CREATIVITY CONNECTS:

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS AFFECTING U.S. ARTISTS

by **CENTER FOR CULTURAL INNOVATION**
for **NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the demographics of our country shift, the population of artists is growing and diversifying, as are norms about who is considered an artist by the arts sector and the general public. Artists are working in different ways—in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary contexts, as artists in non-arts settings, and as entrepreneurs in business and society. Bureau of Labor Statistics and U.S. Census national data sets on artists have become more refined in the past decade, but arguably do not capture information on the full range of artists working today. Artists that may be omitted from these data sets include those who may not seek income from their work and those who use their artistry as part of another occupation. As the nature of artistic practice evolves, many of the existing systems that train and support artists are not keeping pace.

Artists are always influenced by larger socio-economic trends and respond to them in how they make their work and construct their lives. This research found four main trends influencing artists today:

1. ***Technology is profoundly altering the context and economics of artists' work.***

   New technological tools and social media have influenced the landscape for creation, distribution, and financing of creative work. There are benefits for many artists, including lowered costs of creating and the ability to find collaborators and new markets. There are also significant new challenges, such as an increasingly crowded marketplace, copyright issues, and disruptions to traditional revenue models.

2. ***Artists share challenging economic conditions with other segments of the workforce.***

   Making a living as an artist has never been easy, but broader economic trends such as rising costs of living, greater income inequality, high levels of debt, and insufficient protections for "gig economy" workers are putting increasing pressure on artists' livelihoods. Artists also face unique challenges in accessing and aggregating capital to propel their businesses and build sustainable lives.

3. ***Structural inequities in the artists' ecosystem mirror those in society more broadly.***

   Race-, gender- and ability-based disparities that are pervasive in our society are equally prevalent in both the nonprofit and commercial arts sectors. Despite the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity of the country and the broadening array of cultural traditions being practiced at expert levels, the arts ecosystem continues to privilege a relatively narrow band of aesthetic approaches.

4. ***Training and funding systems are not keeping pace with artists' evolving needs and opportunities.***

   Artist training and funding systems have not caught up to the hybrid and varied ways that artists are working today. Artist-training programs are not adequately teaching artists the non-arts skills they need to support their work (business practices, entrepreneurship, and marketing) nor how to effectively apply their creative skills in a range of contexts. Funding systems also lag in responding to the changing ways that artists are working today.

"We have an opportunity right now to really change how our culture values art, creativity, and artists themselves.… We can do this by being an integral part of building new, more equitable and sustainable structures and systems that work for not only artists, but for lots of other people as well. To capture this opportunity, we need to look beyond small artist-specific solutions to systems-level problems, and engage in the bigger, more urgent questions of our time."

– Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts

Artists are responding to evolving conditions and developing new skills and ways to structure their work. There are also entities, both within the arts and beyond, that are working to address conditions for broader constituencies that share some of artists' challenges, such as burdensome debt.

The six-part analytical framework of support for artists that the Urban Institute developed as part of its 2003 study, *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, remains relevant and useful today. Artists still need **training**, **information**, **markets**, **material supports**, **networks**, and **validation**. While positive change has occurred in many of these areas, all of these important supports for artists' work are still necessary areas of focus. However, the current research suggests that greater attention must be paid to larger structural issues and trends influencing the overall context in which artists live and work. Only by addressing the challenges facing artists at the systems level will we truly enable our growing and increasingly diverse population of artists to thrive and contribute fully to a creative and vibrant society.

Five main priorities for future work emerged from the research. Action in these areas could move conditions for artists in a positive direction:

1. **Articulate and measure the benefits of artists and creative work to societal health and well-being.**

2. **Address artists' income insecurity as part of larger workforce efforts.**

3. **Address artists' debt and help build their assets.**

4. **Create 21st-century training systems.**

5. **Upgrade systems and structures that support artists.**

Addressing these priorities requires aligning artists' interests with those of other people facing similar challenges and collaborating with broader movements for social and economic change.
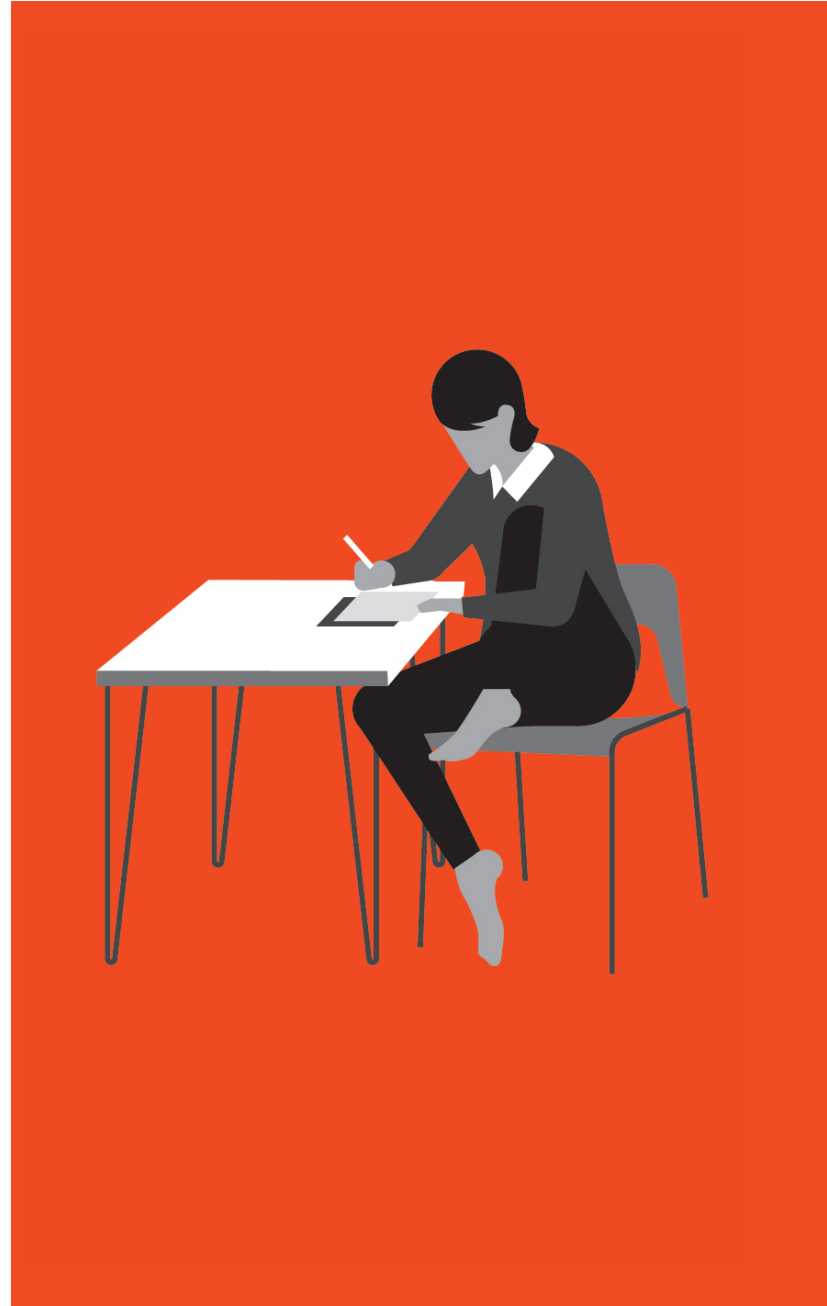
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

As part of its 50th anniversary observation, the National Endowment for the Arts in 2015 launched Creativity Connects,[1] a multipronged effort to show how arts-based creativity intersects with and enriches other facets of life in the U.S. As part of the initiative, NEA partnered with the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI), a leading artist support organization, to conduct this national study on current conditions for artists and the trends affecting their ability to create work and contribute to their communities. In addition, NEA piloted a new grant opportunity (Art Works: Creativity Connects) that supports partnerships between arts organizations and non-arts organizations, and developed an interactive web portal (to be launched in September 2016) that visualizes how the arts connect to the U.S. creative ecosystem.

Artists are a vital part of every community in the U.S., contributing in multiple ways to the quality of our daily lives and to our economic and social well-being. Artists create the works of music, poetry, theater, visual art, film, dance, architecture, and craft that help shape our perceptions of the world and connect us to our multiple heritages and common humanity. Artists' work inspires new ways of thinking and adds beauty and meaning to everyday experience. Artists play critical roles as community leaders, giving shape to community identity and voice to community concerns and aspirations. Artists are inextricably linked to the broader cultural sector and to the creative industries, and they help propel other parts of the economy as well. Everywhere they work and in their various capacities—in cultural institutions, schools, community centers, and entrepreneurial enterprises; in public spaces, in virtual worlds, and in private studios; producing tangible objects and guiding creative processes—artists are critical to social, civic, and business innovation.

The goal of *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists* was to examine current and evolving conditions for how artists live and work. The world has changed significantly over the past decade, in ways that have important impacts on artists and creative practice. New technology has altered all of our lives, and has affected how artistic work is created, accessed, and supported. Creativity and creative processes are increasingly valued by businesses, civic leaders, and the general public. The U.S. has rebounded from the recession, but the economy has fundamentally changed. Income inequality continues to grow, and more workers in other fields are now supporting themselves through the "gig economy," a way that many artists have worked for a long time. The demographics of our country are shifting, with growing Latino and Asian-American communities, and expanding populations of new immigrants, multi-racial youth, and aging Baby Boomers. There is now no racial majority in two states and 22 U.S. cities, and the entire nation will move in this direction in the next 20 years. The range of aesthetic forms and cultural expressions has exploded, driven by an increasingly diverse population, the imaginations of young people, developments in technology, and other factors. The growing cultural diversity of our population also increases the urgency of addressing issues of equity, access, and representation in all sectors, the arts included.

These trends invite us to think in new ways about artists, the value of their work, and their relationship to communities.

Methodology

This research project builds on a 2003 report by the Urban Institute (UI), *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*.[2] The UI study was an unprecedented and comprehensive examination of the needs and interests of artists. Among other contributions, the UI study developed a conceptual framework for understanding the field of artists and identified six domains that affect artists' ability to do their work: validation; demand/markets; material supports such as space, equipment, employment, and funding; training and professional development; community and networks; and information.

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1   "Creativity Connects"™ is used with permission from Crayola LLC.

2   Maria Rosario Jackson, et al., *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, Urban Institute, 2003.

The Urban Institute defined six domains that affect artists' ability to do their work. This framework applies to artists in different artistic disciplines or cultural traditions, different geographies, and different stages of their career.

Validation	The ascription of value to what artists do and make.
Demands and markets	Society's appetite for artists and what they do, and markets that provide financial compensation.
Material supports	Access to the financial and physical resources artists need for their work (employment, insurance and similar benefits, awards, space, equipment, and materials).
Training	Undergraduate and graduate education, apprenticeships and other non-academic training, and lifelong learning opportunities.
Communities and networks	Connections to other artists and people in the cultural sector, and to people outside the cultural sector.
Information	Information about artists and for artists.

Over the past 13 years, the UI framework has informed funders, policymakers, artist support organizations, scholars, and others interested in the creative work of artists and how to enlarge their creative contributions at local, regional, and national levels. The UI study spurred numerous initiatives to build the support structure for artists, including Leveraging Investments in Creativity (2003-2013), United States Artists, Chicago Artists Resources, the Bay Area Fund for Artists Matching Commissions Program, and a variety of other programs across the country.

Creativity Connects used the UI report as a starting reference and explored major changes in conditions for artists since 2003. The study methodology included the following activities:

1. **In-depth interviews** with more than 65 people including artists, heads of leading arts schools, cultural institution leaders, artist service organization staff, public and private sector funders, scholars, and others;

2. **Ten Regional Roundtable discussions** that brought together more than 250 people in different parts of the country, including artists, funders, arts entrepreneurs, service organization leaders and other cultural leaders, commercial designers, community development experts, and others;

3. **A literature review** of more than 300 research papers, conference proceedings, articles, books, and other relevant publications on artists and trends affecting artists;

4. **An online research blog**, http://Creativz.us, which commissioned 18 essays on relevant topics by field leaders (copies of which can be found in Appendix 3), and solicited responses from the public through a social media campaign; and

5. **A convening of 30 field experts** with diverse perspectives to vet preliminary findings.

Through these various activities, the research team explored a set of key research questions:

- *How have the conditions for artists changed over the past decade?*

- *Are the current structures of support keeping pace with what artists need to succeed in their life and work?*

- *How are artists adapting to changing conditions and how are support structures evolving to meet their needs?*

- *What will strengthen the ecosystem of support, better enabling artists and creative workers to generate artistic work, live sustainable lives and contribute to their communities?*

The research team defined the population of artists for this study as adults who:

- Have expert artistic skills;

- Received training or education in an artistic discipline or tradition (whether through institutional or community-based pathways);

- Are actively engaged in creating artwork they share with others; and

- Utilize their artistic skills to derive income, further their creative work, or contribute to their community.

The study sought information about artists working in and across multiple sectors and contexts, including those working in nonprofit, commercial, public, community-based, and informal arts settings, as well as those working within or in partnership with non-arts sectors.

PART 1: SHIFTS IN THE ARTIST POPULATION AND THE WAYS ARTISTS WORK

In looking at shifts in the artist population and the ways artists work over the past decade, four primary findings emerged:

- The population of artists is growing and diversifying, and norms about who is considered an artist are changing;

- Substantial numbers of artists now work in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary ways;

- Many artists are finding work as artists in non-arts contexts; and

- Artists are pursuing new opportunities to work entrepreneurially.

1. **The population of artists is growing and diversifying, and norms about who is considered an artist are changing.**

Although federal statistics can produce reliable counts of U.S. artists by a standard definition, there is a commonly held belief—among artists, cultural organizations, and some researchers—that the current categories are inadequate. Several factors thwart the ability to reach consensus, outside of federal data collection systems, about who should be considered an artist. For example, although artists are categorized as "professionals" in the U.S. occupational taxonomy, "artist" is not a designation owned exclusively by those with professional certification. There are no uniform standards that qualify artistic practice or use of the term "artist," making it difficult to distinguish among different levels and kinds of artists.

Other complicating factors include:

- Social norms for what is considered artistic practice and artistic work changes over time, and official categories and designations may lag in capturing these evolving norms.

- The population of artists whose primary income derives from their arts practice includes many who do not have academic training in the arts.[3]

- Some people with degrees in the arts do not make all or even the majority of their living from their artwork. According to a 2015 survey of 140,000 graduates of arts and design schools conducted by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), for example, only half of arts graduates made over 60 percent of their income from their artistic practice alone. A 2003 Pew Research Center call study found that just 7 percent of artists earn all of their income from their art.[4]

"The definition of artist is elastic, and often hotly contested.... Artists are stretched across many sectors, formal and informal, simultaneously and sequentially. Many are self-taught, despite formal educational opportunities offered to them. Their missions are...diverse and sometimes controversial. The fuzziness has some uses but when it comes to making the case for artists...it confuses."

– Ann Markusen[5]

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3   In 2014, BFAMFAPhD, a collective of artists, designers, technologists, organizers, and educators, examined American Community Survey (ACS) data on working artists. The study found that when designers and architects are excluded from the sample, the majority of working artists do not have arts-related bachelors' degrees (or higher). (*Artists Report Back*, BFAMFAPhD, 2014)

4   SNAAP Annual Report, 2015; and Mary Madden, *Artists, Musicians and the Internet,* Pew Research Center, 2004.

5   Ann Markusen, "Diversifying Support for Artists," *GIA Reader*, Fall 2013.

Federal data sets from the Current Population Survey (CPS) by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the American Community Survey (ACS) by the U.S. Census suggest the following features about the U.S. artist community:

- In 2015, 2.3 million people had primary jobs as artists, working in one of BLS's 11 categories[6]—an increase of about 185,000 between 2005 and 2015. This group represents approximately 1.5 percent of the labor force.[7]

- Approximately 271,000 workers who hold primary jobs in other sectors held second jobs as artists.[8]

- Artists are highly educated—59 percent of artists have bachelors' degrees or higher, compared to 31 percent of U.S. workers overall.[9]

- The majority of working artists earn less than professionals with similar educational achievement in other fields.[10]

- Median incomes for fine artists, actors, musicians, dancers, choreographers, photographers, and "other entertainers" are below the median income of the U.S. labor force overall ($39,280).[11]

- Artists are 3.6 times more likely to be self-employed than other workers (34 percent vs. 9 percent).[12]

Refinements in the surveys conducted by CPS and ACS in recent years have improved understanding of artists' employment and work patterns. However, a number of labor economists and arts field leaders believe the available federal data sources still undercount the number of artists who would fit the definition used by this study.[13] This is because CPS and ACS figures may not be including practitioners who fall outside of the BLS categories—for example, culinary artists, social practice artists, or artists who work embedded within other sectors. The numbers also exclude large numbers of folk artists and tradition bearers who are expert in their artistic practice and whose artistry is important to the cultural or spiritual life of their communities, but who make most or all of their income in other professions.[14] Official counts likely exclude many Native-American artists and Mardi Gras and carnival culture bearers, for example, as well as many community-based artists. Some cultural traditions discourage or even prohibit profiting from artistic work, and federal data on volunteering in the arts may not adequately capture the patterns for these kinds of professional artists.[15]

Data on personal creativity further complicates the picture. Multiple surveys confirm that making art is a fundamental part of life in the U.S., and the line between professional and amateur artist is blurry. Some studies suggest that as many as ten million adults receive at least some income from their artmaking.[16] The proliferation of technological and

6   The 11 BLS categories are: Actors; Announcers; Architects; Dancers and Choreographers; Designers; Fine Artists, Art Directors, and Animators; Musicians; Other Entertainers; Photographers; Producers and Directors; and Writers and Authors.
7   2015 Current Population Survey. The Current Population Survey is a monthly survey of 60,000 households that asks about employment status in the week prior to the survey. In 2000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated there were 2.1 million artists in the U.S., up from approximately 700,000 in 1970. Between 1970 and 1990, there was a 20-year surge in the number of artists, a jump that surpassed the growth rate of U.S. workers overall. The growth rate for artists between 1990 and 2005 was the same rate as the overall labor force; _Artists in the Workforce: 1990 to 2005_, Research Report #48, National Endowment for the Arts, 2008; _"Artists and Arts Workers in the United States,"_ Research Note #105, National Endowment for the Arts, October 2011.
8   Arts Data Profile #3, _Keeping My Day Job: Identifying U.S. Workers Who Have Dual Careers as Artists_, National Endowment for the Arts, 2014.
9   American Community Survey 2010-2014, PUMS. The American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, gathers information about ancestry, educational attainment, income, language, employment, and other factors through monthly surveys of approximately 295,000 American households.
10   Ibid.
11   _"Artists and Arts Workers,"_ National Endowment for the Arts, 2011.
12   American Community Survey 2010-2014, PUMS.

13   Throughout this paper we will use these official federal data sets to make points about artists' income, health insurance status, and employment status. We recognize that this data may not include artists that fall outside official counts. Our overarching conclusions are drawn from the federal data as well as other sources of information—interviews, roundtables, and research literature—about conditions facing the diverse array of working artists in the U.S. today.
14   Ann Markusen and David King, _The Artistic Dividend_, University of Minnesota, 2003; Gregory H. Wassall and Neil O. Alper, "Occupational Characteristics of Artists: A Statistical Analysis," _Journal of Cultural Economics_, 1985; "Artists Careers and Their Labor Markets," _Handbook of the Economics of Arts and Culture_, Victor Gisburgh and David Throsby, editors, 2006; and others.
15   NEA's most recent estimates show there were 7.3 million arts volunteers in 2012 (2.2 million who volunteered with arts organizations and 5.1 million who did arts-related volunteer work, e.g., performed art for non-arts organizations). _NEA Guide to the U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account_, 2013. Folklorist Amy Kitchener, of the Alliance for California Traditional Arts, estimates that there are as many as one million traditional artists in California alone. See also Paul DiMaggio and Patricia Fernandz-Kelly, _Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States_, Princeton University, 2010.
16   Pew Research Center, _Investing in Creativity_. The National Endowment for the Arts' _How a Nation Engages with Art: Highlights from the 2012 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA)_ (2013) and other NEA data suggest at as many as 50 percent of U.S. adults personally engage in making art themselves.

social media tools—from iPhones to YouTube to 3D printing—is making it easier and less expensive for millions of people to make and distribute art. Some of this work reaches professional levels of quality, and some so-called "amateurs" are experiencing popular, critical, and financial recognition in professional spheres.

2. Substantial numbers of artists now work in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary ways.

Cross-discipline collaboration in the arts has a long history but throughout the study, we heard repeatedly that increasing numbers of artists are working in hybrid ways that defy discipline classifications.[17] For example, one-fifth of the 2,200 performing artists supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation from 2000-2014 categorized themselves as multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary, and a Future of Music Coalition survey of more than 5,000 musicians in 2011 found that a similar percentage (22 percent) chose to write in a description of their music rather than select from a list of 32 musical genres.[18] For many artists, the time and creative skills of multiple partners are required to bring their work to completion. Traditional ways of categorizing artists by discipline or providing grants to single individuals do not account for these kinds of practitioners, and this mismatch can have real consequences. Musicians or other kinds of artists whose work falls outside of genres listed on a grant application, for example, may find themselves ineligible for support.

Some artists are becoming proficient in multiple disciplines simultaneously—visual, performing, and other media—and bringing all that expertise together in a given work or series of projects. Others maintain focus in a primary discipline but pursue cross-discipline collaborations—choreographers working with filmmakers, for example, or musicians with visual artists. Art schools are reflecting and encouraging this interest by offering expanded interdisciplinary curricula. New technologies and the Internet are also important drivers of this artistic blending, enabling artists to see more work in multiple genres, experiment with mixing media and find creative partners outside of their existing networks.

Artists have long worked across nonprofit, commercial, and community sectors, as Ann Markusen's 2006 report *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work* demonstrated. Artists continue to do this kind of crossover work today, and some of the traditional distinctions between nonprofit, commercial, and community-based forms are dissolving. In particular, divisions between "high art" (traditionally the domain of the nonprofit sector) and "popular art" (traditionally the domain of the commercial sector) are becoming less apparent in the minds of creators and consumers. For example, accomplished playwrights, such as Tony Award-winning David Henry Hwang, are now engaged in scriptwriting for television. In this medium, they can tell different kinds of stories and reach different audiences using different creative tools (in addition to accessing new sources of revenue). Some dramatic television series are now recognized as leading innovators in artistry and storytelling. However, the structural divisions between different sectors, identified by Markusen in her report, remain barriers to artists' ability to navigate and optimally integrate a hybrid career.

3. Many artists are finding work as artists in non-arts contexts.

Most professional artists work in fields related to their artistic interests and training, switching between adjacent industries rather than entering wholly unrelated domains of work. In the CPS dataset of artists who changed jobs between 2003 and 2013, for example, 59 percent ended up in one of five fields that have some connection to the arts or creativity.[19] SNAAP surveys of arts graduates indicate that about two-thirds of respondents report their current jobs are "relevant" or "very relevant" to their academic training, which is on par with or higher than graduates from other fields.[20]

At the same time, increasing numbers of artists are working *as artists* in other settings, as more sectors are recognizing the value artists can add to their work. This includes schools and afterschool programs,[21] community centers, hospitals and religious organizations, park systems, mayors' offices, neuroscience labs, technology companies, senior centers, consulting businesses, veterans' facilities, and a wide variety of other industries and locales.

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17   Interdisciplinary approaches are increasing in other fields as well as more people recognize the limits of single-discipline or siloed approaches to complex problems. As Neri Oxman notes in the inaugural issue of the *Journal of Design and Science* from MIT, "Knowledge can no longer be ascribed to or produced within disciplinary boundaries but is entirely entangled."

18   Holly Sidford and Alexis Frasz, *Assessment of Intermediary Programs—Creation and Presentation of New Work*, Helicon Collaborative for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, 2014.

19   Joanna Woronkowicz, "Do Artists Have a Competitive Edge in the Gig Economy?" Creativz.us Essay, 2016. The five fields include independent artists, performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries; specialized design services; motion picture and video industries; other professional, scientific, and technical services; and architectural, engineering, and related fields.

20   SNAAP Annual Report, 2014.

21   Nick Rabkin, *Teaching Artists and the Future of the Arts*, 2012.

As the UI study observed, and Ann Markusen's work on crossover patterns in artists' work confirms,[22] many artists move between and among different work environments, often erasing the boundaries between them. Even artists in disciplines that have very formalized institutional structures—ballet dancers and symphonic musicians, for example—often work outside these structures as part of their practice. The contexts in which artists pursue their artistic work are increasingly fluid, shaped by artistic goals, training, resources, partners, location, and timing.

Multiple factors have contributed to many artists working across sectors and in non-arts contexts, including:

• The increasing urgency of socio-political issues—including economic and other forms of inequality, a troubled criminal justice system, and climate change—is spurring some artists to address these issues by working in non-arts settings.

• Leaders in a growing number of non-arts sectors—including community development, healthcare, transportation, technology, and public safety—are recognizing that artists' creative skills and processes can assist their work.

• Limits on the ability the nonprofit and commercial arts sectors to fully employ all professional-level artists is propelling some artists to look elsewhere for work opportunities.

A few illustrative examples of artists working in other sectors show just some of the range and variety of this kind of practice:

• Artists with IDEAS xLab in Louisville, Kentucky, are working with insurance companies, governments, and communities to improve health outcomes in low-income communities.

• Visual artist Jenny Kendler is an artist-in-residence with the National Resources Defense Council, working on environmental projects with NRDC staff.

• McKinsey & Company is employing artists as part of its strategy consulting teams in diverse industries.

• New York City, Boston, Los Angeles, and many other municipalities are sponsoring artist-in-residence programs that embed artists in city departments, including in agencies such as the Department of

Design and Construction, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Department of Veterans Services, and the Housing Authority.

• In partnership with hospitals, veterans groups, and the U.S. military, artist Brian Doerries' company Outside the Wire uses Sophocles plays to engage civilian and military audiences in discussions about the challenges faced by veterans, their families, and their communities.

