



PAINTER EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Creative Growth Executive Director Position Description

Painter Executive Search is supporting Creative Growth in their search for an Executive Director to foster a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for artists with developmental disabilities to create art while extending the visibility of their work around the globe and ensuring the artists and their creations are recognized for their valuable contribution to society.

Creating art is a fundamental expression of the human spirit. When our common humanity is joyfully and fully seen and celebrated, transformation is possible. For nearly 45 years, Creative Growth has fostered an environment where creativity is freely expressed, and the art created there is as unique as the artists themselves. From provocative to delightfully exuberant, the work produced at Creative Growth stands on its own merit in the contemporary art world and calls on us to reconsider the nature of ability and disability.

Creative Growth Art Center (Creative Growth) located in Oakland, California, is the oldest and largest center of its kind in the world. Creative Growth's mission is to serve adult and young adult artists with developmental, physical, emotional and mental disabilities, providing a supportive and professional studio environment for artistic exploration, personal expression and gallery promotion.

Founded in 1974 on the idea that all people are capable of producing works of high artistic merit and that the act of creating can be transformative, Creative Growth now serves over 160 artists with disabilities and positions their work within the contemporary art world. That founding vision has flourished. Today three artists from Creative Growth have works in permanent collections of world class museums including the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Major exhibitions include Creative Growth's artists work in solo museum survey exhibitions and group exhibitions alongside other contemporary artists and last year, two artists were exhibited as part of the Venice Biennale. Artists represented by Creative Growth may find their art and designs featured by top international retailers, on household products and sought by international collectors. All of the artists have the opportunity to show in Creative Growth's local gallery and benefit from the sale of their work. At Creative Growth, the process of creating is honored and celebrated and the impact of that recognition and appreciation transforms the lives of the artists.

Creative Growth's studio provides professional grade, art-making workshops in a variety of media, including painting, drawing, ceramics, woodwork, printmaking, textiles, mixed media and video production. There are no fees for artists to attend, and artists receive 50% of the sales for their work. At the heart of the program is a team of working artists/instructors who support and encourage individual creativity by fostering an open, adaptive environment with few rules and no judgment—a space where a community of creators work side-by-side inspiring, encouraging and celebrating one another.

Creative Growth's 2018-2019 budget anticipates nearly \$2.6 million in revenues from diverse sources. Revenue from art sales, and program fees (supported by government funds through the Regional Center of the East Bay)

comprise the two primary sources of revenue. Significant contributions from institutional and local government grants, individual funders, and event revenue, as well as licensing fees are also important funding sources.

A small staff, 13 full and part-time staff in administration and operations and 17 part-time artists/instructors, work from a beautifully renovated building owned by Creative Growth that houses the studio, gallery and administrative offices. Located in the uptown area of Oakland, Creative Growth has the opportunity to engage the rapidly changing neighborhood in new ways including increasing local support and audience.

POSITION SUMMARY

The Executive Director (ED), reporting to the Board of Directors, has the overall responsibility for leading Creative Growth's strategic planning and execution, organizational management and ensuring its long-term sustainability and impact. The ED sets the tone in stewarding and advancing an internal culture that nurtures and celebrates individual creativity and artistic freedom and ensures safety for the artists and staff. Supporting a team of experienced art instructors, the ED facilitates innovative responses to the needs of Creative Growth's artists, enriching the environment with inspiration, guest teaching artists, and high-quality materials and tools. Working together with staff, the ED ensures all programs comply with all legal standards and regulations.

In collaboration with administrative staff, the ED manages the organization with sound fiscal practices with an eye to serving the individuals in the program. Additionally, the ED will build a model program that shares knowledge and practice and gives voice to the worlds lived and expressed by this creative community and extends that voice around the globe. The ED will facilitate the extension of Creative Growth's influence in the contemporary art world and as an advocate for disability rights. Working together with the Director of Creative, International and Brand Initiatives, staff and Board, the ED will build and evolve new and existing relationships with funders, supporters, collectors, curators, museums and galleries, partners serving people with disabilities, volunteers, the local, regional and global community, and all who are in a position to further Creative Growth's mission. The ED will take an active role in engaging support, raising money and building external relationships. The ED will ensure that the organization's communications are well-developed and that those messages support fundraising and brand development in alignment with the mission of Creative Growth.

