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# STORIES BEHIND THE STATS

UAL Graduate Destinations

Design by Alphabetical



# WELL DONE, ONLY 34.6% EVER OPEN THE COVER OF THE DATA REPORT

## Introduction

Set against a backdrop of rising tuition fees, youth unemployment, economic recession and a global financial crisis, graduate employment and related performance indicators are firmly at the top of the university agenda.

Data on university graduate destinations has long been collected and collated for study and comparison, steering institutional and national higher education policy and strategy and feeding into national newspaper university league tables, which in turn inform and influence prospective students.

*STORIES BEHIND THE STATS* is intended as a guide and snapshot for those interested in UAL graduate destinations and those seeking usable information and data relating to graduate employment, jobs and careers. In creating this resource, Student Enterprise and Employability (SEE) hopes to raise internal awareness and understanding of UAL graduate destinations and to stimulate further discussion and action to enhance 'positive graduate destinations' across the institution.

Data within this report, unless stated otherwise, is taken from the Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE) survey, the primary data source for UK university graduates, and focuses on the most current DLHE data set (2010/11) which covers Home/EU graduating 2010 postgraduates and 2011 undergraduates.

*STORIES BEHIND THE STATS* is part of a compendium of three publications produced by SEE, including the annual report, *WE ARE SEE: Who We Are\ What We Do\ Where We're Going* and a student enterprise and employability landscape review, *WORK OF ART: Understanding Enterprise & Employability in Art & Design Higher Education*.

With the recent introduction of Key Information Sets (KIS) for all UK undergraduate courses, graduate destinations data has become significantly more visible and comparable, placing University of the Arts London (UAL) courses and colleges under closer scrutiny than ever before.

*STORIES BEHIND THE STATS* focuses on UAL graduate destinations data and information to provide a more definitive picture and understanding of what UAL graduates do after they leave the institution and how they feel about their career journeys, challenges and achievements. As well as presenting key DLHE data, the report seeks to contextualise this data and show the stories behind the stats through extracts and data from qualitative graduate studies, blogs and interviews.



SEE is a centre of excellence at UAL. We use our expertise, resources and networks to help UAL's students and graduates to make, take and connect to ideas, opportunities and networks so that they can go on to be successful creative professionals and world-leading innovators, practitioners, employees and entrepreneurs.

SEE values and supports the diversity of practice and motivations of our students and graduates. We want them to profit from their own creativity and ideas by developing their practice and businesses, whether that is for profit or for broader social, ethical and environmental purposes, what we term 'more than profit'.

SEE celebrates the culture and creativity of the whole UAL community and is committed to fairness, equality and access in the way we design and deliver all of our services and opportunities.

#### How we do this

SEE helps our students and graduates to help themselves in reaching and fulfilling their ambitions and potential.

SEE delivers useful, high-quality and thought-provoking events, talks and seminars.

SEE provides funding, awards, scholarship and fellowship opportunities, as well as business and career mentoring and best practice support for paid and fair work placements.

SEE connects UAL's creative talent to the outside world, where we're committed to sharing our knowledge and insight for the benefit of our students and graduates.

SEE builds national and international partnerships and relationships with industry, business, commerce and the public and voluntary sectors to deliver projects and products which test and expand creative practice, knowledge, ideas, innovation and social progress.

SEE has access to a pool of creative talent and celebrates the 'stories behind the stats', illustrating that our students and graduates are supremely employable, enterprising, innovative and skilled for today's rapidly changing world; and that we are supporting them for tomorrow's challenges, not today's.

SEE is passionate about the role that technology can play in connecting and supporting our students and graduates to each other, the creative community and the wider world.

SEE supports learning and teaching to enhance student experience and development within the curriculum.

**Portfolio working, entrepreneurialism and transferability of skills and knowledge are all key areas of 'employability' that UAL is now investing in and supporting via Student Enterprise & Employability, both working in the curriculum and beyond, and in partnership with colleges and industry stakeholders.**

Nigel Carrington  
Vice Chancellor  
University of the Arts London

#### SEE Year 1 (11/12)

**SEE**

Launched  
2011

**20**

Staff

**2**

internship  
schemes

**8**

funding  
and award  
programmes

#### SEE Events (11/12)

**100+**  
Total SEE  
events for  
students and  
graduates

**36**  
events  
**1400**  
attendees

**ENTER  
PRIZE  
WEEK**

**45+**  
events  
**1580**  
attendees

**ART  
SN  
ART**

#### How they heard about SEE events

**27%**

SEE Email

**26%**

SEE website

**15%**

Student Union

**10%**

Course Director

#### ArtsTemps

**£1m+**

paid in student and  
graduate salaries  
(since 2009 launch)

**2500**

jobs placed  
(since 2009 launch)

**3100**

attended part time  
job fairs (2012)

#### Creative Opportunities

**6000+**

external jobs and  
internships advertised

**2900**

registered  
companies

#### SEED funding award budget

**£50K**  
2011/12

**£100K**  
2012/13

**24**

Supported  
entrepreneurs  
and business  
start ups



There are multiple ways for UAL to monitor and capture details and data about our graduate destinations, of which DLHE is just one. Complementary and qualitative graduate destinations research and information is needed to fill in the gaps and contextualise the statistics.

**Graduates often make a lifestyle choice when they choose a creative education and a creative outlook is already a way of life. After graduation, goals and aspirations remain focused on creative practice.**

Creative Career Stories

## STORIES BEHIND THE STATS

The *Creative Graduates Creative Futures* longitudinal graduate destination study and associated reports provide valuable contextual background and qualitative information about creative graduates as a whole, revealing key characteristics, distinctions, challenges and advantages of creative graduates and creative graduate journeys. The study which was led by UAL and carried out between 2008 to 2010, surveyed 3478 creative graduates from across 26 UK higher education institutions, including UAL, and the resulting two reports, *Creative Graduates Creative Futures (CGCF)* and *Creative Career Stories (CCS)*, offer a uniquely rich and broad look at creative graduate destinations and experiences five to seven years after graduation.

SEE, in partnership with UAL's colleges, has recently commissioned a new student enterprise and employability landscape review. The landscape review aimed to develop an understanding of enterprise and employability across UAL, specifically exploring how enterprise and employability are perceived across colleges, courses and disciplines, and how they are designed into course curricula. The findings of the research have been produced in the SEE publication *WORK OF ART: Understanding Enterprise & Employability in Art & Design Higher Education*.

The stories woven throughout this report; from graduate interviews, blogs and case studies, provide further insight into the real experiences of UAL graduates. For example, excerpts from the graduate reporter blogs *What Zoe Did Next* and *Tales of a Graduate Journalist In Berlin* (jointly commissioned by SEE and Commonplace) give a highly personal insight into the first six months after graduation of two 2012 graduates. The blogs were written for a peer graduate audience and selected extracts reveal many of the common challenges and early career experiences UAL graduates face in finding and securing work and in juggling professional and creative goals with the need to make and sustain a living.

Qualitative and experiential graduate studies such as these provide a more comprehensive and accurate understanding of our graduates. They are a powerful tool for informing prospective students about career paths and realities, and also

institutional strategies and activities to support current students and recent graduates. These first-hand graduate stories illustrate and illuminate many things that the stats cannot; from the high levels of resourcefulness, self-awareness, experimentation and adaptability that typify and drive our graduates to the extent in which a quest for creativity and commitment to creative practice will shape and influence early career paths and decision-making processes.

# WHAT IS DLHE?

UAL has been collecting, analysing and reporting on graduate destination information for over 25 years.

*Destinations of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE)* is the national graduate destinations survey, which gathers data on all UK university students after graduation. The DLHE survey focuses primarily on work and further study, and includes questions capturing a range of information on graduates, from whether they are employed, type of work, job title, name of employer and salary, to whether they believe their qualification was necessary for their job.

#### How is DLHE Collected and Managed?

There are two levels of DLHE data, starting with the Early DLHE Survey which is a census of all Home and EU graduates six months after graduation. The DLHE Survey questionnaire is posted to all graduates and those who do not respond to the postal survey are contacted for an interview by phone. The Early DLHE Survey is conducted in two parts, one targeting recently-graduated postgraduates in April and then recently-graduated undergraduates the following January. The graduates that respond are then contacted again 3.5 years after graduation for the Longitudinal DLHE survey, to provide a comparison over a three-year career period. UAL currently outsources the early DLHE survey process to The Careers Group at University of London, who work closely with SEE and UAL Central Registry on the collection of the data.

