

The Box

Appointment of Head of Collections and Programme





Figurehead II by Alexandre de Cunha. Photograph credit: Finbar Webster / Stringer (Getty Images Europe)

Welcome

'Easily the most impressive museum and capital project I've seen in ten years at the Arts Council.'

'A real triumph for cultural place-making.'

'I'll be brief. It blew me away.'

Thank you for your interest in joining The Box team. This is an incredibly exciting time for both the organisation and for culture in Plymouth.

We're two years on from the transformation of Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery into The Box, proudly led by Plymouth City Council. The venue opened to critical and public acclaim in September 2020 and is one of the UK's most significant cultural projects of recent times.

Early feedback has been hugely positive, but as an organisation, we've had to address our newness and learn how best to use our extraordinarily bold building. Like everybody, we're also dealing with the implications of Covid and the cost of living crisis and taking steps to ensure our financial sustainability. But despite the challenging external environment, we still have the opportunity to innovate and take creative risks. The real impact of The Box is yet to be fully realised.

Our collections, including our archives, are a fantastic resource for the city and the region. We're passionate about finding contemporary and creative ways to make our assets meaningful for diverse audiences, to ensure that our content is relevant and that we engage with those least able to access culture.

This new senior role gives you the opportunity to make your mark on a venue – and city – that is full of potential. This is a job for a creative leader with experience of delivering innovative and ambitious programmes that have real impact. We're hungry to grow our audiences and reputation and reimagine what a new hybrid cultural organisation can be in the 21st century. As we transition from a major capital project to a fully operational organisation, we're committed to transforming notions of how a museum operates and enabling The Box to reach its full potential.

If you are full of ideas and skilled at bringing them to fruition; enjoy working collaboratively and have a track record in audience diversification, we very much look forward to hearing from you. Plymouth is a vibrant city by the sea, surrounded by beautiful countryside. The city is passionate about culture and you could have a great life here.

Best wishes
Victoria Pomery
CEO, The Box





Sequences, inversions and permutations by Leonor Antunes. Photograph credit: Nick Ash.

Our story so far

The Box represents Plymouth's determination to use arts and culture as a catalyst for place-based regeneration; driving economic growth, raising aspirations and improving community cohesion. The City Council has put culture at the centre of its strategies and invested more than £50m over the past five years. Instead of the arts competing with priorities such as economic development and social care, it sees culture as the solution and enabler for these agendas.

The city's confidence in this bold vision inspired partners including Arts Council England and National Lottery Heritage Fund to match PCC's £20m investment in The Box with transformational levels of new external funding.

The seven year, £47m project opened in the middle of the global pandemic and has already become a centre of learning for all ages and cultural tourism attraction, as well as a city centre regeneration project.

The Box has merged four separate organisations – the former Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery, South West Film and Television Archive, South West Image Bank and Plymouth and West Devon Record Office. It has transformed three historic city centre buildings – the old Museum and Art Gallery, City Library and St Luke's Church – augmenting them with an ambitious contemporary extension and unique 'archive in the sky'. It has also created a new public square and gathering space, Tavistock Place.

As a result, two million artefacts, archives, film and photographs from across Plymouth and the South West are now housed in a purpose built environment. Seven new gallery spaces showcase our rich collections spanning archaeology, social history, natural history, fine and decorative arts, moving image, contemporary art and more. Five new temporary exhibition spaces include the spectacular St Luke's, a former church now the largest purpose-built exhibition space in the South West.

Our programme combines the best of contemporary art with those historic collections of regional and national significance, offering a fantastic resource for the city. Working with artists and audiences, we are committed to finding contemporary and creative ways to make our assets meaningful to more people. We strive to engage with those least able to access culture whilst supporting wider city/regional agendas including increased collaboration, place-making and sustainable tourism. We're committed to using our distinctive blend of museum, gallery and archive to ask questions about the world we are living in, exploring issues from representation to climate justice through our exhibitions and programming.





Amongst many awards, we received one of just seven Special Commendations in the European Museum of the Year awards in 2022, with the judges describing ‘...a remarkable regional museum with strong ambitions for its cultural, education and social effects. With outstanding exhibitions and easy access for all, it has created a new cultural asset for its city and region and is an active advocate for the social change it can bring to its communities.’

To date, we have welcomed more than 350,000 visitors to The Box. We attract a diverse audience, with around 50% drawn from Plymouth and the surrounding area.

Our early years of operation were subject to many Covid restrictions and closures, but we are still pushing for an impressive return on investment, including up to £800k of new earned income. The Box runs a shop, venue hire and a catering operation, contracted to Fosters. In 2021, The Box shop was shortlisted for the Museums and Heritage Awards. Our venue hire offer, from corporate events to weddings, has had increased interest since the end of Covid restrictions.

