



creative
& cultural
skills

Changing History: Diversifying the museum workforce

An online panel discussion from Creative & Cultural Skills and Rising Arts Agency

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Event transcript:

Jane Ide, Co-Host

CEO, Creative & Cultural Skills:

Hello, everybody. I would love to welcome you all here, I'd love to be able to say it's good to see you all. Unfortunately, being an online event, I can't actually see everybody, but I do hope you can hear me OK.

My name is Jane Ide, I'm the Chief Executive of Creative & Cultural Skills. I'm a white woman in my late fifties with very short dark hair, wearing glasses, a blue and silver scarf and a cream jumper. My background is pale grey with the Creative & Cultural Skills logo in black against it and my pronouns are she and her.

I'm really, really excited and really pleased to welcome you all to this very special event. A joint event hosted by Creative & Cultural Skills and Rising Arts Agency, Changing History: Diversifying the Museum Workforce. We're absolutely thrilled that you can join us, and we're very much looking forward to hearing all our panellists who you'll be meeting very shortly, A1, Sipho, Baz, Hawwa and Leah, who will be sharing with us their experiences and their thoughts about the the creative industries over the next hour and a half or so.

I just wanted to give you a very short introduction to what Creative & Cultural Skills, otherwise known as CCSkills, which is a lot easier to say, is about. CCSkills is the UK-wide agency that works to create a fair, skilled and accessible cultural and creative sector. At the heart of our mission, the work we are all about, is helping to ensure that young people, particularly those who are furthest from the workplace, perhaps have the biggest barriers to face, have access to developing their successful careers across the creative and cultural industries.

We're the organisation that introduced creative apprenticeships to sector in 2008. And if anybody here with us today is an apprentice or has been an apprentice in the creative and cultural sector, we're particularly proud to have you with us and we continue to support the shaping and the development of apprenticeships and other paid vocational entry routes, including the recently announced Museum and Gallery Technical Apprenticeship, which is due to launch next year, which is very exciting.

We were also one of the leading partners behind the Creative Careers Programme, and we launched Discover! Creative Careers Week in 2019 as part of our work to broaden the awareness of some of the lesser known jobs that exist in the creative industries, particularly through offering industry led opportunities.

We all know that our industry was hit harder than most by COVID-19, but we are working very hard at CCSkills to support employers to do something that we believe passionately in, which is to build back fairer. We think there's an opportunity, given all the challenges the sector's had, all the thinking that people have done about resetting and reframing, to make sure that some of those barriers that we know have been in the industry for so long, perhaps can be systematically dismantled in order to make the changes that we'd all like to see.

Just this week, we've announced a new partnership with Creative Scotland to deliver free training to creative employers in Scotland. We're already offering that training in England and Northern Ireland for any employer that wants to understand more about how to create fair access to work.

Today's event is about bringing people together to share their perspectives and their experiences around our key areas of work. But before I hand over to Euella Jackson from Rising Arts Agency to say a few words about her organisation ahead of the panel discussion, I do need to just run through a little bit of basic housekeeping. Now if we were all in a room together, I'd be telling you about fire alarms and where the toilets are and when there's going to be a comfort break. Given that you're all hopefully sitting somewhere comfortable and in your own space, that is entirely up to you. If you want to go get a drink, get a drink anytime you like. However, because it is an online event that does give us some other opportunities. There are going to be captions, but they are being auto generated through Zoom's transcription tool, which does mean we can't guarantee they're going to be 100% accurate.

We hope for the best and any errors we apologise for, but hopefully they'll be more amusing than confusing. The Q&A function will be active during the discussion so that you can submit any questions you have and we really, really would encourage you. That's the whole point of an event like this, is that you can ask questions of people that may or may not be able to answer them for you. So please put any questions that you have into the Q&A function and my colleague Bonnie will be picking up those questions ahead of the 15 minute Q&A session that will come towards the end of event.

Finally, just a reminder again that this is a virtual event, all our panellists are logging in remotely as well. We all are. So we are all at the mercy of the well-known Wi-Fi issues that we might have, visiting pets, visiting family members, possibly small children, housemates, friends, people ringing the door. And it's probably a little early for carol singers, but you never know who might turn up at the door.

Whatever happens, I think we're all well used to the fact now that online events can be a little bit glitchy, but if anything goes wrong, I'm sure we'll be able to work through it and I'm sure you'll be patient with us if that should happen.

So enjoy your evening. Thank you to all our panellists from me for giving the time for us this evening. I'm really looking forward to hearing what people are going to talk about, and I'm now going to hand over to Euella from Rising Arts to introduce the work that they do in their lovely agency.

Euella Jackson, Co-host

Co-Director. Rising Arts Agency:

Thank you very much. Thank you so much, Jane. Hi, I'm Euella and my pronouns are she/her and I'm a young black woman with curly hair. I'm wearing a white top and I'm against a kind of fairly light background with various things in the background.

So I am the Co-Director of Rising Arts Agency and we're a youth led social enterprise based in Bristol, and we exist to support young people who are underrepresented in the creative sector, between the ages of 18 and 30 to achieve their creative ambitions, but also to kind of mobilise to create radical social change.

Now this is a thing that we're really interested in. How can we, you know, dismantle systems, how can we interrogate the things are, how can we think about doing things differently, like creativity and arts are at the heart of how we see change being driven.

And so that's something that we hold very dear to us. And as a result, we use creativity to kind of challenge and change a sector, whether it's through research projects or consultation or our creative industry services. We think of the young people that work with us of our community, and we're really keen on nurturing that talent, but also thinking about how we can help them to get their voices heard and platform them to create the change that they want to see.

So we're really delighted to be joined by Sipho and A1, who are from Rising's community, and hopefully there's opportunities to kind of hear what they have to say around, you know, really challenging museums and the way in which we think about history and heritage. So I won't talk too much longer, but I'm really, really happy to be working with you all and hopefully you enjoy what you hear. Thank you.

Catherine Ritman-Smith, Chair

Head of Learning and Engagement at Young V&A:

Thanks so much, Euella and Jane. It's really great to be here. And hello to everybody joining us online around the UK. To introduce myself, I'm Catherine Ritman Smith. My pronouns are she/her, I'm a slightly greying person of colour wearing a black jacket and a red top with a gold-ish necklace and the obligatory online headphones for anybody that values an audio description.

I am a member of the Creative & Cultural Skills Board of Trustees, and by day my job is Head of Learning and Engagement for Young V&A, what was formerly the Museum of Childhood, based in Bethnal Green in London. I'm working on a transformation project considering the role of the museum in building skills and creative confidence for children and young people, and working collaboratively with young people and their communities to think about how creativity can be harnessed and how museums can be engaging and relevant.

At young V&A, we're using museum collections to inspire and support young people to be positive changemakers and to apply their creativity to address the issues that are close to their hearts. Before this, I was Head of Learning and Skills at Somerset House, and I spent the greater part of a decade at the Design Museum in London, overseeing learning programmes for schools, Further and Higher Education and for children and young people outside of formal learning.

Let's not go back further than that, or I'll be showing my age and today is all about celebrating new generations coming in to enrich and diversify the sector. I'm really looking forward to our discussion today, and I'm particularly glad to know that we'll be bringing together colleagues working in the sector and those who hope to form the future workforce. I've been informed there's a pretty even split in our audience today between established professionals and those weighing up careers in the cultural heritage sector.

What unites us all is a deep interest in the workplaces we have today and in the workforce that we want to see today and tomorrow, and we're here to gain insight from our panellists on that. I think they will all be relieved to know that we're not demanding any magic answers or solutions to some of the issues we're here to talk about today. Today's conversation aims to draw on personal and professional experiences to build a sense of connection and community around the challenges that we face and which are everybody's to tackle. So let's meet that panellist.

