

Documentation of Anti-racist Process - Ruskin School of Art

Updated 15.03.2023

This is a document of the anti-racism process in the Ruskin School of Art since June 2020. The process was initiated in response to the specific situation within the Ruskin and aims to be continually responsive to that situation as well as to reflection on the process itself. We will continue to document our anti-racist process as things progress and we will review our commitments and related action plan annually.

This process has resulted in commitments to 38 concrete actions that create structural change, most of which are ongoing. Our task, particularly post-pandemic, is to weave these anti-racist values and actions into the artistic research that makes the Ruskin unique.

After a series of six listening sessions with different parts of the student body, we founded an Equality and Diversity Forum, meeting twice termly, and comprised half of students from across our three programmes (BFA, MFA and DPhil). The Forum itself decided to nominate a student to co-chair the meeting alongside the Ruskin's E and D lead.

Another unique initiative at the Ruskin is the development of a 'Shared Learning Agreement' amongst students: a poetically worded set of ground rules for discussion that promotes respect and listening.

STARTING POINT

June 2020

June 2020 – Ruskin Statement on Racism: Education for Change

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, the Ruskin put the following Statement on Racism on its website:

The Ruskin School of Art deplores racism. Both staff and students try to live systematically by this principle. But we know that we can do more, and we will do so.

We have a responsibility to speak out, and to ask those difficult and uncomfortable questions which we have not asked or have not asked persistently enough.

Education is about listening and learning from others. We need to acknowledge our ignorance and complicity in discriminatory systems. Only if we educate ourselves can we educate better. Only if we look harder will we see what needs to change.

We commit to such education for change. Now more than ever.

<https://www.rsa.ox.ac.uk/news/detail/ruskin-statement-on-racism-education-for-change>

**BEGINNING TO: FORM ACTION GROUPS, OPEN QUESTIONS, UNDERTAKE TRAINING,
LISTEN Michaelmas Term 2020**

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September 2020 – Short-Term, Task-Specific Working Groups

Prior to the start of the academic year, and in response to specific matters arising as a result of both the Covid pandemic and calls for social justice globally, the incoming Head of School initiated 3 x short-term, task-specific Working Groups. As was made clear, the tasks in these working groups related to wider areas of concern that would need to be addressed through longer-term, more considered thinking and action. Staff were alerted that there will be a call-out for participation in these longer-term Action and Advisory Groups.

Working Group 1

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY – links to resources and training

The task here was to generate specific content for a Canvas module relating to Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality, including links to training and resources for both students and staff. This would be uploaded to the Canvas page and shared with all teaching staff in next week's Tuesday meeting. (Again, it was made clear that this was just the seed for the change that is needed, not the change.)

Working Groups 2a & 2b

REMOTE TEACHING METHODS – Studio Practice / History & Theory

Working Group 2a: Studio Practice

This group would consider best practice for studio tutorials; rethink/restructure the BFA crit sessions for 2020-21; come up with digital etiquette/code of behaviour for on-line interactions in studios and crits, to be included in BFA Handbook 2020-21.

Working Group 2b: History & Theory

This group would consider best practice for remote lectures and seminars and come up with digital etiquette/code of behaviour for on-line interactions in seminars, to be included in BFA Handbook 2020-21.

+ Click here to [call-out for Short-Term, Task-Specific Working Groups](#) (Appendix 0).

Ultimately, these groups 'failed' in their task. This productive failure made clear that it was not possible to address the issues – and, most particularly, issues around equality, diversity and inclusivity – in the 'short term' or through 'specific tasks'. The first working group did arrive at a number of references and source materials, although we ended up not putting up anything on Canvas as it did not feel appropriate. The teaching group primarily focussed on organising the crits for the coming year, which was of paramount concern at the start of the year. All actions were to be carried forward.

October 2020 – Open Question

At the very start of Michaelmas Term, the Head of School sent through an 'open question' to the student body by way of the Student Rep Network and also discussed it in the Ruskin All Staff Teaching Meeting:

*In light of the extraordinary times that we are living in - with all of its calls, demands, confusions, constraints and possibilities; also bearing in mind this year's 150th anniversary of the Ruskin School of Art, what do you consider to be the Ruskin's core values, and what *can* these be?*

This was followed by a further question:

How might this question and our responses to it be inflected with our imperative, as a School, to promote equality, diversity and inclusivity and to tackle systemic racism?

