

AUTUMN 2019

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PRESENTED BY DAVID JONES

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The art of finding
your inner creative

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express yourself

Science claims we become less creative as we age, so how can we retain that youthful sense of curiosity and exploration? As NADIA BAILEY discovers, it's about redefining the meaning of creativity itself.



“Every child is an artist, with imagination and the artistic instinct,” said early-20th-century poet Percy MacKaye. “Life stamps these out.” Harsh but fair, his words still ring true today.

Although we begin our lives delighting in our creative impulses, as we grow up we obligingly put away childish things and focus on more serious pursuits. Play becomes a silly indulgence, exploration is abandoned in favour of productivity, and curiosity – once a virtue – is deemed acceptable only if there’s a KPI attached. Ask a child why the sky is blue and they’ll give you a dozen brilliantly original theories to account for the phenomenon. Ask an adult the same question? They’ll Google it.

For many of us, our strongest yet frustratingly vaguest desire is to be more creative. But we have no idea how we might rediscover the sense of curiosity and exploration that flowed so easily when we

were children. The stumbling steps we do take towards creative output feel embarrassing or amateurish. Pre-empting our own failures, we give up before we’ve even started. Is it true that we become less creative as we age? Does our ability to come up with transformative ideas diminish as we grow older?

“For the most part,” says author and creativity specialist Paulina Larocca, “this is a myth.” Larocca holds a Master of Science in Creativity and Change Leadership, is a graduate of Amsterdam’s THINK Creative Leadership School and teaches creativity at philosopher Alain de Botton’s The School of Life – which is to say she’s someone who has spent the past 15 years thinking about creativity not as a fluffy, romantic notion but as a teachable skill.

By her count, our potential to be creative doesn’t lessen as we age. It’s just that we have so many other tools at our disposal that creativity sometimes takes a back seat. “As adults, we have