Emerging Curator Fellowship

Visual arts & new media
Individual

This fellowship is designed to support the growth and development of curatorial talent by contracting an individual or ensemble of individuals to develop content for an exhibition of Albertan visual art.

This initiative is intended to bring a new perspective to the artworks and artists featured in the AFA Art Collection while increasing visibility for pieces in mediums and sizes that currently have limited circulation within AFA's TREX exhibition program and art placement initiatives.

The final exhibition produced as a result of this fellowship will be displayed at the AFA *art house* in Calgary.

Deadline information
January 31, 2028
Who can apply

This opportunity is open to emerging curators **with less than six years** of curatorial experience but a strong interest in developing their practice. Collaborating curatorial teams/collectives who are artists, art historians, curators, arts administrators, educators or from any other related discipline are eligible to apply to this program if all project curators meet the individual eligibility criteria.

Proposals will be accepted from any of the following applicants:

- Applicants 18 years of age or older
- Individuals with either a college degree or undergraduate studies from a recognized institution
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents with a connection to Alberta. This includes:
    - Alberta curators – a curator, or curatorial team, with an Alberta address as their primary residence

- Expatriate curators – curators who were previously an Alberta resident but no longer have an Alberta address
- Non-Alberta curators – A non-Alberta curator may be considered to have a meaningful Alberta connection if they meet one or more of the following criteria:
  - Curated or contributed to exhibitions presented in Alberta
  - Collaborated with Alberta-based artists, Indigenous communities, or cultural organizations
  - Conducted research or published work relevant to Alberta's cultural or historical context
  - Participated in Alberta-based residencies, fellowships, or professional development programs
  - Self-identify as Indigenous and have family, cultural or Treaty ties to Alberta.

Please note: applicants that currently hold an open AFA project grant are eligible to compete for, and enter into, a contract with the AFA through the Emerging Curators Fellowship.

Ineligible applicants

The following applicants are ineligible:

- Applicants with more than six years of professional, curatorial experience
- Applicants who are employed full-time in a curatorial role at a museum, gallery, or cultural institution
- Applicants currently enrolled in an undergraduate program
- Applicants, including ensembles, who are incorporated under either provincial or federal legislation
- Previous recipients of this fellowship.

What does this funding support?

Individuals or curatorial teams are invited to view the AFA Art Collection holdings and to submit a proposed exhibition concept to be displayed in the AFAs *art house* gallery in Calgary, Alberta.

A contract worth up to $15,000 per proposal is available for this project. A maximum of one fellowship will be awarded.

Once awarded, the successful emerging curators will work with AFA staff to fully develop the exhibition concept and design and implement an accompanying educational enhancement in support of the exhibition.

The Fellowship is structured as a two-year initiative.

The selected fellow will be required to work with assigned AFA staff throughout the project to:

- Curate an exhibition of up to 20 artworks from the AFA Art Collection for the approximately 3000 square feet art house gallery space in Calgary. *The number of artworks in the final exhibition may vary depending on the size of the artworks and the feasibility and complexity of installation.*
- Prepare a curatorial statement, a 150-word introductory panel and accompanying object labels (max. 25 words each) for the exhibition.
- Complete a schematic design for the layout and look of the exhibition in consultation with AFA staff.
- Participate in two on-site research/development visits to the AFA Collection in Edmonton and one visit to the art house located in the Edison building in Calgary. *If you are located outside of Edmonton and/or Calgary, please take travel into account in your budget and proposal.*
- Develop one or more educational enhancement(s) to accompany the physical exhibition such as a gallery guide, lesson plans, virtual exhibition or public program such as events or workshops.

Selected fellow(s) will receive:

- $15,000.00 for an individual or team/collective
- Mentorship from AFA staff in developing the final exhibit concept and design
- Physical access to the AFA Art Collection for exhibition research and development
- Assistance in curatorial artwork selection and access to high-resolution digital images of artworks (as required).
- AFA support for the preparation, install and promotion of the exhibition at the AFA *art house* gallery.

