# *Primer*

***by Artquest***

Everything you wanted to know about being an artist, but didn't know you needed to know, and probably didn't know who to ask anyway.

# Everything we wished we'd known when we left art school.

We are Artquest: a professional development programme for visual artists founded in 2001 hosted by University of the Arts London (UAL) and funded by Arts Council England (ACE). We help visual artists working in any medium, at any stage in their career. Find out more about us at the back of this book.

This book covers the things you need to consider in your first couple of years after graduation: finding and working with galleries; understanding your rights; living in London while avoiding total poverty; finding a studio; maintaining a network; and getting more advice. You can find more information on many of these subjects via the links in the margins.

If you graduated from UAL, there are other resources you can use in your first few years after graduation:

**Careers and Employability (C&E)**

While Artquest is only for visual artists, C&E provides funding, advice, information and opportunities to students and graduates to develop any creative practice.

**CreativeIP.org**

An educational resource for creative practitioners in the UK containing helpful articles and information about intellectual property.

**Alumni Association**

UAL's Alumni Association is the largest creative network in the world, with over 200,000 alumni and former staff in 148 countries worldwide. As a UAL graduate, you're automatically a member.

# Degree shows

The lead up to your degree show is a hectic and frequently stressful time. It's easy to focus exclusively on making your work and forget the wider opportunity the show brings – to have hundreds of artists, curators, journalists and collectors see your work and find out more about you as a professional artist. Your degree show can provide a huge boost at the start of your career – research shows that the first three years after graduation are the most complex and important for artists to navigate.

Regardless of whether your aim is to sell work, make contact with galleries or just to pass your degree, the tips below will allow you to meet your professional goals.

**The show**

It's your responsibility to make your work look good.

Once you've been assigned your showing space, you have to curate it. Be objective and thoughtful, use a critical eye and input from friends, and edit your work down to a tight and concise show. Remember that you don't need to show every work you ever made during your degree, and often 'less is more.'

Label your work in the same way as others nearby to ensure the whole space looks professional. Make sure that people can clearly see who made each work.

Be present as much as possible to meet your audience – curators, prospective collectors and other artists. Be available, sober and friendly to everyone you speak to at your opening: you never know who is a collector or gallerist.

Maintain the show: restock your business cards,

make sure any moving image or technology in your work is functioning when the show is open. Make sure it's presentable, clean and ready for guests.

**Communications**

You've made the work, now you need to tell people about it.

Have your contact information available at all times. People can be interested in your work but might only want to approach you after they have left. You must always have a business card or postcard with long term, up to date, professional contact information. Don't use a university email address that will expire once you graduate; use a professional-sounding email address so that people can contact you easily, and respond as quickly as possible to any inquiries. Add a memorable hi-res image of your work to the card; this will help people to remember you from the pile of cards they will have collected all week.

Build a website for your work before you graduate, so you can add it to UAL's Portfolio, other relevant networking websites and your business card. This can be as simple as a Wordpress or Tumblr blog, Flickr, Instagram or Facebook page, as you can add to it later when you have more time and things to talk about. Embed video from YouTube or Vimeo to increase your audience, but make sure you understand the terms and conditions for uploading work to third-party sites.

Your degree show helps to build a network: keep track of all the people interested in your work, keep cards safe and follow up leads immediately. Ask people if you can sign them up to your mailing list rather than counting on them to contact you – and

never add people to your list without permission. These are the people who you will invite to your future shows and they will get annoyed if you add them to a newsletter list without asking.

**Sales**

If you make work that you can sell, and are interested in selling, you need to think about prices.

If the work is reproducible – like a film or photograph – you could make an edition of it as well.

Photograph every work to a high standard before you sell it, and make a note of who you sold it to, when, its dimensions, and a description. You may need it for another show, and an image would help a curator understand it better than a description. It is also important to catalogue your work for your archive, and it is never too early in your career to begin. The Art360 Foundation has advice and information for building an archive, including a free app for iPhone or Android.

If you don't have a price it will be impossible to sell. Be realistic as to your prices, and understand that, as an unknown artist exhibiting for the first time, your prices will be quite low, so it's a good idea not to overspend on materials for your degree show.

Remember that you only have a limited say in what your prices will be – the market for your work (the people who want to buy it) will set the initial price, and you should be prepared that this may be below what you consider fair. During negotiation, consider the trade off between lower prices and not selling the work at all, and having to store it: if you are happy to wait for a higher price, wait. Your first price is only a

starting point; increased demand for your work is an indication that you can increase your prices, but you should leave room to continue to increase them later in your career. You can't drop your prices once you set them, so give yourself room to develop a higher price the longer you practice.

If you make sales you will need to invoice the buyer to get paid. Add the title of your work, the year and the edition number (if applicable) as well as your bank details so that you can get paid directly. More detail about invoices is on page 16.

You should also create a bill of sale, essentially a receipt, so the buyer can prove that this is a legitimate work by you. This is also proof of the sale agreement and is important to keep a copy for your records.

When you deliver the work, be sure it's well wrapped, protected, and labelled properly, as it will be your responsibility if the work is damaged in transit. Deliver the work in person if you can, as it's another chance for you to meet the collector and maybe even see where the work will be hung – and if appropriate suggest other pieces they might like.

