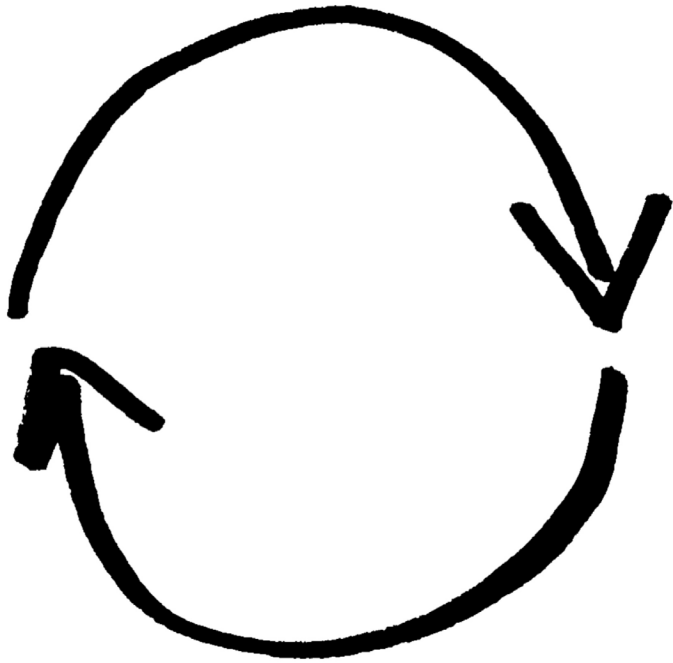




Home-Grown
ARTS

For nineteen year old me.



Following on from Students/Consumers which looked at the current higher education system in the UK; Home-Grown Arts addresses further the cuts to university courses. In particular, the difference in arts education funding outside of London.

Readers are invited to consider the value of creative courses, student bodies and regional arts.

Sharing the voices of students and staff affected by cuts to creative courses, as well as ideas and questions of what it means to be a student and an artist in the midlands.

Home-Grown Arts collates and presents research from a range of sources and provides advice for new students, parents, carers, teachers, educators and artists.

Let's talk loans.

£20 billion is loaned to 1.5 million students in England each year. As a student in a generation who have had some form of access to the internet since birth, applying for these loans is an easy process. So easy, that it is done on mass at schools and colleges across the country - like it is part of their curriculum. Every student tick boxing, selecting the correct drop down and clicking away. Unconsciously applying for a loan of £45,000.

Students living away from their parents and outside of London get a maintenance loan of up to £9706 a year. Students living away from their parents in London get up to £12667 a year.

The money comes easy to many once becoming a university student. Despite many's lack of experience with such a quantity of it. **It's a lottery win. It's payday. Pizza day. New clothes day. Finally, out of their overdraft day.**

With the ease of money and the debt being intangible to many. It's not surprising that some may apply for university with the studying not at the forefront of their thinking.

With the loan applications in motion it's time to shop for a course!

CLICK AND COLLECT YOUR DEGREE. BA or BSC? What course? Where? What city? North or South?

All the while being drawn in by mascots, unconditional offers and the social media facade of the university experience.

It's no wonder:

Students have been **recast as paying customers.** and are left feeling **alienated and instrumentalised.**

And why:

There is a mental
health crisis

There is a mental
health crisis

There is a mental
health crisis.





Use it
or lose it

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If in recent years 50.2% of seventeen to thirty year olds have participated in higher education and if 37.9% of eighteen year olds in September 2021 started an undergraduate degree in the UK, **what sets us apart?**

A postgraduate degree - **an MA**. And what happens when over half of young adults have one of them too?

The education secretary has previously asked universities to consider the value of a course.

In the hope that by **altering or ending** low value degrees students will be set up for a brighter future.

With higher education budgets being slashed by 50% some universities have made the decision to **end** courses - many of them BA's / creative courses so that they can focus on STEM (Science Technology Engineering & Maths) subjects instead.

It's an attack on the arts.

Despite £116 billion gross value added to the UK's economy because of creative outlets like film, fashion, music, & design...

Fatima's next job should still be in cyber (she just doesn't and shouldn't know it yet).

"We know we need to train doctors and nurses in order to maintain our physical national health. But equally, we need to train artists, musicians and designers in order to maintain our cultural national health".

For students currently on higher education creative courses, training to be artists, musicians and designers it can feel like a uphill struggle.

If we don't use our studios in the most archetypal and understandable way, we lose them.

There is also no grant or bursary for students on creative courses anymore. Our maintenance loans are used to fund our creative practice.

