



Summer Teen Art Institute

At the HD Shanghai School · Shanghai, China

3-Week Foundations Experience:

July 5–25, 2026

2-Week Major Intensive:

July 26–August 8, 2026

5-Week Bundle:

July 5–August 8, 2026



An immersive art & design experience

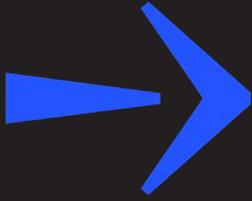
RISD Continuing Education is excited to announce the 5th annual Summer Teen Art Institute (STAI) in Shanghai, China. This residential program, hosted at the HD Shanghai School, connects high school students with RISD's renowned approach to art and design education. The institute is an exciting opportunity for students to immerse themselves in critical art and design practices. When you attend STAI, you'll develop your skills, discover your artistic voice, explore strategies for portfolio development, and define the next steps in your art education.

The 2026 institute offers back-to-back art and design experiences for rising 9–12 grade students and recent grade 12 graduates (must be at least 14 years old at the time of the program).



About RISD

Founded in 1877, Rhode Island School of Design is one of the oldest and best-known colleges of art and design in the U.S. Each year, approximately 2,300 students from around the world pursue a creative, studio-based education at RISD, which offers rigorous bachelor's and master's degree programs in 19 architecture, design, fine arts and art education majors. Today, RISD stands out among the world's preeminent colleges of art and design.



Three options, one unforgettable experience

New students can enroll in the full five-week program, join the three-week foundations experience, or start with the two-week major intensive. Returning students can continue their learning by enrolling in the two-week major intensive.

3-WEEK FOUNDATIONS EXPERIENCE

The institute starts with a three-week foundational program, incorporating the fundamentals of drawing explorations, design essentials, process, materials, rigorous inquiry, and conceptual thinking. Students in this program will participate in two courses: Design Essentials and Drawing Explorations. This three-week experience runs from July 5–25, 2026.

2-WEEK MAJOR INTENSIVE

The institute also offers a two-week in-depth exploration of a specific discipline. Students have the opportunity to build on their foundational experience by selecting a major and focusing on a field in design or fine art. Students in this program explore the methods and approaches of specific industries and how art and design education impacts society. This two-week experience runs from July 26–August 8, 2026.

Please note: We recommend that students complete the foundations experience before participating in the major intensive, but it is not required. Students who have not participated in the foundations experience may apply for the major intensive. When applying, they will be asked to provide additional evidence of their skills and commitment to the program.

5-WEEK INTENSIVE

Students who are admitted to both programs can bundle these experiences for a discounted rate. Both portions of the program inform and build upon one another to create a truly one-of-a-kind experience. The full five-week program runs from July 5–August 8, 2026.





“During the 3-week well designed and organized summer program, my daughter confirmed her passion [for] arts but also **developed confidence, resilience and time management skills.**”

-Parent of former program participant

Dynamic learning, hands-on support

Both programs include live Zoom meeting times with RISD instructors (18 hours per course), as well as daily in-person studio work facilitated by on-site RISD alumni tutors. Tutors provide enrichment and developmental opportunities, facilitate open work time for assignments, and lead small group collaborations or personalized support. Additional coursework is offered through Canvas, our learning management system. The program concludes with a final exhibition and a certificate of completion.

Courses are taught by RISD instructors who are professional artists adept at pushing students to focus on process and experimental-based artmaking to achieve unexpected results. Instructors provide final assessments and feedback on your artistic and portfolio development, as well as insight into potential education and career opportunities.

In studio, coursework is project-based and experiential, so you'll have the opportunity to explore new ways of thinking, create work imbued with meaning, and give voice to your personal visual expression—key assets sought by art college portfolio reviewers. Studio work emphasizes exploration and inquiry through demonstrations and assignments, research, and material investigations. You'll participate in formal critiques, which will be crucial to your creative process and advancement. Critique provides students with a visual language that can reinforce, challenge, and change ideas. Throughout the program, develop a series of visual studies—investigation through sketching and prototyping—that will inform your portfolio development.

