

RA

Royal Academy of Arts

Candidate Pack for Director
of Brand and Audiences



Burlington House

Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest joining the Royal Academy of Arts as our new Director of Brand and Audiences. This is a newly shaped role on our senior leadership team, and a pivotal moment for the Academy as we seek to strengthen our connection with audiences, clarify our brand identity, and secure sustainable growth for the next chapter of our history.

Having recently joined the RA myself, I am energised and inspired by the opportunity to lead this remarkable and much-loved institution alongside a brand new talented and entrepreneurial senior leadership team. The RA is unique: artist-led, independent, and steeped in a 250-year tradition of excellence in the creation, display, and understanding of art and architecture. Yet we are also forward-looking, seeking to expand our audience reach, deepen engagement with diverse new visitors, and maximise the impact of our extraordinary programmes, exhibitions, collections and world class estate.

We have close relationships with some of the most important artists, philanthropists, art collectors, business people and influencers in the world. I will be building a team who will be superb delivery partners working the wealth of talent and resources we have at our disposal. This is a rare opportunity to be part of leading our transformation to further our world-class reputation artistically and commercially.

We will make the RA a compelling and inspiring social hub in the heart of Mayfair that uses the entirety of our superb estate in inventive artistic and commercially successful ways. I will be creating a team of people who thrive on close and effective collaboration, a shared vision, and have commercial acumen, drive and ambition to make a significant and positive impact in their work.

The Director of Brand & Audiences will play a central role in this mission. You will be responsible for shaping and delivering a comprehensive brand strategy that informs everything the RA does, from exhibitions and education to new commercial and digital initiatives. This role will also oversee audience development, marketing, communications, and membership programmes, ensuring that we grow and diversify our audiences while maintaining the integrity and strength of our brand.

We are looking for a proven leader with strategic vision, creativity, and data-driven insights, someone who can translate complex organisational goals into inspiring and clearly measurable initiatives. The ideal candidate will be able to foster a high-performing, collaborative culture, leverage technology and AI to enhance engagement, and balance artistic and commercial priorities with authenticity and discernment. Above all, regardless of what sector you are in now, you will be a passionate advocate for the arts who can amplify the RA's presence, relevance, and reputation globally.

This is an extraordinary opportunity to help shape the Academy's future and to lead brand and audience strategy at a world-class cultural institution.

As the new Chief Executive, I am excited to build a leadership team that will define the RA's identity for the coming decades, and I very much look forward to welcoming the successful candidate on this unique journey.

Best wishes,

Simon Wallis, Secretary & Chief Executive OBE

About us

The Royal Academy of Arts (RA) is one of the UK's most significant and distinctive cultural institutions. Founded in 1768 by a group of artists and architects with the support of King George III, it was established to promote the creation, enjoyment, and appreciation of the visual arts through exhibitions, education, and debate. For over 250 years, the RA has remained true to that purpose, while continually evolving to meet the needs of artists, students, and the public.

At the heart of the RA is its unique artist-led model. The organisation is governed by the Royal Academicians, painters, sculptors, architects, printmakers, and other artists who are elected by their peers. This ensures that practicing artists shape the RA's direction, exhibitions, and education programmes.

This model makes the Academy different from most museums or galleries: it is not only a place for displaying art, but a living institution where art is created, debated, and advanced.

Throughout its history, the RA has stood for the principle that art and architecture matter to society. It believes that artists' voices are vital in shaping cultural and civic life, and that art should be accessible to all.

The RA's values are expressed through:

- Artistic excellence: maintaining world-class standards across exhibitions, collections, and teaching.
- Equity, diversity, and inclusion: removing barriers to access, whether financial, cultural, or physical.
- Environmental responsibility: adapting operations to contribute to a sustainable future.
- Public engagement: fostering dialogue and participation, ensuring that art enriches lives across communities.



RA Under25 Justine Trickett

What we do

Exhibitions and Public Engagement

The RA is renowned for its ambitious and wide-ranging exhibitions programme. These span classical and historic art through to contemporary practice, architecture, photography, and new media. Each year the RA attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to exhibitions that are landmark cultural events.

The best-known of these is the Summer Exhibition, the world's largest open-submission art show, which has taken place every year since 1769. Bringing together works by leading artists, emerging practitioners, and enthusiastic amateurs alike, the Summer Exhibition remains a defining feature of the RA's public identity and a celebration of artistic diversity.

Beyond exhibitions, the RA offers an extensive public programme of lectures, debates, family activities, and learning opportunities. These are designed to open up the world of art and architecture to the broadest possible audience, fostering dialogue and understanding, and encouraging cross-generational creativity.