#### How is DLHE Used?

DLHE data is verified and used by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and universities for statistical reports and strategic planning. DLHE is also used as a key performance indicator within the national newspaper university league tables and feeds directly into the new Key Information Set (KIS) data now featured online against all undergraduate degree courses.

#### What Are the Issues?

As a quantitative statistical survey DLHE has general limitations, and it is a particularly crude instrument for surveying creative graduates. Key survey questions specifically around employment status and employment type overlook certain career and employment distinctions and complexities common amongst creative graduates, such as portfolio working, internships, and short contract and freelance work. DLHE also fails to take into account personal experiences and qualitative measures of job, career or degree value, success and satisfaction.

The timing of the six-month DLHE survey also falls at a point where many creative graduates are still transitioning into professional creative practice and careers, which by their very nature take time and a certain process, often dependent on acquiring new skills, building networks or a client base, or creating new work, collections or products. Consequently, creative graduate data overall does not comparatively present well within this survey.

#### Will the DLHE Survey Improve?

The 2011/12 DLHE survey will be the first to include UAL's non-EU international graduates and for the first time will also include questions that take into consideration creative graduates, including questions or options on self-employment, developing a practice or portfolio, and internships. Changes to the 2011/12 survey should offer a more detailed, representative and positive picture of what UAL graduates are doing six months after graduation.

#### How Can Staff Access DLHE Data?

UAL DLHE data is available at institutional, college and course level. Six-month DLHE data is available on the DestinationsInteractive2 website and staff password and login codes are available from [see@arts.ac.uk](mailto:see@arts.ac.uk)



**4,750**

UAL graduates surveyed (DLHE 2010/11)

**DLHE 2011/12**

first survey to include international (non-EU) UAL graduates

**80%**

graduate response rate for DLHE six-month survey



## UAL DLHE DATA SNAPSHOT

So what does DLHE data show? A snapshot look at the data shows the percentage of UAL graduates in 'positive destinations' (in some form of work or further study) is below the national average. UAL graduates are twice as likely to be doing voluntary work and more likely (by 3%) to be working part-time. At 12% UAL graduate unemployment rate is 3% higher than the national average. On a national level however UK creative graduates as a whole have the third highest unemployment rate (11%) out of 19 different subject categories.





# CREATIVE GRADUATES

An awareness of the characteristics and distinctions of creative graduates and creative graduate careers is critical for understanding UAL graduate destinations data within a wider context.

Careers in the creative sector lean towards certain traits and trends that distinguish them from non-creative careers. Creative graduates, for example, tend to follow non-linear career paths and portfolio careers, often working in multiple jobs and balancing part-time or full-time work with developing a creative practice or undertaking internships, work experience, further study or training. Creative graduates are also significantly more likely to be self-employed or freelance and therefore often employed on temporary or short contracts with intermittent or regular gaps between contracts and income. Internships and unpaid work are common within the creative sector and are widely considered a necessary route to gaining paid work, experience, new skills and entry into a creative profession. Furthermore, longitudinal studies show that these tendencies remain dominant throughout creative careers and amongst more mature or established professionals.

These characteristics are evident within the DLHE data. Compared against national averages, the number of UAL graduates in part-time and voluntary work is higher than the national average, as are levels of unemployment. Possibly most striking is the high number of self-employed and freelancing graduates. All of these trends are representative of the creative sector as a whole and are also present within later careers, as seen within the CGCF longitudinal study.



**18%**  
running a business

**23%**  
self-employed

**45%**  
had worked freelance  
at some point in their career

Multiple jobs and portfolio  
careers the norm for

**48%**

(Data from Creative Graduates Creative Futures)

Unpaid work is a common strategy for job-seeking or learning new skills, with 42 per cent undertaking voluntary experience since graduating.

Creative Graduates  
Creative Futures



Students should be, from the first minute they walk into a course, connecting with the world they're going into in a very real way, in a generous way.

Derek Yates  
Course Director  
Camberwell College of Arts

## HOW DO GRADUATES FIND WORK?

50% of UAL graduate respondents said they found work either through their network or because they already worked there. Only 1% found work by responding to an advert in the press.

The DLHE data highlights the importance of networks and word of mouth within the creative sector. The data is a compelling indicator of the types of skills and exposure that directly and significantly help graduates find work. The data highlights the importance of work placements, industry engagement, live projects and internships. These opportunities can sit within or outside the curriculum and are a mechanism for building networks and professional contacts, gaining work experience and getting that first foot in the door and on the job ladder.

The importance of digital, client-facing and employability skills cannot be underestimated. Knowing how to effectively and strategically use social media, create and market online professional identities and build, exploit and maintain professional networks and employer contacts are essential skillsets, particularly for those entering self-employment, freelancing and short contract work.

It is vital that students and staff recognise the fundamental value of these skills and opportunities and the significant advantage they offer in finding work after graduation. Elevating and enhancing opportunities for networking, negotiation, self-promotion, relationship and confidence building are critical. This then means considering how opportunities (to do so) are structured, embedded and supported within the curriculum and the student experience.

There are many examples of good practice across UAL where this is happening but more can be done, and more needs to be done to ensure UAL students and graduates are competitively placed and fully encouraged and supported to make and take the most of these opportunities before graduating.





# MONEY & MOTIVATION

UAL graduate salaries are below the national average, which is a trend across the creative sector generally within the UK where lower salaries and unpaid work are common features.

Unpaid and voluntary work are well-known features of the creative sector, and a common strategy for finding work. This route is considered by many employers and graduates as the only way into paid work and sought-after companies. As long as creative graduates and employers continue to take and offer unpaid internships (and the sector and government continue to tolerate this practice) it will continue to have a negative bearing on salaries. In addition, many of our graduates disproportionately face financial barriers and biases to job entry and career development, and are exposed to illegal and exploitative work practices.

£18,545

UAL average salary 6 months after graduation (UG graduates)

£20,000

national average salary 6 months after graduation (UG graduates)

£24,486

UAL PG average salary 6 months after graduation

£2,796

average male/female graduate pay gap

**“Work satisfaction comes from staying creative, working with others, transforming lives, teaching, learning something new and progressing their careers. Success equates with achievement and creative fulfilment above financial reward.**

Creative Graduate Stories

DLHE data shows a recent downward trend in graduate salaries nationally, with average UAL graduate salaries dropping by £400 between 09/09 to 2010/11. This is a troubling symptom and sign of the current economic climate and its direct impact on recent graduates. As creative graduates tend to earn lower salaries, a national depreciation in salaries will be especially hard-felt amongst this group.

**UAL Undergraduates average starting salary**  
(full-time work only)

2008-09  
£18,948

2009-10  
£18,743

2010-11  
£18,545

DLHE also shines a spotlight on the pay gap between male and female graduates, with an average difference of £2796. As an institution with 72% female students this will have a significant bearing on the overall UAL graduate salary average. Whilst the gender pay gap is a wider, cross-sector and national issue, there are encouraging signs within DLHE suggesting the gap is closing, with average female salary shifting from 88.3% of the average male salary in 2008-09 to 92.6% in 2010/11. More must be done (on many fronts and levels) to address and eradicate a persisting gender-based gap. As an institution with a predominantly female student body this is as much a concern for UAL as it is for our female students and graduates.

£2,796

average salary difference between male and female graduates

72%

female students at UAL

£1,458

average pay gap between male and female UG graduates

£3,939

average pay gap between male and female PG graduates

**Moreover, the salary data within DLHE may not be revealing a complete picture, given the high proportion (31%) of UK/EU graduates nationally who choose not to give salary data in the DLHE survey.**

As an Arts institution with graduates (typically) on lower salaries than non-creatives, this raises questions as to what the data may be masking and is an area requiring further investigation.



DLHE does not take into account graduate aspirations and satisfaction in relation to work, income and professional status.

The CGCF and CCS reports highlight the extent to which creative graduates have a strong determination and commitment to their creative practice, with 'creativity' being a central driver, often prioritised over financial gain and closely linked to feelings of professional and personal satisfaction. This commitment to creative practice is also reflected in the DLHE data which shows most employed UAL graduates are working in creative jobs or in roles related to their subject discipline. Exploring later careers, the CGCF study showed that the vast majority of graduates are still working within creative roles five to seven years on and that 77% of them enjoy and feel positive about their work.

