

ROMY, 27

The Enterprising Wildcard



- L Studying as an independent
- L Lives alone with her cat
- L Low-income; no access to family finances
- L Moved to Montreal for its affordable tuition and lower cost of living

Clever and resourceful, Romy is a DIY queen, with a unique style that's unmistakably her own. Having immigrated to Canada, she is working with a smaller support network and limited finances. As a result, she's developed a self-reliant character and a mind for novel connections. She leverages these two traits for her mixed-media art practice, personal studies and DIY projects, which allow her to take pleasure in self-expression, learn about the topics she's interested in, and have nice things on a budget. Much of her time is spent working to pay her living and educational expenses. With student loans and no financial safety net, a stable income is vital, making contract work and unpaid internships less accessible to her. She prefers to do things on her own terms and schedule, often working alone or with one or two close friends.

QUALITY

AUTHENTICITY

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

PERSONAL EXPRESSION

CURIOSITY

AUTONOMY

ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

REUSE

"I like making because it lets me have things that I want which I either can't find or can't afford."

"Work and school really drain my energy. If I don't have large stretches of time where I'm bored and have nothing else to do, then I usually distract myself instead of finding or making time for personal productivity."

"I'm pretty limited in my capacity to scale up individual projects. It's not don't want to make more stuff or make a business with it, but I don't know how to do that and I have a crippling fear of investment, failure, and new things that I'm not immediately skilled at."

GOOD AT

L Getting inventive with what's available

- L Hacking, repurposing, alterations
- L Planning and organization
- L Thrifting and trading (barter)
- L Teaching herself things

MOTIVATED BY

- L Creative impulses
- L Joy, beauty, pleasure
- L Connecting with others through craft and knowledge-sharing
- L Saving money

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Technical difficulties
- L Lack of tools / resources
- L Not having anyone to ask for help
- L Mental and physical exhaustion

HELPED BY

- L Spare time and disposable income
- L Internet tutorials
- L Free, salvaged, or gifted materials
- L Borrowed tools
- L Platforms (ie. pop-up markets, trading apps)





- L Recently graduated
- L Lives with his parents and little sister
- L Low-income; financial support from middle-class family
- L Studied away from home but returned to get involved with local issues

Gio has a sharp mind and a way with words. An avid reader of both books and current events, he's usually the first to bring up injustices or scandals with friends and family, who may not immediately recognize the stakes. While Gio grew up middle-class and thus sheltered from any deep sense of financial insecurity, his neighbors and childhood best friend were not so well-off. Watching his friends struggle affected him deeply, igniting his passion for social issues. Gio's time in university was marked by good grades and a high degree of critical engagement, but also a mounting unease about life outside the protective confines of large learning institutions. It doesn't feel right that he earn himself a comfortable tenure-track position when his friends are stuck struggling against the forces he's writing about from afar. For this reason, Gio wants to work with social movements, arming them with the knowledge they need to succeed.

CONTEXTUAL AWARENESS

LITERACY

ACCESSIBILITY

INCLUSIVITY

COMPASSION

SOLIDARITY

INTERSECTIONALITY

PLACE-BASED

"We need people to feel empowered and connected to issues, and for those people to have a voice at the table."

"I encounter a lot of disgruntled or unsatisfied people who care a lot about social and environmental issues but who don't necessarily have the language or educational background to be able to talk about the issues in depth."

"Reading helps me think deeper than taken-for-granted dichotomies, systems, ways of seeing and relating..."

GOOD AT

L Directing action with knowledge

- L Communicating dense theory in relatable terms; teaching
- L Reading, writing, comprehension
- L Engaging others in discourse and making them feel heard

MOTIVATED BY

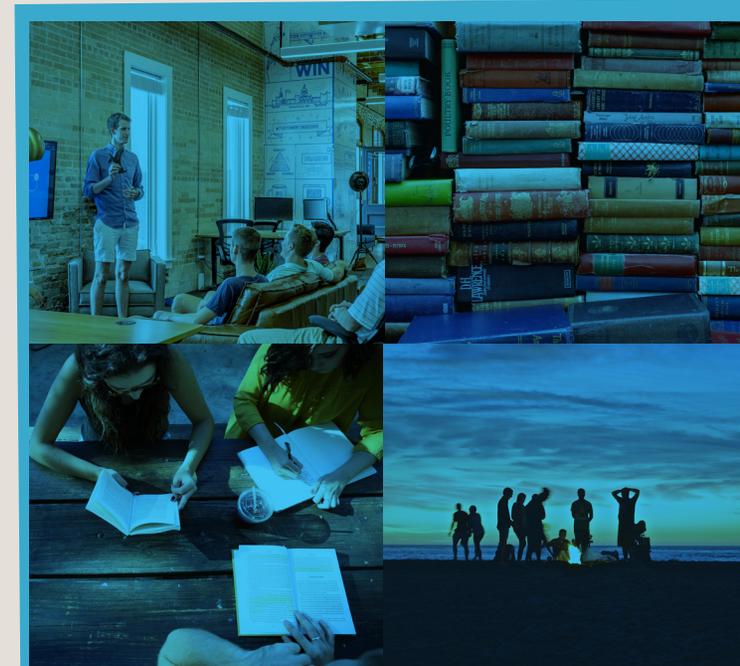
- L Inspiring thought leadership
- L Responsibility to people and place
- L Wanting to engage with the world in a way that is ethical rather than self-interested
- L Helping others find their voice