If you decide to go on holiday or leave town straight after your degree show, make sure you can be contacted for any queries, offers of work or sales- check your email and respond promptly.

# Living in London

London is one of the most expensive cities in Europe and artists in London earn very little from their practice – recent research (2016) suggests 36% of artists earn less than £1,000 per year from their art practice, and only 7% earn over £20,000. If you choose to live in London, how is it possible to afford rent, travel, a studio, debt and still make work?

Artists, in London and elsewhere, earn money through a mixture of full- or part-time employment, art school teaching, freelance work (also called self-employment), selling artwork, public funding and jobs outside of the arts. In order to legally earn money working freelance, you must be registered as self-employed at Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) before you begin to work so that you are paying the correct amount of tax.

The lower your outgoings, the less your income has to be. Tackling both your income and your expenditure can make London a more affordable place to live and work, as well as leaving you enough time to focus on carrying on making work.

The biggest expenditure for most people in London is housing. Market-level rents are very high, but more affordable housing options exist: social housing (such as council housing, housing associations or housing co-operatives) makes up a good (but diminishing) proportion of London's housing stock if you are eligible, and short-life housing or property guardian companies can offer accommodation even if you're not eligible for permanent housing.

Some benefits are available to people in part-time work or self-employment under certain circumstances, and benefit payments change all the

time depending on political context and how close elections are. Your local Jobcentre Plus can tell you more.

Finding a job, particularly one that will allow you enough time to keep on developing your art, can be very hard. There are a number of general employment resources, but two useful arts-related sites are ArtsJobs (run by ACE) and Creative Opportunities (run by UAL, but open to all). UAL graduates up to one year can also work temporarily at UAL with ArtsTemps, UAL's in-house temp agency.

Of course, living frugally in London isn't something only artists have to worry about. The Money Saving Expert website has a huge number of tips about debt, credit cards, utilities and consumer bargains, and includes a free weekly email newsletter. Your local Citizen's Advice Bureau can advise you on benefits and your consumer rights, and help you find a way to manage problem debt.

Finally, consider if living in London is the right decision for you right now. Graduates can find that leaving London, even if temporarily, can help their longer-term financial stability. It is arguably easier to get opportunities outside of London, with fewer artists living out of the capital – conversely, others think it more difficult, with fewer galleries and less infrastructure. Make a decision on where to live that's right for your professional goals and personal circumstances.

# Money

Don't feel bad if you need a 'day job' to support your practice: 69% of artists make money outside of their practice to help pay their rent and bills; whether through teaching, technician work at galleries, or jobs unrelated to the arts. Around half of artists who say they work elsewhere have more than one other job. Often, however, artists don't talk about this openly.

Sometimes you may be able to afford to work for free on a project you are sure you will gain valuable experience or connections through – if you choose to do this, make absolutely certain it is worth your while, or you not only lose money by not getting paid for that job, but by being unable to take on other paid work in the meantime.

As a rule of thumb, always ask for payment for your time. You may not be offered money otherwise, and asking for payment shows that you take your professional career seriously. If you're approached by an organisation that gets funding and are asked to work for free, consider carefully the impact on your financial situation if you take on the job, and your future opportunities if you don't. Either way, never be shy when asking for money: the person working in an organisation who is offering you a job is being paid. Even an organisation not in receipt of funds – like most artist-led spaces, for example – will usually be happy to have a conversation about fees to emphasise that they are also not being paid. Talking about money is healthy even if it doesn't result in payment.

Finding a job that combines the flexibility you need for your practice, as well as providing enough income to pay the rent and bills, is difficult, but not

impossible. Money earned is money you don't have to apply or write evaluation reports for; money you apply for allows flexibility and time to work more deeply in a specified timeframe. By finding the right ways to earn money or cut expenditure you can support your practice in a way that suits your circumstances.

There are three main ways any creative professional can get money, and all are useful for different types of projects or circumstances:

**Ask** – apply for funding, ask for sponsorship or support in-kind

**Earn** – sell work or skills, or find a job

**Borrow** – ask for money and pay it back over time

Our extensive online Money resources can help you understand which of these may be appropriate for you, depending on the different projects you are trying to financially support.

Most artists have a variety of ways to make money including part-time work, self-employment, public and private funding, commissions, sales, image licensing and private income. Different kinds of practice lend themselves to different methods; for example a photographer may be able to license images to greetings card manufacturers or make money taking portraits, or a jeweller developing a new line of work might get a bank loan to repay through the sales.

**Getting a job**

Some artists have jobs that are related to their practice, for example teaching and workshops, working as arts administrators and gallery

technicians, or curating gallery exhibitions. Others are happy to work unrelated to their art, but retain the flexibility of money and time to continue producing and showing work: artists also design websites, work in bars and are even barbers. Consider the kind of work you want, and don't feel limited to having all of your earning potential in the arts sector: choose an approach you are happy with and that fits your personal circumstances.

Check Creative Opportunities for hundreds of paid job vacancies and work placements. You might also find the ArtsJobs and ArtsHub sites useful.

The Artquest website also has useful information on how to become self-employed, including how the tax system works for artists.

