

# Future Directions

...is getting involved in the creative sector really open to all?



## Summary Report of Discussion Session

Future Directions – Session 2

Chaired by Sonita Alleyne OBE

(Held at IPC Media, 11 November 2010)

## Creative London 2020

### About Future Directions

Throughout Autumn 2010, A New Direction hosts a series of discussion events exploring issues and ideas in relation to how young Londoners develop careers in the creative industries and the arts. These debates will be followed online with a facebook community of young people contributing-to and commenting-on the conclusions. Future Directions will help shape an agenda for the creative sector in London in how to develop the creative workforce of the future.

### Creative London 2020

London has long been acknowledged as a global hub for the creative industries. But looking forward to 2020 will this be sustained?

The Creative London 2020 debate brought together 30 people from across the creative industries, policy and government, education and the arts to look at the threats to London's creative sector with a specific focus on the challenge of developing the next generation of creative professionals.

Young people will be crucial to providing the skills, imagination and creativity necessary for the creative sector to grow. The debate asked if we are doing enough to build the workforce of the future and whether we are excluding some young people from the creative industries story.

### Who took part in this discussion session:

**Chair** – Sonita Alleyne OBE

**Speaker** – Martin Bright (New Deal of the Mind)

**Speaker** – Paul Canty (Preloaded)

Name	Organisation
Andrew Senior	Creative Economy
Anne Thidemann	Frieze Art Fair
Beatrice Pembroke	British Council
Ben Arora	Nesta

Caroline Bray	Arts Award
Claire Boulton	Arts Council England
Deirdre Buckley	Craftspace
Elizabeth Lynch	A New Direction
Holly Donagh	A New Direction
Jocelyn Cunningham	Royal Society of Arts
Karen Myers	IPC Media
Kate Edwards	Channel Four
Katie Edwards	British Fashion Council
Landry-Daniel Lie	Trashed Student
Lesley Wake	Arts and Business
Lucy Mantella	BOP Consulting
Marcus Jamieson-Pond	GLA
Mark Crawley	University for the Arts
Mark Gurney	Livity / Music4Good
Matt Gould	A New Direction
Neil Berry	LDA
Sam Cairns	Museums Libraries and Archives (MLA)
Shelagh Wright	Demos
Simone Baird	Trashed
Sophie Hayles	Whitechapel Gallery
Stephen Beddoes	Artquest
Steve Moffitt	A New Direction
Steve Woodward	A New Direction
Suzie Leighton	LCACE
Teresa Cisneros	INIVA
Tom Campbell	GLA
Natalie Sofo	Trashed Student
Alan Rutter	Trashed

## Starting the conversation

Sonita Alleyne the co-founder of Somethin' Else Production Company and chair of Sound and Music, amongst other roles, chaired the event which began with two different perspectives on the theme of Creative London 2020.

### Employer perspective (Paul Canty, Preloaded)

Paul reflected on the challenges for young people trying to get into the games industry. One of these is understanding the kind of roles available and keeping up with the pace of change. He commented that he could not have imagined the job he is doing now when he was at school because it did not exist.

At Preloaded, the team - its skills and expertise - is the commodity and therefore recruitment is taken very seriously. The workforce is educated, passionate, driven - they care, constantly improving their knowledgebase and personal creativity.

Preloaded look for people with initiative, who connect with others and show their passion. A college degree is the bare minimum.

Paul talked about an applicant for a studio manager position who had all the passion and drive but no credible work experience and no degree - in the context of receiving hundreds of applications from all over the world - they could not take this person on. Had this person been signposted to a course at the right point in his education he might well have been able to get a job with Preloaded.

The company wants a diverse workforce - it wants to engage with the community around it in South London (in order to stay relevant as much as anything else) but recruitment is always a big risk for a small company and they have to set the bar extremely high.

Paul's advice was invest in your human capital as an employer, but also as a prospective employee.

### Political perspective (Martin Bright, New deal of the mind)

Martin Bright from New Deal of the Mind spoke about the importance of the arts and creativity in a time of austerity and recession. His organisation has been running a Future Jobs programme for the last year placing unemployed young people in arts and creative organisations. This scheme is changing the nature of the kind of people going into the creative industries.

Martin believes that we must put the creative sector at the heart of the recovery, because this is where the innovation and new ideas necessary for growth will come from. Young creatives are not asking for much; a modicum of capital, support and/ or mentoring and space to work with freedom. It is worth providing these elements in order to drive creative growth.

What is needed is not a paternalistic response but a way of making a transaction with a young person. "Make a job not take a job" as a way of understanding a new model of work training.

