

# IKON



## IKON LEADERSHIP

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# WELCOME FROM PROFESSOR HELEN HIGSON OBE, CHAIR



It is exciting to write to explain our thinking as we begin the process of appointing our new Senior Leadership.

You probably already know that the Ikon gallery, in Birmingham UK, is a very special place. It was created almost 60 years ago to showcase the best contemporary art being produced, to curate it in the context of our city, and to challenge many of the perceptions of our society. We have continued to do this ever since.

Today the gallery aims to:

- stimulate engagement with contemporary visual art in a context of debate and participation by exhibiting work by artists from around the world, including film, sound, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation;
- develop relationships between art, diverse artists and audiences outside the gallery through a range of off-site projects at different locations; and
- encourage public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art through a range of education activities including talks, tours, workshops and seminars.

We do this by seeking to be excellent in everything, in collaborating with local, national and international partners, and in seeking to reach out to as many diverse audiences as possible, through our exhibitions and educational activities, both in the gallery and elsewhere. We are very proud of our history, our artistic footprint and, particularly, our role as an anchor institution in the city of Birmingham.

The Ikon Trustees have spent some time exploring models of leadership which will nurture our aims and our reputation. Having benefitted from the strong inspirational leadership of our previous Artistic Director, Jonathan Watkins, for 23 years, we have taken some time to frame the appointment of the next senior leadership appropriately for the present and the future of Ikon. To this end, we are convinced that we should seek a more collaborative leadership approach, to build a flatter, more inclusive structure, which we think will reflect our local community better, and which will allow us to achieve our cultural mission more comfortably. We are, therefore, not advertising in a traditional way, but looking for proposals for different models of leadership, from teams of whatever size, who can maximise our strong wish to be as diverse and inclusive as possible.

We are looking for proposals from individuals or groups who can meet our brief by presenting a leadership structure which suits our needs. It is the combination of individuals, working in an effective and convincing partnership, that we think will best deliver what the Trustees' vision. We will also increase the inclusivity of our recruitment process by seeking to connect individuals who might not yet have the connections to apply as a team or partnership. These conversations will happen between the closing date of the advert, and the longlisting meeting. If you'd like more information on this, please let us know.

This is a different and exciting approach. It is not something that we have seen in the arts sector before, but Ikon has never done things traditionally. As Trustees we strive to demonstrate the behaviours and mindset that we seek to engender at the Ikon gallery, as it enters its second 60 years.

I look forward to talking you during this exciting process.

# ABOUT IKON

**Ikon is an internationally acclaimed contemporary art venue located in central Birmingham. Housed in a magnificent neo-gothic school building, it is an educational charity and works to encourage public engagement with contemporary art through exhibiting new work in a context of debate and participation. It offers free entry to all.**

[EXPLORE IKON GALLERY HERE.](#)

In 1964, the artists' group that founded Ikon published a prospectus that was as clear as it was idealistic. Their aesthetic proposition was neatly summarised:

The objects of the charity are the advancement of education in the United Kingdom and internationally, and in particular in the City of Birmingham and in the West Midlands region, by encouraging the practice and the dissemination of knowledge of the arts in general but with especial regard to contemporary painting, sculpture and other forms of visual art.

The gallery programme features artists from around the world. A variety of media is represented, including sound, film, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture, and installation.

Ikon is an independent, not-for-profit exhibition space, publicly core funded by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. One of a number of flagship institutions in the UK for the promotion and presentation of contemporary and modern art, like Camden Arts Centre (London), Arnolfini (Bristol) and Modern Art Oxford, it was founded in the 1960s with the proposition: "Ikon is intended as an antithesis to exclusive art establishments and galleries ... [it] has been formed because of the need for an accessible place where the exchange of visual ideas can become a familiar reality." Its activity not only reflects the historical circumstances of Birmingham and the country as a whole since then, but also it constitutes a distinct point of view on British post-war art history.

“IKON IS INTENDED AS AN ANTITHESIS TO EXCLUSIVE ART ESTABLISHMENTS AND GALLERIES ... [IT] HAS BEEN FORMED BECAUSE OF THE NEED FOR AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE WHERE THE EXCHANGE OF VISUAL IDEAS CAN BECOME A FAMILIAR REALITY.”

