



5. *Creativity: A Tool For Change*

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Guest Editor



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COMMON SENSE

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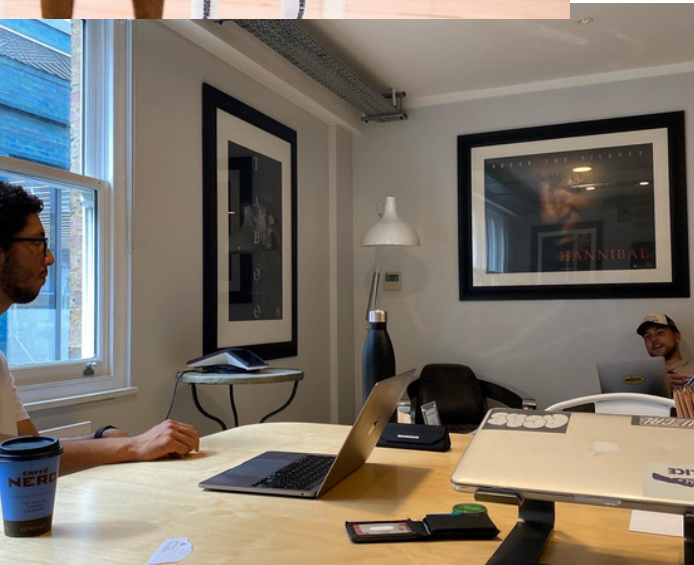
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GUEST
EDITOR'S
NOTE
@FLEURBOYA



FLEUR BOYA

Credits @mikeomoniyics

The dictionary defines creativity as the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness – but it's so much more than that. Creativity is the driving force that allows ordinary people to bring something powerful to life for a greater purpose. Creativity is a tool to convey a message, a tool for change.

As an oil painter, I use portraiture to achieve a range of things – to tell stories, raise awareness, fight injustice, engage in activism and promote the rights of the oppressed. This and many other messages can be amplified through several other creative means.

Photography immortalises special moments, fashion conveys a message through style, poetry uses the power of words to tug on our heartstrings and paintings help us to reimagine the world in new ways. Creativity has no floor or ceiling, no limitations or rules, no beginning and certainly no end. It has no look or appearance – all it has is a message.

So knowing that creativity has the power to provoke our thoughts and feelings – why not use it as a tool to drive change? Why not dig deep and harness control of our imagination to achieve a greater goal? Justice, peace, education, awareness, healing.

The aim of this month's issue is to spotlight incredible people from all parts of the creative spectrum and inspire you to harness your own creativity and use it as a much-needed weapon of change.

Here's The Detail.



Michael Angelo's painting on top of the Palace of Versailles
adrianna geo

Art is a form of therapy

Oriana Jemide | Artist founder of the Medela school



Oriana Jemide is a multidisciplinary creative working within visual arts and creative writing. Her work focuses on developing sensory architectural and landscape sets through combining multiple mediums including painting, sculpture, photography and sound.



How are you using art as a tool for change?

This is always a tricky question to answer. It's like when I get asked to summarise what I do in one sentence. There are a few ways I use art as a tool for change, and I always want to talk about them. I think I will start with my work as an artist, moving through the art world with my practice which is one piece, and then the organisations I'm building to create what I consider to be more tangible change is what I will land with.

As a Black female artist of Nigerian heritage who actually grew up in Nigeria, I feel there is an expectation of the sort of artist I am to be, especially in terms of what I create. My decision to go against the grain is a tool for change. Most Nigerian artists and generally Black artists, at least the ones who have commercial success, are often portrait artists whose work has a very African identity or sociopolitical element. Industry experts have often told me there is no market for Black landscape artists and I will sell more if I paint portraits.

I want my work to serve as a form of healing, and to me, there is nothing more healing than the beauty of our surroundings and our relationship with them

Although I have painted portraits in the past, I consider myself more of a landscape and textile painter. That is the work that feels more meaningful to make. I want my work to serve as a form of healing, and to me, there is nothing more healing than the beauty of our surroundings and our relationship with them. I see my choice to stick to the style of work I make as a way of changing the narrative around Black art and what is considered black art worthy of recognition and success. I see it as carving out a path for other Black artists and creatives to do original and supported work.

Art goes beyond just pictures and objects that people like to look at and touch but can create more meaning in their lives. My company, "The Medela school," is a visual arts platform that provides educational and well-being support through art classes and workshops. At its core, the Medela School focuses on the intersection of creativity, community, education, and well-being, with visual art being its conduit. For me, there is this big piece on the tangible and measurable impact art has on people's everyday lives as a way to change the narrative of its value.