**77% of working graduates were positive about their current work, enjoying the ability to be creative, having autonomy and potential for future opportunities.**

Creative Graduates  
Creative Futures

**79% in work related significantly to art, craft, design or media.**

Creative Graduates  
Creative Futures

Whilst the recession has had a negative impact on graduate salaries and employment opportunities on a national scale, the information available would also suggest that creative graduates are resilient and should fare better than many others within an economic downturn. The creative industries are continuing to grow despite the recession, and this trend is expected to continue, with the UK treasury predicting massive growth over the next 15 years in jobs within the creative sector. Put into practice, the high levels of adaptability, resourcefulness, innovation, enterprise, and willingness to acquire new skills seen within UAL graduates should give them a competitive advantage. This makes them well placed to create, take and exploit opportunities within a challenging and shifting employment market.

**50% of new jobs in the UK economy in 15 years' time will be in the creative sector.**

Sir Christopher Frayling  
quoting the UK Treasury  
on 'Start the Week' Radio 4

**The UK design industry has grown since 2005, despite the recession. There are 232,000 designers, 29% more than in 2005 and earnings have increased by £3.4bn.**

The Design Council

Top 10 UAL graduate jobs (DLHE 2010/11)

Artist (fine art)

Commercial Artist

Clothing designer

Product, Clothing and related designers

Advertising and marketing executives

University and HE lecturer

Directors and producers

Graphic Artists and designers

Editor

Photographer





Searching DLHE data by 'graduate employers' fails to show UAL's top employer, because this is (by far) our graduates themselves.

Although nearly 18% of UAL graduates are self-employed, freelance or business owners this data is easily lost within DLHE data due to the various ways graduates can record this information and how the survey reports the data. The second-top employer of our graduates is UAL itself. As Europe's largest arts institution and a London based creative powerhouse UAL provides many employment opportunities from lecturing, technician, research, assistant and administration jobs. UAL's in-house temp agency ArtsTemps is also a valuable source of temporary and part time employment for many graduates for up to two years after graduation.

The BBC was UAL's third largest graduate employer in 2010/11, employing 12 graduates. After the BBC, UAL's top graduate employers trail off into an extensive and varied list of companies employing just one or a small number of graduates from that year's cohort.

72% of graduates were still based in London six months after graduation. As the 2010/11 DLHE data only includes UK and EU graduates this figure will change in the 2011/12 when non-EU international students are included in the survey, particularly as new UK visa regulations mean the majority of non-EU graduates will leave the UK shortly after their studies. Given the high concentration of creative industries and businesses within and around London, the fact our graduates are staying in the capital is not surprising. As a London based institution, the data reminds us that UAL is extremely well placed to exploit our locality for the benefit of our students, during and after studies through industry engagement, relationships, networks and work opportunities.

With such a high proportion of UAL graduates moving into freelance and self-employment, there is an ever greater need to foster, develop and nurture strong business and client-facing skills amongst students during their studies; from business marketing, sales and budgeting to networking and self-promotion, as well as an understanding of intellectual property rights and employment law.

75%

of UAL's UK/EU graduates are in London 6 months after graduation

1/5

working as freelance/self-employed artists, designers, photographers, journalists, illustrators etc

self-employed/  
freelancer/  
business owner

1

UAL

2

BBC

3

Ted Baker

4

ASOS

5

Top 5  
graduate  
Employers  
2010/11

# UAL GRADUATE EMPLOYERS

## REFLECTIONS

**The traditional destinations survey alone does not capture or reflect the diversity and complexity of creative graduates' early destinations and experience.** Contextualising the quantitative destinations data that comes from DLHE is essential for informing both our own institutional strategy and activity, and study and career decisions of prospective and current students and recent graduates. More needs to be done to lobby for further improvements to DLHE that more sensitively and appropriately account for creative graduates and incorporate wider measures of success such as personal and professional satisfaction and achievement.

**UAL has made important contributions to enhancing understanding of creative graduates.** Studies such as CGCF and WORK OF ART are critical for informing the way in which we teach and support students, when preparing them for employment. UAL must continue to supplement DLHE with alternative and qualitative graduate studies, from full-scale research projects to small-scale or individual studies such as the graduate blogs and interviews included in this report. This information will help us to contextualise KIS online data. As an institution, there are questions around DLHE to answer, and a need to set our own benchmarks and 'positive destination' targets, agreeing actions across the university to achieve these.

**We need to raise internal awareness of graduate destinations and better understand the types of early-career challenges commonly faced by our graduates.** This understanding is essential for effective strategic decisions, investment, action and planning at UAL, to better support and prepare students for professional practice and work. UAL has a duty to prepare our students for the fast-paced and competitive world of work, providing the necessary support, information and opportunities in an accessible and equitable manner, during studies and beyond during that critical and transitional early-career period. What this support looks like and how, when and where it is delivered are questions not only for SEE. A wider conversation is needed to stimulate discussion and engagement across UAL regarding graduate destinations.

**The remit and work of SEE needs to be widely and actively promoted to students, recent graduates and staff.** Together we must ensure that our students and graduates are aware of the extensive support, resources and opportunities available during and after studies. We need to encourage them to seek out, make and take as many opportunities as they can whilst studying, to gain as much industry exposure and experience as possible, helping them to recognise they are entering a competitive market and sector that wants and needs graduates who can work immediately and are prepared properly.

**As a specialist university, our duty of care to our graduates is extending beyond providing a creative education, to preparing our graduates for life after study.** We want our graduates to hit the ground running, armed with the relevant aptitude, attitude and skills to succeed and adapt as creative professionals entering a changing economic landscape and employment market, following their own non-linear career paths and aspirations with confidence and determination. Projected future growth in the creative industries presents a huge opportunity for today's creative graduate: in a growing sector they have the opportunity to not only find but to make, take and create employment that is creative, innovative and satisfying and can lead them into rewarding long-term careers.

**UAL needs to support the campaign to challenge the current unpaid internship culture.** Key centres such as SEE, Fashion Business Resource Studio and the Innovation Centre have already changed the way they work with industry, in challenging unpaid internships. Our Students Union is also actively backing a national campaign against this practice. More needs to be done to raise awareness amongst employers of the impact of unpaid internships on those who undertake unpaid work as well as those who cannot. This practice is harming the creative sector as a whole; depressing industry salaries and new talent, limiting participation and diversity, and placing many graduate employers in violation of employment law.

**UAL must create new incentives and mechanisms for graduates to stay in contact with the institution (and one another) to continue to access and utilise support, opportunities and networks.** SEE supports graduates up to three years after graduation through jobs, internships, events, programmes and funding. We need to maintain and build a new type of relationship with our alumni, focused on industry and peer networks, professional development and a reciprocal and virtuous circle of support between students, graduates and UAL. With 72% of Home/EU graduates remaining in London after studies this is a golden opportunity within easy reach.

**There is much good practice across UAL of embedding enterprise and employability within and outside curricula, but there is more to do to share and scale-up this good work.** The WORK OF ART study and publication highlights much of this good practice, as well as areas for improvement, replication and scaling-up. DLHE highlights the importance of current Seed funding and business start-up programmes, offering a mix of funding, business mentoring, legal, intellectual property, and financial advice. These need to be sustained and matched with further programmes and support to enhance students' digital and client-facing skills, and their understanding of the importance of online and off-line. Equally important is supporting peer-to-peer and industry networks for finding work, particularly for those entering into freelance and self-employment.



6

Month

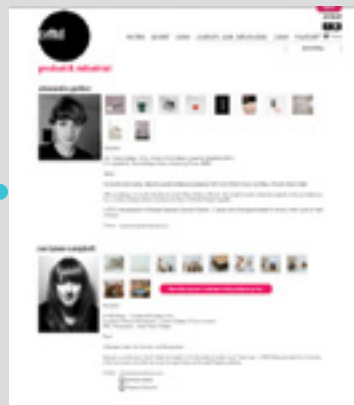
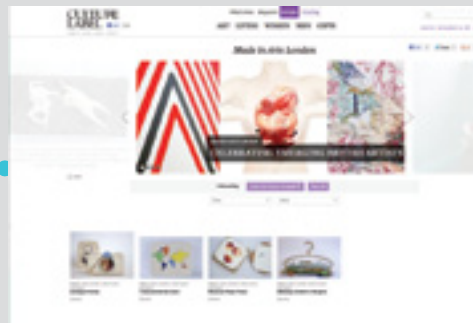
## Things

Just thought I'd swing by to mention that you can now buy a selection of my products over at Culture Label. I'm also now featured on CRFTD. Pretty soon the shop will open there too featuring some of my goods. Hooray!

