



# **Position Specification**

Cranbrook Academy of Art

Director

## The Opportunity

Through its unique educational model, Cranbrook Academy of Art has inspired and achieved substantial artistic, educational, and institutional impact since it was founded in 1932. The Academy has a distinguished heritage and, at the same time, the current opportunity for evolution is significant. What students seek and models of education in the arts are changing, and Cranbrook, with the recent addition of \$30 million dollars in transformational resources, recognizes both the unique strengths of its model as well as new opportunities for innovation.

The Director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art serves as the driver of the Academy's vision and strategic direction, as well as long-term planning and goal setting. They are charged with overall strategic leadership of the Academy, including team management, operational strength, academic excellence, and financial sustainability. They also play the primary role in collaborating with leaders throughout the Cranbrook Educational Community, representing the Academy externally to a wide variety of constituents, and are most often the public face and spokesperson of the organization. The Director serves as the Academy's principal fundraiser and forges strong external partnerships and collaborations.

Transformational change is happening now both at Cranbrook and in the Arts sector, and the next leader of the Academy will set a tone of collaboration, innovation, and inclusion that will impact students and the communities served by Cranbrook Academy of Art for years to come.

## Our Client

### Cranbrook Educational Community

Cranbrook Educational Community (CEC) is a globally respected leader in education, science, and art with a storied history dating back to 1904. Their community of inquiry and learning includes the Academy of Art, Cranbrook Art Museum, the Center for Collections and Research, the Institute of Science, Cranbrook Schools, and Cranbrook House and Gardens. Cranbrook's spectacular and historic campus is graced by architecturally-significant buildings, outdoor sculptures, and stunning natural and tended landscapes. Each year, more than 300,000 visitors and learners of all ages and interests engage in their outstanding educational programs and experiences. The Cranbrook community develops individuals who live with purpose and integrity, create with passion, explore with curiosity, and strive for excellence. Cranbrook is committed to championing inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) in all things. They emphasize excellence, innovation, collaboration, stewardship and service. These values contribute to the bravery and creativity that push forward their goal of continually building an environment that respects and cultivates everyone's gifts.

### Cranbrook Academy of Art

Cranbrook Academy of Art is an exciting and unique residential educational model that allows students to ambitiously push the boundaries of architecture, craft, fine art, and design. The country's top-ranked, graduate-only program, they provide students, artists, and designers with the opportunity to study and live on an extraordinary campus that includes over 300 acres of forest, lakes and streams. Their state-of-the-art workshops and art museum with important permanent collections contribute to the dynamic environment of making an intellectual engagement. Eliel Saarinen was founding President, and ever since they continue to blaze a bold trail as a best-in-class trendsetter of art and design education.

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Today, the Academy offers a broad array of studio-based programs in one of eleven disciplines: Architecture, 2D, 3D, and 4D Design, Ceramics, Fiber, Metalsmithing, Painting, Photography, Print Media, and Sculpture. Their students and Artist-in-Residence are the heartbeat of the Academy. Some of the most impactful and renowned artists and designers of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries, members of the Cranbrook Academy community have included Eliel and Eero Saarinen, Charles and Ray Eames, Harry Bertoia, Maija Grotell, Niels Diffrient, Harry Weese, Tony Rosenthal, Duane Hanson, Jun Kaneko, Michael and Kathy McCoy, Daniel Libeskind, Nick Cave, Masamichi Udegawa, Anne Wilson, Joan Livingstone, Hani Rashid, Peter Bohlin, Donald Lipski, Sonya Clark, McArthur Binion, Artis Lane and many more.

