

LEADING THE WAY

Creating a voice for young arts leaders

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What is Leading The Way?

Leading The Way is an online showcase and exploration of young people in the arts and a discussion of their experiences in arts leadership. The project is funded by [Youth Music](#) and is a young-person led, interactive takeover day on the [Creative Arts East](#) Instagram account [@CreativeArtsEast](#) - taking place on Saturday 3rd October 2020.

Showcased Young Creatives

This document provides further information about all of the young creatives who have showcased their work as part of **Leading The Way**. If you're interested in working with any of these creatives, or would like further information about their practise, please contact info@creativeartseast.co.uk and we can put you in contact with them.

Contents

Young Creatives Showcase 1	Page 1-3
Young Creatives Showcase 2	Page 4-5
Young Creatives Showcase 3	Page 5-7
Young Creatives Showcase 4	Page 7-9
Young Creatives Showcase 5	Page 10-11

Young Creatives Showcase 1

Kadi @kadimusicofficial

Musician and performer sharing her expertise as a youth leader for music workshops.

'I attended a ten-day intensive music programme by Ultimate Artists and currently I work as a youth leader for a music workshop at a girls school with SchoolGroundSounds.'

Performer Kadi's challenges in leading in the arts have been stepping out of her comfort zone as a performer: *'I have a love/hate relationship with performing, I get so anxious but once I'm out there I'm just so focused on making sure I deliver and then afterwards usually I feel really good.'* Kadi enjoys working with the girls in her workshops and tells us that helping them write lyrics guiding them through that process helps her develop her own craft.



'I'm currently working on hosting a workshop on overcoming childhood trauma with creative practices to manage mental wellbeing, so fingers crossed the project is able to go ahead!'

Listen: To [Kadi's music on Spotify](#) or visit [Kadi's Facebook page](#)

Abbie Neale @a.c.neale

An award-winning, published writer and performance poet.

Abbie recently performed her poetry at The Saboteur Awards and The Sheaf Poetry Festival, both of which were held digitally this year. She has won the New Poets Prize run by the Poetry Business and is the proud mother of an illustrated poetry pamphlet!



'My book was published right in the middle of lockdown, so the launch was cancelled and I still haven't been able to contact bookshops to stock it... It's been quite a challenge to find other ways to promote it. But I'm moving to Norwich this week – so I'd like to attend ALL of the arts events going on around there!'

Find out more here: nealeabbie.wixsite.com/portfolio

Anika Hussain @theuntitleddocument

Story creator and advocate for arts in low-income areas and diversity in children's literature.

'I have been to the US to participate in a summit gathering 100 youth activists over the globe where we discussed how to make changes through the arts. Following that, I participated in The Equality Festival in Ghent, Belgium and spoke on a panel about this experience. I participated in the annual Gothenburg Literary Festival in 2019 and spoke about/with the Swedish minister of culture on what could be done to increase arts participation for youths in low-income areas. I loved inspiring people along the way. I have always enjoyed writing but when I figured out that I could use my words to tell a story that could make someone else feel like they finally belonged... that feeling was indescribable.'



Anika's biggest success to this day has been signing with her agent before her manuscript was even finished! Her agent has been a huge champion for her stories and she cannot wait for the day her books finally see the world. On challenges she's encountered, Anika tells us: *'During my MA in Writing for Young People, I found it difficult to convey my stories, which were mostly about South Asian teenagers, and the meaning behind certain phrases or events to a predominantly white classroom. I wanted to be authentic to my story but I also wanted others to understand the stories and their significance. I also find it difficult to break into the publishing industry as many publishing houses only want certain stories if you are of a BME background, for example about arranged marriages or about hate crimes, rather than a normal story about your first love or friendships in college. That in itself is a barrier to many authors as we want to write about our experiences and not glorify the stereotypes that the majority of people have of minorities. When I was a teen, I couldn't even find any books about South Asian teenagers which weren't about arranged marriages and it made me feel odd because all I wanted was to read a story about a girl who falls in love like any other white person. The lack of representation in children's literature and YA fiction has lasting consequences.'*

'I would love to hold workshops for South Asian writers in particular. I read a lot of children's literature and it really saddens me to see that not enough South Asian representation is seen in children's literature. Because if you don't see yourself as the hero in the story, you believe you'll never become one.'

