- Galleries
- Dealers or auction houses
- Curatorial work in informal and/or artist-run settings
- Curatorial work for corporations or private individuals
- Art writing (criticism, journalism)

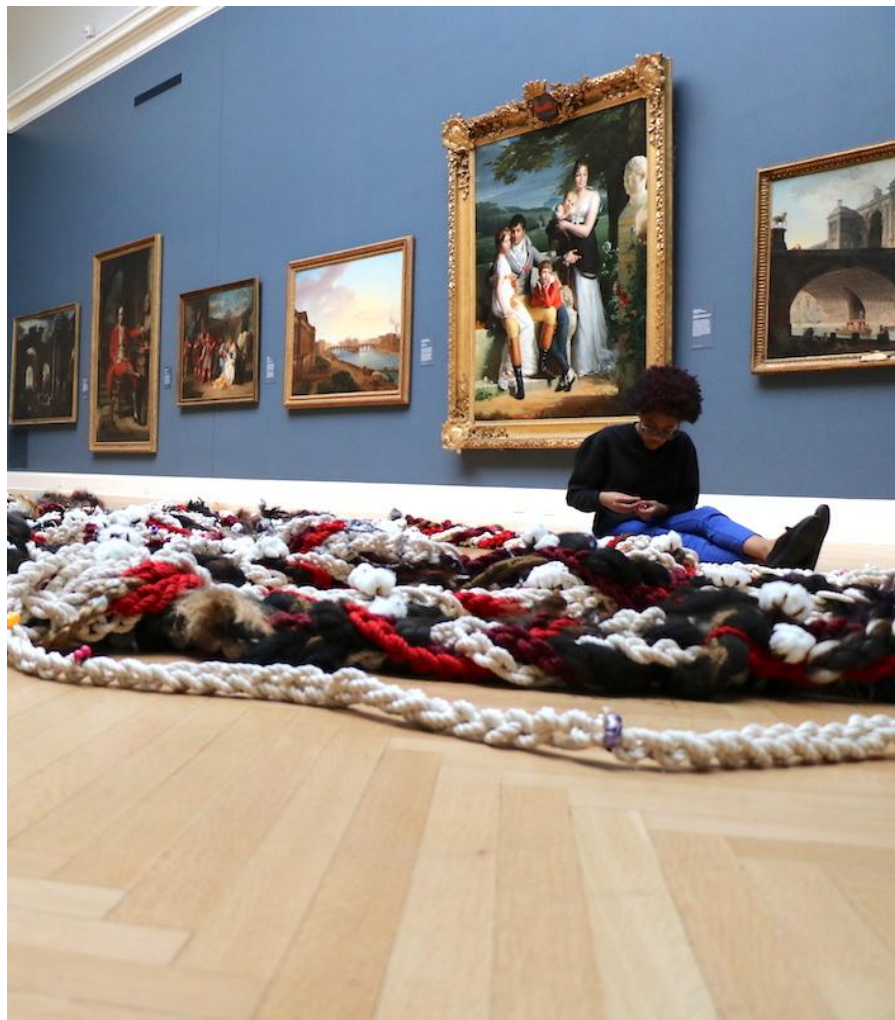


Educators connect people to art. They plan and teach programs and events that happen in the galleries for participants of all ages. These programs are opportunities for people to have experiences with works of art and the ideas those works suggest – experiences that might be transformative, even in tiny ways. Educators work responsively, listening to the interests and needs of museum audiences and individual artists that they collaborate with.

Educators have educational backgrounds in a range of fields, most frequently art or art history. Many of them have graduate degrees in art history, studio art, museum studies, public humanities, education, or other related fields.







