

## Let me in: Getting young people into the Creative Industries

For many young people choosing a career can be daunting. Choosing one in the creative industries, often without clear career structures or the support of parents and peers, access to relevant information or without the required skills, it can be even more challenging.

Over the last fifteen years the V&A's Young People's Team has been helping 13 – 24 year olds into the creative industries through informal skills-based workshops, and through free initiatives such as career insights, career based social inclusion projects, career festivals and a youth collective.

It has become apparent that young people need:

- Realistic career information from practising creatives
- To be informed that careers goals change as a career develops
- Alternative routes in the creative industries other than via university
- Advice on networking – what it is and how to build a relevant one
- Practical advice on subjects such as how to become a freelancer, what is involved setting up a business, developing a portfolio etc.

As young people get older many of them become aware of:

- Lack of contacts limiting the opportunities to get work experience, internships and a job
- Class barriers blocking them from progressing
- That women often only apply for jobs they are qualified for, men are more likely to apply for posts at a higher level than qualified

Young people are not one homogeneous group, their interests and motivations into the creative industries are varied, however the V&A's Young People's Team wanted to see if different profiles could be identified from the young people attending events.

The V&A working with Loughborough University London carried out evaluations during a five-day CreateFutures project for young people not in employment, education or training and Making it: Careers in Art and Design, a one-day event.

Five profiles were identified and were subsequently analysed and added to by members of CreateVoice, the V&A's youth collective.

## **Profile 1: The Selector**

Starting to make decisions that will affect their career path

### **Demographics**

- Age range: 14 -19 years, possibly early twenties
- Education level: Still studying or just finished GCSE/ A-levels, possibly undergraduate
- Employment experience: none/ scarce/ placements and internships

### **Defining Traits**

- Concerned about making the right decisions, aware of the importance of informed choices
- Open to new experiences, keen on exploring possibilities
- Often uncertain about their own choices, seeking external validation
- Willing to gain volunteering experience
- Perhaps unsure where to start/find sources of information
- Sometimes lacking confidence

### **Creative Career Goals**

- Definitely interested in a creative career, but not certain which one to go for
- Probably looked at various options, and have some idea what's out there
- Maybe overly ambitious / unrealistic about goals vs reality
- Sometimes don't fully understand what a creative career is, or the skills/qualifications needed

### **Career Stage**

- Still deciding over 'the' career
- Don't know the broad range of potential careers
- May have already a shortlist of suitable professions
- Some may have decided on a career, but are uncertain and want validation

### **Career Influencers**

- A wide range (from creative professionals to teachers, parents, and peers), different for individual profiles
- Likely to be particularly sensitive to information and advice from experienced professionals and teachers
- Hard to find a balance view
- Decisions often formed too quickly without verification

### **Challenges in Career Progression**

- Lack of information about what happens in a creative sector
- Lack of knowledge about needed skill and steps to pursue a career / route ahead

- Lack of access to networks and creative professionals

### **Needs and Expectations to be delivered by Provider**

- Industry know-how and career know-how to be able to decide or validate one's choices
- Access to creative professionals for career advice and first-hand experience stories
- Rather broad, generic, wide-ranging information covering more creative sectors
- Opportunities for hands-on taster activities

### **What Activities match their profile?**

- Career focus festivals, events giving: informative talks on industry know how and career know how, advice sessions, taster sessions, workshops, demos
- Longer/more engaged, hands-on courses and workshops to experience a creative practice and /or another skill

### **Quotes from young people attending Making it events and CreateFutures projects:**

“Confused about where to go with a creative future.”

“[I want] to become more confident about my choices. I sort of know already, but just to learn if I am on the right path.”

“I am trying to decide on a career. Discovering.”

## **Profile 2: The Multifaceted Creative**

Talented and interested in more than one field

### **Demographics**

- Age range: 16 -21years
- Education level: Still studying or just finished GCSE/ A-levels, possibly undergraduate or new graduate
- Employment experience: Scarce or some experience – internships/ some arts gigs/ occasional one-off creative work
- Take part in a wide range of societies/organisations/clubs
- Often have voluntary experience

### **Defining Traits**

- Talented in more than one creative domain
- Anchored in contemporary youth culture – heavy users of social media, contemporary music, love dynamic, exciting experiences, don't like repetitive boring stuff
- Embrace flexibility: Open to freelancing workstyle that gives liberty, despite low job security
- The younger the more open to exploring possibilities, but not keen to focus on one thing just yet even at 22yrs+
- Unsure how to choose which career to pursue

### **Creative Career Goals**

- Interested in a creative career, but not keen to settle on one just yet
- Exploring different routes that match their talents, often connected
- May also explore creative routes as a hobby/side profession while pursuing another career

### **Career Stage**

- Still deciding over 'the' career, they have already some firm options to choose from (some still in talent/potential stage)
- Likely show interest in more than one area and train for more than one
- Often not keen to decide over a single and final career, rather exploring different routes and matching them to opportunities

### **Career Influencers**

- Reject schools and authority, likely to want to learn more from creative professionals and peers
- May also use social media to get informed, and to propel their own career, actual influence of social media on career choices likely to be higher for the under 20yrs

### **Challenges in Career Progression**

- Need to build solid skills to match their interest-based learning style
- Lack of knowledge about the experience of being creative in a certain sector
- Lack of knowledge about needed skills and steps to pursue a career
- Lack of connecting networks and access to creative professionals
- Lack of confidence and direction

### **Needs and Expectations to be delivered by Provider**

- Map creative career paths – skills needed/the route ahead (career know-how)
- Sample or hear about the experience of practicing in a creative sector (industry know-how)
- Get access to creative professionals for career and industry insights, advice, inspiration, new ideas
- Guidance on how to follow multiple careers or pick one
- Benefit from mentoring

### **What Activities match their Profile?**

- Career focus festivals, events giving: informative talks on industry know how and career know how, advice sessions, taster sessions, workshops, demos
- Longer/more engaged, hands-on courses and workshops to experience a creative practice and /or another skill

### **Quotes from young people attending Making it events and CreateFutures projects:**

“I’m interested in visual arts. I’m coming from a background of writing and music but I’m trying to learn more about the visual aspects of it.”

