

**Video TRANSCRIPT**  
**Reimagining the Creative Industries Panel Discussion 5 August 2020**  
**UAL and the Creative Industries Federation**

Online at: <https://youtu.be/5VTReOpXGik>

On 5 August 2020 members of the Creative Industries Federation assembled online at the UAL Graduate Showcase for a panel discussion on reimagining the creative industries.

The current moment in history combines a crisis in the creative sector brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences, with the potential in the creative sector to help the country emerge stronger from the pandemic, Nigel Carrington, Vice-Chancellor of UAL, introduced the topic of conversation.

He continued to state that the creative sector's goal should now be:

- To work in partnership with Government to help the national recovery.
- To ensure we develop, with Government, a sustained, long-term plan for creativity. With the plan to “to build a better future for everyone” across all parts of society – making the most of our people, ideas, and opportunities for investment.

Nigel remarked that the task is substantial, but the sector is the right partner for Government. Our historic success comes from our resilience, agility, future-facing qualities, and our ability to engage and inspire people. The government's £1.57 billion support package in July has been hugely welcomed – but it is by no means a fix. Oxford Economics has projected the financial impact of the pandemic on the creative sector at over 400,000 creative job losses and over £70 billion lost in creative industries revenue.

Sir Peter Bazalgette followed with the question: **how can we make the case to government for the role the creative sector can play in national reimagining and renewal?**

Bazalgette pointed out that even though DCMS has successfully championed the sector and Neil Mendoza is a powerful new voice in House of Lord, 10 Downing Street is the main decision maker. Luckily, we have Munira Mirza as an ally at No. 10 and the PM's office has an admirable interest in investing in R&D (but yet only focused on science). The ideal would be for a long-term strategic view in the sector's Spending Review submission and an equal partnership between Government and Creative Industries.

Two themes chime with Government agenda:

- (i) Levelling up. It's economic, but also cultural. We must make sure that the bulk of the value created isn't confined to London and the South East.
- (ii) Research and technological excellence. Building on 'Creative Clusters' funding (a product of the last Industrial Strategy). Connect to the talent in small companies and local communities.

Sub-themes that emerged:

- Creative industries as a cross-cutting interdisciplinary asset.
- Knowledge economy/IP economy is the future of the British economy.
- The use of trade and culture to shape relationships across the world to influence perceptions. Soft Power should come before Diplomatic relations, or at least support them.

Chino Odimba's focus lay on questioning **how to make the case to the public for the importance of creativity when so many are struggling with their basic livelihoods and with the prospect of further lockdown.**

Odimba suggests we focus on the “humanness” of creativity, as this underpins how the sector recovers, but also lies at the heart of what we do.

We are now faced with the unique opportunity to change the creative sector's own story by moving away from being expendable or elite. For public opinion to be positive, the majority need to feel they're part of something.

- Examine how a “them and us” culture came to exist around access to creativity, and address that.
- Capitalise on the fact that the pandemic taught us that we need connectivity. Identify where creativity enables humanity to feel more.

Big themes that emerged for further consideration:

- Inclusivity: does our creative sector look like our country/the UK public? How can we sell something to a public when we don't look like them; when we don't look like what's happening to most in the country.
- Regionality: does our creative sector sound like the country/the public beyond London/the South East? Celebrate what is happening around the wider country.
- Leadership: diversity and inclusivity need to be led from the top to be credible. Creative leaders must make sure the “trickle-down” benefits from creativity reach everyone.
- Radical action: the case to the public “must be seen”. Action, not talking, needs to be the sector's next steps. Action may be quite radical.

**How to address some of the burning issues around inequality, precarious jobs and diversity within our own sector, David Bickle asked.**

Between Covid-19, Black Lives Matter and the climate emergency, there is now an economic and societal crisis as well as a health crisis.

