



Design Products

The Design Products Department recognises that design is an activity that fundamentally shapes our world and influences the processes of change. We aim for our students to find their own place, from where they can lead or contribute to these processes.

Although there is a focus on product and furniture design, we do not see any limitations to our field; understanding very well that most of tomorrow's products and services do not yet exist today. As we are living in a rapidly changing world, we want to be forward-thinking and engage with new possibilities. We aim to engage with design as a cultural activity in the context of art, sociology, the environment, humanity, technology, and diverse forms and scales of production. The department has a strong culture of experimentation, innovation and debate. We see these as tools or systems to develop our thinking about design, and even more, what design can be.

The nature of the course is pluralistic; we encourage diversity in thinking, opinions and ideologies. There are no preferred methods or styles. Our aim is for our students to develop their own voices.

Applying

The criteria for acceptance by the Royal College of Art are talent and potential, along with the commitment and the ambition to achieve in art and design. Candidates are selected for places entirely on merit, and we welcome applications from all over the world. All departments hold open days during the application period.

The College is introducing an online application process for 2010/11 admissions. MA Applications will be accepted from 1 December 2009 to 18 January 2010. Full details of the MA Application Process and Entry Requirements are available at www.rca.ac.uk/admissions.

Key Dates and Contacts

1 December 2009

online applications open

18 January 2010

closing date for receipt of applications

27 January 2010

closing date for receipt of portfolios

26 February 2010

invitations issued to candidates selected for interview

19 March 2010

interviews completed

31 March 2010

results letters sent

Open Day

26 November 2009 from 2 – 6pm

Enquiries

+44 (0)20 7590 4322

design@rca.ac.uk

www.rca.ac.uk

General admissions enquiries:

admissions@rca.ac.uk

Staff

Course Direction

Professor Tord Boontje, Head of Department

Hilary French, Deputy Head of Department and Head of the School of Architecture and Design

Visiting Professors

Sebastian Bergne; Dr Kenneth Grange; Deyan Sudjic

MA External Examiners

Volker Albus; Jay Osgerby

Tutors

Jurgen Bey; Durrell Bishop; Daniel Charny; Roberto Feo; Sam Hecht; Gabriel Klasmer; Andre Klausner; Onkar Kular; Julia Lohmann; Michael Marriott; Sebastien Noel; Luke Pearson; Gareth Williams

Technical Staff

Simon Bird; Paul Booth; Boyd Costen; Brian Davey; Nick Grace; Alistair Hamer; Philip Harrison; Frederic Jean; Steven Kellet; Peter Longfellow; Sam Ransford; James Russell; Neil Shepherd; Hannah Terry; Ian Whittaker



MA Programme

Course Description

During the two-year MA course, first- and second-year students work together in small study groups, called platforms. As a student, you will be given the choice to join the platform that best suits you. Each platform has two tutors who set the briefs, give tutorials and organise the platform's activities. Alongside platform design projects, there are course-wide projects, college-wide lectures, Critical and Historical Studies Department programs, and opportunities for cross-departmental collaborations.

Three broad themes are explored within the platforms and inform all the work of the department.

Extreme Functionality

What is the optimum way for a product to work? What is the most responsible way to design it? How can new technologies be best applied to design, and how can longevity be built into products?

The Social Manifesto

Taking advantage of new possibilities and social changes, how can designed objects, systems and spaces improve the quality of life, and what are their impacts? These are worldwide issues and lead us to look at design as an inclusive activity going beyond our western world.

The Fantastic

How can design make positive statements, inspire, and convey meaning?

How can design emotionally express our values? What is the designer's role as originator, artist, manufacturer, and communicator?

MA Entrance Requirements

- A good undergraduate degree or equivalent
- Several years of professional experience, either before or after a first degree, is a benefit.
- Applications are welcomed from candidates from related backgrounds, such as art, engineering or philosophy.
- Proficient written and spoken English.