What is The Medela School? How is this initiative intertwined with your creativity?

We describe ourselves as "the community where everyone is an artist." We are passionate about creating greater accessibility to visual arts to promote joy and learning for every individual who encounters our work.

We see ourselves as building an ecosystem where art is considered essential, not an extracurricular activity. Through our skill-based art classes and therapeutic art workshops, we hope to transform society's view on the value of visual art, making it something everyone can be a part of.

This project came from my desire to create tangible change through art. It is one thing to produce artwork that promotes healing but another to empower others to experience healing for themselves through art.

I've always known that I wanted people to share my art and feel healed, but at some point, that was not enough. I wanted to take it a step further, and creating "The Medela School" was that step.

Is art a form of therapy?

The simple answer is yes. Research reveals that art can be a great way to identify symptoms of mental health conditions as it captures the true, raw emotions of an individual. Additionally it is sometimes used as an alternative to talking therapy for those who struggle with expressing themselves verbally. It helps individuals process their emotions in a way that becomes coherent to them and those trying to support them.

"Medela School" was that step.

Joy Olugboyega



What does the future hold for The Medela School?

The goal of "The Medela School" is to provide access to visual art for everyone, whether it's them using it as a form of therapy or nurturing their artistic skills. We hope anyone will see that it is something they can be a part of.

So our mission is to try out all the ways we can make that happen. For now, it looks like physical communities gathering to make art regardless of age, gender, or race. We are focused on the community element of our work at the moment.

In the future, we aim to extend our reach by moving online. We have plans for an online platform so that anyone from anywhere can access the practice of making art, build their artistic knowledge, and see its value in improving their lives, especially their well-being.

We hope to one day own an arts and well-being center that will house all the services we provide first in the UK, with hopes to open up in other countries. Finally, we hope to develop a model, an accredited curriculum that organisations can adopt to explore the need for visual art in everyday life.

How does your Initiative Inspire others to explore your art form?

In terms of encouraging people to explore visual art, we pride ourselves on meeting people where they are. Whether they are complete novices or budding artists, we hope that we can provide each individual with tools to take them to the next stage of their journey.

People often ask why not provide one service, art as a skill or art as well-being? In my five years of teaching and facilitating art, I've found that the two are closely interlinked, and having a holistic approach allows people to reap the full benefit.

I've come to observe that those who explore art for their well-being enjoy it so much that they become interested in developing it as a skill and vice versa. We don't want to leave any stone unturned.





Black and yellow
Victor Grabarczyk

“

MAYA ANGELOU

YOU CANT USE UP CREATIVITY.
THE MORE YOU USE THE MORE
YOU HAVE.

”

Emay Enemokwu

A sit down with the founder of Jehucal



How are you using creativity as a tool for change?

Firstly, I utilised my creativity in design and marketing to develop Jehucal so I could take control over my life and career. By creating Jehucal, I was able to build a career of my own with unlimited opportunities for growth and development.

In addition to this, as Jehucal began to grow, I was able to utilise my creativity to begin to change the lives of those around me from family to friends.

One of my sisters is an aspiring actor, she needs a computer to be able to record, edit, and submit castings for acting roles. One day her laptop broke, and I was able to surprise her the next day by purchasing her a macbook. In addition to this, she wanted to get into modelling and be in magazines. I was able to have her model for my brand and she's been featured in i-D, Highsnobiety and Complex. She is now also employed by Jehucal.



Regarding my friends, I've been able to create change in their lives in multiple ways, from jobs to paying them to model or simply providing them with opportunities in other methods such as DJ'ing, etc.

On top of this, I've been able to utilise my creativity to inspire our customers about the importance of responsible production. I also regularly return to my university to deliver Keynote talks and speak with uni students to be a source of inspiration for them. All of this has been achieved from when I was 19 years old and sketching designs in my university accommodation.

Has JEHU-CAL filled a gap in the market?

Yes, Jehucal has filled a gap in the market for bags/accessories. Although the first Jehucal bag sample was made in January 2020 as I wanted a bag to take on a trip to Paris Fashion Week, bags quickly became the USP of Jehucal.

Jehucal bags are becoming a staple item amongst the London and soon international community. Every time I attend a party in London, I see a Jehucal bag.

What does 'TILL FOREVER' mean to you, Is this a symbol for your creativity?

'Till Forever is a plan in motion since I was 18 applying for my degree and writing on my personal statement, "I'm coming here to get the skills I need to start my own business".

