

# STRATEGIES OF ARTS ENTREPRENEURS FOR COPING WITH THE ART-COMMERCIAL PARADOX

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## **Abstract**

This thesis researches the coping strategies that arts entrepreneurs use in practice to cope with the paradox between artisticity and commercialism. This thesis departs from the trend in arts entrepreneurship research to focus on defects in arts entrepreneurs' employability but instead focuses on their competence. Nineteen 1,5 hour interviews with Dutch arts entrepreneurs spanning various industries in the creative sector show that arts entrepreneurs deploy a variety of coping strategies that are effective enough to reduce strain experienced by the art-commercial paradox in the majority of participants. The role of artistic and economic logics as drivers for the manifestations of the art-commercial paradox is confirmed. An important new finding is that arts entrepreneurs are primarily driven by the freedom to do what they like, above other artistic or economic values. Another finding is that they can be coherently clustered based on their strain experienced, their attitude towards the concept of commercialism and whether their work has an applied or conceptual nature.

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*“So, in order to connect the innovation – the creative artistic product -- to the money that will feed it, requires knowledge and understanding of entrepreneurial action. What does it take for, at one end, an artist to manage her own career effectively and at the other, start a venture that will generate enough money to keep the circular flow going? I often tell my students that the “discipline” of entrepreneurship is opportunity recognition and, in the arts, opportunity creation. When artists and those interested in advancing the arts recognize the opportunities to generate revenue, to create new businesses that support the arts, then we have arts entrepreneurship.” (Linda Essig, 2015)*

# Chapter 1: Introduction

In modern Western society, making a living from doing what you like is highly valued. For some people 'doing what you like' is about expressing oneself artistically and one way to make a living from artistic expression is by self-employment. In academic literature, an artist making a living from his or her artistic business is called an 'arts entrepreneur'.

The challenges that arts entrepreneurs face are two-fold. Like any entrepreneur, they face the challenges of making their company thrive (or just survive) like any entrepreneur. They have to be commercial, which means they have to make choices based on the necessity to generate an influx of monetary means. However, they also face challenges unique but inherent to artists (Bonin-Rodriguez, 2012; Preece, 2005; Caves, 2000), the most prominent one being the need to express oneself honestly and authentically in an artistic way (Caves, 2000).

The need to make money can interfere with the process of authentic expression and vice versa (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). As a result of this, arts entrepreneurs have to deal with the tension between artistic expression and commercialism.

This tension, or rather paradox, between art and commercialism<sup>1</sup> has been noted by several arts entrepreneurship researchers (DiMaggio, 1991; Scherdin and Zander, 2011; Bonin-Rodriguez, 2012; Beckman and Essig, 2012; Wilson and Stokes, 2005) and is generally assumed to be an issue in creative industries research (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Bujor (2016) even calls this the 'real struggle' of arts entrepreneurship (Bujor, 2016). To pursue survival in the volatile and challenging creative industries, strategies to cope with the paradox between artistic expression and commercialism are necessary. However, the current academic research on such strategies as well as their effectiveness is marginal. This paper adopts an explorative view and assumes that the experts on these issues are the arts entrepreneurs themselves. As such, this paper researches the coping strategies arts entrepreneurs deploy in practice to cope with the paradox between artistic expression and commercialism. Hence, the research question of this paper is as follows.

*Which strategies do arts entrepreneurs use in practice to cope with the paradox between commercialism and artistic expression?*

At present, no specific academic research has been conducted on the coping strategies arts entrepreneurs deploy in practice. Recent literature on arts entrepreneurship is mainly focused on best practices in arts entrepreneurship education (Beckman and Essig, 2012; Hausmann and Heinze, 2016; see for examples Welsh, 2014; Pollard and Wilson, 2014; Hong, C., Essig, L., Bridgstock, R., 2011; Allen et al, 2012; Ball, L., Pollard, E. and Stanley, N. , 2010 and Bonin-Rodriguez, 2012) rather than the actual coping strategies that arts entrepreneurs already deploy in practice. There is little focus on coping strategies that are already espoused

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the word 'commercialism' in this paper is largely interchangeable with the word 'business' as used in creative industries research. However, the conscious choice to use the word 'commercialism' instead of 'business' is made for three reasons: a) because the term 'business' can also refer to topics such as day to day management which diminishes the focus of the paper on monetary outcomes rather than 'humdrum' business processes (Caves, 2000), b) to easily explain to interviewees that participated in this study that have no business background what the purpose of the interview is, as the term 'business' is more open to (mis)interpretation than 'commercialism' and may thus lead to lack of reliability in obtained data

and beneficial, nor is there focus on the nature of the problems outside of the scope of 'teachable skills'.

The focus on education is caused by the belief that the creative sector is a main growth driver in knowledge economies (DCSM, 2008; Allen et al, 2012), that artists need to be more 'employable', meaning adept at producing commercially interesting work, functioning in a professional environment and thus being capable of contributing to the economy by being profitable (Pollard and Wilson, 2014, Allen et al, 2012). Art education is seen as the key to creating this more 'employable' workforce (Pollard and Wilson, 2014).

This paper argues that researching the coping strategies that arts entrepreneurs actually use in practice contributes in several ways. Firstly, it results in knowledge that is not available in academic research at present. Current arts entrepreneurship research is primarily concerned with addressing entrepreneurial challenges that arts entrepreneurs face and is thus problem-oriented. Therefore, there is an abundance of knowledge of what arts entrepreneurs can *not* do, rather than what they actually *can* do. A solution-based rather than problem-based orientation provides a new direction for arts entrepreneurship research. Secondly, a solution-based orientation instead of a problem-based orientation empowers arts entrepreneurs in practice. Results of this study may be used in practice by arts entrepreneurs to explore new coping strategies that aid reaching their financial and artistic goals; it might broaden options for all parties involved when education turns out not to be the only means of improving the arts entrepreneurs' situations and it might encourage arts entrepreneurs to take better advantage of resources they already own instead of continuously adding what they don't have. Thirdly, while proposing 'best practices' is beyond the scope of this paper, clarifying the knowledge gap between theory and practice gives a clear overview of where the field of arts entrepreneurship research can further contribute in a search for best practices. At present, there is no consensus on 'best practices' for arts entrepreneurship yet while these might be beneficial in practice (Beckman and Essig, 2012). Collecting, examining and measuring deployed practices of arts entrepreneurs may contribute to the formation of such best practices (Beckman and Essig, 2012). Lastly, while this paper deliberately takes a different approach than arts education research, arts education can actually benefit from knowledge of what works in practice by offering this knowledge to the arts entrepreneurs.



# Chapter 2: Literature

## 2.1 Arts entrepreneurship: an overview

### 2.1.1. Introduction

For all entrepreneurs, issues around balancing production and management arise. Timmons (1978) notes that “entrepreneurs frequently must vie against established organizations that have more resources—financial, material, and social. They must raise funds, recruit people, capture trade from rivals, deal for the first time with institutional authorities, and create new products or services”. Being an entrepreneur is challenging in itself, regardless of the field the entrepreneur is embedded in. Although general entrepreneurship research is relevant for this paper, specific arts entrepreneurship literature has sufficiently adapted relevant knowledge from entrepreneurship research to explain the relevant topics. Consequently, the subject of general entrepreneurship is not elaborated on any further.

Literature tends to use the terms ‘self-employed artists’ and ‘arts entrepreneurs’ interchangeably (Parker, 2004). The approach of this paper on the strategies these individuals use means that no distinction will be made between the two; the risk of excluding important data by excluding participants on whether they are solely self-employed or do have employees is deemed inappropriate. As such, the term ‘arts entrepreneur’ will refer to both self-employed artists with no employees and arts entrepreneurs who run a company with employees in the creative industries.

In general discourse, the terms ‘creativity’ and ‘artisticity’ are used interchangeably. This paper assumes that while all artisticity can be considered creative, not all creativity is necessarily artisticity and as such, a clear distinction is necessary to ensure reliability.

Creativity is a widely discussed subject with multiple possible interpretations varying from ‘the process of bringing something new to life’ (May, 1994) to “any act, idea or product that modifies an existing domain or that converts an existing domain into a new one ... What matters is whether the novelty that he or she produces is accepted for inclusion in the field” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013). Contradictory to the link between entrepreneurship and the arts, the link between entrepreneurship and creativity is well-established as entrepreneurship “bows on novel ideas and innovations to survive” (Ward, 2004). Creativity is thus about the creation of novelty in general, including artistic expression that is about producing novel works of art, but also including creativity in the sense of business ideas and practices such as the creation of non-artistic products, non-artistic product innovation, novel packaging or management innovation, which is not relevant for this paper.

As opposed to creativity, artistic expression (also called ‘artistic creativity’, Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) is specific to the creative sectors (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Artistic expression is about ‘art for art’s sake’, about self-fulfillment and about abstract goals such as understanding and ‘enlargement’ in a rather spiritual sense (Caves, 2002; Phillips, 2010;

Preece, 2011; Fichandler, 1959). Essig (2015) differentiates between products that have symbolic meaning, are unique and where those creative processes are at least partially controlled by the arts entrepreneur (Essig, 2015). For example, not all jobs in the IT sector involve artistic expression and this paper focuses on the arts entrepreneurs who do have these jobs, such as web designers or game art designers. The definition of arts entrepreneurship is based on that of Bujor (2016), which defines arts entrepreneurship as the business activity of entrepreneurs in the creative industries (Bujor, 2016) and adds that this business activity is at least partly driven by artistic values and results in a product at least partly based on artistic values. For example, a self-employed talent manager working in the music industries is not an arts entrepreneur because of the lack of an artistic product.

Other than the simple creation of novelty, artisticity appears to be internally driven by some kind of personal ethereal mission or fueled by an emotional necessity for artistic expression (Abbing, 2002). This paper assumes that artisticity is prevalent throughout all industries in the creative sector and focuses on those jobs where artisticity can occur. In this paper, the term 'artistic expression' refers to the action of the creation of unique art with symbolic meaning, meaning the production of any visual, audiological, verbal or tangible product, conceived through some form of self-expression. This paper specifically focuses on the sector-specific process of expressing oneself called 'artisticity' instead of the broader concept of problem solving and seeking novel concepts called 'creativity'.

### 2.1.2 Arts entrepreneurship in academic literature

Arts entrepreneurship, while growing quickly as a research field, is still a rather unexplored subject for several reasons. Firstly, the phenomenon of the arts entrepreneur is fairly new, resulting in a young and rather unstructured body of academic literature (Essig, 2017). Another reason is that until recently, arts and entrepreneurship were separate topics in both literature and practice (Deseriewicz, 2015; Beckman, 2012; Scherdin and Zander, 2011; Druckenbrod, 2009). The 'culture wars' of the 1990's, when state grants and economic support for the arts decreased (Deseriewicz, 2015), put artists under increased economic pressure and thus more pressure to be commercial. Because of this, arts entrepreneurship became relevant on a larger scale. During the global economic crisis of the early 2000's, this effect increased again (Deseriewicz, 2015). Due to these developments, the past two decades have seen a rise of academic interest in arts entrepreneurship (Pollard and Wilson, 2014). Since 2012, the arts entrepreneurship-themed journal *Artivate* has been appearing biannually, demonstrating both the growth of arts entrepreneurship research and its relevance.

Arts entrepreneurship research is embedded in other disciplines such as general creative industries research (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007), economy (Throsby, 2003; 2007; Caves, 2002) and sociology (Bourdieu, 1993; 1999). Arts entrepreneurship is deemed a subsector of cultural entrepreneurship (Hagoort, 2007; Henry, 2007; Beckman and Essig, 2012). Relevant papers and articles are discussed individually but discussion of these fields as a whole is beyond the scope of this paper.

As mentioned before, the biggest progress on arts entrepreneurship research is made in the field of arts entrepreneurship education research (Beckman and Essig, 2012), due to the interest of the creative industries to make arts entrepreneurs more 'employable' (Ball, Pollard and Stanley, 2010; DCMS, 2008; Phillips, 2010). Employability is about the creation of business-minded (and thus commercial) creative professionals (DCMS, 2008), also including

self-employability (Welsh, 2014). For arts entrepreneurs in the context of this paper, being employable means knowing how to keep one's business afloat and to remain self-employed. This paper argues that the focus on employability leads to an overrepresentation of the market oriented and commercial view in arts entrepreneurship research in relation to the product oriented, artistic view. The goal of employability research is not primarily aimed at artistic values or artist wellbeing, it is driven by economic values of employability and the contribution of artistic products to the market and to the economy as a whole. This paper argues that a primary focus on artist wellbeing and treating the artistic process and product are important in itself. Additionally, artist wellbeing and the artistic process create and contribute to the artistic product, which is the very product that feeds the market and the economy. Therefore, a product- and process oriented focus contributes to both economic and artistic objectives.

### 2.1.3. The creative sector

The boundaries of the creative sector are a widely discussed subject (Lash and Urry, 1994; Rutten, Koops and Roso, 2010; Beckman, 2012). This paper will use the broad industry-based definition of the creative sector (DCMS, 2001; 2008; Throsby, 2003; 2007) where not only 'core creative' industries -namely music, literature, visual and performing arts- are included but also the following industries: advertising and marketing, architecture, crafts, design: product, graphic and fashion design, film, TV, video, radio and photography, IT, software and computer services, publishing, museums, galleries and libraries, music, performing and visual arts (DCMS, 2015). Some industries are less dominated by arts entrepreneurship and more by corporations, such as the music industries (Druckendbrod, 2009) but all industries are expected to include individuals who are driven by intrinsic artistic values in a professional context (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007), which is the subject this paper researches. The creative sector as a whole is considered to have significant positive economical and societal impact on knowledge economies it resides in (Florida, 2002; Throsby, 2003, 2007; Duxbury, 2004; Cleveland, 2005; DCMS, 2008; Van der Pol, 2008; European Committee, 2010; Phillips, 2010; Cameron, 2010; CBS, 2011). See Phillips (2010) for a more inclusive overview on the benefits of the creative sector.

However beneficial the creative sector is to the economy as a whole, the individuals embedded in it are faced with an existence in a volatile environment (Henry, 2007; DCMS, 2015, Cray, Inglis, & Freeman, 2007). The creative industries are different from other industries in several ways (Preece, 2011; Abbing, 2002, Throsby, 2007). They are infamous for excessively low wages compared to jobs in other sectors that require similar training and skills (Abbing, 2002; Caves, 2002, Throsby, 2007). This is most likely due to the aforementioned individual artists driven by non-monetary rewards (Preece, 2011; Caves, 2002; Throsby, 2007); Abbing notes that artists are "unfit for anything else and are happy to remain as artists despite poor financial rewards" (Abbing, 2002), keeping the cycle of working for non-monetary rewards and low incomes intact. Examples of these non-monetary rewards are "art for art's sake" (Caves, 2002; Phillips, 2010) and "self-fulfillment within the execution of an artistic organizational mission" (Preece, 2011).

Even on an organizational level, the tendency exists to forgo profit maximization with firms forming "not to recoup our investment, but to recoup some corner of the universe for our understanding and enlargement" (Fichandler, 1959). Because arts entrepreneurs are driven by non-economic goals, entrepreneurial behavior is not a goal in itself or a means to make

money but rather a means to create art and make it available to its audience. In other words, entrepreneurial behavior in the creative sector generates money that is meant to feed back to the art (Taylor, Bonin-Rodriguez and Essig, 2015) instead of just solely for profit, as is general practice in other sectors (Caves, 2002).

A prominent issue surfacing in academic literature is core creatives not being able to spend as much time as they would like on arts (Throsby, 2007). This may be due a lack of work available (common amongst dancers and actors) or to the inadequacy of financial return (common amongst novelists and visual artists) (Throsby, 2007). In the knowledge economy of Australia, only 41 percent of artists are able to work for 100% of the time on their arts or on related work such as arts education. Of the 59 percent who took a so called 'day job' unrelated to the arts, 80% said they would prefer to spend more time on the arts. Only 12% of artists spend 100% of their time on the art they prefer to do (Throsby and Hollister, 2003).

Other difficulties are a lack of system and order in arts industries, the tendency for art forms to come and go and "fuzzy and quite permeable organizational boundaries" in art worlds (Becker, 1982; Jeffri, 1980). Henry notes that sustainable careers are difficult to obtain because the creative industries "are ruled by fashion, tastes and young people" (Henry, 2007). This volatility leads to difficulty in predicting returns, especially long-term, increasing risks and making allocation of resources a complex process (Caves, 2002, Phillips, 2010).

In conclusion, the creative industries are as volatile and financially unrewarding for the arts entrepreneurs as they are valuable for artists, society and the economy.

## 2.2 The Art/Commercial paradox: Artistic versus economic logics

### 2.2.1 Paradoxes in academic literature

This paper researches the tension between artistic expression and commercialism in arts entrepreneurs. Because this tension plays out in an organizational context, it is classified as managerial tension. There are several ways to approach managerial tension between competing needs. In organization studies, these include trade-offs, dilemmas, dialectics, dualities and paradoxes (Gaim and Wahlin, 2016). In this paper, the managerial tension between artistic expression and commercialism is approached as a paradox.

