

CVAN panel contribution from Sandra Booth, CHEAD 2.25pm
Sandra Booth | Director of Policy and External Relations
Council for Higher Education in Art & Design (CHEAD)
On after Sarah Munro - Baltic and CVAN

Hello I'm Sandra I'm wearing a red dress, I have long brown hair that hasn't been cut for a year and I wear glasses and a smile. I'm here to advocate for Arts Education.

Visual Arts education gives the next generation of artists, creators and cultural leaders the opportunity to develop imagination and skills that are vital to our future. Art makes you look, see and think. Studying art develops empathy and the ability to interpret the world.

A priority for this campaign is to retain broad access to high quality courses in creative subjects. This is vital to sustaining the strength and diversity of our talent pipeline.

UK is home to world class art schools with 28 entrants in the European art school ranking. Arts education providers, are deeply embedded in their local communities and have developed long standing partnerships with cultural organisations.

Art education is essential. Provision is **diverse, dispersed, and innovative** with over 1000 courses from 172 providers at undergraduate level and 304 postgraduate courses catering for some 180,000 students a year. Creative arts & design is the top subject choice amongst students aged 20 and under.

The success and connectedness of the UK creative and cultural ecosystem is underpinned by the pipeline of talented **artists, curators and individuals** emerging from and engaging with an arts education - but the long-term drop off in creative provision in schools is creating a future crisis.

Any deprioritisation of arts pedagogy and practice is strategically short-sighted and counter intuitive to wider cultural recovery and skills policy.

Access to arts must start in schools. We must broaden the Ebacc to include a creative subject, an argument made by the Durham Commission. T levels could serve art , particularly badly. And the language of "technical" implies a divide between the "academic" and the non-academic that simply does not apply in **practice-based and critically reflective disciplines** like the visual arts. We can look to Wales for their progressive curriculum developments where expressive and visual arts are integrated as a learning framework and methodology across the all pillars of education.

It is disturbing that recent announcements of cuts to the teaching grant for high cost subjects, removal of teacher training bursaries for art and design teachers, debates about the value of a degree measured in terms of a route to a high paid job, proposed defunding of level 3 qualifications that would further narrow choice and curtail access to many artists at a critical stage of learning, and attempts to drive student choice towards STEM subjects - all signal a deep lack of understanding of **the agency of art** and are completely at odds

with other policy interventions, particularly as we enter a recession, and at a time when cultural organisations are advocating increased investment in the arts.

Squeezing arts education, is something no government **concerned with** economic growth and productivity should want to do. Arts education makes a vital contribution to the global success of the UK's cultural sector - so we are calling for these disciplines **to be reclassified as strategically important subjects**.

Higher Education is a crucial entry route into the Creative economy: *some 71% of the sector's workforce are qualified at degree level or higher, compared to 44% across the whole economy*. We must not lose momentum from the creative pipeline, suppress demand for graduate talent, or block **any student's** (It isn't all about Graduates) opportunity to transition via education into this vibrant sector.

However, the way we are perceived affects the way we are funded and measured.

There is a perception that Art schools are a luxury - producing too many graduates who will never earn enough to pay back their student loans. From a market neoliberal perspective this supports those in Government seeking to streamline provision by adopting a narrow view of **Value**.

We **must** change this regressive perception. Without sustained investment provision and delivery would be seriously threatened and destabilised, leading to inequity and 'cold spots' in some areas which would **'level down'** and limit access to opportunities for less advantaged learners and under-represented groups. We must protect arts education and we must support students, graduates, artists and Art teachers who are also creative practitioners – now facing hardship and dual precarity in employment for anyone with a portfolio career combining both teaching and being a practicing artist.

We must also challenge the metrics on careers in the arts. It is vital that indicators capture the richness of successful outcomes, beyond just fixed, full-time employment. The overwhelming majority of arts business are micros – 95% have nine or fewer employees – with flexible, project-led working models. Graduate freelancing has not been captured effectively in outcome metrics. Evidence shows that, while many creative graduates are in graduate-level jobs 6 months after graduation, the proportion is significantly greater at 3.5 years and many are destined to spend at least the first 10 years establishing their careers. For 61% of those choosing creative HE, the most important outcome from their study was the knowledge and skills they acquired on their course and a deep engagement with their creative practice only 14% said salary was their most important motivation.

This campaign will advocate that Art schools **have meaningful interconnections** with our visual arts sector, working through their own galleries and in partnership with cultural organisations and freelance artist communities, demonstrating a variety of educational, social justice and community engagement purposes **with broad cultural reach and impact**. These partnerships between educators and visual artists provide the infrastructure to drive sustainable economic recovery, to transform our lives and rebuild the civic and social fabric of the UK's towns, cities and high streets.

Art education empowers artists to reach their full potential.

If we don't protect arts education, we'll lose the next generation of artists.

Any Curb on educational opportunity is a curb on our culture

Art changes the world.

Never more so than now..... #ArtsEssential

I commend this campaign and I'm delighted to be involved.

This campaign is critical now as we emerge from the pandemic with renewed purpose. The UK's creative and cultural sector has been severely impacted by Covid-19 and will need strategic sector specific support, joined-up policy and investment to bounce back.

Hand over to Laura Sillars – MIMA

Notes:

The creative industries are one of the UK's major success stories, growing at five times the rate of the wider UK economy prior to the pandemic, and contributing £116.7bn to the UK economy in 2019, an increase of 43.2% in real terms since 2010. The Cultural Sector contributed a further £32.3bn to the UK economy in 2018, an increase of 21.9% in real terms since 2010.