

Jennifer Tuckett, 'Why Do More Women Study the Arts but Less Women Work in the Arts?' In: Huffington Post, 8 March 2016 http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/jennifer-tuckett/women-in-the-arts_b_9404202.html

The figures for women studying the arts versus women working in the arts, particularly in creative roles, are shocking. Lucy Kerbel as part of Tonic Theatre's recent Advance research found that, in 2013, 59% of graduates from eight of the leading postgraduate directing programmes in the UK were women but compared that with Elizabeth Freestone's research which found, of the top ten subsidised theatres in the UK, only 24% of directors working in those theatres were women.

The situation is similar nationwide, for example at the University of the Arts London, where I am the Course Leader for the new MA Dramatic Writing at Drama Centre London at Central Saint Martins, over 70% of students are women but only around 30% of professional roles in many of the creative industries (including art, writing, directing, and acting, based on UAL, Tonic Theatre and British Theatre Consortium research) are occupied by women.

Recently, it seemed to me that the reasons for why this is occurring haven't really been investigated yet. Why are so many women studying arts courses but not making the transition to working in the arts? Are they giving up, and, if so, why?

The result of these ponderings has been to create University Women in the Arts. This new scheme will run from April 2016 to April 2017, offering a year of mentoring for selected female students studying arts subjects at Universities across the UK, and public events and advice which will be open to all.

The mentors who have agreed to give up their time are 14 women who we believe have led the way in the arts in the UK. They are, in no particular order:

- Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director of the Royal Court Theatre
- Amanda Foreman, historian, columnist and presenter including of the recent BBC series The Ascent of Women
- Jude Kelly, Artistic Director of the Southbank Centre and founder of the WOW Festivals
- Lucy Kerbel, founder and Director of Tonic Theatre
- Joanna Prior, Managing Director of Penguin General Books, President of the Publishers Association and Chair of the Board of the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction

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- Tamara Rojo, Artistic Director of the English National Ballet
- Charlotte Higgins, Chief Culture Writer at The Guardian
- Elizabeth Freestone, Artistic Director of Pentabus Theatre
- Tanya Seghatchian, film producer of films including the Harry Potter series and My Summer of Love and former Head of the Film Fund at the UK Film Council
- Kate Bryan, former Director of Art16, presenter, art historian and winner of the Women of the Future Arts and Culture Award
- Kate Rowland, founder of BBC Writersroom, the BBC's new writing department, and the former Creative Director of New Writing at the BBC, Head of BBC Radio Drama and Commissioner of Radio 3's The Wire
- Jennifer Tuckett, Course Leader of the new MA Dramatic Writing at Drama Centre London at Central Saint Martins and founder of the UK's first formally industry partnered MA in Playwriting, and Director of Writers at Work Productions, which manages London Writers Week and The Student Guide to Writing amongst other initiatives.
- Anne Edyvean, Head of BBC Writersroom
- Pinky Lilani, founder of the Women of the Future Programme

The partners on the project are Writers at Work Productions (my company, which is dedicated to exploring new ways of supporting writers and improving arts education), the Women of the Future Programme (who run the important Women of the Future Awards for women under the age of 35, the Ambassadors Programme and the Asian Women of Achievement Awards), the new MA Dramatic Writing at Drama Centre London at Central Saint Martins (which I also run and the course is involved so my students can attend the public events but also help support these events which I hope will be a great extra experience for them, a chance to meet the mentors and an opportunity to think about this subject matter) and the project is being run in association with Tonic Theatre, who have led the way in terms of gender equality in the UK recently, including helping support initiatives such as the commitment to 50/50 gender equality recently announced by the National Theatre.

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More information is available from: <http://universitywomeninthearts.com/>