

Postcard Survey of Early-career Creatives in the East Midlands

Sept 2022

Jo Wheeler & No Jobs in the Arts

No Jobs in the Arts aims to support and connect early-career creatives working in the visual arts, through projects linked to the East Midlands. To better understand your career needs, we are asking early-career creatives to **write and/or draw a response** to one question.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

FEEDBACK, SPECIFIC TO:

- APPLICATIONS
- CREATIVE PROJECTS
- WRITING(S)

SEMINAR STRUCTURE,
FEEDBACK FORMS,
ONE TO ONE
CONVERSATIONS
ETC.

**NO JOBS
IN THE ARTS**

You can share your response with us at www.nojobsinthearts.co.uk/postcard
Responses will be shared online to help shape future support.
All responses will be anonymised.

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Summary of Exercise

Jo Wheeler

The postcard idea came about in response to the *lack* of response from recent art sector surveys, perhaps due to the number of questions asked, and the time commitment required to fill them in. No Jobs in the Arts (NJITA) wanted to find a simple mechanism for asking early career creatives, directly, how to improve access to careers in the arts. It was nailed down to one short, specific, open question, '**What Do You Want?**'.

People were invited to engage in 3 ways; via NJITA's website (33 responses), Instagram (29) or by physically filling one in at a networking event (27). There was a pretty even spread of responses between these engagements, with the web replies yielding more lengthy feedback.

There was a risk that people wouldn't take it seriously – but apart from one or two everybody else did. As such, this collection forms a useful set of thoughtful responses, identifying gaps in service or provision, and a range of ideas to address this.

The high level of response to this open call is testament to NJITA's reach. It also suggests that people have appreciated being asked and want to play a part in shaping the change that NJITA is trying to bring to the arts sector. Perhaps, because the question came from NJITA and not an institution, it felt more authentic, prompting more authentic responses.

Four key themes emerged around:

- community networking and critical forums
- opportunities to make and share work through exhibitions, residencies and collaborations
- fair pay and affordable spaces
- being seen and feeling valued.

