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Rhode Island School of Design Launches “Race in Art & Design” Cluster Hire Search

As part of its commitment to address institutional racism and advance social equity, RISD is hiring 10 new faculty as part of a cluster hire initiative focused on race and decolonization in art and design.



(Work by Justin Han BRDD 22 PT) by Jo Sittenfeld MFA 08 PH

PROVIDENCE, RI (October 14, 2020) – In response to student activism and calls from BIPOC faculty members to diversify Rhode Island School of Design's (RISD) faculty and curricula, RISD has launched a search for 10 new full-time faculty members with expertise in the areas of race, colonization, decolonization, post-coloniality and cultural representation, as well as in material practices of resistance. The “Race in Art & Design” cluster-hire initiative—one of many actions RISD has committed to in its plan to address systemic racism—is made possible through one of the largest (anonymous) gifts in the institution’s history.

“We repeatedly heard from our community that the most definitive transformation we could make would be to increase the diversity of the scholarship of our faculty and thereby our pedagogy,” says President Rosanne Somerson. “This initiative will bring 10 new faculty members to RISD in fall 2021, launching a fundamental

transformation toward diversifying and expanding our curricula. I want to acknowledge and thank the student-led RISD Anti-Racism Coalition (risdARC) and the group of BIPOC faculty who passionately led the efforts to instigate much-needed change at RISD, along with the generous anonymous donors who made this possible. This cluster hire initiative is a cornerstone effort of many major commitments underway to make substantive, meaningful and durable change at RISD.”

In an effort to hire multiple scholars based on shared, interdisciplinary research interests, RISD has posted all 10 openings simultaneously: [four in the Liberal Arts and Experimental and Foundation Studies divisions](#), [three in Architecture and Design](#) and [three in Fine Arts](#). Ideal candidates should be engaged in research-based creative practice and/or scholarship addressing the lives, experiences and cultural traditions of BIPOC communities and ready to lead cross-disciplinary dialogue in support of RISD’s [Center for Social Equity and Inclusion](#) (SEI).

“The cluster hire is a concrete and significant step forward for RISD,” says Associate Provost for SEI [Matthew Shenoda](#), “but I see it as the impetus behind a much larger and more durable initiative. Over the coming years, we’ll continue to focus on issues of racism and colonialism and how they intersect with other key issues like sustainability.”

Although the search committees intend to prioritize candidates whose scholarship, practice and pedagogies relate to the African American and African diasporas, Indigenous North American and Latinx communities, scholars focusing on any Indigenous or historically marginalized communities of color are encouraged to apply. The goal is to expand RISD’s pedagogy to address the systemic structures and power relations that continue to shape our society.

For more information, visit [RISD Human Resources](#).

About Rhode Island School of Design

RISD’s mission, through its college and museum, is to educate students and the public in the creation and appreciation of works of art and design, to discover and transmit knowledge and to make lasting contributions to a global society through critical thinking, scholarship and innovation. The college’s strategic plan *NEXT: RISD 2020–2027* sets an ambitious vision for educating students for the future and bringing creative practices to bear on the creation of just societies, a sustainable planet and new ways of making and knowing. RISD’s immersive model of art and design education, which emphasizes critical making through studio-based learning and robust study in the liberal arts, prepares students to intervene in the critical challenges of our time. Working with exceptional faculty and in extraordinary specialized facilities, 2,500 students from 69 countries engage in 42 full-time bachelor’s and master’s degree programs. RISD’s 30,000 alumni worldwide testify to the impact of this model of education, exemplifying the vital role artists and designers play in today’s society. Founded in 1877, RISD (pronounced “RIZ-dee”) and the RISD Museum help make Providence, RI among the most culturally active and creative cities in the region. Find more information at [risd.edu](#).

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