Find out more: www.anikahussain.co.uk

Megan Callen @Dexked_customs

Creates original custom artwork

Megan's biggest success has been setting up her own business selling her unique visual art works and has submitted several pieces for competitions at her local youth zone. On her biggest challenge, Megan says *'Sometimes I felt like giving up as I've only made a few sales, but one day I could be making many sales each week.'* She has also created work for a submission to a prestigious Penguin Books competition while she was studying Graphic Design in college *'I like creating and selling custom art work in my spare time. It allows me to make a little bit of extra money on the side to support my studies. I'd like to attend networking events or even host an art workshop for people in the community that would like to learn.'*



Drithle Adams @drithleadams

Multimedia artist with a focus on performing arts

'I have developed skills such as painting, working with textiles, sewing, clay, creating clothing etc. I have explored many elements of an artistic path. My main interest is performing, from a young age I have been involved in various productions both in English and Irish. I currently am studying drama with Irish in university. I have been working on screen with certain companies, and was recently filming for a documentary. I have begun to explore more on-screen based work as well as theatre.'



Drithle has exhibited two pieces of her work at the Cultúrlann in Belfast and is currently a teacher of arts and workshop facilitator in the Irish language. One challenge for Drithle has been self-doubt, but her biggest success is *'the experience and knowledge I have gained along my journey with the arts. I wouldn't define one event as my biggest success. I believe success is something you discover in many stages of your life.'*

'I work with the Culturlann currently, creating content of artwork for young children. Over lockdown this developed and became a series on their social media pages. This is available to access on their social media. I also am co-coordinator for the theatre group Aisling Óg. I teach young children art, drama, music, dance through the medium of Irish. Young children from the age of 5-11 attend, we teach and develop their skills. The children are encouraged to explore the various elements of the arts. I have experience with script writing, also with creating and displaying live productions with the young children of Aisling Óg. I have been involved in drama groups from a young age such as The Lyric and Brassneck Youth Theatre. I am bilingual therefore, I have performed also in Irish with theatre groups such as ababú and the Culturlann. I have been involved in various events through the medium of Irish, such as re-enactments, theatre, television and campaigns. Recently I have been working on screen, I have experience on screen as an extra, for the likes of Derry Girls and a few BBC productions. Currently I have been working with Relapse Pictures. The Irish language has broadened my opportunities, I have been lucky to be involved and based in many events and experiences connected to my language. I also as well as this have experienced many opportunities in English also.'

Young Creatives Showcase 2

Eden Arnold @eden.arnold

Creative apprentice in events, dance & theatre and advocate for arts access

Eden's biggest successes are all the event's she's been a part of and her creative apprenticeship giving a guaranteed career path. She knows from personal experience that location can often be a barrier to the arts: *'Living in a rural area means that access to the arts are limited, and this can put huge barriers in the way of young people accessing the creative industry.'* Eden told us of her ambitions: *'I would love to be a part of a festival or huge arts event. I would also love to speak in front of an influential audience about the importance of young people accessing the arts and hopefully make a difference through this. I love meeting new people with similar interests and giving young people opportunities to discover the arts.'*



Maddie Crease @poetry_raw_mc

Spoken word poet and visual artist

As well as being a part of multiple group exhibitions with her visual art, Maddie hosts her own spoken word open mic events - with the well-attended inaugural event for a local charity being her biggest success so far. *'Making your presence in the art world is hard for everyone, but I've kept rooted in what I love to do.'* Maddie is keen for the restrictions to end soon so she can return to hosting live events and immersing herself in galleries to inspire her own art.

'Once COVID-19 risk has gone down, I can't wait to get back to hosting poetry in person- plus get back to galleries to inspire my visual art.'



