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Seven inspiring solo shows and retrospectives to catch IRL this year

1. Sargy Mann: Let It Be Felt That the Painter Was There
9 November to 9 February 2020
The late and long-neglected British painter Sargy Mann seems to be having something of a moment of late. Ex-pupil Chantal Joffe curated a collection of his late paintings at the Royal Drawing School earlier this year, award-winning author Olivia Laing featured in a symposium on his work, and now comes this rare retrospective – the largest public display of his work to date.

Born in 1937, Mann studied under Frank Auerbach and Euan Uglow. He developed cataracts at the age of 36 and was declared officially blind 15 years later. While his teaching career subsequently ended, his ability to conjure vivid scenes in undulating false colours only excelled further and he developed an interest in neuroaesthetics. His best pieces collected here rival the most transformative works of his heroes Cezanne and Bonnard.

Attenborough Arts Centre, University of Leicester, Leicester
www.attenborougharts.com

2. Radical Women: Jessica Dismorr and her Contemporaries
2 November to 23 February 2020
Chichester’s Pallant House Gallery has a habit of unearthing obscure British painters and rightly readressing their place in the artistic firmament. This forthcoming exhibition is no exception.

Jessica Dismorr was connected to various modernist art movements between the two World Wars and lays claim to being one of the few true abstract painters working in England during the 1930s. Eighty of Dismorr’s paintings, illustrations and sculptures will sit alongside works by her visionary contemporaries, including fellow female Vorticist Helen Saunders and Rhythm contributor Anne Estelle Rice.

Pallant House Gallery, Chichester, West Sussex
www.pallant.org.uk
Lucian Freud: The Self-Portraits
27 October to 26 January 2020

While we’ve all been there, staring bleary-eyed into the mirror and failing to quite believe the face staring back, Lucian Freud’s battle to confront his own image remains one of the 20th-century’s most compelling sets of self-portraits.

His portraits of others could be as excoriating as Picasso at his cruellest, yet he often imbued his own likenesses with a nobility and composure that borders on arrogance. 1943’s Man with a Feather is a cocksure vision of his 21-year-old self, one that continues unabashed through to 2002’s Self-Portrait, Reflection, which shows the octogenarian artist proudly adjusting his collar.

In fact, viewing Freud’s self-portraits can be as uncomfortable as one imagines it was to sit for the artist, those needling little eyes fixed on you throughout. That his paintings elicit such a visceral response, however, is testament to the power of art.

Royal Academy of Arts, London
www.royalacademy.org.uk

Joy Labinjo
19 October to 23 February 2020

The Woon Foundation Painting & Sculpture Art Prize is a dream gig for students, offering a £20,000 fellowship and a studio space in central Newcastle free of charge. The 2017 winner, Joy Labinjo, was busy working right through the summer in the run up to this, her first major institutional show after her private gallery debut at Tiwani Contemporary in London last year and a solo exhibition at Sheffield’s not-for-profit Bloc Projects in the spring.

Labinjo’s paintings are based upon found images and old family photos, yet the Dagenham-born artist is creating far more than just facsimiles. While there’s a bit of the jaunty awkwardness of an Alice Neel or the bold colour blocking of Alex Katz to Labinjo’s portraits, the 25-year-old is quickly alighting on a distinctive vision of her own, embracing her British-Nigerian heritage and creating balanced, characterful compositions that feel just so.

BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Newcastle
www.baltic.art
Paula Rego
23 November to 19 April 2020
Art is, above all, about communicating and one of our greatest living visual storytellers is the Portuguese artist Dame Paula Rego. While the 84-year-old clearly possesses a vivid and often macabre imagination, she also turns to folk tales and storybooks whenever she struggles with a painting. Her studio, meanwhile, looks more like a theatre props department, filled as it is with masks and mannequins, stuffed toys and costumes.

