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Artists' livelihoods:
the artists in arts policy conundrum

Susan Mary Jones
PhD 2019

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Susan Mary Jones

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the requirements of Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Manchester School of Art, Manchester
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Abstract

This PhD examines the positioning of visual arts within the creative industries through an in-depth, empirical study of the artistic and personal lives of a discrete number of artists in North West England. It argues that the policy elision of visual arts with the creative industries has resulted in lack of in-depth knowledge of the 'wealth of differences' in motives, intentions, attitudes and personal circumstances of artists as they evolve and pursue livelihoods through art practices over a life-cycle. Although certain Arts Council England policies during 1985-2015 intended to aid artists' livelihoods directly or indirectly, analysis confirms that no real change was effected. Over that period, visual artists have tended to be at an economic disadvantage with low incomes and lack of accessible opportunity undermining their ability to amplify creative processes and sustain livelihoods in the longer-term. The research which draws together primary and secondary sources demonstrates that the art practices of artists are characterised by continuous practice-led 'research and development' fired by deeply-held beliefs and intrinsically-framed values and punctuated by creative interactions within and beyond their immediate artistic disciplinary context and geographical location. The frameworks supportive of artists often remain close to where they reside, encompassing the artistic encouragement and emotional comfort provided by families and individually-framed development and professional relationships. The fine-grain analysis and triangulation with cross-reference to relevant evidence developed within this research has generated a new understanding of the interrelated conditions conducive for, and supportive of, artists' practices and livelihoods including a definition of characteristics of, and parameters for, enabling and facilitating these through arts policies.

Key words: artists' livelihoods, arts policy, cultural labour, contemporary visual arts, resilience, inequality

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Acronyms

Artists Time Space Money/Artists Insights (ATSM/AI)

Artists' Union (AU)

Artists' Union England (AUE)

Arts Council of England (ACoE)

Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB)

Arts for Everyone (A4E)

Arts Council England (ACE)

Campaign for Cultural Democracy (CfCD)

Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)

Contemporary Visual Arts Manchester (CVAM)

Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN)

Contemporary Visual Arts Network North West (CANNW)

Council of Regional Arts Associations (CoRAA)

Creative Partnerships (CP)

Creative People and Places (CPP)

Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)

Exhibition Payment (EP)

Exhibition Payment Right (EPR)

Grants for the Arts (GftA)

National Artists Association (NAA)

National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP)

National Framework Plan (NFP)

National Lottery (NL)

National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)

North by North West (NbyNW)

Regional Arts Association (RAA)

Regional Arts Board (RAB)

Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP)

Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO)

Turning Point (TP)

Turning Point Network (TPN)

UBI (Universal Basic Income)

Visual Arts in Liverpool (VAiL)

Year of the Artist (YOTA)

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Introduction

When founded in 1945, Arts Council of Great Britain placed the interests of individual artists at the forefront. The new body's primary function was to provide artists with the 'courage, confidence and opportunity' to 'walk where the breath of the spirit' took them (Pearson, 1982:55). But by 2018, the future resilience of funded arts organisations was Arts Council England's overriding concern and consideration of the needs and aspirations of individual artists were peripheral (Woodley, Towell, Turpin, Thelwall and Schneider, 2018:11). This thesis responds to the current lack of knowledge about the merits of supporting artists through arts policy by articulating a new rationale for supportive conditions for artists' practices and livelihoods over time and making recommendations for future arts policy interventions.

The first section of the introduction provides the context for the primary research including why it was needed, the research objectives, main research questions and the geographical scope. It outlines my professional background in relation to the new research and finishes by defining some of the key terms used in the thesis. The second section sets out the framework for the research and structure of the thesis and summarises the contents by chapter. The final section locates the new research within the current field of enquiry by demonstrating its original contribution to knowledge.

1. Research context

The topic for research arose after review of relevant literatures for the period 1985-2015. This evidenced that artists had been particularly disadvantaged by government and arts policy after 1997, the point when the arts became situated within the creative industries. These industries, in which economic growth is the main driver and performance indicator, are primarily concerned with generating and exploiting intellectual property for wealth and job creation (DCMS, 2001). Because creative people have a preference for acquiring intrinsic rather than

financial rewards, creative industries' working conditions are inherently undermining of livelihoods and foster exploitation including self-exploitation (Florida, 2002; Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009). The informal recruitment processes and 'network sociality' of the creative industries including the pitching culture and expectation of multiple job holding and work mobility compound this base defect and limit participation to those who exhibit the appropriate behavioural traits (McRobbie, 2002:516; Gill, 2007). As a result, there is under-representation including by women and ethnic minorities (Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009:420). Creative industries conditions have a particularly adverse impact on work prospects for women with family responsibilities (McRobbie, 2002) and on some male communities of interest (Morgan and Nelligan, 2015).

Arts policies which present artists' irregular occupations as the norm without acknowledging or ameliorating the disadvantages further compound the mismatch between creative industries' economic imperatives and artists' pursuit of non-financial reward (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2009:415). In terms of knowledge specifically about economic and social conditions for visual artists, the nuance of how artists pursue art practices within the reality of sustaining domestic and professional lives has not been captured in prior research designed to inform arts policies.

With the exception of Brighton, Pearson and Parry's (1985) independent academic study, the tendency has been to offer generalised proposals for improving artists' financial position. These have ranged from strategic changes to the tax and benefits system which were not achieved (Galloway, Lindley, Davies and Scheibl, 2002) to increasing professional development provision for artists, including business and marketing training (Shaw and Allen, 1996; TBR, 2018c).

As prevailing conditions for the arts over the last 30 years have consistently placed artists at an economic disadvantage, this new research aimed to identify a new rationale for support to artists' practices and livelihoods through arts policy.

- **Research objectives**

The objectives for new qualitative research were to:

- provide fine-grain analysis of how artists construct and evolve livelihoods over time within art practices;
- identify propositions for supportive interventions in a particular geographical area that could inform scoping of future larger-scale research studies on productive interrelationships between artists and arts policies.

- **Research questions**

This new research aimed to address gaps in knowledge in two interrelated areas. Firstly, to provide original explanations for how artists' personal and behavioural characteristics and preferences, human and social circumstances and use of collectively-held coping strategies impact on the construction and evolution of livelihoods through art practices. Secondly, to identify the policy interventions that could assist artists to sustain art practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle.

- **What are artists' perceptions and practical accounts of the desirable conditions and contexts for pursuit of creative practices and making a living;**
- **How do artists' experiences compare and contrast with those of arts policymakers and mediators;**
- **What are the underlying values each party brings to their assessments?**

In this way, the research questions provided the grounds for establishing areas of commonality and divergence in the perspectives of arts policy and the experiences of artists as the basis for identifying the conditions which are genuinely supportive of sustainable art practices.

- **Study scope**

Confining the new study to a particular geographical region was a pragmatic decision to ensure the primary research was achieved in the time available for doctoral study and met the research objectives. In practical terms, a closely defined research location eased the arrangements with the sample of artists participating in a series of interviews over a specified time period. As regards ensuring research rigor, the analyses benefitted from contextualisation within a specific time, place, culture and situation (Charmaz, 2006:131) and from integrating the features of a particular arts and cultural economy into considerations of the conditions supportive of building artists' capacity and productive, sustainable livelihoods (Pratt 2015:1). By using a specific location, a nuanced understanding was gained of the ambitions and economic circumstances of independent practitioners within a life-cycle, rather than at a particular point in development, and of the positive and negative conditions surrounding them (Wright, Robinson, Querol and Colston, 2011).

The North West region was chosen because it is large enough to contain a diverse pool of visual artists to draw from, with a range of practices and career lengths and demonstrating geographical and social breadth. The UK's third most populated geographical region, artists are located in the metropolitan areas of Liverpool and Manchester and in the counties of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire which contain both urban and rural areas. The constituency of artists which is continuously regenerated by graduates from degree courses at the region's ten higher education institutions has access to a range of provision including 22 studio groups and a dozen or so other small-scale artists' initiatives and networks. The variety of visual arts organisations for artists to relate to ranges from large Arts Council funded arts organisations such as Liverpool Biennial and CFCCA in Manchester to smaller funded and independent galleries and agencies including Artgene, Cumbria and In Situ and In Certain Places, Lancashire.

- **My professional background**

An incentive to conduct this new research study was my existing professional interest in the topic. A primary motivation across my various roles in the visual arts over the last 40 years has been to understand and effect improvement in the environment for artists' practices. As a practising artist I helped found the National Artists Association, making representation to arts employers and funders for better pay and conditions for artists. As a researcher, I illuminated aspects of art practice for the benefit of artists through editing publications including *The Directory of Exhibition Spaces* (1983) and *Art in Public* (1992). Generating productive interrelationships between artists and arts policy was a common ambition in my two major independent research studies. A feasibility study to improve the interface and arrangements between artists' practices and work in the public realm generated Axis as an organisation which subsequently gained Arts Council revenue support for its innovative digital platform. My three-year study of the scope and value of artist-led organisations influenced new national and regional arts policies to specifically support artist-led initiatives. In my role as Director of a-n The Artists information Company for fourteen years I advocated for better recognition of artists' needs and aspirations within arts policy and developed supportive infrastructures including networks for providers of artists' professional development and the artist-led and the hybrid artists' representative body AIR. The consistently problematic relationship between artists and arts policy was evidenced by a-n's on-going research into the impact of changing external trends on artists' employment over a thirty-year period and for the Paying Artists Campaign, these acting as incentive to scoping new approaches through this doctoral research.

- **Definition of key terms**

It is pertinent here to set out my definitions for some of the key terms used within the thesis, namely for visual arts practices, for visual artists, for livelihood and for the capitals associated with livelihood. In terms of visual arts practices, I recognise the dissipation of historical art form boundaries and dissemination routes and incorporation by some artists of new processes and distribution methods as

enabled by newer technologies or through people-centred practices (Jackson and Jordan, 2005:19; Bellavance 2011:3). My definition of visual arts practices is therefore inclusive: it encompasses the long-standing practices of painting, sculpture, drawing and photography, the newer forms of visually-based live art performance, digital and multi-media and also practices which are by nature participatory, socially-engaged or collectively-forged.

Following Williams (1986:73), I define a visual artist by more than their mode of art practice (such as painting or photography) and include the artist's wider conceptualisation of, and attitude towards art practice, including the context of those with whom artists associate critically. However, in agreement with TBR (2018a:6) I construe the term 'visual artist' as self-defining and value-judgement based. Adopting this broader definition is particularly pertinent because contemporary visual artists are not adequately accounted for within the standard statistical frameworks currently used for capturing data and characterising the workforce and its development needs within policymaking (Jackson and Jordan, 2005:25).

My definition of livelihood is an individual's ability to realise assets and agency, this as development from two existing explanations. Livelihood comprises 'the people and their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets. Assets encompass those which are tangible and intangible, including an individual's right to claim resources [such as] public benefits and to utilise their skills and capabilities to meet all their human needs' (Chambers and Conway, 1992:6). However, it is only through holding agency that individuals can exercise these rights. Thus, achieving livelihood is dependent on realising assets and agency where the latter is 'the *command* (my emphasis) an individual (or family) has over income or a bundle of resources that can be used or sustained to satisfy its needs' (Blaikie, Cannon and Wisner, 2004:12).

In relation to sustaining livelihoods, the individualised livelihood framework referenced in the thesis is defined as arising from acquisition of a number of capitals or assets (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002:8). Firstly, human capital that incorporates a person's skills and education and the time available to engage in

income generation. Secondly, social capitals accrue from trust-based and reciprocal relationships, membership of pertinent bodies and from institutional standing. Thirdly, political capital which derives from a person's access to political and decision-making processes. This is in effect a 'gatekeeper' asset which permits or prevents accumulation of other assets (Booth, Holland, Hentshel, Lanjouw and Herbert, 1998:79). The fourth asset of physical capital comprises access to infrastructure such as transport, communications, equipment and facilities assistive of an individual's income generation. The final two capitals within the livelihood framework are financial - incorporating savings, pensions and social benefits such as sick and maternity pay - and natural capital including access to housing and natural and common-pool resources.

2. Research framework

The thesis which is structured in two parts contains two perspectives on the mechanisms and interventions supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods. The arts policy perspective contained in Chapter 1 formed an arts policy evidence base for the new research. Chapter 2 which contains the methodology and methods for the primary research acts as an intermediary to the second part of the thesis. Chapters 3-6 collectively provide an explanation from the artist's perspective of the positive and negative conditions surrounding art practices and livelihoods, this drawn from the sample of artists who contributed to the primary research with further illumination from related theory and evidence. The conclusion to the thesis in Chapter 7 synthesises new knowledge from the primary research with my existing professional insight to recommend new approaches to delivering arts policy which are supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle.

Arts policy perspective

Chapter 1: Artists in arts policy provides an explanation of the impact of arts policies through analysis of selected direct and indirect interventions by various incarnations of Arts Council England into support for artists 1985-2015. It demonstrates how artist-focused policies and strategies arose either as applications

or bi-products of top level arts policies aligned with political interests, or from specific research and advocacy or as a combination of the two. It identifies the mismatches between expectations for and outcomes of such interventions and exposes the underlying misconceptions and structural constraints to sustaining equitable relationships between publicly-funded arts organisations and artists. Although there was awareness within policymaking processes that artists are largely motivated by intrinsic rewards such as acquisition of knowledge and contribution to social well-being rather than by financial considerations, arts policy has consistently employed an economics lens. Rather than stakeholders, the predominant thrust over the policy period studied was to perceive artists as a service industry. Support for artists was thus aligned in the first instance with objectives for strengthening the status and programmes of publicly-funded arts organisations and then after 1997, to the imperatives of the creative industries in which government positioned the arts.

Conceptualisation of artists' needs and poor social and economic status has thus followed Throsby (2007), Abbing (2002) and Towse (1992) by insinuating that artists' 'unworldly' behaviour, including preferences to make work for its own sake, is the root cause of their poor financial status. Arts policy interventions have been predominantly designed to temper 'wrong' behaviours so that artists fit better into arts and creative industries employment norms. Correcting artists' preferred *modus operandi* by improving their business acumen and social skills through strategies and funding for training, professional development and residencies were generally perceived within arts policy as the way for artists to acquire the 'right' behaviours that would improve their livelihood prospects (ACE, 2006c:7).

In 2001, government cultural policy made direct support for artists' research and development a central objective (DCMS, 2001), a political imperative which drove ACE's subsequent strategies for increased direct and indirect support for artists. However, grants for individual artists from an enhanced direct funding scheme became successively scarcer over the period 2003-2010 (Jackson and Devlin, 2005; Fleming, Erskine and Benjamin, 2010). While ACE's own research implicitly confirmed that artists needed a nuanced combination of 'time, space and money'

to progress and sustain art practices over time (Jeffreys, 2004), its in-house programme of work Artists Time Space Money/Artists Insights failed to deliver the intended structural and economic support. When direct funding has been available to artists it has rarely been light-touch or at sufficient levels to adequately address the constituency's research and development needs (Hinds and Storr, 2010; Fleming *et al*, 2010). Such funding has tended to be aligned to public benefit and offered on a highly-competitive basis.

Policy interventions after 2011 predominantly expected artists to conform to the governing conditions and 'rules' of contemporary visual arts including accepting the implicit and explicit mediating and gatekeeping protocols of funded organisations (ACE, 2010a, b; ACE, 2013a) and associated poor economic terms (Glinkowski, 2010). The model for arts policy's thinking as regards individual artists is the behaviours ACE expects of funded arts organisations who have been systematically encouraged to be more business-like and financially self-sufficient (ACE, 2015). The '80s and '90s concept that government funding to ACE provided subsidy to deliver arts as a public benefit to society was gradually replaced by ACE's perception of public funding to arts organisations as investment in innovation (ACE, 2006c; ACE, 2010a). Supported through access to additional resources such as ACE's Catalyst scheme, funded arts organisations were encouraged to increase earned income and philanthropic giving.¹

In summary, successive arts policies during 1985-2015 favoured support to a building-based visual arts infrastructure and allocated the majority of arts funding to this. Whether artists' interests and practical concerns for livelihoods were integrated or stand-alone interventions, central to or marginal in arts policy, the priority for arts policy has been to grow the arts infrastructure, strengthen the financial position of arts organisations, including professionalising the workforce. Improvement of artists' social and economic status has consistently remained a subsidiary and optional concern within arts policy.

Chapter 2: Methodology forms the intermediary between the prior chapter's policy analysis and the outcomes of the primary research. It comprises an explanation and critique of the methodology and methods employed including choice of methods,

recruitment and selection of artists, and my rationale for sequential interviews and data analysis processes. The initial literature review undertaken to finalise research aims, objectives and scope confirmed prior studies of artists' practices and economic circumstances as predominantly quantitative, producing headline, generalised conclusions for improving artists' social and economic status. The key objective of the methodology was to counter such assumptions. My ambition was to expose through the new research what Brighton *et al* termed as the 'wealth of differences' in artists' motives, intentions and attitudes which influence 'what is produced... and how and why it is used....' (1985:189-198).

In addition, my methodology needed to ensure that perceptions and conceptualisations arising from my prior roles in the field of study and own research on the topic and knowledge were rigorously re-examined. Choice of inductive methodology that incorporated and amplified my reflexivity as investigator ensured this by enabling in-depth interrogation and fine-grain analysis from sequential interviews over an eight-month period with a sample of ten artists. This method ensured that evidence produced was highly-reflective of these particular artists' lived experiences. Hearing artists' stories in depth and first-hand and over a period of time as they pursued art practices within the reality of their lives provided a rich resource of original data and insight on the topic to inform the new research. First-hand explanations and assessments of the conditions that artists encountered illuminated both supportive and discouraging environments for artists' livelihoods through art practices.

Artists' perspective

Chapters 3-6 provide the artists' perspective and demonstrate the diverse ways in which artists' practices and livelihoods are constructed and evolve over time and are conditioned by the reality of personal and professional lives, including their beliefs and behavioural preferences. The term 'whole artist' is used across these chapters as definition for this personal-professional reality. 'Whole artist' encompasses both the artist's upbringing and the particularities and nuances of their professional and personal life. In this respect, the professional facet includes

the artist's work, their attitude and behaviour to it and its critical context (Williams, 1986:73). The personal facet incorporates the artist's human characteristics including motivations for art practices within their overall lives and in relation to their social class, and their emotional and physical wellbeing (Deci and Flaste, 1995). A 'whole person' approach is thus particularly pertinent to my study which 'places the people [we are most concerned about aiding] in the centre' and enables understanding to be gained of their particular situation including the tensions and vulnerabilities caused by changing circumstances however these occur (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002:289).

Chapter 3: Portraits of the artists positions the voices of the ten artists studied within the primary research in the mind's eye as the thesis progresses. From transcripts and using the artists' own words and phraseology, the thesis presents vignettes of each artist, capturing their personality and individualised approaches to making and manifesting art practices over time. By articulating impacts on artists' livelihood prospects of *how* they work, *why* and *with whom* and in differing economic and arts climates over time, these artists' stories informed the processes that are explored fully in subsequent chapters.

My argument for the tripartite concept of 'creative space' as one of three core conditions for sustainable artists' practices and livelihoods is established in Chapter 4: Creative space. The elements of 'creative space' comprise an artist's embedded values and beliefs, art making as a creative process of self-discovery and the immediate supportive structures around each artist which provide emotional, intellectual and artistic support. When these three elements coalesce, my assertion is that the resulting dynamic imbues artists with the confidence to act. In this way, and by imbuing artists with qualities and livelihood assets relevant to sustaining practices over a life-cycle, achieving this condition contributes to mitigating some of the vulnerabilities inherent in artists' lived experiences.

In Chapter 5: Situated practices, I put forward a case for the second of the three core conditions conducive for artists' practices and livelihoods. Situated practices are defined as those conceived, developed and modified by artists over time in relation to artistic ambitions which encompass their personalised circumstances

including where they live and their family contexts. Within this context, artists' personalised solutions amplify their art practices and can generate further livelihood assets and thus act as amelioration against unforeseen circumstances. Artists' access to work which is attuned and localised to their personal circumstances is shown to foster adaptable practices which can be sustained over time. This chapter articulates a significant structural barrier to artists' livelihood prospects by defining a new aspect as an extension from the existing 'artists and money' repertoires developed by Taylor and Littleton (2008).

The strategic role of co-validation in generating additional livelihood assets for artists through achieving mutually-productive working relationships is proposed as the third core condition for artists' sustained practices in Chapter 6: Negotiated relationships. My new analysis in this respect diverges from current contemporary visual arts perceptions and protocols for forging interrelationships between artists, arts organisations and intermediaries. In contrast to traditional concepts of 'career stage' as age or length-of-practice related, the primary research and related evidence demonstrate how artists' acquisition and coalescence of certain qualities creates what I have named 'critical confluence'. In respect of development of my new analysis, I fully acknowledge and reference De Mynn's existing prototype for enabling infrastructures for artists' development (2016:19). My new term is a descriptor for the point at which an artist's achievement of the core competences necessary for a well-developed, personalised infrastructure provides them with visibility and credibility in, and income from, their art sphere (Jones and DeFillippi 1996; Matarasso 2017).

The reflection across the thesis on the 'whole artist' makes the case for a new understanding of the conditions conducive to sustaining artists' practices and livelihoods. In tandem, I use the term 'tensions and vulnerabilities' to discuss adverse conditions inherent in artists' pursuit of art practices and livelihoods, these articulated from the respective perspectives of arts policy (in Chapter 1) and of artists (in Chapters 3-6). My choice of term is apposite because it accounts both for external and structural frictions and those which are internally-held and emotional. In this respect, I accept the Collins Dictionary definition of a tension as something

arising from structural circumstances, such as conflict or mistrust due to differing ideologies, behaviours and expectations of artists and institutions. Vulnerability is an explanation for mental or emotional stress causing weakness and is instanced by the personal, creative or economic insecurity for artists arising from these structural circumstances.²

The conclusion to the thesis is in Chapter 7: Reframing interdependencies. This chapter synthesises insight from the new research with my existing professional experience to articulate a new formula for understanding the parameters of, and impact on artists of conditions supportive of their practices and livelihoods over time. My argument is that 'creative space', 'situated practices' and 'negotiated relationships' form a trio of desirable conditions for supporting a diversity or 'wealth' of artists to navigate tensions and manage vulnerabilities, enabling them to 'get ahead' rather than just 'get by', and make a living through art practices over a life-cycle. Inclusion of 'negotiated relationships' within these core conditions makes my formula divergent in one significant aspect from prior assumptions within arts policy which has defined these as the combination of 'time, space and money' predominantly through provision of grants and physical workspace and improvements to state systems (Jeffreys, 2004; ERS, no date).

The concluding chapter continues by defining a new category and descriptor for emancipated artists. That is to say, for artists who by acquiring these core conditions demonstrate the necessary confidence, capacity and characteristics to benefit and gain emotional and professional strength through art practice within fluctuating contemporary visual arts environments. The qualities of this artist type are in stark contrast to those of creative industries workers whose lives are characterised by acquiescence and emotional and financial uncertainty. I agree with prior arguments that creative industries conditions which are discriminatory to certain sections of workers are untenable within the publicly-funded arts which aspires to equality of opportunity. It is notable that prior optimism that artists could achieve greater visibility within arts policymaking at ACE proved unfounded (Glinkowski, 2010:14). The thesis draws to a close with two bold propositions designed to circumvent the current arts policy stumbling blocks that impede

confident, capable artists from pursuing art practices and sustaining livelihoods over a life-cycle. These are proposed as worthy subjects for future research.

3. Contribution to knowledge

This thesis makes a contribution to knowledge in two ways. Firstly, the new synthesis of policy literatures and resulting analysis of arts policy evidences the inherent structural flaw in locating support to artists in future within the remit of Arts Council England. It establishes how over a 30-year period, arts policy has moved from inclusion of direct funding to artists to an institutional investment model in which the overriding priority is creation, preservation and growth of a permanent, professionally-resourced infrastructure of arts organisations. Secondly, the thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by providing a new understanding of the core conditions which are the most conducive for emancipated, productive artists to pursue practices and livelihoods over time while demonstrating the historical and contemporary mismatch between these and arts policy ambitions.

Notes

¹ Catalyst was a £70 million programme introduced by ACE in 2012 to support philanthropy across the funded arts and cultural sector. Over 400 organisations were selected to establish an endowment (tier 1), build capacity to fundraise for new money, which ACE would match (tier 2), and/or encourage organisations new to fundraising to work together to build capacity and skills (tier 3).

² The Collins Dictionary provides the reference for the definitions I have used for tension and vulnerability, as in <https://www.collinsdictionary.com> [Accessed on 1st August 2019]

Chapter 1: Artists in arts policy

This chapter provides critique and analysis of the efficacy of arts policies 1985-2015 intended to impact on artists' practices and livelihoods within the social and political circumstances of the time, including identifying tensions and conflicts. It starts by drawing on Brighton *et al* (1985) for both policy context on environmental conditions for artists' practices and as benchmark for artists' demographics and economic status. The sections which follow examine three broad policy types, with cross-references to pertinent commentary and data illuminating and evidencing relationships to, and impacts of, policy for artists.

The first section considers *top-down policy interventions* in the form of specific strategies for artists 1985-2002 within arts development ambitions premised on subsidiarity for delivery and long-term sustainability. In the second section, *artists were placed at the centre* of policy 2003-2006 when arts funding was plentiful. The third section covers the austerity policy period from 2008 when government arts funding was substantially cut and *artists were positioned at the margins*. Main barriers and flaws of each policy period are summarised at the end of each section. Prior to the conclusion, reference to pertinent industry and academic evidence compares and contrasts artists' demographics and incomes in 2015 with 1985.

The conclusion identifies the underlying constraints of arts policies that align strategic support for artists' practices and livelihoods within broader visual arts development strategies as delivered through arts organisations. In contrast with the thesis overall, this chapter includes longer direct quotations from policy documents and from a witness interview with former Arts Council England Chief Executive Peter Hewitt because these better illuminate the contexts for and underlying concepts and assumptions within policymaking.

- **Artists' economic status in 1985**

A key reference point for this research is Brighton *et al's* (1985) academic study. Commissioned by the Gulbenkian Foundation and conducted 1977-1985, this arose

from political interest in identifying a rationale for patronage of artists within arts policy. The impetus was Redcliffe-Maud's report (1976) that acknowledged the shifting political, social and commercial circumstances of the visual arts and concluded future arts patronage strategies should account for central, regional and local perspectives and this art form's specifics as 'different in both kind and degree from the performing arts'. A distinctive factor was that visual artists 'normally work alone'. Their art practices rest first-and-foremost on continuing to make the work, regardless of whether there are markets for it or the finance in place to do so. In terms of artists' economic and social status, Redcliffe-Maud identified the core issue for future visual arts policy as 'how to foster *individual creativity* (my emphasis) and how to bring the results [of this] before the public' (1976:141). As artists' incomes were generally lower than the national average and many artists existed at poverty levels, Redcliffe-Maud asserted that independent research into conditions affecting artists' economic status was essential, so future policies could be 'settled in the light of reason' (1976:177).

Brighton *et al's* study comprised analyses of sales and marketing approaches of predominantly London-based commercial galleries and visual arts policies in (the then) Arts Council of Great Britain (ACGB) and regional arts associations (RAAs). Interviews were held with 325 artists in seven areas in England, Scotland and Wales. The study took place in the period when a Conservative government reduced grant-in-aid to ACGB and ambitions for regeneration and enterprise drove regional strategies for economic growth and prosperity. The expectation was that communities would benefit through trickle-down job creation and environmental improvement from schemes such as the Government's Garden Festivals programme commencing in Liverpool in 1984 that primed one-off regional regeneration of post-industrial and derelict land. ACGB's 1985 ten-year Glory of the Garden strategy responded to political objectives for regional regeneration. It devolved £4.4m of grant-in-aid from London to enhance contemporary visual art presentation in what ACGB deemed its 'rightful place' in 22 municipal galleries in impoverished parts of English regions including Manchester, Oldham, Preston and Rochdale in the North West. As Brighton *et al* evidenced and acknowledged the

variety of approaches to and diversity of manifestations of contemporary visual artists practice within ambitions to inform future arts policies it is particularly pertinent to my research. Brighton *et al* provides a 'benchmark' for considering related evidence produced since, including the primary research and other data on artists' working patterns and incomes over the three decades since.

Characteristics of artists' lives in 1985

- **Low incomes and dual careers common**

Artists' average annual income from all sources at £4,481 represented just under a third of national average salary levels. Only 29% of artists' incomes arose from art practice. Just one artist in 20 was full-time and earning anything like a significant income from sales and commissions. Nearly 75% of artists pursued dual careers through teaching in art education at some level (1985:39-44).

- **Gender and socio-economic class under-represented**

Males constituted 80% of all artists. Women were under-represented because female artists ceased to practice in their mid-thirties due to taking on family responsibilities. More than half of all artists came from the top two social classes. Shortage of employment prospects was cited as a contributory factor in the artists' constituency's under-representation of lower socio-economic groups (1985:26-27).

- **Limited opportunity for meritocracy**

Research into the workings of the gallery and art market research confirmed that artists' ability to succeed on their own merit was limited because the art world was controlled by a 'small, powerful grouping of influential galleries and successful artists who by maintaining and promulgating shared assumptions about the nature and importance of art, sustain the existing structures in order to preserve commercial and symbolic values' (1985:191).

In terms of redressing such deficits and imbalances and rather than improving artists' economic circumstances through enhanced direct funding, Brighton *et al*

asserted the main function of policies in the UK arts councils and RAAs should be to fund galleries, exhibitions, commissions and to a lesser extent, other support services from which artists might indirectly derive financial benefit. In contrast with arguments I will make later in this chapter, recommendations for improving artists' economic status are located within traditional gallery and art market development. Improving and creating more galleries showing contemporary work could resolve the public's underlying lack of confidence and enthusiasm for buying and commissioning works of art. While enabling artists to establish their practices and 'mediate their own reputations directly with the public', increased financial support to artist-run organisations was mainly justified because such ventures serve to endorse and preserve dominant art world patterns over the longer term (1985:66).

1. Top-down policy interventions

This section which covers the 1985-2002 period examines three strategies which exemplify the first policy type of top-down artist-specific interventions set within overall arts development ambitions of the time. These policies are reliant on advocacy and enforcement from arts funding bodies to maintain rigor and on subsidiarity for delivery and long-term sustainability. In this respect, the principle of subsidiarity is that a 'central authority should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level'.³ The gallery-orientated Exhibition Payment Right (EPR) and residency-based Year of the Artist (YOTA) programme are critiqued for efficacy referencing Hutton and Fenn (2002), my own research (Jones, 2014) and Stephens (2001). The driving principle for both EPR and YOTA was long-term improvement of artists' conditions by establishing mutuality through strengthening working relationships between art organisations and artists. It is notable however how little evaluative and published material could be located about the impact of these programmes.⁴ Consideration is then given to the impact on artists' employment and livelihoods of ACGB's 'percent for art' policy and subsequent public art commissioning programmes within National Lottery policy, with cross-references made to Selwood (1995), Adams (1996) and Hewison (2014).

- **Exhibition Payment Right (EPR)**

Although instigated top-down by ACGB in 1979, EPR was devolved in 1985 to regional arts associations (RAAs), later regional arts boards (RABs), for implementation. Sustainability over the long-term was dependent on achieving integrated, equitable relationships between gallery and artist in the provision of art as a public benefit.

‘Public galleries and museums choose to exhibit the works of living artists for the enjoyment and education of visitors. Both these functions are of wide benefit to the community. Artists provide a service, and, just as other workers in the gallery are entitled to be paid for their labour, so too artists are entitled to be paid for the use that is made of their work. Artists are professional workers as well. Every other professional sector in the arts expects that this public benefit should be recognised, and recompensed, by the payment of a fee.... The argument for EPR is based on equity - on fairness and justice. All artists should benefit from the consumption of their work by the public.’ (Jones, 2014:3)

Notably, no reference was made to EPR’s role in professionalising and equalising relationships between artists and galleries and thus in addressing structural issues including the sector’s limited opportunity for meritocracy. Although instigated and initially enforced by ACGB, arts councils in England and Wales and RAAs, a key EPR long-term objective was integration into the practical operations of each publicly-funded gallery. It was anticipated that each would adopt and take responsibility for maintaining EPR and associated budgets over the long-term. Expectations were that artists’ fees would be identified within programme budgets as an automatic right and financial demonstration of the intrinsic value of artists’ practices to the public exhibition process. When devolving responsibility for payment to funded galleries, ACGB and RAAs required them to include exhibiting fees in grant applications, showing how a proportion of these would come from their own resources. Future receipt of revenue grants to galleries was conditional on consistent payment of fees (Jones, 2014:4). North West Arts’ 1988 guidance to galleries provides illustration of activating and maintaining EPR.

To ensure that each gallery knows the level of support available and to establish the principle of the venue paying fees, it is proposed that each

venue eligible to apply will submit an estimate of fees required at the beginning of the financial year. An amount will then be earmarked for that venue. The venue will make the payments to artists at the end of each exhibition throughout the year and then claim against the amount allocated by North West Arts at the end of the financial year (Jones, 2014:88).

As enforcement, Southern Arts stated unequivocally that additional funding would be denied to non-compliant galleries (Jones, 2014:96). Arguably, this devolved mechanism for delivering EPR offered a solution to Redcliffe-Maud's dilemma, as above, of how to sustain artists' practices nationally, regionally and locally within the visual arts sector's overall operations. By default, ACGB and RAA/Bs envisaged that continuous application and the ensuing more productive relationships between galleries and artists would embed EPR's principles of equity and fairness. Consistent enforcement and advocacy by funding bodies would ensure exhibition organisers remained attuned to the circumstances lying below the surface of public exhibitions including the impact of paying exhibition fees on artists' status and immediate economic conditions. Provided funding bodies maintained this position, EPR offered a basis for long-term equanimity between galleries and artists.

By 1987, 19% of UK galleries publicly stated 'support [for the] principle of EPR' and 5% that exhibition fees were paid to artists (Jones, 2014:9). Significantly, such a solution to protecting artists' economic interests in alliance with publicly-funded galleries was pursued simultaneously in Canada where the rights of artists to have financial compensation for use of art works exhibited in public became enshrined in law in 1988 and remains in place contemporaneously (a-n, 2014).⁵

Notably, sustaining EPR in perpetuity was an aspect of Supporting Visual Artists: A National Framework Plan (NFP) developed 1998-2001 by an ACE/RAB officer team after extensive industry participation.⁶ Improving artists' economic, social and professional status was one of three aims. Others were to give artists more resources and opportunities and encourage greater public and governmental understanding of artists' value.⁷ In parallel with application of EPR and as an additional building-block in securing professional relationships between artists and galleries over the long-term, NFP commissioned a Code of Practice for the Visual

Arts and a framework for standardised industry rates of pay for artists.⁸ The latter was later adopted by Creative Partnerships (which is discussed in the next section). NFP's intention was substantial long-term strengthening of artists' practices and status. The flexible, integrated strategic planning framework was designed to coalesce ACE and RAB capacities with external sectoral and industry knowledge.

The overarching objective was 'to create, on a national basis, a supportive infrastructure through which artists can gain the space, professional skills and critical knowledge necessary to enable them to make the most of their creative abilities' (Glinkowski, 2010:70).

- **Year of the Artist (YOTA)**

YOTA is the second example of top-down policy interventions dependent on subsidiarity for long-term sustainability of core principles. It formed the finale to Arts 2000, a series of art form 'years' which included Visual Arts UK (1996) in Northern England and Photo Arts '98, Year of Photography and Electronic Image in the North West. An initial proposal for YOTA from practitioners advocated for an expansive research-focused programme of activities grounded in strengthening the long-term interrelationship between artists and people.⁹ However, this aspiration was simplified by arts funding bodies into a stand-alone, year-long programme of 1000 residencies of which a third would be artist-led, the remainder generated by funding agencies, local authorities and other stakeholders (Patten, C/PLEX and Jubilee Arts, 2000:41). YOTA's ambitions were intended to effect long-term change. By demonstrating and promoting good practice in commissioning and employing artists and extending the opportunity to experiment and replenish creative energy and initiate and develop their own projects, it intended to deliver 'lasting opportunities for artists creatively, structurally and financially' (Hutton and Fenn, 2002:v). Related advocacy campaigns were intended to maintain improved economic conditions for artists and the arts in general. However, even though most artists gained new skills or developed artistic abilities in some way, YOTA's residency model's formulaic constraints and short length of most residencies mitigated against significant replenishment of artists' creative energy (Hutton and Fenn, 2002:63). ACE and RABs established an artists' fees policy for YOTA and as a

legacy beyond. 'Hosts and enabling agencies ... were expected to pay a minimum rate of £150 a day (equivalent to £20,000 a year)' (a-n, 2004; Jones, 2013).

However, this key policy aspiration was not achieved as the mean daily YOTA fee paid to artists was roughly half this (at £76). In addition, only £4.2m (38%) of £15m invested by arts bodies into YOTA went on individual artists' projects, with management costs accounting for the major part (Hutton and Fenn, 2002:10).

- **Percent for art and National Lottery**

ACGB's 1985-1995 Glory of the Garden policy that intended to revitalise the regional gallery infrastructure was aligned with government ambitions to employ the arts as a tool for economic and social regeneration.

Urban Renewal continues to be high on the national agenda. The architecture and quality of life in our cities are subjects of debate throughout the country.... The arts are making a substantial contribution to the revitalisation of our cities.¹⁰

A primary objective of Percent for art adopted by ACGB in 1985 was more opportunity for artists to work in the public domain (ACGB, 1990:3). It catalysed a new network of independent public agencies. By 1988 eleven of these mediated between commissioners and artists in this new sphere of visual arts development. Over 40 local authorities voluntarily adopted percent for art policies by 1991 (Artists Newsletter, 1991:3). By 1993, 21% of local authorities had specialist public art officers (Selwood, 1995:164). The Enterprise Allowance scheme (EAS) from 1984 incentivised self-employment for new graduates and artists interested to work in the new sphere. Brighton *et al* acknowledged increased commission of art in public as an important contributor to artists' livelihoods. In 1989/90 £43m of artists' commission opportunities were offered, these often with substantial budgets (Axis, 1990:3). With 10-20% of budgets allocated to artists, by 1993 over a fifth of artists made a living from public art commissions and residencies (Selwood, 1995).

The National Lottery (NL) launched in 1994 promised the arts a new income stream to transform both the cultural landscape and provide greater levels of support for artists working in the public realm.¹¹ Such transformation and direct assistance

could be construed as furthering the two distinct parallel lines of artists' development pursued in the decade prior. Firstly, by enhancing public art commissioning programmes NL funding would substantially increase levels of work for artists. Analysis of moneys spent on public art including Arts Council of England awards and match funding suggests the total amount to December 1996 was £17.3m, in sums ranging from £3,500 for individual commissions to £4,019,500 for a 50-work environmental art trail (Adams, 1996). Secondly, capital funds would enable development of new and refurbished contemporary visual arts buildings including artist-led spaces and generate expanded audiences for, and new buyers and collectors of, contemporary art that Brighton *et al* had concluded *could* improve artists' economic status.

Notably, enhanced patronage of artists was a second objective of ACGB's 1985-1995 Glory of the Garden policy. However due to stand-still arts funding from government, regional infrastructural gallery development took priority and patronage of artists' was set aside as 'an important aspiration of the future' (Artists Newsletter, 1984:2). Although NL funding from 1994 didn't intend to redress lack of direct funding for artists *per se*, artists' initiatives benefited from the short-term Arts for Everyone (A4E) scheme, as discussed in Chapter 5. This light-touch funding stream scheme intended to 'add a new kind of energy and innovation to England's arts scene...' and 'refresh the arts other funding systems cannot reach, by opening up new opportunities'.¹² £21.27m was distributed in awards of up to £100,000 to 5,325 projects over A4E's short life-time (ACE, 1998). Serendipitously rather than intentionally and as discussed further in Chapter 5, it addressed a gap in provision for artists' collectively-developed initiatives such as MART and New Exposures in Manchester. A4E Express gave £3.6m to 917 visual arts projects, created short-term employment for artists and developed new artist-run group practice (ACE 1998/99:11). Funding for informal group projects was awarded for development of artists' skills, exhibitions, catalogues and open studios (Baker, 1997:6).

- **Barriers and flaws**

The conclusion at the end of this section is that base-line flaws in top-down policies make them ineffective over the longer-term. This is because this type is over-dependent on top-down enforcement, with long-term sustainability premised on achieving equanimity between arts institutions and artists. In EPR's case despite strong lead and commitment from ACGB and RABs to the core principle and provision of devolved, designated budgets to galleries, two factors caused it to fall into disuse. Firstly, ACGB's advocacy failed to convince funded galleries of EPR's merits, thus once responsibility was delegated to them it petered out. Secondly, although EPR might have been reactivated within ambitions for the NFP to create a holistic 'supportive infrastructure' for visual artists for the longer-term, the operational practicalities of merging national and regional bodies in 2001 into the new Arts Council England took precedence. Departure of experienced visual arts staff resulted in loss of institutional memory and lack of capacity to deliver NFP (Glinkowski, 2010:70). DHA similarly identified lack of common purpose between art organisations and artists, in that improving artists' fees was not a priority for curators nor were artists' pay and conditions a topic for conversation in the visual arts sector. However, increased funding to institutions wouldn't precipitate economic improvement for artists. Rather than expand fees for and budgets to artists, curators' preference was to generate additional activities that contributed to ACE's performance indicators such as audience engagement, interpretation and learning activity (2013b:28). Comparing Shaw and Allen (1996) and DCA (2013a:5) shows in any case that exhibition payments make minor contributions to artists' livelihoods. The former found 72% of artists showing in a publicly-funded space didn't receive a fee and average gross income from exhibitions was £143 and the latter that 71% of artists received no fee and 60% didn't even receive expenses.

In the case of YOTA, ambitions which were laudable and far-reaching couldn't realistically be achieved in the one-year time-scale defined by funding bodies. I concur with Stephens' view that rather than delivering the desired long-term change in artists' position in society, YOTA's residency formula operated more as convenient tool for arts managers to deliver specific policy objectives (2001: 41).

Achieving ‘significant replenishment of artists’ creative energy’ was a core ambition but there was no evidence this occurred. Uplifting artists’ economic status over the longer-term through instigating fair pay terms wasn’t achieved even within the Year itself (Hutton and Fenn, 2002:63,34). Aspects of ACE’s NFP related to maintaining fair pay and guidance on artists’ rates of pay as a YOTA legacy. However, although ACE published guidance in 2003, within two years this was withdrawn from website and officer guidance, under the view that it contravened the Competitions Act.¹³

In contrast, political imperatives for regional urban regeneration after 1984 and ACGB and local authority percent for art policies did improve artists’ livelihood prospects. In addition, comparing Ixia (2011) with related income data shows incomes of artists working primarily on public art commissions were considerably better than those of most artists.¹⁴ NL funding from 1994 substantially aided capital development of new and refurbished visual arts buildings with associated professionalisation of visual arts infrastructures and staffing (Jackson and Jordan, 2005:23). With the exception of public art commissioning and A4E funds, limited evidence was found of the parallel NL promise of ‘greater levels of support for artists’. The short-lived light-touch, inclusive A4E scheme was nonetheless significant because in contrast to arts policy’s tendency to define arts provision from the top, it successfully responded to the artists’ constituency’s artistic motivations and ideas for activities.

2. Artists at the centre

In the second policy type period 2003-2006, ACE made improving artists’ conditions of paramount importance to achieving longer-term policy objectives. This section references ACE and DCMS policy documents, Selwood (2007), Glinkowski (2010), Hewison and Holden (2004) and witness evidence from former ACE CEO Peter Hewitt to critique ACE’s policy Ambitions for the Arts 2003-06 for efficacy.¹⁵ The policy’s specific impact on artists’ livelihoods through Grants for the Arts (GftA) is assessed through Jackson and Devlin (2005), Hinds and Storr (2010), Louise (2011a), Alexander (2007) and my own research (Jones, 2018). BOP (2012) provides insight

into the economic impact on artists of Creative Partnerships (CP). Collectively, these provide assessment of whether artists' needs and aspirations were effectively addressed during a period of considerable growth in arts funding from government when policy specifically prioritised artists.

- **Ambitions for the Arts 2003-06**

This policy is unique within the period studied because it prioritised artists within a reorganised and unified ACE at a time when government funding to the arts was plentiful and the first-ever review of the contemporary visual arts was instigated. Within this context, Ambitions for the Arts marked an historic policy shift by asserting that it would be 'placing artists at the centre' for the first time in the Arts Council's history, this within new strategies specifically for talent development.

The artist is the 'life source' of our work. In the past, we have mainly funded institutions. Now we want to give higher priority to the artist.... We believe artists, at times, need the chance to dream, without having to produce. We will establish ways to spot new talent; we will find ways to help talent develop; we will encourage artists working at the cutting edge; we will encourage radical thought and action, and opportunities for artists to change direction and find new inspiration (ACE, 2003:4).

When asked why artists had been prioritised, ACE CEO 1998-2007 Peter Hewitt confirmed the rationale was that past policies had only paid lip-service to artists while the majority of funds went to arts organisations. The new policy was 'a genuine... a big attempt to shift the point of focus' to individual artists and makers. The ten-year plan of the newly-formed DCMS also asserted the centrality of artists. It intended to redress funding system imbalances by increasing levels of direct funding to artists in order to increase their independence from arts organisations.

Individual artists have often in the past felt excluded from the funding system which tends to require extensive administrative skills to understand and access. They have felt that the funding bodies were better at serving institutions which had developed the administrative skills to speak the special language of the funding bodies, than they were at serving individual artists....We shall ask funding bodies to build on current work by introducing individual awards for artist and creators which give individuals the power to develop their artistic project by themselves or in partnership with larger

cultural organisations...[providing] a vital opportunity to rebalance the current system to ensure that the best artists... have the power and resources they need to make a proper contribution to the work of cultural institutions and to present their work independently (DCMS, 2001:35).

An underlying concern when devising Ambitions for the Arts was that NL had enabled growth of arts institutions at the expense of individuals whose role in the arts infrastructure had become undervalued. During a Labour government, public funding to the arts increased by 70% in what the then ACE Chair Christopher Frayling dubbed as a 'golden age'.¹⁶ Hewitt confirmed that substantially-increased government grant-in-aid to the arts made realising this new artist-focused policy possible.

[In] the years of plenty ... funding had gone up massively – although much of that was hypothecated for theatre and education – and lottery resources were huge [so] ... we needed to take action to ensure that [the needs of] individual artists and makers were not submerged by the avalanche of organisation-based activities.

As prioritising artists was core to policy, it seems curious Hewitt made no reference to the strategic ACE/RABs research and planning in this respect in the period preceding his 1998 appointment. During 1995-1997 ACE's Visual Arts Department created a body of research specifically to improve understanding of how policy could be supportive of artists. For example, Shaw and Allen (1996) reconfirmed Brighton *et al*, in that artists' incomes remained low despite access to a wider spectrum of employment including from public commissions. Earnings of £7,936 per annum were 44% of the wage for manual workers – just a 12% improvement in percentage terms on Brighton *et al*'s data. Poor income levels were attributed to absence in artists of business awareness and skills and associated lack of 'bargaining power and self-confidence'. In contrast, salaried visual arts jobs had increased – for example 'nearly 50 new posts in regional galleries' were created through ACGB's 'Glory' gallery-based regional revitalisation strategy 1985-1995.¹⁷ Baker Tilley (1997) proposed an advocacy role for ACE to government for changes to tax and benefits systems to improve artists' legal and professional status and economic position. Such evidence contributed to an integrated Arts Council Visual

Arts: a Policy for the Arts Funding System in England in which achieving equitable and inclusive conditions for *many* artists was key.

Britain now needs: a visual arts economy where artists can earn a living, and work on equal terms with other creative producers; where the processes of partnership and collaboration drive a culturally diverse, open, rich culture; a strong countrywide network of visual arts spaces, agencies and organisations which ensure that artists have proper contracts and payment; well trained, internationally-experienced curators, promoters and publishers to develop wider engagement and understanding of the visual arts (ACoE, 1998/99:6).

An expansive development process for this policy involved the ACE/RAB working group, industry representation, visual arts organisations and advisors, an open policy forum and evidence from the Northern Region's Visual Arts UK (1996) and North West's Photo Arts '98 Year of Photography and Electronic Image. Artists were the first of five visual arts policy priorities, with full explanation of revenue and capital funding required to achieve objectives. Three of the 13 principles related to artists, namely their voices should be heard at the heart of decision-making; they were entitled to equitable fees and contractual arrangements; and freedom of expression should be respected. Notably, the 1998 draft of what later became the NFP, as discussed in the first section, called for 'making the status of, and support for, individual artists a Policy Priority....'. Alluding to lack of artists' patronage in the prior period, it asserted that artists 'need more time and funds to research, make and present work' and drew attention to lack of NL support for individual artists.¹⁸ Significantly, structural weaknesses in the financial models guiding visual arts expansion and dangers of over-reliance on treasury and lottery funding were acknowledged. For example, although lottery-funded grants to visual arts capital projects of over £120m and £40m for public art had 'brought great opportunities' there was concern about 'lack of vision in the ideas' emanating from these new cultural buildings. In addition, the 'spiral of decline in critical revenue support from government and local authorities is having a destructive impact... [on] the practising professional artist' (ACoE, 1998/99:10-11).

This combination of arts and political interests created conditions in which artists were prioritised, with funding levels enhanced regionally and nationally towards improvement of their social and economic position. Notably the then ACE Chair Gerry Robinson also promised that the ‘significant savings’ in overhead costs from merging national and regional arts bodies into Arts Council England in 2001 would be passed directly to artists (Gibbons, 2001). Peter Hewitt characterised the underlying principles of Ambitions for the Arts as two-fold: to ‘giv[e] the regions more of a voice ... and bring [in] the voice of individual artists with that’. However, when questioned about how arts organisations viewed prioritisation of the individual, his response highlighted policy’s shortcomings over the longer-term.

... [How] could [the arts organisations] argue with it [except] maybe privately. But to be frank, they probably saw it as a relatively minor demand on the overall resource that was available – it was very achievable, it wasn’t a threat to them..... *when there was so much money* (my emphasis).

In summary, the flaws in this policy type were structural. Firstly and as was the case with policies critiqued in the first section, the rationale wasn’t developed within funded arts organisations themselves and thus was over-dependent on enforcement and sustained direction ‘from the top’ of ACE. Secondly, the premise was that arts funding would continue to be plentiful and cover *all facets* of policy delivery. Notably, substantial growth of the visual arts infrastructure was encouraged by NL capital funding from 1994. For example although they wouldn’t open until some years later, NL awards during this policy period created new arts buildings including Manchester’s Chinese Arts Centre and Liverpool’s FACT in the North West.