We are the future economy: it looks like what creativity, digital technology and digital talent already look like. People have been brought together during the pandemic and will continue to do so. The UK is seen as a diverse place and we should push forwards active anti-racism initiatives, to create a fairer community of creatives: one that looks out for each other, our communities, and works collaboratively.

Intelligent and creative thinking should be at the core of socio-economic solutions and providing more opportunities for the full diversity of individuals would better reflect the world in which we live.

We can achieve this by removing barriers to access and training: via apprenticeships and more university and college creative business incubators offering business coaching, seed funding and mentoring. As well as addressing the barriers the youth experience, such as a narrow school curriculum and access to free travel which helps young people reach cultural institutions.

Eliza Easton continued the evening, questioning **how we get a good R&D settlement, and what does research tell us about how policy-makers should approach the future of the creative sector?**

She stated we need to identify what fundamental evidence is needed to make the case in policy, so Government can make better decisions. The evidence should be independent and academic for example through Nesta's Policy and Evidence Centre.

A key concern of Government is how R&D can drive productivity. We think the focus for R&D and innovation should lie on areas where we know there's real scope to drive change, and where R&D investment can drive productivity.

Easton also suggested, we change the definition of R&D so it can invest in sectors that change lives. It currently omits arts, social sciences and humanities. It should be about transforming lives, not just about creating new widgets. Viewed this way, Nesta has estimated that the creative industries do as much R&D as the manufacturing sector. The Conservative election manifesto promised to review the R&D definition, but this has not yet happened.

If we change the way policymakers see the economy, we could ensure they understand the benefits of applied creativity. After the last recession, creativity thrived, but it concentrated on London and the South East. Now it's the rest of the UK that needs opportunities. Any kind of cluster – whether a city centre or a rural cluster – can succeed; the pandemic's digital technology has proven this.

Easton concluded the future of higher education was threatened by current HE policies, which would have an impact not only on the creatives but the wider economy. Therefore policy makers need to consider:

- What do we want from jobs?
- What does "good work" look like in the modern job market?
- If creatives applied their skills in other sectors e.g. finance, might Govt take a different view?

Individual presentations were then followed by a discussion with the chair:

The chair asked each panelist:

- What would your key message be for our pitch to Government in spending review?
- How do you marry the need for "humanness" from creativity with the need to talk about "money" and economy (which sways Government)?
- How can we make the case for applying creativity across almost every industry and everything the country does?

**Sir Peter Bazalgette:**

- Partnership with Government must be defined as economic benefit.
- The creative sector has a "USP": it's the sector that enriches our national culture and shared values as well as generating income. In the internet age, this is more critical than ever before. We must generate some very specific ideas to create a more diverse sector e.g. more structured opportunities for learning and engagement.

**Chino Odimba:**

- Engage more fully with the potential in diversity and inclusivity. Businesses like Netflix show us how this happens.
- The creative sector offers the potential to tell the stories of our times and our history. Societal consciousness is found in stories; the storytellers make up our sector.

**David Bickle:**

- Determine our “social value/impact”, and how that can be measured/quantified. This happens in architecture, for example. It means evaluating the impact of our actions regularly, focus on how they’ve influenced the community around them, how they’ve increased access to opportunities.
- Evolve and address our biases. Go on a journey – be inspired by what happens around the world. Be open to how that can change us and our practice. Inspire young people.

**Eliza Easton:**

There is hope in policy direction. The Treasury Green Book is changing a lot behind the scenes, to factor in societal and environmental impact more fully. We can be the sector that helps Government work this out.

**Neil Mendoza, DCMS Commissioner for Cultural Renewal responded:**

It’s a hugely serious moment – not just for the creative and cultural sector but for everybody. This sector has a desire to help.

Our sector identifies very little with this Conservative Government, yet we have demonstrated we care about similar things.

Post-pandemic, the Treasury has a better understanding of the creative sector – practically, emotionally, and in terms of money. Capitalise on that to show how we can contribute to levelling up, recovery, and even Brexit.

-Ends-