And while these fanciful set-ups bring character to Rego’s work, she balances these fictions by immersing herself in current affairs and contemporary issues. This major new retrospective, touring from Milton Keynes, focuses on this aspect of her career in depth, selecting works that tackle abortion, politics, gender, violence and more. It is a reminder to all artists to be bold with subject choices.

Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh www.nationalgalleries.org

Elizabeth Peyton: Aire and Angels
3 October to 5 January 2020
Elizabeth Peyton is a portrait painter for the celebrity age. Her portfolio is dotted with likenesses of Michelle Obama, Kanye West and Prince Harry. Fellow artists feature regularly too (Kahlo, Hockney, O’Keeffe), as do ex-boyfriends and historical figures. Curator Lucy Dahllsen says Peyton’s work is “born from an enduring desire to make pictures that tell us about love and human relationships” but that only feels like part of the story.

The 44-year-old New Yorker is seemingly less interested in the interplay of others and more with her own complex relationship with these people she has loved or admired from afar. Hers are devotional portraits, briskly rendered with the urgency of a social media addict and the false intimacy of good fan fiction.


Alberta Whittle: How Flexible Can We Make the Mouth
14 September to 24 November
Barbadian-Scottish multimedia artist Alberta Whittle’s empowering artistic practice has focused upon using “radical self-love and collective care” as a means of confronting oppression and racism. The commission, A Recipe for Planters Punch, for example, saw her submerge her face in the drink while dissecting lyrics to Rihanna’s Bitch Better Have My Money. This major solo show features recent film work, prints, installations and performances, many with a focus on breathing, speech and reading aloud.

Dundee Contemporary Arts, Dundee. www.dca.org.uk
Artist and author Lisa Congdon reveals why routine practise is key to developing your artistic voice

About seven years ago, I was asked to speak at a conference for creative entrepreneurs. The woman who ran the conference was an acquaintance I’d known socially in San Francisco, where I lived at the time. I used to run into her at nearly every event around town, from book signings to art shows to fundraisers for various causes. When she introduced me to the audience at the conference, she said the thing she most admired about me was that I “showed up.” It was the first time I noticed anyone describing me this way.

The compliment made me feel good, but it also caused me to want to explore this idea of showing up. I began thinking about it a lot. What did that mean exactly? And what were all the ways I was showing up? If it was a good thing to show up, how could I show up in new and different ways?

Maggie, the conference organiser, was complimenting me for showing up for other people. In so doing, I became part of a community of artists and creative entrepreneurs. I got to know folks who were also trying to make it in a creative field. I forged friendships with other people that led to the give and take of support, idea sharing, and collaborations. Showing up for other people also meant that I immersed myself in the work of other artists, designers, and writers. I learned from them, which in turn helped me to gain perspective on my own work, important factors in developing my voice.

In my reflection, however, I realised that the notion of showing up was so much bigger than simply showing up for others in my community. Sure, showing up for and learning from other creative folks has a beneficial role in our development as artists. In my book Art Inc.: The Essential Guide to Building Your Career as an Artist, I talk about the importance of finding your community so that you can learn, share, and grow with other artists who are on a similar path. But I also knew that showing up to work at my own drawing table was an equally valuable ingredient in the formula for artistic growth and success. If I spent most of my time looking at the work of other artists and hanging out at gallery openings, but not consistently making my own work, I might be inspired and make friends, but I’d never make progress in my own creative path.

Showing up includes putting in the work. Putting in the work can feel formidable, especially if you are just starting out and you have a job, a family or other commitments. Even when we have time scheduled in our day to make art, the fear of not knowing exactly where to begin or failing or experiencing boredom often keep us from starting. We make excuses for why it’s not worth it to sit and work when we only have 20 minutes, so we choose, instead, to watch TV or scroll through social media on our phone. Showing up includes setting a schedule for making work, no matter how limited, and then doing the work consistently in that scheduled time. Your voice cannot develop in a vacuum. It is not the result of magical thinking or observation. Your voice develops as a result of showing up and making stuff, not once or twice, but over and over again.