Responses are gathered here:

[Open Question](#) (Appendix 1)

While there were helpful responses, there was also a clear resistance to this question and, in particular, to the follow-up question. The question itself felt vague. The follow-up question felt as though it was just 'rhetoric' – where was the action that related to a process of engaging with the problem of racism in the School?

October 2020 – On-Line Training for Ruskin Staff

A query was sent to the Equality and Diversity Officer for the Humanities Division enquiring about the possibility of staff undertaking the 'Implicit Bias Workshop' offered on-line. We were put on a waiting list for the workshop. In the meantime, the Division's Equality and Diversity Officer, Isabelle Pitt, suggested that all staff undertake the Oxford on-line training courses and follow this up with small group discussion sessions.

All Ruskin staff were then mandated to take the Oxford on-line training courses:

- 'Equality and Diversity Briefing' (30 mins)
<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/training#collapse1182876>
N.B. *The online E&D training is a [Marshalls](#) product which is off the shelf but Oxford was able to add/change written elements to make it relevant to the university.*
- 'Implicit Bias in the Workplace' (30 mins)
Each about 30 mins.
<https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/training#collapse1182886>
N.B. *The online E&D training is a [Marshalls](#) product which is off the shelf but Oxford was able to add/change written elements to make it relevant to the university.*
- 'Tackling Race Bias at Work' (40 mins)
<https://ctl.ox.ac.uk/accessibility-teaching#collapse1891581>
N.B. *This is a video by a corporate consultancy called [Skills Boosters](#).*

This was followed up with small group discussions amongst staff. These discussions were

fruitful in opening up a conversation about racism in the School. The discussion also highlighted major problems with the on-line training, specifically, and the issue of training, generally. Staff determined that conversation would need to be ongoing to identify whether further training is needed for staff, what training might be most appropriate for students, and how best to implement this. Questions arising include: What is meant by 'training'? What kinds of 'training' are there? What is the purpose of 'training' and what do we need it to do? Should we integrate something like 'training' into the current pedagogical structure (e.g. a short course that all students take)? (See also below.)

October 2020 – 3 x Action & Advisory Groups Formed

The Head of School sent a call-out to staff in order to form three distinct, but inter-related 'Action and Advisory Groups' relating to key areas of concern for the Ruskin. (N.B. These three action groups would eventually be consolidated into a single 'Anti-racist Action Group', see below.)

A driving question as well as specific aims/objectives were identified for each action group, with the understanding that each group would arrive at an appropriate timeframe for any such action. It was envisioned that each groups' actions would intersect and inform one another. The groups were formed through call-outs sent through to staff and to students such that there were 6 x staff and 2 x students per group. (See Appendix 2: [RSA Action and Advisor Groups 2020- 21](#))

A. Equality and Diversity

What is it that 'we' need to address in order to embrace antiracist and intersectional values at the Ruskin?

Aims/Objectives:

- To develop an appropriate format and 'call' for a number of 'listening sessions', which will ultimately be facilitated by someone external to the Ruskin.
- To arrive at several commitments to structural change at the Ruskin.
- To enable an 'artist in residence' to come to the Ruskin and work with us to develop the infrastructure for an antiracist, intersectional and environmentally sustainable art school – one that is collectively produced and ever-evolving.

(N.B. This group met three times during Michaelmas Term.)

B. Methods and Modes of Teaching / Course Content and Curriculum

What is the future of art education and how can the Ruskin contribute innovatively and ethically to its development and success?

Aims/Objectives:

- To examine all teaching methods and core course content at the Ruskin, arriving at concrete proposals to diversity both teaching methodologies and curricula.
- To develop a Ruskin-specific pedagogy around 'blended learning', with an emphasis on equality and diversity. Specific consideration to be given to: Crit Sessions; Individual Tutorials; H&T Seminars; Lectures/Talks
- To think strategically about how any methods and modes of on-line teaching developed in the short-term (2020-21) can be integrated long-term, thereby improving teaching and learning at RSA.

(N.B. This group anticipated starting to meet in Hilary Term.)

C. Broadcasting / Public Engagement

How can we open and develop the Ruskin through its relation to a wide and diverse context? Aims/Objectives:

- To develop ruskinproject.space as a space for teaching and experimental pedagogy, as well as a platform for public-facing activities, engagement and events, including the final show.
- To plan, develop and facilitate a series of public events and broadcasts for 2020-21 and beyond, particularly in light of the Ruskin 150 and, with this, our commitment, as a School, to enacting antiracist, intersectional and ecological values in our practices.
- To welcome a diverse range of Visitors into the Ruskin, ensuring concrete ways of facilitating this both now and in future.