The plan to escape the monotony of degree>job>family that everyone is set on and instead be in the world of Till Forever. Abiding to my rules, dictating every choice in my life for the rest of my life. Jehucal will grow and live beyond me, that is 'Till Forever.

What Does the future hold for JEHU-CAL, What does legacy look like for You?

Rule number 2 of the 10 crack commandments is never let them know your next move, so I can't answer the first part of this question. If you want to know, you have to make sure you're following @jehucal on Instagram and subscribed to our mailing list.

Legacy for me is Jehucal truly living on 'Till Forever and continuing to positively impact lives of the community surrounding Jehucal. Knowing that I utilised my creativity to develop a platform to aid others in their path is my legacy.



Josh Akapo

Why did you create archetype and what inspired you to do so?

archtype started when myself [Josh] and two co-founders, Jaydon and Thomas, wanted to create a t-shirt business back in school, inspired by streetwear culture and the explosion of Black cultures here in the UK during the mid-10s.

I added myself into their plans because I felt left out, but a year and a name change later, we launched our first piece under archetype [back then it was all-caps too; ARCHTYPE]. We had zero start-up capital, and neither did our parents, so we had to work to fund the clothes we released, and we ended up doing this by being a secret agency making merch and doing socials for artists and brands, including Lovebox Festival, Samm Henshaw and DLT.

Over the years, doing the agency work made more sense as the fashion industry we were inspired by started getting faster, so in 2020, we pivoted to doing just that. We're a creative house made up of young thinkers and creators who move differently.

How is archetype using creativity as a tool for change?

There's no secret formula or lofty framework we use to do what we do; we just use creativity as a tool for change because it's the tool we have and change that works for people is needed now more than ever. This mentality shapes the clients we choose to work with [and the ones we don't], the projects we take on, the people we bring into the fold, and the work that's delivered.

From our work supporting the Becoming A Man project with the Mental Health Foundation, helping young people practice consent in relationships with Thread & Fable for NHS Scotland, there's plenty to do in securing transformative change for people in our world.





How is archetype different to other creative agencies?

So, archetype's not an agency in the traditional sense; we're a creative house. We deliver work for brands & organisations willing to move differently, yes. Still, we also believe in ensuring our creativity is as expansive as it can be, which often means getting our team to work on unbranded creativity.

We're also majority Black-owned and our core team is made up entirely of 'gen z' young thinkers and creators, so that's a bit different. This allows us to effectively talk to and create with young people and marginalised communities because we are just that.

What has been your proudest moment in archetype's journey so far?

I think my eternal proudest moment is waking up every morning knowing I have a business with my two best friends that let me be as creative as I can be and think as deeply as I do, but something that's happened recently made me quite happy with how things are going.

We've recently moved in with the Ridley Scott Creative Group [the folks behind cult classics like Alien, Gladiator, etc] and them asking us to come on board and help them answer more questions on young people is a huge thing.

When your impact is people-centred, not profit-driven, it's hard to find people in these industries to back the vision. When a global production company as well respected as they were excited by what we do, it gave us a lot more energy to keep going.

What does the future Hold?

So we've got quite a few things in the works right now. Of course I mentioned our recent move with RSCG, but we're also creating archdocs, a platform for cultural exploration. It's taken a while to get off the ground but hopefully at the top of next year, we'll have a lot to share with you across a range of mediums on all things culture and people. We've also got our ongoing brand work and new things coming in that we can't wait to announce.





Obafemi Moyosade



Kofi Omar Josephs is a British basketball player who last played in the British Basketball League for Plymouth City Patriots

Kofi Josephs - Why Not I

The best tool I possess is my mindset; being able to think out of the box and see the world in various ways helps me be my most creative self. Viewing the world through a different sense and taking in as much as I can, whether I understand it or not, and letting things marinate in the background helps my creativity grow daily.

How are you using your creativity to Inspire others?

I try and be the change I want to see. I love to create things and push the boundaries for new ideas. Whether they may be new for myself or others. I think it's important to push the boat and to understand differences; new things can be scary but also exciting. I think being creative shows fearlessness of the unknown and understanding the beauty and fear at the same time.

My motivation is being the best I can be. Trying to squeeze every last drop out of this orange and seeing what I'm left with. Knowing that others are capable of so much, and witnessing it myself, I get inspired to inspire.

Why did you start Why Not I?