Practise makes perfect

Once upon a time, I would wake up in the morning and walk bleary-eyed to my computer to check to see if I had gotten an email from my illustration agent about any new work assignments. I was just starting out in my career, and while I was lucky enough to sign with an agent just one year in, paid work came to me slowly at that time. There were weeks and weeks on end when I didn’t have any gigs as an illustrator. Even though this was a bummer (and required living on a shoestring), I began to understand that if I was going to get to the place where clients were knocking at my door to work with me, I had to make more work, and I had to make increasingly better and more interesting work. In other words, the only way I was going to develop my voice as an artist was through practise.

Showing up and making art every day is great, but practising is next-level. Practise is about honing
in on something specific – ideally the kind of work you’d like to get better at making – and then practising that thing over and over.

One of the first tips my former agent, Lilia Rogers, gave to me was that I should give myself assignments when I didn’t have paid work; I should use the time I had to make the kind of work I wanted to get hired to do by clients. That notion – make the work you want to get as an illustrator – became a mantra that guided my career. As a result, I experimented with practising different types of illustration, including repeat pattern design, illustrations for the children’s market, and drawing portraits of people. Instead of making just one or two of something, I made bodies of work, the accumulation of months of daily practise.

Whether you have aspirations to be a professional artist or you want to make art for pure enjoyment, the habit of going deep with something through practise is a sure-fire strategy for speeding up the process of developing your artistic voice.

The beginner gap
Practise can be fun for sure, but the problem is that very often our idea of the kind of work we want to make is way beyond our current skill level. There is literally a “skill gap” between our vision and our ability. One of my favourite descriptions of this gap is coined by This American Life’s Ira Glass. “All of us who do creative work, we get into it because we have good taste,” he says. “But there is this gap. For the first couple years you make stuff, and it’s just not that good. It’s trying to be good, it has potential, but it’s not.” Glass goes on to say that realising there is a gap between your taste (or your big ideas) and your skills is really disappointing to people, so they give up. “They quit,” he says.

One of the challenges of being a beginner is continuing to show up and practise, even when your work feels like it doesn’t match up to what you wish you were creating. Because the truth is, to get better at anything requires practise – doing the same thing over and over until we become a whiz at it. The good news is that with practise, your technical skills and your ability to work well in your medium will improve.

Putting boundaries around our time can help us to feel more in control of both our workload and the time we set aside for experimenting.

Setting a daily routine is important because the most direct route to cementing your technical skills and developing your voice as an artist is doing your thing – drawing, painting, sculpting, photographing, whatever – as often as you can for a designated period of time. Concentrated, regular practise leads to the fastest growth.


"Your voice develops as a result of showing up and making stuff, not once or twice, but over and over again"
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www.DerwentArt.com
The AOI's Ren Renwick on why we need to start talking about freelancers' mental health.

Illustration: Harry Woodgate

There are more freelancers than in any other time in history. In the past few years alone, there has been an extraordinary boom in the self-employed, remote-working, hot-desking culture. The chances are that, if you are going into the creative industries, you will at some point be working as a freelancer—and if you’re going to be an illustrator that chance is even higher.

Freelancing brings huge opportunities and benefits with it. You can wear what you want, keep the hours you want, not have to bother with the office politics of who drank your milk and importantly be accountable only to yourself.

But there is another side to freelancing: you are often working alone, pitching for work (and, by necessity being rejected), there will be days where you literally talk to no one, income is erratic and if you don’t have imposter syndrome at some point you are basically unique. Most of those points can be individual triggers for mental health; all together they demand all creative freelancers proactively ensure wellbeing.

At the Association of Illustrators (AOI), we support illustrators through every stage of their business—and mental health is part of that. As an association, we are not experts (see the box opposite for where to go for immediate help), but we do know that talking about mental health is vital. In part it shows how normal it is—and in part it can help share some great ideas on how to deal with challenges.