Martin urged us to talk about the Creative Society - as a part of the Big Society - and to show government what the sector can do and how we can offer young people careers which are fulfilling and meaningful.

## London and the talent gap: How do we ensure the city retains its edge in terms of the creative industries and what are the implications for how we train and nurture the 2020 workforce?

### Value livelihood not growth

London can tell an extremely positive story about growth in the creative industries over the last ten years. But to some extent that story is predicated on a set of measures and metrics that now feel out of date.

Shelagh Wright talked about other cities and places around the world who are looking less at the stark economic outputs of the creative industries but at the way the sector works, the different kinds of value it creates and the 'energy' around success. This leads to a different kind of policy intervention which is less about developing an industrial sector in the sense of economic growth and more about nurturing an ecology and valuing the sector for the kinds of *livelihoods* it can create and sustain.

There was a sense that the sector – in London and nationally – needs to get more sophisticated in its arguments. However Ben Arora (Nesta) cautioned against moving away from all economic arguments and stressed that governments continue to need this kind of data.

### What creates a dynamic city?

Stephen Beddoes (Artquest) highlighted the fact that creativity and innovation do not necessarily follow (or equate with) levels of public investment. Often factors like affordable space are more important. Matt Gould pointed out that much of London's success has been about the growth of artistic neighbourhoods and this was driven by the need for artists to find and colonize cheap space. Therefore these kinds of interventions may be more important than direct subsidy.

### Changes to the ecology

The massive changes going on in higher education – specifically the introduction of higher tuition fees - will also change the ecology of the arts in London. London arts schools will become some of the most expensive in the world – what does this mean for equality of opportunity? And how will it effect the complex role that art schools play in the success of the wider creative economy?

### New forms of investment

The cuts to public investment will mean organisations have to come up with new models of working to survive. The private sector clearly has a role in this and Lesley Wake (Arts and Business) talked about the work they are doing to develop more innovative relationships between private and public organisations. She stressed the problem that some creative industries have by being neither profit making organisations or charities, which can mean they are not eligible for donations.

Martin Bright (New Deal of the Mind) said that in the UK we are 'behind the curve' in terms of business collaboration and highlighted models from around the world such as Jerusalem Venture Partners where money is used differently. Jerusalem Venture Partners is a successful digital company which funds their town's main arts centre.

## Growth is slow and decline is fast

The creative industries are talent driven. Their infrastructure is their people. This means that they can be flexible about where they locate. Ben Arora (Nesta) highlighted the story of the decline of the British games industry which has been lured overseas by tax breaks in other countries.

It seems unlikely in the current climate that the government will be open to discussing tax breaks for small sectors but they might respond in other ways. For instance with the games sector the government has commissioned Nesta to look at skills issues and there may be lessons for other sub-sectors in this.

*“there needs to be a sense of urgency around these sectors.” We have to move quickly and collectively – “either we will come out (of the recession) stronger or we will lose entire sectors”.*  
Ben Arora

There is an urgent need for London to develop a strong and focused voice on Creative Industries issues in order to maintain the position of some sectors within the industry.

## Actions and ideas:-

- Government needs to continue to incentivize big creative companies where it can – through tax breaks etc whilst acknowledging this is ‘20<sup>th</sup> century industrial thinking’  
*Shelagh Wright*
- We should develop more intelligence about the sector – a more holistic view and see what this tells us about necessary policy interventions *“intelligent about where we go as well as where we have been”*
- Most artists need less than £1,000 to get started – tiny amounts of money make a big difference. Can we develop an Art or Culture bank? Or new models of micro financing?
- The Department for Work and Pension is about to launch a vast investment programme in getting the unemployed into work – the Single Programme. The cultural and creative sector needs to find a way to work with this and model innovative and successful ways in which this kind of work can be done
- We can open up the cultural sector to new communities and tackle worklessness by moving job centres into places people go – like arts centres, libraries and children’s centres.

**Bearing in mind the shifting political landscape and the opportunities in London’s creative sector - How do young Londoners get started? And what can employers and other professionals do to encourage the next generation of talent?**

## Reflecting London’s diversity

The sector remains monolithic in terms of race and class. Is this because of hidden cultural barriers and young people not choosing to pursue careers in these areas or out and out prejudice on the part of employers?

We know that there are a lot of young people from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds doing art and design courses within FE who don’t go on to study in traditional arts schools or take up careers in the sector. Martin Bright also talked about Black and Asian young people at the first

stages of looking for work in the sector 'getting blocked' in favour of their white middle class counterparts.

Lack of diversity is not only a issue for cohesion but it is about talent – currently the sector is missing out on the widest available talent pool.