Olivia Rodgers @livvrodgerss

Visual art creator and event planner

Olivia is an artist and regular member of the National Saturday Club. She has had the chance to exhibit her work at Somerset House and Central Saint Martins. Olivia has found coming up with new and exciting ideas can be difficult but working with others in her group really helps. Of her experience: *'Most enjoyable was just the free creative reign we had to do whatever we want in the sessions at the club and be really true to ourselves as artists.'*

'Arts and music festivals, I think, would be really cool to plan or be a part of, with all kinds of art: music, performance, live art classes!' Olivia has been a dedicated member of the Creative Arts East Leading The Way Advisory Group and has contributed her innovative ideas to the planning and curation of the Instagram event.



Sumaira Warsani @weableacademy_

Sign language artist, interpreting songs through sign and beats through expression

Sumaira can interpret any song in sign language, has worked with well-known artists, and is currently interpreting a British Council event. She tells us: *'I really enjoy when the entire audience, including the hearing impaired, can understand the lyrics and they start signing and dancing with me - and when all the artists praise my work.'* Time management is her biggest challenge as she juggles studying and working. *'My biggest success was my first ever live concert with a strings band.'* *'I would love to Interpret live concert again, and I want to arrange a mega dancing event!'*



[Find out more here](#)

Gordon Parsonage @20twentyproductions

Film maker and video editor

'I enjoy gaining knowledge and experience from other industry professionals and also enhancing my own skills whilst working on projects. I have also been able to set up my own side project "GP Productions" to start doing my own filmmaking and getting my name out there a bit more.'

'Just wanting to give up' on an edit or 'not having any motivation to complete a film' are challenges for Gordon, however he has learnt that this feeling is completely normal and part of the process to becoming a better filmmaker. 'I have been part of many events/projects with 20Twenty Productions such as leading my own filmmaking/animation projects within schools, making films for organisations such as YMCA and Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service. I even got the once in a lifetime opportunity to volunteer at Glastonbury for 4 days.'



Young Creatives Showcase 3

Ken Deng @kend_96

Active member of creative collective *Circuit* and interested primarily in photography and curation

As a part of *Circuit*, Ken has worked with other 18-25-year olds on creative events and projects with art galleries Kettle's Yard and Wysing Art Centre. *'I joined Circuit in the most difficult episode of the lockdown. I really enjoyed reflecting on the idea of regeneration based on recent crises and events such as BLM, with like-minded yet creative peers. It culminated in a social event organised for young people who were also interested in what Circuit had been doing.'*

Ken believes one challenge in being involved with arts leadership is the fact that he doesn't have an artistic educational background and therefore he finds it rewarding to learn from discussions with peers about art creation, media and tools.



Lambert Segura @lambertsegura

Sound artist and professional musician with a focus on human-machine interactions

Having exhibited internationally, Lambert has collaborated with many established artists.

'I had the pleasure of exhibiting my work in France (Lyon), Switzerland (Geneva, Orb, Basel) and Scotland (Glasgow) as part of festivals, group and solo shows. I opened 'The Hovel', an interactive art and design specific gallery space during my studies at the Glasgow School of Art. Since 2017, I work as a professional musician. I've collaborated with various established international bands and artists (Scotland, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, USA), recording and touring full time all over Europe, USA, Canada, Russia and Ukraine, playing in venues ranging from the CCA and Saint Luke's in Glasgow to some of the biggest festivals in Europe with audience of up to 10k people. My work has been published in magazines and broadcasted on the radio.'

'The inter-personal collaboration is very stimulating. There is something extremely rewarding in seeing other artists' faces light up when I help them realise their project. I recently coordinated and curated a large group exhibition of 50 art students and seeing them proud of showcasing their work in an interesting and dynamic layout is without doubt one of my biggest success.'

His approach to challenge is: *'Cohesion and strategy are the driving powers through challenges, both on a human and artistic level.'*

Find out more about Lambert [here](#)

Sinead Burrage @dazed.artt

Live music performer and visual artist

'My main interests include creating artwork in many forms, including anything from on paper to clothing, as well as performing live music. I haven't yet been part of any art opportunities other than selling my work and supporting other local artists at exhibitions, however I look forward to sharing my art further in the future!'



'I love selling my art and seeing customers' reactions, it's so heart-warming!' Sinead found that in the beginning, it was quite a challenge to get started and sell her first artwork. Although she found that when she did succeed, 'it was the best feeling ever! I would love to attend and be part of art exhibitions in the future, as well as potentially holding my own for other small, local artists looking for exposure.'

