POSITION PROFILE

Legacy Director
Joan Mitchell Foundation
New York, NY
ABOUT JOAN MITCHELL FOUNDATION

The Joan Mitchell Foundation cultivates the study and appreciation of artist Joan Mitchell’s life and work, while fulfilling her wish to provide resources and opportunities for visual artists. Through its work, the Foundation affirms and amplifies artists’ essential contributions to society.

Joan Mitchell (1925-1992) was an abstract artist whose prolific career spanned more than four decades. She worked in a variety of mediums—including oil on canvas, pastel on paper, and lithographic printing—and is widely recognized as one of the most significant artists of the post-war era. Upon her death in October 1992, Mitchell’s will called for the creation of a foundation to “aid and assist” working artists and serve as the chief steward of her legacy. These two distinct yet intertwining components of Mitchell’s life and vision have remained at the core of the Joan Mitchell Foundation’s mission, driving its work. The Foundation is a gift from one artist to many artists.

Since its inception, the Foundation has worked through several distinct phases of focus, each defined by the need to find balance between the Foundation’s dual purposes, setting a trajectory of sustaining its mission-based work into the future.
VISION

The Foundation supports research, scholarship, and exhibitions to ensure Joan Mitchell is widely recognized and studied as a significant artist.

The Foundation’s grants, residencies, and related initiatives recognize artistic excellence and elevate a wide range of visual artists and practices. The Foundation works to actively expand the visual arts to better reflect the diverse world in which we live.

The Foundation serves as an evolving example and resource for how an artist’s generosity can impact future generations of artists.

VALUES

Being Artist Centered
The Foundation was established by an artist for artists. The Foundation trusts that artists know what they need to best support their practices; their voices and feedback guide its work.

A Culture of Generosity
Joan Mitchell was generous to other artists during and beyond her lifetime. The Foundation carries forward her generosity by giving, sharing, and making connections with intention.

Commitment to Equity
The Foundation sees diverse perspectives and the variety of lived experiences as through-lines in its origins and legacy of artist support. Through ongoing inquiry, dialogue, and action on issues of equity, the Foundation strives to remove barriers to sustained artistic practice and careers in the visual arts.

Visit the Joan Mitchell Foundation website.
THE OPPORTUNITY

The Joan Mitchell Foundation seeks a strategic, proactive leader to build on the momentum from recent exhibitions and catalogues— the Joan Mitchell Retrospective and Monet-Mitchell— in order to solidify Mitchell’s position as one of the most significant artists of her lifetime. This newly created position will direct the current Legacy and Catalogue Raisonné teams, leveraging resources and prioritizing efforts with a focus on sustainability while remaining mission-centered and forward thinking.

As Director of the Legacy-focused side of the Joan Mitchell Foundation, this individual will oversee the Joan Mitchell Catalogue Raisonné Project, which is focused on Mitchell’s paintings, and the Legacy Department which includes the Foundation’s Artwork and Archival collections, Digital Assets, as well as Rights and Reproductions. They will be responsible for internal management of the team and external relations for Legacy. Reporting to the Executive Director Christa Blatchford while working closely with Deputy of Finance and Administration Aimee Solomon and the Board of Directors, the Legacy Director plays a critical role in establishing the direction and approach for the Foundation’s stewardship of Joan Mitchell’s legacy in ways that align with the Foundation’s values and serve as a model for the field. As a member of JMF’s senior leadership team, the Legacy Director will help develop and contribute to an organization-wide culture of generosity and collaboration. The Legacy director will drive and promote the Legacy team’s research while also drawing connections to the Foundation’s artist-facing work. Establishing and maintaining cohesion and harmony with respect to the Foundation’s overall mission will be a key component of the Legacy Director’s role.

Spread from the companion catalogue to the traveling retrospective, Joan Mitchell, by Sarah Roberts and Katy Siegel.
The Legacy Director will be integral to the 2024 strategic planning process and priority setting for the Foundation’s next five years. In the coming year, this individual will have the opportunity to move the Catalogue Raisonné forward through strategic decisions regarding format, scope, scale, timeline, and staffing of the project. They will develop and refine the Foundation’s approach to external requests for exhibition and research support while fostering relationships with scholars and curators. And alongside the rest of the staff of the Foundation, they will plan for Joan Mitchell’s centennial in 2025.
KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Vision, Strategy, and Implementation for the Foundation’s support of Mitchell’s Legacy

- In collaboration with staff and the Legacy Committee, lead development of the strategic direction and approach for extending Joan Mitchell’s legacy, inclusive of all initiatives within the Legacy and Catalogue Raisonné departments; ensure alignment with the Foundation’s strategic plan and oversee implementation.

- Maximize the impact of Mitchell’s work through exhibitions, publications, and cultivation of scholarship by building and supporting relationships and partnerships.

- Serve as the strategic planning partner for the Board around stewarding Mitchell’s legacy.

- Work with the Executive Director to determine the best use of the nonprofit Foundation’s assets for Legacy priorities based on annual budget allocation.

- Oversee annual budgeting process for Legacy department and Joan Mitchell Catalogue Raisonné project; ensure budget alignment throughout the year.

