

**İSTANBUL  
MODERN**

# Appointment of Director

January 2024



Saxton Bampfylde



Yüzen Adalar Sergisi, Photo © Cemal Emden

# About Istanbul Modern

Türkiye's first museum of modern and contemporary art, Istanbul Modern mediates the sharing and transfer of the country's artistic heritage on a global scale and brings together artistic productions from various geographies in Istanbul. With a vision to support the diversity of artistic expressions, it collects, preserves, exhibits, researches, and documents works of art. It works to increase access to art through interdisciplinary exhibitions, educational programs and events, and contributes to artists' production and international collaborations.

The museum supports inclusivity and creativity to create a sustainable art ecosystem. It fosters a dialogue with modern and contemporary art for audiences of all ages and walks of life, encouraging people to wonder and think together. The internationally oriented programs strengthen the interaction between artists and audiences by making use of technological developments and enables a multifaceted museum experience.

## History

Following the public interest shown in the first International Istanbul Contemporary Art Exhibitions organized by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts in 1987, known today as the Istanbul Biennial, Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı and Oya Eczacıbaşı embarked on a project to endow Istanbul with a permanent museum of modern and contemporary art.

After a long search, the Feshane, a former 19th century textile manufacturing plant on the Golden Horn, was converted into a space for a museum of contemporary art. Although the building housed the 3rd Istanbul Biennial in 1992, the project never reached its long-term goal. The project, led by Oya Eczacıbaşı after the death of Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı in 1993, was revived when a customs warehouse on the Galata pier served as the main venue for the 8th Istanbul Biennial in 2003. When President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, then Prime Minister, gave his approval for the museum to be located in Antrepo No. 4, the museum project was realized.

The 8,000 square meter building was turned over to Istanbul Modern in early 2004 and quickly transformed by Tabanlıoğlu Architects into a modern museum building with all corresponding functions. After spending 14 years in this building as Turkey's first museum of modern and contemporary art, Istanbul Modern moved to a temporary space in the Beyoğlu district of Istanbul in March 2023, where it welcomed visitors for the next three years while the new building was being constructed.

<https://www.istanbulmodern.org/en>



# The New Museum



The new museum, designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, replaces the original museum building at the same location, an old customs warehouse on the Bosphorus waterfront that was taken over by Istanbul Modern in 2004. The Museum's stunning location on the new waterfront promenade, previously inaccessible to the public, gives visitors the opportunity to gaze across the water towards the Anatolian side, Princes' Islands and the Historical Peninsula from this unique viewpoint. The design of the new building was inspired by the glittering waters and light reflections of the Bosphorus.

A transparent ground floor strengthens the connection between the waterfront and Tophane Park. At ground level, the circular columns and round mechanical funnels form an architectural landscape, the shapes of these structural elements softening the transition between light and shadow and creating a bright and safe environment by removing the sharp division between light and dark.

A café, museum shop, library, information points and educational workshop spaces are located on the ground floor next to the main lobby. The public areas of the museum are connected by a wide central stairway suspended in a large void in the centre of the lobby.

From the ground floor lobby, the stairs provide access to a 156-seat auditorium on an underground mezzanine. Photography and pop-up galleries are located on the first floor, as are staff offices, education and event rooms. The restaurant on the south façade has an outdoor terrace with views toward the sea. All lobby spaces on upper levels give visitors a view of both the park and water, maintaining a visual connection to the surroundings. This also helps visitors orientate themselves through the building.

The second-floor houses permanent and temporary exhibition galleries, where also a staircase leads to a glass lantern opening onto a rooftop viewing terrace that hovers above a shallow plane of water spread across the entire roof. A metaphysical connection is created by the reflections of the city on both the water feature and the sea, which merge into one.



# Exhibitions

## Collection Exhibition

Exhibitions curated from the museum's collection reveal the continuity and interaction between Türkiye's modern and contemporary art. Through thematic and chronological approaches, the exhibitions present the changes and transformations in the history of art, often while bringing together artists from Türkiye and different geographies.

[Read more about the collection here.](#)

## Temporary Exhibitions

Istanbul Modern organizes conceptual and retrospective temporary exhibitions that showcase examples of Türkiye's modern and contemporary art. The museum also hosts large-scale and international exhibitions that highlight the current transformations taking place in visual arts.

[Read more about exhibitions here.](#)

## Photography Gallery

Istanbul Modern Photography Gallery hosts exhibitions that showcase the evolution of photography in Türkiye and worldwide since its inception, and the reflections of international art movements on photography. The museum's photography collection consists of works by leading photographers from both Türkiye and different geographies.

## Pop-up Exhibitions

Istanbul Modern's pop-up exhibitions focus on different disciplines in contemporary art and mainly bring together artists from younger generations under different themes.





LÜTFEN YARIYA ÇIKMAYIN!  
PLEASE DON'T CROSS THE RED LINE!

