



The Humanities Center Public Humanities Fellowship Program
2019 Position Descriptions

Position 1

LOCATION: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

TITLE: Creating a Curatorial Policy for CLP

DATES: May 13-August 9

Organization Description

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's (CLP) story is very much interwoven with the story of Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania. Since 1895, CLP has been present for every challenge and opportunity facing our community. As great things continue to happen in our region with increased business investment, new residents, and other growth opportunities, the library is ready to help all people thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Guided by our mission of literacy and learning and our community's vision for the future, our libraries have become destination spaces for information, technology, community dialogue, social connection, and fun. We are not limited by a vision of what the library has been in the past and have spent the last several years listening, improving, and introducing innovative new ideas.

For more information on Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, see www.carnegielibrary.org.

Position Description

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is looking for a public humanities fellow to lead the development of a curatorial policy and program plan for fine art exhibitions in CLP locations.

Public libraries have a unique role as open, free, public spaces of learning and culture. CLP's 2018-2022 Strategic Plan emphasizes the importance of developing welcoming and vibrant spaces for our community to gather and connect, with a goal of creating destination spaces that engage people and encourage library use.

One of the key ways that we can meet that goal is to work with Pittsburgh's community of artists to bring fine arts exhibitions to library spaces across the city. Because we are a trusted, familiar space for a broad section of the community, we are well positioned to connect people across the city to new experiences in the arts.

In the area of art curation, our ambition exceeds a traditional librarian skillset, and so we are seeking help from a humanities student to help our organization understand the best practices, opportunities,

and limitations in fine art exhibition in our public library spaces. While our open and unsecured spaces will never be able to function as museum or gallery-quality exhibition spaces, we believe that we can make a unique contribution to the art exhibition environment in Pittsburgh.

Responsibilities:

Under the supervision of the Adult Programming Coordinator, the Public Humanities Fellow will:

- Conduct an environmental scan of traditional and nontraditional fine arts exhibition spaces in the region and analyze the results to determine areas of opportunity.
- Research and document a set of best practices for exhibiting fine art in a public library, including:
 - A “Collection Development Policy” outlining library criteria for inclusion of artwork in our spaces, including methods for discerning quality and content, priorities, and connections to library mission.
 - Methods to ensure that art exhibitions are inclusive and representative of our community and are as accessible as possible.
 - Practical considerations and scope guidelines for exhibition of art works, including security, safety, environmental conditions, lighting, and otherwise suitable space for exhibition.
 - Methods for encouraging engagement and getting feedback from community members.
- Get input on library art curation from community stakeholders and compile a list of potential partner organizations and individuals.
- Consult with and train library staff who will implement guidelines.

Qualifications:

- Experience in arts and cultural education – an understanding of basic fine arts curatorial practices a plus
- Experience conducting research with academic, trade, and primary resources
- Ability to work independently and as a team member with CLP staff
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Organization and time management skills
- Strong communication skills

Position 2

LOCATION: Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

TITLE: Researching CLP's Special Collections

DATES: May 13-August 9

Organization Description

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Position Description

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is looking for a humanities graduate student who will help expand and enhance research on special collections within the library that have been identified as coming from specific donors. These donors are often tied directly to Andrew Carnegie and the library received these personal libraries or individual books between the late 1800s and early 1900s. We hope that this research will produce a more complete picture of our collection provenance, donor intent, donor biographical information and relationship with the City of Pittsburgh, Local/Regional History and/or Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

Materials for use in the project include an archive, minutes, donor records, and additional materials held within peer institutions. Goals for the project include documenting the findings and resources into a final report that completes this work or positions it for future research.

Responsibilities:

The Public Humanities Fellow will:

- Complete an assessment of archival and resource materials related to these collections.
- Conduct research into the provenance of selected materials, seeking to understand more about the lives of the donors, the possible origin of the materials, and the context of the donors and materials as it relates to the history of the Pittsburgh region.
- Work with CLP staff to create a plan for future use of the materials.
- Work with CLP staff to craft a final report that can be used both internally and externally for community education.
- Work with CLP staff to make recommendations about potential future research, programming, and other uses of the results of this project.