**Artist fees**

Professional artists are paid when they sell their work, but can also earn money when they work on commissions, education workshops or residencies. You will need to calculate a rate of pay for this kind of work. This can be difficult to quantify, and depends on the type of work you are going to do, the organisation you will work with, the overall budget for the project and your previous experience. Make sure to ask your peers and other artists what they charge as a comparison.

**Commissions**

A commission is an agreement between you and another party – be it a public body, local council, private individual, gallery, company or anyone else – to create a piece of work. The commissioner does not necessarily own the commissioned work, nor do they automatically own the copyright – all of these details

must be negotiated in advance and formalised into a contract.

Remember that a commission may involve some compromise to your practice – the commissioner wants a specific kind of work, not just an existing piece that they could buy. It is important to negotiate exactly what is expected, when payments occur and who owns the final work – which may require an additional fee to be paid.

Wherever the work is shown, you still have the moral right to be credited as the author of the piece and for the work to be presented in such a way as to not damage your reputation.

Listen to Susanna Heron talk about the relationship with commissioners for her large scale, site-specific work.

**Pricing and selling work**

There are a number of ways to sell your work, from working with commercial galleries to approaching corporate art collections or producing editioned works sold at lower prices. Even before graduating you need to decide how much you will want to sell your work for. Your prices have to be reasonable, comparable to artists with your experience and need to reflect the materials and skills used in producing the work.

There are a number of formulae which may be of help when pricing your work; such as comparing prices of your peers, and how to increase prices once you get some shows or sales.

Own Art provides low-cost loans to people wanting to purchase works through galleries that participate in the scheme. They have produced video interviews

with collectors talking about why they want to collect art – because they have the time and money to find it, want to support artists to make more work, and like to buy things that they can appreciate.

Artquest also hosts a number of online films that explain how to sell at trade shows and how to build a website to sell online.

**Budgets**

Everyone has a slightly different situation when it comes to expenses, earnings and potential to turn a profit. A good first step is to understand exactly how much you spend and earn by drawing up a budget for your earnings and expenditure.

When you apply for funding or grants, you will frequently be asked for a project budget. This is different from your general household budget, and should only include the expenses you need to produce your project. List costs for all the materials, printing or framing costs, studio rent, or stand hire for art or craft fairs and so forth: how much do you have to spend before you start earning money?

Depending on the project, your budget might include fees, materials, venue or equipment hire, marketing and administrative overheads, like telephone bills and stationery.

**Funding & Sponsorship**

The main provider of public funding for the visual arts in England is Arts Council England, who receive their funding from the UK Government through the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. There are a number of aims that publicly-funded projects have to fulfil which change periodically depending on Government policies and priorities.

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Arts Council England's only funding programme for individuals is Project Grants, a catch-all scheme designed to fund any arts projects in England.

Project Grants applications are expected to include a fee for all artists and other people involved.

Your application will be more likely to succeed if you have another source of income for the project ('match funding') - this might be other funding or a contribution you make yourself.

You can apply for Project Grants at any time (there are no deadlines), and for applications for under £15,000 you get a decision in 6 weeks. There are video interviews with artists who have been successful in applying.

Research what charities and grant-awarding foundations you are eligible to apply for. They sometimes aim their funding only at organisations (such as charities), or for specific types of activity or person (regardless of the art project involved). Browse a comprehensive list of charities and what they fund on the Guidestar website.

**Crowdfunding**

Crowdfunding allows you to collect small donations from a large number of people, rewarding them with gifts if you successfully raise your target. Platforms such as Kickstarter, CrowdFunder, artistShare and IndieGoGo let you propose a project and solicit donations through your own social network. If your campaign is successful the site takes a small cut for administering the project donations, and you keep the rest of the money. Other models include Patreon, where you charge a recurring membership to support your work with predictable income.

**Licensing and copyright**

Artists with suitable work can licence it for others to use for specific circumstances in return for payment. Image licensing requires a contract specifying, among other things, what the image can be used for, how long it can be used, what geographical regions and media it can be used in, and how much payment is promised in return.

Artimage is the only digital image resource curated to showcase and license exceptional works of modern and contemporary art. Developed by DACS, Artimage includes thousands of high-quality digital images of individual artworks, artists' portraits and biographical information and provides a 24-hour response to every licensing enquiry. The majority of fees go directly to artists or artist beneficiaries, with all images approved and authorised by artists or their estates.

DACS also runs the annual Payback scheme: a royalty payment scheme that distributes £4-5million to artists each year for copyright royalties if your work has your work been used in a book, magazine or on TV, as well as secondary uses of your images, such as photocopying. Every year DACS negotiate a share of royalties which they pay to visual artists who've signed up to the scheme. In 2018 payments ranged from £25 to £3,200.

**Invoices**

To get paid, most of the time you will be asked to send an invoice. This is basically a demand for the payment agreed for selling something: a piece of work or some of your time. Invoice requirements vary from organisation to organisation, so it's a good

idea to ask what they need before you send it (this might also be explained on your contract). Make a template for your invoice and reuse it each time.

