November 2026

Opportunity Announcement: Managing Director and Producing Director Shared Executive Leaders

Details:

CounterPulse is hiring for two executive positions: a Managing Director and a Producing Director. These positions will share executive leadership and both report to the Board of Directors.

Compensation: $85,000 per year for each position; please note that because CounterPulse is hiring for two leadership roles simultaneously, we are not in a position to negotiate salary upon offer, and therefore we are publicizing the salary at the top of our range. These are full time, exempt, salaried positions.

Benefits: These positions include full benefits, including health plan (Kaiser, silver level, no employee contribution) and generous paid time off. A full list of benefits will be provided as part of the interview process.

Location: These positions will be expected to work from CounterPulse's offices in the Tenderloin neighborhood of San Francisco. The majority of hours should be in-office, leadership may choose work from home days for the staff at their discretion.

Anticipated Start: January 2027

Term: Permanent, full-time (36 hours per week)

Structure: Two co-equal directors who each report to the Board and are accountable to one another for overall organizational leadership

Application Deadline: Priority deadline is 11/17. Applications accepted until 11/23.

How to Apply: Use this Google form. You can preview the application requirements here.

About CounterPulse:

MISSION: *CounterPulse is building a movement of risk-taking art that shatters assumptions and builds community. We provide space and resources for emerging artists and cultural innovators, serving as an incubator for the creation of socially relevant, community-based art and culture. CounterPulse acts as a catalyst for art and action; creating a forum for the open exchange of art and ideas, sparking transformation in our communities and our society. We work towards a world that celebrates diversity of race, class, cultural heritage, artistic expression, ability, gender identity & sexual orientation. We strive to create an environment that is physically and economically accessible to everyone.*

DESCRIPTION: CounterPulse is one of San Francisco's leading small venues for cutting-edge, interdisciplinary performance. We moved into our 10,000 square foot home in the Tenderloin neighborhood in 2016 and achieved the purchase of the building in 2023. Our main theater and studio space have typically hosted as many as 300 public events each year, ranging from dance, theater and music performances to political discussions and film screenings. CounterPulse's annual budget this year is approximately $600K ($850K including funds for fiscally sponsored projects). Along with our flagship Artist Residency Commissioning, core programs include co-production performances, subsidized space rental, fiscal sponsorship, and neighborhood arts engagement. For more information about CounterPulse, please visit www.counterpulse.org.

RECENT BACKGROUND: In Fall 2025, CounterPulse faced a complex set of simultaneous challenges including the departure of the long-time executive director, a widening budget gap, and a protracted union bargaining process that had not resulted in a contract. Needing to take immediate action, the Board of Directors laid off most staff and reduced programming. From December 2025 to September 2026, CounterPulse operated with a skeleton staff and provided minimal programming.

Summer 2026 was spent on a community visioning process which engaged a broad range of community stakeholders in identifying a recommended leadership structure, reaffirming our mission, and examining the business model. A series of community events and a listening tour have gone a long way towards aligning the community with CounterPulse's new direction.

We are now embarking on a phased reopening and consider the organization to be entering a rebuilding phase. Public performances resumed in October with interim staff and the company will continue to add staff through the end of 2026 and into 2027, in anticipation of a return to robust programming by the end of March 2027. CounterPulse's Board is clear that the organization needs to reimagine its business plan in light of shifts in the funding landscape, and

doing so will be a priority for the new leadership. However, CounterPulse is currently financially stable thanks to careful management, cost savings in 2026, and a much reduced staffing model.

SHARED LEADERSHIP: Part of the community visioning process was an examination of different leadership models. The Board has chosen a 2-person shared leadership team to share executive responsibility knowing that a single executive model has a high potential for burnout and that a team can bring a wider array of skills to the roles. In 2027 these leadership roles will be supported by a technical director, a program associate, a facilities assistant, and a contracted finance manager, all part-time. The Board sees this structure as a first step on the way to a more robust staffing plan once income allows.

Summary of the Roles:

The **Managing Director (MD)** and **Producing Director (PD)** are shared leadership roles. Together, these two positions are responsible for all aspects of company operations; both positions report directly to the Board of Directors. These leadership roles are supported by four part-time positions: Technical Director, Finance Manager (contracted), Program Associate, and Facilities Assistant.

