

# MORRIS & BERGER

## Position Description

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

#### ARMORY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

(Pasadena, CA)

#### THE ORGANIZATION:

##### Mission

The mission of Armory Center for the Arts is to build on the power of art to transform lives and communities through creating, teaching, and presenting the arts.

##### About

The nonprofit and donor-supported Armory Center for the Arts is the Los Angeles region's leading independent institution for contemporary art exhibitions and community arts education. At the core of the Armory's work is a deep commitment to social justice through arts education. The Armory is a community arts center that strives for both excellence and inclusion, rooted in its location but not limited by it.

Today, the Armory provides innovative arts experiences to over 30,000 children, youth and adults each year. Over 80% of arts education programming serves socioeconomically disadvantaged youth and families.

The Armory is a leader in leveraging partnerships that bear fruitful returns for the community. Core program areas are fortified by strong partnerships with regional school districts; city, county, state, and federal government agencies; social service agencies; community-based organizations; institutes of higher education; and local businesses. These partnerships enable the Armory to share its core programs, effectively and with maximum impact, with the most in-need constituencies possible.

#### **Community Art Education**

A key goal of the Armory's mission is to provide engaging, high-quality art classes and art experiences in the region's lowest income neighborhoods in order to advance cultural equity. The Armory's faculty of 60 professional teaching artists works in a variety of settings to transform lives and communities through the power of art. They teach year-round studio art classes for all ages at the Armory's Old Pasadena facility. They collaborate with incarcerated teens to create murals inside juvenile detention camps. They instruct graphic design workshops at continuation high schools in Boyle Heights. They help public school teachers integrate art with math, science and English Language Arts to excite imaginations and inspire critical thinking. They deliver free art classes at low-income elementary schools, inner-city parks, and recreation centers, providing high quality sequential arts courses as well as mentoring for some of our most vulnerable community members.

### **Contemporary Art Exhibitions**

Armory exhibitions inspire dialogue around visual culture and contemporary life, contribute to global discourse in contemporary art, and introduce contemporary visual art to Pasadena, Southern California, and beyond. In addition to critically acclaimed exhibitions by contemporary artists, the Armory exhibitions team also produces a broad range of public programs, including artist residencies, forums, screenings, and performances. Examples of recent exhibitions include *Below the Underground: Renegade Art and Action in 1990s Mexico*; *Los Angeles Poverty Department: What Fuels Development?*; and *Radio Imagination: Artists in the Archive of Octavia E. Butler* in collaboration with Clockshop. Deeply committed to public access, education, and outreach programs, the Armory designs its exhibition and education programs to work together to offer innovative experiences for visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

For more information, please visit [www.armoryarts.org](http://www.armoryarts.org).

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

The Executive Director is responsible for the overall successful operation and performance of the Armory. This includes oversight of all programs and fund development efforts, as well as the fiscal health and structural soundness of the organization. Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director oversees an annual budget of approximately \$2.5 million and a total staff of 20 full-time employees and 50 part-time teaching artists.

Specific responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- **Fundraising** – Taking a leadership role in personally developing new funding sources and opportunities for the Armory; working closely with the development staff and the Board to sustain and grow existing funding, while establishing new relationships and partnerships with prospective donors; working closely with staff and Board to increase fundraising capacity and creating opportunities for engaging volunteers and community members.
- **Leadership** – Articulating the vision and strategic direction of the Armory; articulating both the short term and long term plans to relevant stakeholders and ensuring that overall organizational objectives are met; facilitating the Strategic Planning process with the Board and staff including reporting to the Board on progress in achieving its objectives.
- **Staff Development** – Leading senior management team and staff members to strengthen and support the programmatic and operational goals of the Armory; creating a work environment that attracts and retains top talent; involvement in developing and motivating staff; identifying training needs and tools for ensuring professional growth and implementation of programs and procedures that address these needs; developing effective compensation programs.
- **Financial Management** – Overseeing the financial health of the Armory; ensuring the Board is regularly informed on the financial status of the organization through proper and timely reporting; ensuring that there are adequate controls in place for all funds, physical

assets, and other property; working with staff to select programs for funding under budgetary restraints; implementing adequate risk management; when possible, maintaining adequate reserves to ensure financial health through economic uncertainties.

- **Community Affairs & Outreach** – Actively seeking to expand the scope and reach of the Armory by being the primary spokesperson for the organization and clearly articulating its mission, vision, programs and impact on the community; ensuring that its programs are consistently presented in a strong, positive image; promoting the program advocacy role of the organization; cultivating and maintaining strong relationships with other community organizations, and the national and international arts and education communities.
- **Board Relations** – Enhancing and supporting the work of the Board by promoting and facilitating proactive Board development; advising and informing Board members; effectively contributing to the selection and recruitment of well-positioned Board members; interfacing between Board and staff in an effort to maintain a communicative, supportive relationship; tapping the potential of direct relationships and contacts; and assisting the Board to successfully fulfill its governance and fundraising functions.

#### **TRAITS AND CHARACTERISTICS DESIRED:**

The Executive Director will be an innovative, collaborative and visionary leader who believes in and is able to articulate the power of art to transform lives and communities. The ideal candidate will possess exceptional interpersonal skills and have the ability to interact effectively with staff, Board members, students, artists, community members, civic leaders, school-based administrators, and collaborating institutions. The Executive Director will be a compelling, credible leader, who has the ability to move an organization forward by inspiring and motivating people with creativity, energy and a sense of humor. As such, this individual should not only possess strong personal communication skills and be a good listener, but should also be able to create an environment that is conducive to open and direct communication with individuals of varying degrees of involvement in the organization and its work. The Executive Director should have the ability to think strategically, generate new ideas, plan, set goals and objectives, as well as implement and follow-through on these goals. Leading candidates will champion the mission of the Armory, embrace all aspects of diversity, and invest themselves in the vision and goals of the organization. Experience working with Board members and donors is important as is strong demonstrated success in fundraising efforts. The ideal candidate will have an inclusive leadership style that endorses and encourages creativity, independence, collaboration and consensus building.

#### **CAREER TRACK LEADING TO THIS POSITION:**

The Executive Director will have at least eight years of relevant senior level leadership experience. Although it is preferable that candidates come with a background in the visual arts and with experience and knowledge of critical issues in the arts and education, it is possible that candidates may come from another sector, but demonstrate a strong passion or personal connection to the mission of the Armory. Experience that demonstrates the ability to conceptualize, plan, prioritize, implement, and communicate is essential. Demonstrated successful

experience and comfort with fundraising is essential. The ideal candidate will be a dynamic and forward-thinking individual who has shown success in building widespread support for an organization through collaborative efforts with internal and external stakeholders. The Executive Director should also have a good understanding of effective, forward-looking financial budgeting and implications for nonprofits.

**COMPENSATION:**

A competitive salary and benefits will be provided.

**TO APPLY:**

Please direct inquiries, nominations, and applications, including resume and a compelling letter of interest in confidence to:

Karin Stellar  
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500 North Brand Boulevard, Suite 2150  
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*Electronic submission is encouraged.*