- **Grants for the Arts (GftA)**

The open-access GftA scheme that promised artists ‘the chance to dream’ was a significant feature of Ambitions for the Arts. It merged ACE’s 100 plus separate schemes into designated funding strands for individuals, organisations, national touring, capital and stabilisation. GftA budgets were a considerable improvement

on the pre-merged 1997/98 arts funding system when region-by-region and national direct grants to visual artists totalled £405,000 (ACoE, 1998/99:19).

Investing in the creative talent of artists and individuals was one of five aims. Others were to change people's lives through opportunity to take part in or experience high-quality arts activities; increase opportunities for cultural diversity in the arts; support excellence, new ideas and activity to help build long-term stability in arts organisations; and increase arts resources. GftA was 'a brave and radical initiative which ha[d] transformed Arts Council England's grant making'. Individual artists got 40% of the value of all the first year's grants in 2003/04, with 1, 271 of 3,279 (52%) of artists applying successful. 71% of applicants found application processes easy. Success rate was almost twice higher amongst the over two thirds who discussed proposals in advance with regional ACE officers. In terms of widening access, 50% of grants went to those new to Arts Council funding (Jackson and Devlin, 2005). In contrast to Brighton *et al* who questioned the efficacy of enhanced direct funding to artists, the value to artists of GftA was three-fold.

Grants going directly to artists changed their power ... Approach[ing] arts organisations or other partners with money ... gave them greater control over the direction of a project. Grants for the arts also increased the amount of money [they could apply for], encouraging ambition and innovation (Jackson and Devlin 2005:32).

Louise (2011a) agreed that direct funding fostered a healthy balance of power by 'giving artists greater authority over their own production' and enabling 'more equitable ... relationships with their partners.' Glinkowski asserted that direct awards to artists created value in two interrelated ways. Firstly, 'no strings' funds enhanced an artist's 'sense of self' (2010:192). Time and freedom to concentrate on art practice and self-evaluate heightened esteem and amplified artists' personal and professional relationships. Direct grants may be transformative, precipitating a 'turning point' in artists' careers.... a moment of creative or professional breakthrough or change [with] significant and lasting consequences'. Secondly, although grants didn't necessarily improve artists' economic position in the longer term, by enabling them to pursue and hone a particular way of working such

awards provided a bridge to high-quality opportunities and enhanced artists' professional status. Direct funding thus contributes to sustaining artists' practices over a life cycle (2010:164-206). However as in 2005/06 just 1,600 artists received £8.8m in GftA grants, the centrality of artists in policy was questionable.

Given ACE's rhetoric on the importance of individual artists, there is less funding available than one might think. Most funding is still indirect, with artists benefiting only if they work with funded organisations. Funding for individual artists tends to focus on their professional development or on developing a commercial market for their products... [and] on artists with 'infrastructure' (Alexander, 2007:194).

Although initially funded by ACE's government grant-in-aid, after 2007 the individuals' GftA strand was NL funded and thus conditional on applicants demonstrating 'public benefit' and a cash contribution, both of these more difficult to achieve for individuals than organisations. Fleming *et al* concluded nevertheless that GftA beyond 2007 continued to offer 'the most immediate, obvious, relevant and flexible investment option for artists that want to innovate' and 'its flexibility and mobility [and] openness to a wide spectrum of eligible activities give it an unparalleled development role, particularly for new/emergent work'. However, it was continually over-subscribed and at risk of being 'plundered' and 'used to make up funding shortfalls or scale-up other investments' (2010:6,72,49). Research commissioned by ACE to inform future funding to individual artists reconfirmed artists' centrality within arts policy.

The nurturing of individual artists, practitioners and producers is at the heart of investment in the future of the arts. Creativity, whether primary (writer, sculptor) or secondary (actor, musician), lies with the individual. The value of arts organisations lies in their ability to connect individuals productively' (Hinds and Storr, 2010:8).

However, GftA's 'public benefit' requirement was found to constrain artistic experimentation and unreasonably undermine artists' confidence. It required streamlining so that unsuccessful bids didn't cost individuals unreasonable amounts of time, effort and money and distract from art practices. Over time, GftA became less attractive to artists. Of 1,033 applications in 2009 by individual artists, 485

gained funding, a success rate drop of 16 percentage points on Jackson and Devlin's figures (Louise, 2011a). Notably, although devolution of either all or the small awards aspect to peer agencies for distribution was recommended to improve access to and take-up of GftA, ACE didn't pursue this. (Hinds and Storr, 2010:17)

- **Creative Partnerships (CP)**

CP which operated 2003-11 is significant in critique of policies contributing to artists' livelihoods because it was integral to Ambitions for the Arts in which artists were central. A core feature was achieving quality participation by *many* artists over a sustained period through locally-devolved delivery organisations within a two-stranded socially-instrumental scheme. Firstly, consistent intervention of professional artists and creators in the school curriculum would enhance intellectual creativity in teachers and pupils. Secondly, creative educational opportunity would be heightened in areas of high social deprivation. (Hewison, 2014:76,105,109)

An objective was to create new markets for artists' work by 'building the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors to work effectively with schools, and providing opportunities for cultural and creative professionals to enhance the skills they need to work in educational settings.' (BOP, 2012:29) Artists' participation was thus vital to CP's ambition to 'bring education to a "tipping point", where creativity becomes the norm' (Jones and Thompson, 2008). Although the parent body led on enforcing good working conditions for artists and adopted industry rates to ensure payment at 'fair market rates', CP delivery was devolved to a local network of independent organisations including Curious Minds and Cumbria Arts in Education in the North West. Despite 2005/06 and 2007/08 cuts, £275m had been spent by 2010 on 8,000 projects in over 2,000 schools. Some 3,500 artists had worked for CP, of these a quarter visual artists and two-thirds freelance (BOP, 2012). Note that Chapter 5 discusses CP's role in the livelihoods of some artists in the research cohort.

- **Barriers and flaws**

My conclusion to this section and second policy type is that barriers to achieving the centrality of artists through Ambitions for the Arts were structural. There were systemic flaws in the creation of the new ACE through merger with RABs. Firstly the pan-regional NFP that might have informed an implementation plan for artists' measures was either forgotten about or strategically set aside when ACE's 'new' operations were established. Secondly, ACE's Corporate Plan 2003-06 contained no mechanism to assess impacts of the policy on artists (Glinkowski, 2010:68).

Artists' ability to contribute to and influence policy over the longer-term was limited in a new integrated arts council in which peer review panels were abandoned. Artists in effect became policy recipients only, while being otherwise 'invisible' within structures and methods adopted to define and 'measure what is considered to be important' (Holden, 2004:10; Hewison, 2014). Lack of formal representation mechanisms was perceived as a major constraint to artists maintaining centrality in policy. High-profile artists on ACE's Council were 'more symbolic than substantial'. Thus although artists were theoretically pivotal, their position in arts policy was solely as 'bit part player[s]' (Glinkowski, 2010, 68).

Although GftA offered measurable benefits to artists, it was over-dependent on consistent levels of arts funding and dedicated ACE officer engagement. However, officers found working with first-time applicants and fielding artists' enquiries disproportionately time-consuming and labour-intensive (Jackson and Devlin, 2005). There was an inherent disjunction between the funding body's ambitions for support to artists and desire for manageable, cost-effective administrative systems. Thus although GftA was 'good' by providing 'real reputational value to the Arts Council.... engendering confidence, trust and knowledge exchange', successive streamlining of application and management systems discouraged and intimidated artists as applicants (Fleming *et al*, 2010:11). Funding GftA entirely from lottery sources from 2007 may have contributed to decline in numbers of artists benefiting. Comparing with Fleming *et al*, my research concluded that while during 2003-08 some 25% of awards were for artists' artistic refreshment and research, by

2014/15 these accounted for 11%, with the majority for work showing public benefit (Jones, 2018).

CP was highly relevant to a specific section of the artists' constituency for two reasons. Firstly, engagement with it fulfilled some artists' beliefs about the social value of arts in statutory education. Secondly, regular well-paid employment supported artists whose preference is for dual careers as artist-educators. However, as an embedded policy in which artists were central, CP proved no more successful than top-down policies such as YOTA and EPR. As delivering Ambitions for the Arts depended on consistent levels of grant-in-aid, when the 'golden age' of arts funding ceased, CP's grant was successively reduced and cut entirely by 2011. Potential for CP to contribute to sustaining artists' livelihoods over the longer-term by creating a 'tipping point in which creativity became the norm' remained unrealised.

3. Artists at the margins

This section critiques the third policy type which covers the period 2007-2015 and demonstrates how ACE successively moved artists' interest from the centre to the margins of policy. Referencing ERS (no date), Selwood (2007), Shaw (2011) and Jackson (2010a, b and 2011), it identifies the tensions inherent in translating aspects of ACE's 2006 Turning point 10-year strategy into the Artists Time Space Money initiative (ATSM) and regional Turning Point Network (TPN). Louise (2011a, b), Hewitt's witness evidence and policy documents from 2008 when government substantially cut arts funding and the subsequent austerity period explain how ACE prioritised funding to institutions, and the interests of individual artists moved to the periphery of policy.

- **Agenda for the Arts 2006-2008**

ACE's priorities radically changed with Agenda for the Arts 2006-2008 in which the arts were placed 'at the heart of national life and people at the heart of the arts.' (Selwood, 2007:1208-9). ACE asserted that the new policy was informed by the 'unprecedented level of creative development' over the decade prior. NL funding

had 'transformed the cultural landscape, creating more and better access to the arts for people in all parts of the country. That increase in public investment was the catalyst for a wave of creativity', 'We began the 21st century with the arts in this country in better and more exciting shape than they had been for a long time' (ACE, 2006c:63).

According to Hewitt, the radical shift in policy priority from nourishing artists and practice to strengthening institutional infrastructures and audience development was neither actively generated by ACE nor due to political pressure but arose from a more intuitive 'reading of the political and cultural runes'. However, failure of ACE's 2005-06 Review of the presentation of contemporary visual art to win the intended substantial uplift in government funding specifically for that art form is likely to have contributed.¹⁹ The first-ever at the Arts Council, a ten-strong project group of ten arts officers from the UK arts funding system and advisory group of 39 visual arts specialists received evidence from six research reports including BOP (2005), Jackson and Jordan (2005) and Lindley and Galloway (2005). Within strategies to further strengthen visual arts infrastructures and employment, it confirmed the wide scope and values attached to visual arts practices, and its various manifestations and platforms ranging from arts for health and art education to cultural regeneration, commercial art markets and public galleries (BOP, 2005:5). Almost a third of visual arts organisations had by then benefitted from lottery-funded refurbishment. Emerging tensions included the wider contexts for visual arts in which the traditional applications of fine art, crafts and applied arts were contested and redefined by artists and the sector (Jackson and Jordan, 2005). The poor conditions and remuneration for a workforce which at that time *included* artists was identified as a key challenge for the sector's sustainability (Lindley and Galloway, 2005).²⁰

When the review's recommendations were translated into ACE's 2006 Turning Point ten-year visual arts policy, support for artists was the second of five priorities. This acknowledged that artists were poorly paid and badly supported in England by the tax and benefits systems and that regional commercial markets for art were underdeveloped. This policy aimed to 'Improv[e] conditions for artists working with

venues and promoters' and increase 'opportunities for artists to make new work' (ACE, 2006a:31,11). Perhaps implicitly referencing prior successive ACE internal 'artists' development' policies and documents such as ACE's NFP (discussed in section one), a priority was to 'continue to invest in a programme of artists' development focusing on law, workspace, innovation, financial security and professional standards' (ACE, 2006a:31). Notably however, an ambition in an earlier draft for 'partnerships to help create the *conditions* (my emphasis) that ensure better pay and conditions for artists to make and show their work' was omitted from the published policy.²¹

- **Artists Time Space Money/Artists' Insights (ATSM/AI)**

ATSM's concept arose after review of £1.5m of internal and external research from the decade prior which implicitly concluded that sustaining artists' practices required 'time, space and money' (Jeffreys, 2004).²² Later rebranded Artists' Insights (AI), ATSM/AI was financed by ACE Managed Funds and GftA and delivered by an ACE regional officers' team supported by a Project Manager. It was intended to 'tackle some of those apparently intractable problems such as workspaces, the legal framework and long-term financial planning and security which have beset individual artists for years' (ACE, 2007:4). Its 'charter' in 2004 placed artists 'at the heart of creative societies and economies'. Their rights were asserted to 'develop their skills and creativity throughout their lives; for professional levels of pay and reward, spaces to create and share their art, flexible investment models; and to travel and express themselves freely'.²³ Figure 1(a) below provides a rationale for and animation of ATSM/AI's five-stranded programme of work.

Although over £2.9m was spent on ATSM/AI during 2004-2006, my secondary analysis of data from ERS (no date) suggests direct benefits to artists were few. Ostensibly only 12% of budget went on central administration, however analysis of ERS data shows additional costs of staffing, training and multiple consultancies were included in each of ATSM/AI's five topic areas. For example within the 'Inhabit' strand, £148,000 was spent on scoping artists' pension provision, £128,890

on developing concepts for information provision for studio space and £265,000 establishing the National Federation of Artists' Studio Providers (NFASP). Just 6% (£190,525) of budget in the 'Invigorate' strand was for artists' 'creative space' placements. A further £516,245 of GftA funds to ATSM/AI were for 'creative renewal' placements for 29 'established' artists. ERS (no date) was the only formal assessment located and as with YOTA's by Hutton and Fenn, this was conducted soon after ATSM/AI ended and predominantly considered the programme in terms of effective management of public funds. Notably however, ERS assessed the programme's solutions for artists' provision lacked rigor and were 'relatively sparse in terms of information' and linkage between 'demonstrated evidence of need and plausibility of the proposed solution was weak' (ERS, no date:12). In this way, ERS confirmed the weakness of top down policies, in that these lack the nuanced knowledge required to ensure that interventions are timely and appropriate.

Figure 1(a) ATSM/AI programme of work

Initiative	Description
Interpret the law as it affects them, through expert legal guidance (formerly Artists and the Law)	Working with legal specialists, agencies, artists and institutions to develop and disseminate a 'code of best practice' supporting how artists work in relation to the law and to make recommendations for the future to strengthen provision and support in this area.
Inhabit affordable, sustainable workspaces in which they can create and experiment (formerly Artists' Workspaces)	Working with artists, arts organisations and key cultural agencies, including Regional Development Agencies, Local Authorities and Government, to increase awareness of the contribution artists' workspaces make to the overall growth and quality of the performing and visual arts in England. Brokering new relationships, and leveraging new resources, aim to increase opportunities for artists to occupy affordable and sustainable working spaces that are dynamic places for creative risk, critical engagement, community interaction and the production of ideas and work.
Interact through innovative placements in research and industry movements (formerly Blue Sky Placements)	Brokering otherwise unavailable opportunities for artists to develop skills and expertise, within innovative research contexts, and building new partnerships across the arts and industry.
Invigorate their careers, through opportunities for creative renewal (formerly The Clearing Project)	This will stimulate an environment in which artists in the mid-late stages of their career can explore creative renewal opportunities that will help them to re-focus, re-evaluate and re-invent their ambitions.
Influence their future wellbeing, through long-term financial planning (formerly Financial Wellbeing)	This aims to make a significant and positive change to the financial environment in which artists operate, paying particular reference to taxation, benefits, pensions and pay.

Extract from ERS (no date) p. 12

No evidence has been found in accessible depositories to demonstrate achievement of ATSM/AI's intended long-term benefits for artists. In the 'Inhabit' strand, the studios information platform didn't materialise. Although NFASP subsequently became an ACE NPO, funding was later discontinued and the organisation closed in 2018. Within the 'Influence' strand, neither pension provision nor tax and benefits changes were realised. A £13,500 grant to a-n The Artists Information Company to research artists' Public and Products Liability Insurance provision appears to be the sole direct benefit to artists' livelihoods continued beyond ATSM/AI's life.

ACE's intentions for improved conditions for artists were carried forward into the ACE's ten-year Turning Point (TP) strategy for 2006-2016 (ACE, 2006a). In particular, a TP aim was to 'address how ACE can work with its partners towards the long-term strategy of improving professional conditions for visual artists', offering a continuation of ATSM/AI. This aspiration would be achieved through 'examination of conditions, gaps in knowledge, what professional support is available to artists' and by responding to 'gaps in provision/policy that affect artists' conditions'. Perhaps mindful of ACE's tendency to work within its own bubble, the 'potentially very big and complex beast' of research and animation through TP would cover 'a wide range of subjects and take account of the rich history.... and wealth of agencies and services... [also] working towards this ambition, in complement to [it].'²⁴

- **Turning Point Network (TPN)**

As mentioned previously, ACE's review of the presentation of contemporary visual arts failed to achieve the higher funding levels needed to deliver TP's extensive ten-year policy. When combined with loss of experienced internal staff in a merged ACE, this *may have* been the rationale for establishing the Turning Point Network (TPN) - later Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN) - as the predominant mechanism for achieving TP's ambitions. The concept for a new region-by-region visual arts network was scoped in 2006 by an ACE working group of regional visual arts heads, with TPN's implementation incorporated into ACE's 2008-11 policy.

Although initially a 3-year pilot of eleven regional groups and national committee, TPN was strategically secured beyond by embedding national and regional coordination costs into relevant NPO funding agreements, with regional groups eligible to apply to GftA for programmes funding. The majority of TPN groups were newly-formed, each self-determining and supported by a paid part-time coordinator. Drawn informally from regional visual arts organisations, museums and HEIs and occasionally from independent individuals such as artists and curators, each group nominated a Chair, these forming TPN's national committee (Shaw, 2011). In the North West, the existing Visual Arts in Liverpool (VAiL) network created in 2003, newly-formed Contemporary Visual Arts Manchester (CVAM) for Greater Manchester and newly-formed North by North West (NbyNW) for Cumbria and Lancashire made up CVAN North West.

Enhanced resources for artists' practices and improvement of their economic status was a central TPN feature, this directly related to ACE's talent development policy goals (Jackson, 2010a:2). Figure 1(b) following demonstrates the supposition that through a combination of professional development training, support from 'artist support agencies' and GftA funding to artists' projects (and presumably to new TPN initiatives), 'artists [will be] better able to support themselves'. In this respect, working in collaboration with existing visual arts specialist bodies - i.e. beyond the organisations directly represented within TPN - was considered essential to achieving the aspiration of improving artists' conditions (ACE, 2006a; Shaw 2011). Notably concerns were raised about the dangers of prioritising activities which can more easily be managed within TPN's operations as these can be counter-productive to the pursuit of more expansive 'creative processes [that are] more natural to the arts' (Jackson, 2010b:7).

In this respect, CVANNW provides an example of how when devolved to a TPN, overarching policy ambitions for dedicated support to artists are interpreted more broadly. CVANNW's two-year, talent development programme funded by a £96,005 GftA award included the objective to 'provide professional development opportunities to artists and arts professionals... [by] supporting artist-led projects [and] improving the skills of artists to reach more audiences' (Romain, 2014:1). The

ensuing ‘bespoke leadership and professional development programme ... [used] high-profile mentors from outside the region’ to ‘improve the communication, advocacy and lobbying skills of members [and] create a more ambitious, confident and professionalised workforce’ (Jackson, 2011:182).²⁵ A ‘mentoring chain’ model was adopted, in that mentees became mentors for ‘more junior/less-experienced practitioners [who would] in turn would become mentors and so on.’ It was envisaged this would over time, ‘provide a flexible, light touch approach that could find traction amongst artists...’ (Romain, 2014:1). CVANNW’s impact report notably concluded however that just seven ‘artist/practitioners’ from the network’s membership benefited from this over a two-year period, although a further 44 artists participated in a separate exhibition strand designed to increase visual arts audiences (Romain, 2014:1,2).²⁶

Figure 1(b) Network Logic Model – professional development for artists

GOALS AND STRANDS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	LONGER TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated					
Professional development (artists)	Funding SUN/artist support organisations Funding training and skills development Reviewing loan finance models Mentoring and peer review opportunities Funding artist projects through Grants for the Arts Funding RFO commissions Funding residencies, placements and international exchanges Developing cross-regional initiatives e.g. Escalator, AA2A Influencing course content at HEIs	Blueprint document Number of artists using SUN/artist support organisations Number of artists who received legal and business advice and/or training Number of artists taking part in residencies, placements and international exchanges Number of commissions for artists	Artists gain and apply transferable skills Artists are more entrepreneurial and able to exploit their intellectual rights Stronger artist networks More employment opportunities for artists HEI courses include integral professional and business development	Artists’ pay and conditions are improved Artists are better equipped to take advantage of new forms of commissioning and ways of working e.g. schools, health, industry More artists work in the creative and knowledge industries	Artists are better able to support themselves as professionals The sector is more permeable

Extract from Jackson (2010a)

A founding premise for TPN groups was to work with existing national and regional visual arts organisations and networks to identify and address region-specific needs and to contribute to overall visual arts provision of and support (Shaw, 2011). This was achieved in part by formation of regional committees, as described above.

However, no data has been found during this research study of how TPN's various offerings and 'outputs' collectively contributed to the professional development strand for artists (left-hand column in Figure 1(b) above), nor to the short and longer-term 'outcomes' anticipated (fourth and fifth columns from left). It is also unclear whether a TPN function was to collate the 'outputs' (third column from left) of each regional group's programme, and whether the network's activities contributed to achieving the policy objectives for the funded visual arts sector overall. For example, as Director of a-n The Artists Information Company until 2014, I wasn't asked by TPN or ACE to contribute data for 'outputs' such as numbers of artists using a-n's services to gain professional advice and training or when undertaking residencies, commissions and exchanges.²⁷

- **Austerity in the arts**

Despite the Government's lower-than-expected 2008/09 settlement, ACE signaled nevertheless that visual arts budgets to regularly-funded visual arts organisations (RFOs) should enable 'more artists to produce work' (a-n, 2011). However as the economic downturn continued, government cut arts funding by a further £19m.²⁸ ACE's strategy 2012-15 for preserving the arts in this harsh climate was to allocate the majority of regular funding to public-facing, building-based organisations which it judged 'directly made art' and 'the most significant contribution to our goals'. The 'Top 20' galleries and production agencies were awarded 48% of the new National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) budget, resulting in cuts to what ACE described as 'some agencies with more of a support function' (a-n, 2011). This included a layer of small-scale, artist-led organisations whose activities impacted on almost 6,700 visual artists (Louise, 2011b:13), indicating that 'ACE clearly misunderstood and underestimated the impact of its decisions ... by asserting that cuts would *only* (my emphasis) leave gaps in ... visual arts sector advocacy and leadership' (a-n, 2011).

ACE's Achieving Great Art for Everyone 2011-15 policy for the austerity period placed arts and culture as important contributors to financial growth and cultural tourism within the creative economy. In this respect and within the goal that 'talent and artistic excellence are thriving and celebrated', artists and creative individuals

at emerging and mid-career stage were perceived as ensuring ‘the future success of arts in England’ (ACE, 2010a:28,13). In terms of ACE’s concern to improve artists’ conditions and livelihoods, two aspects of this policy are notable. Firstly, in contrast to TP’s long-term ‘national’ plan, as above, intended to enhance the working situation and economic position for artists including within tax and benefits systems and through access to legal and professional advice, artists’ conditions would instead be enhanced by forging localised ‘support clusters’ and establishing associated evidence-based methods to ‘measure success’. Secondly, it acknowledged poor pay for artists limited diversity of practitioners and stated that ‘if necessary [it would be] commissioning a study on trends in artist livelihoods in locations’. In what *may* have been a reference to Turning Point’s 2006 ambition to improve conditions for artists to make and show work as a core factor in enhancing livelihoods, ACE’s later 2015-18 Corporate Plan asserted *de facto* that artists lacked ‘the right support to allow their work and businesses to flourish’ (ACE, 2015a:8). The adjunct visual arts plan proposed an ‘artist-led approach to strengthening the ... sector, working in key locations across the country. At the heart ... will be a locally-focused campaign to support artists to extend their work and reach more people’ (ACE, 2015b:3). ACE’s 2015-18 plan is significant to understanding artists’ changing position in arts policy because contra to Turning Point (in which artists were integral in the visual arts workforce), it marked the point when policy defined and catered for ‘workforce’ as those working professionally in the visual arts *other than artists* (ACE, 2015:2).

- **Barriers and flaws**

ATSM/AI was perceived by ACE as pivotal within the TP strategic ten-year policy specifically for the visual arts and like EPR and YOTA, intended to create significant structural change for artists. However its weakness lay in being initiated from the ‘top down’. Although concerned with long-term approaches to improving artists’ status, ATSM/AI lacked nuanced, industry knowledge and the methods and delivery mechanisms for progressing ambitions were poorly conceptualised. It lacked coherence because it operated independently from, and in parallel with, related

activities by pan-regional industry organisations (such as a-n, Axis, Crafts Council and Engage) and region-specific counterparts (such as Redeye: The Photography Network) and made no linkages with localised artists' initiatives and groups. As with YOTA, ATSM/AI evaluation was limited to reviewing efficacy of the programme's management and financial systems. Similarly, ATSM/AI evaluation was undertaken too soon after the programme's end, thus no evidence could be collected about any sustained direct or indirect impacts on artists. Overall then, artists' interests were theoretically asserted rather than practically supported by ATSM/AI and tangible benefits for artists were few. The result was that improving artists' status remained at ACE's visual arts policy margins, outwith mainstream strategic development of the visual infrastructure which *might have* provided direct benefit to artists in parallel over the longer term.

Although the concept of pursuing TP policy through formalised regional networks didn't appear in the review's recommendations, 'strategic alliances and networks' within the visual arts were cited as beneficial for sharing costs and knowledge (Jordan and Jackson, 2005:75). Creating TPN *may* have been a strategic response to structural reform recommendations by McIntosh (2008) and McMaster (2008), including advice that ACE should work more closely and respectfully with funded organisations and *artists* (my emphasis). In addition, TPN offered ACE a means of strengthening regional identities by delegating responsibility for visual arts policy implementation and future development back to the regions whose specificity and distinctiveness had been undermined by the 2001 ACE/RAB merger. More practically, using this network as a core mechanism for delivering the TP strategy could be construed as the only workable solution available to ACE for two reasons. Firstly, a streamlined ACE had reduced in-house officer capacity and expertise to implement TP as a 'top down' nationwide strategic plan. Secondly, the anticipated uplift in funding to deliver substantial improvement in human and programme resources for an expanded visual arts infrastructure had not materialised.

However, while Jackson (2010a, 2010b, 2011) and Shaw (2011) authenticated the TPN concept, neither provided illumination of direct value to the constituency of artists whose interests were the second of five priorities and the subject of specific

and potentially measurable outputs. TPN/CVAN groups lacked formal partnerships with the visual arts industry and representative bodies that Shaw (2011) asserted were essential for long-term efficacy. ACE finance to regional networks through NPO arrangements and GftA funding which has ensured the existence of TPN/CVAN for over a decade is the major contributor to its ambiguous identity and sectoral status. TPN/CVAN groups are neither formally-constituted associations with transparent governance and accountability mechanisms nor loose committees representing the range of visual arts communities of interest.

Despite government cuts to the arts and public sector austerity, ACE policy 2011-15 expected funded organisations to 'do more' for artists. It asserted 'fair pay to artists' as an important operating principle and required visual arts organisations to demonstrate commitment to and application of this in NPO and GftA funding applications after 2013. Similarly to EPR, ACE's associated interest in improving artists' exhibiting fees is based on achievement of equality and fairness. However rather than forming an integral part of ACE's own stated equality and diversity ambitions, this policy imperative appears to have been predominantly influenced by external research which found that 71% of artists weren't paid fees for exhibiting, 60% didn't receive expenses and visual arts organisations were unlikely to prioritise remuneration to exhibiting artists (DHA, 2013a:5; DHA, 2013b:28).

ACE's subsequent 2015-2018 visual arts plan stated an 'artist-led' approach would be taken to create 'support clusters' to strengthen the visual arts sector. 'Evidence-based' methods would be adopted to 'measure success' (ACE, 2015:2). This could be construed as attempts by ACE to redress the lack of rapport and common purpose between arts organisations and artists on economic matters that had emerged over the prior period. However, no evidence has been located during this study period of specific strategies to achieve these more supportive arrangements for artists or of tangible outcomes. Although completed in 2016, research commissioned by ACE into artists' livelihoods for 2014/15 to inform policy making for the period 2020-2030 remained unpublished until December 2018.²⁹ In addition, small, artist-led organisations providing direct benefits to artists remain the most

vulnerable, as these have been amongst the first cut by ACE when government funding reduced (Louise, 2011b).

Characteristics of artists' lives 2015

The chapter began by referencing Brighton *et al* to provide the main characteristics of and conditions for artists' practices and livelihoods in 1985. Drawing on range of sources, the situation for artists in 2015 is summarised below.

- **Incomes for artists remain low**

Five quantitative surveys characterise artists' economic status as consistently poor. Kretschmer, Singh, Bently and Cooper (2011) assessed median fine art salaries as £10,000 (or 47% of the £21,276 national median wage). Etches (2011) cited £9,096 solely from art practice, with over half of artists earning less than a quarter of this. DHA (2013a) concluded 64% of artists earned less than £10,000 (or 37% of national median wage), with just over two-fifths earning less than a quarter of income from art practice. TBR (2018a:12) gave artists' income from all sources at £16,150 (or 58% of average annual salaries), with art practice contributing £6,020 (or 37% of all income). Referencing data in TBR (2018a), artists' incomes are higher by 26 percentage points than Brighton *et al* in relation to national salaries. However, fewer artists in TBR's study felt they lived comfortably from art practices (i.e. 3% in 2014/15 compared with 5% in 1985). Notably although 74% of artists had dual careers with art teaching in 1985, only 28% in 2014/15 had regular jobs as lecturers, academics or arts teachers (TBR, 2018b:84). A main challenge for artists remains lack of financial return from art practices, particularly because of the expense attached to them (TBR, 2018a:31).

- **Equality and cultural diversity lacking**

Within the creative industries workforce 12.6% is Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME). However, DHA (2013a) concluded that while 15% of fine and creative arts graduates are BAME, representation amongst artists is under 6%. Poor pay and uncertain employment prospects exacerbate such under-representation (Hesmondhalgh and

Baker, 2009; McRobbie 2016). Although females represent up to 36% of the creative industries workforce (Easton and Cauldwell-French, 2017) working conditions including low pay and requirement for multiple income strands present particular disadvantages for women with or wishing to take on family responsibilities (McRobbie, 2002). In this respect, TBR (2018a) notably concluded that female artists earned over a quarter less than male counterparts and disabled artists 30% less than able-bodied artists.

- **Opportunity for meritocracy limited**

In 1985, over half of all artists came from the top two social classes (Brighton *et al*, 1985:28). Contemporaneously, creative and cultural occupations in general are dominated by people from professional or managerial backgrounds (O'Brien, Laurison, Miles and Friedman, 2016; Oakley, Laurison, O'Brien and Friedman, 2017). Incomes for artists whose parents weren't university educated were lower in 2014/15 than other artists, restricting access to opportunity (TBR, 2018b:11)

Conclusion

The first section's critique of 'top down' policies for artists showed that the underlying premise is flawed. Because such policies don't attract the necessary institutional cooperation to deliver them, they fail to secure longer term equanimity between artists and art institutions. Without this commitment, such policies are over-reliant on top down enforcement and in tandem, on consistent levels of government funding to the arts. In EPR's case, although initial implementation relied on ACE/RAB enforcement, longevity depended on two factors. Firstly, maintenance was dependent on reliable levels of government arts subsidy so that EPR remained affordable within visual arts organisations' budgets. Secondly, longer-term sustainability required widespread and continued acceptance of the principle and self-regulation by the visual arts sector. However once devolved, gallery interest in EPR waned and by 1999 it had effectively disappeared.

Contemporaneously, remuneration levels remain poor for artists when exhibiting in publicly-funded venues and visual arts organisations show little interest in

remedying this (DHA, 2013a, b). This evidence led to development by a-n of the Paying Artists Campaign and a new Exhibition Payment (EP) scheme.³⁰

[This] is a payment to artists which values their singular imagination and professional contribution to the success of publicly-funded exhibitions. It is a flexible, fair approach that upholds equality and diversity in the arts. It contributes to embedding best practice in arts organisations when working with artists, to sustaining artists' careers and to ensuring audiences see art that represents the full spectrum of our human experience (a-n, 2016:3).

EP is premised on forging equanimity between artists and visual arts sector within the sphere of public exhibitions, with the framework for artists' fees directly related to the size and financial status of funded organisations. Unlike EPR however, advocacy for and monitoring of EP is the responsibility of an independent organisation rather than the UK arts councils. While the expectation is that regular impact evaluations will reinforce the mutuality between artists and the visual arts sector and thus sustain EP over the longer-term, only time will tell whether this is realised.

YOTA and ATSM/AI were similarly focused on long-term strategic improvement in artists' conditions across a wide spectrum of visual arts practices. However in both instances, aspirations for improved status for artists was a theoretical policy position as these schemes were developed 'top down' and both were short-term by nature. In the case of ATSM/AI, this was scoped and animated independently even from the array of ACE-funded artist-centred organisations. In this respect, achieving lasting change in artists' economic and social position was of secondary consideration to having suitable management tools and internal accountability systems for the funding body.

Although ATSM/AI addressed the structural support to artists set out as a priority in ACE's Turning Point strategy (ACE, 2006a), tangible benefits for artists over the short or medium-term were minor. Devolving strategic delivery of policy from ACE to regional TPN/CVANs *could* have ensured an implementation framework to deliver this support to artists 2006-2016. However, there is no evidence to

illuminate how TP/CVAN as a national body translated ATSM/AI ambitions for long-term improvements to artists’ welfare and status into plans of action.

The make-up and operations of CVAN as the ‘ACE-approved’ national and regional network for the visual arts characterises the lack of the ‘voice of artists’ in arts policymaking since 2001 identified by Glinkowski (2010) and Hewison and Holden (2004). As Figure 3(c) below shows, CVAN’s 2018-22 policy demonstrates no national or lead role in respect of artists’ interests. Responsibility for improving artists’ conditions which is limited to the areas of workspace and remuneration is transferred back to ACE and *away* from individual galleries and commissioning organisations in the funded visual arts infrastructure which deliver policies and whose senior staff dominate CVAN’s National committee and the regional groups.³¹

Figure 3(c). Position of artists in CVAN National Policy 2018-22

Aspiration	Plan	Indicators
Advocate for adequate support for arts practice	Work in partnership with a-n and ACE to address issues relating to artists’ remuneration and space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advocate regional workspace strategies ● Support partner campaigns relating to artists remuneration

Extract from CVAN National Policy 2018-22, p. 8.

In contrast to gallery-focused mechanisms for improving artists’ economic status in which artists have consistently remained minor players, percent for art for public art and Creative Partnerships (CP) provide examples of mutuality between artists’ and policy objectives. While financial constraints on government grant-in-aid to ACE limited gallery budgets, money was in effect ‘no object’ within public art which could draw in resources from other spheres. The mutuality between artists and commissioners is inherent in this particular visual arts field, in that commissioners are willing to pay higher fees in order to attract suitably experienced artists (Baines and Wheelock, 2003a). Ixia (2019) which cited the contemporary value of public art at £70m per annum showed that artists working in the public art sphere continue to be better paid than their gallery-orientated counterparts. In contrast, and because low pay *doesn’t* affect quality, paying minimum rates to artists remained an

acceptable norm elsewhere in the subsidised visual arts (Lindley and Galloway, 2005:3).

Achieving longer-term mutuality and equanimity between employers and artists in order to secure sustained, quality of engagement between artists, teachers and pupils was a principle of Creative Partnerships. Working with CP thus improved artists' livelihoods in two ways. Firstly, they were paid fair market rates, and secondly the nature of the work suited and provided financial stability for 3,500 dual career artist-educators over a period of seven years (BOP, 2012).

Turning now to the second policy type, the major impediment to achieving the centrality of artists was structural. A stated policy outcome of ACE's Ambitions for the Arts policy 2003-2006 was creating an environment that brought 'more artists' into the constituency. Higher levels of direct funding to more artists would be financed by administrative savings from merging ACE and RABs into one body. As money was plentiful, policy aspirations for enhanced funding and support to artists were notably perceived as presenting neither threat nor opportunity to the sustainability of funded institutions. However, the major stumbling block to achieving this key policy was that the 'new' ACE's Corporate Plan 2003-06 contained neither implementation plan nor monitoring system.

If GftA was perceived as a core vehicle for enhanced patronage of artists, funding allocations to individual artists were too low (Fleming *et al* 2010). Once administration was streamlined, ACE wasn't able to resource the degree of individualised support needed sustain GftA's successful wider access and take-up in the early years, nor was delivery devolved into the sector to ensure it could.

Applying public benefit criteria to the GftA's 'Individuals' strand from 2007 limited its role as an artists' R&D funding source. In comparison, the earlier short-lived A4E Express lottery scheme in which 98% of funds were allocated to projects was more successful in responding to a wide range of artist-centred activity (Hitchen, 2019). (Note that A4E's strategic role in supporting emerging artist-led infrastructures including some in the North West is discussed in Chapter 5.)

A4E Express aims to work on the notion of 'a lighter touch' than is generally the case within the arts funding structure. This is because those who have developed it have recognised a need for arts activities to be engendered by a much broader cross section of arts and community organisations, and that the methods generally used by the arts funding system to solicit and assess ideas may be off-putting to those who are not currently on client lists. It is estimated that A4E could double the number of applications the arts funding system now handles and by doing so, have a major impact on the scope and nature of arts activity in the country within a relatively short time-scale. Overall, implementation of this new programme suggests there could be a gradual dissolving of the existing hierarchical arts funding systems and structures in favour of methods which ensure that arts provision permeates in a more grassroots manner, within and outside the urban centres of population (Jones, 1996:47).

Consideration of policies examined for their contribution to delivering ACE's artists' patronage role within the period when artists were cited as 'central' reveals flaws within each of them. GftA's main limitation was assessed as paucity of budget, this requiring an increase of £20m annually (or 30%) so the scheme could 'play to its strengths' (Fleming *et al*, 2010:5,12). By integrating artists' interests into policy delivery, CP's role was relevant to a significant sector of the artists' constituency, providing many with regular, well-paid work. However, the organisation was cut entirely in 2011 due to arts funding reductions and changing political interests. The result was that this delegated approach was no more successful in the longer term than top-down policies such as YOTA and EPR, as all ultimately failed to secure long-term equanimity between artists and arts organisations.

These examples show that artists were only theoretically central in ACE's Ambitions for the Arts policy. The prevailing concern remained sustainability of institutions bolstered or created by capital lottery funding. Government change in 2010 put grant-in-aid back to pre-New Labour levels within five years. ACE's preference to fund a fixed number of arts institutions as the core instrument for delivering arts policy was reasserted and the specific interests of artists moved to the policy periphery. Although ACE talent development objectives as delivered through funded arts organisations might have improved artists' career and livelihood

prospects, there is no evidence that ‘clear and effective talent development routes’ were available to artists over a decade of this policy (ACE 2018a:28).

Considering the final policy type covering the period of arts austerity 2011-15, although ACE expected funded arts organisations to ‘do more’ for artists and asserted ‘fair pay to artists’ as an operating principle, no steps were taken to enforce this. The prevailing lack of rapport between artists and arts organisations resulted in less than half of artists and galleries agreeing that artists should always receive fees for showing, while others felt it was the funders’ (rather than their) role to maintain such standards (DHA, 2015). In contrast, Burns asserted that employing organisations and funders should take joint responsibility for ‘how they can best support the pool of artists upon whom they depend to “thrive” and in ‘support[ing] better conditions for self-employed artists’ (2017:10). Premised on achieving the necessary mutuality between practitioners and institutions over the longer-term, the envisaged enforcer role for ACE would ‘require all funded institutions to have a duty of care policy for their self-employed artists’ (Burns, 2017:10). In this respect, while Burns included self-employed and freelance practitioners including artists within the arts workforce, ACE policy 2015-2018 expressly excluded them from the goal to create a ‘diverse and highly skilled’ workforce (ACE, 2015:5).³²

The conclusion from this review of 30 years of arts policy is that there are no instances either within the funding body or funded organisations where artists’ interests have been fully integrated. With the exception of Creative Partnerships, artists’ particular needs and aspirations have at best been tolerated in the overall operation of policy. The funding body’s systems for supporting the contemporary visual arts and measuring its impacts are better suited to overseeing the operations and performance of arts organisations rather than of individuals. ACE policy has consistently favoured a building-based visual arts infrastructure. In 1998, ACE’s investment in regular funding to 79 contemporary visual arts organisations amounted to £20m, with others in the regions funded directly by RABs (ACE, 2006a). NL capital funding from 1994 substantially increased the number and artistic scope of visual arts institutions. Even by 2005 however, these were

‘overstretched operationally and financially fragile’ (Jordan and Jackson, 2005:7). In the austerity period from 2011, ACE preserved these public-facing organisations at the expense of the smaller-scale and artist-led. The interests of funded arts organisations have since remained ACE’s main concern.

Awards for NL capital funds are premised on a commercial investment model. The expectation is that an organisation’s longer-term resilience is achievable through a combination of strong leadership, better skilled and remunerated workforce and greater financial self-sufficiency through achieving multiple income strands alongside ACE’s funding (Woodley *et al*, 2018). However, many capital-funded arts buildings have required repeat investment, have failed to increase income from other sources and are over-dependent on consistent levels of government grant-in-aid to the arts.³³ As a result, even when ACE attached importance to protecting or securing artists’ rights and interests through stand-alone, top-down or integrated policies, this research concludes that such ambitions were never shared or prioritised by visual arts organisations nor by the ACE-designated visual arts industry network TPN/CVAN.

- **Key tensions**

New policies to better understand and provide more supportive conditions for artists are dependent on resolving the following core disjunctions. Firstly, as has been outlined previously, the tension in the funding body between ‘good’ management systems suitable for monitoring and supporting institutional infrastructures and those required to nurture and encourage the research and process-based nature of individual visual artists’ practices. For example, while the ‘old’ ACE and RAB structure was well-staffed and had high levels of art form expertise nationally and regionally, it was judged to foster fragmentation and to be administratively expensive. Although the ambition for the open-access GftA scheme was to give *more* individual artists ‘the chance to dream’, human resources were too low to deliver that in a streamlined ACE from 2001 which also lacked art form expertise and local and regional insight.

Secondly, the tension between the differing principles of funders and arts organisations. Devolving policy to delivery organisations supports subsidiarity and is desirable because learning is deepened when extended across the sector, leading to embedded standards of good practice. However EPR's rise and fall provides contra evidence. This 'top-down' policy's inherent flaw was passing responsibility for longer-term implementation to funded galleries before widespread acceptance of the principle and mechanisms for self-regulation were achieved.

Thirdly, the arts policy premise of including visual artists within the creative industries is flawed. As will be explained in Chapter 4: Creative space, artists' motivations for and perceived avenues for art practices differ from those within the creative industries at large. The paradox that individual artists weren't accounted for within creative industries data which masked their overall contribution economically and socially was noted in ACE's ten-year Turning Point policy (ACE, 2006a:33). Galloway, Lindley, Davies and Scheibl (2002) additionally confirmed that low pay and career uncertainty endemic in these industries undermined individual creative activity. Concerns about whether such conditions are supportive of artists' livelihoods align with McRobbie's assertion that '... [those] who sustain the model ... know that their way of life and work is, over the long term, utterly unsustainable.' She concluded creative industries contexts to be particularly hostile to '[young] unencumbered women who dominate in these industries and who have sacrificed motherhood for the mobility necessary to build their status and CVs' (2001:11). Of particular concern within ACE's aspirations to rebalance gender, ethnicity and disability representation in arts workforce is that creative industries' economic imperatives and modes of operation inherently create disadvantage and amplify exclusion (McRobbie, 2002, 2016; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2009). A specific conflict for visual artists in the talent-led and social network-driven environment of the creative industries is that freedom of expression is undermined.

It's not cool to be 'difficult'. Personal angst, nihilism or mere misgivings must be privately managed and, for the purposes of club sociality, carefully concealed. This is a 'PR' meritocracy where the question of who gets ahead on what basis and who is left behind finds no space for expression (McRobbie, 2002:523).

This review of arts policies 1985-2015 concludes that there has been little improvement in artists' economic status over the period. Whether artists' interests were integrated or stand-alone strands, or were central or marginal to policy, strengthening the permanent infrastructure by increasing the number of arts organisations and the scope of arts programmes has consistently taken precedence. Within that context, Jackson and Jordan (2005:86) notably asserted that professionalising the visual arts workforce - including artists - required nuanced, long-term approaches. This observation made after ACE's 2005-06 extensive and strategic review resonates with Redcliffe-Maud's of thirty years prior. He cited as an arts policy imperative the need to understand and acknowledge visual artists as a constituency peculiar within in the arts. This is because artists work predominantly as *individuals*, their art practices resting first-and-foremost on *continuing to make the work* (my emphases), regardless of whether there are markets for it or finance in place to do so (1976:143).

As contemporary art is unlikely to be produced at socially optimal levels by the market alone, a policy role is to understand and provide subsidy for the wider applications of artists' practices beyond the immediately or prospectively economic. Brighton *et al* asserted this policy requirement as recognition of 'the wealth of differences – not only in terms of what is produced as art, but also in how and why and where it is shown used, exhibited and sold, and to whom' (1985:188-189). ACE's NPO funding decisions in the austerity period and since have predominantly supported galleries and the exhibition format. By doing so, arts policy limits the scope and nature of the contemporary visual arts infrastructure and within this, reduces recognition of wider values, applications and associated income sources for artists' and their work. In contrast, ACE's eight-year support to Creative Partnerships addressed the dual longer-term objectives of securing new markets to aid artists' livelihoods and improving the quality of art education through sustained intervention in schools (BOP, 2012; Jones and Thompson, 2008).

With the exception of ACE's unrealised National Framework Plan, there has never been a specific nationwide policy for *artists*. Arts patronage including of artists was one of ACE's founding four functions (Williams, 1989:143; Pearson, 1982). However

1994, 2000 and 2010-2013 charter revisions merged this specific aspiration supportive of artists into broader objectives of developing and improving knowledge, understanding and practice of the arts and increasing public access to it. In addition, and extending from Thelwall (2011) and Louise (2011b), ACE's over-reliance on, and preference for, measuring the impacts of funded arts institutions quantitatively undervalues and reduces the visibility of other contemporary visual arts manifestations and applications, including artist-led initiatives and the individual practices of the majority of visual artists. ACE itself confirmed as a weakness 'the retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development' that had occurred over the prior decade (2018a:2).

Policies directed at improving artists' conditions that failed to gain arts organisations' acceptance or effect necessary infrastructural change, artists' invisibility since 2001 in English policy-making circles and their exclusion as a constituency within the visual arts workforce over the recent period have culminated to create a hostile environment for artists. Artists' ability to achieve sustainable practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle is constrained by lack of nuanced understanding within policy and the visual arts sector as a whole of the merits of artists' individual practices and a low sectoral status that limits artists' capacity to negotiate suitable terms and conditions. A witness in the period when artists were considered central in arts policy, Peter Hewitt's hindsight observation suggests an entirely different approach is needed to ensure productive and equitable interrelationships between artists and the visual arts infrastructure in future.

[Artists] always get lost don't they? There are always these documents when the artist is there as of one of five priorities, but the artist always seems to lose his or her place in the reality of what then emerges, because there are always the other pressures – diversity, education, health
[Artists] just keep losing out... all the experience shows how difficult it is [to retain their centrality].

Notes

³ The definition of subsidiarity is from the Oxford English Dictionary <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/subsidiarity> [Accessed on 24th January 2019]

⁴ Evidence as regards development, implementation and impact of EPR is difficult to find. However, for this research I drew on material in my personal archive of published and unpublished papers and reports collated for Jones, S (2014). *A brief history of Exhibition Payment Right*. Newcastle: a-n The Artists Information Company. As regards YOTA, other than Hutton and Fenn (2002), Patten/C/PLEX and Jubilee Arts (2000) and Stephens (2001), few published references were found. However as a member of the LIFT committee formed to develop YOTA's rationale and programme – see also note 9 below - my personal archive contained early reports and correspondence on this scheme.

⁵ This publication provides examples of EPR or similar models in use elsewhere. In Sweden, exhibition payment is binding on all public institutions with an exhibiting role with the national funding agency providing guidance to professional exhibition organisers in receipt of public funding. In Norway, artists receive two-fold financial compensation when exhibiting, that is for use of copyright and for rental of art works.

⁶ This ACE/RAB National Framework Plan (NFP) began life as The Artists' Development Action Plan. A synopsis (early draft for consultation) dated August 1998 of the NFP is in my personal archive as an industry consultee. This document cited the extent of national discussion on the topic through a 'programme of research, national and regional consultation, including regional focus groups over the past 18 months' and noted 'other independently organised seminars, papers and conferences examining artists' status and needs' which informed the plan to which an estimated 1,000 artists had contributed.

⁷ This is an unpublished document titled *Supporting Visual Artists: A National Framework Plan. Final draft produced by the National Steering Group for Artists Development, February 2001 (Confidential)* which is in my personal archive as I was one of the industry consultees for visual arts policy development at the time.

⁸ Research for and production of the *Code of Practice for the Visual Arts* and on industry standard rates of pay identified by the NFP were initially allocated to the National Artists Association (NAA) and funded by National Lottery A4E (Arts for Everyone). When NAA closed in 2001, the work was passed to a-n The Artists Information Company and delivery led by me as the then Director. The *Code of Practice for the Visual Arts* was published in 2002 and last updated in 2012 – see <https://www.a-n.co.uk/news/code-of-practice-relaunched/>. The *Artists' Fees Toolkit* and *Guidance on fees and day rates for visual artists* were first published in 2003. 2019 rates are at <https://www.a-n.co.uk/resource/guidance-on-fees-and-day-rates-for-visual-artists/> [Accessed on 30th June 2019].

⁹ The LIFT steering group recommended Year of the Artist 2000 should 'celebrate the role of the artist in Britain' by instigating three interconnected strands of activity - Artists' development, Projects, Research and Public awareness - to replenish artists' creative energy, extend opportunities and increase public awareness.

¹⁰ Miles, M (1997). *Art Space and the City*. London and New York: Routledge. pp. 108/09 citing the Foreword by Secretary General Luke Rittner to *An Urban Renaissance*, (1989) London: Arts Council of Great Britain.

¹¹ As an example of this aspiration, *Public Art in the North – a strategic approach to public art and lottery funding*, a confidential paper hand-dated 1985 for the Northern Arts Board

of which I was then a member and in my personal archive stated as the introductory quotation 'We must find ways for the Lottery to support artists'.