Laying the foundation

3-WEEK FOUNDATIONS EXPERIENCE (JULY 5–25, 2026)

Learn the skills, methods, and ways of thinking that are necessary for every RISD undergraduate and artist to succeed. Expert instructors incorporate RISD's key approaches to making. Following RISD's pedagogy will lead you toward the key fundamentals you'll need to enhance your skills and achieve your art and design goals. All participants take both of the following courses:

Drawing Explorations

Drawing skills provide the primary foundation and means of communicating ideas for all areas of art and design. This course begins with the fundamental platform of traditional analysis and representation. Through discussions, demonstrations, and exercises, students explore objects, the human figure, and spatial contexts, honing their abilities in light and shade, proportion, and composition. The curriculum goes beyond rendering, encouraging dynamic mark-making using alternative methods and materials to convey expressive interpretations of volume, movement, and depth. The class pulls from a selection of various media such as graphite, charcoal, pen and ink, collage, pastels, and found materials to explore different drawing processes. Students delve into principles like tone, volume, weight, contour, light and shadow, line, and form, drawing inspiration from observation, research, memory, feeling, and imagination. Extensive drawing periods and fast-paced exercises train students to accept mistakes necessary for success and innovation.

Design Essentials

Often under-emphasized in early creative development, good design skills provide artists and designers with the means to investigate visual phenomena and provide solutions to unasked questions. This course introduces students to some of the essential principles of design, including balance, rhythm, and harmony, through a series of exercises utilizing line, color, pattern, shape, and texture. Once familiar with the traditional "rules" of design, assignments are structured to help students abstract, disrupt, and unhinge formal elements to convey personal meaning and expression of complex ideas into simple form through a variety of methods and materials. In addition to project assignments, students maintain a collage sketchbook of investigations to help build a collection of ideas to inform future work.

Schedule

Each day, you will take either Design or Drawing on an alternating basis. For example, Cohort 1 will have Design every Monday and Wednesday, and Drawing on Tuesdays and Thursdays. While the exact schedule is subject to change, see an example week below.

MONDAY–THURSDAY

7:30–10:30 am Live Class Time
Students are in person with their cohorts and alumni tutors. RISD instructors and TAs are live via Zoom.

Remainder of the day

- Studio work with cohorts
- Enrichment opportunities
- Assignment completion
- Small group work and 1:1 support
- Development of final exhibition

FRIDAY

- Studio work with cohorts
- Enrichment opportunities
- Assignment completion
- Small group work and 1:1 support
- Development of final exhibition

IMPORTANT DATES

Program Move-in & Orientation:
July 5, 2026

Program Closing & Final Exhibition:
July 25, 2026 (Start time TBD)

Program Move-Out (*unless staying for 2-week major intensive*):
July 25, 2026

In-depth exploration

2-WEEK MAJOR INTENSIVE* (JULY 26–AUGUST 8, 2026)

***NOTE:** While we recommend that students complete the 3-week foundations experience before participating in the major intensive, it is not required. If you have not completed the foundations experience, you will be required to provide additional information when applying.

Build on the foundational knowledge you have developed as you immerse yourself in a specific area of study. Choose a major and take your skills to a new level. Learn from an expert instructor as you deepen your knowledge in art and design, and learn how related skills are applied in the field. Participants can apply for one of the following courses:

Illustration

From fashion and film to book design and animation, illustration touches many art and design industries. It is an ideal major for those with a strong interest in using images to tell a story. You'll learn the fundamental skills of creating a compelling narrative, from design, text integration, character creation, and color palette, to concept development and storyboarding. Participants will also learn about a variety of fields and platforms in which illustrated content serves as a means of expression. This can include satire, advertising, social commentary, and fiction.

Animation

Animation is a powerful medium that transforms art into motion, deepens storytelling, and enhances the viewer's experience. It is used across industries like film, television, gaming, and digital media. In this course, you will explore foundational principles such as squash and stretch, timing, and anticipation to craft sequences that evoke emotion and connect with audiences. Using Blender, design original characters, create simple backgrounds, and assemble an animated storyboard. Spend studio time refining your drawing skills while experimenting with movement. In class, you will develop a deeper understanding of how animation connects with viewers and shapes storytelling. By the end of the course, you will have a new addition to your portfolio that highlights your creative vision and technical growth.

Schedule

While the exact schedule is subject to change, see an example week below.

MONDAY, TUESDAY & THURSDAY

7:30–10:30am Live Class Time
Students are in person with their cohorts and alumni tutors. RISD instructors and TAs are live via Zoom.

Remainder of the day

- Studio work with cohorts
- Enrichment opportunities
- Assignment completion
- Small group work and 1:1 support
- Development of final exhibition

WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY

- Studio work with cohorts
- Enrichment opportunities
- Assignment completion
- Small group work
- 1:1 support
- Portfolio development
- Development of final exhibition

IMPORTANT DATES

Program Move-in & Orientation:

July 26, 2026

Program Closing & Final Exhibition:

August 8, 2026 (Start time TBD)

Program Move-Out:

August 8, 2026



Long-term outcomes that matter

Courses are taught by expert instructors and professional artists who are adept at guiding students to focus on process and experimental-based artmaking, helping them achieve unexpected results. Instructors provide final assessments and recommendations for students' continued artistic development, as well as insight into potential education and career opportunities. These experts, along with a dedicated team of RISD undergraduate teaching assistants and RISD alumni tutors, ensure that each student leaves with so much more than when they arrived!

