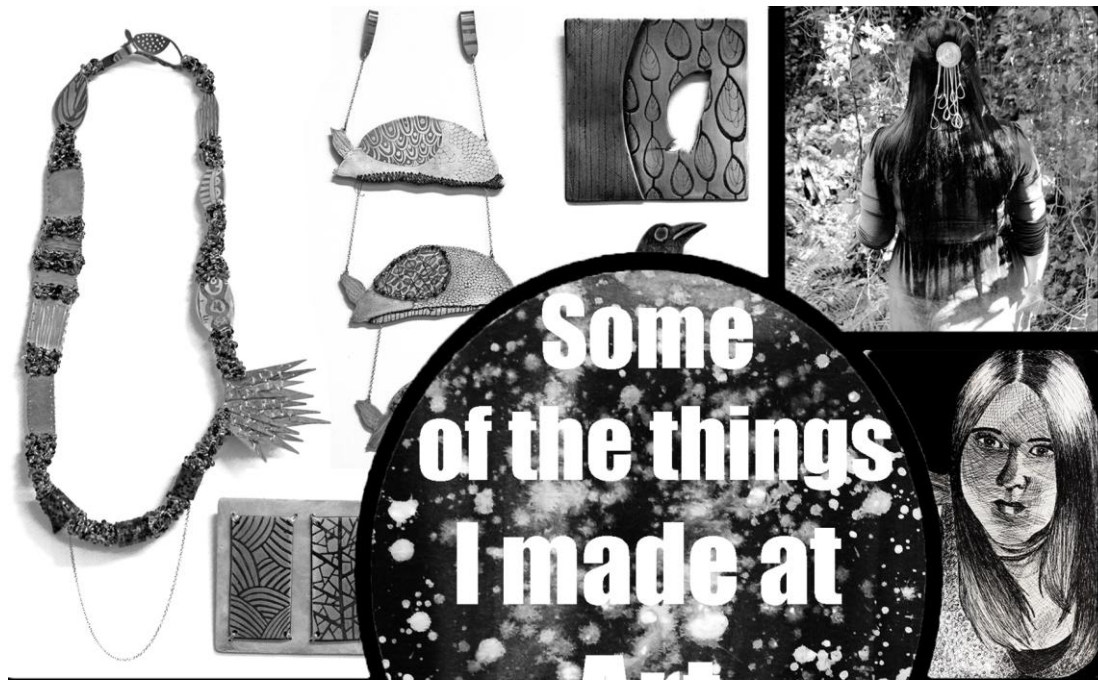
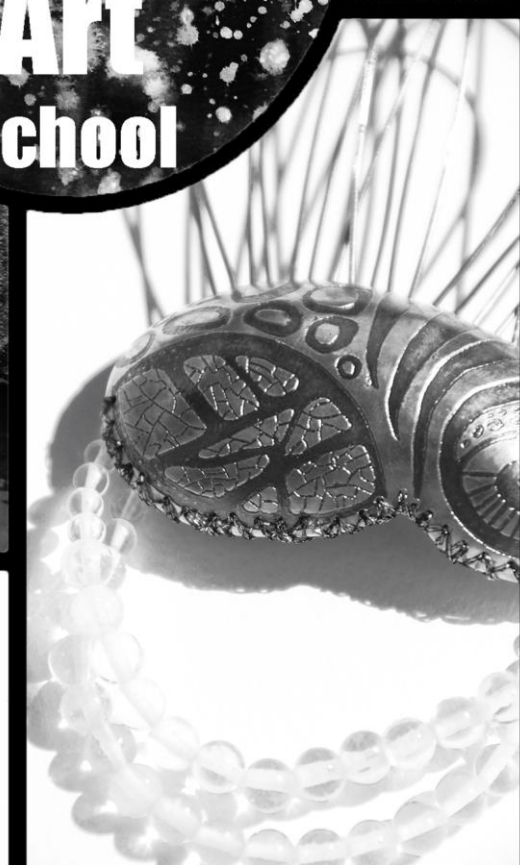


How To Get The Most Out Of Art School

by Chloe Henderson



Some
of the things
I made at
Art
School



This zine is an updated version of an article I wrote for a friend's magazine just as we were finishing our final Undergraduate year of Jewellery & Metal Design at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design (DJCAD), University of Dundee in 2014.

