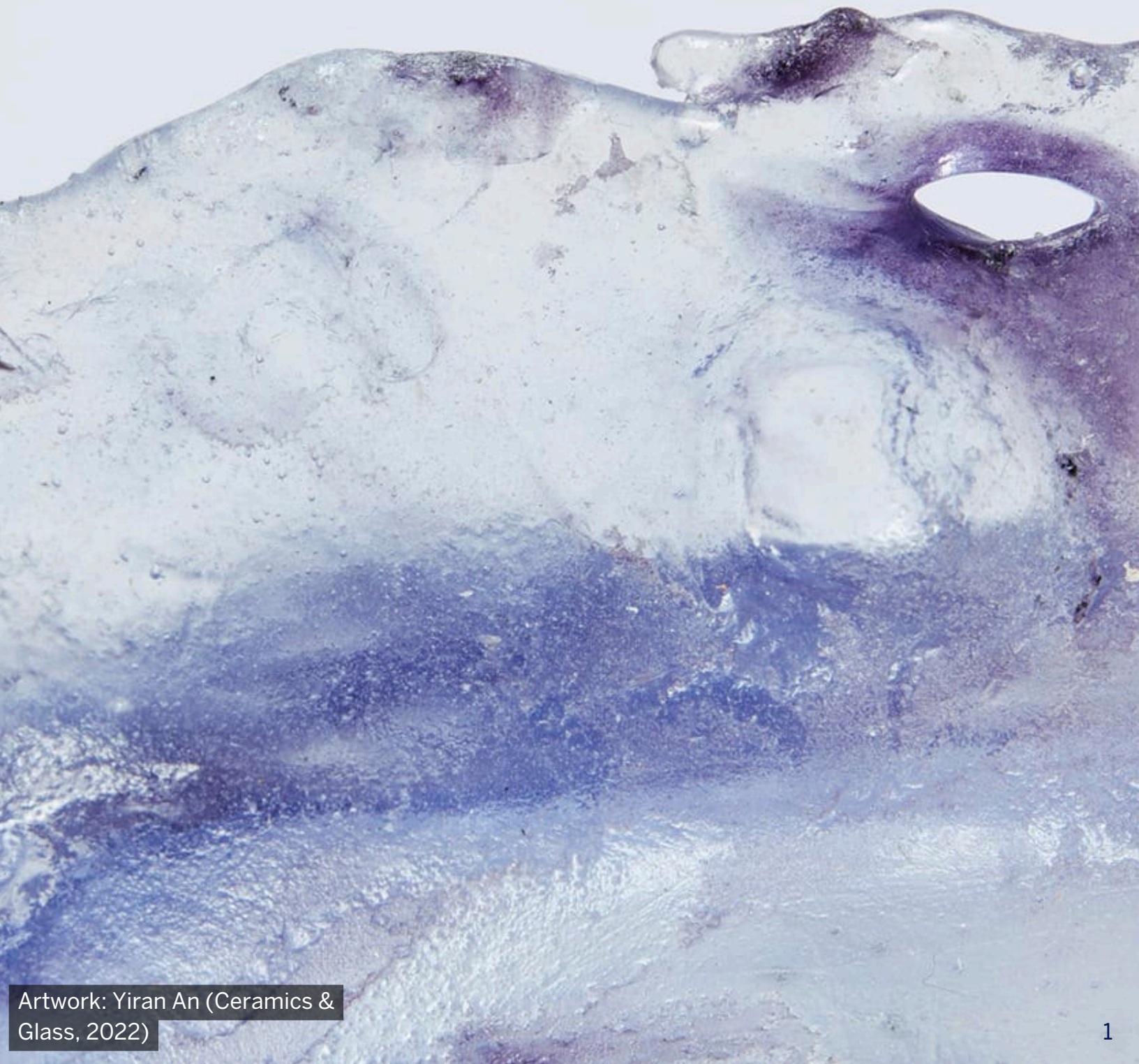


# RCA

## Special Collections Officer January 2025



Artwork: Yiran An (Ceramics & Glass, 2022)