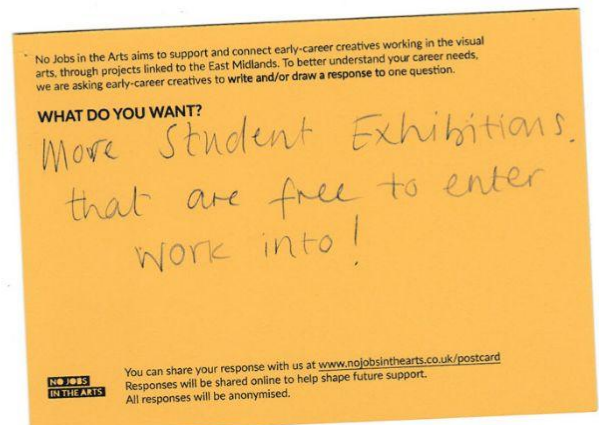
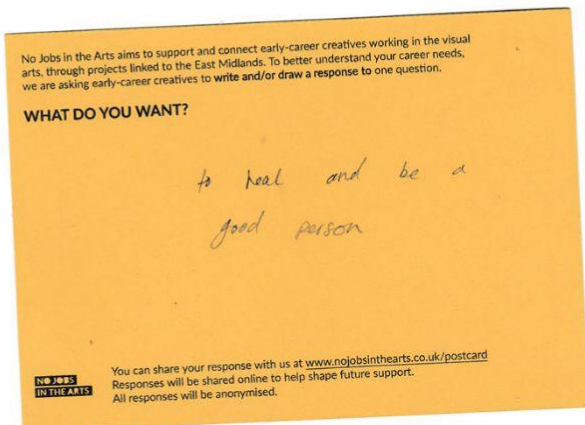
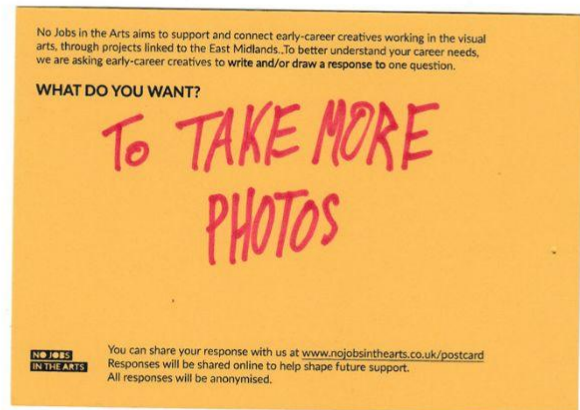
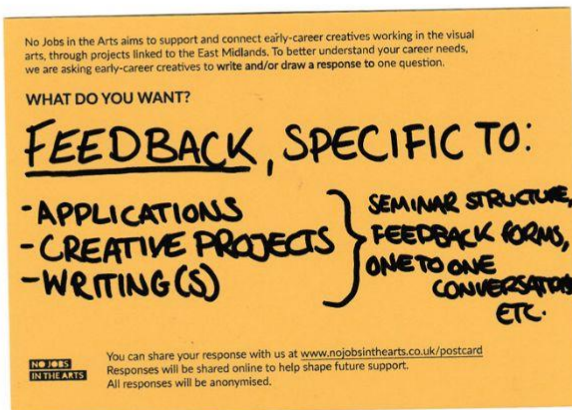
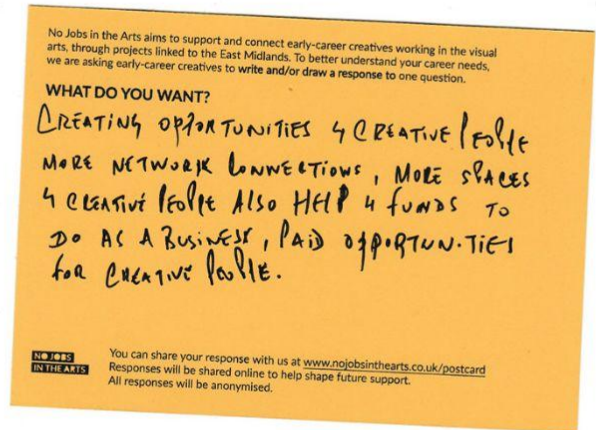
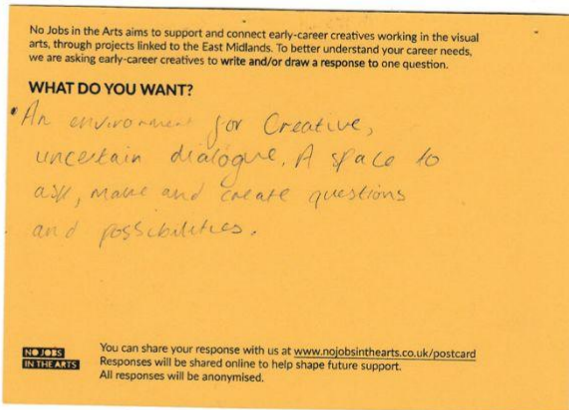
Replies ranged from the very general, "a chance" and "security, support, direction"; to more specific ideas such as, "active support from local authorities to utilise empty shops as pop-up spaces" and "a platform to post collaborative ideas and seek mutually beneficial artistic trade with ideas and labour".

Each response is unique, personal, and valued as a piece of text that contributes to this collection. There's also the beauty of seeing different people's handwriting on the physical postcards. Publicly sharing the set as a visual collection is an important part of their purpose. It's hoped that their simple and quirky character engages with people more than a written report would and prompts more people to get involved in this dialogue.

The collection can be used as evidence to help guide NJITA and other arts organisations in shaping and funding programmes that make access to a creative career fairer and better. The postcards offer a snapshot of the issues and concerns today but could also be a useful tool to use again in the future, helping NJITA and other arts organisations remain relevant, responsive and in conversation with early career creatives.

Postcard Responses – Physical Submissions

Physical postcards were circulated at The Fringe of Failure event, in Leicester, on the 26th February; and The Messy Middle discussion event, in Nottingham, on the 6th April. The postcards were also added inside 110 zines posted across the UK.



