

Where

do

we

go

from

here

?

Advice & practical strategies
on navigating artistic practices
and business' after university

This publication has come to be because of the work and support from artists and my colleagues.

I would like to thank the following creatives/practitioners for their advice and contributions included in this publication: Ayo Akingbade (Filmmaker, artist), Larry Amponsah (fine artist), Zohra Chiheb (architect), Sokari Douglas Camp CBE (fine artist), Allison + Partners (PR), GUAP Magazine, Paula Akpan and Nam Tran.

Thank you, Jai Tyler (from the Creative Shift team). This programme of visits could not have been successful without your partnership. Your support and genuine care for students is evident in the work you do.

Thank you, Aylin Kilic! For your continuous support and making this publication look fantastic.

Last but definitely not least, thank you, Claire Flannery, for the continuous support throughout the project.

Thank you ever so much!

**“If you are waiting to be fashionable for a curator or a white cube space that wants to show you, you might have to die first”
Sokari Douglas Camp says during our ‘behind the scenes’ visit to her studio.**

Foreword

Most students have a picture in mind of how their practice will be, post-degree. It is important that emerging artists are exposed to and educated about the multiple threads or ways in which one’s practice can unfold whilst understanding that they are not by any means tied to these said threads and that they can create new narratives for themselves. There are no rules!

Immediately after graduating from Wimbledon College of Art, University of Arts London, I moved into my first painting studio with friends I graduated with. I had also begun a full time job as a Sabbatical Officer at Arts SU. Meanwhile, I had collectors and art enthusiasts contacting me to buy my work; galleries and curators asking to visit my studio. I was not sure

if I was responding to these opportunities and maintaining these ‘professional’ relationships fittingly.

Several months into my new job, I was finding it difficult to find a balance between my practice and a very demanding full-time role. I asked other artists, academics and technicians who taught me at university for advice on how they kept their practice going. How did they find a balance or find time to make work?! The reality was that sometimes they would not see their studio for months. This was very hard-hitting.

During my time at university, when guest speakers were invited, they often spoke about their practice and the opportunities that had come their way. Very few spoke about the reality and hacks they used to thrive in the art world when they left university.

I remember a lecture at Wimbledon, where an artist spoke honestly about the kinds of jobs she had to do to keep her practice going and ways in which she 'developed' her CV. "Most of the exhibitions and jobs listed on my CV at that time were made up," she said. Another artist mentioned how most of the projects she had done were funded through grants and residencies she had applied for. She went through some of the 'tricks' used in writing bids, and the benefits of doing them – and I thoroughly enjoyed those moments of transparency.

My motivation for the 'behind the scenes' visits and the WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE publication were:

- To support the professional development of students who are the first in their family to attend university or who, like myself, come from a working-class background. Often, it can be difficult for students from these backgrounds to navigate and understand institutional spaces. It was important for me to make this happen.
- To create an opportunity for students to understand what the industry requires of them - and in turn to create an opportunity for the industry to understand what students are currently being taught and what they're expecting of the industry.
- To create a resource that would act as a comfort blanket for emerging artists and give them answers and approaches to dilemmas they were unsure about once they left university.
- To document artistic practices of Black and Asian artists.

***My name is
Annie-Marie
Akpene
Akussah.
I am a
Ghanaian artist
living and
working in the
world.***

Introduction

In this first issue, you are presented with a compilation of studio/industry visits and interviews (that took place elsewhere), revealing experiences, hacks and advice from artists of different backgrounds.

The studio/industry visits have been successful and beneficial for the students who have attended them because of how intimate and transparent they have been. They have acted as an alternative space for learning and teaching outside the institution. There will be a continuation of these visits by Careers and Employability, led by Jai Tyler.

The publication is split into six different sections and switches between interviews, studio conversations and quotations. The sections are titled after important books or curators as a way for me to introduce titans in contemporary African practices.

Some interviews are taken from Gradual Podcast. Gradual podcast is created by UAL Careers and Employability and explores the big challenges that many new graduates will face. Search 'Gradual Podcast' on popular podcast platforms to subscribe and listen.