The Performative Self-Portrait

















Amitabha Buddha
1609

St. Anthony
Abbot, 1385
attribute



Skills:

- Facilitation (listening, inviting others to participate in conversation)
- Communication (public speaking)
- Maximum flexibility and open-mindedness
- Enthusiasm for collaboration
- Curiosity and interest in all areas of art history and art making



You may also be interested in:

- Community arts organizations: leadership, program management, teaching
- Classroom teaching
- Teaching in other informal learning environments
- Teaching about teaching, e.g. in teaching & learning centers or education programs at colleges
- Arts-based foundations or state agencies
- Art writing (criticism, journalism)



Conservators care for works of art in a physical sense. They document, examine, and treat objects. Their work is reversible and guided by a scientific understanding of materials. They work with curators, registrars, installers, and other staff – as well as living artists – to make decisions that strike a balance between preservation and access.

Conservators in art museums often have a background or interest in art-making that informs the manual dexterity needed in their work, as well as coursework in chemistry. A graduate program in conservation is required, and many graduate programs require hands-on experience prior to starting.

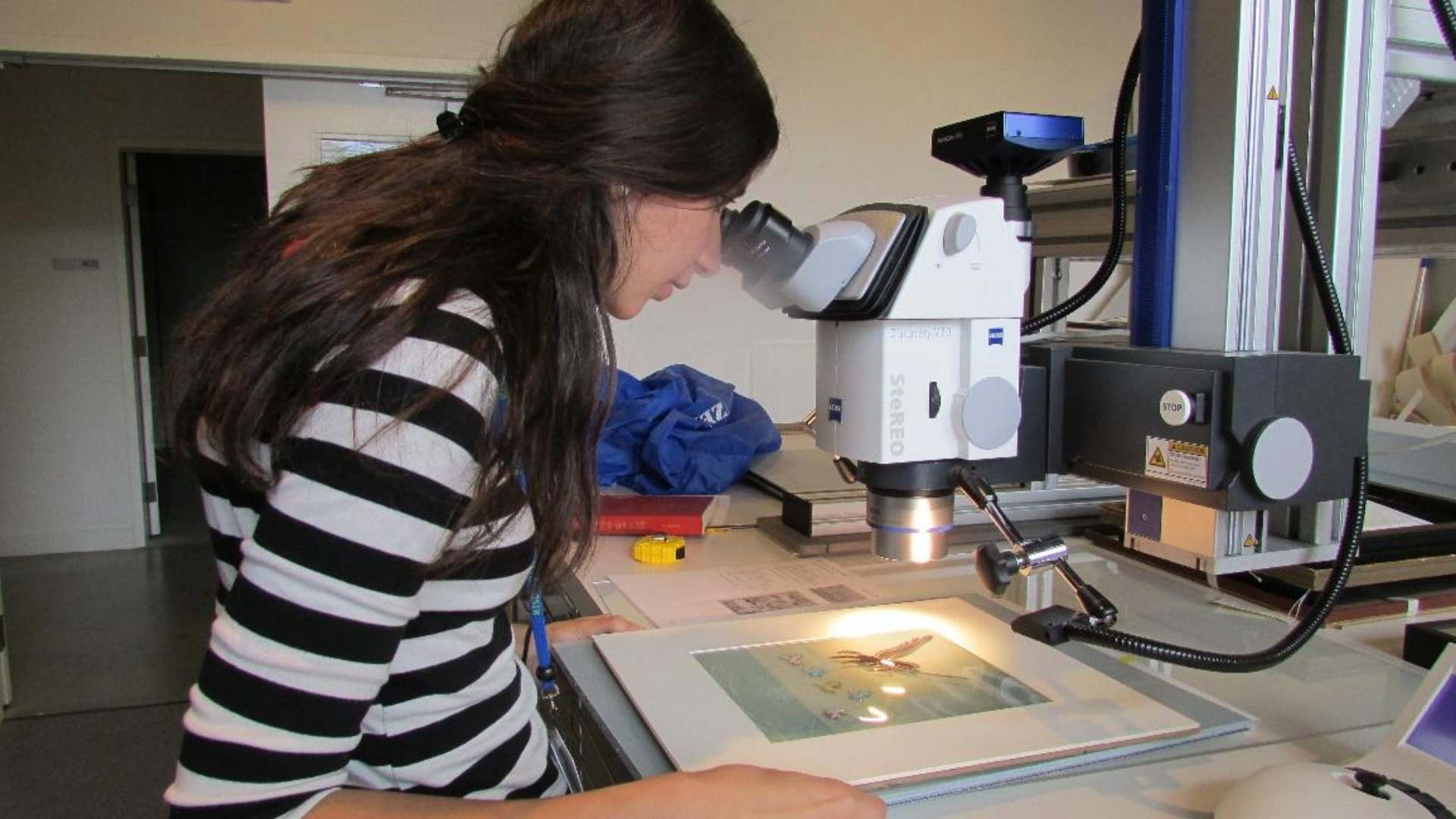














Skills:

- Hand skills (manual dexterity)
- Patience and tenacity
- Scientific thinking
- Analytical skills
- Comfort with solitary and meditative work
- Understanding of material properties
- Interest in the ethics of cultural heritage



You may also be interested in:






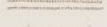







- Doing scientific research in conservation
- Working in private practice for institutional and private clients
- Working for an independent organization providing conservation services (e.g. the Williamstown Art Conservation & Preservation Center)



Registrars and collections managers oversee the physical maintenance of objects and maintain records related to the collection. Those records are both physical and digital and, in addition to basic data about each work, include legal documents like loan agreements and deeds of gift. They are responsible for storage, track the creation and use of photography (of objects, spaces, and people), and lead disaster planning.

