

Press Release 23rd July 2020

Self employed to come together in Solidarity

Artists' Union England creates a Solidarity Fund to aid members in hardship caused by the covid-19 crisis online from July 2020.

Under the current Government Self Employment Scheme (SEISS), many people have missed out on receiving any kind of support. Self employed artists have fallen through the gaps in the system because they supplement their work in the arts with PAYE jobs.

Unions across the country are acting now to address the extreme situation brought on by covid-19, that will affect our working conditions for years to come. We expect to see a large reduction in public facing work as we move forward. This will hurt those working in the creative sector, who already operate in a highly competitive environment. Earnings are notoriously low, and working conditions are often precarious.

The Livelihoods of Visual Artists study (2018) reported artists earning an annual average income of £16,000; and that 2/3 of artists make less than £5,000 per year from their creative practice.

According to AUE (2016 survey) 70% of their membership are female, with nearly half acting as carers. They will have been disproportionately affected by the additional social care responsibilities during lockdown, thus forcing some of our most vulnerable into hardship.

AUE member Vanessa Maurice Williams states "AUE's Solidarity Fund is a great way to help our members at such an unprecedented time. So many people have been financially affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and by having this fund AUE can support our members, however small."



Artists' Union England
artistsunionengland.org.uk

“I am so excited to be involved with the setting up of the Solidarity Fund. Watching and hearing the news constantly I felt powerless at being able to help others in our current situation. For me, art is so important and the fear that our whole culture sector is slipping away due to the coronavirus pandemic is just horrifying. I hope by setting this up AUE can continue to help our members well into the future and keep art very much alive.”

Artists’ Union England has listened to our hard working members across the country. In response, the Solidarity Fund will give easy access to small funding pots for members in hardship.

Support the Solidarity Fund.

Donations are welcome and can be paid directly to our [AUE Solidarity Fund](#) or here [Donate](#)

NOTES for readers: Artists’ Union England is the collective voice of artists living and working in England. Our members work in disciplines including: Visual Art, Applied Arts, Socially Engaged Art, Moving Image, Sound and Performance. Launched May 1st 2014, AUE achieved Trade Union Certification 2016 and is an affiliate member of Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the General Federation of Trade Unions (GFTU).

Further details: www.artistsunionengland.org.uk

Contact: solidarityfund@artistsunionengland.org.uk

Trustees:

Katriona Beales

Theresa Easton

Martin Gollan

Joanne Howell

Vanessa Maurice-Williams