Since its arrival in Brindleyplace in 1998, Ikon has become more outgoing, more internationalist than ever before, whilst at the same time being locally engaged and more committed to its role as a producer. Ikon's previous Director Jonathan Watkins has ensured that Ikon continues to, as ever, assert a dynamic relationship with art, aspiring as much to accessibility as it does to excellence. As in the early years, Ikon's current artistic programme features solo projects, offering opportunities for more in-depth consideration of each artist's work whilst giving rise to telling juxtapositions. Unconvinced by the distinction often made between 'artist-led' and 'audience-led' programmes, Ikon prefers the idea of its activity overall being 'Ikon-led', proactive in response to a global art conversation and engaged in all aspects of cultural life, within and beyond the institution of high art. Local audiences have been rightly proud of artists hailing from Birmingham, who have been exhibited since 2000, such as Hurvin Anderson, Vanley Burke, Ruth Claxton, John Walker, Gillian Wearing and Osman Yousefzada, while also being inquisitive about those not from the region, from emerging artists such as Marjolijn Dijkman and Nástio Mosquito to more established figures such as Francis Alÿs, Beatriz Milhazes, On Kawara and Giuseppe Penone.

Being based in Birmingham, a super-diverse and young city, Ikon's partnership working, and equality diversity and inclusion strategy, is central to all the Gallery does, from the Board of Trustees throughout the whole organisation. Ikon's commitment to the city is to continue to show diverse exhibitions from around the world, and reflect these locally, while working with children and young people and diverse communities who are currently underserved within the region.

Ikon's off-site programme includes working with local communities of Birmingham and the wider West Midlands through many years of schools and education work. The organisation has placed artists in schools and hosted show cases of this work at Ikon, welcoming friends and families to its building, allowing young people's work to sit alongside national and international exhibitions. Education is at the heart of Ikon's activities, stimulating public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art. Through a variety of talks, tours, workshops and seminars, the Learning team aims to build a meaningful relationship with Ikon's local communities that enables visitors to engage with, discuss and reflect on contemporary art. [Find out more here.](#)





The off-site programme continues with larger multiple year funded projects such as Slow Boat, a canal project working with Ikon's Youth Programme running on the canals and waterways throughout the region, and inside HMP Grendon, where current artist in residence, Dean Kelland, works with the prison's communities. The off-site programme also includes work with international biennials and commercial partners, projects vary enormously in scale, duration and location, challenging expectations of where art can be seen and by whom. The organisation sees this programme developing further through representation of and engagement with the communities Ikon serves, in the post pandemic city. Find out more about the projects [here](#).

Ikon's environmental ambition to be net zero is challenging while working in a beautiful Grade II listed building. Solar, wind or other options are not possible. Over the years the organisation's capital programmes (funded primarily by Arts Council England) have allowed it to progress towards this goal, developing its own 'Ikon LED' lighting system along the way. New boilers, new ventilation, LED lighting throughout and zero to landfill go some way to us achieving this goal. Next steps may include a discussion around future transportation for exhibitions, scheduling of exhibitions and use of climate control conditions, as well as travel options.

Click [here](#) to see a short film about Ikon's development from a small artist-led space in the Bullring in the 1960s to its current position as an internationally renowned art gallery at the heart of Birmingham's cultural scene. And click here for more detail on Ikon's name and the history of the gallery.

**IKON**

# FUNDING

Ikon Gallery is a registered charity and as such, needs to raise funds each year from a range of sources including trusts and foundations, corporate sponsorship, individual supporters and our trading activities, alongside its core funding as one of the Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations (NPO). All profits are re-invested into supporting artists and education activities.

Ikon is supported using public funding by Arts Council England and Birmingham City Council. Ikon Gallery Limited trading as Ikon. Registered address: 1 Oozells Square, Birmingham B1 2HS. Registered charity no. 528892.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Birmingham**  
City Council



# AIMS AND STRATEGY

## THE GALLERY AIMS TO:

- Stimulate engagement with contemporary visual art in a context of debate and participation by exhibiting work by artists from around the world, including film, sound, mixed media, photography, painting, sculpture and installation;
- Develop relationships between art, artists and audiences outside the gallery through a range of off-site projects at different locations; and
- Encourage public interest in and understanding of contemporary visual art through a range of education activities including talks, tours, workshops and seminars.



## THE STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ACHIEVE THE CHARITY'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- Free admission to all exhibitions;
- Organising and presenting exhibitions and other projects of national and international significance, both in the galleries and off-site;
- Creating opportunities for artists to make new work in the gallery and off-site in the community;
- Organising a range of projects, events and activities for children, young people and adults, both in the gallery and in schools and local communities to increase the enjoyment and understanding of contemporary visual art;
- Developing collaborations and productive relationships with other educational and cultural organisations, regionally, nationally and internationally to facilitate cross art-form collaboration and audience development;
- Promoting and marketing the programme to attract a broad range of audiences and participants, and attract press coverage to raise the profile of contemporary visual art and the gallery nationally and internationally;
- Publishing exhibition catalogues and other material and making these available through distributors, shop, and on the web site; and
- Providing and maintaining high quality facilities to encourage engagement with contemporary visual art.