The paradox, called 'logical paradox' in the academic field of logic where the concept is originated, is defined as a situation where "two contrary or even contradictory propositions are led by apparently sound arguments" (van Heigenoort, 1972, p. 45). It describes tension between two logical and by themselves incontestable options, making decision-making an ongoing and complicated process. (Smith and Lewis, 2011).

By this definition, artistic expression and commercialism are paradoxical elements; both are needed for the existence of the arts entrepreneur. Without artistic expression, there would just be a 'general' entrepreneur or no entrepreneur, since there would be no product to sell or even no reason to be an entrepreneur at all. Without commercial activities, there would simply be an artist as a hobbyist, with paid employment elsewhere, or without employment at all. Individually, artistic expression and commercialism are logical, while together they create a multitude of tensions that manifest itself in the life of an arts entrepreneur (DiMaggio, 1991; Caves, 2000; Scherdin and Zander, 2011; Bonin-Rodriguez, 2012; Bujor, 2016). For reading

purposes, the tension between artistic expression and commercialism is from now on referred to as the 'art-commercial paradox'.

There are several benefits of approaching the art-commercial as a paradox over other approaches. First is its frequent use in academic literature, leading to a better established body of knowledge on the approach (Poole and Van de Ven, 1989; Van Heigenoort, 1972). Second is the fact that paradox theory partly overarches other approaches; this paper tries to allow all kinds of coping strategies to surface and paradox theory allows this by including other approaches as possible solutions, such as balancing and trading off, see De Wit and Meyer (2014). Third and most important is the fact that the other approaches only allow for either/or approaches where one of the demands is chosen over the other, while a logical paradox additionally allows for and/both solutions where the increase of both artisticity and economical benefit are caused simultaneously (Gaim and Wahlin, 2016). Solely using either/or-solutions for this paradox is not considered desirable for arts entrepreneurs, as both sides of the paradox are vital for them. The paradox frame allows for looking at the interconnectivity of the two sides and looking for ways to integrate them, and find ground-breaking solutions (Gaim and Wahlin, 2016). In the light of the research question, it is desirable for all kinds of strategies to be allowed to surface, whether they are and/both or either/or-solutions.

### 2.2.2. Core issues in the art-commercial paradox

The art-commercial paradox is a result of the properties of artistic processes and products. The first issue is that artistic expression -which is essentially the production process of artistic goods- is a highly volatile process by nature; artistic inspiration is considered heavily unpredictable and therefore relatively challenging to manage (Bujor, 2016). Artistic processes involve high levels of perpetual uncertainty and therefore, the production process cannot be meticulously planned like usual business processes. This can cause complications in matters like budgeting, production optimization and planning. In addition, forcing or trying to secure inspiration is found to have a negative impact on its occurrence (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Another complication in the arts world is that not only the process but also the response to the output is uncertain. The creative sector is infamous for audience unpredictability and quickly changing demand (Henry, 2007), meaning that the reaction of the public is very unpredictable and can vary greatly. Therefore, time, money and energy invested in projects have no certainty of being returned and are thus risky. This is especially problematic when costs of production are very high, for example when making a movie (Phillips, 2010).

In addition to these issues, risk management causes the concern of profitability versus authenticity. An option to reduce risk of investment is trying to obtain information about the public's taste and preferences. However, this brings its own set of complications. Market research is costly, especially for individual artists, as well as hard to obtain and potentially unreliable (Phillips, 2010) but the biggest issue concerning market research is that it's arguably destructive to the creative process. Bringing market research, or any kind of customer opinion, into the equation of artistic expression is destructive to authenticity, which is a core value of artists, their peers and the perceived quality of their work (Molotoch, 2003; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007).

When working for an individual customer or collaborating with non-artists, additional issues in getting customers and communicating with them arise. Barriers in language, common metaphors and dominant paradigms differ between the 'arts' world and 'business' world (Mills,

2003); essentially, it means that artists who speak 'art language' try to communicate with customers or other stakeholders who speak 'management language' instead. This is problematic because communication is vital to resolve differences in dominant paradigms; artists and non-artists likely differ in their idea of what a 'good' product is. A dominant paradigm for artists is that a 'good' product is authentic and beautiful while non-artists are more likely to judge a product on its results, such as commercial success, profitability or usability (Bourdieu, 1993; 1999). Additionally, expectations caused by the volatility of the artistic process might cause conflict between the arts entrepreneur and the customer. These conflicts can cause problems with getting and satisfying customers, thus getting insufficient jobs and eventually risk the survival of the company.

### 2.2.3 Artistic and economic logics

How the artists make choices regarding resource allocation, customer communication and project management can be understood through the lens of artistic and economic logics (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). The art-commercial paradox is essentially a conflict between artistic logics and economic values. Values or logics<sup>2</sup> are general beliefs participants of a certain 'field' -such as the business or arts field- share, exhibit and thus explicitly or non-explicitly impose on one another (Bourdieu, 1993; 1999). Embeddedness in a field inherently means being influenced by its values (Bourdieu, 1993; 1999). In the context of this paper, this means that artists are embedded in the arts field and thus subject to artistic values, and that entrepreneurs are embedded in the business field and are subject to economic values. These artistic values or logics and economic values clash in several ways. Arts entrepreneurs are artists and entrepreneurs simultaneously and are thus influenced by both artistic and economic logics, meaning that arts entrepreneurs are faced with conflicting values that they have to deal with in practice. Typical arts logics and values concern both aesthetics and humanism, examples are 'authenticity', 'purity', 'l'art pour l'art' and 'trueness' (Molotoch, 2003; Bourdieu, 1993; 1999). Typical economic logics are 'profit', 'business survival/growth', 'success' and 'efficiency'.

Bourdieu argues that adherence to logics stems from embeddedness in a field and is driven by the desire to rationally acquire capital (Bourdieu, 1986). However, he does not take personal characteristics and emotions of individuals into account (Schatzki, 1972) nor does he recognize the intrinsic value of concepts other than capital (Evans, 1999). Additionally, arts entrepreneurs are found to be significantly driven by economic and artistic logics (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) without necessarily identifying with or being embedded in the field of economics (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). This paper therefore departs from Bourdieu's theory by assuming that the arts entrepreneurs are driven by emotional and spiritual reasons that have intrinsic meaning other than the acquiring of capital (Abbing, 2002; Molotoch, 2003) and that those emotional and spiritual reasons are logics. Also, logics may be adhered to not because they are intrinsically important but because of necessity; individuals might not be intrinsically motivated by economic logics such as profit or business survival. Instead, acting on economic logics serves other logics, such as providing for oneself or kin or in the case of arts entrepreneurs: create art. Therefore, this paper argues that adherence to logics is not necessarily based on embeddedness in a world but on personal traits and emotions, on the

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<sup>2</sup> The words 'value' and 'logic' are used interchangeably dependent on comprehensibility.

intrinsic value of logics, or on its relation to other logics. Accordingly, embeddedness in a world is not a relevant key concept of this paper but the data collection allows for the theme of embeddedness to re-emerge. The goal of this paper is not to discuss where attachment to logics comes from or to debate that they are important; for the further literature analysis, they are simply assumed to be of influence.

#### 2.2.4. Artistic logics inhibiting economic logics

The clash between artistic and economic logics goes both ways. The idea that money will taint art -in other words, that economic logics taint artistic logics- has a long history. Trying to make money or to be commercially successful is thought to infer with an authentic and 'pure' artistic process (Kant, 1914; Adorno, 1975; Haake, 1997; Taylor, Bonin-Rodriguez and Essig, 2015). Artists tend to relate commerce, business and entrepreneurship to "crass commercialism and economic oppression" (Scherdin and Zander, 2011; Bonin-Rodriguez, 2012) and they regard their peers working for commercial benefit as less 'true' (Bourdieu, 1993, 1999) to the point that leaning too far towards market orientation is deteriorating to artists' reputation in their occupational field (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). They refuse to adhere to the market because they feel it distracts from the artistic potential of a product (Molotoch, 2003; Beaverland, 2005). From the view of the typical 'artist', being commercial and adhering to economic logics is a threat to freedom and authenticity as well as to reputation. However, refusal to adhere to economic logics might result in choices that are detrimental to the arts entrepreneurs' businesses. The choices that arts entrepreneurs need to make and problems that those choices cause are essentially the manifestations of the art-commercial paradox.

The first choice that arts entrepreneurs make that jeopardize their businesses is to not educate themselves on how to be commercial and how to run their business (Welsh, 2014). They are well aware of that; Welsh found that managerial education including marketing and non-profit management are high on the list of things that arts entrepreneurs perceive they are lacking. However, Welsh also notes that artists often choose against entrepreneurship education because they fear it may jeopardize their mission, creativity and artistic quality (Welsh, 2014). The second choice is poor resource allocation. Although proper resource allocation is essential for any startup in the creative sector, time, money and effort are often spent primarily on artistic production and heavily outweigh means invested in financial and commercial activities (Preece, 2005). Not being skilled in or not executing financial and commercial activities lowers the chance of getting customers, keeping customers satisfied and remaining financially sound, eventually endangering the existence of the arts entrepreneurs' businesses. From the perspective of artistic logics, spending valuable time and energy on being commercial or profitable are poor choices. However, not making these choices may be detrimental to the economic logics of profitability and company survival.

#### 2.2.5. Economic logics inhibiting artistic logics

A key feature of artistic expression embedded in the creative industries -opposed to non-commercial artistic expression- is that artistic goods and services are embedded in a context of economic utilization (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). All arts entrepreneurs are embedded

in, and act in, a marketplace and display entrepreneurial behavior (Beckman and Essig, 2012). Consequently, they are influenced by values such as profitability and competition. In this professionalizing of artistic production, comparisons and measurements coming from the market inevitably influence the production process and thus the artistic result. In other words, the economic logics that arts entrepreneurs actively try to avoid being influenced by are inevitable as soon as artists decide to bring their artisticity to the marketplace.

Economic logics overruling artistic logics is significantly more prevalent and dangerous than the opposite because economic logics can destroy the artistic purity and therefore value of artistic products (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Economic logics are a strong dictator of behavior in practice (Bourdieu, 1993, 1999; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007) and thus, while unpopular, quite dominant. While commercialism is frowned upon and is assumed to decrease artistic value, economic workings of the marketplace often force artists to lean towards commercialism and as such trade off their artistic values for economic values. They are forced to take side jobs to ensure proper income, they find themselves faced with a choice between artistically rewarding but poorly paying work and lucrative but less artistically valuable work (Throsby, 2007) and especially the younger, digital generation with loosely knit networks are forced to choose networking over artistic skill-building (Deresiewicz, 2015).

#### 2.2.6. The complication of personality

A further complication in the art-commercial paradox may be that arts entrepreneurs lack personality traits that help them thrive and survive as an arts entrepreneur; it appears that personality traits that are significant for entrepreneurial success (Lounsbury, 2001; Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990; Gartner 1990, Taylor et al, 2015) and artistic expression are opposing in several respects. The 'typical entrepreneur' tends to be high on extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience, and lower on neuroticism (including high self-confidence and high self-efficacy) and agreeableness (Zhao and Seibert, 2006; Leutner et al, 2014, Miller, 2015) with extreme cases of tendencies towards sociopathic and narcissistic behavior (Miller, 2015). These characteristics are thought to enhance an entrepreneur's tolerance to risk, willingness to take initiative and persistence in the face of challenge (Foo, 2011; Holland & Shepherd, 2011, Miller, 2015). Leutner et al find that extraversion is the strongest predictor of entrepreneurial success and that extraverted individuals are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities (Leutner et al, 2014).

However, typical traits found for art students and professional artists found in arts literature are opposing the traits thought to be beneficial for entrepreneurship. These are high sensitivity, high autonomy, low emotional stability, low conformity to norms, high introversion and high neuroticism (Eysenck, 1972; Eysenck and Castle, 1970; Csikszentmihalyi and Getzels, 1973; Götz and Götz, 1979, Burch et al, 2006; Booker et al, 2001). Burch et al found a relation between visual creativity and several psychological disorders related to emotional and mental instability or neuroticism (Burch et al, 2006). An in-depth discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this research. Also, caution is necessary when engaging in trait psychology because it is extremely difficult to casually link particular psychological traits to complex patterns of behavior, such as artistic creation or entrepreneurship (Cooper, Dunkelberg, and Woo, 1988). However, the obvious differences between these lists, especially those of extraversion and neuroticism, need to be discussed because the traits found in artistic personalities are considered detrimental to entrepreneurial success by entrepreneurship



research. If arts entrepreneurs are fueled by their artistic personality, they have an inherent disadvantage because their personality is counterproductive to successful entrepreneurial behavior.

## 2.3 Coping strategies for the art-commercialism paradox

### 2.3.1 Academic literature on coping strategies

Even though some arts entrepreneurs may revert to oppression or denial to deal with the paradox, the central goal of this paper is to identify strategies that are aimed at taking both sides of the paradox into account. This paper defines any strategy used to *actively* approach the paradox while taking both sides into account as a ‘coping strategy’. To identify and make sense of the different coping strategies that arts entrepreneurs use, a framework that allows a variety of recognizable as well as novel coping strategies to emerge is necessary. Because of this, the strategy paradox theory of De Wit and Meyer (2014) (see image 1) is chosen as the framework for identifying and analyzing coping strategies for the art-commercial paradox. Strategy paradox theory proposes six basic strategies to deal with a strategic paradox in practice. These strategies are subject to contingency; both the number of possible strategies differs per situation as well as the effectiveness of strategies per situation (De Wit and Meyer, 2014). A theory that takes contingency into account is appropriate to analyze the art-commercial paradox because the multitude of different manifestations require a multitude of different approaches. Additionally, most paradox frameworks analyze the matter on a theoretical level (Poole and Van de Ven, 1989; Van Heigenoort, 1972) while strategy paradox theory is focused on solving paradoxes in practice, which is in alignment with the goals of this paper.

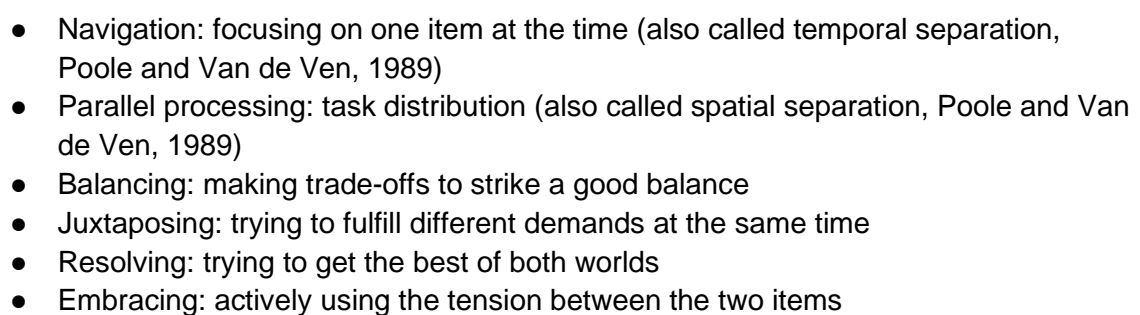
- 
- Navigation: focusing on one item at the time (also called temporal separation, Poole and Van de Ven, 1989)
  - Parallel processing: task distribution (also called spatial separation, Poole and Van de Ven, 1989)
  - Balancing: making trade-offs to strike a good balance
  - Juxtaposing: trying to fulfill different demands at the same time
  - Resolving: trying to get the best of both worlds
  - Embracing: actively using the tension between the two items

Image 1: Strategy paradox theory (De Wit and Meyer, 2014)

Gaim and Wahlin note that the first three strategies on the list of De Wit and Meyer are *either/or* strategies. They argue that *either/or* strategies are a temporal solution and don't provide for the long-term improvement of the situation, while *and/both* strategies have the potential to search for new visions on the paradox to over time reduce, transform or profit from the paradox. Therefore, Gaim and Wahlin see the first three strategies of De Wit and Meyer as

inferior to the last three strategies, which are *and/both* strategies (Gaim and Wahlin, 2016). This paper disagrees with this opinion: *and/both* strategies are less specific and potentially more complicated to deploy, causing them to be less effective. Additionally, especially the early phase of firm formation is complicated. In such a situation a simple, temporal solution may be more effective than spending time and energy on the development of complicated strategies. Therefore, this paper argues that whether coping strategies are effective or not is decided by the positive results they bring for arts entrepreneurs in practice. There are three sides to the impact of coping strategies on the art-commercial paradox: its negative impact on the level of experienced strain caused by the paradox, the positive impact a coping strategy has on economic logics such as getting jobs, making profit or keeping customers satisfied, and the positive impact on perceived benefits for artistic logics such as artistic freedom and authenticity.