I started Why Not I because I was always told I couldn't do stuff, that I was so much different to the people who were doing interesting things and I never understood why that couldn't be me too. Little did I know I would go onto do some amazing things through leaving that little door open of possibility. I want to help others with their self defeating beliefs and overall mental health and wellbeing. Why Not I tries to be the change they want to see, by aiding in destigmatising mental health and making being human more relatable, we empower others to just be themselves and understand life is a marathon not a sprint.

Where does the world of basketball and modeling intersect and have you used both platforms to explore your creativity?

Basketball and modelling intersect through fashion for me. I've always loved fashion, and as we know basketball has had a grip on culture for as long as we can remember. They are intertwined. A lot of athletes are 'models' in a sense simply from people looking at them and wanting to see what they are wearing or doing. Many basketball players feel like when they look good, they feel good and when they feel good, they play good. I've always lived by that.

Basketball players may all play the same sport but we all look different, come from different walks of life, and definitely dress differently. It's a culture. I get to be myself; I'm free to be me on the court. In modelling, I get to be myself, yes, I may be a human mannequin, but I get to bring the clothes and campaign to life in my unique way.

How do you use basketball as a tool for change

I used to think basketball was the destination, but really it was always the vehicle. Understanding that now, has helped me to really help others.

The things I've experienced, good and bad, but always getting back up and dusting myself off to continue help me be an inspiration for others. The life lessons that can be taken from the game are unlimited. I learned this myself and it helps me relate life lessons to others in a creative sporty way.



“

BRUCE
GARRABRANDT

“CREATIVITY DOESN'T WAIT FOR
THAT PERFECT MOMENT. IT
FASHIONS ITS OWN PERFECT
MOMENTS OUT OF ORDINARY
ONES.”

”



JOIN THE COMMON SENSE
NETWORK
THERE ARE TWO SIDES
TO EVERY STORY.

Derin Adesotoye

Presenter & Host and Youtuber



How do you use creativity as a tool for change in your field?

Having a background in content creation on YouTube, with a majority Gen Z audience (and also being Gen Z myself), I love to bring across my skills learnt from engaging our generation on there into the work I do, so that whatever I'm presenting or hosting has a better chance of connecting and resonating with us, which I find especially important for projects I work on with a much bigger picture (like my work with the NHS, or UNICEF) - I think these messages are so important so I really try to tap into my creativity to best find a way and suggest ideas which will allow those campaigns to land with our generation.

Derin is the presenter for the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship providing digital coverage across YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Twitch and Tik Tok. She is also the host of Formula E Pit Lane Preview Show and host of Formula E Accelerate Esports Show

What would you be doing if you weren't working in the creative field?

So I was actually this close from pursuing a career in Finance! Thankfully I missed my uni offer to do so (which is why one of my favourite quotes is rejection is redirection!) and as a result had to select a new course on clearing which is what led me to attend the London College of Fashion and really embrace and hone in on my creative side, which ultimately is what has led me to where I am today. But to give some credit to myself, I do think that if I had pursued banking I still would've continued my YouTube channel as an outlet for creativity - most likely sharing Banking/Finance/Career tips. But I'm very grateful now that my job is so creative and works hand in hand with my creativity and content ideas on YouTube, allowing what I put out to be a lot more aligned, as opposed to say me trying to balance my channel alongside a banking career.

What has been your greatest accomplishment so far in your journey?

Probably seeing the snowball effect that me chasing my dreams has had on other people - still can't get over it! One thing I've always been incredibly passionate about is passing on of information - from sharing on YouTube how I got all A*/A's a GCSE to my University freshers week survival guide, I am a big believer in sharing tips and advice which helped you, so that someone else out there can have a smoother journey and hopefully avoid making mistakes you did. So one thing which is really important to me is always giving back and being open about my career path, which I love to do via panel discussions, talks, interviews or through social media. So seeing the response from that - whether in person, or from a message, is always the most rewarding feeling. I recently had a person change their entire University decision based on a conversation we had - he's now accepted his dream course at LCF vs going to Nottingham for a course his parents wanted him to do! So amazing.

Who inspires you creatively?

Everything and everyone. There's a reason why I follow nearly 2000 people on Instagram! I love taking inspiration from people from all over the world, across different fields and all walks of life. I'm a big believer that all it takes is a nugget of information that can blossom into a totally new idea, perspective, lesson... so I love to expose myself to as many things as possible.

What are 3 things you would tell yourself if you were starting again?

- The route to get to Plan A might look a little different to what you imagined, but trust in the journey, never lose sight of your end goal and believe that you will eventually get there
- You never know when or where opportunities might come around, so always be prepared!
- Who you surround yourself with could make or break you - surround yourself with positivity, love and people who truly believe in you and are rooting for you