The ED will have an important role in supporting the Board in developing the expertise and engagement to further Creative Growth's mission and impact. Working closely with the President of the Board, the ED will partner with the Board to facilitate important policy discussions and fundraising initiatives.

HIGHLIGHTS

History and Approach

Creative Growth was founded in 1974 by Bay Area artist and educator Florence Ludins-Katz and her husband, psychologist Dr. Elias Katz. After state-run institutions that housed people with disabilities closed their doors, the Katzes recognized an opportunity to use the creation of art as a vehicle for communication for those impacted by years of institutionalization and unmet needs. Creative Growth was the first of three Bay Area art centers founded by the Katzes between 1973 and 1983, along with Creativity Explored in San Francisco and NIAD in Richmond.

The core of Creative Growth's mission remains focused on the artists. All of Creative Growth's artists have developmental, physical, emotional or mental disability. They come from diverse backgrounds, some living

independently, others in group homes or with family. They reflect the racial diversity of the Bay Area and speak diverse languages; many are non-verbal. Each client who comes through Creative Growth's doors has the potential to create, in time, they come to recognize themselves as artists. With any artistic endeavor, time is non-linear—some days or weeks are productive, and others are fallow. A core value of the studio is to allow the time for each artist to come into their own style through their own interests. Many of Creative Growth's most well-known artists have been coming to the studio for decades and through that time have evolved their unique styles and artistic voice. The studio is a rich and unusually productive environment—a beehive of action and enthusiasm. Instructors may introduce new materials and modalities, but artists also learn from one another and support one another's work. The program's success is based upon building an environment where it is safe for the artists to be themselves, where they are recognized and celebrated as creative beings, and where a sense of belonging and community thrives. There is no pressure to create and no expectations around the product—a total “hands-off” approach allows for each artist to find the expressions that make up their unique style.

While the Creative Growth's studio has developed norms and values for facilitating a rich, creative and inclusive environment and community, the contemporary art world has become interested in Creative Growth's art and artists on their own terms. Although the artists of Creative Growth had started to gain attention of the art world in the late 80's, much of expansion of the visibility and advocacy for the inclusion of this art in the Contemporary Art world can be attributed to Tom di Maria who stepped into the Director's role at Creative Growth in 2000.

Tom di Maria joined Creative Growth and quickly began to see the promise of the work produced in the studio. Today, largely through his external relationship building, Creative Growth participates in international art fairs including the Outsider Art Fair in New York and Paris, the Air Fair in Tokyo, NADA Miami and the D'Dessin Contemporary Drawing Fair in Paris. Select Creative Growth artists participate in national and international exhibitions and Creative Growth is invited to present at important conferences and seminars highlighting particular artists and the Creative Growth model of working with artists. A diverse group of local, regional and international art enthusiasts, museum and gallery professionals, contemporary art collectors, curators, academics, as well as funders and philanthropists have been cultivated and engaged in bringing Creative Growth's work to the world stage and in financially supporting the programs.

Additionally, important relationships with corporate partners have been cultivated. Current relationships with Target and Method bring Creative Growth's artists designs into national distribution and create a growing awareness for the art created in the studios. Developing personal and professional relationships have been an important part of the evolution of Creative Growth's reach in the world and its influence and advocacy on behalf of this work.

As Tom di Maria moves toward his 20th year serving Creative Growth, his responsibilities are focused around external relations. In 2015, co-director roles were developed and responsibilities for managing the day-to-day operations of Creative Growth were given to Executive Director Becki Couch-Alvarado. Now, this newly redefined Executive Director role, once again provides the opportunity to further concentrate Tom's attention toward cementing the legacy of this work and preparing Creative Growth for future success and greater impact. While the Executive Director will lead the organization in these efforts, Tom di Maria, working from a position as Director of Creative, International and Brand Initiatives, will support the development and execution of a strategic plan which will formalize the standards for art practice, strengthen and evolve Creative Growth staff and Board members' capacity to cultivate relationships with the community, art world and with current

and new donors, and establish the organizational structures and policies that will capture the learning of his lengthy leadership and help ensure the sustainability of Creative Growth for the future.