- Serve as a resource for the Artist Programs team, and in particular the Creating a Living Legacy (CALL) program, for their work on legacy stewardship with living artists.

Team Building and Staff Management

- Oversee current staff of six across the Foundation’s Legacy and Catalogue Raisonné teams; participate in bi-weekly Senior Team meetings.
- Assess current workflows and skillsets and map them to the Legacy plan and vision.
- Assess team capacity and skillsets, including those of project specific hires, to ensure the needs and priorities for the Foundation can be met.
- Deepen and maintain a collaborative team ethos that is committed to learning together and sharing to build knowledge; organize and lead team meetings.
- Ensure a fluid process for responding to incoming requests that is appropriate and respectful of team capacity; manage and prioritize urgent or crisis requests as needed.
- Oversee coordination and project management for upcoming exhibitions and catalogues; establish team members’ responsibilities and accountability.
- Foster professional development and growth for team members.

Joan Mitchell Catalogue Raisonné

- Building on the Catalogue Raisonné team’s extensive research conducted over the past seven years, assess key goals and audiences for the project.
- Work with staff and Board to define publication format (print, digital, or both) with goals, audiences, and timeline in mind.
- Ensure development of a comprehensive project plan; oversee progress and periodic communication to key individuals and partners.
- Further build the existing team in order to reach defined timeline and goals.
- Work with the JMCR team and advisors to create the Review Committee, which will approve artworks to be included in the catalogue raisonné.
**Relationship Cultivation and Stewardship**

- Cultivate the Foundation’s relationships with museums, curators, scholars, and critics.
- Define different levels of Foundation support for external projects; prioritize which exhibitions, publications, and other projects the Foundation will support, and in what ways.
- Ensure the direction and content of supported projects aligns with Legacy strategy and goals.
- Cultivate the Foundation’s relationships with private collectors of works by Mitchell.
- Create and maintain an environment of openness and education with historic stakeholders, private collections, and collectors.

**Foundation Representative and Spokesperson on Mitchell; External Relations**

- Collaborate with Communications Director and Legacy team to determine internally what is most important to share about Mitchell and her work; to strategize around which materials are relevant to different audiences; and to define a coordinated approach to effectively and appropriately sharing those materials.
- Serve as the Foundation’s primary spokesperson on Mitchell.
- Ensure the Legacy team serves as a knowledge hub for researchers of Mitchell’s work and life.
- Work with the Database and Digital Asset Manager to oversee the approach for rights and reproduction.
Prioritization and Direction of Scholarly Projects

- In collaboration with Director of Archives and Research, identify significant areas of needed scholarly research on Mitchell’s work and life; define internal research priorities and identify potential institutional partnerships as appropriate.
- Strategically plan and oversee internal research projects to further the strategic goals of the Legacy programs; key future priorities include study of Mitchell’s works on paper and prints.
- Engage with curators and scholars focused on Mitchell’s life and work.

Collection Oversight with the Collection Manager

- In collaboration with Collection Manager, ensure appropriate care and strategy for the Foundation’s artwork collection, including decisions on long-term sales and deaccessioning.
- Provide insight on important conservation related questions.
- Ensure we are a resource to the field around conservation questions and develop a long-term plan on supporting conservation related queries in the field.

Gallery and Commercial Market Oversight

- Assist with planning, research, and organization of commercial exhibitions, in collaboration with the Foundation’s sales representative, David Zwirner.
- Collaborate on content development and editorial review of scholarly catalogues published in collaboration with David Zwirner Books.
- With the Executive Director, serve as point person for complex legal questions that emerge from the market.
CANDIDATE PROFILE

While it is understood that no one candidate will bring every desired skill, characteristic, and experience, the following offers a reflection of the ideal candidate profile for the Legacy Director of the Joan Mitchell Foundation:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The Legacy Director will be skilled at building and leading high-performing teams with the utmost professionalism and approaching the work with a lens of equity, while guiding team members’ growth and development. They will implement best-practice systems and processes that will provide clarity and efficiency in decision-making. The successful candidate will be comfortable navigating around challenges with flexibility, good humor, and an eye on long-term goals. This individual will set clear priorities, delegate, and allocate resources to support the work of the Legacy and Catalogue Raisonné teams in alignment with the Foundation’s mission and strategic goals. They will be able to balance big-picture strategic thinking with a willingness to be hands-on where needed. The ideal candidate will foster a culture of collaboration, mutual respect, and teamwork within the Legacy and Catalogue Raisonné teams as well as across the organization. Additionally, the Legacy Director will approach operations and finances with an eye toward sustainability and best practices and will make decisions based on a clear understanding of the strategic objectives of the Foundation.
RESEARCH AND CURATORIAL LEADERSHIP

