EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

BACKGROUND

The Virginia Commonwealth University Institute for Contemporary Art in Richmond, Virginia, will be one of the leading institutes for contemporary arts and design in this country. The ICA is a nexus for creativity and inclusion, where innovative thinking and transformational ideas are drawn from a spectrum of disciplines. Unlike museums that house permanent collections, the ICA’s responsive exhibitions and performances invite audience engagement and challenge visitors to experience and examine art in unexpected ways.

The ICA embraces the arts as a catalyst for discovering new knowledge — a model that is made possible by the institute’s position at the center of a dynamic arts community, with ties that extend to the far corners of the globe and lead to surprising partnerships.

The institute is deeply connected to a vibrant public arts school that is both highly ranked and part of a comprehensive urban research university. The ICA is a focal point of Richmond’s energetic arts district, with a striking building designed by Steven Holl Architects, one of the world’s most important living architects. It is positioned at one of the primary entrances to the VCU campus and just minutes away from the highly regarded Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, and Richmond provides easy access to museums, galleries and institutions up and down the East Coast.

The institute’s reach extends to the global community, most notably through its direct tie to VCUarts Qatar, a campus in the Middle East, where the role of arts education is constantly and rapidly evolving. This allows the ICA to tap in to the limitless possibilities for global integration, with arts and design at the center of that collaboration.

VCU’s president, Michael Rao, Ph.D., said of the institute, “The ICA is a critical initiative for VCU, an opportunity to enhance the creativity and community relations of the entire university. It is much more than an innovative building and the pillar of a vibrant arts district — it is a bridge that
will link VCU’s campuses, serve as a gateway to Richmond and help bring the arts community in Richmond the national and international renown it deserves. The ICA embodies the goal of VCU’s strategic plan, to be a top urban public research university.”

Through the institute’s driving educational mission, global partnerships and unmatched vision, the ICA is an epicenter of innovation that will change the way the world understands and discusses the art and issues of our time.

THE ICA BUILDING

The 41,000-square-foot building designed by Steven Holl Architects is opening to the public on April 21, 2018. Located on the corner of Belvidere and Broad Streets, it is placed at the most traveled intersection in the city of Richmond with 60,000 cars passing by every day. Reflecting the ICA’s intention to link campus, community and contemporary art, the Markel Center has two entrances: a “city” entrance opening toward this busy intersection, and a “campus” entrance that leads to a reflecting pool and tranquil outdoor space. Exterior spaces offer an additional 10,000 square feet of creative space. Its interior, with “forking galleries” on three levels, is “intended to change the narrative about contemporary art,” says Holl. “The nature of this building is to embrace the unknown and act as a catalyst for all the directions that contemporary art might be taking.” Funded through $37 million in private contributions, the building houses a 240-seat performance space, four galleries of 9,800-square-feet total, a reception hall/atrium “forum,” a café and shop, offices, a learning lab, meeting rooms, catering kitchen, art storage, prep and fabrication spaces.

Exterior space includes a second-floor terrace and both on-site and adjacent parking. Sheathed in zinc with a pre-weathered patina, it has clear and translucent glass walls. With LEED Gold Certification, the building was named one of Architectural Digest’s 12 most anticipated buildings of 2018.

VCU SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

The ICA programming is complemented by the robust network of students, faculty and staff comprising VCU. Among the many strategic and multidisciplinary partnerships available in the context of a comprehensive research institution, the School of the Arts is pivotal. As a highly-ranked school, VCUarts is a place where the next generation of artists, designers, performers and scholars are empowered to excel in the most daring pursuits they can imagine. Every year, 3,000 undergraduates and more than 180 graduate students come together to explore the constantly evolving role of the arts in our modern society. Students push the frontiers of artistic discovery through bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral degrees in 16 departments and programs, including top-ranked sculpture and graphic design graduate programs, and an acclaimed cinema program. The
Curriculum is grounded in relevant, innovative and entrepreneurial activities that electrify the imagination and fuel the engines of curiosity.

Students redefine what is possible by discovering innovative ideas that occur at the nexus of arts and other disciplines. They join deep, collaborative partnerships with the schools of Medicine, Engineering and Business — as well as numerous other disciplines at the university. The school’s annual budget of $35 million and endowment of more than $14 million funds endeavors that not only feed artistic souls but allow the community to pursue creative and daring opportunities with the potential for social change.

While VCUarts is located at the center of a dynamic arts community in Richmond, its reach is extensive, most notably through its campus in Qatar. VCUarts Qatar connects the home campus to a rapidly evolving region of global significance, where the role of arts and design is leading transformative shifts in myriad industries. The Doha campus exemplifies VCU’s commitment to global outreach and education, presenting significant opportunities for cross-cultural exchange, and increases the visibility and impact of the School of the Arts internationally.

Students at VCUarts have direct access to inspired faculty and enthusiastic mentors with unsurpassed professional expertise. The school has 170 full-time teaching and research faculty members and more than 250 others who bring direct artistic experience into the classroom. Motivated faculty, recognized for accomplishments in their professional lives, have curated or participated in hundreds of exhibitions and performances; won fellowships, residencies and grants; and received numerous notable awards and honorifics.

