

# into the wild

2015/16

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Into the Wild is a one-year professional development programme for fourteen selected artists who have completed BA degree courses in the last three years. The programme is run by Chisenhale Studios. Now in its second year, this unique, free initiative aims to support and inspire emerging artists by providing practical advice on how to survive and thrive in the real world, as well as offering opportunities for making and creative development.

With talks, workshops and mentoring from successful artists and key industry professionals, participants will be able to explore their practices and better understand the diversity of ways to succeed and flourish as an artist in London.

How to: get funding, network, promote yourself, write applications, work with galleries and curators, write statements, build audiences, work collectively, earn money, stay confident, find spaces, generate opportunities and be proactive.

The programme begins with an eight-week taught course that runs every Monday, including inspiring and informative talks by invited guest speakers and artists from Chisenhale Studios. Participants are matched with a relevant studio artist for individual one-to-one mentoring. The taught course is followed by a group-residency in Chisenhale's large Studio4 space, consolidating knowledge gained in the Monday sessions by giving participants the chance to make work, share ideas and host events. During this time, two emerging curators work with participants to plan shows and projects beyond the programme, by means of transition 'into the wild'.

Chisenhale Art Place occupies a unique position in London's East End art community, providing a distinctive platform for local and international artists and audiences. Founded in 1980 by artists determined to find their own premises, Chisenhale Art Place now houses three flourishing and distinct initiatives: Chisenhale Dance Space, Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Studios. The studios provide affordable workspace to both established and emerging artists. Their work reflects the diversity of contemporary art practice and promotes a wider understanding of artistic practice and processes through open sharing events, projects and residencies.

This publication is a collection of individual responses written and designed by members of the ITW 2015-16.

Into the Wild is supported by Arts Council England and the artists at Chisenhale Studios.

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studios



We'd all like to express our thanks to Chisenhale Studios for having us; the artists and speakers who gave us their time and knowledge; Louise and Andrea for co-ordinating the whole thing; and to Louise again for the many motivational speeches and flights of fancy. Be your own art world! Judo flip!

The Wildies 2015/16

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Andrea Davidson, Arts Manager of Chisenhale Art Place

Bar Yerushalmi, curator

Emma Warburton, curator

Alicia Paz, artist

Zoe Mendelson, artist

Tim Knowles, artist

Shezad Dawood, artist

Doug Fishbone, artist

Nadine Mahoney, artist

Amikam Toren, artist

Ingrid Kerma, artist

Kate Hardy, artist

Rebecca Glover, artist

Sarah Kate Wilson, artist

Richard Layzell, artist

Nikki Tomlinson, ArtsAdmin

Sally O'Reilly, artist / writer / critic

Vanessa Carlos, gallerist, Carlos/Ishikawa

Dunya Kalantery, curator, The Function Room

Judith Carlton, director, Cafe Gallery Projects

Belinda Holden, executive project manager, Futurecity

Justin Hammond, director of Art Catlin / The Catlin Prize

Michaela Crimmin, curator, Culture+Conflict / RCA tutor

Charlie Levine, curator, Camden Council and SLUICE art fair

THANKYOU

SPEAKERS

We begin this handbook at the start, as absolute beginners, for absolute beginners. This section is a list of all the advice we received for getting noticed, creating shows and making it happen.

#### JUST START DOING IT

The best way to make it happen is, oddly, to make it happen. This might sound like something your neighbour would put on Facebook, but hear it out. Go out and do the research, spend a week in a service station, spend a week collecting wood. Doing it creates energy. Nothing is as powerful. Nothing gets you noticed in the same way. Even if it's just a crappy thing for an afternoon, it's all in the right direction. It isn't going to happen if you sit in your bedroom thinking about it.

#### TELL PEOPLE

Tell people what you're doing. Doug Fishbone was emphatic about this, as it's worked for him before. Work out who might be interested, who has done similar stuff in the past, and approach them. Have a project description ready, so they know what you're talking about. Have an answer to that question: what are you working on? What do you want to do next?

#### COLD CALL

If you see a show happening that you think your work would fit in, email them, phone them, say you're doing work they might be interested in. Ask if there's a spot left. If there's a person you like, tell them why you like their work, and ask if they have time for a coffee.

#### HAVE YOUR PICKLES READY

Another Doug Fishbone thing, delivered in a New York accent, naturally, like a pizza commercial. "Have your pickles ready" means having everything lined up and ready to go: website, CV, artists statement, hi-res images, low-res images. So when someone says, 'that sounds interesting, send me some stuff,' you can just press: send. Seize the day motherfuckers!

#### BE A NICE PERSON

The other side of all this, is to have some bloody manners. If there's a hype curator at a show, or you bump into one of your heroes in Tesco Metro, behave like a decent human being.

