



Oakland Museum
Of California

**Deputy Director of
Curatorial Affairs**

POSITION OPPORTUNITY
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CURATORIAL AFFAIRS
OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA

MISSION

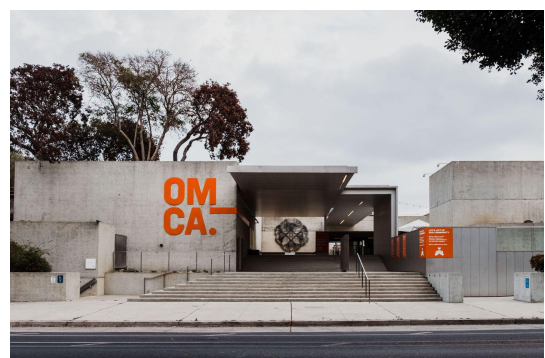
The mission of the Oakland Museum of California is to inspire understanding and empathy with stories and experiences of California's art, history, and natural environment to build more equitable and connected communities.



OMCA engages with communities in telling the untold and undertold stories of California utilizing its collection of more than 2 million objects, artworks, artifacts, photographs, and specimens. We present immersive exhibitions and programs that, through their content, structure, and experience, foster social cohesion—providing platforms and experiences to build trust, understanding, and connection between people and communities. Our exhibitions and collection galleries emphasize stories of inspiration and resilience, collective and individual empowerment, and everyday life. We develop our content, exhibitions, and programming that reflect authentic participation by diverse racial, cultural, and economic groups, and uplift Oakland's distinctive character with audiences locally and beyond.

BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND COLLECTIONS

OMCA opened its doors more than fifty-five years ago in 1969, bringing together three civic museums of art, history, and natural sciences that dated back to the early 20th century. This progressive multidisciplinary approach allowed its visitors to celebrate the many facets of California through an immersive and holistic sensory experience, housed within a landmark building and seven-acre campus that was framed as the “museum of the people.”



More than 15 years ago, OMCA undertook a major renovation and transformed its collection galleries in order to build upon the Museum's original multidisciplinary and civic-minded intent by improving integration of OMCA's collections and programs, strengthening its role as a public forum, and creating new opportunities for visitor participation. The collection galleries are animated by innovative interpretive tools and interactive features as well as gathering spaces and

program areas that engage visitors and encourage them to share their own perspectives, questions, and stories. In 2020, OMCA completed another phase of its campus renovation with the transformation of its rooftop terraces and gardens and creation of two new entries that connect the campus with the surrounding neighborhood.

As the only museum in California dedicated explicitly and exclusively to the state's natural, cultural and artistic history, the Museum's collections extend throughout the state and have strength in both contemporary and historic art, material culture, and natural specimens. The permanent collections of the Oakland Museum of California contain more than 2 million items, including works of art, historical artifacts, ethnographic materials, natural specimens, and extensive photographic holdings, representing the material legacy of California and its people. No other institution has assembled such a full and distinguished, multi-disciplinary, California collection. The renowned art collections, which include seminal works by artists from the 19th century to contemporary times and significant holdings in California craft and decorative arts, feature over 100,000 works and are unique in their dedication to a full range of California art. The history collections number nearly 2 million items representing California's history and people from the original Indigenous inhabitants to the early 21st century. The natural sciences collections consist of more than 100,000 specimens, artifacts, and photographs primarily focused on native species of California. Photography, including the archives of Dorothea Lange and Dugan Aguilar, comprises the largest portion of the collection. These art, history, and natural sciences collections all share a concentration on California, as well as its relationship with the rest of the country and the world.



OMCA nurtures its deep ties to the community by offering many educational and public programs. OMCA welcomes schools, scholars, local audiences, and all visitors to participate in its events and activities and to discover their place in California's past, present, and future. In the recently completed fiscal year, approximately 200,000 people visited the Museum, including nearly 27,000 K-12 students, teachers, and chaperones.

THE OPPORTUNITY

The Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs is a key leadership position and is responsible for the overarching vision and strategy that bring together exhibitions, collection gallery installations, collection initiatives, and design to support the Museum's mission, brand, and social impact, defined as fostering social cohesion between and among people and communities. The position fosters and facilitates the cross-disciplinary, collaborative, team-based work of the Museum that places the visitor and the community at the center of the Museum experience.

This position will make a defining impact on the next chapter of OMCA. The Museum currently has a robust exhibition schedule through 2028. The schedule reflects work over the past several years to develop a portfolio approach to projects, offering a range of scales and types of exhibitions that allow OMCA to respond to the interests of different audience segments. The framework is set for a new leader to help develop a breadth and depth of exhibition experiences within and across the Museum's special exhibitions and permanent galleries. The position will also play a key role in our vision to align curatorial work and design to enhance the impact of OMCA's signature approach, leveraging our collections and supporting new interpretive lenses and visitor experiences.

As a member of the Senior Directors Council, the position shares in overall leadership of the Museum, including responsibility for strategic planning and policy-making. The six members of this team report directly to the CEO and are responsible for setting and leading the strategic direction of the institution. Team members are advisors to the CEO, partners to each other, and stewards of OMCA's collective success.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Strong candidates for this position will embody the following professional and personal qualities, skills, and characteristics.

Strategic Leadership

Possessing seasoned leadership skills with a minimum of seven years of management experience in a museum or collecting-based cultural institution, the Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs will also have a growth mindset. They will be eager to learn about OMCA, the Oakland community, and broader trends in the cultural sector. The Museum is seeking an approach to leadership that deploys management practices, cultural attributes, and intentional actions that invite people into collaborative content development. Ideal candidates will have a demonstrated track record of fostering cross-functional work within and between teams, inspiring trust in colleagues, and creating the conditions for team and institutional success. The ideal candidate will have led major institutional initiatives and be able to move fluidly between big-picture strategic thinking and pragmatic delivery against deadlines and outcomes. Successful candidates will also be outstanding communicators and have a high level of cultural competence, emotional intelligence, and empathy.

Curatorial, Collections, Design and Production Experience

The Deputy Director will have a deep background within the museum field, with experience applying community-engaged practices to exhibitions and collection care, access, and presentation. Experience within a multidisciplinary institution is highly desirable, and a commitment to exploring interdisciplinary connections and working across disciplines is essential. Strong candidates will be able to articulate a process for creating a programmatic vision that both achieves OMCA's social impact and meets community needs, and advances the institution's financial sustainability and audience development goals. The successful candidate will also have the capacity to create a strategic and cohesive throughline between and with exhibitions and other programming that projects a distinctive voice and offers a perspective that is uniquely OMCA.

Key Qualifications

The following are the required experience and qualifications for this opportunity:

- Ability to display the competencies of strategic thinking, development of self and others, and ability to deploy and align organizational strategies and objectives
- 10+ years of experience with progressive growth towards senior leadership
- 7+ years of supervisory experience
- M.A. in relevant field
- Demonstrated experience in directing successful exhibition and collection initiatives in museums
- Familiarity with multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary fields including the arts, history, and/or natural sciences with a focus on community engagement and civic and audience development
- Demonstrated knowledge of trends and progressive practices in the museum field
- Demonstrated achievements as an adaptive change agent, collaborator, coach, and team and coalition-builder
- Superior communication and presentation skills, both written and verbal
- Strong interpersonal skills, with a capacity for managing and leading people with diverse backgrounds, views, and work styles
- Understanding of fundraising techniques, grant application procedures, and funding sources
- Demonstrated cultural competence and a history of building equitable and inclusive programming
- Works well in a deeply collaborative, highly fluid culture.
- Experience with utilizing Google platform preferred.