INVITATION FOR APPLICATIONS

Executive Director, Rhizome

Rhizome, the influential digital art and technology nonprofit, is seeking an Executive Director. This is a unique opportunity for a dynamic leader to engage a new generation of artists and technologists, shaping the future of Rhizome and digital culture at large in a moment of intense public interest in the field.

About Rhizome

Rhizome champions born-digital art and culture through commissions, exhibitions, scholarship, and digital preservation. Founded in 1996 by artist Mark Tribe as a listserv including some of the first artists to work online, Rhizome has played an integral role in the history of contemporary art engaged with digital technologies and the internet. Recent milestones include the Net Art Anthology, an exhibition of 100 works that define internet art as a diverse field of practice; the ArtBase, an archive of more than 2,500 works of new media art stewarded by Rhizome’s digital preservation program; and the Seven on Seven conference, which brings leading artists together with tech-world luminaries to create new work together, such as the first ever NFT in 2014.

Since 2003, Rhizome has been an affiliate in residence at the New Museum in New York City. Founded in 1977, the New Museum is a leading destination for new art and new ideas. Together, New Museum, Rhizome, and NEW INC, the first museum-led incubator founded by New Museum in 2014, explore the future of contemporary art and technology.

The Opportunity

The Executive Director strategically oversees the entire organization, from fundraising to artistic programs to preservation initiatives, and acts as a public representative to connect with online and offline communities and lead the conversation in this diverse field of practice.

A new Executive Director will anticipate the evolution of Rhizome amid new conditions stemming from an eruption of interest and engagement with digital art and culture. They will express a vision for how Rhizome can continue to evolve year-over-year, increasing its impact and support for emerging ideas, artists, and areas of practice, while finding contemporary relevance in its archives and bringing different communities and generations into dialogue. The Executive Director will leverage relationships, programs, and institutional legacy to ensure Rhizome’s visibility and differentiation with the objective of maintaining its role as the preeminent institution in digital culture.

The position requires fluency in digital culture, a nuanced understanding of contemporary art, a passion for dialogue and community development, and a deep respect for the integral role that Rhizome—together with the artists and audiences around it—plays within the history,
definition, and growth of contemporary art engaged with technology and the internet. In collaboration with Rhizome’s expert staff, the Executive Director oversees organizational development, corporate partnerships, foundation and government grant-giving, individual giving, earned income initiatives, and Rhizome’s artistic programming and online activity, including signature programs such as digital art preservation and its collection of 2,500+ digital artworks, major events like Seven on Seven, and annual commissioning of new art. The Executive Director also cultivates the strategic relationship between Rhizome and the New Museum, and works with Rhizome’s Board of Directors.

Rhizome is an Equal Opportunity Employer and candidates from groups generally underrepresented in our field are especially encouraged to apply. We also recognize that no one candidate is likely to meet all this role’s qualifications—if much of the below fits your experience, please apply. This role entails leading a staff of dedicated professionals, supporting artists at different stages of their careers, and addressing a diversity of community-members. Qualities such as emotional intelligence and a true commitment to inclusion will be as important as the below. The salary for this position varies based on qualifications and experience; our current target is $115,000 – $125,000.

Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have many of the following attributes:

- An entrepreneurial spirit excited by the artists, artworks, platforms, communities, and economies of digital art and culture
- Fluency in internet and digital technologies and their relationship to culture, art practice, ethics, and reception
- Nuanced understanding of the broader contemporary art world, with a particular focus on digital & net art, and the way digital art and culture intersect
- Experience being the public voice of an organization, audience development and marketing
- Strong relationships with artists, curators, arts professionals, relevant media, funders, stakeholders, donors, and other individuals central to fulfilling Rhizome’s mission, particularly in New York City but with a national and international outlook
- Connection with Gen Z and the values of a new generation
- Evidence of strong leadership and collaboration skills
- Experience leading new initiatives, projects, or programs within an arts or technology organization
- Evidence of management, development and care of an organization and its staff
- Experience fundraising and cultivating donors and sponsors
- Experience managing special events, conferences, and curatorial projects
- The ability to develop and manage stakeholder relationships with individuals and institutions. Ideally, experience working with a Board or other VIP networks
- Excellent writing and public speaking skills
• Superb people skills

Responsibilities

Financial Strategy and Development

• In consultation with the Board and Controller, establish an annual budget and an approach to income (individual, institutional, and corporate) and expenses to meet (and exceed) those yearly targets, while on a year-to-year basis expanding Rhizome’s capacity and opportunities.
• In close collaboration with the recently added Development Director, oversee all fundraising activities—including benefits, campaigns, grant requests—and lead on / participate in prioritized high-level cultivation and solicitation.
• Develop and oversee Rhizome’s slate of strategic partnerships, ensuring that program interest and capacity aligns with bespoke project objectives and calendars.
• Develop and implement "financial resiliency" planning to promote yearly growth of non-operating income for reserves.
• In partnership with the Controller and annual Audit contractors, ensure that all funds are being spent appropriately and for the best purposes of the organization; ensure completion of an annual audit and financial report.

Mission Delivery

• Ensure that Rhizome’s mission is delivered effectively and broadly through its array of programming and services. Monitor all major activities to ensure their success and preempt potential issues.
• In close collaboration with the Artistic Director and Preservation Director, continually evaluate and improve multi-year program strategies, and ensure implementation of accessible, resourced programs and services.
• In close collaboration with the Toby Devan Lewis Director, New Inc Director, Chief of Staff, and other senior staff at the New Museum, build opportunities for collaboration and mutual benefit between the affiliate organizations.
• In partnership with New Museum’s Department of External Affairs and internal staff (such as recently added Program Assistant), design and implement communications strategies that grow Rhizome’s audience and legibly communicate its work.
• In partnership with contract designers and recently added Community Designer, oversee the ongoing development of rhizome.org towards better program delivery, legibility, and audience engagement.
• In partnership with staff, ensure that Rhizome continues to implement and evaluate effectiveness of institutional diversity, equity, and inclusion goals across its programming.

Board Development
- In partnership with the Chair, set a strategy for the engagement and development of the Rhizome Board of Directors.
- In partnership with Chair and staff, develop and design quarterly Board meetings to ensure that the Board is able to suitably dispense with their governance responsibilities.
- Work independently or with staff to develop all Board communications, including quarterly reports.

Administration

- In partnership with New Museum Human Resources and Controller, the ED oversees staff needs as they relate to joining or parting with the organization, benefits, and professional development.
- Oversee annual goal-setting among all staff, and implement for Director-level staff.
- Create opportunities for all-staff engagement, including professional development and evaluation of organization and work.

**How to Apply**

Please submit all applications (cover letter + resume) and inquiries to edsearch@rhizome.org.

**Application Deadline**

May 13, 2022