



The Arts, Creativity, Cognition, and Learning: A
National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab

WORKING PAPER:

Investigating Artists: Domains of Creativity & Business Practices

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Megan Robinson, Vanderbilt University
Jennifer L. Novak-Leonard, Northwestern University

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I. Investigating Artists' Multiple Domains of Creativity

Creativity is multifaceted and multileveled (James and Asmus 2001). Psychological and sociological research has begun to advocate for and explore the full range of domains in which creativity can be expressed. Individuals' ability to develop and exercise creativity is an increasingly valued attribute across many social realms, including K-12 & higher education policy, workforce development, and urban and community development. While creativity was once reserved for the archetypical "creative genius," it is becoming clear that as notions of the value and applications of creativity expand, creativity is a trait that all individuals have the potential to experience and express in some way.

This study was conducted as part of a National Endowment for the Arts Research Lab project examining self-perceptions of creative ability and potentiality among the general adult population of the United States. Where the larger study provides generalizable insights on the relationship between self-perceptions of creativity and an array of demographic characteristics, the present study utilizes a smaller sampling frame in order to investigate how artists can use their innate artistic creative ability to unlock creativity in other domains, including business and entrepreneurial pursuits.

Our research explores, in professional artists, the relationship between artistic creativity and creativity in other domains as evidenced by self-reported attitudes and behaviors related to artistic practice and the pursuit of a thriving professional artistic career. This Lab's research is guided by psychology research into creativity, specifically theory suggesting that there are different types of creativity differentiated by levels of expertise. Therefore, this portion of the Research Lab focuses on two of these types of creativity: the first is "pro-c" creativity, which includes professional-expertise and progressions towards expertise (Andreasen and Ramchandran 2012; Beghetto and Kaufman 2007; Kaufman and Beghetto 2009; Silvia et al. 2012; Silvia et al. 2014); and the second is "middle-c" creativity, which includes impactful works as determined by others created by individuals with some level of domain expertise (Harrington 2004).

This focused study on artists contains two major goals. The first is to examine the relationships between artistic creativity and other domains of creativity, including creativity in entrepreneurship, social interactions, and civic or community engagement. Exploring the interactions and correlations between creative domains will help the Research Lab become familiar with artists' problem-finding and solving processes, a critical skill with many potential implementations. The second purpose is to examine the relationship between possession of creativity in various domains and translation of that creativity into actionable business practice.

Accordingly, two research methods were used. The first is a survey of past and present participants of the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville's Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training program. Periscope is a year-long professional development opportunity that provides 8 weeks of intensive in-classroom training, one-on-one mentorship with a business mentor, and

exposure opportunities – most notably through the culminating public event, the Periscope Pitch. The survey of Periscope artists provides a base level perspective on how professional artists understand their own creativity. The second data collection effort, semi-structured interviews with a sample of Periscope participants, provides a closer look at how artists are creativity shaping their careers.

Artists who participated in the Periscope: Artist Entrepreneur Training program live and work in Nashville, Tennessee, a mid-size city located in the mid-South region of the United States and in its immediate surrounding areas. Nashville is globally recognized as the birthplace of country music and is referred to colloquially as “Music City” due to the abundance of music related events that take place there. The performing and visual art scenes are similarly robust, with numerous arts related events such as neighborhood art crawls, festivals, and performances scheduled per month.¹ In 2016 there were 847 arts, entertainment, and recreation establishments operating in Nashville, an increase of 185 establishments from 2010.²

Nashville is a growing city; eighty-four people moved to Nashville per day between July 2017 and July 2018.³ The population of the Nashville-Davidson Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was nearly 2 million in 2017, comparable in size to the Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio MSAs and the San Jose MSA in California.⁴

Nashville’s development trajectory has exerted a range of conditions upon the artists living or working in the city. Neighborhood redevelopment and an influx of new residents have brought excitement and opportunity, as well as persistent challenges of affordability and preservation of place, to the area. Nashville lends itself to research on non-artistic expressions of creativity precisely because of its capacity to capture creativity both in response to steady, average growth and creativity in response to rapid growth. For example, artists in our study who are local to Nashville or who have lived in Nashville for many years cite concerns over the rising cost of living. Artists newer to the Nashville area recall being drawn there by both the vibrant art scene and lower cost of living compared to cities such as New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago. Thus, the experiences of professional artists in Nashville offer insights to the experiences of professional artists living across the country, be they in places of rapid growth or in areas of relative stability.

In brief, this study demonstrates ways in which professional artists exercise creativity in non-artistic domains, though they may not always recognize their own efforts as such. Artists in our sample showed creativity in business and entrepreneurialism, social interactions, and community engagement. These findings show artists as multi-faceted individuals who have the capacity for creativity beyond traditional artistic pursuits and across social realms.

¹ See <https://www.visitmusiccity.com/trip-ideas/arts-culture> for arts scheduling. Accessed 6/21/19.

² 2016, 2010 County Business Patterns: Geography Areas Series, Davidson County. Source: American Fact Finder.

³ <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/2019/04/18/nashville-population-growth-slows-2018/3498194002/>. Accessed 6/20/19.

⁴ Population of Nashville-Davidson Metropolitan Statistical Area was 1,903,045 in 2017. Data from the 2013-2017 ACS 5-year Population Estimate. Source: American Fact Finder.

Data & Methods

Data for this project were collected in two parts. The first was via the administration of an abbreviated, 20-minute version of the National Survey of Self-Perceptions of Creativity & Arts Participation, a national survey of adults used for the purpose of gaining initial understanding of how artists who have received entrepreneurial training think about their creativity.⁵ Survey solicitation emails were sent to all past and present participants of the Periscope program (N = 105 at time of study). Periscope artists received an email from the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville in mid-August 2018 introducing the study and research team. The research team sent an email invitation for participation on August 15. Two email reminders soliciting participation were sent, one on August 30 and the second on September 13, 2018. Additionally, both members of the research team attended the Arts & Business Council of Greater Nashville’s annual Periscope Pitch Event on September 5, 2018, where the research team made an onstage announcement about the study to encourage eligible participants to complete the online survey and to participate in the interviews. Members of the research team were available throughout the pitch event to answer questions about the study for eligible study participants and to answer questions about the Lab’s portfolio of research for all event attendees.