Here are the experiences of 10 different practitioners.

Make a note of the words of advice in here, if you think they might be useful for you. But don't feel like you have to compare yourself. This is only an assemblage of a few experiences. Take what you need.

**Annie-Marie Akpene Akussah
Arts SU Activities Officer (2018-2019)**



Time Travel Portal (2018) 45cm Cube - Courtesy of Artist Larry Ampomsoh

Creating Spaces for a Hundred Flowers to Bloom

P-10

Primitive Days

P-15

The State of Things

P-21

In the Field

P-26

Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint

P-30

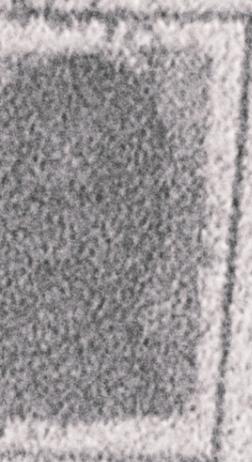
Resources/Useful links

P-36

Content



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Creating Spaces for a Hundred Flowers to Bloom*

*The title of this chapter is taken from a quote by Bisi Silva. Bisi Silva was a contemporary art curator, founder and artistic director of the Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos.

A titan who activated the space for cultural research and scholarship on the African continent, Silva was a huge inspiration to artists, curators, collectors and art enthusiasts.

The Centre for Contemporary Art, Lagos, has hosted a variety of important exhibitions, including solo shows for African artists such as El Anatsui, Ngozi Omeje, and Adolphus Opara. In addition to her work for CCA, Silva founded Àsìkò,

an education initiative that, in its own words, is "part art workshop, part residency, and part art academy". The roving school continues to offer programming to African artists and curators at various locations around the continent.

Bisi Silva's curatorial work extended beyond Nigeria. She curated the 2006 edition of the Dak'Art Biennial of Contemporary African Art in Senegal, the 2009 edition of the Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art in Greece, and the 2015 edition of Rencontres de Bamako, the biennial for African photography held in Mali. She was also on the international jury for the 2013 Venice Biennale.

Bisi Silva died on Tuesday 12 February 2019.

When did you visit your first gallery or museum?

I visited my first museum when I was sixteen years old. I was at secondary school and we visited the Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum in Accra (Ghana's capital city), which tells the story of Dr. Nkrumah, his lifetime struggles, and his journey towards fighting for Ghana's freedom from British colonisation.

We also visited the National Museum of Ghana which encouraged me to learn the skill of creating with a strong sense of precision. Though the museum is fine art-focused it very much inspired me, and gave me a sense of the power of images and their importance when archiving history for future generations.

- Larry Amponsah

Becoming an artist

Describe your first encounter with art. What are your memories of being around art as a child?

I remember being a very creative child with a vivid imagination - always writing, always drawing and always asking questions. Recently, I found an old textbook from primary school from when I was eight years old and it was so beautiful to see what I was expressing then.

- Ayo Akingbade



Visit to Sokari's studio (2019)

Visit to Sokari's studio (2019) From left to right: Tobi Alexandra Falade, Sokari Douglas Camp



Art School

Larry Amponsah in his studio



Art School

“You just got to be as honest with yourself as possible and keep confidence.”

- Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

Life after art school

What were you making after film school?

Films. Now, I have started exploring sculpture - I really like it. I have always wanted to do sculpture but I didn't know who would teach me or where to go - because it was a particular late passion I got whilst at film school.

- Ayo Akingbade

Behind the scenes questions

Primitive days

Where and why did you go to art school?

I went to the Glasgow School of Art. It has a great reputation, and Glasgow is a great city.

- Zohra Chiheb

Describe the first place you referred to as a studio when you left university?

I never had a studio until I got into Royal Academy Schools. It is a good space for me.

- Ayo Akingbade

Where do you think most of your opportunities came from?

Most of my opportunities came from within the artistic community and from artistic circles to which I belong. I really encourage networking, it's very important to create boundless relationships.

- Larry Amponsah

Getting out to talks and inspirational lectures paved my route to specialising in community-led housing. I met up with interesting people to learn about their career paths, and I volunteered on projects I found interesting.

