

# BTEC Ambassador Samo

## Artist, creative force and an advocate for inclusion



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*Samo is a full-time Artist, Street Artist and Activist for the trans community. Samo studied a BTEC in Art and Design at Alton College, now part of Havant & South Downs College. He hails from Southsea and still lives and works in that area.*

*Samo's current project – a book called 'I Exist' showcases and tells the stories of people in the trans community.*

*We spoke to him about his education journey and how his BTEC helped prepare him for a career in the creative arts.*

My art carries the message to bring hope and spread love, whilst opening dialogue and educating about transgender issues.

### How did you become an artist?

I've always been creative and have been drawing and painting from a young age. My passion and how I could communicate my feelings with the world, was always through my art. This has been the narrative of my life up until the present day - using artwork to connect and communicate with others.

In 2016 there was a powerful change in my work as I came out as transgender, exploring identity and documenting my transition through my art. This led to me painting large scale murals across the world, including as a sponsored artist at WorldPride 2019 in New York City.

### How did your BTEC help prepare you for your career?

My BTEC in Art and Design allowed me to explore a whole range of materials and media to express my ideas, further opening my creative imagination and expanding possibilities.

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The support and guidance I received to transfer feelings into artwork was a fundamental part of the BTEC course, self-expression is an artist's language. I also learnt a lot about art history, discovering artists that resonated with me and becoming well educated in my field. Without our history, we just wouldn't be where we are. These teachings allowed me to further develop my own unique style.

I really enjoyed being able to express myself through different media that I'd never previously had access to. I was able to explore different creative practices, like life drawing, and this was when I really found a passion for the human body and anatomy. These practices helped me to better understand my work and myself, playing a fundamental part in my art today.

### **Would you recommend your job to others?**

Absolutely! Being creative is so fundamental in our purpose, it is

deeply rewarding and can open your world to so many opportunities and adventures, as well as different people and cultures.

Being in the creative industry has allowed me to travel to beautiful and interesting places around the world, connecting with many people from all walks of life. I get to do what I love every day. So yes, I would highly recommend a career in the arts and creative field. If you have a passion for it, go for it!

### **Tell us about your current project**

I have just released my first book 'I EXIST', this is the first ever arts book to celebrate the beauty of trans bodies. I continue to paint murals and create work and illustrations that celebrate the LGBTQ+ and trans community.

### **Are you positive about what's ahead for you?**

I'm passionate about education and inclusion, which is a huge driver behind this project, being a voice for an under-represented community and creating visibility within the art world, where it has historically been lacking. I am excited to create change and inspire our younger generations to live inclusively and express openly.