Grace Welfare @gw_performingarts

Performer, teacher and digital artist

As a passionate performer and teacher, Grace is currently involved in many creative projects including 'The Polar Express' with Warner Brothers, and creating digital work with CASPA Arts. She found settling into a new digital way of working due to Covid-19 to be her biggest challenge so far in arts leadership. She thinks that in terms of future opportunities for young arts leaders it is important to possibly have a *'coffee style morning for art professionals to relax/reach out'*.



Find out more about CASPA Arts [here](#).

Sienna Cuff @Sienna.art10

Drawer, singer and player of musical instruments

Sienna, an artistic multi-instrumentalist tells us: *'I am very passionate in most forms of art, yet I particularly enjoy drawing, singing and playing musical instruments. I am a member of the Essex youth choir and consort, and I won art competition for Tesco's click and collect around age 8 which consisted designing art for a reusable shopping bag.'*

'What I've most enjoyed was the rotary Christmas concert at Chelmsford Cathedral in December last year, which has likely also been my biggest success. However, I was also expected to do a tour in the city of Prague with the choir, yet it has been postponed to the summer of 2021 due to Covid-19.'

Sienna believes one challenge she faces is *'the fact that I can't sight read music particularly well, but I am working on it.'* *'I would love to do some form of acting in the future, or perhaps have my songs heard and to perform them on stage once I overcome my stage fright.'*

Listen: To Sienna's music [here](#)



Young Creatives Showcase 4

Bryony Reed @bryonyreedart

Oil painter and painting teacher

As painter and studio manager at The Norfolk Painting School, Bryony has learnt the craft and skill of traditional oil painting and can now apply it to her own contemporary work - after finding the confidence in her practice to quit her psychiatric nursing degree. Bryony believes her challenges are: *'one is facing people's opinions about being an artist full time, and that it's not a 'proper job'. I feel like you have to do what makes you happy and don't listen to others views about your choices, work or creations. Also, financially, you need to be able to support yourself as it can be hard to maintain a stable income, which is why it's important to plan ahead and team up with organisations.'* Her future ambition is to be able to get more young people into art, and she also wouldn't mind getting into the RA Summer Show!



Other arts leadership roles Bryony has taken on are oil painting apprentice, delivering speeches/ painting demos for the Stroke Association, and appearing at Patchings Art Festival - as well as other local art exhibitions. *'I feel so lucky to be one of the only ever modern-day Painting apprentices, by being the apprentice to Martin Kinnear at The Norfolk Painting School. I am lucky enough to teach oil painting every day and manage The Norfolk Painting School studios. I feel my biggest success is having the confidence to quit my psychiatric nursing degree and follow my dream of becoming an artist!'*

Dylan Hickman @Dylan12824hickman

Performer and photographer with a passion for camerawork

With his work showcased through Norfolk Youth Arts, Dylan enjoys connecting with others while finding that competition is one of his biggest challenges. However, he continues to pursue his creative career with ambition knowing that when he is successful in securing roles, it's rewarding.

'I've been in the Norfolk Youth Arts showcase, as well as having a scholarship at theatre royal I enjoy connecting to people whilst being supported and being rewarded by hard work. It's hard to pursue a career where it's very competitive and when you don't get a role that you wanted you can feel heart broken, but when you get the role it can be the most rewarding thing ever. I'd love to host many events and be a part of showing off other people's work to get them the recognition they deserve.'



Suavey @Suavegpd

Performer of music

Having performed at many shows including the Rudolph Awards in 2019, Suavey's biggest success in music is *'the fact I've reached over 120,000 views/streams via Soundcloud. On my own channel. I mostly enjoyed performing in front of many Eastenders and Hollyoaks actors and getting positive feedback from them.'*

On challenges in leading in the arts: *'Last year I nearly lost my life which has had a huge impact on my life I even nearly quit music, but I have a good drive to push and be the best I can be. I feel I have talent that shouldn't be wasted.'* *'I would love to perform at wireless, and the 02. That's one of my goals in life. I'm willing to put in the work to get there!'*

View Suavey's work on YouTube [here.](#)