- Zohra Chiheb

What did you learn at art school?

I learnt about design as a process, more about me as a creative, and about how

hard one has to work in the week leading up to an assessment.

- Zohra Chiheb

What sort of art were you creating once you'd finished art school?

I went to work for an architecture practice in Australia, then I took a trip around the world; my eyes were open to buildings, and I saw cities in ways I hadn't before. When I returned I moved to London to study for my MA.

- Zohra Chiheb

Did you say yes to every opportunity that came your way when you left art school?

Yes! It is so important to take every opportunity that comes your way. You only stop when you get to a point where you don't have time for anything else, and you have to forget other opportunities.

- Zohra Chiheb

No, not at all. It is very dangerous to do so, because not only will you fail to develop your practice properly you may also be exploited by opportunists. It's a savage world out there. Watch out for these threats and try to make positive decisions that will help you grow as an artist.

- Larry Amponsah

"We wanted to create something we wished we had for our younger selves."

Gradual Podcast...

is a podcast created by UAL Careers and Employability that explores the big questions and challenges that many new graduates will face. In each episode, we share unfiltered stories from creative professionals who make a living doing what they love.

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Ade Bamgbala talked to Paula Akpan, Director, Black Girl Festival // blackgirlfest.com

Ade Bamgbala: Do you remember when you graduated, how did you feel?

Paula Akpan: Honestly? So, the night before I couldn't sleep because I knew that the dress I was wearing I need to have heels with it, and I was having nightmares that I would literally walk across the stage and, like, just stack and it kept me up in the night till the point where, when I met up with my parents, I brought some flats with me. I was mostly concerned with not tripping. It was like this is actually all up to me now, where I go from here and it was something that I didn't feel prepared for. I mean, I did some internships, I've always worked a bit and I had an internship lined up in August so I had a month off. I needed to do something to have some sort of structure again.

Ade Bamgbala: What did you do immediately after a year or two?

Paula Akpan: I did lots of internships.

Ade Bamgbala: Did you cofound the entire project whilst at Nottingham?

Paula Akpan: It was the summer where there was suddenly a lot of police brutality in the news cycle. Obviously, its ongoing all the time but it was just getting picked up all the time, but I just kept feeling drained and angry about it. And I spoke to Harriet about it, the overriding feeling would just be like "I'm just tired". And we also wanted to start a project in the gap of finishing university and having to be an adult.

So, we decided that we were going to ask our friends to come around and just each come with a statement of "I'm tired of...". It could be to do with anything to do with gender, sexuality, disability - anything to do with discrimination. But we were trying to hone in on microaggressions and the things that tend to fall through the cracks when having these wider conversations of race and conversations of gender.

So, it's like when someone asks you where you are from and you say London and they're like "where are you really from"? And that immediately alienates you. No, they're not calling you the 'n' word or telling me they want to lynch me, but they are still serving to make me feel 'other' and it sometimes feels insignificant on a personal level - but we wanted to highlight it.

The first question was why they chose that specific statement. The second one was where they place that issue in the wider society. The fact that it was relatable meant that it reached more people.

Ade Bamgbala: Who is coming to you to hire you? You're doing something that you're passionate about, and love, and are being paid to do so...

"If you see a gap don't wait for someone to fill it. There was nothing specific for black British women and, instead of waiting for institutions and for other people, it can be simple as saying I'm going to do it. There are so many funding streams."

Paula Akpan: I mean, at this point we were not being paid so it was also about learning how to be kind of savvy. We were caught off guard by the interest that it took us a while to turn into a workshop programme.

There was one black boy who was really tall -big- and his statement was "I'm tired of being followed around the store". It was about how every time he entered the store security had eyes on him and tracked his movement without fail, because he was this big black boy. It hit me because, even at the age of 11, your innocence as a child is being taken

off you because you are a black child.

So, it was about trying to lend a space where they could just talk about it and unpick it and feel validated, and not have it dismissed.

Ade Bamgbala: So, as a business, how are you doing this?

