Royal College of Art
Postgraduate Art & Design

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Postdoctoral Researcher in Human-centered Design

Department: Design Products, School of Design

Grade: 7

Responsible to: Principal Investigator, Ecological Citizens

Term: 1.0 FTE, Fixed-Term until 31/01/2027

Background:

Founded in 1837, the Royal College of Art is the world's largest community of postgraduate art and design students. It is also the oldest art and design university in continuous operation and has been ranked as the world 's number 1 art & design university for a remarkable eight consecutive years (QS World Subject Rankings 2015-2022).

The RCA is research-led, and recognised in the UK-wide REF (Research Excellence Framework) as the UK's most research-intensive institution – with an increased proportion of the College's outputs classed as 'internationally excellent' and 'world-leading' in the most recent REF assessment of 2022.

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for the world's creative leaders. With more than 20,000 RCA alumni across the globe, the RCA's graduates form a unique international network of artists, designers, creators and innovators. Every year, RCA alumni are recognised as leaders in their discipline, making national and international headlines for their work, which shapes the world we live in. Its graduate start-up incubator, InnovationRCA, is one of the most successful in the country with a high proportion of female start-up founders and a high 'survival' percentage after five years of trading.

Over 2,700 students are spread across four schools, studying at Graduate Diploma, MA, MPhil, MRes and PhD levels, with plans for this to rise to 3,300 by 2027. The College's mix of professionalism and creative freedom, together with its renowned academic community and rigorous academic framework provides the ecosystem in which students flourish and achieve their highest potential.

In addition, the RCA has a number of established and planned research centres: the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design; the Material Science Research Centre (which includes the Burberry Materials Futures Research Group and the Textiles Circularity Centre); the Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, Computer Science Research Centre, and a future centre in Drawing. The RCA is also home to one of the UK's most successful university incubators, InnovationRCA.

The RCA espouses a hybrid approach, supporting 'traditional' making and technical skills in fine and applied art and design alongside the foundational sciences, engineering and technology which underpin designers' ability to solve today's global challenges. The RCA champions the value of interdisciplinary learning, and was the first art and design university in the world to implement a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Design and Mathematics) academic vision, with investment in new faculty posts in Materials Science; Computer Science and Robotics alongside art and design disciplines. By applying creative insights to evidence-based science, its staff, students, researchers and start-ups are addressing major global challenges such as rapid urbanisation and transport; loss of biodiversity; ageing populations; unsustainable consumption and production; and the rise of AI.

Our People

Prior to the death of Her Majesty, the RCA's Royal Visitor (Patron) was HRH Prince of Wales; however, His Majesty King Charles III's office has yet to confirm which institutions he will continue to serve as a Patron, following his ascension to the throne. The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, and the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette. The RCA's Vice-Chancellor – the CEO of the institution – is Dr Paul Thompson, who joined the College in 2009.

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the tutorial-based model of teaching. There is a core academic and research workforce of 230 FTE, supported by around 170 Associate Lecturers and a wide range of Guest Lecturers who bring 'live industry' experience into the taught curriculum – for example, Amin Taha of GrantOn design, whose work was twice shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize in 2017 and 2021, teaches in the School of Architecture; and Yao Yingjia, who is Vice President and Chief Designer at Lenovo teaches in the School of Design.

The RCA operates a high staff-to-student ratio, combined with contemporary and industry-focused teaching perspectives. It also employs a team of 75 highly skilled technicians, many of whom themselves have postgraduate qualifications in their fields of specialism, which range from rapid prototyping and subtractive manufacturing, to film and sound engineering, and from digital modelling to metal fabrication and jewellery making.

Strategic Plan 2022–2027

The RCA's Strategic Plan 2022–27 is available on the RCA website. During this time, the RCA's strategic vision is to increase its influence on the world stage of globally ranked universities, punching significantly above its weight, and attracting, supporting and convening the world's most talented faculty, students, artists, designers and creative leaders.

The RCA will remain an independent, postgraduate institution with a sharply distinctive and fresh research agenda and a research-driven approach towards our taught programmes that keeps it always one step ahead. It will focus on areas of expertise that only the RCA can offer – including some big-bet propositions where there is an appetite for well-managed risk and preparedness to enter new ventures with new associates. The RCA will lead in new fields of creative practice and intellectual inquiry where we believe

creative insights and a uniquely RCA perspective will catalyse new solutions to global challenges. The RCA recognises that the winning formula must be built upon a diversity of student talent with a taught Master's model that is more inclusive, affordable and better suited to twenty-first-century lifestyles and careers.