In our conversations with illustrators, money (and the lack of it) is most often cited as the primary mental health concern. Lize Meddings is the founder of the Sad Ghost Club, a long-term project spreading awareness of mental health. Lize developed her merchandise range in part to give herself control over her income—when there were less commissions, she was able to drive her own sales. This had a
"Talking about mental health is vital... It shows how normal it is"

massive impact on managing her mental health.

Chris Sav, a London-based musician, comedian and illustrator who has created the Disappointman character for CALM, has spoken about the need to face up to financial realities, however tempting it is to bury your head in the sand. There are not many illustrators (or creatives in general) who go into it for the business side of things, but the reality is that being a freelancer means running a small business – and to make that business, work you need to “skill up” and take ownership of that side of your business activities.

You need a business plan (the AOI has templates) and the ability to understand how you are going to manage your money. Do you need an investor? A second job? How will you make it work? Having control of this will help your mental health.

Both Lize and Chris are pretty clear on the risks of burnout for freelancers. There is no “home time” when you are working from home, and you have to really take time to be well and give yourself space for a balanced life. It’s easy to glorify working so hard and the “I’ll sleep when I’m dead” attitude, but it’s not a good mantra to adopt.

Social media and mental health go hand in hand, and it can be easy to get on a self-destructive treadmill feeding the beast. If you’re lonely, social media can be a great way to get some validation, but that validation isn’t real. Social media is also a vital tool, but you need to understand how you are using these platforms to grow your business, and how to use it strategically and unemotionally to grow your audience and increase your income.

Similarly, many creatives recognise that being part of a wider group is pretty important. That might mean being in a studio, having a group of peers you can share ideas with, or going to regular meet ups. However it works for you, it’s really important to have people you can talk to, get feedback from, or just share what you’ve been up to. The AOI runs meet ups for illustrators across the UK – check out our website to see what’s happening near you.

For many reasons, there is a rise in mental health across the population. Mental health can range from something quite mild and manageable to something life threatening. You should seek professional help for any level of symptoms that impact on your day to day life.

But as with physical health, prevention is better than cure, and setting aside time in your business planning to look after your wellbeing is increasingly becoming a necessity.

Ren Renwick is Chief Executive of the Association of Illustrators (AOI), a membership organisation for illustrators. The AOI has resources on mental health, business planning, finance and social media, and offers one-to-one business support to members. Follow them @theaoi or visit www.theaoi.com

Seeking help
If you are struggling with mental health issues or know someone who is, contact the following organisations for advice and support.

• NHS
If you are concerned that you are developing a mental health problem, you should seek the advice and support of your GP as a matter of priority.
Locate your nearest GP at www.nhs.uk/Service-Search. If you are in distress, need immediate help and are unable to see a GP, you should visit your local A&E.

• Samaritans
The Samaritans offers emotional support in full confidence, 24 hours a day. Call free on 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org.uk.

• Rethink
For advice on different types of therapy and medication, benefits, debts, money issues, mental health rights and more, call 0300 5000 927 Monday to Friday, 10am to 2pm.

• Shout
If you’re experiencing a personal crisis, are unable to cope and need support, text Shout to 85258. Shout offers help with suicidal thoughts, abuse or assault, self-harm, relationship challenges and more.

• Mind
Mind offers answers to questions about types of mental health problems and where to get help on the infoline 0300 123 3393. Mind also has a legal advice service that includes advice on discrimination and equality related to mental health issues – call 0300 466 6463.
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**Open SSA+VAS**
Deadline: 30 September 2019
Visual Arts Scotland and the Society of Scottish Artists have joined forces to stage the biggest show of contemporary art in Scotland for a second time. Enter for the chance to feature in the Edinburgh exhibition and win a range of prizes.

[www.s-s-a.org](http://www.s-s-a.org)

**RBSA Next Wave 2020**
Deadline: 2 October 2019
This biennial mentoring programme is targeted at early-career artists based in the West Midlands. Winners receive support for everything from finding a studio to achieving financial sustainability, while also appearing in a February exhibition.