Paula Akpan: At this point we were charging schools for the workshop. We had a day rate. This was the second trip to New York. The first one, we didn't have a clue on what was going on. Second trip, we savvied up and knew that we were doing labour and imparting it, so we needed to get paid.

Ade Bamgbala: Of course.

Paula Akpan: If you don't ask you don't get, and especially when you're from a marginalised group you feel like just take the scraps that you're given, but you have to move with the confidence of a mediocre white man. Walk into the room like you own it and demand things in a way that you were never taught is your right.

Ade Bamgbala: We started this conversation about graduating. I'm going to take you back to university - what would you have done differently, if anything at all?

Paula Akpan: I think I would have done more of my own reading around the topics that I didn't feel were well covered in my course. I wish I had challenged more. Challenged my module conveners.

"I find my own exhibition spaces because we have space in this country!

It doesn't have to be a gallery, I took that on ages ago.

If you are waiting to be fashionable for a curator or a white cube space that wants to show you, you might have to die first.

So, don't go down that path!

There are churches, there's council offices, hospitals."

- Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

"I have not actively set out to be noticed - ever in my life really - does that sound sad? I have always gone for what I wanted and opportunities seem to sprout so naturally. Which is why I said earlier I am blessed, I am not sure but there is definitely a shining star in my spirit."

- Ayo Akingbade

"In terms of pricing as a creative, it's probably one of the hardest things. Getting on your laptop in itself costs money. Opening up Photoshop costs money - it's not free to get Photoshop. So that's the struggle in the beginning. People may not respect your worth - sometimes it's just the honest reality.

If in this day and age everyone has a camera phone, how much is a picture worth? If anyone can go online and get a logo for £5, are logos £5? So, what makes someone else worthy to charge a million pounds?"

- Jide Adetunji

"You don't have to go to a gallery, but you do have to make noise about you're doing."

- Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

"Catch people on LinkedIn - it's really critical."

- Jide Adesesan

“There are good galleries and ones that aren’t so good. Depending on what kind of artist you are, if you’re producing stuff that everyone wants to buy, everyone works for you, but if you’re making work that is good sometimes, not so good other times, it is quite difficult to find a sturdy market for yourself. **I have to duck and dive.**”

- Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

Finding

a

gallery

“This weekend, I was feeling quite shy at this very impressive place in this countryside. I thought, I just can’t quite get myself to talk to the person that I need to talk to. Another woman came along and shoved me, she said go on! Introduce yourself!

But you have to talk to people and that continues to be a challenge. If you want to change that, you can get a **dealer** that works for you. If you can’t be arsed to wait for a dealer you can do it yourself! You can!”

- Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

The State of things.

Okwui Enwezor was a Nigerian curator, art critic, writer, poet and educator, specializing in art history. Enwezor was the director of the Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany.

He was appointed curator of the Venice Biennale 2015, making him the first African-born curator in the exhibition’s 120-year history.

The State of Things is taken from Enwezor’s curatorial statement for the Venice Biennale **“All the World’s Futures”**.

“All the World’s Futures will take the present “state of things” as the ground for its dense, restless, and exploratory project that will be located in a dialectical field of references and artistic disciplines. The principal question the exhibition

will pose is this: How can artists, thinkers, writers, composers, choreographers, singers, and musicians, through images, objects, words, movement, actions, lyrics, sound bring together publics in acts of looking, listening, responding, engaging, speaking in order to make sense of the current upheaval? What material, symbolic or aesthetic, political or social acts will be produced in this dialectical field of references to give shape to an exhibition which refuses confinement within the boundaries of conventional display models? In All the World’s Futures the curator himself, along with artists, activists, the public, and contributors of all kinds will appear as the central protagonists in the open orchestration of the project” - Okwui Enwezor

“I’ve realised that every graduate is a peer, you just don’t know it yet”

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Ade Bamgbala talked to Nam Tran, ceramicist and founder of Cernamic.

Ade Bamgbala: When you graduated, what was going through your mind?

Nam Tran: There was a sense of worry.

Ade Bamgbala: Worry?

