

The Bows

Artistic Director

Call for Applications

The Bows is seeking applications for the position of Artistic Director

Deadline for applications: May 8, 11:59 pm MST

Salary: \$53,600 per annum (+ 3% for cost of living every two years)

Term: Full-time, permanent

Healthcare benefits: Included (after a three-month probationary period)

Hours per week: 35

Location: Mohkínstsis (Calgary)

Start date: June 1, 2025

Vacation: 5 Weeks Vacation

The Bows welcomes applicants with a wide range of skills, experiences, approaches, and perspectives. We strongly encourage applications from racialized individuals and those from LGBTQ2S+ communities, who will be prioritized in the hiring process. Applicants from all backgrounds, lived experiences, and levels of experience are encouraged to apply.

We will be conducting rolling interviews; early applications are strongly encouraged. Longlisted candidates may be contacted as applications are received.

Shortlisted candidates may be invited to submit a curatorial initiative/programming proposal as well as portfolio examples to support the assessment of their experience, writing abilities, and areas of interest.

About the organization:

The Bows (formerly Untitled Art Society) is an artist-run centre in Mohkínstsis (Calgary), Alberta, Treaty 7 Territory. Our core goals are: to support the development, creation, and presentation of new work by early-career artists; to provide affordable studio space for Mohkínstsis (Calgary)-based artists; and to broaden the reach and scope of contemporary art in our region, with the ultimate, if ambitious, aim to engage this city with artistic work that explores pressing contemporary issues.

We work toward these goals with a human-centric approach that prioritizes the wholesale support of artists; creative and radical uses of spaces outside of the gallery; and a curatorial focus on projects and practices that dovetail with the specific socio-political, cultural, colonial, economic, and Indigenous histories and contexts of Alberta. Ultimately, The Bows strives to empower and support artists to imagine radical futures, and to invite those inside and outside of our community to be co-conspirators in realizing such futures.

About the position:

The Artistic Director works closely with the Systems Director and Board of Directors to nurture existing and build new, strong, and vibrant connections with The Bows' many communities through the organization's programming, including exhibitions, the exterior billboard, artist talks and panels, performances, workshops, publications, mentorships, and other initiatives. They play a key role in fostering community relationships through both programming and organizational operations, with an emphasis on continually developing and renewing the organization's mandate in relation to its artistic priorities and the communities it supports.

The Artistic Director is responsible for the organization's curatorial and artistic direction, working with the Programming Committee to research, invite, confirm, schedule, and support artists across diverse programming contexts. Building on a curatorial model that has prioritized equity, reciprocity, and responsiveness to local contexts, the Artistic Director will have the opportunity to shape and evolve programming in ways that align with their own artistic priorities and approaches.

The Bows operates within a non-hierarchical organizational structure, with the Artistic Director and Systems Director working collaboratively in parallel roles and sharing responsibility for the organization's leadership, direction, and development. As an integral part of the organization, the Artistic Director contributes to decision-making processes, including policy development and the ongoing articulation of The Bows' mandate.

Equity:

The Bows is mindful of and proactive about barriers and challenges that an equity-seeking individual could face in an organization built upon colonial logics and white supremacist traditions. In this time of organizational growth and change, The Board and staff are also committed to and responsible for the ongoing work of unsettling colonial systems, which includes a requirement to be ever-changing and open to other forms of operating. In this spirit, we understand support as a mutual practice, where flexibility is paired with reliability, and care is practiced through shared responsibility.

The Bows Board and staff will work with the incoming Artistic Director to mitigate the harmful effects of institutionalized colonialism and white supremacy. We aspire to continue to unsettle these foundations, as an organization and as the individuals that comprise it, and we look forward to working in these ways with the incoming Artistic Director.

Specific Responsibilities and Duties:

Programming and Artistic Stewardship

- Organize and facilitate gallery programs with support from the Systems Director and Programming Committee
- With support from the Systems Director, create an impactful exhibition and programming schedule that meets the following criteria: engaging for local communities; relevant to the Bows mandate, vision, and audience; feasible; and with continuity between programs
- Provide programming artists with curatorial guidance throughout the period of engagement, assisting with the delivery of lists of works, insurance values, and communications materials, including exhibition texts, artists' biographies, promotional images, etc

- Work with artists to deliver programming materials promptly and in accordance with gallery communications schedules
- With support from other staff, receive or package and condition the report work upon arrival and departure
- Work with artists to develop public-facing programming in alignment with exhibitions and interest of the public
- Working with the Systems Director and other staff, ensure the physical gallery is accessible to the public during regular open hours.