¹² This quotation from A4E literature was included in my own study Jones, S. (1996). *Measuring the experience: the scope and value of artist-led organisations*.

¹³ a-n was commissioned by ACE to research and publish *Guidance on fees and day rates for visual artists* were published in 2003 and updated annually since. Rates for 2019 at <https://www.a-n.co.uk/resource/guidance-on-fees-and-day-rates-for-visual-artists/> [Accessed on 30 June 2019]. Circumstances surrounding ACE's decision to cease this provision on the grounds of contravention of the Competition Act are discussed in a-n (2013:6).

¹⁴ Ixia (2012) concluded that average annual incomes were £28,400 for artists for whom public art was a primary source, i.e. 33% *more than* the national average wage. 15% of these artists earned over £50,000 and 10% more than £75,000. In comparison, Kretschmer, Singh, Bently & Cooper (2011) concluded that median income for fine artists was £10,000.

¹⁵ A skype interview was held with Peter Hewitt, CEO Arts Council England 1998-2007 on 7 February 2018. Quotes in this chapter are from transcription extracts.

¹⁶ An edited version of a speech at Charleston House May 2007 by ACE Chair Chris Frayling, in which he used this term appeared in Arts Professional <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/node/179700> [Accessed on 3rd February 2018]

¹⁷ This data is in Appendix 5 of *Arts Council Visual Arts: a Policy for the Arts Funding System in England*. This undated draft document (hand-marked 1998/99) is in my personal archive as an industry consultee.

¹⁸ Reference is from *The Artists' Development Action Plan: A synopsis (early draft for consultation)* August 1998, a document in my personal archive as an industry consultee.

¹⁹ No figure was put on the size of increase required to achieve this Review's ambitions. However when discussed at an Advisory group meeting in 2006 with ACE CEO Peter Hewitt present, my recollection is that the sum required was £40m, a figure also noted in Selwood (2007:1211).

²⁰ Lindley and Galloway (2005) confirmed that 60% of visual arts employees earned less than the national median, only 2.8% earned more than £40,000 pa and 75% had no pension provision attached to posts.

²¹ This more explicit assertion of artists' 'better pay and conditions' is in *Visual Arts Strategy March 2006*, (p. 9, p. 16), a draft version of ACE (2006a) *Turning Point: A strategy for the contemporary visual arts in England*. This earlier document in the Review of Contemporary Visual Arts and Turning Point bundle is in my personal archive.

²² Note that the estimated £1.5m value of this body of research is in ERS (no date). *Artists' Insights Evaluation: Phase 3 consolidation*. p. 12. This report in my personal archive as an industry consultee is undated although the contents suggest it was produced in 2006.

²³ These points are from *Draft paper by Managed Funds group* dated 8 September 2004 in my personal archive as Director of a-n The Artists Information Company 1999-2014.

²⁴ This information was contained in an email to me and co-director Louise Wirz, a-n The Artists Information Company, from Simon Zimmerman, Coordinator Artists' Insights at Arts Council England dated 1st August 2008 which is in my personal archive.

²⁵ Note that names of individuals on regional and national committee members are not published on the CVAN website. The CVANNW list of all members in CVAN,

NorthbyNorthWest and VAI provided to me on 12th January 2017 contained names of 85 organisations and one individual.

²⁶ Romain, S. (2014) *Key findings: Art: Audience Development, Discourse and Skills 2014-2016 (Art: ADDS)* was provided on request by CVANNW. The grant to CVANNW for this programme is listed in Arts Council Grants for the Arts awards 1 July 2013 - 31 March 2014.

²⁷ In respect of the specific 'outputs' listed in this TPN strategy document, as Director of a-n The Artists Information Company, in March 2014 I collated indicative quantitative data on artists' activities through residencies, commissions and exhibitions in wider contexts including non-gallery venues. At a pre-application meeting with an ACE relationship manager I proposed systematic collection of such evidence during the forthcoming NPO period 2015-18. However ACE stated that it did not require this.

²⁸ Arts Council grant-in-aid was cut by almost 30% in the 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, with further cuts made up to 2014. Arts funds 2015-18 were only guaranteed for 2015-16.

²⁹ TBR's research into artists' livelihoods covering the 2014/15 period was completed in 2016 but remained unpublished until December 2018.

³⁰ While a-n's Director and advised by the AIR Council of Artists within a-n, I led the research and consultation processes that culminated in *Paying Artists: Securing a future for visual arts in the UK*, published 2014.

³¹ The CVAN National Policy 2018-22 was provided on request in October 2018.

³² An invited round-table event convened by ACE in November 2017 elicited an email to me from an artist present with this observation about ACE's interpretation of the arts workforce. 'The conversation (and ACE's focus) is on institutional leadership and in the main, their NPO portfolio. I challenged that this will only directly address half of the workforce (in that 40% of the culture sector is freelance, 47% of creative industries are freelance, this before we even get to the artists!). My feeling is that they are unlikely to shift on this.'

³³ ACE's Catalyst funding scheme was intended to financially secure arts organisations through greater philanthropic income although this report in *Arts Professional* identified that many struggled to achieve this. <https://www.artspromotional.co.uk/news/mixed-success-catalyst-scheme-scaled-back> [Accessed on 1st of November 2018]

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter describes the research context and the methodology and methods used to generate new knowledge about productive interrelationships between artists and arts policies. The first section sets out the scope of the research including the intended contribution to knowledge identified by my literature review, my research objectives and questions and reasons for selecting the North West region as study area. This is followed in the second section by discussion of the methodological approach and chosen methodology including its salient features, relevance to the field of study and limitations. The third section describes my research methods including participant recruitment, data collection techniques including the content model for sequential interviews and analysis techniques, the analysis stages and subsequent reviews of literatures to develop core themes in relation to existing theory and evidence. The conclusion begins by providing a reflection on the research processes, including identification of limitations and advantages, and discussion of unexpected outcomes and their value to the study. It finishes by introducing the rationale for the artists' vignettes forming the next chapter.

1. Scope of the study

- **Research context**

A 9,300-word literature review undertaken during early stages of doctoral study positioned this new research and identified scope for new knowledge on the topic. While the review has not been included in full, aspects have been adapted and used as relevant across the chapters of the thesis. The review concluded that prevailing conditions for the arts over the last 30 years had placed artists at an economic disadvantage and that artists' ability to sustain artistic ambitions over time are undermined by environments characterised by uncertainty and low income levels. Arts policies, strategies and interventions to support artists have predominantly

failed to understand and respond to ‘the multiple, fluid and often convoluted ways people manage their lives’ and the inherent complexity (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002:84). Thus policy interventions have not addressed the ‘wealth of differences’ in artists’ motives, intentions and attitudes and ‘what is produced... and how and why it is used, exhibited and sold’, as artists evolve and pursue livelihoods through art practices over a life-cycle (Brighton *et al*, 1985: 88-189).

Although as previously noted in Chapter 1’s analysis of the position of artists in arts policy gender, ethnicity and socio economic class were already known to impact adversely on who works in the arts, other factors disadvantageous to artists’ pursuit of livelihoods hadn’t been articulated. As referenced in the chapters following, prior studies have illuminated negative impacts of creative industries conditions on some sections of workers. However, understanding was limited about the extent to which personalised circumstances affect artists’ ability to sustain art practices economically over time, including lack of nuanced knowledge of the experiences of individual visual artists in localised contexts. New knowledge to inform future arts policy would thus be beneficial in two interrelated areas. Firstly, it could evidence how artists construct and evolve livelihoods over time through art practices in relation to their personal characteristics, behavioural preferences and human and social circumstances. Secondly, it could identify new narratives to translate this knowledge and explain the approaches, roles and functions policy might adopt in future when seeking to understand and sustain artists’ livelihoods.

- **Research objectives**

The objectives of the new research were to:

1. provide fine-grain analysis of how artists construct and evolve livelihoods over time within art practices;
2. identify propositions for supportive interventions in North West England and inform scoping of future larger-scale research studies on productive interrelationships between artists and arts policies.

- **Research questions**

The main research questions were informed by the combination of the substantial literature review mentioned previously and my preliminary review of prior arts policies. These in combination suggested the focus of new research should be on in-depth study of artists' individual attitudes and approaches to art practices and livelihoods and associated illumination of supportive infrastructures and policy interventions. This approach would enable the new research including related assimilation of research theory and techniques and production of a thesis to be achieved in the time available for doctoral study. Questions were designed to provide nuanced, in-depth material about a small cohort of artists in relation to individual art practices and livelihoods and the differing contexts for them.

1. What do artists perceive to be the desirable conditions and contexts for pursuit of creative practices and making a living;
2. How do these compare and contrast with those of arts policy makers and mediators;
3. What underlying values do each party bring to their assessments?

- **Region of study**

The North West region was chosen as the study area for four main reasons. Firstly, it is sufficiently large to provide a variety of social and geographical contexts for artists' practices and livelihoods. It is the UK's third-most populated after the South East and Greater London. It is socially varied because it encompasses the metropolitan areas of Liverpool and Manchester and counties of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire. Secondly, it is by nature a heterogeneous region due to artificial creation of the North West as a political region by successive governmental boundary reorganisations (Salveson, 2016:8). Geographical and social breadth as an arts region was heightened when Cumbria came under the jurisdiction of North West Arts in 2001 within a unified Arts Council England.³⁴ The region's historical geographical distinctiveness is apparent in arrangements for the Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN) in the North West. While other CVAN regions of

England are served by a single network, CVAN North West (CVANNW) comprises three sub-regional groups independently programmed, financed and managed. These are Contemporary Visual Arts Manchester (CVAM) for Greater Manchester, Visual Arts in Liverpool (VAiL) for Merseyside and North by North West (NbyNW) covering Cumbria and Lancashire.³⁵

Thirdly and in terms of the region's status within arts policy in England, by 2005 the North West was assessed as having a 'strong sense of place, cultural identity and distinctiveness' and as one of the ACE's 'more active and successful regions'. It was home to the highest number of publicly-funded contemporary visual arts organisations outside London. The diverse scale and scope of arts organisations ranging from Tate Liverpool and Liverpool Biennial to community arts projects and new media developments collectively produced a 'flowering of activity'. As it was 'not London', the North West benefited from easy access to London's markets although the potential for drain of artists to the capital was noted as a concern (BOP, 2005:8). Contemporaneously, twelve of ACE's visual arts National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) are in the North West region, these awarded £3.15m of funding annually for the period 2018-22, or 7.2% of total visual arts NPO spend.³⁶

Finally and in terms of providing a suitable artists' constituency for research, practice-based visual arts courses at undergraduate and in some instances at master's level, the North West region's ten higher education (HE) institutions contribute to creating and sustaining a community of artists. By my own calculation, the region has at least 22 studio groups of differing scales in locations varying from the metropolitan to the semi-rural. There are at least a dozen region-specific or localised agencies and informal artists' or visual arts networks. Although no firm evidence is available of numbers of practising artists in the region, it is estimated that up to 2,000 are active in Greater Manchester alone (Slater, 2013).

2 Methodology

Following Charmaz, I take the position that every researcher is obligated to be reflexive about what they bring to the field of study, to what they see, and how

they see it. Because we bring ourselves and our social, cultural and political position into this, we 'make assumptions about what is real, we possess stocks of knowledge, occupy social statuses, and pursue purposes that influence our views and actions in the presence of each other' (2006:15). As the Introduction outlined, I've worked in the visual arts including as an artist, activist, independent researcher and arts professional for many years. My research approach thus exhibits a 'socialised subjectivity' related to my personal characteristics, social disposition and lived experiences (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992:126). This necessarily incorporates existing knowledge of and status in the field under study as integral in formulation, scoping and animation of new research. As confirmed by Finlay (2002), it is reasonable and beneficial for a researcher to treat their position and knowledge as an asset and 'leave room' for it as an additional ingredient.

However, researchers must be aware of vulnerabilities attached to evoking one's own experiences, in that findings and propositions may challenge and unsettle existing wisdom and premises (Forber-Pratt, 2015:1). Nonetheless, a 'firm basis for reasons' is only established by proactively challenging one's own beliefs and suppositions in the light of new evidence (Dewey, 1910:6). By accepting my positionality in the methodology and methods employed and holding a reflexive space, I minimised potential to be over directive in the primary research processes. In addition, I concur with Dean that reflexive researchers provide an essential 'dose of creativity, imagination, and hope' that tempers arrival at simplistic conclusions (2017:10). My ability to re-examine and question my existing knowledge in the light of new evidence was a core ingredient in synthesis and theory-building processes. For example, the assumption from prior knowledge of working with and through artists' networks and representation bodies that artists would perceive these as their major routes to professional development and for advice and advocacy on professional matters was not proven in the new research.

- **Qualitative methodology**

Qualitative research methodologies were selected as most appropriate to explore and describe the social phenomena of artists' lives and illuminate and unpack the

meanings, intentions and values artists attach to activities within their 'real world' situations (Bryman, 2008:366; Hammersley, 2013:21-46). My initial literature review as mentioned earlier in the chapter and undertaken to finalise research aims, objectives and scope confirmed that prior studies of artists' practices in relation to economic circumstances were predominantly quantitative. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, some studies after 1985 had in part proposed or precipitated policy changes designed to improve artists' financial circumstances. For example, Shaw and Allen (1997) argued for funding for enhancing artists' business skills and increasing demand and markets for contemporary art.³⁷ However, artists' incomes in 2015 remained low overall.

In this light, qualitative study focused on artists' nuanced experiences of livelihoods in the context of art practices and social circumstances offered the best way to obtain new narratives and perspectives about what constitutes livelihood and sustainability contemporaneously, and for identifying an alternative rationale for artists' relationship to arts policy. The value of actor-led research methods in respect of livelihood matters had been asserted by Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones (2002:83). Morgan and Nelligan (2015) highlighted advantages of heterogeneity in research data in terms of capturing motivations, values and attitudes through individualised conversations. Gill (2007) confirmed the importance of achieving mutuality in research processes, in that people-centred methods in which individuals 'make their own meanings and characterise their experiences in their own terms' draw out unique understandings in terms of nuance of, and dissimilarity in, individual accounts.

When scoping suitable research methodology and methods for new research to inform future policy development, I was also influenced by Crossick and Kaszynska's assertions. These researchers argued for multi-criteria research approaches as a necessary counter to contemporary over-reliance on headline evidence from quantitative data, in order that analyses better 'accounted for the human experiences of art and culture' (2016:10). In respect of finding new solutions to the long-standing problem of artists' poor economic status, Haacke's (2009) conceptualisation of the qualitative research process is pertinent. Piecing together

existing knowledge and data and the more subtle underlying 'hints' and assertions in new in-depth empirical evidence is akin to solving crossword puzzles that are relational and multi-dimensional and which require a combination of knowledge, skills and induction to resolve. Evidence derived from evaluations of arts policy-led activities tends to address impact of only particular kinds of publicly-funded activity in formal settings. However, qualitative evidence drawn from experiences of independent or unaligned individual contributors provides alternative illuminations of diversity in contemporary culture, including nuances in public engagement in a variety of settings. Crossick and Kaszynska's (2016:20) observation of lack of evidence when developing arts policy of 'everyday cultural practices' from the wider spectrum of people involved is also pertinent in terms of the everyday livelihood practices of *many artists*.

- **Grounded theory**

The methodology chosen for this study was grounded theory. After a brief outline of the development of this methodology, I explain my rationale for selection and use of grounded theory methods. Grounded theory offers an inductive methodology in which theoretical propositions in response to social phenomena are constructed from data collected. First conceptualised by Glaser and Strauss (1967), it comprises systematic collection and analysis to illuminate and generate theory about patterns of human behaviour and social and professional responses. Grounded theory combined the competing sociological positions of Glaser who sought to replicate the rigour of quantitative imperatives with Strauss' preferences for processes in which subjective and social meanings emanate from examination of actors' language and sensibilities.

As a methodology, grounded theory created common ground between Glaser's pragmatist, positivist perspective and reliance on rigorous data abstraction to arrive at dispassionate empirical knowledge and Strauss' fundamental belief that human beings are active agents in their lives and worlds and social structures are constructs emergent from human interaction processes rather than imposed as larger social forces. Subsequent evolution of the methodology by Strauss and

Corbyn (1990) provided more closely-defined systems of coding for data analysis and theory generation. Charmaz concluded that researchers can be neither dispassionate nor neutral and are part of the world under study and the data collected (2006:10). Taking an alternative position to Glaser and Strauss' assumptions that data and theories are discoverable through the processes of research she asserted that grounded theories are induced and constructed as a product of researchers' 'past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives, and research practices'.

Choice of grounded theory as a methodology was based on three reasons. Firstly, this is particularly valuable in cases where existing research is judged to lack necessary nuance and depth (Engward, 2013). Secondly as Charmaz confirmed, it privileges the individual's voice and is premised on participatory and collaborative engagement between people whose social situation is the subject of study and the researcher's knowledge, world view and position. It is thus eminently suitable for addressing research questions around artists' lived experiences of practices and livelihoods in relation to my professional knowledge. With reference to policy development, the validity of inductive methodologies is that these support the analyst's task of subverting dominant regimes and 'open up the prospect of something new [and] identify novel forms' (Hammersley, 2013: 21-46). Grounded theory's premise on reflexive and constructivist research enables non-linear inductive processes that create environments in which patterns, themes and categories for analysis emerge out of the data, rather than being conceived and imposed prior to data collection and analysis (Patton, 1980:306). Capturing and keeping central in research the voices and real-life experiences of 'the people [we are most concerned about aiding], understanding their situation and vulnerability to changes whether policy induced or not' is vital when developing policy is the research aim (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones, 2002:292). Resulting propositions are thus premised on amplifying the assets and capabilities of individuals. Thirdly, grounded theory's characteristic outcome is rich data or thick description. This derives from the combination of research relationships founded on trust, mutuality and collaboration and strong inductive and analytical processes that lead to

construction of theoretical frameworks from which abstract and conceptual understandings of phenomena and new theory emerge. For these reasons, grounded theory was assessed as highly appropriate for addressing the research questions.

- **Grounded theory limitations**

However, grounded theory is not without limitations. Reliance on interview data as the primary analysis source may fail to adequately address the social circumstances surrounding participants and effectively evidentially capture crucial aspects such as impacts in relation to wider contexts including family and community (Benoleil, 1996). In addition, Dey (1999) questioned whether researchers can retain the necessary objectivity and grounding in external realities while pursuing the detailed processes involving people's lives and during complex synthesising stages of grounded theory. Overall, however and taking into account these limitations, grounded theory was assessed to be a suitable research method to generate new theory about artists' human and social circumstances and economic sustainability. In particular, by providing contemporary insight on Brighton *et al's* 'wealth of differences' (as described earlier), it is capable of looking beyond past deductions and prescriptions for support to artists and offers a means of understanding the nuance of the economic within artists' pursuit of practices over time.

3. Conducting the research

Detail of my study methods for generating new theory about artists' livelihoods and arts policy relationships was influenced by the assertion that genuine understanding of any subject arises not from its theories and interpretation of them, but from a steady and persistent focus on its practitioners (Geertz, 1973:3-30). Ethnographic research methods which draw out people's cultural characteristics, habits and personalised experiences enable articulation and contextualisation of the nuance of underlying patterns of cultural and social relationships that can otherwise be missing. Oakley (1981) asserted the value of this as providing 'reflection of *actual* detail' (my emphasis) and Gobo (2018) as a means

of understanding people's everyday conceptions of reality by detailed examination of their ways of seeing the world. The thick description generated from conversations and observations during interview processes provides explanations of the particularities of participants, who are situated within the context of meanings derived from their experiences, relationships and reflections on the prevailing conditions. Theorising drawn from analysis and synthesis of in-depth content is in effect 'weak' when compared with the powerful discourses or 'strong theory' generally sought by researchers which prescribes and organises matter into more easily understandable and predictable trajectories (Gibson-Graham, 2014). However, the value of weak theory is the generation of alternative, lateral solutions as antidote and challenge to norms. As such, this ethnographic approach is pertinent to developing original perspectives and new strategies for improving artists' economic status.

Grounded theory's thick description provides a rich foundation of material and the basis for rethinking and reimagining contexts. The inclusive, constructivist position complements my existing worldview, research characteristics and preferences. It acknowledges data and analyses as 'social constructions that reflect what their production entailed' and because facts and values are interlinked, what is seen or not seen within the research rests on values (Charmaz, 2006:144-5,189).

Importantly, Charmaz' grounded theory version is a good fit with my research position in that it accommodates intuition. This provides 'another set of ideas to check' during the research journey that places interaction between participant data and the researcher's own position and social beliefs within empirical disciplinary knowledge from which theories evolve (2006:131,54). Charmaz' methodological stance for activating and conducting research provides an established hierarchy of methods for collecting and processing data, this firstly for analysis and then for conceptualisation of theory. Nevertheless, and acknowledging Bechhofer's (1974:73) assertion that induction and deduction can occur concurrently in research, my stance for formulating a theoretical position in relation to existing theories and their grounds retained flexibility within methods and processes

throughout the research to allow for 'messy' interaction between empirical and conceptual worlds.

- **Data collection through sequential interviews**

Individual interviews are grounded theory's principal data collection method. As Valentine (1997) confirmed, when conducted in an individualised, fluid and conversational style, interviews enable researchers to formally capture the stories that people *want to tell* about their day-to-day lives and social contexts, what is meaningful and important, recording the dramatic and complex as well as prosaic and simple. In the case of my study, this process for collecting first-hand accounts offered illumination in the artists' own language of their life history and real-world conditions and how they understand, construct and conduct art practices and livelihoods. Interviews are not neutral or uncomplicated spaces as the parties are bound by the particularities of their backgrounds and experiences, assumptions and ideologies and self-determine the facets of themselves open to public gaze and those kept hidden (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). By uniquely illuminating the interplay between professional and personal in people's lives, first-hand accounts offer the nuanced understandings of a subject's social reality that have often been missing in arts policy strategies for support to artists thus far (Valentine, 1997; Becker, 1970: 2009).

The role of interviews in grounded theory research is two-fold. Firstly, these provide the rich data required to reach a point of theoretical saturation that Glaser (2001) confirmed as 'conceptualisation of comparisons of these incidents which yield different properties of the pattern, until no new properties of the pattern emerge'. According to Charmaz, grounded theory processes require sufficient data depth to 'get beneath the surface of social and subjective life' and expose data divergence so neither new properties nor further theoretical insights occur to influence emergent grounded theory. Secondly and aligned to a constructivist's stance, interview processes foster common ground for trust and mutuality between both parties. The ensuing collaborative process enables a researcher to develop in-

depth understanding of study subjects as precursor to constructing and evolving jointly-conceived propositions (2006:13,189).

There were three reasons for choosing a series of interviews per artist. Firstly, these would amplify core data through opportunity for observation and reflection over a period of time of a person's particular life experience and real world social and cultural circumstances. In terms of observation, there are distinct advantages for a researcher in experiencing first-hand how lines of enquiry, specific questions and the language used are received by the interviewee. Such observation provides a ground for providing further explanation, the adjustment of terminologies for pertinence to the research and also to capture the interviewee's own turns of phrase and nuances in language in the data. In support of the research objectives, thick ethnographic data provides a counter to prevailing generalised assumptions about artists as has been gathered from prior predominantly quantitative research on the topic. A strength of a sequence of interviews per person is provision of depth of information on subcultures such as lifestyle, values and patterns of conduct (Bertaux and Kohli, 1984). Secondly by fostering mutuality and trust, such an approach to interviews enables an important shift in dynamics. Anderson and Goolishian (1992:28,2) described the transit from pure data acquisition for analysis to formulation of hermeneutic and interpretative environments through the 'heavy emphasis on.... language, conversation, self and story'. While maximising social disposition and lived experiences, the longer research period enabled by a series of interviews strengthens the quality of engagement between investigator and participant and mitigates against the researcher's privilege.

By keeping both parties 'on their toes', these intensive, interpersonal interview processes foster reflection and invention throughout. Importantly and as Anderson and Goolishian confirmed, the engagement-based nature of in-depth interviews offers 'curative and therapeutic' experiences for participants and investigator and are supportive of the mutuality required for jointly-conceived solutions. Lastly, while one-off interviews provide a snapshot of an artist's circumstances at a particular point in time, a series captures artists' first-hand reflections on otherwise hidden impacts of political and arts environments at certain points in time, this as a

nuanced form of life-history that counters the 'public' face of artists in CVs. In addition as Hanage, Scott and Davies (2016) demonstrated, a significant value of such an approach to interviews – in that instance for up to four years – is amplification of practical and emotional difficulties for practitioners in sustaining parallel and conflicting activities of business, creative and personal lives over time.

- **Recruitment parameters**

Nine parameters were established to identify a suitable sample of artists and maintain their participation during the study period. The premise for these was to ensure the data for analysis had sufficient depth and weight and to illustrate and amplify divergence within artists and in art practices and livelihoods. The first parameter specified the North West region as a discrete and appropriate geographical area for study, this intended to ensure the primary research was manageable and could be conducted within the timeframe available for doctoral research. The rationale for choosing this particular region has been explained earlier.

The second parameter made artists with between ten and 30 years of practice eligible for inclusion. A start point of ten years aimed to exclude new or recent graduates whose practices and livelihood patterns were under formation and aligned to Jones and DeFillippi's (1996) assertion it takes at least ten years for a person to know how to function professionally. Note that fuller discussion of this assumption within artists' development is in Chapter 6. The cut-off of beyond 30 years of practice was intended to exclude those beyond the typical age of retirement from work for whom continuing to practice might have become a leisure rather than a professional pursuit with expectation of financial return.

A third parameter addressed participant recruitment processes. I had existing knowledge of particular artists and artists' groups in the North West region and due to my prior industry position, held informal lists of contacts. However such material was neither typical of the region's artists' constituency nor sufficiently comprehensive for producing a research sample. I thus excluded myself as a route to identifying individual artists. Instead, I used a range of organisations of differing

types and sizes including membership bodies, associate and artists' development schemes, studio groups, commissioners of artists and informal networks as intermediaries to reach a range of artists in North West England. The intermediaries' list was deliberately varied: some known to me for their work with and for artists, some recommended as routes to artists including by artists themselves, and others arrived at by reviewing related documents and reports about artists in the region and through internet searches. Sixteen organisations were subsequently approached with the research outline and request to circulate brief information and invitation to participate to artists on their registers and email lists, from which ten responded positively.

Text circulated

I'm undertaking PhD research through Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University addressing the interrelationship between arts policy and artists' livelihood practices. My aim is to identify a new rationale or model for how future public policy could better understand the scope and value of supporting artists' livelihoods. I'm looking to conduct in-depth interviews with a small number of visual artists located in North West England who've been practising for between 10 and 30 years. My intention is to capture artists' stories and understand what motivates them. In particular, I need to know how the contexts and conditions in which they are working over the next 12 months are making a contribution to artists' livelihoods and artistic ambitions. All evidence collected through these interviews will be anonymised.

If you're a visual artist willing to participate in my research interviews and contribute to identifying a new rationale for arts policy around artists' livelihoods, please go to (link provided) to express your interest. You'll be asked to answer just a few questions to confirm your eligibility and provide some contact details.

The fourth parameter used self-identification to create a long-list of artists. Artists receiving an email via an intermediary were invited to complete a short online survey to propose themselves as participants. They were asked for self-description of art practice, website address, confirmation of ability to provide a CV and willingness to take part in interviews to be recorded and anonymised for publication. The first parameter of geographical eligibility to participate was

confirmed when artists' stated postal address and length of practice on the online survey.

Taking a constructivist's stance and recognising local and multiple realities within an obdurate yet ever-changing world, the fifth parameter related to sample size and time allowed to pursue and complete the interviews series (Charmaz, 2006:132). Referencing Baker and Edwards (2012) and in awareness of doctoral study time constraints, a sample size of ten artists with 30 interviews overall undertaken over an eight-month period was assessed as sufficient to reveal complexities and divergences in artists' worlds in a specified geographical location and to challenge existing conceptions while being large enough to provide credible evidence. In support of my assertion, Honey, Heron and Jackson (1997) and Baines and Wheelock (2003b) respectively judged 20 and 26 one-off interviews as sufficient for authoritative study in this particular field. Although such a small sample size limits generalisability of results, it nevertheless offered a greater depth of data on artists' lives than other studies considered significant, such as Galloway *et al* (2002).

The sixth parameter addressed conflict of interest by excluding artists with whom I had a current mentoring or advisory relationship. The seventh parameter was to represent male and female artists equally in the sample. The rationale for an equal female/male split arose from synthesis earlier in the study of a range of evidence since 2005, including from the Annual Population Survey 2010/11, that indicated no other balance could be conclusively argued.³⁸ Note that Chapter 4 contains expanded information and discussion on artists' demographics including gender make-up and of fluidity amongst visual arts practitioners.

Parameters eight and nine guided the interview format and widened scope for participation by allowing for interviewees' differing communications preferences and personal circumstances and taking account of artists' economic status. While it is more common to conduct interviews face-to-face, artists were offered this or a skype interview option. In either case, interviews would be arranged at times and locations convenient to each artist. Responses to research questions could alternatively or additionally be provided as visualisations or diagrams. My prior extensive experience of using technology for at-at-distance communications

confirmed that it is 'shared time rather than physical co-presence that is relevant to the experience as a shared event' (Rettie, 2009:426). Participants who lead busy lives can welcome skype's convenience and flexibility. For some, it is the only practical means of taking part. In respect of longitudinal studies – or in this case a sequence of interviews – providing this option can help to sustain participant involvement in the research over the period of time necessary (Weller, 2015).

The final parameter concerned payment of fees and expenses to participants as compensation for their time which raised ethics questions. The conventional research view is that the only valuable participant is one willing to donate their time for the benefit of the subject under study. The Research Ethics Guidebook as consulted in 2017 advised that research bias occurs if payment is made, as this could be construed as incentivising participation or as coercive because it exerts undue influence on potential participants' decisions about whether to take part. Another concern is that research participants from financially disadvantaged groups may be more vulnerable to such coercion because they need the money and thus if payment is involved, consent may not truly be freely given.³⁹ However the precedent for payment of fees to artists in such circumstances is in Galloway *et al* (2002:4). These researchers affirmed 'a critical element in the [research's] success... was the agreement that all taking part should be paid a fee and have their travel costs met. Payment showed the value ... attached to the [process] and indicated that [it] merited the individual's time and trouble' with fees paid 'in line with recommendations at the current time'. The Artists Information Company agreed to provide up to £4,000 for fees and expenses of artists participating in interviews and towards the researcher's expenses including documentation and transcription of data.⁴⁰ A revised ethics statement for the research that allowed for payment to interviewees was subsequently approved.⁴¹

Following agreement to participate with the selected artists, confirmation arrangements for the first interview offered each artist a fee and expenses to include costs of any specific requirements needed ensure their full participation in a series of interviews. In this way, neither low income level nor any specific access requirements of participants were barriers to their participation. Note that

remuneration was only offered once the sample of artists had been established, this to avoid its potential to incentivise participation (as described above), and to ensure equality of opportunity to participate and secure sustained involvement in the sequential interviews. The fee to artists per interview was arrived at by referencing visual arts industry standard rates for artists with ten or more years of practice published by a-n The Artists Information Company (a-n, 2017).⁴² Taking the middle of the three sample overhead bands and assuming an interview length of 60-75 minutes to include informal and formal aspects, a £281 artists' day rate was applied pro rata, providing an interview fee of £50. Guidance provided to artists within written consent processes and verbally at commencement of interviews of the terms of reference for taking part included how to claim fees and expenses and how payments would be made.

Adhering to good research practices, advance documentation provided to participants and a verbal explanation at commencement of the first interviews addressed ethical use of data and confirmed that artists' contributions would be anonymised in the thesis and that interview transcripts were available on request. Because disclosure of an artist's identity may negatively impact on their future development, each was subsequently allotted a pseudonym. Aspects of their accounts that might have made them identifiable were also suitably adjusted when cited in the thesis. Permission to archive interview recordings as part of the research data and to make these available to future researchers was optional. An additional information sheet for participants included the name of the university and Director of Studies, aim and geographical parameter for the primary research and sample size. Venue, date and time of interviews lasting approximately an hour were offered by mutual arrangement. Documentation noted that artists would have opportunity at the end of the first face-to-face interview to ask for any further information and the option of telephone or skype for subsequent interviews.

- **Creating the sample**

The invitation calling for expressions interest is estimated to have reached 905 artists. It was circulated via ten intermediary organisations in the study region,

namely three studio groups, four membership and artists' development bodies, an artists' support agency, an organisation predominantly commissioning regional artists and an artist-led project. Some snowballing occurred utilising related networks of information dissemination and artists' own 'chains of referral'. Some artists confirmed receiving the invitation via another artist in their personal networks or that they had circulated their own invitation onto other artists or group mailing lists of artists. Of viable responses collected 18 January to 16 February 2017 through the online survey, 14 were excluded for one or more of the following reasons. Artist was not in the geographical location of study, their length of practice was less than 10 or more than 30 years, they didn't confirm a CV was available nor give a website link to one, or they were a current mentee of the researcher. Of the 48 remaining artists on the long-list, 29 (61%) were female and 19 (39%) male.

Using a randomised selection tool and using date order of survey completion, artists were approached sequentially by gender until five males and five females were confirmed as participants.⁴³ Although willingness and ability to participate was requested at survey stage at final selection a month later, change in availability was marked amongst male artists. One was subsequently unable to take part due to ceasing practice, another withdrew citing pressure of work and a third failed to respond to a number of requests to agree the first interview date. These males were subsequently replaced by others on the list to fulfil the research parameter of equal representation by five female and five male artists.

- **Characteristics of eligible participants and sample group**

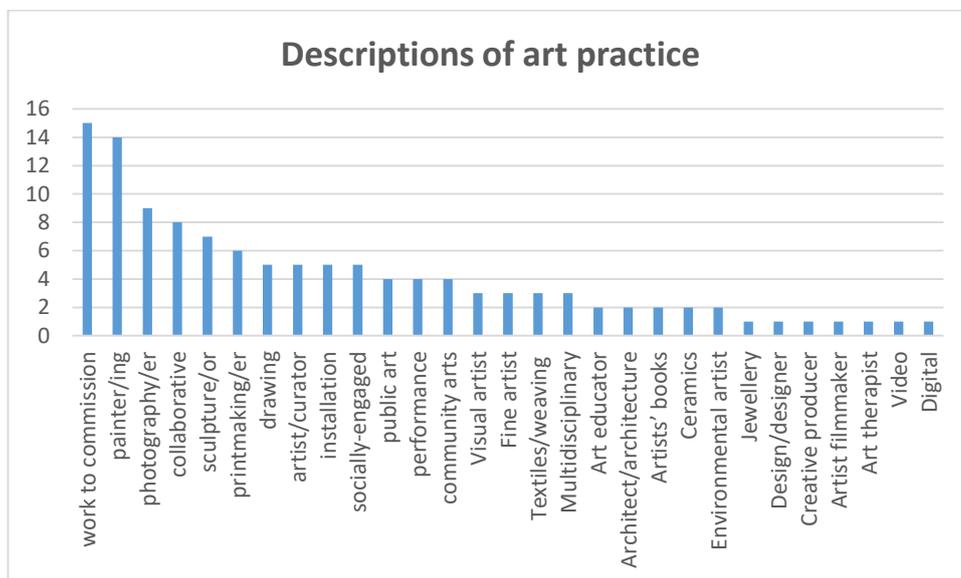
Figures (a) to (d) following illustrate the scope and nature of the long-list of eligible artists. Comparisons are made between the long-list and sample group selected to confirm its suitability and relevance as a cohort for study.

Comparing all participants with the recruited sample demonstrates that the latter has greater participation from artists from the metropolitan centres of Liverpool and Manchester. This is not unreasonable given the positioning in the main cultural cities of new graduates and facilities including artists' studios. However, artists from Lancashire and the rural counties of Cheshire and Cumbria are representative of the

long-list of participants. Although neither Liverpool nor Lancashire artists are amongst the recruited sample, it is nevertheless judged overall to adequately represent artists residing and pursuing practices in main urban areas and conurbations and rural counties of the North West.

As regards practice length and given the large percentage in the long-list of eligible artists where this was assessed as ‘unclear’, the range of practice length in the recruited sample’s was assessed as being reasonably representative in terms of the study’s parameters to consider artists with between ten and 30 years of art practice.

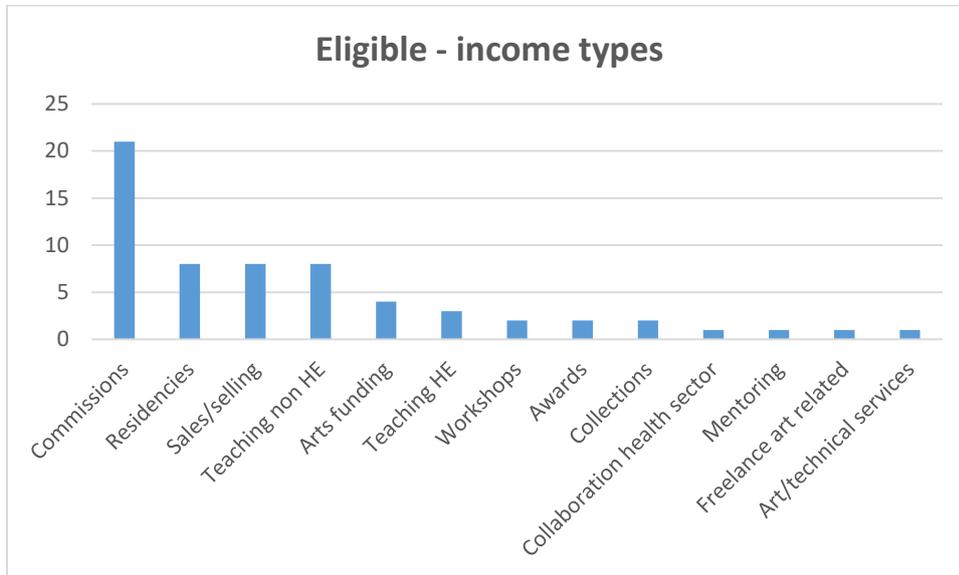
Figure 2(a) Art practices of eligible participants



A free text box invited artists to briefly describe their visual arts practices, with 29 different types mentioned. However, with hindsight some prompts provided to aid participants who were less familiar with using an online platform could have been misleading. While terms such as ‘painting’ and ‘photography’ used enable comparison between the empirical evidence with existing relevant data, those such as ‘working to commission’ are ambiguous and not in common use and do not. However, the overall weight of balance of practice towards fine art (including painting, printmaking and sculpture) and photography is assessed as viable as a research base and comparable with TBR (2018b:6), which is referenced in detail to provide comparator evidence in Chapter 5. This study confirmed the breadth of

visual arts practices, in that the 115 self-defined terms for art practice provided by artists in this online survey created 15 sub-categories employed by TBR for analysis. Note that the makeup of the research cohort is covered in detail in Chapter 5.

Figure 2(b) Income types of eligible participants



Extrapolation from the free text provided by the long-list of respondents to the online survey provided indicators of the types of activity which contributed to artists' livelihoods. It demonstrates that commissions are by far the largest income source. However, combining all teaching categories (HE and non-HE) puts this in second place, with residencies coming third. Aligned with TBR (2018 a, b), this suggests artists' income arises from multiple sources. However, Chapter 5's analysis of the sample cohort demonstrates divergence with this supposition in that two of the three artists working full-time on art practices work wholly on a commissioned basis and four pursue dual careers alongside teaching or a similar profession. This suggests that existing data on how artists progress art practices and make a living when between ten and 30 years of practice hasn't captured the full scope and detail. This insight lack is likely to have impacted adversely on supportive interventions including through arts policy.

- **Lines of enquiry**

Five distinctive, interrelated topic areas formed the lines of enquiry for the primary research, the basis for interview guide and a content framework for a sequence of three, semi-structured interviews with each artist. This approach ensured core research questions were suitably addressed while providing sufficient flexibility as interviews and relationships with artists were unfolded so that additional sub-topics and questions could be developed and addressed. Lines of enquiry were mindful of the interplay between professional and private in artists' lives. The interview guide addressed the five topic areas of Art work, Art profile, Art community, Personal profile and 'Policy, funding and the state', each with sub-topics.

Figure 2(c) Example of lines of enquiry in the interview guide

Topic - Art work	Areas of exploration	Initial questions
<i>Sub-topics</i>		
Motivations and ambitions for practice and livelihood	What being an artist looks and feels like	<i>Q1. Tell me about your practice, how do you make a living and what kinds of work you have or want to have?</i>
Nature of work for artists and how it arises	Desirable conditions	<i>Q2. What's the work been like for you over the recent period?</i>
Types of commissioning and employment for artists	Tensions between artistic ambitions, income-generation and personal life	<i>Q3. What is getting the work dependent on?</i>
Artists' economic conditions and risks	Causes of positive or negative changes in circumstances	<i>Q4. Is art practice the primary income or where does other income come from?</i>
	Barriers to sustaining art practice	<i>Q5. Is any current work or income source at risk?</i>
		<i>Q6. What are your plans now?</i>

Figure (2c) above demonstrates the first topic of 'Art work'. Each topic offered a menu either of questions to ask or areas to check as the conversations with each artist ensued. Through a combination of interview data, artists' CVs, websites, blogs and any related writing, the second topic of 'Art profile' began the processes of identification of enabling or limiting conditions surrounding pursuit of art practices, exploring interrelationships and tensions between motivations, art profile, artistic success and livelihood including how artists' themselves defined progression and development. The third topic of 'Art community' explored artists' conceptualisation and practical engagement in relation to pursuit and sustaining practices and

livelihoods over the period of their career and for understanding each artist's perceptions of, usage or resistance to, arts and peer networks. The fourth topic of 'Personal profile' aimed to provide insight through artists' own explanations how guiding values, beliefs and human characteristics, household circumstances and geographical location related to, were supportive of, or limited, economic status. The fifth further topic of 'Policy, funding and the state' provided the means to explore artists' attitudes towards and experiences of existing structural support for artists, including for personal or professional purposes.

The interview guide incorporated a long-list of 'things to look out for'. These provided an *aide memoire* when conducting each of the interviews and when listening to the artists' responses. As examples and in relation to the Art work topic Q1 (as above), this checklist included 'Was the artist not intending to make a living from art and if so, what reasons were given for that and had that always been the case?'; 'Were art practices pursued through any of the following distribution mechanisms – exhibitions, representation, public or private commissions, residencies, socially-engaged or community arts; selling art works, digital products and services; teaching?'; 'Was income from grants, funding, IP licence or art-related work mentioned?' Artists' interview responses in relation to these areas contributed to language tailoring and provided prompts for subsidiary questions or generated notes for topics or questions to include in subsequent interviews in the series. As the broad base of the lines of enquiry and sequence of interviews allowed for reframing of questions and prompted new areas and questions to emerge, interview questions weren't piloted in advance of commencing the primary research.

- **Semi-structured interviews**

The semi-structured interview format selected offered opportunity to 'probe beyond the set list of questions' and guide the content and flow of interviews across a sequence (Herman-Kinney and Verschaeve, 2003:231). This more responsive and fluid format tempers the investigator's preconceptions and suppositions while their existing knowledge of the field and ability to 'read between

the lines' remains present. Space is provided for participants' in-depth personal reflection, which in turn enables the researcher to identify additional pertinent areas of questioning which radiate out from the particular reality of each interviewee.

Aligned with Charmaz, heightened contexts are achieved when the interviewer remains observant of the impact of being interviewed on participants and purposefully and intuitively adjusts language and phrasing of questions and direction of lines of enquiry accordingly. By remaining reflexive, the interviewer can better negotiate and personalise each interview interaction. A more nuanced understanding is gained when the interviewee's reflexivity is enabled through a process in which the particularities of each individual's situation are brought to bear. This amplifies understanding and informs ensuing data analysis processes. Following Campbell and Lassiter (2015,30-61) and in concurrence with Oakley's (1981) assertions on the implicit imbalance of power between interviewer and interviewee, I concur that fostering mutuality and trust between researcher and participant is a prerequisite for creating the environment for participation and reciprocity. Thus, semi-structured interviews with each artist were conceived as the basis for collaborative, conversational spaces in which new knowledge could be jointly constructed and formulated.

When the core data acquisition method is in-depth interviews, research processes should be designed to avoid the polarities of being too superficial on one hand or too intrusive on the other. If participants' responses are 'led' by the limits of the investigator's knowledge or misconceptions, the danger is no new knowledge will emerge. Similarly, valuable time is wasted if processes don't suitably frame and contain participants' contributions and much of the resulting material doesn't address research questions. Such factors were addressed when designing the framework for enquiry by using Charmaz' three stage process to encourage reflections by participants on personal and professional circumstances through a series of question types. Introductory 'open questions' enabled participants who may have been unfamiliar with being interviewed to become comfortable by allowing space for recounting and considering impacts on them of recent

experiences. A set of 'intermediate questions' probed into directions uncovered during the first stage, with the potential to recap and gain more detailed data. Concluding or 'ending questions' provided space for participants to assess, speculate on and forecast their own development (Charmaz, 2006:29-33).

A beneficial effect of a sequence of interviews, in my case over an eight-month period, was to deepen and individualise relationships between myself as investigator and each of the artists taking part, this in turn enriching the quality and relevance of primary data. For interview processes to be mutually productive, the researcher must take responsibility for the overall well-being of participants within and beyond the interview processes, and for maintaining awareness of and managing effects and implications of this private-professional intermingling. In this respect, the mutuality and reciprocity on which interview processes depend for rigor and efficacy remains uppermost and participants remain comfortable and supported throughout. Sensitive topics – for example artists' personal circumstances and professional concerns - once raised and explored could be appropriately acknowledged and addressed within the interview's formal and informal processes before the relationship was completed. Extending from Charmaz and informed by my own mentoring and advisory experiences, I align with Frels' concept of creating a 'transformatory-emancipatory' experience that enables both sides of the interview relationship to be positively transformed as a result of the process (2010:21).

- **Data amplification through sequential interviewing**

Reflecting within the research journey post activation provided a characterisation of distinct phases of interviewing within the sequential interview process. Notably, Anderson and Goolishian asserted that at least two interviews are required to provide suitable research data. This is firstly because attempting to grasp a person's experience too quickly can be detrimental to gaining the deep understanding necessary. Secondly, a sequence of interviews supports the necessary theoretical saturation. The first interview took the form of establishing a space for participant and researcher to understand and become familiar with each other. It provided for

exploration of my lines of enquiry but to a limited extent, in that my initial questions and follow-up prompts may only have elicited measured responses and observations from the interviewee that might have been more reflective of the public image they wished to present than of deeper perceptions or underlying concerns.

By the second interview, both interviewer and interviewee had opportunity to be reflexive in the gap between interviews and were more comfortable and confident in the relationship being developed. The first ten interviews with artists were held face-to-face. Of the 20 subsequent second or third interviews, nine were held over skype to suit artists' personal situations. This mechanism was preferred by some artists because it eased childcare arrangements or supported their personal or professional patterns, including utilising 'off-site' days when an artist had a time-sensitive project underway.

Stories that emerged through the lines of enquiry and from tailored questioning identified from the researcher's successive review of transcripts provided illumination of each interviewee's real-life experiences and the encounters and relationships that grounded, shaped and affected their practices and personal situations. A bi-product of video skype interviews was the invaluable glimpse into some artists' 'non-professional' and domestic lives and to the working environments of others. The trust developed between interviewer and artists facilitated expression of underlying doubts, concerns and secrets. Artists felt able to voice specific personal concerns or circumstances that enabled or restricted professional lives. In the third and final interview although main areas of questioning were continued, there was a considered closing down of the intensive relationship developed between participant and investigator in which agency was returned back to each individual. In this way, the sequential interview process for data gathering, including the gaps between interviews, provided an experience more akin to an on-going conversation.

The approach I adopted over a three-interview sequence was a modification of Charles' (2007) nine-point framework for therapeutic interviews. This framework allows for exchange and negotiation processes in which the skills of empathetic

responding, multi-perspective awareness and reflexivity are combined with strong existing sectoral knowledge to achieve data saturation while suitably considering the vulnerability and emotional needs of participants.

Figure 2(d) Framework for content in sequential interviews after Charles (2007)

Stage	Content
First interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishing relationships - Understanding participants' experiences and modifying lines for enquiry in response - identifying and using interviewees language to adapt investigators' own
Second interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Including questions and reflections on larger/expanded systems or points of reference - Maintaining flexibility in the conversation – situating yourself as investigator in such a way to acknowledge and make transparent underlying beliefs, biases and assumptions. - attending to the process of the interview by focusing on the wholeness rather than individual parts, seeking <i>meanings</i> rather than explanations - Using a restraining/go slow approach to gain trust and ensure data saturation - leaving space for the participant to identify suitable areas to address or revisit
Third interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recheck or revalidate prior data to increase interpretative or theoretical validity - Ending and summarising to mark the exit point and satisfactory closing down of relationships - Promoting therapeutic transformation for participants by facilitating their next developments and actions

Overall, the 30 interviews conducted with ten artists amounted to some 33 hours of audio recordings. To ensure ethical conditions were met, external services used for transcription agreed my terms of use and deleted all material from shared systems on receipt of finished texts. The estimated 250,000 words of transcribed texts formed the main data source for the coding and analysis stages described below. Some triangulation additionally occurred in the form of reviewing artists' 'official accounts' such as in CVs and blogs and semi-official social media threads and factual and critical writing by them or by others about the artist's work. Web searches and following threads on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram enabled additional assimilation of artists' day-to-day practices, deepened understanding of their public face and exposure through prizewinning, exhibitions, selection in competitions, commissions and residencies.

During the interview sequence, artists in the research sample were asked to keep in touch with news and updates on their work and progress. These 'official' updates, including commentary as blogs and social media posts enhanced the granular nature of interview-based narratives. An amplified and nuanced understanding of the spectrum of artists' lives is crucial in developing new knowledge about effective structural support. As Lipphardt (2012:120) observed, the 'highly ambivalent character of life style and work can get lost in official narratives' which fail to capture what it's like for artists 'to live permanently on the edge, financially, socially and emotionally'.

