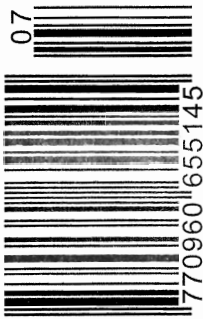


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# THE ART NEWSPAPER™

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INCLUDING  
WHAT'S ON

## More US museums need directors than ever before

*Fundraising skills essential*

NEW YORK. There are currently over two dozen major US museums looking for new directors, more than at any time in the past 20 years. Museum professionals think that the number of posts may be difficult to fill especially as fundraising has become such an essential part of the job.

The majority of the vacancies are in the Midwest, including the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Walker Art Center. The Kimbell Art Museum, the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, the Blanton Museum of Art, and the Nasher Sculpture Center, all in Texas, are looking for directors.

On the West Coast, the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, the Santa Barbara Art Museum and the Henry Art Gallery in Seattle are searching for chief executives. The Smithsonian Institution is searching for a new chief executive and the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC, the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford and the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia are also looking for new heads.

Millicent Gaudieri, executive director of the Association of Art Museum Directors, said that most openings are a result of retirements. However, David Gordon, who will step down from the Milwaukee Art Museum by next March, has left by mutual agree-

ment with the board. Mr Gordon says he will be writing and acting as a consultant. Similarly, Willard Holmes announced plans to leave the flagging Wadsworth Atheneum as soon as a replacement is found, and recently accepted a position as associate director for administration at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

However, the pool of qualified successors appears to be dwindling as trustees increasingly demand a track record in administration as well as fundraising. One curator-turned-director told *The Art Newspaper* he was interviewed for 18 institutions and was rejected by 17 because he had no prior fundraising experience. "The main question asked by the search committee is not, what is your vision for the museum?" he says, "but what's the most money you've raised?"

This echoes Philippe de Montebello, director of the Metropolitan Museum, who told the Association of Art Museum Curators six years ago: "We have to reassure trustees that hiring curators as directors will not compromise the museum's bottom line."

Timothy Potts, outgoing director of the Kimbell in Fort Worth, believes the number of foreign directors at US museums is "simply a reflection of the large number of significant museums in this country, and the unique level of activity in the arts scene here—in acquisitions, exhibitions, new buildings and just about any other aspect of museum life you can think of." Yet Mr Potts recently abandoned his \$700,000 pay package at the Kimbell to become director of the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge University, where he says: "The emphasis can be on quality and scholarship rather than purely populist criteria: not so different from the Kimbell, but an increasingly distant luxury for many US museums."

**Jason Edward Kaufman**

□ The Center for Curatorial Leadership in New York will open in January 2008 offering ten curators a tuition-free, six-month programme, including classes taught by business and management experts, museum practitioners and mentoring by directors. The idea is to introduce curators to finance, governance and marketing in preparation for more senior posts. **J.E.K**