# The Role

The Board of Istanbul Modern are looking to recruit a visionary and dynamic Director, who will be responsible for setting the strategic direction for the Museum as it looks to the future. This is a hugely exciting time to join Istanbul Modern; the new Renzo Piano building opened summer 2023 to great acclaim, and visitor numbers are at a record high. The opportunity is around raising the Museum's profile internationally and ensuring that there is a strong vision and strategy around programming, the collection and wider social influence of the Museum.

## Key responsibilities

- In collaboration with the Board and Executive team, design and implement a vision and strategy for the Museum, including a programming, and collection strategy;
- Represent and advocate for the Museum with key stakeholders internationally;
- Maintain and develop existing relationships, establish new relationships, and follow developments across the international art world;
- Be responsible for both Istanbul Modern and Eczacıbaşı collections, including safeguarding of artworks;
- Support the Business Development department in revenue generation, including sponsorship and fundraising;
- Support the relevant departments to maximise commercial revenues (shop, cafe, restaurant, events inside and outside the museum, membership, young modern, box office, education sales);
- Work with the Business Director and Finance Director on the museum budget;
- Ensure that permanent collection and temporary exhibition programmes are realised in accordance with the museum's vision and mission;
- Support the cinema department for the content and execution of cinema programs;
- Support the department in the development and management of the museum library;
- Work closely with the Marketing Director and communication teams to increase the awareness and reputation of the Istanbul Modern brand, to ensure that all kinds of corporate identity activities related to the museum are designed and implemented in accordance with the principles;







- Work with the Business Director and Human Resources Manager on personnel management and human resources issues. Create strategies for training, personal development and the expansion of general professional awareness;
- Work with the Chair of the Board and Chief Curator in the effective functioning and development of the International Advisory Board;
- Develop possible partnership projects with international museums, including loans;
- To work with the Corporate Communications Director on the Museum's Corporate Communication activities; and
- To manage crisis communication in all kinds of crisis situations that may occur, to provide the necessary leadership and coordination for the solution of the crisis.

## Governance

### Board of Directors

- Chair: Oya Eczacıbaşı
- Vice Chair: Okşan Atilla Sanön
- Damla Birol
- Esra Eczacıbaşı Coşkun
- Şeli Elvaşvili
- Can Kendi
- Özcan Konak
- Ethem Sancak
- Görgün Taner

### International Advisory Board

- Neal Benezra
- Bernard Blistène
- Dr. Yılmaz Dziewior
- Glenn D. Lowry
- Frances Morris
- Sheena Wagstaff

### Photography Advisory Board

- Merih Akoğul  
Photographer, Writer, Lecturer at  
Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University
- Murat Germen  
Artist, Lecturer at Sabancı University
- Sıtkı Kösemem  
Architect, Artist



# Person Specification

The ideal candidate will bring all or most of the following attributes:

- A track record of inspiring artistic and curatorial leadership;
- A leadership style that promotes creativity, innovation and collegiality across Istanbul Modern;
- A strong network of international artists and peer leaders;
- A broad knowledge of modern and contemporary global art practices across all media;
- A track record of developing an innovative programme of exhibitions of different scales, and a knowledge of innovative exhibition strategies;
- Awareness of equality and diversity issues as they affect major museums and a track record of working with diverse artists and audiences, leading with integrity and credibility;
- An understanding of the wider economic, commercial, political and environmental issues affecting Istanbul Modern;
- A convincing and persuasive communication skills, ability to influence and negotiate with senior stakeholders, peer museums, lenders, donors and external agencies/stakeholders;
- A brilliant external advocate for Istanbul Modern;
- Someone who embraces commercial opportunity as part of artistic thinking;
- A savvy, emotionally intelligent leader, who is exciting and fun to work with;
- Personally resilient and optimistic; capable of motivating themselves and others, and able to protect their own energy and effectiveness when necessary;
- A person with interest in the global arts ecology and in global reach allied to deep local impact;
- Demonstrable financial and commercial skills, with commercial acumen and experience of rigorous budget management; and
- Excellent written skills, capable of drafting compelling copy and contributing to powerful public messages about Istanbul Modern's work.



# Terms of Appointment

- This is a permanent, full-time contract.
- The salary for the role will be commensurate with experience.
- Health insurance package after completion of two months (Turkey coverage).
- 2 weeks paid vacation plus the following national and religious holidays:
  - National Holidays
    - January 1<sup>st</sup>
    - April 23<sup>rd</sup>
    - May 1<sup>st</sup>
    - May 19<sup>th</sup>
    - July 15<sup>th</sup>
    - August 30<sup>th</sup>
    - October 29<sup>th</sup>
- Religious Holidays 2024 (these are according to lunar calendar, so the dates change every year):
  - April 10-12<sup>th</sup>
  - June 16-17<sup>th</sup>, and 18-19<sup>th</sup>
- The role will be based at Istanbul Modern, Kılıç Ali Paşa District, Tophane İşkele Street, No:1/1 34433 Beyoğlu-İstanbul.

# How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Istanbul Modern on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **PBLPA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2024**.

Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde will take place w/c 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Interviews with Istanbul Modern will take place on 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March .

*\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

## **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.



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