

'Exit' Strategy

Following upon my initial experience and industry exploration from my BA3a research in summer 2016, my main target was to apply myself to the areas surrounding printed matter, publications and particularly indie, alternative and self-publishing formats. In reflection of this, I have tried my best to push myself towards the generation of printed work, my graduate show pieces and accompanying business cards all share the print method of Risograph. I have been determined to explore the process ever since discovering it, but I was also very much driven to use it as a technical challenge to push my work into the alternative and increasingly popular method to avoid the mainstream and often formalised 'sleekness' to published bookforms today. Additionally, I reflected back upon the existing collectives, print companies and publishers I had already come across when completing my research for BA3a and throughout this unit, I made more discoveries and made actions to contact and develop my work and practice towards this area.

Due to my uncertain opportunities following graduation, I made research into possibilities both locally and further afield. I made contact with a few creatives I knew of in Norwich, in my hometown of Cambridge and also cities I could easily visit such as London, Brighton and Nottingham. My initial task of making lists gave me the opportunity to consider the likelihood of getting into the areas surrounding publication and branding design, print and magazine/editorial, agencies, publishers and print studios. I decided to give myself a wide variety of considered routes as I feel I could easily see myself giving more than just one particular area exploration – I realise I won't know what is MY THING until I've given things a test run, best done and learnt from directly by trying the industry out. I didn't want to hold off on things and didn't see anything wrong with getting the ball-rolling on researching more.

I am really pleased with my initiative to be contacting creatives I have never met and practicing my professional networking etiquette. The fact I had more than just a half-assed reply (or a reply at all!) from some of those I contacted felt like a success – I had achieved my intention of being someone these people took the time to respond to and were happy to help out and give opportunities to.

It is not just my interaction with contacts outside the university experience that I feel has fed my development. The relationships I developed with peers and activities within this unit has really benefitted my investigation in working professionally within illustration. Working collaboratively alongside both fellow illustrators as well as the somewhat different creative course of creative writing has given me a critical

understanding of working as a collective and in an active atmosphere, surrounded by ideas and endeavour. A lot of freelance artists and illustrators will predominantly work solitary, and so sharing minds and ideas has been incredibly eye-opening, an invaluable process and an element I've realised is pinnacle to success. It is why I am adamant to be continuing to stay in contact with fellow students as well as make new creative relationships into the future.

Through the overall evaluation of my illustration practice and resulting creation of my website and portfolio, I had to go through a process of understanding my work and what it is that I do. I had some problems with self-doubt and it took more serious consideration by speaking to others about my work (including an online interview) and generally noticing the strength in my work, not getting distracted by my variety of approaches and realising how they work together to form my identity.