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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

→ More cheap studio spaces and more networking events and more micro-commissions

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I want to be secure and allowed to express my comfortability in being a creative. My open mindedness is allowed

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↳ active support from local authority to utilize empty shops as pop up spaces - not compromised by inviting everyone - so creators can experiment with their own ideas

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

TO ACTUALLY BE CREATIVE.
NO LIMITATIONS
NO CENSORSHIP
TO BE MYSELF

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Security
Support
Direction

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

- To hang out + make work with other creatives like this! (Rings of fame) part commissions
- ★ Not to be on a fixed term contract!
- To be better at applications / not have to do so many
- ☺ Just to share ideas + see other people's work with chance to chat

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

opportunities to connect
critical opportunities

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A platform to post collaboration ideas and seek mutually beneficial artistic trade with ideas and labour
Coworking spaces in empty shops in the city?
Overall sharing opportunities openly + with enthusiasm!!

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

DEVELOPMENT OF ARTISTS TO BE SEEN AS A KEY ACTIVITY OF FUNDED ORGS THIS INCLUDES SPACE, FUNDING AND SPACE IN THE PROGRAMME

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A network that is easy for everyone to access.



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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MORE OPPORTUNITIES IN TERMS OF NETWORKING, COLLABORATIONS, AND PAID WORK EXPERIENCE.



EXHIBITIONS

NO JOBS IN THE ARTS

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

More Exhibitions → New media.
Cheaper travel to galleries for art students.
More art to be showcased in Leicestershire, it feels stuck in the past!

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Supportive, interdisciplinary, critical spaces/sessions.
Less precarity.

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

More accessible networking to get involved/experienced

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

More opportunities in paid jobs.
More places that collab and allow artists to meet. To create in new environments.
More advertisement so we can see what's on.
More art in small towns, less commercial opportunities for critics/galleries student

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Accessible paid opportunities for working-class creatives

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Community collective workshops,
more discussions, more challenging
taboos and stigmas! more creative
local socials, meeting others +
being inspired!

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MORE ARTIST DISCUSSION GROUPS!
to help network :)

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

OPPORTUNITIES + NETWORKING. ADVICE IN
THE ARTS AND WORKSHOPS. FUN ART
THINGS LIKE CLAY!

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

I WANT THE TIME TO REST, I WANT MONEY SO I CAN BREATHE.
I WANT PASSION AND I WANT TO BE HELPED, AND I WANT TO
BE LAUGH AND I WANT TO BE SCARED.

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WHAT DO YOU WANT?

More visibility for
young emerging
artists.

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Postcard Responses – Website Form

Evaluation postcard responses collected through a form on the No Jobs in the Arts website. Several artists uploaded images of their own artwork from their portfolios; these have been omitted as they cannot be reproduced due to copyright.

