

Alternative Routes into Arts education & industry with Emma Edmondson and Stacie Woosley

ios, Websites & Open Calls with Jo McLaughlin

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Working Class Creatives presents

CLASS CONVOS

In Collaboration with Second Act Gallery

38:24 / 59:07
Creative Industries Insights from Alex Zawadzki, Bella Bonner Evans, and Eli Pennick

10 / 1:52:46
Unmasking the Imposter: Empowering Your Creative Confidence with Ceri Har

for we ch to Mark Leckey and Rene Matić about their journeys within the arts

12:29 / 1:09:27
Creative Industries Insights from Alex Zawadzki, Bella Bonner Evans, and Eli Pennick

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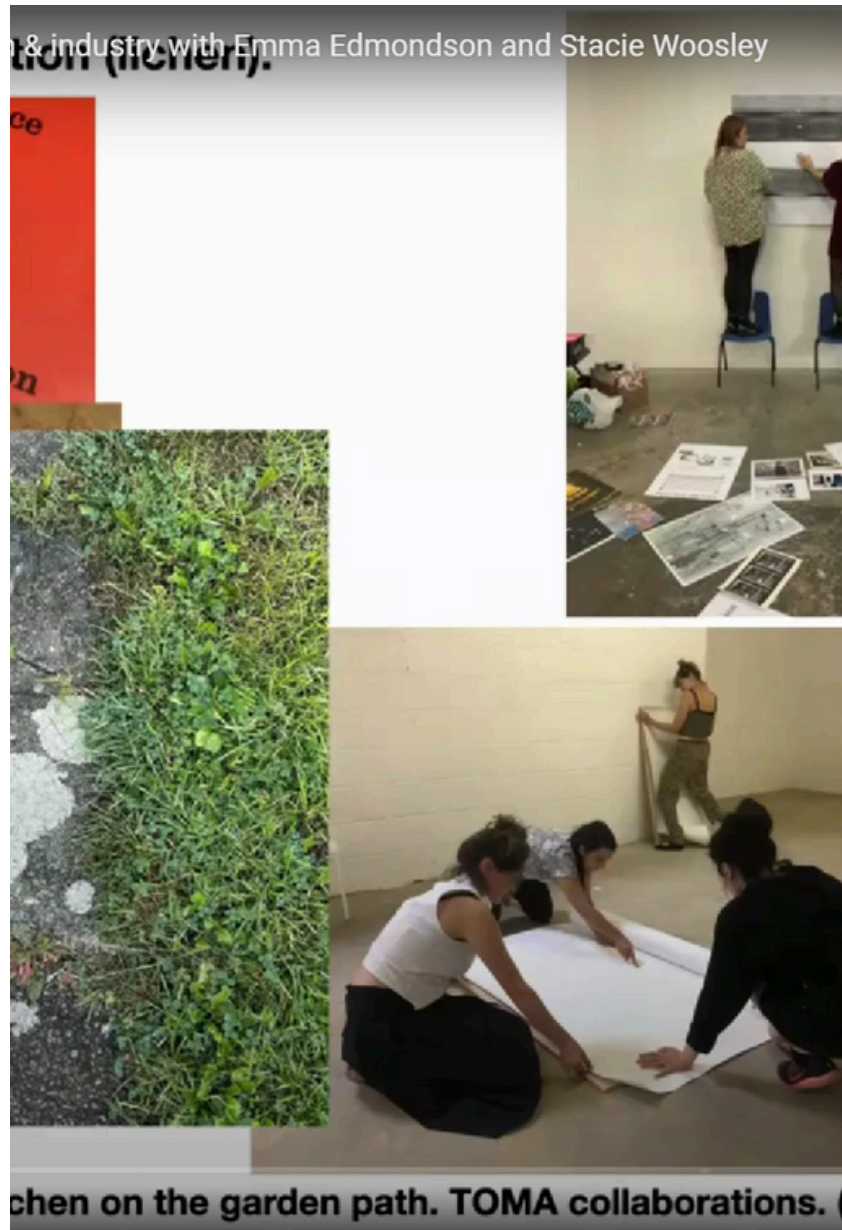
2024
Virtual Events Series