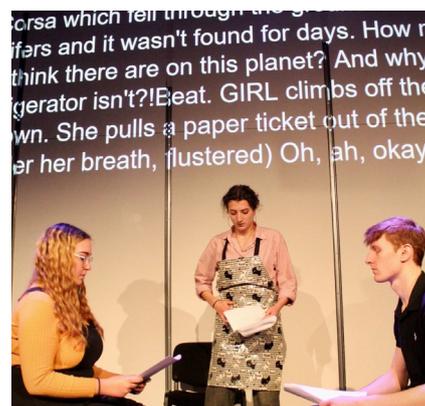


Tara Glenn

Theatre-maker and digital creative

Currently assisting two youth theatre groups online with Dundee Rep Theatre and working on a solo digital theatre project, Tara tells us of her challenges: *'Exploring how to make physical theatre online has been a challenge. I always take ages to process things and to decide what to do – sometimes taking months to write or finish one thing.'*

'Despite studying in London I have always felt a strong magnetic field towards creating work with and for people in Scotland and love recycling casts, and collaborating with people I have in the past or have known for years, I find it really wholesome and it makes me emotional.'



Tara Glenn continued...

'I think a lot of the magic of theatre comes from the raw emotion that is extended from one individual to the audience or between performers. I love seeing the magic unfold on stage. I also love taking people by surprise and going the extra mile. One of my favourite things to do is to write with specific people in mind, whether that is influenced by them or I just simply see them 'in role'. This happened with a recent short play I wrote - a young woman I had worked with for years just so happened to be in London as I was writing - so I essentially cast her before I even had a script!'

Her biggest success has been the relationships she has formed with people while making theatre. Her ambitions are *'to complete my own digital series with participants exploring physical theatre done digitally!'*

Elizabeth Seymour @elizabethseymourart

Creative Practitioner with a focus on curation and public and participatory arts

Elizabeth is interested in public art and participatory art, in particular creating art for everyone and using it as a platform for education, communication and showing how arts and culture are important and a positive contribution to communities.

'In February 2020 I was selected to curate my own exhibition of second year Fine Art student's work at Fairhurst Gallery. I titled this exhibition 'Open To Answers' and although the exhibition was unable to go ahead, I planned to have the focus of the exhibition on the audiences thoughts around the works. Each piece had three questions which could all be answered on one wall that could be written on by viewers. As this exhibition could not go ahead, I created a virtual exhibition to showcase the works and set up a social media page where viewers could still voice their opinions and thoughts in relation to the questions. I have co-curated several exhibitions, including, Untitled at St Margarets Church Norwich in 2018, Space/Place at Norwich University of the Arts Project Space and Play With Me II at St Mary's Works Norwich 2020. I also have experience as a Junior Curator at Anteros Art Foundation between 2017 and 2018. My work has been exhibited in: Untitled at St Margarets Church 2018, City College Norwich 2018, Pardon at NUA 2020, Green Dreams at St Margarets Church 2020, Play With Me II at St Mary's Works 2020, Open to Answers Virtual Exhibition 2020 and thestudentgallery.co.uk April 2020.'

'My biggest success so far has been being selected to curate the exhibition at Fairhurst Gallery. I enjoyed being able to build an exhibition up from scratch, pulling together themes that reflect my views on the importance of art and adding my touch as an artist as well as curator. I enjoy displaying works in a way that allow me to see the way an audience reacts to the works and encouraging viewers to be active in the way they engage with artworks. I like to put together exhibitions that challenge the conventions of the white cube exhibition.'

As an innovative creative worker, Elizabeth tells us: *'I find it challenging to move my work out of traditional galleries and into more public areas. My role at the Fairhurst gallery also came with a range of challenges. This included things such as communication as well as having to turn an exhibition with the main focus being on participation into a virtual experience that could function while we were in lock down.'* Elizabeth would like to host her own events that challenge the stereotypes of exhibitions and the arts and encourage more people to become more involved and to feel more welcome in arts and culture events.

Find out about Elizabeth Seymour [here](#) and [here](#), and about her exhibitions [here](#) and [here](#).