One of my resolutions (you might remember) was to get stocked in 5 physical - not online - stores in 2013. To my surprise the day after I posted that, I got a very exciting email. From the store I'd say I'd most like to be stocked in. So in the next couple of weeks I'm going to their HQ to, as they put it 'talk product' keep your fingers crossed they'll be one of my 5! I've also begun making a list of stores I'd like to approach and have been sifting through the cards and contacts I made at Pulse and picking out the ones I'd like to contact. So we'll see how I go with that. I'm a bit of a novice when it comes to approaching buyers and stores so it's going to be interesting to say the least!

I'm also just about ready to go with my Etsy store so I'll hopefully be posting a link to it next time I pop in here! I just have a couple more products to photograph and a few more tweaks then I'm good to go!

Right I'm off to work on a Wedding commission - quite excited about this one - I'll show you soon!



Excerpts from  
the Graduate  
Reporter blog —  
following a  
graduate's first  
six months.

# WHAT ZOE DID NEXT





1

Month



**Hello! I'm Zoë, I grew up by the sea in South Wales but traded it in for the bustle of London almost 7 years ago. I just graduated from Camberwell College of Arts in 3D Design and have left the comfort of the sunny studio, surrendered workshop access and am out on my own.**

It's been a pretty hectic couple of months so far – in the best possible way. And it looks like that's the way it'll be for a while. I've launched a line of products and a design studio which I'm sure you'll be hearing a lot about in the next couple of months. This is a place for all the tales of life post university – the ugly bits too! So I guess this is it, right honourable and released into the big bad world!

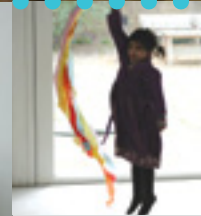
## Sunday Spot

This is how I spend my Sundays. In collaboration with artists I facilitate and deliver a little workshop at South London Gallery called Sunday Spot. I started out as an intern at South London Gallery and have worked as a freelancer for their education and outreach department ever since. I've worked on some really neat projects, recently as a project assistant for the Shop of Possibilities. But I have to say Sunday Spot remains one of my favourites. The sessions are for children and families and totally free. Normally, related to the current exhibition which can be a bit of a challenge when the exhibits are quite abstract. Right now is a group show with loads of inspiration so this week we made trophies and imaginary awards in all kinds of crazy sports, there was even some space themed Olympic action. Working on a Sunday might seem like a drag but actually it's a really nice way to spend an afternoon and I hate to be one of those people but I really do love my job!

## Pulse Trade Fair

In the height of busyness in the last few weeks of term I decided to enter a submission for Pulse Trade fair. SEE had a stand and were looking for UAL students and graduates to exhibit. In all honesty I didn't think I'd get selected but figured it was a worth a shot, you know how it goes 'nothing to loose' – that old chestnut. So I sent off my five images after a long night crunching numbers trying to settle on some prices and figured that would be that. Needless to say I was pretty stoked to receive an email saying I'd been selected and to be joined by two of my Camberwell comrades.

It was an intense few days – I spent quite a bit of time on the setup day paralysed by the fear that I would mess up my installation. You know just standing there staring at my wall space hoping my clocks would put themselves up. Once I actually made the decision to start I'm pretty sure I was done in about 20 minutes so god only knows what I thought might happen.



**“You spend so much time looking at your work in third year and questioning everything. Sometimes towards the end it becomes really difficult to not just see the tiny imperfections and think about the should have done's.”**

As for talking to people, there's none of that awkward business you get at the degree show where you can't even tell if people are fellow students, buyers, artists or just friends and family. Pulse is for trade and press only so chances are if someone takes a pause at your work they're probably worth talking to. This doesn't mean there aren't some awkward conversations though. I watched some veterans of the show at work, stepping back from their booths and then getting straight in there when someone stopped to browse, often without a hello but a straight to the point 'would you like to place an order?' I wasn't that bold and opted for a simple hello in most cases which seemed to do the job.

Knowing the lingo is a good plan, like most things there's a bunch of language that goes with trade fairs – printers speak in gsm, type setters in pica's and points and retailers in sale or return, pro forma and margin. Do a little research – know your prices (don't undersell your time!) and be confident. Easier said than done on the confidence front I know but if you don't sound like you love your product, the buyers won't either. You don't have to pitch apprentice style but having a clue is a good plan. I got a bit rattled when one store, who incidentally became my first stockist were quizzing me about FSC, a quick call to my supplier answered the question but I felt a little naive for not knowing the answer on the spot.

Send emails when you get home - make them remember you – just a short and sweet good to meet you today here's a copy of x, y and z you asked for, that kind of thing. Check out their websites if you didn't know them already and make the message personal instead of sending in bulk. One thing I would say is don't be disheartened if it isn't instant – some retailers took weeks to follow up even if they'd contacted me first. Email them enough to stay on their radar but don't bombard them.

All in all Pulse was definitely worth the £50 it cost – to hold a stand normally costs around £1000 for a couple of meters so it really is a great opportunity! I got stocked, got better at talking about my work and got to know some lovely folk along the way. The clock I exhibited was originally conceived as part of a brief to design a clock for Heals, Habitat or Muji so having Heals approach me was the confidence boost I needed that maybe I'm going in the right direction with this.

You spend so much time looking at your work in third year and questioning everything. Sometimes towards the end it becomes really difficult to not just see the tiny imperfections and think about the should have done's. Receiving orders and even just feedback makes all the late nights and early mornings worth it, that's for sure.



## The great internship debate

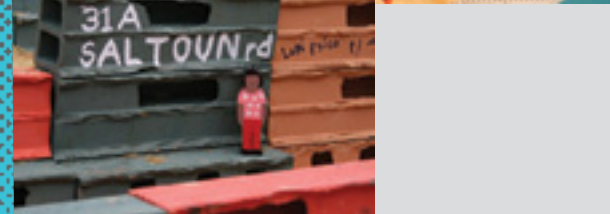
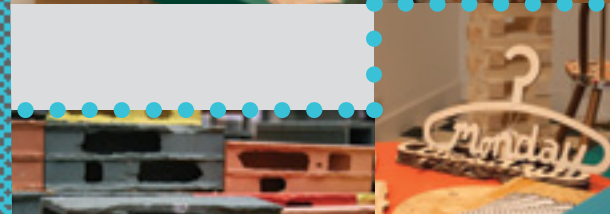
So I'm putting it straight out there, I'm in the 'FOR' camp when it comes to internships. I've always taken a pretty simple approach and view on it; University is expensive – really really expensive now and there's a whole bunch of things you'll learn during your years at uni this is true. There are also a whole other bunch of things uni can't give you or teach you. A 2:1 won't write you a good CV with loads of experience, and a first class degree won't mean you walk into a job either. You need experience! And if I'm gonna pay for school I'm certainly not gonna turn down the opportunity to make myself more employable and gain some valuable experience even if that means doing some of it for free or very little. For me it goes back to the trust fund again. I didn't have that buffer for when I graduated and was all too aware of that, so I spent a good portion of my time in second and third year fretting about potentially having to take a crummy job just to pay my rent. The other portion I spent doing something about it.

During the summer of my first year I interned for Flour on a really great project that was a collaboration between Project Morrinho and a group of young people from a council estate in South London. I had an amazing time and met some really great people along the way, I got my expenses paid and invited back by Flour to take photos of the installation – for which I got paid – hurrah.

That same summer I also did some interning for Artist Simon Fujiwara, Simon won the Cartier Award and his winning exhibit was displayed at Frieze 2010, so yes I worked for free but I not only got to go to Frieze but got to fabricate and install a mock archaeological dig at the fair! There was even a cameo appearance on the culture show as they came to shoot some shots of the work in progress and to interview Simon about the work. I'd done some polycarving before on a much smaller scale – which incidentally is how I got the internship, but never anything on such a large scale. It was hard grafting but amazing fun and Simon and the team were super nice to work for. Probably the closest I'll ever get to exhibiting a piece of work at Frieze!

A year later as summer was approaching and dissertations were looming I applied for an internship at South London Gallery and spent 3 months in their Education and Outreach department doing everything from working with Art Assassins and helping with the launch of Re:creative, to doing an epic mail-out of their book *The Cat Came As A Tomato*, trying my hand at Sunday Spot, dispelling myths about youth and tons more.

I didn't want to say goodbye when the 3 months was up and luckily for me I didn't have to! South London Gallery have given me lots of freelance work since then and I guess I've become part of the team, which incidentally is a really nice one! So it is true that you can get good internships where the staff actually care that you get something out of it and don't just want you to make endless cups of tea!