Gaim and Wahlin (2016) mention two approaches to a paradox that aren't coping strategies. These approaches are 'denial', (denying or ignoring the existence of the paradox) and 'suppression' (choosing one item at the expense of the other) (Gaim and Wahlin, 2016). Because this paper defines coping strategies by an active approach and an intention to incorporate both artistic and economic logics, denial and suppression are not regarded as coping strategies. An example of a suppression strategy is what Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) call the adoption of bohemian values. Bohemian values dictate that a job should be a vocation rather than an occupation, that production of work should be entirely devoted to the production of art as a greater good rather than the production of economically viable products, and that commitment to work and personal development are superior to monetary rewards as reasons for working, especially overtime (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). Bohemian values essentially dictate to distance oneself from economic logics. This protects the artistic process from economic logics while simultaneously protecting an artist's self-image from excessively low wages and justify dedicating their entire life to artistic logics. Bohemian values actually allow artists to go at lengths where they are more likely to keep their passion-fueled production high enough for the mission to create art, which is in turn expected to add to their economic success and keep their work novel, authentic and therefore more likely commercially interesting (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007). However, while this may be the outcome, the means that they use are simply choosing artistic values and distancing themselves from economic values. Because of this lack of intention and action to favor both sides of the spectrum, bohemian values are not a coping strategy.

### 2.3.2. The coping strategies

#### Navigation

Navigation or temporal separation is about separating arts and commerce in time. Arts entrepreneurs first execute their process of artistic expression without paying attention to economic logics such as profitability or commercial success. After the process of artistic expression has finished, the process of selling it or getting commercial success is taken care of (Wang, 2017). This allows for both the processes to be executed without interfering with one another.

Another form of navigation is the aforementioned strategy of taking side jobs that are not related to the artistic occupation of the arts entrepreneur, for example working at a bank or working in a restaurant. From now on, these will be referred to as 'non-arts side jobs'. Non-arts side jobs create a separation in time spent primarily on economic logics and time spent primarily on artistic logics (Throsby, 1996).

### Parallel processing

Another possibility to separate artistic and commercial activities is by distributing them over different individuals. One option is to collaborate<sup>3</sup> with a partner taking over commercial activities, an action prevalent in the music industries (Druckenbrod, 2009; Bujor, 2016; Wilson and Stokes, 2015). Another option is outsourcing work to an external individual or organization (Gilley & Rasheed, 2000). Firm formation can be used to decrease transaction costs (Coase, 1937), make effective decisions (Cyert and March, 1963) and share tacit knowledge (Grant, 1996). Arts entrepreneurs can also employ people to delegate tasks that they do not want to spend their time on. A pitfall of employing is that it takes time and effort to manage employees that in turn cannot be spent on art and that the responsibility for the wages of one's employees enforces economic values. There are risks to parallel processing: friction that can erupt when people with a different focus collaborate. It is also possible that a non-artistic manager can decrease artistic values by pressing the importance of economic values (Bujor and Aascalii, 2015; Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007).

### Balancing

Balancing means finding an optimal distribution between the opposing poles; it means that 'more of X means less of Y' and vice versa. For arts entrepreneurs, this is primarily related to the allocation of depletable resources such as time and money between artistic and economic activities. Dedicating too many resources to either artistic production or commercialism at the expense of the other is detrimental and balancing means finding a point where both sides are sufficiently catered for. An aspect of balancing is that the point of optimum can shift over time; at one point in time, it is more appropriate to spend a certain amount time or money on artistic production while continuing this trend without shifting back to investing in time with customers or money for marketing is risky for business survival. This strategy is different from oppression because it actively tries to give both sides of the spectrum what they need.

### Juxtaposing

Juxtaposing means fulfilling different demands at the same time. In the context of this paper, juxtaposition means activities or choices that have a positive impact on both artistic and economic logics. This both/and-solution can take many forms.

One of those is side jobs that are related to the artistic profession of the arts entrepreneur (Throsby, 1996), from now on referred to as 'arts related side jobs'. An example is a musician

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<sup>3</sup> Note that 'collaboration' means that the artist is still independent; if they were contracted under a manager or label they would not be entrepreneurs anymore and thus fall outside the scope of this paper.

making extra money on the side as a music teacher. Arts related side jobs juxtapose spending time on making money and spending time on artistically fulfilling activities.

A slightly more complicated solution is verbally distancing oneself from economic logics while still acting on them. Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) found this strategy in theatre actors; to protect their reputation and perceived artistic freedom, they verbally deny any desire to make money or be commercially successful while at the same time, their actions show remarkably high degrees of market orientation and economization of themselves and their lives. They make career-oriented choices, allocate energy to jobs with influential people and spend their large share of free time researching competition or going to the gym to stay ahead of competition (Eikhof and Haunschild, 2007).

### Resolving

Another and/both solution is resolving. Resolving is about getting the best of both worlds and thus about maximizing the fulfillment of both artistic and economic logics in the same strategy. As such, it can be considered desirable in the context of this paper but examples in literature are scarce.

Essig (2015) argues that resolving means recognizing the interconnectedness between the opposing values. She calls this 'ouroboros thinking': entrepreneurship is "the tool, the means, by which art and audience connect", in other words: recognizing that entrepreneurship generates money that feeds the creation of more art (Taylor, Bonin-Rodriguez and Essig, 2015). There are several points of interconnectedness between the artist and the entrepreneur, such as internal motivation and passion for the mission (Caves, 2002; Miller, 2015; Welsh, 2014), a quest or self-fulfillment and self-enhancement (Preece, 2011; Holland & Shepherd, 2011), high levels of autonomy and elevated needs for independence (McClelland, 1987; Götz and Götz, 1979, Miller, 2015) and low agreeableness and low levels of compliance to norms (Leutner et al, 2014; Götz and Götz, 1979). Leutner (2014) finds a correlation between invention entrepreneurship and introversion, linking the inventive nature of the artistic process to entrepreneurial success.

### Embracing

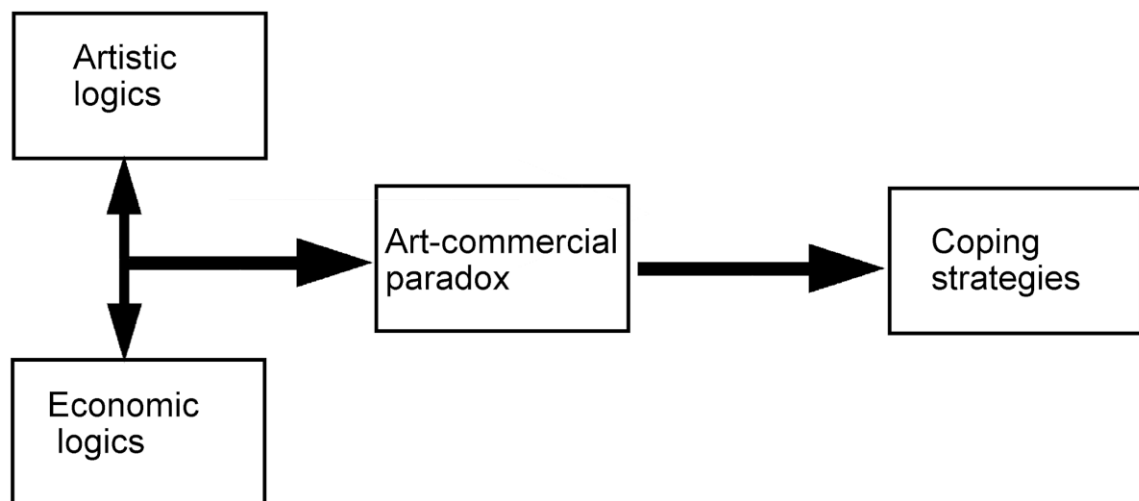
Embracing the tension between arts and entrepreneurship means exploiting the tension between artistic and economic logics. Literature on embracing the tension between non-artistic creativity and commercialism exists (see Davis & Scase, 2000) but is not included in this paper due to its focus on artistry over creativity. An example of embracing the tension means that the tension becomes a source of artistic expression, such as a song, book or painting inspired by the existence of the paradox.

The coping strategies in strategy paradox theory differ in their level of specificity, and their prevalence and effectivity in coping with the art-commercial paradox is expected to differ as well. This paper specifically argues that artists can and will deploy strategies because the art-commercial paradox forces them to and because they actively try to incorporate artistic as well as economic logics. Both logics are at play, thus the paradox persists and will therefore force the arts entrepreneur to deploy strategies for tackling it. It also assumes that the list of possible strategies presented by De Wit and Meyer (2014) is complete and that all strategies trying to

include both sides of the paradox can surface and can be categorized in the context of this framework.

## 2.4 The conceptual model

The main question of this thesis is: ‘which strategies do arts entrepreneurs use to cope with the paradox between commercialism and artistic expression?’ Thus, the conceptual model that this paper uses is based on two variables: the art-commercial paradox and the coping strategies that the arts entrepreneurs deploy. The art-commercial paradox is clarified as the tension between artistic and economic logics and the coping strategies are explained by the strategy paradox theory of De Wit and Meyer (2014). The six strategies are represented in the conceptual model simply as ‘coping strategies’.



*Image 2: The conceptual model*

# Chapter 3: Methodology

## 3.1 The chosen research methods

### 3.1.1. Explorative research method

The chosen research method for this paper is qualitative research. The goal of this paper is to allow for new knowledge to surface rather than being limited by predefined assumptions, as is the case with quantitative research (Brannen, 1992). A qualitative approach is also appropriate because the concepts researched in this thesis are highly subject to interpretation and because the interpretation of participants are expected to be significant in the mechanisms behind the art-commercial paradox, which qualitative research leaves room for (Brannen, 1992).

Exploratory qualitative research is appropriate for several reasons. Firstly, the aim of this study is to surface strategies already in use by arts entrepreneurs in practice to cope with the art-commercial paradox, something that is not yet documented by scientific research. For exploring subjects not yet known to scientific research, exploratory research is appropriate (Brown, 2006). Also, this paper tries to gain insight in the issue of the art-commercial paradox and explain mechanisms behind it instead of solely being descriptive or being conclusive about a possible solution, which is when exploratory research is appropriate (Saunders, 2012); it tries to fill a gap in the current understanding of the way arts entrepreneurs deal with the art-commercial paradox rather than confirming or opposing existing literature (Langley and Abdallah, 2011).

### 3.1.2. Interviews

Qualitative methods include interviews, field or case studies and focus groups (Symon, 2012). Because of the exploratory aim of this research, the qualitative method chosen is the use of semi-structured interviews. This allows for a maximum range of independently acquired interpretations of and approaches to the art-commercial paradox. Most importantly, interviews allow for the elaboration on mechanisms behind choices or actions.

This approach is also chosen because interviews are the most effective way to acquire the data needed to answer the research question; in-depth semi-structured interviews allow for the arts entrepreneurs to share their subjective, personal ideas and experiences and their individual vision on the paradox they are faced with. The one-on-one approach allows for focus on the interviewee and asking additional questions when needed, without the need of handling more interviewees who influence each other and the direction of the interview, as would be the case with focus groups (Kandola, 2012). Every arts entrepreneur needs to be able to direct most of their interview to ensure both contrasting and supplementing answers as well as allowing for important themes to prove their relevance by emerging by themselves, instead of being determined a priori.

Another reason for choosing interviews over field studies or focus groups is that the research question has a broad and sector-wide view: interviews allow for broadening the spectrum of professions and types of interviewed arts entrepreneurs by industry because a comparatively large set of interviews can be executed within the time and means of a master's thesis; field or case studies would necessarily limit the data collection to one or a few cases. Therefore, it also limits to investigating one or a few single industries, and are as such less suitable to

generate data to answer the sector-wide research question as information about the specific industries would necessarily be mixed in without being easily distinguishable. Case studies would be better suited for a industry-specific research question.

One of the important features of this thesis is contrasting and comparing individual interpretation of the issue as well as seeing what different as well as corresponding themes emerge for different individuals. Focus groups are deemed less suitable because in a focus group, the effect of multiple people independently discussing the same topics and independently marking them as relevant is lost. Because this will make it harder to determine the relevance of individual themes, interviews are deemed more appropriate. Additionally, a focus group could distort less dominant visions because of group dynamics because the members prime each other to think in a certain direction and members who are more assertive might determine the prevalence of certain subjects in the discussion (Kandola, 2012). Additionally, the subject of this study can be a rather personal and perhaps private or sensitive matter. The group dynamic in focus groups would both diminish the willingness to share such information as well as lowering the opportunity to gather in-depth information on individual situations.

## 3.2 Data collection

### 3.2.1. Data sample

The sample size was 19 interviews of approximately 1,5 hours with arts entrepreneurs in various sectors: three photographers, four movie directors/producers, two graphic designers (of which one is a CEO), two interior designers, two conceptual artists/painters, one novelist, one musician, one web designer (who is a CEO), one 'all-round designer', one urban architect and one graphic designer/DJ. Of these 19 people, 16 are working on their own while two of them own a company and one of them combines working alone with being co-owner of a DJ collective. 18 of the participants are from The Netherlands, one of them is from Belgium. Interviewees are indicated with a single letter referring to their first name since reference will be made to them while reporting on the interviews here, see table 1 (page X).

The objective was to create a sample with variation in profession, industry, core- or non-core creatives, age, gender and whether they are self-employed or have employees.

The arts entrepreneurs were contacted using the network of the researcher; nine interviewees are direct connections of the researcher, nine of the interviewees are second-tier connections and one interviewee is contacted through one of the second-tier connections. Leads were contacted first by telephone or digitally through whatsapp or email. The threshold for participants was a subscription to the Dutch Chamber of Commerce and marking arts entrepreneurship as their main profession.

As a reward for participating, interviewees will get a summary of the results of the study after the paper is finished and graded and when appropriate, a cup of coffee or tea was offered.

### 3.2.2. The interviewing procedure

19 interviews were conducted, 16 in real life, 2 over the telephone and 1 over skype. All interviews were recorded using a smartphone or a tape recorder. Interviews varied from 1 to 1,5 hours with two exceptions of 2 hours. The setup of the interviews was informal and confidential; interviewees were supposed to disclose personal and perhaps sensitive

information and several measures were taken to establish trust between the researcher and the interviewee. Firstly, when possible, all interviews were conducted in places familiar to the interviewees; mostly at home or at their office, sometimes in a café of their choice and once at the home of the researcher. Secondly, no notes were taken electronically or on paper as this would both be distracting and diminish the atmosphere of an informal and honest conversation. A downside of this was that the researcher had to keep track of possible subquestions in her head, sometimes resulting in less structured conversations. Because of the explorative nature of this paper, as little structure in the interviews was provided as possible. The general structure was as follows:

- Open the interview by asking consent on the recording of the interview. Start recording as soon as possible to prevent interesting statements going to waste. Repeat the purpose of the interview and ensure confidentiality and anonymity.
- Ask for the career story of the interviewee consisting an overview of the purpose and current state of their business how they got to be there. From there on, pick up on striking or 'incomplete' statements and ask further questions to clarify what they are talking about, until the participant marks their personal story as complete.
- Ask the participant about their definition of 'creativity', 'artistic expression' and 'commercialism'.
- Ask how they feel about the research question: do they feel like there actually is a paradox and do they feel like they have to deal with it? In what ways does the paradox impact them? How do they feel about the paradox and its manifestations and most importantly: how do they approach the paradox in general and the specific manifestations of the paradox?
- When themes and sayings become recurring, saturation is assumed and the interview can be concluded. At this point, share and discuss an initial analysis of the interview to ensure alignment between the interviewee's story and the researcher's interpretation to ensure no wrong conclusions will be brought into the data. Additionally, a preliminary analysis of all the interviews done is discussed with the interviewee.
- To prevent important information arising in small talk, keep recording for as long as possible. Close the interview by thanking the interviewee, telling them that they can contact the researcher when they forgot something they wanted to share and ask if they would like to be informed on the conclusion of this research. The options are a phone call or a summary. Most interviewees were interested in the results and several interviewees were actually interested in the full thesis.

After or at the end of the interviews, a short analysis of surfaced themes and observations made during the interview were recorded, either on a voice recorder or on a digital notepad. Especially during the last interviews, the member checking sessions were so elaborate that note taking did not seem necessary anymore.

### 3.3. Data analysis procedure

#### 3.3.1 Interview transcription

Due to the amount of time that transcribing 19 lengthy interviews would take and due to repetitive strain injury (RSI) on the side of the researcher, private funds were used to acquire transcription software (AmberScript, see reference list for link to software). The results of the



transcripts varied heavily in quality; in most cases, parts of text were transcribed wrongly or not at all. To solve this, the transcriptions were not manually perfected but relevant text was immediately transformed into a code where the label attached to the code consisted of a summary, interpretation or literal quotation of the text, depending on the necessity for context to understand the code. This avoided writing the same piece of text twice as well as wasting time and effort on improving text that would not be used for the analysis anyway. Another reason for immediately coding instead of bringing the transcriptions up to standard first was because initial attempts at changing the transcripts already surfaced numerous codes and due to the complexity and sheer amount of data, not coding these observations posed the risk of losing important observations.

