



core™



TheMix
DUBLIN

TBWA\Dublin

UP STARTS STARTS

The ICAD Upstarts is a training and mentorship programme which aims to develop the skills of emerging creatives, educate them about the industry and introduce the industry to them. ICAD Upstarts caters for advertising creatives (art directors and copywriters specifically) and designers, preparing them for careers in their industries; while providing a pathway to the creative sector for marginalised and underrepresented communities.

Now in its 18th year, the ICAD Upstarts programme is the most established and recognised programme of its kind in Ireland, delivering tangible benefits to Upstarts, mentors and host agencies / studio alike. The programme has proven to be deeply relevant to participants. In recent years 75% of Upstarts felt the programme has had a significant impact on the career, while an overwhelming 98% of say they would recommend others participate in the programme. Likewise 94% of host agencies and studios say they would look to the programme as a primary hiring ground.

Upstarts have a distinct commercial advantage over other emerging creatives - 82% are in employment within 6 months of completing the programme.

Overview

Structure

For the first part of the programme, Upstarts will attend workshops to learn their craft and hone their skills. The purpose of these workshops is to prepare them for the second part of the programme. Once this part of the programme is complete, each Upstart will be assigned a mentor who is successfully working in the industry, and who can provide guidance and assistance to the Upstart. The other aspect of the programme are the host studios and agencies. There are six to eight of these per stream, and each issues a single brief. The agency or studio then critique the work produced in response to their brief and giving a short talk regarding their work or the industry in general.

Mentor-Upstart Relationship

Mentors will be available to answer questions, discuss briefs and review work in advance of each hosted evening session. Upstarts will be facilitated in meeting with their mentor via zoom calls once or twice during the course of the programme, as well as intermittent phone calls and emails throughout the programme. Upstarts are reminded that their mentor is invested in seeing them succeed and they should use this opportunity to learn to its fullest. Ask questions when they have them and listen to their mentor's advice.

Upstart Expectations

Upstarts are expected to be present at each workshop as well as each of the weekly evening sessions, and to commit to the undertaking of working on a weekly brief, to be presented to their peers and host agency / studio. Upon completion of the programme, Upstarts are also expected to work towards the organisation and creation of the final exhibition, alongside ICAD. This is an intensive programme but can be completed in conjunction with a full-time job.

Support

Upstarts will have the support of their mentor throughout the process, and will receive feedback from host agencies. ICAD will be available throughout the programme to assist Upstarts with queries or issues they may have during the course of the programme. Should they require it, Upstarts will be signposted to support networks, including mental health service providers.

Application

Application

A brief has been developed for each stream (advertising and design). We encourage applicants to flex their creative muscles, think differently and stand out. Upstarts are selected based on their responses to this brief and their potential to grow and succeed as a commercial creative - we want to see how you think and how you approach creativity.

Criteria

The primary criteria for entry is that applicants respond to the brief issued and submit their best work based on it. This programme is aimed at creatives near the start of their career or looking to embark on a creative career - it's a jumping-off point. For example, this has previously included graduates, people looking to make a career change or people looking to embark on a creative career. That said anyone is welcome to enter regardless of their background and candidates will be selected by judges based on the work and their applications and potential.

Participation Fee

As of 2024 Upstarts is a free to participate programme, which is made possible by the support of programme partners from within the industry who recognise the value of the initiative to individuals and the sector as a whole.

The application fee for the Upstarts programme is €20. If you are unable to cover the cost of the application please contact info@icad.ie

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

ICAD and our programme partners are committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment within the program. Upstarts aims to attract and support individuals from marginalised groups, enhancing the diversity of voices and perspectives in the advertising and design industries. The programme is designed to provide a pathway to the creative industries for underrepresented communities. For more information see our [Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity policy](#).

Thanks

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our partners for their invaluable support in fostering creative talent and helping retain it within the Irish creative industries. Their commitment also enables us to introduce more diversity into the industry, which is proven to enhance creative outputs and benefit the sector as a whole. Together, through the programme, we are building a more vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable future where Irish creativity flourishes.

Lead Partner**core**[™]

Core is Ireland's largest and most effective marketing communications company, with a team of over 360 people collaborating across nine Practices - Creative, Data, Investment, Learning, Media, Research, Sponsorship, Performance and Strategy. Such a wide range of experience fuels expansive thinking. From a creative perspective, it means our teams approach briefs and business problems supported by this diverse skill set. Together, we make a difference.

At Core, we believe in the power of diversity in every aspect of our business. We know diverse workplaces drive innovation and deliver better business results; we also know that diverse perspectives enrich our creativity. Therefore, we work harder to proactively seek, include and foster them. We believe we have a duty to promote diversity in our industry and, in particular, to make a much needed and lasting change in the creative industry.

Programme Partners

BBH is a full-service creative agency founded in 1982. Our logo, the black sheep, represents the power of difference – because when the world zigs, we zag. In 2022, we brought this philosophy to Ireland and opened the doors of BBH Dublin.

TheMix
DUBLIN

The Mix Dublin, is a Hybrid In-House Creative Agency - which means: It's part creative agency, part production company and part design studio. As an integral part of the Irish Distillers Pernod Ricard's 'International Marketing Team', The Mix Dublin works closely with brand teams, external agencies and production partners on global projects.

TBWA\Dublin

TBWA\ DUBLIN, is over 100 ambitious people who believe in creating a total brand world for their equally ambitious clients. Backed by a network of over 11,100 people, we use Disruption® to connect a brand's total ecosystem. All with the ambition to go beyond just saying things, to doing and making amazing things, every day. Because we believe our best work is always ahead of us.

Charity Partner**DesignOpp**

DesignOpp is a not-for-profit initiative championing diversity in Irish design, so People of Colour can fulfill their creative potential. Our goal is to provide more opportunities, diversify education and create a welcoming community for Creatives of Colour.