Registrars in art museums often have undergraduate degrees in art history, art, history, archaeology, or a related field, and advanced degrees in library science or museum studies.



MARKS	DESCRIPTION	EXPERT REMARKS
B Humphrey	Silvers, four legs with ball & claw (bird) feet, shell design at top, gadroon edge, small box on one side	
B Humphrey	Silvers No. 742	
13 1/2	Silvers 	
B B B C	tool and back of handle plain	
653 1/2	Silvers, but at back of handle 	
T	tool & back of handle plain	
271	Silvers, gadroon edge, border around top 	
O B D M	border around base 	
14	Silvers, four claw and ball feet top handle with shell decoration letters scratched on bottom P N 1881	
TV M	Silvers, Hen with design on side plain at bottom F C H 	
TV M O O	Silvers square base with four ball feet border around top of gadroon pattern	
Label 77	more but.	
marked 7-14	more but.	
B Q M U	Silvers: style Tenge & decoration of scrolls and fleur-de-lis pattern	
W and tin also on cover.	Silvers: style Tenge & decoration in flowers and scrolls	
W	W and tin marks conventional pattern on cover	
marked 75 x	Silvers, very thin, monogram (?)	
W	on handle, almost none off.	
marked 75 x	Silvers, heavy wide silvers edge richly designed with scrolls then center with rich scroll decoration around w or tin deep. Leave handles of scroll design, four feet (could design in tin)	

Collection - MuseumPlus 5.0.03 000a RISD 20161003

FILE File Edit Collection Address Exhibition Image Archive Other modules View Administration Tools Help Joseph Le... X

Sign out Sign in as a new user End program

File

Collection All collections

Artist / Maker John Singer Sargent (1856-1925)

Object Title The Artist Sketching

Object Name or Type painting

Accession No. 1986.164 Year From 1922 Year To 1922

Department Painting and Sculpt Date of wo 1922

Record Type General

Culture

Classification Paintings

Basic Data Provenance Curatorial Notes Artist Comments Multiple Groups Subject Terms Teacher Resources Presentation Acquisition/Rights Register

Dimensions 55.9 x 71.1 cm (22 x 28 inches) standard
Frame: 73.7 x 88.9 x 5.1 cm (29 x 35 x standard)

Material / Technique Display text, Oil on canvas
Medium: oil paint

Inscriptions / Marks / Labels Signed LL: John Singer Sargent 1922

Geog. ref.

Source(1) Houghton P. Metcalf, Sr., Providence

Source(2)

Description

Edition / State

Credit Line Gift of Mrs. Houghton P. Metcalf, Sr.