### People get fixed early

Whilst it is important to look at post 16 opportunities there was a plea not to ignore the importance of engaging with much younger kids. Ben Arora (Nesta) talked about the fact that people's expectations of what they can aspire to get fixed very early and if we want to really change the demographics of who succeeds in the creative industries then working with young people from primary age is crucial.

The new freedoms for schools do present some opportunities to provide a different kind of holistic education and the creative sector could lead the way in providing models of how to do this.

### Horizon busting

We have a real issue with lack of knowledge within school about the opportunities available to young people in the creative sector. It is currently a lottery whether young people get the kind of support they need to find a route into these careers.

In many ways the creative sector is dynamic and changing and the education sector 'glacial' (Mark Gurney, Livity) therefore it is different for the two sectors to communicate and find consistent pathways for routing young people in the right direction.

Simone Baird (Trashed) talked about the importance of 'horizon busting' which is a fairly simple process of showing and telling young people about the opportunities that are out there and providing some simple steps they can take to move forward.

### Being old enough for work does not mean you are *ready* for work

The sector is competitive and it demands a lot from its workforce. This can present a real barrier to some young people. The issue is that young people are leaving school not ready for work and not ready for apprenticeship. The IPC work experience programme with New Direction addresses this by making sure all young people do a work readiness course and acquire skills before they are placed in the office environment – this makes the experience much richer for the young person and much better for the employer

### An integrated model for interns/ apprenticeships and mentoring

Steve Moffitt (A New Direction) highlighted the fact that a paradigm shift needs to take place in the way in which cultural organisations look at developing the workforce. Many of the old models the sector has relied upon – unpaid internships etc – appear increasingly outmoded. There is an opportunity to re-frame the narrative around how the sector collaborates and finds different ways of supporting young people.

There was strong support for developing the apprenticeship route but some dangers were highlighted:

- A lot of unemployed graduates are now taking these positions making it even harder for non-graduates to get experience
- Reinforcing the stereotype of working class young people going into apprenticeship and middle class kids going to higher education

Elizabeth Lynch described a model of knowledge sharing like a “*spiders web connecting schools, industry, hubs, agencies, voluntary sector*” with advice and guidance on careers in the sector.

### Priorities

- To model a service which means it is not a lottery for young people finding advice on the sector
- To radically alter – or engage with - careers guidance and work experience within school
- To connect with a range of training models/providers
- To continue to try to make the large institutions and companies more open to young people from different backgrounds
- To keep educational providers up to date on employers requirements
- To shift the expectation from companies and institutions that they must have graduates
- To work to get apprenticeships reflecting the reality of work in the sector – embracing small companies and freelancers etc.

### Conclusions

There is a crisis in careers advice within schools and higher education. There are disjunctures at many points across the progression from school to a career in the sector. The public sector paradigm is changing radically. This situation could result in even more polarization between those who do have an opportunity to work in the sector and those who do not. However, it is a time of change and there are some real opportunities within this for the sector to take responsibility for building the future work force and nurturing the talent from across all sectors of society.

### Three crucial actions need to happen

1. Greater collaboration and engagement across the creative sector to build a system for providing advice for young people on how to build a career in the sector.
2. Maintaining pressure on government to influence training support and other initiatives so that they work with the needs of the creative sector. And working directly with government programmes to influence their outcomes and use them as routes for getting different kinds of young people into the arts and creative industries.
3. Challenge prejudice and class/ethnicity barriers within the sector. This requires an honest dialogue on the issues and sustained investment in cultural change.

**Participants were asked to name one change that they think would make London a more creative city**

'Reform A levels taking the best elements of the creative and media diploma.'

Mark Crawley, University of the Arts

'More knowledge held locally about how young people get on.'

Matt Gould, Consultant

'An arts studio in every primary school.'

Stephen Beddoes, Artquest

'Employers to recognize they can learn from young people.'

Steve Woodward, A New Direction

'A new dynamic careers advice service.'

Mark Gurney, Livity

'Better ways for employers to find talent.'

Paul Canty, Pre-loaded

'For organisations who are in competition with one another to work together to support young people and thereby level out the playing field.'

Karen Myers, IPC Media

'Education and employers talking more.'

Kate Edwards, Channel Four

'Systematic entitlement to experiential learning in creative and cultural sector.'

Ben Arora, Nesta

'More arenas for playful creativity across boundaries of class and background.'

Elizabeth Lynch, Consultant

'An end to the lottery of opportunity for young people getting into the sector.'

Steve Moffitt, A New Direction

Holly Donagh  
A New Direction  
November 2010