Ineligible projects

The following projects are ineligible:

- Exhibitions prepared as part of post-secondary programs or where academic credits are given
- Exhibitions already completed or due to be completed before the commencement of the funding period (funding will not be provided retroactively)
- Exhibitions that have been previously published, produced or exhibited
- Costs for business start-up and the purchase of basic equipment (for example, personal computer and software)

How to apply

The AFA will accept fellowship applications by mail or email at the address listed below.

Email applications must be received by 2 pm of the deadline date; while all mailed applications must be postmarked with the application date.

Please note:

- The AFA does not accept late or incomplete applications
- Applications must be received prior to the commencement of the project
- Projects involving more than one artist must be submitted by one individual on behalf of the ensemble or group. The AFA will not accept separate applications for the same project.

Applications can be mailed or emailed to:

Elizabeth Capak, Art Collections Consultant -- Acquisitions
Alberta Foundation for the Arts (Arts Branch)
10708 105 Avenue
Edmonton, AB T5H 0A1

Email: elizabeth.capak@gov.ab.ca

What to include in your application

Applicants must submit:

- Statement of Interest (max. 500 words) addressing:

    - Why you are interested in curating
    - How this Fellowship would help support your curatorial career
    - Your curatorial values and approach
    - Your past knowledge and experience working with Alberta's visual arts
- Resume or CV outlining relevant experience of all curators involved
- Exhibition Proposal (max. 500 words) including:
    - Proposed theme or concept
    - Target audience, engagement strategy and proposed educational enhancement(s)
    - Proposed project timeline and budget. *Please note business start-up costs or basic equipment purchases are ineligible.*
- Work Samples:
    - Gallery text from two previous curatorial projects (maximum 3 pages, pdf) along with applicable artwork label text (maximum of 4 labels, pdf).
    - Up to 6 images of past curatorial or artistic work (in jpeg format, up to 5 MB each)

How will my application be assessed?

Applications will be assessed based on the following:

- Applicant's experience and potential for growth and development based on their Resume/CV, Statement of Interest and past work samples
- Quality, innovation and originality of the exhibition proposal
- Ability to engage Alberta audiences and increase the visibility for pieces in mediums and sizes that currently have limited circulation within AFA's TREX exhibition program and art placement initiatives
- Quality and creativity of proposed engagement strategy and educational enhancement(s)
- Feasibility of the proposed project and timeline
- Budget accuracy and feasibility

Eligible proposals will be scored by a panel of three experienced arts professionals.

When will I hear?

The projected start date for successful proposals is February 2026.

Other Key Dates:

- Draft Exhibition Plan Submission is due in December 2026.
- The AFA art house exhibition installation and opening is expected to occur in May 2027, followed by the implementation of the exhibition enhancements.

Conditions

A general service contract must be signed between the Contractor(s) and the Foundation before the fellowship can commence.

Contractor(s) must carry personal and automobile liability insurance. Proof of insurance must be provided to the AFA before commencing the Services.

Funding acknowledgement

Whenever possible, you must acknowledge the AFA for financial support in any publicity prepared in relation to the project, including electronic, print, or visual material.

Download versions of the AFA logo and guidelines for usage.

Reporting

Any specific reporting requirements will be outlined in the final contract between successful applicants and the AFA.

Helpful resources

The Alberta Foundation for the Arts (AFA) stewards a vibrant art collection of nearly 10,000 artworks, highlighting the creativity of over 2,160 Alberta artists across multiple media. Through ongoing support from the AFA, Alberta's artistic community, and the public, the collection continues to grow reflecting the diversity of artists and practices in Alberta. View the collection online at Collections – AFA Virtual Museum.

The AFA is committed to increasing public circulation and recognition of the AFA Art Collection. In addition to our artwork loans, placement and Travelling Exhibitions (TREX) programs, the AFA recently launched a new venue to share these works: AFA *art house.* Located in the heart of Downtown Calgary in The Edison building, *art house* is a visual arts gallery dedicated to exhibiting Alberta artists and the AFA Art Collection.

Learn more at https://affta.ab.ca/art-house/

Art Collections Consultant - Acquisitions

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