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Photo: Richard Haughton

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# WELCOME TO THE RCA

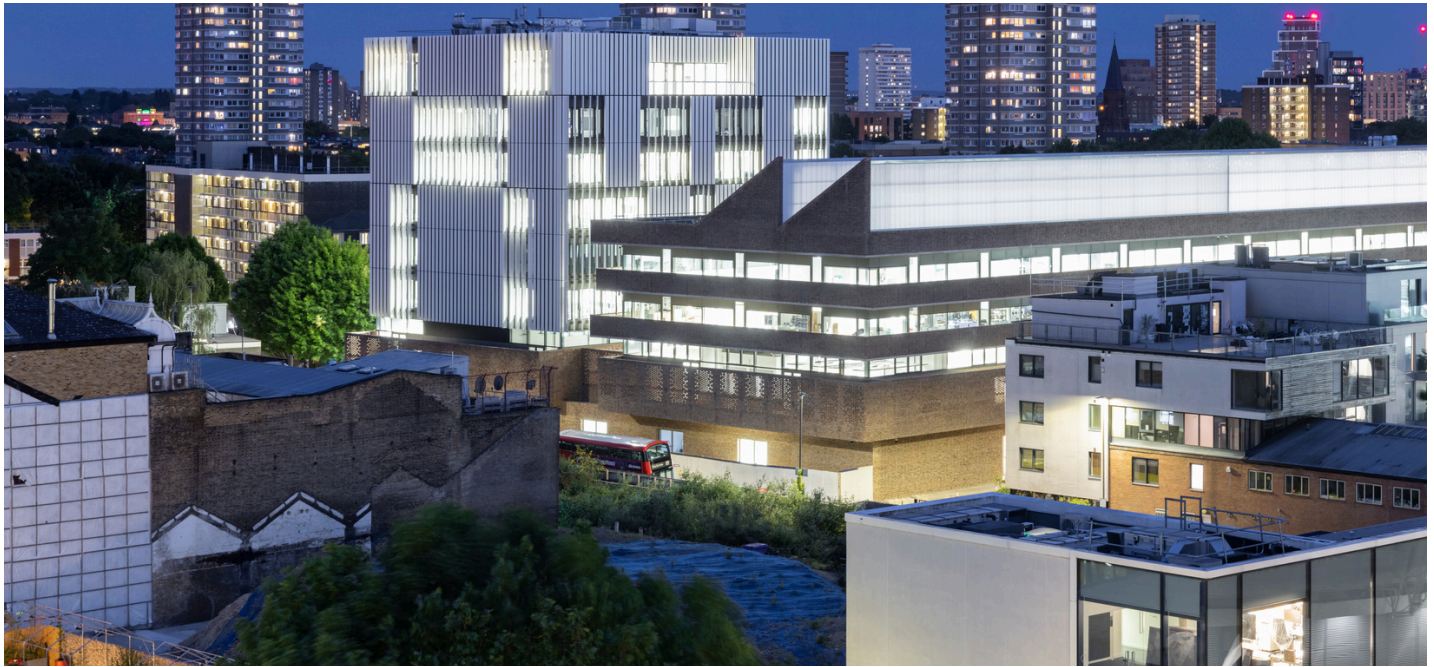


Photo: Iwan Baan

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.





Photo: Richard Haughton

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 Strategy

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. For more information on The RCA's Strategic Plan 2022–27, please click on this link: [Strategic Plan 2022–27](#).



# Our People



Photo: Richard Haughton

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 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.

# Our Values



Photo: Shaun James

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.



# Special Collections



Photo: Iwan Baan

Special Collections at the Royal College of Art is home to over 40 rare and unique collections that include historically significant paintings, prints, archives and publications, with a particular focus on 20th-century art and design and the College's many notable alumni. The collections are used throughout the year by RCA students, staff and the wider research community. The most popular and extensive collections include the RCA archive, the RCA art collection, and the Colour Reference Library of rare books.

Special Collections is one of the service divisions of Education & Student Experience and is predominantly based within the Library at the RCA's Kensington campus.



# Special Collections Officer



Photo: Richard Haughton

## Purpose of the post:

The post-holder will provide essential support within Special Collections to deliver a friendly and responsive service to the many users of the collections, including helping visitors in the reading room and answering remote enquiries.

As Special Collections is a small team, the post-holder will also be expected to assist the Archives & Collections Manager by supporting all day-to-day aspects of the service as required, including administrative tasks and artwork moves and installation. They will work with colleagues across the College, including staff from our academic programmes and professional services teams, to support the wide range of projects that involve our collections.

The Special Collections Officer will also be responsible for progressing an ongoing digitisation programme and will undertake to select, digitise and catalogue items, including publications, artworks and photographs, that have not yet been scanned. Materials outsourced for digitisation also require cataloguing, along with occasional deposits of born-digital materials.

This is a multi-faceted post that involves practical contact with many different types of unique resources and the support of diverse users in a friendly environment.