- **Coding stages**

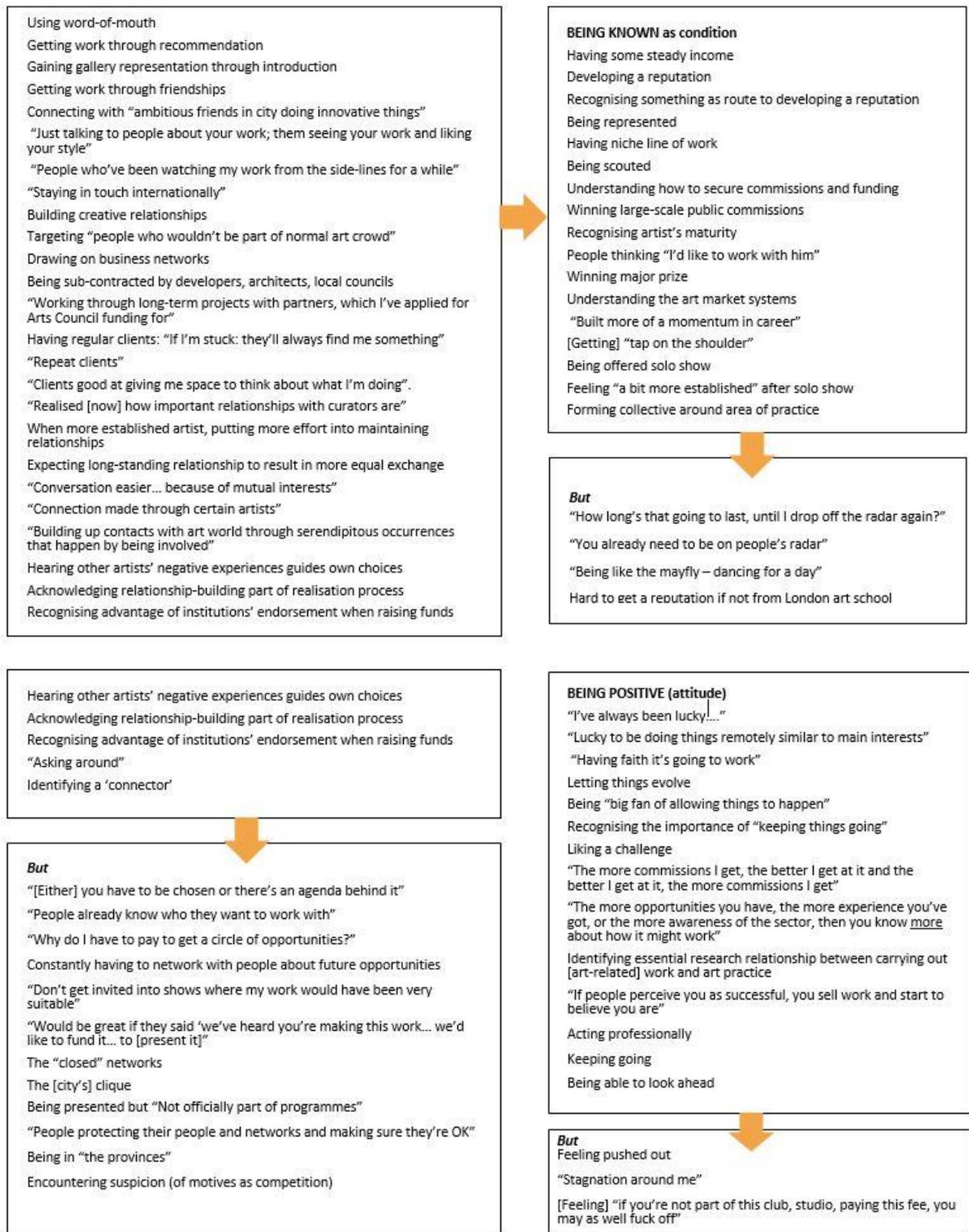
Coding is the 'pivotal link' between data collection and development of emerging themes and concepts to explain them (Charmaz, 2006:46). Within Charmaz' version of grounded theory, data is coded across three interrelated stages to arrive at substantive concepts and theory. The first stage of initial or open coding starts as soon as data is available and continues while the full body of material is amassed. Advantages of initial coding are that it ensures individualised participant experiences become concrete and the investigator's own expectations or presuppositions are kept in check while emergence of multiple ideas is prompted. In my method, line-by-line coding that identifies, names and categorises particular phenomena as a researcher's summation gave way to *in vivo* coding which was assessed as preferable because this captures and retains throughout the process participants' actual words and phrases. A particular value of *in vivo* coding is that 'symbolic markers of speech and meaning' emerge, including recording innovative or new shorthand terms which differ from those commonly in use (Charmaz, 2006:55). In the second stage of focused coding, groupings of initial codes were clustered and condensed as a means for identifying substantive threads from across the data set.

- **Research memos**

Continuous comparison between data and data during research processes was extended through writing memos and contemporaneous notes that cross referenced and contrasted meanings and nascent concepts with existing empirical knowledge (Charmaz, 2006:72-95). Thirty-eight research memos totalling around 40,000 words were produced during coding and writing up stages. Memo writing served a number of functions including aiding transition of data into concepts and synthesis and amplification of emergent ideas. Consistent with grounded theory logic, the sequential acts of coding primary data unearthed new and unexpected ideas which were further explored through research memos and contextualised within existing evidence and theory. The subsequent substantive threads of the new research materialised in the third stage of grounded theory coding from examination of the relationships between categories developed during the second-stage of focused and associated pattern coding.

It is pertinent to note here the interrelationship with how artists develop a level of certainty about their practice that enables them to sustain it. The interplay inherent in the productive processes of making art enables artists who 'do not necessarily know what they want or like' to 'discover their convictions, principles and values' (Beech, 2015:169). Because grounded theory's iterative coding stages and subsequent synthesis processes replicate this iterative *modus operandi* of artists, these are particularly relevant to study of this constituency.

Figure 2(e) Extract showing development of 'relationships' from coding stages



- **Additional research methods**

My initial literature review described previously predominantly served to finalise the research aims and objectives and identify the research gap. It is common within grounded theory to leave review of literature to later stages because this gives investigators a fresh eye on the field of study, enabling them to 'avoid seeing the world through the lens of extant ideas' (Charmaz, 2006:6). Additional literatures including relevant existing theory were thus reviewed for each chapter once substantive areas and prospective themes had emerged from the data.

In addition, a 32,000 word chronology of UK political circumstances, arts policies and related evidence was produced as a research reference source for Chapter 1's review of artists in arts policy to aid understanding of the intentions for and impacts of political and arts policy changes during the period 1985-2015. An additional resource for that chapter was the interview with Peter Hewitt, CEO of Arts Council England 1998-2007. This provided a 'witness statement' as regards considerations of ambitions for artists within policy and operations at ACE at that particular time. Evidence from witnesses reflecting on the recent past is a vibrant way of gathering data. A unique record of decisions and amplification of the circumstances and conditions surrounding them is provided that differs in nuance and emphasis from official records.⁴⁴ The chronology and witness interview were significant resources in the production of Chapter 1 which addresses the research question on how arts policymakers and mediating structures have understood and responded to artists' practices and livelihoods over preceding periods.

Conclusion

As subsequent chapters of this thesis demonstrate, grounded theory methodology and research processes which incorporate and amplify an investigator's reflexivity were successful in enabling new knowledge and theory to emerge from engagement between researcher and data, interaction and reflection between ideas emanating from the data in relation to the field of study and adjunct review and reflection on prior substantive studies and evidence. Grounded theory's main limitations were addressed earlier in the chapter. This conclusion starts by

highlighting some additional limitations attached to conducting grounded theory methods. It finishes by identifying notable incidental outcomes and unexpected benefits for participants arising from conducting sequential interview processes which are pertinent to future qualitative research in this particular field of study.

- **Use of intermediaries**

Using intermediaries to recruit artists arose from my assumption that artists commonly aspire to and benefit directly through connectivity to known formal structures. Such introducers and gatekeepers are accepted as brokers within the processes by which artists interact with and achieve professional recognition (Slater, Ravetz and Lee, 2013). However, a limitation of solely using intermediary membership and artists' development bodies and related organisations for recruitment is artists who are by nature more outgoing and willing or able to be connected with them are dominant. As will be discussed further in Chapter 4, inequality underlies such an approach as artists who are already part of an exclusive 'club culture' are favoured (McRobbie, 2002:516). This weakness and subsequent reliance on self-identification by artists contributing through an online platform could have been resolved by adjusting the recruitment processes to involve more active snowballing. This is more likely to involve artists *not* connected to known intermediaries and ensure long-list and final sample is more representative of behaviours and communication preferences of the constituency of artists as a whole in the study region.

- **Sample size and scope**

Within the sample, gender balance was achieved and artists' practices and practice lengths, livelihoods and locations delivered a suitable range and variety. However, a limitation was that the study contained no artist from an ethnic minority (BAME) nor those self-identifying as disabled. Notably in this respect within quantitative research, TBR (2018a) concluded BAME accounted for 6.5% of artists and 8% were disabled. The limitation in this respect of a small not necessarily representative sample size is a constraint to gaining suitable data saturation for theory building

(Marshall Egan, 2002). However, in relation to this, two artist cited dyslexia as a factor affecting their practice and livelihood prospects. Notably although one in ten of the population is dyslexic, it may be far higher amongst artists and in creative families, in that one study reported this as a characteristic of up to 75% of art students.⁴⁵

- **Timescale for primary research**

Although appropriate for doctoral study, the original six-month time-scale allocated to a sequence of three interviews proved to be relatively short when the practicalities of recruitment of participants was taken into account. Selected artists had busy schedules and deadlines to meet that affected fixing interview dates. Even when extended to eight months, the time-scale limited depth of understanding acquired. Although it enabled participants to discuss early ideas for a project and then the actual running and outcomes of it later on, and comparisons to be made about expectations of (for example) Master's study with the actuality of doing it, it was too short to fully record the impact of changing external trends and major risks, or any 'seasonal variations' which may amplify or constrain artists' ambitions and expectations. Pertinent in this respect is Hanage *et al's* (2016) longitudinal research. Within a four-year research period and despite tailored support, all six of the new graduate participants in it had abandoned creative practices. Although my study doesn't contribute a pool of evidence about 'causes and its consequences of failure' as these researchers' did, acquisition of such data in respect of visual artists would have been equally valuable.

- **Artists' access to data**

As confirmed earlier in the chapter, interview transcripts were available to artists on request. As only one artist took up this option, transcripts were therefore not checked or amended by interviewed artists for accuracy. Construction of portraits of the artists drawn from transcripts and related material which comprise Chapter 3 of the thesis was not anticipated and thus not accounted for within the research consent processes outlined previously. With hindsight, it would have been

circumspect to provide these portraits to the artists, both to check suitability of tone and ensure details included did not conclusively identify them to readers.

Unexpected outcomes

- **Familial creativity**

An unexpected finding from the data was the high level of familial creativity within this particular research sample. For all but one artist, family creativity was evidenced to be a characteristic of childhoods, with craft or art skills pursued or valued and encouraged by grandparents or parents, and with artists' siblings often also now engaged in creative professions. This was not only a characteristic of artists from families in which parents pursued professional occupations but also of those from working-class and mixed social class backgrounds.

- **Mutual benefit for investigator and participant**

The content framework for a sequence of interviews with the artists allowed for reflection by the investigator and participants between meetings, providing opportunity for content to 'lead in unexpected directions and new domains of understanding' and enabling ideas and conceptualisations of supportive structures for artists' practices to evolve and be co-developed (Campbell and Lassiter, 2015). By creating a secure space in which artists could let down their guard, a sequence of interviews and associated climate of trust encouraged artists to articulate their underlying, highly-individualised matters of concern. For example, a 'falling out' in a studio group (F81 informal discussion prior to second interview); anxiety about money (F87, M55, F29); mental health (F87); invisible disability (F87); dealing with debilitating illness (M55), bouts of chronic illness (F98); emotional consequences of changing personal relationships (M101, M49) and dealing with family matters including consequences of bereavement (F68, M49). Although interviews were not a counsellor-client relationship, there was an implicit facet in which the interview process acted as a facilitating environment that was both 'curative and therapeutic' (Anderson and Goolishian, 1988:2).

By enabling participant reflexivity and motivating autonomous change in and development of participants, the nature of the conversations additionally aligned with Markland, Ryan, Tobin, and Rollnick (2005). This developmental shift was evidenced in a number of ways, including in artists' voluntary descriptions and when prompted in final interviews to explain why they had agreed to take part and what they had got out of it. A practical demonstration was payment of fee and expenses that was valued by all artists and taken up by most of them.⁴⁶ However, artists self-identified other significant benefits. Interestingly, although these were not described in the usual industry parlance of 'professional development', the following categorisation of comments indicates the extent to which some artists gained an element of this through the interview processes.

- **Point of self-reflection**

Your asking questions of me makes me think 'why have I made the decision that I only need to earn the average wage?' Before I have been happy, that's an agenda I have set for myself, but when you say it aloud, you have to say, why am I doing that? Do I still stand by that agenda I had years and years ago? Because maybe now it looks a bit foolish. Going back to ... the idea that you have ten years of getting yourself together to get to the next stage of the ladder, I can see I'm moving up the stages from the lower league to the higher league. ... but I am very, now, kind of, driven in a way to make the change happen to get to the next stage again...

It makes me hear everything out loud It's been really nice... each time we've spoken, I've kind of ... had a rethink about what's happened... and I think it's really good to evaluate.

... extremely useful to actually talk to someone about my art practice, and have that chance to look at it from a third party almost ... who doesn't know me and isn't involved directly. It's just been useful to have the space to share what it is like to be an artist, openly, and to say it's damn hard and this is hard work. And speaking to someone about it really sheds a light on, yeah, about why do you do this?

I like trying different things... and felt I fitted the [research profile]... it wasn't something I'd done before I've really enjoyed the process... it has been really good fun for me and good to ... organise my ideas which is interesting in itself.

- **Mark of professional status**

Three artists perceived taking part in the research study as ‘part of making yourself more known... a sign that someone is taking you more seriously ... that in itself is quite affirming’; that they ‘wanted to be part of [research in an area in which] the struggle is real... and how I feel fits in with what other people are saying’; and ‘felt it was nice to think that ... my efforts ...in the art world were [pause] of a standard, you know, that I am an artist surviving in the art world.

Portraits of the artists

Central to my use of grounded theory and qualitative research methods was a desire to capture artists’ nuanced language and vocabularies and to understand the implications of similarities and differences in their sensibilities through analysis of the associated meanings. Sequential interviews allowed for depth in relationships to develop, enabling artists to open up and share hitherto unknown aspects of their circumstances, amplifying and extending my knowledge by grounding me in the reality of their lives and practices. Taking the definition of a vignette as ‘a short, carefully-constructed description of a person, object, or situation, representing a systematic combination of characteristics’, the research methods were extended to include writing a vignette or textual portrait of each artist (Atzmüller and Steiner, 2010:128)

Vignettes were constructed from interview transcriptions and associated materials. They aimed to ensure each artist is ‘visible’ in the thesis, providing an introduction and explanation of them in the context of their own particular social and human circumstances, enabling the reader to hear as if direct from the artists themselves about their motivations and economic situations. These vignettes are presented in Chapter 3: Portraits of the Artists following. Hearing artists’ stories in depth through interview processes made a significant contribution to achieving the thick description which was a research ambition. By providing nuanced exposition of artists’ attitudes, beliefs and professional and social circumstances, these portraits deepened my understanding of issues under study and informed the substantive concepts developed within the thesis.

Notes

³⁴ Cumbria came under the Northern Arts Board until merger of ten regional arts boards in England with Arts Council of England to form Arts Council England in 2001.

³⁵ CVAN (2018a). Contemporary Visual Arts Network – About CVANNW (<https://cvanetwork.squarespace.com/about-cvan-nw> [Accessed on 5th June 2018])

³⁶ Calculated data using Arts Council England's published listing of successful NPO applicants 2018-22. <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-invest-public-money/national-portfolio-2018-22> [Accessed on 5th June 2018]

³⁷ As part of scoping methodology and methods, I reviewed a number of prior studies on artists' livelihoods undertaken 1985-2017 which used predominantly quantitative methods. These are listed at <http://www.padwickjonesarts.co.uk/artists-economic-status-evidence-1986-2017/>. As exemplified in Shaw and Allen (1997), the underlying cause of artists' low incomes was identified as artists' preference for artistic over financial reward, with improvement inhibited by lack of interest in or awareness of 'the business side of their profession'. *Artists' Rights Programme: a review of artists' earnings for exhibitions and commissions. Executive Summary*. London: National Artists Association

³⁸ Reports reviewed as regards this included Turning Point (ACE, 2006a), Visual Arts Blueprint (CCS, 2005), Kretschmer Singh, Bently & Cooper (2011) and TBR (2012) for analysis of the Annual Population Survey 2010/11 by creative and cultural industries' subsectors.

³⁹ The source in this respect is the Research Ethics Guidebook <http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Protocols-and-conflicts-of-interest-74> and <http://www.ethicsguidebook.ac.uk/Are-you-paying-participants-or-using-lotteries-or-prize-draws-192> [Accessed on 24th February 2017]

⁴⁰ The written agreement with a-n The Artists Information Company dated 17 March 2017 confirmed that the company's financial contribution of £4,000 carried no entitlement to influence choice interview participants, gain access to primary data including personal details of interviewed artists, nor contribute to or influence the content of the thesis in any way. In addition, a-n would be provided with written report containing key findings and outcomes of the research, which it may choose to publish to its membership, for which the researcher retains the copyright.

⁴¹ A revised Ethics Statement for this doctoral research study which included payment of fees and expenses to participants and the source and terms of the funding for this was approved by MMU on 3rd April 2017.

⁴² a-n The Artists Information Company publishes annually updated sample fee rates for artists as an industry standard which take into account self-employed status. The relevant guide in respect of payments to artists for participation in this study is (a-n, 2017) https://static.a-n.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Guidance_on_fees_and_day_rates_for_visual_artists_2017.pdf [Accessed on 24th February 2017]

⁴³ I used <https://www.random.org> to produce a random numbers list from which to select participants from my ranges of 1-29 for female artists and 1-19 for male artists. Artists were contacted sequentially to check their ability to participate until five females and five males were confirmed.

⁴⁴ A rationale for witness statements as a unique data acquisition format is in 'The Arts Council at 70: A History in the Spotlight', seminar held 31st May 2016. Transcript by Cultural Trends and King's College London. Unnumbered pages) is at https://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/pdf/Transcript_Cultural_Trends_Conference.pdf [Accessed on 4th April 2017].

⁴⁵ Dyslexia Action asserted that 10% of the population is dyslexic. 'Dyslexia Action. Facts and figures about dyslexia'. <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/page/facts-and-figures-about-dyslexia-0> [Accessed on 13th November 2017]. Appleyard (1997) additionally suggested that dyslexia amongst visual artists could be as high as 75%. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/education-the-art-of-being-dyslexic-1280776.html> [Accessed on 4th April 2017].

⁴⁶ Availability of fees and expenses and how to claim them was explained at the first interview. Artists were subsequently reminded at the end of each interview to claim them. However, two artists consistently refused to accept fees giving the reason as this being 'important research' for them and other artists which they wanted to help.

Chapter 3: Portraits of the artists

The voices and experiences of artists sit at the centre of my research and thus the portraits of the ten artists interviewed for the primary research form the first chapter of the thesis. Each portrait takes the form of a vignette which has been reconstructed by me, the material excavated and condensed from transcripts of the three, hour-long interviews conducted over an eight-month period and from associated material written by or about the artist. My intention in these portraits is to capture each artist's personality, and allow them to introduce and explain themselves and their social and human circumstances. Through my texts that have redeployed the words, terminologies and expressions that artists used, my aim is to give voice to each artist and place them firmly in the mind's eye, enabling the reader to hear as if direct from them about their values, artistic motivations and economic situations.

These are portraits of artists as individual characters, flesh-and-blood people whose understanding and framing of their hopes, fears, desires and future development as artists and people is embedded into experiences of their daily lives and grounded in where they've come from and where they live. Because disclosure of an artist's identity may negatively impact on their future development, each was allotted a pseudonym and aspects of their accounts that might have made them identifiable suitably adjusted. Presented here are portraits of artists, organised by first by gender and then alphabetically, who I've named Emily, Lizzy, Nancy, Susannah, Tanya, Ed, Francis, Henry, Michael and Oliver. Although most are in the region of 1,300 words, those which are a little shorter are reflective of the artist's particular communications and conversational style.

The portraits

Emily

After completing undergraduate and master's degrees elsewhere, Emily and her husband moved to the city and later had a child. She's now in her early 40s and places her pursuit of an art practice which she has been doing for the last ten years within her three-way life split, as she's also a mum and holds down a part-time job.

Right from being a child, I always wanted to do art. I always excelled in anything creative. I just knew that was what I wanted to do, not that I got any encouragement at home. My mum just said 'no', that 'people like us don't do things like that'. So I've just always had to fight to do what I want to do, and make the work I want to make. There's nothing as satisfying as art is, nothing else where you're allowed to not know exactly what it's going to be, and to just learn through the process of doing.

To be honest, although I've lived here for years now, I've never yet felt part of the community. Everyone has their own little cliques and structures. It feels to me like if you're not part of this club or this studio or not paying this fee to get a circle of opportunities, then you may as well just fuck off. To make your way up the arts pecking order, it's like you're expected to do things in a certain way. It seems to be all about who you're schmoozing with but I just see through all that. As I've never felt part of the known networks, I've just got on and found my own doorways into the art scene.

Financially, I'm barely getting by. There really aren't many opportunities around here for the type of practice I do, and because so many are unpaid, I wouldn't apply. I'm not from a privileged background, so even if I didn't have my child to think about and was able to travel to other places, I'd want to be paid. I don't work for free.

I do feel I'm at a disadvantage with my kind of practice because it doesn't seem of interest to that many commissioners. There are more in London of course, but I'm not in a position to just pop down there for a morning to talk to an agency. For a while, I just had to stop making applications because I was so sick of all the rejections I was getting. I felt ready to throw the towel in, as the anxiety was affecting my mental health. It feels like you have to be on people's radar in the first place and that it's through the obvious networks and friendships that artists get opportunities.

A lot of the time I don't feel very confident. It's not that my ideas aren't good enough, it's more the 'has this even got a chance?' aspect. It's like I'm expected to be able to be all things needed in an art project – artist, presenter, designer, maker, researcher, marketer – all the other roles needed. When you're writing applications, it seems to me that you have to be able to read between the lines. I'm dyslexic so struggle with words and I'm not good with numbers either. Even the questions in application forms are in a language I just wouldn't write in and there's no one to ask for help from. There was one project I got that if someone hadn't said to me 'apply', I wouldn't have bothered and just assumed I had no chance. I do feel frustrated though, because often it seems like people already know who they want to work with, and open calls aren't really open at all.

What I'm looking for in developing my practice is relationships that support me in taking risks, to go bigger and be experimental. Like any true artist who's really pushing their practice, you're always looking for places to learn and develop. To be honest, my most successful projects have been led by me, where I've not had to force anything, and the partnerships and conversations have been very natural because we've had mutual interests. I really like it when someone approaches me and wants me to do something creative and says straight away they want to pay me, because I know then that they are actually recognising me as an artist, for the work I'm doing. It's not just the professional relationships though which are supportive. I could absolutely not do what I'm doing without my partner. He's more like a patron really. It's not just his regular income into the household as he does the design and marketing and knows the quality I want for my projects. It's good working together on projects and it makes me wonder sometimes whether I'd still be an artist if we weren't a partnership.

If you asked me, I'd say I can't really look too far ahead into the future for my practice. We have some big life decisions simmering at the moment. We've had enough of living in rented accommodation so we're thinking we should move out of the centre, if we can find a way to afford to. We need to be somewhere where there's a good school for our child. But sometimes I haven't got the mental energy to deal with it because I am thinking about my practice at the same time, but probably really only in terms of a couple of years. I can't look beyond that.

What I'm trying to do now is to create my own little support structure and to bring in the same income I get now from a part-time job, but from my art practice. I am grateful for the Arts Council funding I have had, but to be competitive you've got to put in at least a 20-25% financial contribution. They don't regularly fund individuals, so you're back to square one

afterwards. I've taken a space now in a bigger studio group, and I'm liking being amongst more artists and feeling part of the artist community. I have looked at the professional development around for artists here, but doesn't seem a good fit to my practice. I'm still in the dark about what would be best for my development, because I don't really know what else I need to do to present my work to high technical and aesthetic standards. Maybe it's a mentor or producer or collaborator I really need – or maybe it's just another critical 'pair of eyes'. What I really want is something a bit like speed dating where I can get to meet people who have the skills I need, because I can't afford to waste money.

Lizzy

Lizzy is in her early forties and has been an artist and artist-educator for the last twelve years, making her income from a combination of studio and exhibition sales and part-time teaching. With an eye to future career development, she began a full-time Masters in 2017 at a renowned art school in travelling distance from the home she shares with her husband, teenage step-children and dogs.

I honestly believe you can do pretty much anything you want to do in life provided you focus, work hard and throw your thinking skills at overcoming obstacles. I think I get this from my Mum, she's got a very 'can do, just try things out' attitude. She was very creative herself, always finding creative things for us to do. With eleven of us as kids, we were a creative, messy household that made our own entertainment. Looking back, I can see my brothers and sisters always thought of me as the artist in the family because from an early age, I'd sort of marked it out as *my* territory. When I graduated from art school, I didn't start off to be a professional artist straight away. That only came about ten years later when I took some business courses that opened my eyes to what I needed to do if I really wanted to make a living as an artist. It wasn't just about making the work, I needed to build my brand and really market myself.

My sales tend to come from showing in local art fairs and as often as not, from friends and family or people who've been watching my work for a while who decide to buy something. For about two years, I was a Creative Partnerships artist in residence in schools and did some mentoring of other artists for them. I think Creative Partnerships really was a life-line for artists, we could step away from the day job and do work complementary to our personal practice. Sharing our creative processes with young people was invaluable for us and them. I still come across some of the kids I worked with all those years ago, who tell me they remember what we did and how

much they enjoyed it. Although at the moment my income comes partially from selling work and partially from teaching part-time in a school for children with special needs, I'm not embarrassed to say what I want eventually is to make most of my money from my art work. My husband says I'm a perpetual optimist but I think everyone has to make a living, and wouldn't it be great to make a living from what you love doing best.

But the struggle is real I think, and if we choose to follow this path we have to persevere and we have to be a bit crazy too, because being an artist is always going to be hard. I know how lonely it can be, how you have to second-guess your decisions, how you have to work out what's worth spending money on, and which opportunities are worthwhile. There aren't any guidelines on how to go about it. What I've found is that people can be reluctant to give you advice, especially when they're also going for the same opportunities. Being part of the studios here hasn't always been brilliant for me, although I think informal mentoring goes on when you learn the ropes from more experienced artists and get involved in projects you wouldn't have clue about yourself.

My life choices don't always make sense to other people – why would I want to throw away security and a career to do something so volatile and so uncertain? They say if you'd stayed in full-time teaching you would have been a head of department by now. I've tried other routes, but I always find myself drawn back to the plan A – I need to be an artist, it's like an itch I *have* to scratch. It's as if I'm 'locked in' because the whole process is compulsive. I'm like a little generator in perpetual motion and the more I do art, the more I want to do art and the more energised I get about doing art. When I'm not making art, I'm unhappy. My husband can always tell, he says I get agitated, short-tempered and just can't cope with people socially. I'm a classic extrovert/ introvert I think because although I'm quite confident, I need to spend an awful lot of time by myself. Studio time is powerful alone time, where I can have a conversation with myself. So I have to give art my best shot, push it as far as I can and see where I end up. I've only got one life and money isn't really *that* important. I only need enough for a studio, to travel when I want to, to eat nice food when I want to. We don't want a flash car, we don't even have a mortgage, and we're just not interested in having assets like that.

As somebody who hasn't had children and doesn't want to, perhaps art is my 'baby'. I put my creativity, focus and nurturing into making the objects and ideas and exploring them. That's what gives me a sense of being a person. I think child rearing is incredibly – not draining – but energy intensive. Even nowadays, because the emphasis on child rearing and all the

emotional work of having a family still falls on women, it creates a massive, massive barrier to being an artist.

I would say that there's a real lack of a coherent vision for the arts here, it's like they are in a black hole. In a small community we end up tripping over each other. You come across the same crowd at the same openings, and it all gets a bit gossipy. There used to be more positivity, but it feels rather stagnant now, whether it's just people feeling the pinch and being more closed. Here feels a rather sad place to be. I know that if I want to spread my wings I probably need to make my escape, and I'm not the only artist thinking that.

Going back to study for a Master's was a deliberate choice. We sat down together and thought long and hard about it. I knew I was exactly at the place in my practice where I needed that kind of critical feedback and to shake up my practice and analyse it and then put it back together again to take it forward. Choosing a renowned art school is like nailing my flag to the mast, it's a calculated choice in an art world in which prestige is a currency. Doing the Master's will put me back at the starting line because I realised that it's emerging artists who get far better support, opportunities and exposure than mid-career artists. We just decided to pull our belts in a bit to make it financially manageable.

I really have no idea what doors are going to open and what opportunities are going to present themselves to me once I've completed it. I could give just one more shot at trying to build something good for artists here. But what happens to us next will be a question of sitting down with my husband and deciding the best place to invest my time and effort. We could go and settle in a big metropolitan area with a big, well-established functional art scene. Brexit is a massive issue for me though, because I don't want to lose the European market for my art, so we might decide to go and live in Berlin or move to Dublin so I could get an Irish passport.

Nancy

Nancy is in her mid-30s and has been practising as an artist for 15 years. Until five years ago, she and her husband lived in London. Working as an art lecturer left little time for her practice so they moved to a city in the North West where she joined a studio group. She's now able to work full-time on art practice, financing it through researching and developing partnerships and raising funds for successive projects.

My main chunk of income for the last few years, has come from the long-term projects I've developed myself. I think for *me*, it feels like if you want to do something you've just got to get on and do it yourself, so I put a lot of time into finding partners for projects and doing the fundraising. One of my projects lasted for two years, and for that I partnered with an arts organisation I'd worked with before and with a gallery that wanted to show the work. I've found that inviting visits to my studio is a good way to get to know the people I want to work with in the future. I asked this gallery curator to come to my studio and I could see we would get on well. Even so, it took eight months of discussion to develop and finance that project – the one I've been doing for almost all of this year – which isn't an unusual length of time. I raised all the funds myself from a mixture of different sources including the Arts Council and private funding, so I've had secure income for at least two years for that project and my next one. I mean, it's not a lot of money but I'd just rather make sacrifices with what I spend, because at least I'm getting to do something that I enjoy. I'm just really grateful for Arts Council funding. I suppose it is good validation, stamping approval on the quality of what you're doing. I probably spend two weeks full-time doing an application because they need you to speak in a certain language. I do think you should have to do that, as it's money to do something that you want to do. But I've never been rejected so I think I might feel differently if I was.

I suppose when we lived in London I didn't really think it was possible to make a living from my practice. In the seven years we were there, I didn't come across a lot of artists who were. I was working full-time as a lecturer in higher education and I didn't have a studio, just a desk space I used on weekends. I was really struggling to find time and energy to focus on my practice because I was putting so much of myself into caring, you know, nurturing my students. I don't know, we just had to leave London. I suppose it felt like I needed to be able to concentrate really hard on my practice, so it was a conscious decision. We chose to come here because costs of housing and studios are much lower, and does seem like it is possible and economically achievable to be an artist here. I know quite a few artists who making a living from their practice and being in group studios has really helped me understand the different ways artists work, made me think what might be possible for me. So yeah, I suppose financially it is uncertain, but then I'm really enjoying it.

I was just very driven to be an artist, right from when I was like, four, just determined that was what I wanted to do. I wouldn't have it that I was doing anything else, and now it's part of me as a person. I think it's definitely good for my mental health because I get very frustrated and down when I'm not making work so I'm really grateful for all the opportunities. I

don't know, I suppose I just really love the whole process of researching, responding and making work and sharing it with people. I do really enjoy showing my work.

I would think I'm probably emerging as an artist, but I don't know, I feel like I am. It's just that the word is a bit over-used. I wouldn't say I was mid-career but I don't really know, maybe I'm just an artist. I feel that there's a lot more work for me here than there was in London, but suppose it's like anything, the more you get into it, the more opportunities you have, the more experience you've got, and the more awareness of that sector and how it works, and the more possible it is to be working as an artist. So I suppose I feel that over the last few years, I've built more of a momentum in my career, and that it gathers more with each project I do. When I got funding to go to America and show work, I felt there were so many more opportunities I could access, so I think maybe in future I want to be working more internationally.

I suppose over the last few years I've realised how important relationships with curators really are. I've found certain people to be incredibly supportive, willingly given me down-to-earth advice – like when I'm grappling with a funding application. I think the best relationships are with people who are really passionate about the development of artists. I know there are curators who get to recommend artists for the 'closed' bursaries and commissions, you know, that only artists who are invited can apply for. Obviously, they don't want hundreds and hundreds of applications to look at, but I do worry that it makes everything about *their* taste in artists.

Being in this studio group is very important and gave me a flying start really when I arrived here from London. I became absorbed into a community of artists of different ages and levels of experience, everyone was really open and wanting to collaborate. So yeah, I do feel like I have got a good support network and I have a few artist friends I feel I can really trust. But if I'm really struggling with something, it's my husband I rely on. He's self-employed too and built his business from nothing. He knows that making his money each month is down to him, so I see a lot of parallels between our lives. If I'm complaining about something he's very motivating. Like, he'll say 'Well, no one else is going to do it, so if you don't believe in yourself, no one else will'.

So yeah, I feel creatively satisfied because of all the opportunities to push myself, where I can try things that I don't think I can do and then I get to figure out how I can. I'm very busy at the moment. But I know that setting up my new projects is really just such a long process, so it's always a bit

unsettling from a financial point of view until they are lined up. One of next year's projects has already been a year in the making as they had to raise the funds for it. You know, it's still a bit of a secret, so I can't tell you any more yet. I don't feel I'm ever going to run out of opportunities because I think there are always lots of things to research. It's just all down to me to do it. But at the back of mind is the question of whether to have a child before it's too late. But I don't know how we would manage if I couldn't get maternity pay. Then some artists tell me that because they have a child they feel they don't even get considered for projects, they say curators think you can't handle it or don't have the time.

Susannah

Susannah who is in her late 30s lives with husband and child in a small village surrounded by the landscape that inspires her work. Graduating in 2001 with a degree in applied arts, she won major prizes and quickly found herself making a living from selling through commercial galleries. It was the UK's economic recession that forced her to develop a dual career as an artist-educator which suits her artistic ambitions and family circumstances.

Things started so well for me when I left university. I walked straight into selling work through commercial galleries and right from the beginning, I could be an artist full-time because there were people who found my work very appealing. I enjoyed what I was producing then, but in the back of my mind was a worry that I wasn't really pushing my practice and because of that, the work lacked depth and substance. Then came the financial crisis when commercial galleries were struggling to sell. In no time at all, I went from a position of supporting my life quite easily through my artwork to being not able to at all. I very quickly needed to find other kinds of income, so I drew on my people skills and took on all sorts of short-term teaching work. Two years later, I had four or five different income streams to put on my tax return. But when I looked at how many hours I'd worked against what I'd brought home, it was just crazy. I knew I couldn't sustain myself like that. So after these steep learning curves, I set about developing two regular income streams for my art and my life. I sell my commercial work through my website that gives me the time and materials to make the work I'm really passionate about which I show in open exhibitions here and abroad. For life beyond the art world, I have my half-time salary as a secondary school art teacher.

Ever since I was a tiny child I wanted to be an artist, so it's strange that the experience of doing it full-time didn't actually work for me. I know I have to live in the real world and I've always tried to find a balance for sustaining my life and my practice I'm happy with. It took quite a while to get to the point where I felt that it was an okay time to have a baby. I felt I needed to be at a point in my career when I could stop for a period of time and then come back to it. Looking back now, I see what's happened as a series of pivotal moments in my artist career, that the restrictive situations were the catalyst for doing something more creative and have had the most positive outcomes in the end.

I think the key to being a creative person is to keep on making because then you have a sincerity about your work. It's almost autobiographical and speaks of your life. You should almost be able to see that person through it. It's not the sort of career you can do for a couple of years and achieve anything. I believe that you have to be working past a decade to even start to feel like you are embedded in it. I feel I've got to where I am now by learning from people who've been practising for longer than me and also by luck, hard work and dedication. But mostly I think I have to just keep going, you know, pursuing things against all odds and keeping up a flow of ideas. It's a sort of resilience for me, I suppose. When stuff happens that's out of my control, when I don't feel like myself, the best thing I can do is immerse myself in my work and not really worry what comes out, because it's actually just about a process, and doing that just settles me.

But I know that to keep my practice going, I need to experience some level of success because otherwise, I can't justify the time and money spent continuing with it. Every year, I invest in entering national open exhibitions. I do select carefully and only submit to the ones which are right for my type of work. I'm often lucky enough to be selected and sometimes win prizes. What I'm really hoping for by persistently applying for these juried exhibitions is that a curator or selector will connect the dots and think to say, you know, 'I've seen this artist's name cropping up for the last decade – it's good work that should be shown more'. There were over 33,000 visitors to the last exhibition I was selected for, an enormous level of exposure that I couldn't hope to achieve myself.

When I'm doing my work I need to have enough time to set up and get a good run at it, be skilful using the traditional materials and processes, and really experimental with ideas and processes. I think that's when the really exciting things happen, when you lift off into a direction you never considered before. I think the creative industries are probably losing out on the many, many women who don't get time to get to the point they need to

get to before childbearing, who drop out and then don't have the time to get back or go any further with their practice. That seems a real waste. I think that what I really need now is some sort of one-to-one mentoring. It would be incredibly valuable and for a mid-career artist like me, absolutely essential really when you've dedicated a huge amount of your life to something and feel like you're getting somewhere, but need to know where you fit into the art world.

I'm not an extrovert and I don't thrive in big bustling situations and if you put me in an environment with too big a group of people I become a wallflower, so I don't do a lot of networking. I do share quite readily within my circle of creative people. They are friends really, people nearby who are interested in making music, making drama, making art. I think you do naturally gravitate to people who've got similar social values and ideas. I've often found conversations with them quite useful for moving things forward when feel like I'm stuck on something. I can test the water for my new ideas with the people who are closest to me before going further afield.

I do know the pace of working through ideas and making is slower now than when I was younger. My head has moved on before my hands have made the things I need to, and that's the frustration, there's no two ways about it. But being short of time means you're never short of ideas and I'm never sitting in a studio thinking 'I don't know what to do'. So yes, having enough time for my practice is a massive problem, but I wouldn't want to shelve my teaching career because I enjoy it, it's a really important source of inspiration and it's essential to our financial stability. The very obstacle, the positive obstacle if you like, is that I have a child to look after now, but I certainly wouldn't want to lose the time I spend with her either. I want her to know me as an artist who teaches, who is her mum.

So, ultimately, although it's lack of time that's the problem, it's only at the moment, because I know the time will come when I can rebalance things. It may be that the point when I genuinely will have freedom to do what I want as an artist will come not in a decade's time, but in two. By then, I'll have done the mothering bit and my daughter will be doing whatever she decides she wants to do with her life.

Tanya

Tanya who is in her early 30s moved when 18 years into the city to study and graduated from university in 2006. As a freelance creative image maker and documentary photographer, she's been making her living since from commercial

sector contracts. She satisfies a burning creative drive by making work and taking every opportunity that arises to keep refreshing and developing her practice.

I'm from a family where everyone was being creative *all* of the time. So, I guess that's why even now that's what we all do. At school, I felt much more comfortable in the art room than anywhere else. I'm really obsessed with creating – it's just a magic and fantastical experience, such a massive contributor to my own mental health, I just have to do it. I believe being creative can make someone feel better. I always want to find ways to inspire and enable other people to use their creativity, because it can take them out of their everyday lives – make them feel they're 'something'.

My work comes mainly from businesses. I probably get around 100 contracts a year. What I've found is that people seem to get in contact at just the right time for me. Touch wood, it's all going OK at the moment. When I was starting out, there was a performer who asked me to produce a set for the album that launched his career. It's true there wasn't much money in it, but the video was seen by a lot of people, and I know it led directly to getting me more commissions.

Over the last five years, I've kept refreshing my creative practice by extending how I work. So it now ranges from designing sets and making installations through to selling pieces of work in exhibitions and fairs. I've found this helps a lot in making a living because it gets me into contact with a variety of people and having a range of work means when I'm having a lull in one aspect, another one always seems to be going quite well.

I'm having to work seven days a week really if I am to make my monthly income targets. Sometimes, I wake up at four in the morning because my brain is whirring with it all. But I'm enjoying it and always have faith that it's all going to work out. I do feel I'm in control of my life and my creative practice. I don't make loads of money but then I don't need loads. I do get asked to go cheaper by some customers, but I know to stick to my guns on pricing. The handful of regular clients I've built up are more like my patrons really. I know if I'm stuck they will always find me something. I do have a panic sometimes, but I think that's my way of working out a solution.

I've found that posting something creative online does spur people into contacting me. I think people do seem to respond better if I show them something without trying to sell. When I'm short of work, I just need to start reminding people in my networks what I do and usually work starts coming in again. I'm never afraid of contacting people however high up they are. There are some great people in my life who've been really helpful and

supportive. I'm lucky that a lot of friends I grew up with here are very ambitious and are doing quite innovative things now. For me, it's as much the personal friendships as professional connections that bring in work and creative opportunities at just at the right time.

I always learn best when I'm doing things for myself. My partner's a designer and we decided we just had to make time in our lives to be creatively challenged. We felt we could learn from other artists' experiences, and we needed new ideas for our next big plan. So we went on a big trip abroad to see how other artist communities worked. It ate up all our savings and more. Even though we're still paying it off, it was worth it because we came back really charged up.

Our ambition is to take on a space and launch something combining our creative talents and potential, but it's quite a challenge to get your business head on when you're creatively based. As soon as we got back from our trip, we thought everything was going to happen really quickly – that we were just on the edge of success. Now, we know it actually takes quite a bit of time. We wrote a business plan and then didn't really know who to ask to help us develop it. So although we thought we'd found a great building, we just had to give up on it because when all the costs were added up, was just far too expensive and risky. So we kept on working individually and started to work more collaboratively at the same time. All the time though, we've been building our story, spreading the word, growing our name and bringing in the money we need to live on.

A new experiment is running some digital workshops in friendly places. We want to bring together small groups of people who maybe don't usually get to do creative activities. We've only done one workshop so far, and we didn't expect to make an income from it, but it feels like we're helping to build little creative communities. Some great people came who thought they couldn't do stuff like that but came out with some really amazing stuff. They said it made them feel good and that's really nice for us. If everyone could just appreciate what artists like us are worth – how much time we put in – we'd all earn a bit more and be able to support ourselves a little bit better.

Even though the building we've now taken on now is farther out of the city than we'd wanted, it feels like a good place to start out and we've been working hard to get it ready. We want to make it a really comfortable space – almost a working and living space where we could spend most of our time. We feel we could be on the edge of doing something. It could be failure or success, but if we're lucky and work hard, it will be brilliant.

Ed

Ed graduated from a renowned London art school and initially set up a studio there, developing his public commissions practice alongside a day job. Better artistic and lifestyle prospects were the motivation to settle in a North West city where he married someone with a creative career. He's now in his early 50s with 30 years of art practice experience behind him.

I'm very happy, very satisfied with the life I've got. I think it's the mix that keeps me happy. I make my living from what's called a 'freelancer sandwich'. I have regular income from teaching in a school a day week and running workshops and educational projects in museums or galleries two or three days a week, and the rest of my time is spent on the big commissions I'm known for.

My Masters course all those years ago was very, very practical. It gave me everything needed to do public commissions. Every term they gave us a real-life brief. To get the best marks, you had to show you could do all aspects of it, so not just making a proposal but doing a budget and the production schedule. In the breaks between terms, I did art projects with youth groups and schools, learning about the public engagement side. That's how I got to know about working with people and doing commissions and what certificates and paperwork an artist needs. I wouldn't be getting regular contracts with local councils now if I didn't know to have the right insurances and CRB.

It was a good decision to leave London when I did with some of my friends. We all fell on our feet here. I've found it better to be a big fish in a small pond. I liked living in London but it's expensive and super competitive, not a good place for artists to get old in. I mean, what are artists there going to do when it comes to retirement age? Once I'd moved and was set up, I started off working quite humbly. I found the commissions soon came in from architects and developers here or from people in London and the South East. Once people had worked with me, they tended to recommend me to other people, so it was word-of-mouth that kept the new projects coming in.

It worked well like that for quite a while. But there was a time – it was in 2008 – when I had next to no work. With no notice at all, a regular freelance contract dropped from £200-£300 a week to next to nothing and there were no big projects coming my way at all. I was very vocal about that to anyone who'd listen because I could see it turning into a really bad year. I had to get

on the phone to *all* my contacts. I was in such a dire state financially I even had to borrow money. But just as I was very, very close to giving up and thinking I'd have to get a job of any kind, a few of those phone calls paid off and some work came in that got me through that really, really bad time. It wasn't luck because I think luck is something you make yourself.

I prefer doing the big permanently-sited commissions and if I could make my living solely from them, that's what I'd really want to be doing. But I've realised big projects aren't something I can do on my own, particularly now I'm older. I do genuinely believe – not in a-hippy way – in working collaboratively, in getting more than one brain working on something. When you're all buying into it, what comes out is greater than the sum of the parts. Having artistic collaborators and bringing in a team of people means I can work on a bigger scale. I'm not having to do the physical work myself and I'm only needed on site for a few days every so often. I do really like working with people, kids and adults are such a rich creative source and I enjoy being able to facilitate them in producing really good pieces of art. I believe that by working together, we can produce something far better than anything I could do on my own.

For some of the collaborative projects, being older is a real advantage. When you're talking about budgets of up a million pounds of public funds, I don't think a commissioner's going to give that to a youngster who doesn't know how to run their business. But they're more than happy to give it to me because I've got years of experience. But you grow up in a bubble of the technology from your time so where I'm struggling now is getting the education I need to use all the new technologies. There's a pool of people that I know of my age who can't do these things either, and would benefit from some training and I can't see why we couldn't get some arts funding to do that.

For all the talk of a thriving culture here, funding is always trickle-down and there's no real representation of artists' interests. I was involved in a visual arts forum and the two or three artists around the table were the only unpaid people, the rest – maybe ten professional arts people – were mainly curators, so we were always out voted. There was funding to pass on and the artists were all for this going to artists to improve their understanding of the industry but the others wanted to spend it on mentoring for curators by better-known curators from London. It was a top down, bottom up argument and the top down people won. It was massively frustrating and all of us artists walked away. They probably haven't even noticed we've left.

Until now, I've been very happy with agenda I've set for myself. But now I've had time to think about it, I am wondering if I still stand by that. I've always felt very privileged to be able to make my living from art, because not many artists I know are doing that full-time. I've always known there are stages in the art world that artists have to go through. I know it took me ten years just to get myself together. Then it was getting critical acclaim from people around me that took me up the ladder to the stage I'm now at, where galleries invite me to do projects. The highest level to aspire to would be getting to show at somewhere like the Tate. I'm more goal-orientated now, very driven to make some of the changes happen. I'm very confident presenting myself for the educational and architectural side, and that's how I make a living. But it's the other side – the pure art that gives me creative freedom – I want to be recognised for. So I'm going to pay for mentoring from a curator I know, to help me work out how to represent both sides of what I do.

I've never been greedy about money, always very satisfied to be earning the same as the national average wage. But now I'm thinking, am I being ambitious enough? If I earned a bit more, we could be mortgage-free and I could save for a pension. Maybe I could buy an industrial unit and have more security. I've never thought before about getting work in other places, but because of Brexit, maybe I should.

Francis

Francis started out in the crafts on leaving school but soon made the shift to professional photography, even before gaining the qualification. Now in his early 50s, for the last 30 years he's made his living through lecturing, community facilitation and a commercial photographic business. In 2017 he was taking time out to reflect on his practice and next career moves by taking a Masters.

I've actually been involved in the creative industries since I was 16 because, in another life I used to be a furniture maker. It was in the '90s I made the shift into photography, initially and perhaps naively I thought I could do that without entering education first.

Then, I saw getting higher education as a way of broadening my outlook if you like. I was proud of the book commission I got while I was a student, and yet I never show it to people. I'd say doing that commission certainly opened my eyes to the restrictions that can be put on your work. The tutors were quite sniffy, warning me that I was compromising myself by doing it. In some respects, the course was an interesting contradiction. It did broaden

my outlook in terms of my awareness and knowledge of the practice but on the commercial side of things perhaps it shrunk it. So having thought when I'd graduated I'd be chasing editorial commissions, I found myself pursuing the community-based or practitioner-based work that was being advertised a lot then in *Artists Newsletter*. This was all happening about 20 years ago. Around the same time, I landed my first lecturing work. I saw a regional college advertising for lecturers and the next thing I know, I'm doing 6 hours a week. That very quickly started to grow, and within two years I had a permanent .6 post and was course leader. But frustrations with that role led to resigning from it. After that, until about three years ago, I found that all my income was coming from freelance work associated with photo education, workshops and delivering training. I did do some commercial photography as well. I was averaging around £24,000 a year although it varied a lot. I was involved in Creative Partnerships for three years, initially as a project manager and later as a mentor – they gave us the terrible title of 'creative agent'

Back in the 90s, I felt very strongly about the idea of regional opportunity. Even in the second year of my course, quite organically, I got involved in setting up various photography initiatives. There was a group of us who, after we left, stayed in touch and started to talk to each other about what we could do photographically, how we might support each other. For me personally, that was motivated around the idea of being able to do things around the region rather than having to go to London, if you like. You know, what could we do to support our own practice and create our own opportunities? One of us suggested we perhaps form some kind of collective, although that language wasn't being used at the time, it was more a case of 'what can we do?' So we started meeting at the Viewpoint Gallery once a month, it was a bit of a peer support group. In those early pre internet days, it was conversations, word-of-mouth and spreading the word that brought more established practitioners in. Doing that led to me and a load of other people being invited by North West Arts Board to come in and talk to them about regional photography provision. Okay they weren't handing money over at that point, but they were saying, 'if you guys go off and start to do something there might be the opportunity'. It was certainly a period of great associations, where my colleagues and I put on this big symposium that brought in some amazing practitioners from around the world. We got A4E funding to initiate a photography festival with 17 venues and 21 artists. We were getting to meet lots of people and at the same time, I saw it as developing a reputation. It's what led to the first public meeting and formation of a regional photography network that, in my spare time, I spent the next eleven years developing. The regional aspect of what we were doing was always important, not needing the institutions, just doing things for yourself.

The landscape has always been my anchor. When I get out onto the moor the temptation because the top is quite flat and featureless is to just look at the sky or the fringes. Some people find it a foreboding place, but for me it's the draw. I can find my way around it alone and in the dark and it's not foreboding at all. Over recent years been giving an awful lot to family. My mum and two close aunts who were both widows and had no kids turned to me for quite a bit of help. Mum had a stroke and I had to put my aunts in a home and then within 15 months, all three had died. I had neglected myself, but it was for the right reasons.