Air drying clay or dinner tonight? Paint brushes or the bus fare home? A night out or money to print?

Limboing artist and student.

Student debt is something we will worry about later. And by then we'll be earning that much we won't even notice it coming out of our bank account... That is how it's advertised anyway.

That's if we are earning enough; there is a 75% chance that graduates won't be earning enough five years after university to start making these repayments.

Sam Thorne in School A Recent History of Self Organised Art Education, argues that if the 20th century can be characterised as 'shifted from experimentation to professionalism then the first two decades of the **21st century could be characterised by the pauperisation and student debt.**

How sustainable is this cycle of education?

Graduate premium is a term used for the extra earnings a graduate can expect in comparison to their non graduate competitor.

Is this expectation or an outdated assumption?

It has been reported that graduates from creative courses have a low or even negative graduate premium. And that taxpayers are left to foot their unpaid loans.

But can a creative graduate be measured by the same means?

Is our contribution not different to or greater than our salary?

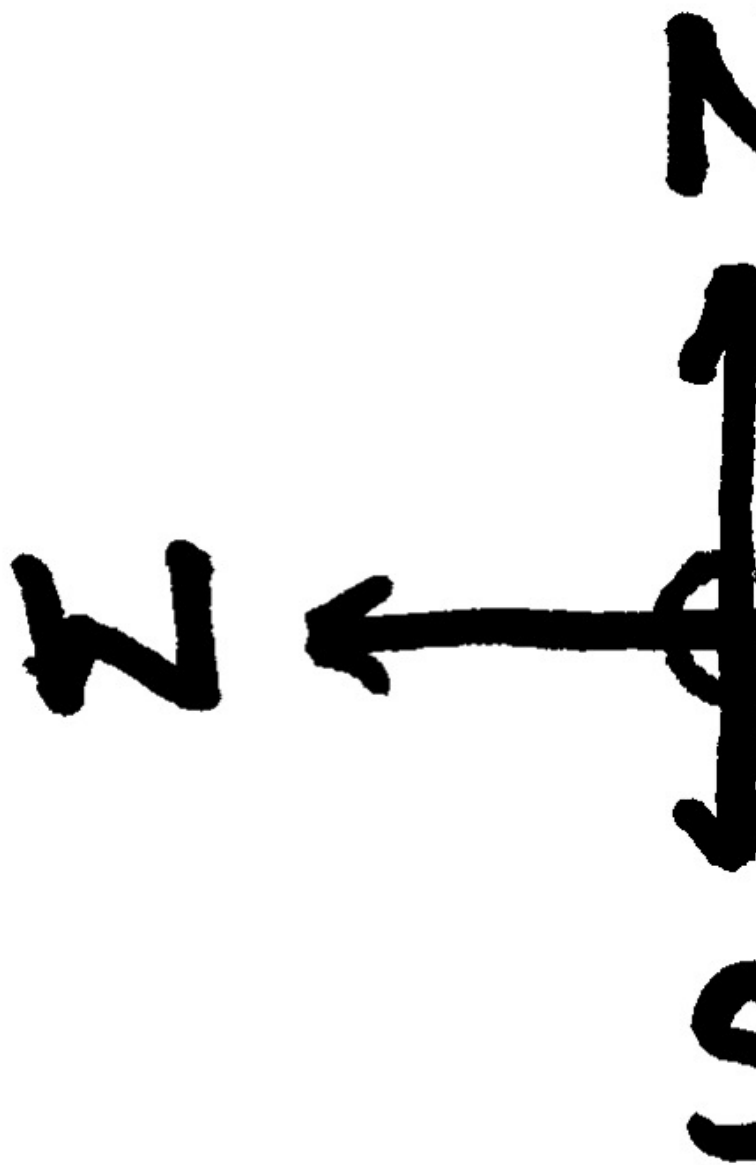
We innovate and stimulate.

The Financial Times business columnar Jonathan Gapper asks listeners to look at the returns from creative graduates across their whole career and states that, for instance, fine art graduates can earn just as much if not more than graduates with other degrees.

'the government is going to make a very narrow economic calculation, for the individual the way you look at it may be different'

The likelihood is that as creative students and graduates we do measure structures and calculations like these differently.





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As part of their 2014/2015 Taking Part survey Arts Council England concluded that people from the Northwest, Northeast and the West Midlands thought that the arts make less of a difference where they live than people in London.

Which is interesting when knowing that for the same amount as London, the North would need £691 million more in funding from the Arts Council England.