In total, 37 Periscope artists completed the online survey, resulting in response rate of 35.5%. Respondents received a \$20 Amazon voucher in compensation for their time. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their willingness to participate in a one-hour, semi-structured interview. People who responded yes were emailed by a member of the NEA Research Lab’s team to determine a time and location for their interview. Interviews were conducted in Nashville in public, semi-private locations of the respondent’s choosing and were audio recorded with the subject’s written consent.

In total, 24 semi-structured interviews were conducted with artists who had experienced the Periscope program. These artists practice a wide array of creative forms, spanning several genres of performance and visual art. The Research Lab made a concerted effort to maximize the representativeness of our interview subjects based on demographic characteristics self-reported by survey respondents. Table 1 summarizes a few key demographic characteristics; further details are not provided due to the small

Table 1. Select Demographic Characteristics of Artist Study Participants

	Survey Respondents (n=37)	Interviewees (n=24)
Race		
White	25 (68%)	14 (58%)
Black	7 (19%)	5 (21%)
Other Race	5 (13.5%)	5 (20.8%)
Education		
Graduate Degree	12 (32.4%)	8 (33.3%)

⁵ See Technical Report: National Survey: Self-Perceptions of Creativity & Arts Participation for details on the construction and administration of the national survey. https://neacreativitylab.northwestern.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NEA-Lab_Technical-Report_COMBINED-DRAFT_190306.pdf

sample size. Interviews began in September 2018 and concluded in October of the same year. Interviews averaged 55.51 minutes in length, ranging from 32.35 to 84.17 minutes. Interview subjects were compensated for their time with a \$100 Visa gift card. Interviews were transcribed by a member of the NEA Research Lab. Data were initially coded in an open coding process, and then later coded line-by-line analytically in two separate rounds. Thematic categories were added, refined, or discarded during the analytic coding process.

A central challenge to consider in the design of the interview questions was to include those which would be immediately relevant to professional artists exposed to business practices specific to the art domain, while still allowing for flexibility in conversation depending on each artist's practice, genre, or overall business-mindedness. The scope of the interview guide was informed by academic literature on the roles, actions, and goals of artists charting paths to success in precarious conditions (Cornfield 2015). In light of our research aims, the interview guide also considers the impact of location in career planning and trajectory, and was formulated to account for our sample's pursuit of creative practice with an entrepreneurial lens in a rapidly developing urban space. Thus, the semi-structured interview guide (available in Appendix C) uses three themes to underpin the interview questions:

- *Relationship between practice and location.* This question set is included on the interview guide to capture environmental conditions which may present as barriers, burden, or benefits to the artist's practice. Questions of this nature allow us to simultaneously account for and capture conditions perceived by artists as being outside their control, thus providing space to examine and make arguments around artists' creativity in their responses to potential environmental problems or benefits.
- *Relationship between self and other artists.* This set of questions investigates the artists' approaches to building or gaining connections to social networks. Our inclusion of these questions was informed by work indicating that the precarity of art as an occupation necessitates the development of both peer and professional networks in order to maximize chances for success (Cornfield 2015).
- *Relationship between self and success.* This section is intended to capture specific actions and reactions to artists' self-perceived successes, failures, or setbacks. These questions, and follow-ups to them, allow us to identify creative responses to events that are potentially disruptive to our artists' professional careers.

Artists were additionally asked to define two concepts of inquiry: the entrepreneurial and the enterprising artist. Respondents were asked to explain these concepts in their own words, for the purpose of helping us gain a comprehensive understanding of how professional artists conceive of entrepreneurialism in their field. Cohesive definitions of the entrepreneurial and enterprising artist were later constructed by the research team through an iterative coding process and refined over time, upon completion of the interviews.

II. Artistic Creativity intersecting with other Domains

One approach to the study of creativity as an outcome is to determine if the individuals responsible for the outcomes are, themselves, creative. Creative identity is influenced in part by how people understand the nature of creativity, as something that is either innate or something that can be developed. As Karwowski (2014) found, “people who believe that creativity is conditioned by effort rather than an inborn quality tend to perceive themselves as more creative” (66).

Self-Perceptions of Creativity

The primary objective of the Nashville professional artist data collection effort was to gain understanding as to the relationship between artistic creativity and creativity in five other domains: creativity in math/science, creativity in social settings, creativity in civic/community settings, creativity in “everyday” activities, and most especially, creativity in business/entrepreneurship. A comparison between professional artists and members of the general US adult population who responded to questions probing creative self-perception across domains shows that artists perceive themselves as being generally more creative, not just more artistically creative, than the general US adult population on average.

Table 2 includes a selection of items asked to understand self-perceptions of creativity; the items shown are those for which over one-third (33%) of Periscope artist respondents reported perceiving of themselves as “much more” creative than their peers, listed in rank-order and compared to responses from a nationally representative survey of adults. The national survey overall margin of error is +/-2.65.⁶ While the Periscope artist sample is not a representative sample, the comparison with the national survey results provides context on how this study’s sample of artist perceive of their creativity across domains.

The sample of indicators included in Table 2 represents a range of indicators used to measure creative domains. Within this set of indicators included in Table 2, the artistic domain of creativity is represented by only one activity, “making up dance moves,” which had a 43% difference in reported rates between the artist sample and representative sample of US adults. The other indicators measure creativity in everyday acts, social interactions, business and entrepreneurial pursuits, and STEM, with several specifically addressing concepts of innovation, problem-solving, and imagination. While we selected Periscope artists due to the focus of their shared training and experience in arts and business, it is evident that the artist sample provides insights on intersections between and across domains beyond just the two used to identify our sample of interest.