Each of our panellists is going to introduce themselves briefly, and I'm going to start with A1. Could you just give us a brief introduction to yourself and where you are in the UK and your role in relation to museums as well, over to A1.

A1, Panellist

Freelancer multidimensional storyteller:

OK, so I'm A1, I'm 28. I'm Black, I've got a beard, long hair tied back, white shirt, white background and I'm currently in Bristol. I'm a multi-dimensional storyteller, I use mainly dance and spoken word to tell stories and within this, the heritage sector, I mainly help around trying to create spaces where we can understand better what people need in order to be a part of that community. As well as... I've been a part of the Uncomfortable Truths project with the museum.

Yeah, I think that's all you asked right?

Catherine: That's great! Thank you A1 and welcome, thank you so much for joining us. So we're going to hear more from A1 when we launch into our panel discussion, but I'm going to hand over now to Baz to introduce himself, Secondary Science and Post-16 Learning Coordinator for Manchester Museum, Baz.

Barinur Rashid, Panellist (Baz)

Secondary science and post 16 Learning Coordinator, Manchester Museum:

Hi my name is Baz. In terms of description, youngish, male, beard, person of colour, male, short hair, hooded top, white background with a green plant in the corner. So as Catherine said, I'm the Post-16 and Secondary Science Coordinator at Manchester Museum, from Manchester and I'm one of the apprentice managers with one of our apprentices that are on board.

Catherine: Brilliant, thank you so much Baz, and really looking forward to hearing your perspective on the role of apprentices in the sector as well. And now it's appropriate to hand over to Hawwa Alam who is a Cultural Learning and Participation Officer Apprentice at Manchester Museum. So, can I hand over to you Hawwa to say hello?

Hawwa Alam, Panellist

Cultural Learning & Participation Officer (Apprentice), Manchester Museum:

Hi, everyone, my name's Hawwa, I'm a 23 year old South Asian female, I'm wearing a turquoise-ish headscarf, a white shirt and glasses and like Catherine said I am a Cultural Learning and Participation Officer Apprentice at Manchester Museum where I mostly work on our young people's project, which is called Our Shared Cultural Heritage or OSCH for short.

Catherine: Brilliant, it's so great to have you with us and thank you so much for that intro. And now we're going to hand over to Siphho, who is another panellist who's come from Bristol. Do you want to say hi to us, Siphho?

Nosiphho Ledwaba-Chapman, Panellist (Siphho)

Freelance Journalist and Nail Artist:

Hi, I'm Siphho. I'm a British, South African, 23 year old woman, fair in complexion with black cane row hair. I'm wearing a red hoodie and a black puffer jacket. I'm a journalist and a nail artist and I'm also part of Rising Arts Agency and the Museum Youth Collective as well, which also worked on the Uncomfortable Truths project.

Catherine: It's fabulous to have you with us Siphho, so thank you so much. And last but by no means least, I'm going to introduce Leah to say hello to us. Leah is Events Trainee at Glasgow Museum.

Leah Sibindi, Panellist

Events Trainee at Glasgow Museums:

Hi, everyone, my name is Leah, in terms of description, I am a black woman, early thirties, long braids and my background is quite funky. I'm wearing a colourful top with a red poppy flowers and I am an Events Trainee with Glasgow Museum.

I've been that for the last 20 months, and I'm also a Gallery Assistant for the Burrell Collection.

Catherine: Wonderful. Thank you so much, Leah. And seeing as we finished with Leah, we'll start with her now. If that's okay, Leah, I'm going to ask you some questions.

So could you just tell us a bit more about your role as a trainee at Glasgow Museums and how you found the opportunity and decided it?

Leah: Sure, yes. So I was an underemployed graduate in around 2019. I was working in as Admin Assistant for a legal firm and I was looking for an opportunity. Sorry, I've just gone blank. So I was looking for an opportunity and I've always really liked heritage and I found that I didn't know much about my own heritage. And when I visited museums here in Glasgow, I wasn't represented as an African woman, I felt not represented at all. I didn't see anything about my culture. I didn't see anything that drew me to the museum sector.

And so. After a while, I went for the opportunity.

Catherine: That's really interesting and great to hear. I suppose, it's interesting for us to find out a bit more about what your traineeship involves, what your day to day life is like in the role and also, I guess with that point about you not feeling represented and whether you think what you're doing is making any difference by being employed in the sector?

Leah: Absolutely. So my traineeship gives you sort of 360 degrees into the museum sector. You really get involved in everything. Will it be the care of items, curatorial? So for me, the traineeship has opened a Pandora's box. And as I said before, I realised that I didn't know much about my culture and what I'm doing now,

I'm working on different projects to bring about my culture. I'm from Zimbabwe originally and I've been in Glasgow for the last 13 years. So I think it's really, really important for people of ethnic backgrounds to start telling their own stories. And not hearing it from the second person, I think is really, really important, so what I'm doing is I've been working on precolonial objects and using them to tell our stories.

Recently, I've put an object on display that's from my cultural background, and I'm really, really pleased with that and I'm hoping that should continue. Because if somebody visits a museum and it's something that doesn't represent them, I think that's another barrier for people of colour. If you go to a museum and there's nothing that really represents you, you're really... You feel maybe unconvinced to work in that environment. I think if something like if you went to a museum and I saw the object that I've just put on display, you do feel sort of represented and you feel sort of interested and in getting involved as well.

Catherine: Thanks so much Leah, it's really inspiring to hear what you're doing actually. And also, I guess a point for questions later and for the panel to consider as well is the role that workforces play in changing the stories that we're telling in museums and how the two are really interlinked as well.

So hopefully that's something we can come back to. But thank you so much for that insight into your current role, and it's really great to hear about how through your traineeship, actually, you're gaining this 360 perspective as well. So thank you so much.

And we're going to move on now to speak to Hawwa. I'm really keen to find out about how you are finding being an apprentice in Manchester Museums and how that came about for you as well.

Hawwa: Yeah so really, I'd say the only reason this came about, and I am where I am right now is because of OSCH the Our Shared Cultural Heritage project I said I'm working on. I think if OSCH didn't exist and if I hadn't met Baz and Sadia, who's the OSCH coordinator, I would never have really set foot in a museum much.

And I don't think I would have even considered trying to work in the heritage industry because I went to the museum a lot as a kid, but I rarely felt very attached to anything I saw there and I never really felt like I belonged in a space like that.

One of my first experiences working for a museum was actually as a Digital Producer at Manchester Museum, right after I graduated, so about a year and a half ago. And with that role, I was involved in digital campaign development for the first official celebration of South Asian Heritage Month in 2020.

And I also did like social media management, marketing and website development. And then the Cultural Learning and Participation Officer apprentice role was advertised around the time my position as a Digital Producer was ending and because of my year working as a Digital Producer for OSCH, I'd begun to see more of a place for myself within the heritage sector. And you know, I began to hope that museums could be more than just places where dusty old colonial objects are kept in glass cases for people to look at, which is honestly how I still viewed museums even during my time at university studying history.

But yeah, because of my experience seeing all the work that OSCH had done, I decided that I wanted to try to develop my skills and see how I could contribute towards the work of the project, especially after seeing how OSCH had impacted people's lives so far and really getting more young people from ethnic backgrounds involved in exploring elements of their own identity and heritage and culture in a museum space.

So yeah, then since my appointment as an apprentice I've been involved in sort of like project planning and organising workshops and campaigns and getting stuck into more of the the development and logistical side that I hadn't really been involved in, in my Digital Producer role.