The Academy's distinctive model emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning under the guidance of Artists-in-Residence who are respected in their field. Each year 65-75 new students come to campus for the unparalleled opportunities that only Cranbrook can provide. Of the total student body of 130-150, one-third to one-half are international students who come from around the globe in order to experience the Academy's unmatched environment of creativity. They are passionately committed to Cranbrook's ground-breaking approach to graduate education. Not only do students learn through hands-on immersive studio work with 24-hour access to individual studios, but they also benefit from a stimulating calendar of different visiting lecturers and critics. Most importantly, the Academy's absence of a routine, standardized curriculum in favor of individually tailored mentorship from the Artists-in-Residence gives students the meaningful artistic experiences they need to be successful. Cranbrook Academy of Art is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

The Academy's facilities include a 35,000 square foot building designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Rafael Moneo which houses the Fiber, Ceramics, and Metalsmithing departments. In that and six other studio buildings, students are provided with studios and share complex art-making equipment including CNC machines, laser cutters, 3-D printers, large format printers, electric and gas kilns, spray booths, a woodshop, foundry, and state-of-the-art software technology. The Academy also has an extensive library devoted to the visual arts featuring more than 40,000 volumes (including books, bound periodicals, and theses), audio tapes, video tapes, and DVDs.

Cranbrook Art Museum is an integral partner with the Academy in its mission to incorporate the vitality of art into life both for Academy students and the public at large. They believe that the direct encounter with modern and contemporary art, architecture, and design cultivates an understanding of not only their significance and relevance, but also of their contribution to society. Housed in one of Eliel and Eero Saarinen's most acclaimed buildings, the magnificent 50,000 square-foot museum has a phenomenal collection of modern and contemporary art and design. The Academy works with the Art Museum to bring the world into art-making and art-making into the world.

In April of 2021, Cranbrook and Jennifer and Dan Gilbert announced the largest single gift in the history of Cranbrook since its establishment by founders George and Ellen Scripps Booth. This historic \$30 million gift is believed to be the largest financial donation ever to a graduate art program in the United States. The gift will create more opportunities for talented students of color to attend the Academy through the newly established Gilbert Fellows program, and provide support for the Academy's existing scholarship fund, expanding assistance to all eligible students. Additionally, the Gilbert gift will fund visiting faculty artists, with a focus on artists of color, allow the Academy to launch new initiatives to secure fiscal sustainability, and support programming and outreach from Cranbrook Art Museum. The Gilbert Fellows program will provide funding for up to 20 fellowships for degree-seeking students of color from unrepresented racial and ethnic groups who would be unable to pursue studies at Cranbrook without financial assistance. Included in this gift, is the establishment of a \$10 million permanent endowment to

continue this fellowship program into perpetuity. Ultimately, the Gilbert’s gift serves as a catalyst for significant forward progress within the Cranbrook Academy of Art and acts as a beacon for students who wish to explore their creative pursuits.

Cranbrook Academy of Art has an annual operating budget of approximately \$6.7 million, approximately 125 students, 13 Artists-in-Residence, and 19 staff.

**Detroit and Southeastern Michigan**

Located twenty miles north of Detroit, the Bloomfield Hills and Birmingham area offers the cultural activities of a metropolitan area and the serenity of a historic setting. The Cranbrook campus is less than an hour’s driving distance of downtown Detroit, rural Michigan farmland and the University of Michigan and Michigan State University, two of the country’s premier public universities. The Detroit metropolitan area is the eleventh largest in the country with more than 4.5 million residents. Beyond Detroit, the region is vibrant and diverse, with a rich mix of cultures and demographics. In addition to its white, African American, and Hispanic populations, the region has the one of the largest Arabic populations outside the Middle East. The Detroit metropolitan area’s importance as a hub of the global auto industry and as a growing center of technology has drawn large populations of residents from Asia, South Asia, and Europe to the region.

The Detroit metropolitan area boasts more than twenty institutions of higher learning; fourteen museums and cultural centers; a symphony, opera, jazz festival, and arts festival; a wide range of arenas; professional sports teams in football, hockey, baseball, and basketball; and more theater seats than any city east of the Mississippi River other than New York City. Economists recently noted that Michigan has moved into the early stages of a sustained recovery and are predicting net job growth for the state for the next three years. In addition, planners around the world have become captivated by the idea of Detroit as a laboratory for ideas to “right-size” older cities.

In addition, a renewed creative community is strongly present in the city, exemplified by the many art studios, cooperative spaces, galleries, and creative businesses. Many of Cranbrook’s graduates are a part of this new wave of artist-led enterprise which is attracting national and international attention to the role of the creative community in revitalizing Detroit.