Wait patiently to talk to them if they're talking to someone else. Ask them how they are. Explain what it is about their work you like. Then, and only then, can you ask them to look at something, or for their email, or whatever. Be assertive, and confident, but not pushy. No-one likes Pushy McGee.

#### BE CAREFUL WHAT OPPORTUNITIES YOU TAKE

Do you want super-corporate white space? Do you want super-lo-fi burnt out garage? Do you want Clerkenwell Design Crowd and free cider spelt le cidre? Do you want supercool art crowd with bowl haircuts and cloaks? Make sure it fits.

#### GO FOR THE WILDEST IDEA NOW

Don't wait until everything has lined up perfectly before going for the big idea. Because that's not going to happen. Ideas go off like milk. Don't wait to propose the big thing you want to do. If the opportunity presents itself, do it now. Shezad Dawood said that.

#### IT'S UP TO YOU

Doug Fishbone said: no-one else cares what you're doing. Don't rely on anyone else to give you opportunities. *Either I'll do it myself, or it won't get done.*

#### BEWARE THE FACEBOOK PHILOSOPHER

All of this sounds obvious when it's written down. It also sounds easy. And it flirts dangerously close to a Nike slogan, or a hashtag to try to get you talking about KitKats on social media. But the key thing is: it's not for anyone else. It's not about soundbites, or looking good. This is to help you make the work you want to make, to think about it in the right way. Because:

#### THERE ARE AS MANY ARTIST PRACTICES AS THERE ARE ARTISTS

There is no right way. It doesn't matter what anyone else is doing. It doesn't matter what anyone else is saying. Everyone else is thinking about themselves. It's not a competition, everyone will die at some point, including you. Just get on with it and enjoy the making of it. Shanti, shanti, shanti.

## SPACE to HOPE you make it

*“So what are you up to now?” One graduate asked another. She curled her hair around a finger that whiffed of someone who was doing better- doing SOMETHING. That night he thought of her, as he burned toast into a smell that lingered in his cavities and the curtains. Whilst sleeping: his studio spreads into the near distance. Concrete is spitted with licks of paint, technicolour lustre, that he fills in his dreams like a children’s colouring-in book. Nostalgic for an environment he can’t remember: an infinite bliss of cheap, post-industrial space. He is rudely awoken into an ex-council flat with a toothbrush molting in his left hand, and an ‘I-should-be-so lucky’ pounding through a hangover of some one else’s out of date dreams If they ever dreamt them. Of course space is a much bigger issue now- Now we imagine we have less And with the camps and all...*

Put fourteen art graduates in a room and ask them a question about how they are making it work, and you soon realize the question you’re really asking is ‘how are you making work?’ Or even – ‘ARE you making work?’ It’s in some ways less a question of ‘how to get a studio space’ and more how can we maintain hope.

For many of us, a studio is one wall of a one-bedroom flat, or better still shared house, seen at the end of a 12hr day, fitting awkwardly into a punishing pay-work schedule. Something you look at and feel guilty about not filling- WHITE WALL. But maybe it’s not the end – rather a tabula rasa, the beginnings of a new way of making things work. Because these past few weeks at Into The Wild have taught us there’s always a way if you keep looking, and that even if your ideal studio isn’t at your fingertips, a new way of working might be.

*‘It is a question of learning hope. Its work does not renounce, it is in love with success rather than failure...The emotion of hope goes out to itself, makes people broad instead of confining them’*  
Ernst Bloch, The Principle of Hope, 1954-59

### □ ADAPT LIKE AMOEBAS, HOPE LIKE A HUMAN, BE LIKE AN ARTIST...

I suppose the simplest option is to assess your situation and adapt rapidly. Don’t lust after the studios of the 1960’s, you could wither away dreaming of industrial warehouse-sized megaplexes of dereliction, or bijou yet despicably chic garrets in Chelsea and Paris. These days are gone. But, that doesn’t mean you can’t make work.

If you haven’t got a lot of space, figure out how your work can fit these new parameters, because if you are here in London, price comes at £17sqm for the lucky ones and even more for the rich. Keep ideas in a sketchbook ready for a time when you have space to make them; make maquettes, share resources and spaces with other artists; consider what space you do have access to – could you use parkland, industrial space, your lounge to temporarily realize a project? What about making work for zines, can ideas become verbalized, performances, text, WHATEVER, just don’t fix on what you haven’t got, try looking at what you DO have- that’s the bacon.

## BURSTING THE LONDON BUBBLE- BANG IT

Scared of going anywhere North of the Watford Gap? Don't panic, it might be ok to get out for a while, London will still be here when you get back and there's always facebook, instagram, twitter- I mean who actually sees each other these days anyways, no one will forget you too quickly. I have friends who have moved up North and even to Spain who manage to see more stuff in London by visiting once a month than I do and I live here. They are hardly plunged into cultural obscurity, rather they return often like healthy glowing specimens who smile more, and pay less.