And yeah, I'm currently working on a number of different projects, some are international collaborations and some are like more smaller projects, but definitely some more to go. I have like a year left of my apprenticeship.

Catherine: That's so great to hear and another really exciting and quite thought-provoking point that you've made about how actually learning activity and activity that engages young people, and Siphos maybe we can speak about this also with you and your role on the Rising Arts programme too, how actually that can draw you in and help you see different perspectives and ways that we can, we can activate collections and stories that are relevant to our own heritages and stories that we think need to be told in our communities as well.

And so you said you've got a year to go in your apprenticeship, and I'm really interested because you said that your Digital Producer role was ending, and this is another thing that we kind of see as a cycle in this mission around diversity is short term roles and where do they lead? So where do you think the apprenticeship is going to take you, Hawwa?

Hawwa: At this point I honestly have no idea. Like, I'm the kind of person that quite likes jumping from job to job because I don't know, like, I like to be excited by my job rather than just get very used to it.

And actually, when my Digital Producer role was ending, I'd been offered a permanent role in this different sector completely and that I had to like decide whether I wanted to still try and find my footing in the heritage sector and go with this apprenticeship or just take the more stable job and kind of give it up. But I decided that seeing as I'm young, I live with my parents still, so I'm all good. Like, I spoke to my parents and I was like, which one should I take? Do you want to kick me out the house anytime soon?! You know, like, what do I need to do here? But they were very supportive and told me that I should just take the apprenticeship because it was definitely something that was exactly what I sort of envisioned that I wanted to do in the future.

But I didn't know how that was ever going to happen, and then that apprenticeship was sort of making it happen. Hopefully, I find something similar to it, but more permanent after this apprenticeship, again, I don't know what's going to happen.

Catherine: I think it's great that you've got the security and the vision really to explore the potential of the role and kind of have your mind open to its next steps and possibilities. It is another point that maybe our participants will be interested in commenting on is this thing about what level of security do you need to be able to work in the sector as well, with this issue around diversity, because I've certainly had moments in my life where I am very grateful to have a backup and it's been a strain that I don't necessarily see other colleagues going through in order to kind of keep up with this sort of job as well.

It's something we can come back to, but Hawaa thank you so much for that. It's really exciting to hear about, I guess the contrast actually with the traineeship, but also that it's leading you in a direction that is enabling you to engage both with the subject matter that intrigues you, but also career prospects that will help develop your next steps as well. So thank you so much.

So we're going to then move over to speak to Baz because as I understand, you actually recruited Hawaa and that was through the Our Shared Cultural Heritage programme. So it'd be great to hear a bit more about kind of what you've been doing in terms of both, kind of the learning initiatives, but also working with apprentices and kind of this dual track approach of addressing this, this kind of need for us to diversify our workforces and the work that we're doing.

Baz: Absolutely, Catherine and I'd just like to share some of the things that we learnt and the challenges that we had in terms of recruiting apprenticeships.

First of all, one of the biggest challenges was unfortunately, apprenticeships and along with internships have become quite toxic and they've become quite toxic because usually

they're very low paid and they're kind of seen as exploitative. I mean, I'll give you a perfect example, the law says that apprentices can be paid £4.52 an hour, I think it's absolutely disgraceful. And you know, if the cultural and heritage sector thinks you know, that's how you diversify the workforce by bringing in apprentices and paying that low wage, I really do think they need to think again.

We decided as a museum that that goes against our values and we're not going to offer apprentices at that wage or at that salary. We decided we will offer our apprentices at the Manchester Living Wage, which is £10.8 an hour. So first of all, we have to get that approved. Thankfully, we did. Then what I actually decided to do was to do a bit of consultation work with regards to why aren't young people taking up apprentices and especially young people or people of colour.

And when we did actually do some initial consultation, we found out and it confirms what Leah and Hawaa were saying, that young people are saying they're not interested in museums because they're not representative in terms of their culture, their heritage, staff, background, they don't see themselves in museums. Even to the point when we were putting out job descriptions for apprentices for a supermarket and comparing it with the museum, nine out of ten times young people, would choose the apprenticeship from that supermarket. And we'd ask why? And the response would be because young people or people of colour felt that they'd feel more comfortable in a place like a supermarket to do an apprentice rather than a museum.

So these are some of the kind of barriers that we had to break down. On top of that, quite a lot of people put that they would never, ever perceive themselves in museums, they wouldn't even see that as a career option. And some of the older people of colour, they would say, again, it's about job security. They wouldn't even consider going into a museum because again, one of the biggest problems is when museums offer jobs, they're either temporary contracts or they're very, very low wage and they just wouldn't it make that switch, as they say.

So these are some of the actual barriers that we actually learnt about. With regards to challenges, this was another challenge, when we actually did advertise the actual apprentices themselves, we realised within about a space of a week, we weren't getting enough quality applications, or we weren't even getting applications targeted to people of colour.

So we immediately actually took the job description down and realised that the language that we actually used around the job description wasn't actually accessible to people of colour, wasn't actually accessible just to young people in general. And even where we advertised the apprentice on the government website, you couldn't actually upload the job description.

So there wasn't much description as they say. So we quickly had to take that down, we quickly had to re-do the job description, had to link it to our own museum website. And then the other thing that we actually did realise was when an apprentice was being advertised, it was just being advertised in the usual museum channels, as they say. It wasn't actually getting out into the community. And then we thought, right, we need to

actually realign ourselves. So we actually get the actual apprentice advert out into the community.

And then thankfully, after we did all of that, we did end up receiving up to 100 applications. So those were some of the things that we learnt, and those were some of the challenges that we actually had when recruiting apprentices.

Catherine: Oh, thank you so much for sharing that. There's like millions of pearls of wisdom in that journey, and I have to say a lot of that chimes with me, not with apprenticeships, but with other forms of generating entry level roles designed to increase diversity of the workforce within a cultural institution.

And speaking to peers, I don't know if you found that other people have had similar experiences to you that yes, there's an issue about language. You've got to think about where you're advertising these roles because otherwise you're advertising to people that already know about and are attracted to museums. And that doesn't diversify the sector...

Baz: And it just goes within the same networks, that's it, it doesn't get out anywhere else.

Catherine: Totally. And so I guess what I was going to lead on to say was that your work in consulting the young people that you want to reach being a really critical part and actually about how that might be a pathway to shifting leadership around these sorts of issues as well, is that by working collaboratively with young people, you can plant and adjust language and think about actually what will work and what will be viable pathways for people to get into the sector, but also to really understand what roles are interesting to young people as well.

Yeah, there's lots and lots to unpack there. I'm just mindful of time, but I guess also really keen to connect back to where this was started in terms of your role in Manchester Museums as well, because I guess looking after the education side of things doesn't necessarily mean that you're an expert in recruitment and apprenticeships as well. And so how are the two things fitting together for you in terms of programme?

Baz: I mean, for me, I think it was because with regards to just that passion, working with young people and because these apprentices were orientated towards young people.

I mean, my role is I'm the Secondary Science and Post-16 Coordinator working with young people, secondary school children and colleges and targeting especially disadvantaged students. And that's where I'm passionate. I thought, no, I want to provide, and I want to create opportunities for disadvantaged children and students, people of colour, to access the museum, that's what I really wanted. And some of the skills that I had with regards to the way I target disadvantaged schools, I applied that same model to the recruitment process and thankfully fingers crossed, it did actually work.