14 / 1:09:27

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THE SECOND ACT
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

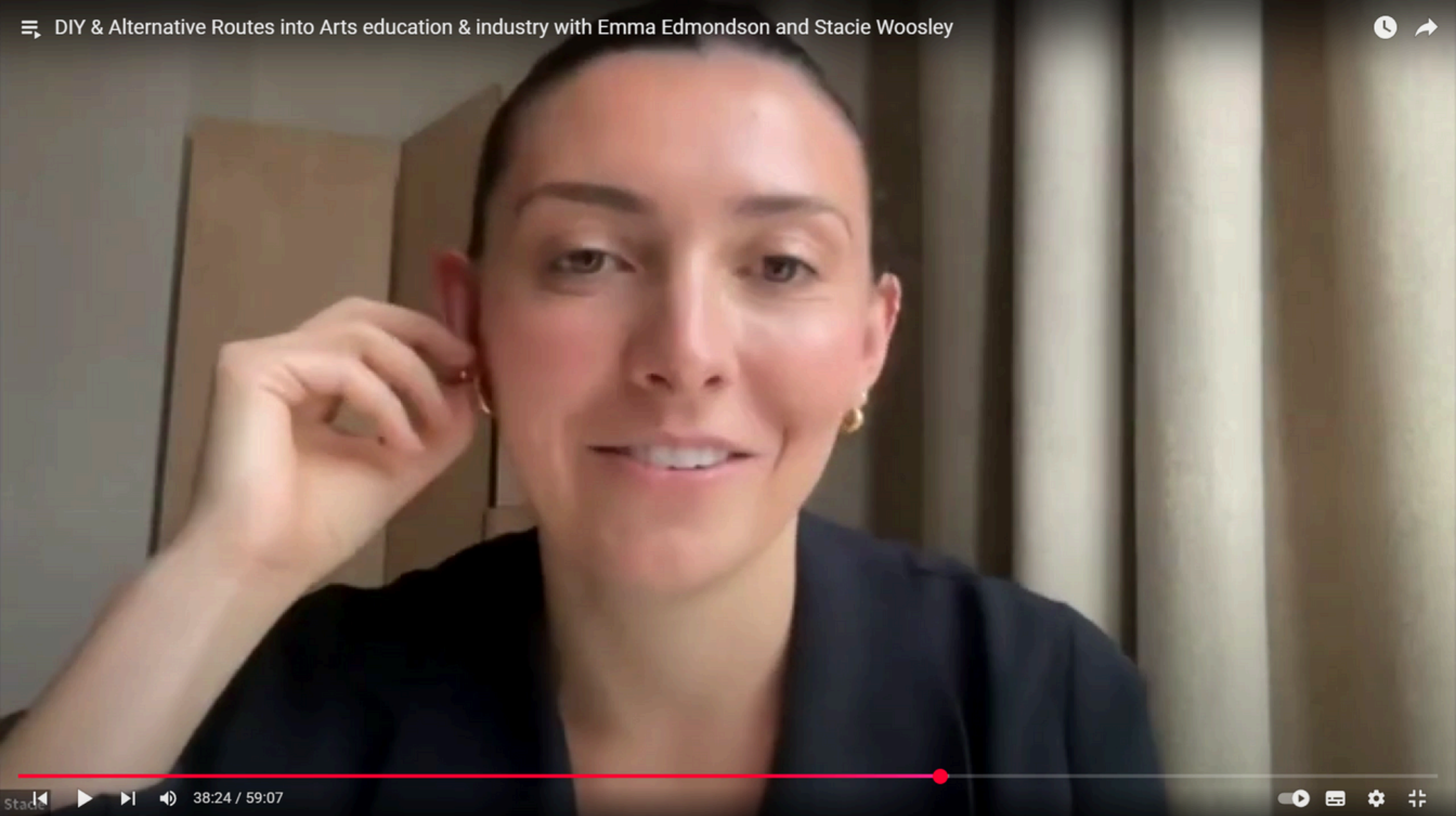
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We partnered with Second Act Gallery to host a series of online talks titled 'CLASS CONVOS' aimed at providing valuable insights and practical advice for working-class creatives.

