



**Royal College of Art**  
Postgraduate Art & Design



## ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART - JOB DESCRIPTION

Post:	Research Associate (Making) Communication Design
Department:	School of Communication
Grade:	7
Term:	Fixed term for 6 months
FTE:	0.165 FTE (16 x days)
Start date:	January 2025; must be available for immediate start and for the entire project duration

### **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 one art and design university for a remarkable ten consecutive years, according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024 – the worldwide survey of academic and industry opinion.

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 2021.

Studying at the RCA is the starting point for the world's creative leaders. With more than 25,000 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.

More than 2,800 students are spread across four schools and research and academic departments, studying at Graduate Diploma, MA, MFA, MDes, MArch, MEd, MRes, MPhil and PhD levels. 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.



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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 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**

The role of Royal Visitor to the RCA was taken on by The former Prince of Wales – now His Majesty The King – in 2018. The announcement of HM The King's retained Patronage of the RCA marks the first anniversary of Their Majesties' Coronation. As part of the official Coronation Concert in May 2023, the Royal College of Art along with The Royal Ballet, The Royal Opera, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and the Royal College of Music came together for the first time ever to create a spectacular one-off performance, with a striking visual backdrop of specially-designed artworks contributed by students from the Royal College of Art.

The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, and the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette (please see link to Council independent members' biographies). The RCA's President & Vice-Chancellor – the CEO of the institution – is Professor Christoph Lindner who joined the College in April 2024.

The RCA's academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry knowledge to the practice-based model of teaching. There is a core academic and research workforce of 196 FTE, supported by around 215 Associate Lecturers and a wide range of Guest



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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 combines contemporary and industry-focused teaching perspectives. It also employs a team of 95 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



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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.

### **School of Communication**

In the RCA's School of Communication, we are interrogating the fundamental ways in which communication shapes our lives, and using this knowledge to develop new ways of communicating and shaping the world through experimental and sometimes radical communication practices.

The School offers students and researchers the opportunity to develop their practices and careers as artists, communicators, curators, designers and writers. All are encouraged to focus in depth on the particularities of their own work while also being exposed to critically diverse positions across the School and to wider contexts and issues beyond, both across the College and in relation to challenges of societal, environmental, economic and cultural importance. We also work across media to experiment boldly with



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outcomes that take many forms, from graphic novel to VR experience, animated film to sound shower.

As a School, we are inspired by practices of communication that are culturally informed and historically aware, that encourage dialogue and are robust enough to celebrate and make space for new ideas, different voices, and other ways of thinking and making. We have a distinctive research and knowledge exchange culture based upon a dynamic interplay between communication practice and theory, encompassing a broad range of subjects and approaches. Research projects in the school range from highly individuated scholarly and creative enquiry to projects concerning public policy and social justice, to speculative practice-focused enquiry.

### About The National Lottery Heritage Fund

As the largest dedicated funder of the UK's heritage, The National Lottery Heritage Fund's vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033.

Over the next ten years, the Heritage Fund aims to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to bring about benefits for people, places and the natural environment.

The Heritage Fund helps protect, transform and share the things from the past that people care about, from popular museums and historic places, our natural environment and fragile species, to the languages and cultural traditions that celebrate who we are.

The Heritage Fund is passionate about heritage and committed to driving innovation and collaboration to make a positive difference to people's lives today, while leaving a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy.

Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund [www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk).

### About Custom House Bookshop

Custom House Bookshop is an inclusive, community bookshop formed by residents in the ward of Custom House, which is in the London Borough of Newham. This is a woman-led organisation whose two founders have over a century of lived experience in the community.

The four main areas of interest for the bookshop are literature, events and activities related to BAME, disabled, LGBT and Women's issues. Emphasis is placed on children and the promotion of health.



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## About Newham Heritage Service

Newham Heritage Service collects, preserves, and shares the story of the people, places and things that are important to the Borough of Newham's heritage. Our collections span seven decades and contain thousands of unique items, including manuscripts, photographs, films, oral histories, objects, artwork, and much more.

[newham.gov.uk](http://newham.gov.uk)

## About Newham Libraries

There are ten libraries across Newham, each offering a range of services and community activities as well as a fantastic selection of books and other reading material, of course.

Many of our libraries have a busy schedule of regular activities to suit all ages and tastes, from parent and toddler sessions, reading groups and chess to knitting, over 50s club and gentle exercise.