I honestly don't feel like I've had a single day through any of these (or various other projects I've worked for free on) where I've thought it was pointless or felt taken advantage of and maybe I got lucky? But I really don't think so. I think if you do them for the right reasons, pick places you care about and know your limits then I don't see any harm in interning at all. Just be sure to let them know what could benefit you, speak out if you don't feel like it's working out and get out if you're just a dogsbody! So how did I pay my rent you're probably wondering – I worked alongside! Sometimes 6 day weeks and sometimes 7 days weeks – which I'm aware doesn't appeal to everyone but as long as you're realistic about what you can and can't cope with you can definitely manage it without help if you want to!

## The Slump

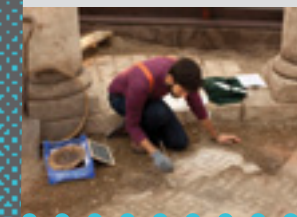
So last week was a bit of a slump week. You know just one of those weeks where you suddenly have far too much time to think about things – mostly things you should be doing.

I started the internship at All Lovely Stuff and was still working a couple of days of week, together with working on the pop-up and so things had been ticking along nicely, until last week, I declined some freelance shifts to give me more time to organise the pop-up and All lovely Stuff were off in Paris and suddenly out of nowhere I found myself here facing the slump!

I'd applied for a couple of jobs I really wanted, and hadn't heard anything, I know I know woe is me, but that together with having a bit more free time caused me to go under a little. I guess this is how it goes when you're freelancing – you'll get days where you start to panic that all the work will dry up and you'll be stranded! But truth is as long as I stay proactive and on top of things I think it should be all good! Just have to keep reminding myself of that. I had an interview with Frieze on Friday and am already feeling a whole bunch better about things. Fingers crossed until I hear from them! But that together with an invite to exhibit which I'll explain another time made me snap out of it and I think after a hearty meal and some sunshine I'm back on track.

## Popping Up

After an intense few days of setting up, running to Southampton to speak at a conference and almost collapsing after way too many 3am bed times and 6am wake ups, Salad Days is now open! HOORAY! We had a lovely launch on Saturday night and lots of folk came down and spent their pennies on our lovely goods. There was lots of beer, music and generally a really nice vibe. We're already dreaming up future projects too so hopefully if time allows there'll be another Flagship incarnation closer to Christmas. There's no better feeling than your dearest friends telling you how proud they are and complete strangers telling you how great it looks. Such a funny thing to see it all become real and I'll be really really sad to take it all down on Sunday! Here's hoping one day we'll secure a more permanent bricks and mortar store but hey we're just enjoying this round for what it is. Popping up and then sneaking off again to work on product development and new events for the next batch!



Photographs: Zoe Tynan-Campbell

**“I don't see any harm in interning at all. Just be sure to let them know what could benefit you, speak out if you don't feel like it's working out and get out if you're just a dogsbody!”**



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## Cutting edge & such

So today is a good day, the sun is shining and I have the place to myself. I'm writing a proposal for an exhibition somewhere very exciting. I'm a wee bit superstitious so I don't want to say where just yet but at this point they seem very excited about my ideas and we're just figuring out dates and logistics and such!

In the meantime though, there's a couple of things I can tell you about that are happening. First off tonight Cutting Edge is opening and I'm very excited to have been invited to take part. The exhibition is curated by two RCA graduates and my work is among some really talented designers.

My work is also now showing in the gallery at 272 High Holborn, I don't have any pictures yet as I haven't been and had a peek myself but if you happen to be in the area swing by and have a look! There will be a launch coming up soon which I'm waiting to hear details on too. And finally my work is going to be selling on Made in Arts London, if you don't know about MIAL already then go check it out. It's a platform for selling UAL student and graduate work online.

The next few weeks are looking to be pretty busy, next week I start work at Frieze then after that I'm getting stuck into some new(ish) projects at South London Gallery then before I know it it'll probably be Christmas! Speaking of Christmas Rosie and I are hopefully gonna do a market or two to peddle our wares so we'll see what happens with that.

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## To freelance or not to freelance

The all important question! If you're anything like me then you probably spent a lot of your days thinking it must be sweet to be able take holiday whenever you want, work in your PJ's and hang out with your cat all day. I used to read blogs of freelancers complaining they never got a day off or a holiday and be kinda like 'yeah right!' Then I started freelancing and found out a few things. I'm no expert but after freelancing for about a year and a half my perceptions have changed a wee bit. So for me it goes a bit like this;

## GOOD

- ✓ You DO get to hang out with your cat way more.
- ✓ You can get up when you like.
- ✓ You can work in your pyjamas.
- ✓ You're in control – you can say yes – you can even say no but lets be realistic you'll probably say yes.
- ✓ You often have a pretty varied work pattern which keeps it interesting.
- ✓ You're forced to learn a bit more about the business side of things and take a lot more responsibility for making sure things happen. It's on your head so you kind of have to.
- ✓ You often get compensated for being a freelancer with a more handsome pay rate.
- ✓ You get to do work with loads of ace people and if you don't like someone you just say no thanks next time they offer you work!
- ✓ You get to go stay with your Nan when she has a new hip because you CAN still send those all important emails and get stuff done.
- ✓ You get to pitch your ideas and work on projects that you really love!

## BAD

- ✗ You can get up when you want – this can go one of two ways – one, is you'll sleep late waste half the day and be mad at yourself for doing so, two, is you'll wake up in the night panicking about how much you have to do and then wake up at the crack of dawn and have to resist getting up and firing up the uber-bright computer screen and waking your other half. Weekends included!
- ✗ Your cat can't help – she'll try dammit by sitting on all the things you need most – normally the keyboard.
- ✗ You can work in your PJ's which for me is a no-no – some weird psychological situation that means without actual clothes on I just cannot seem to make things happen!
- ✗ You work from your sickbed. You don't take sick days because obviously you won't get paid for them.
- ✗ You work late into the night because your little computer seems so harmless and familiar that you forget you should interact with humans and eat and have a bit of fun.
- ✗ You can't ever say NO because next week the world might turn on its head and you might have no work and the sheer thought of this (if you are me) means you're sort of comfortably panicked at all times.
- ✗ It can be a bit lonely working from home lots – I get to hangout with lots of folk whilst running workshops but I can imagine if I was a graphic designer for example and worked everyday from home I'd go a bit mental!
- ✗ People email you at some ungodly hours because apparently freelance also means 24/7 and you somehow feel compelled to answer!
- ✗ It's easy to get disheartened and can be hard to move things forward when it's just you, yourself and well the cat. You stare at / work on something for so long you lose sight of whether it's any good anymore. Sometimes you decided EVERYTHING you've done is really bad and wonder why in your head its good and then in real life it doesn't quite live up to your expectations.
- ✗ TAXES – you get it wrong you're sure as hell getting fined. Inland revenue get it wrong – they take a million years to fix it and that's if they even bother!
- ✗ It's hard to be well behaved and stash away what you know you're gonna have to pay in tax but it's definitely way safer that way.

I'm going to stop there because my bads are outweighing my goods and that doesn't reflect how I truly feel about the situation. I love working freelance and whilst I wonder if I could work a lot less as a 9-5er I'm definitely pretty content with the situation right now. One of my tutors once introduced me as the girl who can't say no to anything which is sort of true but that's just how it goes for now. If it's all or nothing I'm gonna plump for all EVERY time. I don't want to end up doing things badly because I'm doing so much though – so I'm keeping myself in check!



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## Useful Work Vs. Useless Toil

I am currently undertaking 'Work Experience' at a magazine I will not name. It is a massive magazine which I love, a magazine which I one day-dream of working for. Problem is, 'Work Experience' sucks. The main difference between work experience and an internship, as far as I can tell, is the duration. Internships last at least a month, whereas work experience covers around 2 weeks. The work experience I am currently completing is of the editorial variety, and lasted a measly 1 and a half weeks due to the Christmas break. At first I was irked about this, especially as I have had to wait a whole year for this privilege, but now I am thankful.

My time here has been....well, a waste. On my first day I wrote a bio describing myself and my interests which was apparently then sent around all the editors so that they could assign me relevant-ish tasks, and then heard nothing. I was approached by no-one but the office manager with a lengthy admin task – a database of no less than 1,468 restaurants in London, for which she wanted the name of the manager and their email address. Taking the Mickey doesn't even cover it. As if I had taken a week off work (not to mention travelled to a different country, well, I was in England anyway for Christmas but still) for this.