RA Schools

Education is at the core of the RA's mission, exemplified by the internationally acclaimed Royal Academy Schools, the UK's longest-established art school. The RA Schools offers a full-time, three-year postgraduate programme in fine art that is unique in being free of tuition fees. Each year between 10 and 17 students are admitted, benefiting from dedicated studio space, access to specialist facilities, a high tutor-to-student ratio, and bursary support to help cover living and material costs.

The Schools attract applicants from across the UK and around the world, and their alumni have included some of the most influential artists of the past two centuries. By removing financial barriers, the RA Schools ensures that talent, not means, determines access to one of the most rigorous and supportive postgraduate art programmes available anywhere.

Collections, Heritage and Spaces

The RA's collection has grown since its foundation, with each newly elected Royal Academician donating a work to the Academy. Today this collection includes over 46,000 works, from historic masterpieces to contemporary pieces, and serves as a vital cultural resource.

The RA's home at Burlington House and 6 Burlington Gardens has recently undergone major redevelopment, including the creation of new galleries, lecture theatres, and public spaces, all linked by the Weston Bridge. These improvements have enabled the RA to display more of its collection, improve accessibility, and provide enhanced spaces for learning and debate.

Independence and Funding

Unlike many national cultural institutions, the RA is an independent charity. It receives no regular government funding and relies instead on a mixed economy of income streams: ticket sales, commercial activities, membership schemes such as the Friends and Patrons of the RA, donations, sponsorship, and investment income. This independence is a strength, preserving the RA's artistic freedom, but it also brings financial challenges.

The RA has faced significant challenges in recent years, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. Visitor numbers have recovered slowly, with around 607,000 in 2023/24 compared to 846,000 in 2018/19. Rising costs, including energy and staffing, have added pressure, with income at £38m and expenditure at £46m in 2023/24.

However, early results for 2024/25 are encouraging: exhibition attendance was 1% above budget, (driven by a strong Summer Exhibition) overall revenue exceeded targets and, as a result of strong cost management, costs came in under budget.

To learn more about our current finances, please [click here](#).

And to view our ongoing strategy, please [click here](#).

Role description

Job title: Director of Brand & Audiences

Reports to: Secretary & Chief Executive

Role purpose:

The Royal Academy of Arts stands at a pivotal moment in its history. This is a time of renewal, ambition, and huge possibility. We are creating a new senior leadership role, Director of Brand & Audiences, to shape the Academy's future by driving audience growth, deepening engagement, and broadening participation so our brand resonates powerfully across every activity and touchpoint.

As ambassador and steward of the RA's brand, you will develop and implement a visionary brand strategy review that draws on 250 years of artistic excellence, the ambition of its Royal Academicians, and its Royal Charter to shape every aspect of its work. This rich heritage informs our artistic, commercial and strategic priorities, offering a unique opportunity to build on a globally recognised legacy while driving innovation.

You will lead on defining a data-driven strategy on the purpose and presence of the RA for the audiences it seeks to reach and engage for its next century of growth and success, underpinned by our audience insights.

As Director of Brand & Audiences, you will have access to, and oversight of, strategic data- driven intelligence on ticket sales, Friends Membership growth, product and pricing insight, and all brand positioning, marketing campaigns, and communications across all channels.

You will lead a team of 25 staff and work in close creative partnership with the Secretary and Chief Executive, and senior management colleagues comprising the Chief Operating Officer, the Artistic Director and Commercial Director to deliver an ambitious growth plan whilst maintaining the integrity of the institution and elevating the stature and presence of the RA internationally.



Main responsibilities

Leading Brand Innovation

- Lead brand-driven decision-making processes that integrate artistic vision with clear market realities and data-driven audience insights
- Develop and implement a comprehensive brand strategy that serves as the organising principle for all RA activities, from exhibition selection to commercial partnerships that preserves creative authenticity
- Synchronising an audience development strategy with an artistic vision and strategy to deliver critical and financial success for the institution
- Present the RA's brand, its purpose, vision, mission and fundraising goals clearly and persuasively to varied audiences
- Ensure brand consistency, editorial strength and coherence across all audience-facing communications and across all relevant channels – including the RA magazine, the RA website & social media channels

Audience Insight & Growth

- Develop and implement a dynamic data-driven audience development strategy to increase visitor numbers, diversify audiences, and deepen engagement across all platforms
- Devise and deliver a new approach to Friends and Patrons memberships which maximises retention and growth
- Drive digital transformation and adoption with greater use of generative AI. This will capture efficiencies, increase output of relevant content and assets to maximise audience engagement and the RA's potential global digital impact while maintaining brand consistency and recognition