Three movements are contributing to the growth in this cross-sector work in significant ways: creative placemaking, socially engaged art practice, and design thinking. All three have roots going back many years, but all are being increasingly formalized and supported now.

• *Creative placemaking* seeks to position the arts as a core component of community planning and development and integrate the arts into the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.

• *Socially engaged art* encompasses a range of approaches and philosophies linked by the artist's intention to have a social impact with the artistic work.

• *Design thinking* refers to the use of design methodologies and tools in problem-solving in businesses and industry contexts.

These movements are indicators of the rising visibility and status of the arts, and artists, in non-arts settings, but they are not without controversy:

• Creative placemaking has created a useful framework for engaging diverse community development sectors in new kinds of partnerships with the arts, and generated many new opportunities for artists to connect with other fields. However, in some places this approach has been criticized for accelerating displacement of long-term and lower-income residents (including artists) in strong real estate markets.

• Growing attention to "social practice" art in academic training and arts funding programs has increased the acceptance of socially engaged work within the nonprofit art world. However, these developments have also raised concerns about the appropriation and misapplication of methods that have deep roots in low-income communities and communities of color by people who are not from or based in these communities, and who may be insensitive to local concerns and dynamics. Critics believe that the increased attention for this work often privileges

22   Ann Markusen, et. al., *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Nonprofit and Community Work*, University of Minnesota, 2006.

practitioners trained in art schools or who have access to arts philanthropy—rather than community-based artists, many of whom have been doing this work for decades without much funding or validation from the formal arts infrastructure.

- Design thinking is a significant trend in design and business schools, but relatively few artists (except designers and artists trained in these design thinking programs) have been able to translate their creative processes into this kind of service. Nathan Shedroff, the chair of the California College of the Arts' MBA in Design Strategy, makes a distinction between "design thinking, design craft, and design process." He suggests that there is something similar to this in the art world. "There are many types of artists and someone who is great at the craft of painting may not be great at applying those skills to a real world problem." Within the arts, he notes, "we haven't done a good enough job of articulating the different things artists can contribute to other sectors yet."

Despite growing awareness of the value of cross-sector work, educational pathways are still not effectively equipping artists to work in non-arts contexts, nor are other sectors (urban planning, healthcare, or economic development, for example) fully preparing their professionals to understand how to effectively work with artists. Randy Swearer, the vice president of education at Autodesk and former dean of Parsons School of Design, notes that innovation-driven companies have "a deep and powerful need to integrate creative thinking and creative processes" into their work, and "the way that artists are able to frame and understand problems and develop interventions is of tremendous value." However, efforts to date to integrate art and artists into disciplines like engineering and business at universities are lacking depth and nuance. On the arts side, as Swearer says, "the narrow media- and discipline-specific way studio artists are taught in fine arts schools inhibits their ability to take the lessons they are learning and apply them to other areas of the world. The identity that they take on in art school as 'fine artist' also limits how they see their role in the world."

Recognizing the value artists can bring as thinkers, creators, and problem-solvers in other realms has great potential to benefit artists and society at large—by providing new pathways for income, validation, and connection to community needs. However, as this cross-sector work gains increased attention from funders, academics, policymakers, and others, the ethics of how (and by whom) this work is defined, performed, and supported will be critical to consider.

4. Artists are pursuing new opportunities to work entrepreneurially.

The terms "entrepreneurship" and "social entrepreneurship" are now widely used, but their meaning varies according to user and context. For the purposes of this study, we draw from Howard Stevenson's definition of entrepreneurship as work that pioneers a truly innovative product, devises a new business model, creates a better or cheaper version of an existing product, or targets an existing product to a new set of customers.[23] Roger Martin and Sally Osberg's definition of social entrepreneurship is also useful: situations in which entrepreneurship is applied to remedy an unjust condition for a certain population or society at large in a way that fundamentally shifts the system.[24]

More artists are working in entrepreneurial ways to create new and previously nonexistent opportunities for themselves, other artists, and their communities. Here we note just a few examples of successful entrepreneurial ventures created by artists that have created new markets for other artists:

- Actor Robert Redford founded the Sundance Institute in 1981 to support and create new markets for independent filmmakers. Sundance has vastly expanded the creative and business opportunities for a group of artists that previously had few outlets for their work.

- Rolling Rez Arts is a state-of-the-art mobile arts space designed to serve and ignite the creative economy on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, launched by the First Peoples Fund in 2015. It is a business training center and mobile bank that delivers training, arts programs, and retail and business banking services to artists and culture bearers on Pine Ridge.

- Artist Perry Chen, rock critic Yancey Strickler, and designer Charles Adler founded Kickstarter in 2009 as a crowdfunding platform for creative projects. At the time it started, it was a revolutionary way for artists to access funding and promote their projects.

- Artisanal furniture designer Bret MacFayden, in East Nashville, Tennessee, has created the Idea Hatchery, an arts-based small business incubator that provides artists with affordable retail space, a sense of community, and opportunities to market their enterprises collaboratively.

23   Howard Stevenson is known as the godfather of entrepreneurial studies. Thomas R. Eisenmann, "Entrepreneurship: A Working Definition," *Harvard Business Review*, January 2013.
24   Robert L. Martin and Sally Osberg, "Social Entrepreneurship: The Case for Definition," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Spring 2007.

- OurGoods.org, co-founded by artists Carl Tashian, Louise Ma, Rich Watts, Jen Abrams, and Caroline Woolard in 2009, is a barter network that connects artists, designers, and activists to the trade skills, spaces, and objects they need to complete their creative projects.

Some artists have combined their art or design training with business degrees and produced spectacular results. According to John Maeda, former president of the Rhode Island School of Design and now design partner at the venture capital firm Kleiner Perkins Caulfield Byers (himself a crossover designer-business technologist), a number of the most successful recent Internet start-ups, including AirBnB, were founded by what he calls "mutants"—people with deep expertise in both artmaking and business.[25]

Others artists are operating more like social entrepreneurs, seeking to address social or community problems with business interventions:

- BAYCAT in San Francisco's Hunters Point, for example, is simultaneously tackling the lack of diversity in the fields of technology and digital media and addressing employment issues in its low-income neighborhood through training neighborhood youth in the digital arts, linking graduates with work opportunities in the tech field, and providing professional media production services to businesses.

- In rural Appalachia, the artist-run arts and media center, Appalshop, is partnering with Lafayette College to develop Mountain Tech Media (MTM), a national creative services and production company. This initiative employs local artists as part of a regional effort to build a new, creative enterprise-based economy for the Appalachian region.

- Conflict Kitchen is a Pittsburgh-based project by artists Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski that serves takeout food based on the cuisine of countries with which the U.S. is currently in conflict. It serves as a beacon for people from these countries who are living in the U.S., and spurs crosscultural conversation and learning.

- Asian Arts Initiative in Philadelphia is leading a multi-year entrepreneurial effort to transform a neglected four-block alley on Pearl Street into a vibrant community cultural asset. Asian Arts has organized a series of interactive events to re-imagine and re-make the space, such as public design sessions, block parties, art installations, a Community Feast, and artist-in-residence projects. The work is connecting the diverse residents of the neighborhood, including the homeless shelter on one end of the block to luxury condominiums on the other end, as well as engaging artists, immigrants, and other community members in the area and beyond.

- Media artist/activist Esther Robinson has launched ArtBuilt Mobile Studios, which creates small mobile workspaces that enable artists, social-service providers, and micro-businesses to work in new ways and in new places. ArtBuilt collaborates with other artistic partners and community organizations in different neighborhoods to design and build mobile workspaces; advance the mobile workspace movement; and transform where and how artists, social service providers, and micro-businesses work today.

Across the country, there are hundreds of other examples of entrepreneurial endeavors led by artists.

Artists employ various business models for their entrepreneurial endeavors—nonprofit structures, barter systems and cooperatives, commercial models, for-benefit corporations, and fiscal sponsorships.[26] Like many non-arts entrepreneurs, significant numbers of artists are self-employed. Self-employment offers the flexibility and autonomy that many artists need. According to the NEA's "Artists and Art Workers in the United States" (based on data from the American Community Survey), approximately 34 percent of professional artists are self-employed, and they are 3.6 times more likely to be self-employed than others in the workforce.[27] A recent report from the Center for an Urban Future found that, in New York City, the number of creative workers operating a side business outside of their primary employment jumped 61 percent—from 62,000 to 99,600—between 2003 and 2013.[28]

Just like non-arts entrepreneurs, artists' intent may be more about social good or more about commercial profit, more about the community, or more about their own personal success. The most appropriate business structure will depend on what the artist is trying to achieve. One thing is clear, however: whereas 25 years ago, when there seemed to be just two primary pathways for an artist—the commercial arts or the nonprofit arts sector—now we see a much broader spectrum of options that include more artist-driven entrepreneurial endeavors. This fact further blurs the definitions of what an artist is, why they do their work, and where and how they deploy their talents.

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25   John Maeda, TED Talk, October 9, 2012.

26   Artists using Fractured Atlas' fiscal sponsorship program have raised more than $100 million for their projects since the program began in 2002.
27   "Artists and Arts Workers," National Endowment for the Arts, 2011.
28   Adam Forman, et al., *Creative New York*, Center for an Urban Future, 2015.

PART 2: TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMICS, EQUITY, AND TRAINING

Five specific issues were raised repeatedly as primary concerns for working artists—technology, economics, equity, training, and funding. These issues affect artists' work today as well as their future options. These concerns interact with the shifts noted above, and they influence each other as well.

1. Technology is profoundly altering the context and economics of artists' work.

New technologies and social media are changing all our lives and have particular impacts on the way that creative content is created and consumed. New technological tools are expanding the boundaries of artistic practice and the presence of art in daily life, as well as the ways people interact with and consume artistic products and creative content. Better and less expensive technological tools are influencing the way that many artists make work, and where and with whom they make it. These new mechanisms are fundamentally altering the cost structure and methods of creating, distributing, and consuming art, especially in fields with reproducible products such as music, writing, photography, and film. Online giving and crowdsourcing platforms are also changing the way some artists finance their work.

Impacts on Creating

Widespread access to inexpensive but highly sophisticated creation tools such as mobile phone cameras, music and video editing software, and graphic design programs is lowering barriers to creating high-quality work in technology-mediated disciplines. In some cases new technologies for creation, distribution, and financing have altered entire fields. For example, video games used to be very expensive to make and the risk of failure was high, so large production companies controlled what got made and only bet on potential mass market hits. Now, better and cheaper technology means that one or two creators can raise the capital they need through online platforms like Kickstarter and distribute their games through platforms like STEAM. This trend has led to an explosion in experimentation in content and form, and generated a more diverse range of creators and audiences.[29]

The ease of access to technological tools, and reduction of cost in using them, has also enabled artists to experiment with using traditionally consumer-oriented mediums for work that is more oriented toward artistic or social change purposes. For example, video artist Bill Viola collaborated with University of Southern California's Game Innovation Lab to develop *The Night Journey,* a game that explores the topic of enlightenment.

New technologies, such as virtual reality and 3D printing, are triggering the creation of entirely new artistic specialties and they are spurring substantial growth in multimedia and cross-discipline productions. An increasing number of online platforms designed to facilitate creative collaborations, such as hitRECord and SoundCloud, reflect and propel artists' growing appetite to collaborate artistically within and between disciplines. These mechanisms are being used in a range of ways. For example, the Disquiet Junto page on SoundCloud encourages experimental sound artists to post tracks in response to a compositional challenge and then exchange critiques. These tools facilitate artists' ability to locate and work with artistic collaborators from around the world.

In addition, technology is enabling artists to collaborate with people in other fields to achieve mutual goals. Enspiral, an online collaboration started by freelance artists and designers and activists in New Zealand, now facilitates global collaborations focused on positive social impacts. Through this mechanism, artists are collaborating with lawyers, accountants, lay people, and others to organize, finance, and realize projects.

The critically acclaimed 2015 movie, *Tangerine*, is an example of how these various technologies can come together. *Tangerine* could not have been produced even five years ago: it is a transgender love story shot on an iPhone, edited with an $8 app, that involved cast members located through the online platform Vine, and used scoring found through SoundCloud. It was made with a budget of $100,000.

"Amateur" photographer Matt Black's experience also illustrates how technology is making it possible for new people to enter fields that used to require expensive equipment, training, and professional networks. Black's iPhone images of poverty in his rural hometown in Central

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29   Asi Burak, "Why Video Games and Funders Don't Click, and How to Fix It," Creativz.us Essay, 2016.

Valley, California, were picked up and publicized by MSNBC after he posted them to Instagram. This led to his receiving the W. Eugene Smith Grant Award (the "Nobel Prize of journalism") and a nomination to join Magnum, the world's premier photo agency.[30]

There are many positive benefits of these developments but there are downsides to these trends as well. One negative consequence is that technology enables producers to engage less expensive talent in other parts of the world. Vijay Gupta, co-founder of the Street Symphony in Los Angeles and a first violin for the Los Angeles Symphony, notes that "work for classically trained musicians is dwindling" in the U.S., and "orchestra jobs in film are moving overseas because a composer in L.A. can conduct a less expensive orchestra in Singapore using Skype." In fields like music and photography, business models have been completely disrupted by digital technology, which has driven down the prices for content and increased competition, making it ever harder for professionals in these fields to sustain careers.[31]

Impacts on Financing

New online platforms are creating new ways for artists to finance their work. Crowdfunding sites—Kickstarter and Indiegogo, for example—extend the possibilities for artists to find "commissioners" for specific projects from their extended networks and the general public. In 2015, Kickstarter reported that its users, a substantial majority of whom are artists, raised more than $125 million to support their projects.[32] Patreon is another platform that uses a modern-day patronage model to enable artists to secure sustained, unrestricted support for their work through monthly contributions from fans and admirers. Revenues range, but some artists using Patreon receive as much as $7,000/month in contributions from hundreds of individual patrons.

In addition to helping artists raise money, there are emergent Internet-based platforms that show promise for helping artists to manage and gain more control over contracts, assets, revenue, and other forms of property without traditional middlemen. This is a benefit because existing corporate or nonprofit technology platforms

tend to prioritize consumers over content providers (who are frequently artists), and often do not have good mechanisms to protect artists' work or ensure they are paid fairly for its use. Ethereum, for example, uses blockchain technology to enable people to create markets, store registries of debt, move funds, and handle other functions. This technology is new, and it is not yet clear how it will be employed by artists, but pilot projects—such as Ujo Music and Ampliative Art—are experimenting with this technology to create platforms for sharing and creation that are more favorable to artists than the commercial ones that currently exist. Ujo Music, for example, is hoping to use "smart contracts" to ensure that musical artists receive revenue from use of their works in ways that current platforms like SoundCloud, Spotify, and YouTube are not set up to deliver.

Impacts on Distributing and Consuming

Social media and online platforms are changing the ways artists interact with audiences, communities, and stakeholders—and are replacing many traditional gatekeepers and intermediaries. Online platforms such as Facebook and Instagram allow an increasing number of artists to build a community around their work, while others like Artsy, Etsy, red clay, Behance, and CD Baby enable artists to go directly to the marketplace. Many of these sites have replaced live agents, producers, marketers, commercial gallerists, and other people who formerly played the intermediary role of connecting artists to audiences and consumers.

In some cases, these outlets are actually growing new markets for artwork. In 2014, for example, Etsy reported that 1.6 million artists were selling on its platform, offering 35 million items, and attracting 24 million buyers.[33] The European Fine Art Foundation, which covers the international visual art market, reports that online sales of visual art nearly doubled between 2013 and 2015. A third of these buyers spent less than $1,500 and many were new to the art market entirely. Online platforms are especially popular with younger people: over half of art buyers between 18 and 35 report buying art online.[34]

Technology and social media have also altered people's expectations of where, when, and how artistic experiences will happen, and increased people's desire for both passive and participatory options. Platforms like YouTube (now posting more than 60 hours of video every hour, watched by more than 800 million unique viewers each

30   Molly Gottschalk, "From North Korea to Baltimore, Instagram Is Fostering the Next Generation of Photojournalists," *Artsy*, January 21, 2016.
31   Danielle Jackson, "Can Photographers Restore Their Devastated Business?" Creativz.us Essay, 2016.
32   As of June, 2016, the projects listed in Kickstarter's 15 project categories reflect that artistic products dominate the site: Art (347), Comics (172), Crafts (150), Dance (48), Design (532), Fashion (398), Film & Video (652), Food (418), Games (612), Journalism (94), Music (594), Photography (121), Publishing (541), Technology (668), Theater (126).

33   Amy Larocca, "Etsy's Dream of a Post-Capitalist Workplace," *New York Magazine*, April 4, 2016.
34   Abigail Cain and Isaac Kaplan, "The Online Art Market Is Booming—Here's What You Need to Know," *Artsy*, April 22, 2016.

month) and Instagram have vastly increased the amount of creative content available, much of it user-generated. This on-demand content has made the landscape more competitive for professional artists and producers/presenters of all kinds. The marketplace is far more crowded and it is more difficult to get recognition. These platforms have expanded artists' opportunities to interact with audiences, but also forced many to rethink or adjust their offerings. In interesting ways, these tools have shifted—or inverted—the relationship between creator and consumer, making the roles more fluid and interchangeable. This further contributes to the blurring of definitions about who is an artist today.

Challenges

While there are many positive benefits of new technologies and social media for artists, there are challenges as well:

- Artists are now increasingly responsible for being their own producers, and the vast majority must now manage the range of production, marketing, distribution, and fundraising functions once handled by agents, managers, and marketers. Technology and social media may reduce financial costs, but they require substantial time to learn and utilize effectively, and artists may face an opportunity cost if they do not participate in the new online systems with skill.

"Crowdfunding has spurred a board game revolution, but will it spur a revolution in dance as well? Digital platforms like Kickstarter are touted as great equalizers that let the 'little guy' find success independently, but the sorting forces of better matchmaking can also further isolate the little guys. In a world where things 'go viral' and 'trend,' there are power laws at work that can accentuate the sorting into winner and losers. Digital platforms like Kickstarter may be better as 'pre-sale' retail platforms than 'venture capital for the masses.'"

— Douglas Noonan, Indiana University

- Technology tools and distribution platforms, in general, benefit artists working in media-based art forms like film, recorded music, photography, and publishing more than live mediums like dance, theater, spoken word, and craft. The proliferation of technologically mediated content competes with live activities for audience attention. Also, since live art forms are usually more expensive from a consumer perspective, artists may be forced to reduce fees for live work in order to meet consumer expectations of value.[35]

- The availability of vast amounts of digital content has undermined the traditional compensation structures of fields with reproducible products—music, photography, literature, and journalism, most notably. It has also generated new challenges to intellectual property rights for artists who work in these realms. While artists may benefit from digital platforms that facilitate their access to audiences, these platforms are typically designed with consumers, rather than artists, in mind as the primary users.[36] As a result, they prioritize providing content at low cost and often do not pay artists well or allow them to determine how their work will be used. For fields like journalism and photography, the proliferation of easily accessible and high quality "amateur" content means it is a buyer's market, making it almost impossible to earn a living wage selling work.

- Artists with access to technology and who have large networks of associates with substantial discretionary income are the most likely to benefit from crowdsourcing platforms. Artists in lower economic brackets, those who lack high-speed broadband access and/or those who have more limited social networks have less success with these mechanisms. Crowdfunding tools tend to reproduce existing socio-economic inequities and funding patterns in both the nonprofit and commercial art worlds. Money goes to artists with more established reputations who are located in major cities, reinforcing the lack of diversity and distribution patterns in the arts more generally.[37]

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35   This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the "cost disease" of the live arts, a pattern identified by William Baumol and William Bowen in the 1960s that refers to the limited ability of industries relying heavily on human labor and live interaction to benefit from technologically generated efficiencies of scale. Unlike in reproducible art forms (e.g. recorded music) where additional revenue can be generated with marginal costs after the initial content is created, art forms like live dance require the same effort and time from the artist for each additional audience experience.

36   Kevin Erickson and Jean Cook, "Technology Isn't Magic. Let's Make It Work Better for Artists and Musicians," Creativz.us Essay, 2016; Adam Huttler, "For Profit or Not, Artists Need Tech Designed for Artists," Creativz.us Essay, 2016; and Danielle Jackson, "Can Photographers Restore Their Devastated Business?" Creativz.us Essay, 2016.

37   Douglas Noonan, "How Does Crowdfunding Change the Picture for Artists?" Creativz.us Essay, 2016.

- Crowdfunding tends to favor defined near-term projects or products rather than longer arcs of work or process-oriented endeavors.

- Younger generations of artists have greater facility with new technologies and can make faster and easier use of these tools. Less tech-savvy artists (including many over 50) who do not have the training, tools, or inclination to adopt these new creation and distribution systems are seriously disadvantaged, as are people in many rural or low-income areas that do not have access to the Internet.

- Platforms like Twitter and YouTube give the illusion of neutrality because anyone can upload content, but many of the old systems of gatekeeping and power distribution have migrated into the new technological world. Although there are occasional surprise viral hits, corporations continue to exert control over most of what gets seen, distributed, promoted, and shared at scale. While companies like Amazon, Spotify, and Netflix benefit from the "long tail" of products finding niche audiences, these sales do not provide a living wage for the artists themselves.[38]

For more on this theme, see Creativz.us essays in the Appendix.

"Technology Isn't Magic. Let's Make it Work Better for Artists and Musicians," by Kevin Erickson and Jean Cook

"For Profit or Not, Artists Need Tech Designed for Artists," by Adam Huttler

"Why Video Gamers and Funders Don't Click, and How to Fix It," by Asi Burak

2. Artists share challenging economic conditions with other segments of the workforce.

Throughout the study, we heard reports on the challenges of making a living as an artist, whether in the nonprofit or the commercial sector or a combination of both. The artists' world is competitive, adequate reliable employment is elusive, and philanthropic interventions—gifts, grants, and awards—are modest and irregular. Chronically low wages in much of the nonprofit sector is a

challenge for many artists, and many cultural institutions expect artists to work for free or for nominal fees. One person spoke to a sentiment shared by many in saying, "There are no standards for employment contracts in many areas of the field, and too many cultural groups rely on artists to discount their labor in order to survive themselves." The expectation that artists will subsidize the work has many consequences, including diminishing the ability of many artists to work in the sector at all—especially artists without other sources of financial support.

Technology has opened new opportunities for many, but the vast majority of artists who earn their primary income from the arts still earn less than $39,280/year, which is not a living wage in many cities with high concentrations of artists.[39] A significant number hold multiple jobs to make their income.[40] This overall pattern has not shifted substantially in the past decade.

What has changed is the larger context in which artists are working and living:

- **Income inequality is growing**, and the cost of living is increasingly difficult for people in the middle and lower income ranks.[41]

- **Median rents are rising**. In many major cities, rents exceed $2,000/month, pricing many artists out of these communities.[42] While more than a third of artists live in metro areas with populations of more than five million, a growing number are choosing to work in "peripheral cities," small towns or more rural areas.[43]

- **Similar real estate pressures on small and mid-sized arts organizations** in both the nonprofit and commercial sectors means these organizations face displacement or diminished capacity, undercutting critical opportunities for artists to rehearse, convene,

38   Marta Figlerowicz. "The Gatekeepers Aren't Gone." *Jacobin Magazine*. July 8, 2016.

39   "Artists and Arts Workers," National Endowment for the Arts, 2011.
40   Sixty-six percent of artists hold at least one additional job in addition to their artistic practice, and 21 percent hold two additional jobs. "Artists and the Economic Recession Survey," LINC, 2010.
41   "Income disparities have become so pronounced that America's top 10 percent now average nearly nine times as much income as the bottom 90 percent.... Wages in the United States, after taking inflation into account, have been stagnating for more than three decades." Marc Priester and Aaron Mendelson, at http://inequality.org/income-inequality/
42   Zumper National Rent Report, May 2016.
43   Ann Markusen, in *Artists Work Everywhere* (2013), suggests that the majority of artists work outside of the largest megalopolises. Cities such as Boston, Seattle, San Diego, and Nashville now have above-average artist concentrations.

and present work to audiences.[44] In some places, this reality has pitted the interests of artists and arts organizations against each other.

- **While the Affordable Care Act** has helped many more artists access health insurance, premiums are still challenging or completely out of reach for large numbers. BLS data from 2016 suggests, for example, that 80 percent of all artists in the 11 occupations that it tracks have private insurance, but coverage varies widely by field. For example, only 49 percent of dancers and choreographers reported that they had insurance.[45] In a Future of Music Coalition survey in 2013, only 57 percent of respondents indicated they had health insurance (at a time when 83 percent of the general population did).[46]

- **Artists' debt burdens** are escalating, consistent with trends for the general population. A 2014 survey by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) found that 66 percent of recent art school graduates are carrying substantial debt, including 33 percent who have loans between $30,000 and $60,000.[47] This financial weight has direct impacts on artists' choices about career, family, and advanced education.[48]

Artists are also affected by larger trends in the labor market, notably the rise of contracted workers and the "gig economy." The "gig" terminology derives originally from the performing arts, and refers to the lack of an ongoing contractual relationship with a single employer—a condition that has long defined the lives of most musicians, actors, dancers, and others. Many other people are now working in this way, either by choice, necessity, or both.

As part-time or contingent workers, artists usually do not receive health insurance, retirement, family leave, workmen's compensation, and other benefits and protections that full-time employees receive. This fact also means they may struggle to build assets and

capital, which can provide a buffer against variable or unpredictable wages and income.[49] A substantial number of artists were working gigs long before the concept became mainstream, but there is now growing awareness of the stress and negative consequences of trying to survive on part-time, short-term, and low-wage jobs without adequate worker protections. As growing numbers of workers become part of the gig economy, there are more opportunities for artists to find common cause with others in advocating for attention to these issues. For example, Strike Debt and Rolling Jubilee are initiatives using multiple methods—including art and creative activism—in their efforts to abolish debt. Debtfair is a network of visual artists whose work online and in live exhibitions explores the debt burden behind inequality in the art market.