I tried really hard to make the most of it, I really did. I've made a handful of potentially useful contacts, and had a nice time in London in my spare time catching up with old friends but besides from that what have I learnt? Nothing. Just that you have to fight for every inch of responsibility when you're in this lowly role. Which I knew was the case sometimes anyway. I have no real by-lines, just a few poxy blog posts, a suffering bank account (travel expenses were covered but lunches were not really, I received a princely £2 a day towards this) and a real hatred towards London. Why don't they just call a spade a spade, work experience is just another form of exploitation, this time instead of being aimed mainly at graduates also catering to school or college kids. Enough of this, I am gone, suckers!



**"I am currently undertaking 'Work Experience' at a magazine I will not name. It is a massive magazine which I love, a magazine which I one day-dream of working for. Problem is, 'Work Experience' sucks."**

# TALES OF A GRADUATE JOURNALIST IN BERLIN



**Excerpts from the Graduate Reporter blog – following a graduate's first six months.**



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## Graduate Blues

So this is it – you’ve graduated at last, and that inconvenience that was university, taking up all your free time when you could be drinking and exploring London (I jest) has come to an end. But what now? You have a degree – a 2:1 even... but so do thousands of other journalist graduates – bummer. Is a degree enough?

Despite UAL boasting about high employment rates post uni (for some reason a figure of about 86% is lurking in the chambers of my memory from an open day many years ago) I know only two or three individuals from my journalism course who have already secured a job actually in our chosen field. Lots of my former peers have decided journalism is in fact, not for them, and have decided to pursue what they really love, like music, art or teaching, which is a shame but not really – less competition.

Obviously I never anticipated that finding a job would be easy, even most internships these days are like gold dust, and then you’re expected to work like a mule for free for months on end, the carrot that is actual real employment dangled before your beady eyes until it merges into a mirage in the distance and you collapse with exhaustion.

I didn’t expect to be spoon fed, led by the hand into amazing full time employment, but this no man’s land post-university and pre-employment is pretty unnerving. Despite UAL’s ArtsTemps service and SEE’s Creative Opportunities service I feel about as supported as Charlie Dimmock’s breasts. Saying this it has only been about a month since I graduated and luckily I have some savings, so I do have a reasonable amount of time before my greatest fear – that I’ll be sucked back into life pre university, languishing away at home, any creativity leeched out of me in a grey town in the Midlands – becomes a plausible reality. Here’s to carrying on with the job search and new beginnings!

## It’s not what you know...

...it’s who you know. How annoying this old little chestnut is, but how true. Network, network, network! Go out, make contacts, stay in touch, update your contacts, keep your contacts. The whole process can be really draining and repetitive, and at times really rather shallow. But I guess it pays off. Making contacts in your industry field can lead to jobs, opportunities and collaborations which otherwise would not have been realised.



## Here is a low-down of my top three useful social networking sites....

Facebook can be an extremely useful tool – ‘liking’ pages of companies and magazines etc that you like means that their information updates will come up in your news feed, meaning you might see a job advertisement before it’s even been put up on their website, or garnered much attention. It’s also useful as a platform for sharing work with potential clients, and also friends and family. Not only did I bag a job as a BBC extra on Facebook once I have also promoted published work, increased my blog audience and managed to contact companies to get useful email addresses/info which was otherwise unavailable.

At first I was extremely reluctant to join the Twittersphere, but since having been initiated have never looked back. Following leading figures in your area of work can again lead to interesting opportunities and also a way to contact people you would never get an email reply off. Share (relevant) thoughts and opinions on current topics in your chosen field and promote your work and you could get noticed by the right people.

The ‘World’s Largest Professional Network’, LinkedIn started creeping into my consciousness during the last few weeks of university as an increasing number of my peers sent electronic invites to ‘connect’ with me on the network. After some investigation I concluded that this was Facebook’s boring older brother but was extremely useful, tailored specifically for professional networking.

After creating a profile you ‘connect’ with people you know to be able to apply for jobs and be introduced to your contact’s contacts. You can also join groups and discussions on useful topics as well as search through employers and jobs. A little dry but well worth doing in our hyper virtual networking landscape.

**“Obviously I never anticipated that finding a job would be easy, even most internships these days are like gold dust, and then you’re expected to work like a mule for free for months on end, the carrot that is actual real employment dangled before your beady eyes until it merges into a mirage in the distance and you collapse with exhaustion.”**



## Weaving a creative web

As discussed in my previous post, networking is a necessary evil. It doesn't have to be all doom and gloom though, and increasingly popular are online creative networks which link people from similar creative backgrounds, enabling collaborations and exciting job possibilities to be matched up with the right people.

Whilst in London I found the website IdeasTap particularly useful (and I only discovered this in third year, much to my chagrin). IdeasTap is a not-for-profit organisation designed for 16-30 year olds to discover creative work opportunities through job advertisements, in-house briefs and the ability to share a portfolio online. After creating a profile you can start applying for advertised jobs and 'connecting' with other people, sending them messages and joining networks that are of interest to you, for example freelance writing, acting, graphic design etc.

The 'Creative Briefs', which are exclusive opportunities created by IdeasTap and other arts organisations, are particularly good; and range from reporting on film festivals to having your photography portfolio critiqued by Magnum photographers. IdeasTap also offer workshops and events with their IdeasTap Spa programme, spanning a range of disciplines, from free head shot sessions for those in the acting industry to film making and Adobe workshops too.

Since moving to Germany I have discovered Artconnect Berlin - an essential site for creatives in the German capital. Also not for profit, Artconnect Berlin is a networking platform for creatives in Berlin to connect. Much like IdeasTap, after creating an online profile you can connect with others and upload an online portfolio of work. You can also discover events, jobs and studio spaces, an extremely useful tool to new and existing members of Berlin's creative community.

Interested in getting involved behind the scenes in such a worthwhile project I emailed the team and am now contributing to their growing blog, covering current art exhibitions and events. This is great because it means I get a platform to write about the things which really interest me, and I can quickly discover Berlin's extensive art scene. Overall I would definitely recommend getting involved with creative networking sites like this if you're part of the creative community.



The work of Dutch artist Erik van Lieshout at Galerie Guido W. Baudach in Wedding

abc – Berlin Art Week



JANUS – Spatial Installation by Erik Van Lieshout



## Berlin Art Week

This week has marked an important point in my journalistic career in Berlin – my first Berlin based writing job reporting on Berlin Art Week for online arts magazine Berlin Art Parasites!

Essentially the Olympics of the Berlin art world besides the renowned Documenta, this September marks the very first Berlin Art Week event. Online arts magazine Berlin Art Parasites needed help with the mammoth task of coverage of the event and I was more than happy to volunteer my journalistic skills, resulting in my first paid writing job here in Germany. Each day I'm issued with a list of galleries to go and review/photograph, a great way to get to know some more of the amazing sprawl that is the Berlin art scene. Some of the galleries I have visited so far include the amazing Berlinische Galerie, DUVE Berlin and Galerie Guido W. Baudach. Only half way through the week I feel like I've covered some serious ground in terms of both geography and my knowledge of art galleries here in Berlin and am looking forward to what the rest of the event has in store!

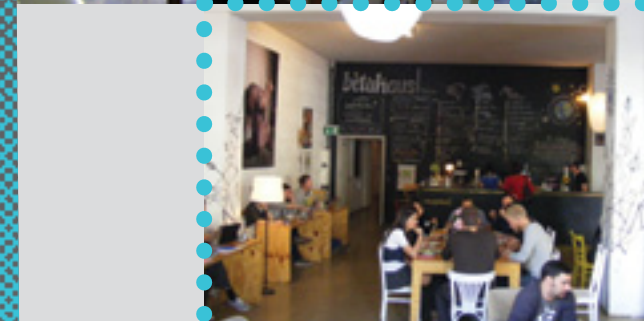
## Co-working, an alternative to your bedroom 'office'

I've always been jealous of my artist pals having a special, designated space where they produce their work, A.K.A their studio. Being a journalist you can (and are often required to) work pretty much anywhere that you have your laptop and a power supply, but this isn't as great as you might think.

Attempting to break into the tough world of freelancing I spend most of my time at my laptop, and although this means it can be done anywhere some places are more suitable than others. Working at home is problematic, the temptation to stay in your pyjamas or work from bed because it's so cold/it's so comfortable is always great and definitely not conducive to productivity. Being at home also means you can procrastinate in so many ways, really not helpful for someone as easily distracted as myself.

Then there is the option of working at a coffee shop, the massive hipster cliché. This is a good alternative when you want some human contact, as sitting at home alone working all day is pretty lonely if you don't have any pets. Coffee shop outings are also expensive, there's only so long you can nurse that chai latte for, really.

