

*Inaugural Speech by Rector Carina Christensen, 8 October 2025*

Dear all,

When you step through the doors of Kolding School of Design, you can hear the sound of the studios. You can smell the materials. You can feel that special atmosphere — ideas constantly taking shape. A wonderful community buzzing with life, curiosity, and creative energy.

I have known and followed Kolding School of Design for many years — as Minister for Culture, as a spokesperson on cultural affairs, as a director in the private sector, and as a citizen of the Triangle Region. Now, as rector, I have the privilege of becoming part of daily life here — and of helping to shape the future that lies ahead of us. That makes me both proud and truly happy.

At Kolding School of Design, the past meets the future. And I have the deepest respect for your individual disciplines, for the school's history and artistic foundation — a rich, living heritage that has carried this institution for almost 60 years. At the same time, my eyes are firmly set on what we can and must create together in the years to come.

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For me, it is essential that we never lose sight of where we come from.

Kolding School of Design was born out of craftsmanship, material understanding, and artistic curiosity. That is our greatest strength — and the foundation that allows us to engage with complex challenges such as the climate crisis, technological transformation, and social divides.

Design is many things — but above all, it is a way of creating change. It is a creative force that nurtures identity, meaning, and agency in society.

Through artistic methods and design processes, we can open new perspectives on complex challenges. We experiment — with new technology, artificial intelligence, digital media and new materials — using them as artistic tools, always explored through a tactile, inquisitive and critical lens.

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We live in a world of great transformation. And it is our responsibility to give our students the best possible education and the best possible conditions — so that they leave us as responsible and in-demand designers, ready to make a real difference in the world.

As a school, we offer them the freedom to experiment — to try, to fail, and to try again — because it is through courage, exploration and curiosity that the most original ideas emerge.

But we also owe it to them to reach further out into the world around us. The school has a proud tradition of collaboration and partnership, yet we must become even more visible, relevant and outward-looking. We must go out, knock on doors — and sometimes even kick them open — to show what we can do, and what our students are capable of creating. Kolding School of Design is a jewel — but it must never become a hidden treasure.

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I am proud that we are a design school of international standing. I am proud that we can demonstrate how creativity, innovation, artistic excellence and design research can make an impact far beyond our own borders.

That is why we must continue to strengthen our cooperation with other educational and research institutions — both here in Denmark and abroad. When we meet across disciplines, experiences and cultures, new ideas and solutions emerge that none of us could create alone.

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Navigating a changing world requires close collaboration among all of us — researchers, lecturers, students and administrative staff. And it requires an open style of leadership.

I intend to be a rector who is present — available, listening, and genuinely curious about your input and ideas. I believe in dialogue, trust and shared ownership — and in being proactive and courageous when opportunities arise.

Dear all — let us now write the next chapter in the story of Kolding School of Design. A chapter where we stay rooted in our heritage, let our branches reach towards the future, and together make a meaningful difference.

I look forward to our collaboration. Thank you for your trust.