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Ivory towers
- L Movements rendered ineffective by incomplete knowledges
- L Paid work taking precedence over pro-bono work

HELPED BY

- L Open access research and scholarship
- L Having free time for voluntary work
- L Politically-engaged friends and collaborators



JULIA, 28

The System-Savvy
Subversive



- L Extensive education
- L Lives with her best friend
- L Good stable job, but a bit underpaid
- L Moved around growing up, finished school in Montreal and has lots of connections here

Julia is a passionate nonconformist, though you wouldn't know it at first glance. A chameleon, she prefers to keep an accessible and relatable image, as this allows her to move between different circles, sampling diverse perspectives in search of multiplicity and nuance. This constant exposure to differing views and complex dynamics makes for an empathetic, unpretentious and genuine personality whose work prospects are always overflowing - though this is also due to how capable she is, having honed her skills through varied learning experiences and community involvement. Julia is a responsible doer, implicating herself in the large-scale societal issues that others may feel too intimidated to approach. She's not afraid to hop on potentialities, take on tasks and get things done, especially if it involves working with friends and other inspired doers.

BUILDING FOR / WITH PEOPLE

INTEGRITY

PARTICIPATION

RESPECT

OPEN LISTENING

PEACE

CONSENSUS

CROSS-CULTURAL POLLINATION

"I feel accomplished whenever my team feels accomplished."

"I'll take something up if I like the people doing it and it means I can build something with a new group of people. I'm not going to build anything alone. And doing it with others is much more broadening and engaging."

"I don't like that everything is about market forces all the time. If I can help the process of doing things in society that are not profit-driven and that can't be brought forth by a market system, that's something I want to encourage."

GOOD AT

- L **Using existing frameworks for progressive ends**
- L Seeing how the other side thinks
- L Strategy, planning, budgets
- L Proposals / grant-writing
- L Communication

MOTIVATED BY

- L Empathy and community life
- L Wanting to do her part
- L Learning by working with motivated and diverse groups of people
- L Future work prospects

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Taking on more work than she has energy for
- L Overbearing personalities that don't listen to others
- L Corporate business norms

HELPED BY

- L Institutional connections
- L Grants and subsidies
- L Smart, active friends who inspire her
- L Gratitude, acknowledgement



RAF, 23

The Experimental Creative



- L Studied on and off and enjoyed the access to resources, but prefers the school of life
- L Unstable income, unique arrangements, somehow makes it work
- L Lives communally with four roommates
- L Based between Montreal and Barcelona; travels often

Raf is a self-described weirdo with an ever-evolving roster of projects and collaborations on the go. He marches to the beat of his own drum, which is part of why formal education didn't really work out for him. He briefly studied philosophy, but found the theoretical discourse too dry and boring for his tastes. His experience with art school was much the same, though he credits a semester-long study abroad with getting him out into the world and awakening his love of travel and cultural exchange. As a result of his regular immersion in different societies and worldviews, Raf often finds himself questioning norms, dreaming of alternatives, and wanting to test his ideas in practice. He derives great support from the lively and diverse crew of people in his orbit.

RE-IMAGINATION

OPEN-ENDED EXPLORATION

CONNECTING THROUGH ART

ADAPTIBILITY

CRITICAL REFLECTION

FEELINGS / SENSATIONS

PRACTICE-LED

“I’m a big fan of open-ended processes with no set expectations. This is really what I need in order to be able to experiment and get to know my materials, which can’t be forced.”

“My friends and I are working on a competition entry right now. It’s not so much about winning for us as it is a way for us to deepen and put into practice our values and opinions and explore ideas in a collective and unstructured fashion.”

“Creative work takes up space in my brain equal to paid work despite being optional, but also doesn’t feel like a hobby or spare time activity.”