The Strategic Plan includes the rollout in 2022/23 of an entirely new model of delivery for the RCA's taught postgraduate programmes to support access, widening participation and student flexibility; it underscores the RCA's commitment to remain the world's most research-intensive art and design university; and it commits to a number of equity and diversity goals which will lead towards the RCA becoming an anti-racist institution. Many of the initiatives within the former and current Strategic Plan are predicated upon the success of a very active comprehensive capital campaign, entitled GenerationRCA which launched in early 2018 and which has raised over £85m to date against a goal of £100m. GenerationRCA supports major capital projects, professorial posts, student financial aid and scholarships. The College's five-year Financial Plan assumes c.£45m of new cash receipts will be secured between 2022–27.

The Strategic Plan is 'twinned' with an underlying Operating Plan which outlines the delivery and KPIs which will enable the institution to deliver its ambitious strategic plan.

The RCA community operates in line with four agreed values:

Curiosity
We have a tenacious commitment to innovation and openness to change. We positively interrogate ideas, assumptions and plans and welcome the honest scrutiny that is alive in a learning community.

Inclusion
We celebrate diversity and embrace difference as a source of strength. We strive for an inclusive RCA community, removing barriers and challenging exclusionary and discriminatory practices.

Collaboration
We value what happens together and we help and support each other to achieve our collective goals. We work in partnership with our students, staff, alumni, institutions and communities across the globe to make a lasting difference.

Integrity
We are always willing to listen, we offer constructive feedback and we promote accountability, building relationships of mutual trust and respect. We are resilient in the

face of challenges, pursuing outcomes with individual, cultural, societal and economic impact.

Project Summary

The RCA has been awarded a £3.3M grant by the EPSRC to establish the Ecological Citizens Network Plus, focusing on digital interventions that would create 'the conditions to make change' towards a sustainable post-industrial society.
The ecological and climate crisis are the two biggest challenges facing humanity. We see numerous digital opportunities to mitigate the impacts, comprehend causes and seek preferable futures. Ecological Citizenship is a skill for positive sustainable, digital & ecological actions. It catalyses impact beyond 'individuals', impacting CEOs to school children and giving us unrivalled reach into businesses, third sectors and communities. The network outcomes will include empowered communities; cross-fertilisation of ideas between disciplines sparking new fields of research, new partnerships, technologies and catalyse new funding opportunities. We intend to increase digital accessibility, competency & agency in all our stakeholders. Ecological Citizens is a cross-RCA research network led by Dr. Rob Phillips (School of Design), with Professor Sharon Baurley (Materials Science Research Centre), and Tom Simmons (School of Communication), in partnership with Dr. Sarah West of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) at the University of York, Professor Alec Shepley of the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology at Wrexham Glyndŵr University, and a wide range of partners from industry and the third sector.

Ecological Citizens

The ecological and climate crisis are the two biggest challenges facing humanity. We see numerous digital opportunities to mitigate the impacts, comprehend causes and seek preferable futures. Ecological Citizens (EC) is a network funded by the EPSRC aiming to upskill people to undertake positive, sustainable, digital and ecological actions. We will work collaboratively with all sectors of society, from CEOs to school children, so that we can impact businesses, third sectors organisations and communities. We are going to catalyse the digital economy, through our activities, which unite diverse groups of people together to address a sustainable digital society. Activities will be focused in three main areas:

1) Materials & Resources, 2) The Natural world and 3) the Digital Economy

Project collective

RCA-led consortium has been awarded £3.3M by the EPSRC Digital Economy Programme to establish the Ecological Citizens research network. Ecological Citizens is a cross-RCA research network led by Dr. Rob Phillips (RCA, SofD), with Professor Sharon Baurley (RCA, Materials Science Research Centre), and Tom Simmons (RCA,

SofC), in partnership with Dr. Sarah West of the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) at the University of York, and Professor Alec Shepley of the Faculty of Arts, Science and Technology at Wrexham Glyndŵr University, and partners from industry, third sector, NGO. Ecological Citizens is a Digital Economy Network+ project funded by the EPSRC Digital Economy Programme, that is focused on digital interventions that would create 'the conditions to make change' towards a sustainable post-industrial society.