So now the solution, well, sort of: co-working. This is when companies rent out a space where you can go and work in an office environment with others, without being tempted to have a bath or required to spend a fortune in caffeinated fuel. The only down side is of course this still comes at a price.



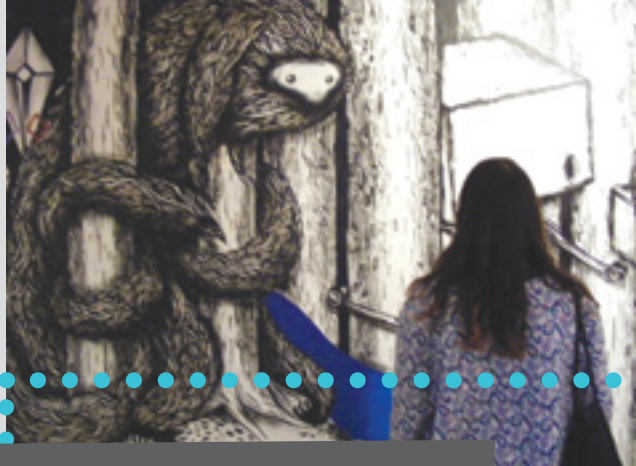
“Being a journalist you can (and are often required to) work pretty much anywhere that you have your laptop and a power supply, but this isn't as great as you might think.”



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In action:  
reviewing one of the  
many exhibitions on as  
part of Berlin Art Week



## Blogging Benefits

Many people are cynical about the ‘Blogosphere’. What good is writing a blog, they say, who will read it? Luckily this needling does little to deter me in my blogging endeavours, and despite there being a crazy amount of blogs out there continue to write my own.

Most people in the media industry have a blog, a website, or a blog within a website, showcasing their skills. As a fledgling journalist having examples of your work is of paramount importance, and it’s nice to have something a little personal as well as a portfolio of clippings. Having a blog also means you have a platform which allows you to keep writing as regularly as you want, attempting to keep that writer’s block at bay.

After toiling away for nearly three months in Berlin, I have a job. That’s right, hold the phone I am EMPLOYED. I am now writing full time for the Berlin based, online arts magazine, berlin-artparasites. The glitch, however, (there’s always one) is that I am an intern; and therefore get paid next to nothing. But still, look Mum and Dad, I have a job. A real life, writing job, writing about the subject I love – art.

My first couple of weeks have been tough. Very tough. The amount of stress I have had to deal with has been extreme, and I have worked the last ten days in a row without a break. A lot is being demanded of me, but when it comes down to it the job needs to be done, and I always knew that making it as a journo would never be easy.

In-between running around like a headless chicken and surviving on 5 hours sleep I couldn’t help but reflect upon my uni days, particularly third year. As a third year student doing BA Journalism at London College of Communication my time was divided between my dissertation (A.K.A the bane of my life – yes I know I’m a writer but hey) and working on the Arts London News.

In my first term I was delegated (as requested) the role of Reviews Editor. Within this role I held meetings with the feature writers and commissioned articles, edited content and chased up accompanying images. This was extremely stressful. For one I hate teamwork, but only because too often I am part of a failing team, where others do not carry out their responsibility and I am left to fill in the gaps. With this project I had no choice but to work as part of a team, and sure enough, things at times fell to pieces and I got angry. There were other times, however, when I realised hey, maybe it’s good to have input from other people, stop trying to do everything.

In the second term my role was that of a news writer, focusing specifically on arts and culture, a topic which my course leader dismissed at the drop of the hat, even in editorial meetings with the whole year verbally haranguing me during my de-briefing, so we could hurry up and get onto more interesting sections of the paper, like sport.

My weekly tasks included pitching story ideas and then writing them, complete with facts, quotes and pictures (which we would co-ordinate with the photography team). This was also stressful, and resulted in many tantrums and exasperation. Looking back now and comparing this system to that of a ‘real life’ publication (it can’t be denied that Arts London News is a real publication, but I mean a situation where I’m getting paid) I can’t deny that it was useful. The main differences I have experienced thus far are the numbers of people working on each project – in my office I am one of three writers – and also the stress level, predictably now in ‘real life’ they are higher. Saying this, after adjusting to the rhythm of the Arts London News work flow I started to enjoy it, and by the time it was over had really enjoyed it and learned a lot; and I’m sure my new job will prove to be the same, and at least my boss takes art seriously. As for the stress levels, well I can’t say I haven’t been warned.

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“Partly to escape London’s impossible intern scene I moved to Berlin. The number of unpaid internships here is also high, although from what I have seen in the three months I have lived here so far no-where near as bad.”

## I is for interning

Internships. A concept that strikes fear and anger into the hearts of many students and graduates, and saves employers enormous amounts of money. There have been debates going on for years about the internship concept, and the legislation about what is legal and what is not is unclear to many. In the UK internships should pay an hourly rate of at least the minimum wage, but this is often not the case. Instead maybe lunch and travel expenses are offered – and that’s if you’re lucky. Despite campaigns for this to change, this doesn’t seem to be happening anytime soon.

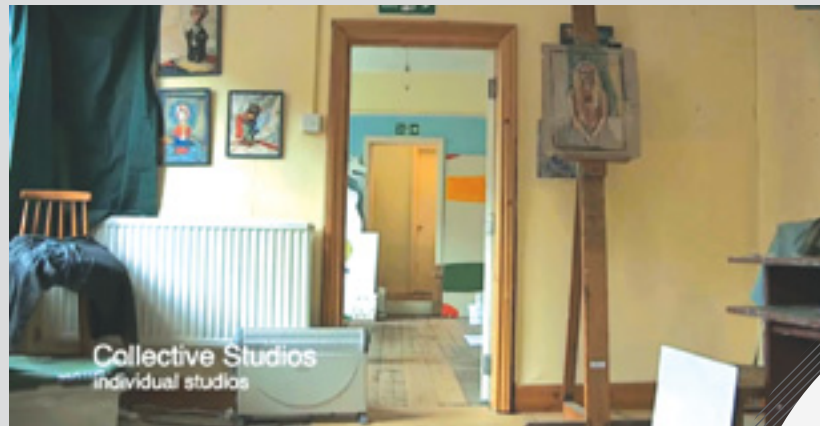
In London getting an internship is like chasing gold dust. The number of aspiring writers, producers, photographers and other creatives far outweigh the amount of employment available. Fighting tooth and nail for the chance to work for free may sound crazy, but internships can be extremely valuable in your path to achieving your dream job. Not only do you build up contacts and learn new skills, but also have the chance to potentially score a job with the company you’re working at. Future employers look for experience on your application, and without it you are at a definite disadvantage. As a result hordes of young creatives are flooding companies inboxes with requests for an internship, offering their time, skills and enthusiasm for free in the hope it will one day pay off.

The pure volume of applicants companies receive means, however, that they can be selective. Very selective. Obviously they will look for the best candidate for the job, but in contemporary society it has become almost the norm to hire a stream of interns to fill a post, exploiting the skills of the younger generation desperate for a shot to make it. The staff of some magazines are even made up of a whole host of changing interns, so great is the availability of workers and the costs saved by allowing them to take part in their publication. This is disheartening to say the least – we have gone to university for how many years, got ourselves into how much debt to now be working for free? As my Dad said to me a few months ago when I was enthusiastically talking about my latest ‘volunteering’ – “You know usually the idea of getting a job is that you get paid, right?”.

Saying this not all internships are bad. If you can afford to do a short unpaid internship whilst studying or by supporting yourself with other part time work (which is often tough, time is also a major luxury) it can pay off. One of my most positive experiences was working on the editorial team of Ebury Publishing at Random House, a two-week stint (travel and lunch expenses included). It gave me a great insight into the world of publishing, and gave me another route to consider with my future career in writing. Equally valuable was my stint at The Shropshire Star newspaper back when I was fresh-faced and 16. I quickly realised that being a newspaper hack wasn’t for me, writing gash (newspaper term for filler) and the occasional short news story with a by-line not really my cup of tea.

Partly to escape London’s impossible intern scene I moved to Berlin. The number of unpaid internships here is also high, although from what I have seen in the three months I have lived here so far no-where near as bad. My current job at berlin-artparasites is an internship, but it is paid. It is also a young company, so there is possible potential for a more concrete role after my internship has ended if everything goes well. Perhaps I’m being naive but here’s hoping I’m not.





“you’ve got to keep on going and keep on asking and keep on finding the opportunities for yourself. Just do it! If you don’t pick up on opportunities and don’t carry on then don’t be afraid to fail.”