⁶ See Technical Report for more on national survey and sample. https://neacreativitylab.northwestern.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NEA-Lab_Technical-Report_COMBINED-DRAFT_190306.pdf

Table 2. Artist perceptions of being “much more creative” than peers compared with all US adults’ self-perceptions: top third of artist responses

	Percentage reporting self-perception as "Much More Creative" than peers	
	Periscope Artists (n=37)	US Adults (n=3,447)
39. Finding new ways to motivate yourself to do something unpleasant	54%	13%
3. Making up dance moves	51%	8%
26. Launching a new business	49%	11%
36. Finding new things to do when you are bored	46%	18%
37. Imagining what something you have never seen looks like, such as a space alien	46%	14%
30. Thinking of many different solutions to a problem	43%	21%
14. Communicating with people from different cultures	41%	15%
9. Figuring out how to fix a frozen or buggy computer	38%	14%
15. Helping other people cope with a difficult situation	38%	19%
16. Teaching someone how to do something	38%	22%
24. Leading a group project	38%	14%
8. Taking apart machines or engines and figuring out how they work	35%	14%
10. Thinking of a new invention	35%	11%
21. Getting people to feel relaxed and at ease	35%	17%
25. Figuring out new ways to save money	35%	20%
33. Decorating a room	35%	19%

Note: full listing of responses from the Periscope artist sample and the US adult sample are included, respectively, in Appendix A and Appendix B.

Artists in our sample primarily relayed information pertaining to the intersections of four domains of creativity: artistic creativity; creativity in business and entrepreneurship; creativity in social interactions; and creativity in civic and community engagement. Intersections between creative domains in our sample were not found to exist independently of each other. For example, an artist may exercise social creativity in order to amplify their business prospects. Still, patterns around the various ways in which artists combine their different creative inclinations could be categorized into three main parts.

Creativity in Business & Entrepreneurship

Gaining knowledge around how artists conceive of the business of art was critical to developing an understanding of the role of artistic creativity in the pursuit of business. Defining the business of art, one respondent said:

“...the business of art is invoicing, keeping track of your inventory, going through who owes you money, paying people, knowing how much you can pay someone before you have to give them a 1099 [tax form]. Social media, building a website, taking good images of the art that you’re making. Learning, knowing how to apply for grants. Grant cycles, when things are due. Being really excellent at

handling rejection. I got a rejection letter again yesterday for the 4th time, 4 years in a row from a magazine that I keep trying to get into, you know. So I'm just like, 'well, whatever, I'll try again next year.' And just being able to keep it all in perspective, in pursuit of a higher goal."

Still, this artist and others in our sample maintain that there is no singular business of art, as different motivations for pursuing the work require different approaches to the business of selling it. Several artists pushed back against the complete intertwining of art with business, stating alternatively that pure profit motive – in the interests of both excess or just getting by – increases the potential to compromise artistic integrity and places undue burden on the art. At the same time, artists acknowledged that the pursuit of “art for art’s sake” is complicated by the reality of art-making as an occupational choice, with the majority believing that art is feasible as a business provided that the intention remains grounded in the creative pursuits and meaning behind the work.

Opportunity Recognition

The first theme highlights the relationship between artistic creativity and creativity in business and entrepreneurship. Artists in our sample displayed creativity in business by demonstrating an ability to evaluate the arts market in their community, not just in terms of sales and pricing, but also in terms of what is absent in the market, and how they can step in and occupy the niche in ways that ensure longevity and stability for their practice. After serving as an instructor for several community arts programs, one respondent noticed that the provided courses offered training only to an intermediate level, despite demand for advanced courses.

Nashville has an amazing number of community art programs but there's not a lot of infrastructure or education to cater to them after they kind of hit the ceiling on those programs. Which is one of my long term goals ... I see that as being my next phase of investing in the Nashville community. And also creating more sustainable business for me.... do it in a really fair equitable way but the same prices as a community intro to pottery class. You know, have a new next level or a new place to go.

Actions taken to meet market demand for artistic products are representative of the actions one would take to expand a business. Artists in our sample expand their businesses through four primary means:

- **Reframing mentality.** By thinking of their art as an active business practice rather than work that should, theoretically, make money, artists become more prone to seeking and being open to opportunity, including collaboration, that might magnify impact.
- **Creation of own opportunity.** A component of practice magnification is recognition of the need for self-creation of opportunities. Several respondents mentioned curating work in galleries as a means to highlight their work in the context of other, similarly themed pieces, which boosted the audience and engendered goodwill between artist

peers. Artists also created opportunity via teaching, which serves as a means of connecting to and educating an audience in their particular genre.

- **Diversification.** Artists are often multi-faceted. Artists in our sample diversify their range of artistic skills, the scale and price structure of products, and the roles they play towards the sale of the work. Artists are more than artists: they are marketers, salespeople, and workflow managers.
- **Targeting.** In the business of art, targeting refers to finding and marketing to the audience who already identifies with your work, rather than the practice of making work to identify with an audience.

One artist, a dancer, is expanding her practice through diversification and creation of opportunity in anticipation of no longer being able to physically perform the work:

...the scary thing for dancers, too, is the day that - you only have one body. And we run our bodies into the ground and people don't really understand that. The day that my body goes kaput I gotta figure out how to make it work still. And I think for me that's why moving into an artistic director sort of role and going more into the film route [is important], just knowing that my body's already deteriorating at a pretty fast rate.