The order of the interviews was initially linear: interviews 1 to 4 were transcribed and coded in order. However, the level of codes and the cohesion of the story rose so quickly that transcribing and coding all the interviews would likely be unnecessary and not feasible within the means of the researcher. After interview 4, the selection criteria of sound recording quality and level of contribution to strategy were used to select the interviews that were transcribed next. This led to the omission of the transcription and data analysis of the following participants: one photographer because she wasn't Dutch and because the interview contained mostly data on a foreign arts education institution, one graphic designer and one filmmaker because the quality of their tapes was hugely insufficient, one filmmaker, one painter and one photographer because the course of the interview focused too much on manifestations rather than on strategies and one movie director because noise at the chosen interview location caused the interview to be severely interrupted several times. This resulted in the transcription and analysis of 12 interviews.

### 3.3.2. Coding process

Each of the transcripts of the twelve interviews selected for coding were uploaded in qualitative analysis software (Atlas TI, see reference list for link to software). The chosen method for data distraction is thematic coding using partial template analysis.

Coding is the process of attaching a label (code) to a section of text to index it as relating it to a theme (King, 2012).

Template analysis is the approach to thematic coding that combines a limited number of a priori themes and inductive development of codes from the data (King, 2012). This is suitable because there are some themes that are already essential to answering the research question, namely manifestations and coping strategies, while the explorative nature of the research question requires novel themes to allow to emerge. In accordance to template analysis, some a priori themes were identified: These codes focused on the definitions of artisticity, creativity and commercialism, manifestations of the paradox, coping strategies and expressions of adherence to artistic or economic logics. However, other codes were allowed to surface as well; every code distracted was evaluated for possible novel themes.

Coding means that a relevant passage of text was marked and labeled with one or more emerging thematic codes and either a literal translation, an interpretation or a summary, depending on the quality of the transcript and on the level of interpretation needed to make sense of the words without the context of its surrounding text. Due to the immense amount of data and the fact that a rather transparent and stable story already emerged during the

interviews, the tactic of pre-coding was used: when a code was being extracted and labeled with its transcription or interpretation, a few letters denoting themes emerging from the quote were added at the beginning of the label. Pre-coding turned out to be an excellent move: the total of codes extracted from 12 interviews was over 1500 and after the initial coding process, this resulted in a list of codes that were already roughly categorized. Making sense of these codes without their context would have been detrimental to the interpretation process, not to mention hugely inefficient.

### 3.3.3. Analysis process

After the coding process, a set of 1534 codes were extracted in qualitative analysis software Atlas TI, with every code already labeled with themes emerging from it. The first stage of the analysis process was identifying which thematic codes were most prevalent and how the most prevalent codes were distributed over the participants. The most prevalent codes turned out to be the codes for the core concepts of this paper with the addition of 'freedom', 'aging' and 'enjoyment'. The core concepts were artistic and economic logics, manifestations and coping strategies. The results of thematic coding were that the distribution of most codes over the participants is even, meaning that the themes emerged are rather universal.

The identification of an important thematic code is mostly done by scrolling through the thematic codes that appear in alphabetical order in Atlas TI. For every thematic code identified, the individual codes correlating with the theme are duplicated to a sub-group and analyzed in isolation for sub-themes and quotes that form a building block for the understanding of the emerging concepts. During the coding process, if a code was related to several themes, it was moved to all of the appropriate pre-code groups, which was the primary way to discover correlations between themes and concepts. See appendix I for the initial result of the analysis, which consists of a story quite literally built from quotes and the correlations found between them. The order analyzing individual themes was relatively loose, the only rules were that the theme 'manifestations' was next to last and the 'coping strategy' theme was last. This was done to ensure that the manifestations could be placed in their proper context rather than analyzed in a vacuum. Coping strategies were very last to ensure that the mechanisms leading up to the choice for certain coping strategies were already understood. The frame for data presentation is that of Langley and Abdallah (2011): the first-order or thematic codes are discussed and analyzed and second order codes are not so much specific 'themes' but rather the story appearing in the text (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). From this analysis, a coherent story of the core concepts and their relation to each other emerged. From this, the research question could be answered; a list of coping strategies was clearly identified and described as well as the mechanisms preceding them. This is coherent with Langley and Abdallah (2011)'s description of how thematic coding is presented: each of the main themes, in this case the core concepts of the conceptual model, are elaborated on individually.

### 3.3.4. Analysis presentation

The analysis presentation are based on Langley and Abdallah (2011)'s description of effective presentation of thematic coding. It will firstly follow the general topics of this study, that is definition of concepts involved, how the paradox is conceived, and coping strategies. Secondly, for each of these topics individually, the main findings will be presented in the form of summaries of the views of the interviewees. The themes are presented as a narrative with

references to the interviews as well as literal quotations, mostly 'proof quotes' that help solidifying arguments (Langley and Abdallah, 2011). Afterwards, the central message of the paper is underlined accompanied by the description of how all the concepts are related to each other. The occurrence of data will not be supported by actual numbers because this might suggest that the data is precise and therefore generalizable in this respect, while the exploratory nature of this thesis makes exact numbers unreliable as well as irrelevant (Brown, 2006). Instead, it will be referring to the occurrence by a theme in either all participants, almost all participants, some participants, or, reference will be made to an individual participant. The broader picture which arises from the summaries is more informative than numbers, which is to surface new coping strategies rather than generalizing them over a broader population. Also, from this point on, when the analysis or conclusion refers to 'literature' without a reference, it refers back to when the issue at hand is discussed in the literature analysis in chapter two. The exception is when referring to a specific paper, then a reference is included.

### 3.4 Research quality

#### 3.4.1. Reliability and validity

The method of using interviews as a research method comes with issues of validity: it remains a qualitative and therefore subjective way of collecting data. This subjectivity is partly due to the filter of interpretation of both the participant and the interviewer and especially the filter of interpretation of the interviewer can draw up information that is not a true representation of the subject at hand (Whitaker and Atkinson, 2019); in other words, the interpretation filter of either parties can create bias.

In general, in the light of bias, the background of the researcher is relevant (Essers, 2009). In the case of this research, objectivity might be decreased by the researcher's background strongly being related to the subject of this research: at the time of the conduction of the interviews, the researcher was an amateur artist with entrepreneurial ambitions and self-employed as a consultant for the creative sector. At the time of analyzing the data, the researcher actually became an arts entrepreneur. This might unconsciously direct the researcher towards 'practical' answers to their own questions or answers that align with the researcher's preconceptions on arts and entrepreneurship.

To counter this bias, several precautions are taken. Interview questions are shown to acquaintances with no background in arts entrepreneurship and notes are made during the interview and coding process to actively search for bias. Also, questions repeating or summarizing the statements of the interviewees are specifically asked to minimize misinterpretation by the researcher. Conversely, awareness of bias and documenting it as possible valuable information can add depth to the information (Essers, 2009). This is pursued actively; after or at the end of every interview, notes on first thoughts on the interview are reported in text or speech to track progress. This is partly done at the same time as member checking, which is returning the data or conclusions about it to the participants to ask for their opinion (Birt et al, 2016). This is done by discussing the initial interpretation and the results of the current and previous interviews at the end of every interview, which received unanimous confirmative feedback from participants. Wherever relevant were thoughts and feelings documented but these turned out to be covered by the member checking.

The qualitative nature of this paper results in a study that is not generalizable in absolute terms as it is subject to the concepts of qualitative variability and reproduction. This was not the goal of this study in the first place; it is supposed to provide insight in what strategies arts entrepreneurs tend to use without giving exact conclusions or numbers.

Another kind of bias is removed by anonymizing the participants. This was primarily done to increase the possibility of obtaining sensitive yet essential personal information and personal views, but anonymizing interviews also ensures that interviewees do not alter their answers to promote their business.

In literature, there is no consensus on the definitions of 'creativity', 'artistic expression' and 'commercialism'. To increase reliability and internal validity, all interviewees are asked what the above terms mean to them and additional texts where they explicitly or implicitly state what the concepts mean to them are coded as well. This is to ensure that the concepts that are being discussed are indeed the concepts relevant to this paper, and that the different participants are talking about the same subject.

A measure that is not taken is post-analysis member checking. This is not done because the analyses shared during member checking roughly correspond with the eventual results from the data analysis, which the participants already agreed with. Additionally, sending the results to nineteen participants, having a discussion with them and taking their opinions into account would be hugely time and labor intensive while adding comparatively little to the validity; the participants already agreed to the general analysis and as such, discussions would likely delve into individual-based details that are irrelevant to the analysis as a whole. Additionally, due to the diminished quality of the transcripts, bringing the transcripts up to standard for member checking would be such a hefty project that the benefits of proofreading would be heavily outweighed.

Another option for increasing validity is bringing in a second coder, again due to limitation in resources as well as the fact that by the time the coding process started, the red thread of the interviews was already visible and the participants agreed with that thread.

### 3.4.2. Ethics

Researching the subject of arts entrepreneurship and conducting interviews is not expected to have a harmful impact on either the participants, the interviewee or other stakeholders. All the participants participated out of their own free will and were not persuaded or incentivized to participate or to gravitate towards certain answers. All participants were aware of and agreed to the goals of the research, what would happen with the data and to the fact that the interviews would be recorded.

The most important measure taken to protect the participants is anonymity due to the possibility of discussing sensitive subjects. If information from interviews about how they feel about their own business, coworkers or art would become public, this might impact their personal life. The audio transcripts are only shared with the supervisor of the thesis and will not be distributed any further in the future without asking permission of the participants. Throughout every stage of the data analysis and presentation, the names of the participants and their companies are anonymized.

# Chapter 4 - Data analysis

## 4.1 General conclusions

### 4.1.1. General conclusions on the conceptual model

First, general conclusions are drawn in the light of the conceptual model. From the data collection and analysis, all the relations within the conceptual model are validated. As predicted by both the conceptual model and by Scherdin and Zander (2007), tension between economic and artistic logics are the driver for the manifestations of the art-commercial paradox. The data shows that all participants experience these manifestations of the paradox and deploy coping strategies to approach these manifestations. A wide variety of art-commercial paradox manifestations and used coping strategies emerged, which confirms that arts entrepreneurs have a wider array of coping strategies at their disposal than literature on arts entrepreneurship education implies.

### 4.1.2. Definitions of artisticity and creativity

The participants have rather coherent and distinctive definitions of creativity and artisticity. They relate both artisticity and creativity to personal input, to freedom, to creation and to novelty. The distinction verbally and unanimously made is that artisticity is about expressing personal thoughts and feelings in an inward oriented and rather isolated process, while creativity is specifically about the process of creating novelty in the form of 'things' or solutions that have a practical purpose in the context of its surroundings. While the participants' definition of artisticity doesn't significantly differ from the definitions established based on academic literature, their definition of creativity does. Academic literature relates only artisticity the creation of a unique product and the product having symbolical value (Essig, 2015) as well as artistic logics such as 'beauty'. The participants relate both concepts to these qualities, creating a new definition that is best described as 'artistic creativity': 'the process creation of novelty in the form of unique things or solutions that have a practical as well as symbolic purpose in the context of its surroundings, driven by the logics of 'good', 'beauty' and 'mission'. Because of this distinction between non-artistic creativity and artistic creativity, the participants who are driven by creativity rather than 'pure' artisticity are still relevant for the research question. None of the participants are primarily driven by the traditional definition of creativity. In the rest of the analysis, the term 'creativity' will refer to artistic creativity and the term 'artisticity' will refer to both artistic expression and artistic creativity.

### 4.1.3. Definition of commercialism

In the data collection, economic logics were collected under the umbrella term 'commercialism'. Their literal definition of commercialism oftentimes involves naming a set of specific activities that span both financial and formal marketing and sales activities: writing emails, calling people, formal network management, using (social) media, going to network events, sending invoices, paying bills, doing taxes. However, the data shows that their

definition of 'commercialism' is not based on activities alone. Participants judge individual activities as 'commercial' or not based on whether those activities are primarily driven by economic logics, mostly finance, marketing and sales, or not. Especially networking and economization of time are seen as 'uncommercial' because it appears that for the participants, those activities are often driven by non-economic values. Therefore, for the participants, 'commercialism' means being driven by the economic values of finance, marketing and sales.

## 4.2 Participant clusters

### 4.2.1. Introduction participant clusters

All the participants deal with the art-commercial paradox and its manifestations, all participants deploy coping strategies and all participants deploy multiple coping strategies. However, from the data it is evident that there are substantial differences between individual participants in the level of strain that participants experience from the art-commercial paradox, the way the paradox manifests itself for them and the specific coping strategies that they deploy. Closer investigation of the data shows that these differences can at least partly be explained by clustering the participants based on a distinguished set of traits. These differences are important for understanding the level of strain participants experience, why the paradox manifests itself in several ways and how coping strategies are chosen. These differences impact the further data analysis and are therefore explained beforehand.

The formation of the clusters is based on three participant attributes:

- 1) Whether they have a positive or negative attitude towards commercialism
- 2) Whether they report serious, daily strain from the art-commercial paradox or not
- 3) Whether they perceive their work as 'applied' or 'conceptual'.

A positive or negative attitude towards commercialism is based not on whether participants enjoy commercial activities but on whether the concept of commercialism -being driven by finance, marketing and sales- is thought of as 'bad'. Experienced strain is based on participant's literal answer to the question of how much strain he or she experiences. Whether participants identify as applied or conceptual is based on the literal self-identification of applied artists as such.

For each group of participants sharing multiple traits, the way the paradox manifests itself as well as the participants' general approach to the paradox are similar. The eventual coping strategies that members of a same cluster deploy still vary significantly based on personal situation and taste but the values that drive the choice for a coping strategy is similar.

The amount of clusters that surfaced is four while the combination of three options allow for eight clusters. This is probably partly due to the small scale of this research and partly because some attributes appear to be correlated; there appears to be a correlation between high reported strain and a negative attitude towards commercialism as well as a correlation between being an applied artist and having a positive attitude towards commercialism.

### Cluster A: Applied creatives

The first cluster consists of applied creatives who show a positive attitude towards commercialism and report low strain from the art-commercial paradox, which we will refer to as applied creatives. They distinguish themselves as applied because their primary goal is the practical usefulness of their products. This cluster consists of four participants: interior designer P, web design CEO R, urban planner M and graphic design CEO J.

Web design CEO R marks the difference between artisticity and creativity as the difference between a conceptual artist and an applied artist. He makes this distinction based on the presence or absence of practical boundaries: 'Conceptual<sup>4</sup> artists are creative without boundaries, (applied artists) are creative within (practical) boundaries'. In short, they engage in artistic creativity rather than artistic expression and they derive great satisfaction from this. They prefer feedback, boundaries and practical challenges over the freedom to express the emotions they experience in the creation process. To CEO's R and J, being creative means having control over the creative process by managing it, not necessarily by doing the actual 'creation'. This is still creativity; Essig (2015) defines that the creative process must be at least partly controlled by the arts entrepreneur, which is still the case. To R and J, managing a creative process and coming up with solutions for the client satisfies them.

Applied creatives derive pleasure from building a business and the creation and execution of new ideas and projects; they feel they have 'entrepreneurial blood'. This cluster is also cooperative and customer-oriented. While entrepreneurial behavior and customer-orientation can be driven by economic logics of finance, marketing and sales, they are actually driven by artistic logics in the case of the applied creatives. Their customer-orientation is driven by a practical version of the logic 'mission', namely 'wanting to help people' and their entrepreneurial behavior is driven by the artistic logics of enjoyment and self-fulfillment. With the exception of interior designer P they derive low pleasure from activities purely driven by economic logics; they dislike commercial thinking without artistic values, they don't like competition and with the exception of P, they prefer to abstain from activities they define as 'harsh' commercialism and PR, such as 'going to business fairs, leaving my business card and calling afterwards'.

### Cluster B: Practical conceptuels

The second cluster consists of conceptual artists who report a positive attitude towards commercialism and report low strain, which we will refer to as practical conceptuels. It consists of photographer R, interior designer R<sup>5</sup>, musician D and novelist T. These conceptual artists are mostly core creatives and focused on artistic expression while their positive and practical attitude towards commercialism causes them to experience relatively little strain from the art/commercial paradox. Other than applied creatives, the practical conceptuels' mission is about the creation of artistic novelty rather than directly helping people. What marks this group is a solid sense of self and a down-to-earth approach to their creative process as well as to commercialism. Interior designer R and novelist T, two of the oldest participants with the most

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<sup>4</sup> Dutch translation: 'Een vrije kunstenaar' of 'vrije kunst'

<sup>5</sup> While in the same profession, P approaches her work as an applied problem-solver with a primary objective to help people and R specifically approaches his work as a conceptual artist with a primary objective to create artistic novelty.

long-standing careers, elaborately highlight the importance of discipline, daily planning and hard work for success, especially in relation to their artistic process. They also specifically state that what sets them apart from colleagues -other than putting in the work- is trust in themselves, something mirrored in the overall confident attitude of photographer R and musician D. All practical conceptuels describe that they are helped by traits inherent to their personality. The traits they name are being disciplined, practical or 'commercial by nature', or a combination of those.