(N.B. This group met one time during Michaelmas Term)

November 2020 – 7 x Listening Sessions with Maxine Dennis

The Ruskin held a series of ‘listening sessions’ (2 x DPhils; 1 x MFAs; 1 x BFA1; 1 x BFA2; 1 x BFA3; and 1 x staff). Each session was 55 minutes long and facilitated by Maxine Dennis (bio below).

Members of the Ruskin Equality and Diversity Action and Advisory were in attendance in the first session (DPhil). Following feedback from that session, this format was changed so that only the Convenor and Student Reps of the E&D group would attend. Upon request from the DPhil students, a further meeting with only DPhil students and Maxine Dennis was also held.

Notes were taken by a member of the Ruskin’s administrative team. Drawing from the sessions, the Convenor of the E&D group put together a document with a list of proposals and suggestions that were intended to feed into future actions and to help the E&D group arrive at the School’s commitments to structural change.

Maxine Dennis is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Psychoanalyst (British Psychoanalytical Society). In the Adult Department, Tavistock Clinic she has been Head of a Psychotherapy Unit and has directed and staffed on numerous Group Relations Events. She is trained in brief and more intensive therapies. She is lead for psychotherapy groups and teaches and supervises on the Advanced Tavistock Adult Psychotherapy Training (M1) and is a visiting lecturer at the University of Essex. Her publications have been on a variety of areas of mental health. She was chair of the British Psychoanalytic Council Task Group on Ethnicity, Culture and Racism.

REFLECTION & RECALIBRATION

End of Michaelmas 2020/Start of Hilary Term 2021

January 2021 – *REFLECTION ON PROCESS AND RECALIBRATION OF ACTION *

Feedback from the student reps on the Broadcasting/Public Engagement Group at the end of Michaelmas Term combined with an email sent to the Equality & Diversity Group by DPhil students at the start of Hilary Term to indicate that a re-think of the action group's composition, driving question and aims would be necessary to hold the School's action going forward.

On January 25 the Head of School sent through an announcement, accompanied by the attachment of a 'Ruskin Update on Anti-racist Action'.

+ Click here to view [announcement](#) that went out to students (Appendix 3a). + Click here to view [detailed explanation](#) that accompanied the announcement (Appendix 3b).

This update indicated a *recalibration in the action* going forward as well as a *firm next step*, while flagging up that some actions already in train would continue *in the meantime*.

RECALIBRATION IN THE ACTION: Reformation of the Actions Groups into a Single 'Anti-racist Action Group'

Through conversations between the Head of School and the student reps of all three action groups, then with senior staff members, a proposal was made to consolidate the three action groups (Equality & Diversity, Teaching, Broadcasting/Public Engagement) into a single group comprising the eight action group student reps students, eight senior and professional staff members and an external facilitator. The group would address the question: 'What is anti-racism? What is an anti-racist art school?'

Drawing upon the suggestions and proposals compiled through the listening sessions in Michaelmas term – along with the further suggestions and proposals put forth and in the process of being gathered by students on the BFA, MFA and DPhil programmes and, forthcoming, the consultation sessions with students and staff of colour (see below) – the group would arrive at firm commitments to structural change for the Ruskin.

At this point, a prompt from a senior staff member of colour indicated that there needed to be a necessary pause in the (re)formation of this action group – and its arrival at firm commitments to structural change – in order to undertake a further, necessary step.

FIRM NEXT STEP: Consultation Sessions with Students and Staff of Colour

The next step in the process of Ruskin's anti-racist action would be:

Consultation sessions to be held with students and staff of colour in the Ruskin with a professional facilitator.

With the understanding that:

- The recommendations gathered through this consultation process would be compiled in a document.
- This document would sit alongside other documents currently being compiled by students

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on and across BFA, MFA and DPhil programmes as well as the document that was compiled following the listening sessions last term.

- All of these documents and the information, suggestions and policy proposals they contain would inform future actions/decisions and, importantly, become the basis for how the staff/student anti-racist action group would arrive at the Ruskin's commitments to structural change, which would themselves become the basis of a realistic action plan devised by relevant staff to see these commitments through.