[www.rbsa.org.uk](http://www.rbsa.org.uk)

**The de Laszlo Foundation Prize**
Deadline: 29 November 2019
An artist aged 35 or under will take home the de Laszlo Medal and £1,500 for painting the best work from life as part of the Royal Society of British Artists’ 2020 exhibition.

[www.royalsocietyofbritishartists.org.uk](http://www.royalsocietyofbritishartists.org.uk)

**BP Portrait Award**
Deadline: January 2020 (tbc)
Artists aged 18 to 30 who enter this prestigious competition are automatically considered for the £9,000 BP Young Artist Award too.

[www.npg.org.uk/whatson](http://www.npg.org.uk/whatson)
The Leathersellers’ Prize  
Deadline: 3 January 2020  
Among more than 20 prizes up for grabs at the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours 208th exhibition is this £1,000 award for works in watercolour and water-soluble media by artists aged 18 to 30.

www.royalinstituteofpaintersinwatercolours.org

Ashurst Emerging Artist Prize 2020  
Deadline: February 2020 (tbc)  
Now in its sixth year, this law firm-sponsored competition has a first prize of £3,000 along with the chance to stage your own solo exhibition in London. Sign up for entry updates at the website.

www.artprize.co.uk

Derwent Art Prize  
Deadline: 17 February 2020  
The renowned pencil manufacturers’ fifth open exhibition will visit London and Paris, while two young artist prizes totalling £6,000 are available for those aged under 25. Cheap £5 entry fees apply.

www.derwent-artprize.com

Sky Arts Portrait and Landscape Artist of the Year  
Deadline: 2019/2020 (tbc)  
With the niche Sky Arts series repeating on Channel 4 now, interest in these two annual competitions is growing. Portrait Artist of the Year entries have closed for 2020 but sign up online for details of the next Landscape-themed series.

www.skyartsartistoftheyear.tv

Young Masters Art Prize  
Deadline: Spring 2021 (tbc)  
Founded by gallerist Cynthia Corbett, this biennial not-for-profit initiative aims to promote young and emerging artists. It is open to anyone who pays homage to the skill of the Old Masters as part of their practice. Previous winners took home £2,000.

www.young-masters.co.uk
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Brushing up

Five books that every art student should investigate in 2019

1. Looking at Art with Alex Katz

Like an extended episode of The Met’s Artist Project – well worth a watch online at http://artistproject.metmuseum.org – this slim, yet engaging book sees the veteran painter offer a guided tour of the work of almost 100 favourite artists.

A rather personal series of bite-size observations and critiques accompany each piece, as Katz claims Renoir is “one of the premier peach painters” thanks to his skill depicting fruit, while Chantal Joffe makes art that is “alive”, despite her technique being dismissed.

Eccentric and inspiring, this is a fascinating insight into how an artist looks at art.

Laurence King, £14.99. www.laurenceking.com

2. The Gift by Lewis Hyde

First published in 1983 and now subtitled “How the Creative Spirit Transforms the World”, The Gift isn’t about visual arts specifically, yet it will do much to satisfy artists struggling to find their place amid the pressures of an increasingly commercial world.

In a series of 10 thought-provoking essays, Hyde delves into poetry and psychology, while encouraging us to question our own artistic practice. As The Handmaid’s Tale author Margaret Attwood notes in her foreword to this latest edition, “One guarantee: you won’t come out of The Gift unaltered.”

Canongate, £12.99. www.canongate.tv

3. On Color by David Scott Kastan with Stephen Farthing

Not so much a book about colour mixing, as a treatise for why artists and scholars have been fascinated by it over the years – and why it still matters. There are 10 hues tackled in turn, each given huge context via a barrage of references.

While it is co-written by the Royal Academy of Arts’s Stephen Farthing and a Yale University professor, and the pair admit most chapters began in a museum, it is far from dry or academic, giving the work of Picasso equal importance to 2015 viral internet favourite “the dress”.