This cluster searches for practical solutions to match their level of enjoyment experienced in commercial activities with the level of commercial responsibility. While they have no negative attitude towards the concept of commercialism, they differ in the level of fun they experience from commercial activities and use tailored coping strategies to match their individual ideas of 'freedom' and 'enjoyment' to their responsibilities. The result is the use of coping strategies that would perhaps feel inhibiting to other participants but are satisfactory and freeing to the individual deploying them.

#### Cluster C: Non-commercial conceptuels

This cluster consists of conceptuels who exhibit a negative attitude towards commercialism and report experiencing high strain from the paradox. It consists of conceptual artist P, filmmaker E and graphic designer K. What marks this cluster is the reported necessity of artistic expression for their general well-being; they report that a lack of artistic expression results in negative emotions or even depression. This leads them to strongly value artistic logics over economic logics and this results in a strong dislike for commercial or financial activities, as well as an initial instinct to avoid these activities. They describe their personalities as stubborn, headstrong and insubordinate. They are very concerned with their freedom and authenticity, with doing what feels important to them and they don't want to compromise. Probably because of this, they experience serious strain from the demands of customers; more than other clusters, they express attachment to their ideas and resistance to influence of other parties in their artistic process. E feels that thinking about the customer and expressing yourself freely exclude each other. He feels held back by the necessity to make money and feels customer demands as serious restrictions. P agrees with this: 'as an artist, you need to distance yourself from the opinion of people around you'. While they do use coping strategies to ensure survival, this cluster exhibits a tendency for suppression: they initially avoid commercial activities whenever possible, partly because they really dislike the activities in themselves and partly to protect authentic artistic expression. However, their negative attitude towards commercialism is not against the concept of commercialism itself but against the effect of commercialism on their *personal* artistic expression or enjoyment. This is illustrated by their unanimously positive perception of people in their direct circle who enjoy economic logics; they are positive about people 'who really enjoy selling stuff and working with numbers' and they are appreciative of the presence of these people in their personal and professional lives.



#### Cluster D: Strained applied creatives

Strained applied creatives are applied artists who have a positive attitude towards commercialism but experience high strain due to resistance to financial activities. This group is distinguished because it significantly differs from all the other clusters but in the data it consists only of all-round designer B. B self-reports as applied and marks his work as 'rather commercial' but at the same time B reports higher levels of strain. What sets B apart from all the other participants is a strong distinction between a low level of resistance to commercial thinking and a high level of resistance to financial thinking. Like the other applied artists, B is driven by a desire to help people. However, in contrast with the other applied creatives, he strongly states that working for money doesn't make him happy.

### 4.3 Artistic and economic logics

#### 4.3.1. Artistic logics

In essence, clustering shows different basic approaches to artistic and economic logics. The participant clusters differ in their interpretation of these logics and what those individual interpretations mean to them. These personal interpretations are essentially based on two factors: how much enjoyment an interpretation brings them and how these interpretations interact in a way that grants them as much freedom to do what they like. This is one of the most prevalent, unanimous and significant finding of this thesis: arts entrepreneurs are primarily driven by the desire to be free to do what they like to do. All participants repeatedly verbally name this as very important and explicitly and implicitly base the majority of their daily and life choices at least partly on this desire. Artistic logics in literature doesn't name freedom as an artistic value. However, the participants highly correlate freedom with other artistic values. Additionally, 'self-fulfillment' related to 'enjoyment' is marked as an artistic value. As such, 'freedom', 'enjoyment' and 'doing what one likes' are labeled artistic logics as well. The exact activities the arts entrepreneurs want to be free to do are mostly a creation process based on other artistic logics. To arts entrepreneurs, the possibility to engage in artistic logics is a form of freedom and self-fulfillment.

#### *Missions and the creation of beauty and 'good'*

The artistic values other than freedom and enjoyment that emerge as important from the data are 'beauty', 'quality' and 'good'. Other values are 'emotion' and 'novelty'. Artistic logics are often intertwined. With 'beauty'<sup>6</sup>, participants mean making something that is aesthetically or auditorily pleasing but they also tie beauty to emotionally touching people. They also tie beauty to high value and quality; all participants take being dedicated to quality as self-explanatory and non-negotiable.

For a few participants, the creation of beauty is a goal in itself but for the majority, regardless of cluster, there is some kind of idealist mission related to it. For them, creating something

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<sup>6</sup> Dutch word: 'mooi'

useful or 'good' is more important than making something that is 'just pretty'. Filmmaker E wants to tell stories. Applied and conceptual artists alike want to help people in some way. The strongest example of this is interior designer P who is primarily driven by her desire to help customers make decisions and trust themselves more, as well as giving people a home rather than 'just a shallowly good-looking house'. For some conceptual artists, their mission is about the creation of novel art. Conceptual artist P thinks that 'art is about uniqueness; you make it for yourself, you are looking for what you yourself want. Art is making something even you haven't seen or know yet.' Writer T calls this 'the obligation to make something that wasn't in existence yet'.

### *Freedom and enjoyment*

While arts entrepreneurs are certainly driven by the creation of beauty and good, 'freedom' and 'enjoyment' emerge from the data as the main drivers for the majority of choices arts entrepreneurs make. To be more exact: they are driven by their desire to be 'free to do what they want'.

Values related to enjoyment<sup>7</sup> such as passion, interest, flow, fun and finding gratification in an activity are held in high regard by all the participants. From now on, 'enjoyment' will be the overarching label representing such values. There are gradations in the extent to which enjoyment alone drives the decisions of the participants but they all base the majority of their decisions on some kind of it; they unanimously view a positive experience as a self-evident core value. They express this verbally but in practice as well; in both the daily and life choices they make, both in private and professional setting, enjoyment is a major driver and if absent, participants will likely refuse to do the activity. In the context of this paper, this mostly involves marketing and finance activities and turning down possibly profitable but non-interesting projects. The value 'enjoyment' is more important than their personal opinions on certain activities; they label the decisions of other people as 'good' when those people derive enjoyment from an activity, even if those activities are the very ones the arts entrepreneurs themselves refuse to do. Filmmaker E even says that 'you want somebody (on your team) who sincerely enjoys working with numbers and marketing'.

They also see enjoyment as a factor in the results of both commercial and artistic activities. Conceptual artist P notes that

*'Selling yourself is extremely difficult unless you think it's really, really fun.'*

and photographer R notes that the absence of enjoyment visibly and negatively influences the photos he takes. The participants themselves as well as the data imply that the level of fun and enjoyment participants experience in commercial and financial activities are strongly related to their level of experienced strain from the paradox.

Freedom is multifaceted. For most participants, being free in general means being able to choose work and activities they enjoy without judgment from other parties. For most, this is their primary reason to be an entrepreneur. Freedom is about expressing ideas and emotions, being free of requirements -especially of a superior's-, freedom of creating whatever one desires and freedom to choose how to spend one's time. There are a few participants who

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<sup>7</sup> The exact word repeatedly used is that they want to do is things that they find 'leuk', a Dutch word that loosely translates to 'nice' or 'fun'.

mention the peace of mind that comes from some form of financial security or controlling one's own administration as freedom, especially if financial freedom allows for choosing less lucrative but more interesting projects. The participants who delegate commercial or financial activities praise the freedom of mind it gives them. However, other participants conversely mention getting that freedom and peace of mind by keeping checks of their own books. In other words, whether to hire an accountant or not appears to be driven by resulting peace of mind, which the participants view as a form of freedom. By one participant, retaining freedom is seen as '(the way to) stay true to myself' and another one calls freedom 'one of the most important metrics of how enjoyable life is'. Lack of freedom has a strong negative impact on the perceived enjoyment of work.

Many life choices as well as which coping strategies the participants employ are based on retaining their sense of freedom according to their individual definition of freedom. Therefore, the exact choices the participants make in their freedom differ wildly. This is mainly because freedom and enjoyment intersect: the exact activities each individual enjoys vary in many ways. Therefore, the coping strategies the participants deploy differ according to what serves their individual preferences.

#### 4.3.2. Economic logics

However, as far as enjoyment, beauty, missions and freedom go, economic logics also influence the arts entrepreneur. The data shows a clear distinction between commercial thinking and financial thinking; commercial thinking is interpreted as either a customer-oriented 'marketing and sales' mindset and financial thinking with 'making money for the sake of making money'. As predicted by Eikhof and Haunschild (2007), economic logics have a significant impact on arts entrepreneurs, despite their resistance towards the influence of money or customers on their creative process. As expected, the data is riddled with statements that making money is not important and that simply 'following client orders' is not something they do. Both marketing and sales and purely lucrative activities are verbally downplayed by the participants and most participants distance themselves from the concept of 'harsh' commercialism as well as 'money just for the money'. However, as expected by Eikhof and Haunschild (2007), the data shows many instances where the participants do engage in choices or activities fueled by economic logics. Specific economic logics all participants are concerned with are having work, getting assignments, keeping their businesses afloat. Strong economic logic participants adhere to is 'getting jobs' and 'keeping my business afloat'; not having work is undesirable and is actively avoided. However, there are two economic values that participants unquestioningly accept and adhere to: networking and economization of time.

#### Networking

Most participants have a negative attitude toward 'harsh' marketing and sales activities, partly because they find it unpleasant and partly because they feel that they are unauthentic. Despite this, participants are unanimously strongly influenced by a single economic logic: networking. All participants give high priority to networking and describe it as vital for the existence of their company. They don't see this as a commercial activity; urban planner M literally separates networking from commercialism by saying

*'I'm not commercial, but I heavily invest in my network'.*

They appear to connect the term 'commercialism' with 'insincerity' (which is the opposite of the artistic value 'sincerity') and they solve this by approaching networking in an informal and sincere way; oftentimes business is done over 'a cup of coffee' and all participants say that 'mouth to mouth' advertisement is the primary way to get orders, not 'formal' advertising. As photographer R describes: 'photographers are found via (informal) networks, not via Google'. They often choose their network over financial benefits; participants are very careful about overpricing for the reason it might hurt their network. Musician D declined an offer to work in Dubai for two years primarily because he would lose all of his connections.

#### Economization of time

Being conscious about money is acceptable to a certain level; all participants accept that money is necessary to live as well as to sustain their creative business. Being conscious of money is mostly translated to being conscious about time; perhaps because time is the most valuable depletable resource the arts entrepreneurs have because money can't directly deliver artistic freedom while time and the freedom to spend that time are seen as a basic ingredient for creativity. Because of this, they all put a lot of effort in prioritizing their time and energy; they approach time in a way where they are turning every minute as if it were a penny.

In the data on time management, three strategies emerge: being assertive towards others, being disciplined and making conscious choices about one's time and energies. An example is photographer R:

*'Continuing too long with retouching (which I find incredibly fun) adds no value for the customer and makes it kind of expensive for them'.*

Participants view 'saying no' as a very important tool in their toolbox to ensure spending their time on meaningful things. The primary things they say 'no' to are 'unfulfilling' projects and customers who have no interest in artistic values or who have unrealistic demands and private actors who demand time and attention. This resonates in the practice of being disciplined; participants limit themselves in non-profitable activities and several participants also mention limiting themselves in time they spend on 'un-creative' activities, usually related to their social life. While they don't directly mention money as a priority, they are very conscious about their time. Time is money but time is also related to enjoyment, freedom and artisticity; the economic logics of time are partly used in favor of artistic values.

## 4.4 Manifestations of the paradox

While economic logics and artistic logics are both important to the arts entrepreneurs, they oppose in several ways and cause the art-commercial paradox to manifest in the lives of the arts entrepreneurs. This opposition of artistic and economic logics is mentioned by all

participants as well as its manifestations: apart from verbal statements of experiencing strain, practical manifestations evidently emerge from the data as specific areas where commercialist demands interfere with artisticity. There is an even distribution of manifestation codes over the interviews, which shows they all struggle with the paradox.

The mechanisms lying at the root of the art-commercial paradox are the opposing demands of artistic and economic logics. At first glance, artistic logics seem to trump economic logics in the importance arts entrepreneurs ascribe them. However, the necessity to make a living forces arts entrepreneurs to adhere to economic logics as well.

Part of the art-commercial paradox is that arts entrepreneurs don't inherently want to adhere to economic logics. As expected by Scherdin and Zander (2007), almost all participants verbally distance themselves from the desire to make money for money itself and verbally downplay the importance of commercial success or profit in comparison to the importance of honest artisticity, freedom or enjoyment. The participants are highly willing to accept low financial security to spend their working time on their passion. They state that freedom and enjoyment are important by themselves but in the data there is no statement that money in itself is important to the arts entrepreneurs. Additionally, reasons that they mention to start a business are mostly related to some form of freedom, rarely to economic benefits. Novelist T describes:

*'Living as an artist means financial insecurity. That is the price we more than willingly pay for satisfaction, for the freedom to create what we want'.*

Filmmaker E underlines this by stating that 'expressing creativity is something that makes me happy, a big fat bank account eventually doesn't'. Interior designer R goes even beyond that by stating that for him, the meaning of life is artistic freedom and fully distances himself from the importance of economic logics by saying that 'it's not about money at all, it's about enjoying what you do'. This is reflected in participants' opinions on arts entrepreneurship education: while those who attended art school feel that they would've liked more education on the subject and that it is lacking, they also think that people in art school aren't interested in it and even that it distracts from artistic logics.

The only participant who clearly states a preference for a customer-oriented view is interior designer P, who makes it her mission as well as her selling point that she is in tune with the needs of the customer. CEO's R and J see commercial choices as necessary because their responsibilities towards their employees sometimes surpass the importance of their personal freedom. An example of customer-oriented design is interior designer P's description of how conservative customers lead to a 'safer and less creative' design. However, most participants exhibit a negative attitude towards more commercial colleagues. Most of them simply distance themselves from colleagues who make choices based on 'what sells' by saying they themselves prefer not to take sales into account in their creation process. Other participants express openly negative views on colleagues who are less oriented at artistic values by calling them 'unoriginal', 'unauthentic' or even barring them from the title of 'artist' or 'creative'. One participant describes how at their art school 'colleagues who worried too much about customers or money were maligned'. This general low interest in commercialism is reflected in art school curriculae according to musician D: 'In (art school) the maximum of entrepreneurship education was one hour per week, otherwise everybody would stay away'. Interior designer P and photographer R think that artists with no 'entrepreneurial blood' will have a hard time and web design CEO thinks that 'real creatives with managerial talent and

business are a real rarity because real creatives are too focused on creating and protecting their process and results'. The example of artistic logics trumping economic logics which occurs most is putting in extra hours or taking work home with little or no pay to make something that sufficiently lives up to artistic values. In other words, artistic logics trump the economic logic of 'working for money'.

However, while money itself might not interest them, they do recognize the necessity of a certain amount of money for their creative work as well as for their private life. Money is a means to an end, which is to live so that they can be creative. They see that they need money in order to maintain their freedom and their creative process. This is in alignment with the assumption of this paper that economic logics are not an end in itself but that they are adhered to due to necessity. However, this adherence to money and related economic logics is the cause of the clash between artistic and economic logics; economic logics get to interfere with artistic values, not out of morality but out of sheer necessity. Therefore, the clash between artistic and economic logics is inevitable. This clash is evident in all the participants. This means that the manifestations of the paradox have the following character: a manifestation is a way in which an economic logic inhibits or complicates an artistic logic.

The categorization of the actual manifestations is surprisingly simple. There are only four factors that inhibit creativity, artisticity and other artistic logics: time, money, colleagues and customers. They are an inhibitor of artistic logics because they cause participants to perceive their process or work as less original, less 'good' less 'inspired' or more 'repetitive' and the arts entrepreneurs themselves derive significantly less pleasure from the process as well as the results.

The core of the art-commercial paradox is best described by elaborating on these four inhibitors and describing how they cause strain for the arts entrepreneurs. Because time and money are strongly interrelated because the arts entrepreneurs approach them as such, they are discussed simultaneously.

### Time and money

The first inhibitor of creativity and artisticity alike is time. There is a direct correlation between time and creativity: a lack of time results in stress. Graphic design CEO J calls stress caused by a lack of time the greatest inhibitor of creativity: 'Creativity needs space'.

However, most issues with time in the context of arts entrepreneurship is the fact that time is usually directly related to money. The amount of time spent on a job is strongly related to the value that can be created for the customer as well as the money that can be made off it. This is directly related to one of the most frequent and straining manifestations in the data: pricing. The trade-off in pricing that several participants across clusters struggle with is choosing a price point that is commercial but also sufficient to both sustain the business as well as ensuring that one is taken seriously. Price points that are too high may repel customers and quickly ripple through the network as bad word of mouth. However, low price points can also cause customers to take the art entrepreneur less seriously and value the result less. Working on an hourly basis poses the problem that the creative process is rather unpredictable, which results in low reliability of the estimated price. Additionally, the majority of the creative process is not necessarily the literal production of the actual end result but conceptualizing and experimenting. The latter is something the participants have a hard time actually billing.