Program

The core of Creative Growth's program is focused on adults with developmental disabilities and runs five days a week, providing a professional art studio setting and facilitation and is enriched by trips to museums, galleries, and artists' studios. Artists develop a working portfolio and all artists have the opportunity to share their work. Many artists produce exhibition quality art that is for sale in the Creative Growth gallery as well as galleries and art fairs around the world. The Saturday Youth Art program is offered to young adults ages 16-22 with developmental disabilities and offers high school students with artistic inclinations the opportunity to explore art as a vocation with the possibility of transitioning into the Creative Growth adult fine arts program.

Creative Growth actively encourages the presentation and visibility of the art and the artists through a range of activities. The Creative Growth gallery, housed in the same building as the studio, is open six days a week to the public. Presenting seven in-house exhibitions annually, the gallery showcases work evolving from the adult and youth programs. Another activity of the adult program is the twice-monthly studio talks that are curated by artists in the program. These informal gatherings allow the artists to select and speak about pieces of their choosing and share stories and process to an enthusiastic audience of their Creative Growth peers as well as teachers and staff. Additionally, in 2015, *Creative Growth Magazine* was founded as a vehicle for the artists to present their work and explore their lives as people with disabilities. The annual magazine is an opportunity to tell stories from inside the studio, to highlight the interests of the artists, and to offer the larger community a look inside the artists' lives and work. The Creative Growth Magazine recently published its 3rd edition and is sold in select museums and galleries.

For the last 9 years Creative Growth has hosted *Beyond Trend*, a runway event and fundraiser featuring fashion creations designed and modeled by Creative Growth artists. The event has garnered national and international attention and attracts both celebrity partners and attendees. These sold-out one-of-a-kind fashion performances and social happenings weave together art, fashion, music, and Bay Area cuisine and includes a Pop-Up Shop where guests can take home looks direct from the runway. Artists encourage one another in developing specific pieces for each show and delight in participating on the runway and receiving the accolades for their work.

Program activities at Creative Growth are often joy-filled and enthusiastic, but walking into the studio, you may also be struck by the deep attention and focus of the artists. These artists work with purpose and are immersed in their work--each communicating through their art their unique experience of the world. It is that individual worldview—and their unique expression of the culture of the maker, that provides each of them a platform for leading and changing the world through their art.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership

- Provide vision and leadership to the Board and staff; model Creative Growth's values and facilitate new opportunities to extend its mission;

- Ensure that Creative Growth continues to foster an environment that ensures the fullest exploration of creative expression in the visual arts for artists with developmental disabilities;
- Work together with the Board and staff in the development and implementation of a strategic plan which capitalizes on Creative Growth's position at the vanguard of art and disability, ensures the continuity of high-quality programming, renews a voice for social justice and inclusion, and builds long-term sustainability;
- Actively engage with the Regional Center of the East Bay, seeking to ensure that the most advantageous funding opportunities are clearly understood and established;
- Be an effective advocate for Creative Growth and for those it serves; expand relationships with those in a position to support Creative Growth's mission, impact and operations;
- Participate in advocacy efforts in support of the rights of people with developmental disabilities and funding;
- Ensure that the organization is a visible and active participant in the local and worldwide contemporary arts community; oversee the collection and/or sale of major works; develop opportunities for expanded partnerships, curation and visibility for Creative Growth, artists and instructors;
- Support opportunities to share knowledge and learnings and be a good partner to others engaged in this work;
- Work closely with the Board to ensure the development of strong Board governance, establish clear lines of communication and organizational transparency; provide well-defined opportunities for committee and staff leadership and engagement;
- Assist the Board in the recruitment, selection and evaluation of board members and actively inform and engage the Board in issues of importance to the operations and strategy of the organization.

Internal Management

- Recruit, nurture and challenge a highly-qualified and motivated professional staff to ensure that Creative Growth's operations and programs are in alignment with mission and goals;
- Engage the staff in organization-wide projects such the annual Beyond Trend fundraiser, internal and external exhibition development, and other program events, and including development of annual budgets and reporting;
- Lead the recognition and appreciation of a dedicated and talented staff; support their personal growth and engender collaborative, respectful and joy-filled working relationships across the organization;
- Oversee and monitor the financial activities of the organization including budgeting, fundraising, grant writing, and reporting and including managing policies around pricing and collection management;
- Ensure that sound bookkeeping, and accounting procedures are followed and that contracts are reviewed, and responsibilities met;
- Ensure the values, practices and key relationships of Creative Growth are documented and shared in order to deepen the collective knowledge resident in the organization; facilitate cross-training and opportunities for professional development;
- Report to the Board of Directors regularly on key information including the financial health of the organization, specific updates on fundraising progress, financial results relative to budget, liquidity, and cash flow. Provide additional reporting as required to keep the Board appropriately informed of any significant change in financial or operational status; ensure organizational risks are well known and managed effectively;