Nam Tran: There was a worry career-wise, but I had a path. I applied to the RCA whilst I was at CSM, so I knew that after I left I would go straight into an MA. Which I found wasn’t the right path for me. Just because I had been in education since nursery, and I had never experienced life and that’s the truth. In my second year at the RCA I dropped out.

Ade Bamgbala: You did?

Nam Tran: Yeah, I’m known as the royal drop-out now.

Ade Bamgbala: You moved out of Vietnam at

the age of 3. Tell me about growing up and if it influenced your career path.

Nam Tran: I think a lot of tutors wanted me to be influenced by my background and heritage, but my heritage and background was always in East London. As an Asian family in the UK, we are always pushed to the academic fields. My sister is a lawyer and her husband is a banker.

Ade Bamgbala: So, they’ve ticked that off.

Nam Tran: Yeah, they’ve ticked off and they’re like Nam’s the black sheep, he’s not going to be nothing and he’s going to be struggling. I told them to give me a few years to crack it. I’ll be on TV sometime. I’ll be known in my field.

Ade Bamgbala: When you said that to them, just out of interest, is it because being on TV to them was you being professional in their eyes?

Nam Tran: It was more to do with me proving to them that this was more than ceramics. I’ve also aspired to finding more in ceramics; to be known, to be remembered. That’s my goal. Earning money from pottery commissions is easy, I’ve always done that.

Ade Bamgbala: You say that so flippantly. I’m definitely going to have to challenge that. “Making money from ceramics is easy” - it can’t be that easy.

Nam Tran: I’ve always hustled. You have to remember where I’m actually from; I’m from east London. At the age of 10 I was pulling out market stalls for 10 quid at 3am. Then hustled out and worked on those market stalls at 12, and after I started selling bikes and all sorts.

Ade Bamgbala: So, what I’m trying to understand is how you came into this world of ceramics. Was it a catalyst?

Nam Tran: Yeah! The first catalyst was when I was left to my own devices in my foundation in Newham College. They just went: this is the ceramics room if you want to have a go, go for it.

I just got a little bit of clay, making round balls, stuffing glass beads and melting it. Just messing around, it was fun.

“I’m from East London. At the age of ten, I was pulling out market stalls for ten quid at 3am.”

Ade Bamgbala: Let’s rewind now. You’ve graduated, you felt euphoric, but not quite because you’re going to the RCA. Then you realised that I haven’t actually lived life so I’m going to drop out because it is not for me. What was your next play?

Nam Tran: After I left the RCA I went into depression. I went to work in Sainsburys for about 2-3 years as a night shift manager.

Ade Bamgbala: And you weren’t doing anything in between that. Just working as a night shift manager?

Nam Tran: No, that was it. Carried on making money. Just thought I’ll pack it in, this ceramics

thing has done me in. But the crazy story is one of my close friends and technician at CSM in the ceramic department passed away, his name was David Cook.

Ade Bamgbala: May he rest in peace.

Nam Tran: He left me his entire life’s work in his studio, everything.

Ade Bamgbala: Wow!

Nam Tran: And it shocked me. I got a letter in the post saying you’ve inherited all this by the lawyer. I thought this is a bit mad, who does this? Especially for a kid like me. I felt I needed to earn stuff, I don’t get given stuff. No one understood why he left me that.

Ade Bamgbala: Do you know why?

Nam Tran: In his will, it stated that he saw something in me; in the sense of I was that loud-mouthed kid who always wanted to learn and push it. We had a dream of opening up a studio in Portugal. He was clear from the cancer he had, but it kept coming back and one day it was over.

So, in the will, it was written that I should set up the studio and start teaching and inspire as he did to me.

Ade Bamgbala: This isn’t a common path and (for) those who want to enter the world of ceramics, I’m just curious to know what is that common path? And how can they get from being a student to a being a professional who is being paid for what they love?

Nam Tran: You’ve got to know the right person. However, before that, you need to know what sector in ceramics you want to be in design or in craft? I would say go and knock on all these doors.

Behind the scenes studio visit

Surviving financially



Student: When you first left the art institution, as a maker how did you gather together tools to make?