Catherine: It's fantastic. I guess I raised that question because I suppose my personal experience has been sometimes frustrating and not in my current role, but in past roles where because it's about young people, it ends up being in learning. But actually, it's a much wider issue about how we have a diverse workforce across the entire institution and actually HR needing to be involved and other departments needing to be involved in

supporting this, because otherwise you still end up in one corner and that's the box ticked as well.

How is that working for you?

Baz: Absolutely. We're quite fortunate in our museum, what we actually have is we have a social justice group in the museum and all the findings that we found from our recruitment process for the apprentice, we've actually cascaded that out to the museum as a whole, so quite a lot of the issues that we actually raised, they're actually implemented with the recruitment process as a whole now, whether it's young people or older or any other department, they're using some of our same techniques.

And I'll give you a perfect example. We now, the majority of the time when it comes to interview processes, we give the interview questions beforehand to the candidates. Again, that helps with the recruitment process. With regards to ensuring that there's a diverse panel that selects the actual applicants, ensuring, in terms of diversity, ensuring there's young people there and old people that they all feed into the actual recruitment panel.

So things like that have actually helped quite a lot with regards to diversifying our workforce.

Catherine: That's so wonderful, because that then means you are kind of genuinely, collaboratively working internally as well because I think that understanding of the issues and thinking about the processes and the good practice can't just sit in one person or in one particular, like 'we'll do it for apprenticeships, but we won't do it for any of our other recruitment'.

So it's really great to see that joined up approach because I think the other thing that maybe we'll come back to the panellists about is that once you've got them in, once we've recruited our apprenticeship, our trainees or our entry level roles, what is their day to day experience going to be like? And I think again, it's really exciting to hear about the social justice panel in terms of making sure that actually next steps along the way are also considered in terms of our drive to actually retain the people that we're recruiting.

Baz: Absolutely Catherine and we have done some initial consultation around retention. I don't know how much time... if I can just give a couple of minutes with regards to retention, especially for apprenticeships.

Pastoral care is very, very important with regards to looking after the apprentices. And I'll give you an example with regards to pastoral care and some of the policies that actually do effect apprenticeships. Now, the government recognises apprentices as traineeships, but unfortunately they're classed as employment.

So a person who's 16 or over, if they're now classed as employed, all the benefits that they get whilst they're living at home, which their parents receive, such as council tax reduction etc, everything goes, OK. So that network of support actually goes. So then it's kind of like it's up to us as a museum to be aware of that and see if you can provide some financial support with regards to if that network goes and if we're saying, OK, even sometimes, you

know, a £10 minimum wage is not enough, how can you actually support that young person?

So again, we've done some work around retention and how to provide that pastoral care.

Catherine: That's brilliant. It's great to hear and trainee and trainees and apprentices listening in as well, it would be really great to hear your perspectives on this.

Thank you so much Baz and really useful insights and really generous sharing of learning as well.

Moving on to something completely different in a way, is A1, I wondered if I could talk to you about the work that you do with, I guess, your interest in a focus on identity through stories and working on Bristol Museum's Uncomfortable Truths project, it would be great to hear a bit more about your role within that and how it's influenced your practise and kind of what you think that sparked in terms of learning in the museum itself.

A1: OK. I was just trying to figure out how to start it.

So I think I'll start with when I joined the museum's project, the Uncomfortable Truths project, I was actually studying fine art, I still am, and I was with Rising Arts, I'm still with Rising Arts, but I was with Paper Arts as well.

So when I first joined, I was more interested in deconstruction of stories. And as I carried on my practise, heritage started to come up quite a lot. Heritage didn't come at first because of the same issues that everyone has said that it didn't seem to resonate when I'd like go to the museum and stuff, even by watching films or TV series, like the closest I could see was like the victimised side of it, rather than achievements, adventures and whatnot, you know? So it didn't resonate that much.

I mean, I didn't know much either. What started to really spark it for me was the project I was doing, which was telling stories, I was putting myself in them, and the question that was posed to me was the minute I put myself in there, does a story become about just any individual, as in just a human being of any race? Or is it specifically talking about a black person? And my aim was actually, it was talking about everyone, but because I was in it, the whole perspective and narrative shifted completely and it baffled me.

You know, it's kind of weird because I was thinking like, I'm not trying to pin it down to one thing. So why is it when I'm in there, all of a sudden, everything changes, you know? So from there I started looking into a lot of stuff like Stuart Hall, who I think it's called Spectacle of Others, and it talks about the perspectives and historically how black people have been perceived. Race and Sex by JA Rogers, which talks about a multitude of stuff, but like it talks about the political side and how it shifted from maybe religion to race etc and so forth, history on Haiti called The Irritated Genie and just looking at different artists like Fred Williams and stuff like that.

So those sort of things started to make me think about heritage a lot more. And just I guess how do we create more representation? And in terms of what I did, we investigated different artefacts, and the one I looked at was the Delhi Durbar painting. And I did that

with another person called Donnell, where we did a lot of research around it and started to create a podcast where we were basically asking questions about what is true is and what isn't and what would be the real story around it and how it ties in with colonialism.

So that's what we started doing. And I guess the most recent thing I started doing now is actually trying to understand more about what it means for us to be accepted in spaces like this. Like what, what is valued for us to feel like this is actually a space to be? What does that look like? What's the language around here and stuff like that?

I can't remember what other questions you asked me now.

Catherine: That's all great, you actually started to I guess express the next question I have for you, which was you talked about what does it mean? What is the value of being accepted in a space?

And I just wondered what your reflection is as an artist on the museum as a space for inspiration, but also commissioning and kind of work as well. What has that value been? What are your reflections so far?

Is not necessarily a definitive answer, but it is interesting to kind of, get a sense of what you've gained by putting yourself into these stories and exploring these works and I guess tackling some of these issues as well.

A1: OK, well, I'd say what I've gained from it is, I guess a hunger to actually, like an advocate for truth, kind of thing, like what's actually real and what isn't and also try to understand more how I can communicate to others to see other perspectives and I guess create empathy as well as other stuff.

Damn it, I can't remember all of that, can you ask me the whole thing?

Catherine: I was just babbling, it's alright!

A1: OK, what I will add then, what I will add is one of the things I would say is the museum's definitely trying to obviously, oh I'm talking about Bristol Art Gallery and Museum, I'm sure other museums are doing it as well, but specifically I'm talking about them because I know they're doing it. They are trying their best to be more inclusive. They have more diversity and stuff like that.

And when we look at stuff, like valuing stuff, I think the question sometimes really is more about understanding communities more and letting their voices be heard to then understand how to move forward and build more of a relationship there, so it doesn't feel like, 'oh, this isn't the place for us' or stuff like that.

So it needs to be a constant relationship between the community sort of thing because I mean, I know a lot of people who definitely think it's just a tick box sort of thing and that's not the intention, but it's almost if you were to say if the museum was like maybe your other half like your partner, there's certain actions your partner would do, that you may not think projects what they're trying to do, but that is the intention. And until you can communicate and actually ask, you're never going to know and you're just going to ever run with it, which is, I guess, listen to respond or listen to understand and actually more questions.

Catherine: I think that's really that's really helpful.

There is so many things you said then that are relevant to this wider discussion, one of them that I really pull out is this idea about us developing empathy and that needing to be institutional as well as individual as well as within communities, as well, it's a really powerful thought, because then it extends into what you were saying about effectively if I paraphrase you about constant dialogue, about listening to people and allowing those voices to be heard because that helps us reach an understanding and institutions might not always get it right. They might think that they're doing the right thing, but it doesn't always land well.