In addition, artist entrepreneurs face many challenges that other sole proprietors and small business owners do not. Often artists do not see themselves as aligned with other non-arts business owners, even when they face similar challenges and have similar needs. As a result, they may not take advantage of available services, such as programs offered by the Small Business Administration or similar entities. In addition, lending and other financial services available to conventional small businesses may not accommodate the distinctive needs of artists and their businesses. Artists' unconventional income histories, their lack of familiarity with financial terminology and processes, and the fact that many lenders/investors do not understand the value proposition of their work are all impediments to artists' ability to secure adequate financing.

Diminished Tolerance for Risk

This economic situation has other, indirect effects on artists' opportunities and work, as rising costs of business and an increasingly competitive marketplace diminish the tolerance for risk among producers and presenters (in both nonprofit and commercial spheres). This trend pushes many artists to do more conservative and commercially viable work. The for-profit and nonprofit sectors are reinforcing a winner-take-all phenomenon—increasingly backing a relative few "art stars" and "hits" and disregarding hundreds of thousands of others.[50]

44   *Creative New York* reports that the districts in New York City most associated with art and creativity have seen the most rapid increases in rent rates.

45   March 2016 edition of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement. Kristin Thomson and Jean Cook, "Taking the Pulse in 2013: Artists and Health Insurance Survey Results," Future of Music Coalition, 2013.

46   March 2016 edition of the Annual Social and Economic Supplement, Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Kristin Thomson and Jean Cook, "Taking the Pulse in 2013: Artists and Health Insurance Survey Results," Future of Music Coalition, 2013.

47   SNAAP, 2014.

48   Seven of the ten most expensive schools in the U.S. (after scholarships and aid) are art schools. Default rates for arts school graduates are higher than those of non-arts graduates. *Artists Report Back*, BFAMFAPhD, 2014.

49   A recent Bank of America study on the gig economy noted that capital-based platforms that use accumulated fixed assets (such as AirBnB, which enables people to use their assets [homes] to make money) generate greater revenue for independent workers than labor-based platforms that depend on the worker's time (such as Uber), reinforcing the importance of accumulated assets in the struggle for reliable income.

50   Arlene Goldbard, The Game of Ones," *Arlene's Blog*, June 2016.

This more conservative perspective on risk appears to be affecting philanthropic behavior as well. Artists who seek support from foundations and nonprofit funding intermediaries report that there is less interest in experimentation and open-ended artistic exploration, and little interest in kinds of work—such as community-based cultural projects—which may take many years to fully realize. Increasingly, funding entities and presenters of all kinds seek measurable outcomes and reliable results, and focus on specific projects rather than investing in the long-term development of an artist's ideas and body of work. In many interviews and every Regional Roundtable, we heard that these trends discourage artistic exploration and the long-term development of artistic ideas, and do not take into account the fact that intermediate "failures" are essential to artistic innovation and long-term success.

Responses

Artists and others are working intentionally to address many of these economic issues. Coalitions of artists are organizing and campaigning for fair compensation for artists through organizations like W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) and the Freelancers Union. In addition, artists are finding new ways to share resources, not only in creating work but also in managing business and organizational functions. The number of artists' collaboratives is increasing, many of which provide artists with shared back-office functions—online and off. Co-located office spaces such as the Center for New Music in San Francisco, for example, and ArtsPool (an online cooperative bookkeeping and financial management service), and hundreds of maker spaces and cooperatives around the country reflect artists' growing interest in finding cooperative ways to respond to shared needs.[51] Many artists are using fiscal agents rather than starting their own 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations or commercial entities, and some of these programs provide back-end organizational services as well. For example, Fractured Atlas, the largest arts-based fiscal sponsor in the U.S., has been the umbrella for close to 10,000 individual artists' projects over the past five years and also provides insurance, ticketing software, and visa assistance.

There are hopeful signs that more banks, community development corporations, community development financial institutions (CDFIs), and other entities are addressing the challenges artists face in accessing space, capital, and financial services.

- The Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) and the Minnesota Street Project in San Francisco, Spaceworks in New York City, and Artspace Projects, Inc. in more than 30 communities across the country are helping to develop affordable work and living spaces for artists.

- The Maryland Institute College of the Arts is working to help the Small Business Association in Baltimore to adapt its services to better suit the needs of artists.

- The Union Bank & Trust's Catalyst Initiative in Omaha, Nebraska, is developing creative ways to make loans to artists and assist them in managing both personal and work-related finances.

- Northeast Shores Development Corporation, in Cleveland, Ohio, has pioneered new approaches to help artists with home ownership.

- The Surdna and Kresge Foundations have partnered to fund seven CDFIs around the country to provide training to artists and creative entrepreneurs that enables them to develop business strategies, connect their work to markets, and secure financing to jumpstart or grow their businesses.

For more on this theme, see Creativz.us essays in the Appendix.

"What Artists Actually Need is an Economy that Works for Everyone," by Laura Zabel

"What Does It Mean to Sustain a Career in the Gig Economy?" by Steven J. Tepper

"Do Artists Have a Competitive Edge in the Gig Economy?" by Joanna Woronkowicz

"Health Insurance is Still a Work-in-Progress for Artists and Performers," by Renata Marinaro

"Artists, the Original Gig Economy Workers, Have More Rights than They Think," by Sarah Howes

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51   John Tierney, "How Makerspaces Help Local Economies," *The Atlantic*, April 17, 2015

3. Structural inequities in the artists' ecosystem mirror those in society more broadly.

Conditions for artists reflect conditions in the society at large, and the race-, gender-, and ability-based disparities that are pervasive in our society are equally prevalent in both the nonprofit and commercial arts sectors. As Carlton Turner of Alternate ROOTS puts it, "We continue to struggle with issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity in the arts and culture sector because our society continues to struggle with them."

Despite the increasing cultural and ethnic diversity of the country and the broadening array of cultural traditions being practiced at expert levels, we heard repeatedly in interviews and Regional Roundtables that arts funding and presentation systems continue to privilege a relatively narrow band of aesthetic approaches, mostly based in the Western European fine arts. This is true for individual artists and their work, as well as the organizations that employ them and present their work. A sampling of data from a variety of sources reinforces the point:

- Artists able to make their full income from the arts are less socio-economically and demographically diverse than the total U.S. workforce.[52]

    - Only 13 percent of writers and authors are non-White and/or Hispanic compared with 32 percent of the total workforce, for example.[53]

    - Only 20.7 percent of designers and only 17 percent of fine artists are non-White and/or Hispanic.[54]

- 4.4 percent of arts school graduates are African-American (compared to 12 percent of the population) and 6 percent are Hispanic (compared to 17 percent of the population).[55]

- Approximately 4 percent of arts-related foundation funding is directed to organizations whose missions are dedicated to serving communities of color, including those based in African-, Arab-, Asian-, Latin-, or Native-American heritage.[56]

- Even less foundation arts funding is allocated to serve rural communities, or intended specifically to assist the work of folk artists and tradition bearers in indigenous communities.[57]

- Just 12 percent of the playwrights whose work was produced by nonprofit regional theaters between 2011 and 2014 were people of color.[58]

- Less than 5 percent of musicians in the nation's symphony orchestras are African-American or Latino.[59]

- Out of top 100 films in 2014, less than 16 percent of directors, writers, and producers were women.[60]

- Only 32 percent of artists shown in New York and Los Angeles galleries in 2013 were women.[61] Between 2007 and 2014, fewer than 25 percent of the solo exhibitions at five major art museums featured women artists.[62]

- One in four people in the U.S. still does not have Internet at home, which means that the lower costs of arts production and distribution offered by technology has not benefited artists equally, and may have actually increased disparities for the artists in low-income or rural communities who lack access to these tools.

This situation not only means a lack of equal opportunity for large segments of the artists' population, it also means that our nonprofit and commercial cultural ecosystems do not reflect the pluralism of our country's population overall. Artists reside in every community in the country, expressing a wide variety of cultural and aesthetic traditions, but the formal systems and structures of validation and support in the arts do not yet fully reflect this reality.

In our interviews and in the Regional Roundtables, several initiatives were mentioned as encouraging examples of leaders addressing the structural roots of these inequities.

- The Enrich Chicago initiative, for example, is working to increase support for culturally diverse groups and artists, and to place more young artists of color in paying internships;

52   "Artists and Arts Workers," National Endowment for the Arts, 2011.
53   Ibid.
54   Ibid.
55   *Artists Report Back*, BFAMFAPhD, 2014.
56   Steven Lawrence, "GIA's Annual Research on Support for Arts and Culture," *GIA Reader*, September 2015; includes analysis of grants over $10K by the top 1,000 U.S. foundations.

57   Ibid.
58   Dramatists Guild, 2015.
59   Sphinx Organization; League of American Orchestras, 2015.
60   Stacy L. Smith, et. al, "Inequality in 700 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race and LGBT Status from 2007 to 2014," University of Southern California, 2015.
61   Cara Despain, Gallery Talley
62   Maura Reilly, "Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures and Fixes." *ArtNews*. May 26, 2015.

- Grantmakers in the Arts' has made racial equity a major focus of its work;

- the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs' recently completed a survey on the diversity of staff and boards in cultural institutions and is launching initiatives in response to the findings;

- the Intercultural Leadership Institute—a partnership of the National Alliance of Latino Arts and Culture, Alternate ROOTS, First Peoples Fund, and Pa'i Foundation—was launched in 2015 to achieve cultural equity based on an ethics of difference, inclusion, and empowerment, addressing the need for culturally relevant and equitable practices in arts management and leadership;

- and Americans for the Arts has recently published a policy statement on cultural equity.

Many we interviewed applauded United States Artists for the notable diversity of its fellows roster over its ten-year history, and the commitment to inclusiveness in its selection processes that has produced this result. However, most people we spoke with believe that much more must be done if the organizations and mechanisms that support our creative ecosystem are to truly reflect and nurture the diversity of American artistry and cultural practice.

For more on this theme, see Creativz.us essays in the Appendix.

"Why We Can't Achieve Equity by Copying Those in Power," by Carlton Turner

"Does Crowdfunding Change the Picture for Artists?" by Douglas Noonan

"Who Sets the Agenda for America's New Urban Core?" by Umberto Crenca

4. Training is not keeping pace with artists' evolving needs and opportunities.

Appetite for professional training in the arts remains strong—approximately 120,000 people graduate with art degrees every year.[63] Many more people make their way into art careers without academic training, through apprenticeships or other kinds of pre-professional education. Regardless of the entry point, the skills required to succeed as an artist today are not limited to mastering an art form or presentation technique. Increasingly, artists also need knowledge and skills in multiple areas of production, business, and social media, and must master the complexities and ambiguities of both making art and making a career in a contemporary world.

"We are at an important evolutionary moment, a millennial moment, in which the value we ascribe to artists and the roles they play in our communities needs significant recalibration, as do the ways we train artists and support their work."

— Samuel Hoi, Maryland Institute College of Art

As more artists work in non-arts contexts, by choice or necessity, they also need heightened ability to improvise, collaborate, and transverse disparate domains.[64] This requires that artists and educators think more about the distinctive creative capacities that are rooted in arts practice, and articulate those skills in ways that can be understood by people outside of the arts. We heard repeatedly that relatively few artists have been able to take advantage of the growing interest in creativity and design-thinking in the business and public sectors, for example, in large measure because they have been unable to articulate the value of what they bring to non-arts contexts.[65] A continuing aversion to "instrumentalizing" the arts in

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63   SNAAP, 2015.
64   Lingo, Elizabeth L. and Steven J. Tepper, "Looking Back, Looking Forward: Arts-Based Careers and Creative Work." *Work and Occupations*. Vol. 40 no. 4, November 2013.
65   A 2015 search of the 3,500 most widely read articles on creativity, for example, found few mentions of artists. This may be because artists are not being trained to articulate or apply the value of their creative skills in non-arts contexts, and because many sectors have not figured out how to integrate artists into their decision-making and problem-solving processes.

> "Artists' distinctive competencies include dealing with ambiguity, generating ideas, improvisation and prototyping, reasoning with analogy and metaphor, and telling compelling stories in multiple mediums. These things can be useful capacities for many fields."
>
> — Steven J. Tepper, Arizona State University

some fine arts training programs also creates a barrier for artists who wish to use their skills in non-arts contexts.

In our interviews, Regional Roundtable discussions, and other research, people reinforced the point that artists are inadequately prepared for the contemporary world of work—inside or outside of the creative sectors. In both academic settings and more community-based or experiential training programs, young artists are not being educated in business or marketing skills, in strategic use of social media to advance their work, or in thinking about their entrepreneurial options. In a 2015 SNAAP national survey of recent art school graduates, 75 percent said they needed entrepreneurial and business skills in their art careers, but only 25 percent had received this training while in school.[66] Less is known about training provided by apprenticeship or community-based programs.

Moreover, few art schools are helping their students understand how to apply their creative skills in "unconventional" contexts—in community development, creative aging, business start-ups, or other non-fine arts settings. Another SNAAP survey revealed that 90 percent of art school alumni work outside the arts at some point in their careers, suggesting that being able to apply art-based skills in cross-over contexts would be broadly useful for artists in diverse disciplines.[67] With notable exceptions—such as programs at Arizona State University, Otis College of Art and Design, and Maryland Institute and College of Art which focus on developing entrepreneurial skills and giving undergraduates work experiences outside the arts— undergraduate- and graduate-level fine arts education for artists still focuses on honing artistic technique and reinforces the idea that the artist's singular vision will carry them through. As former president of the Rhode Island School of Design John Maeda has said, "Business schools are faster at integrating design training into their curricula than arts schools are at integrating business training…. 70 percent of top business schools have design clubs."[68]

Even when these programs exist at art schools, only a portion of practicing artists choose to go through them. There are some art schools that are developing hybrid programs, such as the California College of Arts MBA in Design Strategy, but often these are still siloed from the regular fine arts curriculum and attract a different set of students. A large number of artists learn about the business and entrepreneurial dimensions of artistic practice after their training ends. Therefore, more professional development and continuing educational opportunities are needed for working artists to help them learn business skills and how to apply and articulate their creative skills in non-arts contexts.

A growing number of professional development and training programs have sprung up in the past 10-15 years to address this gap. Programs such as Center for Cultural Innovation's Business of Art workshops, Creative Capital, National Arts Strategies, the Montana Arts Council's Artrepreneur Program, the Arts Council of Metropolitan Kansas City's Artist, Inc. professional practices program, the Rolling Rez Arts Mobile Unit (a mobile business training center and bank that travels across the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation), and Artists' U's programs in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and South Carolina—and dozens of others across the country— are serving artists of all ages, artistic media, and backgrounds.[69] These programs reflect the recognition that to succeed, artists today need more than artistic vision and superior technique. They need a big toolkit of other kinds of skills, as well as a broader conception of the artist's role in society.

66   SNAAP, 2015.
67   SNAAP, 2014.

68   John Maeda, TED Talk, October 9, 2012.
69   A recent review of training programs, "Options for Community Arts Training and Support," by the Center for the Study of the Arts and Community's William Cleveland, indicates there are more than 120 such programs in college or universities in 25 states.

For more on this theme, see Creativz.us essays in the Appendix.

"The Art School of the Future," by Ruby Lerner

"How Artists and Environmental Activists Both Do Better Together," by Jenny Kendler and Elizabeth Corr

5. Artist fellowships, grants, and awards are not responding to new ways of working.

Fellowships, grants, and awards are an important part of the artists' economy, especially for those artists seeking recognition and presentation opportunities in the nonprofit arts sector. Many interviewees and participants in the Regional Roundtables suggested that the system of foundation and public agency grants and awards for artists needs re-thinking. Grant guidelines and timeframes are not keeping pace with the ways that artists are making work, application procedures are unnecessarily cumbersome and often exclusionary, and decision-making is too slow. Many also commented that too few programs offer support for new art forms, for hybrid or interdisciplinary work, for community-based artists, and for artists working in non-arts sectors.

The UI study analyzed data from NYFA Source, the most comprehensive listing of programs and services for artists.[70] In 2003, NYFA Source listed 2,659 award programs in the U.S. that distributed approximately $91 million to artists annually. UI's analysis found that the number of awards varied widely by artistic discipline and geography. For example, nearly five times more awards were available for literary artists than folk artists, and twice as many awards for composers as choreographers. Similarly, the funds available varied considerably by discipline, with media artists eligible for more than twice the funds available to performance artists. Geographic variations were also notable—twice as many awards were available (and restricted) to residents of Massachusetts as to residents of Ohio, for example.[71]

This current study did not include a new analysis of NYFA Source, but field leaders consulted for this study reported that significant disparities continue to exist in the resources available for different disciplines, for different kinds of practice, and for artists in various parts of the country. While artists are grateful for the recognition and support offered by an award, the majority of such grants are relatively small (close to 80 percent of awards are for $10,000 or less) and because they are usually project-based do not address the fundamental need that artists have for flexible and sustained time without having to worry about survival to create, refine creative ideas, and hone technique. This "research and development" time remains a fundamental necessity for most artists and is essential to their creativity and generativity.[72]

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70   NYFA Source is a program of the New York Foundation for the Arts, which lists awards, services, and publications for artists nationally. nyfa.org

71   Maria Rosario Jackson, et al., *Investing in Creativity*, 2003.

72   For more on this see Sidford and Frasz, *Assessment of Intermediary Programs*, 2014.

PART 3: IMPLICATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

Throughout the research process, field leaders expressed the desire for action that moves beyond incremental and small-scale efforts that serve small numbers of artists. Instead, they told us, the arts sector needs coordinated action to both recalibrate how our society understands the value of artists and to influence the larger systems within which artists live and work in order to make them more equitable and sustainable for artists, and other workers as well.

Unless artists and their allies work to shift how society talks about and measures the value of creative and cultural work, provide income security for people who work in unconventional employment structures, find solutions for unmanageable levels of debt, ensure that training pathways are aligned with the realities of artistic work today, and create more responsive artist support organizations, we are nibbling at the margins of the challenges that artists face. Meaningful change in these five areas could have a truly transformative impact on artists of all kinds, everywhere—enabling them to make art, apply their creativity in diverse contexts, and serve communities in expanded ways. Addressing these issues at a structural level is also more equitable—likely to produce benefits for a much broader cross-section of artists, tradition bearers, and creative workers than approaches that target particular types of artists or aesthetic approaches.

The number of potential allies for addressing these macro-level issues grows each day. Multiple sectors are recognizing that we are not effectively talking about or measuring what really matters to individual and societal well-being. In healthcare, community development, education, and other realms, both local and national level efforts are seeking new ways to account for and invest in the things that truly contribute to quality of life and holistic community prosperity—including creativity, beauty, and social connection. On an economic level, as more and more people become self-employed, work in part-time situations, or struggle with excessive student debt, more efforts are addressing these issues. These developments can benefit artists as well as other kinds of workers. Multiple sectors are also realizing that the way our educational systems are structured is out of step with what people, industries, and society need today—and tomorrow. There is growing demand, inside

and outside the arts, to better integrate creative thinking skills into other sectors and knowledge disciplines. Finally, technology has disrupted traditional roles played by intermediaries in all fields, and diverse sectors are grappling with the new challenges and opportunities this has revealed.

Enabling the full spectrum of artists to realize their creative potential suggests that change is needed in five areas. The field should consider ways to:

1. **Articulate and measure the beneficial contributions of artists and creative work to societal health and well-being.**

Specific suggestions:

- Articulate the distinctive skills, capacities, and value that artists and creative workers can bring to various sectors, communities, and society as a whole.

- Develop and track more holistic measures for communicating the impact of arts-based creativity on societal health and well-being.

- Expand the range of artistic practices, styles, and practitioners that are valued and supported by the nonprofit arts sector to better reflect the cultural and aesthetic diversity of our society.

- Develop methods to better capture information about the entire population of artists and creative workers in the U.S. today.

Achieving these points will require coordinated action by funding agencies, academic institutions, artist support organizations, and other supporters of artists. A range of other kinds of people and entities are attempting to better understand the elements that lead to holistic societal well-being, and they can be powerful partners. This might include community development institutions, impact investors, economists, urban planners, and social scientists working on measures of community development and societal health beyond GDP or financial profit. It might also include theologians, psychologists, philosophers—as well as artists themselves—who are familiar with alternative, non-quantitative systems of articulating value.

2. Address artists' income insecurity as part of larger workforce efforts.

Specific suggestions:

- Link artists with other efforts to address workforce issues related to wages, portable benefits, and protections for independent workers.

- Examine alternative options for setting standards regarding artists' employment and compensation and mechanisms to monitor their implementation.

- Partner with financial institutions, investors, and funders to ensure that artists are included in initiatives such as social impact investing, revolving loan funds for community development projects, and investments in entrepreneurs/small businesses.

- Continue to connect artists to efforts focused on equitable community development and building local economies.

Artists support organizations and funding entities can play a major role in building the bridges described above. Federal, state, and local agencies in labor, commerce, community planning, and related sectors have been and will continue to be critical partners in this work. Organizations who work on workforce issues might also be collaborators. In addition, progressive leaders in finance, including community development financing institutions, the Federal Reserve, and foundations with mission-related investment portfolios are potential partners in this work.

3. Address artists' debt and help build their assets.

Specific suggestions:

- Connect artists with existing programs to reduce debt, such as cooperative credit mechanisms, federal loan forgiveness programs, Jumpstart Our Business Start-ups, Single Stop, and other services.

- Partner with and support initiatives seeking to help people build assets, including new equity investment mechanisms.

- Work to lower the costs of higher education in the arts, and support alternative and less expensive training and certification mechanisms.

- Expand mechanisms that help artists to acquire assets, such as equipment or space, that might generate revenue for them.

- Expand artists' access to no-interest loans.

Artists support organizations and funding bodies—both public and private—will be important leaders in this work, ensuring that artists' interests are addressed by public sector and private services working on debt issues and helping workers build assets. As important, artist support organizations can partner with national and local organizations working on efforts to build the assets of lower income workers.

4. Create 21st-century training systems.

Specific suggestions:

- Incorporate business and entrepreneurship training into the core curriculum of arts schools and continuing education programs.

- Better prepare artists to articulate and apply their distinctive competencies in a variety of community and business contexts.

- Bridge gaps between arts and non-arts disciplines, and promote more cross-overs of students, teachers, and methods.

- Work with non-arts sectors to secure paid internships and work placements for arts graduates, and train these entities in how to work with artists.

- Work to acknowledge qualified apprenticeship and mentoring programs outside of academic institutions as valid modes of professional education.

Arts schools and artists support organizations (virtual and live) can be essential leaders in the suggested efforts above. Academic training programs can do more to ensure that their students leave school with the diverse skills they need to succeed; link artists to employment opportunities in and outside of the arts; form mutually beneficial partnerships with academic programs in other professions, and professional industries; and help artists access continuing professional development opportunities. In addition, artist supporters can partner with others seeking to reconfigure education for the 21st century by breaking down academic silos and better integrating artistic methods and thinking with other sectors and disciplines.

Creativity Connects:
Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists

5. Upgrade systems and structures that support artists.

Specific suggestions:

- At national, state, and local levels, convene discussions on the broad structural issues identified in this report and identify fresh strategic approaches that will better align multiple organizations' efforts and produce greater impacts for more artists.

- Consider the functions now being played by existing technological platforms (nonprofit and commercial, arts and non-arts centered) and how they can be adapted, improved, or supplemented to better serve artists' needs.

- Connect to and partner with service organizations outside the arts and other entities working on issues raised in this report, such as debt, entrepreneurship, and healthcare.

- Support efforts that help artists utilize new technologies more equitably, such as improving access to high-speed Internet, digital copyright protections, and artist-centered content-sharing platforms.

Artist support organizations and funders have important roles to play in re-considering the support functions that artists most need now, and how these functions can best be addressed by connecting artists to the training, information, networking, validation, and markets they need through more optimal deployment of the tools, platforms, and services available. Stronger integration of artist intermediaries and training institutions can also help create a more comprehensive and integrated system of support nationwide.