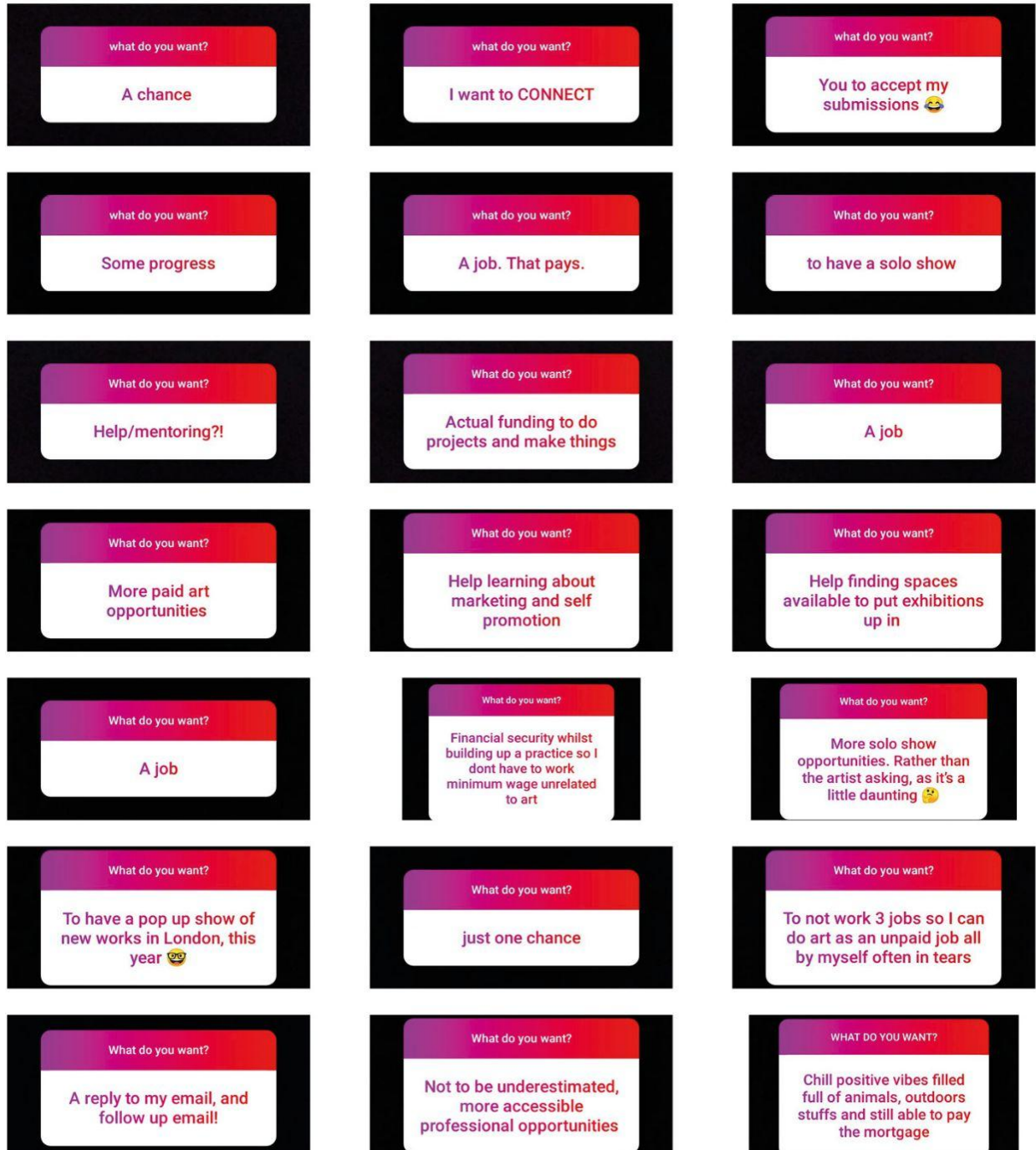
- *As a early-career creative, I would like to see more support or knowledge hubs on preparing proposals for grants (that could be for grants covering funding, exhibitions, community work).*
- *For ageism not to be a thing. Early career doesn't mean early on in your life.*
- *I'm not sure because I'm not sure what's needed to make it in art*
- *More engagement with young creatives, more paid opportunities for emerging artists, more exhibition opportunities, more connection & networking, more inclusivity, a varied mix of practices from artists being offered placements & opportunities, accessible studio spaces, making the art world a more welcoming place*
- *Funding for short term projects or to kick start ideas*
- *A resource of local (East Mids?) curators, their experience to date and what themes they specialise in. This would help to know who to approach for genuinely relevant exhibition invites and studio visits. I imagine it would be mutually beneficial for the curators, too.*
- *Performance mentorship to help take my words onto the stage*
- *I think at the moment I just want more time, because I've realised that the business of being an artist (marketing, applying to opportunities, etc) takes up 50% of my time, and the 50% is for actually making work. The only way to have more time would be to generate/receive finance long-term (1+ years)*
- *I want creative job adverts to stop classing anything over 3 years as a junior position! I also want them to display their salary expectations for the job, and on the same note I want people to stop thinking creatives will work for FREE just because "we do what we love".*
- *1. Respectful, fairly paid and collaborative opportunities both locally and nationally 2. A forum for discussing, critiquing and generating Ideas 3. More open dialogue and cross pollination of creative practices with each other and other disciplines - such as biology, politics and technology.*
- *'Remember Yesterday, Live Today, Expect Tomorrow'*
- *Time / Cheap studios / Community / Money / Sense of belonging / Sustainable long-term opportunities*