I'd say a large part of what I've done over the past 20 years has been being an educator and facilitator, helping other people in one way or another. Some of that happened by chance, me responding to situations and opportunities and I enjoyed that, I didn't regret it. I think some people succeed in spite or despite of the stuff around – that idea of survival of the fittest. But if we're supposed to be a society that's developing and becoming more socially just with a small 's' and 'j', I think we should look out for people who because of lack of opportunity slip through the net because they and society are missing out.

There came a point when I started to think 'Is there something missing?' Wondering whether I still had an itch that needed scratching. So I began to think a little bit more about my photography and that's when I joined an MA. My motivation at the moment is re-establishing myself, retaining the wake-up call I've had being a student. I wouldn't say I was off-track, more a bit out of circulation. In the back of my mind I'm already thinking should I do a PhD, return to lecturing or commercial photography or am I an art practitioner now? But we'll have to see how some of that unfolds.

If you asked me, I would find it hard at the moment to say what success would look like. I've given an awful lot of time to networks, probably spent from 1996 to God knows when contributing to them. I've got a lot from that but I think they can be distractions for us as individuals. Sometimes when I look back to past ventures, being involved like that again appeals. But then I think, 'No it's time to actually leave that behind'. We can feel involved and we're getting somewhere, but are we potentially neglecting our own very personal practice in doing that? Ironically for someone who's helped a lot of people, I'm very poor at asking for help myself. I'm quite self-reliant – often too self-reliant. Maybe it's time to be a bit more selfish.

Henry

Henry who's his early 40s has been an artist for nearly two decades. He's grown up, studied and now lives with partner and daughter in a place very near to where he was born. He's built up a niche small business that with reliable freelance work and self-initiated art projects and commissions, provides the financial stability he wants for his life and his family.

In my head I'm first and foremost an artist, and although sometimes I feel I'm really getting somewhere now with my art practice, I still worry there's not much to show for all the hours and hours spent working full-time. If only I could throw caution to the winds and just decide to do what it takes to be the artist I really want to be. It's a war of attrition. I'm desperate to call time on the bread-and-butter day jobs that, fair enough, give me the steady income I need to have, but which are – well – pretty dull now. They are just taking up far too much of what could otherwise be my creative time. I know I'm good at initiating and getting funding for my art projects. It's these I find are the most creatively satisfying. They validate my practice and get the attention of people who probably weren't listening to me before. I can see this is where my future as an artist lies. I don't know what's stopping me really. It's not that I'm not organised. I make these plans which are pinned up on my wall and get advice from my mentor. I have five and ten year milestones. It always seems very logical on paper, it's realising the plans that's the problem.

I'm always having to think about money. I'm at a stage in life where I've had a mortgage for a long time. I've got a young family, I'm responsible, and I'm the main breadwinner. I've got monthly income targets to meet and I'm always worrying about going over the overdraft and the bank manager breathing down my neck. What my partner earns, well, it's a contribution – it's up and down and small amounts, so it isn't to be relied on. And then there's my Mum to think about. She's on her own now and I need to make sure she's safe. Mum's the one I get my creative traits from, she is just naturally talented. It was from her I learned that pretty much anything is possible: you just need to crack on with it and stop worrying.

So if I did give up the steady income, I need know there are enough big commissions around here and that I'm likely to be getting them, but these are things I can't be sure about. I've been offered interesting opportunities in London and they *might* have been good for exposure, but I can't think about doing them because of the money – the budgets offered just aren't realistic. If you're an emerging artist, there are thousands of opportunities,

but mid-career it all feels a bit like smoke and mirrors. There's not a lot of support that really understands what your practice needs at that stage. I can't always be relying on Arts Council grants. Yes, they've been very helpful in my career so far, but there's only one window of opportunity. You might get a few successful bids and if you're not self-sufficient after that, you're going to have to look for income from somewhere else. I used to think I wanted each project to be bigger and better than the last. But to get bigger grants, I'd need to show a bigger national impact and involve more people, and then I'd be up against bigger projects, so I don't know if that's really the way to go.

I'm responsible for my family and I worry about what might happen if I'm not there providing for them. I don't like to think about being away from home for more than a couple of days at a time. I want to be a good father, taking my daughter to school every day, because she's growing up fast and soon enough will be a teenager who doesn't want to know her Dad at all. I've been thinking that I do need to involve my family more in what I do as an artist. So one thing was they came on a site visit for a large commission proposal. Then there's been trips to the studio for my daughter and she's helping me make things. Maybe she'll grow up to want to be an artist and be proud of me because I'm an established artist who can give her some contacts to help her on her way.

In all the time I've been an artist other than my family, there's only been three or four people who are working in the arts in my circle of trust. They are the ones who have been pivotal, who have kept me going, pushed me to try something, and have helped me to take a different direction. But I do feel like I'm in control of my own destiny – I've learned how to survive and know what's required. But this is what creates my first fear factor, knowing it's all down to me to pick and plan. It's exciting but scary. I've got a fairly steady income from various bits and bobs, so to cut those ties to certain income streams brings on the second fear factor, like what happens if I can't rely on getting those art projects and good commissions? So then, when I weigh it all up, the financial risk of letting my steady work slide and the prospect of letting the family down is just too great, and I just have to chicken out and stop where I am.

I am frustrated because it's *time* that's the massive constraint. It's studio time I need, time to actually sit down, play, make and let ideas develop instead of trying to cram that development into a few odd snatched hours here and there. I can see that there is potential for that creative time to happen now because I'm being represented by an agent and a gallery. I'm happy to be guided by them – the agent is already in my small circle of

people I trust and the gallery comes recommended by an artist I've known for years. So, I *am* hopeful that these developments and taking on studio space amongst similar artists who are doing my kind of work will help to open up my practice and secure a livelihood for me and my family from it.

It is a lonely occupation being an artist. I feel a bit excluded from the art scene. It's a very fly-by-night kind of lifestyle. You spend all this time in your own company thinking, thinking you're not getting anywhere, thinking you're at the bottom of the pile, while wanting at the same time to be strong enough to say that's what I want and just go for it. I kind of just keep working because I do believe I'll make it one day or there'll be a pot of money somewhere that comes along.

Michael

Michael is a painter in his early 40s who lives in the city with his wife and two children. Over 12 years of art practice he's won or been shortlisted for significant regional and national art prizes and competitions, selected for notable UK and international exhibitions, experienced the fruits of commercial gallery representation and sold work to important art collectors.

I suppose as an artist I'm quite traditional, in that I make paintings in my studio and then hope to sell them. It's not the idea of whatever *being an artist is* that interests me, it's the painting, drawing and making things that do that. Making art is something I just have to do. I can't imagine what could replace it in my life. I believe we're all made to create and we need to have the freedom to create, whatever that looks like. Being creative makes each of us more a more whole person. If creativity dies, we end up a more reduced version of ourselves and it's harder to create. I've thought this way since I was 14, when I found my faith and started to take art seriously. From that perspective, part of me needs to be helping other people to realise they can create too, so that comes out through my dual career as well as the 'being a parent' part of me.

A few years back, I had some big boosts in terms of encouragement and ability to keep going as an artist. In the space of five months, I was shortlisted for a major fellowship and also won three of the big painting prizes. I think the confidence that comes from winning leaks into your work and makes it more confident and look better. Through a friend's introduction, I got gallery representation and my paintings were in a big exhibition in London, alongside modern masters and artists such as Damien Hirst. When things like that happen, I think it's because people perceive you

as successful, so you sell a lot of work, and then you start to believe you are. And when you believe in yourself, you feel more assured about what you're doing, and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

I sold some big paintings for really big prices then, and it did feel like 'yeah, this it!' Someone said that as soon as you sell a painting for five figures, you've made it. But no, it doesn't. I did sell paintings for five figures, but now I'm back to selling for two or three grand. It turned out I was only in that world for two days. I know it's just the climate and opportunities that have changed. I'm old enough to know how to weather the storms and to just carry on painting and drawing, hopefully always making better work. I think it's life, enjoy it, throw yourself into it, make the most of it when you have it, but don't mourn it when it's taken from you.

My job working with troubled children fits in with my art practice. It's not only that it pays the mortgage and puts food on the family table, I think of it as providing what I'd need if I was, say, a landscape painter. Even if my paintings were made in the studio, I'd have to go for a walk in the landscape to experience it. In the same way, the subjects for my work are related to my job. I need to do it, it's the equivalent of going for a walk. I can't really conceive of doing anything else I'd like as much. The financial security means I can take creative risks and although I do want sell my paintings, it doesn't really matter when I don't. But I worry sometimes that you can only *really* take risks when there's nothing to lose.

The older I get, the more doing painting is a habit. I know habit can totally kill the work, that you can just produce *those* kind of paintings which are great and what you're known for. But at the same time, I think habit is about really mastering something as an artist and spending three hours a day on it for ten thousand days, or whatever they say it is, where you really *know* what you are doing. As a painter, I need to be maintaining the *craft* of what I do. I might have a month off when I don't go into the studio, but I also have intense periods when I must be in there. I once was able to throw myself into a painting. I worked from Thursday morning to Saturday afternoon, without stopping, eating or sleeping until it was finished. It was nice that it was bought afterwards but I define its success as the quality of the image I was able to make.

If I had a gallery and work was selling regularly, I could think about doing fewer days at my job and have one or two days a week completely devoted to painting. I'm waiting at the moment for the dates for an exhibition I've been offered by a New York gallery. It was supposed to be last year and it's disappointing it's been pushed back. Reading between the lines, the gallery

is struggling a bit financially, as a lot are since the recession. I think that there are too many artists and not enough galleries, and it's harder to get taken on by a gallery if you haven't been to a London art school. What I really need to find is an intermediary, someone who can talk face-to-face and promote me and my work to the kinds of gallery that could take me on.

I'm an introvert so my nightmare would be having to go to lots of openings to chat up people. I do like talking to people but I think if you're not careful, talking becomes a substitute for actually making art. I do seek out conversations a couple of times a year with two painters I've known a long time and respect and I also like to talk to artists further down the path than I am. I believe in God and prayer is important, but the biggest support for my practice comes from my wife.

Oliver

Oliver's big plan was to move to London. But he arrived in the city 15 years ago and through serendipity stayed on and got a place on a degree course, graduating in 2006. Now in his mid-30s, he's put heart and soul into projects that have benefitted himself and other artists. Although he knows how to play the city's arts game, he feels his chances of progression there are slim and it's only a matter of time before he moves to London.

What I really enjoy as an artist is using paint and the skills that have been part of my life since I was a teenager. I enjoy the artistry that comes from being accurate and of knowing what I'm doing is set within the long line of painting tradition stretching back to the Renaissance. The work I'm known and commissioned for is imbued with these skills, so the more I can get, the better I get, and the better I get, the more commissions I'll get. There was probably one whole year though when I couldn't make any work – for reasons outside my control – and although I've sometimes thought about giving up entirely, I know I never will. I get so much joy and excitement from the action of making. It's what gives me ideas all of the time.

It's like being a mayfly. You dance for a day when you graduate and then you're screwed. Even before I left university I was part of an artists' group which was already being asked to do things. It hasn't always been easy since graduation to survive financially although I've always found ways to create spaces and raise funds for my projects. Filling in a grant application form is not so much daunting, but it is a full-time job for two weeks. It's a labour of

love though because you end up using the grant to pay everyone except yourself.

I feel my practice isn't of as much interest here as when I graduated and it was more edgy. If it hadn't been for my 'DIY' approach, I'd have had to leave a long time ago. Two major projects I've generated did lead to lectures in galleries and universities and invitations to make new work for biennales. It felt like I was fishing and there was a net just pulling in all these invitations and I thought 'this is it'. But to mix metaphors it wasn't, as I took my foot off the pedal and it all just faded away. What I learned is that everything you get is only because of how much you put in.

During the time I've been here, large parts of the city have been wiped out in the name of regeneration. When shops and offices lay empty after the crash, there was a big drive for self-directed work and artists were encouraged to do pop up shows. But since then, some established artists' studios forced to close and others pushed out of the centre. For our new studios, we cherry-picked artists with strong practices, who are influential through national contacts and known to curators. We're all ambitious, doing this development because we all expect to see things improve quite soon. But we are a bit like emigrants out here at the edges of the city.

I know I'm lucky to be earning a living from jobs even remotely similar to my main interests, as it hasn't always been as good financially. But doing this kind of work takes up all my time. It's only through my studio practice I can maintain my skills. It's there I can have fun playing, where I can explore ideas, be experimental, make the work I want to make and to be allowed to fail. It's beginning to feel like I'm spinning plates and that my practice is getting side-lined. To get gallery representation and the commissions I know I can get if I just keep working at it, I need to be spending more time in my studio.

People do come up to me and say, 'I'd like you to do this', or 'I've got this idea for you', but just when there seems to be a clutch of developments on my horizon, it all goes awry and everything starts slipping away. I don't really understand why that happens or why don't I get invited into shows I think I should be in. Is it something I'm doing wrong? I got some advice from a gallerist last year. What I really needed then was to be able to talk to someone over a period of time to build a relationship with them, so they understood my work and could put themselves at service to it. But the advice I got was formulaic, it was just about calculating how to convert audience figures into sales. They probably said the same things to most artists.

I know I'm at a crossroads now with my practice and my life. The projects I did in the past were self-directed, so I didn't need a gallery then. But now I'm older, I want to be approached, so I'm making the work that I want to make and exhibiting to a professional standard. Instead, I'm still doing all the chasing. It worries me that I've seen people do a lot better by this stage than I am doing, who maybe don't work as hard. Or maybe it's just that they are better at playing the game than I am.

So even though I've put a lot of energy into the city's art scene over the years, I still feel like an outsider and there's not enough to keep me here. The networks are too limited. I've no interest at all in part-time art school lecturing but could see myself making a living from sales and commissions. It's fair to say though that it isn't exactly a hotbed for contemporary art sales here, and where are artists expected to progress to once they've had a show in the only major gallery or had a big commission here?

I know I'll be moving on sooner rather than later. Glasgow is good but I've more reasons to be in London. I've been going there regularly since I was 16. My sister lives there and I've always looked up to her. She's in the arts too, really brave, a real trailblazer. I've always loved how exciting London is. Just the networking in a bar there is different from wasting money in a bar here. It's a different audience and not only that, there's two hundred different audiences and you can tap into any one of them and get somewhere.

It's possible to find commonalities amongst artists whose stories have been unfolded here. However as set out in the prior chapter, my methodological approach and research methods were designed to capture heterogeneity within the approaches and practices of interviewed artists. In relation to my enquiry into the interrelationship between the visual artists' constituency and arts policy, these vignettes served to demonstrate similarities and variances in how artists approach, pursue and forge individual art practices including motivations for and circumstances surrounding the tuning and retuning of them over time.

Chapters 4-6 which follow comprise the primary research which has generated the new knowledge about conducive conditions for artists' practice. These three thematic chapters expose nuances and distinctive aspects within artists' *modus operandi*. With cross-references to related theory and evidence these provide a new understanding of the three core conditions by which arts policy might support the art practices and livelihoods of *many* artists' over a life-cycle.

Chapter 4: Creative space

This chapter establishes my argument for the tripartite concept of ‘creative space’ as one of the three core conditions for sustainable artists’ practices and livelihoods. This draws on the primary research and makes cross-references to related human development and creativity theory. After my definition of the term ‘creative space’, the elements are set out. These are firstly artists’ values and beliefs, secondly art making as a creative process of self-discovery and thirdly, the ‘circles of trust’ that provide artists with emotional, intellectual and artistic support. The chapter’s sections introduce each element in turn. When the three elements of ‘creative space’ coalesce, my argument is that the resulting dynamic imbues artists with the confidence to act that is vital to maintaining art practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle.

The chapter’s conclusion identifies and discusses the tensions and vulnerabilities associated with ‘creative space’ before addressing mitigating factors and its contribution to the livelihood capitals artists require to sustain artistic ambitions over a life-cycle. After considering limitations of economic measurement, the chapter finishes by proposing a revised definition of creative capital towards identifying an alternative value system that could better account for artists’ contributions to society.

Definitions

Following the Cambridge Dictionary, the term ‘creative’ here is used adjectivally, in relation to artists’ psychological attributes and their art processes and development of original art products.⁴⁷ My definition takes into account two of the four creativity perspectives, in which this is defined as either a process, trait, tradable asset or mechanism to acquire business or competitive edge (Said-Metwaly, Kyndt and Noortgate, 2017). In the first conception where creativity is a process, once a person has become sensitive to problems-and gaps in understanding and knowledge, their creative processes are applied to scanning and closely examining a context. Solutions are found by conducting focused experimentation to test and

validate emerging propositions (Torrance, 1997; Guildford, 1975). Although this perspective widely applies to the *modus operandi* of artists, arts policy notably also has an interest in it. For example, the work of 64 million artists is premised on the importance of creative processes which by enabling people's agency, creates a more healthy society (ACE, 2016:4).

The second perspective of creativity is as a trait or combination of psychological attributes such as attraction to complexity and risk-taking and holding intrinsic characteristics including intuition, flexibility and perseverance (James and Asmus, 2000-2001; Runco, 2007). As discussed later in the chapter, such traits and attributes are common amongst artists. The third creativity perspective concerns the generation of original, novel or innovative products as tangible, tradable assets or intangible stocks which have prospective market value (Khatena and Torrance, 1993). This understanding which is applicable to products arising from artists' practices and generation of original, novel or innovative work and products is core to the economic success of the creative industries (DCMS, 2001).

The fourth perspective on creativity relates to acquisition of extrinsic assets and economic return in commercial and developmental contexts (Horn and Salvendy, 2006; Zeng, Proctor and Salvendy, 2011). In such situations, creativity is a productive interference and interchange between people within an institution. By acting collaboratively and creatively, people improve the tangible outputs and efficacy of organisations and contexts they're working in. In contrast with the creativity perspectives described above which relate to individuals, providing optimum contexts for creativity (and the associated potential for innovation) is intended to secure commercial edge in organisations (Geis, 1998; Amabile, Conti, Coon, Lazenby and Heron, 1996). This creativity perspective thus relates to the Arts Council's expectation for the programming, operations and business models of funded arts organisations to demonstrate innovation.⁴⁸

In the context of artists and art practices, the term 'space' is often construed as physical workspace. An example of this is the ACE's Artists Time Space Money initiative as discussed in Chapter 1, in which a significant aspiration was strategic enhancement of artists' studios. However, I adopted Collins Dictionary definitions

of the term as the most appropriate to the proposition contained in this chapter. Firstly, space as a noun used for something conceptual rather than physical which cannot be counted and defined as ‘to give someone space to think about something or to develop as a person.... and to allow them the time and freedom to do this.’ Secondly, as singular noun – that is to say something which isn’t conceptually plural – my parallel definition of space is that it is ‘a period of time’.⁴⁹ Thus my definition and conception of ‘creative space’ is summarised as freedom for artists to develop artistically and technically over time.

1. Values and beliefs

The interviews with artists which form the primary research illustrate that the beliefs artists accrue during their upbringing are key contributors to their ability to sustain art practices and livelihoods over time. As the extracts below demonstrate, when intrinsically-held values such as self-worth, personal growth and caring for others are uppermost, artists gain nourishment beyond economic return from art practices. Strong beliefs and values are vital to maintaining emotional well-being and professional drive in the short and longer-term.

Faith is important to me. I fast, I pray. We as a family, we go to church.
My main motivation is the idea of sub creation... the idea that, if you believe that you are made in the image of a creator then you are created to create. Tolkien had the idea that creation was primary but sub-creation was secondary, so we kind of sub-create and in doing that you are in some way fulfilling what is a deep part of who you are intrinsically.

For this artist, finding religious faith as a teenager coincided with ambitions to become an artist and belief in the power of creating that defines his life, art practice and economic expectations now. Artistic freedom and autonomy drive his practice because the more he creates, the more whole a person he becomes. Helping others as ‘sub-creators’ is equally important, and this is achieved through an educational role and how he brings up his children. Such beliefs guide all life decisions. For example, although not living in London affects longer-term

sustainability of his art practice, he has no intention of moving there as it would undermine the quality of family life that supports him as a person and an artist.

Susannah's emotional responses to the concept of 'home' are the starting point for her practice. They are her context for exploring the very purpose of being in the world, thinking about her own mortality and for representing through art the traces and memories she'll leave behind. Through her art practice and teaching art to others she believes she can 'make a difference'. Conscious reflection and purposeful adjustments over 15 years of art practice have enabled her to evolve an art practice and livelihood in a small village, harmonising her underlying values and philosophy with being a wife and mother. For Tanya, relatedness to others is of utmost importance to her art and her life.

It feels physically like I have to do something creative... I can't kind of switch off ... it's the whole thing about how it helps me mentally [and].... feeling that you can make someone feel better or something, feel 'something'... to [convey] this idea of the community, of how good it can be to make art ... and the importance of it.... just kind of spreading that word.... [providing a] light-heartedness that could take people out from what's going on.

These intrinsic values give artists inner strength, enabling them to manage adverse conditions and uncertainties and devise personalised approaches to livelihood attuned to particular life circumstances and artistic ambitions. Artists' predominant tendency is to 'focus on what is important, one values... and on what is worth striving for' (Jeffri and Throsby, 1992; Throsby and Thompson, 1994 and Honey *et al*, 1997). The new research aligns with TBR which confirmed 70% of artists took this position (2018a:9).

Such behaviours towards practices and livelihoods in artists align to substantive reasoning theory. Rather than using market as authenticator of human endeavours, this instead 'articulates the substance of what we and others are doing, [and its particular] qualities' (Klamer, 2018:xii). Nancy's story provides one illustration. Post-graduation in London, she kept her art practice going for seven years while lecturing full-time. But she found the caring for and nurturing of students sapped energies for the art practice that had been her *raison d'être* since childhood. The

solution was to move to somewhere with cheaper living costs and use fundraising skills learned in HE to finance a full-time, studio-based art practice. Through such examples, the primary research demonstrates that artists are able to sustain themselves within changing external climates over the longer-term provided conditions allow them to be volitional and in control of their courses of action.

As illustrated by Ed below, by resolving the complexities surrounding pursuit of artistic development for themselves, artists achieve capacity and autonomy to deal with intrinsic and extrinsic uncertainties and limitations as these occur.

I'm very satisfied. I feel very privileged to make a living this way. Okay, I am reliant on educational establishments, the council, private individuals [for my work] but it's up to me to put myself out there, to let people know I exist and I can do these things. If I'm a retiring wallflower then nobody is going to know I'm there If I ... put my head above the parapet, and say 'I'm here and I can do this', I'm the one in control.... I'd had a [period] when] there was next to no work at all. I was very close to giving up at that point. I was quite vocal about the fact that it was quite bad at the time. Then suddenly a few phone calls came through and it got me through a really, really bad time.

Such persistence aligns to Honey *et al* who cited this as a significant factor in sustaining artists' practices over time (1996:69,100). From a psychology perspective, enjoyable and purposive behaviours give people good reason to persist with something. Although extrinsic incentives such as money may increase production quantity, superior performance quality arises when people are motivated by intrinsic reward. In addition, self-motivation and staying power levels heighten with age and work progression (Cerasoli, Nicklin and Ford, 2014). In support of identifying how the strength of artists' values and beliefs contribute to optimum conditions for their practices and livelihoods, amongst individuals where instrumental and materialistic motives dominated, prior research indicates that reliance on achievement as validator undermines both the quality of learning and of performance (Wrzesniewski and Schwartz, 2014).

Tanya's story below demonstrates that artists who derive inner strength from remaining true to themselves and knowing it's 'all down to me' are well-equipped

to sustain art practices and forge courses of action aligned to their personal preferences and social reality.

[When there's] not enough work, I'll normally have a panic and then try and calm myself down. And then have things that I guess I do. Like I'll contact people maybe just have a bit of an update or a conversation and sometimes that sparks, 'oh we need you' [for something] I'll also do something creative and post it online, because that kind of spurs people and jogs their memory of you. And if you try to show them something without trying to sell them something ... I think people like that anyway, sometimes prefer it.

The primary research demonstrates that artists retain a strong sense of purpose and higher levels of self-esteem supportive of good emotional health in conditions that foster capacity to self-evaluate and form their own judgements and solutions. They are thus able to adjust direction intuitively but purposefully in order to develop and sustain relationships supportive of art practices. This approach is supported by psychology in that creative potential arising from expression of intrinsically-held values including self-determination, personal growth and caring about others is undermined when achievement of extrinsic factors such as economic rewards, awards or public accolade are prioritised (Deci and Ryan, 2002). Notably also, Honey *et al* tentatively suggested artists with extrinsically-measured career motives were the most vulnerable and more likely to abandon art practices than other artists (1996:11). Vulnerability created by lack of control over life decisions is exemplified in the stories of two artists below, for both of whom income-generation from art practice is crucial to sustaining it.

Henry has been practising for 17 years and wants to be able to look back in the years to come and feel proud of the art he's produced because it's recognised for aesthetic worth and integrity. But it's equally important to demonstrate to family that being an artist is a proper job. He needs to bring home a certain level of monthly income as its breadwinner. Over time, he's developed three parallel income-generating strands. An art practice financed by commissions and grants, regular income comes from his own small art-related business and freelance design in a family business. To get to the next stage as an artist however, he needs to stop

the 'bread-and-butter' work and spend the majority of his time on his art practice. But because he can't let his family down, the dilemma is how to move from where he is now to earning enough solely from art practice.

A second example is Emily who knew from childhood, and despite parental opposition, that she wanted to be an artist. She perceives being paid for art practice as both practical and validating. Financial uncertainty also heightens her anxiety levels and undermines the self-esteem and creative energy she needs to keep going. Taking the artistic risks needed to progress her practice beyond her current ten-year point entails navigating what she has experienced as the highly-competitive arenas of public sector development funding and openly-advertised opportunities.

[I want] to make the work that I want to make. And be paid for it at least half of the time. And just learn and develop, learn and develop, and to take risks but be supported in taking those risks. Because I guess [w]hat I have learnt is that you can't go big or be that experimental really without support.

People are self-determining when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness are satisfied (Deci and Flaste, 1995:81). As these needs lie at the heart of artists' processes, those who satisfy them are more likely to achieve productive lives, exhibit healthy behaviours and generate superior qualitative outcomes over time than those extrinsically-dependent. In addition, people enjoy healthier and productive existences when pursuing personal goals for their own sake and making their own choices and they are mindful of others' needs (Ryan, Huta and Deci, 2008). They have greater personal satisfaction and well-being when doing something they enjoy and are stimulated by, they feel in control of their lives and experiences and have a strong sense of purpose and achievement in their relationships (Huppert, 2008).

As illustrated by the comments below, artists' practices imbued with high levels of self-determination are a 'statement about who you are and what you value', predominantly concerned with 'creating meaningful work that parallels all that is important in your life' (Summerton, 1996).

The reality is for myself that I don't feel myself to be a person if I am not making work. The work sort of, it flows very naturally from one thing to another. All I know is that when I can't make work, I feel frustrated and I don't feel I can be who I am, and that is more important than anything else.

... It's important for artists to express how they feel both politically and emotionally through their practice. ... [Rather than] ... trying to hit a brief or capture a market. What's wrong with just creating something just for the pleasure of creating? Entering into the unknown, following an idea through, blindly believing that something worthwhile will appear in front of you.

- **Values and economics tension**

A core tension for artists is the conflict between doing satisfying work and earning enough money from it, particularly when faced with unpredictable environments (Galloway *et al* 2002). This is exemplified in the livelihood solution arrived at by one artist after the 2008 financial crash when the galleries and agents providing regular sales income closed down. She quickly went from supporting a full-time studio-based practice through art sales to not being able to do so at all. She turned instead to the teaching she felt passionate about. Within two years she had built a new livelihood around four or five different income streams through taking on multiple adult art education contracts. However, it proved a short-term solution as this was neither practically manageable nor economically sustainable in the longer-term.

The primary research additionally confirms artists' continual concerns about running out of money, cash flow and lack of savings to cover the unexpected. However, rather than seeking better financial returns from art or reducing artistic effort to match the pay, artists' tendency is to 'make sacrifices' when forecasting income expectations 'because at least I'm getting to do something I enjoy'. Such decisions by artists align with assertions that 'psychic income' from pursuit of art practices supersedes financial considerations (Honey *et al*, 1997:98) and that artists' preferences for satisfying work has the effect of undermining their economic position (Throsby, 2007).

2. Art making as self-discovery within the continuum of art practices

The primary research confirms that self-discovery arising from deep immersion in processes of enquiry and experimentation is a core factor in sustaining artists' practices. By providing individualised learning and development, this is a vital ingredient in the continuum of artists' practices. Although Bouchard, Lykken, Tellegen, Blacker and Waller (2009) disproved the idea that creativity runs in families it is striking that in seven of ten artists studied, creative activities including making and craft skills were childhood and family norms. In five families, it was mothers who valued these creative processes who were influential in building an artist's creative drive.

[My mum] was one of nine and when she left school at 15 she just worked in various factories around [here] But she is a very creative. I don't know if I told you but, dolls' shoes and dolls' clothes. She is a very creative person, but she never really understood it, she is very practical. My brother and me were watching a film once when we were kids. It was called the Labyrinth with David Bowie ... and it had all these fantastic puppets and we were trying to work out how they made these puppets walk and my mum just got some cardboard out and some Sellotape and some string and actually made a pair of legs that walked. She's amazing and she is very much if you want to do something, just do it. Find out how to do it and do it yourself.

My mother ... always valued 'made' over 'bought' and I think that has been instilled in myself and my sister who works as an upholsterer. So she's in a creative role as well.... But I think that was always imprinted in us from an early age, the idea that made is always better than bought. So no matter what you do.... she still valued that above anything else and that has stayed with me long term.

'Being creative' ran through Tanya's family: her father an architect, her mother became an artist later in life, and a musician, photographer and writer featuring amongst uncles and aunts.

Ever since being a kid, [my family was] just very creative. I suppose we were always being creative *all* the time. So, I guess why even now it's just like, that's what we do. ... I don't know, if you were talking about a piece of

paper, then they would turn that into a sculptural thing and sort of blow your mind or something. It was good. I enjoyed it.

In other cases, a family member's encouragement enabled a child to enjoy the creative life as an artist that member had aspired to. Nancy felt driven to be an artist from a very early age and 'just would not be told otherwise'. She was encouraged by her grandfather who came from a family too poor to take up the art college place offered him. He and her father paid for her to go to extra art classes as a child. In Susannah's case, the mother who encouraged her to become an artist 'would probably have gone down that route if she'd been encouraged to when ... younger, but she was encouraged to train in something more vocational.'

It is pertinent here to examine the attitudes and behaviours towards art practice of the interviewed artists against the four creativity perspectives introduced at the beginning of the chapter. Of the four identified by Said-Metwaly *et al* (2017), three particularly relate to how individual artists pursue and behave towards art practices while the fourth better aligns with business and commercial developmental contexts, including to the operations and business techniques of publicly-funded arts organisations. The primary research evidences that sustaining artists' practice over time relies predominantly on the first concept of creativity as a process, in that pursuit of art practices is a continual process of self-directed learning and development. This is exemplified by Oliver who perceives his studio as a place of enjoyment where he can spend time developing intellectual and technical skills that have been part of his life since a teenager. He derives great satisfaction from the artistry acquired over ten years of art practice and from knowing that it contributes to the long-line of tradition in painting stretching back to the Renaissance.

The value of such behaviour aligns with assertions that truly experimental behaviour only emerges when individuals are 'learning to do something well for its own sake', absorbed in making processes, comfortable with not knowing what might emerge (Sennett, 2008a: 277-279). As Emily's story below illustrates, immersion in art processes is exhilarating because it increases intellectual and technical capacity, encourages creative risk, heightens personal satisfaction and emotional well-being and contributes to maintaining momentum in art practice.

I just want to do what I want to do. It's like being a child. I want to make the work I want to make. ... I just feel so many other things in life are based on these sort of structures where you've got to schmooze or you know there is a certain way to like make your way up the pecking order I can't explain it, but I like to create my own structures for reasons I want to do it, that [are] going to benefit me and other people in some way. And I just enjoy kind of the research part and also not knowing and discovering. [T]here is nothing else where you are allowed to not know, and kind of learn through the process of doing. And I really enjoy that. It is just so satisfying to get somewhere and not know exactly what it is going to be, but you've maybe got a bit of an idea. And ... how you get there is just exciting to me.

Susannah whose studio-based practice is combined with part-time teaching relishes the school's long break when she gets 'a good run at things, experiments and explores materials, the most valuable parts of making that fall by the wayside when time is tighter.

The first day's work [this summer]... was wholly unsuccessful. But everything that happened meant I could go on the next day with a real positive attitude because I knew what I needed to do to make those things better and for things to work.

These artists' stories illuminate how immersion in self-determined art making processes over longer time periods enable the 'really exciting things' to happen. It's then when 'things can really change' and new directions are identified for pursuit. As the examples following illustrate, learning processes specific to an artist's circumstances have significant impact. Nancy gets most creative satisfaction from self-generated opportunities in which she purposefully puts herself in unknown territories and challenges herself. Henry is most proud of work made when he acquired money and bought time to 'look at what I was doing. I was using material, I was exploring, I was playing, and I was actually *making* work and I was on a journey with the work.' Opportunity to be in her studio for four consecutive months gave Lizzy concentrated time to process concepts that had been floating around in the background for some time. By raising the level of language used to express herself, she strengthened her practice and defined a new departure for it.

Aligned with Sennett (2008a), artists' self-directed intensive capacity-building processes which heighten and extend core creative abilities is strategically significant in sustaining art practices over the longer-term. Achieving quality of work over a life cycle is dependent on artists having physical and conceptual space and time to conduct processes that enable intimate connection between 'hand and head'. This context first habituates artists' creative abilities and then enables transition from problem-solving to problematising – that is anticipating and attempting to predict the 'flaws' which could occur in creative processes that are only resolved by heightened imaginative and intellectual skills gained over time and by consistent effort. Artists learn how to make ideas concrete through immersion in art processes. By looking deeply at something from differing angles, they become capable of dealing effectively and imaginatively with ambiguity and uncertainty.

As exemplified in a comment from artist Serena Korda writing publicly on the strategic value of a year-long fellowship, intensive self-development is about '..... me learning It's scary, but it makes exciting work.' By arousing curiosity and creating conversational space, artists' processes are a locus for addressing such tensions and mechanism for consistent questioning and reflection on the nature and purpose of what they are doing and why. A key motivator of individual creativity is quest for knowledge when something is missing or a problem encountered (Runco, 1992; Sennett, 2008a: 277-279). Thus, the time artists spend conducting art processes enhances these abilities and draws on their intuition and knowledge and is essential in testing and arriving at suitable resolutions to problems, whether within their professional practices or personal lives.

Artists also engage with the second creativity perspective, where this is combination of certain psychological attributes or traits and acknowledges the intrinsic characteristics including intuition, flexibility and perseverance. In this respect, artists who acknowledge and work with such perplexities demonstrate 'prospective minds' that aggressively engage with uncertainty and risk (Thomas Homer Dixon, 2006). These are characteristic in people for whom creativity is processual, as above. However, although these qualities don't necessarily ensure the presence of creativity (Amabile, 1983), such traits are vital within human

motivations to *be creative* rather than in creativity *per se*, although both aspects are necessary for creative achievement (James and Asmus, 2000-01). Notably in this respect, the term 'creative practitioner' developed by Creative Partnerships to define individuals engaged in its education programmes (and later used in Arts Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice grant scheme) aligns with this fourth definition of creativity as a behavioural trait.⁵⁰

From a psychology perspective, ability to extract order from chaos, independence, unconventionality and willingness to take risks are behavioural traits common in people involved across all creative fields (Barron, 1963; 1968). Others displayed by creative people include preference for complexity and ambiguity and unusually high tolerance for disorder and disarray. Amongst fine artists, creativity is most often interpreted as either this perspective of 'being creative' or the first one of a process (Oakley, Sperry and Pratt, 2008:6).

The third creativity perspective is as original, novel or innovative products as tangible, tradable assets or as intangible stocks with prospective market value (Khatena and Torrance, 1993). This definition is relevant to the original work and products of the creative industries which 'have their origin in individual creativity, skills and talent and have a potential for wealth and job creation through generation and exploitation of intellectual property' (DCMS, 2001). Arts policy assumptions that 'artists will innovate....' are also applicable in this respect.⁵¹ In such contexts, creativity is essentially valued and strategically nurtured for extrinsic worth and as a means to generate innovative outcomes for economic return and commercial growth. However, the primary research illustrates how artists' intrinsically-held values and beliefs coupled with continuous self-determined processes of enquiry also feed towards this third perspective.

Artists' desire to do something well and purely for its own sake aligns with theory that the pleasure of creating is autotelic or an end in itself. Total absorption in the act of making in which artists lose track of time and physical location can create a state of 'flow' in which significant creative or innovative results occur (Csikszentmihályi, 1996a:107,110-13).

[When I did a] residency ... I was almost exploding to paint, I was really itching to paint and I was drawing all the time and I had all these ideas.... when I was making that painting ... I didn't sleep for three days ... I painted from Thursday morning to Saturday afternoon, without stopping or eating. It was a sort of bizarre experience but I had to get the painting finished. I just got thrown into it. It was the image that was successful. It was nice that it got bought but that didn't define its success

Tim Etchells confirmed this creativity context as being 'bound up with what you are doing, to be at risk in it, to be exposed by it.... An endless making-do in one's only hope for progress, in which ... the surprises of innovation, mistakes and of changing one's mind are the only certainties worth clinging to' (1999:22-23). Such examples from artists align with assertions that optimal fusion of the productive mind and labouring body secures a zone in which human capacities are transcended and the conditions for producing the best creative work (Banks, 2014). As an extrapolation from Sennett's (2008) identification of the baseline contexts for notable work, artists require depth in terms both of latitude (space) and longevity (time). It is the leap between *deep looking* to examine something in detail and from its own perspective, *deep questioning* to reflect on, and both problematize and solve problems and *deep intuitive openness and relatedness* that the tacit knowledge artists rely on for sustained practices is preserved and built on. In terms of understanding the interplay between 'being' and 'doing', it is notable that to become competent, practitioners first require a kind of knowing-in-practice of which deep or tacit knowledge is the greater part (Schön, 1983:viii).

Because artists' rewards are predominantly intrinsic and accumulated through in-depth engagement with art practices over time, they retain a strong sense of personal control and can generate the agency to keep going, despite difficulties (Csíkszentmihályi, 1979), Whether on their own terms or those defined by galleries, agencies and art collectors, the work artists judged to be their best or most significant work emerged in circumstances when they had opportunity to 'be artists'. They were able to conduct art practices, acquire skills and gather momentum from immersion in art processes, recognising that both failure and success were possible.

The following extracts taken from the first and last interview with one artist in the research cohort exemplify how artists draw on the inner strength derived from intrinsic reward and tacit knowledge acquired through art immersion in art processes to manage uncertainty and maintain progress in art practice.

If you'd spoken to me a couple of months ago I was ready to throw the towel in, I'd just had enough. I just thought I don't know how I'm meant to carry on, it's actually affecting my mental health. But then the flip side of that is if I don't have my practice that also affects my mental health, so it's important to create and experiment and to keep doing that, having that practice in some shape or form. It might not give me everything I want but I need it.

Five months later, this artist reflected on a self-initiated, larger-scale project just completed in which she had managed her own expectations and those of other artists involved in it. She felt proud she'd been able to keep the momentum going and to see the work 'just come out of the craziness of my life'. In her own eyes and those of her collaborating organisations, she succeeded in pulling off a big, experimental project while managing her emotional and financial circumstances, this heightening both the quality of work and her ability to sustain art practice over the longer-term.

Tensions

However two key tensions arise from the inherently experimental, introverted and time-dependent nature of artists' practices and associated deep personal satisfaction and ability to sustain art practices over time. Firstly, artists' lack of ability or confidence to assert their economic needs themselves and expectation that commissioners will implicitly know and *want to* acknowledge these appropriately. This is exemplified by two artists' comments, the first from Emily, an artist from the research cohort with ten years of practice, describing an interchange with a commissioner, and the second from a public interview with well-established artist Lubaina Himid.

I did suggest about doing [additions to the base project] So I kind of put a question out there – 'could we have some sort of workshop in between performances?'. I quickly realised that I'm offering more free work here, but

it was kind of the cat was already out of the bag, I'd already said it and they were on it and were like, "Yeah," but then no money was suggested. So then I thought I need to get back and say I need some more money at least for the materials to cover that time [But] I just lacked the confidence to really say 'this is what I want', but at least I did say I do want [a fee], which in the past I wouldn't have done. I should have asked for more, but you know [how it is].

[When asked whether artists talk enough about money for work and doing things for free.] We do amongst ourselves. I think because being an artist looks like such a pleasurable thing – something that you would do because you enjoy it, because it looks fun.... So it's getting that balance right – that making work, being creative is a real thing, it's a real job, it's a real contribution and there ought to be considerations about paying well for it.⁵²

A second tension is the conflict between artists' process-based, experiment-dependent practices and desire within arts policy and the funded visual arts to achieve and publicly-demonstrate 'excellence' by presenting 'original, innovative and artistically ambitious' outputs (ACE, 2010a:16). In this latter case, art's impact is measured by '[the work's] ability or potential to change how the audience or participants view the world'.⁵³ However such expectations for art and of artists fail to account for the concept of applied creativity as a sustained process. Extending from the dominant binary of the 'Big C' of eminent creativity applicable to a small number of people with greatness and 'Little c' in the form of everyday creativity are two further categories. Firstly, the creativity inherent in learning processes or 'Mini-c' and secondly, 'Pro-c' which is individualised developmental and effortful progression which differs from 'Little-c' by representing 'professional-level expertise in any creative area' (Kauffman and Behgetto, 2009).

In respect of the latter categorisation, Bennett's (2009) consideration of the wider value and impacts of craft makers in peripheral areas of Wales to policymakers is pertinent. Bennett identified a resilient seam of this 'Pro-C' category as overlooked by policy. These are makers who exemplify self-sufficiency and determination to survive and whose value to others and to society arises from sustained grass-roots, creative making activities located within their communities. In such cases, rather than a demonstrable outcome, creativity is consistent application of imagination or

‘the creativity of undergoing’, in which individuals improvise personalised routes within their overall developmental aspirations, these pursued as lived experiences, over time (Ingold, 2014).

3. Circles of trust

The primary research identifies the discrete, nuanced circle of people surrounding an artist who provide a combination of emotional, intellectual and artistic support as a core factor in sustaining art practices and livelihoods. Artists commonly cited a small handful of people including specifically-named artists, friends known since childhood and family members as individuals admired and heavily relied on for personal and professional well-being. Oliver’s ‘little family’ is the set of people he knows he can trust. He ‘goes to their things and they’ll come to mine’, and they keep an eye out for each other. Alongside, as a community of practice are two artists he consistently confers and exchanges with as regards the techniques and skills of their specific art form. In some instances, artists defined a particular artist who had taken on the role of mediator for or authenticator of themselves to other artists. An artist active in a city’s art scene for 20 years was named in this respect by two artists in the primary research. One cited this artist as her ‘doorway into the local art scene’ when arriving new into the city, and the other that ‘just working with her and seeing how she works and the projects she delivers, and delivering those alongside her has been ... very instrumental in people knowing who I am’.

Susannah’s circle of creative people, also friends and including her (creative) husband, have common interests in creating music and drama and making processes. When she’s stuck, she finds conversations with them valuable in moving her art practice forward. The ‘ambitious’ friends she grew up with in the city who ‘now do quite innovative things’ are an integral part of Tanya’s professional network. A friend’s interest in his paintings led to Michael’s relationship with a London commercial gallery. She acted as an informal agent for a while and using her own connections and friendships, introduced his work to commercial galleries including one which represented him and successfully sold his work for some years.

Although from beyond the research sample, another North West artist confirmed her rationale for instigating a discrete, supportive circle of like-minded people for personal and professional refreshment.

We can be virtually connected to everyone on the planet if we want, but it's just not the same as getting together in person. [Because] of this I set up ... a group made up of women in the arts – artists, curators, administrators. We get together for food and drinks and occasionally look at art. It's socially-based and not really aimed to be 'professional networking'⁵⁴

These artists' circles align with notions of *oikos* – the Greek for home – as descriptor for individualised practical and emotional support structures. This is 'the circle of people with whom [someone has] essential connections' and who can be relied on 'even if the house falls down' (Klamer, 2018:10). Artists' highly-personalised *oikos* are significant to their ability to define and develop livelihoods over time because these encompass the social, governance, market and cultural logics that provide authentication of and sustenance for individuals whose lives and *modus operandi* are values-based.

- **Workspace**

All artists interviewed for the primary research had designated studio or workspace although approaches to achieving this were aligned to personal circumstances and working preferences. Of five in group buildings, Nancy joined well-established studios when moving from London and affirms the value as two-fold. Firstly, being affordable, she's able to be in the studio pretty much full-time. Secondly, immersion in many artist-led projects there gave her 'a kind of a flying start ... which just really help[ed] build my understanding of how to work as an artist' in the area.

Emily moved from a less artistically inspiring smaller space into well-established studios because she felt that being amongst other artists she judged as peers would strengthen her professional status. However as confirmed by Lizzy's experience, positive dynamics in group studios are not a given.

Most of the artists in this building are bogged down in a day job... [that] has to take precedence. And you can see how that slows down their practice. And for a lot of artists around me there is stagnation I think in some ways artists groups can be fantastic, in other ways they can be very limiting.

Oliver was part of new studios in the city set up specifically for artists who viewed themselves as 'careerists'. Artists demonstrating strong practices who could offer something positive into the studios' overall development were cherry-picked from the local art scene. Ed set up studios and gallery as a joint venture when moving to the North West 20 years ago. Tanya was developing a new creative initiative with a creative partner.

'We are just in discussions ... [on new studios] We've set up an office... there's one workshop and ... the next phase, that's kind of [another workshop] ... [then] we would then be able to plan exhibitions and workshops. So it's in a really good location... the perfect place. [It will be] a comfortable space to be in that you could almost spend twelve hours of the day there.

Two artists however had specific preferences for studios at home, finding this more conducive to art practices and family circumstances. Susannah 'enjoy[s] working independently ... [my studio at home is] really well set up now...'. Working two or three days a week and in blocks over school breaks, she has the 'ability to make work at home in a much easier fashion than I have been able to do in the past'. Similarly, Michael prefers the intensity of his small studio at home where he works most evenings and some of each weekend. He's never been tempted to join a studio group, concerned that this 'can become a bit of a substitute for doing the art'.

- **Family support**

The primary research confirms that artists value the consistent support which comes from immediate family members. In three cases, this support is economic in that their partner's higher income provides underlying subsidy to art practices while in another four, the artist's income equalled or exceeded their partner's. Less tangible but of equal importance is the emotional support from family members,

including partners. Even now, Henry acknowledges his mother as one of the most important sources of support for his practice.

She's amazing and she is very much if you want to do something, just do it. Find out how to do it and do it yourself. A few weeks ago I felt [project I was working on] wasn't very good, my work wasn't good enough for that and I was disappointed with it and my [other] project wasn't quite working right and I was under pressure and I felt bad ... that's when I'll kind of ring my mum ... and say, 'look mum I just feel shit, this is not going right' and she says, 'don't be ridiculous, just crack on'.

Such instances exemplify existing theory that the heightened self-confidence and strength derived from such interactions make significant psychic contributions to sustaining people's emotional and social well-being (Putnam, 2000; Bauman, 2003)

The partners of half the artists in the primary research work in creative occupations, including in music, design, applied arts or other creative industries occupations. The research illustrates how contexts in which creative processes are held 'in-house' in this way heighten an artist's resilience and artistic ambition. This is particularly evident amongst those artists who enjoyed creative childhoods. Although Tanya's plans to start a joint space together with a creative partner have taken more time than anticipated to come to fruition, their shared ambition has retained the drive to achieve it and given them strength to continue, this despite the pressures of concurrently maintaining individual practices and incomes. A personal partner who is also a creative partner may compensate to some extent for lack of support for an artist's early creative ambitions in childhood. Although Emily's childhood desire to be an artist was perceived as 'ridiculous' by her family, she 'just fought her way through it'. Part of the attraction to her partner was his creative occupation. He acts as personal assistant in the development of her projects, his design skills pivotal to visualising and marketing her productions and performances She feels she probably wouldn't still be practising if they weren't a couple.

- **Actor-led development**

Preference for artistic development derived from personalised mentoring was significant amongst artists in the sample. Half had worked with self-selected mentors or equivalent over the recent period, locating these from personal research or recommendation and contracting them direct. While two gained arts funding for this, others defined and self-financed the mentoring, considering it as part of running costs. When struggling to find a direction for his practice, Henry's approach was to raise funding to pay a mentor of his choice. Working with them over six months helped him to 'think through what kind of artist I wanted to be, what my work was about, and what I was trying to say'.

... [my mentor is] good at tying things down and kind of, 'Right, this is what you need to do'. Or 'Why don't you try this'. Or 'That sounds really good'. And that's all you need to hear sometimes, that bit of confidence from somebody who you trust... there is probably only four people in that circle of trust that I actually talk to about work and he is part of [it], that I feel open with, they won't judge me, I can be honest with.

For Emily, the relationship with a mentor of her choosing provided a safe environment.

[It] ... has just helped me so much, just having that person who's got that experience, and I can just say what I think and not have to edit what I have to say, for fear of not coming across as professional or [showing] I can't cope.

