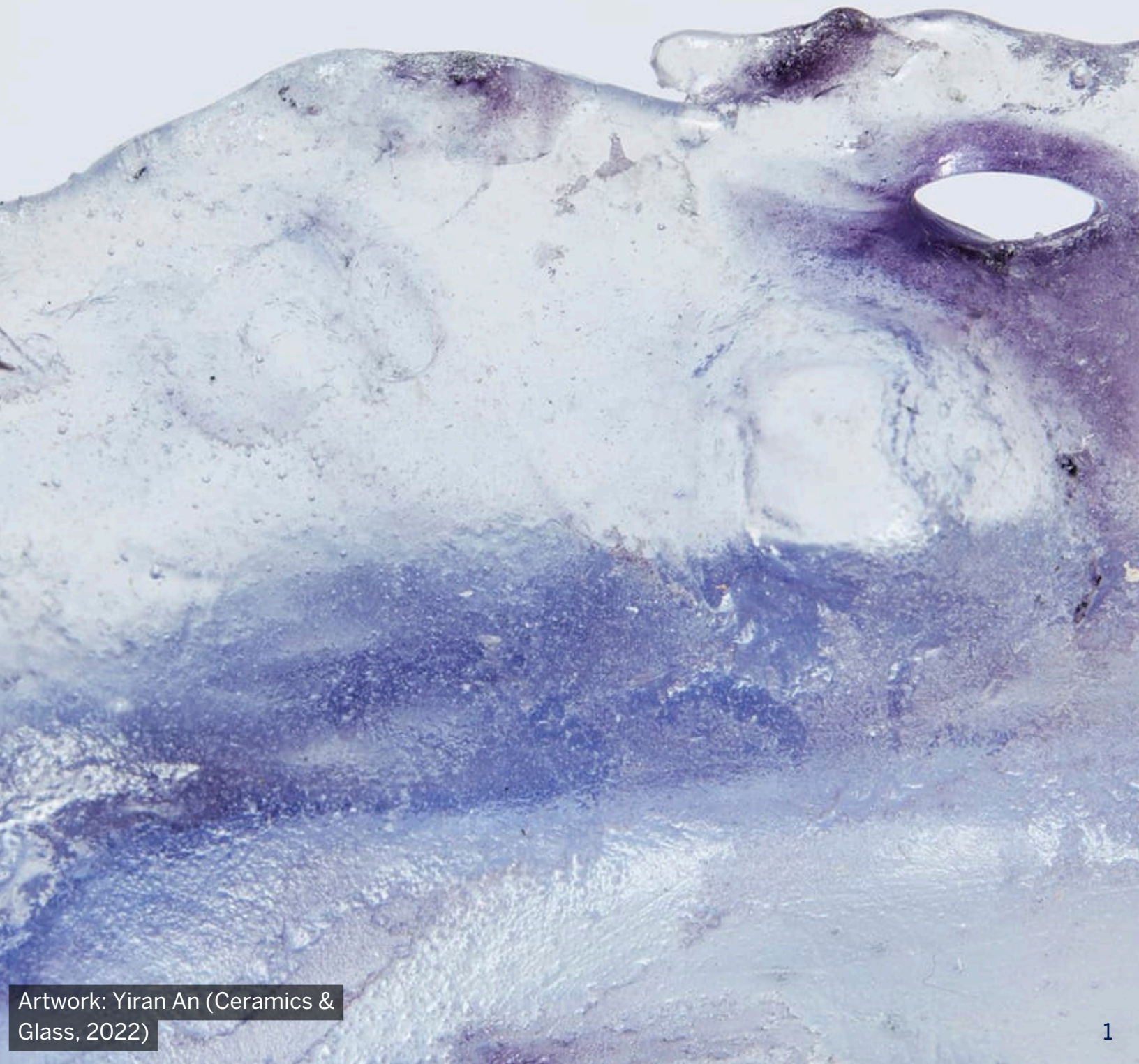


# RCA

## Research Associate

## December 2025



Artwork: Yiran An (Ceramics &  
Glass, 2022)



# CONTENTS



Photo: Richard Haughton

3	<b><u>About RCA</u></b>
4	<b><u>Our Strategy</u></b>
5	<b><u>Our People</u></b>
6	<b><u>Our Values</u></b>
7	<b><u>About the Role</u></b>
13	<b><u>Person Specification</u></b>
15	<b><u>Pay and Benefits</u></b>

# WELCOME TO THE RCA



Photo: Iwan Baan

Founded in 1837, the Royal College of Art is the world's oldest art and design university in continuous operation and today hosts the largest postgraduate community of art and design students globally. The RCA has been ranked the world's number one art and design university for eleven consecutive years by the QS World University Rankings by Subject 2025, reflecting the College's unrivalled reputation for excellence and influence.