However, practice expansion does not occur in the absence of the hard skills. Only 2 out of 24 interview subjects reported receiving business training while in an undergraduate or graduate art program. One of these artists sought that training independently as a minor while in school. With regard to their professional arts education, the majority of our sample's experience could be summed as, "in art school talking about how much the materials cost to make, that is not something we're encouraged to do." Now as practicing, professional artists, respondents attest to the need for business skills, including marketing, publicity, communications, and money management.

Post Periscope, the majority of respondents felt more confident in their work, that their work was improving, that they were making better choices in regards to their art, and that they were more effective in targeting their work to an audience. These benefits indicate the presence of an underlying mechanism, namely, the unlocked ability to evaluate their own art production. Artists describe using their creativity to drive their decisions and their business skills – considering art not just in terms of style and purpose, but also time, cost and recognizing opportunity – to elevate their creative practice.

A director recalled the rapid re-distribution of resources she coordinated after an injury prevented her from completing her own show. She describes adapting to adversity and the actions which led to the creation of a new theater festival:

...we had a stage, it was booked, I knew that there were other women who had talent and things that they would like to share but they couldn't afford to rent the theater, hire a lighting designer and – but we had all that. And so

I sent out an email to a bunch of women that I knew and we got like, 50 responses. And that year we did the first women's work festival and we've been doing it ever since...But it wasn't like this opportunity just presented itself. I had to figure out what to do because we couldn't do a show.

This artist has broadened the collective audience for her work by creating a practice arm which curates and highlights the work of her peers in addition to her own. Despite injury, art happened as originally planned and was multiplied as a direct result of the artist's creativity in business.

Access to Capital

Like other businesses, professional artists require capital in order to grow and produce work. Many artists presented funding and financial responsibilities in their personal lives as a barrier limiting their practice. Artists who are financially stable or supported in their art via funding have more ability to be creatively free and innovative, which serves to elevate art scenes over time. Our respondents communicated both the tactics and tensions behind securing funding to produce their work. Speaking about her work with a maker's space in town, one artist said:

We just became a nonprofit ...But the inherent issues of being a nonprofit are that you cannot apply for large scale funding and operating support until you have 3 years of financials. And it's in those first 3 years the money and support is most important....Knowing what I know now about how we are not getting city support and will most likely not be getting a lot of institutional support, we have started leaning heavily on individuals and soliciting donations from private donors.

The artist describes a decision motivated by the desire to maintain a platform for other makers, but notes that barriers beyond the control of the organization have hampered efforts and forced them to seek yet another alternative.

Another artist recalls the process of evaluating resources and then reframing a project in order to secure support.

...everything I think in terms of art and artists is kind of seen for me through the lens of if I want to be an artist or if I want to be - if I want to make music in this ensemble I have to have funding and support to make it happen. And sometimes, you know, you have to kind of scoot a little bit over to do things like outreach and things like that, that match up with the funders' priorities. And I don't, we don't do it ever that its so far outside of what we do that feels not relevant, but it certainly does stretch our capacity...

In instances such as this, art-making happens because artists engage with two domains of creativity: using both artistic and business or entrepreneurial creativity to reimagine artistic

processes into something that better fits available resources, while maintaining the same creative yield.

Creativity in Social Interactions

The second key theme that emerged from the interviews is the relationship between artistic creativity and creativity in social interactions. Art is inherently communicative and social. Artists rely on their ability to emote through their work in order to connect with an audience and, in most cases, make a sale. Messaging in art requires that artists possess both artistic and social creativity in order to craft work that people can translate and have a meaningful response to. In addition to social creativity in the design and production of a piece, artists in our sample practice a more mainstream version of social creativity via different approaches to networking.

Building professional contacts

Artists employ social creativity to further their embeddedness within professional networks. These networks include gallery managers, directors of interior design, festival and art crawl organizers, and arts funding organizations. Several artists within our sample mentioned the need or desire to further their social contacts, and discussed the tactics by which they approach network expansion, including email and social media. One artist, a painter, described building a network through reputation and collaboration:

...when I moved to town my church has a gallery and so I got a show there. And that was my first solo show. And out of that I got a gallery relationship and out of that gallery relationship I received a grant to do, to work on a project. And out of that grant I received two more. And then you know, got a purchase prize with the city. And it sort of keeps, keeps building. And then that gallery is the one that recommended me to the Arts and Business Council and the Periscope program....out of that came all those grant things. So it's kind of like one thing has led to another has led to another has led to another.

At a recent show, this same artist curated the work of other artists to show alongside his own, citing a desire to create a “multiplication of efforts” as well as the benefit of increased audience exposure for all parties amongst his reasons for doing so.

Building artist peer groups

Several artists in our sample engage in collaboration, a process which requires artists to become expert communicators who must cooperate with each other to achieve their collective vision. Collaboration occurring across genres, especially, calls for high communicative ability, where successful products represent dedication to the process, outcome, and professional collaborative relationship. Beyond collaborative opportunity, artists deploy social creativity in the seeking of peer groups with whom they can commiserate, pursuit of membership in artists collectives and professional associations, and participation in artist retreats. In the absence of traditional work space or structure, artists have to generate their own social groups in order to

receive information and support. For artists, social networking amongst peers combats burnout, protects mental health, and serves as a form of professionalization.

Small groups became more like group therapy than anything. And that was something I didn't expect and something that was, for me at least, much more helpful than the business side. Just being able to sit in a small group with other artists who are close to the same age as me, same level of achievement and kind of go around the table and talk about what has worked for us and what hasn't and why we felt we needed [entrepreneurial training] like that to help us get to the next level.

Peer groups represent the creative pursuit of networking for personal gain. In addition to emotional support, artists also receive the community that many in our sample described needing in order to feel inspired and able to create.

Building audience

Showing and sales also involves the strategic use of social creativity. Artists use social cues and body language to determine someone's interest in their work.

