

# Why art, craft and design matters

**When we talk and listen to our members, it's increasingly apparent that there is a need for a wide variety of advocacy materials for art, craft and design education.**

Members of the Society, through our NSEAD Forum, have discussed and authored advocacy content to support conversations amongst ourselves, and to make explicit the value of our subject to parents and carers, head teachers, senior leaders and the public at large.

We are, therefore, delighted to present our NSEAD art, craft and design advocacy poster, 'Art, craft and design is for...' and the following guidance that includes the evidence, views and voices of our experts in the field. We hope this will guide discussions with the people you need to influence, to ensure children, young people and learners across all phases are able to confidently choose and engage in our subject.

With many thanks to everyone who contributed to this work.

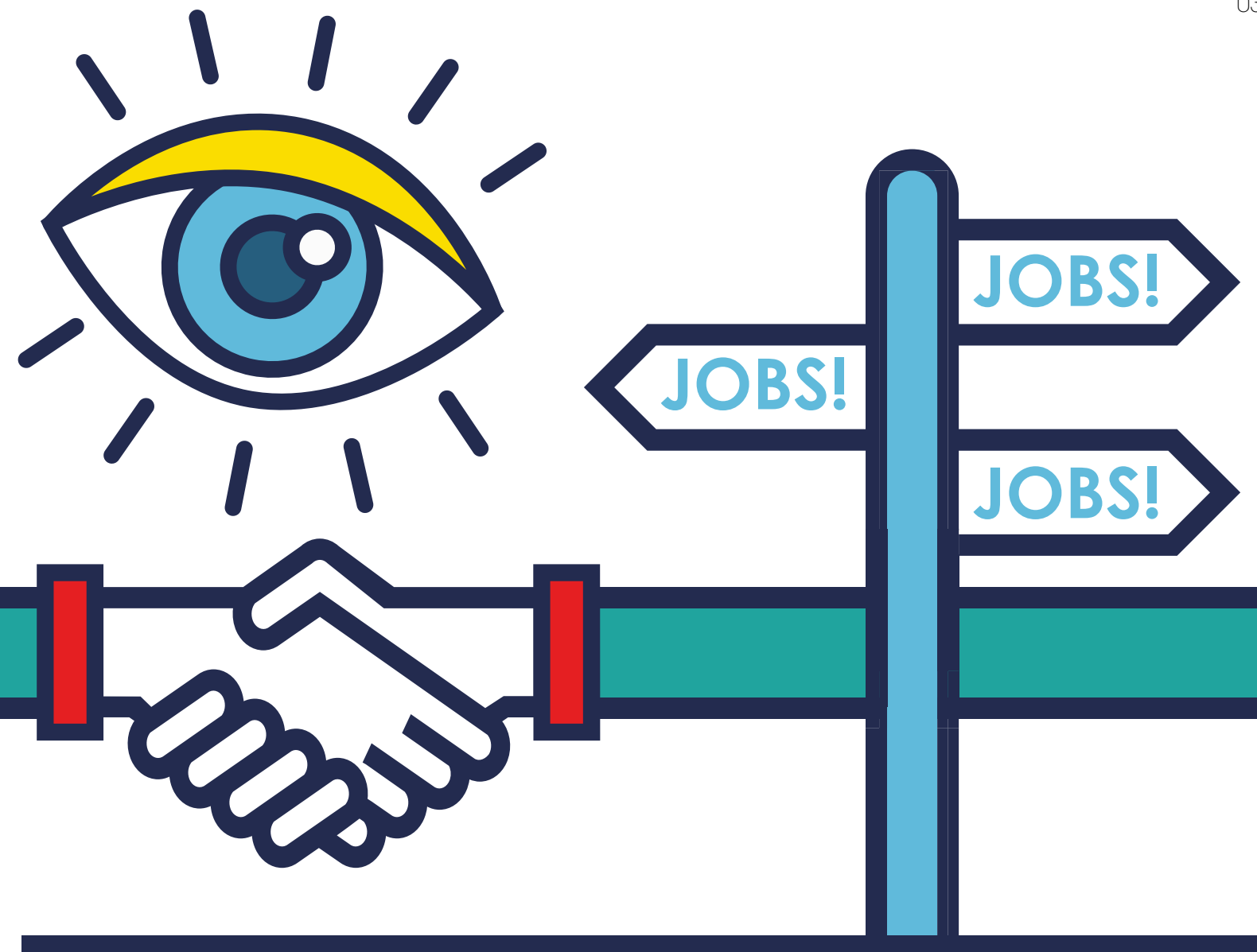
## What is art, craft and design?

Art, craft and design, as a combination of disciplines, defines and promotes visual literacy. As young children we learn to interpret images long before we become fluent in the written word. Visual literacy enables us to communicate and comprehend successfully and meaningfully in an increasingly image-saturated world.

