RCA

COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

CONTENTS

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THIS DOCUMENT?

Sean Steed (MA Graphic Design) painting a mural at the Museum of Brands, part of Kensington + Chelsea Art Weekend | Photography: KCAW

The aim of this strategy is to increase the positive impact the RCA has on the world by improving the ways in which staff and student engage with our wider communities through;
- Setting out and sharing a strategic framework and priorities for the RCA's community and public engagement work
- Encouraging best practice amongst staff and students planning and delivering community, public engagement and knowledge exchange activities
- Sharing our priority areas of activity and focus

What does it mean to be an engaged university?
The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement (NCCPE) describes an engaged university as having activities in place which incorporate public engagement into their research, knowledge exchange, teaching, and social responsibility:

Public Engagement with Research	Engaged Teaching
Actively involving the public in the research activity of the institution	Developing teaching activities which positively impact on the community, and enhance students' engagement skills
Knowledge Exchange	**Social Responsibility**
Increasing the two-way flow of knowledge and insight between the university and wider society	Seeking to maximise the benefits that the institution can generate for the public

Who are the RCA's communities?

Internal
Staff
Students
Alumni

External
Schools and colleges
Voluntary and private sectors
Funders and policymakers
People, families and organisations in various communities

Who has shaped this document?

The Communications and Marketing team consulted with 22 members of staff from across the College in August and September 2022 to help co-create and shape this document.

Representatives from the following parts of the RCA have been involved in its development: Schools of Architecture, Arts & Humanities, Communication and Design; Academic Development; Communications and Marketing; Development and Alumni Relations; Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, IT Services, Research & Knowledge Exchange; Student Support; Students' Union and the Vice-Chancellor's Office.

Engagement experience with local partners over the past five years has also contributed to this strategy, reflecting our desire to work collaboratively and ensure activity is aligned with external needs and priorities.

HOW DOES THIS SUPPORT THE RCA'S STRATEGIC PLAN?

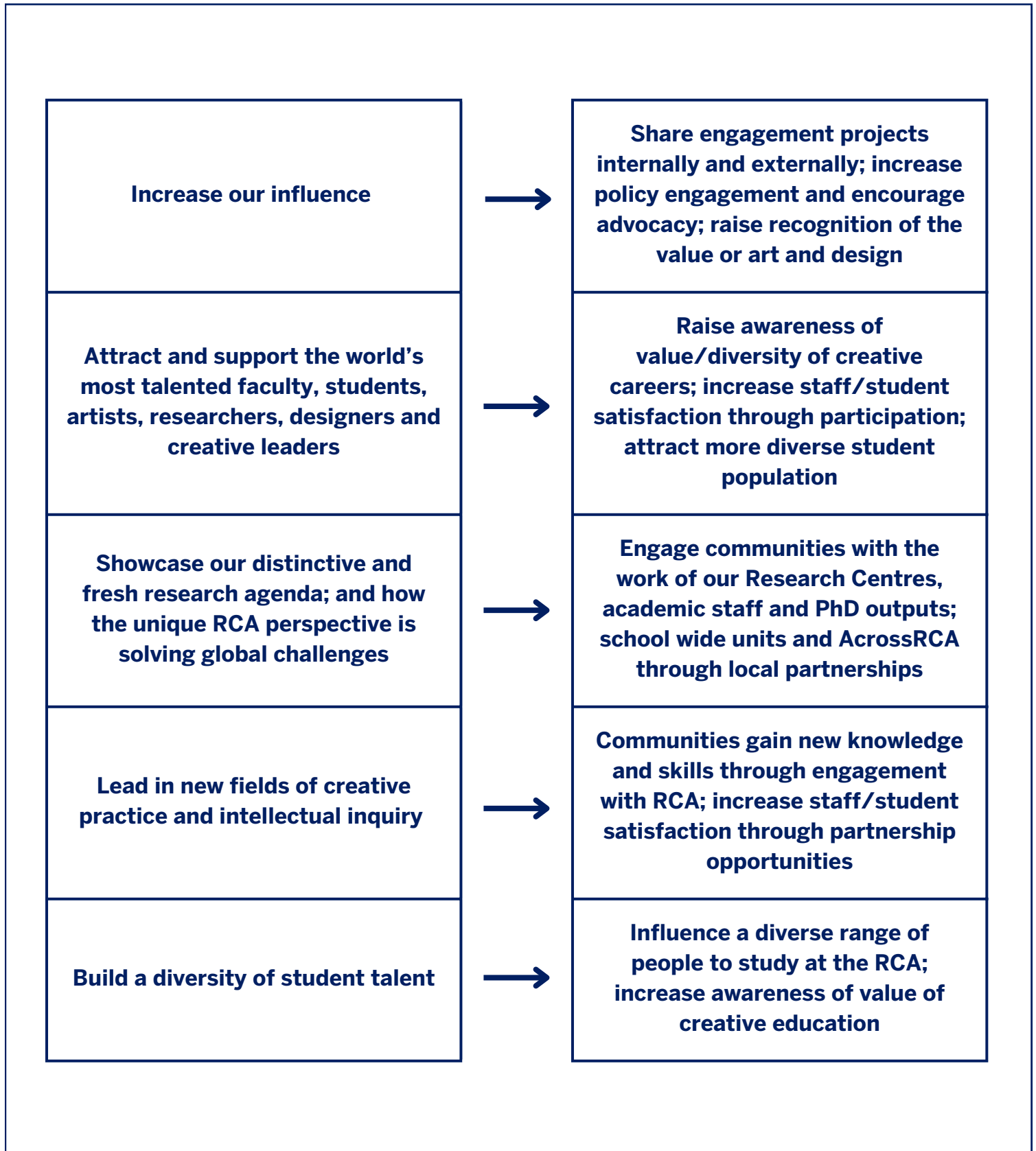RCA Sculpture in Battersea Park project | Photography: Gabriel James Mansfield