But actually, by listening to each other, we can go on this journey and think about what the solutions are, what would work and what works now. And actually, what was OK in the past might not be okay right now because things have moved as well. And I think that that idea about, again, just continually thinking about where our empathy is and actually what the needs are and what communities are saying - so being outward looking. Really good points. Thank you very much.

We'll come back to some of those, we'll hold that thought because I'm being a very bad Chair and we've got to keep an eye on the time. So I was going to move on to Siphon because you're also working in Bristol aren't you? And also part of the Uncomfortable Truths project and you've challenged Bristol Museums over some of the colonial items in the collection. So. I guess one of the questions kind of coming back to who's employed and who the workforce is, is what are museums missing out by not having more voices like yours in them?

And I guess what has been your experience from your engagement in museums so far?

Siphon: Yeah, it's a difficult question. I think, you know where I personally stand and kind of the things I've said in the work I have done is that I believe that unfortunately, whilst we still retain colonial artefacts in museums, true reconciliation can never really happen. But that isn't to say that in those smaller pockets that we can't encourage cultural sectors to employ younger people.

I think more than anything, by not employing younger people, you're just missing out on great art and you're missing out on great material. And unfortunately, like a few of us have said throughout on the panel is that when we go into these spaces, we don't see ourselves reflected. And if we do it, it might be, for example, a colonial life. You might go to a museum the only African thing there is a colonial artefact that doesn't inspire curiosity and, you know, just inspiration. It inspires resentment. So people are left feeling resentful towards this space and disconnected from the space.

Whereas if you have more black and brown people in the actual process of making the material, it's going to make like, young people are going to come in and feel that connection. If I went to a museum and I saw like, for example, Leah's curation, she mentioned about pre-colonial Zimbabwe, I would be like, 'wow, I've never seen something pre-colonial in a museum full stop, never mind African stories told by African people'. And it

might leave me with a feeling of, you know, I want to get into that, I want to get into research, curation and the rest of it.

But one thing I would definitely encourage alongside hiring young people is, and I can't stress it enough to have black and brown people in senior roles. Unfortunately, now we have a problem whereby most of the senior roles are highly predominantly white. So even when there is opportunities for young people, these people in senior roles, they don't have access to those communities. They don't have the right language to access those communities or just proximity in any shape or form. So those opportunities are getting missed, which is such a shame because there's a lot of people who won't even consider themselves in these spaces, but they, you know, they absolutely have every right to be there.

So having black and brown people in senior roles is going to mean those opportunities get to the right people. And in the end, you're just going to have great art, a great subject matter. You know, there's a reason why they don't want to give these artefacts back because they're amazing and having a different perspective.

Having a different, someone with a different cultural gaze, let's say, is just going to create something really beautiful. And it's a shame that we don't see more of that. Yeah, I hope that answers your question.

Catherine: I think that's a really great point, and thank you for raising it because I think it comes back to some of the conversation that I was having with Baz around the idea of retention. Where do you go after you've done this project? Where do you go after you've been in the young collective? Where do you go after you've done the project or the traineeship? How do we get more diverse people into leadership? And aside from like my personal story is like holding on, hanging on for a long time, I've been in sector for over 20 years, but I guess, I think it's just having the privilege to be able to like, hang on and have the security to kind of keep working in lower paid roles, potentially, but also the determination just to stay in your role.

So I'm really interested in what you think around encouraging young people in leadership in the sector as well to make this change that you want to see.

Sipho: Yeah. One thing that I think will really help is to be able to facilitate independent projects and independent research. I think sometimes we make the mistake of being like, you know, let's make a brief and then reach out to young people, see if they want to be involved.

I'm like, we should try to get young people involved in the brief process themselves. And that will give them a taste of what a senior role does rather than just someone that's just been outreached if that makes sense.

Catherine: And is that your experience? Is that your experience of kind of the way that is worked by collaborating and being part of Rising Arts and then engaging with Bristol Museums? Is that, is that kind of your experience? Because I think that's really great practise in terms of co-creation and co-design and like genuine ownership. And again, I

guess it goes back to that thing about, Baz was saying about consultation, it's more than that, it's about shaping it together.

And these things need to work in different ways to make sure that we have a proper stake in, in what we get involved in as well. And so we can, we can direct it and find those new possibilities that you wouldn't have thought of if that's not your lived experience.

Thank you so much, Siphon. I'm now going to ask the whole panel because we're a couple of minutes over, over time and I don't know who wants to go first, but, a question for you all is if you could go back and give your 15-year-old self some career or life advice, what would it be? And you can have a couple of minutes to think about it.

So Leah, would you mind going first, would that be OK?

Leah: Yeah, great insight from everyone there and the things that people have said I can, I can relate to so many things. But if I can go back in and give myself career advice, is that - read about your history. I think when you read about your history, when you get into the creative sector or the museum sector, you're able to actually tell your story, you're able to actually tell your own history. You're not, what I've found more than anything, when I'm looking at all the objects and collections, I find that there's objects that have not been curated, that they've been in the museum for years and is just sitting there not being curated.

I think when we are going into the spaces like the museums, we need to be prepared and we need to have the right information of our cultures and we need to, what A1 was saying, we need to stay away from the from the victim side of things and be able to actually go into these spaces and actually tell our stories.

And the other thing as well about diversity, what I've been looking at in the museum sector where I am, is that diversity is not just a black face. There's more to diversity, and I think, I want people that are in the top places of the museum to look at diversity as not just the black face. There's more to people of colour. It's not just their skin colour. They don't represent, we don't represent ourselves just because of skin colour. We've got more work to give to the museum sector.

So the advice that I'm giving myself is read, read, if you're a young person listening now, make sure you know your history. And if you want to get into the creative industry, you know your history and you can tell your story.

Catherine: That is music to my ears, Leah, thank you so much, I think that's such a great point and borne out by all of our panel members about how informed they are actually being tenacious, finding things out for yourself, researching your history if that's the thing that you're interested in, but that that kind of cultural engagement and pushing yourself to to be curious about the issues that are I guess both in our heritage and in our futures as well.

And you've also half answered the next question I'm going to ask in a minute about advice to museums. So we'll hold that thought to kind of respond on actually this point about what diversity is in museums and advice that we can give to the sector itself, because I think

there's this big word 'intersectionality' isn't there, about there being a lack of diversity across not just race, but also class and also gender and also all sorts of things. And actually, how we just need to think more broadly about making space for people that are not just us in the sector.

And so we'll come back to that point, but it's a really great one that you raise. But the advice of 15 year old being read your history is a brilliant one. And yes, I wish I could time machine myself back to tell myself that. Could we next go to Hawwa and can you tell us about what advice you would give you a 15-year-old self about careers or life?

Hawwa: I don't know what... I kind of need the advice now my career hasn't really started! I mean, I only graduated a year and a half ago so I wouldn't call it a career yet, it's more just me exploring what I'm doing in life. But I think if I gave myself my younger self any advice, it would be to just get used to being confident in challenging things that you see that are problematic, not necessarily even in museum spaces, but just in general.

So, for example, in education, I remember at uni a lot of times things would happen that I was really uncomfortable with and I would be too scared to speak out, mainly because Prevent exists, but also just in general because it was never a safe space.

But then I would always regret it afterwards. And I feel like now I don't do that because I don't want to feel that regret. So I just go ahead and I say what I want to say or I challenge what I want to challenge because at the end of the day, if you don't do that, then it's never going to change because everyone's going to feel scared. But the more people that speak out, then the more people will then support you.

Like I remember one time in uni, some crazy incident happened in a seminar and one girl spoke out and another girl spoke out and then another girl spoke out. And because of that, that a whole group of people started supporting each other and like a whole situation happened.

