



A FOCUS ON NATURE CAREERS HUB ARTIST/POET

CHLOÉ VALERIE HARMSWORTH – ARTIST/POET



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is your role, and how long have you been doing it?

I am an Artist, Writer and Poet working in Creative Conservation. I aim to raise awareness and appreciation for the beauty of our natural world, and the issues that our wildlife faces, through my visual and literary images.

I've always been doing this in some way, ever since I was a child. But in recent years, I've made a concerted effort to spend more time focusing on this meaningful purpose and have shared my work on social media ([@chloevalerienatureart](https://www.instagram.com/chloevalerienatureart)) to connect with like-minded people. It's through collaboration that we can spread our environmental messages further, to make a bigger and more positive difference in the world.

What are your main responsibilities?

I think a big responsibility I have is to be truthful to myself and brave in my self-expression. This is something I've learnt over time: to be proud of my natural style rather than trying to change it, and to let myself show my emotions and vulnerabilities through my work.

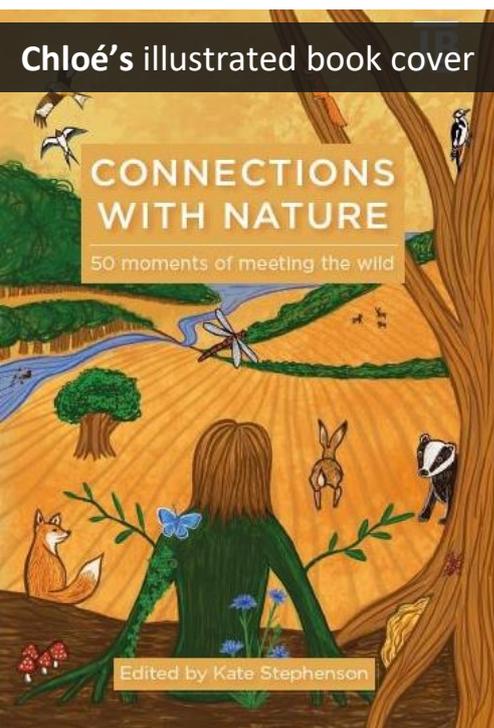
The most important responsibility of all, however, is to do what I can to help care for our environment and its wildlife! This is something we all must do, and the best way is to harness and utilise our skills and passions. By doing so, we will be motivated and engaging, and reach people more effectively. Creative Conservation is not only beautiful; it is a valuable and powerful tool to communicate important messages between people of all ages, genders, and backgrounds.

Who are the main people you have to work with?

Other Creative Conservationists (such as Tiffany Francis-Baker, from whom I first heard the term 'Creative Conservation'), writers, bloggers, charities, and sustainable organisations and magazines.

My art has been used for environmental campaigns, to illustrate my own articles and blogs, to illustrate books by other authors, and in St Albans Museum's 'The Remarkable World of Trees' exhibition.

One of my poems, 'When I Finally Leave This Place', was included in the book ['Connections with Nature'](#), an anthology of nature writing by the Wildlife Blogger Crowd, compiled by the wonderful blogger and conservationist, Kate Stephenson. I also created the cover for the book.



A goldfinch art piece created by Chloé

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What does your day-to-day look like?

My day-to-day is very variable, depending what projects I have on at that time. I work on my editorial projects when I need to, but I also make sure to save some time in my week for creative work. One thing that is absolutely essential to me is time in nature at least once a week, to recharge my batteries, soothe my whirring mind and re-inspire me.

I find that with poetry, I will be walking in nature (often in woodlands) and a couple of lines will come into my head. I'll continue walking, letting the words of the following verses come to me one by one, mouthing them aloud. I'll then sit on a bench to commit my new poem to paper. I'll look at this again at a later date, to make any necessary tweaks so that the poem can be as good as I can get it.

My art tends to happen in the early evenings before dinner, sitting comfortably on the sofa, or on weekend mornings in the same place with the sun streaming through the window. Sometimes I will go outside to sketch trees – one of my favourite subjects – as each has its own individual character.

What was your pathway into your role?