The ideal candidate for either role will be an experienced arts manager, with exceptional organizational skills, excellent communication habits, a deep understanding of contemporary dance/theatre production, the flexibility and resilience to work in an evolving organization, and alignment with the ethical values, practices, and concerns of CounterPulse's artists and audiences.

The Managing Director will be someone who loves and understands systems, both organizational and financial, and gets real satisfaction from building the structures that let artists and staff do their best work.

The Producing Director will be a seasoned producer with a passion for supporting and mentoring experimental artists, engaging diverse communities, and integrating arts into a neighborhood.

Scope and Nature of Work:

ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP: Shared between the two roles

- Provide ongoing leadership of strategic planning, including the upcoming 2027-28 renewal of CounterPulse's 5-year strategic plan

- Maintain strong relationships with CounterPulse's community of artists, arts organizations, and neighborhood partners
- Develop the Board of Directors and manage governance processes
- Shape company culture and lead the development of an effective, equitable, and humane work environment
- Serve as emergency contact for facility and event issues outside of working hours
- Represent CounterPulse at select meetings, conferences, and events
- Serve as spokespeople for CounterPulse with funders, partners, and press
- Lead, with the Board, a reimagining of CounterPulse's business plan in response to shifts in the funding landscape
- Guide communications strategy and implement institutional marketing efforts
- Assess and adjust staff roles and structure to match budget, mission, and capacity
- Evaluate programs against CounterPulse's mission

Managing Director's Responsibilities

FINANCE AND BUDGET

- Lead the development, implementation, and monitoring of CounterPulse's annual budget, with the ongoing mandate to identify new sources of revenue and opportunities for cost savings; recommend mid-course adjustments as necessary
- Oversee day-to-day financial operations, working closely with the contracted Finance Manager to manage A/R and A/P, to issue payments and payroll, and to make deposits
- Ensure accuracy of the books and completeness of the monthly and annual closing processes
- Monitor cash flow as needed
- Lead annual audit and tax preparation processes
- Provide periodic financial reports to the Board of Directors
- Build the financial models and scenarios that inform the business plan, including earned income from rentals and programs
- Serve as primary staff liaison to the Treasurer and Board Finance Committee

FUNDRAISING

- Serve as the chief development officer with regard to all individual fundraising activities, including Board fundraising, major donor development, the annual appeal, and one or more annual fundraising events
- Serve as lead grantwriter for general operating support; provide budgets and financial reports for project grants led by the Producing Director; track all grant reporting deadlines
- Cultivate and steward relationships with institutional funders
- Maintain donor tracking databases and applications

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Lead hiring and onboarding as CounterPulse adds staff through 2027; maintain employee files; oversee termination and separation procedures
- Oversee the performance review process for each staff member, with their supervisor; develop performance improvement plans and take disciplinary actions when necessary
- Provide appropriate professional development opportunities for staff
- Review and update the Employee Handbook, Collective Management Policy, and Benefits Plan on an every-other-year basis; communicate HR policies to staff
- Manage and administer payroll and employee benefits including health/dental/vision plans and health FSA and commuter benefits
- Ensure compliance with all applicable employment laws and regulations

LABOR RELATIONS

- Serve as lead representative for CounterPulse in labor relations with CounterPulse Workers United (CPWU), IWW IU 630, including any future bargaining
- Work closely with the Board of Directors and outside labor relations experts to develop mutually acceptable labor agreements

FACILITIES

- Oversee routine and non-routine facility maintenance, including building mechanical systems, core-and-shell elements, and exterior signage
- With Producing Director, ensure that the facility, equipment, and staff meet the highest standards of readiness every time artists or audiences are welcomed into CounterPulse

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

- Lead the creation of efficient administrative systems for the organization
- Ensure an adequately equipped and supplied office environment for staff
- Oversee technology implementation for the administrative unit
- Ensure timely government filings and compliance with all federal, state and local business requirements
- Maintain appropriate insurance coverages, including workers comp, liability, property, and directors and officers insurance; manage insurance claims

SUPERVISORY

- Supervise the contracted Finance Manager, Facilities Assistant, and other administrative/management staff when hired