When I first graduated, despite being on countless waiting lists, despite all possible effort, I simply couldn't find a studio in London. I had shows coming up and my white-walls couldn't accommodate an excess of 500 pastel plasters. After a month of solidly chasing leads from Peckham to Putney with a 1hr commute from North East London, to be told I'm 7th on a waiting list and they'll let me know if they want my hard earned cash per month or not I'd had it solid: I upped sticks and moved to Wales for 3 months. I had a studio with a view of mountains and cows. I had 3 sinks all to myself. I had a realistic, nay CHEAP bill at the end of the month. Logistically it was less work, and above all it was glorious.

Here are just a few of the enviably wonderful studio complexes outside London who remain brilliantly well connected to the UK art scene and beyond. You could even have a window that opens.

Set The Controls For The Heart Of The Sun - Leeds

East Street Arts - Leeds

BLOC Projects - Sheffield

Grand Union Studios - Birmingham

Newbridge Project – Newcastle

The Royal Standard – Liverpool

## RESIDENTIAL PROPECTS

If you don't fancy simply upping sticks solo, residencies are a great way to experience a new place, and a way to find a making space. The links on the opposite page are pretty good places to find a rundown of wopportunities, but you should also look for specific residency programs you're interested in, and map a timescale for applications so you can apply throughout the year.

[isendyouthis.com/opportunities.aspx](http://isendyouthis.com/opportunities.aspx)

[blog.re-title.com/opportunities/](http://blog.re-title.com/opportunities/)

[artquest.org.uk/articles/view/visual-arts4](http://artquest.org.uk/articles/view/visual-arts4)

[artsadmin.co.uk/resources/e-digest](http://artsadmin.co.uk/resources/e-digest)

Our visiting associates listed a few specific examples that sounded pretty peachy too- Skowegan, Gasworks Triangle Residencies, Popty, Grizedale Arts, Wysing, Riksakademie.

And our current Into The Wild cohort have tried out some great opportunities including:

ACAVA & UAL Lifeboat, One year studio residency

REACH, Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop  
[edinburghsculpture.org/opportunities-featured/reach-scotland/](http://edinburghsculpture.org/opportunities-featured/reach-scotland/)

Art Commune, Yerevan, Armenia  
[acsl.am/art-commune-2/](http://acsl.am/art-commune-2/)

SNEHTA, Athens, Greece  
[snehtaresidency.org](http://snehtaresidency.org)

Space Under - Sound Tectonics, Athens, Greece  
[spaceunder.com/education/categories/sound-tectonics/](http://spaceunder.com/education/categories/sound-tectonics/)

## LONDON BABY

If you're set on staying, sign up to the waiting lists for London's non-profit studio spaces ASAP, they have the lowest prices per sqft in London traditionally, as they are non-profit of charities.

SPACE Studios, Cell, ACAA, V22, ACME, Chisenhale Studios

You pay a nominal fee [usually about £15 or free for some] for sign up to some but it's worth it, you're on for life and will get updates and newsletters for studios and sublets and shares when they become available.

## ARTICULATING YOURSELF - THE ARTIST STATEMENT

It's not long ago, that I could be actually be bothered with writing my artist statement. Mainly because whenever I read one, I'd get frustrated at the use of a certain language, or references to certain philosophers, that shared no relation or resemblance to the actual work. They seemed to me, to only exist to show how intellectual a person was, rather than to inform me of what the artists practice was.

But I was wrong.

I'm beginning to see the potential in the artist statement, and how it can be a useful tool. It can help you understand your practice, and give some clarity to the tangled ideas in your head. It's something I've always put off, because I was afraid to sit down and dedicate a day to thinking about my work. I was afraid I would unravel the tangle in my head and be left with a bigger mess, but it isn't like that. It does help.

Here's an example when this understanding could have helped you (me) out in 'real life':

You're at one of those openings and you're looking at a video on a monitor, it's a decent video- you're enjoying it. You're feeling like- yeah I like art, I make art, I am an artist. Then someone sees that you are really enjoying the video, they don't know you and you don't know them. They walk towards you and you both speak about the video, and you're speaking about this video in front with such enthusiasm. Then the person asks you that unforeseeable question:

'What's your art about?'

It's here where you start to sweat and get pissed off at the situation, because inside you're thinking -I know what I do- but you cant seem to get it out. Then you say something like:

'I make sculpture...,' You shudder at your response, and awkwardly make an excuse to walk to the bar.  
DISCLAIMER: It's OK to just make sculpture and even say 'i make sculpture', it is OK> it is OK.

Granted it might not be brilliant that first time, and it's easier to say 'just write it' than actually writing it. You're not writing down directions to the shops, you're writing about you're practice which is a little bit more complicated. It takes time and patience to write.

