

Job Description: Project Archivist (6-Month Fixed Term)

Organisation: Canterbury Society of Arts Charitable Trust (CSA/CoCA)

Reports to: Paula Granger, CoCA Partnerships Manager

Reports to: Tim Jones, Christchurch Art Gallery Librarian Kaitiaki Pukapuka

Location: Christchurch

Contract type: Fixed-term (6 months) May to October/November 2026

Hours: 40 hours pw at \$45 per hour

Position Overview

CoCA is seeking a skilled Project Archivist to lead a six-month project to assess, organise, preserve, and document the Canterbury Society of Arts/CoCA's historical archives stored at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetū.

These archives include records, photographs, artworks on paper, exhibition documentation, catalogues, audiovisual materials, and administrative files spanning the CSA/CoCA's long history as a foundational arts institution in Aotearoa.

The purpose of this project is to create a structured, accessible, and sustainable archive that supports future research, exhibitions, governance, and storytelling.

Project Scope & Key Responsibilities

1. Assessment & Project Planning

- Conduct an initial assessment of all physical and digital archival materials held by CoCA.
- Develop a practical work plan for the six-month project, including timelines, priorities, and resource needs in consultation with CoCA and Christchurch Art Gallery.
- Identify at-risk materials requiring urgent preservation or digitisation.

2. Sorting, Arrangement & Description

- Arrange materials into coherent series that reflect CoCA's organisational history, exhibitions, programmes, artists, and governance.
- Prioritise material that will assist in CoCA telling the story of the CSA for the upcoming 2028 building anniversary and 2030 anniversary which marks 150 years of the CSA.
- Assist with any Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga enquiries.
- Catalogue materials according to recognised archival standards.
- Create clear inventories, finding aids, and metadata to support future access.

3. Preservation & Stabilisation

- Stabilise and rehouse fragile materials using appropriate archival supplies.
- Improve storage conditions and recommend long-term solutions for physical archives.
- Identify items requiring specialist conservation support.

4. Digital Asset Management

- Review existing digital records, including photographs, videos, design files, and exhibition documentation.
- Establish or refine folder structures, naming conventions, and metadata standards for long-term use.
- Prioritise key items for digitisation and create workflows for digital ingestion.

5. Documentation of CoCA's Institutional History

- Ensure documentation captures major exhibitions, artists, events, and organisational milestones.
- Work with staff and the Christchurch Art Gallery Librarian to identify undocumented or dispersed materials.
- Integrate legacy documents from the Canterbury Society of Arts where appropriate.

6. Handover, Reporting & Recommendations

- Produce a final project report outlining the state of the archive, work completed, and remaining priorities.
 - Provide recommendations for ongoing archive governance, preservation, staffing, and digital systems.
 - Prepare a handover package including inventories, policies, and procedures for future custodians.
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Skills & Experience

Essential

- Qualification in Archives, Records Management, Museum Studies, or related discipline.
- Demonstrated experience managing heritage collections or historical archives, ideally in the arts sector.
- Strong understanding of archival standards and best practice for physical and digital preservation.
- Ability to work independently, manage project timelines, and deliver outcomes within a fixed term.
- Excellent organisational, documentation, and communication skills.

Desirable

- Knowledge of New Zealand art history and familiarity with the Canterbury arts community.
- Experience with digitisation workflows and digital asset management systems.
- Understanding of copyright and permissions relating to artists' archives and historical collections.
- Experience working with or mapping legacy archives from multiple sources.

Personal Attributes

- Methodical, organised, and detail-focused.
 - Respectful of cultural and historical materials and committed to ethical stewardship.
 - Able to work collaboratively with staff and the wider arts community when needed.
 - Self-directed, proactive, and capable of problem-solving within a project-based environment.
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Applications

- Applications close on 19 April 2026.
- Please send in your application to: info@coca.org.nz and include a cover letter and CV.
- If you have any questions, please email info@coca.org.nz