

# Stella Shaw

Equity



#### Can you tell us a bit about your career to date?

I trained in fine art in the 90's when my children were growing up and then worked in fine art and story telling, which got me involved with performing groups and cross arts projects.

In the last two years I've gone back to painting and, when I'm not in my art studio, I work with community groups, developing amateur artists in visual arts and performing skills. One group I am currently working with, who have learning disabilities, have produced quite extraordinary work involving self-portraits with video and music.

## What do you like most about your work?

On the art side, I just love complex artistic technical challenges. With teaching, I get the chance to share what I'm interested in while helping others to find their own way. I find it incredibly rewarding.

### What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The biggest challenge has to be too few paying customers and little access to funding. When you become selfemployed, you have to set up as a business.

When you set up as a business, you are excluded from much of the available

Another challenge is finding things that you care about and are interested in that also match what the customer wants to pay for. I've had to learn how to do lots of things, including making items myself, and developing products to sell, which is not exactly at the core of what I do.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

I've become good at crafts, which is quite a leap from fine

"All that I've learned from FEU Training has made my marketing through social media and my website much more targeted and effective. I'd say it's doubled the number of clients I have coming to classes"

art. I've learned how to make cards and other objects that can be created easily in groups.

I've developed skills around working in a team with other practitioners and writers, when my 'natural habitat' is working in a much more solitary fashion.

I've learned presentations skills, photography and web search optimisation. The driver has mainly been financial.

## What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

Isolation is a challenge and of course money. Courses are so expensive. The FEU has been fantastic is assisting with both of these.

#### What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I've attended several including Creative Productivity, How to Drive Traffic to your Website and Get Noticed (which looks at targeted CV writing).

## What are the most important things that you've learned? How have you used what you have learnt in your work?

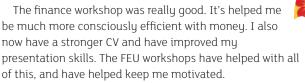
The social media courses have been fantastic. I'm now using Twitter and Facebook, and I'm on a Facebook group with lots of other artists. It's broadened my network and I'm learning lots of technical things from this group.

> All that I've learned from FEU Training has made my marketing through social media and my website much more targeted and effective. I'd say it's doubled the number of clients I have coming to classes. I'm using my website more consciously as a marketing tool, and I'm using photographic images in a completely

> > different way. In fact, after the 'Shoot, Edit with your iPhone' workshop, I took some great action shots of my fellow artists at the studio.

Snapshot

# Stella Shaw



Coming to FEU Training events makes me feel I'm not alone. I've kept in touch with a few people. I love the networking and supportive aspect to the workshops.

## What has encouraged you to attend FEU **Training sessions?**

The wonderful thing about the FEU is meeting up with other creative people. There is always a lot of knowledge in the room and people are very generous in the way they share that. We always learn so much from each other, in addition to what we get from the tutors and the course material.

The workshops are helpful and the team is really friendly and supportive. It's great to learn about business with other creatives. I like that the approach is to focus on

what you can do, and what you are good at.

Overall I have to say that I am very, very grateful that FEU Training has been there at just the right time for me.

Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creatives?

"Isolation is a challenge and of course money. Courses are so expensive. FEU Training has been fantastic is assisting with both of these"