A world-class art, craft and design education is an entitlement. It inspires personal expression and cultural understanding. It promotes creative and practical responses, and imaginative risk taking, to provide solutions to our material, emotional, social and virtual worlds. It is a unique subject with attributes that must guarantee its place, not only on the curriculum from Early Years through formal education settings, but also within lifelong learning.

Considered also as three separate entities, art, craft and design embraces a wide and diverse landscape of human endeavour. Art is the expression or application of human creativity and imagination, typically in a visual form, such as a print, drawing, painting, sculpture or through light-based, film and digital media. Art can be emotionally, intellectually and politically challenging, it can be poetic and beautiful, and it can express the vision of an artist seeking to express and communicate ideas through a visual language.

Craft can be defined as the designing and making of individual artefacts by hand. Craft develops haptic skills, intelligent making, and intellectual, creative and practical skills, as well as visual sensitivity, and a practical working knowledge of tools, materials and systems. Makers typically work individually, or in small to medium enterprises, creating functional and decorative objects that may include garments, stitch, printed or woven textiles, ceramics, wood, plastic, glass and digital creations.



Design is what links creativity and innovation. It shapes ideas to become practical and attractive propositions for users and customers. It is typically client-led, and designers often work to a negotiated brief. Design may be defined as creativity deployed to a specific end. Designers seek to provide solutions to client needs now, and in five or ten years' time.

Art, craft and design is, therefore, uniquely placed to equip children and young people with the skills needed to participate and contribute in a visually literate society.

## Why must art, craft and design be on the curriculum?

Art, craft and design makes use of critical thinking, imagination and expression. Creating and making develops attributes in children and young people, such as the confidence to take risks, the ability to solve problems, self-belief, autonomy of thought and a sense of identity. Art, craft and design is about visual literacy and communication, and is an understanding of visual culture and practice. Art, craft and design is a popular subject for children and young people. It promotes enjoyment and engagement at school for both high and low-ability students. It provides a channel of communication beyond text and the ability to excel without words. The therapeutic benefits of participation in

art, craft and design are well documented, leading to an increase in wellbeing, a growth in confidence and an enjoyment of learning, as well as beneficial outcomes for sick, vulnerable or hard to reach people.

Art, craft and design allows us to make judgements. In Elliot Eisner's *Ten Lessons the Arts Teach Us* he states: 'The arts teach us that problems can have more than one solution and questions can have more than one answer'. The subject offers the ability to have judgement without rule.

Art, craft and design aligns itself to a spiritual, moral, social and cultural agenda. It can explore and celebrate similarities and differences between people and cultures, and thrives on diversity and inclusivity, making it a subject that serves and enhances local communities.

**'Art, craft and design is manifest everywhere, not only in galleries and museums, but also in the design and manufacture of our clothes, soft furnishings and intelligent fabrics'**

## What does art craft and design lead to?

Within the context of the curriculum, art, craft and design gives unique experiences and opportunities to children and young people that can be taken forward into careers within the creative, cultural, heritage and digital media industries. The subject develops creative and expressive lifelong skills that are applicable everywhere, from home and leisure to work.

And, this is simply because art, craft and design is manifest everywhere, not only in galleries and museums, but also in the design and manufacture of our clothes, soft furnishings and intelligent fabrics. It is in our domestic and industrial products, as well as games, animated films and TV documentaries. Art, craft and design is essential in the development of interiors, exteriors and all the accompanying furniture, fittings and planning that goes into home decor. Look around you and you'll see that design is everywhere.

And, alongside both the material and virtual world of art, craft and design comes a unique portfolio of skills and attributes; practical, skills based and expressive, and problem solving, critical and analytical. These are transferable creative thinking skills, fit for purpose for the future of our children and young people within the fast-changing world of the twenty-first century.

The creative industries are those that are based on individual creativity, skill and talent, with the potential to create wealth and jobs through the development of intellectual property. It is through intellectual property that creativity translates into economic value.

The thirteen designated creative industries include advertising, the art and antique market, architecture, crafts, design, designer fashion, film, interactive leisure software (games) music, the performing arts, publishing software, TV and radio. The creative industries are the fastest growing sector of the UK economy. In 2017, the number of jobs in the UK's creative industries rose by 5 per cent, compared to a 1.2 per cent increase in the wider UK workforce, contributing £91.8bn to the economy. (*Creative industries economic estimates*, January 2017, DCMS, GOV.UK)

The culture and heritage industries are also a vital source of economic growth. The Culture White Paper 2016 states: 'The development of our historic built environment can drive wider regeneration, job creation, business growth and prosperity.'

The job market wants creative people who are lateral and not always linear thinkers, people with a growth mind-set, and people with transferable skills, confident working in both teams and as individuals, and unafraid to take risks. Art, craft and design leads to employability in the creative industries.

