

# RCA/180



**Royal College of Art**  
180 Years of Innovation, Art & Design

## ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

### JOB DESCRIPTION

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>Role:</b>           | Special Collections Project Officer 0.6 FTE, three year fixed term contract (with possibility of extension) |
| <b>Department:</b>     | Information, Learning & Technical Services  |
| <b>Grade:</b>          | 6   |
| <b>Responsible to:</b> | Archives & Collections Manager  |

### Background:

The Royal College of Art is the UK's only entirely postgraduate art and design university. 2017 marks the 180th anniversary of its foundation as the Government School of Design, and the 50th anniversary of its Royal Charter. Its continued pre-eminence in teaching and research is reflected in the College's ranking as the world's number one art and design university in the QS World University Rankings.

The Royal Charter specifies that the College's purpose is "to advance learning, knowledge and professional competence particularly in the field of the fine arts... through teaching, research and collaboration with industry and commerce". Fifty years on, the College remains in the vanguard of creative enquiry, with around 2,000 students from 65 countries registered for MA, MRes, MPhil and PhD degrees. Applications are strong, and the College's strategy sets out an ambitious plan both to increase student places to 3,000 by 2020 and to launch new programmes underpinned by its world-class research. Recent examples include the MA in Contemporary Art Practice, launched in 2016, to offer a truly global dialogue about the practice and study of contemporary art, alongside the College's established fine art programmes in painting, sculpture, photography and print, and the haptic crafts of making in ceramic, glass, and metal.

The College is located on three sites in central London, in Kensington, Battersea and White City. In 2016 the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an unprecedented £54 million grant to support a major expansion at Battersea to create a flagship innovation campus, housing new research centres, knowledge

exchange labs and additional space for the College's highly successful business incubator, InnovationRCA. Subject to planning consent, work on the new building is due to start in early 2018 and complete in late 2020.

As well as welcoming students from around the world, the College's global dimension is enhanced through extensive links with business and industry and its partnerships with leading art and design, cultural and educational institutions; including, among many others, its neighbours in Kensington (Imperial College London, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Royal College of Music and the Natural History Museum).

The College has 400 full- and part-time staff, including internationally renowned artists, designers and practitioners. These staff, together with customised forms of teaching and learning, dedicated technical facilities and research centres, all contribute to create an exceptional creative and intellectual environment and a remarkable record of graduate employment. Numerous eminent graduates have created far-reaching impact and influence, and the College boasts such noteworthy alumni as Sir James Dyson, Thomas Heatherwick, David Hockney, Tracey Emin, Christopher Bailey, Julien McDonald, Alison Jackson, Idris Khan, David Adjaye, Suzie Templeton and Sir Ridley Scott.

Special Collections is one of the service divisions of IT, Library and Technical Services (ILTS), a cross-College department. Special Collections is a busy and popular service, with the many different collections in use by staff and students from across the College throughout the year. The service also supports a wide range of high-profile external users.

**Purpose of the post:**

This post has been funded to support a three-year project to transform and make publicly accessible the Royal College of Art's many special collections, which include archives, slides and other photographic material, posters, prints and publications. The post-holder will undertake to select, digitise, and catalogue a significant proportion of materials from a wide range of these collections and help create a fully catalogued online resource of around 50,000 previously unseen images. Duties will include scanning original prints, posters and publications, and cataloguing the resulting files in a digital assets management system. Materials outsourced for digitisation, such as a large slide collection, will also require cataloguing. Volunteers and student assistants will provide additional support and the post-holder will be expected to supervise the work of these ad hoc members of the team. In addition, the post-holder will be expected to assist the Archives & Collections Manager in providing a proactive, efficient and effective service to researchers, including staff and students, while the digitisation project is ongoing.

### **Duties and responsibilities:**

- Undertake and deliver several concurrent or successive digitisation projects over three years, including scanning original materials and cataloguing images in a digital assets management system to recognised standards and to conform to the College's metadata schema. Observe deadlines and quotas agreed with the Archives & Collections Manager in order to complete the project in the time available.
- Maintain and update the in-house digital resources created from Special Collections materials (e.g. online image gallery), including born-digital and digitised content.
- Assist with annual task to catalogue images of student work in the summer degree show.
- Assist the Archives & Collections Manager in the provision of a general enquiry, research and digitisation service in response to staff and student projects, including remote enquiries and appointments booked to consult materials on site.
- Provide invigilated access to Special Collections for researchers, guiding users through the materials, and overseeing their handling and use in the reading room.
- Supervise volunteers and student assistants to assist with the digitisation projects at different stages.
- Undertake basic research into provenance and context of previously unidentified or uncatalogued materials, where required.
- Undertake general administrative tasks relating to the various collections, including the College art collection, e.g. creating purchase orders, assisting with facilitation of loans, booking collections and deliveries, compiling inventories.
- Assist with occasional and periodic re-hangs of artworks around the College, including the packing, movement and installation of artworks.
- Assist with the processing of acquisitions, including sorting, listing and arrangement of materials.
- Participate in general housekeeping activities, including shelving, occasional collection moves, collections from storerooms, and stock-checks.
- Comply with College finance procedures and policies. Liaise with suppliers and manufacturers.
- 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:**

### **Essential**

- Significant experience of working with special collections, archives, museum collections or similar
- Experience of cataloguing of artworks, photographs, books or other heritage objects, using a collections management system, digital assets management system or equivalent
- Experience of delivering a customer-focused service
- The ability to plan and organise own work, including working on a number of different projects concurrently, and prioritising accordingly
- The ability to be flexible, to use own initiative and work with a minimum of supervision
- Strong attention to detail and accuracy
- Strong IT skills, e.g. knowledge of Microsoft Office, Google apps, databases and image-editing applications
- Ability to communicate and work effectively with researchers at all levels

### **Desirable**

- A postgraduate qualification in librarianship, information management, archives management or equivalent
- Experience of digitisation workflows, including adherence to particular standards
- An interest in contemporary art, design and culture
- Experience of working in higher education
- Knowledge of appropriate object handling procedures

### **Additional Information:**

- Salary working 21 hours per week: £18,409 – £21,079 per annum inclusive of London Allowance
- Normal hours will total 21 hours per week, over three days, with an hour each day for lunch
- This appointment will be made on a three year fixed term contract (with possibility of extension)
- 15 days annual leave plus extended breaks at Christmas and Easter
- A contributory defined benefit pension scheme and interest free season ticket loan are available

**December 2017**

## **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 16% 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. 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.

### **Childcare Vouchers**

The Royal College of Art enables staff to purchase childcare vouchers, through its partner Edenred, as a salary sacrifice scheme.

**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.