They walk in, they're walking past, you know, five or six artists and this is the reaction I get: [holding breath]. And they stop, literally stop. They do the backtrack. Then they come up and they look at it, and they step back again. And then they kind of look behind [the piece] because they can't quite figure out what it is. And that's when I know I have a conversation with them. And I go, 'yeah it's photography.' And they go, 'it's what?' 'No yeah really it is.' 'Really? How'd you do that?' And I said, 'well, I could tell yah, but it's going to cost you about 15 minutes of your time.' And then I end up with a crowd around me.

Dealing in the sale of personal work has the potential to be an uncomfortable, frustrating experience for all parties involved. The artists in our sample have creatively refined their direct sales techniques by learning how to read body language, pique curiosity, and draw audiences into conversation. Artists also relayed information about having pitches and scripts prepared for their work to help educate their audience and keep their pricing at the desired level.

Creativity in Civic & Community Engagement

The third theme demonstrates the relationship between artistic creativity and creativity in civic/community pursuits. As one respondent said, artists can help their communities to "process their own experiences as human beings." One artist uses her writing practice as a tool for community organizing, and runs workshops designed to bring neighbors of different backgrounds together. Four others spoke of teaching and the desire to expand the teaching

capacity of their practice. Another respondent spoke of her work with various non-profit organizations:

I don't think that handmade things should just be for rich people...I've done a lot of work with the Nashville [non-profit]. I used to take my students to paint murals in their garden that was designed, they got grant money to have gardens for refugee families from agrarian societies....we did a lot of projects around that space. We created murals, we helped create this big learning felt diagram that they could take into schools and teach about nutrition. I've partnered with a lot of organizations like that. Right now I'm working at [job training program]...

A powerful point of civic and community creativity is the ability of artists to create projects that generate conversation, thereby helping others imagine their own stories or creative potentials. By helping communities unlock their creative potential, artists make substantial, but often unquantifiable contributions to the daily lives of people around them. As cultural entrepreneurs, artists play an essential role in the place branding of community – a “process of construction through dialogue between stakeholders” (Mittilä and Lepistö 2013: 144).

[when people say they aren't creative]...everyone has to take responsibility for their own creative process, but anytime I hear that - and I hear that all the time - I'm like, 'uh I'm gonna challenge you on that.' And I just even say, 'just notice as you walk around your life in the next day or two how your creative energy might be coming out' like, whether it's organizing your closet or making a meal for someone. Those non-traditional ways we think of or we don't think of as being creative but they expend creative energy. So my first thing is, 'oh you can't say that to me'...there are people who are kind of like, hold the creativity in high esteem and it's like, 'well I'm creative you're not.' And they kind of create this gap rather than build a bridge. Like it's not - my desire is to build a bridge so there's something that touches our humanity together. We are in solidarity in enjoying beauty and seeing beauty and somehow it's coming out in you, in your life you're creating beauty in some way.

Artists craft place in ways which resonate with the public. Public-facing projects, like murals that are created by artists, are subject to community interaction and dialogue. Regardless of intent, these projects become neighborhood symbols, points of conversation, and gathering places for people who are both from or just visiting these spaces.

Still, it is important to note that artists in our sample had mixed responses to the idea that artists carry a “role” within community, with some citing concerns that the prescription of a role, real or imagined, puts undue pressure on creativity and an unfair burden on artists. Others separated art from the artists, saying that while art has the ability to unify community, an artist must be consciously inclined to use their skills for the purpose of doing so.

...with the Envision Nolensville Pike⁷ [project], we're not just as artists going in there and doing our thing and leaving. We're getting community feedback, we're involving community partners, and really wanting to place work in the community that reflects that community. You know, bringing our skills to the table and giving them something that they value.

The capacity of artists to be involved with the construction of community – by intentional planning or just by the nature of the work – is limited only by the degree to which artists are supported in their pursuits. Artists are impactful to community even in their capacity as private citizens. One artist, a painter, recalled:

...it's been a nice process to be out in public making work outside and yeah, engaging with people as they come by. One of the weirdest things that kept happening was when we were first [painting outside in a public space] was people would come sometimes and they would be like, 'oh thank you for painting.' And we were like, 'what?' We were like, 'thank you for painting, what do you - what are you talking about?' It was just funny to have people, to have that be their reaction. We were really floored by that at first. So that it kept happening we're like, 'oh this is really weird.' It was almost like people were enjoying that sense of like, 'oh there are artists who are appreciating the spot right now.'

By painting outside, this artist was serving as a visual representation of the art, culture, and “vibe” of the city, and her presence resonated positively with other citizens occupying the same public space. This same artist has on two separate occasions worked closely with farming communities to paint their favorite, treasured views and take oral histories of the land ahead of a gas drilling and development booms that would compromise the beauty of the area, which speaks to the ability of artists to preserve culture and community over time.

⁷ <https://www.civicdesigncenter.org/projects/envision-nolensville-pike-community-creativity-and-imagination-in-placemaking.2079977>. Accessed 6/25/19. Envision Nolensville Pike is a redevelopment initiative designed in close partnership between community residents and business stakeholders to enliven their neighborhood corridor.

III. Reflections

Art and creativity are highly valuable, but artists face numerous challenges in their pursuit. One is that the return on investment cannot always be quantified in monetary terms. Beyond pure economics, artists contribute to cultural preservation and quality of life in their communities. Still, persistent public stigma around artists – as starving or transient – complicates the ability of artists to assign value to their work. Entrepreneurial training helps artists to combat one of the most prevalent, damaging narratives facing them in the market: the idea that their work does not have to be priced well enough to financially support them.