### For head teachers: What's in it for my school?

As a head teacher, or senior leader or governor, why should I be considering the value, depth, breadth and time given to art, craft and design in my school? Yes, it's an exhibition in the foyer; it's taking something handmade home for a holiday or celebration; it's a poster for the local fete and a backdrop for the school play. But am I aware of and developing what good and outstanding teaching and learning look like in this subject? Is art, craft and design a significant choice in my school, or a second-rate choice dictated by accountability measures?

Am I aware how art, craft and design can support other curriculum areas and develop critical thinking skills? Am I aware how learning through the arts improves attainment in all subjects and can help raise standards? Am I aware of its significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, cultural and social agenda?

Am I aware that Ofsted will be considering if the curriculum is broad and balanced to include provision for the visual arts? Is careers advice in my school acknowledging the importance of qualifications in the visual arts, and linking them to pathways through higher education and apprenticeships into careers as diverse as architecture, the games and heritage industries, fashion, publishing, software and film. Does my school see the potential of art, craft and a design as a STEAM subject, linking science, technology engineering, art and maths to develop job-ready, creative, analytical and innovative problem solvers.

Am I aware of the agencies and resources available to support subject-specific professional development for art, craft and design in my school?

### For parents and carers: What's in it for my child?

As a parent or carer, why should I be concerned if my child does not have art, craft and design in their lives?

Art, craft and design is a pathway to a wide variety of courses in further and higher education, and careers in the creative, cultural, heritage and digital media industries.

Art, craft and design provides my child with visual literacy. It encourages my child to be inquisitive and a problem solver; it provides my child with a cultural education, and fosters wellbeing and positive mental health.

How would I feel if the school foyer and walls were devoid of paintings, collages and photographs, and the corridors empty of sculpture and models? No murals in the playground, no props for the school play, and no trips to galleries and museums.

Is participation in the visual arts a fundamental human need? Why has the UNESCO Convention on the Rights of the Child stated: '*Children have a right to relax and play, and join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities*? If art, craft and design is not studied in my child's school, has this entitlement been removed?

If my child wants to study art, craft and design, what value, curriculum time and resources does the school put on this subject? Will my child have access to a dedicated art room and good range of materials and equipment, and will there be opportunities for them to engage with the work of other artists, makers and designers? Will my child be taught by a subject specialist at secondary school or subject co-ordinator at primary school, and what opportunities will there be for my child to present and exhibit their work in the public domain?

Am I aware of how fully my child is able to engage in art, craft and design in their school?

### For us all: What's in it for our society?

Art, craft and design as a subject in formal education not only enables people intending to work as artists, makers and designers, but supports everyone to develop as critical consumers of ethically and ecologically well-designed products and systems, and confident audiences of the historic and contemporary visual arts.

Engagement in art, craft and design is fundamental to being human, to being visually and culturally aware, and to be able to interact meaningfully in both material and virtual worlds.

It promotes personal fulfilment leading to a sense of belonging, a sense of worth, a sense of place and opportunities for careers, lifelong learning and leisure activities.

Are we aware of the effect of the unintended consequences of government policy on the value we place on art, craft and design within formal and informal education? ▶

**'Engagement in art, craft and design is fundamental to being human, to being visually and culturally aware, and to be able to interact meaningfully in both material and virtual worlds'**

## In our words: Advocacy voices, quotes and profiles

### Sir Roger Kneebone Professor of Surgical Education and Engagement Science

‘I’m arguing for a move in healthcare towards a more renaissance time, when there were not clear barriers between art and medicine.’

*The doctor stitching together medicine and art*, edited by Rachel Pugh, Guardian online, 5 Nov 2014

‘...Embroiderer Fleur Oakes has identified techniques from her repertoire that could improve surgeons control over fine sutures when they join arteries together. These cross-cutting collaborations are part of the engagement and performance science programme that I direct at Imperial College. Under its aegis, biochemists and clinicians in the divisions of computational medicine and surgery are working with expert practitioners and academics from the Art Workers Guild, the Royal College of Music, and the Victorian and Albert Museum research institute to explore current ground in haptic learning.’

*Medicine; discovery through doing*, Professor Roger Kneebone. Published online by Nature. com 15 Feb 2017

**Professor Roger Kneebone trained first as a general and trauma surgeon, working in both the UK and Southern Africa. He then became a general practitioner in Wiltshire, pioneering an innovative minor surgery-training programme before joining Imperial College in his current role.**



### Morag Myerscough Artist and designer

‘What I liked about art college was time to think and time to experiment, time to discuss, enjoy and question. (At school)

I think all subjects need to cross over into each other and not kept separate. A good balance is needed as one subject feeds into the other and makes you use different parts of your brain and emotions...the need to show the value of art, craft and design, and how they are connected to other subjects like maths, science and geography, is important. All these subjects should be working together rather than as separate entities. The digital world we live in has made this possible and it is very exciting.’

