

# IKON



## **Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover)** **Job Description**

Deadline for applications: 6pm, 18 March 2026



## Job Description

<b>Post:</b>	Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover)
<b>Reports to:</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>Salary:</b>	Circa £48,500, subject to review in April 2026
<b>Contract:</b>	We are open to proposals and a flexible approach to this fixed-term maternity cover role. Fixed-term; 12-months
<b>Location:</b>	Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham, B1 2HS is the main working location, although flexible home and offsite working could be discussed, depending on the approach contracted
<b>Closing date:</b>	18 March 2026, 6pm, however Ikon reserve the right to close the application submission period prior to this date once the application capacity is reached

## About Ikon

Ikon is an internationally acclaimed art gallery in central Birmingham, offering free entry to all. Founded in 1965 as an artists-led alternative space, it has evolved into one of the most internationalist artistic programmes in Europe, combining established with emerging artists. Housed in a renovated neo-gothic school building, Ikon is an educational charity for the promotion of visual art of international significance, playing a key role in the cultural life of the West Midlands region.

Ikon's main galleries welcome around 200,000 engagements every year, with many more engaging with off-site projects, national and international collaborations and online. Off-site programmes include artist residencies at HMP Grendon, HMP Springhill and HMP Birmingham, sharing the core belief that art can be a force for good in carceral settings. Ikon Slow Boat hosts the gallery's Youth Programme (IYP) and Ikon Creative Health explores the dynamic intersections of art, health and wellbeing.

In recent years Ikon has exhibited the work of Donald Locke (2025), Seulgi Lee (2025), Htein Lin (2025), Mathab Hussain (2025), Jesse Jones (2024), Dion Kitson (2024), Exodus Crooks (2024), Mali Morris (2023), Melati Suryodarmo (2023). Group exhibitions include *Thread the Loom* (2025), *Friends in Love and War* (2024-25), *Start the Press!* (2024) and *Horror in the Modernist Block* (2022-23).

Ikon is an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community. In its management structure and as an employer, Ikon is pledged to ensure equal opportunities for all, regardless of age, race, gender, disability, marital status or sexual orientation. We actively seek applications from the widest range of applicants.

# Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover) – Job Description

## Overview

Ikon has an exciting opportunity for a creative and enthusiastic individual to join the senior management team at Ikon, working with the team and Board of Trustees as we look to the future.

Ikon currently presents up to 6 on-site exhibitions a year across two floors of galleries. These include solo exhibitions by local, national, and international artists, new commissions, thematic group shows and exhibitions of historical art with a contemporary relevance.

International partnerships and occasional off-site projects are also managed by the Exhibitions Team. These are developed and curated by Ikon's two Artistic Directors with partner institutions and colleagues across Exhibitions and Education. Ikon also collaborates with consultant and guest curators on selected exhibitions.

The Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover) will be line managed by the Chief Executive Officer, with input from the Artistic Director, Exhibitions, and will receive support from the Artistic Director (Education) as required to ensure a smooth transition. Towards the end of the contract, the postholder will work closely with the returning Artistic Director, Exhibitions to ensure continuity and effective delivery of the exhibition programme. During the maternity cover period, they will be a member of and working closely with the Senior Management Team comprising the CEO, Artistic Director (Education), Director of Development & Audience Insights, and Head of Finance.

You will be leading the Exhibitions team, which currently includes the Artistic Director for Exhibitions, a Curator, an Assistant Curator (with responsibility for the public programme), and a Technician. The Technician works across the Facilities Team, supporting both the organisation and technical production of exhibitions and offsite projects. As Artistic Director (Maternity Cover), you will line manage the Curator and Technician, act as the main point of contact for stakeholders and funders on designated exhibitions and projects, and ensure best practice across curating, artist liaison, loans management and exhibition administration.

Your key objective will be to oversee exhibitions, public events and projects in Ikon's forthcoming programme (2026/27), set by the Artistic Director, Exhibitions. You will support the Curator in curating and finalising designated exhibitions and projects, while also contributing to the development of confirmed exhibitions, public events and future projects within Ikon's long-term artistic programme (2028 and beyond). A core part of the role will be to maximise audiences, enhance exhibition funding, and identify commercial opportunities that strengthen the organisation's artistic and financial reach.

