

Associate Conservator Museum of West African Art

Job Overview

The Museum of West African Art (MOWAA) is an independent non-profit organisation in Nigeria set up to drive research and execute high-value cultural, arts and heritage initiatives in West Africa. A critical part of our mission is to conserve and make accessible a collection of art and antiquities for the education, enjoyment and wellbeing of visitors locally and from around the world – connecting West Africa's ancient heritage to its thriving contemporary arts and culture.

As part of this commitment to developing conservation standards in West Africa, we are seeking an early-career conservator to join our Collections department. The Associate Conservator reports to the Head of Collections and is responsible for the preventive care – and support in supervised restoration work – of art and artifacts in the collection.

It is expected that the Associate Conservator will remain current with advances in the conservation field and be an active member of the community. This role will also provide expertise to support acquisitions, loans, exhibitions, and other undertakings fundamental to the Museum's operations, building on a strong culture of internal teamwork between Curatorial, Outreach & Learning, and Facility Management colleagues.

Key Responsibilities

Conservation

- Manage and treat a range of artworks, including metals, ceramics, and organic materials
- Continuously monitor the physical condition and environmental parameters of objects both on display and in storage, ensuring optimal conditions for longevity
- Offer expert advice on the display and storage of works, considering preservation needs
- Working closely with the Head of Collection, evaluate conditions for incoming and outgoing loans to safeguard artworks during transit and display
- Oversee the conservation laboratory and its maintenance
- Collaborate with facility management and other departments to address environmental issues affecting collections, such as HVAC systems and gallery lighting.

Research

- Keep up with latest trends and treatment procedures in conservation practice through research and training.
- Conduct scientific research on objects within or relating to MOWAA's collection when necessary
- Lead the develop of MOWAA's reference collection, working with MOWAA's Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art

Object Safety and Documentation

- Support collection management through documentation, accession and deaccession processing at MOWAA
- Analyse changes in physical state, treatment needs and assess risk to the object with regards to exhibition, environmental conditions, and handling, escalating where appropriate
- Collaborate with Curatorial teams to develop a long-term plan for continued security of the permanent collection
- Contribute research and regular updates to the Facility Disaster Plan

Expertise and Training

- Train members of MOWAA partner institutions.
- Mediate and communicate with staff, other institutions, artists and community members on matters relating to the preservation and conservation of objects in MOWAA's interest.
- Work with the Head of Collections, develop and implement policies and procedures relating to the safety of objects in the permanent collection or in the care of MOWAA

External Conservation Services

- Conduct surveys and cultivate relationships potential clients for external conservation services to the museums, art galleries or private collectors
- Meet with clients, examine works, provide analysis of treatment needs, provide an estimate of cost, perform and document condition
- Research and examine treatment methodologies
- Develop and monitor conservation budget on select projects

Museum Practice

- Travel to host venues for museum exhibitions to conduct condition reporting and oversee art handling processes.
- Collaborate with outreach, learning, and curatorial departments to promote accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and equity in museum practices.
- Work with communication teams to develop public-facing messages promoting responsible art care and conservation.
- Undertake additional administrative tasks and assignments as required to support museum operations.

Key Qualifications

- A Bachelor's, or post graduate degree in Conservation or related field from a recognized training institution with a specialization in object conservation.
- A portfolio with condition report, treatment proposal and treatment report.
- Basic photography skills
- Proven ability to carry out comprehensive conservation projects based on a documented decision-making process involving risk assessment, careful ethical consideration, and proper collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, while demonstrating a high degree of manual dexterity and technical knowledge whenever required.
- Preventive conservation skill is highly desired.
- Able to prioritise work under little to no supervision within a specific time frame
- Community oriented with an ability to work within a large dynamic team.
- Possess effective oral and written communication skills.

Career Growth, Training & Development

MOWAA has a strong culture of constant learning and invests in developing people. This post offers exposure and hands-on experience on ways of working global institutions across MOWAA's wide network of partners and affiliates. By joining our team, you'll have an opportunity to shape a growing organization, work on ground-breaking initiatives and build a rewarding long-term career.

Terms and Conditions

- Reporting Line: Head of Collections & Senior Conservator
- Duty Station: Benin City
- Tenure: Full time employment
- Compensation & Benefits: Competitive, subject to credentials

Application Process

Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and CV to careers@wearemowaa.org by 30 May 2024. Please include "Associate Conservator" in the subject line of your email.