The RCA's Strategic Vision 22-27
Our strategic vision is to increase our influence on the world stage of globally ranked universities, punching significantly above our weight, and attracting, supporting and convening the world's most talented faculty, students, artists, designers and creative leaders.

We will remain an independent, postgraduate institution with a sharply distinctive and fresh research agenda and a research-driven approach towards our taught programmes that keeps us always one step ahead. We'll focus on areas of expertise that only the RCA can offer – including some big-bet propositions where we have the appetite for well-managed risk and we are prepared to enter new ventures with new associates. We'll lead in new fields of creative practice and intellectual inquiry where we believe creative insights and a uniquely RCA perspective will catalyse new solutions to global challenges.

We recognise that the winning formula must be built upon a diversity of student talent with a taught Master's model that is more inclusive, affordable and better suited to twenty-first century lifestyles and careers.

HOW CAN OUR ENGAGEMENT WORK ENHANCE THIS STRATEGIC VISION?

Increase our influence	**Share engagement projects internally and externally; increase policy engagement and encourage advocacy; raise recognition of the value or art and design**
Attract and support the world's most talented faculty, students, artists, researchers, designers and creative leaders	**Raise awareness of value/diversity of creative careers; increase staff/student satisfaction through participation; attract more diverse student population**
Showcase our distinctive and fresh research agenda; and how the unique RCA perspective is solving global challenges	**Engage communities with the work of our Research Centres, academic staff and PhD outputs; school wide units and AcrossRCA through local partnerships**
Lead in new fields of creative practice and intellectual inquiry	**Communities gain new knowledge and skills through engagement with RCA; increase staff/student satisfaction through partnership opportunities**
Build a diversity of student talent	**Influence a diverse range of people to study at the RCA; increase awareness of value of creative education**

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT - STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

FASHION + JOY Showcase during Wandsworth Arts Fringe | Photography: Michele Panzeri