Most invoices will need some or all of the following:

- A date: when you're sending the invoice
- An invoice number: this is for your reference, and is often used by the person paying you as a reference for the bank transfer so you'll know when you've been paid
- A description of the work you have completed: so they know what you're invoicing them for, including the dates and hours worked
- Contact details: address, telephone, email
- Payment due period: when the invoice has to be paid, such as 10 or 30 days
- Company number or UTR (Unique Taxpayer Reference, also known as your self-employment reference number) which will be provided by HMRC once you register as self-employed, plus your National Insurance number
- Your VAT registration number (if you have one)
- Payee account name and bank details: account number, sort code, bank name and branch address, plus IBAN and BIC numbers for overseas clients.

You can legally claim interest on late payments under the law: the Late Commercial Payments information page on Gov.uk has more information, and it's a good idea to mention that interest will be payable on late payments on your original invoice.

# Money

**Other resources**

As well as Artquest, these other projects can help you make a living:

• Careers & Employability can help you make the most of your creative business idea. Their Mead Awards offer money to support your creative project or business.

• UAL graduates of up to one year can find employment on ArtsTemps - an in-house temping agency for current students and recent graduates to work at UAL.

• CreativeIP can help you with licensing and making money from your intellectual property.

# Networks

Your professional network – all the people you know in the art world, from interns or administrators to artists, curators, your tutors, collectors and friends – is the most important and valuable resource you have. Your network is the best way to find a job, spread the word about your projects, help you understand how the art world works, get feedback on your work, help with applications and advice, as well as to celebrate and commiserate down the pub.

Naturally, these relationships have to be reciprocal: your support for your peers with your time, resources and knowledge will be rewarded with theirs.

Your network also includes colleagues and friends in non-art jobs who may be able to help you with fundraising, research, materials, publicity or any of the other things a well-rounded artist's career needs.

Remember: be friendly to everyone - you never know where or when you might meet someone again further down the line.

Listen to Nick Kaplony and Melanie Stidolph talking about the importance of networks, and how to build and maintain them.

Online social networks can be useful tools for growing your network; listen to artist Binita Walia explain how to use Twitter to increase your visibility to different audiences. You also broaden your professional network through any work in the art world and keeping in touch with your new colleagues.

Networks are vital for every aspect of your career:

- Making new work: other artists will have the technical skills you lack to realise a piece of work, and

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you can trade your skills too.

• Artists will also know about good framers, cheap suppliers or shipping companies, and will share this practical information with each other.

• Exhibiting work: a good relationship with a gallerist or curator, or a recommendation from an artist that they already know, is more likely to lead to an exhibition.

• Selling work: people most often buy work from artists whose practice they already know. Collectors are more likely to buy further work from you if you maintain a relationship with them and tell them when you have exhibitions.

Own Art created a series of film exploring the motivations of art collectors - required watching for any artist looking to understand why people buy art.

• Developing work: while studying you rely on conversations with tutors and fellow students to develop your ideas and solve problems around your work. Outside of college, maintaining these relationships allows these useful conversations to continue.

Q-Art are an artist-led peer critique group that organise regular meetings between artists, students and new graduates to help continue the supportive and critical environment of an art school crit.

You can also maintain and extend your networks by setting up a peer-mentoring group. This is a group of like-minded artists who meet regularly to discuss their work; combining the support and critical feedback of a group crit with a chance to learn from the practical experience of other artists.

# Networks

• Promoting work: in the arts, word of mouth and personal recommendation carry a huge influence. Your network acts as a public relations machine, and word about you will spread fast – whether for good or bad. Keep in touch with people when you have something to say, but don't send too many messages.

Start now: you've already started building your network - your tutors and peers in college can still provide mutual support after you leave. Make sure you keep in touch with everyone to maintain those crucial first links.

Artquest's Exchange community is an online social network specifcially for artists around the world. We encourage artists to form their own peer networks, find new local friends, and plan trips and exchanges with their peers around the world.

Another valuable source for your network is the UAL Alumni Association. With over 200,000 former students and staff in 148 countries, you have access to an enormous, ready-made network that can help you wherever you end up.

# Self promotion

Self-promotion is sometimes frowned upon as 'spin' or 'blowing your own trumpet', but every artist needs to make sure their different audiences know who they are, what they're doing and how to get more information. Through self-promotion your shows will get visitors, you will develop your network and build relationships with galleries. It would be a waste of time to create amazing works of art that just sit in your studio without anyone seeing them: self-promotion means building a career.

There are a number of tools that you can use to raise awareness about your practice:

**Business cards**

At private views and gallery openings, business cards are an easy way of exchanging contact details. They don't have to be expensive to produce or corporate-looking. Many artists include an image of their work on one side to personalise their cards and make them more memorable. Include your name and contact email address, phone number, website and any social network accounts you use professionally – keep these separate from your personal accounts.

**Website**

People inevitably turn to Google when initially researching an artist. Make sure you have your own website or, at least, simple Tumblr or Wordpress site so you can be found easily. Social networks, discussed on p24, are helpful too; even an up-to-date professional profile on Linked In will help.

A website can and help raise awareness of, or even sell, your work, depending on your practice, and is useful when applying for opportunities: you can send email applications and refer to your website for

images and supporting material.

The presentation of your work online needs good-quality documentation: getting a qualified friend to photograph your work can bring out different aspects that you weren't aware of, and you can trade skills for this favour if you haven't the money to pay.