The State of Michigan enjoys a glorious natural landscape, especially the vast lakes that give it the nickname The Third Coast. In 2011, the Sleeping Bear Dunes in Northern Lower Michigan were chosen in a nationwide poll as “the most beautiful place in America” over other locations on the coasts and in Hawaii.

**The Role**

The Director of the Cranbrook Academy of Art will lead the organization in its next phase of setting international standards of excellence in the worldwide study and teaching of these disciplines. The Director is an integral and collaborative member of Cranbrook Educational Community’s leadership team, and a passionate ambassador for Cranbrook’s unique approach to graduate and lifelong education. The Director will be motivated by Cranbrook’s impact and history of innovation to set a course for an equally dynamic and forward-focused future.

In the daily operations of the Academy, the Director will ensure that Cranbrook’s strategic objectives are developed, effectively implemented, and realized in a fiscally responsible manner. The Director oversees all programs, operations, revenue development, and personnel of the Academy. The Director has direct

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supervision of the Dean of the Academy, Director of Academic Programs and Library, Director of Communications, Manager of Enrollment and Financial Services, Budget and Facilities Support Assistant, and Executive Assistant, and collaborates with the Senior Director of Development. The Director reports to the President of Cranbrook Educational Community and collaborates closely with a dedicated Board of 29 Governors and a supportive senior peer group including the directors of the Schools, Art Museum, Institute of Science, Center for Collections and Research, Horizons-Upward Bound, Community and Multi-Cultural Programs, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Advancement Officer.

The Director proactively and collaboratively engages across the CEC, including with students and Artists-in-Residence. Serving as the Academy's primary spokesperson, they also represent Cranbrook to various external constituencies, including alumni, professionals, and patrons nationally and internationally. The Director is collaborative and accessible, able to interact with the wide range of constituencies across the Cranbrook community.

Among the opportunities and challenges awaiting the new Director:

- Providing strategic leadership and management for the next phase of the Academy's development, including sustaining financial and programmatic viability;
- Leading the Academy to advance and champion policies, practices, and opportunities for students, Artists-in-Residence, staff, and the public that support inclusion, diversity, equity and access;
- Preserving and capitalizing on the Academy's mission and unique educational model while leveraging its culture of innovation, collaboration, and intense individual development;
- Pursuing new revenue opportunities to augment traditional tuition models;
- Working with CEC leadership and governance to implement sound and entrepreneurial financial management;
- Recruiting, developing, delegating to, and leading an exceptional team, such that operations, capacity, and systems are strong; ensuring that the right people are in the right roles with the bandwidth and expertise to take responsibility for their respective functions, and that they function highly as a team; creating a culture that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive;
- Strengthening and promoting the Academy's reputation for creative excellence, while recognizing the need to devise, evolve, and grow its programs to provide greater interdisciplinary experiences;
- Extending the Academy's reach within the region and raising its profile in the United States and abroad.

These require a Director who will:

- Lead a highly participatory community in the ongoing development and articulation of its mission and shared values, reflecting both Cranbrook's strong design and arts tradition and its ambitions for the future; advocate for the value of art and design education in a modern and diverse society;
- Lead fundraising and development of new revenue opportunities, in partnership with the Senior Director of Development, President of CEC, and Boards of Governors and Trustees to achieve strategic objectives by identifying, cultivating and stewarding established and new funding sources from individuals, institutions, foundations, governments, and corporations with the key goal of providing levels of financial aid that will attract the best students to Cranbrook and retain them;

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- Be the Academy's principal external spokesperson and ambassador; link and connect the Academy with other leading peer institutions regionally and globally; and engage with a wide range of external constituencies, notably a dynamic and creative alumni body, in advancing all aspects of the Academy; be a great proactive and transparent communicator to the internal CEC;
  - Collaborate in the identification and implementation of successful cross-divisional educational activities and programs, and assist and support Community-wide planning initiatives in order to help further Cranbrook's vision, mission, goals and objectives;
  - In conjunction with the Dean of the Academy who will oversee and guide a team of outstanding Artists-in-Residence, offer advice and support to the Artists-in-Residence and administrative personnel responsible for the Academy's teaching and programs, operations, business and financial affairs, institutional advancement, and student life;
  - Create an environment that fosters safety, respect, transparency, integrity, inclusion, diversity, equity, and access;
  - Work closely with a dedicated Board of Governors committed to the Academy, the Museum and the Cranbrook Educational Community.