...people will ask a band to come in and play for 5 hours or something like that and maybe that band has 6 or 7 people in the band. And the venue will say, 'uh we'll give you guys \$200.' To play for 5 hours. And it's 7 people. So 7 people are supposed to split \$200 plus whatever tips they get in that tip jar they put out front. Whereas the venue is packed out. It's a bar downtown, the bars are always packed and the drinks are flowing and you know they're making 15, 20 thousand dollars sometimes a night. You're paying the musicians \$200. Like, that's exploitation. And so yeah, you find yourself in a place where your art is being exploited. But at the same time it's hard because you still have to pay your bills. And if this money is going to help do that, you're in a hard place. Because you want to practice your art, you want to be a working practitioner of the craft that you have, but at the same time again it goes back to the thing I said where you have to be able to survive.

Professional artists are engaged in at least two calibers of creativity: pro-c and middle-c. In addition to being experts or approaching expertise in their respective fields, the extra-artistic creative undertakings of our respondents, particularly those engaging community, demonstrate the “substantial social impact” characteristic of middle-c creativity (Harrington 2004: 180). However, despite the invaluable and often unquantifiable contributions artists make to the vitality of their communities, many professional artists struggle to thrive.

Pursuit of a career in art-making is commonly misconstrued as the pursuit of precarious work – work that is insecure, unstable, and poorly paid. Precarity complicates the relationship between creativity and autonomy by limiting power. Business training helps demystify the Business of Art and bring stability to precarious working conditions. Business training and professionalization opportunities such as conferences and workshops are important resources for artists. Only a few artists in our sample mentioned having received any sort of business training in the process of securing their art degree, despite the importance of this training in helping artists to market themselves as multi-faceted creatives not just in the arts, but in entrepreneurial pursuits as well. As pro-c creatives, the responses of artists in this study have implications not just for how entrepreneurial training programs can help artists harness and unlock creativity in non-artistic domains, but for arts education programming and the capacity of artists to work within communities in general. Undergraduate and graduate-level

educational programming and training for artists should be cognizant of the difficulties many artists face post-graduation and provide opportunities to learn how to navigate those challenges and look at art through an entrepreneurial lens.

Teaching artists to conduct cost-benefit analysis, how to pitch work to arts organizations or other investors, and to write business plans for their practice will not hamper creativity in art. In all likelihood, having these skills will help artists circumvent barriers that may otherwise stifle their creativity. Still, the pedagogy of the business of art needs to be refined. Several artists in our sample had difficulty translating their business training to their practice, and relied heavily on direct mentorship from members of the business community to supplement their classroom training and support their efforts at entrepreneurialism.

Defining the Entrepreneurial and the Enterprising Artist

Stereotypes concerning the nature of artists – as flighty, fanciful, or destined to suffer for the sake of producing art – create a substantial barrier in artist-client relations by forcing artists to constantly negotiate the value of their labor and work. By defining the entrepreneurial and/or enterprising artist, this Research Lab seeks to capture the product of interactions between two domains of creativity, in art and in business, in order to develop a new framework by which to understand artists and their work. Indeed, reflecting back on the self-reported perceptions of creativity in Table 2, the artist sample in this study did not primarily understand its creativity in artistic terms, but rather in terms of self-motivation, innovation, imagination, and helping, connecting with and leading others.

The Entrepreneurial Artist. Entrepreneurial artists consider their art-making to be their own micro or small business. These artists are “doing the work”; striving for financial stability by conducting cost-benefit analysis to assign accurate value to their art and labor and help determine which projects to pursue, diversifying skill-sets and creative products, and capitalizing on their available resources to develop cohesive collections.

The Enterprising Artist. Enterprising artists exist as members of larger, self-developed enterprise. The enterprising artist has parlayed opportunity into a large business which they do not themselves manage, but rather provide artistic and creative direction to, or that provides them artistic opportunity. Enterprising artists are doing the work, but “not thinking of the bottom line”; they are focused on finding a niche to occupy and producing art regardless of cost-benefit or ability to fully capitalize on the work.

As with other occupations, people should respect the considerable effort, training, skill, and labor involved in the production of art. Our research suggests that artists are multi-faceted individuals who have the capacity for creativity beyond traditional artistic pursuits. The persistent belief that artists are destined to struggle is a disservice to their contributions to economy, community, and culture. Conversations about the role and character of artists should be reframed to consider their substantial capacity for creativity not just in the artistic domain,

but in the realms of business and entrepreneurship, social interactions, and community engagement as well.

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Appendix A: Topline Survey Results

[SECTION 1: PERSONALITY TRAITS]

Q2. Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For each characteristic, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

You see yourself as someone who...

	n	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. Is talkative	37	0%	22%	19%	38%	22%
2. Tends to find fault with others	37	32%	54%	8%	3%	3%
3. Does a thorough job	36	6%	17%	31%	28%	19%
4. Is depressed, blue	37	24%	59%	8%	8%	0%
5. Is original, comes up with new ideas	37	35%	49%	11%	5%	0%
6. Is reserved	37	16%	38%	11%	22%	14%
7. Is helpful and unselfish with others	37	54%	30%	16%	0%	0%
8. Can be somewhat careless	37	59%	38%	3%	0%	0%
9. Is relaxed, handles stress well	37	8%	41%	24%	22%	5%
10. Is curious about many different things	37	3%	16%	16%	49%	16%
11. Is full of energy	37	32%	49%	16%	0%	3%
12. Starts arguments with others	37	24%	57%	16%	3%	0%
13. Is a reliable worker	37	24%	35%	16%	24%	0%
14. Can be tense	37	16%	32%	19%	19%	14%
15. Is clever	37	14%	41%	27%	19%	0%
16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm	37	57%	38%	3%	3%	0%
17. Has a forgiving nature	37	22%	49%	24%	5%	0%
18. Tends to be disorganized	37	14%	41%	22%	22%	3%
19. Worries a lot	37	22%	35%	24%	14%	5%
20. Has an active imagination	37	8%	22%	19%	49%	3%
21. Tends to be quiet	37	76%	22%	0%	3%	0%
22. Is generally trusting	36	3%	39%	25%	17%	17%
23. Tends to be lazy	36	33%	56%	8%	3%	0%
24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset	37	5%	11%	16%	54%	14%
25. Likes to make things	37	8%	3%	3%	22%	65%
26. Is confident	37	73%	19%	8%	0%	0%
27. Can be cold and distant	37	3%	27%	41%	27%	3%
28. Persists until a task is finished	37	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%
29. Can be moody	37	51%	46%	3%	0%	0%
30. Appreciates beauty	37	41%	35%	16%	8%	0%
31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited	37	41%	38%	16%	5%	0%
32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone	37	5%	14%	19%	43%	19%
33. Does things efficiently	37	27%	38%	19%	16%	0%
34. Remains calm in tense situations	37	22%	24%	19%	35%	0%
35. Prefers work that is routine	37	32%	32%	27%	8%	0%
36. Is outgoing, sociable	37	54%	35%	8%	3%	0%
37. Is sometimes rude to others	37	46%	35%	16%	3%	0%
38. Makes plans and follows through with them	37	14%	49%	24%	14%	0%
39. Gets nervous easily	37	0%	3%	24%	49%	24%
40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas	37	14%	35%	30%	14%	8%
41. Has few artistic interests	37	5%	22%	19%	35%	19%
42. Likes to cooperate with others	37	65%	30%	3%	3%	0%
43. Is easily distracted	37	0%	11%	8%	51%	30%
44. Is knowledgeable about famous art, music, or literature	37	27%	30%	24%	19%	0%