Inspired by our members' survey, the series covers pathways into the creative industries, DIY and alternative education routes, the emotional labor of making art, confidence building, and portfolio preparation. Featuring speakers like Alex Zawadzki, Bella Bonner-Evans, Ell Pennick, Emma Edmondson, Stacie Woolsey, Mark Leckey, Rene Matic, Ceri Hand and Jo McLaughlin. These sessions explore key issues such as representation, networking, funding, and overcoming imposter syndrome, offering a comprehensive guide to navigating the creative industries.

All of our CLASS CONVOS sessions are available to watch via our [Youtube channel.](#)



This talk, led by Emma Edmondson and Stacie Woosley, explores how artists can navigate education and the creative industries through DIY and alternative routes. Rather than relying solely on traditional art school training, they discuss self-directed learning, using free resources and community workshops, and building a portfolio through experimentation and personal projects. They highlight the importance of community and networking connecting with peers, mentors, and collaborators as well as practical strategies for finding funding, staying motivated without institutional deadlines, and presenting work professionally. Through sharing their own experiences, they show how resilience, resourcefulness, and initiative can help artists create their own opportunities and build sustainable careers outside conventional pathways.



This Access Session brings together Alex Zawadzki, Bella Bonner-Evans, and Ell Pennick to share their individual journeys into the creative industries and respond to WCCD members' questions about jobs in the arts, creative leadership, network building, and gallery representation. Together, they explore the challenges and opportunities facing working-class creatives and discuss how to carve out space within the art world. From Alex's work at The Second Act supporting artists from the North, to Bella's experience as a curator and writer building community for young art professionals, to Ell's founding of Guts Gallery to create fairer models for artists, the speakers offer practical insight, candid reflections, and encouragement for those pursuing careers in the arts outside traditional pathways.



This Access Session features artist Mark Leckey and artist-writer Rene Matić in conversation about navigating the arts industry and the emotional labour of making work rooted in personal and political narratives. Prompted by WCCD's 2023 member survey, which highlighted barriers such as exclusion at networking events, low confidence, and imposter syndrome, the discussion explores how class, identity, and lived experience shape artistic practice. Leckey reflects on his explorations of youth, class, technology, and nostalgia across film, sculpture, sound, and performance, while Matić shares how their work draws on music subcultures and queer intimacies to examine race, class, and belonging. Together, they offer an honest and empowering look at sustaining a practice while challenging structural barriers in the art world.



This Access Session, led by arts professional and coach Ceri Hand, addresses the challenges of confidence and imposter syndrome; issues highlighted in WCCD's 2023 member survey as major barriers for working-class creatives entering the industry. Drawing on over thirty years of experience, including her role as Director of Programmes at Somerset House and her work hosting the Extraordinary Creatives podcast, Ceri shares practical tools and strategies for overcoming self-doubt, building resilience, and sustaining a creative practice. Her session offers encouragement and actionable advice to help artists navigate the pressures of the art world and step into their careers with confidence.



This final Access Session of the Class Convos x The Second Act series features art historian and curator Jo McLaughlin, who shares practical guidance on building a professional artistic practice. Responding to WCCD's 2023 member survey, which highlighted challenges with portfolios, websites, and applications, Jo offers strategies for refining portfolios, designing effective websites, and approaching open calls with confidence. Drawing on her experience as Lead Curator at Acrylicize and creator of Jo's Art History Podcast, she provides actionable advice to help artists present their work effectively, seize opportunities, and navigate the practical demands of the art world. This session offers essential tools and insight for creatives seeking to strengthen their professional practice and advance their careers.