Working on project basis poses the problem of 'getting lost' or customers asking for additions or changes that cause the project to far exceed the hours put in that would make it viable. Also, pricing in general is often experienced as a stressful and personal or even emotional subject. It's related to self-worth by not going too low but also about wanting to help people by not going too high. Additionally, it often concerns things they would do for enjoyment, which causes guilt. Finally the value of creative products is oftentimes hard to decide, especially from the point of view of the creator.

Many grand or innovative ideas will never see life because the customer can't or won't pay for the time, and there are many activities or instances of feelings of insufficient effort, refinement or 'greatness' because the value for customers goes below the worth of the investment; it becomes too expensive for either the client or the arts entrepreneur themselves. There is also a trade-off between activities that in the long run potentially contribute to income: creating high-quality products, investing in new valuable skills, bringing novel and innovative ideas to life, branching out or specialising. Participants report constant strain because investing too much of their time in such activities -that have a lower chance of yielding results than 'just doing the job'- means running the risk of not adding enough value or becoming unprofitable. This also goes for spending extra time because of enjoyment; 'if you spend the majority of your time on doing fun stuff for a low hourly wage, you'll end up with no money at all'. Participants who actively look for job opportunities sometimes find it straining to have to look outward for new jobs while in the middle of a process.

The most controversial issue is authenticity. Participants across all clusters think that money changes or inhibits the creative or artistic process. 'You make different music when you only play for the money (...) if you play only for money, you give up all your creativity'. Musician D says. Or, in less subtle words of conceptual artist P: 'that one colleague who was good at selling himself only made unoriginal beach images.' Interior designer R agrees: 'Money makes you subservient and that distracts from that the work fits with the desired image. You ought not to work towards the client but towards what fits in the concept.'

The effect of money on creative freedom is moderated by two factors: having a side job for stability lowers the negative effect money has on creative freedom and having a private life that demands a steady cash flow, usually a family with children to care for, increases the negative effect money has on creative freedom. Time also relates to poor work-life balance, this however is not discussed as an issue because most participants are positive about having freedom to work whenever they want and bleeding their work into their private life.

## Customers

The next inhibitor of artisticity is customers. The participants show relatively little interest in the market as a whole and mixed feelings towards customers exist. On the one hand, most participants seek some level of cooperation with their customers by taking the time to explore their wishes, to communicate with them and even to go as far as to pass an order on to a colleague to ensure that the client gets the best result. However, there is also general resentment towards customers because the majority is known for gravely underestimating the time and effort that go into a creative process, leading them to demand huge output and quality for a ridiculously low price. Especially despised is the argument that participants 'would do this work even if they weren't paid' because 'it's their hobby'. Customers specifically in the creative

sector can be stingy, think they can 'design something quick themselves as well' and have unrealistic images and demands. Customers often don't see how much time a creative process takes and 'thinking time' may take up a lot more time than 'creation time', skewing the vision of the amount of hours used for the creative process. Urban planner M has had several encounters with customers who only want urban plans that will yield them as much money as possible and strip a design of all beauty and people-oriented elements during the process and she's 'just not happy with purely money-oriented designs' and customers who don't have the money for creative ideas. She puts up with it because of her industry: 'just making crazy ideas without practical, commercial or financial elements in consideration doesn't get you very far in this industry'.

With customers come demands and those demands sometimes inhibit creativity. CEO J is blunt about it: 'I think you're not really artistically free when you have a customer'. Photographer R summarizes it: 'I'm doing too much of what others want me to do and too little of what I want to photograph (...) there are many things I'd like to do but I have to keep in mind that they may not have value for my customers'. The issue of this is made clear by filmmaker E: 'working hard for business movies ruins the liking for making (fun) movies for yourself in your free time'. Writer T says that one must be cautious to repeat oneself once something turns out to be successful with readers. Interior designer P says that doing too many new things -something she really likes to do- creates an unstable image towards customers and is thus not desirable. This illustrates an issue that several participants mention: in the creative sector, there is always the matter of taste. Less than in other sectors, where something works or it doesn't, there's no objective 'good' or 'bad', making interaction with customers a possibly precarious thing. One participant remarks that taste can also be related to experience and that it can be frustrating when the arts entrepreneur has lot more experience than his or her customers.

Some participants say that the ideal situation of well-paying customers who leave the client plenty of artistic freedom is usually reserved for the 'lucky few', a phenomenon called the 'superstar effect' (Rosen, 1981). Graphic design CEO J thinks that customers who pay hugely while setting the design process free are mostly reserved to 'superstars', in the context of the graphic design industry those are 'huge, distinct and unique ventures with very big, chic customers'. The data suggests that the prevalence of the superstar effect differs per industry; graphic design CEO J strongly recognizes this phenomenon in the graphic design industry while urban planner M sees a more even distribution of work and success within the urban planning industry.

## Colleagues

The last inhibitor of artisticity is colleagues. For the CEO's, colleagues are in-company colleagues; for others the term colleagues refers to colleague-entrepreneurs. A significant part of the informal network appears to consist of colleague entrepreneurs and these are discussed by almost every participant. There appears to be next to zero competition with direct colleagues; apart from conceptual artist P, there are no instances of distrust or feuds. Instead, colleagues are oftentimes (possible) business partners and allies; there are several mentions of jobs being passed on within the network and of outsourcing work to colleagues. There are high levels of trust within these relationships; participants often brainstorm with and get advice from colleagues, even about subjects sensitive to competition such as pricing. Several



participants are or have been in a collective and are hugely positive about the benefits of skill sharing, job distribution, advice and support.

However, as soon as participants start sharing a creative process, issues rise. Participants describe that sharing a creative process is challenging because of misaligning visions, paces, values and tastes. This often results in friction and in some instances in a lack of results. Creative visions, tastes and processes are difficult to communicate as well as deeply personal. Rejecting or criticizing someone else's work is a precarious and vulnerable thing that can easily turn personal. All these difficulties, in the words of CEO J, 'don't exactly stimulate creativity'. Conceptual artist P discloses his history with a partner who 'came too close to his process' and declares that he is 'unfit to cooperate with anyone (...) I'm too stubborn, all artists are'. There are also stories about the difficulty about working with commercial partners; different backgrounds can continually cause different opinions on what the product should look like or about certain choices are made.

CEO's R and J encounter additional issues because they are responsible for their employees. Both see their artistic freedom limited heavily by their responsibility for their employees, something they take very seriously, and both are very concerned with the culture of their companies. Web design CEO R is positive about all of his teamwork; he is happy about his co-founders, with whom he shares management, creative and commercial tasks, and with his employees whom he delegates 'the practical part of the creation process' to, but J admits to being uncomfortable in the position of a boss; she is sensitive to the atmosphere and the reactions of others and finds management a challenging thing to do. R is very concerned with the size of his company and the informal ties in his company and is very concerned about his company not growing too big. Both have no time to directly be involved in a creative process, something they would like to do more but that they can't do because they are responsible for the income of their employees. They don't necessarily see this as a huge loss, though; they feel that managing the creative process is a creative process as well.

## 4.5 Coping strategies described by interviewees

While experiencing manifestations from the art-commercial paradox is universal, so is deploying coping strategies. The data reveals a wide variety of coping strategies used by the arts entrepreneurs and also shows differences between individuals as to the specific coping strategies that are deployed. They are indexed according to De Wit and Meyer (2014)'s strategy paradox theory, which turned out a valuable framework to give all the coping strategies that emerged a proper place. The arts entrepreneurs approach coping strategies as different tools they can use depending on the situation they are in. As was expected, the first three strategies are rather straightforward while the last three strategies are more open to interpretation. Perhaps because of this, the participants generally tend to use the first and last three strategies in comparable frequency. They are also flexible in the use of individual coping strategies: rather than committing to a single strategy or a single kind of strategy, arts entrepreneurs mix and match strategies and let them work alongside each other. De Wit and Meyer (2014) are aware that certain strategies are more suitable for certain situations than others. In this case, participants gravitate towards navigation and resolving; these strategies

are used most frequently and the participants are the most satisfied with the results of using these strategies.

A factor that was unclear from the data analysis is how competent participants are in executing certain strategies. This paragraph simply lists and categorizes the emerged coping strategies according strategy paradox theory (De Wit and Meyer, 2014) and explains them. There are no strong preferences of participant clusters for a specific category of strategies, the use of strategies is predominantly individual. When a coping strategy is strongly related to a certain cluster, it is mentioned in the description, but this is rarely the case.

A point of discussion is the fact that the two most important strategies the arts entrepreneurs deploy -translating the 'bad' commercial values to values that they seem as appropriate, namely networking instead of commercialism and time management instead of financial thinking, are both discussed as economic logics and categorized as resolving strategies. This is because they overarch the categories as values but are also used as practical, specific and actionable strategies in the data. Simultaneously, most strategies described in this chapter largely flow from network and time management and seek ways to make them work in practice.

#### 4.5.1. Navigation

Navigation strategy is used by almost all participants, likely because it's a rather straightforward solution to manage the highly valuable asset of time. While Gaim and Wahlin (2016) are not as positive about navigation strategy because it's an either/or strategy, participants are positive about it and choose to rely on it because it grants them freedom in several ways.

The first navigation strategy is the non-arts side job. While some participants with side jobs say that they would in the long run prefer to spend all of their time on their creative business, they are usually positive about their current non-arts side jobs because the reduction of financial insecurity brings peace of mind, which increases creativity, as well as more freedom to choose less lucrative but more fun jobs and take risks in the direction they want their company to go.

The second navigation strategy is making a strict division between time spent on artistic logics and time spent on economic logics within working hours. In the applied creative process, this takes the shape of a cycle of going inward for an authentic creative process and outward for alignment with economic logics repeatedly until arriving at an end product. For conceptuials, navigation in the creation process often means first completing the process of artistic expression and next starting to think about a possible audience only after the product is finished. Most participants who actively take up commercial and financial activities dedicate a certain amount of time daily or weekly and spend the rest of their time on the creation process. Examples found in the data are one day per week, every other day or one to two hours daily. For novelist T this is a year-based division: he spends two thirds of a year finishing a novel and one third afterwards on PR activities with his publisher and PR assistant.

A final example of navigation is completely separating part of the artistic expression from commercialism by keeping it as a hobby instead of as a professional activity. Purely hobbyist activities that are never brought to the workplace may be related to the professional work but are often in a different line of work than the professional activities. For example, graphic design CEO J sings in her free time, interior designer R makes abstract paintings and web design

CEO R writes books about language, pastry and family trees. This is done throughout clusters and participants report huge satisfaction from this outlet of artisticity.

Apart from some mentions of wanting to spend more time on artistic logics, participants are generally satisfied by the navigation strategies they deploy.

#### 4.5.2. Parallel processing

Parallel processing is about the division of labor. For the arts entrepreneurs, this mostly means separating creative and commercial tasks and dividing those over different individuals, groups or systems. Especially by applied creatives, there are observations that 'artists who don't have 'entrepreneurial blood' will have a hard time' because 'true creatives' usually lack management and PR skills because they are overly product-oriented, and that the best solution is teaming up with a person who has management, PR and financial skills. There are some participants who team up and some other participants who view such a partner as desirable. Graphic designer K's DJ collective is made up of two creatives and one business minded person. 'I'm really bad with numbers. I know I shouldn't be but it's good that I have someone in my collective who is'. CEO's R and J and musician D actually are the parties that take up economic logics, in the case of D because he is the only one experiencing fun from it. Parallel processing is not restricted to internal parties: there are some participants of outsourcing activities to publishers, PR agents and accountants and participants are unanimously happy about these teams. Other matters that are externalized are creative activities that may be fun but are not related to the interviewee's core skill set and that take too much time to acquire properly themselves. An example is a web designer hiring a photographer to make photos for a website rather than putting in the time and effort to educate him or herself (further) on photography. These skills are usually delegated to external colleagues in their network that they have a trusting connection with. This also goes for passing on tasks to external colleagues when time or lack of interest inhibits them from taking on an order.

Parallel processing with direct, in-organization colleagues requires similar levels of additional coping strategies as the amount of coping it saves. As explained in 4.3, partnering comes with several difficulties that need solving. The key to this according to the participants is to be educating oneself on communication and taking time for it.

#### 4.5.3. Balancing

A tricky category to identify is balancing. Balancing is about making a percentage-based trade-off between economic and artistic logics; it's not about choosing but about trying to find a - sometimes shifting- optimum. The arts entrepreneurs do this in several ways. The primary area where this happens is pricing. Pricing is a trade-off between multiple points where sufficient monetary rewards and the amount of fun and artistic freedom, being taken seriously by customers but also commercial. Another trade-off is in the choice of projects based on monetary or artistic rewards that are accepted based on their current financial situation; a healthy bank account means freedom to take jobs that allow more artistic freedom but pay less, or approaching a job in a more arts oriented way rather than an economic way. They appear to feed this balance themselves by charging more for orders they see as less 'fun'. The primary ways to price are on hourly basis or on project basis. A variation is that interviewees charge less-fun jobs on hourly basis and fun jobs that they are willing to invest

their time in on a project basis. They do this to allow themselves the freedom to express themselves without the pressure of making every hour sufficiently valuable for the client.

Overall, most participants appear to prefer caution when it comes to high pricing, partly because they don't 'aspire to be really rich' and partly because they see conservative pricing strategies as a way to network and gain long-term customer commitment, two things that are the pinnacle of their economic logics and strategy.

A related creativity/profit trade-off is CEO R who chooses to reject big projects that would force his workforce to grow. Growing would weaken the informal ties that nurture creativity in his company and it would also expand his managerial responsibilities to the extent that he would lose the time for his share in the creative process.

Another trade-off is working on the previously discussed work-life balance. In the data, this mostly means clearing one's private life from inhibitions for the creative process: reducing financial and social responsibilities and other distractions.

One of the most jarring and frequently mentioned trade-offs is when customer's wishes and one's own opinion are mutually exclusive. Especially applied creatives (cluster a and d) find that it's important to listen to the customer but to carefully choose moments when it's best to 'keep the leg stiff', sometimes because customers have impossible demands related to what they are paying and sometimes because they have demands that will decrease the value of the end product. Especially for applied creatives, the balance is usually in the favor of the customer because the arts entrepreneurs want to protect their reputation in their network. This may result in something that the arts entrepreneurs are less proud of. In such cases, some participants indicate they resolve this by not adding that specific piece of work to their website or portfolio or even by not putting their name on it, balancing customer satisfaction with their artistic pride and image.

Finally, there is the trade-off between novelty and repetition. Surprisingly, this is primarily experienced as a trade-off between two artistic logics, namely enjoyment and quality or beauty. Repeating methods and creating similarity between products can increase beauty and quality, which are artistic logics. Web design CEO R describes: 'repetition and demarcation make your product better, sharper'. However, the data implies that novelty is significantly tied to enjoyment and several participants see too much repetition as detrimental to the experienced enjoyment in the production process. Interior designer P and photographer R feel that following the same steps or constantly producing similar products is less fun, enjoyable, fulfilling and motivating and therefore constantly balance novel ideas, experimenting and learning new skills with repeating and refining known processes. This trade-off is also influenced by economic logics; P notes that repetition is important for brand building, which is an economic logic she also incorporates in the trade-off between novelty and repetition.

#### 4.5.4. Juxtaposing

One of the ways to juxtapose the need to make money and the desire to spend time on artistic subjects is to take a side job that is related to the arts entrepreneur's passion. This allows one to connect with one's passion in a more lucrative way than a non-arts side job. Writer T ensures that all the side jobs he takes on are related to writing: amongst them are a daily column in a newspaper and sharing writing techniques. Side jobs can also fulfill non-arts related passions: interior designer R has a profound passion for teaching and he prefers spending time teaching over designing full-time. Musician D jokingly says that he uses time

when he's hired for background music -and 'no one listens to you attentively anyway'- as a time to practice.

Juxtaposing is especially used in situations where customers have significantly different values or taste than the arts entrepreneur. Especially the applied artists from cluster A are convinced that creativity to fulfill different demands at the same time is the pinnacle of 'good design' and there are various examples of approaches to this situation: convincing the customer of the possibility of fulfilling both demands, asking for space to come up with novel solutions, taking the time to create new solutions together or, in the case of interior designer R, 'only ask what the client wants, never how they want it'. When this happens between colleagues, CEO J offers to send both concepts to the customer to have them choose; this gives both creators space and additionally gives the client extra value by offering choice.

