

Senior Curator (French Art)

Full-time and Permanent

Salary £42,938 - £48,054 per annum (pay award pending)

Plus generous benefits package

Hybrid / flexible working

About the role

Are you a Senior Curator with deep expertise in French art and eager to share your knowledge? This is your chance to shape how an amazing collection of French art is experienced, researched and enjoyed by audiences.

We're delighted to have an exciting and rare opportunity to join our dedicated Curatorial team. We are seeking a knowledgeable and passionate Senior Curator with a specialism in French art of the mid-19th to early 20th centuries, complemented by a broader knowledge of 17th- and 18th-century French art.

We're looking for someone who is collaborative, forward-thinking and committed to supporting equity, diversity and inclusion. Someone who believes in the power of art to inspire, challenge and connect people.

In this role, you will make a major contribution to the development, understanding, display, interpretation, promotion, and use of the collection. You will bring excellent object knowledge, including works on paper, to support your academic specialism. You'll support an active programme of loans and exhibitions related to the French works in the collection. Your strong and evidenced research profile will be matched by proven experience of developing research-led exhibitions that engage and inspire audiences.

Drawing on an established and wide network of contacts from museum peers, international research networks, to relevant organisations and academics, you will conduct authoritative research on behalf of the National Galleries of Scotland.

Working as a key part of our dedicated and passionate Curatorial team, you will contribute to delivering our audience offer, initiatives and projects, supporting our purpose to make art work for everyone.

The difference you'll make

As a key senior member of the Curatorial team, you will work to ensure that the relevant area of the collection is developed, displayed, researched and made accessible. Reporting to the Deputy Director & Chief Curator (European & Scottish Art), your responsibilities will include:

- Initiating and developing creative and original ideas and proposals for the audience offer of exhibitions, displays, online activity and talks in consultation with senior colleagues.

- Producing research and interpretive material, including publications, talks, captions etc, and contributing to the digital engagement programme.
- Project managing exhibitions, displays and other relevant initiatives, with budgetary responsibility.
- Contributing to the National Galleries of Scotland research profile and environment through publications for both academic and wider public audiences.
- Proposing acquisitions, loans, etc., whilst maintaining accurate catalogue and accessioning details, records and other relevant data.
- Fostering a collegiate and supportive working environment through your day-to-day approach to work, administrative and line management responsibilities.
- Liaising with Collection Care and Collection Management colleagues to ensure the highest standards of care and protection for the collection.
- Contributing to partnership initiatives (national and international).
- Collaborating with other departments and contributing to the audience framework plans, in line with the organisation's overall vision of broadening access to the collection.
- Contributing to learning, engagement and other programmes across the organisation.
- Developing and maintaining a wide network of contacts and stakeholders, including lenders, donors, dealers, other museums, public institutions, universities, gallery professionals, artists etc.

Who we are looking for

To succeed in this role, you'll need the following range of knowledge, skills and experience:

- Education to postgraduate level or equivalent experience, with a significant proportion focused on French art of the mid-19th to early 20th centuries.
- Excellent research skills and evidence of outputs (publications/exhibitions etc.).
- Extensive experience in the wider curatorial community with a demonstrable reputation for French Art with a network of relevant contacts.
- Fluent written and spoken French.
- Strong communication and effective collaboration skills with the ability to build positive relationships with both colleagues and external stakeholders.
- Excellent organisational skills, time management and project management.
- Successful budget management.
- An ability to work in a collegiate manner, aligning activity with organisational strategic priorities.
- The ability to foster and champion a positive working culture, collaborating with and inspiring colleagues.
- Proven commitment to EDI initiatives.
- Excellent IT skills.
- A knowledge of the art market.

It would also be great if you have:

- Proven line management experience.

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- A knowledge of practices in other spheres relevant to the area of specialism (conservation, works on paper etc.)
- A working knowledge of collection management systems (e.g. Axiell).

We are National Galleries of Scotland

Our three Edinburgh galleries are the National, Modern and Portrait. We house and look after Scotland's amazing world-class art collection – one of the finest in the world. Step inside and explore treasures from Botticelli and Titian to the very best modern art to contemporary portraits of pop culture icons. And, as you'd expect, the world's greatest collection of Scottish art, our national collection. We also have an outstanding collection of Western art from the late Middle Ages to the present day.

We're a space for thinking, dreaming, doing, and playing. Soak up the art. Meet friends in the cafés. Have a family picnic surrounded by the sculptures in the Modern grounds. Be inspired by our amazing art films. Choose your own experience. There is no one way to enjoy Scotland's national collection. We are yours to discover.

As well as displaying our art at our three Edinburgh sites, we also share it through an active programme of partnership across Scotland, the rest of the UK and abroad, as well as online.

We conserve and research our collections and we are committed to reaching the widest possible audience through our ambitious plans. Visitor numbers to our sites in Edinburgh totalled an average of 2.5m visitors a year in the years prior to the global pandemic.

What's important to us

We make art work for everyone. That's our purpose and it drives everything we do. This is an exciting time for us, as we move forward with our engaging strategic vision: Art for Scotland: Inspiration for the World.

We're putting our audience at the heart of what we do. Matching Scotland's rich collection, our expertise and creativity with the needs and wants of our visitors. Finding new ways to connect with more people and create an innovative, inclusive organisation that can meet the challenges of our ever-evolving world.

We're committed to looking at how we operate as well as how we engage our audiences. We will play our part in tackling the Climate Emergency, and we're embedding Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) in the way we work. We want everyone to feel a sense of belonging and freedom to be themselves at work or at play with us.

What's on offer for you

Our colleagues will tell you great things about working here. We aim to ensure the National Galleries of Scotland is a great place to work, where our people thrive in a culture where we are trusted, empowered, and engaged to achieve our true potential. We offer a range of benefits to promote healthy working lifestyles for all our colleagues. Details specific to this role are:

Salary

£42,938 - £48,054 per annum (pay award pending). Starting salaries will normally be at the minimum rate depending on experience.

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Hours

35 hours per week excluding a one-hour unpaid lunch break each day. Flexibility with working schedule and some early evening work may be required. We're also committed to supporting flexible working options for everyone which includes flexible working, working remotely and flexitime policies.

Holidays

When you first join, you'll get 36.5 days holidays per year (including public and privilege holidays). After 5 years your annual leave will increase to 41.5 days.

Where you'll be based

You will work across all of our Galleries based in the heart of Edinburgh - the National, Portrait, and Modern (One and Two).

Pension

We are a [Civil Service Pension](#) employer. You get to choose if you want a defined benefit or stakeholder pension. The benefits of joining the scheme include [generous employer contributions](#) to your future pension, life assurance, and options to increase your pension. If you join the alpha Civil Service pension scheme our contribution will be 28.97% for this role.

Other benefits

Family friendly working policies, free or discounted entry to various visitor attractions, staff discount at our shops and cafés, Cycle to Work Scheme, wellbeing support and services including our Employee Assistance Programme.

The closing date for completed applications is 12 noon on Thursday, 09 October 2025.

Please note that the successful candidate will be subject to Basic Disclosure Scotland security clearance.