GLASS

DANCE
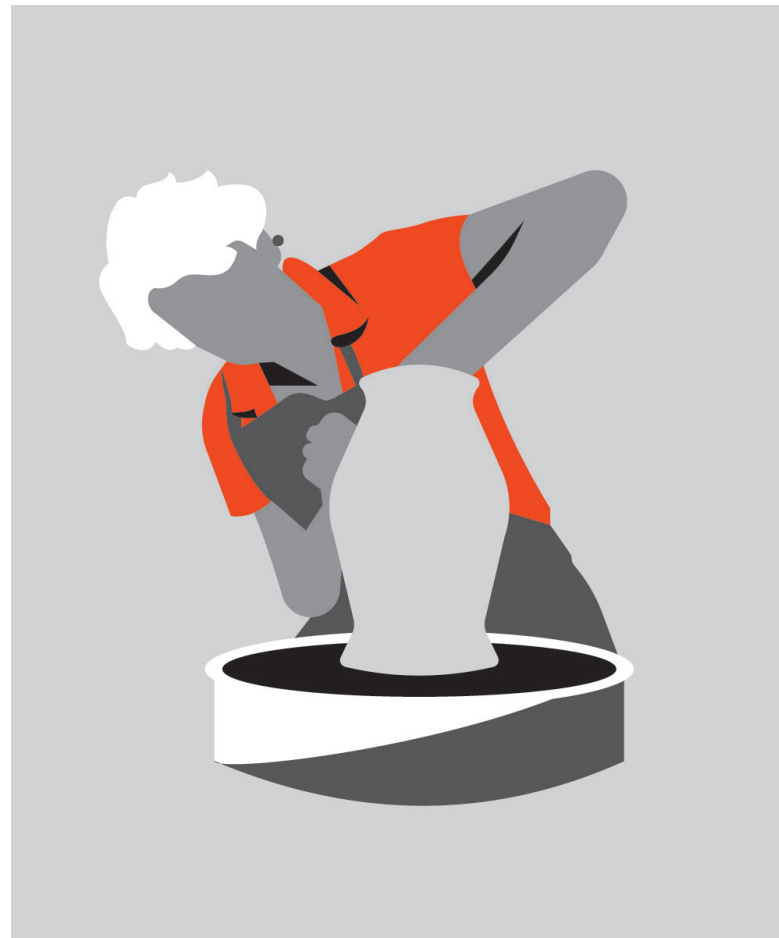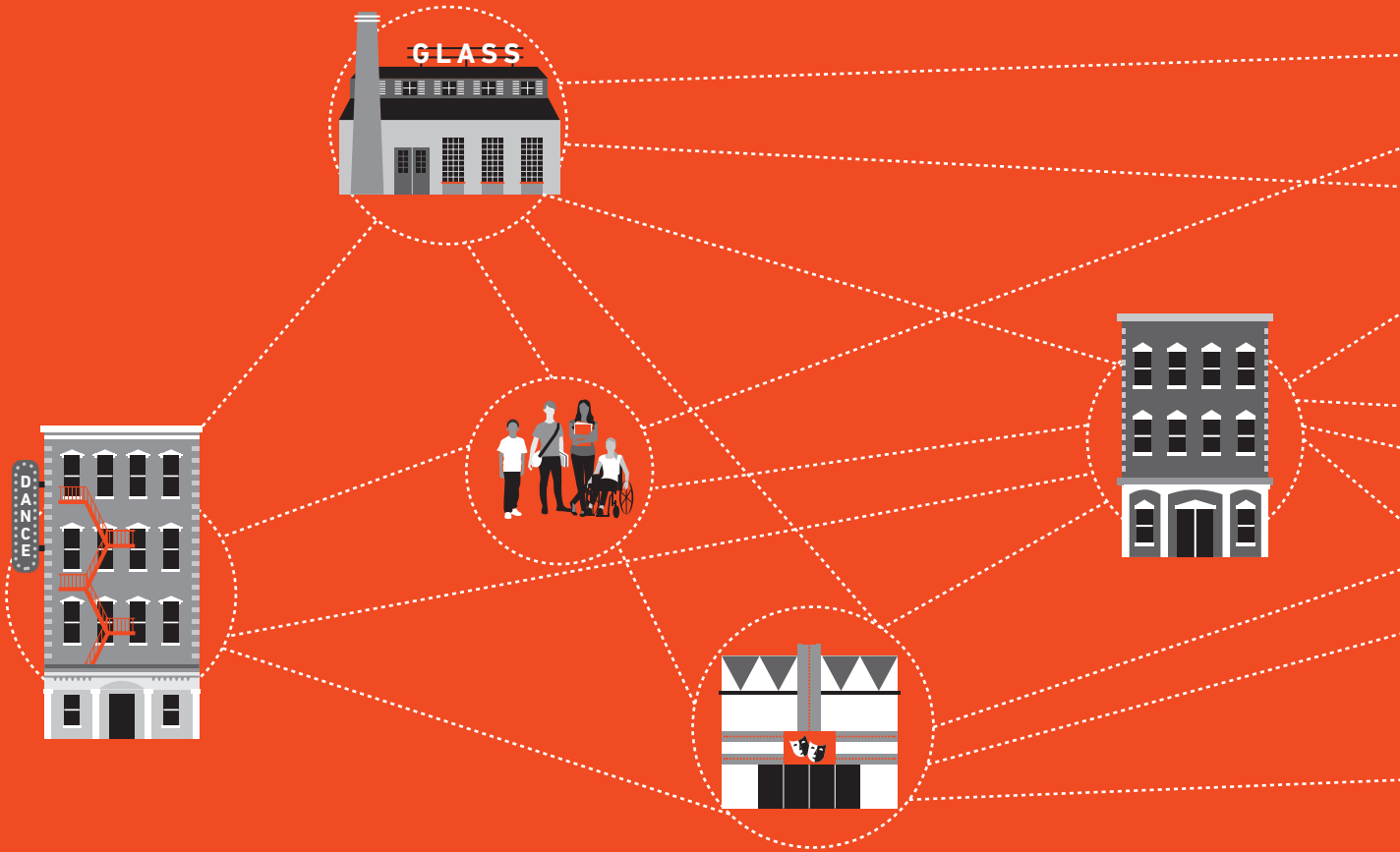
CONCLUSION

The population of artists is growing and diversifying. The ways artists work now, and where and with whom they work is also changing; and artists' distinctive skills and capacities are being applied in increasingly varied contexts. New technological developments, economic shifts, and other conditions of contemporary life present an array of challenges for artists, but also offer new possibilities and a growing number of potential partners and allies. While continuing to strengthen existing artists' support systems, those who care about America's creative future need to pursue coordinated efforts to better and more equitably articulate the contributions of artists and creative work to societal health and well-being, and adjust systems of training, employment, and financing to keep pace with artists' changing reality.

GALLERY
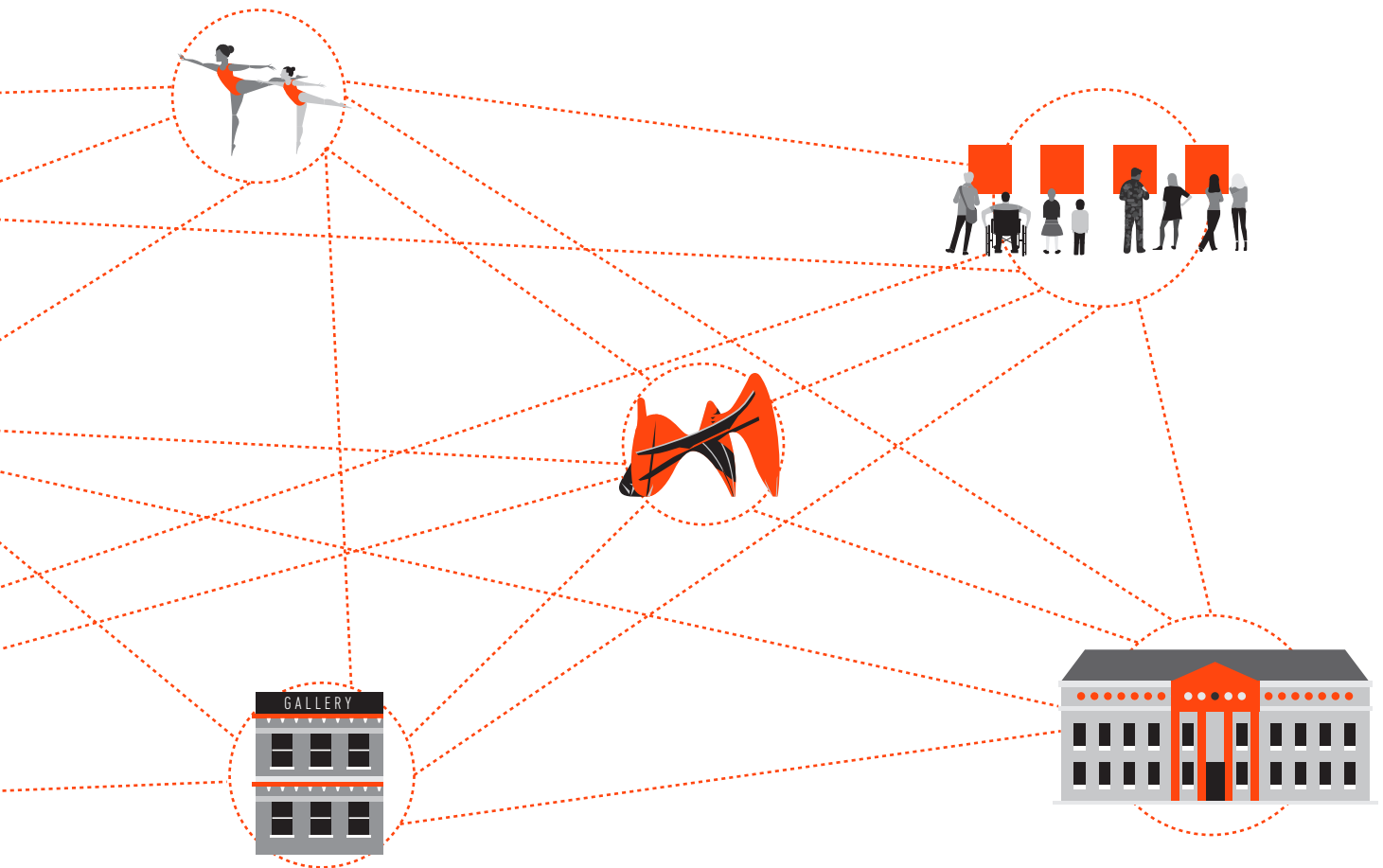
APPENDIX 1. INTERVIEWEES, AND PARTICIPANTS IN EXPERTS CONVENING

Maribel Alvarez, Southwest Center, University of Arizona

T. Lulani Arquette, Native Arts and Cultures Foundation

Blake Beckham, Lucky Penny

Roberto Bedoya, Tucson Pima Arts Council

Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America

Danielle Brazell, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles

Stanlyn Brevé, National Performance Network

Eric Booth, Educator

Asi Burak, Games for Change

Cornelia Carey, Craft Emergency Relief Fund + Artists' Emergency Resources/National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response

Polly Carl, HowlRound/ArtsEmerson at Emerson College

Jean Cook, Future of Music Coalition

Barbara Davis, The Actors Fund

Mary Frances DeRose, University of Massachusetts Boston

Penelope Douglas, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Leah Edwards, Autodesk

Courtney Fink, Common Field

Deborah Fisher, A Blade of Grass

Lizabeth Fogel, Walt Disney Company

Adam Forman, Center for an Urban Future

Leora Fridman, Artist

Thelma Golden, Studio Museum in Harlem

Lee Gutkind, Writer/Editor, *Creative Nonfiction*

Anjee Helstrup-Alvarez, Movimiento de Arte y Cultura Latino Americana

Samuel Hoi, Maryland Institute College of Art

Cinda Holt, Montana Arts Council

Adam Huttler, Fractured Atlas

Cheryl Ikemiya, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

Kemi Ilesanmi, The Laundromat Project

Danielle Jackson, Culture Culture

Maria Rosario Jackson, Kresge Foundation/National Council on the Arts

Tabitha Jackson, Sundance Institute

Jean Johnstone, Teaching Artists Guild

James Kass, Youth Speaks

Marda Kirn, EcoArts Connections

Amy Kitchener, Alliance for California Traditional Arts

Suzanne Lacy, Otis College of Art and Design

Steve Lambert, Center for Artistic Activism

Kate D. Levin, Bloomberg Philanthropies

Ann Markusen, University of Minnesota (retired)/Markusen Economic Research

Toni Moceri, Allied Media Projects

Alyce Myatt, Multimedia Consultant

Anne Gadwa Nicodemus, Metris Arts Consulting

Deborah Obalil, Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design

Douglas Noonan, Indiana University

Erin Potts, Revolutions Per Minute

Lori Pourier, First Peoples Fund

Angelique Power, Joyce Foundation

Jim Pugh, Universal Basic Income Project/ShareProgress

Heidi Quante, Artist

Prerana Reddy, Queens Museum of Art

Judilee Reed, Surdna Foundation

Favianna Rodriguez, CultureStrike

Michael Rohd, Sojourn Theatre/Center for Performance and Civic Practice

John Michael Schert, University of Chicago

Sanjit Sethi, Santa Fe Art Institute

Nathan Shedroff, California College of the Arts

Malia Simonds, Bloomberg Philanthropies

Caitlin Strokosch, Alliance of Artists Communities

Randy Swearer, Autodesk

Steven J. Tepper, Arizona State University

Elizabeth Thompson, Buckminster Fuller Institute

Shelley Trott, Kenneth Rainin Foundation

Carlton Turner, Alternate ROOTS

Clyde Valentin, Southern Methodist University

Risë Wilson, Robert Rauschenberg Foundation

Caroline Woolard, BFAMFAPhD

Laura Zabel, Springboard for the Arts

Steve Zeitlin, City Lore

APPENDIX 2. HOSTS AND PARTICIPANTS IN REGIONAL ROUNDTABLES

State arts agencies hosted roundtables in ten regions of the country, and the National Endowment for the Arts convened a group of artists and arts service organizations. The host agencies, staff contacts, and participants are included below.

Atlanta, GA Roundtable

Hosted by Georgia Council for the Arts at Edgar Allan

Georgia Council for the Arts Staff

Allen Bell

Tina Lilly

Emily Murray

Karen Paty

Participants

Chris Appleton, WonderRoot

Jamie Badoud, The Hambidge Center

Stephanie Cash, Burnaway

Louis Corrigan, Possible Futures

Sonya Halpern, National Black Arts Festival

Anthony Harper, Hallister Development/The Goat Farm Arts Center

Jessyca Holland, C4 Atlanta

T. Lang, T. Lang Dance

Jason Martin, Community Guilds/STEAM Truck

Fahamu Pecou, Visual Artist

Mason Poe, Edgar Allan

Dantes Rameau, Atlanta Music Project

Chuck Reece, The Bitter Southerner

Anthony Rodriguez, Aurora Theatre

Mark Runco, University of Georgia

Jen Soong, Root City Market

Lauri Stallings, glo

Boston, MA Roundtable

Hosted by Massachusetts Cultural Council at Café ArtScience

Massachusetts Cultural Council Staff

Michael Ibrahim

Ann Petruccelli

Anita Walker

Participants

Sarah Ganz Blythe, RISD Museum

Julie Burros, City of Boston

Vanessa Calderón-Rosado, Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción

Umberto Crenca, AS220

Janet Echelman, Artist

David Edwards, ArtScience Labs, Le Laboratoire

Carrie Fitzsimmons, ArtScience Labs, Le Laboratoire

Laura Freid, Silkroad

David C. Howse, ArtsEmerson at Emerson College/HowlRound

Diane Paulus, American Repertory Theater at Harvard University

Heather Pontonio, Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation

Lisa M. Wong, Musician/Pediatrician

E. San San Wong, Barr Foundation

Des Moines, IA Roundtable

Hosted by Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and Iowa Arts Council
at Moberg Gallery

Iowa Arts Council Staff

Mary Cownie

Matthew Harris

Chris Kramer

Veronica O'Hern

Joseph Piearson

Participants

Sally Dix, Bravo Greater Des Moines

Sarah Dougherty, Des Moines Public Schools

Jennifer Drinkwater, Iowa State University

John Mark Feilmeyer, ArtForceIowa

Jeff Fleming, Des Moines Art Center

Leon Kuehner, Iowa Alliance for Arts Education

David McGraw, University of Iowa

TJ Moberg, Moberg Gallery

Katie Patterson, Happy Medium

Andre Perry, Englert Theatre

Siobhan Spain, Mainframe Studios (formerly DesMoinesArts)

Jordan Weber, Fluxx Collective

Deanne Wortman, University of Iowa

Lesley Wright, Faulconer Gallery at Grinnell College

Helena, MT Roundtable

Hosted by the Montana Arts Council
at Myrna Loy Center

Montana Arts Council Staff

Kristin Han Burgoyne

Arlynn Fishbaugh

Cinda Holt

Kim Baraby Hurtle

Emily Kohring

Participants

Tom Borrup, Creative Community Builders/University of Minnesota College of Continuing Education

George Everett, Mainstreet Uptown Butte

Olivia Everett, Mainstreet Uptown Butte/Imagine Butte Resource Center

Frank Finley, Salish Kootenai College

Tim Holmes, Tim Holmes Studio

Sheri Jarvis, Montana Artrepreneur Program

Vaughan Judge, Montana State University

Gita Saedi Kiely, Big Sky Film Institute

Steven Young Lee, Archie Bray Foundation for the Ceramic Arts

Tracy Linder, Visual Artist

Michael McGill, Missoula Children's Theatre

Laura Millin, Missoula Art Museum

Jack Nickels, ArtSpace

Janaina Vieira-Marques, Teaching Artist

Lexington, KY Roundtable

Hosted by Kentucky Arts Council
at the Living Arts & Science Center

Kentucky Arts Council Staff

Lori Meadows

Emily Moses

Sarah Schmitt

Dan Strauss

Participants

Soreyda Benedit-Begley, Fashion Designer

Melissa Bond, Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky/University of Kentucky

Teresa Day, Kentucky Educational Television

Theo Edmonds, IDEAS xLab

Tim Glotzbach, Berea College

Judi Jennings, Kentucky Foundation for Women (retired)

Heather Lyons, Living Arts and Science Center

Karine Maynard, Maynard Studios

Matthew Maynard, Maynard Studios

Everett McCorvey, University of Kentucky

John Meister, Super Soul

Gil Reyes, StageOne Family Theatre/Theatre [502]

Arturo Alonzo Sandoval, University of Kentucky

Bill Schutters, Kentucky Innovation Network/Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation

Ada Smith, Appalshop

Dan Swartz, Wunderkammer Company

Randall Vaughn, Gray Architects and Engineers, P.S.C.

Crystal Wilkinson, Berea College

Richard Young, North Limestone Community Development Corporation

Los Angeles, CA Roundtable

Hosted by California Arts Council
at the Reef

California Arts Council Staff

Caitlin Fitzwater

Craig Watson

Participants

Mike Blockstein, Public Matters

Leonardo Bravo, Big City Forum

Danielle Brazell, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles

Ava Bromberg, The Reef

Kathy Gallegos, Avenue 50 Studio

d. Sabela Grimes, Choreographer/Writer/Composer/Educator

Vijay Gupta, Street Symphony/Los Angeles Philharmonic

Wendy Hsu, Artist/Researcher/Digital Strategist

Maria Rosario Jackson, Kresge Foundation/National Council on the Arts

Carolina García Jayaram, United States Artists

Bettina Korek, ForYourArt

Bob Nicoll, Blizzard Entertainment

Prumsodun Ok, Artist/Teacher/Writer/Cultural Activist

Julie Orser, California State University, Fullerton

Doris Sung, dO|Su Studio Architecture

Laura Zucker, Los Angeles County Arts Commission

Minneapolis, MN Roundtable

Hosted by Minnesota State Arts Board
at their offices

Minnesota State Arts Board Staff

Jill Bode

Sue Gens

Ben Owen

Participants

Vickie Benson, McKnight Foundation

Eyenga Bokamba, Intermedia Arts

Paul Bonin-Rodriguez, University of Texas at Austin

Ben Cameron, Jerome Foundation

Karleen Gardner, Minneapolis Institute of Art

Ashley Hanson, Minnesota Theater Alliance

Wing Young Huie, Artist/Community Builder

Sonja Kuftinec, University of Minnesota

Sharon Louden, Artist/Educator/Editor/Advocate for Artists

Kathy Mouacheupao, Twin Cities Local Initiatives Support Corporation

John Nuechterlein, American Composers Forum

Randy Reyes, Mu Performing Arts

Lula Saleh, African Economic Development Solutions

Mona Smith, Healing Place Collaborative

Carl Atiya Swanson, Springboard for the Arts

Britt Udesen, Loft Literary Center

Omaha, NE Roundtable

Hosted by Nebraska Arts Council
at their offices

Nebraska Arts Council Staff

Mike Markey

Carla Podraza

Marty Skomal

Suzanne Wise

Participants

Jeff Beck, Saddle Creek Records

Chris Beutler, City of Lincoln

Bob Culver, Consultant/Retired Executive, Lincoln Financial Group

Jason Fischer, Surreal Media Lab

Dan Gutzmann, Union Bank Catalyst Initiative

Rachel Jacobson, Film Streams

John Keady, AIM

Karen Kunc, Artist/Entrepreneur

Matt Mason, Nebraska Writers Collective

Brigitte McQueen Shew, Union for Contemporary Art

Andrew Norman, Hear Nebraska

Liana Owad, Nebraska Innovation Studio

Teliza Rodriguez, Museum of Nebraska Art

Rich Sorich, Iowa West Foundation

Roger Weitz, Opera Omaha

Pittsburgh, PA Roundtable

Hosted by the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
at Kelly Strayhorn Theater's Alloy Studios

Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Staff

Philip Horn

Participants

Tina Williams Brewer, Quilt Artist/Teaching Artist

Lee Gutkind, *Creative Nonfiction*

Darrell Kinsel, BOOM Concepts

Ryan Lammie, Radiant Hall

Christiane Leach, Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council

Maritza Mosquera, Artist/Educator

Kathleen Mulcahy, Pittsburgh Glass Center

Staycee Pearl, PearlArts Studios

Stevie Sheridan, Quantum Theatre

Janera Solomon, Kelly Strayhorn Theater

Jane Werner, Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Alison Zapata, Visual Artist/Teaching Artist

Santa Fe, NM Roundtable

Hosted by New Mexico Arts
at McCune Charitable Foundation

New Mexico Arts Staff

Loie Fecteau

Jenice Gharib

Linda Underwood

Participants

Jamie Blosser, Santa Fe Art Institute

David Breecker, Santa Fe Innovation Park

Tim Castillo, University of New Mexico

Tom Frouge, Avokado Artists

Tina Garcia-Shams, Street Food Institute

Shira Greenberg, Keshet Dance Company

Dennis Gromelski, FUSION

Allison Hagerman, McCune Charitable Foundation

Joanne LeFrak, SITE Santa Fe

Alice Loy, Global Center for Cultural Enterpreneurship/ Creative Startups

Valerie Martinez, Artful Life

Kym Pinder, University of New Mexico, College of Fine Arts

Sabrina Pratt, Creative Santa Fe

Irvin Trujillo, Weaver, NEA National Heritage Fellow

Jill Cooper Udall, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities

Arts Service Organization Roundtable

Hosted by National Endowment for the Arts
at their offices

National Endowment for the Arts Staff

Ann Meier Baker

Beth Bienvenu

Nancy Daugherty

Michael McLaughlin

Cliff Murphy

India Pinkney

Ned Read

Greg Reiner

Laura Scanlan

Jason Schupbach

Douglas Sonntag

Caralyn Spector

Amy Stolls

Winona Varnon

Carol Walton

Participants

Paul Allen, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Kelly J. Barsdate, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Paddy Bowman, National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Michael Butera, National Association for Music Education

Cornelia Carey, Craft Emergency Relief Fund + Artists' Emergency Resources/National Coalition for Arts Preparedness and Emergency Response

Alan W. Cooper, Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation

Catherine Dehoney, Chorus America

Deb Dormody, Alliance of Artist Communities

Mario Garcia Durham, Association of Performing Arts Presenters

Cathy Edwards, New England Foundation for the Arts

Teresa Eyring, Theatre Communications Group

David Fenza, Association of Writers and Writing Programs

Andy Finch, Association of Art Museum Directors

Greg Finch, National Center for Creative Aging

Amy Fitterer, Dance/USA

Brandon Gryde, Opera America

Ed Harsh, New Music USA

Adam Huttler, Fractured Atlas

Jeffrey Lependorf, Council of Literary Magazines and Presses

Kathi Levin, National Art Education Association

Margaret Lioi, Chamber Music America

Susan McGreevy-Nichols, National Dance Education Organization

Betsy King Militello, National Alliance for Musical Theatre

Heather Noonan, League of American Orchestras

John Nuechterlein, American Composers Forum

Deborah Obalil, Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design

Julia Olin, National Council for the Traditional Arts

James Palmarini, Educational Theatre Organization

Mollie Quinlan-Hayes, South Arts

Mary Margaret Schoenfeld, U.S. Regional Arts Organizations

Gail Silberglied, American Alliance of Museums

Alisha Tonsic, Network of Ensemble Theaters

Alexis Truitt, American Alliance for Theatre & Education

Nina Ozlu Tunceli, Americans for the Arts

MK Wegmann, National Performance Network (retired)

APPENDIX 3. CREATIVZ.US ESSAYS

Angie Kim,
Center for Cultural Innovation... "Introduction: What Do Artists Need to Thrive?"

Asi Burak,
Games for Change .... "Why Arts Funders and Indie Video Game Makers Don't Click, and How to Fix It"

Laura Zabel,
Springboard for the Arts .... "What Artists Actually Need is an Economy That Works for Everyone"

Jenny Kendler and **Elizabeth Corr**,
National Resources Defense Council .... "How Artists and Environmental Activists Both Do Better Together"

Kevin Erickson and **Jean Cook**,
Future of Music Coalition .... "Technology Isn't Magic: Let's Make It Work Better for Artists and Musicians"

Tanya Selvaratnam,
Artist, Producer, Activist... "Want to Be an Artist? Be Passionate and Realistic about Your Career"

Renata Marinaro,
The Actors Fund.. "Health Insurance Is Still a Work-in-Progress for Artists and Performers"

Yaw Agyeman,
Sound Artist, Black Monks of Mississippi ...."Generosity as a Guiding Principle of Life as an Artist"

Adam Huttler,
Fractured Atlas .... "For Profit or Not, Artists Need Tech Designed for Artists"

Steven J. Tepper,
Arizona State University ...."What Does It Mean to Sustain a Career in the Gig Economy?"

Ruby Lerner,
Creative Capital.."The Art School of the Future"

Carlton Turner,
Alternate ROOTS ...."Why We Can't Achieve Cultural Equity by Copying Those in Power"

Sarah A. Howes,
Playwright, Actor, Attorney ...."Artists, the Original Gig Economy Workers, Have More Rights than They Think"

Umberto Crenca,
AS220... "Who Set the Agenda in America's New Urban Core?"

Danielle Jackson,
Writer, Strategist.. "Can Photographers Restore Their Devastated Business?"

Joanna Woronkowicz,
Indiana University .... "Do Artists Have a Competitive Edge in the Gig Economy?"

Douglas Noonan,
Indiana University ...."How Does Crowdfunding Change the Picture for Artists?"

Caroline Woolard,
Artist, Teacher, Organizer .... "Online Platforms Are Not Enough. Artists Need Affordable Space."

NOTE: Texts of the Creativz.us Essays are as they appeared online.

Introduction: What Do Artists Need to Thrive?

by Angie Kim – President & CEO, Center for Cultural Innovation (02/08/2016)

If you're reading this, chances are good that you're an artist, a friend of artists, or someone who is interested in how creativity thrives. Hello! You've come to the right place.

By engaging in the conversation here and through social media, you are part of a research effort to understand how artists in the United States live and work and what they need to sustain and strengthen their careers. CREATIVZ features essays by a range of thinkers in the arts field, along with comments, images and ideas curated from contributions through social media using the hashtag #creativz. Please add your voice!