The RCA is research-led, with REF 2021 recognising the College as the UK's most research-intensive art and design institution. A growing proportion of our outputs are judged 'world-leading' and 'internationally excellent', and our interdisciplinary research environment brings together artists, designers, architects, technologists and scientists to address global challenges and shape future creative practice.

With more than 25,000 alumni across the world, the RCA's graduates form a unique global network of creative leaders. Our students and alumni are internationally recognised for developing award-winning, sector-defining work — from fine art and architecture to robotics, mobility, material science and cutting-edge design innovation. InnovationRCA, our graduate start-up incubator, is one of the most successful in the UK, supporting high numbers of female-led ventures and delivering exceptional long-term commercial success.





Photo: Richard Haughton

More than 2,800 students study across four Schools and multiple research centres, taking programmes at Graduate Diploma, MA, MFA, MDes, MArch, MEd, MRes, MPhil and PhD levels. Our practice-based model blends academic rigour, creative experimentation and interdisciplinarity, supported by a highly skilled technical workforce and an academic community with deep links to industry, culture, science and the creative sector. The RCA is home to established and developing research hubs including the Helen Hamlyn Centre for Design, the Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, the Computer Science Research Centre, the Textiles Circularity Centre, the Materials Futures Research Group and a forthcoming Centre for Drawing.

The College champions a STEAM vision — integrating science, technology, engineering, art and design — with investment in specialist faculty across fields such as robotics, materials science and computer science. This approach enables our community to tackle urgent global issues including climate resilience, ageing societies, biodiversity loss, the ethics of emerging technologies and the transformative potential of AI.



# Our People



Photo: Richard Haughton

The strength of the RCA lies in its people: our students, academic community, researchers, technical specialists, professional services teams and our global network of alumni and partners.

The RCA's Chancellor is Sir Jony Ive, one of the world's most influential designers. The Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council is Sir Peter Bazalgette, and the President & Vice-Chancellor — the College's Chief Executive — is Professor Christoph Lindner, who joined the RCA in 2024.

Our academic faculty bring world-leading expertise and industry insight into a practice-led teaching model. A core academic and research workforce of around 196 FTE is supported by more than 215 Associate Lecturers and a broad network of guest lecturers from across global creative industries and cultural sectors. Distinguished practitioners including leaders from architecture, design, fashion, visual communication, materials science and digital innovation contribute directly to the curriculum.

Our 95 specialist technicians hold deep expertise in areas including digital fabrication, prototyping, film and sound, 3D modelling, metalwork, ceramics, textiles, and emerging technologies. Their knowledge underpins an exceptional hands-on learning environment and ensures students have access to world-class technical support.

Our people form a distinctive creative ecosystem: a collaborative, interdisciplinary community working across disciplines, generations and cultures to shape the future of art and design.





## OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION: TOWARDS THE RCA AT 200 (2026–2030)

The RCA's new Strategic Plan sets out a transformational five-year phase as we begin our journey towards our bicentenary in 2037. Our ambition is to become the world's most influential art and design community, with a global footprint and a renewed approach to research, education, partnerships and organisational culture.

### By 2030:

- The College will operate across two revitalised central London campuses, including a reimagined Darwin Building at Kensington.
- We will establish research and education hubs outside the UK for the first time.
- We will strengthen our global partnerships, increase access to scholarships and widen participation for students from all backgrounds.
- We will be recognised for leadership in emerging creative technologies, especially AI, and for our contribution to sustainability, regenerative practice and public good.

Our work is underpinned by the RCA's four values — Collaboration, Curiosity, Inclusion and Integrity — and by commitments to long-term resilience, financial sustainability, staff and student wellbeing, and a culture where creativity and innovation thrive.





The College's ambitions will be delivered through three Strategic Pillars:

#### Strategic Pillar One

Creating and delivering the best art and design education, dialogue and research.

#### Strategic Pillar Two

Championing a community with outstanding potential who are diverse, inclusive and connected.

#### Strategic Pillar Three

Convening transformational exchanges of art and design expertise and ideas.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The RCA is committed to building a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment where all students and staff feel valued, supported and able to thrive. As part of our Strategic Plan, we will:

- Launch a refreshed EDI Strategy with an emphasis on inclusive recruitment, equitable practice and a fair, consistent experience for all.
- Deliver sustained activity to achieve Disability Confident Level 3 and Advance HE Race Equality Charter Bronze status.
- Review and enhance the student journey to strengthen belonging, wellbeing and post-study success.
- Deliver a comprehensive People Strategy alongside a co-created Better Workplace Action Plan to support development, recognition, progression and workload sustainability.
- Strengthen connections across our global alumni community, creating networks that support opportunity and collective creative impact.

