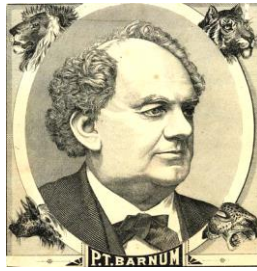


# The BARNUM



# MUSEUM

## **Barnum Museum Overview:**

The Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc. is undergoing a major construction and re-envisioning effort to reimagine the guest experience of the prominent Connecticut Museum attraction. During this time, Barnum Museum operations focus on ongoing research and development initiatives related to the re-envisioning, collections management, and providing digital and out-reach programming. The Museum site is not available for general public visitation during construction.

## **Curator**

The Barnum Museum seeks an experienced, creative and energetic individual with a passion for engaging the public with innovative mission-driven work, to serve as the Curator of its diverse collections of objects, archive, and digital resources. Above all, the candidate must demonstrate an enthusiasm for a non-traditional Museum environment, and desire an opportunity to become part of a team of innovative thinkers and creators. The Curator will be an instrumental member of the re-envisioning process and provide expertise associated with planning and development. This will include but not be limited to exhibition content development, research and planning, conservation management, all cataloging and tracking management, installation methods and protocols, and staff oversight. The Curator will play a key role in the transformation, and serve as the collections liaison to the Museum Design firm.

## **Barnum Museum Mission:**

*To inspire curiosity, creativity and confidence through instructive entertainment.*

The Museum upholds P.T. Barnum's original 'instructive entertainment' principals through a diverse and innovative thematic programs that inspire curiosity, and encourage new ways of seeing the world as a place of knowledge, opportunity and wonder.

**Purpose:** To be a preeminent institution of learning, committed to intellectual exchange and community engagement.

## **Qualifications, Education and Experience:**

The position requires a self-motivated, organized, curious, creative problem-solver with excellent research, written, public speaking and interpersonal communication skills; the ability to manage time and motivate people; and a facility for cross disciplinary thinking that embraces new media technologies. The candidate must have advanced knowledge of 19<sup>th</sup> century American and European history, material culture, and decorative arts, with advanced curatorial and registrarial experience.

Strong technical and digital skills are essential and should include proficiency in Microsoft Office, and various collection management systems. Candidate must demonstrate an ability and desire to learn other digital platforms as new technologies are introduced in the field.

- A Master's degree is required, with advanced degree in museum studies, history, humanities, material culture, art history & natural science, anthropology, and/or other disciplines that related to the mission of the Museum. Additional expertise in another area of American fine or decorative arts, and/or archival training is a plus.
- Minimum of five (5) years of senior-level curatorial experience in a museum setting.



- Advanced expertise in artifact, art and document handling procedures, and storage best practices.
- Knowledge of archives processing and preparation of finding aids.
- Experience managing digital collections, and knowledge of digitization preservation standards.
- Knowledge of and experience with principles of advanced research and exhibition development, and all related collections management best practices.
- Demonstrates grant-writing skills.
- Experience managing long- and short-term loans to other institutions.
- Ability to successfully communicate orally, over digital platforms, and in writing to a wide variety of constituents, with the capacity to synthesize complex information in a manner that is engaging, inspirational, relevant, and accessible to the general public.
- Commitment to accuracy, consistency, and attention to detail.
- Proficiency in planning and organization.
- Computer software skills including but not limited to Microsoft Office, Adobe software, and collections management and or archives management database systems. Familiarity with Collective Access is a plus.
- Ability to manage multiple projects to successful completion on time.
- Experience as Project Manager for state and/or national-funded grant projects is a plus.
- Team player able to work collaboratively with staff and other departments within the museum.
- Ability to adapt quickly to changing priorities.

## **Responsibilities**

The Curator's responsibilities encompass the care, management and interpretation of a large and diverse object and art collection, archive, and a high quality digital image resource collection. The Curator interfaces with the public by responding to inquiries, preparing and delivering presentations both in-person and on camera, and creating occasional custom tours of collections. As a senior representative of the Museum, the Curator will be engaged in various public programs, and will make presentations at relevant conferences. Curator will also be a key player in the development of new exhibitions for the reimagined Barnum Museum (currently underway), working with exhibition developer BRC Imagination Arts. Specific responsibilities:

- Candidate will demonstrate eagerness to learn the vast and complex history of P.T. Barnum and his genre in 19<sup>th</sup> century America.
- Enforce the Collections Management & Code of Ethics Policy to ensure best practices are followed. Manage the acquisition, documentation, maintenance, care, and use of the collections. Develop, implement, review, and revise as necessary collections management policies and procedures in accordance with AAM guidelines and Museum protocols.
- Work with Museum Designers to assist in the development of the Barnum Museum's new Interpretive Master Plan exhibitions (expected to begin in 2023-2024).
- Oversee and participate in the overall care of the historic collection, including cataloging, examination, conservation assessments, preventative maintenance activities, housing, and storage. Maintain a working knowledge of conservation practices, the ability to assess treatment proposals and effectively communicate with conservators to ensure that the appropriate treatment goals are understood. (All advanced conservation is contracted with outside professionals.)
- Oversee the care, preservation, identification, interpretation of objects in the collection at the onsite collection storage spaces, off-site storage facility, and items loaned to or by the Museum.



- Manage incoming and outgoing loans. Investigate loan requests to ensure appropriate timing, facility conditions, travel requirements, and customs issues prior to approving.
- Conduct periodic inspections, and inventories of the collections on a rotating basis.
- Serve as the collections' first-responder in the event of an emergency. Knowledge regarding the management of insurance claims documentation and tracking, finding conservators, and managing records of damage is a plus.
- Participate in the development of educational programming or program planning for students, interns, and adult/life-long learner audiences. Collaborate with the Museum Educator to develop and expand collections-based educational programs for school-age children.
- Expand public access to archival finding aids, and object records and images.
- Generate and plan electronic/digital content for social media, distance learning initiatives, and promotion of the Museum, designed to engage visitors with the Museum and its surroundings.
- Work in conjunction with digital media specialists to develop content and provide support materials for the Museum's YouTube, Podcast, and other digital content development production.
- Maintain and develop partnerships with contributing scholars, curators, and our network of colleague institutions to ensure accurate research and interpretation, and to refer research inquiries to appropriate other sources as needed.
- Build partnerships that enhance community engagement.
- As needed, communicate and work with staff regarding scheduling of exhibitions, special projects, maintenance, rotation/movement of objects, and promote safety awareness.
- Supervise and train other curatorial staff, interns, and volunteers as necessary to carry out assignments utilizing on professional data management systems.
- Serve as a spokesperson about related history, collections and exhibitions to community groups, educators, collectors, staff, volunteers, and other interested parties.
- Conduct scholarly research, and engage scholars in research on the collections to further collective knowledge and augment accuracy; seek opportunities to expand interpretation beyond traditional narratives.
- Respond to all collections-related inquiries promptly, and seek to assist with an alternate resource if the Museum cannot provide an answer or resource.
- Initiate, coordinate, collaborate, and participate in the development of grants and fundraising proposals along with the Executive Director and the Director of Philanthropy.
- For collections-focused grants, work with the Assistant Director to oversee the administration of funds secured, and ensure funds are properly expended and reports are filed in compliance with deadlines.
- Attend special events including exhibition openings, lectures, fundraising events, and other activities as a representative of the Barnum Museum. Occasional early morning, evening, and some weekend hours are required.
- Establish annual goals for Curatorial Department, and serve as staff liaison to the Board of Directors Collections Committee.
- Collaborate with Executive Director, other staff members, and colleagues to ensure museum goals, objectives, and objectives are met, including the development of budgets and reports.
- Inform the Executive Director of potential issues or concerns in a timely fashion, and if necessary, work with colleagues to strategically address issues.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the Executive Director.



**Physical Requirements and Working Conditions:**

- Work is performed primarily in an office environment, as well as in storage areas, and historic structures with general environmental conditions typical of historic museum sites. Appropriate personal protective equipment provided if needed.
- Ability to go up and down stairs with ease.
- May require sitting, standing, and walking for prolonged periods indoors.
- Tasks will occasionally require bending, squatting, reaching, and working above shoulders, grasping forcefully, as well as packing, carrying, and lifting boxes of collections, standing on a ladder, and using a vacuum.
- Ability to operate hand and power tools and equipment, assist in moving large crates and boxes, as well as to lift 30 lbs. or more, as required to perform tasks associated with exhibition installation, and collections management.
- Consistent with its obligations under the law, the Barnum Museum will provide reasonable accommodation to any employee with a disability who requires accommodation to perform the essential functions of their job.

**Benefits**

- Health Insurance
- Paid time off (vacation, sick days, most holidays)
- Professional development opportunities

**Terms:**

The Curator will work as part of a team consisting of Museum staff and digital specialists, with contributing designers, trades and vendors, and our network of contributing scholars and institutions. The Curator will work within the policies and procedures established by the Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc.