- Oversee the relationship with the Regional Center of the East Bay to ensure a smooth, collaborative relationship, safety of the artists and compliance with all program and funding and reporting requirements;
- Oversee philanthropic grant administration and ensure compliance with all policies, legal and contractual obligations;
- Lead ongoing development and dissemination of studio norms, policies and practices to support field building;
- Oversee the implementation of all human resources policies, procedures and practices; manage personnel issues and execution of equitable staff benefits.

Fundraising and External Relationship Development

- Along with the Director of Creative, International and Brand Initiatives and others, grow the visibility of Creative Growth--its programs, artists and art, and advocate for inclusion for artists with disabilities and their work in the contemporary art world;
- Effectively represent the organization to the public, to partners and colleagues in the art and gallery world, to the provider community within the developmental disabilities service arena, and to current donors and prospective supporters;
- Develop more robust fundraising systems and efforts; increase membership and financial support, diversify and deepen the connections with current donors and increase the engagement of the Board and staff in building support with individual and institutional donors worldwide;
- Actively engage in the arts community (including museums, galleries, collectors, educational institutions, studios, curators, artist and others) in order to foster opportunities for exhibitions, exposure and collaboration;
- Ensure that the Board is supported in its fundraising efforts, facilitate and train the Board in fundraising and advocacy on behalf of the organization, and allocate appropriate staff time to sustain these efforts;
- Oversee the preparation of grant and contract proposal budgets and reports, as appropriate.

EXPERIENCE

A successful ED candidate will likely have:

- Significant experience within an arts nonprofit organization experiencing growth and change including skills in Board development, governance and engagement, ideally with an organization with a deeply-held culture of inclusion and a mission that supports social justice;
- Demonstrated leadership and evidence of a management style that encourages creativity, collaboration, and transparency and engenders full engagement by the staff and Board in the mission;
- Experience and interest in engaging the arts community and supporters of the arts in order to develop further opportunities to partner programmatically, develop exhibitions, showcase programs, art or artists and generally further the mission of Creative Growth;
- Strong financial and organizational management skills; a track record strengthening organizations operationally and financially;
- Experience with organization development and structure matched with the flexibility to allow creativity and inspiration to evolve those structures;
- Knowledge of the contemporary art world, museum and gallery practice, curating, collecting and artist representation;
- A history of strong collaboration as someone who actively seeks strategic partnerships and develops effective relationships;
- Past success in diversifying funding sources including individual donors, foundations and corporation support, as well as skillful development of earned income streams;

- Well-developed interpersonal skills; approachable with excellent oral and written communication skills; comfort representing the organization in a variety of settings and to a diverse audience;
- Experience fostering a creative culture where individual contributions are celebrated and respected and freedom of expression is encouraged.

ATTRIBUTES

- A passion for expanding opportunities for artists with developmental disabilities grounded in a deep respect for their creative capacity and regard for their unique needs;
- A team builder with both vision and strong management skills;
- Approachable; understands the complexity of this work and can support and participate in the studio when needed and shows a personal investment in the lives of the artists and staff;
- Emotionally mature with a good sense of humor;
- Exercises excellent judgment; acts in accordance with organizational and personal values;
- Has a thoughtful approach to bringing art to the world; able to evaluate appropriateness in licensing and commercial partnerships;
- Exhibits a strong commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and openness;
- Extremely proactive approach to work; solutions-oriented with attention to detail;
- Inspires trust, creativity and cohesiveness;
- Flexible; comfortable leading in a fluid and unpredictable environment;
- A hard worker; a 'doer' with a willingness to work hands-on with a high-energy level;
- Resourceful—able to set priorities and respond to challenges creatively;
- Exercises the highest ethical standards.

Creative Growth operates facilities licensed by the State of California. California Care Licensing (CCL) mandates the following: record of criminal history obtained from California Department of Justice, i.e., clearance to work in a licensed facility; record of health screening including negative TB test results, and current First Aid and CPR certification.

For additional details or to submit your resume and cover letter for review, please contact;

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