Our vision

 We will demonstrate the value of creativity and innovation in order to create a positive impact in the social and cultural fabric of our local, national and global communities. We will do this by;

- Working collaboratively with diverse partners and participants

- Sharing knowledge between our talented faculty, researchers, students and alumni and our communities

- Being an open, welcome and inclusive place, physically as well as in principle

- Sharing best practice through practical resources, networks and support

Adalberto Lonardi (MA Interior Design) painting his Love Kensington + Chelsea Street Art Project
Photography: Nick Smith, Studio Indigo and London Projects

Ways of Working

We will approach this vision through the following ways of working;

- Strategic - Focused on the areas where the RCA has the most relevance, passion, and value to share

- Inclusive - Co-create with and support a diverse range of partners/societies/audiences

- Collaborative - Working in partnership with existing organisations, people and places to make a lasting difference

- Open - Building relationships of mutual trust and respect; sharing our skills and resources with others

- Empowering - Build the conditions for everyone at the RCA to contribute and make change through sharing best practice in engagement design, delivery and evaluation
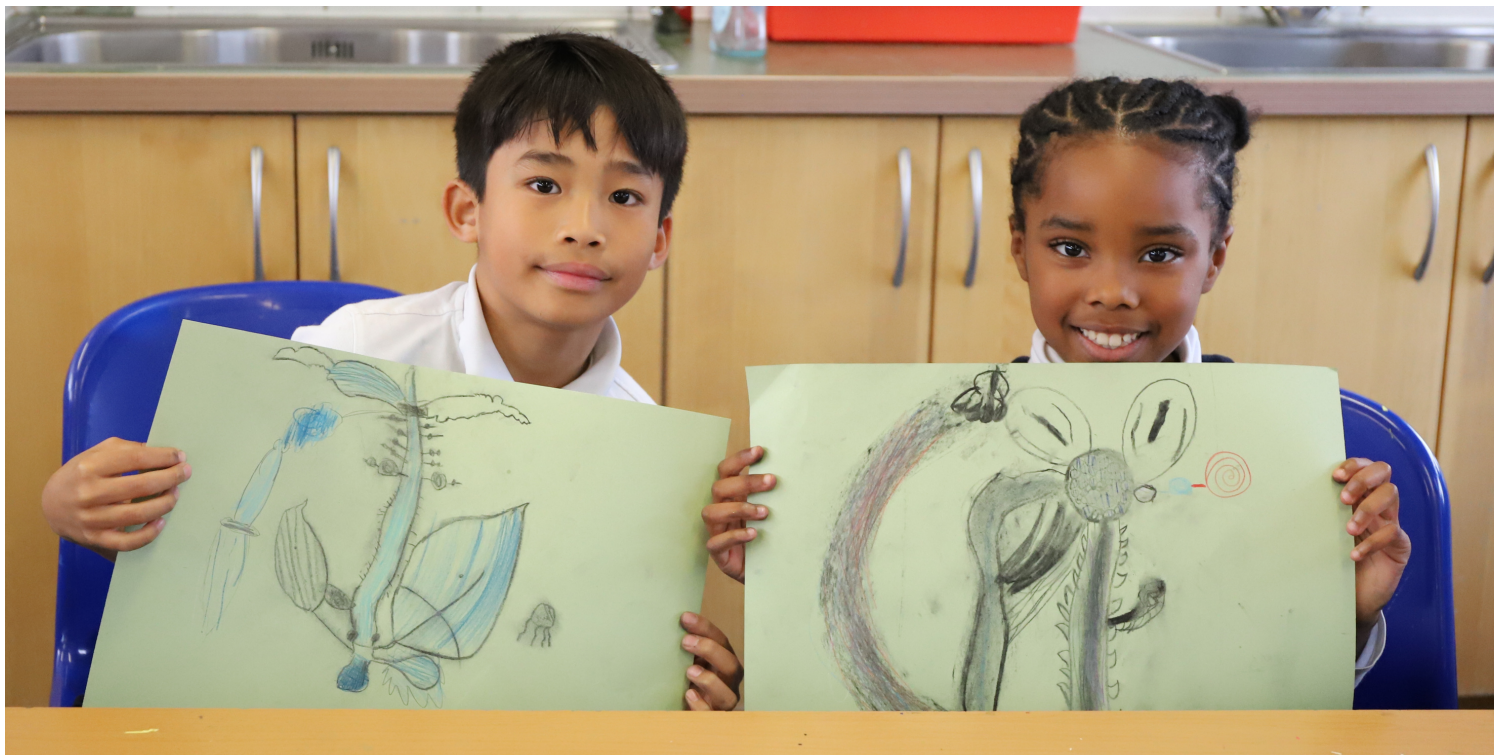
Plant Power outreach workshop | Photography: Heather Sibly