Also include on your website:

- Photos of exhibitions, installations and projects
- A brief artist's statement
- Artist CV or short biography
- Contact details, or links to any gallery that represents your work
- Scans of, and links to, press articles or reviews
- Information about upcoming exhibitions and projects – this could be embedded from Instagram, Facebook or Twitter.

**Curriculum Vitae (CV)**

An artist CV is different from a job CV since only the experience you have directly related to the arts is relevant. A CV is a list of your skills and experience including exhibitions, education, residencies, relevant employment and funding, and should be individually tailored to the opportunity you are applying for – a CV for a residency application would be different from one applying for project funding. Many artists find it useful to have a 'master' CV – a list of everything artistic you've ever done – and edit it down to no more than two pages of A4 for specific applications.

# Self promotion

**Social networks**

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social networking sites can be valuable tools to reach an audience, if used well. Make sure you have the time to take on this task before you begin, and use whichever platform suits you best.

**Your email newsletter**

You can send updates to your network, like current projects and news, via a well-designed email newsletter when appropriate - such as announcing an exhibition. Make sure people know you're going to add them to your list, and let them opt-out if they want to. Be polite - first impressions count.

# Your rights

Artists and makers have well-established legal rights, as well as general protection under law on issues like employment or getting paid. The rights mentioned in this section are all explained in our free online legal pages, Artlaw, which also provides free legal advice to professional visual artists on questions not covered by our 400+ online articles.

At Artquest we're overwhelmingly asked about contracts and copyright. If you learn nothing else, learn these two basics and avoid a raft of problems in the future.

**Contracts**

For any professional agreement – whether working, getting a commission, selling work, getting a studio, collaborating with other artists, being represented by a gallery, licensing images of your work – **it's essential that you get whatever you've agreed in writing**. This is even more important when issues of payment or copyright are involved – which for artists is the majority of cases. A contract is any written record of what you're going to do, what the other party is going to do, and anything important that should happen along the way – like getting paid or delivering work – and when this should happen. Without something written down – even an exchange of emails – you have no proof of what you've agreed and therefore no way to hold the other party to their side of the bargain.

Any contract is the result of negotiation – you don't have to accept a first offer, and can talk about the terms and conditions in any job or project. Be prepared to talk about money – if it's not been mentioned, bring it up yourself: you'll look more professional, too.

If you're not offered a contract, draft a basic agreement yourself. Even writing an email with an outline of what you are going to do, and any project milestones or a timeline, will be enormously helpful in case of any future disagreements. If sending an email, ask them to reply to it saying they agree to the terms.

Many artists create standard 'terms and conditions' around their working conditions; the kind of professional relationship and working conditions they are prepared to accept. This is then a quick starting point for any negotiations, and you can update it as often as you like.

See the Artlaw Contracts section for information on a huge range of contracts, including some horror stories of what happens without them.

**Copyright**

Copyright protects any original artwork from being used or copied without permission. There are some exceptions to this, notably performance and live art, which can be protected in different ways.

Copyright lasts for your whole life plus 70 years – so only work made by people who died before 1948 is not protected by copyright (but may be protected by trademark or other intellectual property law): work no longer protected by copyright is in the 'public domain'.

Copyright is an automatic right – it is not registered, as any original work is automatically protected. Trademarks and design rights are different and need to be registered to protect them.

Copyright is legally enforceable throughout the world, in pretty much every country and in broadly

the same way.

You cannot hold copyright on an idea, only over how you make something out of an idea – so, for example, the copyright of your painting about climate change is probably not infringed by another painting that looks different and is also about climate change. Remember: it is possible for people to have the same idea even if they haven't met or seen each other's work.

No-one can hold copyright on the title of a work.

You keep the copyright of your work, even after you have sold it, unless you sign a contract selling your copyright. Never, ever sell your copyright: consider licensing your work to others to make use of, for a fee. For more information on licensing, see the DACS and CreativeIP sites.

You can become a member of DACS when you take advantage of their annual Payback service. Every year, DACS collects and distributes millions of pounds of royalties to visual artists and craftspeople whose work has been reproduced in UK books, magazines or on TV.

For full information on copyright, what's covered and what's not, see the Artquest website.

**Internships**

The last few years have seen a lot of discussion on unpaid internships within the arts. Whether or not you are legally entitled to payment for work depends on whether or not you are legally defined as doing work. See the Artquest website for information on what makes a worker and what the law says to help you understand your rights.

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We also include information on what you can do to negtotiate a high quality internship, and information on good practice for interns.

Increasing numbers of organisations offer internships that are paid at least the national minimum wage as a result of increasing awareness of the negative impact that unpaid internships have on diversity and access to the arts.

Our AWP Internships programme works with new UAL graduates, placing them in respected arts organisations in London on defined projects at above London Living Wage.

# Studios

For many artists, the first task on graduating seems obvious: get a studio to continue to make work. But studios can be expensive – and for some practices, might not be the most important place to begin. Around 20% of artists we've asked don't have a studio, with about a third of them reporting they have never had a studio.

