Curator for Historical Culture and Community, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa

Tulsa, OK, USA
Application deadline: Oct 28, 2026

Crawford Mann

Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community
Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK.

Reports To: Director of Curatorial Affairs, Alex Mann.
Status: Salaried, Exempt, Full-Time.
Location: Tulsa, Oklahoma 74127.
Posting Number: 413, posted 9/08/2026.
Application Materials: cover letter (max 2 pages), C.V., writing sample (max 20 pages).
Deadline: open until filled; application reviews begin September 28, 2026.
Application Link:
https://utulsa-ibvjjb.fa.ocs.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX_1/job/413

Job Summary

Gilcrease Museum, which houses an interdisciplinary collection representing the diverse heritage of the Americas, seeks an intellectually curious, creative, and self-motivated individual to be Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community.

The Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community is a new curatorial role, charged with leading exhibitions, acquisitions, research, and interpretation within Gilcrease's collections of historical American fine art, visual culture, material culture, manuscripts, archives, and rare books, together numbering more than 300,000 items. Utilizing broad staff expertise, Gilcrease studies and shares these through multiple intersecting scholarly perspectives and methodological frameworks. The focus of the Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community will be questions of identity, politics, and cultural expression from the past, using rigorous research and dynamic storytelling to convey the relevance of historical objects to contemporary audiences.

The Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community will participate on a seven-member curatorial team and collaborate with other museum departments, reporting to the Director of Curatorial Affairs. Primary duties include researching and cataloguing the collection; recommending historical items and collections for acquisition; developing dynamic long-term, temporary, and traveling exhibitions; identifying and bringing traveling exhibitions to Gilcrease; and raising national and international visibility for Gilcrease's work and for its collections. This role will also partner with Gilcrease's Associate Curator for Contemporary Culture and Community to activate the Muse-

um's collections in support of projects with living artists, including participants in the Artist-in-Residence program, and with community collaborators.

Objects of study for the Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community will include some of Gilcrease's most esteemed collections areas. Many of the Museum's best-know items pertain to the history of European settlement in the Americas and to interactions between the settlers and Native nations in the present-day United States. These include superb examples of colonial-era and nineteenth-century portraiture, history paintings, genre paintings, and sculptures in marble and bronze, with pockets of strength in works by Charles Bird King, George Catlin, Frederic Remington, Charles Marion Russell, and members of the Taos Society of Artists. In addition, the Museum collects materials and hosts research on military history and diplomacy, the transatlantic slave trade, religion in the Americas, histories of transportation and urbanization, the Civil Rights Movement, and changing roles for women in American society. Documents and artworks speaking to the history of Oklahoma are another area of depth, including items concerning the forced removal of Native tribes to this region and about the 1921 Tula Race Massacre. The Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community will be a key point of contact for researchers and exhibition opportunities in these diverse fields, while initiating projects based on the curator's personal expertise and interests.

Key Opportunities
The Assistant Curator for Historical Culture and Community will join Gilcrease as the Museum prepares for its public reopening in early 2027 in a new 83,500-square-foot building. With this watershed moment Gilcrease is also embracing an intersectional approach to managing and displaying its 300,000+ objects. This includes interdisciplinary galleries that juxtapose objects from different times, places, and cultures, as well as increased attention to Indigenous histories and makers, and to Latin American art and culture. Key opportunities include:
• Strategic Leadership: Contribute leadership to the reimagining of the Gilcrease brand, visitor experience, and curatorial department structure.
• Museum Transformation: Participate in the installation and reopening programs for Gilcrease's new museum building.
• Collection Visibility: Help catalogue, exhibit, publish, and promote under-utilized collection areas, in conversation with staff, conservators, visiting researchers, and other experts, including community members (locally and beyond).
• Exhibitions Excellence: Organize and curate exhibitions for Gilcrease's expanded galleries and traveling exhibitions program.
• Academic Profile: Engage with students, faculty, and library resources at the University of Tulsa, a top-100 private research university.
• Scholarly Growth: Initiate and lead projects that are steered by the curator's expertise and curiosity.

Essential Functions (Responsibilities):

Exhibitions
• Curates and presents temporary, long-term, and traveling museum exhibitions, utilizing Gilcrease collections and loans.
• Supports the implementation and public unveiling of Gilcrease's new Interpretive Plan, contribut-

ing to the presentation of interdisciplinary narratives in the new museum building.

Collections
• Collaborates with collections stewards, conservators, and other staff to support access and care of Gilcrease's historical paintings, sculptures, works on paper, archival materials, and rare books.
• Contributes to Gilcrease's Collections Development Plan for historical materials related to communities and cultures of the Americas, particularly the present-day United States, including leadership of acquisitions through gift and purchase.
• Assists the curators of Indigenous art and culture, Latin American art and culture, and others to conduct consultations with descendent communities regarding historical collection items with potentially sensitive cultural content.
• Contributes to interdepartmental work developing collections policies, museum operations, and programs that build and strengthen Gilcrease's relationships with the communities throughout the Americas whose stories its collections represent.
Research
• Conducts scholarly research on the Gilcrease collection for exhibitions and publications, including digital and online resources, while ensuring findings are appropriately documented and preserved within institutional records systems.
• Fosters and maintains positive working relationships with museum colleagues across the United States and beyond, as well as with scholars, gallerists, collectors, living artists, and a diverse array of community advisors.
• Promotes Gilcrease nationally and internationally through publishing and presenting at conferences, universities, and other external venues.
Service
• Collaborates with the Associate Curator for Contemporary Culture and Community on community-driven curatorial projects, including exhibitions, performances, installations, and visiting artist collaborations.
• Develops on-site public and educational programming in coordination with the Learning & Community Engagement Department and Helmerich Center for American Research staff, including public lectures, symposia, media programs, and museum tours.
• Liaises with and builds strong, ongoing relationships with outside stakeholders, including museum supporters, citizens of Tulsa, regional artists and arts organizations, and national and international communities with ties to Gilcrease's collections and mission.
• Facilitates research by visiting scholars and responds to public and professional inquiries relating to the Gilcrease collections and the curator's areas of expertise.
• Supervises or co-supervises curatorial department interns and volunteers.
• Conducts staff and docent training.
• Serves on Gilcrease interdepartmental teams to enhance operations, communication, and staff culture across the museum.
Development
• Assists in preparing and writing applications and reports for grants supporting exhibitions and the care and interpretation of the collection.
• Interacts with donors, board members, The University of Tulsa staff, and volunteers; conducts VIP tours as requested.