Qualifications:

- Experience with primary research – experience conducting biographical and/or archival research a plus
- Ability to work independently and as a team member with CLP staff
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Organization and time management skills

Position 3

LOCATION: Carnegie Museum of Natural History

TITLE: Benchmarking the Anthropocene

DATES: May 13-August 9

Organization Description

Mission:

The mission of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH) is to “use our collections and scientific expertise to create knowledge that inspires an understanding of natural heritage, communicate the unity and interdependence of humanity and nature, and advocate for the protection of the earth and its inhabitants, while encouraging participation in the natural sciences.”

History:

Founded by Andrew Carnegie over 120 years ago, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh (Carnegie Institute) is the region’s largest and most far-reaching provider of informal educational and cultural experiences. Today, Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh serves as a catalyst for growth and knowledge; offers a home to thinking and inquisitive children and adults; acts as a collector, guardian, and interactive presenter of cultural and scientific treasures and ideas; and supports the region by attracting visitors and promoting economic development. Comprising four distinct museums (CMNH, Carnegie Museum of Art, Carnegie Science Center, and Andy Warhol Museum), Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh touches the lives of more than 1.34 million people annually. More than maintaining priceless collections and presenting interesting exhibitions, the museums’ work is about connecting with diverse audiences by appealing to each and every person’s desire to explore, to question, to learn, and to be inspired—at any age.

Recognizing the inherent connection between history, the natural world, and art, CMNH also explores the relationships between these once-disparate fields and strives to reconnect and reunite them through innovative and collaborative projects. A major track for this reconnection is under the theme of the Anthropocene. The Anthropocene is a new major theme for scholarship and visitor engagement at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Complementing the museum’s existing focus on the evolution and diversity of life on Earth, the Anthropocene provides an additional lens to examine the future of life and the interdependency and interconnectivity of humans and nature. Weaving together humanities, art, and science in research and interpretation of biology, mineral, anthropology and art collections, this cross-cutting initiative seeks to lead the evolution of natural history museum practice for the 21st century. To learn more about CMNH, visit our website at <https://carnegiemnh.org/>.

Position Description

The Anthropocene is a transdisciplinary topic of interest across the academy and society at large. While the Anthropocene concept is similar to other sustainability and conservation discourse, it has become more broadly humanistic in its formulation and engagement. Cultural institutions ranging from art museums to history centers to technology and natural science have begun to use the Anthropocene in exhibition and research, demonstrating its appeal as a concept for engagement and collaboration. Yet

the extent to which this engagement is transcending disciplines and dominant environmental narratives is not clear.

CMNH is looking for a humanities graduate student to research what other museums have been doing to address the Anthropocene and evaluate those efforts to develop an institutional and intellectual context for CMNH's work on this topic. Specifically, we are interested in the extent to which existing efforts successfully bridge the humanities, arts and sciences. Do they forward new environmental-social narratives? Is the approach bridging natural and anthropological collections and social humanistic critique with technical scientific inquiry? What types of institutions are engaged? What specific work are they doing? Where are the gaps? What are the best examples of transdisciplinary work?

Responsibilities:

- Survey other cultural institutions and exhibits on the Anthropocene and similar topics.
- Critically evaluate the transdisciplinarity of these efforts. In the case of science museums, special attention should be paid to how effectively the museums incorporate a humanistic perspective and critique.
- Use the survey and evaluation results to make direct recommendations to CMNH about what it can do in order to move the field further in accomplishing the integration of humanities, arts and sciences in its approach to the Anthropocene.

Qualifications:

- Excellent research, organization and writing skills
- Familiarity with environmental sustainability challenges and humanistic critiques
- Ability to work independently and collaborate with CMNH staff
- Ability to set priorities and deadlines

Position 4

LOCATION: Carnegie Museum of Natural History

TITLE: Highlighting the Anthropocene in CMNH Collections

DATES: May 13-August 9

Organization Description

Mission:

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History:

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Position Description

CMNH is in the process of long-term planning for future renovations and new galleries to weave the Anthropocene concept into the museum and update public offerings. In the short term however, there is a desire to tell Anthropocene stories using the existing galleries and object displays. The museum is set up as a study in deep time. Most of the elements to tell the Anthropocene story are already here. But the links are not made clearly in current exhibits and interpretations. We are interested in working

with a humanities fellow to pilot an audio tour that would tell a compelling Anthropocene narrative for visitors, such as about climate change or extinction, possibly related to anthropological collections and the cultural causes of global environmental change. The scope and focus would be under the creative direction of the fellow.