Financial leadership

- Take P&L responsibility, developing strategies to grow this substantially over five years in line with the agreed strategic plan for growth
- Maximise ticketing yield through brand-consistent pricing strategies, audience development initiatives and upsell and cross-sell opportunities
- Collaborate closely with the Commercial Director to ensure commercial opportunities align with and strengthen the RA's brand
- Marketing & Communications
- Oversee marketing, communications, and digital engagement to promote the RA's mission, programming and brand, driving loyalty and retention from existing audiences and acquisition of new ones firmly positioning the RA as a market leader.
- Ensure an outstanding, inclusive visitor journey both onsite and online, pre and post visit
- Lead data-driven marketing initiatives and approaches that serve both audience development, market reputation and brand-strengthening objectives
- Grow our use of existing and new media to represent the brand globally
- Lead the Royal Academy's website and social media strategy, ensuring it engages audiences, supports Friends and Patrons membership growth, and showcases the RA's programmes and brand to maximise reach, impact, and profile
- Drive the Royal Academy's national and international profile, increasing media presence, thought leadership, and strategic communications to amplify our influence and reputation
- Constantly research innovation in technology and communication to use to positive effect at the RA

Main responsibilities

Visitor Experience

- Co-create with the CEO and Artistic Director a programme that appeals to audiences and delivers the brand essence.
- Collaborate with Front-of-House teams to deliver an outstanding, inclusive visitor journey both onsite and online and maximise opportunities on pricing and membership conversion

Championing Collaboration and Influence

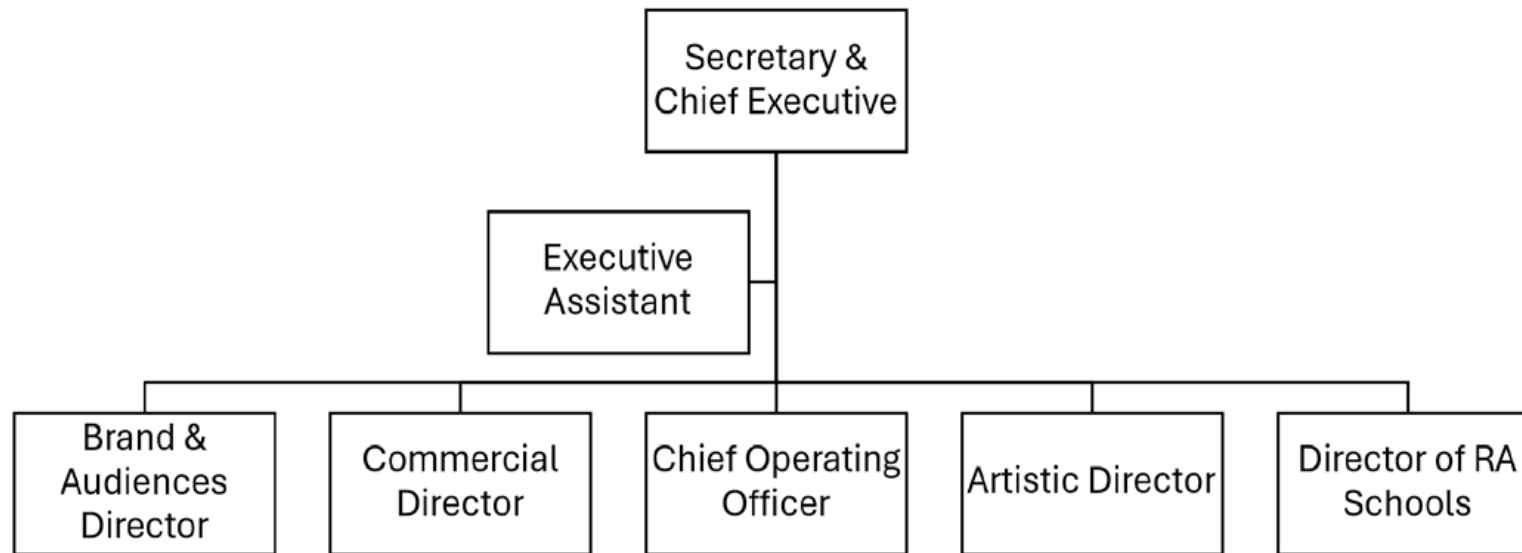
- Collaborate with senior leadership to align brand and audience strategy with artistic programming and institutional charitable objectives and opportunities
- Manage budgets and set targets for audience growth, engagement, and revenue, ensuring efficient resource allocation, measuring and monitoring the success of initiatives
- Lead and inspire multidisciplinary teams in audience development, marketing, communications, and membership with an empowered and 'can do' team ethos
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive culture, that integrates brand thinking across all organisational functions bringing teams from across the RA together and working to a clearly understood strategy and targets.
- Promote diversity, equality, and inclusion in audience development and team leadership
- Ensure compliance with GDPR and data protection regulations
- Manage budgets and set targets for audience growth, engagement, and revenue within brand strategic framework
- Establish and champion a clear KPI framework to track audience engagement, commercial performance, and brand impact, ensuring it drives consistent, data-informed decision-making.
- Safeguard and enhance the Royal Academy's reputation through proactive reputation and risk management, media engagement, strategic stakeholder relations, and effective oversight during any crisis