[SECTION 2: OCCUPATIONAL VALUES]

Q3. Which of the listed characteristics are very important to you in picking a job or career?

Please select all that apply.

Opportunities to be original and creative	95%
Opportunities to be helpful to others or useful to society	86%
Freedom from supervision in your work	65%
Avoiding a high-pressure job, which takes too much out of you	51%
A chance to exercise leadership	43%
Opportunities for moderate, but steady progress rather than chance of extreme success or failure	41%
Making a lot of money	27%
Other	24%
Getting away from the city or area in which you grew up	19%
Remaining in the city or area in which you grew up	8%

[SECTION 3: SELF-PERCEPTIONS OF CREATIVITY]

Q4. Compared to people of approximately your age and life experience, how creative would you rate yourself for each of the following activities? For activities that you have not specifically done, rate your creative potential based on your performance on similar tasks.

	n	Much more creative	A little more creative	About as creative	A little less creative	Much less creative
1. Making up lyrics to a song	37	22%	38%	22%	16%	3%
2. Composing an original song	37	5%	24%	35%	16%	19%
3. Making up dance moves	37	51%	38%	11%	0%	0%
4. Creating or modifying your own clothing	37	27%	51%	16%	5%	0%
5. Writing a poem	37	32%	30%	16%	19%	3%
6. Designing a sculpture or piece of pottery	37	32%	38%	16%	14%	0%
7. Solving math puzzles	37	22%	51%	22%	3%	3%
8. Taking apart machines or engines and figuring out how they work	37	35%	51%	8%	5%	0%
9. Figuring out how to fix a frozen or buggy computer	37	38%	27%	16%	19%	0%
10. Thinking of a new invention	37	35%	46%	16%	3%	0%
11. Building something mechanical, like a robot	37	30%	30%	19%	22%	0%
12. Drawing up designs or creating instructions for how to build something	36	28%	47%	11%	11%	3%
13. Designing a way to test a hypothesis or idea	37	32%	19%	35%	11%	3%
14. Communicating with people from different cultures	37	41%	19%	19%	11%	11%
15. Helping other people cope with a difficult situation	37	38%	19%	5%	27%	11%
16. Teaching someone how to do something	37	38%	43%	14%	5%	0%
17. Thinking of a polite way to tell someone about a flaw or bad habit	37	19%	35%	30%	16%	0%
18. Planning a trip or event with friends or family that meets everyone's needs	37	24%	51%	22%	3%	0%
19. Mediating a dispute or argument between two friends	37	30%	43%	16%	11%	0%
20. Delegating work to people and inspiring them to complete it	37	8%	19%	30%	19%	24%
21. Getting people to feel relaxed and at ease	37	35%	30%	19%	8%	8%
22. Persuading someone to do something	37	11%	35%	27%	24%	3%
23. Persuading someone to buy something	37	32%	38%	22%	5%	3%
24. Leading a group project	37	38%	27%	14%	5%	16%
25. Figuring out new ways to save money	37	35%	32%	22%	11%	0%
26. Launching a new business	37	49%	35%	14%	3%	0%
27. Delivering an engaging presentation or speech in front of a group of people	37	16%	19%	24%	22%	19%
28. Pitching your ideas to other people	37	19%	43%	27%	8%	3%
29. Finding new ways to get things done more efficiently	37	19%	27%	38%	14%	3%
30. Thinking of many different solutions to a problem	37	43%	38%	19%	0%	0%
31. Creating a tasty meal out of scattered leftovers	37	5%	30%	22%	16%	27%
32. Figuring out a new way home to avoid traffic	37	11%	41%	19%	24%	5%
33. Decorating a room	37	35%	43%	19%	3%	0%
34. Capturing your feelings or ideas in a journal or blog	36	14%	39%	25%	19%	3%
35. Delivering a punch line of a joke	37	30%	51%	14%	5%	0%
36. Finding new things to do when you are bored	37	46%	30%	11%	14%	0%
37. Imagining what something you have never seen looks like, such as a space alien	37	46%	27%	14%	14%	0%
38. Making up an original bedtime story to tell a child	37	24%	16%	22%	19%	19%
39. Finding new ways to motivate yourself to do something unpleasant	37	54%	41%	3%	3%	0%
40. Getting others in your community involved to try to solve some community problems	37	11%	51%	30%	5%	3%
41. Approaching a person of influence in your community about some needs or problems	36	31%	39%	19%	8%	3%
42. Organizing a petition, a protest rally or march, or the boycott of a product	37	3%	27%	24%	24%	22%
43. Raising awareness about causes you care about within your community	37	32%	46%	14%	5%	3%