This has always been my true path. However, a lack of self-esteem and expectations from others (and therefore what I thought I "should" do career-wise – i.e. an office job in London) took me away from this for many years. And yet, working in the publishing industry has helped me in many ways. After

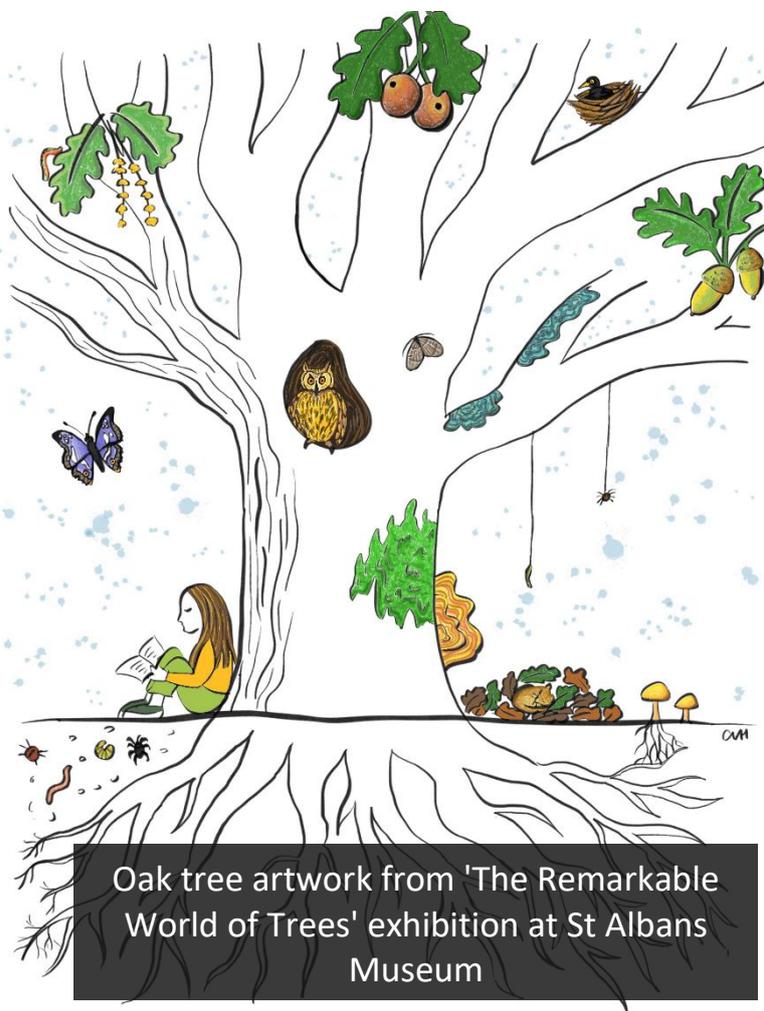
getting a good amount of experience, I was able to go freelance, which gave me more time and flexibility to explore my artistic and poetic urges.

What is the salary range for this type of role?

That's a hard one to answer when it comes to creative roles! It is an unfortunate truth that most of us need to have another role alongside our creative one(s) – one that brings in the money to pay our bills and buy our food.

There are examples of people who do manage to be creative full-time, so it isn't impossible, just tricky. Ultimately though, you have to do it just because you love and believe in it, and because it is part of who you are.

Hopefully in the not-too-distant future, creative pursuits will become more financially viable once they are respected as relevant and essential professions. They have the ability to change minds and culture, after all, and they are needed more than ever in the complicated and confusing world that we live in.



Is a degree essential to your role?

In my opinion, I don't think so. I have a degree in Creative Writing and English Literature, but I don't think this has been essential to what I write these days. I also have an A-Level in Art, but again, I don't think this is necessary to be an artist.

Qualifications are great if they give you confidence, and they can allow you to explore various creative styles. In my experience, though, creativity is incredibly personal and comes from within you – and the desire to create cannot be taught. Therefore, I've found creative courses to be very hit-and-

miss. I've enjoyed them but had to figure out on my own (years and years later) what I could, wanted and needed to do, and how. It took a long time for me to reach this point and was a journey I had to undertake on my own.

What are the most useful skills to have for this role?

The features of every creative person: imagination, the ability to let your mind wander and daydream, observational skills to take in the wonders around you (to inspire both your artistic and written work), dedication, love and passion, and a way with words to communicate your message. Patience is also a very useful quality to have, although I'm still working on that!

Finally, you need to be able to shut out the world and ignore distractions (also very hard at times), to allow yourself the time and space to create.