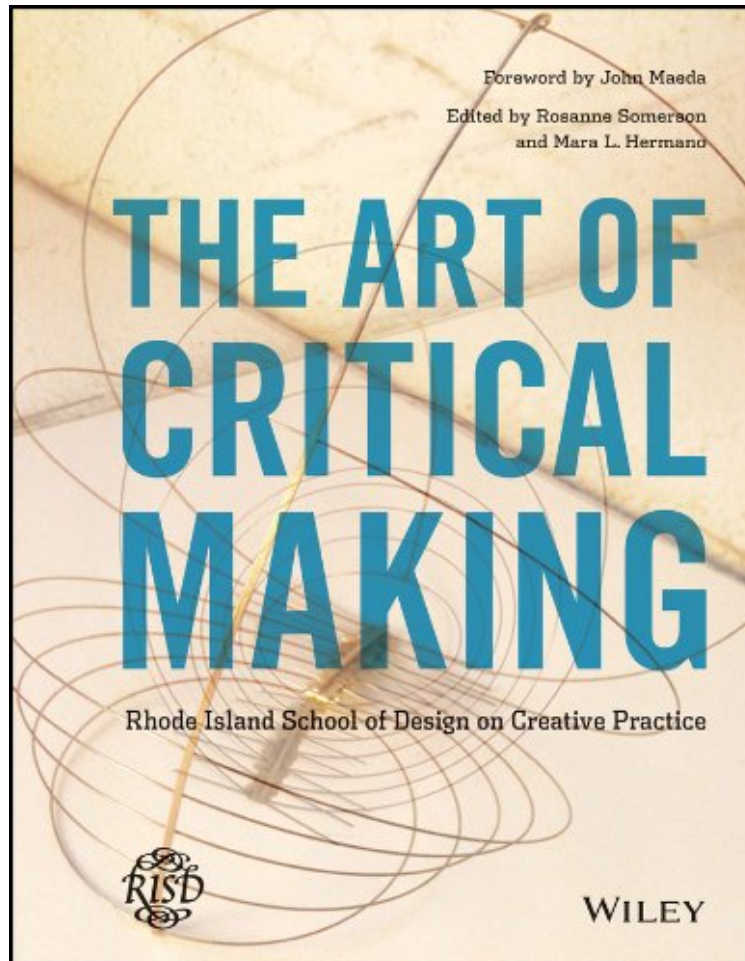


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The Art of Critical Making: Rhode Island School of Design on Creative Practice

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Describes the world's leading approach to art and design taught at Rhode Island School of Design At Rhode Island School of Design students are immersed in a culture where making questions, ideas, and objects, using and inventing materials, and activating experience all serve to define a form of critical thinking—albeit with one's hands—i.e. "critical making." The Art of Critical Making, by RISD faculty and staff, describes fundamental aspects of RISD's approach to "critical making" and how this can lead to innovation. The process of making taught at RISD is deeply introspective, passionate, and often provocative. This book illuminates how RISD nurtures the creative process, from brief or prompt to outcome, along with guidance on the critical questions and research that enable making great works of art and design. Explores the conceptual process, idea research, critical questions, and iteration that RISD faculty employ to educate students to generate thoughtful work Authors are from the faculty and staff of the Rhode Island School of Design, which consistently ranks as the number one fine arts and design college in the United States The Art of Critical Making shows you how context, materials, thought processes, and self-evaluation are applied in this educational environment to prepare creative individuals to produce dynamic, memorable, and meaningful works.

From the Inside Flap At Rhode Island School of Design (RISD), students are immersed in a culture of "critical making," in which the hand and mind combine to envision and create essential objects, experiences, and meanings. Consistently ranked as the number-one college of its kind in the United States, RISD is a leader in the field of art and design education. Its value, however, extends far beyond art and design, suggesting models significant to anyone seeking to contextualize, navigate, and transform increasingly complex cultures, structures, and networks. In The Art of Critical Making, RISD faculty and staff guide the reader through RISD's approach to education and innovation. Chapters explore subjects including the origin of the hand-brain connection; the foundational lessons of "critical making"; the role of designers as curators of information; the human-nature relationship; the deep purpose of drawing, materials, and critique; and how partnered projects invite businesses to engage with RISD's educational resources. This book illuminates how RISD nurtures creative practice, from initial spark to finished outcome. In these in-depth accounts, readers will discover methods and tools that will generate their own critical making, helping to: Frame critical questions through an iterative process Apply hands-on, embodied approaches to problems Enhance seeing through closer looking Meet uncertainty with flexibility Evaluate and articulate the significance of one's work Generate ethical responses to global needs For creative innovators—whether business people, practicing artists and designers, prospective students of art and design, or educators—The Art of Critical Making will inspire new and rigorous ways of thinking and making. Readers will gain insight into how "critical making" can be a generative, transformative act essential to our collective experience. From the Back Cover As the world grows increasingly complex and fast-paced, with global issues impacting us all, making, materials, and meaning are critical. The kind of essential knowing that we develop at RISD—informed through our hands, through our bodies, and in the creation of works, experiences, and events—is more cogent than at any other time. Artists and designers hone the capacity to generate something from deep inside ourselves to live outside of ourselves. By residing in the experiential and the physical, and by developing the "hands-on" as a portal of intelligent learning, we confirm the mind as maker and making as a state of mindfulness. We demonstrate how artists and designers are hosts for enduring creative discovery that is self-initiated and actively engaged. In short, artists and designers manifest what has not existed previously—in many cases, what has never even been imagined. —RISD PROVOST ROSANNE SOMERSON, EXCERPT FROM THE INTRODUCTION I believe that art and design have critical roles to play in innovation in this next century, much like science and technology did in the last. The very methods revealed in this book will drive the new ideas, movements, and solutions that will help us tackle the complex problems of our day. —RISD PRESIDENT JOHN MAEDA, EXCERPT FROM THE FOREWORD About the Author ROSANNE SOMERSON is the Provost at Rhode Island School of Design. A professor for more than 25 years, she has lectured in museums, conferences, corporations, and schools across the world. She has maintained her own studio since 1978 and has exhibited work extensively in museums throughout the United States and internationally including the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Louvre in Paris. MARA L. HERMANO is Executive Director of Strategic Planning and Academic Initiatives at Rhode Island School of Design. Trained as an art historian, she has focused her career on the intersection of art and design, culture, and higher education.