If you do need a studio for your work, it's a good idea to apply as early as possible for a place. Subsidised studio organisations tend to have very long waiting lists, sometimes two or more years. In 2015 there were 3,500 artists waiting for affordable studio spaces in London.

The main publicly-funded studio providers in London include ACAVA, Acme, SPACE, ASC, Bow Arts Trust, and Cubitt, along with dozens of smaller providers, many of which are listed on Studio Finder.

You can sometimes find a shared studio space or sublet by:

- finding a studio building you're interested in and putting an advert on their noticeboard
- reading the free ArtsAdmin E-digest, particularly the Lonley Arts section
- searching Artist Studio Finder

Many established studio organisations offer studio residencies for new graduates - keep an eye on Artquest's opportunities pages for news.

Before you choose a studio, you should consider any special resources you need and make sure they can provide them. An 'affordable' studio space usually means between 30-80% of market rent – which in London can still be quite high. Artists in London

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have reported studio rents doubling or more since 2017 as studio providers, many with no reserves in their budgets, are forced to pass on increased property costs to artists. Make sure you can afford a studio before you take it on, or agree with friends (and the studio provider) to share the space and the costs.

If you get a studio, taking part in any open studio opportunities that you can will provide better exposure, better relationships with others in your studio, and new audiences.

There are a number of makerspaces (offering specialist workshops for a membership fee), hire-a-bench workshops and hackspaces appearing across the country. These offer the use of tools and different level of memberships, often including single-day hire. These spaces offer further opportunity to exchange and collaborate with other artists, and the benefit of an increased network. Spaces such as RARA, London Hackspace, London Sculpture Workshops, London Centre for Book Arts , Thames-Side Print Studio and Blackhorse Workshop are used by designers, architects and amateurs alike. For a list of artist-led workshops in London, check the Open Workshop Network.

# Residency & exchange

A residency is a period of time that an artist spends developing their practice away from their usual location. They are prized by artists as a reflective period to focus on work without having to worry about jobs or money – although some residencies ask for payment to contribute to their running costs, a piece of work to be donated by the artist at the end, or some work by the artist on education or outreach activity. Resident artists may also be expected to put on an exhibition, run community workshops, make a presentation, or engage with staff or public.

We have a detailed overview of how to get a residency on our website, including interviews with artists, the benefits and what to expect.

At their very best, a residency might provide a free studio, artist fee, accommodation and living and materials allowances, so that the artists are relieved of day-to-day pressures of life and can spend the residency period pushing forward with their practice uninterrupted.

Residencies might be invited (i.e., an organisation selects an artist themselves), or selected (through an open application procedure).

Although artists often work in a specifically provided studio (and sometimes accommodation) for a fixed period to develop their work, a residency might also be offered by a school, museum, university or foundation that may provide access to a collection or staff, but not a studio space.

**Benefits of residencies may include**

- a period of uninterrupted time on your practice
- financial support

# Residency & exchange

• new space to make work

• professional development support, such as conversations with curators

• increased networks

• exposure to new audiences

• access to specialist knowledge or equipment

• the opportunity to travel

It's important to check exactly what a residency award provides, and expects, before you apply. Do your own research and decide if it is right for you.

Residencies are highly sought-after opportunities, but some artists manage to sustain their careers by undertaking them regularly, or continuously.

**Finding residencies**

There are many sources of information on the hundreds of different residencies available and where to find them. Artquest lists national, European and international residencies.

Useful sources for international residencies also include Res Artis and TransArtists, but make sure to check if they require payment to accommodate you.

One useful UK scheme, Artists Access to Art Colleges, provides studio space and access to facilities in art schools for 6 months from September, and in return expects some teaching time – a useful way to build experience of teaching as well as access art school equipment and workshops.

If you're looking for a residency at the start of your career, you might consider signing up with our Exchange online social network. Exchange lets you

# Residency & exchange

meet artists around the corner and around the world to network and exchange with your peers.

Exchange offers:

• Profiles for more than 2,000 artists

• A local network, allowing you to find artists living and working near you.

• Potential collaborators, exchange partners and friends.

Join our network and you could end up in India, Australia, Canada, Indonesia or America; or you might opt for Liverpool, Glasgow, Cornwall or York.

# Exhibiting

One of the main measures of an artist's career development is through exhibitions, whether in galleries, by completing public commissions, organising their own shows, or other projects.

It is important to be aware how galleries operate, so you understand how they programme exhibitions. Artquest has a section with both articles and video interviews with curators and gallery coordinators discussing how they work with artists. We also published a selection of online films interviewing gallery directors of publicly funded galleries, artist-led spaces, galleries within higher education institutions and commercial galleries explaining how they select artists to work with.

Whichever kind of gallery you are thinking of approaching, research them carefully to ensure your work is appropriate to the space and themes they exhibit, show interest in the rest of their programme, and explain why you think your work is suitable to them.

**Publicly funded galleries**

Publicly funded galleries come in many varieties and are hard to generalise. They are often funded through annual grants from Arts Council England, or trusts and charities, and tend to show the work of more established artists, usually only by invitation. A show at a publicly funded gallery is an important opportunity for an artist, but often only comes at a later career stage.