By completing this program, you will:

- **Immerse yourself** in rigorous visual and critical inquiry, designed to encourage experimentation and challenge ideas, motivations, and assumptions.
- **Strengthen your ability** to observe, conceptualize, analyze, and create.
- **Focus on the process** of conceptual thinking and making; move beyond your initial concepts to immerse yourself in an inspirational critique culture.
- **Gain skills** to prepare for college-level art and design studies in the context of China, the US, and beyond; identify key areas of portfolio development and documentation of work.
- **Learn from RISD instructors**, who are leaders in the fields of art and design education.
- **Expand your skills** in time management, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving.
- **Build your confidence** as an artist and as an individual, while also learning to master a range of tools, materials, processes, and techniques.
- **Develop a final showcase** with your peers.
- Participate in info sessions and portfolio reviews with RISD Admissions
- **Receive** a letter grade and a certificate of completion.
- **Network** with RISD instructors, staff, alumni, students, and like-minded peers.
- **Enjoy a fun and rewarding experience.**

“I believe the way the assignments are structured in **this course really helped me improve my creative process and understanding of my own works.** In the assignments, you are required to create sketches of different compositions and be able to explain what the concepts are, which has helped me be more confident when starting my final pieces, as well as understanding of my own work.”

-Former STAI student



Beyond the studio

In addition to a vibrant studio culture and interaction with expert instructors, you will benefit from additional enrichment opportunities included as part of this experience.

Residential Student Experience

The experienced team from the HD Shanghai school provides co-curricular enrichment opportunities during weekends and off-hours.

Student Support

Students have the support of a full suite of services while attending the program. The HD Shanghai School offers resources and facilities, including dining, housing, fitness, and open studio time. In addition, expert staff are on hand to ensure the successful ongoing management of student health and safety, conduct concerns, family questions, and fun.

Developing Your Future

As a participant in the Summer Teen Art Institute, you're invited to have your portfolio reviewed virtually by a RISD representative. This will occur in mid-August after the program concludes, and is coordinated through the RISD Admissions office. This is a great opportunity to receive direct feedback on what's successful in your work and what needs improvement in preparation for your college applications. These live, online portfolio reviews are 10-15 minutes long.

The institute is also excited to offer an information session and Q&A with representatives from RISD Admissions during both the 3-week and 2-week programs.

Program Cost

Total program costs* are below in USD:

Foundations Experience (3 weeks):

\$7,700 Tuition
\$1,000 Residential Fee

Major Intensive (2 weeks):

\$5,760 Tuition
\$700 Residential Fee

5-Week Bundle:

\$12,785 Tuition (5% off with special bundle rate for participating in all 5 weeks in the same year)
\$1,700 Residential Fee

Note: Tuition includes all necessary art supplies.

*Fees do not include transportation or additional personal costs

Application

Applications for the RISD Summer Teen Art Institute at HD Shanghai School open on January 21, 2026, at 9 am ET. All applications must be completed online and include the requirements below to be reviewed for admission. Applications are reviewed on a rolling, first-come, first-served basis. If space permits, final applications will be due by May 7, 2026, at 12 pm ET.

Application Requirements

For all applicants:

- \$60 non-refundable application fee
- Proof of English proficiency. If English is not your primary language, you are required to show a proficiency level above 79 on the TOEFL, 100 on Duolingo, or 6.5 on the IELTS.
- At the time of the program, student participants must be at least 14 years old AND rising into grades 9, 10, 11, or 12, OR be a new 2025 graduate from grade 12.

For students applying to the 3-week foundations experience:

- Submission of artwork (details and requirements will be provided in the application)

For students applying to the 2-week major intensive:

- You must have already completed the 3-week foundational experience in 2022-2025 or plan to in 2026, OR
- If you did not complete the 3-week foundations experience, you must complete the following:
 - Submission of artwork (details and requirements will be provided in the application)
 - 2 written essays (details and requirements will be provided in the application)

For students applying to the 5-week bundle:

- You must attend the full program, including the 3-week foundations experience
- Submission of artwork (details and requirements will be provided in the application)



Visit our website & apply here



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