But the incident was reported and it finally got sorted. If that one person hadn't said anything, that it would have just continued and carried on. But yeah, I also think just in general in terms of confidence, just knowing that you deserve to be in a space, even if you don't see anyone else that looks similar to you or thinks the same as you because imposter syndrome is real in any setting.

But I think definitely in heritage and creative settings, it's even more so for people of colour because you're usually the only person of you in the room and you just have to understand that like, yes, you're the only person, but you have valuable perspectives and you deserve to be there just as much as anyone else.

But other than that, I need advice. So people, please give it to me!

Catherine: Well, you've been incredibly generous in sharing some really great points there as well.

This thing about speaking out and the confidence to speak out and this relationship with imposter syndrome. For me, I suppose I see the need for companionship and solidarity, actually, when you feel quite isolated and actually how often retention around new and

entry roles where you are underrepresented in the sector, you're more likely to go the course and finish the placement, if you've got somebody with you who is also going through this.

If you've got a network to support you, if you feel like there's a peer group that you can talk to. And so that being kind of one part about, you know, A. You have the perfect right to speak out, but also that sometimes it takes back up and actually if you say it then somebody else is probably feeling it as well and that moment of boldness.

But this thing about imposter syndrome as well, when you don't see people talking or looking or necessarily demonstrating thought the way that you are and actually how we can keep, I guess, celebrating using events like this to celebrate the very important contribution that all the panellists are making to the sector in making it a sustainable and equitable environment for looking at heritage and our history in the wonderful art that's in museums as well.

So points, I'm sure lots of people have got some experiences to come back to that. But I think finally, just the other comment to your point about needing advice, I think we all need advice. I think that's the joy of being together now and us building our networks is that we learn from each other. And for me, peer learning and bouncing things off peers and just going, I'm going through this thing now it's like, we're never sorted. And I don't believe that anyone is, it's often a facade and we need to break that down because that's the other thing that makes us feel bad because we're going to pick away at everything that's wrong, but from our perspective, somebody else is gliding over it because they feel entitled to be there. So what we can do to shore each other up and pass on that support and just, I guess, reflect back the successes as well. But thank you so much for those points, they're really, really great.

I'm going to hand over now to A1. A1, what advice would you give to your 15 year old self about careers or life?

A1: OK, so I was trying to figure that one out because I was just thinking, what am I even doing? I felt like I'd be a bit cryptic, like say stuff like 'don't limit yourself', 'be an adventurer, you're gonna have a...'

Can people hear me?

Catherine: Yep you're doing great.

A1: 'Be an adventurer, which means even on your adventures you're gonna have ups and downs' and 'If you remember that every poison has an antidote, then you can use those opportunities to reflect, so progress forward.'

And the best thing they can do is always start. Just start, you know, whatever it is that they want to do. They should question everything, allow themselves to have the best opportunity that could be stuff like just, so maybe you've just done a project with... just say Bristol Museum for now. And they've met, you know, I don't know the coordinator, the curator. They can actually ask these people more questions about whatever it is they want to do, from how do they continue or even maybe understand what is their worth is in order

to make sure they're actually being valued as, not just as... yeah being valued as someone who's actually a part of that work, which obviously will be more like being paid or being recognised. Stuff like that.

Oh, and there's no need to rush whatsoever.

Catherine: These are all philosophies for our time, thank you so much, great. You know, the one that really hit me is the 'don't rush', it'll come, but being on an adventure and there being ups and downs.

I think that kind of goes back to Hawwa, your point about feeling like an imposter, feeling like it's not all going right, actually, it will come right in the end. We just have to keep keep coming back to it and use your voice to try and get the help that you need or to address the issue that you're facing. But it's OK. Sometimes when it isn't going right. It can't all be roses all the time. And I think being realistic about the challenges that we face in any role is important as well, to be honest about that.

But thank you so much for all of those points. Baz I'm going to come to you now and ask... Oh go on.

A1: I mean, obviously we've thought about what we can say to a 15 year old, but also think it would also be, like if we think about it the other way in terms of what the organisation will actually offer for them and how they continue to work with them or advice or development sort of thing, you know? Yeah, because I think that's important, because sometimes we will be part of it and then that's it. Nothing else happens.

You know, and it's... I feel like it's not solely on one person because we don't always know the answers to a lot of things. But the more people there are, the easier it is sometimes. And obviously, if there's an organisation already doing it, that's obviously a pool of wealth that you definitely want to be attached to.

Catherine: It grows, doesn't it? It all comes together.

Thank you for that point and that kind of again in terms of what we need to be saying back to museums about things that we should be setting as expectations in terms of our dialogue and our opportunities for young people as well. Thank you, A1.

So Baz I was going to come to you and ask you to dial back to your 15-year-old self and think about what advice you would give about careers and life.

Baz: Absolutely. I mean, first of all, with regards to learning, I think we're always learning all the time. You know, I'm learning a significant amount from even my younger peers, Hawaa, I'm constantly learning from her all the time. But with regards to, you know, advice that I would give myself when I was a 15 year old, I wish I was a lot more braver. I wish I'd challenged things a lot more. And definitely I wish I demanded for my rights a lot more because I think when you're younger, you're quite shy or you don't, you don't say anything and you're not that confident.

And it's with regards to this question around, you know, should young people be in museums? Should people of colour be in museums. No, young people have to be in

museums and people of colour have to be in museums. And the reason being is because the majority of cultural heritage centres within the U.K., they're funded by the taxpayer. We are all taxpayers, the majority of us are. You know, we have that right to have access to cultural heritage sectors.

And this shouldn't be a monopoly by essentially middle class white people. So, you know, we need to start making those demands. And Euella said in the chat as well, I think, you know, there is a civic duty that some people do need to step aside so they can give opportunities to people of colour or to young people.

Catherine: Great advice and great points as well, I think the idea that this is our shared heritage and that we all have a right to access it is one that, you know, it's that that thing about cultural entitlement and cultural capital, which we haven't laid into today because we've been talking quite specifically about the workforce, but they are really integrally linked aren't they and it would be interesting to see whether, again, there are any questions from our participants today about that.

And before we wrap up this section Sipho, I wondered if you had any advice for your 15-year-old self as well around careers or life?

Sipho: Um yeah, mine's quite simple. I think I would just tell myself to kind of challenge narratives. I've made of myself, you know, when I was younger, I always have this thing of like, 'I hate learning, I hate education' this, that and the third.

And in hindsight, it was like, no I didn't hate learning or education, I just hated the education system, and I didn't find that stimulating. And you know, I would complain at school the whole day and I'd go home and watch documentaries back to back.

So clearly, you know, I did like to learn and the same way I had a narrative, you know, I don't... I'm not creative, I thought I wasn't a creative person. I was raised in a small town, it's not like Bristol where there's art everywhere, agencies like Rising Arts Agency that encourage young people to get into it, there just wasn't that.

So I just from that assumed I'm not a creative person. Although I was doing girlfriend's nails on the weekends all the time and doing other creative stuff at home, just doing little DIY things just out of boredom. And especially with nail art, for example, I just didn't consider that to be an art and because it's not widely accepted as an art, whereas now I make a case to call myself and nail artist, not just a nail tech, I'm both of those things, but I really emphasise the artist side because that's what I'm doing. I'm making art and the women I see who are also nail artists, what they're doing is real art. So, yeah, challenging my narratives, those kind of limiting narratives and also giving myself the authority to create my own definitions.

I think that's how I would say that in a nutshell.

Catherine: Great point. Really great point. And I think this thing about who says what is creative and what isn't and who says what you do is or isn't and where do these limitations come from is a massive, massive question.