They will also have limited resources and usually have to fundraise to make exhibitions happen – sometimes, an Arts Council England grant will pay for staffing and building costs only, with programme

funding found from other sources. Consequently, they have to plan one or two years in advance to apply for and secure funding.

They are publicly accountable because of their state funding, and have to demonstrate some public benefit for the shows they put on. They will sometimes, but not always, pay an exhibition fee, and you should ask about this if you are invited to exhibit.

**Artist-led galleries**

Set up by artists to programme their own choice of exhibitions, these spaces might exhibit artists from a particular network of friends and colleagues, accept open applications or only select artists to exhibit. You should contact them before sending a proposal to make sure it can be considered.

They are often self-funded out of the artist-members own pocket, might have very limited project funding, or no money at all. Don't assume that these galleries will be able to fund your exhibition: you may need to find money or work at the gallery to make your exhibition happen, or assist with funding applications.

These galleries tend to work with artists only on one exhibition and are very unlikely to represent you. Some may try actively to sell your work for a commission fee to help support their programme, but most do not.

Artist-led spaces tend to offer exposure to a wider network and validation amongst other artists, helping you build your reputation and find more exhibition opportunities.

If you have a group of artists interested in the idea,

you may also consider setting up your own artist-led gallery.

**Commercial galleries**

Commercial galleries are for-profit companies set up to make money by selling art. They actively represent individual artists, helping nurture careers, and maintain a network of collectors with whom they can place work. They pass on money when a sale occurs.

These galleries make money by taking a commission of the selling price: which can initially be 100% - i.e., they will sell the work for double the price you want to receive for it. There is no set, regular starting commission for working with a commercial gallery.

They may also financially support the costs of making new work depending on your relationship with them.

On Artquest you can watch a video with a gallerist explaining what to expect from a commercial gallery, plus an article on how artists work with commercial galleries.

**How to get an exhibition**

Building a trusting, professional relationship with galleries and curators is vital for getting exhibitions. Often a director or curator will follow an artist's career for some time - possibly years - before finding an exhibition they want to include them in.

Most galleries do not accept unsolicited submissions, and sending them an email or printed application will not get you very far – and may not even get you a reply. A good way to be seen is by applying to selected open submission shows and prizes such

as New Contemporaries and the various Jerwood Awards, as gallery directors and curators are often on judging panels for these.

Gallery directors and curators spend a lot of time looking at applications and visiting exhibitions - this is an important part of their job. Try build a relationship with them by inviting them to your events and exhibitions. Keep inviting them to different exhibitions even if they don't come at first. Read more about how to meet curators.

**Get it in writing**

If you are offered an exhibition always have an agreement in writing outlining your roles, responsibilities and the practicalities relating to the exhibition or project. Remember that every agreement and relationship will be different and open to negotiation, and be prepared to compromise where you are able.

You should always have an agreement in writing with a commercial gallery covering (among other things) who owns what work, what rights you have to access collector contact details, how often you can expect an exhibition, and what exhibition costs the gallery will cover. Our Artlaw archive has a useful overview of contracts with galleries.

**Curators**

Curators organise, select and programme exhibitions, and can work in a variety of ways. Some are employed by institutions directly and are responsible for their organisation's programme, often with the director or other curators, and some are independent and build their own relationships with galleries and initiate their own exhibitions.

# Exhibiting

Freelance curators (i.e., curators who work for a number of galleries as self-employed workers) are a vital contact for artists to get exhibitions, and you should have some idea of how to meet them.

# More help

As an artist you'll never stop learning and acquiring new skills. It might be that your medium requires learning new skills or techniques, or perhaps you will take part in talks and short courses. This section highlights a few of the dozens of organisations that exist to help artists with all aspects of their careers.

**Our regular events**

Peer Forum, run in partnership with galleries around London, provides artists with the funding, space and resources necessary to establish their own peer mentoring groups, while establishing contact with some of London's most respected art spaces.

Outpost involves Artquest artist-staff spending one day a month working in studio spaces around London to find out more about the kind of things you'd like us to do, and to answer your questions.

For an overview of all our projects, including residencies and internships, visit our website.

We have held hundreds of talks since 2001. All of our audio is collected and distributed via SoundCloud, and is free to access.

**Key organisations around London and the UK**

Artists Union England is a trade union for professional visual and applied artists - the only representative body for visual artists in England. They aim to represent artists at strategic decision-making levels, positively influence the role artists play within society and challenge the economic inequalities in the art world to negotiate fair pay and better working conditions for artists.

a-n The Artists Information Company is a UK agency supporting the practice of visual and applied artists.

# More help

Through advocacy and information, a-n stimulates and supports contemporary visual arts practice and affirms the value of artists in society.

Established by artists for artists, DACS is a not-for-profit visual artists' rights management organisation acting as a broker for 80,000 artists worldwide. Runs the annual Payback scheme, distributing millions of pounds of royalty fees to artists whose work has been used in books, magazines or on TV, as well as secondary uses, such as photocopying.

Open Workshop Network is a growing network of 40+ open-access workshops covering 24+ disciplines and 125+ different types of tools across London, including makespaces, Fab Labs and hackspaces. Each is a member-led organisation, with the network collectively covering almost all media: ceramic, screen printing, welding, 3D scanning, plaster casting, architecture, woodwork, metalwork, digital fabricators and engineers.

