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Contact: Jaime Marland
401.427.6954
jmarland@risd.edu

**Rhode Island School of Design Hosts International Students
as Part of U.S. Department of State's Fusion Arts Exchange Program**

***Intensive Summer Exchange Program Provides Students Opportunity to
Explore How Digital Media Operates Within Our Global Culture***

PROVIDENCE, RI, July 7, 2008 – The U.S. Department of State has selected Rhode Island School of Design [RISD] to be a host institution for its Fusion Arts Exchange [FAX] program for the second consecutive year. For six weeks this summer, 20 talented students from Argentina, Finland, Jordan, Kenya, the Republic of Korea and the U.S. are participating in "Digital Media, The Self, and Community: Using Digital Media as a Cross-Cultural Tool," which was specially designed by RISD faculty to explore how the emergence of digital media operates within our global culture.

Coursework is organized into modules that explore how digital media enables us to think differently about geography, economic opportunity, social and global relationships, while examining the issues and opportunities that arise from developing new media platforms.

To put their learning into practice, participants will work closely with New Urban Arts [NUA], a nationally-recognized interdisciplinary arts studio for high school students in the Providence community, introducing local youth to new forms of digital communication. NUA's summer program will be focused on "correspondence," and weekly workshops will allow students to work with FAX participants to explore how the notions of "communication and exchange" are enabled through digital media.

In addition to their studies in Providence, students will travel to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington, DC, where they will be introduced to practitioners in a variety of cutting-edge digital media applications – including researchers, artists, designers and business people.

"It has been our privilege to host this exceptional group of students as part of the Fusion Arts Exchange program again at RISD," said David Bogen, associate provost at RISD.

"Digital media are reframing how relationships are formed and maintained, through the increasingly popular online exchange of information and photographs, blogging, digital diaries, and virtual collaboration on intellectual projects. The current landscape offers a diverse set of opportunities to become a participant, and platforms like Wikipedia, MySpace, Second Life and YouTube harness the social networking capacity of the Internet and open up new spaces, enabling mass collaboration like never before."

"The projects this summer will include digital postcards, a web site documenting explorations of place, digital portraiture at New Urban Arts, and digital video correspondence," added Peter Hocking, director of RISD's Office of Public Engagement. "Each of the modules provides an opportunity for students to develop an understanding of themselves in relation to others, and a deeper understanding of the tools through which they can communicate across cultures by harnessing the potential of digital media."

The RISD faculty members leading the Fusion Arts Exchange coursework include:

Daniel Peltz, Department of Film/Animation/Video

Peltz's module, "Digital Media and Relationships," will study new models for social exchange through digital media. Students will engage in practice-based research, including a collaborative digital video assignment based on the on-going work of the Call and Response Project on RISD.tv, a venture of the RISD video department that has been a platform for exchanges between Cameroon, France, Korea and RI.

Peter Hocking, Division of Graduate Studies / Office of Public Engagement

Hocking's module, "American Culture and History," will introduce students to central themes within the American experience. Students will map the history of the U.S. from its colonization to contemporary times by looking at specific moments in Providence's history to explore the values and principles that inform broader American government, economics, and culture. Each student will develop a series of psycho-geographic digital postcards that document what they're learning and seeing throughout the module.

Catherine D'Ignazio, Department of Digital Media

During D'Ignazio's module, "Digital Media and Place," students will plot the field of digital media in relationship to place, by locating and visiting regional institutions and practitioners. The study will provide a sense of the breadth of practice, from art to design to business, that the term "digital media" encompasses, including how the initial "placeless-ness" of cyberspace gave way to a near obsession with place (i.e. Google Maps and GPS). Students will create works and prototypes that engage with the places they are from and the places they will visit this summer.

John Caserta, Department of Graphic Design

Caserta's sessions, "Digital Media and Information," ask students to consider how to translate the joy of unexpected occurrences from the physical library to the digital one. Students will perform exercises at local libraries that follow a contemporary design methodology of seeing, mapping and proposing.

Photos

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/risd/>

About RISD

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) has earned a worldwide reputation as the preeminent art and design college in the country. Today, with more than 22,000 alumni, the college enrolls roughly 2,000 undergraduates and 400 graduate students from the United States and almost 50 countries, offering degree programs in the fine arts, architecture, and design disciplines, and art education. Academic programs include research and design initiatives, the exploration of art criticism and contemporary cultural concerns, as well as international exchange programs. Each year, RISD hosts prominent and accomplished artists, critics, and authors to its campus. Included within the college is The RISD Museum of Art, which houses a world-class collection of art objects from Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome and art of all periods from Asia, Europe and the Americas, as well as the latest in contemporary art. For more information go to www.risd.edu or <http://www.risdpublicengagement.net>.

About the Fusion Arts Exchange Program

The Fusion Arts Exchange is a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. Parallel programs on sports management, music, and screenwriting are being hosted by Texas A&M University, Northeastern University and the University of Southern California, respectively. Participants in Study of the U.S. Institutes are among the approximately 40,000 individuals who participate in exchanges managed by the Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs [ECA] each year. Other ECA exchange programs include the Fulbright Program and the International Visitor Leadership Program. Through a range of academic and professional exchanges, the Bureau seeks to increase mutual understanding between the United States and other countries. For more information, visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/education/amstudy/>.

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