[newham.gov.uk](http://newham.gov.uk)

## About Rosetta Arts

Rosetta Arts is proud to be a dynamic and diverse organisation, delivering exciting, innovative and creative courses, workshops and experiences for people in east London. We reach out to those who otherwise have little access to the rich and transformative benefits of the arts and education. At the heart of our programming, there is something for all ages and stages of a person's creative learning and development. Working across gender, disability, age and income, we respond to poverty and inequality by acting as a catalyst for creative talent.

[rosettaarts.org](http://rosettaarts.org)

## Purpose of the Post

The post holder will work closely with the RCA Principal Investigator (PI) Jessie Brennan and Co-Investigator (Co-I) Joseph Pochodzaj, team members (project collaborator Denise Evans-Barr, Co-founder of Custom House Bookshop) and project partners (Newham Heritage Service, Newham Libraries, and Rosetta Arts) to deliver the research outputs/outcomes of the project.





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## Research Project

Royal College of Art (RCA) has received The National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £99,980.00 for the heritage project, 'Custom House, Our House', in Newham, east London. Made possible by money raised by the National Lottery players, the project will record intergenerational voices on the impact of community-led regeneration in Custom House, in collaboration with Custom House Bookshop and project partners Newham Heritage Service, Newham Libraries and Rosetta Arts.

Supported through The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project will enable up to 12 volunteers who identify as coming from underrepresented groups in the heritage sector – including Black and Global Ethnic Majorities, youth, migrant, and working-class – to receive oral history training to record an interview from a community member who has lived experience of Custom House regeneration or expertise in community-led regeneration in the area. Newham-based young photographer Inés Yearwood Sanchez has been commissioned to create portraits of the oral history interviewees, while established photographer Chris Dorley-Brown will make new photographs of Custom House heritage. Project outputs (audio interview extracts and photographs) will be shared publicly with audiences in summer 2025 via a range of formats: a photography exhibition at Rosetta Arts; printed and digital publications; a touring exhibition across six Newham libraries; and a public engagement programme.

RCA is committed to celebrating diversity, eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity to all. This project will afford: Newham Heritage Service to grow its collections to be more representative of Newham's diverse heritage, supporting it to better represent and serve Newham's communities; Rosetta Arts to reach new young audiences and engage them in heritage for the first time; and Newham Libraries to engage more and diverse local audiences in community heritage that involves participatory exhibition formats, engagement workshops and public 'in-conversation' events. An anticipated outcome of the project is that the intangible cultural heritage of Custom House will be widely disseminated, and residents will have a deeper knowledge of community-led regeneration before significant urban change.

### Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- To undertake high-quality, rigorous and collaborative research to deliver the project outcomes, working with the PI to ensure these are in line with the strategic direction of the School and the College as a whole, including:

- in collaboration with team members, manage the design, production, fabrication, curation and installation of the library touring exhibition

- To deliver on specific research activities or outputs as outlined in the project, including:



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- A. Prepare and deliver research activities to develop and define the exhibition concept and design solution, working closely with the PI and Co-I.
  - B. Design a modular display system/design solution that will showcase the project outputs (audio oral history interviews, photographic portraits, and photographic cityscapes) to non-specialist audiences, to be toured across six Newham Libraries;
  - C. Attend site visits with project partners to six Newham Libraries (Custom House Library, Canning Town Library, Forest Gate Library, North Woolwich Library, and Stratford Library) and contribute to community engagement events on Saturdays 8 February and 15 March 2025 as part of the research project's co-design process;
  - D. Curate the outputs (including commissioned photographs and audio interviews) by incorporating them into the exhibition display structure, liaising with the commissioned photographers;
  - E. Work independently, with the support of RCA technical services (between Kensington and White City campuses), in the Making and Digitally Aided Making Spaces (specifically Bench Space for timber cutting and sanding) to produce scale drawings and source/cost materials within budget and timeline to meet project milestones and deadlines;
  - F. Engage in hands-on, practical making at RCA to fabricate and realise the exhibition display structure, liaising with external partners and suppliers as necessary (e.g., in printing photographs, graphics and interpretation copy, and/or largescale graphics for visual identity) to lead the production process;
  - G. Manage a budget allocated to the exhibition display, ensuring both high quality and value for money;
  - H. Refine, test and assemble the exhibition display structure, communicating written installation instructions to project partner Newham Libraries so their staff can deinstall/reinstall the exhibition at five other libraries between June and September 2025;
  - I. Install the display of project outputs in the inaugural exhibition at Newham Libraries in June 2025, resolving technical issues and adhering to health and safety procedures at all times;
  - J. Take part in evaluation processes.
- To manage the research award in collaboration with team members, 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 for the project
  - To produce research outputs that are effectively shared with the world through appropriate channels (for example exhibitions, books, peer-reviewed journals, and conferences) to the discipline.
  - To ensure that project outputs and project deliverables are properly documented and disseminated to key audiences via reports, papers, exhibits, publications, the website etc. working with the project team;
  - To communicate 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.