Here is the original introduction:

"The winter's frost is nipping at my filed-down fingertips, the end of my degree is rapidly drawing in (arghh!), and as I sit here writing this just before the Hollydays I can't help but think back over my time at art school. At this point, almost at the end of my years in metal-prone education, but not so far along as to know if it has all been worth it (oh please, please, please give me a degree!) I feel so inclined as to enlighten you with my wisdom. So what have you learned? I hear you cry out; well, I'll fill you in! Yes, I've gone for the clichéd top ten list, but as you sit there reading this don't pretend you don't love them too."

I'm happy to say I did get my degree! Bachelors of Design Honours is proudly written all over my CV, and in September 2017 I'll be off to The Birmingham School of Jewellery to study a Master's Degree in Jewellery & Related Products.

In the run up to my Master's I figured it was a really good time to revamp this article, and breathe new life into it. I've re-written it with the added knowledge of life after University, and the thoughts of someone who is about to embark upon the University experience all over again... and this advice is as much for me as it is for you!

So, without further ado... here it is! A Top 10 List Of How To Get The Most Out Of Art School with accompanying photographs and images of my time at DJCAD, and the work I created there.

I hope you enjoy it, and I hope the advice given here serves us well.

1. GO TO EVERYTHING

*I don't have time, I hear you cry... yes you do!
Stop sleeping off your pizza hangover, take that traffic cone off your head and go.
You can get drunk later.*

The one thing that I most regret about my time at Uni is not going to all the things. I was shy, anxious, and afraid of people; these traits stop me from doing a lot of things, but I'm slowly getting better, and I am hopeful that this is the piece of advice I will take to heart the most. I WANT TO GO TO EVERYTHING.

**Your time at University is shorter than you think.
Make use of the resources while you can.**

- Go to lots of lectures, even the ones that aren't your subject.
- Take up some of the extra credit classes.
- Join a society.
- Get involved with some of the many things happening on campus.
- Read all the books in the library. Make use of all the tools and equipment in the studio.
- Do your best to make friends, and contacts - and the dreaded word - network with people to make artsy connections for the future. Collaborate!

I say all this with anxiety lingering at the back of my mind... TRUST ME I KNOW HOW HARD THIS STUFF IS, but just try. Do the best you can, and try to get out of your room as much as possible. Use it all while you still can. Do the thing!

2. TAKE BREAKS

Yup. This one is important too. I know I just told you to do all the things, and you're probably like *hang on... I won't have time to take any breaks!!* But... you will. If you don't, you'll crash and burn, and nobody wants that.

Take some time out that is just for you.

Getting the balance between work and play is a tricky one... especially when you're studying a subject that is most likely your work life and your play life all rolled in to one. In my job, I'm a jeweller and an illustrator, and in my hobbies I paint, draw, stitch, make things. The lines are very blurred between work and fun.

You'll become a balancing act, and will find a way to make it work just for you.

Here is a little list of things that you can do to chill out, use as time to reflect, and practice self-care:

- take a yoga class.
- write a reflective blog post (extra credit if you can relate it to your Uni work).

- go for a walk in a place of natural beauty.

- find a furry friend to cuddle, and find your calm.

www.borrowmydoggy.com is a useful place to start, or search your local area for cat cafes, petting zoos, animal shelters etc.

- go for bubble tea with a friend to catch up and vent about everything that's going on in your lives.

3. DO WHAT YOU DO WHEN YOU PROCRASTINATE

Procrastination isn't always a bad thing. However, if you have just sat and watched all the episodes of Doctor Who in a row and there are empty popcorn packets littering your floor (what? me? never!) it's probably time to get back to work.