Engage is a membership organisation representing gallery, art and education professionals in the UK and in 15 countries worldwide, and promotes access to, enjoyment and understanding of the visual arts through gallery education.

Artsadmin is an arts lab for the creation of performance, site-specific and interdisciplinary work, where the innovative, experimental and unusual are nurtured. Artsadmin develop artistic talent and support artists at all stages of their careers, use their expertise to help artists realise ambitious ideas, and creating a safe and supportive space for experiment, risk-taking and development.

Visual Artists Ireland is the representative body for

visual artists across all Ireland: providing practical support to artists in all art forms throughout their careers.

Lawyers Volunteering for the Arts was set up by a group of London law firms to offer pro bono legal support to non-profit arts organisations.

**Key networks and groups**

Artists looking to develop a network and get feedback on their work should consider joining regular Q-Art peer mentoring groups  An artist-led initiative, Q-Art also publishes books, organises gallery visits and promotes exhibitions by members.

ForumArts is a network for visual artists that delivers opportunities, talks and information about creative practice. Based in and supported by The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Forum creates a community for artists and a platform for discussion and debate.

Peer Sessions is a nomadic crit group providing a forum for the discussion of contemporary art at postgraduate level.  Meetings aim to offer constructive feedback to practicing artists and engage with current concerns in art and culture. Peer Sessions also organise projects focussed on facilitating and supporting artistic collaboration.

Groundwerk is a monthly series of free practical workshops designed for artists and creatives wishing to gain the skills to support their practice, organised by artist-led gallery Turf in Croydon.

The Contemporary Visual Arts Network nurtures contemporary visual artists and organisations to produce internationally regarded, critically engaged work that is valued by society. Present in each

region of the UK, CVAN produces talks, training, professional development and sustains networks of artists.

Art/ Work Association (A/WA) is an association of artists and creative workers and a self-generated programme of talks, screenings, seminars, reading groups, workshops and critical feedback sessions, conceived as a forum for peer exchange. A/WA offers a support network for associates and enables self-organised learning, professional development and critical dialogue. Supported and hosted by Auto Italia.

Art Monthly's previews and events calendar (London only) lists useful opportunities to meet new people and keep up to date on the latest currents in contemporary art, with ArtRabbit covering similar topics and news around the UK and internationally.

# About Artquest

Primer was written by the Artquest team of professional visual artists, working part-time on the programme. Much of the material here is edited from our website.

If you spot a mistake or have a suggestion for our next edition, help us to make Primer even more useful by sending feedback to:

- info@artquest.org.uk
- Facebook / londonartquest
- Twitter / @artquestlondon
- SoundCloud / @artquest
- Instagram / @artquestlondon
- Youtube / ArtquestLondon
- Vimeo / artquest

Artquest provides advice and information to London's professional visual artists and makers, helping you make the most of your career.

Our free-to-access website has over 2,000 pages of advice, listings, articles, film, audio and opportunities for over 30,000 artists and makers who visit each month, covering every area visual arts practice, including:

- Opportunities and deadlines listings: look at our online listings and follow #artopps.
- Funding, funders, financing advice and awards
- Tax, money, income and budgets
- Materials suppliers from the esoteric to the banal
- Affordable studio spaces in and around London
- Advice on getting an exhibition and meeting curators
- Shipping and art handling companies

# About Artquest

- Information on public liability and artwork insurance
- Residencies in the UK and overseas
- Reference and research materials
- Printers, framers and graphics companies
- Marketing and publicity advice and contacts
- Legal archive and free online legal queries
- How to set up an organisation
- Benefits, housing and employment
- Becoming self-employed and invoicing
- International venues, residencies, advice services and networks
- Courses and training providers
- Calculating rates of pay, VAT and tax

More information is added each week, commissioned from artists, curators, arts administrators, funders and other arts professionals on the practical and critical elements of artistic practice. Our website is complimented by a programme of talks, residencies, events, peer mentoring groups and partnerships.

Every month, Artquest lists high-quality opportunities for artists - everything from deadlines for awards, exhibitions, residencies and conference papers to commissions, mentoring, training, fellowships and journal submissions. We filter and select these opportunities for quality and reliability; because we don't accept advertising fees, our opportunities are selected on the basis of merit only.

# About Artquest

Our small, dedicated, team are all practicing artists, curators and writers. We create new resources in response to the needs of artists and makers.

**Nick Kaplony**

Nick is a graduate of Camberwell College of Arts and has worked as assistant curator at the Arts Gallery London, and as Exhibitions officer at the Pump House Gallery. He is also a practicing artist and freelance curator. Nick is a born and bred Londoner.

**Russell Martin**

Russell is a graduate from The Glasgow School of Art and has worked in gallery education, as a curator and is still a practising artist. His self-initiated projects include peer mentoring groups and two art project spaces, and he is co-founder of an artist-led commissioning agency. Russell has lived in London since 1998.

**Tom Pope**

Tom graduated from the Royal College of Art in 2011 and has worked extensively in education and events. Tom's artistic practice combines performative strategies with photography in a collaborative and playful manner, while additionally undertaking large scale participatory performance projects.

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