Yale, £20. www.yalebooks.co.uk

4. Blind Spot by Teju Cole

Novelist Teju Cole sensitively documented the immigrant experience in his breakthrough debut novel Open City, and here he turns his attentions to his passion for photography with equal eloquence.

Published originally in Italian to accompany an exhibition of his own photography, Cole selects 150 of his pictures, taken everywhere from a Brooklyn car park to a church in Lagos, which he annotates with thoughtful captions.

They combine to form one of the most stimulating books about the art of looking since the John Berger art history staple Ways of Seeing.

Faber & Faber, £20. www.faber.com

5. Modernists and Mavericks by Martin Gayford

The closest the art world gets to a page turner is this lively sketch of the London art world between 1945 and 1970.

From the creators of Artists & Illustrators. ArtStudent 21
Sacred Cows

The White Pube’s Gabrielle de la Puente shares all the art world things she wishes people would get over in 2019. Illustration: Tess Smith-Roberts

God. I thought working in the arts would be more fun that it is. I thought it would be more creative too, more accessible. For some reason I thought it would have better politics than other industries, and even be a bit VIBEY to use the language of the straight white men I am forced to work with on occasion. No one told me it would be like this. Like c’mon, there is so much keeping the art world from actually being fun, and there’s a row of Antony Gormley statues standing arm in arm in the way of this industry being a fairer place for different identities and classes of people.

I am DONE and I need you to be cooked and done also. Antony Gormley’s vanity project can do one for starters, but there’s so much keeping the art world from actually being fun, and there’s a row of Antony Gormley statues standing arm in arm in the way of this industry being a fairer place for different identities and classes of people.

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1. London
You think it’s superior, I call bullshit. Why’d you wanna work full-time for a massive corporation of a gallery where you can’t make a dent in anything it has to say?

Why work multiple jobs and long days to jussst about make rent, in the process losing all the headspace and energy you need to produce some good art for yourself or pay attention to someone else’s? I have friends in London right now paying £800 a month for their studio alone and they are SECRETLY LIVING IN IT AND HAVE BUILT A FALSE CEILING HIDEY HOLE WHERE THEY CAN SLEEP UNDETECTED.

IDK why art people would wanna live in a pressure cooker like this where everyone has been stripped of power and agency. Especially when the rest of the country has a healthier work/play balance, relatively cheaper bigger spaces, more entry points, and plenty of interesting shows. Loads of good stuff happening elsewhere. So pls, London exodus, now.

2. Tate, as a whole
Tate Modern is putting a Warhol show on next year? Nope. These galleries show the same roster of about five dead white men, and I can’t anymore. We cannot be seduced like this to pay 5 meal deals’ worth of British pounds to get into exhibitions, when all we’re doing is providing big income for the Tate (who literally have the credibility to find that money elsewhere) and validation for the collectors who want to keep their assets valuable.

BOYCOTT these boring shows, save your pennies. We don’t need to be keeping rich people rich and we definitely don’t need to be seeing these artists AGAIN.

3. Museums
Museums are just rooms full of stolen things. I can’t remember feeling GOOD in a museum. I’m always just a bit thirsty and sad.

I know these big rich institutions might be beginning to acknowledge their colonial histories but as the whitest person known to man, Tristram Hunt, has made clear, they’re not interested in returning any of these items to the countries they were taken from. Tristram, director of the V&A, can suck a 28,000-year-old polished stone dildo from Bavaria for all I care. Do not support or respect museums. They aren’t what we need them to be.

4. The way art people dress
Fashion trends have always made me cringe, I’m NGL. To think everyone is wearing the same thing at the same time kills me but
"I never feel GOOD in a museum... They are just rooms full of stolen things"
it’s even worse when it comes to art, because participants think the costume is limited to three very specific categories:
1. People who only shop in Cos, wear wide leg bottoms and very clean shoes.
2. Lads who wear the blue workers’ jacket because they have no personality.
3. Skinny people who dress in stylised working class getup so they can pull off a character of edginess without proximity to an empty bank account. I HATE THIS!

