

Art
Academy

Head of School - Crafting the Future of Art Education





A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Pepper". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of the first and last names being large and prominent.

Rob Pepper - Principal

Help Lead the Next Chapter of The Art Academy

The Art Academy is at a pivotal and exciting moment in its 25-year history.

We have a new, purpose-built home beside Tate Modern, an expanded public profile, and a renewed commitment to reimagining high-quality, accessible art education.

We are now seeking a Head of School who wants to shape the future of an institution that has always defied convention, championed creativity, and placed students at its heart.

This is a rare opportunity: to lead a dynamic art school with deep roots, strong values, and extraordinary potential for growth.



Photography: Haley Bray

Who We Are

The Art Academy began 25 years ago when sculptor Tanya Russell set out to create a school that reflected the way artists actually learn: through community, practice, rigour and mentorship.

What started as a small studio school has grown into a thriving, respected independent art institution in central London.

What Makes Us Different

Artist-led from day one.

Our tutors are practising artists, many with significant profiles in the art world.

Human-centred.

Students are known by name, supported individually, and taught in small groups.

Practical and professional.

We combine technical skill, experimentation and professional readiness.

Accessible.

As a charity, we open doors for people who might not otherwise access art education.



What We've Achieved

- Over 40,000 learners have studied with us across courses, degrees, workshops and outreach programmes.
- We have created a new Bankside campus, purpose-designed for studios, ceramics, printmaking, digital, sculpture and gallery exhibitions.
- We run highly valued community programmes with local schools, disability groups and older people.
- We developed a distinctive BA Fine Art, praised for its studio culture, teaching expertise and pastoral support.
- We established the Artists' Gallery, a professional exhibition venue showcasing emerging and established artists.
- We have hosted high-profile supporters and events across the arts world.



Where We Are Now

A Transformational Moment

The Academy stands at a significant inflection point:

A New Building, A New Horizon

Our Bankside campus—five years in the making—now provides the fully accessible, modern facilities we have dreamed of: large studios, specialist workshops, an auditorium, project spaces, a shop, and one of London's best-located galleries.

Refreshing Our Academic Model

The UK education landscape is shifting rapidly, with a strong national emphasis on flexible, modular, lifelong learning pathways. While eligibility frameworks continue to evolve, the Art Academy is embracing the spirit of this change:

- Developing courses that are more adaptable,
- Increasing opportunities for stackable learning,
- Strengthening professional and skills-focused pathways, and
- Creating more entry points into creative education.
- Our next phase is about building programmes that genuinely meet learner needs in the modern creative economy.

A Leadership Evolution

We are evolving our senior leadership structure to support the next stage of the Academy's development. As part of this, the Principal will shift into a more outward-facing creative and strategic role, strengthening partnerships and championing the Academy externally. The Head of School is a new position that will lead the academic life of the institution, providing clarity, stability and ambitious direction for our programmes and community.



The Role — Head of School

Your Purpose

To lead, nurture and elevate the academic life of the Art Academy.

To uphold the highest standards of teaching, pastoral care and student experience, while driving innovation in curriculum, partnerships and progression.

What You'll Lead

- Academic strategy and curriculum development
- Programmes across foundation, undergraduate, part-time, short and professional courses
- Quality, standards and student outcomes
- Tutor development and staffing
- Student support and safeguarding
- Cross-campus culture and studio life
- New programme development aligned with future creative careers
- Accountability for student recruitment, retention, course performance and the sustainable growth of all academic programmes.

What You'll Inherit

- A deeply committed tutor community
- An exceptionally loyal student body
- A culture that prioritises kindness, creativity and care
- A prime Bankside campus ready for academic growth
- Strong external partnerships and a respected public profile
- A governance structure ready to back ambition and excellence



What Makes This Role Special

Lead Real Change

This is one of the few leadership roles where you can genuinely influence the future of art education in the UK. We are small enough to be agile, but established enough to be respected.

Shape a School That Truly Cares

Our students and tutors describe the Academy as a second home. Community and pastoral care are central to who we are.

Develop New Pathways

You will have the freedom to build the next generation of creative-skills training—modular, industry-connected, imaginative and ambitious.

A Highly Visible, Culturally Significant Location

Being next to Tate Modern places us in the heart of London's creative landscape.

Work With an Experienced, Supportive Leadership Team

You will collaborate with the Principal, Operations Director and Trustees to ensure the academic side of the Academy has the space and support to flourish.

Be Part of Something With Purpose

As a charity, everything we do is guided by a mission to widen access and change lives through art.

It also carries responsibility for driving student growth and supporting strong course performance.





Photography: Haley Bray

The Future — A Vision You Will Shape

Our next five years include:

- Expanding our Professional Programme for artists developing their practice
- Growing modular, flexible learning opportunities
- Growing foundation, part-time, evening and weekend provision
- Building industry-facing collaborations and placements
- Developing our Artists' Gallery as a platform for emerging artists
- Strengthening outreach and community programmes
- Increasing bursaries and widening participation
- Cultivating a vibrant, inclusive artistic community at Bankside

You will be a central author of this next chapter.





Who We're Looking For

A leader who is:

- Visionary, warm and collaborative
- Excited by new models of creative education
- Deeply committed to students and staff
- Skilled in academic systems, quality and curriculum
- Able to inspire tutors and teams
- Passionate about art, craft and contemporary creative practice
- Ready to join an institution with heart, ambition and room to grow

Join Us

The Art Academy is at a moment of reinvention and opportunity. If you want to lead an institution where creativity is valued, people matter, and ideas are welcomed, this is the role.

You won't just be running a school – you'll be shaping a movement that believes art should change lives.



Art Academy

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