BRITISH
BFDG
FILM
DESIGNERS
GUILD

HOW TO FIND WORK IN THE UK BUSINESS ART DEPT

A basic breakdown of who to ask and what to ask for.

The Film and TV business attracts a multi discipline students and professionals.
All have place amongst the many skills and facets of the industry.

Who is in the Art Dept.

What is a typical Art department crew list in order of hierarchy -

Production Designer (presides over main three teams)

Supervising Art Director	Set Decorator	Construction Manager
Senior Art Director	Property Master	Assist Construction Manager
Concept Artist	Assistant Set Decorator	Construction Co-ordinator
Storyboard Artist	Production Buyer	Construction crew
Art Director	Assistant Production Buyer	
Assistant Art Director	Set Dec Co-ordinator	
Senior Set Designer	Graphic Designer	
Set Designer	Set Dec Assistant / Runner	
Junior Set Designer	Prop crew	
Art Dept Assistant		
Art Dept Runner		

A few of the other derivative titles are -
Art Director Locations
Art Director Vehicles
Art Department Sculptor
Art Department Model Maker
Art Director Stand-by
Art Director Stand-by 2nd Unit
Décor / Lettering Artist
Art Department Archivist
PA Personal Assistants
Drivers
Various assistants

Who to speak to.

Typically the Supervising Art Director does the hiring and crew scheduling, and is the best contact for more senior positions.
If you are new to the business or unsure who to speak too aim for the Art Dept Co-ordinator. Co-ord's usually collect and keep CVs and contacts throughout the film but particularly in the beginning.

How to find out who to speak to.

Contact production personnel in studio rather than crew at home and most likely not working.

The best way to discover what films are being made is to contact the main film studios directly, Pinewood, Shepperton and Elstree. Smaller studios like Ealing and Teddington are harder to get information out of the switchboard, but still worth a try.

When you ring ask for projects in 'Pre-Production' these will be at various states prior to shooting. Once they are at the shooting stage art dept crew tend to reduce as their share of the work is done.

Enquire the name of the Art dept Supervisor or Co-ord and ring them directly. Almost always you will get a pleasant reception even if there is no job opportunity, it's how we all work.

What to ask for.

Most technicians start at the bottom as runner. If you have ability, creative talent and can work well as a team member a slow start won't hamper your career. Certain film and TV skills are learnt in the job. Starting straight in as Art Director, if you have never worked in the business before, is difficult. You would be an expensive gamble which few would take, should you be unknown or never had worked with comparable teams. If you have no prior experience with the British Film Business I always recommend starting at the bottom as Art Dept assistant. You will have talent and shine through your work so promotion will follow, along with knowledge of how the business works. Even with technical knowledge of similar trades in Architecture and CAD; the film business has methods of encountered nowhere else.

What is a good method of contact?

Talking face to face or a phone call beats an email every time. All senior members receive a lot of emails request work and advice, many ending up in spam. Follow up a call or interview with an email, but not first contact.

Try to visit them to show your portfolio to get advice and get noticed.

Having trouble getting started?

Work experience contract is unpaid but does build contacts, CV and knowledge.

Contact the Art Dept Co-ord to see if the production allows this.

Contacts.

Kays production guide and The Knowledge are publications that print names, titles and contact details. These book can be found in larger public libraries. Screen International prints productions that are currently shooting. BECTU have an 'Early Bird' production listing for members only. Plus various companies that are subscription based print production/chase lists.