The Legacy Director will have a sophisticated understanding of and passion for American and 20th-century art and art history and for the materials, techniques, and condition of art objects, particularly paintings; they will have a robust record of exhibitions and scholarly publications and ideally have worked on a catalogue raisonné. The ideal candidate will have specific familiarity with Joan Mitchell and her work, but more importantly they should have a demonstrated capacity for developing deep knowledge of an artist that advances and expands understanding of the field. They will possess a reputation of credibility and experience as a leader and champion of contemporary art and artists and will inspire the engagement and commitment of others. This individual will be able to direct project management related to the care, conservation, display, and interpretation of artworks and archives. The Legacy Director will have experience with and empathy for the process of curating large-scale exhibitions and collaborative projects.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING AND COMMUNICATION

The Legacy Director will be an individual with high emotional intelligence, able to communicate clearly, authentically, and with diplomacy, adjusting the approach to fit the listener. They will be a strong leader, communicator, and collaborator who is skilled at listening to and learning from leadership, staff, and other constituents. The successful candidate must build rapport and cultivate relationships across all levels of the Foundation. Further, they will bring a nuanced understanding of legal and copyright issues, as well as the sensitivity to navigate complex relationships with institutional and individual partners, sponsors, historic stakeholders, and others. The Legacy Director will be comfortable in the broader arts and cultural community to advance the mission of the Joan Mitchell Foundation locally, nationally, and internationally. This leader will have excellent presentation, verbal, and written communication skills.

PASSION FOR THE MISSION AND VALUES

Fully embracing the Foundation’s mission, the Legacy Director is grounded in American and/or 20th-century art history and understands how artist’s collections and archival materials intersect with our contemporary world. They will be passionate about working in partnership with the staff, Board, and other partners to advance the mission of the Foundation. The ideal candidate will possess and promote a deep appreciation for collections, history, research, and scholarship. They will have a strong work ethic, interpersonal skills, a sense of humor, and a commitment to lifelong learning and professional growth. Additionally, this leader will be an individual of unquestioned integrity, ethics, and values; someone who can be trusted without reservation.

CALL/VoCA Talk with Legacy Specialists at Pratt, photo by Taylor Dafoe.
EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- Advanced degree in studio art, art history, museum studies, or related field, Ph.D. preferred; or equivalent combination of education and professional experience.
- 10+ years of senior leadership experience as evidenced by leading a significant department or division within a museum, artist’s foundation, or other relevant organization.
- Experience managing, mentoring, and retaining teams in a culture of transparency, collaboration, accountability, and trust.
- Experience representing an organization to a range of audiences and partners, serving as an ambassador and advocate.
- Demonstrated commitment to, and a record of success in, fostering an inclusive, equitable culture and environment where all feel respected and welcomed.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Joan Mitchell Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer with a strong commitment to equity and inclusion in our organizational culture and our hiring practices. The Foundation does not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, religion, race, color, creed, national origin, alienage or citizenship, disability, marital status, partnership status, veteran status, gender (including gender identity), sexual orientation, or any other factor prohibited by law. The Foundation believes that commitment to principles of fairness and respect for all help create a climate that is favorable to the free and open exchange of ideas.

The Foundation proactively seeks to reach out as widely as possible in order to attract the best candidates to join the team. If you believe that you could excel in this role, we encourage you to apply even if not sure you meet 100% of our qualifications. Employment decisions are made based on an individual’s qualifications to contribute to meeting the Foundation’s objectives and its organizational needs. This description and potential offer shall not be construed as a contract of any sort for a specific period of employment as the Foundation recognizes employment is at will.

Although the above statements are robust and intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed by the individual(s) hired into this role, they are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all duties, responsibilities, and skills required. The Foundation reserves the right to modify, add, or remove duties and to assign other duties as necessary. In addition, the Foundation will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals in all aspects of the employment process.

If you are a qualified individual living with a disability and need assistance expressing interest online, please email Koya Partners at NonprofitSearchOps@divsearch.com. If you are selected for an interview, you will receive additional information regarding how to request an accommodation for the interview process.
COMPENSATION & BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is $150,000 to 160,000.

The Joan Mitchell Foundation offers an excellent benefits package that includes full family medical (including contributions toward the deductible), dental, and vision payment, commuter benefits (parking and mass transit), paid holidays, vacation, sick time, and floating holidays. Additionally, there are other great benefits such as pet insurance, group accident insurance, MetLife Auto and Home Insurance, Legal Insurance, and a Behavioral Health Employee Assistance Program.

The exact salary that will be offered to the Legacy Director will be determined based on a consideration of the successful candidate’s skills, experience, and geography and aligned with Joan Mitchell Foundation’s compensation policies.

CONTACT

Koya Partners, the executive search firm that specializes in mission-driven search, has been exclusively retained for this engagement. Naree W.S. Viner and Tenley Bank of Koya Partners have been exclusively retained for this search. To express interest in this role please submit your materials by filling out our Talent Profile, or email Tenley directly at tbank@koyapartners.com. All inquiries and discussions will be considered strictly confidential.

About Koya Partners

Koya Partners, a part of Diversified Search Group, is a leading executive search and strategic advising firm dedicated to connecting exceptionally talented people with mission-driven clients. Our founding philosophy—The Right Person in the Right Place Can Change the World—guides our work as we partner with nonprofits & NGOs, institutions of higher education, responsible businesses, and social enterprises in local communities and around the world.

Learn more about how we can help you with your search on the Koya Partners website.