With a VCUarts education, our students graduate prepared for careers not yet imagined, and ready to shape the future of discovery. More than 18,000 alumni can be found around the world, working as artists, scholars, entrepreneurs and leaders in a variety of fields.

About VCU

Virginia Commonwealth University is a major, urban public research university with national and international rankings in sponsored research. Located in downtown Richmond, VCU enrolls more than 31,000 students in 220 degree and certificate programs in the arts, sciences and humanities. Fifty-two of the programs are unique in Virginia, many of them crossing the disciplines of VCU’s 13 schools and one college. MCV Hospitals and the health sciences schools including the schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions, and the Massey Cancer Center comprise VCU Medical Center, one of the nation’s leading academic medical centers. Today, VCU serves an integral role in the economic health of the city of Richmond and the region by educating the current and future workforce, advancing research and enhancing patient care. VCU, its health system and other related entities have cash
and investments of approximately $3 billion, which includes $888 million in endowment funds.

VCU is rooted in a rich history dating to the 1838 founding of the Medical College of Virginia, which now comprises one of the two downtown Richmond campuses. The Monroe Park Campus began as the Richmond School of Social Work and Public Health in 1917. The two campuses merged in 1968 to become VCU, the most comprehensive urban university in the state and one of the most successful research universities in the nation. VCU’s third campus is located in Doha, Qatar and is a cornerstone of Education City, which is now host to seven other branch campuses of prestigious universities — Weill Cornell Medical College, Texas A&M University, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Carnegie-Mellon University, Northwestern University, HEC Paris and University College London.

As an urban institution of higher learning, VCU and its partners have contributed immeasurably to the development of the fabric of the city of Richmond which has transformed into a center of artistic and cultural growth, business development and social services. In consequence, the city and its leadership in business, industry and cultural affairs have given extraordinary support to the university’s growth, complementing the support of the commonwealth.

As the premier urban, public research university in the state, Virginia Commonwealth University’s mission is to advance knowledge and student success through its commitments to:

- An engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting
- Research that expands the boundaries of new knowledge and creative expression and promotes translational applications to improve human health
- Interdisciplinary collaborations that bring new perspectives to complex problems and mobilize creative energies that advance innovation and solve global challenges
- Health care that strives to preserve and restore health for all people, to seek the cause and cure of diseases through groundbreaking research and to educate those who serve humanity
- Diversity that provides a climate of inclusion, a dedication to addressing disparities wherever they exist and an opportunity to explore and create in an environment of trust
- Sustainable university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of the communities VCU serves in Virginia and around the world

**RICHMOND, VIRGINIA**

Richmond, Virginia, is a culturally diverse and historically rich capital city with a thriving creative scene, entrepreneurial activity and renowned local restaurants. The metropolitan area offers minimal traffic congestion with less than a 25-minute commute on average. Richmond is centrally located with the Atlantic beaches, Blue Ridge mountain ski slopes and hiking, and Washington, D.C. all within a two-hour drive.
The Greater Richmond area is home to eight Fortune 500 companies and was named a top-20 metro area in which to start a business by CNBC. The Richmond Region offers a full range of undergraduate, graduate and professional degree programs at more than ten colleges and universities, VCU being the largest.

In 2012, Richmond officially established its growing arts district, which encompasses dozens of blocks along Broad Street from Belvidere Street to 13th Street, with venues such as the Hippodrome Theater, the Maggie Walker Historic Site and the Richmond Ballet, among others. The district provides an array of benefits and resources to establishments that cater to arts and culture, including theaters, art galleries, museums, dance studios, music venues and historic sites. The VCU ICA is centrally located within this district and will serve as one of its cultural anchors.

For more information on the city of Richmond, please visit:

- www.grpva.com/living-in-richmond
- www.visitrichmondva.com

THE POSITION

The director will provide the creative vision, executive leadership and strategic direction for the ICA, shaping its role as an outstanding arts institution and working symbiotically with the VCU School of the Arts. The position reports directly to the university’s provost and vice president for academic affairs. It may include a faculty appointment in VCUarts and requires collegial collaboration with the dean of the School of the Arts. Within the context of the university’s strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, the director is expected to take advantage of the ICA’s unique opportunities, as it is embedded within a research university and at the intersection of Richmond’s rich and diverse community.

Building on a strong foundation of existing operational, programming and impact planning, the director will develop a five-year strategic plan in collaboration with key constituents across VCU, including the VCUarts dean and faculty, key volunteer leaders, staff, students, and community. The plan should fully capitalize on the strengths of VCUarts and other university schools and departments. The director will work closely with the ICA’s communications and development staff to grow and expand its reach to include local, regional, national and international audiences, and develop the financial and fundraising plans necessary to provide for financial sustainability.

