

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 work with 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 suitable for a wide range of 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.

1. 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.'
2. 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.
3. 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.

4. 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](#).

1. Have your contact information available at all times. Often people will be interested in your work but might 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 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.

2. Build a website for your work before you graduate, so you can add it to UAL's [Showtime](#), 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](#).

3. 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 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](#).

1. If the work is reproducible – like a film or photograph – you might think about making a small [edition](#) of it as well.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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

details about invoices are in the Money chapter of this book: include bank name and address, sort code, account number, and for overseas buyers an IBAN and BIC code.

You should also create a [bill of sale](#), like 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.

6. 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. Include as much information with the work as possible, e.g. an [artist statement](#) and card for the collector's records. If possible it's always a good thing to do to offer to deliver the work in person, 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.

More [tips on degree shows](#) are on the Artquest website.

Your work doesn't end once the show is over – immediately after your degree show is when you are most likely to be contacted. If you decide to go on holiday or leave town, make sure you can be contacted for any queries, offers of work or sales.

Living in London

London is one of the most expensive cities in Europe and artists in London earn very little from their practice – half earn below £10,000 a year from their practice alone. 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 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 – taken together, this is referred to as a ‘portfolio career’. 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.

As well as earning money, 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 usually very high, but other 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 can offer accommodation even if you’re not eligible for a permanent place. A full discussion of [affordable housing options](#) in London can be found on the Artquest website.

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 or the [Gov.uk](#) website 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, as long as you register while you are still a student.

Of course, living frugally in London isn't something only artists have to worry about. The excellent [Money Saving Expert](#) website has a huge number of tips about bills, 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 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, or even just want a break from the busy art world. 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 – artists living in London have as much difficulty in finding exhibitions here as anyone else in the UK, and with higher living costs.

Money

Don't feel bad if you need a 'day job' to support your practice: an overwhelming majority of artists have to 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. Often, however, they 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 time frame. By finding the right ways to earn money or cut expenditure you can support your practice in a way that you are comfortable with.

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 other 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 higher sales prices of a final product.

Getting a job

Some artists have jobs that are related to their practice, for example teaching courses 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.

For jobs listings, check [Creative Opportunities](#), which lists 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 for their time 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. [Our online tools](#) can help you think through this process, and make sure to ask your peers and other artists what they charge, for 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 – after all, the commissioner wants a specific kind of work that they

have paid for, not just any piece of your work. 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 mentioned 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](#) is an ACE scheme that provides low-cost loans to people wanting to purchase works through galleries that participate in the scheme. [Watch video interviews with collectors talking about why they want to collect art](#) – essentially, because they have the time and money to find it, 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](#).

Preparing a project budget

Everyone has a slightly different situation when it comes to his or her 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 budget, and should only include the expenses you need to produce your art. List costs for all the materials, printing or mounting costs, studio rent, or stand hire for art or craft fairs and so forth: how much do you have to spend before you can earn money from your art?

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.

Arts Council England's funding programmes for individuals are [Arts Council National Lottery Project Grants](#) and [Developing Your Creative Practice](#).

Project Grants applications are expected to include a fee for artists and other people involved, so you should earn money for doing the project you want to.

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](#).

Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) is open to artists looking to undertake development opportunities. You don't need match funding, and you can apply for amounts from £2,000 up to £10,000. There are 4 rounds with deadlines per year.

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). Read our tips on [writing applications](#), and browse the 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 and IndieGoGo, let you propose a project and canvass for 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. Research the best platform for your medium before you launch your project.

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 it can be used in, what media, 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 between £4-5million to artists each year for copyright royalties if your work has 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 are paid to eligible visual artists of all kinds who've signed up to the scheme. In 2013 the average payment was over £258.

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. Invoices can 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). 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
- 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](#)
- 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 your original invoice to speed payments.

Make a template invoice with all of your details that you can fill in for each job so you only need to find all this information once!

Other resources

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

- Student Enterprise and Employability can help you make the most of your creative business idea. Their [SEED Fund](#) offers up to £5,000 to support your creative project or business.
- UAL graduates of up to one year can find work through [ArtsTemps](#) (if you registered as a student)
- [Own-it](#) 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 fellow interns or administrators to artists, curators, your tutors, collectors and friends – is perhaps 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. Read University of the Arts London alumnus Michael McManus article on [working as an artist's assistant](#).

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 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 and Axisweb 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.

- 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 regularly 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.

Another valuable source for your network is the University of the Arts London [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, so make sure you have a website or professional profile on [Axisweb](#), Linked In or something similar by the time you graduate, and keep it up to date. [Websites](#) are increasingly affordable, with many DIY design packages available to create a simple and effective online presence, and simple Wordpress or Tumblr blogs available for free (apart from the time you need to put in to building and maintaining them).

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 will benefit from good-quality documentation of your work: 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 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 your Facebook page or Twitter account

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 slightly 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 individual applications.

Social Networks

Facebook, Twitter 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. See our advice on [social networks and mailing lists](#).

