

“I kind of hate the idea of having a style. I try to stay away from limiting myself to that just because I get really bored super easily.”

Maia Boakye is a multidisciplinary artist currently based in Toronto. They are in their undergrad at the University of Toronto, double-majoring in architecture and visual studies. Boakye’s freelance work has been published in outlets such as *NPR*, *Spotify*, *Facebook*, *The Globe and Mail* and *Vice*.

Boakye has industry experience working with illustration, digital manipulation, sculpture work and photography. Right now, they are moving towards creating more video work, displaying their art, and becoming financially stable through their art and design work.

Here are five tips from a working professional in the art and design world on how to assert yourself as a content creator:

1. Do your research

Give yourself the opportunity to think of ideas and research new concepts. “I was so busy and I wasn’t even feeling satisfied with my ideas,” Boakye says. “I wasn’t coming up with new things because I didn’t have time to think about new things or to research.”

2. Ensure your style is adaptable

Having the ability to accommodate to the client is important when working as a freelancer. “A lot of times companies will ask you to do something a certain way . . . They can’t ask for your work and you give them something in a completely different style,” Boakye says. That said, it is important to push yourself to try a variety of media. “In some way, you have to be consistent. For personal work, the more that I can put out there in different styles, the more people have to choose from.”

3. Take a break and reset

“I had to take a step back and realize, okay, there’s no rush to get anything done,” Boakye says. Throughout their academic and freelance career, they had to learn how to do less. “When I get stuck, I like to do the complete opposite. It’s really fun to just completely change it up.”

4. Know your value as an artist

It’s hard to determine your rates when you’re starting out as a freelancer. Boakye wishes they knew a) when to start charging b) what to start charging. “Learning how to value your work is a really big skill and a really uncomfortable skill. Honestly asking for money is so uncomfortable — and I kind of hate it — but it’s also necessary.”

How to Make it as a Freelancer

Content creator Maia Boakye’s advice on how to make it in the industry while balancing life.

Text by Katelyn O’Brien
Illustration by Maia Boakye

5. Just start

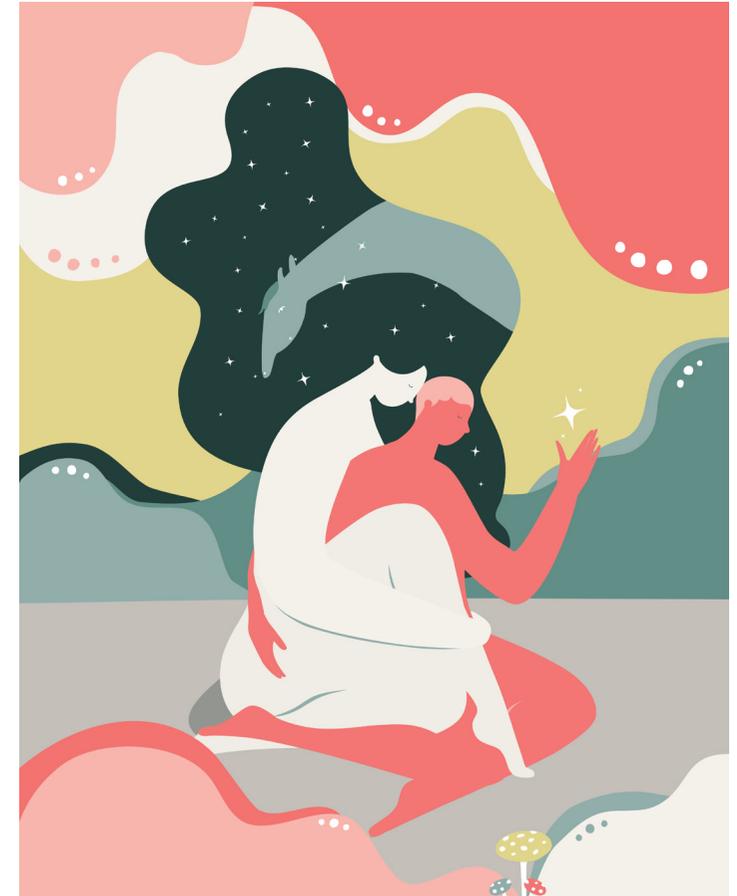
Boakye says, “I think people are always so scared of starting to put work out there because [they’re like] ‘oh I’m not ready, I’m not ready, I can’t publish this stuff’ and I don’t think there’s ever a time you’re ready because you’re always going to be getting better.”

Boakye suggests to just put your work out there. “It was the only way to start doing what I was doing and start making money off my work. I wish I knew to just not be so hesitant about having a starting point and being vulnerable about the fact I was going to constantly be improving,” Boakye says.

Maia’s tips to deal with burnout:

“If you are struggling with burnout, the best thing is to take a break. Some people say travel, you can’t always travel. Go on the subway and ride super far one day and just clear your mind. I like to be so bored sometimes that I have to do something and that’s always helped me with my burnout: take a break, do absolutely nothing, experiment in a new medium, make Jell-O, do anything else, so that you feel ready enough to come back and you can feel clear to make a plan on how you want to restart.”

Boakye adds, “experimentation with completely new things is also a really good way to help with burnout, especially for artists.”



If you want to check out Boakye’s work, visit their website maiaiboakye.com or check them out on Instagram @ghostyboi.