As well as significant support from Plymouth City Council, The Box receives revenue funding from Arts Council England (ACE) as a National Portfolio Organisation. In May we submitted an application for funds for the period 2023-26. This is a competitive process and the outcome is imminent at time of writing. In addition, we receive funding from the British Film Institute and several other trusts and foundations.

Partnership and collaboration is vital and The Box has a number of significant strategic partnerships in place, including the National Portrait Gallery, V&A and Tate St Ives. We are connected with networks and initiatives across the city through the new National Marine Park, Plymouth Culture, FE/HE providers, RIO and Theatre Royal Plymouth, working with them to offer a joined up and connected approach to cultural opportunity in the city.

Our vision, mission and values

Our vision:

Reimagining the future through the past

Our mission:

The Box is a dynamic space for people, ideas and experiences. We are a sustainable hybrid cultural organisation for the 21st century. From our home in Plymouth, we share extraordinary stories and explore the pressing issues of our age. Reimagining the future using curiosity and creativity

Our values:

Connected – we are committed to inclusion and thrive through collaboration. We connect people, places, ideas and collections

Progressive – we are ambitious and dynamic. Developing new ideas and ways of doing things, we seek to be a beacon of best practice

Curious – learning is at the heart of The Box, enabling creativity to inspire change

Relevant – working with others, we generate an engaging and accessible offer for our communities, particularly those for whom The Box is new





Our collections and programme

The Box is seeking to re-define the role of the 21st century museum. As a hybrid organisation, we are perfectly placed to do this. We are passionate about creating connections between art, people and objects and between the contemporary and historical. Placing people at the heart of what we do will drive our success. We are a catalyst for change – innovative, ambitious and collaborative.

We generate new ideas and strive to make contemporary art, our collections and work more accessible.

Embracing digital transformation is key to visitor experience and audience development. We have used digital to engage with audiences in care homes, to disseminate content and to create opportunities for artists. We aim to narrate the story of the city and our collections so that more people feel that The Box reflects their identity and the multiplicity of histories.

Colonialism and empire are intrinsically linked to Plymouth's past. Working with contemporary artists from the region and beyond, we commission and showcase existing work that challenges, inspires and makes historical material more relevant to the present. We also invite artists to respond to the collections and involve audiences in our interpretation so that multiple voices are heard.

Our ambitious opening programme *Making It* was curated in-house in 2020. It featured commissions by international artists including Antony Gormley and Leonor Antunes, alongside collection displays highlighting Plymouth's history and importance.

We've given voice to local and global communities who have first-hand experience of the impact of colonialism. *Mayflower 400: Legend and Legacy*, for example, looked anew at the traditional Mayflower narrative. We built on this practice with *Songlines: Tracking the Seven Sisters*, which brought the ancient stories of indigenous Australians to Plymouth, the only UK venue for this international touring exhibition from the National Museum of Australia.

Our 2022-23 programme has strived to connect our audiences with history, our collections and contemporary art and thinking. Zadie Xa, Maurizio Anzeri, George Shaw and *British Art Show 9* featured alongside collections-based *Dress Code: Fashion Stories from The Box* and *because the night belongs to us*, a community-driven examination of Plymouth's nightlife over the past 50 years.

In 2023-24, we have exhibitions by Rana Begum, Quinlan & Hastings, Sue Williamson and a new commission by John Akomfrah. We are developing an ambitious Sir Joshua Reynolds exhibition that highlights the amazing drawings from our Designated Cottonian Collection, to mark his 300th anniversary plus a show of Dutch Flower paintings with the National Gallery.

We see The Box as part museum, gallery and archive, a social space for art, people and objects. A centre of knowledge and cultural participation, with artistic excellence at its heart. Taking creative risks and innovation are vital for our success, so too is our focus on learning and engagement. We are particularly committed to representation, climate justice and digital transformation across all areas of our work.

Learning and outreach is at the heart of our vision and our programme of events and activities engages with children and young people in formal education, families, community groups, FE and HE. Since opening, we've supported 8,000 visits from children and young people through our schools programme, as well as activities tailored to everyone from early years to older people to underserved communities, which have reached over 23,000 people. We run a regular programme of free family activities, including special sessions for early years and were shortlisted for the Kids in Museums Family Friend award in 2021.