- *It would be nice to have a platform to access gallery curators and owners to show your work to them and link up to them. The whole idea of getting into serious galleries and having your work displayed seems a minefield.*
- *I want to fulfil my dream! Become a famous artist! I believe that the attached work most clearly and visibly reflects my inner world. The world that I want to show to other people, to the viewer who looks at my work. I want peace in the souls of the beholder, but not the peace when you do nothing, but the peace in which you can do what you love.*
- *Representation, help to raise my platform as an artist. Support with marketing myself and moving my career forward.*
- *Help with marketing tips*
- *Food*
- *I want to know how to make a financially sustainable and consistent living in the arts*
- *Less snobbery surrounding works of craft or applied arts as many bursaries do not stretch to these disciplines.*
- *To not be overlooked*
- *Hi we want a platform (and money obv)*
- *Solo exhibition opportunities Events/festivals to join as a performance artist
Grants/funding for projects*
- *A job. Teaching is the only art job that has a clear road. Canvas maker, technician, artists assistant, gallerist, curator, mount maker etc. exist, but no idea about experience/qualifications to achieve as it is not taught, even in University.*
- *To not be taken advantage of when it comes to delivering workshops. I refuse to rent a space at a venue, which adds more unnecessary pressure to promote and charge participants in order to recoup my costs. I should be paid an agreed fee to deliver, built upon experience, and knowledge. I should not be taken advantage of.*
- *To find my place in the industry with a youth culture and/or fashion based company.*
- *More Time to make Art*
- *To find info/contact about artists self tax assessments!*
- *Paid internships, More arts-based apprenticeships, more accessible funding for start-up businesses. Guides in approaching businesses and organisations for paid work experience to further develop skills after leaving formal education.*

- *More easy and obvious 'ways in', organisations being open to meeting and encouraging young people to meet with them and network. Paid internships, apprenticeships, good volunteering roles and entry level positions.*
- *I want my work to mean something. I want people to look at my work and find value in it. I don't mean valuable monetarily, but other values, such as inspiration, empowerment or just to see and understand the story behind the images I produce.*
- *theatre and speech workshops, castings for dancetheatre productions.*
- *More organisations like No Jobs that are doing things for the creative industry from the perspective of people in the creative industry*
- *Not to be hassled by DWP to get full time employment when I want to concentrate partly on art and partly on employment.. this takes away a huge amount of creativity*

Postcard Responses – Social Media

We used an Instagram story to ask creatives, via our instagram account [@nojobsinthearts](#), 'what do you want?'. The participants had a 24-hour window to respond to the question using the social media app. The question was asked three times, 15-16th February 8-9th April, & 8-9th March 2022.



What do you want?
A reply to my email, and follow up email!

What do you want?
Not to be underestimated, more accessible professional opportunities

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
Chill positive vibes filled full of animals, outdoors stuffs and still able to pay the mortgage

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
To access different spaces to make in.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
to feel valid as an artist/creative/person

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
More early career opportunities that aren't just open to under 25s

what do you want?
More cheap studio spaces

what do you want?
I want my work to mean something.

what do you want?
Exposure, learn how to market my self

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
Community

About

Jo Wheeler is based at Primary Studios, Nottingham and has been working as a creative based in the East Midlands for 25 years. Her pathway to a career in the arts included volunteering, setting up an arts partnership and PAYE jobs with organisations. Since 2009 she has been freelancing, wearing a number of 'hats' to make a living whilst keeping her connected and creative, including: artist, educator, mentor, producer, photographer and evaluator. Her work focuses on working in collaboration to explore ideas of place and belonging. www.jowheeler.co.uk

No Jobs in the Arts create professional development opportunities for early-career creatives working in the Visual Arts, through projects linked to the Midlands. No Jobs in the Arts CIC is registered in England and Wales with the company number 14220745.

nojobsinthearts@hotmail.com / nojobsinthearts.co.uk / [@nojobsinthearts](https://www.instagram.com/nojobsinthearts)



This project would not be possible without funding awarded by Arts Council England. Arts Council England is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Arts Council England invest public money from Government, and The National Lottery, to help support the sector and to deliver this vision.