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 specific and 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 350+ 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 some 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 (call it an 'agreement' if you prefer) 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 that you keep – 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 whatever you're offered 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, you can offer to 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 around 1947 is not protected by copyright: work no longer protected by copyright is in the 'public domain'.

Copyright is an automatic right – copyright is not registered, as any original work is automatically protected. [Trademarks and designs](#) 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 [Own-it](#) 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.

We also include information on what you can do to [negotiate 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.

If you do need a studio for your work, it's a good idea to apply as early as possible for a place. The bigger subsidised studio organisations – like ACAA, Space, Bow Arts, Cockpit Arts and the like – tend to have very long waiting lists, sometimes two or more years. Even the smaller studio spaces – like Arthub Studios, Lewisham Arthouse or Mother Studios – can require a long wait before you get a space.

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-bulletin](#)
- searching [Studio Finder](#)

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

Our [LIFE BOAT](#) residency offers a shared studio for up to 4 UAL fine art graduates for a year in Limehouse, and is open to newly graduated fine artists.

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. 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 up over 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, and services like [KitMapper](#) make sharing and earning from renting your equipment easy.

Discounts for some of these facilities are available via the [Artquest Rates](#) scheme.

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.

Our [Horniman Residency](#) offers mid-career artists access to the [Horniman Museum](#) collection and curatorial staff and a bursary, but no studio space.

Benefits of residencies may include

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

You can also make the most of your residency by using it as an opportunity to engage your audience by recording your thoughts online and providing images of your new work in progress.

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 instead consider our online community, [Exchange](#). Exchange is our free studio and apartment exchange website, allowing visual artists at any stage in their careers a chance to visit others around the world and expand their practice with foreign travel. The AirBNB for artist studios, and an antidote to the competitive international residency network, Exchange provides an accessible alternative for artists who want to travel overseas in their own time and within their own resources. Artists pay their home costs for studio and (optionally) apartment while they are away.

Exchange allows you to:

- use Facebook or Twitter to sign up and log in – no extra passwords to remember, and you can remove your profile at any time
- find artists in places you're going to travel to and connect in advance, and artists who live or work near you to make new connections in real life
- find artists who are looking to exchange studios or apartments, around the world, and book exchanges securely
- keep in touch with other members securely online until you're happy to share contact details
- ask for advice or find collaborators from amongst your peers
- apply for special Exchange-only events and opportunities

Get on to 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 different types of gallery 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 regular 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 usually actively represent individual artists, help nurture their career and maintain a network of collectors with whom they can place work, or they might simply 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 artists' 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 [Bloomberg 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 building a relationship with them by inviting them to your events and exhibitions, and 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 a written contractual agreement with a commercial gallery covering (among other things) who owns what work, what rights you have to access any collector contact details, how often you can expect an exhibition, what exhibition costs the gallery will cover, and much more. 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 programme, and some are independent and build their own relationships with galleries and initiate their own exhibitions. Freelance curators (i.e., curators who work for a number of galleries as self-employed workers) are a vital contact for artists and makers 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 programmes or techniques; or it might mean that you occasionally want to 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.

To keep up-to-date with Artquest events, join our mailing list or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).

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's programme staff and artists 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.

[All of our 140+ pieces of 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. 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 for visual artists' rights management organisation. Passionate about transforming the financial landscape for visual artists through innovative new products and services, DACS acts as a trusted 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 of your images, such as photocopying.

[London Sculpture Workshop](#) is London's first open access sculpture workshop: a not-for-profit community interest company with exceptional facilities for artists/makers and those interested in making work in 3D. LSW offers a superbly equipped metal and wood workshop and additional mould-making and ceramic areas and over 2,500 sq ft of flexible working areas.

[London Centre for Book Arts](#) is the UK's only open-access resource and education centre dedicated to book arts. Located in Fish Island, near Hackney Wick in east London. Facilities include letterpress, bookbinding, reprographic and print finishing. Membership is from £100 a month.

[ACAVA](#) is a major provider of affordable artists studios in London, leasing and renovating studios to artists across the capital, and providing the studio space in which we host our Life Boat graduate studio residency.

[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 21st century 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.

[Cubitt Gallery and Studios](#) is an Arts Council-funded artist-led organisation in Angel, Islington. Comprising of an internationally-recognised contemporary art gallery, 30 studios for professional artists, and a local education programme, Cubitt is a unique hub for the development in curatorial, artistic and educational practice in the visual arts.

[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.

[Axisweb](#) supports contemporary art in the UK by giving artists and art professionals a platform to showcase their work, find work opportunities, stay informed and make useful connections. Axisweb also commission features from a wide network of specialist contributors across the UK.

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. Annual membership is £20.

[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.

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 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.

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

- 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 over 80 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 instead of income for our programme.

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. He is co-founder of an artist-led commissioning agency. Russell has lived in London since 1998.

Kat Buchanan

Kat is a graduate of Central Saint Martins with a professional background in social media, inclusive practice, events and exhibitions production, and elders and community projects. Kat is a practicing artist who makes work that is collaborative, participatory, and live. She joined Artquest in November 2017.

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