Listen, I am a vaguely successful person in the arts, and I’ve been wearing the Pokemon Uniqlo collection to all my meetings this week, at least am UNIQUELO.

5. Old man granddad galleries
If I’m thirsty and sad walking around museums, you can imagine what happens to me when I visit these permanent collections of a load of old paintings of ships and people I don’t know. I age so fast.

Art history is important but we’re only ever seeing it through a white lens. You could be putting anything on those gallery walls but instead you decide to do that? Please fire the curators and hire someone off Twitter who does good threads, they would literally do a better job.

6. Panel talks
They’re not fun to watch and they are less fun to be on. As that tweet goes, we’re going to look back on this era and wonder why we organised so many panel talks. ‘Precarity in the arts’, ‘who writes the future?’, ‘feminism and the internet’ and so on. All that talking when what we need is ACTION.

I find these are becoming more and more redundant, and that I honestly get more from following interesting people on Twitter, or sending them an email if I have a question, or even taking them for a coffee if we are in the same city. Panel talks are weird unnecessary performances we can do without.

7. Art as sacred, gallery as temple
Finally, there is a seriousness attached to art that I reject. I got told off by an invigilator at a Jackson Pollock exhibition in Tate Liverpool once for answering my phone - AM NOT SORRY KAREN, this phone call is going to be more interesting to me than Jackson Pollock’s work.

I am convinced this expectation we have to treat a painting as tho’ it is holy is to demand an often uncalled for amount of respect of art when it doesn’t always hold public value, or any personal value to many of us. There’s no right way to be an exhibition visitor! Feel free to BOO, laugh, clap, be loud, walk out, cheer or cry – and if the gallery tells you off say FINE, I’M GOIN’ TO GO AND WATCH THE FOOTY INSTEAD. ‘Cause for all you might bemoan football culture, at least it is A SAFE SPACE for owning your feelings, sharing them out loud, and throwing BEER in the air when things go well. I am jealous.

More of that pls.
www.thewhitepube.co.uk

"People who only shop in Cos? Lads in blue workers' jackets? I HATE THIS!"
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Considering the environment when you are solely focused on making great art on a budget may seem like a luxury that you can consider later, yet there are plenty of affordable options out there if you know what you are looking for, from sustainable wood to non-toxic substances.

1 Richeson Lyptus Navajo easel
Brazil’s environmentally-friendly Lyptus wood plantations are a mix of eucalyptus and native tropical forest, harvestable 40-50 years quicker than temperate trees. US manufacturer Jack Richeson & Co create a range of lyptus easels, with the affordable Navajo available in the UK via Norwich Art Supplies.

www.richesonart.com

2 Caran d’Ache Pastel Pencils
It may come as no surprise that sustainability and ethical responsibility are watch words for a Swiss company so slick that they have collaborated with Nespresso. These rich pastel pencils are just one of many products designed and made with FSC-certified wood in Caran d’Ache’s Geneva workshop

www.carandache.com

3 Zest-It Oil Paint Dilutant and Brush Cleaner
Forget the turpentine or white spirit. This environmentally-friendly, biodegradable alternative is made using the zest of citrus fruit, so it not only naturally cleans brushes and dilutes oil paints, but also has the pleasant effect of making your studio smell like freshly-cut lemons.

www.zest-it.com

4 Winsor & Newton Cadmium-Free Professional Water Colour
For more than two centuries, Cadmium pigments have been a go-to for serious artists, cropping up on the palettes of everyone from Monet to Mondrian.

Recently, however, with the European Chemicals Agency considering banning the substance due to concerns about it entering the watercourse, Winsor & Newton developed these substitutes.

www.winsornewton.com

5 Hahnemühle Bamboo Mixed Media paper
Hahnemühle donated more than 130,000 euros to environmental initiatives since 2008 and its range of bamboo-fibre papers is a particular favourite with environmentally-conscious artists.