# STORIES GRADUATE INTERVIEWS



# NEW GRADUATE PROFILE:

**Henk Gieskens,**  
**BA in 2D design**  
**(graduated 2012)**

Interview by Marie Burrows



## What have you done so far since graduating?

One of the things I have done is work as an intern at Nick Knight's SHOWstudio. Working for Nick was a great experience and has made me realise that I would like to go into the business side of art as much as making my own works.

I have also been awarded the artist residency LIFE BOAT 2012 (this is supported by Artquest, ACAVA and ArtsTemps). The residency involves a free studio/space at Vyner street as well as peer group meetings and crits with artists and galleries. I created a Facebook page and tumblr for this residency because these mediums make it very easy to share an important part of my progress online. It's been really worthwhile, giving me some very useful feedback from people who I wouldn't have had it from otherwise.

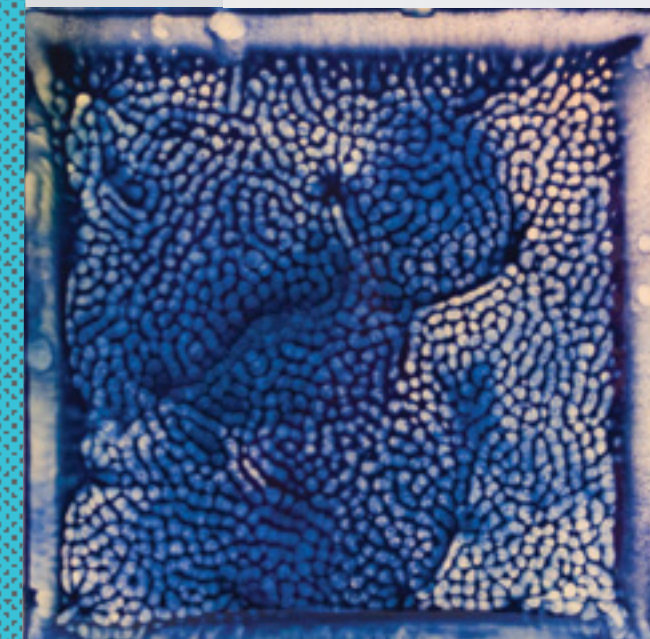
I believe that sharing and showing where you're from and how you make your practice can be very important to potential buyers, or people who just want to keep track of you. Documenting work online also works as an archiving system and helps to keep track of most things. Obviously I still use notebooks and sketchbooks, but this is something I consider more personal. I paint in these books and try ideas and mediums out that might lead me somewhere. During my studies, for example, I developed a new kind of oil paint that allows me to work with the medium in sheet format, and the whole process of trial and error in my sketch books was very personal and not to be seen.

## How did you secure the residency?

I managed to get this opportunity just by applying. After graduating I applied for over thirty opportunities in the UK for showing work or doing commissions. This residency has been the only one out of thirty that I have been awarded. Sometimes you really need to bite your lip and just move on, get yourself out of bed and see what else is out there that might work for you. This is very exciting!

## Is graduate life how you thought it would be?

No it's not. Finding a job is very hard and I have to do less exciting work than I've been trained in. Saying this, everything is what you make of it, so deal with it! At the moment I do various sales work beside my studio work, and am waiting for results of job interviews I have done.





## How are you surviving financially?

By working in sales part-time. In a way this is a shame but it makes me realise that I have a main goal in my life; to become an artist that can sustain himself through art. Despite this, the experience is perhaps useful because I do like marketing and sales, and would love to start my own gallery one day.

## Are you glad you did the course at UAL, would you do it again?

Yes I would do it again. I think three years is too short though, you need more time to really get to know what you're doing. You need time and space to fall flat on your face and pick yourself up and start again, and the freedom you get during your study is something you won't experience again soon after graduating. Although writing essays and dissertations weren't really my cup of tea, they really helped me to understand more about my practice and where I want to take it.

## And finally, do you have any advice for future graduates?

Make sure you have an idea of what you want to do after your studies! I applied for an MA Art and Science, which I was accepted on, but then realised it wasn't actually what I wanted to do. I only did this because I got very scared of the world outside college. Prepare yourself for once you have left the cosy covers. Do an internship while you're studying or make a plan of what you need to do to make some money in order to have a studio – but first ask yourself if you really need one.

Be very real to yourself about your goals but don't get upset when things are not working out the way you planned – just change your plans for the better. To everyone you meet in your professional career, be nice and honest about what you want and what you can or can't do. When things don't work out, tough shit – carry on! The most important thing is believe in what you do – if you don't believe in it why should anyone else?

# 5-6 YEARS ON...

**Success equates with achievement and creative fulfilment above financial reward. For the future, sustaining a living through creative practice is a commonly held goal. For many, setting up their own enterprises to fulfil ambitions and undertake postgraduate study to progress in their practice are important aspirations.**

Creative Career Stories



Claire Strickland  
Milliner  
BA Technical Effects  
for Performance

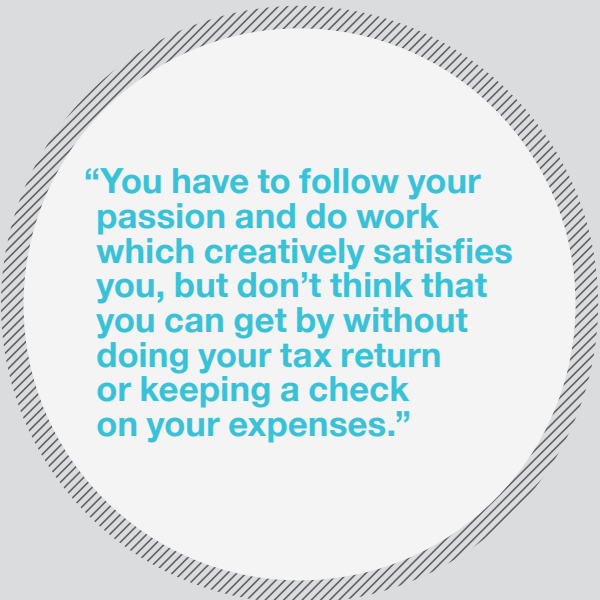
(graduated 2007)



I went to the finals of the Hat Designer of the Year Competition, which is run by the Hat Magazine, and that was in Paris and I ended up coming third. But I noticed that a lot of the people who'd entered didn't go and talk to the judges and I thought that it was a really missed opportunity because it doesn't matter even if you didn't come first, that's still a great opportunity to go and talk to people who've studied your designs and seen what work you're doing. I ended up talking to Edwina Ibbotson who was one of the judges and she's a couture milliner, and I ended up working for her. I also kept in touch with the editor of the hat magazine and she ended up recommending me for a job at James Lock the Hatters, and I currently work there full time.

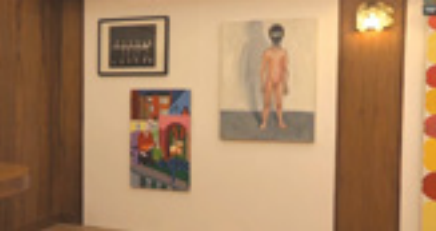
Write a plan of what you want to do over the next three years. So at what point do you think you might need an accountant? What year are you going to enter a competition? Don't underestimate the business side of it because you have to make money. You have to follow your passion and do work which creatively satisfies you, but don't think that you can get by without doing your tax return or keeping a check on your expenses.

I remember somebody saying to me, "you'll do really well in this industry because you get on with people", and at the time I kind of didn't really understand what she meant. I didn't think it was a particularly important piece of advice, but it is because you're always working in a team and so much of it is recommendations from other people.



Mark Nader  
Collective Studios Founder  
and Manager / Fine Artist /  
Building Manager /  
Teaching Fellow  
BA Fine Art

(graduated 2008)



Success I guess for me is something I try not to think about mainly because I've been thinking about this and if I ever deem myself successful I'll stop. I think my driving force is trying to become more and more successful and we've had lots of little successes along the way and that's been great to just keep you going but if you ever say, "Right, that's it I am a success!" Then what's the point of carrying on?

You know, even in your last year you have to start looking into what you're going to do and, especially as a fine artist, I think you carry on regardless of your financial constraints, but to become a professional artist you need to think about where you're going, whether you'd want space to work in and how you're going to afford that space and whether you set that up yourself. You've got to ask the right people and there's that kind of dirty word 'networking'. But networking is just talking to the right people, getting advice from the right people. There are so many people out there who will give you advice, you ask and you might get and you might not, but you've got to keep on going and keep on asking and keep on finding the opportunities for yourself. Just do it! If you don't pick up on opportunities and don't carry on then don't be afraid to fail.