### Main duties and responsibilities:

- Assist the Archives & Collections Manager in the provision of a general enquiry and research service in response to the research needs of students, staff and external researchers. Undertake additional research to answer enquiries and liaise with researchers accordingly.
- Provide invigilated access to Special Collections for researchers, retrieving items, offering a basic guide to the materials when required, and overseeing handling and use in the reading room.
- Progress a range of digitisation projects, including scanning original materials, undertaking any necessary post-production and basic cataloguing of images in a digital assets / collections management system. Carry out occasional digitisation-on-demand requests from other professional areas of the College. Observe deadlines, priorities and targets agreed with the Archives & Collections Manager.
- Maintain and update the in-house digital resources created from Special Collections materials (eg online image gallery), including born-digital and digitised content.
- Undertake research into provenance and context of previously unidentified or uncatalogued materials, where required.
- Supervise occasional volunteers and student or Library assistants to assist with basic digitisation and cataloguing projects.



Photo: Richard Houghton

Main duties and responsibilities (cont):

- Assist with occasional exhibitions and periodic re-hangs of artworks around the College, including liaising with staff over the selection and assisting with the packing, movement and installation of artworks.
- Assist with the processing of new acquisitions, including sorting, listing and physical re-arrangement of materials, and subsequent digitisation and cataloguing.
- Participate in general administrative housekeeping activities, including collection moves and creating and updating inventories.
- Contribute to digital preservation activities, including capture, ingest and basic cataloguing of content.
- Comply with College finance procedures and policies. Liaise with suppliers and manufacturers, including conservators and storage companies.
- Undertake any duties consistent with the role as required and in agreement with the Archives & Collections Manager.

The details of this job description may be reviewed from time to time according to the changing needs, functions and circumstances of the Royal College of Art.





# Person Specification

It is essential that the post holder has:

- Experience of working with special collections, museum collections, archives, rare books or similar heritage materials, including digitised and/or born-digital items
- Experience of delivering a user-focused service
- Experience of creating and/or editing catalogue records of artworks, photographs, books or other heritage objects within a collections management system, digital assets management system or equivalent
- Experience of digitisation workflows, including use of flatbed and/or book scanners and/or digital cameras to digitise materials, adherence to particular standards, and appropriate handling procedures
- Ability to plan and organise own work, including working on a number of different projects concurrently, and prioritising accordingly
- Ability to be flexible, to use own initiative and work independently and/or solo with a minimum of supervision
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Fluent IT skills, eg use of Microsoft Office, databases, image-editing applications
- Ability to communicate and work effectively with researchers at all levels

It is desirable that the post holder has:

- A postgraduate qualification in librarianship, archives management, museum studies, conservation or similar
- Experience of digital photography and colour management
- Knowledge of appropriate object-handling and collections care procedures
- A strong interest in 20th-century art, design and culture



# Pay & Benefits

## Additional Information:

- Responsible to: Archives & Collections Manager
- Full time salary - Grade 6: £37,936 - £42,703 per annum (salary will be pro rata at 0.8fte)
- Permanent and part time role - working 0.8fte (28 hours per week).
- 27 days annual leave plus extended breaks at Christmas and Easter, at the discretion of the College. Pro rata for part time employees.
- A contributory defined benefit pension scheme and interest-free season ticket loan are available, along with many other benefits.
- Location: Kensington - as the role requires regular access to physical collections and contact with users, it is almost exclusively based on campus
- Department: Special Collections - Library Services



Photo: Philip Vale



### 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 16% of your salary while you pay 6%.

### Holiday

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 on either side of Easter and the remainder between Christmas and New Year. 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 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.

### 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.

### 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.



## Equality, diversity and inclusion - Disability and neurodiversity

### Disability Confident

RCA is a Disability Confident Committed employer. You may recognise the logo from our job adverts.

Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit, retain, and develop disabled people. RCA was originally awarded the Disability Confident certificate in October 2022, which broadens and deepens our existing commitment as an employer.

As a Disability Confident Committed employer, we commit to the below core activities:

- ensure our recruitment process is inclusive and accessible
- communicating and promoting vacancies
- offering an interview to disabled people who meet the minimum criteria for the job
- anticipating and providing reasonable adjustments as required
- supporting any existing employee who acquires a disability or long-term health condition, enabling them to stay in work
- at least one activity that will make a difference for disabled people







**10 YEARS**

as the world's N°1  
University for Art & Design

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2015-24

Together, the RCA community can generate change now for a sustainable future everywhere.