Sokari: The squat place that I went to had tools that they were throwing out, so I said...I want that. I started off with £300 for my gas bottles. When I was at the Royal College, we all used skips! I just used to go with a trolley and get these bits of wood, take them to the studio and clean them up.

Living in the city, you can collaborate with a huge company because you are who you are. You are a young artist and people want to support you! The steel workers used to give me steel that was supposed to be £40 for free because it was a little bit bent.

Student: Straight after university, you might not have a big body of work. How do you balance trying to get into shows without selling your work and keeping ownership of your work?

Sokari: Do a residency!

Visit to Sokari's studio (2019)



Student: How do you find working from home? I find that I enjoy having a studio that is completely separate from where I am living. How do you find a balance?

Sokari: You have to be really disciplined. The shortcomings are if you have children you have to think about what they see you make. I couldn't make anything too violent or too revolting which was a pity. Living and working at home, I make a point of going out and seeing things.

Behind the scenes questions with Zohra Chiheb

Would you describe your artistic medium as elitist?

Unfortunately, statistics show that architecture is still a white, male-dominated profession; particularly at a senior level.

Did you have a job whilst at art school?

I always worked in bars and restaurants so that I had some spending money during my degree. I also worked for architecture practices (mostly paid) over the summer holidays, but I didn't work during my MA.

Once you left art school, what kind of job did you have to keep you on your feet?

I graduated during the recession of 2008/9, and I worked in an Italian restaurant for a few months. I can make a beautiful cup of barista-style coffee! I was so relieved when I received a job offer from an architecture practice later that year.

What are your thoughts on striking a successful 'work-life balance'? Do you have any tips?

I work for a local authority where there is a real focus on achieving a successful work-life balance; I am constantly encouraged not to work too many hours. This is so different to my experience of private architecture practice.

How many hours a day do you work?

An average of eight hours – that's the aim, anyway.

In the field

The art world

The artworld. What do you think about it?

The artworld is just a caricature, the film world too.

- Ayo Akingbade

Friendship, rivalries, fallings out. Have you been through any fall outs?

Yes, that is life, right? I don't like it when people tell me how to feel or say I am too opinionated. Like, how can you live and not have opinions - I am an expressive person, so that to me does not make sense.

- Ayo Akingbade

Have you been part of any art collectives?

Yes, many. I'm currently a proud member of the blaXtarlines Kumasi community.

- Larry Amponsah

Visit to Ayo Akingbade studio, Royal Academy (2019)



How useful is it to make friends and connections in the art world?

Having 'connections' is the main basis of life and work really. It being useful is up to you. - Ayo Akingbade

It is important to build connections and long-term relationships. You can't survive without them! In fact, there is no place in this world for those who don't have connections or a sense of belonging. - Larry Amponsah

Visit to Sokari's studio (2019)
Sokari Douglas Camp with Camberwell and Wimbledon College of art students



Friendships

“No one is going to give you your career. You have to go and get it.”

- Jim Selman

We took students studying photography, ceramics, PR, and media communication to

Allison + Partners, a public relations firm in London

We chatted to Jim Selman, Jide Adesesan and Amin Choudhury to get the low down on life in PR:

Jai: How do you get people interested in your story?

Every client needs something different. Your job is to make sure that you know what their objectives are, and to figure out what actions you need to take to meet them. They've got a big idea and it's up to you to take those little steps to make sure that idea is possible.

Jim: That's a really interesting question that cuts to the heart of what we do. The client lives their product or organisation, and it may not be special to the outside world. The muscle you develop as a PR person is around working out what's of interest to people. You make a story in several different ways.

Jim: Actually, back to your point again about when is a story going to work and when is it not going to work...

What's on TV at the moment? Brexit, knife crime, gender empowerment. These are huge stories and very important. Does your story have any relevance alongside them?

There are lots of times when we get a request from a client and we just have to say, actually, it's just not going to work. 'Cos you wouldn't be doing your job well if you just took everything they said and tried to cultivate something out of it. You'd get laughed at. Often times they'll go "We've got this new great product!" - but it's not really new. Then we're like, "Hold on, you've told this story already."