At the start of Hilary Term, the Head of School began working with Humanities Division to identify and bring on board an external facilitator who can lead consultation sessions with students of colour and with staff of colour. Anticipated date for sessions: mid-to-late-February.

IN THE MEANTIME: Funding/Fundraising, Staff Small Group Sessions, Visiting Speakers Series

As the update indicated, there were actions and processes already 'in train' and that would continue:

- **Funding/Fundraising** – Ruskin's permanent staff would continue to work to find scholarships and financial support for students, such as the currently existing [TORCH Mellon UK BAME Graduate Scholarship at the Ruskin School of Art](#) that was put in place by the previous Head of School. Staff will also continue to look for

potential funding opportunities for antiracist artistic, cultural and academic initiatives. •

Staff Development – Weekly small group sessions (Weeks 1-4 of Hilary Term) (see below) •

Visiting Speakers – the Visiting Speakers series (Weeks 5-8 of Hilary Term) (see below)

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE / ARRIVING AT A SHARED LEARNING AGREEMENT Hilary Term 2021

January/February 2021 – Weekly Small Group Staff Teaching Meetings

During Weeks 1-4 of Hilary Term, staff worked reflectively and in small groups with the aim, firstly, of implementing antiracism into our pedagogical practice and, secondly, educating ourselves on a broader set of artistic references to include artists of colour and embedding these into our teaching. Discussions arose through close engagement with artwork. Staff were also invited to read 'Decolonising Education: A Pedagogic Intervention' (p. 190) from the book [Decolonising the University](#).

February/March 2021 – Visiting Speakers Series on Anti-racist Practice

The Visiting Speakers series for Hilary Term (Weeks 5-8) was devoted specifically to this School's antiracist agenda.

How can an understanding of anti-racist practice inform this School's teaching practices, learning practices, art-making practices, knowledge-making practices, conversational practices, critical practices, institutional practices?

TALKS

Speakers were invited from across disciplines to give a talk, helping both students and staff to understand more about anti-racist practices. As the series was intended to help us work together to develop the anti-racist practices needed in our School, all students and all staff were encouraged attend the talks. Visiting Tutors were remunerated for their attendance in the talks.

SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

As well as giving a public talk, Visiting Speakers were invited to engage with students and staff in small-group sessions. These sessions could involve workshops, seminars, reading groups, etc. Students and staff were invited to sign up for the sessions. Visiting Tutors were remunerated for participation.

The talks and sessions were all held on-line in the Ruskin's new Zoom platform for public-facing events.

Thursday, 18 February - Jennifer Martin & Nina Trivedi

A Class Ponders the Present – Future

Thursday, 25 February - Arun Kundnani

Training is the Graveyard of Struggle: An Anti-Racist History

Friday 5 March - Lola Olufemi

Feminism, Imaginative thinking, and the limits of the institution

Thursday, 11 March - Michelle Williams Gamaker

On Fictional Activism and Contemplating Fictional Revenge / Combatting Institutional Violence through developing self-protection strategies

+ Click here to see [full information about the series](#) (Appendix 5).

PREPARATION FOR SERIES 1: Arriving at a Set of ‘Ground Rules’

In preparation for the series, a process was put in place to arrive at a set of ‘ground rules’ for the series. The process began with a set of ground rules borrowed from the Northern Irish arts collective Array. (These ground rules had been used in a reading group that the Head of School, who initiated the process, had taken part in.)

These rules were read out loud before the first Visiting Speaker talk. A number of reflection sessions were then scheduled – one after each talk in the series – where students and staff could gather together to reflect on, amend and change these rules to fit the purposes of the Ruskin. All students and staff were invited to join the reflection sessions.

+ Click here to view a [copy of announcement](#) (Appendix 6).

(See also below, ‘Arriving at a Shared Learning Agreement.’)

PREPARATION FOR SERIES 2: Invitation to Students and Staff to ‘Learn More and Take Action’

In preparation for the series, and as per advice from the Humanities Division Equality & Diversity website, staff and students were encouraged to engage with one of two books ahead of, alongside of and/or following the series:

1. [‘Me and White Supremacy’](#) by Layla F Saad. Using a step-by-step reflection process, Saad encourages people with white privilege to examine their racist thoughts and behaviors. You can also get an accompanying journal to help chart your changing attitudes and understanding.
2. [‘How To Be An Antiracist’](#) by Ibram X Kendi. Combining ethics, history, law, and science, this is a personal exploration of the author's process of examining racial and racialised structures and how he fits into them.