## Ways of working

The Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover) vacancy is a fixed-term, 12-month contract. Ikon is open to proposals and a flexible approach to recruiting for this temporary position.

The main working location will be Ikon Gallery, 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham, B1 2HS, although flexible home and offsite working could be discussed, depending on the approach contracted.

The deadline for applications is 18 March 2026, 6pm, however Ikon reserve the right to close the application submission period prior to this date once the application capacity is reached.

## Key Competencies

**We are looking for an individual who:**

- Has experience of leading an exhibitions team
- Is able to communicate with internal and external stakeholders with clarity, diplomacy and build trust quickly
- Prioritise workload and manage expectations around capacity and delivery
- Represent leadership consistent with existing values
- Is flexible and adaptable
- An experienced project manager able to deliver on time and within budget
- Has experience of and is able to support fundraising
- Is highly audience aware, with a strong commitment to advancing Ikon's core values of accessibility, inclusivity and openness.
- Has a 'can do' attitude and is a positive problem solver

## Main Responsibilities

### Strategy & Leadership

- Retain Ikon's artistic visibility during a year where the future Arts Council England funding round is likely to be determined
- Continue Exhibitions input and work closely with the Senior Management Team on strategic vision and future plans
- Become an ambassador for Ikon, advocating for Ikon and attending external meetings to represent Ikon nationally and internationally where necessary
- Leadership of the Exhibitions team in the delivery of exhibitions, public events, projects and partnerships

### Exhibition Development & Planning

- Work with the Artistic Director, Exhibitions, at the beginning and end of the contract period, to ensure the smooth handover of designated exhibitions and projects

- Curate and manage designated exhibitions and projects, in collaboration with Exhibitions, Education and Facilities teams
- Research and write texts for designated exhibitions and projects
- Support the Curator to liaise with artists and their representatives, arts institutions, guest curators, funders and project collaborators relevant to Ikon's artistic programme
- Work closely with the Chief Executive Officer and Head of Finance on budgetary control and the formation of estimates of income and expenditure for exhibitions and projects
- Line manage and give support to the Curator and Technician
- Work with the Artistic Director (Education), to ensure that the public programme and educational activities align with exhibitions and projects on and off site
- Work with the Director of Development & Audience Insights and wider audiences' team to promote the artistic programme
- Ensure exhibitions meet Ikon's standards of artistic quality and excellence; equality, diversity and inclusion; and environmental objectives
- Respond to exhibition and archive enquiries, attend studio visits and curatorial events

### Exhibition Management

- Supervise the work of the Curator, including administration of artwork loans; organisation of travel, accommodation and fees for artists; registrar duties; condition reporting; organisation of artwork transport and insurance; drafting of installation and deinstallation schedules
- Supervise the work of the Curator in maintaining exhibition budgets; ensure artists and contractors are paid in a timely manner
- Review and act as the signatory for artists' contracts and loan agreements. Ensure contract and loan conditions are met
- Oversee sourcing of suppliers and contractors for exhibition production and installations by the Curator and Technician
- Establish exhibition insurance values and arrange extra cover if required, including applying for Government Indemnity
- Undertake due diligence in provenance research for temporary loans and permanent artworks
- Oversee communication between Exhibitions, Facilities and Front of House regarding the maintenance and mediation of exhibitions

### Fundraising

- Work closely with the Director of Development & Audience Insights, Artistic Director (Education) and CEO, to research patrons, trusts, foundations and potential sources of donated income for exhibitions
- Prepare and submit funding applications

- Ensure that terms and conditions of funding grants are met, produce reports for funders in a timely manner
- Give support to the Exhibitions team to develop their skills further in this area

