

To our friends and family in the RISD community,

RISD Black Artists and Designers would like to voice our outrage and alarm, as well as our support for fellow Muslim and International Students. This letter is also for our larger community; for immigrants to the U.S., LGBTQ+ identifying persons, womxn, those with disabilities, people of color, as well as anyone who has been affected by the actions of Donald Trump and his administration. We will hold our school accountable in resisting intolerance and in protecting all students.

If you are being affected by the rapidly unfolding events related to the travel bans, we stand in support of you, we will organize with you, and we will amplify your voices in any way that we can.

While these policies and proposed policies are horrific and sickening, we do not diminish the work you were already doing fighting xenophobia and ignorance in this country. Donald Trump, and the supremacists behind him, are highlighting and exacerbating Islamophobia that was already going on. They ran and got elected with this platform, they won by exploiting American fear, perpetuated by deceptive and incorrect information. Deportations, detentions and persecution are not new in this country.

As we resist Trump, we resist Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, Vice President Mike Pence, and all those working to push this disgusting agenda forward.

This ban is also meant to send a message, otherizing and rejecting those of the Islamic faith. If you feel prejudices of any kind against you in the RISD community, know that we have your back. We see you and are listening to you.

Our school must support students threatened by the rapid changes in our political climate. Both the administration and student body must hold themselves and be held accountable to our shared values of equality and justice.

As always, BAAD is a space for students that identify with a black experience. However, our meetings are *always* open to those facing persecution, hate crimes and trauma, especially in their struggle against discrimination. Additionally, white allies are welcome to listen and support.

Much love,

Malaika and Qualeasha

President and Vice President, Black Artists and Designers