Again, we probably won't, we won't break into now. But again, the idea of more diverse artists, more diverse creatives, more diverse workforce, more diverse learning programmes, all coming together to challenge some of the, I guess, the narratives that have limited us in fulfilling our potentials and being proud of who we are, quite frankly as well.

It's wonderful to hear about your nail art and I wish you weren't so far away. I'd like to come and sample the services. But anyway, so I've just got one more question, and I think we need to move to taking questions from the floor as it were.

But I just wondered whether any of you, probably we could only have a couple of contributions on this point. But this, coming back to this idea about what advice do we need to give to museums right now about the makeup of their workforces and appealing to more diverse and young candidates?

And I think that is, reflections on 'does vocational always work? What type of roles are good? What have personal people's experiences been? And a lot of what you've said so far and actually the advice that you've been giving to your 15 year old selves has spoken to that.

But I just wondered if one or two people wanted to chip in and respond to the advice that we could give to museums about their workforces right now. Baz, you look like you're going to speak?

Leah: I think I'm getting this advice from my experience that I've had with Glasgow Museums and I think more than anything, represent ethnic minorities in the collections. And again I'll go back to what Siphon said, It's not really about what, like colonial objects represent young people, there is things that can represent young people actually of colour that is not to do with anything colonial or slavery. And I think represent more young people. Representation is my advice to the museum sector.

Catherine: That's a brilliant one. Thank you. So representation of the positive stories that we want to be telling that needs to be fundamentally in the fabric of our museums, isn't it? It's a great point. Thank you and thank you so much, Leah. Does anybody else want to speak to that point before we move on to questions from our audience?

A1: It's a really tricky question, but the way I see it, I feel like there needs to be a real understanding of what these words mean, as in diversity, quality, equity, because they seem more like, I don't know, trendy words or something. And not many people actually understand the effects it can have, and they just see it more as 'we need to do it'.

But I say they don't understand like, you know, the implications it really has, but also us thinking about maybe language. Language and space, so how can how can you diversify your workforce if the language and space kind of just resonates of just, I guess, old white people or, yeah, stuff like that, whereas you need space that can actually feel like it can hold young people or people of minority backgrounds or just any sort of diverse... a space that can hold diverse backgrounds.

Catherine: I think it's a great point, A1, thank you. And it's more than just conceptual space as well and some of the work I've done in the past, we've got extra work to do because of the beauty and the magnificence of some of the buildings that we work in.

You know, when that big white buildings with big colonial symbols stuck on the outside of them, they broadcast particular messages, and that was deliberate in a historical context. But actually there's more work to do to even overcome that and stepping in the door, let alone what we're putting on display, let alone who's working there.

So it's a really multilayered approach. Thank you for making that point. And does anybody finally want to add in, Baz were you going to say something?

Baz: Yes for me I think, the advice I'd give to the museum and cultural heritage sector is please don't make diversity tokenistic, in the sense what ends up happening is when we talk about diversity, or there's a diversity initiative to employ people of colour or young people. But again, they're temporary jobs, they're quite precarious or they're very low paid. If we want to talk about diversity, please mean it - diversity has to be right from the top all the way from the management, right, the way down to the bottom.

And just one more thing for me. I think a diverse workforce actually adds value to a museum, and the analogy that I always use is comparing a pond to a stream. With regards to a pond, it's just a still body of water. And if your workforce is like a still body of water, it becomes stagnant very, very quickly. Whereas if you look at a stream, it's it's always transient. It's always moving, it's always refreshing. You know, you can generate new ideas and that's what workforces need to be like.

And that's what they need to represent and currently at this moment in time. What I'm seeing is in quite a lot of museums, there's quite a lot of ponds in the workforce, they're just really stagnant.

Catherine: That is just the best analogy I've heard for a long time, Baz, thank you for that. And you know, the other thing that as as you were saying that, the young people that we have on the panel today are exactly the opposite of that, they are the stream, they are refreshing, they are vibrant, they are constantly on the move.

And you just think about the range of different things that you're doing in your work, in your areas of interest, in your areas of thought. And it's just incredible. So I just, I'm going to hand over to Bonnie now, but thank you to everybody on the panel so far, for your contributions. I haven't been able to keep an eye on the chat because I've been listening and learning frantically as we've been having a conversation, but I'm going to hand over to Bonnie, who's going to take any questions that have come through the chat.

Bonnie Smith (Co-Host)

Campaign & Communications Manager, CCSkills:

Thank you very much. Hi, everyone. We've got quite a few questions. We are a little bit limited on time, so we might only get through a few of these. But what we'll do is invite the panellists to take a look at these questions and we can respond on email after the event, on any that we don't get to and also to anything that's been brought up in the chat as well because I know that's been very busy.

So first question that we would like to ask is from Kevina Khan who has asked, 'I wonder how panellists would advise young people and artists of colour to ensure that they are properly compensated for the value that they bring to the work to museums and not continually offer their insight and work for little or no money. How do you balance having your voice heard with being exploited? And so I don't know if there's anyone in particular who would be interested in answering that from the panel? Hawwa.

Hawwa: Yeah, so I work in a museum setting as a Cultural and Learning Participation Officer Apprentice, but I also work as a freelance artist and photographer as like a different job. And one thing that I've definitely learnt over the last few years of working as an artist is just that you have to say no. And I know, like it's very simple advice. But I guess when I was younger, when I was still learning as a freelance artist, that was so hard to do because like, like the question says, you really want to have your voice heard, you want those opportunities.

But organisations or individuals or whoever that you're working with know that and they're going to use that against you almost if they want your work, but they don't want to pay you, they're then just going to make sure that that idea of exposure that they really want you to have seems so appealing that you're willing to get paid less or get paid nothing at all and do free work. And all I've done is just get used to saying no and just being strict in how I charge people or how I approach a conversation and also just talking to people.

Making friends in the industry who have been doing it for longer really, really helps, because then they can provide mentoring and support and advice and just knowing how to navigate those conversations without feeling as though it's like a losing battle. Because definitely, when I was first starting out, it felt like a losing battle because I would say no, and then I'd regret it because I was not getting the jobs because I was saying no to free work and then I was getting no portfolio work. And then it was just sort of like I had nothing going. So it is definitely a balance.

I think asking for advice and just connecting with people who have been doing it for longer, who know how to do it, who have had that experience really, really helps.

Bonnie: Thank you very much. Yeah, understanding and getting to grips with your own balance and how you manage that. Thank you. I know A1 has put his hand up so we'll move to A1.

A1: So I basically agree with you Hawaa. But I think, what I want to add is, depending on the young person or person of colour, I think they need to understand what their reality is. So what I mean by that is, let's say it was free, if you can, if you are able to negotiate with them, which is either negotiate pay or say to them, like, what's in it for me, sort of thing, would I still be able to continuously talk to you? Will I be able to have contacts with people outside, third parties and stuff like that?

Because sometimes you can get paid, but it leads nowhere because you don't have those connections and sometimes the other way around. But it depends, I would say, on your reality as well. So if you are able to understand your reality, you're going to know exactly what you need.

And it might be money or it might be more than that. It depends, are you trying to progress further. And that does not mean you don't need money to progress further, just stating the different options that that person might have.

I would definitely say that, I would definitely advise them that they have every right to ask for more money. Say no. Or, I guess, kind of issue a complaint around it sort of thing. It doesn't have to stop there, you know?

Yeah, I think that's my advice anyway.

Bonnie: Thank you A1, do any other panellists want to respond to that question at all?