This web site is *not* a summary of research findings, but rather an integral part of the research process itself. The goal is to make the research transparent, include a broad range of people and perspectives in the process and hear from as many artists and artist support providers as possible. A report summarizing the findings will be published and available on this site in September 2016.

Background

This national research project builds on a 2003 report by the Urban Institute, *Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists*, which developed a conceptual framework for understanding the major domains of support that artists need: validation; demand/ markets; material supports such as space, equipment, employment, and funding; training and professional development; community and networks; and access to information. Over the past 13 years this framework has informed the practice of funders, artist intermediary organizations and others who are interested in supporting artists.

The world has changed significantly since 2003 in ways that have important impacts on artists and artistic practice. New technology has changed how artistic work is created, accessed, and supported. Creativity is "in," and is more highly valued by businesses, civic leaders and the general public. Demographic and generational shifts have led to new aesthetics and ways of working, and raised the urgency of cultural equity. With the "gig economy," the way that artists have always worked has become more

mainstream and magnified the need for new structures that support this way of working.

The domains outlined in the Urban Institute report are still applicable, but we need a fresh understanding of the context in which artists work today, and what new kinds of support structures need to be created, or what existing systems can be enhanced to enable them to thrive.

Who

This research is a partnership of the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), with additional support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Surdna Foundation.

CCI's mission is to support individual artists, and the ensuing research report will generate understanding and a national dialogue on the kinds of support artists need, with CCI's intention to catalyze support for artists.

For the NEA, this research is a component of their 50th anniversary initiative, *Creativity Connects*, which shines a spotlight on how the arts contribute to the nation's creative ecosystem and connect with other sectors that want to use creativity. Together, the NEA and CCI are working together to recognize and understand the kind of support that artists need today.

How to Be Involved

• Share your stories and perspective. Comment directly on posts on this site, or through your favorite social media app. On social media, be sure to use this hashtag: #creativz

• Share the site or posts with other artists, creatives and those who are interested in supporting them.

• Use social media to show and tell us about your life as a creative—what you do, how you do it and what's going on in your world that makes your creative work easier, harder or different. You can also see some of the views we've curated from Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

Why Arts Funders And Indie Video Game Makers Don't Click, And How To Fix It

by Asi Burak – Board Director, Games for Change
(02/01/2016)

Today's indie video game creators are operating more like independent artists in many ways, however the nonprofit arts funding system is hard for them to penetrate. A few thoughtful adaptations could make the funding system a lot more relevant and accessible to artists and social entrepreneurs choosing to work in this exciting medium.

The 'democratization' of game creation tools and distribution has had a significant impact in recent years on the field of video games. Previously, creators had one route: go through the gatekeepers — large console publishers that held the power over what got created and marketed. Games were very expensive to make and the risk of failure was high, so the content was limited and fairly conservative. This is similar to big film studios making bets on blockbusters.

Now, with online distribution like Valve's STEAM distribution platform and mobile app stores, any game maker can pull together the resources to make a game relatively cheaply and get access directly to audiences. Furthermore, crowdfunding platforms like Kickstarter have allowed game designers to create direct relationships with their potential users, very early in the process.

This has contributed to a leveling of the playing field and has resulted in more games being created with more diverse content. While the price tag for an indie game is lower, if a small team sells enough in quantity, they are able to pay the rent (e.g. Papers Please by Lucas Pope or This War of Mine by 11 bit studios). Very successful ones can literally become millionaires. On the flip side, the biggest challenge now is noise — there is so much content out there that it is much harder to get discovered.

This shift in technology and underlying economics has truly led to a renaissance in games. The content being created is bolder and more experimental. Creators are trying new things that the big developers never would have been able to try. This has also created space for different types of artists to explore game development as a mode of expression (see The Night Journey,

Bill Viola's collaboration with the USC Game Innovation Lab). We are also seeing a change in the demographics of who is playing games – many more women, and an average age that is increasing every year (35 in 2015, according to the Entertainment Software Association's industry survey).

Although games and interactive experiences are increasingly created for purposes other than profit or entertainment — for social change, for example, or artistic expression — the current nonprofit funding and support structures are highly challenging for game developers to access. The National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities have supported several game projects, but it is far from an easy fit. Most public funding entities require that grantees are nonprofits or have a fiscal sponsor, but that is not how game creators typically operate. Usually they are either operating as a small for-profit studio or as individual artists. In addition, most game creators don't really know how to apply for grants or that other support structures for artists exist and might be relevant to them.

Here are some steps funders could consider to make their support more relevant to game creators:

- Hire or harness talent and critics who understand gaming and can communicate well with game creators.

- Provide scholarships for individual game creators – career and life support that isn't conditional on what they are creating but on their talent and artistic potential.

- Go for a portfolio or incubator approach vs. funding one-off projects, in order to build the whole sector.

- Figure out how to address the non-profit status question.

I believe that implementing these suggestions could make a dramatic change in the life of emerging video game artists, and more importantly – catch up with recent developments in one of the most dominant media forms.

What Artists Actually Need Is an Economy That Works for Everyone

by Laura Zabel – Executive Director, Springboard for the Arts (02/02/2016)

In the years since Investing in Creativity, the Urban Institute's 2003 report on the support structure for U.S. artists, a lot of things of have changed, many of them for the better. More than ever before, through nonprofits (including the one where I work, Springboard for the Arts) and education institutions, artists have access to programs that teach entrepreneurship and business skills. There are organizations to help artists find affordable studio and living space and programs that help artists navigate the complex healthcare system. New grant and fellowship programs that provide recognition and visibility for artists have taken hold.

Incredible work is happening all across the country to ensure that artists are more able to make a living and a life and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

And yet, despite all this progress, I still feel like we have a long way before we approach something that feels like a real, systems-level change in how artists are able to support themselves and be visible and valued for their work. Even if we were to exponentially scale and broaden access to the current artist supports – for example, if every artist in America had access to basic business skills training — while it would be an important improvement in the lives of artists, it still feels a bit like nibbling at the margins.

Because our systems aren't just broken for artists, they are broken for everyone. I've come to believe we can't really improve life for artists in any broad or lasting way without improving life for everyone.

Ack. So daunting. I know. It flies in the face of every consultant who tells us to avoid mission drift and every pundit who tells us art should stay in the realm of metaphor and beauty and avoid pedestrian concerns like economics and inequality. And yet, to not engage in the broader realities of our culture and context for our work feels a lot like fiddling while Rome burns.

Daunting, yes, but also thrilling. We have an opportunity right now, to really change how our culture values art, creativity and artists themselves. I believe we can do it by being an integral part of building new, more equitable and sustainable structures and systems that work for not only artists, but for lots of other people as well. To capture this opportunity, we need to look beyond small artist-specific solutions to systems level problems, and instead engage in the bigger, most urgent questions of our time.

For example, the economy.
Let's be clear: Our economic systems are perfectly designed for the results we are getting. Just by way of example, by law you need to have a net worth of over a million dollars to become an "accredited" investor—i.e. to be able to invest venture capital in businesses that have a high potential return.*

This law was made following the great Depression to protect people, but it's easy to see that laws like this only increase income disparity and ensure that people who already have resources continue to have resources and those who don't, don't. This kind of systemic disparity is mirrored in arts world, large minimum donation requirements for boards of directors at major arts institutions may not be regulated by the SEC but they certainly perpetuate inequity between people who hold the power in the arts community and people who don't.

Luckily, there are really smart, bold people and organizations working to address the broken systems of our economy and imagine new futures. Movements to remake our world and our systems so that they are more equitable and healthy are gaining ground, including the New Economy Coalition, Capital Institute, P6 Cooperative Trade Movement, Citizen University and National Domestic Workers Alliance.** These movements are working for a better system for everyone, but artists stand to benefit greatly from the changes they are advocating (especially because they are often part of the group of low-wage, independent, "gig economy" workers that are most disadvantaged by our current system).

For example, the mainstreaming of gig economy workers because of platforms like Uber has created visibility around the need to organize for better worker protections. Protections like collective bargaining for independent workers and models like worker cooperatives could and should include creative workers and/or be adapted to serve artists.

Or take, for example, the movement and work to create universal access to free college tuition. This option would remove affordability barriers of attending college and change who can imagine a future as an artist for themselves, as art schools are currently among the most expensive schools in the country. It would lessen the student loan debt burden for millions of young people *and* open up the choices that artists can make about employment post-college.

I think that artists and those who care about them have a greater chance of creating lasting change if we work in solidarity with others trying to change the broken systems

that disadvantage all of us. In survey after survey, artists say what they need is income, healthcare, reliable housing. You know who else needs those things? **Everybody**. What if we could actually change how our larger economy works so that the need for artist-specific solutions became unnecessary?

I believe (fervently, optimistically) that artists can not only benefit from these movements, but also make them more effective by participating — bringing imagination and creativity to the table to help society imagine new futures and show us new possibilities. To reach their full potential, these new systems need artists' creative thinking — our ability to animate communities, to advocate and to tell the story of a better future. Now is the time to put our creativity where our mouth is. If we're going to prove our value once and for all, we have to engage across sectors and with totally new ways of thinking.

Sounds good, right? Let's just join hands and imagine a new economy into being.

What would this actually look like? Back to that law limiting accredited investor status to only the wealthiest people: As a part of the JOBS (Jumpstart Our Business Startups) act in 2012, Congress actually opened up that law to allow a new system for all people (not just the wealthiest 3%) to become investors in businesses. It is now legal for people of all income levels to invest in local businesses and ideas through crowdfunding equity investments. How might we use this mechanism to create a market of local creative goods and services as well as a market of cultural and neighborhood value? What if neighbors could come together and collectively invest in an art and community center for their block or if people could easily invest part of their savings in creative social enterprises in their community through a designated community investment engine? These investments could simultaneously build social and financial capital within communities, while creating new paths towards sustainable livelihoods for artists and other makers. Similar models have been used effectively for the support of neighborhood restaurants and breweries, and new statewide initiatives, such as, MNVest in Minnesota, are coming online to create the policy and infrastructure necessary to make this idea a reality.

Imagine an economy where instead of local money going out into the coffers of large global companies, individuals and institutions can choose to have their dollars circulate locally to support local food, culture and other producers. What has been started in the 'Buy Local' movement could be expanded to include better mechanisms to make it simpler and more accessible to support local producers with our every day buying habits. We could create incentives for large corporations, educational institutions and hospitals to support locally grown food for their cafeterias and events, locally made goods for employee incentives and locally sourced music and photography for their marketing departments? What if these major institutions could earn a "local economy certification" alongside their LEED certified buildings?

There are exciting models springing up in the food community. The Fair Food Network program, Double Up Food Bucks, provides Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) beneficiaries with a one-to-one match to purchase healthy, locally grown fruits and vegetables, creating reciprocal relationship between local producers and their neighbors who need access to healthy food. And the Hmong American Farmers Association's Alternative Markets Program creates relationships with school districts, catering companies, and stores to make it simpler for those institutions to buy directly from local farmers.

These ideas and examples only scratch the surface of how we might work to change how money travels through our communities in ways that could impact artists as local producers. There are hundreds of other ways we can find for people to spend their money on goods and experiences that build meaning in their lives. There is good work happening to make a new economy a reality. Colleagues in local food, environment and sustainability, and racial and economic equity are focused on building new systems that work for everybody. New mechanisms are being developed to make it simpler and easier for people to spend their money and invest in a way that aligns with their ethics and values in local markets and provide support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

Perhaps the "artist service" work most needed now is to help shape these evolving mechanisms so they are relevant to artists and help artists tap into these systems. And to bring our creative assets to bear in advocating for this system change wholeheartedly. If we were to do all this, it might be that the concept of "artist services" could become unnecessary. In that world, grants and fellowships could be allocated to support special projects, reflection time and R&D for artists, instead of living expenses or healthcare. Support for artists could be focused on helping creativity and innovation flourish and spread widely, rather than remediating broken systems. These artist-specific resources would be built on a solid foundation, a foundation that works for artists, and for everyone.

*gross oversimplification. I am not an economist.

**this is an assortment of organizations and movements that I think are really interesting and crush-worthy right now, you can probably think of others!

How Artists and Environmental Activists Both Do Better Together

by Jenny Kendler and Elizabeth Corr – Artist in Residence & Manager of Arts Partnerships and Events, NRDC (02/17/2016)

Art has long been a catalyst for social change, from the anti-war efforts of the Dadists during World War I to the music of Nina Simone during the 1960's civil rights movement. Today, cause-related groups are exploring using culture to broaden their reach and impact beyond what is possible with conventional advocacy methods. The National Domestic Workers Alliance, for example, leveraged the attention around the movie The Help to launch a culturally based advocacy campaign for the Domestic Workers Bill of Rights in California, which contributed to it passing in 2013. From the National Day Laborers Organizing Network to the DREAMers, organizations are recognizing the power of art as a way to move people. On the artist side, there have always been artists who have sought to contribute, through their art, to issues they care about. The environment is a particularly fast growing and urgent area of interest and is leading to a growth in artist demand for academic programs and residencies that can help facilitate this work. Yet within large-scale environmental organizations, relationships between artists and organizations, if they exist, are still typically one-off projects, or involve bringing artists or artistic work in at the late stages of an advocacy campaign to add creative elements. Jenny Kendler's residency with the Natural Resources Defense Council is an attempt to develop a different residency model where the artist is fully embedded within the organization and works collaboratively with the organization over a long period of time. Jenny and Elizabeth Corr from the NRDC tell their story here. – Alexis Frasz, Editor

For a number of years, artist Jenny Kendler had been searching for a science-based or activist organization with an artist-in-residence program as a way to explore her interest in environmental themes. Having had little luck in her quest for formal programs, Jenny's interest was piqued in the fall of 2013 at the EXPO CHICAGO international art fair, where she saw that the environmental non-profit Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) was an exhibitor. NRDC's show included artwork by Maya Lin and Gordon Matta-Clark, and was distinctively different from the other art/activism partnerships that she had seen, which had tended to use artwork solely for marketing or design purposes.

Elizabeth Corr, the staff member who had curated the show and was manning the table, had been quietly working behind the scenes at the NRDC to figure out how the organization could work with artists and make it a fruitful partnership for both parties. Jenny introduced herself as an artist interested in environmental issues, and out of this connection, six months later, NRDC's Artist-in-Residence program was born.

NRDC had been implementing a wide variety of tools to tackle complex environmental problems, ranging from scientific research and data modeling to policy advocacy and litigation. But Elizabeth wondered about other strategies that could build awareness of and action on important environmental issues by the general public.

Elizabeth's vision was to establish a residency that would invest in a long-term relationship with an artist fully embedded in the organization. This had two equally important goals:

1. To support artists interested in the environment for a meaningful length of time

2. To enhance the effectiveness of NRDC's advocacy as a result of creative approaches developed by the artist and the organization working deeply in partnership

With this, NRDC became the first large-scale environmental organization to have a resident artist working side-by-side with program staff.

Jenny's residency, which continues through July 2016, provides her with access to NRDC's office, key program staff, data and other valuable resources that would normally be inaccessible to artists interested in environmental themes. She has the ability to participate in staff meetings, conference calls, planning sessions and program retreats to the extent she desires. Perhaps most importantly, the residency is structured to be collaborative in nature — not just an artist working independently within an organization. Because of their aligned values, excellent communication and the trust and generosity of other NRDC team members, Jenny is able to harness her unique creative talents in ways that help animate and translate NRDC's priority areas for a broader public audience.

One of the first projects that Jenny worked on with NRDC was *Milkweed Dispersal Balloons*, included as part of the Marfa Dialogues at The Pulitzer Foundation for the Arts in St. Louis. From an advocacy perspective, the project was intended to raise awareness about the declining population of monarch butterflies and stimulate policy and citizen action.

NRDC scientists and lawyers agreed that one of the most meaningful steps that could be taken to help the monarch population increase its resilience to the stresses of urbanization and agricultural practices was to plant and protect milkweed – the primary source of food for monarch caterpillars. Yet the organization didn't have a way to convey that information to the public in a way that could spur direct action.

Jenny's project modified a food cart, transforming it into a mobile oasis that contained information for participants and food for monarchs. Using biodegradable clear balloons filled with floating, fluffy milkweed seeds, visitors to the project were asked to pop the balloons in their neighborhoods to plant the milkweed, thus increasing habitat for the threatened species and, importantly, giving citizens a sense of ownership over the problem.

The project was successful on its own terms as an artwork — traveling to other major museums including The DePaul Art Museum in Chicago and the Albright-Knox in Buffalo, NY, and it was featured in a variety of publications including *The Chicago Sun-Times*, *Chicago Gallery News*, and *ANTENNAE: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*. It was also successful as an activist project, inspiring thousands of viewers and participants to take action in their own capacities to protect monarchs, and even leading to some major policy wins. For example, after reading about the project in an NRDC publication, Tom Weisner, the Mayor of Aurora, Illinois, worked to stop the Illinois tollway from mowing almost 300 miles of highway in the state, thus allowing milkweed to thrive and creating a critical habitat for migrating monarchs. This creative approach allowed people to learn about an urgent environmental issue on their own terms in a fun and engaging manner, as opposed to being told by an environmental organization what they should do or not do. This shift in dialogue helped viewers make their own emotional connection to monarchs and inspired them to take action.

The NRDC Artist-in-Residence program works because it is structured around what artists need to thrive and do their best work. Jenny isn't tasked with specific projects (like: "make a whale banner"). She isn't required to keep to a schedule or work on only one topic. Instead she can be a 'floating' member of the NRDC team, first in NRDC's Land and Wildlife Program and now with its Water Program. As a result, she is able to follow her natural curiosity and aesthetic sensibilities, while having access to some of the foremost experts on environmental issues — which drives her conceptual and research-driven artistic practice.

The residency is supported by grant funding secured by NRDC which provides for art project expenses and travel for research and speaking engagements, along with a stipend for Jenny. Elizabeth serves as a liaison between Jenny and the NRDC team to ensure that her work is never instrumentalized or co-opted. Instead, they work together to find activism opportunities that are natural extensions of the projects and don't jeopardize the aesthetic merits of the work itself.

There is substantial opportunity for more partnerships between environmental organizations and artists to enhance the work of both, and other environmental organizations have inquired at the NRDC about how to start programs of their own. A few keys to making these collaborations successful include:

- Funding opportunities that bridge the divide between traditional "environment" programs and "arts & culture" programs

- A better understanding on the part of environmental organizations about what artists need to make successful work, including adequate financial compensation

- Better articulation by artists, and understanding by organizations, of the variety of creative skill sets and strategic capacities that artists bring to the table

- Dedicated staff at the organization that are available for the artist and understand the value of art as a catalyst of social change.

Technology Isn't Magic. Let's Make It Work Better for Artists and Musicians.

by Kevin Erickson and Jean Cook – Staff, Future of Music Coalition (02/24/2016)

Let's say that you're one of the best in the world at what you do.

Let's say, for example, you're [Abduvali Abdurashidov](). You've spent decades studying and mastering the forms and traditional instruments of the Shashmaqam, the classical music tradition of your native Tajikistan. You've devoted your life to the preservation and promulgation of this music, and this hard work has gained the attention of the [Aga Khan Trust for Culture](), which partners with the respected US record label, Smithsonian Folkways, to release [a high quality recording of you and your pupils](). The sales of the disc aren't exactly burning up the charts, but you do end up garnering a Grammy nomination! Moreover, thanks to internet distribution, it's easier than ever for people in the rest of the world to [hear your work]() and encounter these rich musical traditions.

And when these recordings get played on digital radio stations in the United States, it generates royalty income for you, the performer. Great! But how does that money make it back to you? Tajikistan has no systems or official body to collect and distribute royalties generated overseas for Tajik performers. Those royalties could be meaningful income for someone like Abduvali Abdurashidov, but the infrastructure in Tajikistan, and much of the non-Western world, has not yet been built.

Perhaps these challenges seem remote, so consider an example closer to home. Say you're a jazz sideman in New York, or a young classical composer in Oakland. Today, listeners might be able to hear your work on any of a number of digital music services no matter where they are in the world. It's a momentous opportunity, except that digital music services are not typically built to serve you. Because services like Spotify and Apple Music are built with mass audiences and commercial heavyweights in mind. Genres like jazz and classical tend to be treated as an afterthought. Thus, a composer might find she's erroneously listed as the performer on Spotify, and a sideman might not get credited at all on Apple Music. As we've argued before, [these problems make classical and jazz undiscoverable for new fans](), contributing to the bigger problem of these genres'

"invisibility" in the marketplace. If it is this hard for audiences to even find your work on these services, how can you be accurately paid for your work, or meaningfully benefit from the supposed promotional value of these services?

These stories speak to the current conflicted state of many artists' relationship with technology — we sense the incredible potential of technology, and yet we also sense a failure to live up to that potential, because the technology and the supporting infrastructure isn't really being built with all of us in mind. Discourse around technology possibilities for artists alternatively gravitates toward the utopic — *tech will solve everything and bring about a democratized cultural landscape* — and the dystopic — t*echnology will ruin everything, dumb down our audiences, and steal our lunch money!* Both of these narratives are misleading because they focus on supposed innate capacities of technology itself, rather than the power relations that determine which technologies are developed and adopted, and how they are deployed.

It's true that technology can serve as an unprecedented platform for diverse artists — that's why so many [musicians]() and [arts organizations]() led the charge for strong net neutrality protections. But crucially, **the level playing field provided by open platforms is only a first step towards equality of opportunity. You still have to do the work of building accessible, accountable systems and infrastructure *on top* of that level playing field.** Otherwise, by default, everyone gets stuck using tech tools created by and for the big commercial actors, with their values and assumptions intact.

Most for-profit technological infrastructure — like Apple Music, Spotify, or ticketing systems — is designed with the goal of attracting venture capital and reaching a mass-scale audience on the open market. This means our systems and business models are being built with those goals in mind. As a result, these tools often do not serve the needs of artists who are not aiming for, or able to achieve, mass-culture saturation or millions of fans. We end up with a simulacrum of a more democratic and vibrant culture, rather than the real thing.

For example, a few years ago Facebook was an exciting mechanism for artists to connect and communicate with fans. Now, due to changes made in order to increase profits for shareholders, the number of people who actually see an artist's posts about upcoming performances or new recordings is severely limited, unless she pays for advertising. She might have spent several years and countless hours building her audience on Facebook, only to find that her ability to connect

"organically" with them and share relevant information is severely limited by the platform itself.

How do we fix this? First, we must acknowledge that the work of creating technological tools and systems that work well for artists is too vital to be left to the private sector alone. If we accept that the nonprofit arts sector is intended, in part, to address the inadequacy of the market alone to support a vibrant arts system, then we must apply that same insight to how we think about the internet. Rather than imagining the internet as inherently democratic, we must realize it is subject to the same kinds of power disparities and economic dynamics as the offline world. As a result, there is a need for real investment in artist-centered technology infrastructure — both public and philanthropic — to truly actualize the potential of technology to support a more democratic and diverse creative system. Without it, someone like Abduvali Abdurashidov will continue to be disadvantaged in the global marketplace.

Secondly, artists need a more central role in shaping and developing the technological tools and resources intended to serve them from the earliest design stages. Attention should be paid to the needs of diverse kinds of artists and audiences, in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability and geography, as well as medium, genre and scale. This would help ensure jazz and classical communities, as well as others currently left out of the system, are being served.

There are already some significant investments in artist-centered tech infrastructure. The American Federation of Musicians is building critical digital infrastructure to make sure sidemen get paid for digital royalties. CASH Music is developing open source tools for musicians to take control of their careers. Fractured Atlas is building digital tools like open source ticketing software and Spacefinder tools specifically to serve artists, while the Actors Fund is building digital infrastructure to help artists navigate the health system.

But it's only a start. Artists and their allies need to build collective power to ensure that evolving technology works for the full diversity of artists and creators. We need foundations and other supporters of arts programming to see investment in artist-centric tech infrastructure as key components of their field-building work. And we need artists to bring their expertise and insights to the table as we identify the most critical infrastructural issues. The groundwork has been laid and the time is right. Let's do it.

Want to Be an Artist? Be Passionate and Realistic About Your Career

by Tanya Selvaratnam – Artist, Producer, and Activist (03/02/2016)

I almost didn't become an artist. Throughout school, I acted but never envisioned it as a vocation. As a Sri Lankan woman immigrant, I didn't have role models who looked like me out there in public. My own experience didn't give me the courage to pursue theater as a profession. When I was playing a supporting role as a bag lady in an eighth-grade production, the director pulled me aside and said, "You have talent. Stick with it. You have such an expressive face." I was flattered but wondered, *Then why did you cast me as the bag lady?*

In high school and college, I was lucky to meet peers who cast me in roles like *Medea* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. But I still didn't consider a life in the arts feasible. When I moved to New York to help produce events for the NGO Forum on Women and subsequently the Ms. Foundation for Women, I interned and then started performing with The Wooster Group. Finally, I realized, *Maybe a life in the arts is possible.*

Today, I balance work in film, theater, visual arts, and literature. I produce films and events, act in theater, serve as the Communications and Special Projects Officer for the Rubell Family Collection, and write books and essays. My career has evolved organically and haphazardly. I still feel like I'm figuring it out every day.

If you are passionate about being an artist, devote yourself wholeheartedly to being an artist. But that *includes* being realistic and intentional about what it takes to support your career as an artist, like being strategic about seeking support (financial and otherwise) and putting together a diverse portfolio of skills that you can rely on to make money.

If I had to go back and do it again, I would give advice to my younger self that I wish someone had given me:

1.   Focus on your passion.

We are constantly pitching ourselves against the expectations of others. As a result, we waste time avoiding what we truly love to do.

If you want to be an artist, then focus on developing the tools you need to become one, rather than spend time on other pursuits that don't fulfill you. The road is not easy, but there are steps you can take to make it easier to navigate.

2.   Identify your role models.

Which artists do you most admire? Who has the career you would most like to have? Look into how they got to where they are, and take steps to emulate them. I realized from an early age that I wanted a career that exemplified the slow build rather than the quick ascent.