Recommended Priority Audiences

We will work with young people aged 11–25 years as well as our neighbours, community groups and organisations with a particular focus on those who have been excluded, marginalised or disadvantaged by society. We will do this through partnerships and co-creation in these areas;

Hyper-local
London Boroughs of Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea, Wandsworth and Westminster

ACE Priority Places in Greater London
*As part of Arts Council England's (ACE) Delivery Plan for 2021-24, they identified 54 places across England in which their investment and engagement is too low, and opportunity to effectively increase investment and engagement is high. Within Greater London this includes Barking and Dagenham, Brent, Croydon, Enfield and Newham as well as areas recommended by RCA BLK and our EDI team including Hackney, Hounslow, Lambeth and Southwark.
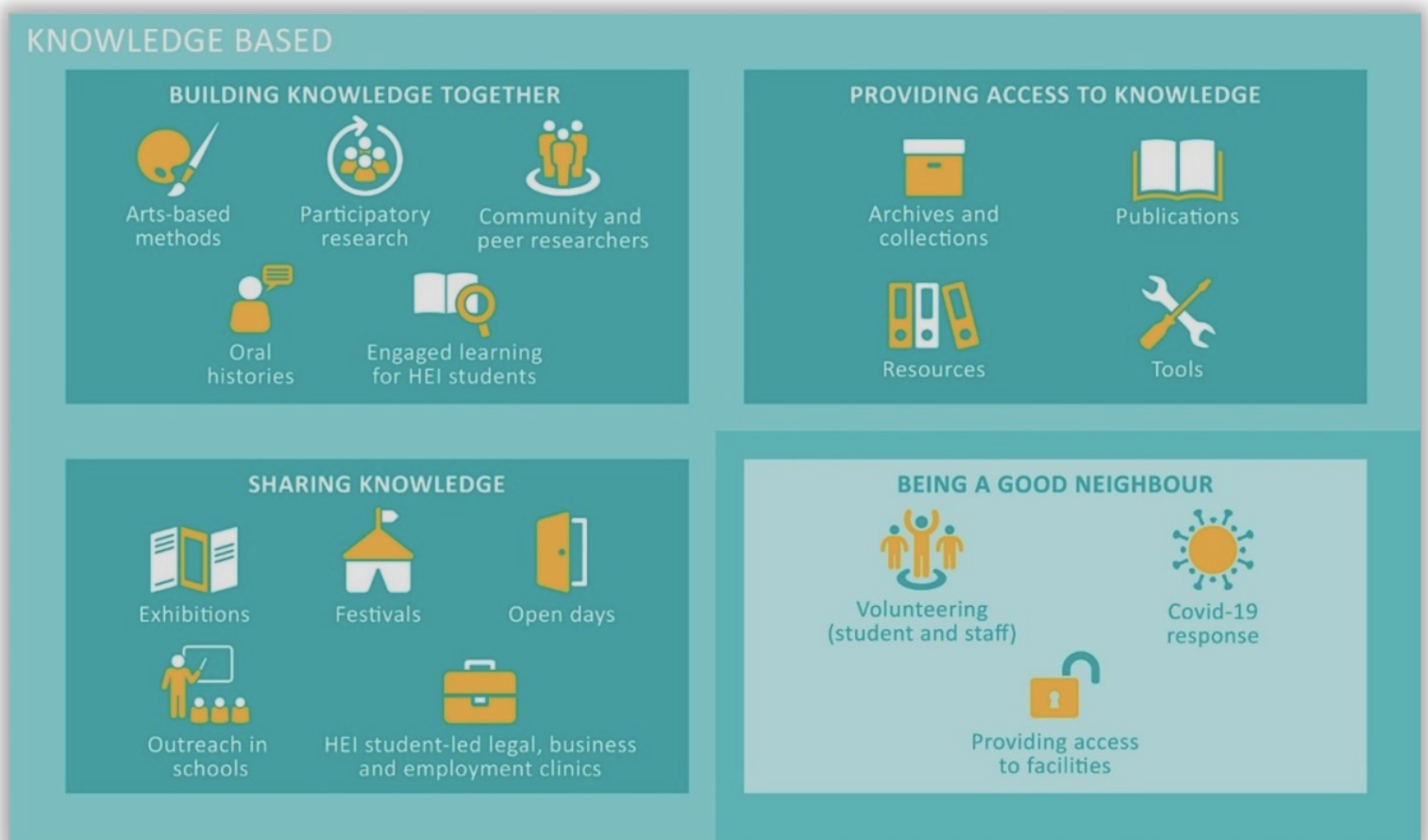
Levelling Up for Culture Places
 This is an extensive list covering the Midlands, North, South East and South West of England)
**ACE has worked with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to identify 109 local authority areas, all outside of Greater London, that will be the focus for additional ACE engagement and investment between 2023-26.