Performs other duties as assigned.

Working Environment

The Gilcrease workweek is Monday – Friday, 8 hours a day, 40 hours per week. In 2027 the Curatorial staff begins work in a new curatorial research center, located inside the historic Thomas Gilcrease House (1913). Occasionally, working evenings or weekends due to special events may be required, and occasional overnight travel may occur.

Required Qualifications:

Knowledge/Skill/Ability
• Recognized scholarly expertise in any area of historical American art and culture (pre-1980s), demonstrated through publications and conference participation
• Excellent communication skills: writing, public speaking, and interpretation for both scholarly and general audiences
• Advanced research skills, demonstrated through experience in archival collections
• Reading knowledge sufficient for research in at least one second language
• Ability to creatively interpret and present interdisciplinary museum collections
• Demonstrated ability to collaborate as a team member with staff and volunteers
• Cultural sensitivity and ability to reach out and work with diverse communities, including communities of cultures associated with Gilcrease collections, and constituents served by Gilcrease Museum
• Demonstrated ability to manage concurrent projects, establish priorities, and meet deadlines, while maintaining high attention to detail
• Enthusiasm for creating welcoming and engaging museum experiences for all
Equivalent Education/Experience
• Master’s degree from an accredited university or college in art history, history, American studies, African-American studies, religious studies, women’s and gender studies, museum studies, or a related field (PhD preferred)
• Two to five years of work experience (including fellowships and internships) in a museum or cultural heritage setting, with experience in exhibitions development

Preferred Qualifications
• Experience integrating technology into exhibitions, programs, and research
• A robust network of professionals in the American art and/or history fields, including museums, galleries, research libraries, and archives.
• Proficiency in PC or Mac software applications, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook
• Experience with collections databases, particularly The Museum System (TMS), ArchivesSpace, and OCLC WorldShare Management Services
• Proven grant-writing experience in support of historical research projects
• Knowledge of the American Alliance of Museums and School for Advanced Research best practices for the care and maintenance of collections
• Ability to evaluate museum objects as to condition, authenticity, origin, and quality; and to help identity conservation needs
• Additional language proficiencies are welcome

Physical Demands and Other Requirements
Physical dexterity is required sufficient for using a keyboard and telephone; and for carrying, pushing, and pulling up to 50 pounds. The position may be subject to extended periods of walking, standing, sitting, reaching, balancing, bending, kneeling, handling, climbing, and twisting. The curator must have visual acuity to closely examine small objects, and speech and hearing sufficient to interact with co-workers and to communicate well with professional and general audiences.Responsibilities require working with highly sensitive or confidential information.
The University of Tulsa limits eligibility for this position to individuals who are legally authorized to work in the United States and will not require future sponsorship for employment visa status.
Note: Research shows that women and individuals from underrepresented backgrounds often apply to jobs only if they meet 100% of the qualifications. We recognize that a successful candidate may meet many, but not 100%, of the requirements listed on this job description. Therefore, if much of this description describes you, please apply for this role.

Benefits:Benefits include medical, dental, and vision plan options, 401(k), paid time off, and a range of other benefits and privileges available to all University of Tulsa employees.
The annual starting salary range for this position is $44,500 – $47,500.

Application reviews will begin on Monday, September 28, 2026

SUBMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS HERE:
https://utulsa-ibvjjb.fa.ocs.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperience/en/sites/CX_1/job/413

About Gilcrease Museum

Mission Statement: Gilcrease Museum, through its collections, is dedicated to bringing art, history, and people together to research, discover, enjoy, and understand the diverse heritage of the Americas.

Gilcrease Museum houses a comprehensive collection of the art, culture, and history of North America. Thomas Gilcrease, a citizen of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, founded the Museum in 1949 in Tulsa, OK. Today the interdisciplinary collection contains more than 300,000 items, representing hundreds of Indigenous cultures from across North and South America, with material culture and archaeology from 12,000 BCE to the 21st century. The collection includes more than 350 years of American paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, including the largest public holdings of art of the American West.

Adjacent to the museum, theHelmerich Center for American Researchhouses the Gilcrease Library and Archive. This collection holds manuscripts, photographs, maps, rare books, print portfolios, and broadsides related to the history of the Americas from the 15th century to the present. Beyond the museum's gardens and grounds, a large public park leads visitors to trails for walking and biking. Gilcrease is owned by theCity of Tulsa, which has partnered withThe University of Tulsa to steward its operations.

Reference:
JOB: Curator for Historical Culture and Community, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa. In: ArtHist.net, Sep 14, 2026 (accessed Nov 9, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/54220>.