3.   Seek out mentors.

When I was starting out, I was lucky to meet people like Kate Valk of The Wooster Group who continue to be mentors to this day. I also take opportunities to mentor young artists, either through official channels like a mentorship program or guest teaching at schools and informally with people who reach out to me. If there's an artist you admire, write to them and see if they would be willing to mentor you. Don't take it personally if they don't respond, but maybe they would be willing if asked. I wouldn't be where I am today without mentors.

4.   See as much art as you can.

Experience art in its myriad forms. You never know where you might find inspiration. If you like Broadway shows, don't only see Broadway shows. If you're interested in experimental theater, don't only see experimental theater. One of my favorite things to do is walk aimlessly and stumble upon art, in a gallery, a park, anywhere.

5.   Learn the business of being an artist.

Many great artists don't stay artists because the economics are too difficult. I've served as a panelist for various funders. As I review applications, I wish that more artists learned how to document their work in a high-quality way, write a clear and concise proposal, or identify their audience and outreach plan. These are aspects not necessarily taught in school. Having mentors and researching the business of being an artist through artist-service organizations can make a difference.

6. Figure out what you can do to support what you want to do.

This is probably the biggest challenge. Before I was producing to support my art, I worked as a waitress, a cook, an office manager, a transcriber, and more. Recently, I was in Portland, Oregon, where I live part-time. Two musician friends there told me they were studying, respectively, graphic design and computer coding through online courses. They weren't going to stop making music, but they were developing other skills to supplement it.

7. Build your support network.

By this, I don't mean audience engagement. I mean develop allies who will back you up when you are down. A few years ago, I was at my lowest point, both personally and professionally. I learned how lucky I was to have people in my community who were there to tell me to keep going and focus on my art. Also, artists have the tools to turn adversity into action. When you're going through hard times, write it out, paint it out, act it out. When life throws you lemons, make art.

8. Be generous and gracious.

For example, if someone asks you for advice, give them even a few minutes of your time or at least explain why you might not be able to at that moment. If someone recommends you for a job, thank them. As *Kim Whitener*, Producing Director of HERE Arts Center in New York City, said to me: "One thing artists struggle with in terms of the perspective of non-artists is the sense that they're narcissists, that it's all about them. But an artist who is kind and has a strong sense of justice, collaboration, and generosity will get much farther."

9. Take risks.

I produced an interview with the artist Taylor Mac, in which he said, "Don't be afraid to fail. Don't be afraid to let your voice crack. Don't be afraid to look ugly." I feel these are words to live by. The collector Mera Rubell has told me that she's attracted to art she doesn't understand. Unless you take risks, you won't know how far you can take your creativity.

For MADE HERE, a 50-episode series I produced with Chiara Clemente for HERE Arts Center, we interviewed almost 100 artists about how they make their life and work. I learned so much making that project — one of the biggest takeaways being that if you love being an artist, then be one.

I'll close by quoting some of the artists in that series. Elizabeth Streb, about whom I also produced a feature documentary *Born to Fly* by Catherine Gund, said: "Wreak havoc ... Focus on your dream ... and then do that thing." And Bill T. Jones said: "You better love it and you better be a badass. And you better have a thick skin and a big open heart and an agile mind ... Don't explain and don't complain. Now have fun. And go give us pleasure."

Tanya Selvaratnam is a writer, producer, actor, and activist; and the author of The Big Lie. www.tanyaturnsup.com

Health Insurance Is Still a Work-In-Progress for Artists and Performers

by Renata Marinaro – National Director of Health Services, The Actors Fund
(03/09/2016)

The Affordable Care Act, known widely as "Obamacare," has changed the health insurance landscape for artists, largely for the better. For example, in 2013 Marcie and Russell, freelance writers and artists with an 8-year-old son, had health insurance, but it wasn't a very good policy. They were paying over $500/month for health insurance with a very high ($3,500) deductible. In December 2015, they found out they were eligible for a new program in New York called the Essential Plan. The family now pays $49/mo, for very comprehensive coverage without deductibles.

This is the way the Affordable Care Act is supposed to work, right? More comprehensive coverage at a lower cost for those who had previously been shut out of the healthcare system because they didn't have a traditional job with benefits, or they were unlucky and had a pre-existing condition.

In 2013, prior to the beginning of many of the major provisions in the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the Future of Music Coalition (FMC) and the Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center conducted an online survey of US-based artists about their access to insurance. The survey found that, of the 3,402 artist respondents, 43 percent did not currently have health insurance. That was more than double the national estimate of 17 percent uninsured in the general population. The vast majority of artists (88%) said that the main reason they were uninsured was that they couldn't afford it.

Under the health insurance system that existed prior to passage of the ACA, insurance was difficult for artists to get and keep. There are three main reasons why: First, many artists and entertainers are self-employed and don't have the benefit of job-based health insurance. Second, if they are working for an employer, the work tends to be contract-based and sporadic, and so they don't qualify for employer-provided insurance coverage. Third, people who pursue arts-related careers earn substantially less than workers with similar levels of education, and many simply couldn't afford insurance costs, even when they were eligible.

Since 2014 and the implementation of Medicaid expansion, subsidized coverage and competitive marketplaces, the uninsured rate in the general population has fallen to approximately 10%. We don't know exactly how many artists are insured, but we do know that many more freelance and low-income workers are insured than in the decades before.

Good news, right? Well, yes but … it's complicated. The Affordable Care Act represents a large leap forward in terms of regulating the worst abuses of the insurance industry, increasing access to coverage, and offering comprehensive coverage. In 2013 I spoke to a dancer from Colorado whose insurance covered only her arms and legs. Today, under the ACA, all of her body parts must be covered. But does greater access to affordable insurance mean that artists are using it?

When I called Marcie to follow up on her story, she told me that she's having issues with her insurance: "I just can't seem to find reliable information on doctors who accept it," she said. "And despite confirming in advance that my insurance would cover the follow-up tests that my doctor recommended, I received a letter from my insurer after receiving the tests saying they weren't covered after all." This is a familiar story: plans through the marketplace or Medicaid have limited provider networks and it can be hard to find doctors, particularly specialists, who accept many of them. Some states, like New York, offer no out-of-network coverage, meaning that a musician who tours for a living isn't covered while on the road. And in many states, plans have high deductibles, making it difficult to use the coverage for anything other than preventive screenings or a catastrophic medical event.

These are issues that can be fixed, but it will take your input to fix them. Policymakers hear from insurers all day long – they need to hear from consumers. Your voice matters, and the more artist voices, the more likely that changes in the system will reflect artists' needs.

Things you can do to share your story:

1. Contact your state representatives or get involved in a state or national organization working for better healthcare. The Actors Fund is working with Health Care For All New York (HCFANY) to advocate for change at the state level, and HCFANY has made it easy for New Yorkers to share their stories on their website. Nationwide, Families USA is an influential organization that advocates for a better healthcare system. You can sign up to for their Health Action Network to stay informed, or just share your story on their site.

2. Take 15 minutes before March 15 to take this survey from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation about the needs of artists, including their health needs.

3. In the comments or using the hashtag #creativz tell us: Are you using your insurance? If yes, are you happy with your coverage? Why or why not? And has access to coverage since 2014 made a difference in your creative life?

Remember that this is a new system with room for growth. Policymakers are trying to understand the problems, and create solutions for them, as you are reading this. By sharing your experience, you have the chance to be a part of those solutions.

Renata Marinaro, LMSW, is National Director of Health Services for The Actors Fund. She has written Every Artist Insured, a guide to understanding the Affordable Care Act for artists and entertainers. The Actors Fund's Artists Health Insurance Resource Center has been connecting artists, craftspeople and entertainment industry workers around the country to health insurance and affordable healthcare since 1998.

Are you using and happy with your health insurance? Has access to coverage since 2014 made a difference in your creative life?

Add your perspective in the comments below, or on social media tagged #creativz

Generosity as A Guiding Principle of Life as an Artist

by Yaw Agyeman – Sound Artist and Member, Black Monks of Mississippi
(03/17/2016)

In the summer of 2007, I had a phone conversation that changed my life.

"You shouldn't have to compete with the clamor of beer bottles and the noise of the day. You've been given a gift, and your gift should be shared in settings where it is appreciated. I want to help you with that."

Since that conversation with Theaster Gates, I've performed with his group The Black Monks of Mississippi at many major art exhibitions and institutions including documenta 13, Whitney Biennial, Art Basel, the Serralves Foundation, the Menil Collection and the Venice Biennale, to name a few.

For the first time, I also have the opportunity to show my work in a public forum as a solo "visual artist" at the American University Museum. A few years ago, I would have never believed these were possible ticks on my timeline. Theaster made good on his almost ten year promise and in the process has shifted how I think about generosity and its place in my artistic practice.

Years ago, when I was still singing in music clubs and bars, DJ and tastemaker Gilles Peterson played a song of mine on his BBC1 radio show and later placed it on his 2008 compilation Brownswood Bubblers 3.The song Where Will You Be was masterfully conceived by my brother and partner in crime Khari Lemuel and recorded in his hot and creaky bedroom. Gilles gave the song some beautiful legs in the commercial music industry, but I couldn't capitalize on the momentum because, I later realized, I am not ultimately a recording artist. I am a sound artist. I create moments. I work to affect the spirit and conjure the ancestors. Manufacturing and reproduction for mass consumption are not my specialties nor my calling. Many years of reworking and rearranging, forcing and frustration brought me to this epiphany. Theaster's work and his invitation offered me the vocabulary to articulate my heart's inclinations and the environment in which to practice them, a space where I could reimagine and play. It has been crucial to my development as an artist and a human being.

My first performance as a member of the Black Monks of Mississippi took place at The Little Black Pearl in 2009, an educational institution that builds their programs at the intersection of art, culture and entrepreneurship.

The show was weird and funky, and it started and stopped like a fly car that needed work, but it was so beautiful, and liberating.

We were practicing the art of singing, playing with words and melodies out of and in time. It was through this rigor that I developed the idea of a *practice*. Theaster called us to remember what it meant to utter as opposed to sing, and how it felt to wait and then to lose yourself when waiting was enough. And we did it in real time, with an audience. It changed me forever. I had never performed with such fervor and restraint and possibility. I had never been asked to be as big and as small as I was. I had not been asked to share like that. Prior to this performance and encounter, I was not thinking about my voice as an instrument. I was thinking about it as a product, as a means to a profit. Now, important questions were being asked of me, and my spirit was moving to answer them. At the Black Pearl, on that evening and for the first time, I was being asked to use my gifts to expose my heart. This was a lesson that has shifted how I think about performance and breathing and loving.

Two years ago, through a residency with the Rebuild Foundation, another of Theaster's projects, I had the opportunity to further investigate my voice and my practice. The residency evolved out of an interest with my father's musical tastes and how that might inform my present and future musical occupations. The work took place in the Listening House, originally a local candy store, now renovated to accommodate the Dr. Wax record collection (a local record store that had been a staple in Chicago for 30 years), portions of the Johnson Publishing Library and remaining stock from the now-closed Prairie Avenue Books. During the week, I listened to my father's albums and some vinyl from the Dr. Wax collection. On Sunday, the response to my listening culminated in a public service called Work on the Sabbath, where I collaborated with a number of artists across disciplines. We practiced sharing — space, music, conversations, and food — with each other and the community. And we still do so on a monthly basis. What the residency revealed to me is that as an artist I am more interested in sharing than entertaining. Entertainment requires a "me" and a "you," while sharing focuses on an "us." Perhaps my conversation with Theaster and his follow-through made the notion of generosity a bit sexier, or maybe he unearthed some ideas that were already present in my body.

During the residency, one day out of the week I opened the door of the Listening House so that the music might waft into the street. A passerby might walk in or maybe a congregation or two might form itself on the sidewalk on such an occasion. One magical day, five children stood at the opening and one boldly asked, "Can we come in?" Happily, I said "Yes!" At the time, Peace Pipe by B. T. Express was in mid-groove and the kids slid right into it. The joy with which they danced and the comfort that accompanied their rhythms filled me so. That open door was an invitation to be free.

I just started reading the book The Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell, and he says something that has stuck with me: "I want to convince people that personal explanations of success don't work. People don't rise from nothing."

I'm a common man with perhaps an uncommon gift, but I'm not the baddest in the land. I know vocalists that confound, but they'll probably never perform at the Eldorado Ballroom or process the grounds of the Serralves Museum. And perhaps they don't care to. But my singing ability itself does not justify these fuller and more special possibilities I've enjoyed as an artist.

I have merely been a recipient of a beautiful generosity. I have moved in the art world by the reaching of hands and the warmth of hearts. A seed planted and watered bore fruit. I bear witness.

Now that I sit and sup at tables of artists that I could have only imagined previously, I've come to understand how expensive those seats are and how rare an invitation. When I review the tape of my journey thus far, I'm sure that it was catalyzed by an invitation. The invitation to join Theaster in his artistic endeavors also was an invitation to uncover my own practice and to investigate my own passions. I believe these invitations, from those that are farther along the path to those that are just finding their way, should be less rare and more frequent. There are babies that just need to go right at a fork, and the words and hands and hearts of more experienced artists might steer them in a proper direction. And those people and institutions that have no idea that we exist can profit so much from our questions and answers, our courage and our presence and our love.

Each one of us has the power to unlock and to set free the potential of others. I challenge you all, especially those who are in possession of keys to rooms seldom seen.

I challenge you to be generous. I challenge you to make invitations.

I challenge you to share. And I challenge you to do it again.

Yaw Agyeman has performed on both the theatrical and musical stage and is a member of the artistic collaboration Black Monks of Mississippi.
Follow him on Instagram @thursdayboy and Twitter @ yawsmusic.

For Profit or Not, Artists Need Tech Designed for Artists

by Adam Huttler – Executive Director, Fractured Atlas (03/23/2016)

In [Technology Isn't Magic. Let's Make It Work Better for Artists and Musicians](#), Kevin Erickson and Jean Cook from the [Future of Music Coalition](#) offer some smart observations about the roles – both positive and negative – that technology can play in our field. Refreshingly, they avoid the all-too-common trap of anthropomorphizing new technologies as moral agents. [BitTorrent](#) is no more inherently righteous or evil than a toaster is; what matters is how the technology is used.

So how should we be using technology to ensure that it has a positive impact on the lives and work of artists? Erickson and Cook argue for increased investment in "artist-centered" technology infrastructure. This framing is critical and, I believe, correct. Where my own view starts to diverge from theirs, however, is in defining the factors that make a platform or service artist-centered. When technology fails to serve artists, it isn't because of the provider's tax status; it's because the technology was never *designed* to serve artists in the first place.

Erickson and Cook emphasize a few elements:

- Non-profit organizations should own and drive the development of technology services

- Attention must be paid to power disparities and how technology amplifies or mitigates them

- Artists must be involved in the design process from the earliest stages.

While none of this is wrong, per se, I'd like to offer a simpler framework. **An artist-centered technology platform is one that makes artists its customers.**

That's it. As counterintuitive as it may seem, this single factor is both necessary and sufficient to ensure that a service supports and empowers artists, rather than exploits them for profit. When the artist is the customer, she ends up having agency in controlling and directing her own work, and it is her brand that accrues equity as a result of her success, not that of the platform. By contrast, when we consider consumers, advertisers or other third-parties to be our customers, then artists are inevitably treated as products or (worse) commodity inputs.

To illustrate, I'll offer a brazenly self-serving example. Consider two ticketing platforms: [Artful.ly](#) and [Telecharge](#). [Fractured Atlas](#) designed Artful.ly from day one to treat the artist, not the ticket buyer, as the customer. Telecharge is a traditional consumer-oriented ticket portal. Artful.ly allows users to sell tickets on their own websites; Telecharge drives traffic to a central, branded portal. Artful.ly makes itself invisible during the purchase process, putting the artist's identity front-and-center; Telecharge presents itself as a consumer-facing brand. Artful.ly users own their audience data and can export it for free at any time; Telecharge retains all audience data and provides a limited subset of it to event producers. These are just a few of many examples; in truth, this one design principle pervades nearly every aspect of both platforms.

In contrast, the factors identified by Erickson and Cook are meaningful, but not essential. We can all stand to be more conscious of how power disparities contribute to inequality, and it's never a bad idea to involve end-users in the design of a product. The only really problematic criterion is the question of non-profit vs. for-profit provenance — we must resist ascribing morality to a tax status!

The authors point out several for-profit, non-artist-centered platforms, such as Apple Music, Spotify and Facebook. Yet there are plenty of counter-examples of for-profit technology tools that do put the artist in the center – typically by treating her as the customer to be served. To stick with the music industry, consider [CD Baby](#), which essentially allows independent musicians to serve as their own record labels. It charges them setup fees and takes a cut of sales, but puts them in control of their own catalogs and pays them both the artist's and the label's share of royalties. There are countless examples from elsewhere in the arts – digital cameras, graphic design software, film editing tools, some (but not all) crowdfunding platforms.

At the same time, many non-profit efforts fail to heed this principle. I'll avoid calling out specific peers, but suffice it to say that non-profit initiatives sometimes put the needs and desires of third-party funders ahead of those of artists. The times when I've badly misstepped on Artful.ly and other projects have invariably been when I've fallen into this trap.

Technology innovation is hurdling onward, propelling us into the future at an ever-accelerating pace. The dangers that Erickson and Cook identify are real. We may yet find ourselves in a dystopian landscape where a handful of mega-corporations control all media consumption and treat artists as just another exploitable resource. This vision is hardly inevitable, however. If we are smart and

intentional in our use and design of technology systems, we can just as easily put artists and creators in the driver's seat. The good news is that the essential principle – make the artist the customer and emphasize her needs above other stakeholders' – is remarkably easy to identify and equally easy to follow.

Adam Huttler is the founder and Executive Director of [Fractured Atlas](), a nonprofit technology company for artists. Follow him on Twitter [@adamthehutt]().

What Does It Mean To Sustain A Career In The Gig Economy?

by Steven J. Tepper – Dean and Professor, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University (03/31/2016)

We live in a gig economy defined by short-term, project based work. While career success might once have looked like a connected set of dots on a straight line rising over time, today it looks more like a desk drawer filled with electronic device chargers and wires that are endlessly entangled, with no clear sense of where one wire ends and the next begins.

The data supports the idea that we live in an increasingly intermittent, entangled and chaotic world of work: Today, people will work in a greater number of different jobs (around 15 in their lifetime) and will change jobs more often (1/3 of American workers expect to be in a different job within 3 years), hold more jobs at any one time, work across sectors, be self employed and start more enterprises (and probably see more enterprises fail). About 50 percent of all college graduates — including those studying accounting, engineering and biology — will not be working in fields closely relevant to their majors within 5 years. Even Hilary Clinton has highlighted the gig economy on the campaign trail: "This on-demand, or so-called gig economy, is creating exciting economies and unleashing innovation. But it is also raising hard questions about workplace protections and what a good job will look like in the future."

Adding to this disruption in how we work, economists and futurists predict that we will, collectively, work *less*, as machines and robots achieve productivity gains while displacing workers. As Mary Gray, senior researcher at Microsoft Research, has written, "Supporting the many people who may never enjoy the security of a 40-hour workweek will be one of the most important conversations we have about the on-demand sharing economy."

Artists are an extreme example of this overall workforce trend, as evidenced by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) — which has surveyed more than 140,000 graduates of arts and design schools. Findings include:

- Between 15 to 20 percent of all arts grads start their own enterprises
- 75 percent have been self employed
- More than half work in multiple jobs
- Only one-half of those who self-identify as professional artists make over 60 percent of their income from their artistic practice alone
- 90 percent will have worked outside the arts at some point in their careers

Having worked for decades, if not centuries, as itinerant workers who move from project to project, commission to commission, artists must be central to conversations about this "new" world of employment. Artists have much to gain from broader policies supporting part-time and "gig economy workers," and the experience of artists may be instructive to those other sectors just starting to be influenced by these trends. What does it mean to sustain a career or a life of purposeful work in this context? How would we think differently about what a "sustainable career" looks like for artists if we accepted that it is not possible for most artists to make a living from the studio or the stage alone?

1. Train artists in business and entrepreneurship

Design and arts schools need to do a better job of preparing the more than 120,000 arts graduates who enter the workforce every year, by making entrepreneurship and other business skills a requirement of study, not just an option, an elective, or a special program. Recent data from SNAAP shows that there is a significant "skills gap" in the area of business and entrepreneurship — only about one quarter of graduates feel like they acquired these skills in school, while almost three-quarters say they depend on these skills in their work lives, a skills gap of nearly 50 percent. For the past decade, forward-thinking faculty in design and arts schools have taught classes on entrepreneurship, enterprise, marketing and finance. Arizona State University was the first to create a center to incubate new business ideas from arts students and graduates when it launched the Pave Arts Venture Incubator in 2006, and now others have followed.

2. Help arts students better see and utilize the skills they already have

Schools must also help students recognize that they graduate with a broad toolkit of skills — what I refer to as creative competencies — not just expertise in their

chosen discipline. These competencies include the ability to:

- Deal with ambiguity

- Collaborate on emergent creative projects

- Improvise

- Give and receive critical feedback

- Reason with analogy and metaphor

- Tell compelling stories using multiple platforms and media

- Radically revise work

- Generate and audition many ideas

Given that many graduates will work in non-arts jobs, it is important for artists to see how these competencies can be deployed across multiple contexts. Unfortunately, based on SNAAP data, in many non-arts professions, a minority of arts graduates report that their arts training is highly relevant to what they are doing. As faculty, we are failing to help students see that they have something creative to contribute not only on the stage, in the concert hall, or in the studio, but also in every area of life and work they might find themselves.

3. Connect artists with jobs and resources that can use their skills

Arts educators and advocates must also help to match artists with existing needs, jobs, and resources. Creative placemaking through ArtPlace and others is one such move — connecting artists to the billions of dollars invested annually by banks, governments and philanthropy for community development — ranging from housing to transportation, workforce development, new businesses, health, and revitalized public spaces. Social impact investing, which some estimate will grow to $3 trillion in the next few decades, is another opportunity. The Arts Impact Fund in the UK – a joint initiative of the Arts Council England, Nesta, Bank of America Merrill Lynch and several foundations — is one of the first social venture funds (€7M) to focus on the arts. If arts-led enterprises could capture just 1/2 of 1 percent of potential future impact capital, artists could have access to $15 billion to advance creative work that has a social purpose — an amount that would double the current amount of private giving to the arts. If the arts could capture the same share of social impact investing as they do of private philanthropy (almost 5 percent), then we could see as much as $100 billion flowing to artists.

On a smaller scale, the conference and meeting industry in the U.S. spends close to $258 billion a year, with probably $50 billion spent on speakers and presentations. If artists represented 1 percent of all speakers and presenters at national conferences and convenings this would be an additional $500 million flowing to artists, more than 3 times the current budget of the National Endowment for the Arts. Or, could artists be some of the 25.8 million new school teachers we will need to provide every child with a primary education by 2030? Or part of creating new schools, content and platforms to reach these new learners?

4. Reconsider and reinvent our existing arts infrastructure

Our existing cultural infrastructure — nonprofit institutions, intermediaries and funding institutions — does not adequately serve the way artists work today. Musician Aaron Gervais argues that traditional organizational forms like the nonprofit ensemble fail to support how musicians actually work — collaborating on many different projects with different artists, swapping roles, and "gigging" to flexibly find work and opportunity. In visual arts and design, 3D printing and additive manufacturing is leading to new markets and new ways of delivering cultural products. For example, many predict that in the near future, individual fashion designers — using technology to scan individual bodies — will be able to self-produce, in their own homes or local workshops, perfectly fitted "ready to wear" clothing. Existing nonprofits, intermediaries and funders have not yet figured out how to support these new ways of working.

We need a new arts infrastructure that is flexible, entrepreneurial and organized around networks and nodes, rather than institutions. These forms are already beginning to emerge, but have not yet been widely invested in. Could the Creative Capital model that builds a full set of services and relationships around individual artists be scaled to enable artists to sustain their work without incorporating as an institution? Could a micro-patronage platform like Patreon be coupled with something more durable like a social purpose corporation (B-corps) so that a few hundred individuals might invest in a single artist over a longer period of time? Could maker spaces (for both digital and physical production) become even more widespread and provide mentorship and apprenticeship, not unlike the thousands of artist workshops throughout Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries? Could new platforms — like Sonicbids, GigMasters, Gigwish, Gigfinder — help artists make sustainable careers by providing them

with tools and resources to connect to each other and with markets? Could our existing nonprofit institutional infrastructure be "open sourced," so that independent artists can access it to show their work?

To support artists and creative workers in the future, we must reinvent and repurpose our arts infrastructure, tap into new revenue streams and train and prepare artists to be enterprising, deploying their creative talents across multiple roles and sectors. But challenging old assumptions and bold innovation will not be enough to create sustainable careers and lives. To quote Laura Zabel, who says in an earlier post for this site, "Because, our systems aren't just broken for artists, they are broken for everyone... we can't really improve life for artists in any broad or lasting way without improving life for everyone."

Artists have long been critical to social and political movements from the civil rights to AIDS awareness, the environmental movement, LBGT rights, and workers movements. Today, artists must lend their creativity to advance the cause of workers throughout the economy – who increasingly bear more risk, experience greater insecurity, and suffer reduced wages and higher costs from education to housing and healthcare. We need a cultural change around the whole concept of work and, more importantly, what a sustainable career looks like. Artists must lead this cultural change, both because they understand this new economy and because their stories, images, songs, and symbols can fundamentally change how we think about equity, justice and the "good life" in a rapidly shifting world of work.

Steven J. Tepper is the dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University, the nation's largest, comprehensive design and arts school at a research university. He's also on Twitter @sjtepper.

The Art School of the Future

by Ruby Lerner – Founding President & Executive Director, Creative Capital
(04/07/2016)

In more than seventeen years at the helm of Creative Capital, an arts funding organization that has supported more than 600 awardees in all disciplines, I've learned a lot about what artists need to sustain their careers. Artists come to us with brilliant ideas and incredible technical skills, but they may never have learned other important life and work skills, like how to plan for their taxes, write a realistic budget, or speak confidently about their work to potential presenters or investors. These skills may not be intuitive, but they can be taught. We connect artists with the practical skills and advisors they need to thrive, and we've seen truly transformative results.

