

SARA HESTON

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EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in User Experience & User Interface Design *August 2022 – May 2026*

Robert Morris University | Minor: Graphic Design | University Honors Program | GPA: 3.8 | Magna Cum Laude

SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

AMC Transformational Creativity Fellowship | RMU Academic Media Center *Spring 2025 – Present*

- Earned this distinction — awarded exclusively to recipients of the Dean's Media and Innovation Scholarship — and received continued funding to expand the "Create +Connect" vending machine project.
- Continued developing and exhibiting the project, a flat vending machine that dispenses custom trading cards featuring RMU students, creating a platform for peer networking and creative visibility on campus.

Experience Design Scholarship | RMU Academic Media Center *Fall 2024*

- Designed and launched "Create + Connect Vending," an interactive flat vending machine stocked with custom trading cards of RMU students, intended to spark campus community and connection.
- Developed full product documentation, including design specifications, prototyping records, and project rationale.

FREELANCE

Independent Freelance Artist & Designer *Spring 2025 – Present*

- Provide custom creative services for individual clients, including original artwork, graphic design, sticker design, brand identity development, and social media.
- Manage all aspects of client projects independently, from initial concept and communication through to final delivery.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Design Manager | RUNE Magazine, Robert Morris University *January 2024 – May 2024*

- Designed the literary magazine cover in collaboration with a team of artists, balancing creative vision with editorial direction.
- Reviewed and curated submissions, selecting final contributors to ensure a cohesive and high-quality publication.
- Planned and formatted section layouts based on accepted applicants, maintaining visual consistency throughout the magazine.

Line Cook & Chef's Assistant | Quicksilver Golf Course *January 2022 – Present*

- Prepared and cooked food for large-scale events, including weddings, golf outings, and public gatherings, serving over 500 people per season.
- Delivered high-quality food service under fast-paced conditions, demonstrating strong time management and teamwork skills.

PROJECTS & EXHIBITIONS

Honors UX/UI Capstone Project | Robert Morris University *Spring 2026*

- Finalizing the "Create + Connect" vending machine project as a culminating Honors UX/UI capstone, integrating research, user testing, and iterative design.
- Preparing a written handbook reflecting on machine specifications, as well as creating an informational website where users can submit artworks to be distributed from the machine

"Create + Connect Vending" — Vending Machine Project *Fall 2024 – Present*

- Conceptualized and built an interactive flat vending machine that dispenses custom trading cards featuring RMU students' art and personal profiles, fostering campus community and creative visibility.
- Exhibited at the C4CCF Creatives Fair at the University of Pittsburgh (April 5, 2025) as an invited tabling artist; gathered visitor feedback and gained experience presenting at a large-scale creative event.
- Also exhibited at the RMU "Spring into Success" Professional Experience Celebration and the RMU Gold Show (Fall 2025).

Creative Director | “What the Duck Duck” — Public Art & Community Engagement *Fall 2023 – Present*

- Conceived and executed an ongoing project placing small plastic ducks across RMU’s campus and beyond — over 35,000 ducks placed to date.
- QR codes placed on the bottoms of the ducks direct finders to the @What_The_DuckDuck Instagram, where community members engage with duck-related content and participate in organized scavenger hunts.
- Organized an Easter-themed campus scavenger hunt funded by the Derrick Matsby Jr. Micro Grant, producing custom merchandise and driving broad student participation.

RMU Gold Show — Juried Student Exhibition *2023 – 2025*

- Selected three times for this competitive juried exhibition showcasing top student creative work at Robert Morris University, in the Wheatley Center Gallery
- Fall 2023: “The Jackalope” — original plasticine sculpture.
- Spring 2024: “Resonance” — self-filmed and edited video piece.
- Fall 2025: “Superficial” (original game design), “Rotten to the Core” (collaborative game with Amber Holt), and “Create + Connect” vending machine — three accepted works.

Thrive Art Gala *Spring 2024*

- Exhibited original work “Grief Grows Tranquility” at this art gala.

RUNE Magazine — Selected Artist *Spring 2024 & Spring 2025*

- Spring 2024: “The Jackalope” — plasticine sculpture accepted into the publication, concurrent with serving as Design Manager.
- Spring 2025: “The Nuclear Journey” — original illustration accepted into the publication.

AWARDS

Dean’s Media and Innovation Scholarship for Community *Spring 2025*

Robert Morris University, Academic Media Center

Awarded in recognition of exceptional community impact through the “Art at Convenience” project. This scholarship opened the door to membership in the AMC Transformational Creativity Fellowship and provided continued funding for the vending machine project.

Derrick Matsby Jr. Micro Grant *Spring 2025*

Rockwell Fellowship

Competitively selected as a grant recipient for the “What the DuckDuck” project. Received \$500 in funding to produce an Easter-themed campus scavenger hunt, create duck-themed merchandise, and expand duck placement across campus.

ACTIVITIES

National Society of Leadership & Success (NSLS) | RMU Chapter *August 2023 – Present*

A nationally recognized leadership honor society that develops students through structured programs in goal-setting, leadership, and professional development.

RMU Active Minds | RMU Counseling Center *September 2024 – Present*

Student-led chapter of the national Active Minds organization, dedicated to raising mental health awareness and reducing stigma on campus.

SKILLS

Design & Technology: Adobe Suite, Figma, Canva, Procreate, Rhino 3D, Google Suite, Microsoft Suite

Coding: HTML, CSS, Python, Swift

Professional: Project Management, Prototyping, Community Engagement, Event Production, Customer Service, Accessibility Testing

RELEVANT COURSEWORK

Intro to Graphic Design, Intro to Product Design, Digital Imaging, Game Design, Designing for New Media, Idea Development, Writing and Storyboarding, 3D Modeling, Intro to Web Design, Interactive Animation