Andy Holden, *Cat-tharis*, 2016-2020



The role

HEAD OF COLLECTIONS AND PROGRAMME

Title	Head of Collections and Programme
Grade	GRADE L: £56,924-£60,970
Reference	N1495
Reports to	CEO The Box
Work style definition	Museum based hot-desk/touch down worker
Job type	Operational Leader
Primary purpose of role	Maintain The Box as a leading museum, gallery and archive. Lead an innovative programme and ensure that the collections and archive are cared for, managed and curated. Lead the management of the team to research, develop, curate and deliver an ambitious exhibitions programme. Develop new partnerships locally, regionally, nationally and internationally and work closely with key funders and stakeholders. The role is part of the senior management team at The Box and plays a leadership role within the city and museum sector.

Key accountabilities and key measures

Role outcomes

- To lead on the delivery of an ambitious and innovative artistic offer for The Box (15%)
- Lead and manage the team ensuring that they deliver on the vision and values to attract visit numbers and critical acclaim, in particular local audiences (15%)
- To work strategically with the CEO and senior colleagues to set the vision, policy and culture of The Box including report and bid writing (10%)

Role measures

- Vision and programme approved by Arca, Advisory Group and key stakeholders eg Arts Council
- Achieving visitor target numbers, positive feedback and media attention
- Input into all aspects of The Box's operation and delivery of Business Plan and Programme
- Retaining standards as demanded through accreditation schemes of Arts Council and the National Archives

- Lead, manage and develop The Box's integrated collections and the staff team (15%)
- Secure funding for the programme (15%)
- Budgetary management and responsibility for the collections and programme of c£1m per annum (15%)
- Raising the regional, national and international profile of The Box to drive footfall and social and economic transformation (5%)
- Representing The Box at regional, national and international meetings and events (5%)
- Regular presentations to portfolio holders, Cabinet meetings, Arca, the advisory group and stakeholders (5%)
- Achieve ambitious fundraising targets
- Meeting financial targets within the Business/Forward Plan
- Building visibility and credibility for The Box particularly with lenders, media, national and international influencers
- Building strong and effective political and stakeholder support

Key activities

- To be part of the Senior Management Team of The Box, working closely with the CEO and colleagues, representing The Box and deputising for the CEO as required (10%)
- Lead and inspire the Collections and Programme Team to develop and implement an integrated programme of contemporary art and historical exhibitions, commissions and events on and off site including digital, creating a distinctive and ambitious offer for local, regional, national and international audiences (15%)
- Use data, particularly on audiences, to inform future programme plans (5%)
- Work closely with the Engagement Programmes Manager to develop a programme that drives audiences (10%)
- Work with partners across the city and beyond (5%)

- Provide effective and inspiring leadership to colleagues (5%)
- Contribute to the future vision and strategy of The Box and its ongoing operation (5%)
- Research and generate proposals for exhibitions, projects and commissions that will generate diverse audiences and ensure the collections are part of the vision (10%)
- Write clear and compelling reports and case studies to develop understanding of and create visibility for our collections (5%)
- Support the CEO and be a key part of the Senior Team in developing and nurturing existing partnerships and developing new relationships (5%)
- Contribute to the cross-departmental strategic work of the Senior Management Team (SMT), including fundraising, learning, commercial and marketing activity (10%)
- Actively engage in all aspects of fundraising for the programme and our wider ambitions (10%)
- Represent The Box at local, regional, national and international events, routinely attending launches, meetings and events associated with the programme (5%)

**Essential qualifications/
knowledge**

- Professional knowledge of the national heritage and museum sectors knowledge and the issues, standards and best practice required for accreditation through Arts Council England and the National Archives and knowledge of funders/stakeholders such as Arts Council England, the British Film Institute and the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Relevant management/leadership training
- Degree or post-graduate qualification in a relevant arts/humanities subject, or equivalent