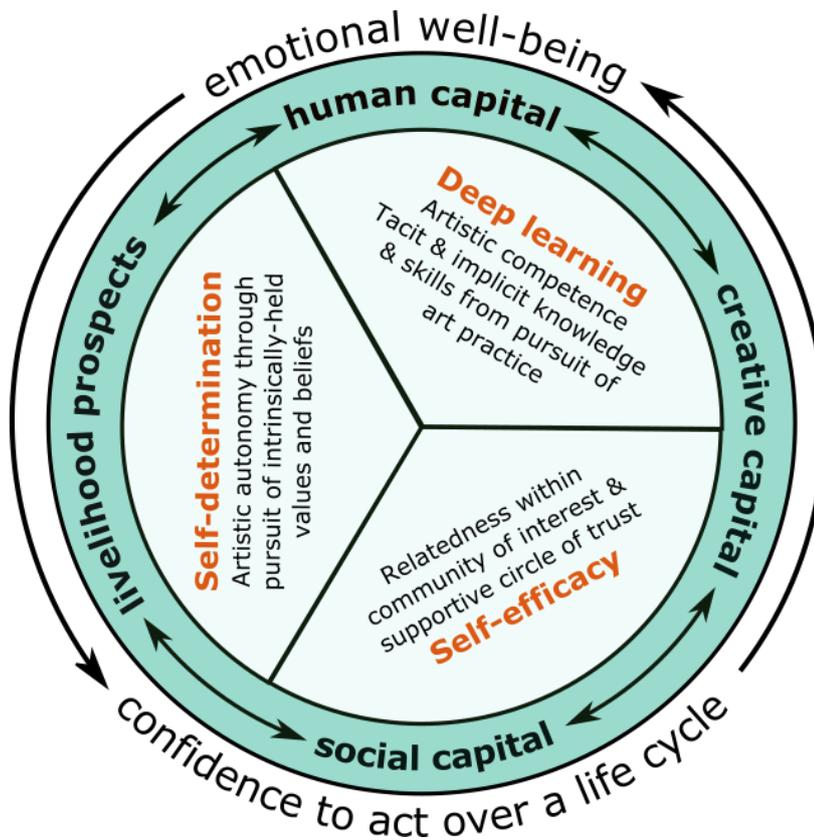
Michael paid for twice-yearly tutorials from London-based artists he rates critically to gain artistic advice and encouragement and to authenticate his work for the commercial art markets he aspires to. Alongside ongoing mentoring from her school's head of art, a printmaker in their own right, Susannah pays for expertise from the craft guilds and societies in the traditional skills her practice requires. Nancy built the cost of a marketing mentor into an Arts Council funding application for a succession of self-determined projects presented in partnership with arts organisations. She used recommendation to find someone who could show her how to identify and communicate effectively with people likely to be interested in her work and articulate its particular reference points.

In contrast to these individualised approaches, three artists in the research sample had used an-established regional artists' development provider. Of these, one discontinued their involvement feeling there was no progression and another assessed the advice as too formulaic, with only one continuing to participate. However, a further two artists had reservations about such schemes, voicing concern about having to 'pay someone to get a circle of opportunities' and exhibition offers being 'all tied up with whoever they know and who they want to promote.'

When artists' approaches to progressing art practices are self-directed and personalised they are illustrative of Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The definition adopted here for artists' CPD is as planned pursuit of knowledge and skills building from an individual's experience through personalised, purposive actions towards acquisition of qualities and expertise for an artist's specific areas of work to aid progression over the longer term (Taylor, 2013:19). Being actor-led, flexible and responsive to individual contexts and needs and having clear aims and activation methods related to art practice are thus characteristic of effective artists' CPD. As such, the self-determined CPD illustrated by this new research fosters the self-efficacy artists need to sustain art practices over time. This is because the critical determinants of an individual's ability to take action rest on their capacity to be in charge of life circumstances, with pursuit of any goal premised on having confidence that it is achievable (Bandura, 1997).

The research supports self-efficacy theory in respect of pursuit of art practices by demonstrating that artists acquire this 'confidence to act' when they achieve personal goals, encounter people they relate to achieving similar goals and are encouraged forward by those who believe in them. Achievement of these results in a positive emotional or physiological state. Thus, artists' acquisition of a strong sense of purpose and confidence to act are crucial to securing and sustaining human and social well-being. In addition, when CPD is scoped and managed by artists themselves it contributes to the autonomy, competence and relatedness of self-determination which are at the heart of being creative (Deci and Flaste, 1995).

Figure 4(a) Creative space



Conclusion

As a core supportive condition for artists' productive practices, my concept of 'creative space' plays to artists' strengths. It is applicable to the diversity of artists and wide range of art practices types and provides them with emotional well-being and the confidence to act. Firstly, this condition is the grounds for amplifying and consolidating artists' intrinsically-held beliefs and values and desire for continuous self-discovery through art practices. Secondly, the skills and tacit knowledge acquired through conducting research-based processes enable artists to achieve the competence, autonomy and relatedness which generate the self-determination and persistence essential for pursuit of art practices over time. Thirdly, it accounts for artists' nuanced circles of trust, the small groups of like-minded people from within artists' personal and professional lives who consistently and unconditionally provide encouragement, emotional strength and artistic support. The self-efficacy embodied by 'creative space' fosters artists' endeavours to achieve personally-defined goals which with associated positive emotional health, imbue artists with

the 'confidence to act' necessary to sustain art practices over a life-cycle and in changing circumstances. Focusing on the 'whole artist' and their personal and professional circumstances and preferences, the tripartite concept of 'creative space' aligns with prior assertions that artists derive greatest benefit from actions attuned to their specific contexts (Louise, 2014) including from highly-individualised, longitudinal advice and opportunity (Gordon Nesbitt, 2015).

By contextualising artistic and professional ambitions within personal circumstances, my concept of 'creative space' is supportive of artists' well-being and positive mental health. In this respect, the key ingredients of well-being are defined as holding a positive identity from working productively and creatively, immersion in learning processes that develop potential and satisfy aspirations for personal growth, strong, self-affirming relationships with people and purposeful engagement with people and society (Aked, Marks, Corden and Thompson, 2008:10; Savage, Hynds, Dallas-Katoa and Goldsmith, 2017).

Importantly also as a core condition for artists' productive practices, 'creative space' accounts for the specificity of visual artists as a constituency peculiar within the arts. As noted in Chapter 1's review of arts policy, artists work predominantly as *individuals*. Art practices rest first-and-foremost on *continuing to make the work* and thus artists' aspirations are not necessarily aligned to addressing the needs and expectations of specific groups (Redcliffe Maud, 1976:143). Nor are whether there is finance for production or markets for any outcomes from art practices main considerations. By choosing to do work to which they are most suited and consistently devoting time and high levels of energy to it, artists' pursuit of art practices is best understood as a vocational mission reflective of their purpose in life.⁵⁵

Tensions and vulnerabilities

Although this chapter argues for 'creative space' as a highly-personalised, productive environment and base condition for artists' sustainable art practices, three main underlying tensions and vulnerabilities are inherent in it. In this way, the new research aligns with prior analysis by demonstrating the in-built friction

between artists' intrinsic rewards from doing satisfying work and managing the economic constraints of the predominantly short-term, project-by-project based work available to them (Galloway *et al*, 2002:xii). As Chapter 1 establishes, this vulnerability is exacerbated by the competitive environment for visual arts work caused by factors including political and policy change and shifting market trends. Although implications of economic uncertainty are considered in more detail in the chapter following, Emily's earlier comment exemplifies a key tension in that artists who are values-driven and pursue art processes for their own ends can lack confidence to say 'this is what I want' financially. There is also an assumption amongst artists – as Lubaina Himid expressed – that commissioners of artists *ought to* know what realising a project costs and as a matter of course, will *want to* acknowledge artists' financial needs appropriately. Burns (2017:10) notably asserted this as the reasonable expectation that arts organisations should acknowledge the symbiosis between their resilience as organisations and the artists' endeavours over the longer-term by demonstrating a 'duty of care' in arrangements with artists.

However, a second dimension of this uncertainty or precarity is psychological vulnerability. In this respect, Bourdieu (1997) defined this as a person's objective, material, subjective and emotional insecurities, these occurring across all social stratas. In terms of understanding precarity's psychological impact on artists, the new research reconfirms the view that such uncertainty is exacerbated by conditions which are undermining of trust and individualised long-haul processes (Bauman, 2003). Best construed as an unwelcome 'fate', emotional precarity for artists arises from structural and personal insecurities when their individual rights and social status are eroded. This diminishes their psychic strength and well-being and can make external challenges and shocks unsurmountable.

A further tension and associated vulnerability related to achieving 'creative space' lies between artists' vital pursuit of process-based, experimental practices over a life cycle and arts policy expectations for outcomes of art practices through projects or productions to demonstrate excellence and innovation. In such contexts and as discussed in Chapter 1's review of artists in arts policy, the value of art practice is

transactional, which is to say it is valued by and quantified through audience and interpretation and learning outputs and indicators. However, rather than as a mechanism for generating measurable predominantly innovative outcomes, artists' tendency is to pursue creativity first-and-foremost as a process premised on risk, which moves them from one conscious state to another. Thus arts policy requirements to demonstrate excellence through immediately accessible public engagements has the effect of undermining the 'expectational', durational human concept of creative processes that thrive on not knowing (Negus and Pickering, 2004:vi).

- **Mitigating tensions and vulnerabilities**

By fostering individuals' ability to plan and be reflective throughout their lives, 'creative space' provides some mitigation. Aligned with Nussbaum's (2011) theory for well-functioning individuals, 'creative space' acts as a bedrock against society's material and emotional precarities by supporting artists' well-being over time, this both through the acquisition of human dignity and fostering supportive mutual relationships with others. From a psychology perspective, artists' characteristics make them better-suited to cope with the unexpected. Their psychological traits provide capacity to respond to turbulence, complexity and large-scale cultural changes and when developing new creative strategies for personal success. Artists consistently manage seemingly conflicting traits such as being innovative and conservative, particularist and generalist, reasoning abstractly and narratively and thinking holistically and systemically (O'Hara, 2001). In addition and as the primary research demonstrates, artists are reflexive learners who immerse themselves in process, tolerate ambiguity and difference and exhibit both local and global perspectives. However, managing a complex and multi-faceted terrain depends on individuals' ability to develop successful relational connections and ability to operate in flexible social systems while also consistently building their professional capabilities and taking care of personal needs and expectations. While being creative brings a special kind of meaning and self-fulfilment to lives and creative

people are by nature adaptable, managing the dialectical tensions of these antithetical creative traits is a life-time occupation (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996b).

Language used by artists in the primary research demonstrates the fluid, emergent, contextual and relational environments in which they operate, providing first-hand narration of how artists understand and manage the ambiguities and conflicts.

Artists commonly talked about 'spinning plates', 'juggling' and the continual struggle to 'balance' time and space for practice with income-generating work and family responsibilities. However, the highly-personalised strategies and support structures forged through holding 'creative space' assist artists to manage such ambiguities. By supporting artists' emotional well-being and artistic development 'creative space' enables artists to 'just fight a way through it'. Artists develop their own particular methods within complex personal and professional lives to become engrossed in art processes that heighten their intellectual and technical abilities and to conduct the research and experimentation necessary for sustaining art practices over the longer term.

- **Assets for artists' livelihoods**

Two main factors influence artists' ability to develop and exploit their livelihood assets or capitals. Firstly, how well they manage personal or professional vulnerabilities in the face of external trends and shocks and secondly, their ability to draw on external resources including the supportive interventions offered by institutions to artists. As demonstrated by the research, 'creative space' contributes holistically to building the capitals or assets which support artists' livelihoods over a life-cycle. Creative experimentation and associated well-being accrue from artists' cyclical, reflective self-development processes. By feeding human capital and acquisition of social capital, artists acquire capabilities, power and agency to pursue practices in manner and at a level satisfying of their needs within personalised definitions of fruitful artistic development. These persistent processes bolster intrinsic self-motivation and strengthen convictions and values. Achieving competence generates the autonomy necessary to sustain art practices and livelihoods over time while also providing a personalised method for resolving

tensions between intrinsic and extrinsic needs and interrelationship with others. The creative friction and energy arising from artist's ability to make matters concrete and reflect in order to arrive at what they perceive as quality in their work combine with intrinsically-held values to provide a ground for 'finding new problems' which drives their artistic development and expand their practices into unknown realms.

Human and social capitals are enhanced by resolving the tensions between achieving artistic satisfaction through experiment and risk, 'finishing the job' and delivering art which both provides extrinsic value to others and satisfies artists' creative curiosity. These assets are further amplified when combined with heightened self-confidence when artists personally experience success and see and hear others like themselves achieving similar successes. Alongside qualitative aspects including acquisition of qualifications, enhanced professional and 'soft' skills and increased status in a field, artists' human capital accrues from strengthened relatedness to other people and immersion in activities supportive of the aspirations and economics of their lives. In terms of emotional strength and well-being, this new research indicates that acquisition of human capital is strongly aligned to artists' supportive 'circles of trust' and that family circumstances are significant in sustaining artists' personal resilience, creative practices and livelihoods over time.

In terms of social capital, contributions arise when artists receive encouragement, acknowledgement and support from other people who believe in their ability to achieve their goals. In this respect, Chapter 1's review of artists in arts policy included articulation of how direct funding to artists is a strategic form of autonomy-supporting development which contributes to artists' human and social capitals (Jones, 2018). Within the primary research, such funding benefitted four artists as individuals and for another, it catalysed what has since become a well-established artist-led venture regularly funded by ACE. The research also demonstrates that artists' social capital is amplified when networking is nuanced and generates productive, trustworthy relationships and associated interactions

with people who have power and external influence, including those drawn from within an artist's immediate 'circle of trust'.

- **Reasserting intrinsic value**

Citing the worth of the arts on purely intrinsic grounds could be construed as defensiveness and a throwback to 20th Century subjectivity when personal taste and arts patronage favoured elitism over access (Holden, 2004:17-27). However, providing different methods are employed to understand and capture evidence, there is no reason why the publicly-funded arts cannot simultaneously assert extrinsic and intrinsic arts values (Bakhshi, Freeman and Hitchen, 2009). This latter view is supported by Burns who cited self-employed artists working in participatory arts and with socially-engaged practices as providing demonstrable value to others (2017:7). She recommended arts policy and arts institutions adapt their expectations of artists and strategically seek to improve their working conditions and economic situation because 'society depends on them to deliver impact in health, criminal justice, education and community settings'.⁵⁶

From an economics perspective failure to account for the non-economic is a concern which runs wider than the arts. Current market-based norms fail to account for attributes and contributions to society of people whose lives exemplify value-based approaches (Klamer, 2018). A first step to change this would be to devise a new 'common language ... [in which] meaningful intangible assets can be made' and their nuanced values recognised (Lev, 2003). In this respect, Throsby (2002) has previously cited the 'non-use' value of artists and art practices, namely these accrue assets which are neither captured nor measured by markets and economics. Thus, over and above intrinsic assets for artists themselves, pursuit of practices over time have 'existence value' as attached to something being there ready until it is needed. They hold 'option value' that keeps the possibility of future as yet uncategorised benefits open, and have 'bequest value' which is derived over the long-term including over an artist's life-time. Equally applicable to the micro-scale of artists' individual practices is the concept of 'deferred value' as explanation for the intrinsic artistic, social, societal or alternative fiscal values gained over

longer timescales from activities in which art practices are central but not immediately measurable (Thelwall, 2011:39-40). In relation to policy initiatives supportive of artists' intrinsic values and motivations, Holden's (2004) conclusion that policy and funding strategies require longitudinal approaches to demonstrate benefits of institutional art practices is also pertinent to devising policies specifically designed to be supportive of artists' endeavours.

Chapter 1 provided an explanation for why the premise for including visual artists in the creative industries is flawed because it creates economic and social disadvantages amplified by exclusion of freelance artists from employment legislation around equality and diversity. Chapter 5 following draws on my own research (Jones, 2017) to demonstrate substantial decline in the value of work for artists since 2007 and trend amongst visual arts commissioners towards the exclusive recruitment processes characteristic in the creative industries.

Compounding these less conducive conditions for artists is an indicator from the research that those with childcare or family responsibilities are economically disadvantaged by the nature of arts opportunities and that low and uncertain income levels are barriers to childbearing, this concurring with evidence from performing arts.⁵⁷ In agreement with a prior study commissioned as part of ATSM/AI into pension provision for visual artists, this new research found most performers lacked savings to cover unforeseen circumstances and pensions.⁵⁸ Significantly also, half the artists in the primary research sample reported inability to work due to medical conditions for periods lasting from one to three months, including one with an occupational condition, and another with medical circumstances that threatened continuation of the artist's practice.

As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, economic concerns are usually secondary to artistic considerations, with artists prepared to abandon secure income and reduce overheads to make ends meet in order to continue to do work that satisfies them. However, while they show great competency in 'getting by' and regardless of length of practice, artists' ability to pursue practices and acquire capitals to support livelihood are at risk over a life-cycle. In this respect, it is pertinent in any case that reliance on economic growth as a measurement of

success has life-diminishing impacts on people (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2010). A contributor to the ‘pernicious effects’ of social inequality on UK society is the economic uncertainty experienced by artists that by increasing levels of anxiety and illness, undermines their ability to achieve personal goals.

While ameliorating for disability in employment is legislated for, specific impacts of neurodivergence on artists’ ability to pursue their practices over time are not. Neurodivergence which includes autism, Asperger’s and bi-polarity also encompasses dyslexia which two of the artists in the research sample reported and which up to 75% of artists may have.⁵⁹ Notably, however ensuring arts environments are supportive of such conditions is pertinent because some research suggests that ‘divergent thinking’ by individuals with autistic traits – such as artists – produces more original and unusually creative ideas.⁶⁰

- **Redefining creative capital**

Economists have confirmed artists’ tendency to choose to work fewer hours in other income-generating occupations to devote more time to art practice, even when little money is gained from the latter (Throsby, 2007; Abbing, 2011:17-23). Further critique of the economists’ perspective in respect of this is in Chapter 6. However in summary here, such analyses fail to account for the intangible values emanating from pursuit of art practices over a life-time and to measure the resulting capitals as assets within forging a healthy society. While the benefits of fostering creativity amongst the community at large are asserted on well-being grounds - for example by 64 million artists and in the conclusions from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts (2017) - the rationale for progressing this through supportive interventions for the wider constituency of individual artists is not.⁶¹

In addition to enhancing human and social capitals within livelihood strategies, my concept of ‘creative space’ suggests reconsideration of what constitutes creative capital, how this occurs and is quantified and nurtured. Aligned with the forth creativity perspective described earlier in the chapter, Kao (1996) attached this term solely to business developments where working environments leverage creative ideas for economic gain and business resilience. However, rather than

something which is institutionally-held and arising from group dynamics, creative capital could be reconfigured as an asset deriving from depth in relationships over time, as generated by the creative processes and products of an individual through engagement in nuanced circles of trust and communities of interest. In this way it offers a mechanism scoping and defining alternative value systems providing these are thought of as ‘products’ arising from amplification of the persistence of human creative processes premised on risk and experimentation and heightened capacity to imagine and effect new artistically-framed possibilities (Lev, 2003).

Relevant in respect of developing such a position is that key factors in achieving creative environments include making it administrative and financially easy for people to create and discover independently and gain access to training and managerial acceptance that rewarding performance is generated by intrinsic motivation and – importantly for this thesis – premised on value arising from creative risk-taking activities (Geis, 1988:25-33). Pertinent in this respect are new sociological arguments for more democratically framed exchanges between people and institutions. Broader definitions and quantification of the reciprocity in exchange and value to both parties form part of long-term solutions to rebalancing social relationships and ‘break[ng] the spell’ of economic reason (Mellor, 2019:132-153).

Notes

⁴⁷ Definitions provided by Cambridge Dictionary
<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/creative> [Accessed on 26th July 2019]

⁴⁸ Amongst ACE’s 2020-30 ambitions is that ‘the organisations we support will invest more in business innovation as a tool for business growth’ (ACE, 2018b:11).

⁴⁹ Definitions provided by Collins English Dictionary
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/space> [Accessed on 26th July 2019]

⁵⁰ CP’s use of the term ‘creative practitioner’ is described on *Working with artists*
<https://workingwithartists.wordpress.com/background/being-creative-and-what-is-a-creative-practitioner> [Accessed on 1st May 2019]. ACE’s new rationale for adopting ‘creative practitioners’ rather than ... ‘artists’ in preference to the term artist or other art form descriptors is ‘partly to ... reflect findings from the research commissioned for the new strategy, which showed that the general public’s understanding of what we meant by ... “artists” is significantly narrower than our own [thus] the phrase “creative practitioner”

covers all those who are involved in creating culture, from artists and makers through to curators and producers' (ACE, 2018b:1).

⁵¹ Arts Council's policy *Great Art and Culture for Everyone: Ten-Year Strategic Framework 2010-2020* (2010b:7) stated in the last of five mission objectives 'artists ... having the freedom, and being challenged, to innovate'. *Achieving Great Art for Everyone: a Strategic Framework for the Arts* (2010a:24) had also stated this as 'artists will innovate'.

⁵² Lubaina Himid speaking to Michael Berkeley on Private Passions on BBC Radio 3, broadcast on 9th December 2018 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b0b1pb4c> accessed 10.12.2018 [Accessed on 10th December 2018]

⁵³ I was a contributor 2015-2018 to ACE's AQA NPO assessment processes. During this time, ACE's assessment criteria were sharpened in respect of originality and innovation. In 2015, AQA assessors could comment in free-text narratives about quality and appropriateness of vision, execution and impact of the work. By 2018, in addition to free-text narratives providing assessment of these areas, the category of 'Originality, Innovation and Risk Taking' was included. In addition, assessors were asked to choose from pre-formed list of achievement statements including 'Originality: it was ground-breaking; Risk: the artists/curators really challenged themselves and Excellence: it is one of the best examples of its type that I have seen'.

⁵⁴ Chesney, R (2018). Presentation, Prospecting: new territories for artists' practices, 1 November 2018, University Centre Somerset, Taunton.

⁵⁵ My definition of vocational is drawn from Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

⁵⁶ In contrast to Burns (2017), a report from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts advocated for people's increased access to creative pursuits including visual arts and crafts on the grounds of mental health and well-being failed to identify any need for parallel support for artists' own well-being. It concentrates solely on extrinsic value to others, namely: 'The arts can help keep us well, aid our recovery and support longer lives better lived' and 'the arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness and mental health'. All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts (2017:4) Health and Wellbeing Inquiry Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Wellbeing, The Short Report July 2017.

⁵⁷ Those in performing arts with childcare responsibilities are found to earn less than others in the industry. More than three-quarters were forced to decline work due to it. Hemley, M. 'Less money and job insecurity' – landmark survey reveals 'career penalties' of parents working in performing arts. *The Stage*, 18th December 2018. <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2018/less-money-job-insecurity-landmark-survey-reveals-career-penalties-parents-working-performing-arts/> [Accessed on 20th December 2018]

⁵⁸ Commissioned within Arts Council England's Artists Time Space Money (ATSM) initiative discussed in Chapter 1's review of arts policies, a report from The Artists Pensions Trust (2007) noted that although 44% of people in the UK working population as whole had no pension, amongst artists the figure was 70%. The key barrier to having savings of any kind was found to be affordability, this due high levels of self-employment and unpredictability of income. This report is cited in *Art work in 2007* (2008), a-n The Artists Information Company. <https://www.a-n.co.uk/resource/art-work-in-2007-2008/>. [Accessed on 1st June 2018]. Etches, S. (2011) *The Big Artists Survey* later concluded that only 16% of artists paid into a pension.

⁵⁹ Dyslexia Action asserted that 10% of the population is dyslexic. ‘Dyslexia Action. Facts and figures about dyslexia’. <http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/page/facts-and-figures-about-dyslexia-0> [Accessed on 13th November 2017]. Appleyard (1997) additionally suggested that dyslexia amongst visual artists could be as high as 75%. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/education-the-art-of-being-dyslexic-1280776.html> [Accessed on 4th April 2017]. Two artists in the research sample self-identified as dyslexic. Neurodivergence is the term for genetic conditions including autism, Asperger’s, dyslexia, bi-polarity and AHAD which is inherent in one in 100 people in the UK’s population. After the formal primary research period, one artist in the sample reported the intention to be tested for AHAD. <https://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/navigating-different-world> [Accessed on 5th April 2017]. The 2016 Westminster Commission on Autism notably also concluded that ‘The autistic community struggles with navigating a world attuned to the needs of neurotypical people: too many have to fight for the same opportunities and liberties that others can take for granted.’

⁶⁰ ‘Research discovers link between autism and creativity’. University of Stirling. August 2015. <https://www.stir.ac.uk/news/2015/08/research-discovers-link-between-autism-and-creativity/> [Accessed on 18th March 2017]

⁶¹ See the note above on the well-being assertions by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts (2017). The definition drawn up by 64 Million Artists (2018:5) of ‘everyday creativity’ as ‘the importance of process over product, being given permission, finding activity in your local area [which is] driven by local people’. As exemplified in ACE (2018b:6) which states that ‘we want people to live creative lives’ as an ambition of the 2020-30 policy, this imperative is informing future policies for widening participation and audience development.

Chapter 5: Situated practices

This chapter in two sections draws on the primary research and related evidence to illuminate how artists' livelihoods are enabled through 'situated practices'. Such practices are defined as those conceived, developed and modified by artists over time in relation to artistic ambitions which encompass their personalised circumstances including where they live and their family contexts. The primary research looked specifically at the practices, livelihoods and personal contexts of a cohort of artists in North West England and demonstrates the significance to livelihood of where artists situate and conduct art practices with the associated commitment to a location reflective of artists' life values and choices. Exploration of individualised approaches of the sample of artists, which encompasses differing types and lengths of practice and solutions to developing and disseminating art practices and making a living, provides illustration of the relevance of situated practices as a core condition for artists' livelihoods, while identifying the tensions and challenges.

The first section starts by comparing past and contemporary evidence of artists' working patterns and incomes to illustrate how changes in external environments, including in arts policies, impact on artists' ability to pursue practices and livelihoods before identifying core tensions and vulnerabilities. In the second section, the concept of situated practices is discussed as a core condition for artists' pursuit of livelihood through art practice and verified through cross-reference to related arts, business and sociological theory. It finishes with discussion of associated tensions and vulnerabilities. The conclusion commences by demonstrating how artists' personalised solutions amplify their capabilities and livelihood assets and provide mitigation for unforeseen circumstances. It ends by identifying a new element of the 'artists and money' conundrum as structural challenge to artists' ability to sustain practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle.

1. How artists practice

- **Art form and distribution**

Artists' descriptions of art practices and methods for distribution in the primary research data and cross-referenced to contemporary advertisements and opportunities listings was drawn together to create the art form and distribution analysis in Figure 5(a) below. Six art form types and six distribution methods were identified. The distinction between type and distribution however is not clear cut. For example, live art performance is a manifestation encompassing art form and distribution method. Six artists commonly used fine art practices of painting, printmaking and drawing. Two were photographers, with one occasionally using moving image. In addition to live art performance, five distribution methods were used. The exhibition form was the most significant for six artists with and two others using it occasionally. For the majority of the sample, work was most commonly presented through invitational and self-generated solo and group exhibitions. For three artists submitting to open exhibitions and competitions was a major distribution route, generating exposure which would lead to further shows and income from prizes or sales. Note that to maintain anonymity rather than the pseudonyms used elsewhere in the thesis, artists are identified here solely by the research ID allocated to them during recruitment processes.

Figure 5(a) Art form and distribution

<i>Artist research ID</i>	M82	F87	M49	M55	F81	M58	F98	M101	F68	F29	Total
Art form											
<i>Painting</i>				x	x	x	x	x			5
<i>Printmaking</i>					x		x		x		3
<i>Drawing</i>								x			1
<i>Photography</i>			x							x	2
<i>Live art performance</i>		x									1
<i>Moving image</i>										x	1
Distribution											
<i>Installation</i>				x				x		x	3
<i>Public art</i>	x										1
<i>Residencies/community art</i>	x	x				x	x				4
<i>Artist's books</i>									x		1
<i>Photobooks</i>			x								1
<i>Exhibitions</i>		x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	8
Total	2	3	2	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	

Six artists pursued traditional art practices in which work is first created before being presented publicly. For the remaining four, engagement with others or public participation of some kind was integral to the making, realisation and distribution processes. Note that there was no attempt in the research to provide for typicality. However, TBR's (2018b) analysis of 2007 artists by 115 self-definitions of primary and subsidiary art forms into 14 sub-forms provides a useful cross reference. The sample is more representative of fine artists than TBR (70% to 54%), of photographers (10% to 3%) and of live artists (10% to 3%). However the 80% of the sample who regularly use solo or group exhibitions for distributing their work is broadly in line with TBR's assertion that these distribution routes are significant for 72% of artists (TBR, 2018b:72). Note however as this data includes 18% of artists pursuing craft forms, there is no strict correlation with the primary research sample which didn't.

- **Income sources for individual artists**

Figure 5(b) following illustrates the diversity of avenues for art practices and income sources of the sample of artists. This includes public grants and art teaching, participatory work, commissions, art sales and art-related services. Three artists had received Arts Council England Grants for the Arts (GftA) for research and professional development or to undertake art projects with public benefit. Two had received such grants twice or more in recent years. Income for four artists came from teaching art at higher or secondary level or from art counselling. Five artists gained income from participatory work through community or socially-engaged projects including residencies and gallery or community-based education. Seven artists commonly received paid commissions for photography, public art, live art performance, moving image works, residencies and painting. Six artists sold paintings, limited and unlimited edition prints and artists' books including to private collectors and retail sales, including two selling spin-off or gift items related to their main practice. Six artists made income from art-related services including graphic design, illustration, website and digital products, set design, gallery technical support and production work and art restoration.

Figure 5(b) Artists' income sources

<i>Individual artists</i>		M	F	M	M	F	M	F	M	F	F	Total
		82	87	49	55	81	58	98	101	68	29	
Household £ contribution		E	S	M	M	S	M	S	M	E	E	
Practice years		30	10	20	17	12	15	12	10	15	11	
Time spent on art practice		F/T	O	D	O	D	D	F/T	O	D	F/T	
<i>Public grants</i>			X		X			X				3
Art Teaching	<i>HE lecturing</i>			X								1
	<i>Secondary</i>					X				X		2
	<i>HE Visiting</i>						X					1
	<i>Art counselling</i>						X					1
Participatory	<i>Community arts/ social engagement</i>	X	X	X	X						X	5
	<i>Gallery interpretation/ education</i>	X	X									2
Commissions	<i>Documentary photography</i>			X							X	2
	<i>Photobooks</i>			X								1
	<i>Public art</i>	X										1
	<i>Live art performance</i>		X									1
	<i>Moving image</i>										X	1
	<i>Residency</i>		X			X		X				3
	<i>Paintings</i>								X			1
Art sales	<i>Paintings</i>					X	X		X			3
	<i>Prints</i>							X		X	X	3
	<i>Artists books</i>									X		1
	<i>Spin off gift items</i>							X			X	2
Art-related services	<i>Graphic design</i>				X				X			2
	<i>Illustration</i>										X	1
	<i>Website design/digital</i>			X	X	X						3
	<i>Set design</i>										X	1
	<i>Gallery technical</i>								X			1
	<i>Website/ photography skills training</i>			X								1
	<i>Art restoration</i>				X							1
Total		3	5	6	5	4	3	4	4	3	7	

Key	F/T = Full-time	D = Dual	O = Other	M = Main	E = Equal	S = Sub
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Of the ten artists studied, three worked full-time on art practices although approaches to achieving this varied. Four pursued dual careers and had significant income from teaching art at higher or secondary level or art counselling. For three of the overall sample, public grants were the main income. The livelihoods of five artists included earnings from art-related work of some kind. Art practices and income patterns of the three artists in the 'other' category (above) that are not easily categorised are discussed in more detail below. Seven artists were either

main income provider to their household or contributed an equal amount. A partner's income provided subsidy to the art practices of the remaining three.

- **Full-time art practices**

Tanya has worked full-time as a photographer for the last eight of a ten-year practice. She provides services predominantly to private sector clients including photography commissions, installations and set design. She views the four clients providing regular work as akin to 'modern-day patrons' as they often find her work when she needs it and recommend her to others. From time-to-time she makes, exhibits or sells individual pieces of work. She occasionally submits these to opens and competitions, viewing this as important exposure within her artistic development. From undertaking up to 100 pieces of contracted work she earns around £12,000 annually and is an equal contributor to the household. Notably however, this artist's work volume is neither typical within contemporary visual arts practices nor within the creative industries where nearly half of the workers have no more than five employers and fewer than 3% have 51-100 contracts a year (Easton and Cauldwell-French, 2017:15).

Ed combines large-scale public art commissions from architects and developers outside the region with regular local participatory arts contracts in gallery education and museum interpretation. The work which comes from both public and private sectors is mainly invitational, often arising from recommendation. For larger-scale projects, the artist draws on artistic and business collaborators to pool artistic expertise and technical capability. He described his full-time artists' occupation as a 'freelance sandwich', this developed over 30 years of art practice. It brings in around £25,000 a year, making him an equal contributor to his household's finances. Notably, the higher earnings from this field of work align with Ixia (2011) which showed that artists who work primarily on public art commissions command better rates of pay and income levels than their gallery-focused counterparts.⁶²

In contrast, Nancy's full-time, studio-based fine art practice takes the form of one- or two-year self-initiated research-based exhibitions or residencies arising from

studio visits and partnerships with organisations based on mutual interests. This pattern has been established over the last four of a fifteen-year practice. Financial and in-kind support from partnering organisations and small amounts of income from art sales leverage grants of £12,000-£15,000 from public sources including charitable trusts. Annual income of £12,000 a year is subsidiary to her household. Within the research sample, artists' incomes from full-time art practices that range from £12,000-£25,000 a year are higher than the norm. As a comparator, average income for all artists from art practice is £6,020, and less than £7,000 for mid-career artists and £13,000 for those self-defining as established (TBR, 2018b:17,32). Note that critique of these commonly-used terms to describe artists' career stage is in Chapter 6 following.

- **Dual career**

Five artists within the research cohort either were currently or had in the recent past pursued art practices as a dual career alongside work in higher or secondary education as lecturer, teacher or counsellor. Such contracts of employment offer artists time to develop art practices alongside regular work related to their interests and beliefs that provides income and associated benefits. As a regular art counselling job provides Michael's main income, he's not reliant on art sales to support his life. It's a job he really enjoys doing and the free time and reliable earnings enable him to take the 'creative risks' that move his practice forward. For a period of time, two artists combined art practices with regular freelance work for Creative Partnerships (CP). As described in Chapter 1, there was a strong coincidence of interest between CP's need for artists to realise its mission and the interests of certain kinds of artists in encouraging other people's creativity.

[It] was marvellous ... a lifeline to various artists and it enabled us to step away more from the 'day job' and step into work that complemented our own personal practice. We might not be selling ... art work, but we were sharing those creative processes and discovering, through working with young people. It was invaluable [to us] and it was invaluable to the young people who were benefiting from it.

One artist in the research cohort was ‘core practitioner’ for CP, engaged for three years to create, deliver, manage and evaluate projects while benefitting from the organisation’s structured and informal training. Involvement with CP provided artists with financial stability, strengthened their transferable skills and opened new avenues for creative development. In addition, because work could be highly-challenging, it provided a context for artists to re-define art practices and widen their future dissemination options. In relation to policy supportive of artists’ livelihoods, CP was exemplary by holding a ‘firm line’ in two strategic ways. Firstly, artists were generally contracted for no more than three days a week, enabling CP work to run alongside rather than subsume their independent art practices. Secondly, and ‘in line with the objectives of the Arts Council in ensuring that creative practitioners are acknowledged and valued for their work’, artists were paid ‘fair market rates’, these within the industry rates acknowledged and advocated for by ACE itself (BOP, 2012).⁶³ This is exemplified by one artist’s experience.

The work . was very valuable to me and not just financially.... The first year I did ... about £2-£3,000 worth of work but ... in the two subsequent years, the money I was getting off that was £14,000. And the way in which you could manage your time with that was very flexible... and gave me a brilliant foundation on which to do other things.

- **‘Other’ patterns**

Three artists had working patterns that were neither full-time practices nor dual careers, in which art-related work formed part of income. For two of these, pursuit of art practices and attitudes to earning money draws in the additional dimension of family responsibilities and dependents. Henry who is his household’s breadwinner:

... has to earn x amount of money every month just to cover everything and keep things running.... All my decisions are based on making sure that I hit that target.

Income comes from ‘a mixed bag overall of job roles and different hats’. This includes regular freelance design work in a family member’s business, two or three

days a week in an art-related business set up specifically to finance his art practice, and the earnings direct from art practice. 'Being an artist, my artwork that I want to do and the projects I want to be involved with ... [including] putting a bid in to [GftA] or applying for opportunities' has to be fitted into the time left over after the other jobs.

However, contributing to family life is a significant factor in making decisions about how and where to pursue art practices. Household finances are reliant on regular income such as from his art-related work, so working away isn't viable. Although he might consider taking on art opportunities beyond his geographical area, he doesn't want to work away home even for a couple of weeks, as being a part of his child's daily life is as important as his art practice. Being intimately involved in what his child's doing including over the early years fulfils an emotional need. For Emily 'being a mum' to a pre-school child is part of her three-way life split, along with doing 10-30 hours freelance work a week in an arts-related field and initiating her own art projects and opportunities.

In terms of providing evidence of work and income patterns of the artists' constituency as a whole, TBR (2018a) provided no indicator of the extent of full-time practices amongst artists. However it concluded that in 2015, 28% of artists had dual careers alongside art teaching of some kind and nearly two fifths were financially reliant on partners' income. Almost seven out of ten artists depended for income on art or non-art related jobs and just 2% received Arts Council England grants.⁶⁴ As exemplified in the artist's comment following, this new research demonstrates the specific impact on art practices and choices about work opportunity for four artists with dependent children for whom immersion in family life is an essential but limiting factor.

... because so many opportunities are unpaid, so I just wouldn't apply for them anyway even if I didn't have a child I'm not from a privileged background... so I just won't do things for free anymore.

Susannah recognised that while a dual career in art teaching would continue once she had a child, her art practice would be 'nudged out of the way ... for a period of time'. However, although once her child went to school she would regain that time,

artistic development that took her away from home wouldn't be viable for 'at least a decade if not more' until 'he was of an age where I felt happy to be disappearing on a regular basis.' Two female artists pursuing practices full-time and currently childless had addressed the practical implications of childbearing. One artist put this ambition into the 'five-year plan', along with development of a new workspace with a creative partner in part as practical solution to co-managing new family responsibilities.

However for one full-time, self-employed artist with self-employed partner, childbearing was difficult to contemplate on economic and artistic grounds. Would she get maternity benefit? How could the household manage financially without her income? Significantly, she voiced an underlying concern about implicit discriminatory practices in the visual arts. She was concerned her artistic prospects would become limited because 'people ... don't even consider you for things because you have a child ... they think you can't handle it or you don't have the time for it.' This supposition may be evidenced by the fact that at 31% and 40% respectively, female artists are under-represented in both commercial and ACE-funded galleries (Bonham-Carter, 2016:6).

However, the primary research further demonstrates that taking family responsibilities constrains time for artistic development for both male and female artists and isn't confined to dependent children. As illustration, two artists described caring responsibilities for elderly relatives as a necessary but limiting factor to pursuit of art practice ambitions. One took time out over a prolonged period to care for three elderly family members without other structural support. Another's 'homing instinct' is partially premised on taking responsibility to be on hand for a widowed mother who in turn provides the artist with invaluable emotional support towards sustaining art practice. Notably however although not explicitly cited, an inference from secondary analysis of TBR (2018b) is that the volume of the artists' constituency with no dependent children at 67% is two percentage points higher than in UK family households in general (ONS, 2015).

- **How artists' work arises**

Figure 5(c) How artists' work arises

	M82	F29	F98	M58	F68	F81	M49	M101	M55	F87
Time on art practice	F/T	F//T	F/T	D	D	D	D	O	O	O
<i>Open or applied for</i>				x	x	x			x	x
<i>Self-generated</i>	x	x	x				x	x		x
<i>Regular clients</i>	x	x						x	x	
<i>Self-representation</i>	x	x			x	x		x		x
<i>External representation</i>			x	x					x	
<i>Recommendation</i>	x	x	x	x						

Key

F/T = Full-time	D = Dual	O = Other
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This research sample of ten artists predominantly pursued art practices in the North West. Work had been commissioned, presented or shown in some forty galleries or arts organisations, six festivals or community-based programmes and six regionally-based opens or prize exhibitions.

Artists with full-time art practices consistently generated their own work or projects. Regular and repeat commissions and recommendation from prior commissioners and clients were vital contributors. Such artists didn't generally apply for open submission opportunities and were self-representing or represented by regional galleries or agencies. Successful independent fundraising from GftA benefitted three artists whose applications cited regional arts organisations as collaborators and beneficiaries of an award's outcomes such as through exhibitions, residencies and community-based engagements. Access to openly-promoted opportunities was however vital for dual career artists and those with 'other' work patterns whose 'non-art' income-generation limited time for art practice and associated visibility.

In terms of artists with dual careers or 'other' work patterns with family or caring responsibilities, opportunities that involved working away from their home base and associated regular income sources were largely untenable. For example, such artists wouldn't consider low or no fee residencies for reasons such as 'you've got to put food on the table at the end of the month'. For those with dependent

children, opportunity close to home was imperative because ‘travel away’ to do art projects was not acceptable.

A very positive obstacle is that I now have a child to look after and if [I was] making more money, I could [afford more childcare], [but] there’s a balance to be struck here because I do want to spend time with my daughter as well while she grows up.

Open competitions with associated prizes are highly valued by dual-career and ‘other’ category artists. Selection on artistic merit and prizewinning offers exposure that generates further opportunity such as gallery representation and exhibition invitations and recommendations. One artist recounted a positive chain of reaction occurring over five months following selection for a notable open exhibition. Subsequent winning of major national and regional prizes and an invitation to show in a significant exhibition in London culminated in selling work ‘for five figures’ to an important collection. However and as also demonstrated by the review of arts policy in Chapter 1, artists’ practices and livelihoods in relation to their sphere of work can be both positively and adversely affected by factors beyond their control. Figure 5(d) below provides further amplification of this through further interpretation of a-n (2004) data which exemplifies the impact of political and social policies on the landscape for artists’ work 1989-1999.

Figure 5(d) Artists’ opportunities comparing 1989 and 1999 from a-n (2004)

<i>Type</i>	1989		1999	
	Number	Value	Number	Value
<i>Awards and fellowships</i>	102	£871,620	43	£352,000
<i>Art vacancies</i>	41	£281,758	107	£990,598
<i>Commissions</i>	31	£130,340	83	£525,000
<i>Competitions</i>	51	£383,797	65	£388,700
<i>Exhibitions</i>	172	£86,780	266	£20,750
<i>Residencies</i>	35	£116,250	56	£97,360

In 1989, the combined traditional areas of awards and fellowships, competitions and exhibitions represented 56% of volume of all work and 70% of value. Artists pursuing studio-based practices characteristically applied for awards and fellowships to make new work and distributed finished pieces through exhibitions and submissions to opens, prizes and competitions. Although only 5% of all

opportunities, the expanding field of commissions was attractive to artists, this in part because of the larger budgets. As examples, Public Art Development Trust's BAA commission budget was £35,000 and a Public Art Commissions Agency project in Birmingham £20,000. By 1999, although remaining 43% of total volume of all work, the more traditional opportunities areas of awards and fellowships, competitions and exhibitions had reduced to 30% of overall value. Art commissions had grown to 10% of volume and 20% of overall value of all work. Major public art programmes were located within percent for art schemes and attached to regeneration of waterways, cycle paths, tramways and transport systems, these often supported by National Lottery funding. As examples in the North West region, Cumbria County Council offered three £200,000 commissions for large-scale site-specific works to experienced artists and craft workers. Likewise, West Lancashire Council allocated £300,000 from a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) for a three-year public art programme (a-n, 2004).

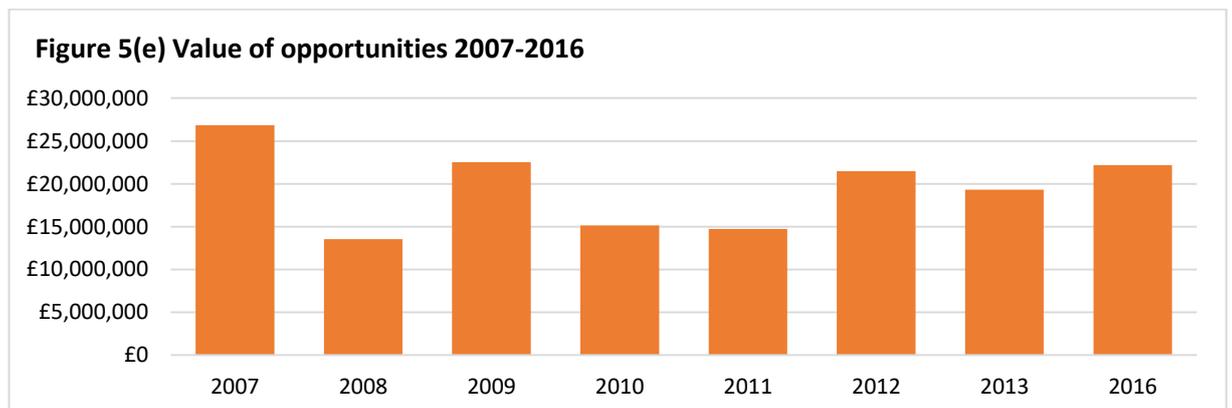
An example from the primary research provides an indicator of how artists working over the period 1989-1999 benefitted from alignment of art practice aspirations with the new social and political realities. One artist graduated from a Master's in public art from a prestigious London art school in the mid-80s. In his view, his MA deliberately set out to counter contemporaneous political views that 'art schools weren't producing people that were any use to society'. Such courses that integrated business and conceptual aspects of art practice into delivery of private or public sector commissions created artists adaptive to new environments for visual arts practice. As coursework included making proposals based on real-life briefs including budgets and public engagement plans, this artist was already immersed in the field of work on graduation, with both skills and sectoral knowledge to make a living from it. The early career development of another artist who graduated in photography in the mid-nineties similarly illustrates artists' responsiveness to external environments. Having undertaken publishing commissions as a student, he expected to pursue work within the commercial photography world. However, seeing the scope for practice through community

photography, he gravitated instead towards this as a better fit with his desire to facilitate other people's creative expression.

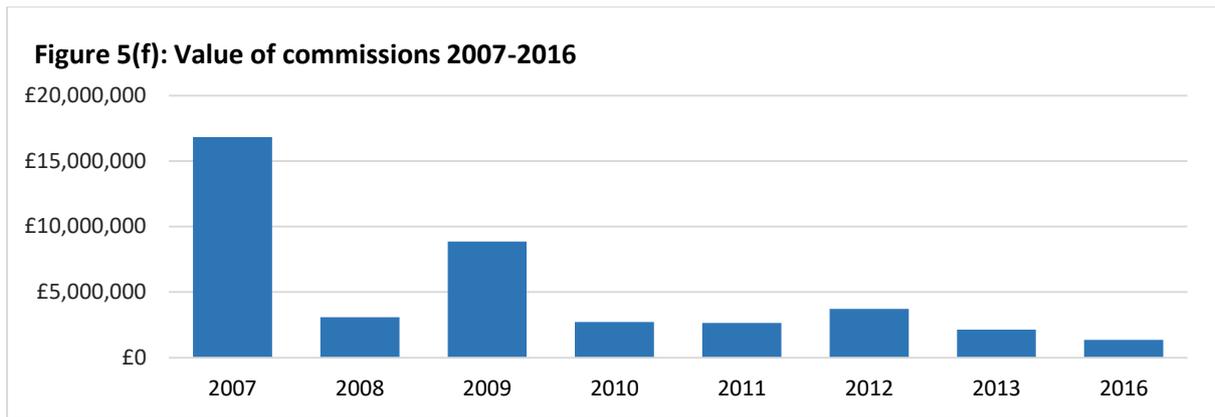
Buck (2004) confirmed the impact of the new interplay between public and commercial and associated framing of art and artists' contributions in economic rather than social terms as a contemporary form of the art patronage arts policies had always intended to serve. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 1, policy arising from Jackson and Jordan's review for ACE of the contemporary visual arts actively pursued these more expansive routes for and manifestations of contemporary visual arts including within regeneration, healthcare and education. Arts policy perceived this broader arena for the visual arts as a route to improving visual arts incomes at a time when 60% of those employed in the visual arts earned less than the national median and fewer than 3% made a reasonable living (Jackson and Jordan, 2005:9,16; ACE, 2006a).

Since the 2008 financial crash, the creative industries as a whole have prospered and demonstrate a 24% increase in full-time pay over the period 2008-15.⁶⁵

However Figure 5(e) below from my own research (Jones, 2017) shows a significant reduction in the value of work for artists over a similar period.



Total value of openly-offered work to artists in the pre-recession year of 2007 was £26.8m but £22.18m in 2016. However, the latter represents a considerable reduction in real terms as if the figure 2007 were to be translated into relative value or purchasing power for 2016, it would be £34.16m, which is to say 54% higher than 2016's actual financial value (Jones, 2017:5).



In the commissions' category, total average value declined in 2016 so that this area of work represented just 8% of the total value of commissions in 2007 (Jones, 2017:6,12).

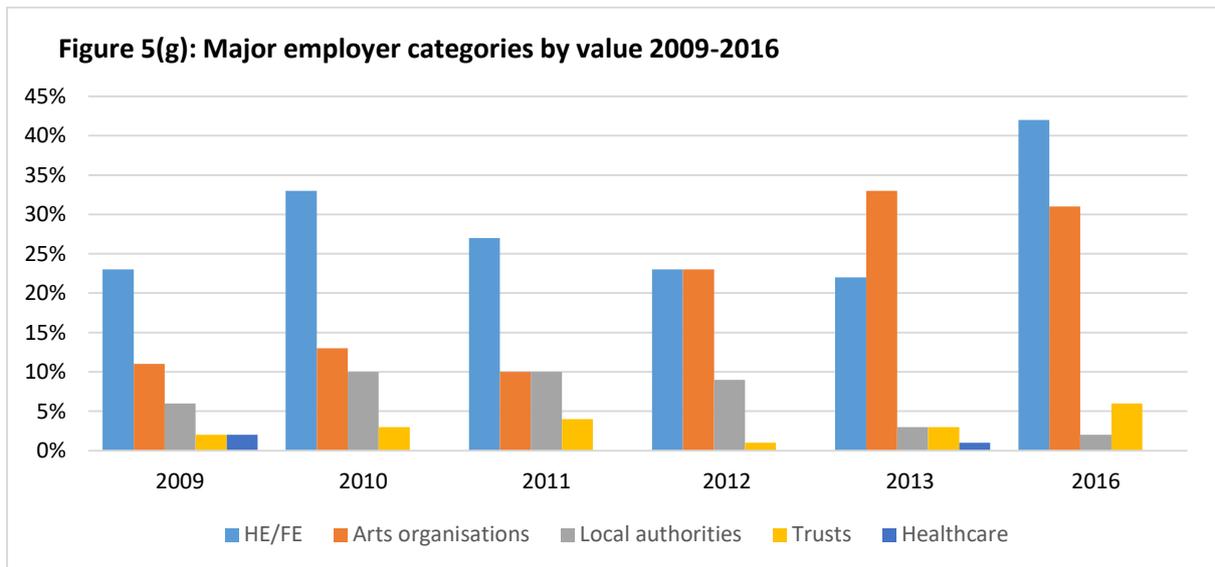


Figure 5(g) shows that with the exception of 2012 and 2013, Higher Education remains the major employer of artists through offering a range of full and part-time teaching posts and related paid opportunities relevant to artists. Although in 2016 31% of the value of openly-offered work for artists came from arts organisations, such work had an average value of just £5,305. In comparison, work from local authorities at that time provided an average value of £11,800 (Jones, 2017:14-15).

