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s in funding

tuition fees rise from the current cap of £3,290 a year to £7,000 a year from 2012, which, together with living costs, could see students leave university with debts of £30,000 to £40,000. Fees and loans would continue to be available upfront, with graduates starting to repay their loans once they are earning more than £21,000—an increase from the current threshold of £15,000.

Postgraduate institutions such as the Royal College of Art are also expected to be affected by cuts, although the Browne report suggested postgraduate funding should largely remain the same. Public funding is already non-existent for many postgraduate arts courses. “We are going to be called upon to make cuts,” said Paul Thompson, the rector at the Royal College of Art. “But small specialist institutions at postgraduate level, particularly those committed to excellence, will not see all their funding abolished.”

The average cost of a one-year MA, including fees and living costs, totals around £16,000. A report published on 29 October by the National Union of Students, which polled 2,500 postgraduates, found that finance is a major factor for 70% of those who studied full-time. The 67% of respondents who are entirely self-funded are most likely to have considered leaving or suspending their studies.

Although the repayment threshold for undergraduate loans is due to rise to £21,000, an entry-level museum curatorial role, which requires a postgraduate degree, starts at around £22,000. The starting salary for an assistant in a commercial gallery is around £16,000. **Anny Shaw**

Flatpack studio on the move

Showing ingenuity in a time of austerity, Polish-born, London-based video and installation artist Marcin Dudek has constructed his own studio on a rooftop in the East End. Made from wooden packing pallets, the “Screen House” is located above the La Ruche centre, a gallery and studio complex near London’s Brick Lane. Dudek sees the building as a hybrid structure that can act as a studio, an exhibition pavilion and a living space. Designed like a piece of flatpack furniture, the 5m by 4m studio can be taken down and reassembled in just over a week. Ease of movement may prove to be the studio’s most effective quality as La Ruche is in danger of closing owing to a 2012 London Olympics redevelopment project. Free to move, Dudek plans to invite other artists for residencies. As a potential exhibition venue, London’s Waterside Project Space and Matt’s Gallery have expressed an interest in recreating the studio as an indoor installation.

Richard Unwin

