

Position Description: Director

Responsible to: Blue Oyster Arts Trust

Staff: Gallery staff, volunteers and contractors

Location: 16 Dowling Street, Ōtepoti Dunedin

Application deadline: 5pm, Friday, May 16 2025

Contract: Two-year, fixed-term, with the possibility of a third-year extension contingent on future funding.

Hours: Full-time, 37.5 per week

Salary: \$65,000 per annum

Ideal start time: Early August 2025

Blue Oyster exists to enable emerging and experimental arts practitioners to work in an innovative, experimental and non-commercial environment. With a commitment to tikaka Māori and te tiriti o Waitangi, we aim to broaden the interest and understanding of contemporary arts by providing a forum for discussion and debate. To read more, visit: <http://blueoyster.org.nz/about/>

The Director is responsible for realising the organisation's strategic vision for the gallery and for enabling individual artists to develop and present projects to a high standard. To achieve these ends the Director will develop and manage all aspects of programme delivery and gallery operations.

About the Position

The Director will lead Blue Oyster's artistic programming by developing an annual schedule of exhibitions, workshops, publications and events. They will identify and present work by emerging and experimental artists by managing open calls and a rigorous selection process. The Director will combine curatorial research with their vision to shape a programme that engages diverse audiences and advances contemporary art practices.

The Director is responsible for building and maintaining artist relationships, managing and where necessary, employing support staff, managing volunteers and working with the Blue Oyster Arts Trust to ensure the progressive management of Aotearoa's, and perhaps the world's, Southern-most contemporary art project space.

Working in conjunction with the Gallery Manager, the Director oversees all gallery operations, including:

- Creative New Zealand and Dunedin City Council funding applications and reporting
- Fundraising and revenue generation
- Financial management (via Xero) and payroll
- Compliance with Charities Commission procedures
- Health, safety and risk management
- Exhibition installation, technical support and maintenance
- Archiving and collections care
- Marketing, communications, writing and editing
- Reporting to the Board and managing local and national stakeholder relationships
- Visitor engagement and audience development

This position is an excellent opportunity for an emerging curator or early career arts professional who is active within the national arts communities, contributing to an ambitious organisation in its third decade of operation.

Qualities and interests

- Leadership, decision-making, creativity and innovation
- A broad interest and understanding of contemporary art in Aotearoa
- Profile- and relationship-building skills
- An interest and experience in budgeting and bookkeeping
- An interest and experience in funding applications and reporting

Qualifications and experience

- Tertiary qualification in the arts/fine arts preferred
- 2+ years proven experience with arts administration, events management, artistic programming
- Volunteer or paid work history within arts organisations (museum/gallery/artist-run space)
- Working knowledge of Adobe Creative Suite preferred. Microsoft Word and Excel skills.
- Experience in practical gallery installation techniques
- Writing and editing promotional texts, exhibition texts and long form criticism
- Respect for tikaka Māori and an understanding of and commitment to upholding the principles of Te tiriti o Waitangi

Key Relationships

- The voluntary Blue Oyster Arts Trustees
- Blue Oyster staff, volunteers and work-placement students
- Local, national and international artists
- Local, national and international audiences (online included)
- Mana whenua ki Ōtepoti – Kāi Tahu, Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou and Kāti Huirapa ki Puketeraki
- Creative New Zealand, Dunedin City Council and other funding partners
- Supporters Network, sponsors and partners including Caselberg Trust, Dunedin Fringe Arts Trust & Puaka Matariki Steering Rōpū
- Colleagues and contacts in related institutions both within Aotearoa and abroad
- Contracted designers, editors, writers, tradespeople, etc.
- Media, art writers and reviewers
- Arts education sector including Dunedin School of Arts

Key Responsibilities

Artistic

- Develop an innovative, challenging and high-quality annual programme of exhibitions, workshops, publishing and events.
- Present the draft annual programme of the above content with budget to the Board of Trustees for critique, advice and approval.
- Promote and support emerging and experimental art practices in Ōtepoti and Aotearoa.

- Collaborate with artists, curators, writers and ensure clear communication and a mutual understanding of expectations.
- Ensure the installation and presentation of projects is completed to the highest possible standards, maintaining the artistic integrity of the work.
- Maintain a broad knowledge of the practices of contemporary visual arts in Aotearoa and abroad.
- Maintain and develop professional relationships with like-minded institutions.
- Commit time to professional development by attending relevant symposia, workshops and conferences.

Management

- Efficiently manage all activities of Blue Oyster to budget and on time.
- Monitor annual financial accounts with monthly financial board reports, one half-yearly report and propose the following year's operational budget to Blue Oyster Arts Trustees by the required deadline.
- Regularly report to the Board of Trustees against expectations and limitations for monthly meetings, including daily activities, new relationships, future plans and changes in operations.
- Supervise and manage staff and volunteers providing training, support and performance reviews.
- Be responsible for bookkeeping, financial records and annual auditing with the Gallery Manager.
- Ensure healthy cash flow of the organisation and that all payments are made and received by the 20th of each month, including weekly wages and tax obligations.
- Manage resources (time, people, finances) sustainably to increase Blue Oyster's capabilities.
- Ensure that the gallery is staffed daily, that visitors are welcomed and that artworks, gallery spaces and equipment are tidy, safe, protected and well presented and maintained.
- Ensure Health and Safety and risk management documents are kept up to date.
- Be committed to local organisations and artists working within Ōtepoti and the wider Otago region as well as those working nationally and internationally.
- Commit to upholding Blue Oyster's environmental sustainability efforts wherever possible.
- Commit to upholding Blue Oyster's Host Responsibility Policy at openings and events.

Communication

- Be a professional spokesperson and the first point of contact for Blue Oyster.
- Take and prepare for all public speaking opportunities to help raise the profile of the organisation.
- Oversee an effective marketing and promotional plan for Blue Oyster.
- Ensure opportunities for publicity and promotion are maximised with clear and timely communication, including preparing interpretive text in consultation with artists and curators.
- Ensure all projects are adequately documented and archived and the archive is used/maintained.
- Ensure <http://blueoyster.org.nz> contains all relevant, up-to-date information and undergoes annual maintenance by our web hosts.

Blue Oyster art project space.

- Commit time to fostering productive relationships with current and potential stakeholders.
- Actively attend community events and exhibition openings.

Funding

- Ensure applications and reports to funders are advised on, prepared and submitted on time and to a high professional standard.
- Lead the gallery's revenue generation through proactive fundraising initiatives, with a strong focus on securing new sponsorships and cultivating long-term partnerships by developing strategic relationships across business and cultural sectors to obtain financial support, in-kind contributions and promotional partnerships that align with Blue Oyster's mission.
- Assist practitioners seeking additional support for programmed projects.
- Actively support others in the community with advice on funding applications and other relevant opportunities.
- Foster productive relationships with current and potential funding partners and sponsors.
- Apply to local community trusts and foundations for new equipment, renovations and other capital expenditure items.

How to Apply

- Email admin@blueoyster.org.nz to receive a copy of Blue Oyster's 2022-25 Strategic Plan.
- Send your CV with two referees, a cover letter and a writing sample (can be previously published, approximately 750–1000 words) to admin@blueoyster.org.nz

Recruitment Timeline

Application closing date: 5pm, Friday May 16, 2025

Start Date: To be negotiated with the successful applicant, but ideally late July/early August 2025.

The current Director is available for handover between late July and early August 2025.