Portfolio

- This should describe your abilities in design and presentation. It should include representative samples of drawings, model-making and any other work-up material at investigative or exploratory stages of the design process as well as presentation of finished pieces.
- It should also contain samples of any written work, technical studies or additional work carried out in conjunction with the design projects.

Interview (if invited)

- Any work carried out after the submission of the portfolio or any work in progress can be brought to the interview.

- You are expected to be able to talk confidently and objectively about your own work, and about your personal ambitions for future work at the College.

Research

Research is conducted in three broad areas:

- 'Extreme Functionality' questions the optimum performance of products, materials and designed outcomes.
- 'Social Manifestos' lead us to consider design as an agent of change in the social and political sphere.
- 'The Fantastic' asks how design can make positive statements, inspire, and convey meaning, and explore the designer's role as originator, artist, manufacturer and communicator.

Within the department, research students are able to work closely with the MA platform group that most closely reflects their area of interest and will also be part of a larger cohort of research students in the school and beyond in other design-related disciplines.

MPhil/PhD Entrance Requirements

The department welcomes applicants for research degrees, either MPhil or PhD by project and by thesis. Potential applicants are encouraged to submit draft proposals for consideration and discussion with proposed supervisors. We particularly seek proposals concerning the three central issues addressed by the department: Extreme Functionality, The Social Manifesto and The Fantastic.

Recent doctoral research has included the potential for scanning and rapid-prototyping technologies to examine foetal development (Jorge Lopes, PhD 2009).





Facilities

Although the emphasis has shifted away from craft, making is still important and the investigative aspects of model-making and materials-testing are encouraged as a key part of project development. In computing, there are technicians with a wide range of software expertise who provide ongoing instruction and support.

Facilities:

- personal workspace in the studio alongside the workshops
- traditional facilities for wood-working, metalworking, plastics and resins
- computer-driven 3D milling equipment
- Apple Mac- and PC-based 2D and 3D modelling programmes
- RapidformRCA, the College's rapid prototyping centre

By arrangement, students are also able to use workshops in other departments as well as facilities outside the College.

Career Prospects

In a 2008 survey, 93% of Design Products graduates who studied here from 2002–2008 were found to be in directly related employment/activity.



Many alumni have received international acclaim, for example Sam Buxton, Paul Cocksedge and Julia Lohmann, and many are the rising stars of the next generation, including Shay Alkalay and Yael Mer (Raw Edges Design Studio), Peter Marigold and Simon Hasan. Graduates frequently establish their own studios.

Funding

The RCA's particular situation and educational ethos means the actual cost of the educational experience we provide is comparatively high. We offer an experience that is real value for money, but studying here is a serious financial investment, so it's important to ensure that you have adequate funding in place.

2009/10 tuition fees (for guidance): UK/EU students £5,780; Channel Islands and the Isle of Man £12,000; overseas students £24,000 per year.

The College is able to allocate more than £2.5 million in bursaries to eligible students. For more information see www.rca.ac.uk/funding.



Extra Support

Students who are accepted onto an MA programme have access to: extensive support as pre-students in their year of application; learning and pastoral support during their two years of study; and professional practice support for three years following graduation.

Student Support offers assistance with practical, housing and financial issues, as well as supporting international students and students with disabilities, including dyslexia and dyspraxia.

For more information see www.rca.ac.uk/support.

College Initiatives

In addition to our core MA and Research activities, we offer opportunities to participate and collaborate in projects, exhibitions, placements and professional enterprises, among others: workshops, awards and prizes are offered across all disciplines; the Helen Hamlyn Centre offers a focus for people-centred design and innovation at the College; and InnovationRCA provides the opportunity to interact with business and industry partners.

For more information see Innovation and enterprise: www.rca.ac.uk/iande.

More Information

College information:
www.rca.ac.uk/about

Students/alumni interviews:
www.rca.ac.uk/stories

Equality and diversity:
www.rca.ac.uk/diversity

Finding accommodation:
www.rca.ac.uk/housing

Financial support:
www.rca.ac.uk/money

Student Support Office:
www.rca.ac.uk/sso

Student Union:
www.rca.ac.uk/su