+ Click here to view a [copy of announcement](#) (Appendix 7).

PREPARATION FOR SERIES 3: Self-Care and Communities of Care

In preparation for the series, students and all staff were encouraged to find ways of ensuring self-care and also ensuring that they are aware of communities of care within the School.

+ Click here to view a [copy of announcement](#) (Appendix 8).

February/March 2021 – Arriving at a Shared Learning Agreement

As part of the preparation for the Visiting Speakers series, a process was put in place to develop a set of 'ground rules' for the School. As noted above, a set of ground rules was borrowed from the Northern Irish arts collective Array. These rules were read out loud before the first talk in the series. A number of reflection sessions were then scheduled – one after each talk in the series – where students and staff could gather together to reflect on, amend and change these rules to fit the purposes of the Ruskin. All students and staff were invited to join the reflection sessions.

However, in the first talk of the series, Jennifer Martin and Nina Trivedi discussed how they worked with students to arrive at a 'Shared Learning Agreement'. In the reflection session after the talk, students and staff involved decided to use the reflection sessions to arrive at such a 'Shared Learning Agreement' – this rather than a set of 'Ground Rules'.

A document reflecting the process of arriving at these ground rules can be found here:

+ Click here to view the version of the [Shared Learning Agreement Process Reflection Document](#) as of 30.3.2021.

Students and staff are still in the process of arriving at a Shared Learning Agreement, anticipating arriving at a final iteration at the start of Trinity Term (Monday of Week 1 of Trinity Term). Should it need to, this process may carry into Trinity Term and up until Academic Committee (Week 4 of Trinity Term) where it will be discussed and, later, at Ruskin Committee (Week 6 of Trinity Term) where it can be ratified such that the agreement is in place ahead of the next academic year.

FIRM NEXT STEP

Week 9 Hilary Term

March 2021 – Consultation Sessions with Students and Staff of Colour / Confidential On-Line Survey

The Head of School worked with Clare Wakeham, Organisational Development Adviser in Oxford, to put in place professional facilitation for what had been deemed the 'firm next step' in the School's anti-racist process: consultation sessions with students and staff of colour. They chose to work with Challenge Consultancy, who are a professional consultancy service.

Very specifically, Challenge were invited help with two things in relation to this School's ongoing anti-racist process:

1. To produce a **confidential on-line survey** to gather opinions and views from everyone in the School on anti-racist matters (a recommendation from Challenge).

The on-line survey was recommended by Challenge as a way of ensuring that all staff and students were given a confidential opportunity to inform the next stage of the School's anti-racist work. The on-line questionnaire was open from the 8-16 March 2021.

Completing a response was voluntary and confidential. The questionnaire contained a mixture

of 11 open and closed questions. The timing of the questionnaire was deliberate, enabling Challenge colleagues to gain insight into the attitudes and opinions surrounding the School's anti-racist work, some of the challenges and some suggested solutions in advance of conducting the consultation sessions.

A total of 33 questionnaires were completed – 21 from students and 11 from staff including from Associate Professors/Professors, Visiting Tutors, workshop, and professional staff. 1 respondent did not define their role. 8 respondents identified as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic or Black indigenous or people of colour.

2. To facilitate the **consultation sessions with students and staff of colour**.

The overall aim of each session is to have an open and honest discussion about what practical changes could be made in the School, its structure and its operations that would help the Ruskin become an anti-racist school.

These were offered to staff and students of colour and held on the 18th and 19th March respectively. Suky Bains, one of Challenge's most experienced consultants and herself a British Indian woman was commissioned to facilitate the sessions, notes were taken by another Challenge associate, Tola Sokoya, a Black woman. Delegates were offered remuneration for attending.

An account of the Ruskin's anti-racist process to date, including number of reports and documents compiled thus far through the Ruskin's anti-racist process, were shared with Suky Bains in advance of the consultation sessions. These include:

- a) a document of proposals compiled by the DPhil/MFA students;
- b) another document of proposals compiled by students on and across BFA, MFA and DPhil programmes;
- c) a document with proposals that came out of the listening sessions in Michaelmas Term.