Appendix B: Topline National Survey Results: Self-Perceived Creativity

National Survey of Self-Perceptions of Creativity & Arts Participation (n=3,447 U.S. adults)	Much more creative	A little more creative	About as creative	A little less creative	Much less creative
1. Making up lyrics to a song	12%	18%	21%	24%	25%
2. Composing an original song	10%	12%	20%	26%	34%
3. Making up dance moves	8%	12%	22%	24%	35%
4. Creating or modifying your own clothing	11%	19%	27%	23%	21%
5. Writing a poem	12%	16%	20%	24%	29%
6. Designing a sculpture or piece of pottery	9%	14%	24%	24%	28%
7. Solving math puzzles	14%	24%	27%	19%	16%
8. Taking apart machines or engines and figuring out how they work	14%	21%	19%	20%	26%
9. Figuring out how to fix a frozen or buggy computer	14%	22%	23%	19%	23%
10. Thinking of a new invention	11%	21%	27%	23%	17%
11. Building something mechanical, like a robot	9%	16%	21%	24%	30%
12. Drawing up designs or creating instructions for how to build something	12%	21%	27%	22%	18%
13. Designing a way to test a hypothesis or idea	10%	25%	34%	18%	13%
14. Communicating with people from different cultures	15%	28%	36%	14%	7%
15. Helping other people cope with a difficult situation	19%	40%	30%	9%	3%
16. Teaching someone how to do something	22%	42%	28%	5%	3%
17. Thinking of a polite way to tell someone about a flaw or bad habit	12%	29%	35%	18%	7%
18. Planning a trip or event with friends or family that meets everyone's needs	20%	31%	33%	9%	6%
19. Mediating a dispute or argument between two friends	13%	32%	36%	13%	6%
20. Delegating work to people and inspiring them to complete it	15%	31%	35%	13%	5%
21. Getting people to feel relaxed and at ease	17%	37%	32%	10%	4%
22. Persuading someone to do something	12%	34%	36%	12%	6%
23. Persuading someone to buy something	11%	26%	32%	20%	11%
24. Leading a group project	14%	29%	33%	15%	9%
25. Figuring out new ways to save money	20%	35%	30%	11%	4%
26. Launching a new business	11%	17%	30%	23%	19%
27. Delivering an engaging presentation or speech in front of a group of people	13%	23%	28%	18%	19%
28. Pitching your ideas to other people	13%	33%	33%	14%	7%
29. Finding new ways to get things done more efficiently	22%	43%	27%	6%	2%
30. Thinking of many different solutions to a problem	21%	40%	28%	8%	3%
31. Creating a tasty meal out of scattered leftovers	24%	28%	27%	13%	9%
32. Figuring out a new way home to avoid traffic	23%	37%	27%	9%	5%
33. Decorating a room	19%	28%	28%	16%	9%
34. Capturing your feelings or ideas in a journal or blog	12%	21%	27%	21%	19%
35. Delivering a punch line of a joke	12%	22%	33%	21%	12%
36. Finding new things to do when you are bored	18%	37%	32%	10%	3%
37. Imagining what something you have never seen looks like, such as a space alien	14%	24%	35%	16%	11%
38. Making up an original bedtime story to tell a child	15%	28%	28%	17%	13%
39. Finding new ways to motivate yourself to do something unpleasant	13%	31%	37%	13%	6%
40. Getting others in your community involved to try to solve some community problems	6%	19%	33%	27%	16%
41. Approaching a person of influence in your community about some needs or problems	9%	21%	34%	22%	13%
42. Organizing a petition, a protest rally or march, or the boycott of a product	5%	12%	25%	28%	30%
43. Raising awareness about causes you care about within your community	10%	22%	37%	21%	11%

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

1. What brought you to Nashville?
 - a. How would you describe the arts scene/arts community here?
2. How would you describe your practice/tell me about your arts practice?
 - a. What are some of the things that make your practice difficult to do sometimes?
3. How has your practice changed over time/since coming to Nashville?
 - a. What have you done, if anything, to adapt to Nashville's current arts climate?
 - b. What kinds of opportunities are there for artists here?
4. How does being an artist impact your identity? Or, how does your identity impact your art?
5. Have you ever collaborated with other artists in the Nashville area?
 - a. Tell me about your collaboration(s) with Nashville area artists. What was the outcome? How did you find the collaboration experience? Did it have an impact on your practice?
 - b. About how many times have you collaborated with other Nashville area artists?
 - c. How did the collaboration come about? Did you reach out to the other artist, or did they reach out to you? Why did you agree to the collaboration?
6. Have you ever collaborated with artists not currently in the Nashville area?
 - a. Tell me about your collaboration(s) with these artists. What was the outcome? How did you find the collaboration experience? Did it have an impact on your practice?
 - b. About how many times have you collaborated with artists not located in Nashville?
 - c. How did the collaboration come about? Did you reach out to the other artist, or did they reach out to you? Why did you agree to the collaboration?
7. How do you understand success?/What does success look like to you?
 - a. Do you feel you have the tools you need to be successful? What have some of your challenges been?
 - b. How would you define an enterprising artist?
8. What do you think is the role of the arts in a community?
 - a. What is the role of artists?
 - b. How has the role of the arts/artists changed since you started your practice?
 - c. What can communities do to empower artists? What can artists do to empower communities?
9. What would your practice look like if you didn't have any limits?
 - a. What are some of the things that you feel limit you?

Do we have your permission to contact you (by phone or email) in the future should potential opportunities arise for you to talk publicly about your experience in this research and/or to react to published findings from the research? (YES or NO).