The survey also concluded that adult attendance in museums and galleries in the West Midlands was the lowest in the country.

Is this because we have fewer of them? Does this correlate with the dwindling access to arts education in the West Midlands?

But oddly, adult engagement in the West Midlands with the arts was higher than London. So, we were engaging with it somehow.

The Government's Leveling Up agenda aims to give communities a chance to **"catch up"**. Sounds good...

Others also argue it **'looks more like punching down than levelling up'**.

Research from the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) found that 'on a wide variety of measures, **regional disparities** in the UK are greater than in most comparable countries'.

The disparities in arts funding and arts education **"puts off those from lower socio-economic backgrounds leaves art subjects to wealthy domestic and foreign students"** which affects the **'cross pollination of stuff that makes things happen'** says lead singer of Pulp, Jarvis Cocker, after the news of 50% budget cuts to higher education.

The Leveling Up agenda also has plans to move civil servants and departments across the country. As a symbol of a united nation.

For this to happen, it's said more powers need to be given to regional mayors, and education needs funding not cutting to stop **'geographical cold spots as many courses become unviable'**.

Where are you

Where's the

from?

the Midlands

at?

Wolverhampton is suffering with a £20 million deficit across its university.

Their School of Art and Screen School housed in the George Wallis Building have suspended recruitment to Fashion, Textiles, Interior & Product Design and Glass & Ceramics for a year.

Then what?

'In essence the craft courses at WSoA have been hollowed out and destroyed' and they "feel like a sacrificial cow"

Despite their fashion course being ranked 7th in the country according to The Guardian and it having a student satisfaction rate of 88.2%, it won't be running for new students and the rest of the **students are being taught out.**

Over the next two years student bodies for these courses will get smaller and smaller, studios & workshops emptier and emptier.

Their Performing Arts School at the Walsall campus has also halted recruitment and staff are being offered a "mutually agreed resignation scheme"

whilst being 'deeply concerned for the future of performing arts in the West Midlands'

Many members of staff say it feels like an **'ideological decision'** rather than one of economics or choice.

If the staff feel there is a lack of choice and the students were satisfied with the courses, then whose voice is being listened to? If any at all?

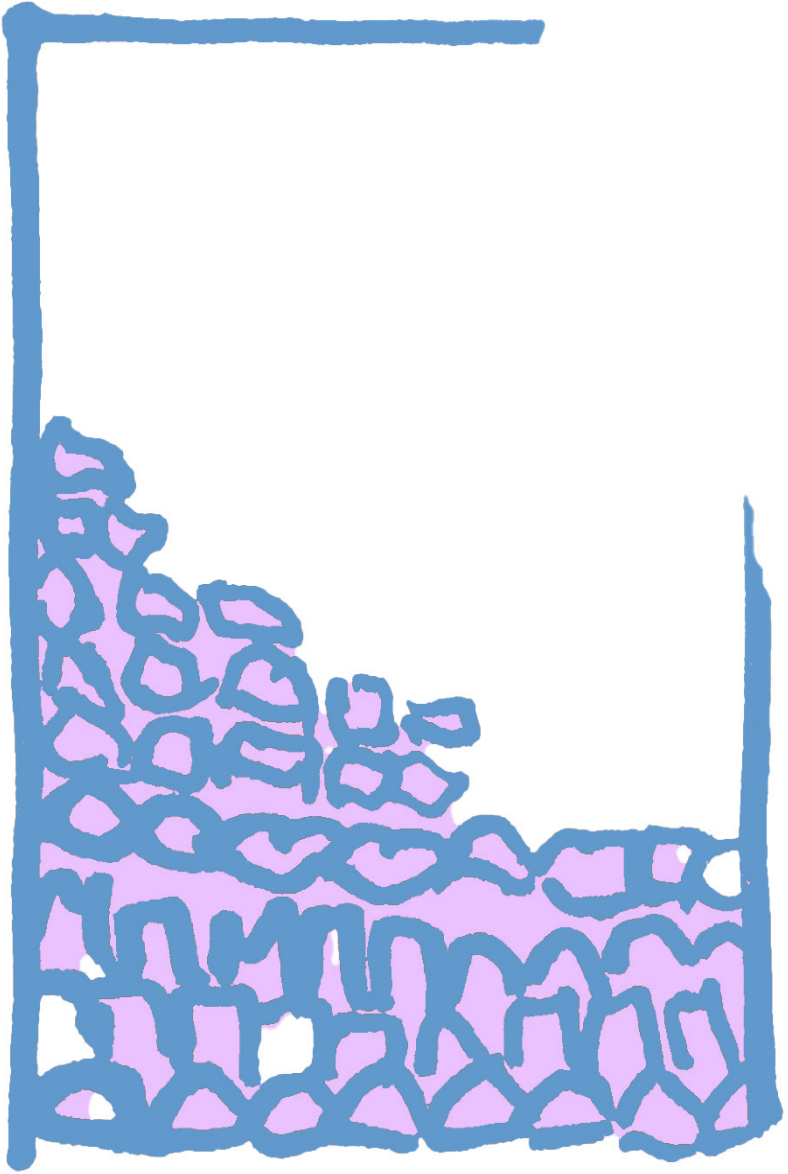
The emphasis again is on STEM subjects.