The virtual consultation sessions were planned to be held on Zoom for up to 120 minutes. To safeguard participants and protect their anonymity, the private messaging functionality within Zoom was restricted to direct communication with the moderator only, aside from that participants were free to publicly message everyone in the session. Additionally, all attendees were able to participate with or without their cameras on or their name on display. Most delegates opted for full visibility.

No staff chose to attend the session on the 18th March, 12 students attended on the 19th March.

From the survey and the consultation sessions, Challenge compiled a report. This report is to be circulated to the 'Anti-racist Action Group' in the first instance, who will work with this – alongside of the other documents and materials compiled throughout the process – to arrive at the Ruskin's firm commitments to structural change.

**** IMPORTANT NOTE ** - Resistance to Consultation Session from Staff Members of Colour**

Notably, no staff members of colour opted to go to the consultation session with staff of colour facilitated by Challenge. The Head of School was alerted to this possibility and encouraged to open up a more direct channel of communication between herself and the staff members of colour. An opportunity to meet directly with the Head of School was opened up and two staff members chose to attend.

It is important to note 'for the record' that this meeting with the Head of School was not a 'consultation' and that, for a number of staff members of colour, their decision not to attend either facilitated consultation session or the meeting with the Head of School was an act of political resistance. This resistance is important and needs to be recognised as part of this account of process and, ultimately, taken into consideration in the School's overall anti-racist action plan.

As one staff member of colour noted in an email exchange with the Head of School:

"I believe it would be most helpful and generative to replace that tick box [i.e. the attendance of staff of colour at a consultation session] with a more nuanced narrative, along the lines of: the specific request for a consultation with staff of colour did not result in the planned single consultation session but some discussions did take place revealing many important matters: significantly, it is evident that many of the staff of colour are always/already intimately engaged in and passionate about this work, many face a conflicted sense of responsibility, there was resistance not to change but to saying all is well, this work is emotional labour, and the request for consultation and resistance to it drew attention to the problem of asking staff to transform the institution when they are all on fractional pay and/or precarious contracts."

CONTINUING VISITING SPEAKERS SERIES & DEVELOPING SHARED LEARNING AGREEMENT / ARRIVING AT COMMITMENTS & AN ACTION PLAN

Trinity Term 2021

April/May 2021 – Visiting Speakers Series II on Anti-racist Practice

The Visiting Speakers series for Trinity Term (Weeks 1-5) was again devoted specifically to this School's antiracist agenda. In this respect, the series was an extension of the work done in Hilary Term, with speakers specifically invited by way of a knowledge exchange around Anti-racist Practice. However, the series this term differed in terms of how the speakers were invited.

For these sessions, Ruskin Tutors and DPhils have worked with BFA and MFA students who responded to the call out last term to identify/invite/host the visiting speakers. This work included students determining the kind of teaching that the Visiting Speakers might do in addition to the talk (studio tutorials, workshop, seminar, group crit, etc.).

This pilot scheme provides a structural change to the way we make invitations, host and develop our working relationships with visiting speakers.

Thursday, 29 April 2021 – Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley

Watching isn't enough

Thursday, 6 May – Faisal Abdu'Allah

The Art of Dislocation

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Thursday, 13 May – Jennifer Martin

Artist Practice

Thursday, 20 May 2021 – Raqs Media Collective

Archives are never at ease

Thursday, 27 May 2021 – George Chakravarthi

Being Seen and Being Seeing

+ Click here to see [full information about the series](#) (Appendix 15).

April/May 2021 – Continuing to Develop the Shared Learning Agreement

Alongside the Visiting Speakers series, we continued to hold reflections sessions to further develop the Shared Learning Agreement. Each iteration was shared at the start of the speakers' talk and became the basis for discussion and editing the next day.

The most recent version was presented at Academic Committee in Week 4 (Tuesday, 18 May) and at the All Staff Departmental Meeting in Week 5 (Tuesday, 25 May) where we discussed how best to integrate the Shared Learning Agreement into learning and teaching in 2020-21.

Ruskin School of Art - Shared Learning Agreement

We are co-creating this (orL, seminar, etc.) as a shared space for which we have collective responsibility. The following are some things to consider:

What is your position? What is your position in relation to others? How are you being mindful of different bodies being policed or privileged?

Everyone has the right to say 'I don't know' – and that's ok. Learning starts from a place of not-knowing. Can you be brave? Can you be curious, ask questions?

