

“You should never consider your portfolio finished. You should always be dissatisfied with it. Your book requires endless work and few things are more important. And no matter how successful you become, this never changes. That’s really the only thing I’ve learned about portfolios

Adrian Shaughnessy, graphic designer & writer, quoted in Flaunt. See

Ad School 2.0 is open

As London's School of Communication Arts relaunches this September, it hopes to offer its students a taste of the new advertising landscape. There's still time to apply.

Between 1985 and 1995 the School of Communication Arts in London offered unrivalled preparation for entering the advertising industry. Set to reopen later this year, the School is now in the middle of looking for its first intake of students in 15 years. While the ad industry itself has changed enormously within that time, Marc Lewis, dean of the second coming of the college, hopes that he and his 50 prospective students – plus a host of industry mentors – can bring the model for the original institution into the 21st century.

Back in 2000, CR reported on the untimely death of John Gillard, the former principal of the School which had to close in 1995 due to his failing health and a lack of funding. At the time, former student and by then influential industry figure Graham Fink recalled that Gillard “was an unbelievable teacher, very unorthodox... he got the best out of everybody. This country needs thousands of John Gillards.”

Ten years on and Fink looks set to further honour his former teacher's memory – he's involved in the relaunch of the school, on course for its first academic year in September. Lewis, who was also under Gillard's tutelage in the early 90s, talked to CR about his reasons for relaunching the celebrated school, a venture that he believes will combine the best aspects of Gillard's teachings with an approach that is even more inclusive and decidedly more digital. If you're keen to take on a career in advertising, and gain invaluable industry experience along the way, applying to the School of Communication Arts 2.0 could be a great way to take your first step.

Lewis has been hard at work bringing changes to the way the School will work, namely in ensuring that its many scholarships will attract more people from a diverse range of backgrounds. “I got a scholarship to the School through The Guardian,” recalls Lewis, “but it was clearly a vehicle for white, middle class people – and our industry is full of them. Scholarships should promote diversity and I want to fix that.”



Left: Marc Lewis interviews applicants for the new SCA in the school lecture hall: a church in Vauxhall

Creativity, too, has always required diversity." Lewis' plans include an improved scholarship system whereby 15 of the 50 places for students (or 'cohorts' as they're called at the new SCA) will be able to benefit from a full bursary. This is, he says, in order that the college remains an "elite ad school" but one that fundamentally "promotes fairness and equality".

The School as working studio

Lewis also recognises the importance of forging stronger links with the ad industry. In a bid to counter the woes of both students and agencies, who often bemoan the lack of 'real world' education opportunities at college, Lewis hopes to have his intake surrounded by industry figures throughout their education. These on-hand professionals will also help to generate the School's curriculum through a Curriculum Wiki repository, where they're required to contribute knowledge, skills and advice. The School itself will also look more like a working agency, with students getting stuck into real briefs within a proper studio environment. The evening lectures, of which there are set to be two a week, are also planned to take place in a church in Vauxhall. It's an unusual premise, but perhaps it's just what creative learning in the UK needs.

The structure of the courses on offer at the new-look SCA will be intense, with hours expected to be 8am-6pm, Monday to Friday, and with the focus, naturally, on copywriting and art direction strands. "John wanted to create the antithesis of a university way of learning," says Lewis of Gillard's original vision. "Universities teach you about the 'how'; we think it's more important to learn the 'why' so that the students have more empathy when they express any idea."

The course will provide students with a Diploma in Communication Arts qualification, accredited by the University of the Arts London Awarding Body, and also a guaranteed six-month work placement at the end of the academic year. During the 12 months there's also an opportunity to compete for £10,000 in 'seed funding', which is awarded to the ten students in the year who come up with the most impressive start-up idea. These ten then go down the 'ideapreneur pathway', where they will develop their business idea whilst following the curriculum.

So who does Lewis want to see applying for the first year? "We'd like applicants to be digital-savvy, to know how to use pixels efficiently," he says. "Then it's about their ideas in their application but also what potential they have to apply them." If that sounds like something you can match, check out the website, schoolcommunicationarts.com, to find out how to apply.

Details on the School of Communication Arts' courses, fees and scholarships at schoolcommunicationarts.com

Shows etc.

Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen June 19-June 26 rgu.ac.uk/degreeshow	June 18-June 24 dmu.ac.uk/artanddesign	University of Derby June 5-June 12 derby.ac.uk/degreeshow	University of London June 5-June 12 ntu.ac.uk/degreeshow
Coleg Menai, Bangor June 4-June 16 menai.ac.uk	The Arts University College, Bournemouth June 24-July 1 aucb.ac.uk	Duncan of Jordanstone College, Dundee May 22-May 30 dundee.ac.uk/degreeshow2010	Royal College of Art May 28-June 12 rca.ac.uk
Brighton University June 5-June 10 brighton.ac.uk	Bucks New University June 11-June 17 bucks.ac.uk	Edinburgh College of Art June 12-June 20 eca.ac.uk	Sheffield Hallam University May 29-June 12 shu.ac.uk
Camberwell College of Arts June 22-June 26 camberwell.arts.ac.uk	Cardiff School of Art and Design June 5-June 11 csad.uwic.ac.uk	Hereford College of Arts June 19-June 23 hca.ac.uk	University of East London June 19-June 23 uwe.ac.uk/show2010
Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design June 15-July 24 csm.arts.ac.uk	Chelsea College of Art and Design June 19-June 26 chelsea.arts.ac.uk	Kingston University June 5-June 11 kingston.ac.uk/degreeshow	Wimbledon College of Art June 18-June 23 wimbledon.ac.uk
University of Cumbria June 2-June 11 cumbria.ac.uk/lookatme	De Monfort University June 18-June 24 dmu.ac.uk/degreeshow	Lancaster University June 16-June 23 peterscottgallery.com	D&AD NINE June 24-June 26 Old Truman Brewery, Shoreditch dandad.com
		Leeds College of Art and Design June 19-June 24 leeds-art.ac.uk	Free Range June 4-June 12 Old Truman Brewery, Shoreditch free-range.com
		London College of Communication 19 May-July 22 lcc.arts.ac.uk	Futurising June 29-July 1 Nicholls Building, London futurising.com
		Newcastle University May 29-June 12 newcastledegree.show.co.uk	New Design July 1-4 & 8 Business School, Islington newdesign.com
		Nottingham Trent June 18-June 24 ntu.ac.uk/degreeshow	