OUR PRIORITIES

1. Internal capacity building - create a supportive, inclusive environment to share best practice in engagement design, delivery and evaluation

2. Engaged learning - diversify and share opportunities for staff and students to engage with communities

3. Social responsibility - co-create with local communities to deliver an impactful public programme of activity aligned to RCA strategic aims

4. Creative education and equity - champion and advocate for the value of a creative education for all young people

These priorities will be delivered through a wide range of activities. These are exemplified in the diagram below on categorising approaches to Public & Community Engagement activity in the Knowledge Exchange Framework narratives taken from the NCCPE website.

KNOWLEDGE BASED

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE TOGETHER
- Arts-based methods
- Participatory research
- Community and peer researchers
- Oral histories
- Engaged learning for HEI students

PROVIDING ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE
- Archives and collections
- Publications
- Resources
- Tools

SHARING KNOWLEDGE
- Exhibitions
- Festivals
- Open days
- Outreach in schools
- HEI student-led legal, business and employment clinics

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR
- Volunteering (student and staff)
- Covid-19 response
- Providing access to facilities

MEASURING OUR IMPACT

Local sixth form pupils visit an exhibition at the RCA's Dyson Gallery | Photography: Heather Sibly

What impact do we want to demonstrate?

- Greater sense of internal community and satisfaction amongst those working in/ interested in this field
- More strategic embedding of community and public engagement in our day-to-day work
- Closer, longer-term links between our local communities and our teaching, learning and research
- Influence a diverse range of people to come and study at the RCA, or the creative arts more broadly
- Build recognition and encourage support for the value of the creative industries and cultural education

How will we measure and report on our impact?

- Measure outputs (events, exhibitions, publications, articles, reports, partnerships, no's of people and demographics of participants in activities)
- Create a logic model for each activity strand where relevant. Measure outcomes and impacts where possible through surveys, feedback forms and postcards after an activity - including all the participants (members of the public, the delivery team and partners)
- Gather evidence - document activities and events through photography or film wherever possible and if budget permits. Obtain relevant permission from participants to be photographer/filmed. Develop case studies that include community engagement - catalogue and track impact.
- Create an annual report summarising and analysing activity each year; submit data and case studies for KEF
- Share best practice and templates for reporting and evaluating engagement projects with staff and students in the new online hub