Project Summary

Ecological Citizens is led by an interdisciplinary team of experts in design, participatory environmental research, and technology.s. Ecological Citizens is accessible to everyone, enabling people to help others and the environment through a sustainable digital society. The Ecological Citizens network outcomes will include empowered communities; Cross-fertilisation of ideas between disciplines sparking new fields of research, new partnerships, technologies and catalyse new funding opportunities. We intend to increase digital accessibility, competency & agency in all our stakeholders.
Our activities will advance the UK's capabilities in the sustainable digital economy theme, through partnership working. We leverage gatekeeper organisations who widen and deepen Ecological Citizens reach. Our unparalleled reach through diverse partners gives us access to industry, NGOs and other third sector organisations, including those working with diverse and marginalised groups, all intent on: 1) Establishing project(s), 2) Embed research via ambassadors within organisations 3) Signpost new areas of research, 4) Foster new collaborations 5) Informing new Digital Economy SDS research challenges & calls. All leading to a 'Sustainable Digital Society', through Ecological Citizenship. We will do this by catalysing activities, relationships, project pilots, deploying design-led activities, strategic activities, building the network overtime resulting in outputs both speculative and tangible re-defining what Ecological Citizenship should be.

Purpose of Role

We are seeking a postdoctoral researcher with interest in user centred and planet centred design. Ecological Citizens is recruiting 3 postdoctoral researchers. This role is located at the RCA (London) with 2 others at the SEI and Glyndwr. The role will spend time working within post-sustainable frameworks. Technological prototyping, and experience of designing ubiquitous computing, is desirable. The role will include: the conceiving, development, and deployment of both strategic and tangible workshops, contributing to strategic direction, leveraging design-led processes. The work will rely on good communication and team working skills. The successful candidate will work alongside the principal researcher, co-investigators, the national team, partners, and other roles within the project. The project is design-led but an active interest in; the natural world, materials, and the digital economy would be beneficial.

This is a cross-collaborative project working with others across 3 institutions, whilst being design-led, details below:

York Purpose of the Post

We are looking for an interdisciplinary post-doctoral researcher with experience of community engagement, citizen science or user-centred design, focusing on sustainability.

You will have an interest in the natural world and the digital economy. You will have excellent communication and facilitation skills which you will use to work effectively with our diverse academic and non-academic partners. You will spend time networking with the other post-doctoral researchers in Wrexham and London and with our many collaborators, so willingness to travel is important. You will have a passion for learning from others. You will work alongside the principal investigator, co-investigators, other members of the team, and partners.

Glyndwr Purpose of the Post

We are seeking a postdoctoral researcher with a keen interest in furthering ways in which the arts and science collaborative projects can be deployed to encourage sustainable and ecological citizenship. Experience and skills in Arts and Science collaboration, particularly with regard to nurturing community engagement and promoting public understanding are essential, together with an interest in user centred and participatory practice and developing technologies to support key themes such as food, energy and environment . An interest in creating visual narratives for post-sustainable frameworks and behaviours would also be desirable. The role will include working with and adding to, a broad range of partners to: develop our network of actors; to facilitate strategic focus groups and workshops; engage in data collection and analysis; produce reports and updates; funding calls; and contribute to strategic direction and fulfilment of the EC project. You will have excellent communication skills which you will use to work effectively with our diverse academic and non-academic partners. You will spend time networking with the other post-doctoral researchers in York and London and with our many collaborators, so willingness to travel is important. You will have a passion for learning from others. The successful candidate will work alongside the principal researcher, co-investigators, the national team, partners, and other roles within the project. The project is design-led but an active interest in; the natural world, materials, technology and the digital economy would be beneficial. Technological prototyping and experience of designing ubiquitous computing, is desirable.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

● To undertake high-quality, rigorous, and (where relevant) collaborative research projects which lead to robust research outcomes.
● To develop personal research objectives and interests that align closely with wider project plans.
● In collaboration with team members, to manage any awards won, ensuring execution of proposed research, efficient management of resources, and effective delivery of research outcomes and impacts.
● To work with academic, industry and third sector partners as appropriate on collaborative research and knowledge exchange projects.
● To support engagement with any sponsor companies, undertaking collaborative research projects and contributing to working relationships to maintain a productive partnership.
● To produce and disseminate research outputs that are effectively shared with the world through appropriate channels (for example books, peer-reviewed journals, conferences) to the discipline.