Baz: For me, the issue is morally and ethically, I just think it's wrong that cultural and heritage sectors are paid such low wages, are paying such low wages to these artists. I mean, for me, I know it's a very difficult situation, but I would say, call it out. You know, if museums are, you know, carrying out these exploitative practises or paying those really, really low wages, call it out because, you know, in this day and age it is completely unacceptable for museums to even negotiate at very low wages.

Whilst I do fully understand what some of the going rates are for artist rates, because I work with the Arts Council and Arts Council has the guidance. But I do know of some museums that still carry out those exploitative practises, and it's absolutely wrong.

Bonnie: Thank you, Baz, and just quickly, before we move onto any other further questions, does anyone else want to respond to that question? OK, thank you. So just another question from our attendees from Sana Ikram, 'the reason why traineeships and apprenticeships haven't worked to provide alternative career routes into the sector is because there is no exit plan to support that progression after they finish their contract. What can we do better?' Baz, you're still on screen...

Baz: That is actually a really good question. One of the things you can do is, the apprenticeship that you're offering, at what level are you offering the apprenticeship at? So there's level one, level two, level three. We deliberately decided to purposefully, we decided to offer a level three qualification, the reason why we offered a level three qualification, is it gives you access to other careers.

So for example, with the level three qualification, you can go straight on to university with a level two, you can go straight on to college. So we decided to offer a Level three qualification. I agree with Sana with regards to yes there needs to be an exit plan. And again, that's having a conversation with the apprentices and having a look at their work plan, or what stage they are at within the apprenticeship and then internally looking at applying for more funding to keep that apprentice on.

For me I always say where there's a will, there's a way. And, you know, I'm really hoping that we do keep our apprentices on and that all depends on if Hawwa wants to stay with us. Thanks Baz, and does anyone else want to respond to that question at all?

Catherine: Siphos got her hand up.

Sipho: Yeah, I just wanted to say I thought I'd just quickly bring in Rising Arts to this, because I think the framework of how Rising works is just like, incredible. I could speak about Rising all day, how amazing I think it is.

I think every section of the UK needs a Rising Arts Agency. I've been there with them for maybe like six months, since that time I've done a podcast for this cultural heritage thing, I've, here I am on this panel. I hosted another event. I got my first commission for nail art that was documenting an event.

I've done so much within that time from being a part of a community that's a mix of all different types of marginalised people. Actually, it is black and brown people, as well as LGBT, people with disabilities. So it's a great hub in that, one it's great for collaboration - if I ever need someone to help me with this, that and the third, if I want to collaborate with someone, I've got a network here of loads of artists from all different kinds of backgrounds and mediums there.

But the thing that's good about Rising, it's almost like a consultation based thing as well. So other organisations and the sectors will come to Rising and say, here's a job for X, Y, Z, can you put it out to your people? So it just gives us so many opportunities and in that kind of way, I think that it would be good to follow that framework in that., being a cultural institution where other people, other institutions can come to you and say 'listen, we need someone that can do researching, we need help with this art gallery, we'd love to take on a young person, so that it can come straight to the source in that way. And yeah, see, Rising is amazing.

Catherine: Sounds awesome Sipho, thank you. I was just going to leap in and add to what you're saying because you actually made loads of really brilliant points. This this thing about networks that actually, if we do right by trainees and new roles within our organisation, entry level roles, we need to be connecting them. That's what a good line manager ensures and Baz, you're doing this with Hawwa. Connecting up, making sure that the relationships are built so that they have options and choices and advice.

There's the thing about skills, finding the right entry level processes, schemes to make sure that the skills are transferable and usable and work across the different options that might be available in the sector, but also beyond it in areas of interest to the individuals.

I think there's something strategic about what organisations need to be doing when they're selecting apprenticeships or traineeships or whatever scheme they're going to go for. It's like, is it going to be sustainable? Is this really business crucial or are you just doing it because it's a great way to get a young person in? Sometimes that's all we can do. But actually, for there to be progression, there's got to be somewhere to go and so, is there another role that will be available afterwards?

Or could this role be extended as Baz was talking about with Hawwa as well? And then the final thing I would say is like, the truth is, it's a competitive sector, isn't it? And so we need to be making sure that we're supporting talent, but being realistic about how we are growing our sector as well so that there are the right chances for the as wide a range of

people as possible. So they're my points, but I've stolen them from everything that the past panellists have said! A1, you go.

A1: Yeah I wanted to add onto what Siphosaid, and I... what did I want to say. So, I think I want to add the people who are doing an apprenticeship and stuff like that where it seems like there's no progression afterwards. I guess, I like to say it like this, you're not second best so, you know, you can ask your company more about what is going on.

And I have actually done this where I wasn't like doing an apprenticeship or something, but as part of the Young Collective I did actually ask the museum like, what are you trying to do? What does this mean to you and stuff like that, like, really make sure that this isn't just a tick box thing sort of thing. And ask like, where's it going to go and how can like, how can I progress or what opportunities can I have after this sort of thing? Like, I actually did ask those questions.

One of the things that came to mind for me in particular when I was with them, was actually thinking about what tools they offer outside of the contracts or apprenticeship, whatever it is. And what I mean by that is, so the layout might be, you have to be with them four days a week or something, three days a week or five days a week. One of the things that I've never really seen is, you know what? You can have free membership to something like a FutureLearn or something, which offers many different things in there for like, I guess, extra courses or something. And maybe they could provide whatever you need to do additional stuff outside of it to add more value to what you have, as well as the apprenticeship or where you're working and etc. so forth.

And yeah, I never see that. And yeah, that's one of the things I was talking to someone else about. I hadn't actually vocalised it completely, but I've always thought to myself like, OK, we're doing this but then like, somehow you're asking us these questions and we only know part of it. And how do we progress forward when maybe we're not getting paid enough or we don't see ourselves going any further? And we, if we do do it, we're using our resources, whereas we could actually be like, look, could you not add us on to this or whatever you know, we'll not feel too limited and stuff.

Catherine: I think it's is a great point. It's this idea about constant learning and self-development, professional development opportunities and great advice built into the way that we are supporting entry level roles in the sector, is also critical to the success and sustainability of these roles. Thank you for that point, A1. And there are some examples out there actually of that sort of practise, It probably doesn't happen enough, and it probably doesn't happen in a way that's focussed enough as well.

And Bonnie, how are we doing for time? Because I'm sure we must be getting to the end of our time?

Bonnie: I think we'll wrap up now, but we will respond to any questions on emails and thank to everyone that has submitted. But yes, Catherine, thank you, if you would like to close, that would be great.

Catherine: I will, I will close. Well. I think like, for once she's lost for words. I'm just going to say, wow! I could sit and listen to the wise words and just brilliant insights and perspectives from all of our panel members forever.

I've learnt so much, and it's really humbling and joyful actually to hear about the wisdom that you're gaining from what you're doing, but also the dynamism and the challenge that you're bringing to the work that you're doing as well.

And it's inspiring. So I want to say huge thank you to Leah, Hawwa, Baz, A1, Siphon. Thank you to Jane and to Rising Arts and CCSkills for getting us started today. And a huge thank you to everybody that's joined us today for your thoughtful questions.

I'm sorry that we talked for so long that we didn't get to them, but we will, as Bonnie said, come back to them and send some responses back to those questions. But thank you to everyone that's come together. I hope it's not been one of those occasions where we're preaching to the converted, but actually, that we are thinking about how we can support each other and share our perspectives and learn from each other to continue to address these challenges that seem to go on and on. But I hope that there's this real optimism in the futures of the sector, of our workforce and of our brilliant panellists.

So huge thanks to everybody for taking part tonight and thank you from me. Thank you.