Current Loc. RA216.201.L

Location type storage location

Flag

Count 1 Web Ready

Record: 1 of 1 No Filter Search

Object Title POWER

The Artist Sketching | RISD Museum

risdmuseum.org/art-design/collection/artist-sketching-1986164?return=%2Fart-design%2Fcollection%3Fsearch_api...

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Image

Description

Exhibition History

USE & FEEDBACK

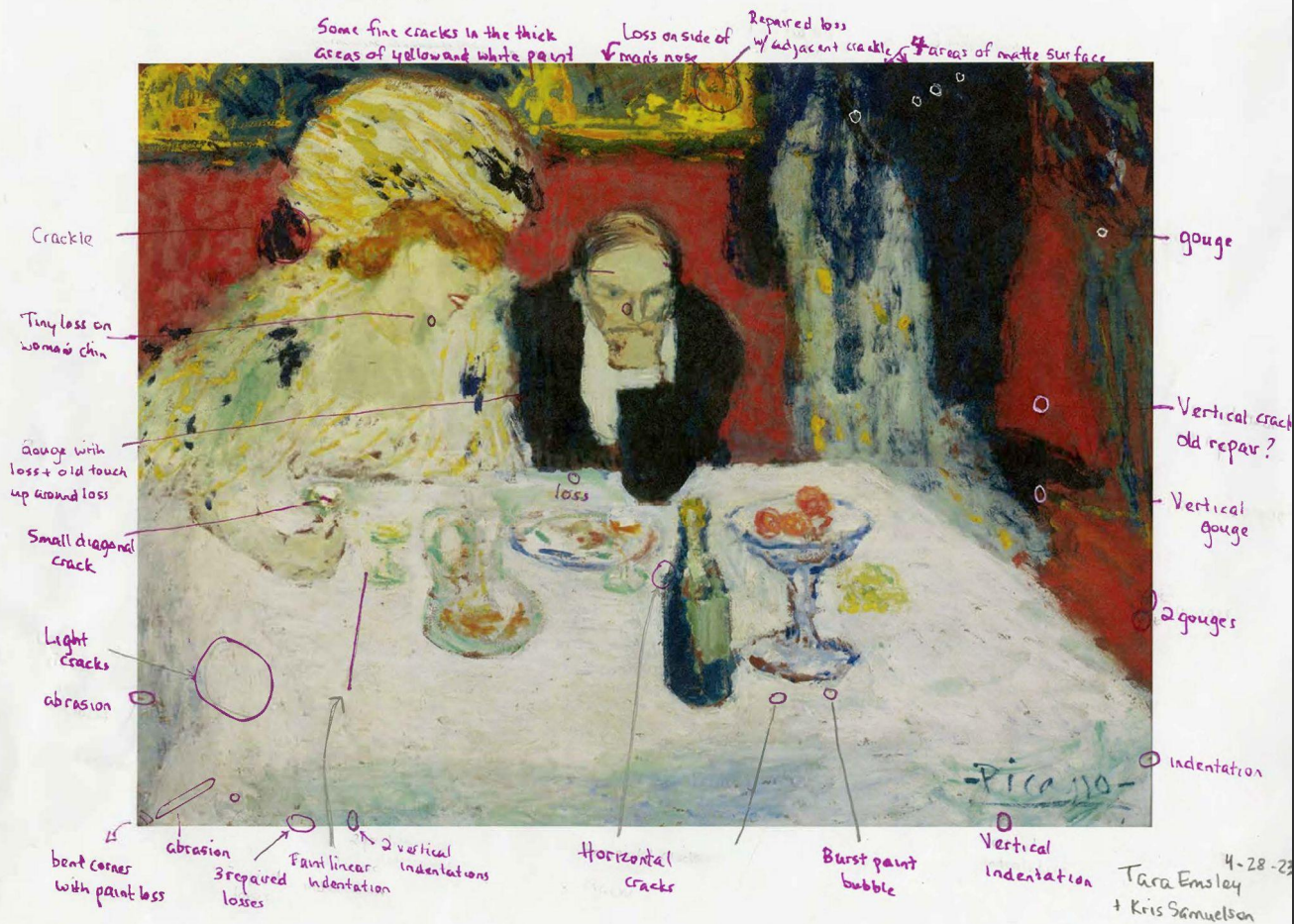
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John Singer Sargent