#### 4.5.5. Resolving

The strategy most frequently deployed is the resolution strategy. Resolution is about 'getting the best of both worlds': where juxtaposition is about fulfilling two different demands at the same time, resolution is about the maximization of both artistic and economic values. The participants appear to deploy a wide variety of strategies that allow them to get the most out of the situation. One reason that this category is so broad may be the wide interpretability of the term. Resolution thinking is summarized by musician M: 'Amateurs play for fun, professionals play for the fun and for the money'.

##### *Matching passion and customers*

The most important and prevalent resolving strategy that they deploy is being primarily product-oriented: They primarily hone their skills and act out their passions, and secondarily look for possible lucrative markets and customers to match these desires to. The ideal situation described is that there is high general demand for the fruits of the arts entrepreneur's unbound, authentic artistic expression, and/or that the participant attracts customers who pay them royally to be as artistically free and who want them to make something new and exciting without keeping too many tabs on what they 'should' do. Musician D describes the product-oriented nature of this coping strategy:

*'You need to develop your own sound and find an audience who appreciates it as well'.*

This coping strategy is based on the idea that authenticity and passion drive 'good' work and that staying true to authenticity and passion will attract the 'right' customers who will pay for exactly the things they like to do. There are several mentions that a situation like this is rare, but the data also includes examples and anecdotes of arts entrepreneurs who indeed 'do their thing' and have an audience that likes them, resulting in satisfactory remuneration as well as maximum artistic freedom. Graphic designer K experiences this match with his DJ collective:

*'We make stuff and people want to listen to that. We produce things and apparently there's demand for it. That's the most awesome thing I can imagine'.*

The data shows an underlying premise that being free from financial worries enhances authenticity and novelty, which results in money. This requires trust and several participants

back this by the idea that if they like their own personal work, there must be some other people out there who share that opinion and may even have demand for that work so much they pay for it.

The second part of this strategy is finding the right customers. While the subject of customers stirs mixed feelings, there are several types of customers that participants are unanimously positive about and that they want to attract. They are especially positive about customers who leave them plenty of artistic freedom and pay them well. They are also appreciative of loyal customers, customers who are emotionally invested in the creative process and customers who share artistic values, although the latter are viewed as rare. This process also involves saying no to customers whose visions and demands are in misalignment with the values of the arts entrepreneur. While this sometimes poses a challenge because some customers start with a wish for creativity but gradually eliminate it during the design process, participants do report that this approach leads to an upwards spiral, which is at the core of this resolving strategy. Getting projects that allow the arts entrepreneur to express their individual talents and passions increases the chance to find more customers that are looking for those qualities, which in turn increases the financial freedom to reject non-matching customers. This is somewhat of a chicken-and-egg story: one participant says that his success comes from 'customers that allow me great freedom' while for other participants creative freedom is a byproduct of success.

#### *In-process resolving*

The pinnacle of resolving found in the data is integrating economic values into an artistic process without having to do any artistic concessions. In two instances, participants actually succeed in integrating commercialism in the creation process. These are executed by graphic designer K's DJ collective and musician D in his jazz trio. They clearly but broadly define their boundaries of 'what they are' and 'what they are not': they have a clear view of their own concept. Within that concept, there is room to integrate elements to attract the audience and move with what the market is demanding, all without losing integrity. K describes that working with the concept is both beneficial to the artistic direction and value of their work as well as important for marketing: by being clear about their concept and about being selective in the commercial influences they choose, they create focus on and connection with the audience they want to attract. D's jazz trio has a more navigation-esque approach to introducing commercial aspects into the concept: his jazz trio writes songs where parts of the music are roughly predefined to give the audience 'something repetitive, something that they know, so they can accept the novel parts', namely the purely improvised parts that characterize jazz and what the jazz trio experience as the ultimate artistic freedom. They fulfill the demand and mission of making music that can be understood by a broader audience. D and K strongly feel that they are doing no concessions regarding their freedom and authenticity in these approaches.

#### *Resolving activities and values*

Another key resolving strategy is finding activities or values that have a positive impact on both academic and artistic logics. In no particular order, these emerged from the data:

- Some participants resolve the need for commercial activities by aligning them with artistic values. The most prevalent examples are the way they translate the necessity to be commercial to a form that is 'non-commercial': networking. Some of the participants deliberately take steps to get to their desired customers by looking for desired customers,

initiating contact, seeking out events or competitions where the desired customers or media are and seeking out markets that allow for commercial as well as artistic work. However, they do this not as a primarily commercial activity but as part of the artistic process: they look for people, markets and events that they are sincerely interested in and want to undertake artistic projects with. They take strictly 'commercial' activities but use them primarily for artistic logics, fulfilling both artistic as well as commercial demands. Musician D approaches commercial activities by integrating it with the logic of enjoyment: 'I see it as a game. That's what makes it fun'. The other primary example of this strategy is how they approach the need to make money by translating it into time, where the logics of artistry are used to decide how time is allocated.

- Important for finding the right customers is effectively communicating and showcasing one's talents and capabilities. This means clearly communicating passions and capabilities by building a portfolio with work one prefers to do. When the professional work is not sufficiently aligned to the passion and capabilities of the arts entrepreneur, some participants solve this by taking private, hobbyist work and putting those in their portfolio. Their hobby grants them freedom of artistic expression but also contributes to marketing and sales.

- Another hobby-related strategy is translating a hobbyist project to a commercial concept after the work is finished and served its job as a fulfilling free-time project. This is a resolving extension of separating part of the artistic expression into hobbyist activities. It maximizes artistic freedom because the projects initially fulfilled their purpose as a purely expressionist project and the translation into a commercial project allow the arts entrepreneurs literally to make money from their hobbies.

- A unanimously integrated value that enlarges artistic fulfillment as well as commercial success is quality. Delivering quality for customers as well as for their own satisfaction is a non-negotiable value for the participants. The arts entrepreneurs strongly feel that delivering good work is essential for business while simultaneously satisfying them artistically.

- Related to this is that artistically satisfying work is the main driver for productivity and quality; participants report that their hard work, continuous effort and putting in extraordinary amounts of time (something that is reported by all participants, except when private situations force them to limit themselves) are the results of passion and deep enjoyment of the creative process.

- A resolving strategy home to the practical conceptuels (cluster B) is succeeding in what literature deems impossible: managing the process of artistic expression. Practical conceptuels do this with the combination of discipline and cultivating enjoyment. Writer T does this as follows: with structure and discipline, he 'gives artistic expression a road to expand into (...) and get the inspiration to quietly flow'. When he is inspired, he critically looks at the feasibility of his inspiration. When he decides it is, he supplies discipline and structure by setting goals for the amount of time or words his process gets to fill. From then on, 'the inspiration steers my work'. Interior designer R takes a different approach: he structures his agenda with at least half of his time dedicated to 'nothing' to allow the creative process to flow and the other half relatively structured, containing activities related to economic and artistic logics as well as activities related to his teaching career and private life. In the beginning of a creative process, he plans no 'hard' deadlines or events related to his creative process because the inspiration needs space to simply appear. While non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C) feel differently, practical conceptuels feel that 'discipline is not a resistance of freedom' but rather a prerequisite for it.

- A well desired coping strategy is having a personality that includes artistic as well as entrepreneurial traits. However, the participants interpret 'personality' not with individual traits but more with the activities someone inherently enjoys or not. In other words: it is seen as

ideal to have a personality that enjoys commercial as well as artistic activities. In the self-report as well as in anecdotes, several people emerge who unite both the 'administrative' as well as the creative side in their personality because they enjoy both sides.

-A final way to fulfill a demand for authentic expression as well as connecting to an audience is when the artistic process is about interacting with the audience. Musician D describes this as essential to his artistic expression; his process is about tuning into the mood of himself and the audience and is therefore deeply about connecting with those around him. This is both artistically fulfilling to the artist and a way to generate a connection with an audience. While the intention of this connection is not concerned with economic logics, it can contribute to commercial success.

#### 4.5.6. Embracing

A final strategy is embracing the tension between artisticity and commercialism. The only accounts of embracing are from applied artists who say that boundaries (usually posed by practical and customer related demands) stimulate creativity. However, they say this specifically about the problem-solving definition of creativity rather than artistic creativity and thus appears to add little to answer the research question.

### 4.6 Time: The ultimate moderator

An overarching theme that connects many pieces of data is time. One of the most surprising broad themes that emerged from the data was the aging of businesses and participants. When young, one cares less about money and only wants to focus on your product. Musician D sees this as the reason why more than one hour per week of entrepreneurship class in music school<sup>8</sup> doesn't work:

*'When you're 18, 20 years old, you want to focus on your dream of making music. You don't want to hear how to make money from that'.*

Being young means less responsibilities, lower rent and lower living expenses. This means more freedom, something interior designer R looks back on with warm feelings: 'I had just enough money to live, to eat, to buy records. I didn't need anything else (...) then I'd work behind the bar for a night and I could go forward another week!'

The general trend is that as one gets older, one's experience increases and with that skill levels, customer base and intuition. Also growing is the desire for more financial stability and some form of status. As photographer R notes: 'being forty years old and still photographing house parties or being a manager at Albert Heijn is kinda sad'. Musician D thinks similar: 'At some point, you're not satisfied anymore by playing in the background. You're done practicing, you know what you are, you want to be heard, listened to'. The effect of aging is related changes in one's private life, usually children, and by changes in one's definition of a 'good life' such as a higher life standard, more free time, less nights out partying and more silence; in short, a better work-life balance. Even the non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C) clearly say that getting older means less partying, less 'fulltime creativity' and more 'thinking of what

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<sup>8</sup> Dutch: Conservatorium



I want to do with my life'. In the context of work itself, aging is also a factor: K describes that the clear boundaries that demarcate the concept of his DJ collective are a result of years and years of practicing and working with the concept, resulting in an intuitive sense of 'this fits within our concept' and 'this does not'.

The effect of aging may not be unique to the creative sector but it has a significant impact on the participants nonetheless. On a final and positive note: aging appears to be the ultimate moderator for the strain experienced from the art-commercial paradox. Several older participants say that as they get older and more experienced, the strain they feel from the art-commercial paradox, be it worries about money, a poor work/life balance or struggling to find a way to combine the need for artisticity and making a decent living, all seem to lighten. 'I used to struggle (with the paradox) but it all came together nicely', P says. The most hopeful quote of them all and a beautiful final quote to close this chapter with is from novelist T: 'I don't think I have experienced that tense feeling related to the (art-commercial) paradox in 25 years'.

# Chapter 5 - Discussion and conclusion

## 5.1 Discussion

The general goal of this thesis was to surface data that was not known to scientific literature yet. Its primary objective was to oppose the trend in arts entrepreneurship education research to focus on the shortcomings of arts entrepreneurs, and instead focus on their competencies in the face of the art-commercial paradox. This paper did find that arts entrepreneurs do struggle and that the art-commercial paradox with the underlying artistic and economic logics is a significant cause of their struggles. However, this paper also found that arts entrepreneurs have a wealth of coping strategies that they can deploy to cope with the art-commercial paradox and are often more capable and assertive than arts entrepreneurship research implies them to be.

### 5.1.1. Conclusions related to previous literature

#### The actual use of coping strategies

This thesis is based on De Wit and Meyer (2014)'s strategy paradox theory. Within this framework, several important strategies, some previously known and some previously unknown to literature, are discovered. It was already described that arts entrepreneurs use navigation to deal with opposing demands but it was not yet known that participants are positive about this strategy and that they use it to create a sense of freedom. It was also known that they can collaborate but it was unknown that they are generally positive when collaborating with people, as long as it doesn't concern their artistic process. The juxtaposition strategy of the arts-related side job is also verified and perceived as positive and they almost unanimously use the juxtaposition strategy of verbally distancing themselves from economic logics while still acting on them. Important novel strategies that are discovered are how participants use trade-offs to deal with pricing and most notably that they have several ways of resolving the paradox: they match passions and customers to create an upwards spiral, they use a demarcated concept to create space where artisticity and commercialism can co-exist, and in general, they integrate artistic values and activities with economic values and activities, most notably by translating commercialism to networking and translating economic thinking to the economization of time. Embracing doesn't appear to be relevant in the context of artisticity.

#### Eikhof and Haunschild (2007)'s artistic and economic logics

The first notable relation between the data and the literature is the validation of the model of artistic and economic logics as discussed by Eikhof and Haunschild (2007). The hypothesis that arts entrepreneurs verbally distance themselves from economic logics but act on them anyways under the premise of economic logics interpreted as 'non-commercial' is strongly confirmed. The prevalence of artistic and economic logics as well as the oppositions between the two are confirmed; regardless of what Bourdieu (1986) thought, it appears that logics and emotions influence each other and that emotions are a driver for adherence to logics as well as an intrinsically valuable logic themselves.

Additionally, the issue of 'bohemian values' where living for art is considered noble and worth sacrificing societally 'normal' things such as financial stability and a regular work-life balance, are prevalent in conceptual artists but in varying levels. It corresponds somewhat with the negative opinion of non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C) on commercialism, however, the artists are concerned with their art and freedom out of emotional necessity rather than a moral level, which is demonstrated by their positive opinion on other individuals who do adhere to economic logics, and to a lack of self-ascribed 'nobility'.

#### Gaim and Wahlin (2016)'s strategy theory

Another relation between the data and the literature is the separation between *either/or* and *and/both* strategies as presented by Gaim and Wahlin (2016). A valuable contribution to answer the main question is that arts entrepreneurs in practice deploy a wide array of strategies to cope with the art/commercial paradox, and that their most important way is to either divide their time over the logics or by resolving the paradox by getting the best of both worlds. However, these are not the only ways: they have a wide array of strategies at their disposal, both *either/or* and *and/both* strategies. The division between Gaim and Wahlin (2016)'s division of strategies in general is roughly balanced: the *either/or* strategies and the *and/both* strategies emerged from the data in similar numbers. Striking is that the 'resolving' strategy trumps any other category, probably due to the breadth of the category, followed by navigation. This is favorable according to Gaim and Wahlin: apparently the participants are skilled at obtaining the best of both worlds in practice. Gaim and Wahlin (2016) argued that *and/both* strategies are more valuable than *either/or* strategies. This paper disagreed and tested which strategies are most valued by the arts entrepreneurs. It turned out that the arts entrepreneurs use both strategies in similar frequencies and their most favoured strategies are navigation and resolving, the first is an *either/or* strategy and the second is an *and/both* strategy. While resolving helps them actually 'solve' the paradox and find ways to synthesize artisticity and commercialism, navigation helps them create peace, space and order that they need to function practically. They prefer to have several strategies at their disposal and use them as tools for the appropriate situation rather than relying on a single one. Ironically, it turned out that it wasn't a matter of favoring or choosing between strategies, which Gaim and Wahlin would call '*either/or*', but a matter of deploying multiple strategies simultaneously, which resonates with Gaim and Wahlin's concept of '*and/both*'.

#### Personality

Although cautious, the results had some implications about the issue of personality. The literature study of this paper found oppositions between the artistic and entrepreneurial personality. While it was not the primary goal of this paper and though no hard conclusions can be drawn due to methodological issues<sup>9</sup>, the participants found that the archetypical traits described by the literature are not mutually exclusive. They perceive no strong distinction between 'entrepreneurial' or 'artistic' traits, the distinction between people with 'entrepreneurial blood' and no 'entrepreneurial blood' is made but this appears to be largely

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<sup>9</sup> For serious and valid conclusions on the matter of personality, the field of psychology and its specific methodology must be respected. Since this paper has no such background or methodology, it can only describe its findings in a cautious and anecdotal fashion.

driven by the level of enjoyment experienced from commercial activities. Participants feel that these traits are either a sliding scale or can coexist in the same person at the same time. Also, the arts entrepreneurs primarily relate a 'commercial' personality to levels of enjoyment of commercial or artistic activities rather than traits. This means that commercialism is not necessarily a trait but more of a preference. Incidentally, the traits that are described in the clusters were surprisingly coherent within clusters and shared by most or all of the participants in this cluster and they are therefore presented as such. However, this paper recognizes the complexity and danger of personality analysis and merely proposes that future research on the clusters must be accompanied by methodology from the field of psychology.

### Artisticity and creativity

The issue between artisticity and creativity rises as well. In the literature analysis, there was concern about creativity versus artisticity. In the eventual data analysis, this overall difference in interpretation appeared to matter quite little because the kind of creativity all participants adhere to is artistic. However, there is a big difference between artistic creativity and artistic expression: there are emotions involved in the latter and that possibly increases the strain experienced by the paradox.

All participants see their process as important and something to be protected and give symbolic meaning to their creative work; rather than being solely useful, they want it to have meaning and they rely on inspiration and personal missions. However, the results of this thesis clearly distinguishes those whose processes are based on and relying on emotional and personal involvement and those who are primarily based on problem solving with symbolic meaning. This distinction is based on whether participants self-categorized as applied or not. While the objective was to research artistic expression in as many contexts as possible, it turned out that actually researching artistic expression is largely confined to conceptual artists.