Amin: My job is to get the client out there. I keep a strong relationship with the media. I keep a strong relationship with my client so that I know what they're doing and can pitch that to interested journalists. I submit press releases, making sure they're optimised and at the top of Google searches.

Amin: The client is looking to you for your expertise

- that's what they are buying into. So, it's your job to tell them this will work, or this won't work. If it does work, then great - you'll get the coverage. If it's not going to work, you shouldn't go with it because you need to keep that relationship going with the journalists. The media isn't going to trust you if you're selling them fallacies.

Has there been a time where you said yes, this will work, and it hasn't? How do you deal with that?

Amin: That's when you need to bring your team together and brainstorm to figure out how you could make it work. If you work alone, you're obviously in your head, you don't know what is in other people's heads. They'll have something different to bring to the table. So, it's always good to get back to the team and say "Guys, this isn't working - how can we fix it?"

Keep thinking on your feet, keep brainstorming. This is why a lot of people stay in PR.

Jai: Do you have a particular process to help you as a team?

Jim: We always start with research!

“Four reasons to work at Allison + Partners:

- 1. It's really versatile – you need a broad skill set but it keeps it interesting.**
- 2. You're always working for the benefit of your client.**
- 3. You're learning about good things.**
- 4. You work hard, but you play hard too.”**

If you are interested in PR, when you leave university:

1. Get a copy of every national paper every day.
2. Make lists of top publications on Twitter
3. Network every day and maintain your network.
4. Look into other industries for similar roles.
5. See yourself as a professional.

Breaking into PR:

- Lots of agencies offer work experience. Usually one to three weeks, unpaid, but travel expenses are covered. Try it out!
- Paid internships are more competitive – usually you'll have multiple interviews and a writing test. They usually last three months.

Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint*

**The title of this chapter is taken from Ghanaian author Ama Ata Aidoo's novel 'Our Sister Killjoy, Reflections from a black eyed squint'. It revolves around themes of black diaspora and colonialism, in particular colonisation of the mind, while touching on the effects of post colonialism.*

In Aidoo's novel she tells the story of African students who have come to Europe to study. The protagonist, Sissie, goes to Europe "to better herself" within European education, and is confronted by and has to think deeply about same-gendered relationships. The novel also touches on the way Africans buy into the notion of white superiority by turning to Europe when they are looking at education or material possessions.

The orientation toward Europe begins in Africa and is reinforced when Africans migrate to Europe. After colonisation, African countries were left with

European ideologies and frameworks and these still operate on the continent.

Ama Ata Aidoo was born in Saltpond in the Central Region of Ghana on 23 March 1942. She was raised in a Fante royal household, the daughter of Nana Yaw Fama, chief of Abeadzi Kyiakor, and Maame Abasema. She grew up "under the oppression of resurgent neo-colonialism as a result of British aggression during the late 19th century" that was taking place in her homeland.

Her grandfather was murdered by neo-colonialists and the tragedy in turn brought her father's attention to the importance of educating the children and families of the village on the history and events of the era. This led him to open up the first school in their village and influenced Aidoo to attend the Wesley Girls High School where she first decided she wanted to be a writer.**

**From biography.yourdictionary.com/ama-ata-aidoo if you want to read more.

"It's work hard, play hard.
**You're working hard,
and you are rewarded.**

We get to leave early on a
Wednesday to work out.

Last year we did a
Great British Bake Off.

I baked a cake – it was terrible!"

- Amin Choudhury

“You shouldn’t be afraid of talking to your own community. The artistic audience needs to expand.”

We visited Sokari’s studio in London with students from Camberwell College of Art and Wimbledon College of Art.

Behind the scenes visit to Sokari Douglas Camp CBE

Sokari: The idea of School Run is to illustrate that African folk live normal lives... I was trying to tell my daughter. This piece was shown at Tiwani Contemporary Gallery about 10 years ago.

It was placed outside, parked as if it was a car and it was fun watching London cabs looking at it, as people sat on it.

