

>>Snapshot

Jane Campion Hoye Writer and Story Teller WGGB & Equity

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

Following an early career as a professional actor based in London, I discovered a passion for writing. I did a degree in Bristol funded by the Equity Trust, for which I am so grateful and which has opened so many doors for me.

I then trained as a business journalist, working as a professional copywriter and features writer before I had the opportunity to combine my love of theatre with writing by doing an MPhil in Playwriting. Since then I have specialised in script writing and storytelling.

I particularly enjoy passing these skills on to individuals or groups in the community who will benefit from them and was delighted to get the opportunity with the Voices from the Ashes project as Writer/Storyteller in Residence, sponsored by the Arts Council in 2014.

I was also selected for the Writing West Midlands development programme Room 204, which has provided me with great opportunities for networking, training and exposure of my work.

Currently, I'm aiming to get my second full-length play 'Safe' into professional development. In the last year, the play has attracted attention from mainstream theatres and festivals, and recently showcased a rehearsed reading at The So&So Club in Central London. I also had one of my short stories 'Slum Songs in the Sun' broadcast on BBC radio and have just finished writing my first short screenplay for a national film project.

What do you like most about your work? Why is it so satisfying?

As both a performer and storyteller I love stories that leave an impression. I am passionate about people finding their voice, both for myself when writing my own stories and scripts, and to help other people achieve this. On the Voices from the Ashes project, I facilitated workshops for the NHS mental health services helping service users to find their own voice and tell their story in their own chosen medium, either through poems or storytelling. I never cease to be

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amazed by the incredible stories many people have, often far more unbelievable than fiction. Sometimes the power is not in the story but in how it is told.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The biggest challenges can be the erratic and sometimes absent income. Another challenge is the level of competition for work. There are so many talented writers out there it's difficult to get selected. You need to be sure of your unique selling points and find ways of standing out and getting noticed. That's where the support from FEU Training has been invaluable, helping me to develop mu online presence and market myself, and what I do.

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

I have moved from acting and performance through to journalism, creative writing and storytelling. This has involved me expanding and developing my skills to cover script writing, short stories and oral storytelling.

In addition, I have added editing and proof reading to the services I offer. All of which has had to be supported by learning to market myself, build my own website and brand, networking and giving presentations about my work. What has prompted me is a combination of creating more







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opportunities to do what I am passionate about, giving something back and of course, earning a living.

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

Location and funding are the biggest obstacles. There are a lot of courses but most of them are in London and expensive, so apart from having to pay for the courses, I also have travel and accommodation to consider. Because FEU Training workshops are free and run at a variety of locations, including Birmingham, they provide a valuable resource of accessible training - the benefits of which make it worth the membership fees to both unions.

Through the Room 204 development programme, I have also benefited from access to lots of development opportunities for which I am very grateful.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I've attended Build Your Own Website, Make Impact, Building your Brand, Negotiation for Freelances and Write That Book and Get It published.

What are the most important things that you've learned?

Attending these workshops has given me the confidence to create a platform for my work. The Build your Website workshop was tough and I thought too technical for me, but I worked through it all and was amazed how much I managed to do myself. Now I have a website I am proud of and which I can edit myself, every day if I want, without having to pay someone to do it for me.

As a direct result of these workshops, I have created a recognisable brand and a website. They gave me the confidence to self-publicise and stick up for myself. In a nutshell, they helped me to do the tough stuff.

There is little other support out there as a freelance. Every opportunity you approach you are starting from scratch and it can feel lonely and cut off. FEU Training events provide support, encouragement and confidence. They take the fear factor out of many of the topics covered.

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

The FEU Training workshops always have content that is of great value. They deliver what they say they do on the tin! They provide a welcome opportunity to mix with other creatives from all the artistic disciplines. It is brilliant to be working amongst such a broad range of people crossing all the different media. Events have an exciting buzz. Everyone there is professional and hungry to learn and the trainers are all excellent. I think the key thing FEU Training workshops do is give attendees the confidence to tackle the difficult aspects of creative freelancing.

Do you know any organisation that offers business courses to creatives?

In terms of the diversity of people reached and the variety of what FEU offers, I'd say there is nothing else guite like it.

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