# JOB DESCRIPTION

Ikon are looking for a new model of directorship to lead the organisation into the future. We encourage applications from co-leadership models to deliver across all strands of Ikon's delivery framework: including business operations, curatorial/exhibitions, and learning.

Following the retirement of our director of 23 years we are looking for a directorship which can deliver upon our strategic and operational vision. We have outlined the Strategic and Operational tasks which we expect to be met.

## STRATEGIC

- To create and articulate a strong vision and distinctive identity for Ikon through the formulation of its artistic programme, education work and across all aspects of the organisation;
- To foster strategic relationships and understanding between artists, partner organisations and the communities of Birmingham and broaden people's knowledge and expectations of the contemporary visual arts;
- To ensure that strategic plans are in place and that these are delivered to convey the artistic and organisational vision for Ikon;
- To plan and realise Ikon's artistic policy, reflecting a range of contemporary international, national and local art practice and enhance Ikon's profile; and
- To ensure that strategic plans are in place and that these are delivered to convey the artistic and organisational vision for Ikon.

## OPERATIONS

- To implement the vision and distinctive identity of the Ikon through its artistic programme, education work and across all aspects of the organisation;
- To promote the understanding and enjoyment of contemporary art and its importance as a medium for understanding the world we live in;

- To lead on a range of education and community led funding sources to support the growth of Ikon's programme;
- To ensure Ikon is run in such a way that it is able to maximise its strong international reputation and is able to reflect the diversity of the local community;
- To develop funding sources to support the growth of Ikon's programme.
- To ensure that the delivery of Ikon's programme is supported through effective fundraising, stakeholder management and operational excellence;
- To facilitate effective communication both internally and externally which upholds the excellence of the artistic programme;
- To deliver effective finance, human resource, technical, building, IT and administration systems to support the delivery of the organisation's objectives;
- To ensure the effective and efficient operation and commercial viability of Ikon Bookshop, Oozells Trading Limited, Ikon investment portfolio and any other commercial activities;
- Through effective monitoring and evaluation demonstrate the impact and the effectiveness of our work in meeting aims and objects to our stakeholders –including audience, artists, patrons and funders; and
- Buildings management and Health and Safety ideally with insight into managing a listed building.



**IKON**

# Leadership Specification

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE(S) WILL BE DYNAMIC AND COMMUNICATIVE, CAPABLE OF WINNING TRUST.

## ESSENTIAL

- Knowledge of visual and contemporary art and a passion for working with artists;
- A track record of working with diverse artists and audiences and a commitment to inclusion, relevance and diversity in all aspects of the organisation;
- Ability to lead, or co-lead, with integrity and credibility;
- A combination of strategic and creative mindsets;
- Ability to manage multiple exhibitions and projects simultaneously;
- Ability to work effectively under pressure and to prioritise workload;
- Strong track record of educational leadership
- A track record of fundraising, generating income and managing risk;
- Ability to work as part of a team and with a flexible and collaborative approach to work;
- Strong experience of commercial initiatives in the arts;
- Ability to balance the commercial and charitable objectives of a public arts space;
- Proven ability to partner with local, national and international organisations;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills, including public speaking;
- Strong stakeholder engagement skills and the ability to network and build relationships effectively; and
- Strong research skills.

## DESIRABLE

- Experience of working with a Board of Trustees and a senior staff team;
- Knowledge of Arts Council England's Let's Create strategy and best practice;
- Prior experience of working within an ACE NPO or with equivalent type of statutory funding; and
- Knowledge of regional arts landscape in the UK.





# TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

## **SALARY**

The salary will be discussed with the candidates and will depend on the leadership model, however for guidance, it is envisaged that the salary will be circa £75,000 for an individual role. This could be split into part time or pro-rata amounts.

## **BENEFITS**

Workplace pension schemes, Discount at Ikon shop

## **ANNUAL LEAVE**

25 days (increasing to 27 days after three years' service, then one additional day per year to a maximum of 30 days)

## **CONTRACT**

Permanent

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.

## **GDPR PERSONAL DATA NOTICE**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

# HOW TO APPLY

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Ikon on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code EYYTCA .

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter, and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is **noon on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023.**

*\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

## Equal opportunities at Ikon

Ikon is an equal opportunities organisation and welcomes applications from all sectors of the community.

Ikon is dedicated to continuing the diversification of our leadership team and particularly like to encourage those who have lived experience and identify themselves as disabled, are Black or Asian or are LGBTQ+.

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. With respect to its provision of services, its policies and procedures, Ikon seeks not to discriminate, either intentionally or unintentionally, against any group or any individual. Equal opportunity of employment applies to the recruitment, training, pay and conditions, work allocation and promotion of all Ikon's staff and occasional workers.

**Ikon is a disability confident employer.**





**IKON**

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