Artist Relations

- Create a positive environment for artists to work and take creative risks, while also communicating and respecting the policies and limits of the organization
- Professionally communicate with artists via email and phone/video calls, or through in-person meetings to arrange exhibitions and programming, all within a timely manner
- Clearly communicate timelines and deliverables to artists and other community partners for exhibitions and outreach
- Effectively relay project timelines and expectations to other staff and contractors, wherever necessary
- With support from other staff, receive or package and condition the report work upon arrival and departure

Administrative:

- Work with the Systems Director to establish project budgets
- Work with the Systems Director to find and apply for various funding opportunities
- Assist the Systems Director with year-end reports, including financial statements, CADAC, and interim and final grant reports
- Contribute to the upkeep of digital and physical files and archives

Board of Directors:

- Report programming progress to the Board of Directors on an approximately monthly basis with the Systems Director
- Provide the Board of Directors with programming projections for the upcoming year, for feedback and advice on changes to plans in board meetings, or over email, where time-sensitive
- Work with the Board of Directors and the Systems Director to implement organizational decisions

Outreach and Communications:

- Work with the Systems Director and Communications Committee to develop and distribute: timely, engaging, accurate, and professional communications for public-facing programs
- Oversee gallery communications, ensuring they are timely, engaging, accurate, and professional
- Steerhead outreach efforts, such as membership drives and educational events, including exhibition walkthroughs, either scheduled or impromptu
- Maintain and provide outreach to the organization's membership, ensuring members are kept informed regarding programming and events
- Adhering to policies, create a welcoming environment for all community members

Mentorship:

- Build and sustain reciprocal, non-hierarchical mentorship relationships with artists, staff, interns, students, and early-career arts professionals'
- Provide ongoing guidance and feedback across all stages of artistic and professional development
- Facilitate regular check-ins to support goal setting, skill development, and knowledge-sharing
- Create meaningful opportunities for mentees to engage in programming and organizational activities
- Support professional development, including exhibition-making, grant writing, and navigating arts context
- Foster an environment of mutual learning, care, and accountability built on a foundation of respect for artists' autonomy, confidentiality, and consent

Qualifications:

The ideal candidate will bring a combination of the following experiences, skills, and approaches:

- Experience developing, curating, and delivering contemporary art exhibitions and public programming
- Demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with artists, providing curatorial guidance and support throughout the development and presentation of their work
- Strong organizational and administrative skills, including experience with project budgeting, scheduling, and managing multiple timelines

- Experience with grant writing, reporting, and/or familiarity with public arts funding structures in Canada
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to produce and oversee clear, engaging public-facing materials
- A collaborative, non-hierarchical approach to leadership, with the ability to contribute to shared decision-making processes with staff and Board members
- Experience building and maintaining relationships with artists, communities, and publics through outreach and programming
- A demonstrated commitment to equity, anti-racism, and anti-colonial practices, and an understanding of the social, cultural, and political contexts that shape artistic production, particularly within Mohkíinstsis (Calgary), Alberta, Treaty 7 Territory
- Experience with mentorship, or a willingness to support the development of emerging artists and arts professionals in a reciprocal and supportive environment
- Willingness to engage in hands-on, day-to-day gallery operations, including occasional physical tasks and evening or weekend work as required

Reciprocity (Roles and Responsibilities of The Bows):

The Bows is committed to wholeheartedly supporting the incoming Artistic Director with the understanding that such support will need to be tailored to the idiosyncratic needs and interests of the hired candidate. The Systems Director, as well as the Board of Directors, are responsible for providing a generous transition and learning period for the incoming Artistic Director. The Board and staff are also committed to and responsible for the ongoing work of unsettling colonial systems, which includes a requirement to be ever-changing and open to other forms of operating. The Bows is committed to being a caring, transparent, flexible, and human-centred employer; we intend to continue to approach HR as “human relations” rather than “human resources.”

Working Conditions:

- Lifting and physical tasks may be required
- Some evening or weekend work may be necessary for events or programs
- Access to workspace and necessary equipment provided

To apply:

Applicants are encouraged to send a letter of interest, including artistic and personal priorities, ideas, past work, past experiences, and/or any other relevant information, and CV in one PDF to board@thebows.org (subject: Artistic Director) no later than 11:59 pm (MDT) on May 8, 2026

Candidates are also welcome to submit a video application of no longer than 5 minutes.

Questions about the position or application process can be directed to current Systems Director Jasmine Hynes at jasmine@thebows.org.