UCA appoints Professor Bashir Makhoul as Vice-Chancellor

date: Wednesday 26 April 2017

We are delighted to announce that conceptual artist Professor Bashir Makhoul has been appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts (UCA).

Professor Makhoul will join UCA from Birmingham City University, where he was Deputy Vice-Chancellor with strategic leadership for academic development, student recruitment, marketing and internationalisation. Previously, he was based at Southampton University as the Head of School for the Winchester School of Art.

His appointment marks the first time a Palestinian academic has been appointed to the top position at a British University and it is believed to be only the second time an academic from a non-Western background has been made Vice-Chancellor in the UK.

In an academic career spanning 22 years, Professor Makhoul has specialised in creating overseas partnerships and has spearheaded the creation of two Chinese campuses: the *Birmingham* Institute of Fashion and Creative Arts in Wuhan, and Southampton's first overseas campus in Dalian, China. He speaks rudimentary Chinese and is fluent in English, Hebrew and Arabic.

Professor Makhoul said: "I've been extremely impressed by the level of staff commitment at the University for the Creative Arts. The quality of education on offer is extremely high, and the facilities students learn in are first rate. Further work now needs to be done to make these great attributes more visible, particularly internationally."

Alongside his academic career, Professor Makhoul is a prolific writer, editor and artist. He maintains a studio in Beijing and has exhibited at a range of high-profile venues and events including the Hayward Gallery, Tate Liverpool, 2013 Venice Biennale and the Aichi Biennale in Japan. Currently his work is on show in Australia, Liverpool and Beirut, with a large exhibition in Mexico planned for next year.

He is a published author who has written several books about Palestinian art and themes of conflict and identity, including the 'The Origins of Palestinian Art' and 'Conflict and Compassion.'

Professor Makhoul adds: "The creative industries are rapidly evolving to encompass a range of technological and management disciplines. Universities need to ensure that their portfolio maximises these growth opportunities and continues to empower students from all cultures and backgrounds to make a contribution in their chosen field globally."

Rob Taylor, Chair of the Board of Governors at UCA, said: "The panel was extremely impressed with Professor Makhoul's experience and with the levels of activity he's been able to maintain as a leader, academic and artist. He's ideally placed to build on UCA's recent league table gains and further develop our international links."

UCA has campuses in Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham and Rochester, and is the second largest creative institution in Europe. Professor Makhoul will take up his new role in June. He said: "I am delighted and honoured by the opportunity to lead the continuous advancement of the University for the Creative Arts. What I see here is a University that is proud of its achievements and open to embrace the opportunities and challenges that the future will bring, a university with productive and dynamic relationships with partner institutions around the world, a university that will give its students not only a world-class education in the arts but direct access to a global context of education, research and the creative economies."