The Artist Sketching







Skills:

- Detail-orientedness
- Organization
- Project management
- Comfort with collaborative decision-making
- Technological aptitude, especially facility with databases



You may also be interested in:

- Libraries (public or academic)
- Special collections or archives (typically collections of manuscript and printed materials)
- Technology
- Exhibitions management



Digital Content Producers & Graphic Designers create media content for galleries and online, work with artists on digital projects, create environmental graphics, and design print publications and marketing content. They are often responsible for a museum's web presence. Their work straddles many other departments, and may be positioned within education (because of the interpretive nature of digital content), exhibition design, or marketing and communications.

Digital initiatives specialists and graphic designers in art museums have backgrounds in design and are interested in how design and digital media supports a museum's mission.





Consider the lasting effects a company has had on the community where it grew and prospered. Listen to firsthand multi-generational accounts about the Gorham Manufacturing Company and its connections with labor, craft, and the Elmwood neighborhood, as well as Indigenous and environmental perspectives about the landscape the company occupied.

Connect to RISD-VISITOR wireless
on your mobile device and go to
SOUNDWALKS.RISDMUSEUM.ORG.

SOUND WALKS

THE RISD MUSEUM THANKS THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED
TO THE CREATION OF *REVERBERATIONS*

Matthew Bird
senior critic, Industrial Design, RISD

Al Caplan
Will
inter
an

Clarissa Guzman
Gorham site neighbor and student,
Blackstone Academy Charter School

Jeff Herman
silversmith and former Gorham employee

Sherenté Mishitashin Harris
member of the Narragansett Tribe and
RISD/Brown dual-degree student

Ingrid Neuman
conservator, RISD Museum

Christopher Roberts
former postdoctoral research associate,
Pembroke Center for Teaching and
Research on Women, Brown University

Robin Tagliaferri
visual artist, non-profit administrator,
and granddaughter of Paolo Tagliaferri,
hoisting engineer in the Gorham foundry

Robert A. Tagliaferri
son of Paolo Tagliaferri, hoisting engineer
in the Gorham foundry