GOOD AT

- L **Materializing novel ideas**
- L Jamming and improvising
- L Working amidst uncertainty, testing limits
- L Drafting plans, building stuff
- L Inspiring, entertaining, networking

MOTIVATED BY

- L Creative freedom and expression
- L Joy, adventure, play
- L Sense of relating / belonging
- L Learning through doing
- L Seeding future opportunities

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Financial pressures, costly resources
- L Having to define and deliver specific outcomes
- L Lack of trust

HELPED BY

- L Friends, collaborators, patrons
- L Sub-culture: underground spaces, events & communities
- L Accessible tools, free materials
- L Call-outs, competitions
- L Flexible schedules and expectations
- L Funding for arts / research-creation



ALEX, 19

The Dedicated Organizer



- L Student leader, barely passing classes
- L Low-income, student loans
- L Flat-sharing with three friends from student life and their two cats
- L Loves Montreal, fears its gentrification

Alex will probably be the reason the next generation enjoys one right or another, though this priceless contribution will likely go unacknowledged. Though they study and enjoy their classes immensely, the call of direct action and grassroots organizing usually ends up taking precedence over grades - especially since Alex also works a day job and something's got to give, though sadly, this is sometimes Alex's mental health. Their student loans are part of what makes this impossible combination possible, but that this amounts to Alex limiting their own freedom by skimming money off their future earnings to protect freedoms in the present is something they try not to think about. By far the most essential component is their support network of friends and partners-in-dissent, who make sure to show up and help take some weight off their shoulders whenever they're cramming for a test or taking a break for self-care.

TAKING ACTION

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MUTUAL AID

EMPOWERMENT

DEMOCRACY

JUSTICE

SOCIAL EQUALITY

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

“At the start when the movement was first growing, it felt like an unstoppable force. Responsibilities varied and were as many as there would be in a 200-person company, but not as hierarchical; everyone was allowed to choose their responsibilities and they were voluntary.”

“I would have liked to have developed a robust project around participative democracy, but we were a small team with more work than we could do and nobody wanted to join us after the pandemic disrupted the movement and caused everyone to scatter.”

“I chose to be involved mainly, almost exclusively with people I felt comfortable with.”

GOOD AT

- L **Mobilizing the masses**
- L Holding power accountable
- L Horizontal organization
- L Outreach, community-building, facilitation
- L Planning and executing campaigns

MOTIVATED BY

- L Love, compassion
- L Deepening bonds through struggle
- L The dynamic energy of countercultural movements
- L Being on the right side of history

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Power abuses, pain of others
- L Over-extension and burn-out
- L Loud, insensitive people
- L Limited lobbying power
- L Little to no financial resources

HELPED BY

- L Close friends and community allies
- L Movement support, campaign wins
- L Places to gather: outdoor public space, community / social centers
- L Crowdfunding, donations, fee-levies



SOPHIE, 31

The Practical Ecologist



- L 1.5 degrees, diplomas, certificates
- L Shares expenses with her partner
- L Low-income, low spending
- L Loves cities and small towns equally but detests the suburbs

Sophie is a treasure trove of ecological knowledge and practices. When it comes to living sustainably, she does everything she can. Moved by her dedication, Sophie's friends and family try to do their part as well, and while it makes her happy to see the people in her life monitoring their impacts or opting for more responsible purchases, it doesn't feel like enough given the sheer extent of the devastation unfolding all around her. Climate change, the sixth great extinction, habitat destruction, deforestation - you name it, she's heard about it, and probably cried herself to sleep over it too. She isn't entirely sure what to do about it all, but she's trying to be present with it and take things one step at a time. Less inclined for structured learning environments, Sophie prefers experiential learning and working with others, who usually like working with her too, for her authenticity, benevolence, and big-picture perspective makes for easy friends.

GRATITUDE

HARMONY

STEWARDSHIP

ECOLOGICAL WELLBEING

CARE

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

ZERO WASTE

HOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE

"It's fun and interesting growing plants and eating them, caretaking for them and beautifying our spaces with them."

"This last summer I spent two months volunteering at an eco-village, learning through doing and being in a place."

"I used to drive out to the boonies and do ecological restoration work - pulling invasives, seeding native grasses, that kind of thing - but after a while I got jaded. It just felt like projects weren't sustainable whenever our economic system didn't let us tackle larger tracks of land and only wealthy old white people could be involved."

GOOD AT

- L **Caring for more-than-humans**
- L Relational thinking
- L Teaching and inspiring others
- L Gardening, farm work, permaculture
- L Ecological restoration

MOTIVATED BY

- L Love, sense of connection with land
- L Attunement to eco-entanglement
- L Joy of caretaking for plants & animals
- L Curiosity, experiential learning
- L Community, commensality, sharing food

FRUSTRATED BY

- L Ecological degradation
- L Social exclusion
- L Class inequality making sustainability inaccessible
- L Money always taking priority

HELPED BY

- L Mentors and supportive friends
- L Space to grow in the city: yards, community gardens, urban farms
- L Borrowed tools, free food
- L Access to a car