These commitments reflect our belief that an equitable, inclusive, connected community is essential to achieving our vision and delivering our work with integrity and excellence.



# Our Values



Photo: Shaun James

The RCA community operates in line with four agreed values:



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.



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.



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.



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.



The AI-Design Lab is a major collaboration between the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU) and the RCA, funded by the 'InnoHK' programme to support collaborations between Hong Kong universities and world-leading universities around the world. Building on the research and innovation expertise of the two institutions, the AI-Design (AiD) Lab will explore how artificial intelligence and design can address some of the major challenges of the 21st century.

The AiDLab is built around three programmes of research, all with an interdisciplinary and industry-facing focus and opportunities for commercialising the project outcomes:

1. Ai in Fashion Design
2. Ai in Textile and Apparel Quality Control
3. Ai in Ergonomic Design

The RCA will lead 3 projects across these three programmes, involving staff from across the RCA's research centres and academic schools, working in collaboration with HKPU colleagues.





## About the project

CirculAI Fashion is an AI tool within the AiDLab portfolio aiming to support global fashion brands in reducing their environmental footprint through Intelligent Design Decisions. This project integrates AI tools with technical data from all stages of a garment's lifecycle to enable design teams within fashion brands to operate within sustainable design practices, supporting transition to circular fashion systems



#### Main duties and responsibilities:

- To work closely with the Principle Investigator for the project, undertaking high-quality and rigorous collaborative research activities which lead to robust research outputs.
- In particular, the Research Associate will carry out following research activities (1) Review state of the art of existing circular design guidelines and tools. (2) Develop a circular design training framework to support the research teams technical experts with training of the AI model. (3) Liaise with industry partners to collate key data sets. (4) Conduct user-centred research to inform the development of the AI model.
- The preparation of the project reports communicating findings of the research to all project partners and the Funder in consultation with the Principle investigator.
- To support and be actively involved in project meetings.
- To support a team research culture that reflects best practice in research conduct. including in issues and processes concerning research ethics, research integrity and research data, compliance with relevant funding body processes and reporting requirements, and RCA guidelines concerning the use and procurement of IT equipment and other equipment and facilities; to liaise with the RCA's Research and KE Office staff, Information, Learning and Technical Services staff and others to achieve this, and to undertake relevant training and development opportunities.
- To ensure that project outputs are properly documented and disseminated to key audiences, via reports, papers, exhibits, publications, the website etc.





Photo: Richard Haughton

#### Main duties and responsibilities (cont)

- To report on all aspects of work undertaken, verbally and in writing, as required by the project and the Academic Leader.
- To ensure confidentiality on all matters and information obtained during the course of employment.
- To ensure all aspects of the work undertaken are compliant with health and safety rules.
- To respect the confidentiality of data stored electronically and by other means in line with the Data Protection Act.



# Person Specification

## Essential experience and skills:

- Applicants must have (or about to receive) a MA or MRES in fashion or textile design, textile engineering, textile / fashion supply chain management or materials science and engineering (or a closely related discipline) or equivalent experience.
- Applicants are expected to have knowledge of and experience of working within industrial Textile and Fashion supply chains.
- Applicants are expected to have knowledge of and experience with methods and tools for circular design, materials, processes and technologies that support circular fashion and textile systems.
- Applicants are expected to have knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research approaches relevant to capturing user needs for innovative technologies, and of correlating such datasets.
- Be aware of research ethics and required processes and permissions for user centred research.
- Be aware of the risks in the work environment and the relevant Health & Safety issues.
- Ability to be an effective and collaborative member of a broader team working constructively with senior staff and supporting the work of less experienced staff or students involved in projects.
- Flexibility and confidence to tackle a wide range of tasks, with an open, proactive, creative and problem-solving approach.
- Excellent writing, communication and presentation skills, able to adopt an appropriate style for a range of specialist and non-specialist audience
- Strong interpersonal and team-working skills (with the potential to develop mentoring skills).



Photo: Iwan Baan



# Person Specification



## Desirable experience and skills:

- Teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and other forms of public presentation.
- Experience in leading independent research projects
- Experience of working on collaborative projects, preferably involving HE/industry collaborations in a relevant field.
- Knowledge of materials experience theory and methods

# Pay & Benefits

## Additional Information:

- Responsible to: Principal Investigator
  - Full time salary: Grade 6 £38,738 per annum including London Allowance - salary will be pro rata.
  - 0.5FTE - 17.5 hours per week and fixed term for 12 months.
  - 30 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 alongside many other benefits
  - Location: Battersea, London
  - Department: Research & Innovation
- 
- The Research Associate may be required to spend time in Hong Kong at least once a year for the employment period.





### 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

30 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







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

QS World University Rankings  
by Subject 2015-25

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