



Strategy 2022–2025

Our origins

The Royal Institute of Art has been educating artists and architects since 1735. It is the largest higher education in Fine Art and Architecture on artistic basis in Sweden. The historical scope of its operations has established a profound practice and expertise in art and architecture unparalleled in Sweden. Expertise in a broad artistic field, which continues to extend and alter its boundaries, is the driving force at the core of the school's operations. The prominent heritage of the Royal Institute of Art could ostensibly stifle innovation and transformation. However, its history is documented in crucial reforms and course changes. At different times and for various reasons, whether internal expansions or external turns, the school has managed to reinvent itself and seek out new directions.

The road to a vision statement

In the spring of 2018, the Royal Institute of Art began to formulate a new vision statement for 2019–2025. This undertaking took the form of a series of workshops in which students, staff and management conjointly set goals for the school from artistic, didactic and organizational perspectives. We felt the need to envisage the future along new sightlines without sacrificing our fundamental knowledge, working methods and experience.

The chamber play

The finished vision statement *In like a lion, out like a swine* assumed an unorthodox format in the context of an institution of higher learning. Conceived as a chamber play, it takes place at the school in an imagined future. The drama concludes with a summary call that sets goals for the Royal Institute of Art. The unconventional form was born of the desire to find an expression that reaches beyond simple slogans and embodies the requisite complexity of a vision statement for an art academy. Through dramatic dialogue, the vision statement invites the reader to follow the deliberations and standpoints that govern the goals of our operations.

Vision statement and goals

The vision statement sets out a series of key goals for the school.

- Artistic knowledge and vital artistic practices shall be the driving force at the core of our education and research.
- We shall be an art school that dares to take artistic risks, to experiment and to continually develop expressions, methods and contexts of art.
- We shall admit different artistic and didactic orientations to refract each other. These encounters shall occur in the context of generosity and curiosity, of reflection and empathy.
- Our education and research shall be intertwined, and together generate an expansive force field for the elaboration and development of art.
- The school shall open itself to the world as a vital, visible meeting place in artistic and cultural life at large. We shall initiate collaborations with neighboring areas of culture, science and community that situates thereby situating the school in a larger context.
- Staff and students influence the organization through their engagement, founded on responsibility, trust and equal treatment.
- We shall be an independent educational institution to safeguard the freedoms of art and education.

The map shows the way

Achieving the goals of the vision statement requires a strategy: a joint plan for how we might shape the school described in the vision as the aim of our operations. The strategy is the map that orients us through the landscape sketched out by the vision statement. The vision's goals, and the strategic tools for achieving these, lay the foundation for more concrete, calibrated plans. They appear as action plans, operational plans and other policy documents and are based on the resources we have at hand.

Strengths and weaknesses

Prior to drafting the strategy, in the spring of 2021, the Vice-Chancellor summoned the faculty at the Royal Institute of Art to a series of workshops dedicated to strategically critical issues of education and research. The key points of the vision statement were the starting point. From the conversations that ensued during the spring, ideas crystallized regarding the function, form and content of a strategy for a university operating on artistic basis.

The discussions laid bare the strengths and weaknesses that needed to be considered in relation to the strategy. The school's three greatest strengths are as follows:

- The school's deep-seated knowledge base and far-reaching experience in Fine Art and Architecture.
- The school's autonomy and relatively small-scale body which facilitates mobility and flexibility in education and research.
- The breadth and heterogeneity of our faculty in terms of artistic orientation and expertise.

The three greatest challenges are as follows:

- To strengthen the collaboration and communication between different parts of the school and the outside world.
- To create functional and sustainable organizational contexts for education, research and the school as a whole.
- To build sustainable systems for our physical infrastructure, e.g. premises, and secure sufficient resources for our operations.

Approaches and environments

Our strategy shall meet the challenges we face and uphold our advantages. To achieve this, we understood that we needed to establish a protocol outlining a series of *strategic approaches*. Emerging from the art's practices and conditions, the protocol defines the positions and perspectives that best lend support to our daily routines and inform our greater considerations.

An art school is a physical location of shared work where education and research are based to a great extent on practical skills. The opportunities that this environment provides thus play a crucial role in our artistic work. The Royal Institute of Art has long developed specific environments, such as the studio and the workshop, that have been successful. We see these as imperative to maintain. But the changing nature of art, as new artistic and didactic methods emerge, creates the need for additional environments and forms of education and research. These needs are set out in the vision statement as goals; and to reach them, we have chosen to expand on new or partially new *strategic environments*. In tandem, our approaches and environments

shall become the powerful tools of our strategic work in shaping the future art school we are striving for.