- **Rise of self-employment**

Self-employed status amongst artists was encouraged from 1984 by the Enterprise Allowance scheme (EAS). By 1989 an estimated ten per cent of those on EAS were artists or arts businesses (a-n, 2004). In 2012, Creative and Cultural Skills estimated 77% of UK visual artists were self-employed, this higher than the creative industries average of 43% (CCS, 2012). As cited in Chapter 1's arts policy review, ACE's per cent for art policy and growth of specialist agencies and local authority public art officers increased volume and scope of paid work in the expanding field of public art commissions and residencies and contributed to growth of self-employment amongst artists. As previously noted, 21% of artists were making a living from art commissions and residencies in the public realm by 1993 (Selwood, 1995).

It is pertinent here to refer back to past evidence and theory as comparative data. Brighton *et al's* (1985) study 30 years ago concluded that fewer than 30% of artists worked full-time on art practices, just 5% earned significant incomes from them and over three quarters had either full-time or dual careers alongside art education work.⁶⁶ A decade later most artists were earning a living, albeit small, from art practice and art-related work, with art teaching the single most important income source (Shaw and Allen, 1996). Further extrapolation from TBR (2018a) suggests that in 2015, only 20% of all artists were pursuing art practices full-time.⁶⁷ Overall then, it could be construed that opportunity for artists to pursue art practices full-time has decreased by ten percentage points over a thirty-year period. My additional analysis comparing Brighton *et al* with TBR (2018b) concludes that the volume of artists benefitting from the stability of dual careers alongside art education has decreased by substantially, that is from 74% in 1985 to 28% in 2015.

- **Portfolio careers**

Twenty years ago Summerton (1999) asserted that the growth of portfolio working was 'good' for artists because it widened income sources and choice. Ostensibly, Hall's (1996) projection of portfolio working within 'Protean careers' could be highly relevant to artists who place particular value on autonomy and 'setting and

achieving their own life goals and ambitions' in response to changes in external environments. However the inherent disadvantage is that 'the price-tag goes on their produce, not their time' (Handy, 1994:177). Although the concept and tensions within artists' careers of portfolio working will be discussed in the next chapter, TBR's assertions are worthy of note here. While concluding portfolio careers are the most common way of operating for artists, it confirmed that by 'creating a circle of high-risk, low-paid work', these are a root cause of poor income levels (TBR, 2018a:25). This aligns with Ball's (2008) assertion that amongst artists with up to eight years of practice, the more strands of work in a portfolio, the less is earned overall.

Tensions and vulnerabilities

Regardless of whether artists are full-time, have dual careers or 'other' practice formulations, a core economic tension identified by this new study is that artists' income levels don't increase in line with practice duration. Albeit that this is a small sample with no claim to be representative, full-time artists with a practice length of 11-15 years earned as little as £12,000 a year from art practices. The concern thus is that if visual artists' earnings peak at 35-44 years, the prospects of saving in the later, 'better' years for old age are negligible (Kretschmer *et al*, 2011:3).

In addition, my inference drawn from TBR (2018b) mentioned earlier in this chapter that artists may be less likely than the population as a whole to have dependent children, has implications for the care of ageing artists over the long-term. This is because adult children and grandchildren are an acknowledged support structure for parents in old age (Ageing without Children, 2017). However levels of income solely from art practice within the research sample are higher than TRB's mean of £6,020 per annum (2018b:8). Amongst those with 17-30 years of practice, incomes were £24,000-£36,000. Resonating with Ixia (2019), a conclusion of this research study is that artists who established art practices and income patterns during prior political and social periods are more likely to fall within the just 7% of all artists earning £20,000 or more annually from art practices (TBR, 2018b:8).

Another deduction from my research is that dual career artists are more capable than other artists with other work patterns of maintaining economic stability and managing adverse circumstances in the external environment. However, in the case of those artists with dual careers alongside teaching, as noted previously in the chapter, this status is declining within the artists' constituency as whole. Longer-term implications of this are two-fold. Firstly, dual career status provides artists with the greatest financial security and contributes to their overall welfare through access to benefits including sick pay and pension contributions. Secondly, this work enables artists to fulfil aspirations to 'make a difference' to the lives of others in tandem while also providing regular income for the artistic freedom that sustains art practices over the longer-term. Although some artists finance practices through other art-related work, multi-jobbing and portfolios of income-generating work which TBR asserted are the most common amongst artists, this is assessed to be by necessity rather than choice. Such work is both restrictive of artists' access to opportunity to make artistic progress and is the least well remunerated.

2. Where artists practice

Within the research cohort, six artists were born and raised in the North West. They demonstrated both loyalty to the region and immersion in it as a source of artistic and emotional support. Sustained engagement with a place over a length of time was found to provide tangible and intangible benefits. For one artist, continued relationships with the friends she grew up with who were now doing 'innovative things' contributed positively to the stream of paid work that has sustained her practice for over a decade. By moving from the city to very small village 'surrounded by hills and walks and forests', another artist purposefully set out to recreate the environment she'd grown up in as a child and which inspires her work. Working from a home studio suits her family circumstances, while the landscape and the natural rural environment around her provide the source material for her work which is distributed nationally and internationally. More prosaically, another artist's preference to work close to home directly relates to the associated regular

earnings from art-related work in the region that is an essential component in the household's income.

The economic benefits of moving from London are demonstrated by two artists who made conscious decisions to relocate to the North West. One who moved with a group of friends some 20 years ago felt that 'super competitive' London with high living costs wasn't a place to get old in. Relocating to Manchester in the early years of regeneration gave room for artistic manoeuvre and an affordable location to 'make his mark' in his chosen art sphere. This city two decades ago was judged a good place for artists. Property and living costs were cheap, big open-plan studios could be rented centrally. Artists had easy access to materials and light-industrial expertise for art fabrication and casual work was plentiful (Grennan, 2001).

Manchester's underdeveloped arts infrastructure at the turn of the Millennium was likened to '60s New York, in that it provided 'plenty of slack in the system' for artists and artist-led initiatives, providing affordable living and work space for art practices to develop into (Williams, 2001:8).

One photographer in the research sample recounted how creation of a new supportive infrastructure and increased localised opportunity for practitioners came about. It was energised by the combination of activism amongst his new graduate cohort who deliberately wanted to avoid moving to London and the impending closure of a specialist regional facility. The outcome was the artist-led 'New Exposures' festival involving 21 regional photographers and 17 venues including galleries, bars and retail units, illuminated street advertising units and billboards that also contributed to Photo Arts '98, Year of Photography and the Electronic Image in North West England within the Arts 2000 programme. This artists' initiative gained funding from the Arts Council's Arts for Everyone (A4E) Express scheme which, as noted in Chapter 1, was 'light touch' and proved to be particularly supportive of the artist-led. In addition, this collectively-framed initiative went on to fulfil its ultimate objective of providing more sustained support for artists' practices through formation in 1999 of Redeye as a network for photographers.⁶⁸

A4E's main scheme also awarded £100,000 to artists' initiative MART for a month-long, city-wide 'Festival of visual art made in Manchester'. The organising group of eight artists identified the low profile of artists there as a 'cultural gap' in a city already known for performing and media arts, science and sporting prowess. The ensuing programme of artists' projects, exhibitions and workshops would redress this by placing artists at the centre and 'pull[ing] back the curtain and... reveal[ing] the sheer strength and diversity of artistic practice.... and mak[ing] the work of Manchester's visual artists visible and available to all' (MART, 1999:7). A legacy of such initiatives from 2001 was North West Arts Board's Regional Arts Lottery Programme (RALP) that offered up to £100,000 a year in three-year funding to regional artist-led initiatives (Stanley, 2000:13). Notably, the new research evidenced another structural benefit of such ventures, illustrating the funding body's willingness at the time to draw in artists' ideas and integrate their initiatives into delivering arts policy.

'A group of probably 10 to 15 [artists] ... were invited to [a] meeting because we were all involved in [initiatives in] different ways.... And then the conversation started – [with someone] doing some paid research for North West Arts Board [into future provision for artists]... okay they weren't handing money over at that point, but they were saying, 'if you guys go off and start to do something there might be the opportunity.'

Economic benefits for artists residing in the North West where costs of studios, materials and travel are lower in comparison with London is confirmed by TBR's conclusion that this region's low overheads enables artists to spend the most time on art practice when compared with artists in other English regions. In addition, North West-based artists are more likely than London-based counterparts to find opportunities on their home base (TBR, 2018b:73,76-78). Notably, artist-led ventures such as group studios that were supported in prior political and arts policy periods continue to provide an important aid to artists' practices. An artist in the research cohort who moved to Manchester from London five years ago confirmed that joining an established group studios and being amongst role models of full-time art practices provided a 'flying start' to becoming a full-time artist herself.

In a different vein, another artist who in the recent past experienced the benefits of London commercial gallery representation rejected assumptions that the best place to get on as an artist is London. He perceived distinctive artistic benefits attached to staying 'on the edge' in a region characterised by 'germination and development'. While recognising this might be construed as 'putting your art second', this artist questioned whether the most authentic art arises from 'starving yourself and throwing everything into the pit' and making 'selfish choices' detrimental to family life.

Notably however, three artists reported the North West as less-than-hospitable to sustaining practices over the longer-term. The 'cliques' in one city have become alienating for an artist who moved there a decade ago after graduating elsewhere. There's an underlying feeling that the city's own graduates are prioritised and unless you're 'part of this club or this studio, or paying this fee then you may as well just fuck off'. Even when consistently engaged in art practice and presenting work, there's a perception amongst some artists in the sample of being ignored and invisible. One who studied there and initially felt welcome began to feel similarly 'left out' and 'pushed out' by the preference emanating from some arts organisations for youth and incoming artists, and has since moved away.⁶⁹ 'Stagnation' in the local art scene is the impetus for another artist in the research sample who resides in one of the region's smaller cities to have started looking to move to somewhere with a 'big, well-established and functional art scene', perceiving this as more worthwhile investing time and energy in.

Tensions and vulnerabilities

This section identifies three main underlying areas of tension and vulnerability which are now discussed. TBR identified female artists spend less time on art practice and earn less than their male counterparts (2018a:23). The new research provides an additional nuance by demonstrating that whether male or female, family responsibilities including for dependent children and eldercare are significant in decisions about how and where artists pursue art practices and thus impact on their artistic development and livelihood prospects. It highlights artists' desire to

contribute meaningfully to family lives as a constraint when set against external perceptions including by arts policy of how artists make progress and art practices are developed and sustained over the longer-term. As cited previously, one male artist's family responsibilities restricted access to opportunity away from home. Female artists confirmed that 'being a mum' may take up a third of their available time and impact adversely on development of art practices for a decade or longer. Such barriers to achieving development are not confined to visual artists, as female performing arts practitioners are in a similar position (Parents in Performance, 2018). Circumstances of self-employment in which maternity pay is related to self-employed earnings history confirms a dilemma for female artists, in that it may only be by 'sacrificing motherhood' that they can maintain art practices over the longer term (McRobbie, 2001:11).

- **Susceptibility to external trends**

The research illustrates how artists' decisions about where they reside and appropriate sites for art practices are influenced as much by family circumstances as by artistic ambitions and access to markets and opportunities for art practices. Work which is attuned and localised to artists' personal circumstances is shown to foster adaptable practices which can be sustained over time. However the ways in which artists pursue practices and achieve livelihoods is already known to make them highly susceptible to 'world events' and policy shifts (Galloway *et al*, 2002), Full-time artists and those with 'other' working patterns are the most vulnerable to external circumstances and trends. The experiences of two full-time artists in the face of the 2008 economic crash illustrate this. One with a well-established practice recounted the 'really dire state' caused by sudden drop off in work that brought him close to giving up. It was only by borrowing money and being 'very vocal about the fact that it was quite bad' that enough work came in and he got through 'a really, really bad time'. Another who now has a dual career with art teaching had made a good livelihood from art sales up until then. The recession forced her to diversify and develop a portfolio of adult education teaching. However, within twelve months she knew this wasn't an economically viable alternative either and

instead found a different solution. The continuing economic fragility led more recently to cancellation of another artist's long-planned solo exhibition designed to provide exposure to the international art market when the 'huge gallery with a lot of money behind it' unexpectedly ceased trading.

Artists' projections for their practices and livelihoods can similarly be positively and adversely affected by arts policy shifts. Strategic support to artists' initiatives through 'light touch' A4E funding and the region-specific RALP ceased by 2002. Although Creative Partnerships was 'good for artists' by supporting the livelihoods of some 3,500 dual-career artists across England including two in the research cohort as already mentioned in Chapter 1, arts policy shifts in 2011 cut all funding to this organisation. In the same vein, GftA funding which has provided the main income source for one artist in the research cohort and enabled her to work full-time as an artist for the last several years, ceased during 2018. It is notable too, as Chapter 1's review of arts policies identified, that artists have experienced successively diminishing returns from GftA over its operation since 2003. The financial implications for individual artists of cessation of GftA in favour of Arts Council Project Grants and Developing your Creative Practice from 2018 are yet to be evidenced.

- **Constraints of self-employment**

The primary research demonstrates that artists are able to progress and sustain practices over time through self-employment and to manage to some extent on the associated low incomes. However, only one artist in the sample had any savings and three relied for financial stability on overdrafts and credit cards. Although three could expect some kind of pension in old age from current or past dual occupations, the remainder had none set up. As noted in the previous chapter, prior research commissioned by ACE confirmed lack of savings and including for pensions to be higher within the artists' constituency than amongst self-employed people as a whole. As one artist reported, neither she nor other creative people around her could think about saving for a pension because, although they 'work all the time..... we're just getting by'. However some particular vulnerabilities attached to self-

employed status for artists have thus far attracted little attention from arts policymakers. Four artists in the research sample couldn't work due to illness or occupational medical conditions which lasted from a few weeks to four months including one which was occupational. Although one was eligible for ESA (Employment and Support Allowance) for another artist, the time-sensitive nature of the commission in hand meant they 'just had to work through that'. As noted in Chapter 1, ACE has advocated in the past for adjustments to the tax and benefits systems to better acknowledge artists' low incomes and variable earnings, although it was unsuccessful in influencing legislative change. In the same vein, Dellot and Reed (2015) proposed strategic changes to National Insurance Contributions (NIC) and Universal Credit (UC) to boost living standards for the poorest self-employed. Recommendations for improvements to tax and benefits for 'workers' in the new economy are also pertinent to artists who although self-employed, are more often treated as 'workers' in terms of the fixed terms and non-negotiable payment levels offered by arts commissioners (Taylor, 2017:42). Inequality is inherent when artists' contracts for public sector work are predominantly to the employer's advantage and designed to reduce an organisation's costs. Such contracts thus lack due diligence in terms of addressing adverse impacts on those expected to deliver them.

- **Lack of appropriate professional development opportunity**

The primary research agrees that artists' lack of 'timely and affordable' professional development opportunity is a barrier to sustaining art practices (TBR, 2018a:12). As outlined in the previous chapter, personalised and self-initiated professional development for artists contributes to achieving the self-determination necessary for sustaining creative lives over the longer term. The future livelihood of one full-time artist with a substantial length of successful practice was notably made more vulnerable due to the combination of lack of 'know how' about new digital technologies and of savings to invest in associated new equipment and facilities.

Such professional replenishment is best conducted within a personalised capacity-building framework attuned to each individual's characteristic behaviour and

learning preferences and their personal circumstances (Gunnell and Bright, 2010; Taylor, 2013:19). In the above artist's situation, addressing the skills-gap required first a sustained period of digital acclimatisation and training to acquire new capability and knowledge of appropriate applications and techniques and secondly, capital investment in new equipment and facilities. Although two artists in the research sample had been able to fund this kind of personalised and strategic longer-term development through GftA awards, applications by a further two artists for similarly-framed support were unsuccessful.

'Working from home'

Current definitions of socially-engaged or participatory practices don't explicitly apply to activities by and strategies of artists who, by buying houses and starting families make a commitment to the places in which they live. Such terms tend to be applied solely to art practices. For example O'Neill (2014) attached this to artists who make work directly related to particular social, political, economic or environmental issues that is 'co-authored or co-created by specific publics and voices'. However, this new research concludes that a more expansive conceptualisation of 'situated practices' is called for, this a descriptor of those artists who as they pursue art practices, make commitments to and are influenced by the places and particular social environments in which they live. My descriptive term aligns with Speight (2015) who asserted that artists' work is shaped by their personal and professional relationships with a place. As artists are also 'people who eat, shop, sleep and socialise' in a specific location, they have a vested interest in being an integral part of forging 'sustainable, self-sufficient and locally-distinctive economies and cultures'.

As Chapter 1 demonstrated, arts policies have consistently perceived artists to be a mobile and malleable resource. However such assumptions obscure the reality, in that the preference of most artists is to work *where they are* (Markusen, 2013). Policy and arts infrastructures thus fail to acknowledge the 'complexity and (positive) ubiquity' of artists and multiplicity of values attached to their nuanced contributions outside cities and in smaller places and communities in which they

work and live. The notion of 'working from home' is commonly associated with salaried occupations. In this instance, it is valued because of the flexibility about where and when jobs are carried out, enabling people including those in the creative industries and arts to more easily manage personal and professional lives. Porteus and Smith (2001) argued that this practice is inherently damaging to retaining a healthy work-life balance because work matters impinge on and come to dominate home life.

However, for artists whose practices and lives don't conform to this norm, a more fruitful work-life balance is achieved when work opportunities reflective of artistic interests and aspirations aren't dependent on having to travel and work away from home. TBR's quantification of artists' travel and accommodation expenses infers that nearly three fifths of artists pursue art practices away from home (2018b:31). However, working from home not only reduces travel time and overhead costs but is supportive of those artists with family or caring responsibilities. An additional important effect is that it helps to illustrate the assertion that artists as 'residents and human beings' belong in, and are integral to, their communities and neighbourhoods (Francis, 2018). Working in one's home location and the associated 'sense of belonging' is vital to human well-being. Sense of belonging arises from people's intimate involvement in environments and feeling they are integral to its workings. The ensuing psychological, social, spiritual and physical benefits combine to enhance individuals' involvement in communities (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema and Collier, 1992).

When applied to artists, this sense of belonging is supportive of achieving Hagerty *et al's* condition of heightened emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses from others they work with. In addition and aligned with Speight, as above, sense of belonging is strengthened when artists as citizens fully participate in shaping environments in which they live (Landau, 2018). In terms of supporting artists' resilience within art practices, achieving a feeling of belonging is a significant factor in the adaptability people require to sustain personal growth through consistent processes of learning and development (Teo, Chan, Wei and Zhang, 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter has continued the theme opened in the previous chapter by considering the 'whole artist'. It demonstrates that artists' personalised approaches to how and where art practices are conducted and livelihoods forged are individualised to their particular artistic and family contexts and adaptive to changes in the external circumstances including from political and arts policy. Although it is common for some artists to disseminate work made in the region nationally and internationally, regional and local commissions and purchases by private and public sectors and dual careers in art teaching are the major contributors to artists' livelihoods. The concept of situated practices and working from home are shown to provide practical and emotional benefits to artists' pursuit of practices and livelihoods. Well-being accrued from belonging in a place over time fosters trust and familiarity with environments. Being amongst like-minded people feeds into acquisition of social capital supportive of individualised livelihood frameworks.

In this respect, the concept of achieving 'situated practices' for artists aligns to three dimensions of social capital. Connections between actors in a social system within personalised networks that generate access to resources lead to acquisition of structural social capital. Consistent personal and individual connections, relationships and repeated interactions over time in a place contribute to relational capital. Shared meanings, interpretations and narratives within trust-based interactions which grow over time and in which goals and aspirations are common generate cognitive social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). However, a further conclusion from this new study is that artists' ability to secure and capitalise on these assets and sustain situated practices over a life-cycle is constrained by a double-bind inherent within artists' relationship with, and access to, money.

- **Artists and money conundrum**

Summerton (1995) described the rationale for artists' practices and work choices as motivation to 'make a living out of art practice and desire to be in control of their

own lives, work and careers'. She construed such artists as being 'in business' by anticipating *some kind* (my emphasis) of income from art practice. However, rather than small businesses concerned with profit generation, a conclusion from the primary research is that artists' attitude to work and money places them within a particular category of social enterprise. This assertion arises from considering definitions of social enterprises by Nicholls (2006) and Mair, Robinson and Hockerts (2006). Such enterprises are founded around activities that address social issues by using money either from non-governmental sources or from market-based sources. The primary research shows that by ten or more years of practice, artists developed rationales for charging for work and knew what they need to earn annually. Although there are instances where artists took unpaid work, for example to demonstrate what they could do in expectation of further work, they commonly 'stuck to their guns' and declined work when offered rates considered too low. Conversely, artists' underlying tendency is not to be or appear to be 'greedy', with a proclivity when costing and scoping proposals for original work to be unrealistic or over-optimistic, including accepting low fees when these are offered by commissioners. Thus artists don't or can't build margins into budgets to cover time spent on speculative work and acquisition of new knowledge and skills, nor allowances for savings for holidays, unexpected circumstances and old age. In this way, artists' behaviour towards art practices epitomises Kerlin's (2013) 'sustainable subsistence model' of social enterprise that is to say, one which is inherently dependent for survival on attracting state or charitable income. Artists' behaviours in this respect additionally align with definitions of a social entrepreneur, in that artists are mission-driven and employ aspects of entrepreneurial behaviours to deliver value to society with the intention of being financially independent, self-sufficient and sustainable (Abu Saifan, 2012:25). However, artists' prioritisation of 'mission growth' over 'profit growth' positions them within the non-profit category of social enterprise. Thus although artists are self-sufficient, it can only be to an extent. Like others within this category of social entrepreneurs, artists are only sustainable over the longer-term if income earned

from socially-valuable activities is supplemented by 'non-market' sources such as public or charitable support.

It is pertinent here to use Taylor and Littleton (2008) to reconsider the inherent incompatibility for artists between making art and making money. From a sociology perspective, these researchers identified two distinct but parallel-running repertoires. On one hand, if artists take on work essentially to make money, peer groups can judge them having 'sold out' by sacrificing artistic quality and integrity. By default then, and as expounded by Abbing (2002), artists' failure to make money can sometimes be considered a marker of their artistic success. On the other hand and as will be discussed in the next chapter, self-generated opportunity and income including from direct grants acts as validation, both to artists themselves and within certain arts systems and developmental ladders. Within Taylor and Littleton's first repertoire, artists may either implicitly or explicitly choose the precarity of creative work while avoiding thinking about how they will progress in the longer-term, or opt to finance art practice from paid work unrelated to it. This may also be construed as the portfolio working mentioned earlier in the chapter, which will be examined further in the next.

However, as a development of Taylor and Littleton's second repertoire, the primary research demonstrates that after ten years of practice artists do make considered plans about their artistic futures, including effecting strategic changes in how and where they work and taking steps to cut overheads to manage on lower incomes. In addition, artists are presented with an inherent problem if they seek to finance art practices from 'other' sources, in that much of the work which could provide artists with the necessary flexibility to be available for 'art' is equally precarious. For example most 'front-of-house' and customer services work which artists commonly rely on is low-paid and casualised (Bloodworth, 2018).

Taylor and Littleton's additional repertoire is the concept of the 'lucky break', that occurs when outside forces of some kind propel artists from the periphery and nearer to the centre of the world they wish to inhabit. Interestingly, the underlying assumption is that this is a phenomenon that artists can't themselves control. However aligned with the assertion that 'luck is being ready', the research

illuminates how artists' deliberate life choices, situated practices and management of complex external circumstances enable them to persist and maintain momentum towards achieving their own 'luck' within longer-term ambitions (Eno, 1996:1).

- **Double jeopardy**

Two further artists and money frictions identified in the new research highlight the imperative for artists to access public subsidy *of some kind* if they are to maintain livelihoods over a life-cycle. Firstly, as explained above, because artists' pursuit of art practices follows the 'sustainable subsistence model' subsidy is necessarily needed to augment low earned-income levels. Secondly, levels of indirect public support to artists in terms of fees for developing and presenting socially valuable activities in publicly-funded venues are neither reflective of artists' production and living costs nor of the value of artists' work in engaging public audiences. New business models adopted by arts organisations to make themselves resilient as a requirement of arts funding means they cannot afford to pay for artists' various programmes inputs, including to exhibitions, gallery education and participatory and outreach at artists' 'full cost recovery' rates. That is to say, preparation, delivery and post-programme contributions are not accounted for in artists' fees and terms nor are fees generally based on relevant industry rates. Notably also my own research found 28% of all awards, commissions, competitions and residency opportunities openly-offered to artists in 2016 didn't offer any money (Jones, 2017:3). As Chapter 1 demonstrates, since 2003 direct grants from ACE for artists' research and development have declined in scope and overall value. In such circumstances, artists are in 'double jeopardy', twice denied access to subsidy which could help them to sustain art practices over a life-cycle.

This is not to say that it is impossible to remove artists from the double jeopardy of excessive self-subsidy. As discussed already in this chapter and in Chapter 1, past arts policies such as for percent for art and Creative Partnerships were even-handed in this respect. It was notable that public art commissioners and employers agreed that an artist's experience and reputation should command higher rates than the standard (Baines and Wheelock, 2003a). Interestingly however, a criticism

of CP's good payment practices was that rates subject to artificial inflation (i.e. outside the employer's direct control) create sustainability difficulties for art education itself and other arts and culture sectors dependent on artists that were themselves subsidy-dependent for survival (BOP, 2012:32).⁷⁰

An arts policy argument introduced in Chapter 1 was to better provide for those 'who wish to build a career [with] full-time employment' (BOP, 2005:5). Pertinent to understanding livelihood prospects for artists contemporaneously is that in that period prior to the 2008 economic crash, more than 50% of arts organisations couldn't afford to pay artists (ACE, 2006a:21). At that time, 32% of arts organisations had already benefited from refurbished or new lottery-funded buildings. However in terms of programme delivery, the sector remained characterised by 'scarce resources and capacity' (Jackson and Jordan, 2015:74.)

Unlike other sectors where generating high-quality products leads to highly-paid jobs, it was perfectly possible in the visual arts to produce and present high-quality results from poorly-paid and casualised work, this identified as a significant stumbling block to improving artists' economic circumstances (Lindley and Galloway, 2005). Notably also, it was judged that 'the sector's poor remuneration system is responsible for wasting its own skills and experience' (Jackson and Jordan, 2005:84). The Arts Council at that time recommended a minimum day rate of £175 for self-employed artists. However, when set alongside the overall lack of financial resources for programmes in arts organisations, the unintended effect was to undermine artists' ability to charge more than the minimum, that is to say to ask for fees reflective of their actual expertise, overheads and individualised circumstances (Baines and Wheelock, 2003a; Jackson and Jordan, 2005:76).

Notes

⁶² Ixia (2012) showed that artists for whom the public art sphere of work is the primary income source had average incomes of £28,400 (or 33% *more than* the national average wage for than year), with 15% earning over £50,000 and 10% more than £75,000.

⁶³ In BOP's (2012) evaluation of impact of Creative Partnerships on artists' livelihoods, 42% of artists involved reported better security and financial stability and 31% increased turnover or income. For a significant number of respondents (44%), CP accounted for a

small minority of turnover/income (10% or less). However for a sizeable minority (12%), it accounted for 50% or more of annual turnover/income.

⁶⁴ TBR (2018a:12) concluded that only 20% of artists spent as much time on their art practice as they wanted, with those with less established practices the most affected and TBR (2018b:38;12) that 68% of artists had at least one additional job and 38% were reliant on a partner's income. As Q55 in the TBR survey asked specifically about receipt of Arts Council grants, my assumption is that this data is contained in 2018b:16) in the 'Other grants or agencies' category of 2%.

⁶⁵ According to CEBR (2017:7) *Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy* for Arts Council England, average full-time gross pay in creative, arts and entertainment activities (SIC90) in 2015 was £39,474. Over 2008-15, full-time earnings increased by 24 per cent and part-time by 11 per cent. <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/arts-council-news/economic-contribution-arts-and-culture-report-publ/> [Accessed on 20th August 2018]

⁶⁶ Brighton, Parry and Pearson (1985:35) concluded 42.2% of artists were also working full-time in art schools and 36.6% were dual career in this respect.

⁶⁷ TBR (2018a:12) concluded that only 20% of artists spent as much time on their art practice as they wanted, with those with less established practices the most affected and TBR (2018b:38) that 68% had at least one additional job. In relation to the study region of the North West, although not indicative of all artists in the North West, Ekosgen (2017) *Artists' Studios in Greater Manchester Study: report for Manchester City Council*, a survey in 2016 of 100 studio tenants, concluded 41% were full-time artists and 43% part-time artists with another paid role.

⁶⁸ By 2014, Redeye was membership organisation in receipt of regular Arts Council funding for providing services to photography and photographers.

⁶⁹ Although acknowledging the importance of the city's art schools, an interference which might be drawn from Dave Moutry's (Director of Culture at Manchester City Council) in 2018 ambition for the city to become a 'net importer of artists and a net exporter of art' is that attracting artists from, say, London to relocate to the city is of greater importance than sustaining those already there. <https://www.artspromotional.co.uk/news/dave-moutry-appointed-director-culture-manchester> [Accessed on 1st June 2018]

⁷⁰ 'CP has succeeded in developing a core of highly skilled, market-aware practitioners that are ready to engage with the education sector. However, there are a number of challenges associated with the model, including a series of unintended consequences such as wage inflation, and questions regarding sustainability' (BOP, 2012:32).

Chapter 6: Negotiated relationships

This chapter draws together the primary research and human development and cultural theory to establish negotiated relationships as the third core condition necessary for artists' sustained practices and livelihoods. Negotiated relationships are defined as jointly-conceived, and as customised arrangements in which each party gets enough of what they want in order to give up something without feeling resentful.

The first section theorises critical confluence as a juncture when artists become capable of maintaining art practices and livelihoods over a life cycle. The four phases of making progress that preface arrival at this position are first described, illustrated by the primary research and then contextualised within pertinent literature. Characteristics and benefits of achieving critical confluence are set out before demonstrating its three-point contribution to the assets or capitals that enhance artists' livelihood prospects over a life-cycle. The second section addresses definitions of artists' careers and commences with critique of perceptions and limitations of existing terminologies. It continues by demonstrating that the term 'experienced artists' is more relevant to describe those committed to making progress through consistent enquiry effected by conducting art practices over time. Through cross-reference to propositions arising from systems, cultural and sociological theories, the final section examines assertions that the arts operate as an ecology or ecosystem.

Discussion of differing perspectives on artists' position within arts environments and comparison with artists' realities and interrelationships precedes the chapter conclusion. This begins by summarising key tensions from prior sections which impact on artists' ability to pursue art practices and livelihoods over a life cycle. It finishes by identifying two key structural frictions impeding artists' ability to 'get ahead' over the long-term.

1. Critical confluence through making progress

This section cross-references Smith's and Honey *et al's* (1997) artists' development propositions and Csíkszentmihályi's (1996) and Banks' (2014) creativity theory with the primary research and as a development of De Mynn (2016), establishes a rationale for critical confluence. This is the juncture when artists have acquired certain competences and individualised infrastructures supportive of their individualised artistic ambitions and circumstances. This point's significance to artists' livelihood strategies is first shown by the primary research, contextualised within Jones and DeFillippi (1996), Matarasso (2017) and Alexander's (2007) hypotheses of creative industry and arts and employability competences and then compared with De Mynn's (2016) theory of critical junctures as a supportive structure for artist development. The relevance of critical confluence is confirmed by cross-reference to Leedy and Ormrod's (2001) educational theory, Hall's (2014) psychology perspective and Kennedy's (1998) for business development efficacy before demonstrating its relevance to Fagen (2004) and Hall's (2004) contemporary visual arts lens.

Chapter 4 demonstrated a core factor in sustaining artists' practices as the self-discovery arising from deep immersion in the processes of enquiry and experimentation. By providing individualised learning and development, this personal growth is vital to the continuum of artists' practices over time. The primary data provides further amplification by evidencing that artists develop and maintain their practices through the quadripartite, iterative processes of 'making progress' that enables them to 'get ahead' rather than just to 'get by' (Putnam, 2000). Within the durational processes of making progress through art practices, the phases of critical confluence are defined as searching, coalescence, choosing and relating.

- **Searching**

This phase encompasses artists' tentative and exploratory use and development of materials, methods of and approaches to working relevant to their specific

practices. As exemplified by comments from the research cohort, the processes of searching enable artists' acquisition of embedded artistic and behavioural habits that become their means of keeping themselves and their practices going.

... I really looked at what I was doing, I was using material, I was exploring, I was playing ... I was actually making work and I was on a journey with the work.

Mastering something as an artist and spending three hours a day on it for ten thousand days, or whatever they say it is, where you really know what you are doing. ... maintaining the craft of what I do.

When you spend a length of time doing anything, you stop having to think on your feet all the time and it starts to embed.

When 'searching for the way ahead' artists spend concerted time immersed in conducting and critiquing their art processes and professional approaches. Such durational immersion is a characteristic of artists whose art practices are sustainable because they are in 'continuum' (Smith, 2010:168). In addition, exploration of materials and artistic concepts within a context of enquiry through art practices fosters the traits of perseverance and stubborn determination essential for sustaining art practices over the longer-term (Honey *et al*, 1997:69,100).

- **Coalescence**

The second phase of 'making progress' is coalescence, which is to say when art practice is conducted to a sufficient degree of absorption and self-reflection for work to 'come together' and for artists' ideas to 'take off'.

... [a concentrated] period of time where a lot of sparks sort of went off.

I was almost exploding to paint, I was really itching to paint and ... I had all these ideas.

As described in Chapter 4, it is through conducting research-based processes of making work that artists acquire the necessary degrees of competence, autonomy and relatedness to generate and sustain self-determined practices over a life cycle.

In the coalescence phase of making progress deep learning and questioning of art processes create the grounds and individualised agency for making artistic ‘leaps’. This is exemplified by the comment by one artist that they have become ‘braver ... taking that leap into the unknown and risking ... things that maybe I wouldn’t have five years [ago]’. Outcomes of such absorption and reflection align with assertions that agency accrued in this way is a vital ingredient in artistic risk-taking and precursor to ‘flow’ (Csíkszentmihály, 1996:107). Banks (2014) agreed that significant developments only arise during an individual’s state of ‘being in the zone’ and Sennett (2008a) that deep immersion in creative processes over time is a prerequisite for acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding.

- **Choosing**

The third phase of making progress occurs when artists have worked within and through art processes to a sufficient depth for their practices to have ‘caught hold’. Instead of feeling the need to ‘grab at everything’ that comes their way, artists have become capable of choosing between differing options in terms of how best to ‘get on’. This phase is characterised by individualised prospecting and scoping of liaisons and avenues for pursuit. In parallel, this is the point when the way artists’ work appears as recognisably theirs, both to themselves and others. This gives artists and their collaborators confidence about developing relationships for mutual gain. Reflections by artists in the research cohort demonstrate that approaches to making progress are individualised, enabling artists to make positive decisions, both about general direction and detail of art practices.

[I make a plan] ... I draw myself in the middle: ‘This is me here’. And then I have all the stuff around that I am doing at present Then I extend it to where I want to be ... ‘this is where I’m heading’ So, in there, there’ll be milestones. ... long-term goals that I try and map my way to ... bit-by-bit, by making small incremental changes to my practice to get there.

I used to be based in London and then five years ago, I decided to move [here], because I just felt, economically, it was a lot more achievable to try and have time to be an artist... [and] where I can access good opportunities

[I am] editing how I am shown on the internet Cut[ting] some work out as I don't want to do that work anymore. I'd rather be seen purely for a different type of work.

As demonstrated in these comments, prospecting for, assessing and selecting appropriate relationships to pursue and defining those less suitable enables artists to become 'much more brave' about defining routes for, and initiating individualised approaches to, sustaining art practices over the longer term.

I do feel that the art world I am dealing with is getting smaller I am starting to feel a little bit of success ... to feel I can be ... saying 'I'm not going to do any promotion for a month or two, I'm going to settle and do my work'. I think that comes with, I suppose, maturity of a career and the ability to just trust that actually, you're not just disappearing off a map.

[I] try to get to places, to meet people [and] then build up relationships so they want to work with [me].

When I ... facilitate myself or bring other people [together] and curate, it seems to create the best opportunities for me and everyone else, and ... seems to ... feel like the beginning of some momentum.

During this phase artists develop communications iteratively and experimentally, making tentative and considered overtures to locate those to work with whom interests and connections are common, testing potential for value exchange and reciprocity before further pursuit. In a manner similar to wider-world marketing and communications behaviours, artists are engaged during this phase in 'warm' (rather than 'cold') calling and in developing targeted 'content marketing' to identify and scope compatibility with individuals as extended or new collaborators.⁷¹

When I was doing [a previous] project ... I was inviting people for studio visits including [a curator] from a [gallery]. I knew that it was some[one] that I wanted to work with, so I asked if there would ... be any possibility and then we developed a residency project over about eight months.

I'll contact past clients [for] a bit of an update or a conversation and sometimes that sparks, oh 'we need you for [something]' I'll also do ... something creative and post it online, because that kind of spurs people and

jogs their memory of you ... I try to show them something without trying to sell them something [as] ... people like that anyway, sometimes prefer it.

- **Relating**

The fourth phase of 'making progress' is denoted by acquisition of a deeper understanding of how to scope and maintain professional relationships supportive of an artist's individual needs and expectations and of capacity to identify and select between options. It arises out of artists' greater artistic surety, capability and credibility as achieved through their own efforts and their retention of a strong focus on future direction coupled with a nuanced understanding of the implicit and informal reciprocal and developmental mechanisms at play in their sphere of practice. The ensuing mutuality is characterised by receiving 'critical and financial acknowledgment' from others.

I have stayed in contact with some of the people and organisations I've worked well with Gradually I started to get invitations for work and the amount of applications I made got less.

[It's] people who've known me ... and gone onto other jobs ... through conversations [it will be] 'do you know anyone who can do this?' and I'm one of the names that will come up.

[I got] some funding from [gallery] and [commercial venue] towards the project. ... I had like [50% of the overall budget] – £15,000 –in match-funding.

Characteristic of this phase is emerging cooperative conditions which enable artists to continue to make progress specifically aligned to their artistic ambitions.

Duration is an essential factor, enabling scoping and practical testing of appropriate relationships to ensure these are mutual and will be effective over the longer term.

Do one project together and if that is successful, do another... it's not tied to a time period, it's for as long as we want to keep working together and it's more of a collaboration.

A curator [I worked with successfully] recommended me for a few things, bursaries and things like that – not that I've necessarily got them, but, you know, closed things, that only [invited artists] can apply for They're quite unique opportunities that only certain people have access to

[A] company [got in touch] I am in talks with them about representationmore of it is built on trust and he told me the basics ... and it seemed reasonable. And I thought that ... it's something ventured, I can trial this and see how it works. And I spoke to him on the phone and via email and I got a good vibe from him he seems like a good guy. And he's been recommended by other people that I trust.

During the prospecting phase, artists begin to 'know what is right' for their particular aspirations and circumstances. They grow in confidence, knowing they have proven capacity to generate external credibility through their own efforts and on their terms within their chosen sphere. Other people come to realise 'I'd like to work with that artist': they are 'invited in to discuss possibilities', 'get a tap on the shoulder', and are the subject of recommendation or referral.

Critical confluence is the consolidation point of individualised infrastructures which have been researched, formulated and tested by artists to form a supportive environment for achieving their particular ambitions for sustaining livelihoods through art practices over time. Artists gain awareness of the 'smaller world' in which they operate. They can draw up a personalised 'road map' which accounts for personal and professional lives. As illustrated by the research, amongst artists with full-time practices individualised methods are developed which enable artists to make progress though concentrating on pursuing art practices and self-determined, longer-term projects. By generating and engaging in negotiation processes, artists acquire capacity to develop and retain deeper and more productive relationships with like-minded people and institutions and achieve mutually-scoped and beneficial activities. The characteristic behaviours of artists who have achieved critical confluence are summarised below.

- **Being outward looking**

The research demonstrates that artists with developed and productive personalised infrastructures put dedicated time to identifying relevant avenues and people to pursue further.

I'm going to meet up with another artist ... who was one of the judges on [an] arts prize and is with [commercial gallery] in London. So it is useful to meet up with people who are sort of a bit further ahead of you on the sort of trail.

Identification of the most appropriate shows to submit to, the winning of significant prizes and taking and making opportunities to 'talk to people about your work' so they know about and come to 'like your style', is the preface to concentrated work to build relationships with the specific people and institutions whose interests are the most compatible with an artist's own.

- **Recognising 'promising avenues'**

Here, artists' are using their initiative to scope new venues while understanding that they have to 'take the ups and the downs'. Considered investment, including weighing up invitations and on occasion biding their time until their work is sufficiently developed to become of interest to particular people and future collaborators enables benefits to accrue over time

Don't chase it, just do your work, you are being watched. People are paying attention and they will come to you.

... I'd been talking to them about what I am working on and they expressed an interest in wanting to support a part of this work.

I wasn't going to do it [because there wasn't any money offered] and then at the last minute I just thought 'no, hang on a minute, how often does a gallery invite you to use their space?'

As the primary research exemplifies, within an overall plan of their own making, artists with critical confluence are recognising and responding appropriately to implicit and explicit signals denoting that 'people want to work with you'.

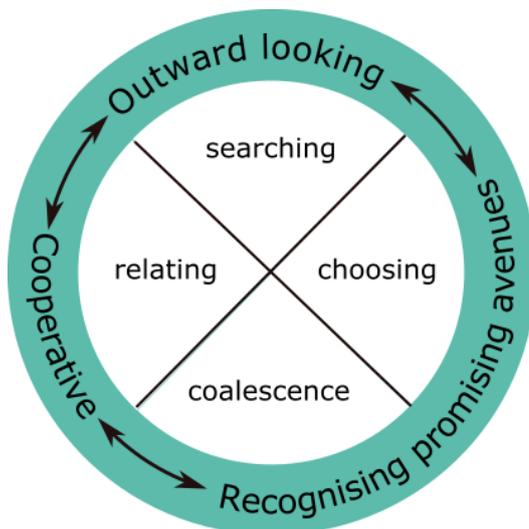
- **Cooperating**

Artists' deepened experience and awareness of their sector's workings is the basis for identifying appropriate alliances and collaborations, including drawing on third-party insight and introductions when developing new work.

[One person] has been really supportive to me... the first year I was here, she contacted me about a commission and [since] ... she's recommended me for quite a few things, and has just always been incredibly supportive ... [and] great with any applications ... she'll look through them and get back to me straight away.

I was introduced to [a curator] through [another artist]. I just told her what I was doing and she told me what she was doing, and then invited me to [do] this thing So I just thought, okay, well I've already got the work, it'll be a good opportunity to just meet some new artists and for people to see my work who wouldn't normally.

Figure 6(a) Critical confluence – the means to get ahead



Contribution to livelihoods

- **Enhanced competencies**

Individualised infrastructures fostered by artists that lead to critical confluence contribute to livelihood assets and prospects in three ways. Firstly, through their own efforts, artists gain competences to *know what to do* and *why, how, when, and*

with whom that are the means of 'getting ahead' rather than just 'getting by' in their chosen pursuits. This state aligns with Jones and DeFillippi's (1996) and Matarasso's (2017) identifications of core enabling competences for 21st Century workers and to the view that artists with well-developed, personalised infrastructures gain greater visibility in, and income from, art practices (Alexander, 2007). Identification of critical confluence's strategic role through enabling personalised frameworks is informed by De Mynn's prototype for artists' development (2016:19) and acknowledges that artists benefit most from creating individualised, supportive infrastructures (Alexander, 2007:194).

A inference from De Mynn is however that resourcing artists' development in the form of acquisition of skills, knowledge and resources and showcasing is dependent on supportive actions provided through arts organisations, which are in turn premised on, and tempered by, the institution's 'cognitive filter' (2016:8,20). An ambiguity however is that scope and extent of institutionally-led artist development programmes is premised on offerings that directly align with funders' objectives that are practically deliverable within an organisation's available resources. However as shown in Chapter 1, funding to smaller organisations is unreliable over the longer-term, subject to change due to policy shifts and government grant-in-aid levels. In addition and as discussed in Chapter 4, institutionally-framed programmes may be unable or unwilling to support artists' needs for individualised solutions and tailored support.

- **Self-validation**

The second contributor to livelihood prospects arising from critical confluence is self-validation, this being one of two facets of authentication processes. Internal or self-validation is considered here and external validation which broadly arises from induction and focuses on generalisability for the purposes of making predictions will be addressed in the chapter's final section. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines self-validation as 'the feeling of having recognised, confirmed, or established one's own worthiness or legitimacy'.⁷² Leedy and Ormrod (2001) concluded self-validation to be causal, a product of knowledge derived from individualised

realities. Hall (2014) asserted it as a critical development juncture for individuals (such as artists) who hold intrinsic beliefs and values. As demonstrated in the prior two chapters, high levels of uncertainty attached to artists' pursuit of artistic practices creates emotional and economic tensions. Self-validation provides amelioration of such anxieties in artists' lives by contributing to human well-being and resilience and thus assisting management of inherent intense, sometimes negative emotions. Encouraging individualised reflection and giving individuals permission to be their 'real self', self-validation is thus a vital constituent of 'forming relationships and thriving' (Hall, 2014).

Contexts enabling negotiation additionally contribute to artists' self-validation and negotiation's discursive, exploratory and durational processes are rooted in specific realities. Forming reciprocal relationships requires dealing with and acceptance of people 'how they are, warts and all', so that differing views are resolved and mutually-compatible courses of action arrived at. Negotiation processes produce desirable outcomes that are jointly-conceived: customised arrangements in which each party gets enough of what they want in order to give up something without feeling resentful (Kennedy, 1998). Respectively, negotiation processes in visual arts contexts confer 'trust in both directions' and generate the 'intelligent critical environment' supportive of artists' pursuit of art practices over a life cycle (Fagen, 2004:8; Wade, 2004:9). A fundamental aspect of negotiation is the effort made to identify relationships worthy of concerted investment: the 'people with a similar ideological belief and artistic ambition and ... understand[ing of] the co-dynamics between artistic practice and social need' (Cole, 2004:13). Thus, Fagen, Wade and Cole infer the co-validation implicit within negotiated relationships, fostering the trust and cooperation vital to further strengthening durational art practices. In this respect, negotiation *should be* a natural and expected part of the process of making and formalising visual arts agreements, with willingness to negotiate a signal and authenticator of the competence and seriousness of both parties.

- **Bridging social capital**

The third contributor to livelihood prospects from negotiated relationships is a further aspect of social capital. Chapter 4 demonstrated accrual of social capital when artists receive encouragement, acknowledgement and support from people who believe in their ability to achieve artistic ambitions, this amplified by individualised, trustworthy relationships and interpersonal interactions supportive of individualised livelihood frameworks. Chapter 5 showed that artists' situated practices contribute to social capital's structural, relational and cognitive aspects (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). The additional form of social capital accrued from critical confluence is bridging capital that enables individuals to 'get ahead' (Putnam, 2000). Whereas bonding social capital arises from interrelationships within specified groups or communities and enables people just to 'get by', bridging social capital operates heterogeneously and inclusively between and across social infrastructures and groups. As the new research demonstrates and aligned with Claridge (2018), during the making progress phases and subsequent critical confluence, artists operate horizontally rather than vertically, locating gaps and drawing on 'weak ties' in hierarchical structures. Through cooperation, earning and building trust and achieving mutuality, these laterally-formed liaisons are explored for synergy in nuanced ways for individual advantage and to enhance livelihood and art practice prospects over the longer term.

In addition and related to the 'circle of trust' defined in Chapter 3, bridging social capital is a vital ingredient in artists' creative sustainability, extending the 'radius of trust' supportive of individualised development strategies (Ogden, 2017).

Mechanisms enabling acquisition of bridging social capital are thus significant within ambitions to scope 'more inclusive structures and [longer-term] equitable developments' between and for groups that are diverse in nature.

2. Defining artists' careers

This section begins by summarising existing visual arts perceptions of artists' career stage terminologies including by Bowness (1989), TBR (2018b) and Sim (2017)

within analysis of their contemporary relevance. Key limitations are identified and cross-referenced to arts commentary by Turney (2012), Matarasso (2017) and Gardner (2016). It continues by exploring the suitability for wider adoption of Smith's (2010) reclassification of 'experienced' artist and as descriptor for artists with concerted commitment to making progress through art practices characterised by persistence over a life cycle.

The concept outlined in the prior section that artists' development is the process of making progress through conducting art practices and achieving personal and artistic aspirations aligns with Oxford Dictionary's definition of career as something offering 'opportunities for progress' through pursuit of 'an occupation undertaken for a significant period of a person's life'. Interpretation of career as 'promise of progress' is similarly premised on continuity *of some kind* rather than on formalised or recognisable advancement stages (Williams, 2014:51). Thus in neither instance is career development specifically aligned to age, practice duration or defined in hierarchical terms. In this latter respect, the patterns of artists align with definition of career development as combination of horizontal and vertical moves (Lewis, 2019). In contrast, Bowness' (1989) conception of 30 years ago perceived artists' careers as products of linear, age-related processes. Artists' development was then perceived as a four-stage process orchestrated not by artists but predominantly by the external realities of the visual arts, through which a small section of young artists achieved established artist status over time.

Premised on having located suitable and sufficient opportunity and resources to make and show work in the early years of art practice, artists arrive at the first development stage when recognition of their worth is peer-acknowledged. This arises from inclusion in particular exhibitions so that 'word gets around that there is a new artist worth looking at'. Achieving critical recognition is the second stage, occurring when artist and body of work receive positive, serious critical attention. Patronage by dealers and being collected forms the third. Bowness asserted it took about 25 years (or to middle age) for the truly original artist to get to the fourth stage of being 'established'. Once in this position, an artist's recognition was secured through consistent critical attention and purchase of work including for

significant public collections (Bowness, 1989:7). This conception is explored for contemporary relevance within the critique below of current terminology for career stage and associated parameters.

- **Emerging artist**

Terms used for those at the starting out point include 'young artist', 'new graduate', 'emerging' and 'early career'. TBR who made 'emerging/early career' a category for artists to self-select thus concluded this term encompassed 40% of artists, while noting emerging artists' ages ranged 19-39 years (2018b:49,14,21). Sim concluded the first few years post university to be a pivotal developmentally for emerging artists because a 'big pool' is trying to get to know how 'how things work' (2017:10-15). TBR aligned with Sim's conclusion that most artists have qualifications. In line with the population as a whole, 70% of 19-29 year old artists had taken art qualifications soon after secondary education, this in contrast with in older age groups where it was between 31-36% (2018a:14). Thus the supposition to be drawn of emerging artist is of a young person actively developing an artistic style by seeking and steadily gaining opportunities to make progress in their practices, acquiring sector-specific skills and capabilities as they go, including by joining groups or gaining similar peer support.