When writing the statement, there are some useful guidelines that I try to follow. They might be useful to you, or completely irrelevant.

THEY ARE:

- As a quick exercise you could write a short description of a piece of your work trying to explain it to a child, dead poet, a peer and a professor; and compare the different tones of language you write in. The benefit of this exercise is to loosen your use of language and give you different perspectives on tone. This exercise and many others were introduced to our group by the fantastic Sally O'Rielly.
- Try writing a short statement in first person and third person, to give you an idea of the different tones.
- Don't be afraid to write. Sit down, make yourself comfortable however that might be watch X Files, sip a green tea, have a Tyskie- you choose. Just write it down. Throw it all out on the page!
- The first draft might not be great, but try not to get disheartened. Just go over it and tweak it and keep on tweaking it until it's saying what you want it to say. It might not happen in a day.
- Consider the words you are using, there might be some better ones out there (it's good to have thesaurus next to you).
- Get a friend to read it. Get the Butcher to read it. Get that person who works at the shop to read it. Get your mum and dad to read it. Get Nelly the Elephant to read it. Don't just get your art mates to read it.
- Lastly... please no unnecessary use of art jargons.

Funding your art practice is a familiar issue for artists, and one thing that became evident during the Into The Wild talks is that this issue rarely goes away. Yet however ambitious (monetarily) a project is, one clear message was revealed throughout the seminars: the money is out there, you just need to be ingenious in how you get it. There are as many ways to fund a practice as there are artists, and each of the speakers had a tale of rising and falling fortunes during their career. This section concentrates on where to look when you can't, or won't, fund a project off your own back.

#### PEOPLE NEAR TO YOU

We'd probably be surprised how much those close to us are willing to help us, and we shouldn't underestimate their generosity when working towards a project. Asking those you know for small donations can work really well, as demonstrated by some of the In To the Wild speakers. Maybe sweeten the deal by offering a small token to say thanks.

#### THE PEOPLE NOT SO NEAR

You'd be equally amazed how a well written proposal combined with crowdfunding can whip people you've never met into a frenzy of shelling out some serious dollar. People like a good idea, particularly if they feel like they can get involved, or have some affinity to the project or your practice. This funding technique is more suitable to some work than others – it is a lot easier to gather interest with an idea that engages others and isn't just a personal project.

#### ANGELS, PATRONS, SPONSORS

Big business has big money, and you'd be surprised how they like to spend it. We were told about Angel Investors, people who will give you money in return for the pleasure of supporting your practice. Similarly there are patrons, individuals willing to give ongoing support; sponsors who will offer funding in return for something (i.e advertising); and partners who want to have a bit more involvement with your ideas in return for their money, contacts and experience. The difficult bit is probably finding these people in the first place.

#### PUBLIC COMMISSION

Whether an open call supported by a gallery, a public commission by the government or that for a private developer, large amounts of money are made available to artists to complete work which engages with the environment and community. Often there are requirements to fulfill within the proposal, but if you're successful you can become responsible for a large budget and therefore access to professionals who can help you realise the project

#### ARTS COUNCIL

The Arts Council is the backbone of funding for all non-commercial arts institutions, and individual artists too. Other than the drip down effect of commissions via galleries, the arts council also offers 'Grants for the Arts' which are open for any practitioner. The grants span anything from £1000 to £100,000, with two different routes for grants above and below £15,000. Obviously, there are quite a few people fighting for this money. As such, before you begin writing a proposal to the Arts Council, it's vital to know what criteria you need to fulfil – for details on how to apply see: [artscouncil.org.uk/funding/grants-arts/2016/how-apply/](http://artscouncil.org.uk/funding/grants-arts/2016/how-apply/).

#### NOTE: DINNER AND A SHOW

The Arts Council has also kindly divided the populace into specific groups based on their level of engagement with the arts, socio-economic status and political outlook. When you write an application you should have in mind that you will be expected to have a target audience, and a want to engage more of society than just your arty mates (see the 'not currently engaged' lot of the pdf below). If nothing else it makes for very interesting / slightly disturbing reading. Download from: [http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/arts\\_audience\\_insight\\_2011.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/arts_audience_insight_2011.pdf)

#### LOANS

Funding can take the form of a loan. Until student loans come in for doing an MA, artists have been taking out career advancement loans to support themselves through the course. There is also 'Creative Industry Finance', and Arts Council Initiative delivered by Creative United which is geared towards creative business and enterprise.

#### MONETISING YOUR WORK

It's perhaps worth for some artists to consider producing work which is more sellable to support the experimental side of their practice. Some will be happier to do this than others, but it can be a valuable way of supporting yourself whilst also meaning you don't have to leave the comfort of your studio. Avenues for selling work range from market stalls to gallery representation, to asking for pay-what-you-can donations at a performance or event but how you seek to do this will depend on you and your practice.