The thicker, 265gsm weight mixed media paper will stand up to plenty of mark making and paint washes.

www.hahnemuehle.com/en
**Vegan products**

One of the wonderful things about painting and drawing is having the ability to craft new images using the same materials and techniques as the Old Masters. However, when those materials are made from centuries-old recipes in less enlightened times, traditional doesn’t always equal better.

Traditional art materials with unexpected additions can include brushes (animal hairs like sable and kolinsky), gesso (often made with rabbit-skin glue), gouache (can contain gelatine or oxgall), paper (sized with gelatine), oil paints (check for beeswax), and watercolour (some contain honey).

Luckily for vegans, or simply any artist wishing to be a more conscientious consumer, there are plenty of traditional-style art materials on the market that are free from animal by-products.

1. **Gamblin PVA Size**
   - US manufacturer Gamblin has doubled down on its commitment to the vegan painter, not only discontinuing its rabbit-skin glue but also producing this great alternative.
   - Applied dilute with distilled water, PVA size can be used to seal linen or canvas and has a neutral pH so it won’t yellow.
   - www.gamblincolors.com

2. **Faber-Castell Pitt Artist Pens**
   - Faber-Castell is almost 250 years old yet has an exemplary approach to vegan products. The German company’s Pitt Artist Pens use a plastic dispersion resin binder in place of shellac or gelatin, while the sepia ones are inorganic too – sepia ink was traditionally obtained from cuttlefish and squid.
   - www.fabercastell.com

3. **Derwent Graphic Pencils**
   - Graphite can be unexpectedly non-vegan in some cases, thanks to the presence of tallow, which is made from animal fats and helps smooth the drawing process.
   - The harder pencils, from B to 9H, in the Graphic range are all free from animal products.
   - www.pencils.co.uk

4. **Daler-Rowney System 3 Acrylics**
   - Certain black or grey paints across all media can contain the PBk9 pigment, derived from animal bones. However, both System 3 blacks – Mars and Process – are free from this. In fact, aside from Raw Sienna, all colours in the range are vegan-friendly, and none of Daler-Rowney’s products are tested on animals.
   - www.daler-rowney.com

5. **Da Vinci Casaneo**
   - A Kazan squirrel hair shortage prompted the da Vinci artist brush company to develop a synthetic alternative with a similar elasticity. The Casaneo range covers everything from wash brushes and 50mm mottlers to these handy travel brushes, ideal for urban sketching.
   - www.davinci-defet.com

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Euan Roberts
The collectable London-based painter reflects on his university days, from charity work to serial killers. Interview: Rachael Funnell

How did you start?
I grew up in Brighton and me and my friends panicked about what we were going to do after A levels. We stayed to do an art foundation at the city college. When I was 20, I went to Manchester Metropolitan Uni to study illustration and animation. The people are really nice in Manchester and they’re very proud of the place. Plus, the rent is cheap.

Did you do any activities outside of your course?
We started a grassroots arts platform called Other. We put on shows and promoted artists, and it eventually emerged into a charity. We still set up art workshops in half-term for kids in Croydon. It started off just an excuse to throw parties at university, but then it turned into a way to help others.

What was your proudest achievement at university?
I sold a painting in my final year from a rather dark series I created around the theme of serial killers. People who know my art practice now wouldn’t recognise my university work. Around that time, the head of the Illustration MA at the Royal College of Art came and did a talk. Everyone had to show her their work, based on which she’d tell you what to apply for after university. She looked at mine and said, “You should go and find a shed and make art.” So, that’s basically what I did.

How could institutions better prepare you for the real world?
Making money is the elephant in the room at art school, but it’s a really important skill. If you wind up in a terrible job with no social life, desperately trying to meet your extortionate rent, that’s when your creative flame is most likely to go out. Universities could do more to teach you about business skills: how to network, how to sell, how to approach people.

"Making money is the elephant in the room at art school"
RADICAL WOMEN

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Jessica Dismorr, Abstract Composition (detail), c.1915, Oil on wood © Tate, London 2019
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