*AD Magazine*, #12

**Morag Myerscough trained at St Martin’s School of Art and the Royal College of Art. She runs Studio Myerscough in London and has designed for the Next catalogue, the permanent exhibition at the Design Museum and the main entrance to the Royal London Hospital.**

### Joe Macleod Global design director at Ustwo (2010–14)

‘Design should be a cornerstone of the national curriculum for one crucial reason.

Where academic subjects encourage pupils to coldly recall information, design permits pupils to think confidently about the unknowns of the world – ultimately creating visionaries of the future who can apply design process and thinking to a diverse range of problems.’

*AD Magazine*, #8

**Joe Macleod’s career has spanned the leading web, telecoms and app companies, where he led teams and built a variety of successful products. Most recently as head of design at the award-winning digital product studio Ustwo, he built it into a globally recognised team, working with the world’s favourite brands. He now works on the Closure Experiences project researching this important issue.**

### Rebecca-Louise Leybourne Facial technical artist

‘Art was always my favourite lesson and if I could turn another subject into a reason to draw then I would. A defining moment of my school life was selecting my GCSE options. Having to choose between fine art or art graphics became too much to bear, so of course I chose them both. My job as a facial technical artist combines using state of the art technology to capture an actor’s performances, with solving and animating onto a CG (computer generated) character. Education has been such a key point to getting me where I am today.’

*AD Magazine*, #16

**Rebecca-Louise Leybourne studied multimedia at Newcastle College and gained a BSc in computer animation and visual effects at the University of Bradford. Following an MSc Rebecca-Louise took up a post at the Imaginarium Studio working on games design, music videos, adverts and trailers.**

### Sir Nicholas Serota Chair of Arts Council England

‘...the future of the country depends on having creative innovative people; we need this sort of creativity and ability to respond to change. We are moving to an age where the visual becomes ever more important and everyone needs to be skilled in understanding the visual. Just as they need to be trained in maths and literacy, they need to be trained in sound, film, and the visual arts and so on.’

*AD Magazine*, #10

**Sir Nicholas Serota studied economics and art history at Cambridge University and an MA at the Courtauld Institute of Art. Following a post at Modern Art Oxford, he joined the Whitechapel Art Gallery and became Director of Tate from 1988 to 2016. He is now chair of Arts Council England.**

### Maria Amidu Artist

‘I pay particular attention to the debates around social practice and the role visual art has played and can play in activating change... I ask myself critical questions about the perceptions and definitions of the artistic outcomes in projects I develop, and am concerned about how/if my ideas can make a useful contribution to a situation.’

*AD Magazine*, #12

**Maria Amidu is a graduate of the Royal College of Art in glass and ceramics, and exhibited nationally and internationally before pursuing her socially engaged art practice. She has developed site-specific projects and residencies with a number of museums, galleries and organisations.**

## Talking about art, craft and design

### Children and young people, on art, craft and design:

‘I’m not frightened to speak in class anymore.’

**Primary pupil, Merseyside**

‘Everyone has a fear of failing but when you do fail I know for a fact that art and designing gets you to a success that you might not have thought of.’

**Primary pupil, London**

‘I never knew this whole world of animation existed, and can’t wait to explore it.’

**Secondary pupil, Norwich**

‘I feel I have been free to imagine. Nobody forces you; art gives you the opportunity to let your imagination go wild.’

**Primary pupil, Smethwick**

‘On Mondays before I didn’t wanna get up. When you think ‘oh yeah’ I’m gonna do some art today, it makes you feel alive, determined, makes you want to get up.’

**Pupil, Slough**

### Undergraduate students on arts-based degree pathways:

**Students were asked about the relevance of art, craft and design to future career paths, wellbeing and life skills:**

‘It allowed a different way of thinking within the school day; a creative and alternative way of considering things and approaching decisions.’

‘Confidence and understanding of other cultures. My mind was broadened, and I was open to learning more and thinking differently.’

‘The value of hard work, taking the initiative, learning from mistakes and confidence to express myself and my work.’

‘A way of thinking not encouraged by other subjects.’

‘The value of studying art and design at school is crucial to anyone who wants to get involved in the creative industries. It gave me the perfect grounding in both practical problem solving and creative thinking.’

‘It really opens up your imagination and can help you think outside the box. It is the starting point for aspiring artists to become fashion designers, architects, games designers, sculptors and all sorts of careers.’

This six-page advocacy resource *Why art, craft and design matters*, and nine advocacy postcards, are available at [nsead.org](http://nsead.org). To download them, you will first need to log-in. Our advocacy poster can also be ordered from the NSEAD website.



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