Young Creatives Showcase 5

Sarah Pedley @pedderz06

Videographer

As an ambitious videographer, having had three knee surgeries makes it difficult for Sarah to get out and work on videography, so adapting and learning has been crucial. *'There are opportunities for us as young people, we just have to find them.'* When asked about future ambitions, Sarah tells us: *'I want to go to one of the big film festivals like Cannes or Sundance.'*

Maria Willis @mezzomaria

Performer of music

Musician Maria has worked with Yorke Trust (Norfolk), Norfolk Youth Music Theatre, Sheringham Little Theatre, and various others in London. When asked about any challenges she has faced, Maria responds: *'Many. I didn't get onto the degree course at music college on first application. I had to fund a foundation year instead. I have faced countless rejections in auditions, but I appreciate that everything happens for a reason.'* Of her ambitions: *'I have held many charity concerts in Norfolk and endeavour to hold more. I also enjoy working with young people and would like to create workshops for young people wanting to make music. Personally, I have always wanted to go to the Aldeburgh festival.'*



Making people feel is something Maria thrives on. *'It's a unique gift to give someone when they could be at their lowest or even their highest. Performing Dido's lament with orchestra directed by Dominic Ellis-Peckham with TL Symphony orchestra was incredible. Also performing the role of Nada in Svadba at the Queen's House (Greenwich) was so much fun. It's hard to narrow it down!'*

Watch Edelweiss (Sound of Music) – recorded in lockdown [here](#).

Watch Tired – Ralph Vaughan Williams (Four Last Songs) – recorded in January 2020 [here](#).

Alice Banfield @banfieldaec

Visual artist – creator of paintings and drawings

Alice enjoys exchanging narratives with other artists and tells us her biggest success is being accepted into this year's BEEP painting biennial. She has been taking part in exhibitions and publications, and of her recent challenges she tells us that over the lockdown, *'the studio spaces were closed, meaning that there was limited space to work and access to materials.'* In the future Alice's main driving ambition is that she would like to apply for a short course led by the Royal Drawing School.



Sydney Burges @sydney_burges

Creative professional with an interest in directing, and inclusive arts

Sydney tells us about the creative leadership opportunities she has been involved in: *'I have put on exhibitions, shows, and festivals! Being part of the Inclusive Theatre Company @Chickenshed_uk opened my eyes to how important it is for everyone to have the opportunity to create and be creative!'*

Serious about championing others to reach their creative potential, Sydney is positive about any difficulties arising: *'There have always been challenges... I just have to find a way over, around or under them. Anything is possible!'* She tells us of her ambition to *'host a large scale (maybe even international) meet up/conference where people of all abilities can share their creative performance practise and learn from each other. I most enjoy sharing memories with other people and thinking creatively about how to make things accessible and inclusive. My biggest success so far has been graduating with a first-class degree in Inclusive Performance and being accepted onto a Masters in Inclusive and Special Education!'*



Rachael Guardiani @rachelsartblox

Visual artist focusing on drawing

Rachael is a creative practitioner in visual and fine arts and drawing. Discussing her favourite moments of being a leader and creative decision maker in the arts, Rachael tells us: *'I love being able to create something that expresses a feeling that I can't seem to put into words.'* When thinking about her challenges, she explains: *'There have certainly been periods of artist block, or being frustrated with my work and not being proud of anything I've made.'* With both these challenges and interests in mind, Rachael is hoping to attend art school next year - with her eye on several different institutions to continue her career in visual art.



Josh Thompson @jo_sh_123

Sound engineer, music maker, performer and event organiser

An active member of The Garage Youth Forum, Josh has experience in many areas of sound engineering including working for Wild Paths Festival. Challenges in being an arts leader for Josh are *'money, and being under the age of 18 - often seeming to others to be inexperienced.'* The sound engineer has been a member of Creative Arts East's Leading The Way advisory group, guiding the planning of the Instagram event, and he is keen to be involved in as many creative opportunities to lead as he can.

Thank you so much for your interest in Leading The Way and for taking the time to explore these amazing young creatives. If you want to find out more, don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing lea@creativeartseast.co.uk or DM us on Instagram - [@CreativeArtsEast](https://www.instagram.com/CreativeArtsEast)