Yinka Shonibare CBE

Organisation structure

Senior Leadership Team



Person specification

Knowledge and Experience

- Experience of working as part of a senior leadership team, contributing to organisation-wide strategy, in a fast-paced and ambitious culture.
- Extensive experience in developing, leading and delivering successful brand strategies that have driven new audiences and retained them with up-spend for a visitor or consumer-facing brand.
- Proven track record in risk management to safeguard brand reputation.
- Understanding of the dynamics inherent in a creative charitable organisation where we balance both artistic vision and commercial aims.
- Deep expertise in digital innovation and a champion of user-centred practice to drive efficiencies and inform strategic and operational decisions.
- An experienced and dynamic leader, able to consistently motivate, inspire and effect positive change and innovation of valued talent within the team to drive strong performance and minimal churn.

Skills and Abilities

- Strong commercial and entrepreneurial drive: the vision and flair to develop an established and prestigious proposition into a competitive and profitable omnichannel sector leader.
- Ability to look and think ahead, and identify new ideas, opportunities and partnerships
- Ability to plan and deliver multiple projects simultaneously with the capacity to respond to fast-paced, constantly changing market conditions.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills, with the ability to inspire and influence senior stakeholders and diverse audiences, representing the best of the RA.
- Highly developed negotiation and influencing skills, with the ability to secure advantageous outcomes for the organisation.
- Strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret data, uncover insights and harness digital innovation, new technology and AI.
- Skilled in leading organisational transformation, embedding positive change in complex environments.

Personal Qualities

- Passion for the arts and culture, with sensitivity to the
- Academy's mission as an artist-led, charitable institution.
- Committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion, both in audience development and internal team leadership.
- Entrepreneurial mindset with creativity, innovation, and resilience.
- Future-focused, with curiosity about emerging cultural, digital, and commercial trends.
- Collegiate and values-driven, committed to inclusion, accessibility, and sustainability in commercial activity.
- Integrity, discretion, and a natural ability to build trust across diverse internal and external stakeholders.

Terms of appointment

Salary

Up to £120,000

Location

Burlington House, London

Pension

Enhanced Pension Scheme - Employee pays 3%, 4%, 5% or 6% and receives employer contribution of 5%, 6%, 7% or 10% accordingly

Annual leave

5 days annual leave, plus bank holidays and 3 additional days leave at Christmas



Burlington Gardens Staircase

Additional benefits

Financial

- Season Ticket Loans
- Give as You Earn Scheme
- Staff Discounts in Café and Shop on site at the RA
- Reciprocal Agreements with other galleries
- Enhanced Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave benefit
- Professional Qualification Renewal Costs Covered
- Benefits Hub – online discounts on a range of travel, retailers & experiences

Family

- Life Insurance 3x salary
- Special Leave for last minute emergencies
- Agile Working Policy
- Enhanced Maternity, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave benefit
- Enhanced shared parental leave benefit
- Compassionate Leave
- Free entry for friends and family into RA exhibitions

Health & Wellbeing

- Virtual Private GP and Second Medical Opinion
- Service
- Taxis home for anyone finishing after 11pm
- £50 voucher towards glasses for VDU users
- Enhanced Holiday – 25 days
- 3 additional days leave at Christmas for all staff
- Cycle to Work Scheme
- EAP – 24/7 advice line, online portal and face to face counselling sessions
- Volunteering opportunities
- Agile Working Policy
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Meditation Drop in Sessions

Cultural, Social & Developmental

- Free access into all RA exhibitions
- Curator led talks
- Other talks & events for staff
- RA Choir
- RA Netball Club
- LGBTQ+ staff network
- RA Staff Council
- Thirsty Thursday Social
- RA Breakfasts
- Annual RA Party – the phenomenal social event of the year!
- Leadership Training
- Basic Skills Courses
- Race Equity & Inclusion Training
- Access to the Apprentice Levy and other funding for development courses

How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/raa-dir-bra-aud> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Monday 24th November 10am

Preliminary interviews: w/c 1st and w/c 8th December 2025

Final Panel interviews: Mid December/Early January



Grayson Perry RA hanging the 2018 Summer Exhibition, Photo Philip Sayer