“Photography remains a plan B, plan A is music, so photography is something to fall back on. I know what’s trendy, you have to go with the times.”

### **Profile 3: The Decided**

Chosen a career, looking for relevant opportunities in that field

#### **Demographics**

- Age range: 20 -24years. Can be younger and studying in a chosen creative field
- Education level: Likely to be still studying or just finished undergraduate or postgraduate
- Employment experience: Some experience – starter jobs/ entry levels/ internships/ some arts gigs/

#### **Defining Traits**

- Keen to build a broad base of skills to get ahead of the crowd/ consolidate one's position in a chosen creative sector
- Be aware and informed about what happens in one's field

#### **Creative Career Goals**

- Build a career in a chosen creative field
- Keep informed and aware of what happens in the chosen creative sector

#### **Career Stage**

- Have chosen a career, either still studying for a creative qualification or moving from study into work

#### **Career Influencers**

- More autonomous decision-making, likely to accept information from peers and creative professionals, trusted instructors/mentors

#### **Challenges in Career Progression**

- Lack of knowledge about the running of the industry they have just begun to explore
- Lack of access to connecting networks and creative professionals for leads and opportunities – jobs, freelance, training and internships

#### **Needs and Expectations to be delivered by Provider**

- Get access to creative professionals for career and industry insights, advice, inspiration, new ideas
- Identify leads and opportunities such as workplaces, internships, etc
- Deeper, more specific information about industry and career know-how, above the basics

#### **What activities match their profile?**

- Events that put them in touch with creative professionals and expose them to how things work in a field and enhance networking
- Talks and career stories from creative professionals and follow up information

- Possibly applied workshops, more in-depth than the taster workshop to get more advance skills

**Quotes from young people attending Making it events and CreateFutures projects:**

“I study art and design and want to be an architect.”

“I am looking for a placement, internship, I am doing a BA in Product Design.”

## **Profile 4: The Switcher**

Transitioning into a creative career

### **Demographics**

- Age range: 23years+
- Education level: finished studies, possibly undergraduate qualification/postgraduate
- Employment experience: employed and / or with professional experience not necessarily in the field they want to be in

### **Defining Traits**

- Preoccupied with finding a job that gives them more fulfilment and satisfaction than the current/recent one
- Feel pressure to succeed and get up to speed with others already in the field

### **Creative Career Goals**

- Transition into a creative career
- Looking for alternative/ non-traditional routes to enter a creative sector

### **Career Stage**

- Already working/ with professional experience but decided to change career
- May have decided on a target career or exploring options such as work experience or paid internship

### **Career Influencers**

- Autonomous in taking decisions and choosing their influencers
- Likely to trust peers and creative professionals for information and advice

### **Challenges in Career Progression**

- Lack of connecting networks and opportunities for career change
- Lack of knowledge about alternative/ non-traditional routes into creative industries
- Moving beyond volunteering/ casual working into an actual job in the creative sector

### **Needs and Expectations to be delivered by Provider**

- Gain knowledge on how to enter a new professional field without new studies.
- Want to find out about non-traditional entry routes
- Gain access to creative professionals for advice and career insights
- Access leads and opportunities they can follow up on

### **What activities match their profile?**

- Looking for leads, networking opportunities and connections, information to follow up on rather than 'how to' or exploratory talks and workshops
- (when exploring target career options) Sessions that give an insight into the experience of working in the sector, advice from experienced professionals

**Quotes from young people attending Making it events and CreateFutures projects:**

"I am working in film and visual arts. I am interested in alternative career routes, not the traditional ones."

## **Profile 5: The Explorer**

Looking for new ideas, spends time critically thinking to form new opinions

### **Demographics**

- Age range: 14 -19years, likely to be in the younger percentile
- Education level: Likely to be still at school or just finished GCSE/A -levels

### **Defining Traits**

- Exploring what to do with their lives and looking around
- Believe in the importance of catching the right opportunity – eager to attend industry events/ networking/research
- Not yet quite ready to take a final career decision – want to get a sense of what’s out there first
- Active on social media
- Very busy schedules

### **Creative Career Goals**

- Still developing career goals
- Not certain about their career, and whether it’s a creative career or not
- Want creative industry insights

### **Career Stage**

- Still deciding over their career and study paths, and whether creative careers suit them

### **Career Influencers**

- Social media (especially Instagram and YouTube), family, school and peers are all likely to influence them

### **Challenges in Career Progression**

- Deciding. Too many choices
- Concerns over employability

### **Needs and Expectations to be delivered by Provider**

- Get general and specific information about choice of creative careers and a taste of how it is to work as a creative professional
- Need honest perspectives of particular industries

### **What activities match their profile?**

- Informative talks on industry and career know how; taster workshops; demos

- Workshops and courses, hands-on activities where they can try out things and develop basic skills

**Quotes from young people attending Making it events and CreateFutures projects:**

“[I came] to see what’s it like to work in the creative industries. I heard about it from friends and social media.”