Position: Curator  
Location: 820 Main Street, Bridgeport, CT  
Salary Range: \$50,000-\$70,000  
Hours Weekly: Full-time

The Barnum Museum Foundation, Inc. is committed to a policy of Equal Opportunity Employment and nondiscrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, marital status, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, age, disability, veteran status, or any other classification protected under state or federal law. This full-time, benefit-eligible position has an estimated starting salary range of \$50,000-\$70,000. Rank and salary will be commensurate with experience. Review of applications will begin on March 31, 2023 and will continue until the position is filled.

**COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements:**

All employees are required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 unless otherwise exempt due to medical or religious reasons. If not previously vaccinated, new employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19 no less than six weeks prior to their start date. New hires will be required to show proof of vaccination on their first day of work. No documentation regarding vaccination status will be required



prior to the start date; however, a case for exemption from the requirement must be made in writing to the Executive Director at least three weeks prior to start date.

### **How to Apply:**

Interested applicants should submit a cover letter, resume, and two work samples (e.g. writing and/or exhibition descriptions/collateral materials, recorded video or other web-based content, etc.) to: John Swing, Asst. Director - Barnum Museum – [jswing@barnum-museum.org](mailto:jswing@barnum-museum.org).

203-331-1104 ext. 100

**Job Posting:** 3/15/2023 – 4/20/2023

### **About the Barnum Museum:**

The Barnum Museum, originally founded as the Barnum Institute of Science and History, was established in 1891 by Phineas Taylor Barnum (1810-1891) to promote the cultural heritage of Bridgeport, Connecticut, and to serve as a permanent home for the programs and collections of the Bridgeport Scientific Society and the Fairfield County Historical Society. Although Barnum did not live to see the building completed in 1893, it continues to promote Barnum's instructive entertainment philosophies.

Succumbing to the Great Depression, the Barnum Institute ceded ownership of the building to the City of Bridgeport in 1933. During the 1960s a group of citizens and city officials stimulated new community interest in Barnum's Museum and restored the building. The Museum continues to represent a public-private partnership between City officials, community, civic, business leaders, and educational and cultural representatives who join in a region-wide effort to govern and lead the Barnum Museum. In 2010, the historic building was struck by an anomalous EF1 tornado, and in 2011, the Museum amassed additional damage from Hurricane Irene, with Super Storm Sandy striking another catastrophic blow in 2012. Today, a massive restoration and re-envisioning effort to restore the Museum back to full operational capacity and forging ahead with a new, innovative Interpretive Master Plan to restore the site to full operational capacity, once again serving as a beacon for economic vitality and community engagement.

The Barnum Museum is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, soon to be designated a National Historic Landmark. The building is our most significant artifact and follows all Secretary of the Interior Guidelines for historic places. Currently, the exterior of the historic building is undergoing major restoration and repair. Work is expected to take eighteen months for completion. During this time, Museum leadership is continuing its crucial capital campaign to re-imagine the Museum's guest experience.

### **Barnum Museum Major Re-Envisioning Campaign:**

With over 35,000 square feet of gallery, entertainment, educational, and retail space, the Barnum Museum is one of Connecticut's most significant national landmarks and has been one of the State's most unique tourist destinations for over a century. In re-envisioning the Museum, the goal is to create an attraction which will draw visitors from across the country to experience one of New England's first immersive history museums - an alliance of unparalleled historical artifacts and high-tech modern storytelling. The Barnum Museum of the future will be a 21st century attraction showcasing vibrant exhibits that offer learning through exploration, imagination and innovation, stimulating the power of creativity and sparking intellectual curiosity!



We will achieve this goal by immersing the audience in Barnum's world: his life stories, contributions, failures, flaws, and monumental achievements; and their continuing resonance in our world today. By giving guests an emotional, immersive, cinematic and story-driven experience, the re-imagined Barnum Museum will transform and expand perceptions of Barnum to portray him not just as a showman but as a person with life-long struggles and triumphs, a remarkable thinker, entrepreneur, philanthropist, a force for good, and timeless role model for the power and strength of the indomitable human spirit.

In Barnum's words: *"The one end aimed at was to make men and women think and talk and wonder, and, as a practical result, go to the Museum. This was my constant study and occupation."* We aspire to these are words everyday as we re-envision and re-imagine the Barnum Museum, and these words are at the very heart of our re-envisioning campaign.