### **Public Programme & Digital**

- Work closely with the Exhibitions team to devise a strong public programme, ensuring all events are audience focused, delivered within budget, and scheduled in good time to enable effective marketing by the Marketing and Audience Insights team.
- Write and edit texts on exhibitions for press releases and Ikon's website
- Contribute ideas, and support colleagues in Marketing & Audience Insight with the coordination and delivery of digital content related to Ikon's exhibitions
- Contribute to talks for student groups, patrons and guests about Ikon and its artistic programme where necessary
- Attend Ikon exhibition launches and openings, talks and off-site events
- Participate in interviews for press (including for print, digital, radio +TV), act as a spokesperson, deliver exhibition tours for visiting journalists and, directed by the Marketing and Audience Insight team, respond to specific press enquiries in a timely fashion.

### **Publications & Documentation**

- Support the Curator to oversee occasional exhibition related publications, printed and digital; liaise with designers; oversee the sourcing of images, image licensing and copyright, copy edit and proofread texts and layouts
- Oversee the drafting and distribution of exhibition publications to artists, stakeholders, local and international distributors
- Ensure exhibitions are fully documented for Ikon's archive and digital platforms
- Maintain Ikon's digital and physical exhibition archive; respond to exhibition and research enquiries

### **Other Duties**

- Attend Senior Management Team meetings and quarterly Board meetings
- Attend, contribute towards, and occasionally chair internal meetings
- Work closely with the Senior Management Team on future vision and future plans
- Advocate for Ikon and become an ambassador for the charity
- Operate in accordance with Ikon's employment, Health and Safety, equal opportunities and other practices, policies and procedures
- Carry out any other duties commensurate with the job role

## Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
<b>Experience</b>	<p>Significant experience of curating and organising exhibitions, including the administration of loans, transport and insurance</p> <p>Significant experience of working with technical and operations teams on the production, logistics and installation of exhibitions</p> <p>Significant experience of projecting and managing project budgets</p> <p>Experience and proven success in fundraising, writing, and submitting reports for funding applications</p> <p>Proven ability to manage multiple exhibitions and projects simultaneously</p>	<p>Experience of managing staff, interns and volunteers</p>
<b>Skills</b>	<p>Strong communication and interpersonal skills with excellent attention to detail</p> <p>Writing and editing texts for exhibitions: press releases, website copy, and publications</p> <p>Experience in the production of publications, including liaison with graphic designers, image licensing, copy editing and proofreading</p>	<p>Knowledge and skills in using SketchUp and Adobe Creative Suite (e.g. Photoshop, InDesign) to support the production of exhibition media and publications</p>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<p>Extensive knowledge of visual and contemporary art and a passion for working with artists</p> <p>Excellent knowledge of ICT and MS Office, especially Word and Excel</p> <p>Knowledge of Government Indemnity and Immunity from Seizure and their application to works of art</p>	
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<p>Reliable, calm under pressure, team player, good prioritisation skills.</p> <p>Enjoy working as part of a team and have a flexible and collaborative approach to work</p>	<p>Confidence in public speaking</p>
<b>Other</b>	<p>Flexible to work weekends / evenings</p> <p>Willingness to undertake training as required</p>	

## How to Apply

Please send the following to [office@ikon-gallery.org](mailto:office@ikon-gallery.org) by 6pm, Wednesday 18 March 2026 (BST).

Please use the subject line 'Artistic Director, Exhibitions (Maternity Cover) Application'

- A Cover Letter (no more than two A4 pages)
- A CV
- Please also complete the online [Equal Opportunities Monitoring form](#)

Please note Ikon reserve the right to close the application submission period prior to the date listed, once the application capacity is reached.

Interviews are expected to take place on Friday 27 March 2026 at Ikon Gallery.  
Expected start date is beginning to mid May 2026.

### Note

Applicants must be able to provide evidence of their right to work in the UK.

Ikon requires all staff to obtain a Government Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, in accordance with Ikon's Child and Vulnerable Adults Protection Policy. You will be required to provide the necessary documentation for the DBS check to be carried out. Ikon will cover the cost of obtaining the DBS check and reserves the right to request additional checks at any time in the future.