Excluding the odd movie marathon, I discovered that when I was escaping from the toils of my work I was doodling little patterns in my journal. It then became obvious to me that hand-drawn etching was something I should maybe focus my efforts on, and now it is one of the key fundamentals in my style.

Utilise what comes to you naturally... just don't talk yourself into Netflix binging being "for your art"!!



4. HAVE MULTIPLE PLANS

If you have a Plan A, make a Plan B, and Plan C, and a Plan D, and a.....

For every one thing that goes right for you, one thing will also go very wrong. That is just the rules of being an art student.

Remembered to bring a pencil to your lecture? Well done, bring two; your first one WILL explode while you're writing down that really important bit. Saved your work while writing your essay? Congratulations, do it again, and again, and again, and again: you WILL hit that button on your keyboard that nobody can see but we all know exists; that one that sends your work into another dimension. TAKE PICTURES OF EVERYTHING. Emailed the PowerPoint to yourself so you could pull it up and present your amazing, revolutionary talk? Go you, you're awesome, but bring a copy on a memory stick too, remember technology HATES you.

Always have a back-up.



5. USE ALL THE EQUIPMENT

It is unlikely that you will have access to all that glorious equipment in your workshops after you leave. **USE IT NOW.**

Even if you think you will never ever use it again, just give it a go. Try every new skill you are taught. Practice everything. You don't have to make anything good, just give new techniques a go.

You're at University for a reason: to learn. Use this time. You'll not have very much time/resources/equipment to play about with when you leave.

When you sit down to try and make something in the little workshop space you have set up in your bedroom you will completely understand why I have included this point - sorry for setting the curtains on fire Mum.....



6. YOU ARE YOUR OWN HEALTH & SAFETY

Like I said in point 4... art school is all about experimenting and playing with shiny new ideas... but, ya gotta stay safe!!

Take risks for your art, sure... but be careful. You don't want to win a Darwin Award.

And always check potentially dodgy things with your tutors and/or workshop supervisors. You don't want to get hurt, or get others hurt, and you don't want kicked out of Uni!

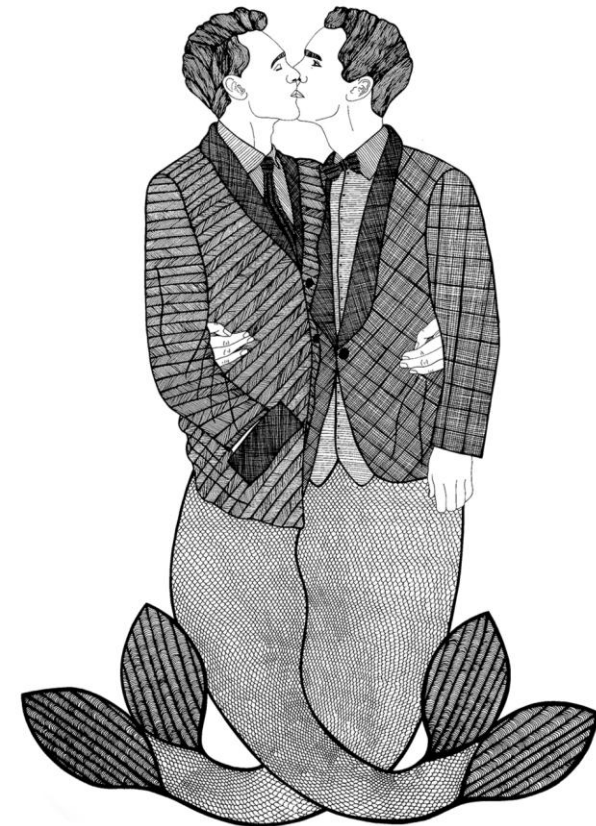
I'd also suggest keeping painkillers and plasters in your toolbox. That mini first aid kit is rather essential must-have for all creatives.

