

Position Announcement: Curatorial Fellow for African American Photography

The Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) seeks an outstanding emerging scholar of African American Photography for a three-year curatorial fellow position, with a possible one-year extension. The job offers invaluable professional experience for a scholar interested in an art museum career. The selected candidate will be fully integrated into SAAM's curatorial team, working under the supervision of an experienced curator and in collaboration with staff from various departments. They will be active in acquisitions planning and development; collections assessment and research; project administration; gallery installation and interpretation; and public programming and publication. They will also participate in the intellectual life of the museum's Research and Scholars Center, home of its research fellowship program and journal, *American Art*.

The Curatorial Fellow for African American Photography will play a key role in an initiative to expand the representation of African American photography at SAAM. In 2020, SAAM acquired the L.J. West Collection of works by African American daguerreotypists. In 2022, it acquired the R. Drapkin Collection of photography used to represent, self-represent, and misrepresent African American history and culture. A third collection, in late 2023, will bring SAAM's holdings to over 350 objects, with at least one further acquisition in the pipeline. This initiative seeks to fundamentally rewrite the American Art narrative at SAAM, with installations showing that African Americans immediately recognized the importance of photography, both as entrepreneurial makers and as consumers of images.

With the supervisory curator, the fellow will survey SAAM's holdings, conduct research to enhance collection records, and recommend appropriate terminology for metadata in order to make these works broadly accessible. They will also research artists and examine artworks being considered for acquisition. Lastly, the fellow will participate in the upcoming reinstallation of SAAM's permanent collection galleries, working to support the robust representation of African American experience, perspectives, and artistic accomplishment through research and writing that will inform the selection of works, through the production of interpretive material and programming, and by overseeing the first convening of scholars and artists given access to these collections and the publication of their research.

Applicants shall have expertise in photographic history, preferably with a nineteenth century focus, or African American art and history, and shall demonstrate scholarly excellence in addition to a strong interest in a museum career. A PhD in art history within the last five years is preferred, but the position is open to individuals with other academic backgrounds and specialties. Experience in some aspect of museum practice, including but not limited to collection management or exhibition development, is a plus. Strong technological capacity and experience developing digital humanities projects would also be highly valued. The successful candidate will be skilled in verbal and written communication, exhibit digital fluency, and be able to balance diverse tasks within the areas of research, collections management, and administration. Some research travel may be expected of the candidate.

The position is classified as temporary, full-time Trust fund employment (IS-9, step 1), with a starting salary of \$64,957 plus benefits that include vacation and sick leave, holidays, and health insurance.

Closing date of this announcement: October 1, 2023

How to Apply: Email enclosed resume, writing sample, and letter of interest to John Jacob, McEvoy Family Curator for Photography at jacobjp@si.edu with a subject line of “Curatorial Fellow for African American Photography” by October 1, 2023.

The Smithsonian Institution is an equal opportunity employer.