- To produce research outputs. These outputs may be suitable for submission to the national Research Excellence Framework (REF) exercise, with a quality of at least 3* as per the REF definition.
- To support communication of research outcomes to a wide variety of audiences, including through public engagement, tailoring content, and style to a broad range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- To participate in relevant academic, industry, government, and policy networks as appropriate, presenting the work of, and representing the EC project.
- To participate in project and team meetings and activities, events, and workshops, contributing ideas for development, delivery, and promotion of projects.
- To contribute to the RCA Academic community through presentations or teaching in appropriate forums and participation in RCA-wide activities such as Across RCA or Committees and boards as requested.
- Where appropriate, to support the delivery of Executive Education courses and workshops.
- To conduct all research reflecting best practice in ethics, integrity, research data management, and research governance, ensuring compliance with RCA policies and external funding terms and conditions and sector standards.
- To ensure compliance with RCA processes and procedures in relation to procurement and use of equipment and facilities, including health and safety policies, working with relevant departments across RCA.
- To ensure confidentiality of sensitive project information is maintained, through appropriate project data protection.
- To undertake general administrative and other tasks relevant as part of the team.

Person Specification

Essential
- The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate at least one of the following:
 * PhD in a related field of art & design, engineering, physical computing or a closely related discipline, or equivalent level of experience in a different sector, or a Master's degree and significant experience in research projects.
- Evidence of producing quality research outputs relevant to the career stage and discipline, for example *outputs in peer-reviewed academic conferences or journals that will be strategically aligned with the team and require support, under the direction of the PI.*
- Evidenced experience of contributing to and reporting on projects.
- Demonstrable understanding of good practice in research conduct (including in research ethics, research integrity and handling research data).
- Evidenced flexibility and confidence to tackle a wide range of tasks, with an open, pro-active, creative, and problem-solving approach.
- Evidenced excellent writing, communication, and presentation skills, able to adopt an appropriate style for a range of specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- Evidenced strong interpersonal and team-working skills.
- The role will involve travelling to the different academic sites throughout the project.

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Desirable
- Evidenced experience of collaborative projects, preferably involving HE/industry collaborations in a relevant field.
- Provable experience working on cross-disciplinary project(s).
- Knowledge or experience of working within the natural world or ecologically based backgrounds.
- Provable experience of designing for, with or within sustainable practices, circular economies, sustainable supply chains or sustainable policy.

Additional Information:
- 35 hours per week, 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday with an hour each day for lunch
- Salary: £39,670-£43,029 per annum inclusive of £ £3,284 London Allowance
- The successful applicant will be appointed to the first increment on the advertised pay grade. Thereafter and subject to satisfactory performance, the role holder will be eligible for an annual increment each year, normally with effect from 1 August.
- 25 days annual leave per annum plus extended break at Christmas
- A contributory defined benefit pension scheme and interest free season ticket loan are available

February 2023

PAY & BENEFITS

Pension

The Royal College of Art is a member of the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL) which is a contributory defined benefit pension scheme. The college will contribute a sum equal to 21% of your salary while you pay 6%.

Holiday

5 weeks (25 days) paid leave a year plus bank and public holidays normally observed in England and Wales. In addition, the college is normally closed for six days a year, one day either side of Easter and the remainder between Christmas and New Year, at the discretion of the college. Part-time staff will be entitled to the pro rata equivalent.

Season ticket loans

Interest-free loans are available for staff to purchase annual season tickets.

Enhanced maternity and adoption pay

Qualifying employees are entitled to enhanced maternity/adoption pay: 26 weeks' full pay, 13 weeks Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay. This compares to the statutory provision of 90% of average pay for 6 weeks followed by Statutory Maternity/Adoption Pay for 33 weeks.

Enhanced paternity pay

Qualifying employees are entitled to two weeks' paternity leave entitlement at full pay. This compares to the statutory provision of two weeks' pay at the statutory rate.

Enhanced sick pay

Occupational sick pay after six months' service is three months' full pay/three months' half pay.

24/7 confidential support

Staff and family members in their household have access to a free, external confidential support service for work, financial, legal, family and personal problems 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Occupational health

Occupational Health support for the College is provided by Imperial College's occupational health service at their South Kensington Campus.

Cycle to Work Scheme

The Royal College of Art has signed up to the Cycle to Work Scheme – part of the government's Green Transport Initiative – which allows employees to make significant savings on purchasing new bikes and safety equipment.

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Life Cover

Active members of the SAUL pension scheme automatically receive life cover. A lump sum of four times your salary together with a refund of your contributions and a 2/3 pension for your dependent/spouse is payable should you die whilst in employment.

Library

All staff are welcome to join the college library.

Events

All staff are welcome to attend exhibitions, lectures and private views held by academic schools and programmes.