

TOP TEN TIPS FOR YOUNG ARTISTS

There are no set rules or career paths in the arts, but that doesn't mean that there isn't anything you can do to improve your chances of achieving your dream career.

These tips are relevant across many creative fields including music, film, design, visual art, dance and theatre.

1. Engage with the industry

If there's something to read, watch, listen to, see or otherwise participate in and it's got something to do with your chosen field, do it!

2. Find a mentor/s

It can be useful to have a mentor who has been there, done that. The relationship you have with your mentor can be formal or informal, long-term or short-term, face-to-face or remote eg. via email. What matters is that your mentor is someone with professional and personal integrity, who is happy to share their experience and doesn't see you as competition.

3. Be professional

Whether you like it or not, being an artist is like being a small business. Once you're a rock star you can probably get away with turning up late and behaving badly, but while you're on the way you need to be as professional as possible. If you get an opportunity, don't blow it by thinking it's cool to be a slacker. In the long term, getting your head around things like tax, marketing and managing a small business can save you time, money and hassle.

4. Persistence ... determination ... motivation

Whatever you want to call it, you need it. No-one ever got their record listened to / their painting viewed / the lead in that play by sitting around wishing it would happen. Know what you want to achieve and get on with it.

5. Network

It's true; who you know is just as important as what you know. How many job ads have you seen in the papers that say 'Major Label seeking New Artists for Recording Deal'? None, right? You need to make sure people know who you are, what you can do and what you want to achieve. If the idea of networking fills you with dread, try this technique – don't hammer a new contact with info about you, instead, focus the conversation on them. Ask lots of questions about what they do and their interests. If it seems natural, ask them if it's okay for you to have their contact details. If it seems appropriate, follow up a week or so later with a 'nice chatting to you the other week, thought you might be interested in checking out my tunes' phone call or email. Networking is a great way to build a support base of people who know and respect you and believe in what you're trying to do.

6. Keep learning

Did you know that makeup artists who also have hairdressing skills get more work? Education doesn't finish when you leave school / college / uni. Actively seek out new learning experiences and keep your mind open to new ideas. What are some complimentary skills you could use in your toolbox?

7. Who's great? YOU ARE!

If you don't believe in yourself, how are you going to convince other people to believe in you? Just before that make or break audition / meeting / opening / speech, listen to a song that will pump you up and make you believe in yourself. One of those REALLY corny songs, y'know?

8. Play nice

People like folk who are easy to get along with. If you had to decide between a really talented artist who is great to work with and an equally talented artist who is difficult to work with, who would you choose? Lose the 'attitude' and don't burn your bridges. Having good relationships is important. You never know which of those annoying people in your drama class is going to end up as a famous festival director! Be nice to people on your way up, because on your way down, you're going to need their help.

9. Refine your craft

Work on getting better at what you do. Sure, self-belief and 'who you know' can get your foot in the door but if you can't back that up with talent and an interest in continual improvement you'll just annoy people.

10. Get experience

The creative industries are ripe with opportunities to gain experience - volunteering, student placements, work experience, extra-curricular activities, and DIY are all great ways to develop your skills, meet and impress industry folk and add to your CV. You won't get 'discovered' by hoping, wishing and dreaming but you WILL get 'discovered' by getting out there and making stuff happen. Put on a gig, organise an exhibition, start an art show review blog. Activity creates opportunity. Don't be scared about making mistakes – everyone does – just see the things that went wrong as feedback / advice / tips about the right way to do things in future!

*If you require any more information regarding this fact sheet please contact Youth Arts Queensland
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