Here's just one example: Creative Capital grantee Byron Au Yong, a composer from Seattle, credits our strategic planning workshop with teaching him to better manage his time and only take on opportunities that align with his values. He told us, "Creative Capital has helped me focus by honoring my practice … After the workshop, I began to hone the logistics of my life and be more honest with my musical goals. I made specific changes, like having a meeting with myself every Monday to organize my week. I became better at deciding what to do and what NOT to do." Byron's new strategic planning and time management skills gave him more time for creative work.

Over the years, I have often wondered, what if the practical skills that we teach our grantees when they come into our system had been taught to them when they first began pursuing their creative work? How much stronger could these artists' foundations be if they began building them earlier in their careers?

Historically, I have seen an aversion to teaching professional practices in many undergrad and especially graduate-level art, film and performance programs. In recent years, as the Creative Capital model and similar approaches to artist professional development have become more well known, a few schools have incorporated business skills into their art programs, and we've been thrilled to present Creative Capital workshops for a small number of student and faculty groups. But I would like to see a drastic reworking of the art-school model to ensure that skill-building for self-management is a fundamental part of all artists' education.

If I were designing The Art School of the Future, I would integrate art theory, practice and technical training with a professional development curriculum. This would start with strategic planning, goal setting, work/life balance, and time management. The Art School of the Future would also teach financial literacy, encouraging young artists to build good financial habits early in their lives and careers. And we would spend a LOT of time on communications — verbal communications, presentation skills, negotiating, marketing, outreach and PR. We would teach artists community engagement skills — how to reach the audiences they most want to reach, and who to partner with to make that happen. We would teach strategies for working collaboratively with other artists.

These skills are powerful, not only because they will be useful throughout a working artist's life, but equally because they will help artists take advantage of many other opportunities in creative fields, and beyond. The reality is that not everyone coming out of art school programs will end up as a working artist, supporting themselves full-time on creative work — and that is fine.* So, art school graduates should also be able to teach, run an arts business, curate, produce, install work, raise money, do promo and marketing, and understand the technical aspects in their mediums.

I believe that if all art schools integrated professional practices into their programs, graduates would emerge with greater control over their careers. They would be better equipped to achieve fulfillment in both their personal and artistic lives and to be generous colleagues and contributors to their communities.

* The SNAAP survey of nearly 100,000 art school alums includes a breakdown of art school graduates by occupation. Among respondents, 42% report working outside the arts. Even within the arts, substantial percentages work as arts administrators, educators, curators, etc.

Ruby Lerner is Founding President and Executive Director of Creative Capital, an organization that supports innovative artists across the country with funding, counsel and skills-building workshops.

Why We Can't Achieve Cultural Equity by Copying Those in Power

by Carlton Turner – Executive Director, Alternate ROOTS (04/14/2016)

The memory is as clear as cellophane. I sat in a sterile windowless classroom listening to much older professors that don't look like me lecture on business strategies, market segmentation and innovation using slideshow presentations full of dated animated clipart and colorful charts and graphs. Their monotone voices overflowed with confidence in their pedagogy and its ability to save their students from the perils of mediocrity and low profit margins.

But this wasn't my college days of the early nineties before the iPhone, self-driving vehicles and Skype. It was a leadership program for arts professionals just a few years ago, meant to turn us into leaders, preparing us for the challenges of today's non-profit arts world.

This is not the first time I'd encountered this kind of one-size-fits-all leadership development program that assumes success is just a few workshops away. A year earlier I sat in a dimly lit studio space in the historic LaMaMa Experimental Theatre in the East Village as a participant, alongside nine other arts organizations whose primary audience and community are people of color, listening to the development director of a major arts institution with a dedicated development staff of more than fifty lecture to us on how to model our development strategies to be effective in the non-profit arts world. I sat there with my board chair and development director, who on our small staff of four full time employees also served as marketing director, chief grant writer, and taker-out-of-trash when necessary. The lecture was lost in translation. If the intent of the program was to support our organizations in breaking the chains of foundation dependency, then ignoring the realities that we face on the ground as organizations living missions that prioritize forgotten and excluded communities won't get us there. To say there was a disconnect between the prescription and the ailment would be a tremendous understatement.

The workshop lecturers quoted the stats that most organizations serving communities of color have less than 10% individual giving in their annual budgets. This is seen by the larger nonprofit arts field as a deficit of fundraising ability and is countered with training that suggests mimicking fundraising structures that have served institutions of much greater size serving much wealthier patrons. What isn't talked about is the history of income inequality that is responsible for the gap in generational wealth across race lines. According to the Pew Research Center in 2013 the gap was 13:1 for black families and 11:1 for Latino families in comparison to white families, or as Nicolas Kristof states, "the United States now has a greater wealth gap by race than South Africa did during apartheid."

Organizations with a dedicated mission to serving communities of color are struggling to stay afloat not because of mismanagement, lack of capacity or inferior artistic products. They struggle to stay afloat because of the history of inequity that exists in our society at large, a phenomenon that also impacts the distribution of funds in the cultural sector. **We continue to struggle with issues of inclusion, diversity, and equity in the nonprofit arts and culture sector because our society continues to struggle with them.**

As we work to understand and develop solutions to these problems as a field we cannot do so disconnected from the larger social context. And yet so many of the professional development programs offered to build the capacity of artists and organizations of color are ignorant of these issues at best, and actively reliant on the perpetuation of them at worst.

In my years as part of Alternate ROOTS, an artist-centered and artist-led organization, the strongest leadership models I have witnessed have come from within our membership and other peer organizations working at the intersection of arts, culture and social change. I became involved with Alternate ROOTS fifteen years ago as a young artist infected with the idea that artists could change the world. ROOTS was founded on the idea that it was not only a possibility, but a responsibility. To my fortune, I was adopted by John O'Neal, Nayo Watkins, Linda Parris-Bailey, Kathie deNobriga, and Dudley Cocke and countless other southern arts warriors whose creative practice is informed by and deeply engrained in the communities they live and work in. My artistic and administrative practices have been heavily shaped by their influences.

There are three primary operating principles that I have found to be tremendously valuable in their approaches:

1. Be aware of and acknowledge local cultural practices.

2. Validate leaders who are responsible and accountable to their communities.

3. Build coalitions by actively breaking down racial, ethnic, geographic, religious, and class barriers that separate communities experiencing the same struggles.

These principles guide the work of these leaders in both their creative practice and organizational development.

These are also the principles that have informed the development of the Intercultural Leadership Institute (ILI). The idea for ILI was developed in 2011 by Alternate ROOTS, the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, First People's Fund, and the Pa'I Foundation as a way to pursue cultural equity by building solidarity among artists and culture bearers, supporting their personal transformation and developing a robust network of intercultural leaders. ILI offers business and management skills development, but more importantly it honors the traditions of cultures across a spectrum of practices, both traditional and contemporary, as a foundation for intercultural co-intentional peer learning. In this context the hand drum, song, and prayer is as important an organizational principle as the quarterly board meeting. There is a significant contrast between this approach and existing leadership programs in the nonprofit arts field.

ILI marks a shift in the field around how we train cultural sector leaders. This program doesn't place people of color as the recipients of training by "experts" from largely white-led institutions, rather it looks to the participants to define leadership models in relationship to their communities. The ILI leadership model operates on the premise that the answers to fundamental issues in our country around equity can be found in traditional cultural practices. The practice of looking to community-generated leadership and knowledge to seek solutions to issues of cultural equity and sustainability for artists and organizations of color is in stark contrast to one-size-fits-all solutions that ignore the fact that these problems are rooted in complex social structures and look different depending on time and place. In the ILI leadership practice we don't pretend to know it all, instead we work collectively to engage each other in a process of discovery that uncovers what we do know, identifies the gaps in our knowledge, and attempts to fill the gaps through the reflective practice of looking back to our cultural traditions and leadership models that have been dismissed and devalued by the dominant culture.

I live in Utica, Mississippi, a small rural area about 25 miles southwest of Jackson where I was raised and my family has been for many generations. My life in this place has provided me many opportunities to recognize the genius of my ancestors who were forced to survive

with far less. In those examples I am afforded the opportunity to adapt their sophisticated and grounded approaches to my survival, an approach that includes the collective care of my environment and extends through the people around me. It is a different approach to my responsibility to my community than the one taught in business schools and most arts leadership programs, which view the community primarily as consumers.

It is important to learn finance, marketing, and board development skills. However, without a principled approach to leadership, grounded in a practice of call and response with your community, those skills are not enough to shift the material conditions of communities and organizations of color. Those of us working on the ground in grassroots arts organizations and communities of color don't have to wait for the solutions to these complicated issues to come from outside. They won't be found in the disconnect between people and power. The answers are in our bones, encoded in our DNA because they have always been there.

We are the ones we've been waiting for!

Carlton Turner is the Executive Director of Alternate ROOTS, a regional non-profit arts organization based in the South.

Artists, The Original Gig Economy Workers, Have More Rights Than They Think

by Sarah A. Howes – Playwright, Actor, Artist Advocate (04/21/2016)

The gig economy has long been the model for many artists. Musicians have always had gigs; it's just that now, apparently so does everyone else. According to the NEA's Artist and Arts Workers in the United States study, "American artists are highly entrepreneurial; they are 3.5 times more likely than the U.S. workforce to be self-employed."

Even so, things are not same-old, same-old for artists in this new economy of ours. There are certain "once-employed" artists who are now being pushed into contract work (e.g., journalists). Let's call this the "shifting creative economy." There are creative entrepreneurs being pushed into low-value contest work (e.g., graphic artists) — the "lost creative economy." And finally, employers are just classifying some workers as contractors when they really aren't — the "sidestepping creative economy." Although there is potential for change with more ethical practices on the part of businesses and individuals in all three, this final arena is where I think we have the most potential, from a legal perspective, to create large-scale change for artists' livelihoods.

The shifting creative economy: This situation is partly created in response to the lost revenues caused by copyright infringement or declining subscriptions; the newspaper industry being a noticeable example. In 2000, there were 25,593 staff reporters and writers hired by U.S. newspapers, but in 2012, there were only 17,422 — a 32% drop over 12 years. Nate Thayer, a freelance journalist, was once offered an annual salary of $125,000 to write for the Atlantic, but now the same magazine only offers freelancers as little as $100 per story. It's hard to place blame on the newspaper industry in this scenario — formerly one of the most profitable creative industries in America, newspapers now struggle to pay labor costs because the content itself is losing value in the digital marketplace.

The lost creative economy: This trend is driven by platforms like 99designs, or other similar content mills, that promise creative products at rock bottom prices. It works like this: prospective clients post detailed requests for a new business logo online, and then hundreds of graphic artists submit logos in the hope of being the one

selected. Clients can even go back to the "still not hired" designers to request modifications before making a final decision. According to the NO!SPEC campaign, these types of logo mills have designers cranking "out massive strings of poorly conceived, ineffectively executed, and in a growing number of cases, plagiarized work from other professionals in order to win as many 'prizes' as possible." This may work out well for the client, but the vast majority of designers earn nothing for their labors. These types of gigs provide little security, little or no pay, and leave a contractor without the creative, professional, or personal freedom that entrepreneurship is supposed to support.

The sidestepping creative economy: This involves businesses misclassifying people who are actually employees as contractors to save money. Due to generations of labor advocacy, employees are eligible for more livable wages, health benefits (sometimes), and access to many state and federal employment laws that independents miss out on, including:

• Unemployment insurance

• Minimum wage standards

• Family medical leave protections

• Workers' compensation

• Protection from sexual harassment

• The ability to collectively bargain under the National Labor Relations Act

Determining misclassification is difficult, because there is no single body of law to follow. It is not just about whether you work 9 to 5, have a supervisor who assigns daily projects, or work full or part time. A dancer or an actor may be an employee under one state or federal law, and a contractor under another law or in another state. Misclassification might be at play when an arts organization has an ongoing, involved relationship (or even a substantial engagement) with one of their artist contractors.

When deciding a worker's classification, a judge will ask questions like whether the hiring party has the right to control the work, provides the tools to do the work, and whether the work done is part of the regular business of the company. While every law differs in terms of which facts are most persuasive, courts are usually concerned most with either the amount of control the hiring party has over the worker, or how economically dependent the worker is on the hiring party. Laws also differ in their underlying policies. For example, while the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which sets minimum wage and overtime pay, seeks to make most workers employees to ensure basic labor

protections, copyright law actually hesitates before calling a worker an employee, because doing so strips the artist of their copyright ownership.

Employers automatically own the work of their employees, but not the work of their contractors. Courts are hesitant to take away a contractor's copyrights if the creator was not paid like a traditional salaried employee. To own the copyrights to a contractor's work, a hiring party needs to get a written agreement, signed by the artist, that assigns the copyrights to them. It is also critical that hiring parties and artists understand the legal consequences of an assignment versus work made for hire, and even what types of art forms qualify a contractor's work for the work made for hire doctrine. The work made for hire doctrine takes away a visual artist's rights of integrity and attribution, and the right to prevent destruction of artworks of "recognized stature." It also denies all artists the right to reclaim once sold copyrights by way of a termination notice filed with the U.S. Copyright Office.

You might be asking yourself what you or your arts organization can do about all of this. Well here are my ideas:

1. **Internal audits**
   Art businesses of all sizes should perform internal audits of contractor relationships to evaluate whether roles should be clarified or re-classified. This audit should take into consideration the various employment and labor laws, as well as the company's creative process and the worker's role in producing copyrightable content. I believe that hiring contractors just to save money, even when it is legal, has a negative impact on the creative products. Staff artists can dedicate the time to mastering their craft, incubating ideas, and performing critical edits. In an interview I had with filmmaker [Tiffany Shlain](#) (who employs, rather than contracts, four filmmakers), she pointed out that employees also develop an irreplaceable "institutional knowledge." It might be cheaper in the short term to hire contractors, but in the long term, this decision might harm the quality and the sustainability of the work itself.

2. **Advice, support, education**
   Artists who believe they are wrongly classified should look to organizing groups for professional advice, advocacy support, and legal education, such as a union, trade association, or the [Freelancers Union](#). Reporting misclassification might be all an artist needs to do. State and federal agencies may take it upon themselves to resolve the issue with the employer, saving an artist a considerable amount of time and legal costs.

3. **Collect and share data**
   Groups that are dedicated to bettering the lives of American artists — like arts councils, industry affinity groups, advocacy groups, funders and service organizations — ought to collect data on employee classification in the arts to provide policymakers with a clearer picture of possible misclassification. Usually artist surveys ask about employment either to see if artists get paid as an artist at all or if they work full-time or part-time in their arts job. But these surveys should also investigate the quality of artists' work. Is the artist being classified as a contractor when he or she is really an employee? Does the work provide health benefits, paid time-off, or at least minimum wage? If they lost their job, could they get unemployment benefits? If they were injured on the job (say building a set), could they collect workers' compensation? If properly collected, this information could give advocates more data to work with.

I want to be careful to not shame arts organizations with small budgets that rely on artist volunteers or workers who accept modest stipends. Lines need to be drawn in a way that still allows exceptions for such meaningful, necessary opportunities (and even unpaid internships that are truly educational and that benefit students). And artists have every right to let others use their copyrighted works at no cost, so long as the choice is theirs. However, for the artists who are behaving like employees, giving companies valuable labor, and receiving none of the benefits of being either an employee, a student, or an entrepreneur, something needs to be done. Otherwise we are either throwing away the critical workers' rights that Americans have fought for since the Great Depression, or suggesting that these rights don't apply to artists.

A system that works better for everyone requires that artists be invited to conversations about where the American workforce is going. After all, artists might be able to help policymakers come up with some creative solutions!

Disclaimer: I will be a licensed lawyer as of May 6, 2016. I also work in copyright law, not employment law. The views expressed are my own, and are not attributable to any past, present, or future employers. My knowledge of this area of law has developed through my experiences of working with artists and through personal legal research. Please refer to local attorneys and legal services organizations for assistance in understanding what exactly makes a worker an employee under the various laws at play.

Final note: I paid a friend to edit this article at her professional rate, and it was worth every penny.

Who Sets The Agenda In America's New Urban Core?

by Umberto Crenca –Founder AS220
(05/02/2016)

As the Founder of AS220 in Providence, Rhode Island, a community-based arts center responsible for $25 million of investment in Providence's downtown – with 100,000 square feet of space and two new developments in process - I am an advocate for the role that art, culture and design can play in community development.

Community developers are now reconsidering past approaches that tragically bifurcated neighborhoods with our national highway system, moved street retail into mega malls, and promised utopian bliss in single family suburban homes. Some 70 years later, as we begin to imagine cities of the future, we have come to realize that our downtowns, big and small, provide more to the fabric of society than we may have realized. Creative placemaking — which sees art, culture and creativity as critical elements of urban vitality and development — has become key to what is now considered effective community development nationally and, to some degree, internationally. The desire to re-establish our urban cores as places of exchange and community engagement is a compelling and powerful movement that seeks to re-establish lines of communication, trade and cultural enrichment that the 1950s exodus into the suburbs ruptured.

But as we invest in and realize our new urban society through creative placemaking, it is critical that we ask the question: Who gets to play? Who creates the forums for issues of significance to be discussed? Who participates in those discussions? And how do we ensure that the process of planning, building and maintaining our cities is inclusive and results in a more equitable society?

Creative placemaking kicked off over a decade ago, in part based on Richard Florida's idea of attracting a "creative class" of talent to cities through cultural lifestyle amenities. There are now national efforts like ArtPlace America and the National Endowment for the Arts' Our Town, as well as many local initiatives, that attempt to use culture as a way of rejuvenating cities. And yet many municipal efforts at creative placemaking are simply using cultural offerings as a means to an end, which is usually economic growth and development. Ultimately, these development methods often displace or ignore local residents in favor of attracting those of higher economic status.

Creative placemaking needs more consideration of the people who are already part of a community and those of us promoting it need to think of cultural activity as an end in itself, not just a means to an end. **What if we considered that the creative talent we need to create a vibrant place already exists locally, it just needs the conditions to grow and to be nurtured?**

To this end, a key piece of every urban development initiative should be creating secure and unrestricted maker spaces for local artists, makers and dreamers to come together to explore, to make, to present, to share, to learn, to teach, to rehearse. We need imagination to create new, improved and more equitable cities, cities rich with opportunities for all their residents. If we build a foundation that supports this creativity on a local level, we will inevitably attract new artists, makers and dreamers into the mix, while supporting the innate creativity of local residents. In doing so we will create environments where positive community outcomes are unpredictable, yet inevitable.

What kind of spaces are these? Artists, makers and dreamers need places for incidental and unpredicted encounters. They need access to tools and technology. So far, over 2,000 independent hackerspaces, fabrication labs and makerspaces have emerged globally to satisfy this need.

These venues cannot be elite spaces for just a select few. Access to these spaces needs to be flexible with multiple pathways to participation and they need to be made affordable with scholarships or volunteer systems. Artists, makers and dreamers need safe spaces to take risks. They need places where unintended collaborations can precipitate. These spaces need to be permanent fixtures in the community and agile in their programming to respond to the community as it changes, constantly challenging assumptions. They need radically diverse programming to appeal to different audiences — poetry slams, open mics, PechaKuchas, metal bands, fashion shows, concerts, rappers, poets, spoken word artists, and that which is yet to be defined. These should be places where panel discussions on community or global concerns can happen, the more difficult the topic the better.

I imagine a world full of places where people are invested in and dedicated to each other, like Project Row Houses in Houston, Crosstown Arts in Memphis, or City of Asylum in Pittsburgh, to name a few. By supporting

spaces like these, creative placemaking becomes less like the Garden of Versailles, with carefully measured rows of predictable outcomes, and more like a compost heap, creating rich fertile environments with endless capacity to grow ideas, capitalizing on the infinite potential of each and every individual in residence. By creating these kinds of spaces and ecosystems ripe for creative activity, we build and sustain strong, agile *and equitable* urban communities over the long term. Creating this kind of community is what AS220 strives to achieve with its work in Providence and beyond. We work towards our vision of a just world where all people can achieve their full creative potential with the belief that these ideas, when applied in each city or town, would manifest in infinitely unique and original ways.

Umberco Crenca is a visual artist, performance artist and musician and founder of AS220, an unjuried, uncensored and all-ages forum and home for the arts in Providence, Rhode Island.

Can Photographers Restore Their Devastated Business?

by Danielle Jackson – Writer & Strategist, Culture Culture (05/06/2016)

In January, the photographer Zoe Strauss made a bracing plea on her Facebook page. The artist, whose work had been recognized by the Whitney Biennial and Magnum Photos, and was the subject of a traveling survey exhibition organized by the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was out of money, needing $750 for a root canal, owing $1,500 to various friends and several thousand more for storage of her exhibition prints, without which she could not maintain the condition of her work.

"I've got no prospects on how to continue a lifetime of paying for that storage," she wrote. Although she had taught as a Distinguished professor at Cal Arts, she did not possess a college degree that could land her a stable teaching position. Privately, Strauss shared that she had been waiting several months for a paltry payment of $850 from a prestigious magazine. The photography market, long in decline, offered little in the way of steady income or respect for timely payments. In the meantime, strapped to meet basic healthcare and living expenses, her immediate goal was to get any job she could find. Her earning potential was limited: like 68% of American adults, her formal education had ended in high school. UPS wasn't hiring, but an interview at a supermarket was in the works.

Strauss' plea was shocking in its transparency; rarely does the patina of worldly success wear thin enough to lay bare the extreme severity of even a "successful" photographer's economic condition. Her situation is not uncommon for many photographers. According to National Endowment for the Arts data, 46.6% of photographers are self-employed, including documentary, editorial, and commercial photographers, photojournalists, and independent artists. Their median earnings are $26,875. This figure is roughly double the poverty line for a single person, and half the national median income.

And although the field is nearly equally divided by gender, women earn 74% of what men do, which is the lowest ratio in the arts according to national government data. Photographers were nearly 50% less likely to have full-year or full-time work compared to other laborers in the work force, which partly accounts for such low income. These statistics square with some international research; in 2015, a World Press Photo survey revealed that most photojournalists were self-employed and earned less than $30,000 per a year. A collective of artists known as BFAMFAPhD has analyzed census data to further illuminate poverty rates and rent burdens facing artists, which are significant.

Despite these grim statistics, and the increased number of online spaces and professional development seminars dedicated to photography, frank and open conversations concerning sustainability, livelihood and compensation have remained mostly absent from the field.

As more of the general population works in the "gig economy" and various legal movements to secure basic protections for these workers emerge, **photographers should consider joining coalitions of other artists and independent workers to organize and advocate for their rights as freelancers**. Lack of healthcare, erosion of fees, no guaranteed hours, late pay – these are the types of struggles between management and workers that the modern contingent workforce share.

What could it look like to take a cue from adjunct professors and fast food workers who are organizing at the level of industry, rather than institution?

Over the last decade, photography, which straddles the worlds of art and media, has been challenged by the decline of ad-supported media and the advent of mobile technology, and like the larger economy, the industry is rife with job precarity and stagnant wages. As a means to cut costs, and amid the notion that "anyone can be a photographer," magazines publish user-generated photographs, newspapers have replaced entire photo departments with writers with cell phones, and freelance photographers are sought to enter war zones without kidnapping insurance.

Even insurance costs for non-conflict jobs can be out of the question – Sim Chi Yin required surgery after an injury while on assignment in Northern China and learned only afterward that her contract with *Le Monde*, an international newspaper, did not include healthcare, disability or accident insurance.

A few especially entrepreneurial photographers have hatched schemes to stay afloat in this context: selling prints to collectors, pitching partnerships to NGO's, developing a rigorous private workshop schedule, shooting video, and adopting social media marketing, but the result is a grinding, unyielding cycle of work.

Culturally and economically, the value of the photograph has decreased significantly, leading to a "new normal" for professional photographers in the form of lower day rates, fewer assignment days and abysmal resale fees. In the name of "brand-building," photographers are asked by media organizations to create or license images for free for online articles and Instagram takeovers. Competition for paid assignments can be fierce, and it is not uncommon for photographers to carry expenses from corporate assignments for months at a time on personal credit cards while they await reimbursement. Many young photographers who are coming of age in this era of economic challenge and wide-spread distribution of images have particular trouble delineating when and where to work for free, pushing terms of engagement still lower. These terms are impossible to live on, but no one wants to burn bridges in a gig economy. Established photographers have expressed fears that a photography career is becoming viable only for those who have personal fortunes or other sources of income.

There are a number of promising efforts to help artists in general organize and seek better labor relationships, but photographers have largely not yet joined these campaigns or replicated their methods. The group Working Artists for the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) seeks to ensure artists are paid fair fees and wages by galleries, museum, and cultural spaces. They have circulated a sliding scale of exhibition, speaking, and publishing fees artists should charge based on an organization's revenue. They have also developed a certification process for cultural institutions that commit to providing fair wages. Wordrates is a platform where journalists can review publications on issues like contracts and fair pay. Arts & Labor is a working group that has negotiated for fair labor practices within the art world, including the unionization of workers at Frieze New York. And adjunct professors across the country, who sometimes require food stamps to survive, have been organizing at universities across the country.

What if the field could foster industry-level conversations on creating sustainability? Should photo agencies offer healthcare? Can a certification process in the vein of W.A.G.E. be of use for media outlets? Could platforms like Blink, or Visura, or other industry groups that connect freelance photographers to photo editors, advocate a code of protections? Could foundations who support nonprofit media organizations insist their grantees pay advances? How can busy photographers who don't have agents or studios advocate for their interests? Can photography education programs create comprehensive training on contracts, billing practices

and negotiation? And can photographers join larger political fights for universal healthcare, inexpensive education, and affordable housing, all of which will support the lives of artists, and others, in numbers much higher than any industry effort alone?

The highly competitive and atomized nature of photography work makes organizing a challenge, but hopefully photographers can be empowered by movements to expose exploitive relationships within other creative professions.