Brit Flag was a combination of things. I became a British citizen and I fell in love with people like Denise Lewis, the pentathlete. Back in the day, for her to be on the front page of The Times was amazing!

There was this girl who looked like superwoman with the British flag and she owned it. So, I became very conscious of black folk that were British because I was going to become British as well.

Why was I becoming British? So, I could miss the queues and not be harassed when I travelled. Whenever you showed your green passport, even if

you were leaving the country they’ll stop you. You’d think why are you stopping me? I’m trying to leave!

Jai: Do you just make work whenever or do you respond to commissions?

Sokari: I have stories in my head that I research and one thing leads to another thing. I have threads that I am following all the time. Odd conversations come from looking at pictures from the Internet.

Jai: How do you research or keep track? Do you use a sketchbook?

Sokari: I have a sketchbook to complain in! [laughter] I do have a sketchbook as a diary. Basically, I work with maquettes, so will make things.

Student: Do you find your practice easier when working towards a brief or do you make work just for you, and which do you find more fulfilling?

Visit to Sokari’s studio (2019)
Sokari discussing her work with students



Sokari: Both and all of it is cool, as long as you’re working and having conversations with people.

Student: You use oil drums in your artwork and repurpose materials, and since you’re working with metal you use a lot of gas, so, you’re polluting. How does that affect your interaction with your artwork?

Sokari: At the moment, I have decided to embrace it and I’m coming to terms with it. I am not too sure where I am going. It’s this intuitive thing - waiting to understand why you did that. I am embracing material things. If I can help the environment somehow, I’d

love to and I’m not quite sure how at the moment apart from recycling a bit.

Student: What would be your key advice for approaching opportunities like residencies, competitions and exhibitions?

Sokari: You’ve got to give yourself time to write a proposal that you can shoot out to them. Do a lot of research and push it to someone. You don’t have to think of only England, think as broad as possible. But do realise that you need time.

You shouldn’t be afraid of talking to your own community. The artistic audience needs to expand.

Finding a place in history

Is there anything you would have done differently in your practice?

I would fail, fail, and fail again. By allowing yourself to fail you are enquiring into something the world has not yet provided answers for; it is through failure that we try new things and build confidence in our discoveries.

- Larry Amponsah

“Companies don’t just holla at you to give you money, you have to be in their plans before they even think about you. So, we had to learn how to get in front of people who have money and that came through taking certain opportunities that we knew would elevate us. It took a lot of clever decisions.”

- Jide Adetunji

“To know categorically what you are going to do is to be fixed upon the outcome but blind to the journey. Journeying is where the work takes place; without the travel, the destination looks much like where you started from.” - Roni Horn

- Quoted by Ayo Akingbade as her favourite quote

What is your take on finding a place in art history?

I would rather create one for myself rather than finding a space that already exists. There has never been a space for me and my people, so we have to go the long way around to establish one for generations to come. - Larry Amponsah

Resources/ useful links

SITES FOR RESIDENCIES, COMPETITIONS, AWARDS, GRANTS AND APPLICATIONS, "PROFESSIONAL" DEVELOPMENT

Artquest: artquest.org.uk

UAL Careers and Employability (C&E) :
arts.ac.uk

Arts Council: artscouncil.org.uk

UAL Students Union: arts-su.com

ArtsHub: artshub.co.uk

Creative Opportunities UAL:
creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk

SITE FOR ARTIST RIGHTS (LEGAL STUFF)

Artquest: artquest.org.uk

Artimage: artimage.org.uk

DACS: dacs.org.uk

UAL Creative IP: creativeip.org

SITES FOR PAID CREATIVE JOBS

Creative Access: creativeaccess.org.uk

ArtsJobs: artsjobs.org.uk

UAL Students Union: arts-su.com

UAL Careers and Employability (C&E):
arts.ac.uk

ArtsHub: artshub.co.uk

DACS: dacs.org.uk

Creative Opportunities UAL:
creativeopportunities.arts.ac.uk

The Dots: the-dots.com

If You Could: ifyoucouldjobs.com



Where

do

we

go

from

here

?