Can you speak from the 'I'? What does it mean to speak from your own position and experiences?

Can you respect people's identities? Can you ask, and not assume?

The spaces that we are working in carry specific histories and contexts. Can you acknowledge the context? Can you avoid becoming numb to the shadow?

What does it mean to practice mindful listening? Can you avoid planning what you'll say next as you listen to others? Can you be willing to be surprised, to learn something new? Can you listen and respond with your whole self?

Who is speaking and who is not? How can you encourage full participation by everyone present? Do you participate often? If so, can you consider 'moving back' so others can 'move up'?

Different learning spaces will have different needs in terms of privacy. Can you come to an agreement about the levels of porosity for your learning environment?

Discomfort is inevitable, especially in dialogue about race, or when bringing silenced issues into the open. Talking about oppression does not create divisiveness, but points to divisiveness that already exists. Through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, change begins. Can you stay in the discomfort?

Can you be open about thoughts and feelings? Can you 'try on' new ideas or ways of doing things that might not be what you prefer or are familiar with? Don't just say what you think others want to hear.

If you have acted or spoken harmfully, even if unintentionally, someone will bring this up with you. If this happens, how can you listen and reflect on what they are saying? Don't try to absolve yourself of responsibility.

This agreement asks participants 'to hang out in uncertainty' and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue.

This is a living document.

Version as of 18.3.2021

It will also be presented at Ruskin Committee in Week 6 (Tuesday, 1 June).

+ Click here for [full process document](#) leading up to this version.

May 2021 – Anti-racist Action Group – Three Workshops

Comprising student representatives from the School's original three action groups as well as senior academic staff members + Head of Administration and Finance, the Anti-racist Action Group met together to accomplish three things:

1. Answer the question 'What is anti-racism?/What is an anti-racist art school?' and, in doing so, arrive at a **working definition of 'anti-racism' for the Ruskin** and identify **core anti racist values** that will underpin the School's anti-racist action plan.
2. Drawing from information and ideas compiled throughout this year (through listening sessions, through students' collaborative work and through facilitated conversations) the group will **identify the School's firm commitments for structural change.**
3. Bearing in mind the anti-racist work in the School throughout the 2020-21 academic year, as well as the group's conversations throughout the workshops, the group will work to **draft an update/rewrite of the 'Ruskin Statement on Racism: Education for Change'.**

This work together took the form of three workshops. Student representatives were paid an honorarium (£150) for their time. Staff on part-time contracts will be paid at their regular wage. Suky Bains from Challenge facilitated all three workshops.

- Wednesday, 5 May @ 10.00-13.00 (Workshop 1)
- Wednesday, 12 May @ 10.00-13.00 (Workshop 2)
- Wednesday, 19 May @ 10.00-13.00 (Workshop 3)

As well as the three workshops and related tasks, group members who were able to do so met for one further 'extraordinary' workshop in order to arrive at the Ruskin's Anti-racist Action Plan.

+ Click [here](#) for information about the Anti-racist Action Group and all three workshops.

+ Click [here](#) for original working document for arriving at the commitments, which became the basis for the group's collaborative process.

+ Click here to the final iteration of the re-draft of the Ruskin Statement on Racism, our firm Commitments and the Anti-racist Action Plan to see these commitments through (website link to come).

June 2021 – Re-draft of the Ruskin Statement on Racism with Documentation of Process, Commitments and Action Plan

+ Click here for the re-draft of the Ruskin Statement on Racism, our firm Commitments, and the Anti-racist Action Plan to see these commitments through (website link to come).

January 2023 – Collaborations and workshops

We are realising a collaboration with the University of the Arts, Berlin, that workshops creative ways to revision both art schools' libraries and archives. Additionally, we will host an event for all students in week 1 of this term, 'Where is the Ruskin Archive?' that invites Laura van Broekhoven, Director of Pitt Rivers Museum, to speak about the museum's history and recent efforts to recontextualise its collections; and postdoc Mishka Sinha to speak about her project at St John's College that examines the college's colonial past. Following these discussions, Ruskin tutor Harold Offeh will lead a practice-based workshop 'radically browsing' through the Ruskin archive. This workshop will provide an introduction to interested DPhil and BFA students to the proposed project. Finally, second year BFA students will be offered a course in Hilary term with Onyeka Igwe and Giulia Smith that examine 'critical fabulations' (Saidya Hartman) around archives, including artistic processing of these.