First, photographers could begin to speak honestly with one another about their financial instability. Next, photographers could see themselves as part of, and actively contributing to, a larger struggle for fair labor practices and basic needs. And with their long history of working as freelancers, photographers could be knowledgeable additions to the broader movement of newly independent workers. Moving forward, sharing strategies across sector will be a critical step towards sustainability for workers in a growing gig economy.

Danielle Jackson co-founded the Bronx Documentary Center. She tweets @makerthinker.

Do Artists Have a Competitive Edge in the Gig Economy?

by Joanna Woronkowicz – Assistant Professor, School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University (05/12/2016)

Artists are all too familiar with the act of juggling multiple jobs in order to sustain their art work. While for many multiple jobholding is an economic necessity, as the original gig workers artists may have a competitive edge to sustaining work in the new gig economy.

In other words, since artists have been effectively managing gig work for ages, we can learn something from observing the employment behavior of artists in terms of strategies for all workers on how to succeed in the gig economy.

First, it's important to define our terms and how artists can relate to current conceptions of gig economy workers. The term "gig" refers to work that's characterized by the lack of an ongoing relationship with a single employer. The term partly originates from the word used to describe short-term musical engagements by jazz musicians. So, even though much of the current conversation about gig work tends to be in reference to the so-called "sharing economy" (think Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb), gig work includes a much larger universe of freelancers and independent contractors.

How are artists similar to gig economy workers? In a recent post on this site, Steven J. Tepper notes, data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project shows that many artists are self-employed, have more than one job, and gain income from non-arts work. Similarly, gig workers are often self-employed and have more than one job. A recent study of Uber drivers shows that many gig workers place a high value on having flexible work schedules, either to have autonomy in their jobs or to balance work and family. Studies of artists have long emphasized the value these workers place on flexibility, especially in terms of how flexible jobs relate to overall job satisfaction.

So, there *are* natural alignments between artists and other gig workers. Therefore, we can look at a few ways artists manage work that may prove useful in identifying strategies for being successful in the gig economy.

Artists adapt existing skill sets to related lines of work.
While the stereotype is that every artist is a waiter or a bartender in addition to being an artist, this may not always be true. While national level data don't have good information on multiple jobholding, by looking at how workers change occupations and/or industries over time, we can start to get a sense of what types of jobs artists toggle between. What we find is that, in general, artists are more likely to switch between jobs in similar industries than they are to enter entirely new domains of work. For artists that switched jobs between 2003 and 2013, the majority (59%) landed in one of five NAICS industries: independent artists, performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries; specialized design services; motion pictures and video industries; other professional, scientific and technical services; and architectural, engineering, and related services.

Even among people who formerly worked as artists that no longer identified themselves as such (national level surveys of employment require respondents to identify a "primary" occupation), only 2% landed in food service. About 10% worked in the education sector, and 11% moved into some type of managerial role. Moreover, the stats are similar when you exclude higher paying artist occupations like architects and designers. Therefore, artists are efficient by making lateral job moves, instead of moving into jobs that require entirely new skill sets.

Artists use self-employment as a strategy to buffer against the effects of financial crises.
The recent economic recession provided a fertile testing ground for observing how certain occupations manage work during times of economic hardship. In general, artists fared worse than other types of knowledge workers—such as those working in computers and math, science, engineering, and education occupations—in the last economic recession. Artists were more likely than these other workers to be unemployed and underemployed. Nevertheless, while U.S. workers in general were less likely to select into self-employment during and after the economic recession, the rates at which artists became self-employed actually increased from about 2008 to 2011. Either the artist labor market presented more opportunities for self-employment than other markets or artists were more apt at creating work for themselves compared to other workers. The entrepreneurial nature of artists and their work provided a buffer for some workers during the recession.

Creativity Connects:
Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists

Artists use various personal support systems while pursuing independent work.

Since both artists and gig-economy workers value flexibility and autonomy in their work, observing characteristics of self-employed artists can provide insight for understanding the success factors related to maintaining independent work. For example, artists who live in cities and are married are more likely to be self-employed than work in wage/salary jobs. This suggests that either artists arrange their personal circumstances in order to pursue independent work, or that certain life factors are important in determining if an artist is able to work independently. For example, cities offer artists more opportunity for independent arts work; and spouses and partners can serve as safety nets for artists when work is hard to find. While the direction of causality may be unclear, the data suggest that artists who work independently often have various personal support systems in place.

Artists have a rich history of serving as trendsetters. As the original gig workers, artists are on the vanguard of honing the skills necessary for managing gig-style work and already possess many of the skills to succeed in this growing economy. Other gig economy workers can learn from artists on how to succeed in today's changing workforce: adapt your existing skills to related realms of work, pursue self-employed work when in between jobs, and review how your personal support structures might help you sustain less predictable independent work. And advocates and policymakers who are interested in developing policies and structures to support this growing workforce could learn a lot from studying the work patterns of artists as well.

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How Does Crowdfunding Change the Picture for Artists?

by Douglas Noonan – Director of Research, Indiana University Public Policy Institute
(05/20/2016)

Previous discussions (here, here) of a gig economy are well-founded and well-informed, but permit me to shift the lens a bit to what might be the bigger, more fundamental novelty we face. That the arts community has been well versed in a gig economy for many years is evidence that gigging may not be the deepest innovation here. The novelty is the platform (or marketplace that enables new kinds of gigs), which has enabled a fundamental restructuring of markets and the organizations of production and consumption. I first gigged as a babysitter before the concept of the "gig economy" or the internet existed. What's new is the multitude of babysitter platforms emerging (UrbanSitter, Babysitting Barter, etc.) to match the next generation of babysitters with my unruly toddlers.* The platform economy is what is disruptive and revolutionary.

Though these new platforms have different types, their core feature is that they leverage network effects to improve sorting efficiency. It's like Match.com for a society. These online platforms enable better and better matches between peers, producers and consumers, etc. Getting excess labor or capital matched with people who have a need for a ride, a room, or a whatever is the lifeblood of platforms like Uber and AirBnB. But more broadly speaking, platforms (e.g., Facebook, LinkedIn, Angie's List, eBay, Amazon, iTunes store) enable far-flung users to find their matches. In so doing, it has enabled the formation of new markets for content, small (my toddlers' videos) and large (any cat video).

In light of this, I would argue that crowdfunding is the piece of this platform economy puzzle that represents something more genuinely new to the arts community than gigging. Part of the platform economy is the use of "the crowd" or the masses to provide value – whether work, information, or funding. Since the emergence of Kickstarter and Indiegogo the arts have been wondering if this could be a game changer. Will these platforms fundamentally tilt or redefine the arts funding landscape? And if so, how?

At Indiana University we have a research team looking for answers to these questions. The research is still ongoing, but I'd like to share some early findings, and raise some bigger questions.

First, while artists seem to have embraced platforms like Kickstarter and Indiegogo, crowdfunding's benefits may not be evenly distributed across the arts or all types of artists.* Creative types the world over can increasingly form ensemble teams, drum up support from the crowds, and have ready-made markets – all with better matches and sorting than even the best garages, town squares, or community incubators can muster. But as a cheaper way to raise capital, crowdfunding may distort the kinds of arts and activities that succeed in the funding race and leave behind the sorts of activities that rely on less technological ways to garner support.

For example, arts with easy "pre-sale" products (e.g., tickets, mp3's) may find more success in crowdfunding than endeavors that need long-term support or offer more abstract outcomes (e.g., developing a new technique, impacting a community). And types of art that require in-person experiences (e.g., dance, opera) may struggle to reach the crowd in an online platform, while others (e.g., music, movies) may relatively thrive with online delivery of the marketing or the product.

Second, crowdfunding may reinforce existing funding inequalities in the art world. The "crowd" that funds a project on Kickstarter may be a better reflection of the same elites and avid patrons that fund the arts in more conventional models than a representation of the masses. And the power of reputation may only be amplified on digital platforms, leaving the "rich get richer" story of funding in the arts fundamentally unchanged.

Third, the digital crowdfunding platform holds some promise to reduce the barriers of distance, possibly flattening the world of funding, as artists and creators can reach potential supporters outside of their local area. Yet a quick glance at the geography of Kickstarter suggests that the world isn't yet flat, and arts resources are still flowing to the usual arts centers.

This "heatmap" sketches out total Kickstarter funds raised in 2014 for projects in North American metro areas, where darker red means the metro raised more funds and darker blue means little fundraising. To put some scale to it, consider that blue metros raised less than $30,000, lime green San Diego raised $85,146, and red hot New York raised over $1.1 million. The blues scatter widely, and the big population and cultural centers show more heat.
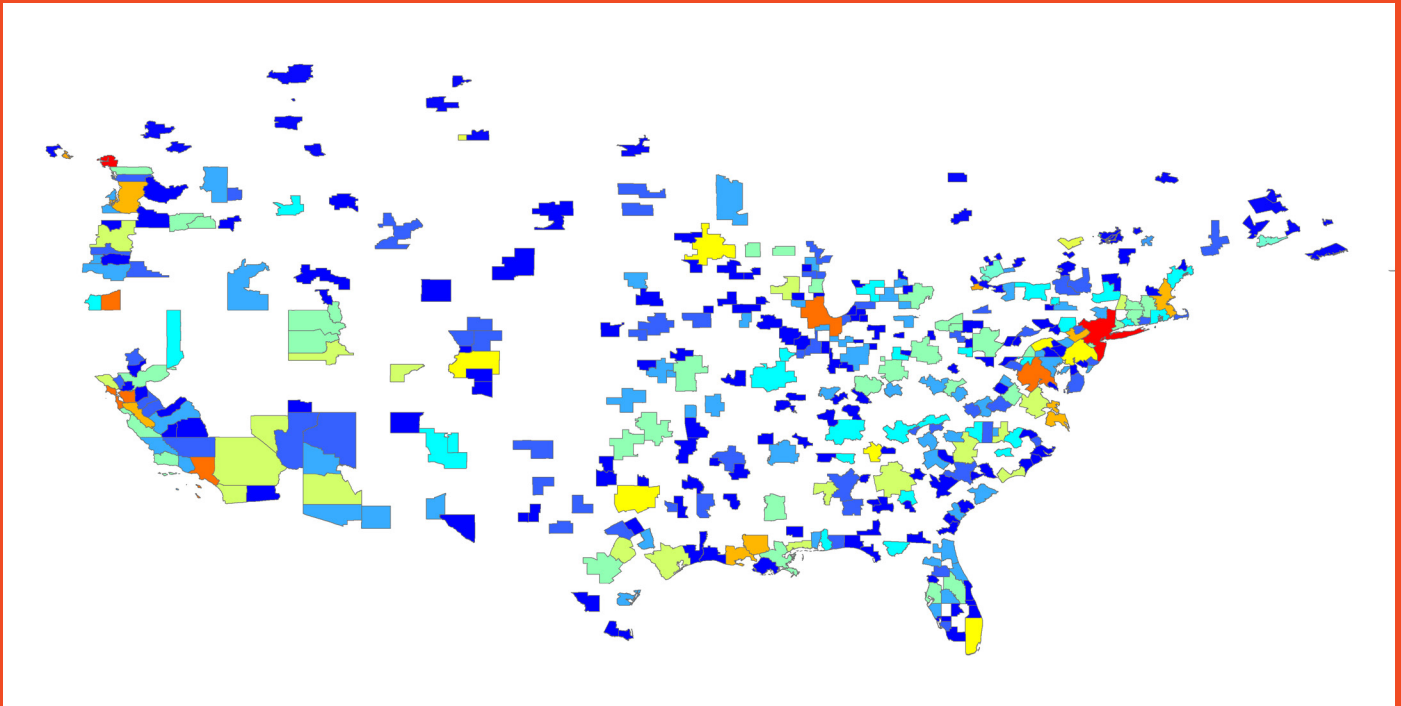
Figure 1: "Heatmap" of total Kickstarter funds raised in 2014 in North American metro areas. Created by and courtesy of Douglas Noonan.

Finally, what kinds of projects tend to go through Kickstarter, and which of those succeed remain open questions. And do the successful fundraising campaigns translate into successful or better quality artistic products?

Some early data from Kickstarter data suggest some things about the landscape of content.

1.   Larger crowds may tend to fund low-end projects with mass appeal, while a few deep pockets in the crowd can bankroll standouts. For example, compare the large crowds backing films like "Blue Like Jazz" (Rotten Tomatoes score 38%) with the smaller crowds for "The Loving Story" (Rotten Tomatoes score 100%). Or for video games, smaller projects like "The Resistance: Avalon" (ranked #47 overall at boardgamegeek.com by true aficionados) may receive critical acclaim but not much support, while mass market entertainment products like "Exploding Kittens" (ranked #4,475 overall at boardgamegeek. com) receive huge backing (it was, for a time, the most-backed Kickstarter project ever).

2.   There are a substantial number of 'corporate' projects, coming from established firms or from creative types employed by them. The crowdfunding platform may be a significant market research lab

– with a primary goal to test the crowd's appetite rather than raise funds from them.

3.   Further, there appears to be a significant role for Kickstarter as a platform for creative types' "moonlighting" enterprises. The crowdfunding platform can enable innovative side projects and experimentation to complement their more regular, stable, or structured work in established venues.

Crowdfunding adds a new potential revenue stream to the portfolio of more conventional revenue sources for artists. The digital platform allows for micro-scale production and more direct and flexible connections between the audience/market and the creator. While cutting out some "middle men," Kickstarter taps into the better matchmaking powers of cyberspace.

Digital platforms let people successfully and efficiently sort into narrow niches, to find a vibrant-yet-specialized community of interest. These better matches are game-changers for some, but it may not be a boon for everyone. Crowdfunding has spurred a board game revolution, but will it spur a revolution in dance as well? Some high-profile, high-technology failures (e.g., Kreyos smartwatch, Zano swarming drones, Anonabox) may indicate that Kickstarter is better as a "pre-sale" retail platform than as a "venture capital for the masses" platform.

Will those who were successful when the crowds were relatively undifferentiated also be the successful ones on these new platforms? Digital platforms like Kickstarter are touted as great equalizers that let the "little guy" find success independently, but the sorting forces of better matchmaking can also further isolate the little guys. In a world where things "go viral" and "trend," there are power laws at work that can accentuate the sorting into winners and losers. Likely, we'll experience a mix of both—some greater opportunity for artists that would previously have gone unseen, while others will have trouble making it work or even experience new kinds of challenges. How we navigate that, and how it complements (or replaces) more traditional platforms and institutions (e.g., firms, grantmaking), remains to be seen.

*Kickstarter categorizes its projects in 15 categories. Today, their listing of live projects across those categories reflects a dominant artistic role in crowdfunding: Art (347), Comics (172), Crafts (150), Dance (48), Design (532), Fashion (398), Film & Video (652), Food (418), Games (612), Journalism (94), Music (594), Photography (121), Publishing (541), Technology (668), Theater (126).

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Online Platforms Are Not Enough. Artists Need Affordable Space.

by Caroline Woolard – Artist, Teacher, Organizer (06/06/2016)

In 2008, a bunch of friends and I built out and managed a studio space in Brooklyn. We signed a five-year lease with a three-year option, and hoped for the best. We wanted to make our work and to innovate. This meant taking risks and failing often, and we needed low overhead (low rent) to make this possible.

When I realized that over eight years we would pay our landlord $960,000 for a dilapidated 8,000 square-foot studio space that we had built out with our own money and sweat equity, only to be kicked out and priced out of our neighborhood, not eligible for commercial loans to purchase a building of our own, I became obsessed with affordable, equitable ownership models.

But let's back up. There are more creative people in our nation than doctors, lawyers and police officers combined — if we organized, we'd be larger than the US military! Even if our bank accounts evaporated overnight, we would still have skills to share with one another. Think about it like this: the next time you think about applying for a grant, take the 40 hours you were about to spend on a grant you likely won't get, and use it to work on someone else's project, and let them work on yours. This way, you will get a grant, but it will be one of mutual respect rather than institutional visibility.

Building a Creative Commonwealth

Since co-founding and co-directing OurGoods.org and TradeSchool.coop in 2008 to enable exactly this kind of resource sharing, I've seen how sharing economy platforms build resilience and mutual aid (for those of us on the privileged side of the digital divide). I've also seen that online platforms are not enough. We need affordable space, so that we can take risks and fail. And where will we meet to swap or share goods and services without spaces? Ensuring affordable space is the only way creative innovation can occur. And so I started thinking: How might we as artists utilize the strengths of a networked information era to cooperatively finance, acquire, and manage space? **What can artists do to help ensure affordable space and reduce displacement?**

The following suggestions were co-authored by my dear friends Stephen Korns and Susan Jahoda as part of a collaborative project called New York City, To Be Determined.

Why can't artists stay put? Because short term leases end and rents go up. Why doesn't Loft Law keep neighborhoods affordable? Because Loft Law buildings don't require future affordability, so units are sold on the open market, driving real estate prices up for everyone. Why don't organizers for affordable space see arts graduates as partners? Because arts graduates haven't demonstrated an ability to organize and contribute to existing movements for affordable space. How might artists stay put? What can artists contribute?

1. RESIST

- Arts graduates (people with BFAs, MFAs, and PhDs) can refuse to be represented as "pioneering" in "empty" neighborhoods. Instead, they can form alliances with artists who are long time residents, but may not have formal degrees or have typically understood "artistic lifestyles," forming and supporting Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts.

- Artists can resist offers for short term exhibitions in neighborhoods and storefronts awaiting redevelopment. Artists can speak out against developer-led gentrification where planners and developers profit from our resourcefulness, creativity, investment, and labor.

- Artists can urge elected officials and government agencies to require developers to make permanent, truly affordable housing and commercial space, rather than giving tax breaks to developers whose "affordable" units in their market-rate projects are not affordable to the majority of neighborhood residents and only remain "affordable" for a limited period of time.

- Artists can stop accepting rising rents and evictions in isolation, joining and creating a rotating credit and savings associations (susus), anti-eviction networks, and tenant unions.

2. SUPPORT

- Artists can join existing coalitions for affordable housing for all, and collectively demand that the city preserve, create, and support both truly affordable housing and commercial space, like the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development's inclusionary zoning campaign.

- Artists can stand behind the [policy brief of the Naturally Occurring Cultural District](#) to support culture's contribution to a just and equitable city for all.

- Artists can support community land trusts to take property of the speculative market forever and benefit all low-income people with groups like the [New York City Community Land Initiative](#) and the [New York City Real Estate Investment Cooperative](#).

3. **CREATE**

- Artists who make art about housing or real estate can connect audiences and achieve press coverage of long-term initiatives for affordable housing.

- Artists with social, cultural, and financial power can urge wealthy art collectors and philanthropists to consider land-based philanthropy, donating land and buildings to community land trusts.

- Artists' groups can connect their work to long-term struggles directly by starting capital campaigns that allocate a percentage of all money raised and all press opportunities to the larger movement for affordable space.

As an artist, you are one in a sea of millions of artists in this country. Being one of so many might seem like competition for your art career (although I would argue it offers more possibilities for resource sharing and collaboration!), but it's good news for your ability to make social change. You and other artists and educators form a voting bloc. You can join anti-eviction networks and efforts for radical reimagining of land ownership and urban spatial politics. Artists have done this in the past, and artists can do it again.

For example, The [New York City Real Estate Cooperative](#) (NYCREIC), is a tangible opportunity for change.

Inspired partially by the Cooper Square Committee's success in using a community land trust to establish permanently affordable low income housing and commercial space, NYCREIC seeks to leverage relatively small investments (as low as $10) made by a large group of people to secure permanently affordable space for civic, small business, and cultural use. It aims to make long-term, stabilizing, and transformative investments in real estate for the benefit of member-owners and their communities.

NYCREIC will:

- Assist communities in raising the capital they need to purchase property

- Work with community-based organizations to plan and implement their real estate development projects

- Support local community activism to ensure that the city emphasizes affordable, community-controlled commercial space in its land use decisions

Artists will benefit from the NYCREIC and other land trusts, but not because they are set aside as a special interest group from other low income people who share their needs. By building a cooperative, we are educating, empowering and shaping a powerful group of New Yorkers, including artists, who say: Development without displacement is possible.

Thanks

Ryan Hickey at Picture the Homeless for welcoming us into NYCCLI's work, to Caron Atlas for consistent reminders about the term "artist," Paula Segal for refined goals/tactics and her work at 596Acres, Esther Robinson for ongoing dialog and her work at ArtHome, to Aaron Landsman for telling us to make it short, to Caroline's cooperative house, and to Megan Hustad and Stephanie Knipe for editing and ongoing support.

[Caroline Woolard](#) is an artist, teacher, and organizer who co-creates art and institutions for the new economy. She's on Twitter [@carolinewoolard](#).

APPENDIX 4. TEAM BIOS

Alexis Frasz is co-director of Helicon Collaborative. She has worked in the nonprofit cultural sector for more than a decade, focusing on research, analysis, and strategy development with a range of arts and cultural institutions, foundations, and service organizations. She is the author of *Bright Spot Leadership in the Pacific Northwest* (Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, 2012), *Artists and the Economic Recession* (Leveraging Investments in Creativity, 2010), *Critical Issues Facing the Arts in California* (James Irvine Foundation, 2006), and *Creative New York* (Center for an Urban Future, 2004), among other publications. Some of Frasz's recent work has focused on the role of artists and cultural organizations in addressing environmental sustainability, including *Beyond Green: The Arts as a Catalyst for Sustainability* (Salzburg Global Seminars, 2016), and understanding the landscape of artists working for social change (Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, report to come). Frasz graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Princeton University. She serves as an advisor for Food Shift, a Bay Area nonprofit working to end food waste and hunger, and Headlands Center for the Arts, an international artist residency and arts center in the Marin Headlands. She lives in Oakland.

Marcy Hinand is president of M. Hinand Consulting, a practice she founded in 2015. She has more than 25 years of experience working with nonprofit cultural organizations and foundations on projects ranging from strategic planning to program management, research, and assessment. She was a partner and principal in Helicon Collaborative LLC from 2007–2014. Before joining Helicon, Hinand was program director for the arts at the James Irvine Foundation, where she commissioned groundbreaking research on cultural engagement and initiated innovative programs to boost cultural participation. Previously, Hinand worked with the TCC Group, where she managed the Knight Foundation's Community Partners in the Arts Access Program and other large-scale projects. She managed the Ford Foundation's four-year $40 million New Directions/New Donors for the Arts program, and held positions at the Nonprofit Finance Fund, the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Hinand is a graduate of Skidmore College and holds an MFA from Brown University. She is the co-author, with

Paul Connolly, of *Increasing Cultural Participation: An Audience Development Planning Handbook for Presenters, Producers, and Their Collaborators* and *For the Record: Documenting Performing Arts Audience Development Initiatives.* She lives in San Francisco.

Angie Kim is president and CEO of the Center for Cultural Innovation (CCI). She has 20 years of experience in the arts and philanthropy having worked as a grantmaker, evaluator, and communications specialist at the Getty Foundation and Flintridge Foundation and as director of programs at Southern California Grantmakers. She has been active in Los Angeles Arts Funders, was a member of the Los Angeles Arts Loan Fund, and was an inaugural investor in California's Cultural Data Project. She has served as chair of the board of Center for Cultural Innovation, vice-chair of Grantmakers in the Arts, and as a board member of Leveraging Investments in Creativity, California Humanities, and California Arts Advocates/Californians for the Arts, and as a council member of American Alliance of Museum's Center for the Future of Museums. Kim is an expert on the topic of U.S. philanthropy and has lectured at the University of Southern California and Claremont Graduate University. She holds a BA from Linfield College, MA in art history from University of Southern California, and PhD in public policy from Walden University. She lives in Los Angeles.

Heather Peeler is vice president of member and partner engagement at Grantmakers for Effective Organizations (GEO). Over the past 12 years, she has helped foundations, nonprofits, and government agencies develop and implement strategies that have led to greater impact, performance, and sustainability. Prior to GEO, Peeler served as the chief strategy officer at the Corporation for National and Community Service, where she led the development of a five-year strategic plan and oversaw grantee capacity-building efforts and research and evaluation initiatives. Prior to that, she served as managing director of Community Wealth Ventures; executive director of Small Press Distribution; and managing editor for *Foundation News & Commentary* at the Council on Foundations; and was co-founder of GenArt/SF, a nonprofit arts organization that increases young people's participation in the visual arts. She holds a BA in architecture and art history from Wellesley

College and an MBA from UCLA Anderson School of Management. She serves on the boards of Public Allies, DC, an organization that advances new leadership to strengthen communities, nonprofits, and civic participation; and Fair Chance, which builds the capacity of nonprofit organizations that improve the lives of children and youth living in Washington, DC's most underserved communities. She lives in Washington, DC.

Holly Sidford is co-director of Helicon Collaborative. She has worked in the nonprofit cultural sector for more than 30 years as a planner, funder, institution leader, and strategist. Sidford's work has influenced national discourse and practice in a variety of areas, including cultural engagement for audiences and communities, support for artists, and equity in cultural funding. She organized the national funding consortium that supported the Urban Institute's *Investing in Creativity* study, and founded Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC, 2003-2013) as a ten-year initiative to address issues identified in that report. Her research on patterns in arts philanthropy, *Fusing Art, Culture and Social Change* (National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2011), continues to stimulate field-wide discussion. Previous positions include program director at the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund and executive director of the New England Foundation for the Arts. Sidford serves on the board of Sadie Nash Leadership Project, an award-winning leadership program for young female leaders in metropolitan New York, and Fractured Atlas, a national organization pioneering technology-based ways to empower artists, cultural organizations, and other creative enterprises. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Marc Vogl is a consultant to nonprofits, a philanthropic advisor, and a visiting assistant professor at Brown University's Center for Public Humanities (2016). Vogl provides facilitation, planning, coaching, and research support to cultural organizations and funders in the Bay Area and across the country. Formerly the executive director at the Bay Area Video Coalition, and an arts program officer at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Vogl has served on the San Francisco Arts Task Force and Obama's National Arts Policy Committee. He is a trustee of the MOCA Foundation, a mayoral appointee to the San Francisco Citizens Committee on Community Development, and board member of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts and At The Crossroads, a nonprofit serving homeless youth in San Francisco. He holds a BA from Brown University and an MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He lives in the Bay Area.

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