



Royal College of Art

Postgraduate Art & Design

ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post:	Postdoctoral Research Associate
School:	School of Design
FTE:	0.8 (4 days a week)
Grade:	7
Term:	Fixed-term for 8 months
Responsible to:	Principal Investigator (Dr. Qian Sun)

Background

The Royal College of Art is the UK's only entirely postgraduate institution of art and design, dedicated to teaching, research and knowledge exchange with industry. The RCA has been ranked the number one university-level institution for art & design, internationally, for the eighth consecutive year according to the QS World University Rankings by Subject, 2021.

The College currently has some 2,700 students registered for Graduate Diploma, MA, MRes, MPhil and PhD degrees, and this is set to rise to 3,000 in coming years. The majority of postgraduate teaching and research supervision is delivered by the RCA's four Schools: Architecture, Arts & Humanities; Communication; Design, with each School led by a Dean of international standing and a recognised leader in their field.

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); the Intelligent Mobility Design Centre, the HELIX Centre, and future centres in Computer Science and in Drawing. The School is also home to one of the UK's most successful university incubators, InnovationRCA.

Our People

The RCA's Royal Visitor (Patron) is HRH Prince of Wales; its 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. The RCA has more than 500 permanent staff, including internationally renowned artists, designers, architects, theorists and curators. These staff, together with an innovative pedagogy, world-class technical facilities and research centres, all contribute to an exceptional environment and a remarkable record of graduate employment. Generations of eminent graduates have created far-reaching impact and influence, such as Barbara Hepworth, Bridget Riley, David Hockney, Sir Ridley Scott, Sir James Dyson OM, Asif Kapadia, Thomas Heatherwick, Chris Ofili, Tracey Emin, Jake & Dinos Chapman, Christopher



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Bailey, Idris Khan, Chantal Joffe, Sir David Adjaye, Erdem, Philip Treacey, Monster Chetwynd, Oscar Murillo and Lina Lapelyte.

Strategic Plan 2022–2027

The RCA is currently crafting a new strategic plan, involving all staff in a process that was concluded in March 2022, with the publication of a new Strategic Vision and Plan for the next five years and the appointment of our new Chair of Council, Sir Peter Bazalgette.

This plan will embrace the roll out of a new model of delivery for our taught postgraduate programmes; it will underscore our commitment to being the world's most research-intensive art & design university; and it will commit to a number of Equity and Diversity goals which will lead towards the RCA becoming an anti-racist institution.

The School of Design

The School of Design offers programmes that engage with a broad spectrum of design from the industry-focused, through collaboration with engineering and science, to the experimental and theoretical. With a strong culture of innovation, experimentation and debate, as well as research degrees at MPhil and PhD level, the School explores the boundaries of knowledge in the fields of industrial design, design engineering, product design, service design, critical design, systems and services, social innovation, new materials, globalisation and the discourse between international pedagogies and manufacturing.

Connecting Roots

Connecting Roots: Co-creating a Green Social Prescribing Network in Walsall for Health and Wellbeing is part of a £1.5 million Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) programme for levelling up health and wellbeing in the UK. Led by Dr Qian Sun, Reader in Service Design, Policy & Social Innovation at the RCA, Connecting Roots will work with communities to establish how design principles and nature can combine to support physical and mental health.

The project brings together a range of stakeholders, including Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs), local authorities, primary care, funding bodies and policymakers, to work collaboratively towards green social prescribing – a type of social prescribing that links people to nature-based solutions, such as community garden projects, for health and wellbeing.

Over the past two years, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of time spent outdoors to people's health – as well as the inequality of access to green space in the UK. The goal of Connecting Roots is to create a more integrated care system which addresses these issues, informing and influencing system change. The project will also draw upon our expertise in design thinking, management and policy to explore how localised nature-based activities for health and wellbeing can be scaled up.

Connecting Roots is one of 12 research projects supported by the AHRC, in partnership with the National Centre for Creative Health, the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). All 12 projects combine nature and creative approaches



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to tackle health disparities across the UK. Further information can be found on the [UK Research and Innovation website](#).

Purpose of the Post:

The postholder will work closely with the PI (Dr. Qian Sun), team members and partners across industry, community and public sector bodies to deliver the research outcomes of the project.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- Conduct research to deliver the project outcomes under the supervision and direction of the PI
- Support the PI in the design and development of the research activities for the project
- Conduct critical literature review and primary research e.g., interviews, workshops, and design research where required, and analysing research findings to contribute to the overall research outcomes
- Write project reports and participate in project meetings and design activities
- Engage in the dissemination of the results of the research under the supervision of the PI
- Support the development of proposals for research funding
- Engage in the wider research and scholarly activities of the School and College.
- To undertake general administrative and other tasks as part of the project work, as required. Act as an effective and collaborative member of a broader team, and provide support to PhD and Master students when required.
- Carry out administrative and management work associated with the research project
- Working with the project team, ensure that project outputs and project deliverables are properly documented and disseminated to key audiences, via reports, papers, exhibits, publications, the website etc.
- To contribute to project updates on a regular basis, working with other team members, project partners and relevant stakeholders.
- 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 skills and experience:

- hold a recent doctorate, or working towards acquiring a PhD, in a relevant field to the project including design, health, policy, and social science
- have interest in and (proven) experience with a multidisciplinary approach to health, societal and political themes and topics related to the project;
- demonstrated understanding of operational requirements for a successful research project and managing resources
- have an excellent track record in research, preferably with a focus on research through design (RtD).
- proven ability to identify and fulfil the academic writing requirements for target publications
- have knowledge of and experience in different research fields/methods;
- have excellent communication and coordination skills;
- have affinity with realising societal impact through design research;



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- knowledge and application of the principles underpinning successful grant application and have the potential to generate research funds from national and international funding agencies;
- be able and willing to be part of an interdisciplinary team;
- have an excellent command of spoken and written English.
- proven record of working with team members and PhD students to help build their research skill and knowledge and to support and guide their professional development
- generates new ideas and links and builds upon existing ideas to generate unique concepts and solutions

Additional Information:

- This is an 8-month fixed term contract
- Normal hours total 28 hours per week, 09:30 – 17.30 with an hour for lunch
- Salary, working 5 day per week: £37,910- £41,171 per annum pro rata inclusive of London Weighting Allowance
- 25 days annual leave plus 6 days college close per annum, at the discretion of the college. Pro-rata for part-time employees.
- Location: Kensington & Battersea

June 2022



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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 19% 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 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.

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.