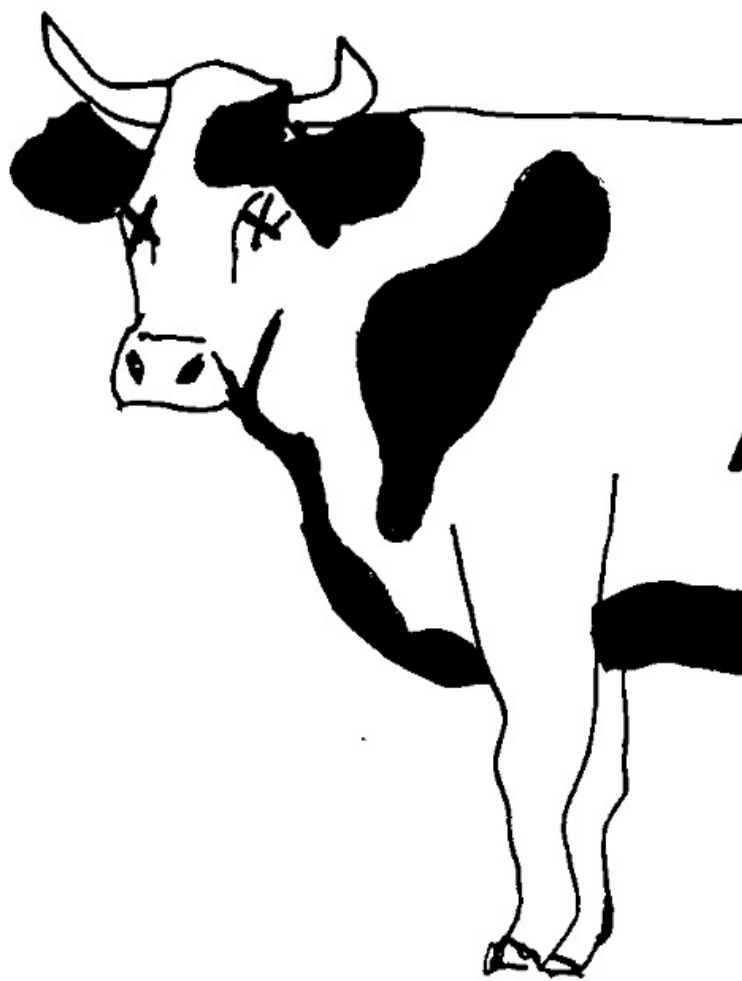
Do the staff and students on those courses have a voice?

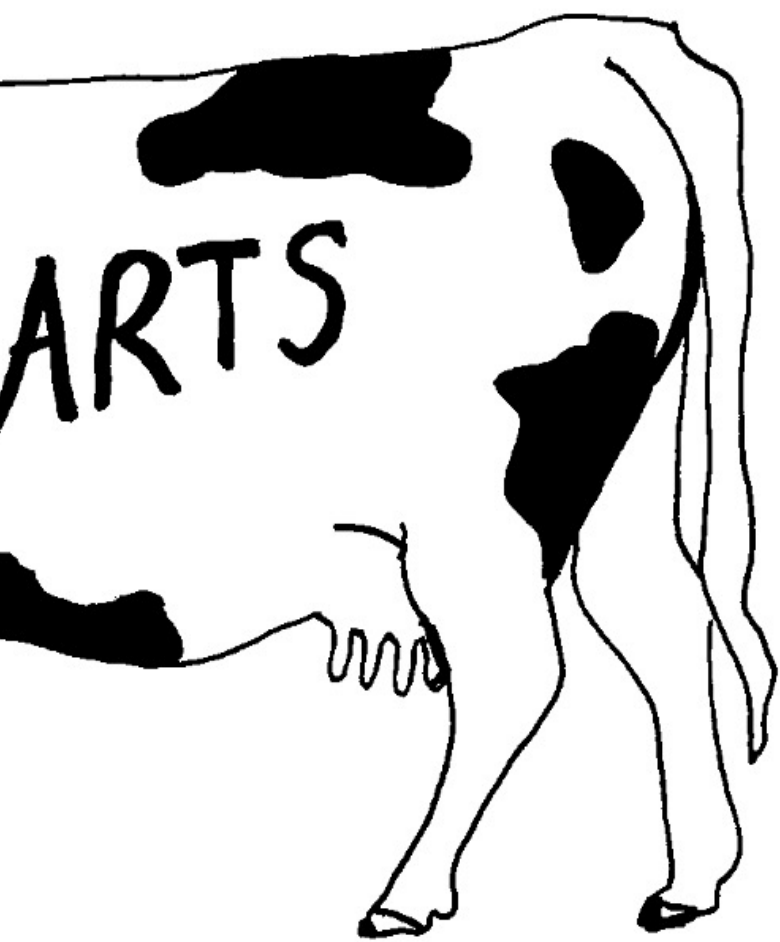
With the news of one regional art school suspending courses, rumors appear that others will suspend courses too or close completely with the economical effects of Covid-19.

