

• Gustavo Alfonso Rincon | Ph.D., M.Arch., M.F.A., B.Sc., B.A. •

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Academic Cover Letter - Date: 01.28.2025

Dear Members of the Search Committee,

I am writing to express my interest in the position of Assistant Teaching Professor, Mandeville Art Gallery Director at the Department of Visual Arts, University of California, San Diego. As an artist, architectural designer, and media arts researcher, my work bridges disciplines, focusing on the intersections of art, architecture, and technology. My career has evolved into advancing New Media Architectures (NMA)—a field exploring how physical and conceptual spaces as information are transformed through digital technologies, immersive virtual environments (IVEs), and interactive systems. Over the years, I have taken on the roles of Director, Curator, Artist, Designer, and Researcher to discover ways of creating discourse through creating Art events.

As an alumnus of UCSB's Media Arts and Technology (MAT) program, where I earned my Ph.D. with the dissertation "Shaping Space as Information: A Conceptual Framework for New Media Architectures," my connection to UCSB bridges the Colleges of Engineering and Letters & Sciences. My years collaborating with the AlloSphere Research Group shaped my vision for interdisciplinary research and artistic practice. A major curatorial project titled "White Noise" was part of my dissertation—a multi-year project uniting the entire department, sponsored by the Mosher Foundation. This project involved two media arts sites as exhibitions, an outdoor concert, an outreach program for local high schoolers, a publication supported by the program, and an invited speaker with our entire faculty speaking on a panel discussing the role of media art in contemporary research practice. All of which was born from a debut work at the MOXI (The Wolf Museum of Exploration and Innovation) in Santa Barbara by the AlloSphere team that required Design research on the final specifications of the installation space as well as the creation of an Immersive Virtual Environment requiring much Architectural/design engineering and hardware/software development. Currently, "Sketches of Sensorium," a research project presented at the AlloSphere initiated by Newton Harrison (1932-2022) as part of the Getty Foundation's Pacific Standard Time (PST ART), and Irvine's Beall Center for Art + Technology's "Future Tense: Art, Complexity, and Uncertainty" exhibition exemplify my commitment to explore technology as a filter to research immersive art and scientific visualization, facilitating a larger multi-team vision. Along with contributions to the development of the artistic work, a show was designed both as a virtualized online and physical media exhibition space supporting the larger AlloSphere Facility exhibition program.

In my career trajectory, I have held leadership roles that emphasize community engagement and knowledge dissemination. As Director of the Foundation for Art Resources 501(c)(3) in Los Angeles, my team and I co-curated exhibitions, lectures, and multimedia events to bring art and ideas to the public. Currently, as Co-Director of Digital Futures International 501(c)(3), I have supported global accessibility to cutting-edge knowledge through online exhibitions, lectures, workshops, and conferences, engaging millions worldwide via YouTube. In my current curatorial practice, I use the potential of existing platforms to create and invigorate online communities to meaningfully address contemporary issues in art, architecture, computational design, and media arts, reflecting my commitment to democratizing education and inspiring interdisciplinary collaboration.

Professionally, my work as an architectural designer has spanned clients and projects across the U.S., Europe, the UAE, and China, combining advanced computational methods with contemporary design machinic principles. My research practice within the framework of New Media Architecture(s) functions within a spectrum between industrial and interactive design, producing multisensory environments that integrate media art, fabrication, and architectural engineering. These experiences inform my teaching philosophy, which blends theory and practice, encouraging students to engage critically with emerging technologies while engaging in a critical curatorial and participatory practice of critique. Academically, I have developed and led curricula as an instructor at institutions such as Otis College of Art and Design, where I contributed to establishing interactivity within the technology-driven Product Design program. Currently, as an

instructor at Berkeley City College, I am reimagining learning paradigms in courses like Virtual Reality & Digital Spaces Lab and Data Visualization. My teaching emphasizes accessibility through discourse, mentorship, and the integration of AI tools, experimenting with co-creation methods to prepare students for the future. Over the last several years, I have worked on creating online curricula and para-educational materials to better explore our cultural foundations of learning and knowledge creation.

My research has been recognized through leadership roles in organizations like ACM SIGGRAPH and Leonardo/ISAST, where I have curated and participated in exhibitions, panels, and reviewed publications that interrogate the intersections of art, science, and technology. Recently, our commissioned and funded collaborative projects with TED Vancouver and Autodesk SIGGRAPH - LA have further challenged our abilities in the application of AR, VR, and XR technologies in design-curated immersive installations on a large-scale, time-compressed schedule. These creative challenges embody my dedication to fostering innovative research and dialogue across existing disciplines through art-making as well as curation. As Director of the Mandeville Art Gallery, I would prioritize exploring innovative programming to participate in a local discourse on the cultures of mediated technology and science that have evolved in California. I want to continue to support artists and ideas, linking the University to existing San Diego communities as well as other global networks to discover and explore the creative potential that exists. The integration of new media and performance will also be investigated to engage and critique the contemporary development of technology. Over the years, my role in finding collaborative partnerships, reinforcing existing programs and university resources, and discovering new funding streams of support will help to strengthen the existing creative environment. Finally, in engaging the artistic potential of all students on campus, the development of opportunities for an open gallery envisioning a dynamic space as a research hub centered on interdisciplinary practice will be a catalyst for rethinking the role of the artist within and outside the world of technology. My teaching-through-mentorship philosophy will emphasize learning and team building to overcome the challenges of artistic research, engaging young voices in existing conceptually rich theoretical frameworks.

Finally, my intuition to pursue new forms of art experimenting with technology and its potential to redefine society informs my vision for this role. At UC San Diego, I envision contributing to the Department of Visual Arts' legacy of academic and artistic excellence by furthering my research in New Media Architectures as an artistic paradigm. My practice investigates how information, data, and mediated spaces redefine our understanding of reality, fostering discovery and creativity. I believe in the promise of accessible knowledge creation, discovery, and research as a "Human Right." My calling is to inspire young minds, challenge authority, and facilitate innovation in an ever-changing academic landscape that will lead to new, world-changing research. I am inspired to mentor students in exploring the intersections of contemporary art, spatial practices (architecture), and emerging technologies (sciences), preparing them to navigate and shape an evolving artistic future in an uncertain algorithmically curated world.

Thank you for considering my application. I look forward to the possibility of discussing how my experiences and vision align with the goals of your department and the Mandeville Art Gallery. Please feel free to contact me at gustavo.alfonso.rincon@gmail.com or 1.310.592.1535 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



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