Responsibilities:

- Research and produce an engaging, accurate Anthropocene audio tour for CMNH to provide as an option for visitors to use while visiting the museum.
- Work with museum curators to generate ideas and fact check information.
- Work with museum marketing and education departments to inform our approach to the tour.

Qualifications:

- Experience producing quality audio recordings for public communication and storytelling (e.g. podcasts, journalism)
- Independent research skills, and ability to collaborate with museum staff
- Willingness to spend time in the museum and get to know galleries and visitors
- Familiarity with the Anthropocene and environmental sustainability issues

Position 5

LOCATION: Senator John Heinz History Center¹

TITLE: Highlighting Medical Innovation in Pittsburgh

DATES: May 13-August 9

Organization Description

Mission:

The History Center is an educational institution that engages, informs and inspires large and diverse audiences through museum, virtual and outreach programs that enable links to the past, understanding in the present, and guidance for the future by preserving regional history and presenting the American experience with a Western Pennsylvania connection. This work is accomplished in partnership with others through archaeology, artifact collections, broadcast media and the internet, conservation, educational programs, exhibitions, events, library & archives, museums, performance, publications, products, research, and technical assistance.

History:

Founded in 1879, the History Center serves the people of Western Pennsylvania as the oldest cultural institution in Pittsburgh, serving as a leader in best practices for museums and providing assistance to organizations through our affiliates program. The History Center is accredited through the American Alliance of Museums, a distinction awarded to less than 10% of museums nationwide. The History Center is the keeper of our region's memory, preserving the inspirational stories from Western Pennsylvania's past for future generations. To learn more about the History Center visit our website at www.heinzhistorycenter.org.

Position Description

The theme of innovation is prominent in History Center exhibits and is the central focus of our core exhibition "Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation." From airbrakes to zombies – and everything in between – new ideas from this region have changed the world. This is a place of innovation, a place where innovators found a culture focused on hard work and supportive of new ideas, with individuals and institutions willing to provide the capital needed to transform those ideas to reality. This environment fueled the process of innovation. From that process, in this place, innovators have generated ideas that have changed the course of history.

"Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation" has a number of recurrent threads that run through the exhibition and are central to the telling of the story of innovation. One of those central themes is the history of innovation in medicine. While many people in the region may be aware that Dr. Jonas Salk and his team developed a vaccine for polio here or that Dr. Thomas Starzl made liver transplantation a

¹ The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, founded in 1879, today does business as the Senator John Heinz History Center, which includes the Detre Library & Archives, Fort Pitt Museum, Meadowcroft Rockshelter and Historic Village, and the Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum.

reality, few likely realize the major impact advances in medicine and medical technology from the region have had on the larger world.

The History Center has received funding to update and expand the story of innovations in medicine in our “Pittsburgh: A Tradition of Innovation” exhibit and in the “Sport and the Body” section of the Western PA Sports Museum. We are seeking a researcher who can delve into this story and provide both the research needed to ground new interpretation and also advise on the possible assets for expanding the exhibit – be they objects, images, film, audio, or other materials.

Responsibilities:

- Work with the Director of the Curatorial Division, Anne Madarasz, to chart a course for researching medical innovation in the region.
- Research in History Center and regional archives to develop a more comprehensive history of medical innovation in the region, focused on the post-World War II era to the present, but that acknowledges and considers earlier stories such as homeopathic medicine (Shadyside Hospital 1866 and Dr. McClelland).
- Think broadly about new research in areas such as biomedical and tissue engineering and concussion prevention and treatment, as well as medical technologies dealing with health issues such as sleep apnea and chronicle those stories.
- Consider issues such as nutrition and training regimens and how new research has informed those subject areas and their application to athletes on all levels.
- If time allows, develop some narrative (may include exhibit labels) writing for the exhibits and work with design and curatorial staff to discuss interpreting this research in the exhibit space.
- Develop a list of potential exhibit resources – artifacts, imagery, audio, video, etc. that could be used to interpret each story.

Qualifications:

- An understanding of Western Pennsylvania history and the historical context for research area
- Experience with research in the history of medical or medical humanities is a plus
- Ability to work independently and as a team member with HHC staff
- Experience with primary research – an understanding and appreciation of material culture/public history is a plus
- Strong writing and oral communication skills
- Organized with an ability to meet project deadlines
- Ability to travel within Pittsburgh and research at other institutions if needed
- Strong interpersonal skills – comfortable with oral history or interviewing content experts if needed