### Issues not vital in the data

Another issue discussed in the literature chapter are that two core issues that didn't appear to be vital in the data. These core issues of the paradox that were identified were process volatility, high risk in return on investment and issues in communication with customers. The latter is indeed identified as a challenging factor, not because of discourse issues but because of paradigm issues; customers are often focused on economic values and try to 'make the most of their money', causing friction with the arts entrepreneurs. Discourse issues are not specifically mentioned by the arts entrepreneurs.

The issues of product volatility don't specifically surface as vital. However, overall, the participants appear to be rather unfazed by the unpredictability of the artistic process. There are no mentions of arts entrepreneurs complaining about this subject and while there are mentions of stress and lack of time lowering artistic quality, there are no complaints about unpredictability. Additionally, process volatility assumes that artistic processes cannot be planned but opinions on that vary through clusters. The practical conceptuials (cluster B) agree that process volatility exists but disagree with its supposed non-manageability. They feel that process volatility can be managed to some extent by the right coping strategies, such as weeding out distractions and setting up a planning that allows for both structure and space. The non-commercial conceptuials (cluster C) do indeed feel that forcing a process by planning it taints artisticity and give examples of inspiration striking at unpredictable moments.

However, they don't see this unpredictability as a problem, possibly because they only bring the product to the market after it is finished, meaning that volatility is not an issue during the production process -there are no customers waiting for it, after all- and possibly because they have a deeper understanding of their own process and needs than literature implies. However, the large range of subjects covered by the data means that the impact of process volatility might be overlooked.

Risk in return on investment on a larger scale is not discussed by the participants. There are several possible explanations for this. Literature specifically mentions the reaction of 'the public', while neither of the participants mention working for a wider audience; they all work for individual customers that they can spar with and make financial arrangements with, which greatly reduces reaction and output uncertainty. However, the data implies that on micro level, it is indeed a core issue; instead of risk in return on the investment of money, the core issue is risk in return on the investment of time. The participants are very cautious of where they invest their time and are continuously aware that time they invest in retouching or learning a new skill might not pay itself back. Therefore, risk in return on investment is indeed an issue, the difference being the scale, the level of uncertainty and the means invested.

A final subject that was expected to be more prevalent but that didn't directly show in the data is authenticity. The term is barely used and from the data it is unclear whether authenticity is an unsurfaced underlying value, so closely tied to 'doing what I want' that the participants consider it synonyms, or whether authenticity is simply less important than Eikhof and Haunschild found it to be. A final option is that 'authenticity' is one of the drivers of the non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C). While they don't explicitly name it, their fierce fight against the influence of others is strongly suggesting that 'non-influence', which is arguably synonym to authenticity, is their core driver.

### 5.1.2 novel conclusions

Apart from confirming or opposing the literature, the explorative nature of this paper surfaced several concepts novel to academic literature.

#### Participant clusters

The most important conclusions are the discovery of the participant clusters.

This paper found that participants can be clustered based on their experienced strain, their attitude towards commercialism and the applied or conceptual nature of their work. This is novel because current arts entrepreneurship research only divides between core creatives and non-core creatives, something that is related to whether artists view themselves as conceptual or applied, but not directly correlated: interior designer R and graphic designer K, who are technically not core creatives, share the conceptual vision and approach of the core creatives in the research. Also, practical conceptuels (cluster B) and strained applied creatives (cluster D) show that being core-creative or non-core creative is not related to the level of strain experienced from the paradox. The best predictor for the level of strain appears to be related to whether a participant has a negative view of commercialism. This is not directly related to how much 'fun' commercial activities are perceived as, but about the perception that a commercial orientation and related activities have a negative impact on the creative process, and especially, how undesirable this influence is. All clusters admit that customers have a

negative impact on the level of creative and artistic freedom in a process but clusters have different approaches to deal with this impact. Applied creatives (Cluster A) do not actively fight this impact but welcome the limitations, viewing them as fuel for their creative problem-solving. The practical conceptuels (Cluster B) take practical measures to limit the impact of customer influence on their creativity as a whole. The exact measures that they use are based on their personal preferences, capabilities and opportunities and mostly on their personal definition of 'freedom'. Non-commercial conceptuels (Cluster C) actively fight customer influence for as much as they can; if they are forced to cooperate anyway, feelings of resistance persist. They are the strongest defenders of their own artistic freedom and make several choices that are strongly in favor of artistic logics and more often than not go against economic logics. Their objection against commercialism is three-fold: it is based on ethics, on a lack of 'fun' but mostly on their emotional need to honestly express themselves. This makes non-commercial conceptuels highly interesting. However, the cluster differentiation between the practical conceptuels and the strained conceptuels show that relying on artistic expression is not inherently tied to experiencing high strain from the art-commercial paradox. One would expect non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C) to be client averse but conceptual artist P is not. Perhaps because he separates his production process from his things. On a final note, non-commercial conceptuels are the only cluster reporting that lack of artistic expression has a negative impact on their emotional wellbeing but there is no reason to assume that this is not the case for other clusters.

#### Freedom and enjoyment as primary drivers

One of the most consistent threads in the data is the strong influence of 'being free to do what I like'. From literature, the expectancy was that the arts entrepreneurs would be explicitly driven by authenticity, the creation of beauty and by 'good' art. While these are usually the things the participants highly value, freedom and enjoyment trumped any of the other values in both frequency and intensity. The question arises if these values are unique to arts entrepreneurs or a general trait that belongs to either artists or entrepreneurs. Literature on arts entrepreneurs describes an overwhelming variety of reasons to start a business and explains many other reasons to start a business -many of them economic logics- that leave 'being free to do what I like' in the background, leading to the idea that this trait is connected to the arts part of the arts entrepreneur. Another possibility that freedom and enjoyment are moderately present in artists as well as in entrepreneurs, and amplified by the synergy of the two.

#### Aging

Another novel conclusion is the overall effect of aging on the experienced strain. While the participants experience aging as positive, it needs to be noted that arts entrepreneurs who quit are not included in the data. While our older participants saw their issues decrease over time, this may be due to other factors contributing to their success and the fact that their business persisted for so long is simply a byproduct.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The general conclusion of this paper is that arts entrepreneurs have a wide set of coping strategies that they deploy to cope with the art-commercial paradox next to arts entrepreneurship education. They actively approach the art-commercial paradox in a way that takes both artistic and economic logics into account. They do this in multiple ways, depending on their personal situation, predisposition, preferences and capabilities.

In this study, the paradigm of Eikhof and Haunschild (2007) is confirmed: the art-commercial paradox can be explained by artistic and economic logics. Next to adding to the current literature, this thesis clearly revealed additional insights, notably that 'being free to do what one likes' is the primary driver for the majority of decisions arts entrepreneurs make. Additional insights are the importance of participant clusters and the importance of aging.

## 5.3 Practical implications

This research was designed to discover strategies that are useful for arts entrepreneurs in practice, besides education. Paradoxically, getting this knowledge where it matters -in the hands of arts entrepreneurs- means educating them on the findings of the present study. The exact knowledge brought to the arts entrepreneurs can be tailored to their individual needs and clusters can be a helpful tool to identify what knowledge can be helpful. For example, strained applied creatives struggle with pricing while non-commercial conceptualls may benefit more from education on ways to outsource or re-interpret commercial activities. In general, pricing is perceived as a difficult subject, therefore developing pricing courses and teaching it in arts curriculae more often is recommended.

Something that is highly recommended in existing and future curriculae is the integration of and focus on enjoyment, freedom and authenticity. The participants show that translating commercial activities to artistic logics is key to motivating themselves for such activities. The exact translation is personal but differs: sometimes dedicating every action to 'artistic good' is a way but another option is to relate actions to enjoyment or showing how an action can grant a kind of freedom. The expectation is that approaches such as these make the transmission of 'less fun' knowledge easier. Another issue is authenticity: arts entrepreneurs are more likely to be opposed to an activity when they feel it forces them to be authentic and presenting knowledge in a way that respects authenticity might ease the transmission of knowledge.

## 5.4 Future research

The goal of this thesis was to gather data that was unavailable to academic literature and to do a first exploration of the field of coping strategies for the art-commercial paradox. This goal has been met, which results in many open tabs for future research.

Due to the explorative nature and small sample size of this study, generalizability is low. Therefore, suggestions for future research are statistical tests of the conclusions and correlations presented in this research. A primary subject that needs further study are the clusters. In the data, the clusters presented itself as a highly coherent set of participants with strongly distinctive qualities. Larger scale research is needed to verify the actual existence of these clusters individually, to see if new clusters arise and to further explore the properties of the clusters.

In retrospect, the question that initially led to this thesis is how non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C) deal with the demand to be commercial. The high level of strain that this cluster exhibits and the fact that they deploy little coping strategies based on economic logics makes them highly interesting for future research. A case study on non-commercial conceptuels to further highlight the actual strategies that they deploy -after all, although they have tendencies to avoid commercial activities, they are still in business- and deeper insight in how they make sense of the paradox, what their logics and world vision looks like and how their emotions are related to their process is important to develop greater understanding of this cluster.

Another interesting topic is a deeper understanding of the differences between practical conceptuels (cluster B) and non-commercial conceptuels (cluster C). Where do the exact differences between this cluster come from? Is it based on a different interpretation of the concept of 'freedom'? Or is it, as practical conceptuels imply, based on personality traits regarding structure and discipline?

Finally, the existence of strained applied creatives (cluster D) needs plenty of future research. Its existence needs confirmation and a deeper understanding of its characteristics can help another specific group that is largely underrepresented in this research: applied creatives who experience art-commercial strain. For this cluster, the exact difficulties might not be solely distinctive for creatives. Entrepreneurs who are passionate about a subject and struggle to unite their values and pricing are likely an occurrence in other sectors as well.

For two individual participants, future research may be needed as well: CEO's R and J are posed with issues that are unique in the data set. Their main theme is 'how to unite the necessity to manage with the desire to create'. Both happen to be applied but owners of core creative businesses are a possible source of useful data as well. Issues of balancing a management role and a production role are not unique to the creative sector but due to the unique properties of the creative sector and the lack of research on this particular subject, future research may result in interesting data.

Throughout the data, examples of the influence of personality traits surfaced, especially in practical conceptuels (cluster B). The issue of traits is only superficially mentioned and no final conclusions on the subject can be drawn. However, some indication that personality traits are influential on both the level of strain as well as the deployed coping strategies imply that further research could reap benefits for how arts entrepreneurs can benefit from their own personality traits. This paper suggests that this issue is further investigated with involvement from the field of psychology. A recommendation is surveys to look for correlations between personality traits, strain, clusters and coping strategies.

Another option is the breadth of sectors taken into account. The data suggests huge differences between industries in their dynamics, opportunities, type of customers and even values. Because individual industries are only represented by one or two participants, individual sector traits are omitted or not included in the data at all. From literature as well as from the data, the expectancy that levels of strain experienced as well as suitable coping strategies differ significantly. This is interesting for future research.

Two final concepts that leave a lot of room for further research are process volatility and examples of high risk of return on investment. These were not sufficiently discussed during the data collection, while delving deeper into the exact process of artistic expression could surface very interesting data. Interviews focused on the issue of process volatility and how the participants approach this might answer some questions that rise with the clusters: to what extent is it possible to plan a creative process? From the data, it appears that participants are well aware of the requirements of their own process, as shown by the practical conceptuels (cluster B). How well aware are participants of their own process and the requirements of their



process in general, and what impact does this awareness have on the manageability of their process? What are these requirements exactly?

Finally, researching this subject in the context of other cultures is interesting to find which parts of the art-commercial paradox, its manifestations and the use of coping strategies are universal and which are influenced by culture.

## 5.5 Limitations

One of the limitations of this research is the fact that the analyzed data set consists solely of native Dutch participants and the same applies to the researcher as well. This means that the undetected influence of Dutch culture makes it harder to generalize over an international population. Incidentally, the data strongly align with Hofstede's culture theory. Dutch culture is very individual, tendencies towards indulgence and highly feminine (Hofstede, 2020). Individual cultures value individual freedom, indulgent cultures value having fun and enjoyment and 'doing as one pleases' and feminine cultures value 'liking what you do' and dislike competition. In lesser intensity, the way arts entrepreneurs approach economic values reflect this: they value networking and time management and have some resistance against unquestioningly adapting to their superiors -or customer's- wishes. Networking is reflected in femininity, time management is reflected in uncertainty avoidance and resistance against a 'subordinate' role is related to low power distance. In almost every sense, Dutch culture aligns with the main findings of the research, which brings up the issue of external validity. Are arts entrepreneurs extreme examples of Dutch mentality? Are they regular examples with the only difference being driven by artistic values instead of, for example, care-related or technical values? What would a Brazilian or Indian arts entrepreneur think of this issue and would it make a difference in the strategies they deploy, or on their thoughts and value systems behind those strategies?

Some limitations were due to complications in the data collection phase. As mentioned before, one interview took place in a place alien to the interviewer, possibly diminishing the level of trust between the interviewee and the researcher. One interview took place in two locations because the initially chosen location became too noisy for proper recording, resulting in an informal but chaotic interview.

A point of concern is the lack of female representation in both the interviews and mostly the results. This disadvantage is caused because gender was not taken into account when selecting interviews for coding and with these omissions is that the majority of female participants are not included in the analysis anymore; the initial number of seven female interviewees is reduced to three females included in the data analysis. The concentration of women in cluster A here appears to be coincidence; the other women whose interviews were not coded are most likely two for cluster B and two for cluster C. CEO J experiences gender-related issues related to the paradox and it is therefore concerning that the role of the female voice in the data was significantly low in the data collection and even lower in the data analysis. However, her issues were related to her role as a manager, not to artisticity itself. In none of the other interviews was reason to assume that gender played a significant role for the subject of this paper. This was confirmed in the data analysis where gender didn't emerge as a theme either.

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## Appendix I: Participant clusters

### Legend

Cluster A: Applied creatives
Cluster B: Practical conceptualls
Cluster C: Non-commercial conceptualls
Cluster D: Strained applied creatives

The column Attitude Comm is about whether participants have a positive or negative opinion on the concept of commercialism. Strain is whether participants reported serious strain from the paradox. Artisticity is about whether participants find artistic expression to be important in their professional lives; a 'no' implies that the participant finds artistic creativity to be important instead. Applied/conceptual is about whether participants self-identify as applied or not. Personality traits are individual personality traits verbally identified by the participants. These are not translated to ensure nuances are not lost in translation. Note that in the cluster analyses, these traits are complemented with implicitly named traits that are not added to this table. Balance is about whether participants are content with the balance between artisticity and commercialism in their professional lives.

Name	Attitude Comm	Strain	Artisticity yes/no	Applied/ conceptual	Personality (Dutch)	Balance
Interior designer P	Pos	No	No	Applied	Ondernemersbloed, bewijsdrang, gevoelig voor sfeer, kan goed tussen regels door lezen en zo klanten echt helpen (dienstbaar)	Min
Urban planner M	Pos	No	No	Applied	Praktisch, niet in extremen, past in beide hokjes half	Min
Web design CEO R	Pos	No	No	Applied	Bèta én creatief, combineert dat graag. Niet concurrerend. Gedijt goed in scheppende omgeving. Voelt zich best creatief, is tevreden	Plus
Graphic design CEO J	Pos	No	No	Applied	Stressgevoelig, praktisch, mogelijkheden denken, ondernemend, dienstbaar (wil de ander plezieren), 50/50 ondernemer en creatieveling	Min
Photographer R	Pos	No	Yes	Conceptual	Balans tussen goede gemoedstoestand uit zekerheid en creativiteit.	Min



Novelist T	Pos	No	Yes	Conceptual	Zorgeloos en zeer gedisciplineerd en positief. Gedecideerd. Geloof in mijzelf, meegaand. Slecht in nadenken over geld. Fantasieverslaafd	Plus
Interior designer R	Pos	No	Yes	Border	Zorgeloos, zeer eigenwijs. 'Beide kanten in persoonlijkheid', admin + art. Zeer gedisciplineerd doch 'gek'. Nieuwsgierigheid. Ondernemersbloed van mezelf. Streng, georganiseerd	Plus
Musician D	Pos	No	Yes	Conceptual	Doener, positief, constructief	Min
Graphic designer and DJ K	Neg	Yes	Yes	Conceptual	Extreem kritisch, weeg alles af. Heeft duidelijk eigen ideeën	Min
Filmmaker E	Neg	Yes	Yes	Conceptual	Eigenwijs, eigen ideeën	Plus
Conceptual artist P	Neg	Yes	Yes	Conceptual	Einzelganger, niet samen kunnen/willen werken, zeer eigenwijs, emotioneel, niet leuk = niet doen, geen afleiding willen, kwetsbaar, tegen kritiek kunnen en beetje hard zijn,	Plus
All-round designer B	Pos	Yes	No	Applied	Niet zo zakelijk. In het midden qua (ELOG PUUR) maar werk is (ELOG COMM). Wordt niet gelukkig van geld verdienen dus moeilijk	Min