

Selected Highlights of 2005/2006

FuelRCA

The RCA is all too aware that the career trajectories of its graduates tend not to follow a traditional path – according to the skills and ambitions of the individual, graduates are just as likely to be freelancers, entrepreneurs, academics and grant-assisted artists as they are to work for a large company.

It's this knowledge that led the College to develop FuelRCA. Set up in 2005 to support both existing students and graduates and largely run by recent College graduates in tune to its students' needs, FuelRCA offers expert professional advice, guidance and support through a host of dedicated networks – including workshops, seminars and mentoring services – all of which are uniquely tailored to the requirements of RCA students and alumni.

For two of the founding members of Exhibit K the assistance provided by FuelRCA was vital. Sarah Douglas and Mimei Thompson both graduated from Painting in 2005 and were looking for a way to integrate their artistic careers with a business plan that would encourage both their economic and creative development.

They hit upon the idea of providing a service offering tailor-made tours of London's contemporary art scene while still at the College and used a three-day start-up workshop called 'Marketplace' to consolidate their business plan further. The workshop, run annually by FuelRCA, offers bespoke business advice specifically designed to address the needs of the College's graduating students. "It was good to be with other alumni because they've got more experience out in the real world," noted Douglas, reflecting back on the event. "The workshop included speakers who had set up their own companies and that was particularly useful for us."

Exhibit K has recently celebrated its first successful year's trading. Over that time they have overseen everything from a

complete overhaul of private City bank Insinger De Beaufort's art collection to arranging meetings for time-pressed overseas gallerists with emerging artists on London's contemporary art scene. They even helped one couple mark their engagement with a single, special artwork rather than the more traditional diamond ring.

Back at the College, FuelRCA assisted seminars have covered topics ranging from the practical – idea development, market research and branding – to the more holistic: looking at how a lifetime's experiences rather than just education alone all contribute to the sum of an artist's parts.

The intention is to offer a far-reaching, made to measure service to student and graduate requirements. A confidence seminar earlier this year, for example, that focused on the emotional requirements needed for success, was developed in direct response to student feedback, while the success of ventures such as 'creative futures', a two-day cross-discipline seminar that enabled both fine artists and designers the opportunity to mix and share ideas, has helped to confirm the value of the service across the College.

Wherever possible alumni are included on the panels of discussion groups and workshops because, as Graeme Raeburn, one of the service's coordinators points out, "They understand the set-up and specific needs of RCA students."

Establishing a career isn't easy for graduates in any discipline and our highly skilled, highly talented graduates are no exception. The RCA recognises that a vital part of any student's education should be to equip them with the skills needed to find and sustain professional and personal success in their chosen field. FuelRCA offers a far-reaching, inclusive and thoroughly professional opportunity to do just that.

Article first published on the RCA website.