### **Candidate Profile**

The successful candidate must combine a passion for Cranbrook's mission, strong vision for the Academy, proven administrative abilities, and a strong commitment to fundraising and supporting new revenue initiatives. The Director will be a collaborative and inclusive leader of the highest integrity, with the ability to motivate and inspire Artists-in-Residence, staff, students, alumni, and administrators around a shared vision. They will be an excellent communicator and listener with strong interpersonal skills, as well as the ability to cultivate relationships with diverse constituencies among Cranbrook's stakeholders and the broader arts, design, and architecture communities.

The next leader of the Academy will have demonstrated a high level of achievement in developing or contributing to a forward-looking strategy for an organization, building the financial, operational, and ideological support for its implementation, and skillfully balancing and aligning the needs of multiple interests. In particular, they should have experience managing institutional transition, and will be energized by advancing the Academy's reputation and engagement regionally, nationally, and internationally. The successful candidate will have the energy, optimism, and entrepreneurial drive to lead the Academy into the future. An outstanding record of teaching, creative activity, and/or leadership in a related field is desired, and candidates from a wide range of backgrounds encouraged. The performance and personal competencies required for the position include the following:

- **Strategic Vision:** The successful candidate will have a track record as an innovative and entrepreneurial thinker and proactive implementer. They will have the vision, creativity, and judgment to lead the Cranbrook Academy of Art successfully and responsibly through a period of important transition. This individual will be sensitive to and have had extensive experience and/or interest in pedagogy and curricula at a graduate education level. They will build on and further develop the leadership role the Academy plays across its various disciplines and in the field more broadly.
- **Management of Teams and Resources:** The successful candidate will be able to translate the Academy's over-arching goals into clear objectives for the Dean, Artists-in-Residence, and staff,

optimizing the strengths of the Academy and addressing its challenges. They will foster a continuing culture of collaboration and mutual respect. Additionally, they will approach the financial oversight of the Academy with an even-handed and reasoned approach to budgetary decision making in full transparency and collaboration with the CEC administration, reporting to the President on the operations and budgetary performance of the Academy.

- **Communicating, Influencing, and Building Relationships:** The Director will be an inspirational communicator, with a degree of personal passion that enables them to bring diverse constituents onboard with the mission and vision of the Academy. This leader will demonstrate an ability to develop a productive and mutually fulfilling relationship with CEC leaders, Artists-in-Residence, staff, and governance, as well as to engage students of the Academy. The successful candidate will exhibit a consensus-seeking and yet decisive approach to problem solving to effectively build support for the Academy’s initiatives. They will persuasively communicate the Academy’s direction and strategy both internally and externally, assuring effective communication among key stakeholders and building the Academy’s brand.
- **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access:** The next Director will bring deep personal commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and access in all aspects of the Academy’s work. They will seek to build an organization that is substantively diverse and reflective of the diversity of the communities Cranbrook serves.
- **Resource Development:** The successful candidate will ideally have experience building an institution’s funding base—in partnership with the advancement team, President, and governance—to increase and diversify financial support. They will be an effective relationship builder able to inspire support of the Academy. In addition to fundraising, the Director will take the lead in determining and supporting new revenue initiatives to augment the Academy’s traditional tuition model. Entrepreneurial drive will be essential.

## Contact

Russell Reynolds Associates has been exclusively retained for this search. Given the need for confidentiality throughout this process, prospective candidates are invited to reach out directly to our search consultants at [CranbrookAcademy@russellreynolds.com](mailto:CranbrookAcademy@russellreynolds.com) with a CV and brief explanation of interest.

Cranbrook is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to age, color, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, race, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or status as a protected veteran.