

After work

Books and webinars to check out
page 62-63

Rate AT magazine and WIN
page 65

Carillion's shocking collapse
page 66

THERE'S AN ART TO IT

In addition to running her own accountancy business, Georgia Duffee FMAAT spends her time volunteering for The Arts Society

WORDS ANNIE MAKOFF-CLARK





Georgia Duffee started her own practice, Benedetto Accountants & Tax, in 2016

Art and accountancy aren't exactly traditional bedfellows. One usually requires creativity and spontaneity, while the other relies on accuracy and statistics – and numbers, of course. But for AAT Licensed Accountant Georgia Duffee, who has a genuine passion for both, the two disciplines aren't necessarily polar opposites.

Duffee takes her inspiration from the mathematical paintings and drawings of renowned 15th-century Renaissance artist, Leonardo Da Vinci. Da Vinci frequently worked alongside his partner and collaborator, mathematician Luca Pacioli, who is often described as the father of accounting.

"There are a lot of scientific elements to Da Vinci's work," Duffee says. "He would have been influenced by Luca Pacioli, who was thought to be the first to introduce the concept of double-entry bookkeeping."

But in fact, it was merchant Benedetto Cotrugli whose 1458 published work on bookkeeping and accountancy pre-dated that of Pacioli's 1494 work by several decades. Benedetto also inspired the name of Duffee's business, Benedetto Accountants & Tax.

"There's accidental symmetry with the dates too," she says. "Benedetto was born in 1416 and my company was founded 600 years later, in 2016."

Becoming her own boss

Duffee's decision to set up her own practice at just 21 was borne out of frustration with previous accountancy firms. Her first employer never responded to her request for a pay review once she had qualified with AAT. Her second job, although a "wonderful company" initially, changed for the worse when it was bought by a Top 100 firm. Duffee went from managing a 25-client portfolio in a close-knit firm, to working behind the scenes in a departmentalised corporate environment without meeting any clients.

The last straw came when she ended up working six-day weeks in her third job while juggling additional studies. "I took some time off in the end, because it was really getting to me," she recalls. "I hardly saw my family and friends, and my work-life balance was skewed." Duffee hoped she'd return to work refreshed with a new lease of life, but it wasn't to be. "On my first day back, I remember just sitting at my desk thinking, 'I can't do this for the rest of my career'."

It was her turning point. She enrolled on AAT's *Be Your Own Boss* course and the rest is – quite literally – (art) history.

Duffee says that starting her own practice has freed her up to do what she really enjoys, such as rediscovering her passion for the arts. "I've been trying to visit all the famous masterpieces around the world,

which I usually do around my birthday. I've seen Leonardo Da Vinci's *'The Last Supper'* in Milan, a Van Gogh exhibition at Tate Britain, and I've visited Salvador Dali's house in Portlligat in Catalonia. I haven't seen any Picasso yet, but that's next on my list – I love his artwork."

BE YOUR OWN BOSS



Download the guide here:

www.aat.org.uk/prod/s3fs-public/assets/AAT_Be_Your_Own_Boss_guide.pdf

Shorts

BOOK	BOOK	BOOK	BOOK	BOOK	BOOK	BOOK
<i>The Squiggly Career: Ditch the Ladder, Discover Opportunity, Design Your Career</i> by Helen Tupper and Sarah Ellis (out now) Career ladders and jobs for life are a thing of the past.	<i>Reach The Top In Finance</i> by Sally Percy (out now) This book will help you develop a range of skills that will support your personal and professional growth in the finance sector.	<i>Money to Byrne</i> by David Byrne (out now) Under the title of CEO, Byrne was unknowingly employed as the fall guy for an elaborate scam carried out by "Euro Fx".	<i>Cracking The Leadership Code</i> by Alain Hunkins (out now) A practical tool kit to help you learn how to communicate, influence and persuade others more effectively.	<i>How to Speak Money</i> by John Lancaster (out now) Money is our global language. Yet so few of us can speak it. This book sets out to decode the world of finance.	<i>No Filter</i> by Sarah Frier (out now) In her first book, Sarah Frier shares the inside story of how the popular social media app Instagram transformed business, celebrity and our culture.	



Together, we're benefiting other people's lives by making art available to all."

More recently, Duffee started volunteering at personal development events company, Best You Expo, which brings together health and wellbeing companies across the UK to showcase industry best practice.

All this extra work has meant, of course, that Duffee's work-life balance has become rather skewed again. But, as she points out, it's better to have a slightly skewed work-life balance working for yourself than working for someone else. And volunteering is something she's always done.

Her first volunteering stint at age 13 was in a local shop. Since then, she's volunteered at Mind and various music festivals, including Village Green Festival, as well as being secretary at her local AAT Essex branch.

"Time management is key. When you volunteer, people have to respect you're giving up your free time, and you have to respect that too. Make sure you get your work done, but know where your limit is. It's knowing when to communicate. You can't burn yourself out in the process of trying to help people."

Duffee is passionate about helping people and making an impact. "You only have one life," she says. "So do what you can to make a positive impact on the lives of other people." ■

Helping a good cause

Currently, Duffee manages her business alongside volunteering as treasurer for The Arts Society at the Greater London branch. The charity organises events and study days to bring people together who wouldn't otherwise access the arts. Duffee is responsible for everything finance-related – from preparing accounts, to paying invoices to suppliers and venues. And she loves that it enables her to immerse herself in the art world, while using her accountancy skills to help a good cause.

"The general age demographic in The Arts Society is a lot older than me, so everyone says I bring

"When you volunteer people have to respect you are giving up your free time, and you have to respect that too. Know where your limit is."

the average age down quite a bit," says Duffee. "I absolutely love volunteering there. I've learnt so much from them, and being treasurer helps fine-tune my skills. I'm helping them as much as they're helping me.

WEBINAR

Coronavirus Webinars
(www.fsb.org.uk)
The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) runs through the financial help available for SMEs and the self-employed.

WEBINAR

CIPFA Leadership and Influence
(www.cipfa.org)
Covers the factors that will help leaders in any industry develop a powerful platform for influencing their seniors and peers.

WEBINAR

Bitesize Briefing
(www.icaew.com)
ICAEW provides an overview of the factors to consider when deciding whether Covid-19 is an adjusting or non-adjusting event after the reporting period.

WEBINAR

Xero Espresso Webinar
(www.xero.com)
A 45-minute introductory tour of Xero's key features, covering MTD, bank feed setup, VAT, reporting, invoicing and mobile.

COVID-19

Read AAT's latest Coronavirus (Covid-19) updates:
aat.org.uk/about-aat/coronavirus-update