Producing Director's Responsibilities

ARTISTIC PROGRAMMING AND RESIDENCIES

- Lead planning and curation of CounterPulse's annual programs, including full and developmental artist residencies, community programs, and presented work
- Recruit and oversee curatorial committee
- Serve as primary liaison with resident artists, supporting their development of new work
- Prepare artist contracts and orientation packets, and secure signatures
- Maintain the program calendar, including studio time, work-in-progress showings, and public performances
- Coordinate artist payments, including stipends and production budget reimbursements

EVENT PRODUCTION

- Provide strong leadership and serve as hands-on producer of all public events; sensitively balance the needs of artists, audiences, and the organization; implement sustainable production processes
- Lead the marketing function for all public events, develop marketing plans and budgets, and implement marketing initiatives
- Lead the ticketing function for all public events
- Oversee the CounterPulse website

RENTAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM

- Oversee the facility rental program, and play a hands-on role in fielding inquiries, conducting site visits, and generating contracts and invoices
- In collaboration with the Managing Director, develop and implement growth strategies for facility rental revenue

FUNDRAISING

- Serve as lead grantwriter for project grants, including residency, commissioning, and presenting support; develop project budgets with the Managing Director
- Track program activity and prepare narrative reports for project grants
- Plan and produce the Annual Gala fundraising event
- Support other individual donor cultivation and fundraising events

FACILITY AND TECHNICAL READINESS

- With Managing Director, ensure that the facility, equipment, and staff meet the highest standards of readiness every time artists or audiences are welcomed into CounterPulse
- Oversee the continual improvement of CounterPulse's technical capabilities, and plan for the replacement and upgrade of technical equipment
- Oversee the hiring and training of technical and front-of house staff, and the creation of training materials

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Work with Board and community partners to clarify CounterPulse's community engagement goals given reduced staffing
- Develop/sustain ongoing partnerships with neighborhood organizations
- Identify a sustainable set of community-engaged programs, achievable with current staffing and to be re-evaluated once staffing can expand

SUPERVISORY

- Supervise the Technical Director, Program Associate, and other program staff when hired

Qualifications:

Both Positions

- Demonstrated leadership ability (could be leading an organization or a substantial program or department), ideally through a period of financial or organizational transition
- Significant grant writing experience
- Excellent communication skills with staff and with a diverse public
- Extraordinary organizational ability
- Passion for the arts and social justice
- Connection to San Francisco's experimental performance community and familiarity with the politics, identities, and values of CounterPulse's artists
- Desire and ability to work collaboratively, including shared decision-making with a co-director, staff, and Board
- Ability to work gracefully under pressure and to approach challenges with openness and a sense of humor
- Ability to respond promptly to facility and event emergencies, including outside working hours
- Proficiency in Macintosh OS and Google products
- Ability to lift 25 lbs

Managing Director

- Minimum of three years of financial management experience, including hands-on experience with QuickBooks and spreadsheet tools; deep knowledge of generally accepted accounting principles as applied to nonprofit organizations
- Some individual fundraising experience, including long-term donor development strategies and face-to-face solicitation

Producing Director

- Experience producing contemporary performance, including working directly with artists and managing production budgets as well as developing/commissioning new work
- Experience with and passion for community engagement through the arts, ability to work with diverse communities and navigate the complexities of CounterPulse's role as an arts organization in the Tenderloin
- Experience with theater infrastructure, including lighting, sound, carpentry, and rigging
- Basic knowledge of lighting, set, sound, and video design preferred, but not required
- Experience scheduling and supervising technicians, house staff, and volunteers

We welcome candidates from outside the traditional arts-management path.

Union Status: Certain CounterPulse employees are members of CounterPulse Workers United (CPWU), IWW IU 630. Both positions are designated as "Supervisory/Management" and neither director will be eligible for union membership.

To Apply:

Submit your resume and cover letter through the application form linked above. Send questions about the opportunity to leadership@counterpulse.org. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER
CounterPulse fosters a creative and professional environment that reflects the diversity of San Francisco. We actively recruit a wide pool of applicants representing dimensions of difference that include — but are not limited to — age, national origin, ethnicity, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, gender, or political affiliation.