



MANCHESTER
OPEN
EXHIBITION
2022
HOME



MAKE PACK by Jamie Hale



Jamie Hale

I'm a cross-disciplinary creative (which means I can't make up my mind)! I am a scriptwriter for theatre and television. I've got a poetry book out, called "Shield", which is about being a disabled person in the early days of the pandemic. I direct for theatre, I act, make films, and I run an artistic development and showcasing organisation for d/Deaf and disabled creatives. I also write fiction and essays, but they're a bit lower down the list at the moment!



My advice

Don't let time get in the way of creativity. There will always be more work to do so, plan to make time to be creative, schedule your day, make sure you're taking this seriously. Choose your most creative timeslot and block it out completely, however frequently you want to be working on your creative stuff.

Similarly, don't let perfection get in the way of creation. A really interesting test was carried out by a high school teacher who split a pottery class in half – for half the class their grade would be based on their one best pot made, and the other half's grade would be based on the weight of all the pots they'd made, put together. So, the first group were asked to produce quality and the second quantity. The best pots were made by people in the quantity group, because they weren't focused on perfection, just creation. Take this to heart – you can edit afterwards but if you don't create you've nothing to edit.

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My creative process

My process and practice are based on the idea that inspiration is necessary but comes from a dedicated practice. I've never believed that I can wait for the lightning bolt to strike me, and I make sure to take the time to do something creative each day. Even if I don't feel inspired, I do my best. Since I've started to do this I've been far more able to produce my creative work and had far more bolts of inspiration.

I'm often struck by a word or phrase, which I then weave into something else. Or, a visual image, or memory but, it's usually words and phrases that catch me.

I think making creative work your career is different from indulging and enjoying it, and it requires that commitment. Although, I also don't put all my eggs in one basket as I have a career outside the arts as well.

Creative prompts

Take a story from mythology (I often go Greek or Arthurian), and think about all the people involved. What perspectives do they have? What hopes and fears? Can you write a poem, or a fragment that captures the internal and external conflicts at the heart of the myth?

Choose an animal and think about what you associate with it. Now try to design a human character with the characteristics of that animal but without turning into cliché.

Take one of your body parts and write an ode (a poem of admiration) to it. Do you love your toes? Are your biceps supporting you? It can be hard to love one's body as a whole, but pick one part and make yourself at home with it, try to honour it, thank it for what it does for you.

Go silly. Write a poem in rhyme that's entirely pointless and just fun to do – make it as obvious in the rhymes and as silly as you can.

"I wish I'd known years ago that I could make art for more than just myself. I spent ages writing poems, not realising that they were good enough to send to be published. I didn't think I could, or should, perform. I didn't realise that I was able to actually do something with my work until I had the support of creative friends and mentors (especially CN Lester and Kate O'Donnell)."

"If you tell yourself the art world isn't for you, then it won't be. I'm not going to pretend it's easy to make a living creatively, but whether you want to read at open mics, or work full-time in the arts, it can be challenging. I've often found that as a full-time wheelchair user, to whom countless venues are inaccessible, I feel like I'm not wanted in the art world – and that's often true. However, I've used it to motivate me to work on creating spaces for other people like me, so that we can take up our own space in the arts world."

"My main encouragement in creating work is to have a daily practice (if possible) – even if just for five minutes a day. Also, bad work is always better than no work, and can be edited later. Once you've created it, work out what you're going to do with it, then do it."

Building networks

The world is built on connections. There's a joke in the poetry world that to be a successful poet, you need to be two out of the following:

1. Nice to work with
2. Quick at answering emails
3. Good at writing poetry

Of course that's not entirely true but it makes a big difference. If you want to make art your career, then networking is a crucial part of that.

Get in touch with people whose work you admire and ask them if they'd meet you for a coffee. If you do an event or performance, follow it up, get to know people and let them know you're available for work.

If you're nervous or insecure this can feel like it's very bolshy – but if people don't know you're out there, they won't be able to commission you. A lot of the people I've just commissioned for an upcoming series of events I found by asking on Twitter who was out there. It pointed me to lots of people I hadn't known existed before. If you don't put yourself out there, nobody will find you.

One of the things I do to overcome my natural reticence is have a pen name. I use my middle name as my first name creatively. Jamie Hale is several things I'm not; naturally confident, easy-going and good at putting themselves out there. Having that divide lets me be so much more confident with networking.