Employment Information Package

Head of Conservation
The Chester Beatty

Welcoming over 350,000 visitors each year, the Chester Beatty (CB) contains a world-famous collection of manuscripts, prints, miniature paintings, early printed books and objets d’art from countries across Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. The Collection is principally focused on the written word and its associated painted and printed images.

One of Ireland’s National Cultural Institutions, the CB is a public charitable trust established under the will of the late Sir Alfred Chester Beatty and is governed by a Board of Trustees.

The Western treasures of the CB include some of the earliest sources on papyrus for the bible and a great library of Manichean texts; Armenian and European manuscripts from medieval, Renaissance and modern times; prints, early and fine books and bindings complete a remarkable conspectus of the arts of manuscript production and printing from many cultures and periods.

Chinese and Japanese painted scrolls and albums, woodblock prints, printed books and decorative arts are among the most important part of the CB’s East Asian holdings. The Asian collections also contain material from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Tibet, Mongolia, Thailand, Burma (Myanmar) and Indonesia.

The Islamic Collections comprise mainly manuscripts and single-page paintings and calligraphies. This includes more than 260 complete and fragmentary Qur’ans, some dating from the late eighth and ninth centuries and including the work of the leading calligraphers of the Islamic world.

For more information on the CB, its holdings and a full schedule of events and activities please visit www.chesterbeatty.ie.
Summary Job Purpose

The position of Head of Conservation offers an exciting opportunity for an experienced conservation professional to lead the conservation team at the Chester Beatty.

Reporting to the Head of Collections/Director, the Head of Conservation will be responsible for the development and operation of the conservation studio in accordance with international museum standards. They will manage the conservation studio and will also have an active role in the conservation of collection objects.

The Chester Beatty is a collaborative organisation and the global nature of the collections is reflected in our multicultural and intercultural programming. The successful candidate will be an energetic individual with a passion for the arts and excellent interpersonal skills. They will form part of a small but dynamic team with the flexibility to adapt to the CB’s constantly changing environment. In the course of their work, they will liaise closely with the Curators, Registrar, Digital Team and Facilities & Security Manager.

Key Areas of Responsibility: the Head of Conservation key areas of responsibility will include;

- Serving as a member of the management team
- Providing strategic leadership in conservation and care of collections, ensuring that the Chester Beatty retains its leader-in-the-field status in key disciplines
- Driving and implementing best conservation practice, reviewing relevant collections care policies and procedures and ensuring they are implemented in line with the Strategic Management Plan
- Performing and documenting complex conservation treatments on selected items within the collection and exercising oversight of all conservation work
- Managing the departmental budget and overseeing the procurement of specialised equipment, supplies and services
- Operational management of the conservation studio to ensure optimum workflow efficiencies are attained without compromising the care needs of the collections, and ensuring there is an adequate conservation presence available to the Chester Beatty at all times, including holiday periods
- Managing the conservation team ensuring staff are highly engaged and motivated, and have the knowledge and skills required to deliver a high level of support to the museum
- Identifying, advising on and overseeing research projects and make a personal contribution to the Chester Beatty’s research reputation
- Preparing condition assessments of items and collections; advising on conservation needs and options and establishing priorities in consultation with curators
- Making recommendations regarding objects proposed for acquisition, exhibition and loan, including review of facilities reports from borrowing institutions
- Playing a key role on the Emergency Response Team to ensure maintenance of an effective disaster/emergency response and recovery plan to ensure the museum is well prepared to deal with a potential emergency situation
• Being responsible for the implementation of the Internal Audit recommendations relating to Collection Care
• Identifying grant and other funding opportunities and working closely with the Head of Development and Director in submitting successful bids
• Training and providing guidance for staff in materials handling, preservation decision-making and physical care workflow
• Co-ordinating preventive care, including collection storage initiatives, IPM and environmental monitoring programmes
• Contributing to the development of public engagement activities at the Chester Beatty, including volunteer training and Friends programmes
• Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships with local, national, and international contacts, groups and networks
• Managing administrative detail of the Conservation department including annual appraisals of staff, leave arrangements and management of the internship programme
• Ensuring the museum is compliant with its management of hazardous materials in the Conservation Laboratory
• Performing other duties as assigned by the Head of Collections and/or Director.

Skills, Knowledge and Experience:

**Essential Requirements:**
• The minimum requirement for the post is the possession of a postgraduate university degree in conservation plus a minimum of seven years’ experience working in an area relevant to the Chester Beatty collections
• A minimum of five years’ experience in a conservation role at supervisory/management level with proven leadership and people management skills, particularly the ability to delegate, empower, motivate and support team members to achieve agreed goals and to create a culture of engagement and collegiality
• Research interest in an area relevant to the Chester Beatty Collections
• Understanding of the ethical issues associated with collections care
• Extensive national and international professional network
• Ability to demonstrate knowledge or understanding of new developments in conservation and new and emerging research trends and methodologies
• Experience of successfully exploring and developing collaborations with the museum, library and archive or academic sectors
• Good organisational skills and ability to manage day-to-day operational activities as well as project work
• Experience of effectively overseeing the delivery of projects and managing complex workloads and to meet deadlines under pressure
• Experience of budgetary or financial management and risk management
• Expert knowledge of conservation history, ethics and methodology
• Advanced knowledge of preservation issues in cultural institutions and international best practice
• Excellent verbal, written and interpersonal skills and an ability to act as an effective advocate for the Chester Beatty with stakeholders nationally and internationally
• Knowledge of relevant professional standards and codes of ethics and practice, and relevant Health and Safety standards
• Good computer skills and experience with Adlib or a comparable collection management system are necessary.

Desirable:
• Conservation experience in the museum or heritage sector
• Experience directly relevant to the collections of the Chester Beatty Library
• Experience of emergency planning and disaster preparedness
• Knowledge of the Irish language

Salary
In line with Department of Public Expenditure and Reform regulations and guidelines on public service pay, the salary for this position will differ for new entrants from outside the Irish public/civil service and for existing Irish civil/public servants.

New Entrants outside the Irish public/civil service:
An incremental salary scale applies and all new entrants from outside the Irish public/civil service will be required to commence employment at the minimum point of the scale which is €63,858 per annum. They will also be required to join the Single Public Service Pension Scheme.

Existing Irish public/civil servants:
For existing Irish public/civil servants, the salary scale of €60,755 to €68,600 applies, subject to approval of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. However the entrant will be required to commence employment at the minimum point of the scale €60,755 per annum.

Annual Leave
The annual leave allowance will be 29 working days a year, subject to the usual conditions regarding the granting of annual leave, is on the basis of a five day week and is exclusive of the usual public holidays.

Conditions
The post will be subject to satisfactory clearance from An Garda Síochána, a medical check and a probationary period.
Application Instructions

To apply, interested candidates should submit a cover letter expressing interest in the position and outlining relevant experience, together with a complete curriculum vitae and the names and contact information (mail, e-mail and telephone numbers) of two referees to:

Mary Corless
Human Resources Manager
Chester Beatty
Dublin Castle
Dublin
D02 AD92
Ireland

Or by email to: personnel@cbl.ie with “Head of Conservation” in the subject line.

Closing date for receipt of applications is 5.00 pm on Thursday, 31 October 2019

Interviews will ideally take place at the Chester Beatty on the 27 November, 2019.

Please note that any travel expenses incurred attending for interview cannot be reimbursed.

Canvassing will disqualify.

Referees will not be contacted until the search committee has informed the candidate of doing so.

The Chester Beatty Library is an equal opportunities employer.

Please note: All data received relating to the application will be held in line with the museum’s record retention and data protection policies.