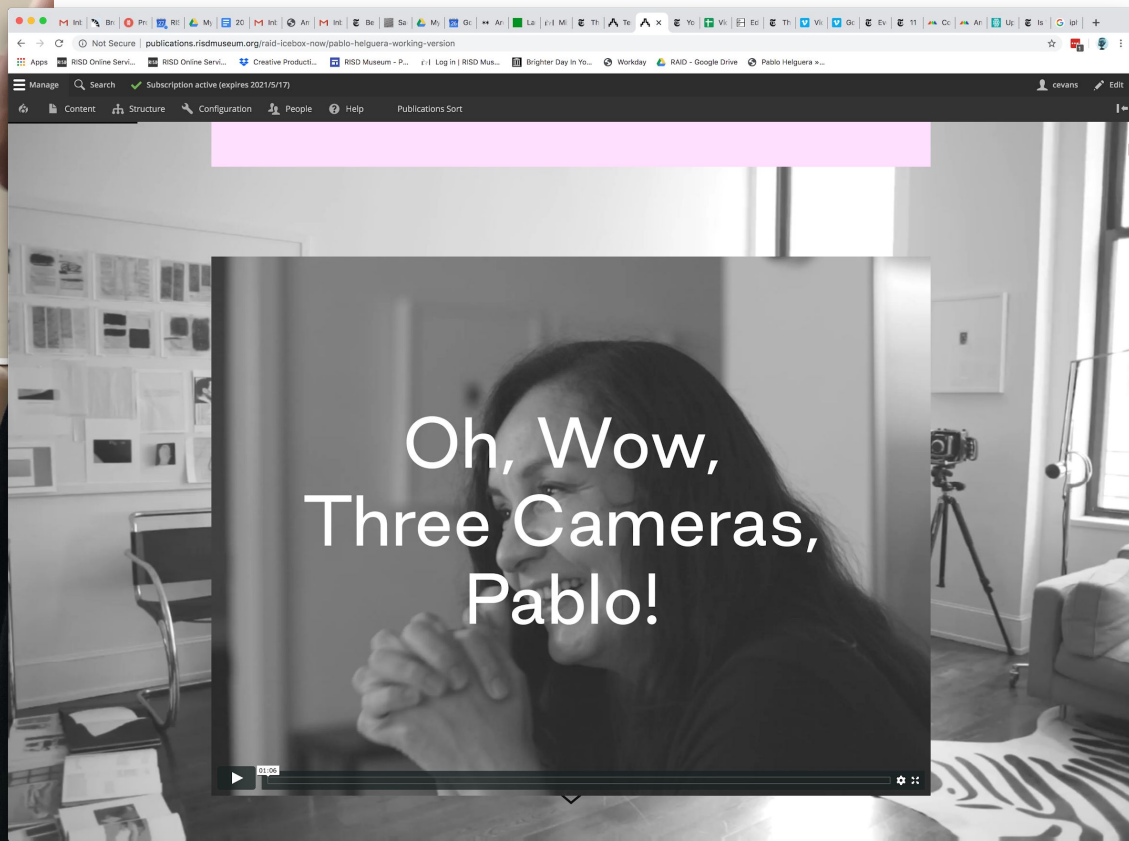
Freeman
conservator

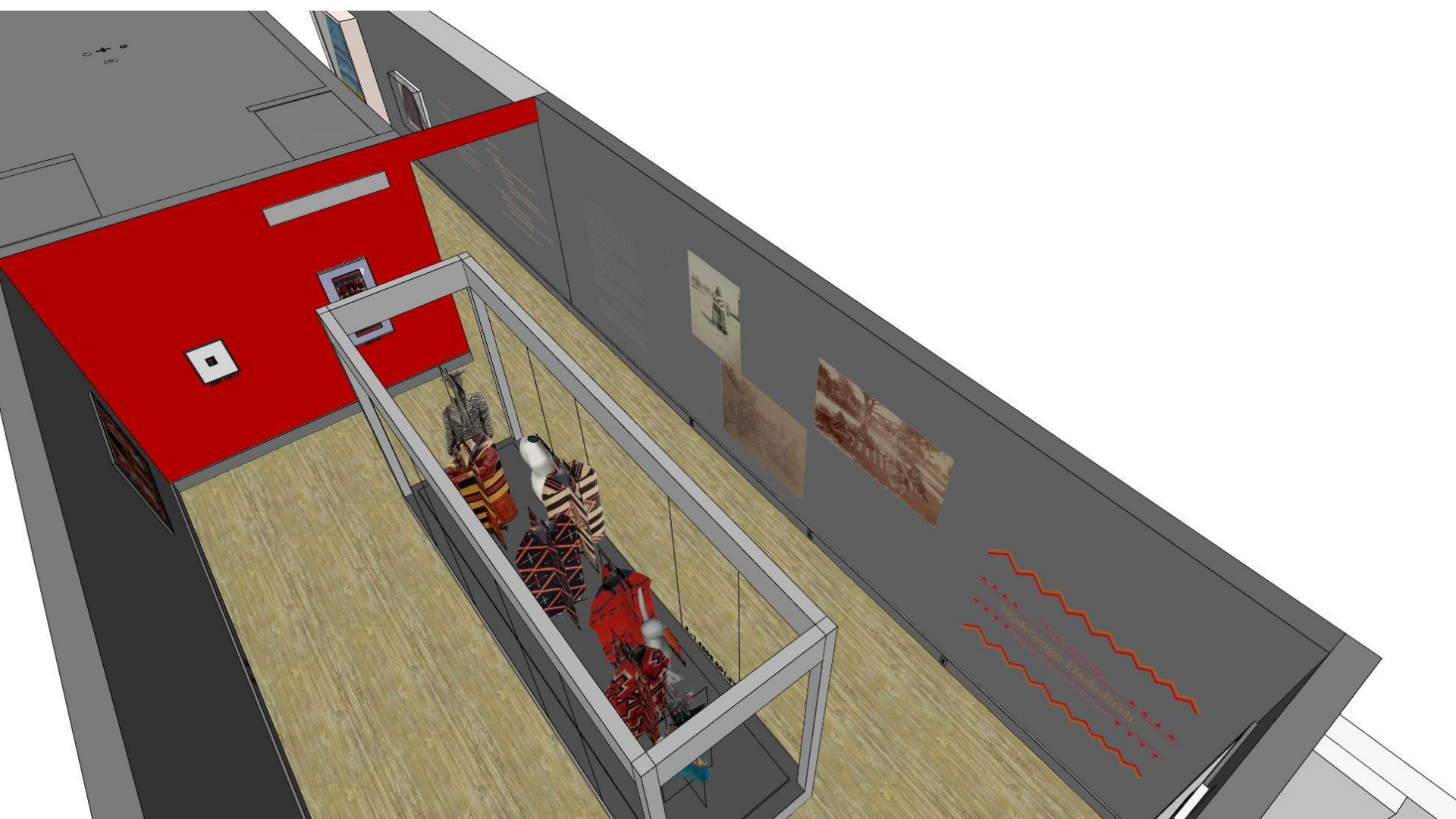
Vales

Museum











Skills:

- Video and/or audio production, graphic design, and/or web development
- Enthusiasm for fluid collaboration, both internal and external
- Interest in storytelling, narrative, and interpretation
- Curiosity and interest in all areas of art history and art making



You may also be interested in:

- Content creation, design, or web development in a range of other nonprofit or for-profit spaces, including:
- Publication design
- Video production or artistic direction
- Podcasting



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Learning more: here at the RISD Museum

- Office hours
- Summer internships (part-time and full-time)
- THAD fellowships
- Graduate assistantships
- 2-year fellowships in education and conservation
- Work/Study

- Museum Guild

- Dorner Prize



OFFICE HOURS

Museum curators, conservators, educators, and installers are offering weekly office hours. You can schedule a half-hour meeting to discuss objects in the collection to support your research and inspire your creative practice, to learn more about museum work, or to have a virtual studio visit.





PAID SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

The museum's summer internships offer undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to gain professional experience.