Despite our reliance on the arts during the pandemic.

The impression is that art schools just aren't needed in regional cities because of a lack of students on courses currently and that **'arts teaching is being downgraded and now, at Wolverhampton University just about eradicated'**.







How to

For parents, carers, teachers, & educators it can be as simple as the conversations you have with people applying for a creative course.

Encourage them to apply for a course in a subject they enjoy.

Support them. Look into the requirements for creative courses at colleges, art schools, universities. Research into the facilities they offer, if the staff have their own practice, what alumni are doing...

Don't assume they'll be a teacher, or a painter decorator, or be able to draw, or have an Etsy, or do anything for you free of charge, or that they'll need your help finding a "real" job...

Be open minded!

Acknowledge **art from your own home** by:

Following local artists, art schools or colleges on social media to keep up to date with events.

Sharing and promoting artists' work online. Reach out to them -share your interest.

Acknowledge **art in your local area** by:

Visiting degree shows and speaking to students and staff there.

Visiting local artist led spaces/galleries and speaking to staff there. Buying memberships there if possible.

Taking classes, participating in workshops, and seeing performances and exhibitions...

help:

Petitions to sign:

Visit **Public Campaign For the Arts** website for a number of arts based petitions.

Two important ones for arts education are titled:

Rishi Sunak - Keep Your Promise to Fund Art Activities in Secondary Schools.

Nadhim Zahawi – Reverse the 50% Funding Cuts to Arts Subjects in Higher Education.

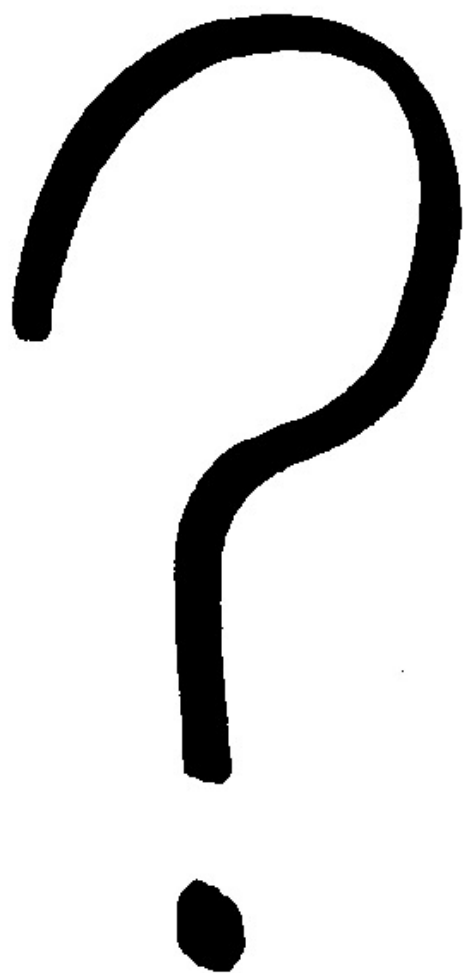
Advice for new students:

Make work for you; that you are passionate about! Fit a mark scheme around your work not your work around it.

Be prepared for: constructive criticism, unlearning and growth.

Be open to: adaptation, change and collaboration.

Don't be afraid to: not take tutors' advice, say no and take breaks.



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Inés
Leicester