

Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellowship 2025-2027

About Romare Bearden

Romare Bearden is recognized as one of the most creative and original visual artists of the 20th century. He was known especially for his innovative collages, but also notably worked in watercolor, oil, photomontage, and printmaking. Born in 1911, in Charlotte, North Carolina, he grew up in New York City's Harlem neighborhood. After graduating from New York University, he began producing political cartoons for *The Crisis*, the official magazine of the NAACP. Bearden's first solo show was held in Harlem in 1940, and by the 1950s he was nationally acclaimed. To deepen his knowledge of philosophy and art, he used the G.I. Bill to study in Paris in 1950.

Bearden rose to prominence at a time when African American artists had few opportunities to study art, sell their works in galleries, or exhibit them at museums, which led to his life-long work in education and community alongside his artistic production. He co-founded artist collectives such as Spiral to create art and discuss the responsibility of the arts and artists in the civil rights movement. He was also an inaugural member of the Studio Museum in Harlem. His life and art encompass a broad range of intellectual and scholarly interests, including music, performing arts, history, literature, and global art. He died in New York City in 1988, at the age of 76.

The Romare Bearden Foundation was established in 1990 by the estate of Romare Bearden (1911-1988) to preserve and perpetuate his legacy.

About the Fellowship

The Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellowship honors the pioneering artist's legacy by providing opportunities to early-career museum professionals. The goal of the Fellowship is to promote greater access to the field for individuals from backgrounds that are historically and statistically underrepresented at American art museums. During the two-year paid Fellowship, Fellows work in various museum departments and gain the skills, experience, and confidence necessary to pursue careers in art museums and related fields. The Fellowship embodies Romare Bearden's vision of creating opportunities and spaces for new voices to thrive and contribute meaningfully to the art world.

Who Should Apply

The Museum welcomes candidates from various backgrounds who will advance the goals of the Bearden Fellowship program. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- individuals who are the first from their families to attend college
- individuals who live in households with incomes below 80% of the national median household income
- applicants who grew up in households or communities that afforded limited opportunities to visit and engage with museums
- individuals who have encountered other specific articulable barriers to entry into a museum career

The Bearden Fellowship program also provides opportunities for individuals who articulate and demonstrate a commitment to the goals of the program, even if the candidate does not come from a historically and statistically underrepresented background.

Fellowship Structure

The Fellow will spend the first year of the Fellowship in a cross-departmental position working with various departments, including possible assignments in public programming, interpretive materials, development, marketing, curatorial, research, and audience engagement. The Fellow will spend the second year working on specific significant projects aligned with the Fellow's interests and the Art Museum's needs.

As a member of the esteemed Saint Louis Art Museum staff, fellows are mentored by senior-level staff and collaborate with team members throughout the Museum to advance projects tailored to the Museum's needs and the Fellow's skills and interests. The museum's Chief Diversity Officer supervises Fellows.

Qualifications

Eligible candidates must have completed at least one year of graduate coursework by June 2025 in art history, art education, museum studies, cultural history, or related fields. Applicants cannot be enrolled in course work classes during the Fellowship. Applicants must have excellent written and verbal communication skills and work independently and manage multiple assignments.

Compensation

The Romare Bearden Graduate Museum Fellow receives \$44,538/year (\$22.84/hour); full-time benefits package along with moving and professional development allowances.

Application Materials

Candidates must complete the online application at www.slam.org/careers, including: upload a resume, a personal statement not to exceed 1500 words (see below for prompt), a writing sample from a previous academic/professional project (not to exceed 1500 words), and undergraduate and graduate transcripts (unofficial are accepted). Only applications with ALL the materials listed will be reviewed. *(Suggestion: make note of your login/password so that you can revisit your application to upload or edit attachments)*

Application Deadline: March 2, 2025

Dates of Employment: July 21, 2025 – July 31, 2027

Fellowship Questions: Renee Brummell Franklin, renee.franklin@slam.org

Selected candidates will be required to submit to a criminal background check and drug screen before hire.

The Saint Louis Art Museum is committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

The Museum is an Equal Opportunity Employer. We are committed to treating all applicants and employees fairly based on their abilities, achievements, and experience, without regard to sex,

race, age, disability, religion, national origin, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by law.

Personal Statement Prompt:

Reflect on your journey toward a career in the museum or arts field, with a focus on experiences that have shaped your perspective on art, community, culture, education, or history. (Not to exceed 1500 words.)

In the first paragraph, introduce yourself by describing the origins of your path into the arts. Highlight formative experiences that led to your interest in museums and how your personal and professional journey aligns with the Fellowship's goals.

In the body of your response, address any of the following points in any order:

- Describe the people, networks, or communities—formal or informal—that have been pivotal to your growth. Explain how these relationships have supported your vision and contributed to your development.
- Reflect on your personal sphere of influence. How do you currently impact the people, spaces, or communities around you through your work, values, or actions?
- Describe specific challenges or barriers you have overcome in our personal and educational journey
- Reflect on the role of art or museums in addressing societal inequities and fostering inclusivity.

In the final paragraph, share your aspirations for the Fellowship and how this opportunity will contribute to your long-term career goals. Share how you hope to contribute to the Museum's mission and Romare Bearden's legacy of representation and equity.