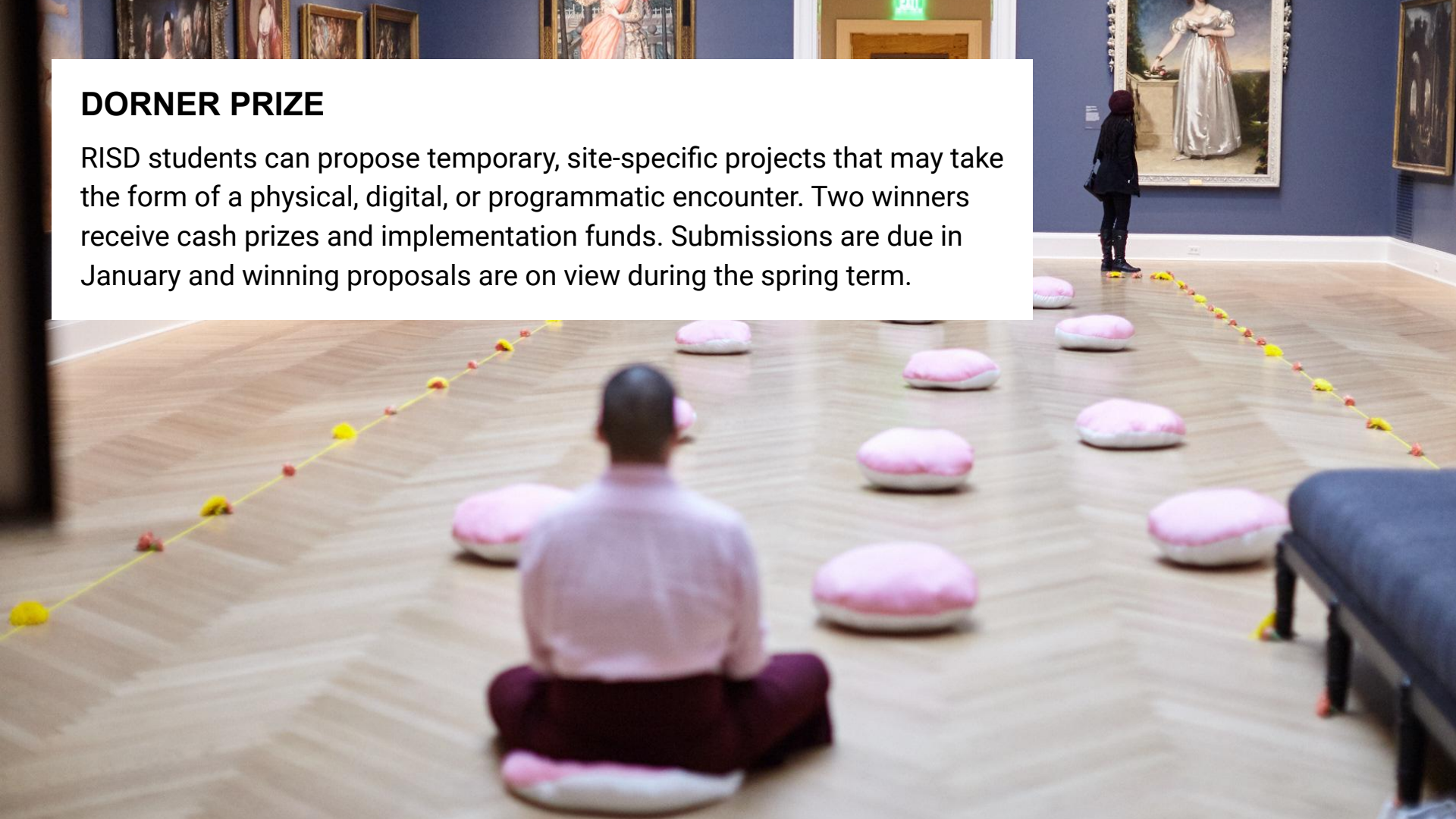


THAD FELLOWSHIPS, GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS, AND WORK-STUDY

Students can gain work experience in the museum in departments ranging from curatorial to museum education, installation, digital content, and graphic design, providing insight into potential career paths in museums.

DORNER PRIZE

RISD students can propose temporary, site-specific projects that may take the form of a physical, digital, or programmatic encounter. Two winners receive cash prizes and implementation funds. Submissions are due in January and winning proposals are on view during the spring term.



A photograph of two students in a workshop. A young woman with reddish-brown hair and glasses is focused on shaping a piece of clay on a pottery wheel. She is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt. Next to her, a young man with curly brown hair and glasses is smiling and watching her work. He is wearing a grey cardigan over a dark shirt and a striped scarf. In the background, there are shelves with various colorful items, possibly pottery or art supplies. The lighting is warm and indoor.

MUSEUM GUILD

The Museum Guild is a group of students who are interested in thinking about the interpretation of art & design and about how college audiences access and utilize museum spaces and collections. They develop programs that take place on Third Thursdays, including student performances and Work in Process opportunities, like the one pictured here.

Learning more: external

- [New England Museum Association](#)
- [American Institute for Conservation](#)
- [Association of Registrars and Collections Specialists](#)
- [Association of Art Museum Curators](#)
- [National Art Education Association](#)
- [Museum Hue](#)
- [AAMD Salary Survey and Art + Museum Transparency](#)
- [r/museumpros > jobhunting](#)



QUESTIONS?

museum-academic@risd.edu