The director will articulate dynamic and inclusive institutional vision and shape programming that will motivate and galvanize staff and build active participation and support from community
members. The director will support the curatorial and educational staff in planning and executing an active and ambitious exhibition and public programming schedule of the highest quality. Programming should capture the interest of broad and diverse audiences regionally, nationally and internationally, while providing innovative connections with the vibrant local arts community and campus. The director will build relationships to strengthen the ICA’s network to include other departments across the university, keeping in mind that the entire faculty and student body of VCU are important audiences.

IMMEDIATE AND ONGOING RESPONSIBILITIES

The director will have the following priorities:

• Develop a programmatic vision for the ICA that reflects a commitment to excellence and “the new,” a foundation in contemporary art, and a dedication to programming that is made accessible to a wide range of audiences; embrace new technology and digital media in order to meet audiences when and where they want to learn

• Identify avenues for introducing contemporary art and the ICA to the broadest audience possible; be an active participant and leader in the cultural arena and position the ICA as a convener and catalyst; identify opportunities to collaborate across a broad spectrum of regional, national and international cultural institutions

• Forge strong and sustainable working relationships within VCU; contribute to the leadership and development of new and multidisciplinary connections across the university; identify and optimize opportunities for mutual support and integration between VCUarts and its constituents and the educational offerings at the ICA

• Engage with existing support organizations, including the dean and faculty of the School of the Arts, ICA staff and key volunteers, ICA Advisory Board, Teen Council, and Endowment Committee, among others, to allow active collaboration; serve as a visionary leader, encouraging all collaborators’ interests in advances in contemporary art and keeping them informed on a regular basis; help identify and cultivate the next generation of leaders

• Engage in and support philanthropic outreach and public service efforts for the ICA

• Create a sustainable financial model, understanding and shaping the financial dynamics of the organization, developing budgets, managing the ICA fiscal affairs and setting strategic, operational and financial direction

• Develop an appropriate plan for staffing in light of ICA operations and strategic direction; provide effective and inspiring management of staff and volunteers

• Develop and implement initiatives that reflect a commitment to community engagement, social justice and education in support of the university’s mission to increase student access

• Lead and coordinate the shared governance of the ICA and work to foster and sustain a diverse and
inclusive environment for all

- Develop short- and long-range plans and continually ensure that policies are evaluated, implemented and congruent with institutional goals and industry best practices
- Know VCU and its School of the Arts thoroughly; learn its history and culture, educational and public programs, operations, and constituents; understand its base of support and its potential

**QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS**

The ICA seeks a visionary leader who is future-focused, daring and bold. The director will be a convener of extraordinary ideas and a curious, inspiring, innovative, entrepreneurial and experienced leader who brings to the role a record of achievement reflective of the ICA’s standards of excellence.

The Director will demonstrate:

- An understanding of and commitment to contemporary art; knowledge of the international art world and its key players; and an ability to translate this awareness into meaningful collaborations, research/scholarship and exhibitions for the institution that speak to the internal campus and external audiences
- Senior staff-level administrative experience in an arts organization known for quality and excellence and familiarity with a kunsthalle and/or a contemporary art museum/gallery setting
- Ability to develop, articulate and implement a shared strategic vision and plan
- Proven experience in administration, infrastructure development, and budget and facilities management
- Ability to guide and empower a dynamic and creative team
- Direct experience planning and implementing innovative and experimental programming
- Ability to build and nurture relationships with a wide range of individuals from artists to academics to collectors to business and civic leaders
- A record of fundraising success, which includes expertise in stewardship of donors (Capital and endowment campaign experience is desired.)
- Effectiveness as an enthusiastic and motivating spokesperson and ambassador for an institution or program; excellent interpersonal, verbal and writing skills
- Commitment to fostering a welcoming and productive environment for faculty, staff, students and visitors representing diversity in age, race, color, national origin, gender expression, religion, sexual
orientation, veteran’s status, political affiliation or disability

• Experience with the demanding external expectations of a cultural leader or public intellectual along with the capacity to become a visible presence on campus, in the city and state, and beyond

• A terminal degree in an appropriate discipline (Professional experience in an academic environment is a decided plus; knowledge of AAM standards and practices is desired.)

• Commitment to bringing cultural experiences to wide and diverse audiences

• Conversant in the use of technology and digital media in promoting an institution, reaching audiences and creating innovative and engaging exhibitions and programs

• Desire to work in collaboration with dean and faculty of VCUarts and an active and engaged advisory board

NOMINATIONS AND APPLICATIONS

The Search Committee will begin reviewing applications immediately and will continue to accept applications and nominations until the position is filled. Candidates should complete the basic personal and demographic application through the VCU job site at https://www.vcujobs.com/postings/78364. The position is anticipated to begin in summer 2018. Requested application materials include a letter of interest and curriculum vitae. All applications, nominations and inquiries will remain confidential until finalists are identified for campus interviews. Applications materials and nominations are requested to be submitted to:

Susan VanGilder, Partner
Julie Tea, Partner
Beth McCarthy, Senior Associate
VCUICA@storbecksearch.com

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