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- To deliver project updates on a regular basis, working with other team members, project partners and relevant stakeholders.
- To participate in project team meetings and activities, events and workshops, contributing ideas for the development, delivery and promotion of the project.
- To conduct all research reflecting best practices in ethics, integrity and research data management, 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 respect the confidentiality of data stored electronically and by other means in line with the Data Protection Act.
- To undertake project related general administrative and other tasks relevant as part of the team's work, as required by senior staff.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential skills and experience:

- The successful candidate must be able to demonstrate the following:  
a Masters' degree in Visual Communication (or relevant equivalent) and significant experience in spatial practices (i.e., using wood) and curatorial design, as well as in research projects;
- Evidenced experience of working as a practitioner, either academic or commercial/industrial, producing quality outputs and designed artefacts relevant to career stage and discipline. For example, at least one independent creative practice output;
- Evidenced experience using a multidisciplinary approach to visual communication, spatial practices and curatorial design, as well as topics related to the project;
- Evidence of professional practice, research, knowledge exchange, and/or teaching that contributes to the advancement of relevant activity and is relevant to the goals of the project and School;
- Evidence of, or clear potential to produce, research outputs of at least 3\* REF quality in line with the strategic direction of the College.
- Evidenced experience of delivering projects and reporting on them;
- Abilities in making: excellent technical skills to design and make a modular display structure (i.e., using timber/plywood) to showcase the project outputs;
- Have an excellent track record in research or practice, preferably with a focus on design and fabrication of display structures, graphic design and visual identity, and exhibition curation through design;
- Demonstrable understanding of good practice in research conduct (including in research ethics, research integrity and handling research data);
- Have knowledge of and experience in different spatial design and visual communication research methods;



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- Have excellent communication and coordination skills;
- Be able and willing to be part of an interdisciplinary team;
- Have an excellent command of spoken and written English;
- Evidence of the ability to supervise academic work at master's and/or doctoral level;
- Generates new ideas and links and builds upon existing ideas to generate unique concepts and solutions.

#### **Additional Information:**

- Location: 0.165 FTE South Kensington (and White City) campus;
- Term: Fixed-term for 6 months;
- Salary: £43,809 per annum pro rata inclusive of London Allowance;
- Normal hours will total 16 days, with majority of making at RCA to be focused between 8 February and 16 April 2025;
- 25 days annual leave (pro-rata).

December 2024



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## **PAY & BENEFITS**

### **Pension**

The Royal College of Art is a participating institution of the Superannuation Arrangements of the University of London (SAUL). As such the College can offer all new starts joining on or after 1 April 2023 membership of SAUL START, a new contributory, defined contribution, pension scheme. The college will contribute a sum equal to 16% of your salary while you pay 6%.

SAUL is not able to enrol any new Members in its defined contribution scheme (SAUL CARE), however, if you are currently a member of SAUL's CARE scheme or believe you have historical entitlement to join SAUL CARE, please inform the HR team on accepting an offer of employment.

### **Holiday**

5 weeks (27 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. 27 days from 1/10/24.

### **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 six weeks' paternity leave entitlement at full pay.

### **Enhanced sick pay**

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

### **Enhanced shared parental pay**

Qualifying employees are entitled to enhanced shared parental pay: up to 24 weeks paid at the full rate of the employee's normal pay (only in the first 26 weeks following the start of maternity/adoption leave), followed by 13 weeks Statutory Shared Parental Pay.



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This compares to the statutory provision of up to 37 weeks paid at the statutory rate or 90% of average weekly earnings, whichever is lower.

### **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.

### **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 dependant/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.