

Isaias

Skills Exchange Programme participant

When Isaias joined Creative Crawley's Skills Exchange Programme; part of the Cultural Ecology Development strand, he was looking for a way to reconnect with his creativity, strengthen his confidence and open doors to future opportunities in the creative industries.

Having been out of work for some time and unsure how to progress towards his ambition of becoming a concept artist, he saw the programme as a chance to build new skills, collaborate with other artists and expand his professional horizons. What he didn't expect was just how transformative the experience would be - both personally and creatively.

“ **Working with others helped me rebuild my confidence and trust that the ideas I put out there are good ideas**



“ **I can talk in front of a group of people without freezing up. I didn't know I had that in me, but now I guess I do**

The following section explores Isaias' experience through Creative Crawley's four strategic pillars:

PILLAR 1: ON THE DOORSTEP

From the outset, Isaias found himself part of a warm and supportive cohort. Although he was used to working independently, Skills Exchange encouraged connection, conversation and collaboration.

Working side by side with peers helped him rebuild confidence in speaking up, sharing new ideas and participating in group activities - something he previously found challenging.

PILLAR 2: BIG PICTURE

Isaias' standout experience was the intensive creative week, where he collaborated with another artist to produce a large-scale piece depicting a post-apocalyptic, cyberpunk-inspired vision of Crawley. Merging two distinct skill sets into one cohesive artwork pushed him to work at pace, experiment and contribute to a piece that was proudly displayed for the public.

Isaias found the programme broadened his understanding of how his digital skills could apply to a range of artistic mediums and professional opportunities. The programme also ignited excitement about collaborating with other artists locally and beyond.

PILLAR 3: PEOPLE AND PLANET

While his artwork explored futuristic themes, the experience itself grounded Isaias in a renewed sense of wellbeing. Engaging in creative practice, sharing ideas and spending focused time making art had a positive impact on his mental health - reminding him why he wants to build a future in the creative sector.

By looking more deeply at how artists work with themes of place, identity and evolving environments, Isaias broadened his artistic perspective and adopted a more open-minded approach to new ideas and creative processes. The programme also encouraged mindful collaboration, mutual respect and an appreciation for diverse artistic practices.

PILLAR 4: VALUE IN ACTION

Through Skills Exchange, Isaias rediscovered his confidence, strengthened his communication skills, gained hands-on experience working collaboratively and demonstrated his ability to deliver high-quality work to a deadline.

These outcomes are now directly supporting his goal of entering the creative industries - whether through freelance opportunities, employment in a design-based role or progressing towards his ambition of becoming a concept artist for video games, films or TV.

The programme gave him practical evidence of his skills, a stronger portfolio, and renewed belief in the value of his creative voice.



“ This programme opened my eyes to how my digital and graphic design skills can translate into many different creative mediums

IMPACT SUMMARY

Isaias' experience in the Skills Exchange reflects the power of Creative Crawley's community-focused, skills-driven approach. Through collaboration, mentorship and meaningful creative challenges, he was able to develop new confidence, improve communication, expand his artistic practice and build a stronger foundation for his future career.

The sense of community he found not only reduced feelings of isolation but also helped him trust in his own creative instincts. Isaias describes this shift as one of his proudest achievements during the programme

By the end of the programme, he felt more prepared, more inspired and more determined to pursue his long-held ambition of working in the creative