

The Everyday School of Art

This is a duplicated post, available on both AccessArt and The Everyday School of Art, to explain the thinking behind a new Substack venture aimed at creating a shared space to inspire personal creative exploration.



Creative cycles ebb and flow. There are times in your life when creative thought and action feels important and becomes all encompassing, and times in your life when leaving behind the pressure to create is a welcome relief. And then times in your life when you know creativity is part of you, but it seems to exist just behind or just in front of you, never quite with you now.

I've always been interested in why we are creative beings, and how we enable our creativity to flourish. For many years, as a child, teenager and young person, this manifested itself as a desire to actually make – enjoying tactile experiences shaping materials in the real world. But there came a point when I stopped making – and even at the time I knew why I stopped: I could no longer see the point. I knew I wasn't going to be a "great artist" (I thought in those terms back in 1995), and I didn't understand what the relevance was then of me making things, that no one needed or perhaps wanted – it felt too insular, too indulgent. We even had a tutor at The Royal College of Art who came round each studio and asked us "Do you really think the world needs another one of those?" It was a damning question and one to which I could only answer no. Not understanding the relevance or purpose of art to my life was a nail in the coffin, and I see the same pattern emerging today when others have no understanding of the importance of art in our lives: art tends not to flourish (let's say the

British Government 2010-2023+, or certain individuals, or certain sub-communities of people).

So, I stopped making my own work, and instead returned purposely to the child version of me, the kid who liked to make, and thought about how I could inspire and enable the next generation to make, and that endeavour became my creative outlet.

That venture – thinking how we could inspire and enable the next generation to make, became AccessArt, a registered UK Charity. We now have over 20,000 members, grown 7000 members since last September. Apparently 20,000 people will fill the O2 stadium – so that's a lot of people, and each of those members uses the AccessArt resources with their own pupils/students/audiences to inspire visual art education. Good stuff.

The people who use AccessArt; the teachers, artist educators and parents, spend a huge amount of time and energy nurturing creativity in others. Driven by their passion for art and their belief that art education can change lives, it's an exciting, stimulating role, but it takes energy, and often it takes the energy away from our own creativity – we just don't have enough hours in the day.

Time and again, through conversations, we hear how teachers and educators care so much about enabling their audiences or pupils with limited time and

resources that the educators themselves are often subsumed. Their own creativity is put on the back burner for the sake of some greater good. The same is true of my relationship with AccessArt, and that is why, together with my daughter, Rowan, who is at a very different stage in her life, we have decided to create The Everyday School of Art.

We see The Everyday School of Art as being a place where all educators, parents and carers can finally emerge from behind their roles, and begin to see themselves as artists and creatives in their own right. We hope The Everyday School of Art will help us all identify and explore our individual creative potential, and feed our appetite to nurture ourselves, for once, alongside others.

So if there is a part of you which feels you would like to explore, or return to exploring, your own creative potential, then please join us over at The Everyday School of Art on Substack. Let's show who we are as individuals and create a rich community which will surely complete the circle.

Find out more and Register for free at The Everyday School of Art here. Register before the 30th September and we will upgrade 10 registrants (chosen at random) to paid subscriber status free of charge.

Best wishes,

Paula Briggs

Co-Founder, CEO & Creative Director AccessArt

Co-Founder The Everyday School of Art 2023