Creativity is the capacity to imagine, conceive, express, or make something that didn't exist before.
(Durham Commission on Creativity and Education, 2019)

Before we start talking about the skills that support the development of this capacity, it's probably worth starting with what we mean when we say 'the creative industries'. Or at least, our particular view of them here at Morley.

Of course it's the beautiful world of fashion, film, art, advertising and architecture to name but a few industries. However it's important to recognise that many more industries are creative.

Because being creative means coming up with new solutions, new ways of doing and new ways of being...and those are characteristics that certainly aren't solely the preserve of the arts and media worlds.

Realising this gives us such exciting possibilities for collaborating with new fields and creating innovative learning experiences.

Creativity is everywhere. It is valued as much by athletes, engineers, mathematicians and scientists as it is by artists, writers and composers.

So it's in this generous world – defined by a belief that creativity exists in all places and all sectors – that the Chelsea Centre for the Creative Industries is finding its niche. And it's here where we support our creatives to build 21st century skills for future careers.

Nearly all our skills building starts with a curricular diet that you would expect in an art school environment...such as confidence in line, colour, form and composition.

But that's also complemented by a firm foundation in the essential skills that everyone needs: in language, digital skills and maths.

With these building blocks in place, our students have the freedom to pursue a specialist field...of which there are many across the ecosystem that we're creating here at Chelsea.

Each and every day I'm thrilled to see students developing their talents in painting, pattern cutting, casting, editing, millinery, darkroom processing, intaglio printing, studio lighting...and so the list goes on.

What unites them – what unites us – is the joy of making and creativity.

We use an industry description of 'T' shaped skills: the horizontal line being an expression of those essential and core skills that give our students their grounding, and the vertical line describing that specialist bit that makes each creative unique.

But a final element of the Morley skills mix is probably the most important of all: it's the bit that the creative industries excel at, and yet perhaps the sector's best kept secret.

That is supporting the development of students' transferable skills.

The skills that employers consistently recognise as in highest demand including teamwork, communication, initiative, and problem solving. The skills that help you remain resilient, work with others and also value what you do.

And this is why our centre is committed to curating moments of collaboration, both within and outside the college walls, where students find opportunities to sharpen their skills in working and communicating with others.

It's why we pursue social justice in our work. (This of course is in Morley's DNA, the college having been founded by a suffragette and funded by an abolitionist.) We know that the world of work should mean something...and changing the world for the better should be an ambition of what we do.

This is why our Fashion students explore sustainability and upcycling as part of their design practice and why we have workshops on democracy, government and youth voice.

It may be easy to think that with this approach to skills that every student turns out the same. On the contrary, we're proud of the diversity of our students: every journey is unique, and every outcome is different.

It's what makes the Chelsea Centre for the Creative Industries the most exciting place in London to study. We are proud partners in every student's journey to find their authentic self.
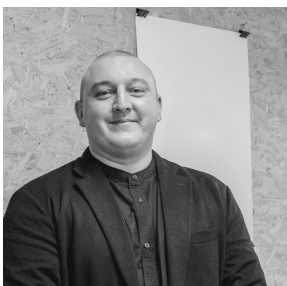
Matias Shortcook
Centre Principal
Chelsea Centre for the Creative Industries
Morley College London