Essential experience

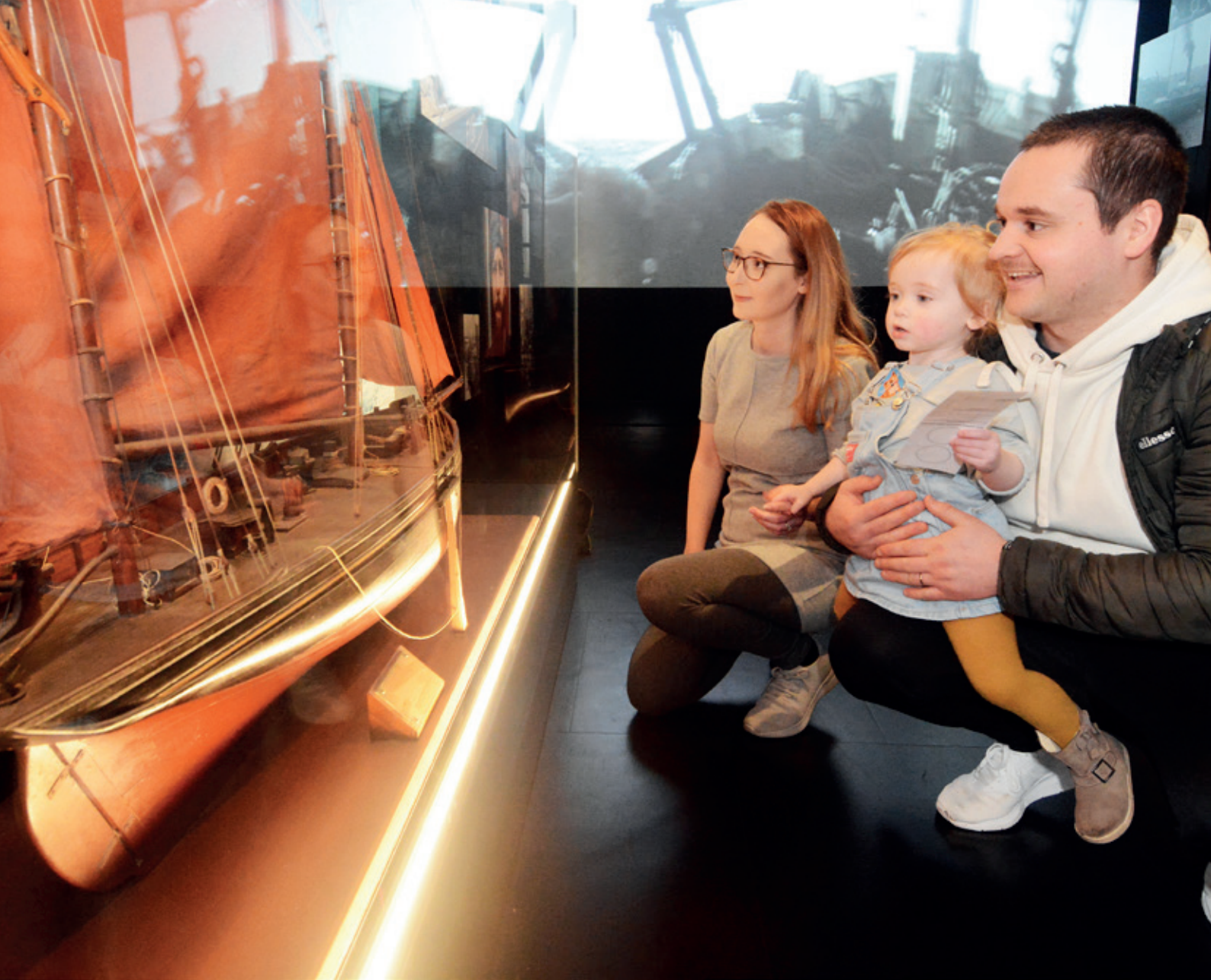
- Knowledge of historical and contemporary art
- A track record for curating exhibitions that engage with diverse audiences and of working at a senior level within a museum context
- An inclusive leader able to inspire and empower staff
- Extensive experience of working with contemporary artists including commissioning
- Senior curatorial experience gained within a museum/gallery
- Experience of working with collections
- A proven commitment to developing diverse and new audiences
- Proven fundraising experience
- Experience of managing and developing complex projects and budgets

Essential skills

- Proven senior-level organisational skills and an ability to work collaboratively
- An ability to work strategically both as part of a team and independently, leading multiple projects while remaining calm and organised under pressure
- Highly developed verbal and written communication skills, including public speaking
- A sensitive and politically astute negotiator, able to cultivate and develop strategic partnerships and key relationships with funders and stakeholders
- Excellent writing skills and proven experience of writing texts for diverse audiences and contexts
- Diplomatic, with an ability to achieve outcomes when resolving sensitive problems and challenges
- Fundraising and budget management
- Prepared to travel and work evenings and weekends as required

Corporate standards

- In accordance with Council policies and guidance on information management and security, it is your personal responsibility for data protection, client confidentiality and information governance.
- Act at all times in accordance with appropriate legislation and regulations, codes of practice, the provisions of the Council's constitution and its policies and procedures.
- Work within the requirements of the Council's Health and Safety policy, performance standards, safe systems of work and procedures.
- Undertake all duties with due regard to the corporate equalities policy and relevant legislation.



What we offer

Annual leave

Up to 25 days annual leave (plus public holidays, and pro rata for part-time), rising to 30 days after five years' continuous service. Additionally, you may be able to purchase up to 15 days of additional annual leave through our flexible benefits scheme.

Pension scheme

You can join one of the largest public sector pension schemes in the UK which offers attractive employer contributions.

How to apply

Apply via Plymouth City Council's recruitment portal plymouthcitycouncil.engageats.co.uk. The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Monday 21 November. Interviews are likely to be held in Plymouth on 8/9 December.