

The Placement Diaries: Week 22 - Becoming a Freelancer, Finally Filling Out the Grant, and Getting More Positive Visions

11th February 2022

So, this is the week where things hopefully finally start to happen (although at the time of writing this, there's no internet at all, and it feels like I'm in the olden days where I have to use Word for the first time in ages, not to mention that it feels weird, so if this piece looks visually (well, typographically) more different than the rest, it's because of this, but never mind that), and where things start to finally look up, where I get to actually do things instead of just thinking about them.

First things first, I did the very first step, where I set up a freelance profile. The freelance platform of choice at the moment is PeoplePerHour, where freelancers usually set an hourly rate, and do freelance things for clients, often telling them how long it's going to take in order to do a certain thing. It's still early days (it's been early days for a long time now, to the point where they can no longer be considered as early days anymore), but at least it's something. So, naturally, I set up a profile, and of course with anything new, I'm still trying to figure out how the platform works, but I'll get used to it.

Of course, in order to actually become a freelancer, I need to have the right tools in order to do the job, and this is where the grant comes in, so that I can actually have the money in order to buy them. The tools aren't actual tools, but rather tools of the freelance illustrator/designer trade, which involve nothing more than a graphics tablet and a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud (oh how I wish I could simply just pay for the software once instead of every month), because let's face it, the free alternatives suck. I've tried to use them, and it just isn't the same as using Adobe's products (not to mention that those are literally the industry standard, for a good reason, along with the fact that clients expect you to use Adobe Creative Cloud, and nothing else, in order to be able to do the work), plus I want to avoid having the reputation of being a cheap designer/illustrator who refuses to use Adobe software for whatever reason, because I've come to realise that only hobbyists use free software, plus I only know how to use Creative Cloud effectively, since I can work faster that way.

A graphics tablet is also really important, because trying to create something, specifically an illustration, with just a mouse (or better yet, the trackpad on your laptop) is never going to cut it, and it's just going to become a bit cumbersome if you do it by hand, so having the right tools in order to do the job is highly important, and as a result, I'm spending the first chunk of the grant on getting one year's access to Creative Cloud (as cheap as legally possible, thanks to the extremely huge student discount where I

can get it for just under £200 a year, where normally I'd only be able to get it for 4 months with that much), as well as a graphics tablet so that I can actually do the work, not to mention that it's basically the workflow which works best for me, no matter what the anticapitalists say (because let's face it, we need money to be able to live and function in this world, so there's no way around it, and I'd rather make a living based off what I enjoy, as well as what I'm good at, instead of starving to death or working a job that I hate, even if it means paying for a subscription to use software, but if it gets the job done, it gets the job done, plus I'd factor this in when I come to creating and listing my prices so that the software starts to pay for itself), and free software will never be able to cut it, because it's like using really cheap art supplies, which are obviously going to hinder your ability in order to create decent art, not to mention that there are literally no designers who use the cheap stuff. So yeah, using the industry standard software is important, and I don't have the time, the energy, or the brain power to just create my own little tools. At this point, there's no point in trying to reinvent the wheel for no reason. So, that's me justifying how and why I need those things, especially with the grant where I just tell them which things I need, why I need them, and how it's going to improve my situation for the better (in this case, to be able to take on client work as well as improving the overall business).

I also did another visioning session, and let's just say that it was a better experience this time since I didn't picture myself in a dark labyrinth. Instead, I imagined seeing a nice sustainable and architectural house, in a decent area surrounded by nature, with the sun beaming down. I was sat in front of it, probably in front of another building which was still a part of that property, possibly an art studio or something, where I faced the house and I saw it, but it was still a bit hazy, probably from the sun beaming down.

At least it was better than how I was envisioning things a few weeks ago, and now, there's at least an inch of certainty, because at least there's something tangible which I can realistically work towards over the next couple of months instead of trying to navigate a labyrinth in the dark, because let's face it, that is never easy at all, and hopefully, things start to look up soon, especially now that it's almost Spring and that the days are starting to get longer, which is always my favourite time of the year since it represents new beginnings in a way that the New Year will never be able to do.

So, that's my week, and although I'm starting to get on a roll, I'm probably going to take it easy next week since it will be the half term holidays again, and because I deserve to be able to take a break from time to time so that I don't make the same mistake which I made last time where I just worked all the way through for three months straight, because let's face it, that's just a recipe for disaster, and I don't want to deal with that again, because dealing with it once is already bad enough.