I'm rather accident prone... have you ever accidentally flicked paint into your eye? Don't. It really hurts. It's far better to stop the saw-blade wound from filling up with metal dust and ending up with a shiny, scratchy wound, and all it takes is a wee box of plasters. And the persistent tones of beating hammers do, oddly enough, take a toll on your head in the darkening hours of the day. Painkillers are a must. Oh... and drink plenty of water!

Stay in school kids!!

7. ART DOESN'T ACTUALLY MEAN ANYTHING

Art is different for every person. Some people will love your art, others will hate it, and others will simply not care. That's the hard part of being an artist. Just carry on creating, make things because you want to. Like a very wise man once said "make good art" and do it because you love it, because when you're in the centre of your little creative explosion - making everything come together, and fall apart, and stick to your fingers, and infect your brain - you couldn't imagine doing anything else.



8. WHEN SOMEONE IS BEING CRITICAL OF YOUR WORK THEY ARE NOT ATTACKING YOU PERSONALLY

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I know, trust me I know! it's really really hard to disconnect yourself from your work.

Your work is everything to you. Art, even when it isn't, is so personal. It's an idea YOU have come up with, and have created with YOUR own two hands, but when someone is giving you criticism you just have to break up with your work for a moment - don't worry, it's not you.

There have been many a time when I have jumped onto my bed all dramatically and cried because my work had been criticised. I still find it very hard to disconnect from my work, and I still get upset when someone doesn't like what I'm doing.

Criticism makes you stronger and makes your work better.

I'm trying to remember that. Take the comments people make, use them to make your art better, and ignore them when you need to.

9. IF YOU FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT

As clichéd as it sounds, being pushed outside of your comfort zone is the best place to be, and the best place to house that discomfort is art school.

Make mistakes now while you can get away with it, and remember most mistakes are actually just great ideas in disguise. Learn from everything that goes wrong, and bear in mind that most things will most likely go wrong; just like technology, the tools hate you too.

Mistakes are not failures. Mistakes are not failures. Mistakes are not failures. Mistakes are not failures. Mistakes are not failures. That is a statement I really need drumming into my head. I tend to get really upset when things go wrong, but instead what I should do is write down that lesson learnt, and move in. I'd highly recommended that as way to help you progress, and not get too bogged down in the little things that don't really matter.

Just keep trying, you'll get there eventually... and it will be oh so worth it!



10. SUCCESS IS NOT ABOUT THE GRADES YOU GET, BUT ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

Okay, I sounded a little like a fortune cookie there, but which scenario would you prefer?...

You're studying away, reading lots of things you don't have any interest in but they seem like good grade getters, you write about topics you don't care about but they seem like good grade getters, your art doesn't look anything you want it to look like, but it seems like a good grade getter, at the end of your degree you come away with a first but you forget everything you have learned because it has no appeal to you whatsoever.

OR

You read books with no relevance to anything just because they are interesting, you write about weird and wonderful topics because they make your mind dance around in wonderment even if nobody knows what you are talking about, you make art that looks exactly the way you want it to even if your tutor gives you THAT look, and at the end of your degree you didn't quite get the grade you were hoping for (or maybe you did, go you!) but you left satisfied having learnt about your passion, and you made good art.

If you picked the first scenario, please have a sit down and reevaluate your choice to go to art school, if you picked the second remember: "just because your grades are bad it doesn't mean you're failing".

I hope you have enjoyed reading this zine, and I hope the advice you have read here is something you can use to make your experience at University the best it can be! Good luck... and wish me luck!!

“Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more. . .”





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Chloe Henderson is an odd artsy person from Edinburgh. She creates visual and wearable artwork inspired by stories, fantasies, geek culture, feminism, and mythologies. Chloe creates highly patterned work. Her drawings are akin to the zentangle style, and this is also reflected in her etched style metalwork.

She uses the patterns to create narratives, and explore visual storytelling through the fine arts, and the wearable jewellery creations she makes in the workshop. In her spare time she tames unicorns and swims with mermaids.

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