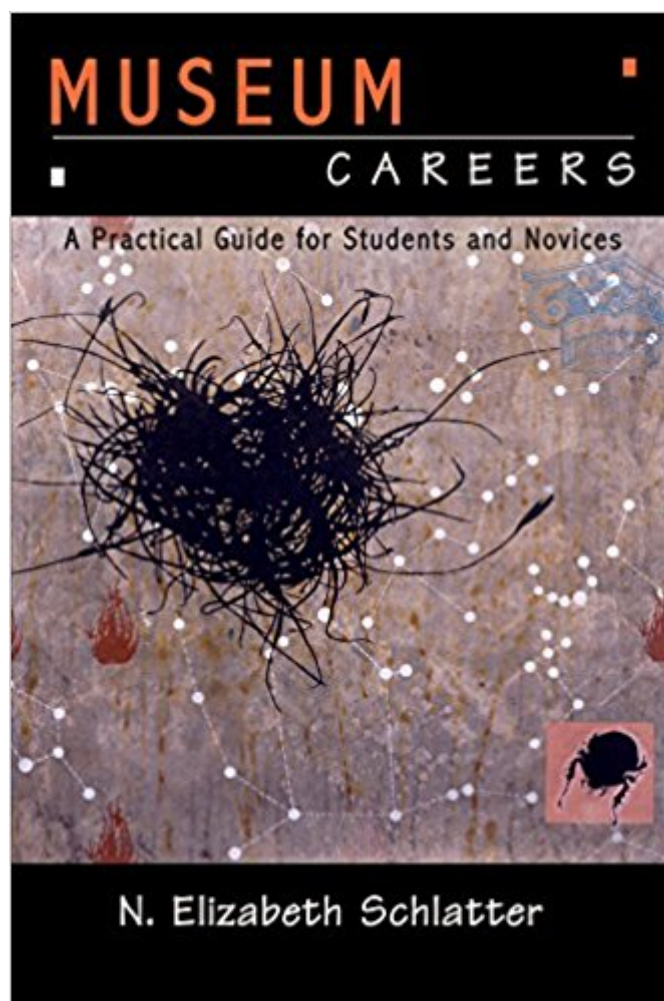


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Museum Careers: A Practical Guide For Students And Novices



Synopsis

This concise volume is the place to start for anyone considering a career in museums. Museum professional and author N. Elizabeth Schlatter outlines the nature of the profession as a whole, the rewards and challenges of museum work, types of museums, and jobs within museums, including salary ranges. She discusses options for education and training, and offers suggestions on how to secure a job and move up the career ladder. Interviews with museum professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds demonstrate different career paths and offer unique and helpful advice. For novices in the field, students in museum studies programs, or anyone considering museums as a career choice, Schlatter's book is an essential starting point.

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Customer Reviews

Elizabeth Schlatter offers scholarly instructions for students in the field of art to pursue a career to become a museum curator. I highly recommend this book to anyone in the field of arts.

Museum Careers: A Practical Guide for Students and Novices by N. Elizabeth Schlatter covers just about every aspect of the field, ranging from the reasons to choose a museum career (and the potential drawbacks) to practical advice and resources for job seekers. This book is written in a casual, friendly tone that captures the reader from the beginning. It is both engaging and chock full of useful information that you will need when launching your museum career. Museum Careers is divided into three parts: Museum Work, Museum Jobs, and Preparing For and Gaining Museum Employment. Chapters include Museum Trends Affecting Employment, Finding and Applying for Jobs, and Professional Development and Career Growth, as well as detailed chapters explaining a wide variety of museum positions. Schlatter begins with an explanation of why she chose museum work, which she calls "an altruistic yet selfish calling." People become museum professionals for a host of reasons, including a love of objects or museums themselves, an opportunity for lifelong learning, or an engaging and creative work environment. The drawbacks are well-known in the field, and Schlatter does not shy away from telling it like it is. The first obstacle is, of course, the notoriously low salary. It is important to realize that the benefits of museum work almost never include a fat paycheck, but life isn't all about money. The workload is often heavy, with mandatory overtime at after hours events and programs. In a post 9/11 economy, many museums have had to cut back to balance budgets, which translates into fewer staff members performing more duties. I was glad to see Schlatter mention the geographic limitations of museum work as another drawback. I seldom see this referenced, although I am always telling my interns about it. You will almost always have to move to find your ideal museum job. The more limited your geographic search, the fewer opportunities you will find. If you are unwilling to move, plan to spend an even longer period of time searching for employment. Toward the end of the first chapter, Schlatter reminds her readers that you do not have to be "intimately familiar" with the museum's specialty, but you should be enthusiastic about it. "A general rule of thumb for museum work is that if you dislike the mission, you'll hate your job," she writes. Schlatter mentions several important trends affecting the profession as a whole, the most important being a shift toward education. "The stereotypical curator of the mid-twentieth century (an overeducated male connoisseur who reveled in his acquisitions, arcane research, and elite insular network of peers) became obsolete," she says. Today, curators work as part of a broader team, more closely focused on education - through programming, exhibitions, and outreach. The center section of the book focuses on detailed descriptions of each position found in the museum profession, divided by Jobs Focused on Objects and/or Exhibitions, Jobs with a Public Focus, and Jobs with an Administrative Focus. Included are the following: Director Conservator Curator Designer Exhibition

Manager/Developer Librarian/Archivist Photographer Preparator/Art Handler Registrar/Collections Manager Development Officer/Membership Manager Editor Educator/Volunteer Manager Information Officer Marketing Manager/Public Relations Manager Retail Manager Security Chief Visitor Services Manager Administrator/Finance Officer Facilities Manager General Counsel/Attorney Human Resources Manager Technology Manager Each job title is explained in great detail, followed by salary ranges; education, experience, and skills; and resources for job openings specific to that position. The book's third and final section focuses on how to prepare yourself for and find a job within the museum field. Schlatter examines undergraduate majors and graduate programs, outlining a wide variety of options ranging from a Master's of Arts degree to various certificates. She stresses the need to serve as an intern or volunteer as you prepare for your future career. Schlatter concludes with advice about where to find museum jobs, how to prepare a resume and cover letter, and what to expect during the interview process. The conclusion of the book, called "Life Outside the Museum," really struck home with me: "The final tidbit of advice is to remember that life exists outside of the museum, not just the museum you work for but also the industry as a whole. Many people joke that a museum career is not a job, it's a lifestyle. We spend our free time visiting museums, learning more about our field, reading the latest publications...." In my own experience, this is absolutely true. A museum career is rewarding and frustrating in many ways, full of both opportunities and challenges. But every day, I can honestly say that I love what I do, and I can think of nothing better I could have done with my life. I thoroughly recommend Museum Careers to anyone thinking of dabbling in this world. It provides not only a ton of practical advice, but Schlatter is completely honest about every aspect of this career. When I was just starting out, I wish I had had such a wonderful resource at my disposal. It is the most complete book on the museum field I have ever seen. Buy it! You won't regret it.

This book is amazing! It is well-written and an excellent behind the scenes look at working in the museum world. I recommend it highly.

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