Strategic approaches

Emerging from the conditions of the practice of art, we have opted for a number of strategic approaches to help steer the school towards our goal: becoming a vital and active site for artistic creativity and learning in dialogue with the larger world.

Candor and conversation

We shall be a candid, inclusive and versatile university that encourages its students, researchers and teachers to shift between education and research, between public outreach and professional commitment, between the academy and the larger world. The public program shall showcase new avenues to our school for richer social interaction and knowledge sharing. In conversation with associated universities, institutions, and organizations, we shall share our expertise and resources.

Hospitality and mobility

We shall dare to take new avenues both inside and beyond the school and create new artistic force fields that connect us through different expertise and with different allies. The Royal Institute of Art shall be known as a multidimensional academy that encourages diverse viewpoints and skills. We shall participate in artistic discussions that embrace both local and wide-ranging networks extending out in the world. We shall connect different contexts within and beyond our local context and sphere of knowledge.

Respect and sustainability

Respect and sustainability shall permeate the Institute in all its aspects. We shall accord proper respect for one another, for the contexts in which we act and for the capacity of art to remain free. Our perspectives and considerations shall have both local and planetary impacts. Our use of materials shall follow recycling patterns; we shall use and reuse our resources. We shall employ our ingenuity to develop resilient methods and approaches that will not lacerate nature and its ecologies. To secure our operations, we shall work from a perspective that is resource conscious and forward-looking.

Access and transparency

The Royal Institute of Art shall promote a working and learning environment through involvement on equal terms. Access and transparency shall characterize our operations. We create tools for reflection and feedback to spur improvement in our programs and research, including our working and study environments. Opening the Institute and increasing its visibility in diverse contexts will broaden participation in our operations.

Strategic environments

The location, design and interplay of the environments at the school provide space for the teaching and research methodologies we wish to highlight. In line with this, our school's projected refurbishment aligns with the four principles we aim to emphasize: *flexibility, reuse, collaboration* and *encounters*. These shall define the reorganization of environments spatially and conceptually.

The research environment

The research environment is grounded in artistic practices, whose forms are conceived and shaped in contact with the various actors, activities and attitudes within and beyond the Royal Institute of Art. The research environment shall accommodate a third-cycle education and various research practices, and foster interconnections between these and with other spheres. Research shall act as co-creator of our hybrid, multidimensional character, and our researchers and research students shall actively engage with the school's environments. In interaction with all levels of education and based on an artistically experimental approach, research shall promote the development and impartation of our collective knowledge base.

The lifelong-learning environment

The Royal Institute of Art shall be a place where artists and architects can deepen and develop their art throughout their professional lives. The key to lifelong learning at the school is found in our programs of further education. It is here the boundaries between education, research and professional operations are tested and reformulated. Artists and architects advance their practices and networks in the leap between education and research. Further education strives to meet progression of art, culture and society by blending previous knowledge with acquired experiences and experimental approaches.

The professional environment

We shall responsibly prepare our students for sustainable careers as artists. We shall furnish students with the keys to and networks of larger artistic and cultural contexts, so that their artistic practice can grow and viably branch out over the course of a professional life. Our students shall be oriented in and reflect over the conditions of art making in various contexts. We do this by developing an environment that extends into various collaborations outside the school and grants participation in a larger art world and other relevant contexts. Through the integration of education, further education and research, bridges are spanned between the different artistic practices of the undergraduate and graduate programs and a future professional life as researchers. In this way, we contribute to creating sustainable relationships and future opportunities for our students

The virtual environment

The virtual environment connects spaces regardless of their geographical distance. It shall give our students, researchers, staff and wider audience increased access to our education and research. The virtual environment shall facilitate sustainable mobility, enable widespread contacts across cultural boundaries and offer participation in the school's activities, both locally and globally. Here, artistic practices can investigate new relationships within the limitations of space and location, and develop the interfaces between digital and analogue techniques. The virtual environment shall be sustainable in the recognition that also digital environments consume our planet's resources.

The Laboratory

The Laboratory is a new environment at the Royal Institute of Art. It consists of several temporary labs which complement the previously established learning and research environments such as the studio and the workshop. In the labs, a range of artistic skills and approaches shall unite around a question or theme in seeking knowledge beyond specific contexts. Research, learning and production shall be interwoven with theoretical and practical methods for generating new knowledge. Teachers, students, researchers, and external partners shall come together beyond the school's established affiliations to stimulate artistic development. A lab evolves in step with new conditions and ideas that lack a natural affiliation with other environments at the school. The Laboratory is an incubator for change calibrating the school in the direction of its goals.