The underlying assumption is that such artists are willing and able to continue to live their former 'student lives' with associated lack of domestic security and assumed low artistic and living costs. Despite this 'early stage of uncertainty', these artists are nevertheless expected to be able to pursue continuous practices that will move them towards the next stage development stage (Throsby and Hollister, 2003:33). However, the longer-term implications are that women who dominate the industry must be prepared to 'sacrifice motherhood for the mobility necessary to build ... status and CVs' (McRobbie, 2002:11).

Entry criteria for openly-offered opportunities illustrates how career point remains equated with practice length. For example, only artists 'within five years of beginning their practice' are eligible for Jerwood/Film and Video Umbrella awards while eligibility for the Jerwood New Work Fund is premised on the concept of the

ten-year point (as discussed below) after which emerging artists are assumed to be mid-career. Artists' fellowships attached to Arnolfini in 2019 are open to those 'outside of higher education and practising as an artist for at least two years'.⁷³ Prospective employers of emerging artists thus generally expect them to be mobile, available to go wherever the work is and willing just to 'get by' financially by doing non-art related work as they may have done as students while working through degrees. TBR (2018b) confirmed emerging artists aged 19-29 earned 68% of average artists' incomes and Sim (2017) that artists' development is inhibited by lack of financial support or opportunity to make income from art practices including from direct grants. Assumed to have no family responsibilities, emerging artists are expected to be able to manage on low incomes with little of it arising from art practices, necessarily accepting of the economic challenges of portfolio working identified in the previous chapter.

However prior research identified the structural difficulties of aligning development with age. Turney (2012) viewed it as cause of unhealthy 'fetishisation' of youth and exploitative of their eagerness at the expense of those starting out as artists later in life. Artists starting out their late 20s and early 30s may already be considered 'too old or too experienced for many of the schemes that offer some support to emerging artists' (Gardner, 2016). Matarasso (2017) additionally questioned the premise, acknowledging artists who start out later in life – such as once dependent children are older – necessarily have 'less energy, strength or flexibility' than those in their youth. As the research also confirms, artists beyond 'new graduate' stage are typically less mobile and flexible about where and how they can undertake art practices and income levels required, this in part due to having 'responsibilities, dependents and ties' (Matarasso, 2017). In this respect, it is pertinent that 17% of individuals enrolled in arts and creative subjects are over 25 years old and classified as mature students (HESA, 2019).⁷⁴

Significantly also, TBR's (2018b) self-identification method positioned 30% of 40-49 year old and 23% of 50-59 year old artists as 'emerging'. However, lack of income when 'emerging' limits participation by the broader constituency of visual artists. As examples, by older artists starting out who may simultaneously be responsible or

need to earn enough from art practices for child and eldercare costs and by artists self-defining as disabled whom TBR concluded comprise half of all in that category. Overall however the baseline concerns are couched, artists' perception is that there are fewer opportunities for those starting out to support themselves (Dyer, 2019:5-12).

- **Mid-career artist**

Twenty years ago, Honey *et al* judged that after a twelve-month acclimation period post graduation, it took ten years for artists to get to mid-career, with knowledge of how to do so developed causally through the processes of making and financing art practices. Jones and DeFillippi (1996) similarly asserted that individuals needed a decade in an industry to gain the competencies to be emancipated, shapers of their own employment paths. Ostensibly at that point and as free agents, such individuals are able to make a living by 'scramble[ing], bee-like from opportunity to opportunity'. The mid-career term might be also applicable to Throsby and Hollister's career stage point when artists 'become established' and address two of Bowness' career stages: external validation attached to critical recognition and subsequent endorsement through representation and being collected. In terms of income, TBR concluded 30% of artists at 'mid-career' aged 40-59 years earned almost double from art practice than those 'emerging' (2018b:91,49). However, there are inherent conflicts in this 'middle stage'.

It is also the point where many people decide whether to have a family, and/or are immersed in family life at its most involved. Children are in school or going to college. Elderly parents may also need to be cared for. This is all on top of maintaining relationships with partners and self (Dyer, 2019:10).

The primary research illustrates a structural tension within the term mid-career and its linear connotations through the upward then downward trajectory of one artist studied. After selection for significant exhibitions in his late twenties, the artist won a string of notable art prizes and was successfully represented by a commercial gallery for three years. A significant piece of work was sold to a 'big' collector from a major exhibition with a group of well-established artists.

Someone said 'As soon as you sell a painting for five figures, that's it, you've made it'. But it doesn't. You [may] sell a painting for five figures But ... then [I went] back to selling work for 2 or 3 grand.

Although consistently acknowledged by credible mediators as making 'gallery-ready' work, this artist's experience aligns to Bowness' assertion that artists themselves have little power to affect artistic destinies over the longer term. For this artist, due to continued austerity their commercial gallery closed and a long-planned international solo exhibition cancelled. Furthermore, 84% of visual artists are self-representing (Etches 2011:12). As Chapter 5 demonstrated, such artists characteristically use open submission as a route to exhibiting amongst peers, with prizewinning a vital contributor to 'gaining critical recognition'. However over a quarter of all openly-offered opportunities offer no income (Jones, 2017:3). Thus, although such opportunities may 'offer enticing prospects for exposure', the financial terms fail to reflect the time artists need to make the work (Sim, 2017:13) and don't allow for other 'immovable commitments' within artists' personal and professional lives (Lynas, 2018).

Also significant to understanding barriers to making progress through art practice, female artists who are the majority in the visual arts constituency earn 26% less than their male counterparts (TBR, 2018b). As illustrated in the prior chapter, childbearing and subsequent responsibilities may result in art practices being 'nudged out of the way' for a period of a decade or more. Highlighting the disingenuity and awkwardness of mid-career as a term, Piper concluded it as only applicable retrospectively, denoting 'the period between an artist's "early work" and the "late work" made just before they pass away' (2019:20).

- **Established artist**

While Throsby and Hollister (2003) asserted that this established stage is premised on artists' personal assessment of achievement, Bowness concluded it took about 25 years (or to middle age) for the 'truly original artist' to reach the fourth stage of being 'established'. At this point, artists are recognised through consistent critical attention and purchase of work including for significant public collections. TBR

however concluded that established artists who make up 16% of the artists' constituency are over 50 years old. More significant however is their personal circumstances in that, whether single or in a relationship, 30% of these artists have no dependents. This may provide a structural explanation for why, when compared with all artists, established artists are able to spend the most time on art practice and earn the most from it (TBR 2018b:50).

Artists' assessments of career status

In examining artists with practice lengths of between ten and 30 years, the primary research concentrated on identifying supportive interventions for those with sustained practices beyond post graduation and 'emerging' periods. It demonstrates that artists' perceptions and achievement of status in their sphere of operation are not clear-cut and diverge from the above externally-formed assessments of artists' development stages. Thus current labels such as emerging, mid-career and established are restrictive or inappropriate.

... I feel like I've been around a long time in a lot of ways. But then I've made lots of small bits of work. So in *that* respect I don't like feel mid-career ... but in terms of doing bigger more ambitious projects I feel very emerging. ... I might use [mid-career] just because that's what people think, but I don't really think that myself I've got this in my mind, [that] what mid-career artist means [is] that you have this thing that you do and we know what it is.
Artist with ten years of practice

I'm not 'emerging'. I don't really like the term mid-career either because I don't feel like I've done enough. So, I would just say I'm an artist. *Artist with 15 years of practice*

I'm a stage two mid-career artist I looked at how long I'd been doing it [and at my CV]. I'm probably mid-life so I presume I'm mid-career. [Mid-career is] getting to a stage or taking opportunities or positions that allow me to be who I think I am. Whereas when you are younger, and emerging as an artist, you are probably doing lots of different things. *Artist with 17 years of practice*

I'm definitely not [established] – I don't know what [that] means. I would hope I am mid-career rather than end of career. *Artist with 12 years of practice*

For some artists in this study, the core consideration for identification and assessment of career point is economic.

Because of the money I need to be making ... I am priced out of that bracket of emerging artist, now ... and [of] those opportunities where you give everything up for very little *Artist with 17 years of practice*

I would say I'm at a slightly awkward mid-career artist, which means that you can't really sell the work at the price that a lot of people would be able to purchase it for, because you have had to put your prices up, but you're not really at the point where you are getting enough acknowledgement ... to able to put a realistically comfortable price on what you do either. *Artist with 15 years of practice*

Artists with developed practices are prone to 'market failure' because the inherent constraints noted by artists above to earning a viable income from art practices are unacknowledged, particularly within policy measures intended to support equality of opportunity (Sim, 2017; Lynas, 2018; Selwood (2001:1-2). Notably, the artists above have family responsibilities, with time spent on childcare a major consideration as regards the extent to which, and where, art practices are pursued.

Reclassification of artists' development

My conception of critical confluence as a significant development juncture when artists become self-determining and self-validating agrees with Smith (2010). She considered the need for reclassification of artists beyond the initial post-graduation period and who have developed resilient practices. Rather than the current definition of mid-career, the new research concurs with Smith's assertion that artists are 'experienced' when art practices and behaviours can demonstrate 'momentum' and 'duration'. Whether due to career or personal breaks, the practice lengths of experienced artists vary: Smith cites between seven and 30 years and my own research 11-30 years. A salient point is that these 'experienced' artists generate at least half their income from art practices (Smith, 2010:168). As Chapter 4 illustrates, earnings for 'experienced artists' in the sample pursuing full-time art practices are better than the average for all artists.

Reclassifying artists who have achieved the juncture I have defined as critical confluence who are continuing to make progress as experienced artists also aligns with Summerton's (1995) view that those with sustainable practices have achieved technical competence and artistic skill. They operate in holistic ways, understanding the symbiosis between their artistic endeavours and the 'business' of managing practices and careers. As exemplified by the new research, such artists recognise points of proactivity and purposeful intervention as they pursue art practices.

... for me to grow, I have to [work with] other people, I can't just do it on my own ... because I want to work on a scale that is way beyond what I [can] achieve [myself].

I invit[e] people for studio visits and [a curator] ... was one of those people. I knew that [the gallery] was somewhere that I wanted to work with [and] I've started to build a relationship with the ... curator at [another gallery, as I] would really like to try and do something in the future with them.

In agreement with Jones and DeFillippi's (1996) and Matarasso's (2017) definitions of 'knowingness' attributes, achieving critical confluence generates emancipated, capable artists who understand what they need to do to remain active and visible as artists, who remain open to advice and continuous development and learning from others. Tangentially to Bourdieu's (1993) concept that an individual's progress is inextricably linked to their degree of understanding of 'the rules of their game', a characteristic of experienced artists is that they know how to work such 'rules' *to their advantage*. The supportive conditions of critical confluence enable experienced artists to set the rules themselves (Orrù, 2019:60). Artists become assertive in identifying their own routes for art practices, engaged in making themselves 'ready for something [that] was going to happen [so that] when that ... came up' they could 'just do it' (Eno, 1993:1). As exemplified in behaviours of experienced artists in the primary research, a core trait is consistently striving to make progress through art practices, developing knowledge and skills, and scoping, identifying and securing the negotiated, productive relationships that contribute to sustainable art practices over the longer-term.

3. Arts ecologies

The section above identified from artists' perspectives how making progress through art practices and achievement of critical confluences fosters supportive environments for sustainable artists' practices. This section draws on Capra's (2004) systems theory, cultural analysis by Jackson and Jordan (2005), Markusen, Gadwa, Barbour and Beyers, (2011), Holden (2015), Robinson (2010) and on Holling's (2000) conservation theory to consider the proposition of, and intentions for, the arts as an ecology including positioning and relevance of artists' practices within this. The workings of the contemporary visual arts and how artists are accommodated in its structures are further explored from a sociology perspective (Becker, 2008) and through seminal analysis of markets for art specifically designed to inform art policy (Morris, McIntyre and Hargreaves, 2004).

A healthy arts ecology is dependent on a breadth of actors co-existing, cross-fertilising and co-developing activities for mutual benefit towards new interventions and innovations (Capra, 2004:2). Jackson and Jordan's strategic review proposed a broadly-based contemporary visual arts ecology where 'creative individuals, audiences, local and national government, public sector bodies, independent not-for-profit organisations, collectors and the commercial art market [could] interact in complex and dynamic ways'. Linear, hierarchical visual arts models of operation that encouraged duplication and competition were the cause of unhealthy structural fragmentation, this exacerbated by 'scarce financial resources', this even at a time of when arts funding was more plentiful (2005:7,22). A weakness of a vertically-framed ecology characteristic of the visual arts is its inability to cater for and capitalise on assets of messy, dynamic interrelationships and unorthodox career and content origination patterns (Holden, 2015:2). The strongest arts ecologies are inclusive and heterogeneous, capable of engaging a wide range of actors from individuals to institutions and policymakers to participants. Arts production and demand for arts and cultural offerings are only appropriately scoped and shaped by 'cultivating a view of [the ecology's] wholeness and interconnectedness [and of the] complex interdependencies' (Markusen, Gadwa, Barbour and Beyers, 2011:8).

- **Arts as ecosystem**

Responsive, developmental networks require the *freedom* (my addition and emphasis) 'to continually create or recreate themselves by transforming or replacing components' at the core of an ecology's structural and enabling conditions (Capra, 2004:27). Arts ecologies are more effective when operating as ecosystems in which purposeful, positive interconnections between the various elements, functions and behaviours foster self-supporting and self-regenerating systems and mutual benefit. Importantly, ecosystems avoid wastage because the by-product of one aspect's operation creates sustenance for another. The tension when shifting from hierarchically-enabled structures to those more flexible, self-determining and responsive necessarily is that the former needs to be willing to cede and redistribute power to the latter to achieve shared ambitions for vibrant and resilient communities of practice.

Holling's (2000) conservation perspective is pertinent to considering effective methodologies for the visual arts. His premise for inclusive, participatory and non-linear interactivity encompassing 'diversity of species, spatial patterns, and genetic attributes' is notably time-conditional, with strategies and activities 'measured in years, decades, and centuries'. However those already well-accommodated by more 'rational' structures of how development is organised and led are resistant to adoption of unfamiliar, more fluid and non-institutional approaches. As a result, the tendency amongst institutions 'not programmed to understand' is to ignore or seek to control the extent of complexity (McCarthy, Miller and Skidmore, 2004:11).

Despite the premise for more messy and dynamic infrastructures and similarly to De Mynn's 'cognitive filter' as discussed earlier, Holden's arts ecosystem conceptualisation employs an institutional lens (2015:30-31). Actors are categorised as 'guardians' (museums and institutions), 'platforms' (enablers of the gamut of cultural expositions) 'connectors' (intermediaries), and 'nomads' (artists and audiences). Theoretically, functional dynamism occurs when all elements are 'equal, interactive, co-dependent and adaptive to change and whole-system regeneration'. That is to say, they are all treated as 'stakeholders' in the ecosystem.

However, colliding the distinctive categories of artists and audiences into one faction carries the underlying assumption that these are similar in scope and in effect subsidiary to the main business of producing institutionally-driven products and programmes. The perception is that adaptability and flexibility rests predominantly with artists and audiences while the ecosystem's core function is to preserve existing institutional frameworks.

While Holden acknowledged endemic low levels of public interest in the arts and a fragile climate for prospective creative processes, his solution to a fecund, resilient ecosystem in effect undermines the equality across its elements he asserts as crucial to dynamism. In preference to either increasing support for artists or widening audience participation in the arts he argued instead for *a great number of* connectors. Such individuals are perceived as the preeminent resource in effecting greater creativity, best placed to mediate and orchestrate the spirited, complex, diverse, multi-faceted and finely-tuned localised support systems that art and cultural products require.

In this way, his preference for intermediaries as core enablers of artists' participation in a productive, diversified arts ecology is oppositional to my concept of critical confluence for artists' development and to recognition of the pivotal role played by experienced artists whose consistent making progress towards realising artistic ambitions generates the external manifestations 'guardian' arts institutions rely on to realise business objectives. Interests of institutions are placed first and foremost in his conclusion that a healthy ecology is dependent on intermediaries or connectors who put people and resources together and speak the language of bigger agencies and institutions (Holden, 2015:12,29). Such connectors hold great power by acting as gatekeepers:

[They manage the] infinite supply of creative goods available for possible production, [against the] limited space [for] being manufactured, promoted and consumed... in the arts world [where] the supply and demand relationship is not simple, [and] art goods are not something people even realise they would require (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009:15).

However, such gatekeeping in effect inhibits artists' achievement of self-validation specific to and amplified by their own realities that are the primary measure of rigor (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001). Holden's ecosystem model nonetheless might be perceived as fostering and enabling co-validation through strengthening the interface between artists and mediators. However, his strict delineations offer little room for the necessary 'ambiguous gates' and more responsive, fluid systems for effecting change (Barzilai-Nahon, 2009). Extrapolation from Leedy and Ormrod identifies the inherent conflict between endeavours that are individualised and relational and institutional verification processes. While the characteristics of the former are nuanced and foster particularity, the latter is externally-focused and measured and premised on producing standard models and generalisable outcomes for prediction purposes.

- **Subscription model**

The contemporary visual arts ecology is premised on an artificially-maintained 'subscription' process that filters and legitimises what is 'art' (Morris, Hargreaves and McIntyre, 2004) and conversely what are merely 'retail sales' (Thelwall, 2008).⁷⁵ Controlling supply of and markets for contemporary visual arts through the subscription model necessarily restricts artists' prospects of selling work. Although ostensibly an eco-system, the implicit control of an artist's public image by cooperating coterie of art professionals, such as academics, curators, dealers, critics, artists and particular types of collector limits both supply of artists and extent of livelihoods from art practice. Galleries assume a 'hunter and hunted' approach when locating suitable artists, in that 'Artists should be in the forest, so to speak, but not looking directly at the hunter's gun' (Ayling and Conroy, 2007). The subscription model discourages artists from being overt about economic matters and from selling to unknown buyers as this undermines the delicate balance within art systems they may come to rely on later. The new research agrees, illustrating how regardless of financial implications and whether looking to public or private sector, artists are encouraged to be complicit in the 'editing' of their behaviours and CVs to align with the subscription model's expectations and sensibilities.

I was getting told not to sell to anyone, [as an indicator] that you are at a stage where you should probably not sell.

One of the people that bought my work [had] phoned [a commercial gallery] because they wanted to buy a piece by [another artist] and they were told that they couldn't have it, [even though] the piece was available. And then ... a few months later, [the gallerist] phoned them back asking if they wanted to buy it, because it obviously hadn't sold to the 'right' person.

In such contexts, artists are implicitly and explicitly required to be passive players, playing little part in effecting changes in their status, prepared to wait unspecified periods of time and to appear unconcerned about economic matters. Thus the tension is that although artists are encouraged – for example by the subsidised professional development schemes mentioned previously – to improve their sectoral visibility by acquiring business acumen and doing targeted marketing, the subscription model requires converse behaviour.

There are particular difficulties for artists whose practices and livelihood prospects relate, as the subscription model does, to the differing ecologies of commercial and subsidised sectors. That is to say, they are faced with the choice of either 'liv[ing] *as an artist*' (my emphasis) regardless of any negative economic implications – for example arising from participation in the subscription system – or attempting to make a living from '*being an artist*' (my emphasis) through whatever art formats and relationships required (Solhjell, 2000).

- **Interdependence and cooperation**

The various art worlds for contemporary art practices were defined by Becker (1976) 'all those people and organisations whose activity is necessary to produce the kind of events and objects which that world characteristically produces'.

Chapter 5 confirms this diversity of distribution routes for artists' practice types, which range from work for commercial galleries and associated art markets to commissions for publicly-funded contemporary visual arts institutions for community-facing and other public interventions. Specialist work genres include documentary photography, public art and socially-engaged and participatory arts

that each have their distinctive validation and distribution mechanisms. While there are differing art arenas for artists' practices which coexist and each has their own nuances, art rules and aesthetic or philosophical prejudices and preferences, actors can and do move in and out, participating in one or several of them serially (Becker, 1976)

The inherent potential within this broad conception for interdependence and cooperation between artists and other actors in the contemporary visual arts process however infers rather than delivers an ecosystem. While through forging and sustaining productive and negotiated relationships and operating within known conventions premised on mutuality through cooperation through networks Becker (2008) perceived the artist as central, their ability to 'get on' is limited by the protectionism, nepotism and exclusion inherent in them (Oakley, 2006; Banks, 2007). Core flaws are the instrumentalisation of personal relationships within imperatives for network sociality and the endemic lack of durational, nuanced emotional support (Wittel, 2001). The expansiveness and inclusivity of art production – and thence artists' livelihood prospects – are constrained by the combination of institutional hierarchies premised on opacity and protectionism and over-reliance on gatekeeping mechanisms in which commercial and publicly-funded interests are intertwined (Becker, 1976; Morris *et al*, 2004).

- **Artists at the heart**

Albeit within considerations for achieving resilience in publicly-funded arts organisations, Robinson (2010) aligns with Becker by perceiving artists as holding a central position. Placing them 'at the heart of the arts ecology' within sustainable development in arts organisations requires explicit recognition of what artists are doing and how they evolve and innovate. Organisational adaptive resilience is a four-phased cyclical process defined as 'capacity to remain productive and true to core purpose and identity whilst absorbing disturbance and adapting with integrity in response to changing circumstances' (Robinson, 2010:14-20). Figure 6(b) relates his analysis of an adaptive development cycle for arts organisations with my concept of arriving at critical confluence through artists' processes.

Figure 6(b) Artists' resilience after Robinson (2010)

Adaptive resilience phases (Robinson)	Critical confluence phases (Jones)
Growth	Being outward looking
Release	Recognising promising avenues
Consolidation	Cooperating
Reorganisation	Cooperating; Being outward looking

Robinson's demarcations of a 'growth' period characterised by innovation and scoping of new demand align with the 'being outward looking' phase of critical confluence by contributing to scoping new ventures for mutual benefit. 'Release' which acknowledges that unexpected disturbances or external circumstances precipitate innovation is akin to artists' inquisitive exploration of 'promising avenues'. Robinson's 'consolidation' in which capacity and relationships are renewed as the basis for 'reorganisation' and stimulator of further innovation aligns with the artists' critical confluence phase of 'cooperating' with others and marks the cyclical process and return to 'being outward looking'. In relation to appropriate frameworks supportive of artists' development through art practices and contra to Holden, Robinson equated the arts ecology's health with presence of strong interrelationships between actors of differing scales, this to ensure sectoral capacity to persist in the face of unforeseen circumstances and external shocks.

Conclusion

This chapter has placed the 'whole artist' under study in prior chapters within the wider perspectives of participation and recognition in and interrelationships with arts development infrastructures and ecologies. The first section identified core capabilities acquired by artists through the processes of making progress within efforts to maintain and sustain art practices over the longer term that preface critical confluence. At this point, artists' individualised infrastructures are consolidated, forming a supportive environment to achieve ambitions for sustaining livelihoods through art practices over time. Self-validation arising from critical confluence including from acquisition of bridging social capital contributes to artists' development of individualised livelihood frameworks. In this respect, artists' ability to scope and negotiate terms of reference with commissioners and employers is a core supportive factor in sustaining livelihoods.

The second section discussed external perceptions of stages in, and key contributors to, artists' development within the reality of artists' experiences. The premise that artists' development can be organised and managed into the broad categories of emerging, mid-career and established artist and that artists predominantly pursue chronological and continuous trajectories is critiqued in relation to the primary research with cross-references to external evidence. By restricting volume and flow of artists and thus their relationships to institutions however, my conclusion is that such categorisations are predominantly convenient management tools for institutions. Terminology such as mid-career employed by institutions to categorise artists is 'often more about marketing' (Piper, 2019:24) Because such labels are ambiguous and not reflective of the specificity of the demographics of the artist constituency and realities of how contemporary artists pursue practices over a life-cycle, they act as strategic barriers to artists' achievement of individualised development strategies including pursuit of equitable relationships with institutions.

Labels such as 'emerging' fail to account for artists' personal and economic situations including the age when they start out as artists, the impact of family responsibilities and artists' interests in and restrictions on being mobile. The term 'mid-career' has become construed as banal: not attached to the exciting arena of 'discovering' the latest emerging artist nor 'providing valedictory opportunities to the well-established artist with a mature practice' (Dyer, 2019:8). As also evidenced in Chapters 4 and 5, artists' development trajectories may be disrupted by external factors such as the UK economic downturn and austerity period that forced them to make radical shifts in direction and purposive life choices.

Rather than the generalised term of mid-career, the new research agrees with Smith's identification of the more appropriate term of 'experienced artist'. Experienced artists are those who have acquired a nuanced understanding and capacity to negotiate their terms of reference and thus to work 'the rules of the game' *to their advantage*. Through individually-developed practices, experienced artists are not arbitrarily defined by particular age or length of practice but characterised by capacity to achieve momentum and continuity over a life cycle.

Structural barriers within external environments which by controlling both the mechanisms for supply and demand have the effect of limiting artists' ability to sustain art practices over a life cycle are identified in the third section. Critique of Holden and Morris *et al* confirms that over-dependence on gatekeeping inhibits the potential for mutuality and realisation of dynamic, productive and more expansively-framed ecosystems and associated new income strands supportive of artists' livelihoods through art practice. Böhm argues for contexts in which 'You as the artist set your own career trajectory which even though it will be interdependent from more conventional public recognition, is in principle more independent' (2019:62). Pertinent here is prior identification that reliance on traditional gallery-based cultures for validation limits recognition of the wider values attached to artists' work and thus fails to account for and authenticate artists' engagement with the diversity of contexts for contemporary practices (Ravetz and Wright, 2015). By locking in and isolating certain individuals within tightly-defined territories guarded by gatekeepers, norms are preserved and protected and inclusivity diminished through the bolstering of boundary fences and hierarchies which both Ravetz and Wright and Holden cite as barriers to dynamic systems and inclusivity. Within such norms, artists' livelihoods are inhibited by lack of scope to formulate negotiated, mutually-beneficial relationships within art practices in which both parties achieve enough of what they want to be satisfied.

Arts policies for a 'coherent, nationwide approach to the development of artistic talent' specifically for emerging and mid-career artists however have been predominantly delivered by funded arts organisations acting in a gatekeeping capacity (ACE, 2010a:28-29). Perhaps acknowledging the 'discouraging lack of career structure' (Jackson and Jordan, 2005), a specific aim of ACE's policy from 2015 was to 'support career progression for independent artists' (ACE, 2015:8. However, there is no evidence that clear, effective talent development routes were made available to artists (ACE, 2018a:28). Holden's institutional cognitive lens for the arts ecology aligns with Arts Council policy that in 2010 made resilience and economic viability a strategic goal – but only for funded institutions (ACE, 2010b).

Notably however, the increased levels of competition and associated lack of mutuality amongst institutions formed the greatest threat to achieving it (Woodley *et al*, 2018). Rather than concentration on survival of these funded institutions, ACE was advised instead to ‘support the growth of a flourishing *ecosystem* [original emphasis] of arts and culture’. By arguing against current structural wastage and making a case for conditions that foster cooperation and co-validation, this new research aligns with this analysis which concluded that creativity within arts and culture is dependent on ‘individual artists and creatives who are as much part of the ecosystem as institutions (Woodley *et al* 2018:11,5).

This chapter has drawn on the primary research and related evidence to theorise negotiated relationships as the third core condition for artists’ sustained practices and livelihoods over a life cycle. In addition to the tensions articulated within the chapter sections, two significant additional structural frictions are identified as impediments to artists’ ability to capitalise on their attributes and ‘get ahead’.

- **Too many artists?**

The economics perspective attributes the root cause of artists’ low incomes as oversupply (Towse, 1992); Throsby, 2007; Abbing, 2002). The outcome of liberal education policies, unregulated profession of ‘artist’ and restrictive art validation systems (including the subscription model described above) creates a ‘winner-takes-all’ market for contemporary visual arts in which it is possible for only small numbers of artists to do well, while the efforts and social impact of the majority are unaccounted for or wasted. However, as described in chapter 1, policy interventions can effect change in this respect. Past government regeneration schemes which encouraged growth of self-employment amongst artists and arts policies such as percent for art and Creative Partnerships and provide illustration of the view that wider definitions of what constitutes art and resulting diversified markets can capitalise on supply and thus extend work and livelihood prospects of artists and associated benefits to society (Abbing, 2012).

- **Ambiguous employment status**

Chapter 5 demonstrated the inherent inequality when contracts and terms are couched predominantly to employers' advantage (Taylor, 2017:42). This is exemplified by one artist's assessment of an openly-offered opportunity.

... awful briefs written like it's a contract for a CEO position and specifying pre-application, unpaid site visits and other set dates and outcomes and the size of your final piece and what the piece will tell the audience to think and the budget is £2,000.⁷⁶

Narrowly-defined arts infrastructures and associated validation mechanisms inhibit artists' scope to assert individualised needs and proactively negotiate mutually-beneficial arrangements with commissioners and employers supportive of their particular art practice development and livelihood requirements. In this respect, they conform with preferences within creative work environments for 'labile labour' Such workers must be prepared to fit themselves into and manage the emotional stresses and economic uncertainties of highly-competitive conditions, including incessant job seeking on poor economic terms. They are expected to be excited by serendipitous opportunities, exhibit readiness to improvise and 'rebrand' in response to external conditions and 'endure the scrutiny and arbitrary judgement of gatekeepers' (Morgan and Nelligan, 2015:68). As prior chapters showed, self-employment has become the norm for most visual artists. Ostensibly, individuals' ability to negotiate terms and conditions suited to their particular needs and social circumstances is a condition of this employment status.

However, closely-defined and hierarchical visual arts structures undermine the principle of artists' self-employment. Artists are in effect treated as 'workers', an employment category in which conditions are socially and economically disadvantageous (Taylor, 2017:42). Self-employment is thus a theoretical status for artists when they are presented with fixed budgets and terms that take no account of individualised conditions such as time needed for family responsibilities and costs such as childcare. Extrapolating from Chakraborty (2019), although artists are ostensibly a vital ingredient in the efficacious workings of the arts ecology, they are

effectively disempowered by their ambiguous employment position in that they are ‘treated transactionally, yet need to act *as if they belong*’ (my emphasis).

Notably in this respect, better regulation in the public sector could mitigate such undesirable impacts including predatory behaviour towards workers and high levels of unhealthy competition (Holden, 2015). Strategic shifts in ACE’s equality of opportunity and cultural diversity policy to extend beyond employees in funded institutions to encompass all aspects of the workforce could similarly significantly contribute to securing the right of freelance artists working in the public sector to negotiate their terms.

Notes

⁷¹ The five stages of a Prospecting marketing framework of Warm calling, Referrals, Content Marketing, Networking and Email marketing are identified in Teneo Results (2016) ‘Top 5 Methods of Prospecting’, <https://teneoreresults.com/blog/top-5-methods-of-prospecting/> [Accessed on 12th December 2018]

⁷² Definition is from the Merriam Webster Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/self-validation> [Accessed on 30th March 2019]

⁷³ Jerwood / Film and Video Umbrella Awards 2019 <https://www.jerwoodfvaawards.com/apply/faq>; Jerwood New Work Fund <https://jerwoodarts.org/opportunities/new-work-fund/>; Artist Brief City Fellows at Arnolfini Bristol <https://www.arnolfini.org.uk/programme/city-fellows/CityFellowsArtistBrief1.pdf> [Accessed on 24th April 2019]

⁷⁴ Average UK graduation age in all subjects is 22 years with 10% of mature students over 40 years of age (<https://theconversation.com/there-has-been-a-massive-drop-in-the-number-of-mature-students-studying-at-uk-universities-83180>). 17% of enrolled students in 2017/18 within creative arts and design subjects were aged 25 years or older <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he/characteristics> [Accessed on 12th March.2019].

⁷⁵ Mechanisms for, and barriers to, accessing a hitherto untapped £354.5m market from sales within the traditional gallery-based art world and a further £515.5m from work sold through ‘non-legitimised’ channels including art fairs, shops and studios were identified by Morris, G. Hargreaves, J., and McIntyre, A. (2004) *Taste Buds: How to cultivate the art market. Executive Summary*. London: Arts Council England

⁷⁶ Anonymised from a response posted on social media by an artist to a public announcement of an opportunity for artists: ‘New mural will celebrate sustainability.’ <https://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/17543626.new-mural-will-celebrate-sustainability/> [Accessed on 2nd April 2019]

Chapter 7: Reframing interdependencies

This conclusion to the thesis synthesises insight from the primary research with my past industry experience to create new knowledge about productive interrelationships between artists and arts policy. In the first and second sections, the contexts for artists' practices and livelihoods are analysed by addressing the respective perspectives of arts policy and artists and providing an explanation of the environment for, and characteristics of, my new categorisation of emancipated artists. This is followed by identification of the inherent ambiguities and structural frictions limiting artists' ability to progress art practices over a life-cycle. After locating the new research within cultural labour theory, a dual arts policy conundrum is then identified in relation to artists' ability to construct and maintain livelihoods through art practices over time.

In order to understand their structural impact, the third section applies the conditions identified by the primary research as the most conducive for artists' development to two bold, strategic propositions and methodologies for future supportive arts policy interventions. These proposals are further contextualised within theory for innovative contemporary political and economic ideas, reforms and funding sources for people-centred developments designed to enhance social well-being and reduce inequality which are offered as opportunities for future research. The chapter ends by identifying limitations of the research study.

1. Conditions for artists – arts policy perspective

This section summarises the conditions created for artists by visual arts policy over the last 30 years. It is pertinent to start by considering the UK government's basic premise for and expectations of the Arts Council (ACE) as the designated arts enabling agency.⁷⁷ The core tensions of the model are that policies and funding interventions have to perform across four areas. Although one of these roles is to provide state patronage of the fine arts and be a pump primer of new developments in the sphere, another is to actively intervene or interfere in

commercial art markets to counter unacceptable influences on public taste. At the same time, another facet of its obligations is to make sense of and respond on the public's behalf to emerging and evolving popular culture (Williams, 1989:143). Pearson (1982) identified three core ambiguities in ACE's position in this respect. Firstly, the conflict between artists' pursuit of art practice as essential personal research and development (as 'art for art's sake') and the duty to increase public access to the arts. Secondly, the friction within arts policymaking when addressing the variety of tastes, interests and experiences of society's differing and discrete sections and classes. Thirdly, the confusion by conflation in arts policies of the aesthetic, the political and the administrative.

These inherent conflicts and ambiguities have been apparent in ACE's workings as regard support for artists over the period studied. Although ACE is a quango in receipt of government funds, application of its underlying 'arm's length' principle and thus its independence from political persuasion was put under strain during the Labour Government 1997-2010 (Hewison, 2014:20-22, 222). It is pertinent to raise here the arm's length principle on which ACE is funded and in which trust is a core feature because neither party controls the other. In 2005 and in 'exchange' for the Labour government's increased arts funding to ACE, this 'arm' became unacceptably shortened (Frayling, 2005:16). A similar curtailed version of trust premised on mutuality was in turn applied by ACE to arrangements with funded organisations and also guided the funding body's expectations of impacts from direct support to artists.

- **Arts policy long game**

Chapter 1 demonstrates that over the last 30 years regardless of government of the time, arts policies have pursued long-term ambitions which have been closely attuned to political imperatives. These policies have had the effect of making the economic conditions for artists more precarious. ACE's underlying premise for enabling public access to contemporary visual arts has been first to secure the physical infrastructure of arts buildings and then to make funded arts organisations financially and administratively sound. Glory of the Garden 1985-1995 which

strategically enhanced exhibition programmes in regional municipal art galleries and museums marked commencement of this arts policy long game. As Arts Council of England policy documents showed, impact and value was measured in part through gallery jobs created (ACE, 1998/99). National Lottery (NL) capital funding from 1994 continued the strategy for infrastructural development through urban regeneration and job creation. By 2005 NL funding had refurbished almost a third of existing visual arts organisations and resourced additional galleries such as in the North West FACT in Liverpool and the (then) Chinese Arts Centre in Manchester, these both new visual arts charities operating independently from existing organisations and local authority provisions.

In parallel to delivering arts policy through an enhanced gallery infrastructure, NL funding for percent for art policies from 1994 further responded to the government's urban renewal agenda for areas in post-industrial decline, enabling a substantial programme of visual arts development independent of galleries and museums. A cohort of arts-funded public art agencies and specialist local authority posts emerged. ACE's pursuit of both public art and capital lottery developments is premised on the structural and economic theory of 'trickle down' in which public-private finance enables infrastructural development and creates attractive new environments. In such circumstances, ACE measures impact quantitatively in two main areas. Firstly, by market reach through audience numbers to arts buildings and visitor spending contributing to an organisation's economic viability and demonstrating levels of public participation. Secondly, by the number of jobs created by the arts regardless of their quality in terms of pay and conditions and economic sustainability.

- **Precarious employment**

The base flaw in the 'trickle down' economy-driven model as pursued by arts policy is poor job quality. Although jobs are created, the appropriateness and detail of remuneration levels, pay differentials and sustainability are of minor importance. In such circumstances, regulation of any kind is an impediment to achieving economic ambitions (McDermott, 2018). This development conceptualisation thus suffers

from 'optimism bias' through the tendency to conflate economic boom with enhanced social benefit, while failing to improve the economic position of those at the bottom of the food chain (McInroy, 2016: 11). As demonstrated in prior chapters, while self-employed status is inherently precarious, economic imperatives attached to the funded arts since the '90s have successively increased numbers of freelance or self-employed artists to a level substantially higher than the creative industries as a whole (CCS, 2012). ACE policies over the last twenty years in particular were intended to improve job security and provision for old age for employees in funded arts organisations. However, as the freelance-heavy artist 'workforce' is excluded from such employee benefits and provisions it remains both economically and emotionally vulnerable over the short and longer term. In broad terms when 1985 and 2018 data is compared, artists' incomes from art practices have barely improved and still remain lower than national comparator incomes.

To extrapolate from McDermott, in a trickle-down economy the 'human thriving' of most individuals is of marginal concern. Thus, as is the case with artists, the status quo of wealth inequality is reinforced, albeit in the optimistic hope that benefit *of some kind* might filter down to those lower in the food chain to compensate for the value they contribute. However, prioritisation of the economically-viable by arts policy is at the expense of artistic autonomy and freedom of expression.

There is no doubt that the desire to legitimise the 'arts' by describing it in economic terms was based on good intentions – essentially there was a desire to provide the same status to the arts sector as that afforded other sectors of society. However using a form of rhetoric to provide better lines of communication to the rest of the society, is one thing; when this language and policy become the entire *raison d'être* then the discourse itself becomes self-defeating. Adopting the language and ideology of a market-driven approach presents a very real danger that arts activity should only be pursued for market-driven objectives (Caust, 2003:51-63).

ACE's optimism bias in policymaking is characterised by the iterative development over the last 30 years of differing strands for manifesting contemporary visual arts, with much of this only made possible by arts lottery funds (Culturehive: 2013). On the one hand, ACE's strategy to maximise this resource was to maintain a pivotal role for art galleries in upholding the principle of 'art for art's sake' by substantially

improving and extending the building-based infrastructure. Simultaneously, ACE actively intervened in and influenced the scope and nature of visual art presented in the 'new', critically-uncharted arena of the public realm (Adams, 1996). In both of these two policy strands, political imperatives for job creation were uppermost. However while specialist agency and local authority animation of public art created jobs for many artists (Selwood, 1995), contemporary visual arts gallery development was quantified by professional visual arts jobs created for those *other than artists*. Thus whereas by 1993 public art provided main income for a fifth of artists, success of the 1985-95 Glory of the Garden policy was cited as creation of 50 regional gallery posts (ACoE, 1998/99). By 2005-06 ACE regularly funded 222 visual arts organisations of differing scales across the divergent spheres of galleries, public art and education, community and healthcare (Frayling, 2007). Lottery and the Labour government's substantial increase in funding in combination significantly bolstered the visual arts sector's infrastructure, increasing the number of jobs by 40% (O'Brien, 1997; CCS, 2018).⁷⁸

Within ACE's economics-led ambitions, artists' contributions to delivering policy until 2006 fell into three categories. Firstly and supportive of artists' artistic autonomy, artists were valued as producers of unique works for public galleries and associated traditional and new emerging art markets. Secondly, artists were vital contributors to public and commercial urban regeneration which concurrently gave scope for artists' research and development, new skills acquisition and scaling-up art practices. Lastly as community facilitators and educators, artists delivered social well-being and enhanced school art education (Jackson and Jordan, 2005; ACE, 2006b).

As Chapter 1 demonstrates, the latter two types have consistently supported artists' livelihoods through higher pay levels, in that Creative Partnerships mandated industry pay standards across its delivery agencies and public art commissioners were prepared to pay more for experienced artists. In contrast, artists' exhibition fees (EPR) in public galleries were never reflective of the economic value of artists' contributions and galleries abandoned the principle when funding bodies ceased enforcement. By 2005, 50% of visual arts organisations

stated they couldn't afford to pay artists (Lindley and Galloway, 2005), an omission which might have been strategically addressed within the period of ACE's 2006-2016 policy. However by not explicitly tackling this, ACE was complicit in perpetuating the assumption that 'the fruits of the artist's labour can be enjoyed for free' (Glinkowski, 2010:60).

The multi-stranded delivery of visual arts policy gives an appearance of acknowledging Brighton *et al's* 'wealth of differences' within artists and art practices (1985). However, artists consistently remained socially and economically undervalued during a period of purposeful visual arts infrastructure expansion and in the 'good' years of funding 1997-2010, this reflective of the optimism bias in ACE's policymaking. Managing an expanded infrastructure with three divergent strands of work compounded the ambiguities in ACE's remit that Pearson had identified over two decades prior. While the 'newer' form of public art diversified contemporary visual arts audiences and enhanced artists' income sources, it remained a critical 'poor relation' to traditional gallery-based practices which arbitrate the public's taste and act as validators of the quality of art and artists' practices. However, most visual arts galleries were over-reliant on public funding and lacked levels of funds required for programming and professionalised human resources (Lindley and Galloway, 2005). Full implications of the visual arts infrastructure's dependency on regular funding became apparent after 2008 and in the austerity period when ACE cut regular funding to visual arts organisations by 35% (a-n, 2011). Sustainability of capital lottery-funded arts buildings and staff posts also took precedent over funding to smaller organisations at the front-line of artists' practices and the volume of artists benefitting from ACE's direct grants declined (Louise, 2011a, b).

In short, the three-stranded contemporary visual arts sphere built over the 20 years prior which catered for greater numbers of artists - and in the case of public art and Creative Partnerships paid them at appropriate rates - was superseded by arrangements which prioritised galleries. ACE's 2011-15 visual policy put the responsibility for developing artists' practices to galleries, with a funding settlement caveat that these should 'do more' for artists over and above the exhibitors (a-n,

2011). However over the policy period studied, artists' remuneration from galleries has neither been reflective of this policy ambition nor of artists' contributions and their implicit sectoral value. Such arts policy shifts illustrate Peter Hewitt's identification (in Chapter 1) of the base flaw within ACE where artists' practices and livelihoods are concerned, that artists 'always get lost' in the funding reality. This convenient amnesia as regards artists' poor economic status exemplifies arts policy's default position, in that looking after artists is never considered mission-critical.

2. Conditions for artists – artists' perspective

This section synthesises the benefits to artists of achieving the nuanced conditions most conducive to pursuit of practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle drawn from Chapters 3-6. The primary research which addresses the 'whole' artist and encompasses their upbringing and personal and professional lives confirms that although artists take their financial responsibilities seriously and making a living from art practices is an important consideration, artistic and life decisions aren't predominantly driven by economic concerns.

In this respect, the new research reconfirms Redcliffe Maud's assessment forty years ago. The distinctive feature of artists' practices is that their motivations remain first-and-foremost premised on inner drive and expression of intrinsically-held values and beliefs, this fostered and enabled through the self-development processes within persistent art practices. In short, unlike the creative industries where for example design, films and video games are not produced unless there is a commissioning client or finance already in place, to be artists they *have to* be engaged in the making of work, with art processes continuing regardless of any financial considerations. However, achieving productive relationships supportive of artists' core values premised on mutuality is dependent on artists' gaining suitable opportunity for artistic co-development and animation over a life-cycle.

- **Motile artists**

The primary research in Chapters 4-6 exposes the nuances and distinctive aspects of artists' modus operandi. By doing so, the research provides a new understanding of the three core conditions by which arts policy might support *many* artists' practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle. The first condition of 'creative space' provides artists with the confidence to act. It amplifies artists' intrinsically-held values and beliefs, supports their acquisition of skills and knowledge and critical capacities that foster self-determination, encompasses the nuanced supportive infrastructure of like-minded people including close family members, and acknowledges the inherently vocational nature of art practices. The second condition of 'situated practices' secures artists' sense of belonging through individualised supportive circumstances which by enabling adaptive practices, aid their sustainability over a life-cycle within changing external contexts. The third condition of 'negotiated relationships' enables co-validation, this through artists' iterative, productive relationships with like-minded people and institutions which enable them to consolidate their position and to 'get ahead' rather than just 'get by' (Putman, 2000).

Figure 7 Characteristics of motile artists



My new term of 'motile' artists provides a conceptualisation for a type of artist more capable of surviving and thriving over time within certain productive and enabling conditions. My definition of 'motile' artists is those who have volition or the ability to move spontaneously and independently and, importantly, to do this *in a way strongly reflective of and finely tuned to* their specific artistic aspirations and personal needs. Artists who pursue a consistent quest for artistic excellence and effort over time within specific social conditions demonstrate 'motility'.

In contrast, although giving the appearance of interdependence, the conditions for artists implicitly or explicitly provided by policy interventions and through arts organisations maintain a strict delineation between the development ambitions of arts organisations as a whole and the scope and nature of art opportunities offered to artists. Such assumptions broadly perceive artists as a service industry akin to the creative industries where the preference is for individuals characterised as acquiescent, reactive and needy (Morgan and Nelligan, 2015:68). The new research demonstrates that motile artists are less likely to fall victim to systems they have no hand in shaping, including to work environments implicitly and explicitly exploitative of their emotional and economic vulnerabilities. Artists who have achieved motility are thus more capable of sustaining art practices and livelihoods over a life cycle. The consequences of the conditions enabling motility are summarised below.

- **Confidence to act through vocational art practices**

The tripartite concept of 'creative space' explained in Chapter 4 gives artists the confidence to act over a life-cycle and to manage external shocks and knocks. As a framework for understanding how artists develop what Glinkowski (2010) affirmed as 'sense of self', 'creative space' is applicable to *many* artists and the wide range of art practices types and distribution methods because artists' intrinsic motivations, values and beliefs are fully accounted for as strengths. Albeit not necessarily in the linear time-scale of typified notions of career development, artists who make purposeful choices to do work they are most suited to and who consistently devote time and energy levels to it are pursuing art practices as a vocational mission

reflective of the purpose they attribute to their lives. A critical determinant of artists' ability to take meaningful action is gaining the sense they are in charge of their own life circumstances. Pursuit of their particular goals is premised on having confidence that these are realisable.

As a core condition for artists' practices, 'creative space' amplifies and consolidates intrinsically-held drive and understands artists' essential consistent application of research-based art processes, including the acquisition of skills and tacit knowledge pertinent to artists' specific type of work and community of practice. Artists garner strength from their personalised circles of like-minded, trustworthy people including family members; the core group of people who consistently provide personal emotional support and professional encouragement including critical artistic support. The self-efficacy inherent in 'creative space' fosters artists' endeavours to achieve personally-defined goals. With the associated accrual of positive emotional health, artists are imbued with capacity and resolve to take action over time and to weather changing and uncertain circumstances. The primary research demonstrates that holding 'creative space' is the basis for artists' acquisition of the confidence to act. This fosters the capacity to sustain art practices over the longer-term through achieving personally-set goals, being in proximity to people realising similar life goals and being encouraged forward by those including close family members who believe in and care deeply about them (Bandura, 1997). Acting as a bedrock against society's material and emotional precarities, 'creative space' is supportive of human dignity (Nussbaum, 2011). It is the kernel for the positive identity and emotional well-being artists require to identify and pursue mutually-beneficial relationships with those supportive of their particular artistic ambitions.

- **Locative art practices and sense of belonging**

The second core condition conducive for artists' practices and livelihoods is the concept arising from the new research of 'situated practices' which provide artists with the sense of belonging essential to sustaining art practices over a life-cycle. 'Situated practices' is a descriptor of the behaviours of artists as they pursue art

practices, make commitments to and are influenced by, where they are located and the people to whom they closely relate. Regardless of where and how the various products of art practices are disseminated, artists' individualised strategies that account for the particularities of artistic and family contexts are shown by the new research to be better adapted to and resilient in the face of unwelcome changes in the external circumstances, including to those related to political and arts policy changes. Aligned with the sense of belonging accrued from situated practices is the vital ingredient of human well-being, this arising directly from people's intimate involvement in their environment and feeling they are valued in, and integral to, it (Hagerty *et al*, 1992; Speight, 2015; Landau, 2018). In combination, the psychological, social, spiritual and physical benefits of 'belonging' contribute to formulation of productive environments for artists that are simultaneously supportive of achieving heightened emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses from those with whom they engage and contribute positively to livelihood prospects. In this way artists' pursuit of personalised practices, which are amplified socially and economically because of where artists are and the people they relate to, aligns with broader concepts of placemaking and contributes to acquisition of livelihood assets, the implications of both of which are discussed later.

- **Co-validation through negotiated relationships**

Artists 'get ahead' artistically and economically once they achieve the juncture of critical confluence. By making progress through developing and maintaining art practices over time within specific personal and professional contexts, artists consolidate individualised infrastructures to form supportive environments for achieving their particular ambitions. At this juncture, artists are capable of activating individualised plans that account for their specific needs and aspirations and are supportive of personal and professional lives. In this way, artists arrive at the self-validation that is a vital aspect of sustaining art practices over a life-cycle.

However, it is engagement through deeper, productive relationships which are negotiated with like-minded people and institutions that generate the additional ingredient of co-validation which is essential to long-term sustainability of art

practices. Thus negotiated relationships in which activities are scoped and co-developed for mutual benefit forms one of the three core conditions for artists' practices and livelihoods. Customised, carefully-tuned arrangements bounded by mutual trust and appreciation are a significant factor within artists' ability to sustain durational art practices. These signal and authenticate the competence and seriousness of both parties, including willingness to negotiate and arrive at co-validation, and characterises the point at which an artist becomes acknowledged as 'experienced'. In this respect, the term 'experienced artist' (Smith, 2010) is more suitable than those such as emerging/early career, mid-career and established artist that are typically and conveniently applied by others to artists' development in place of the formalised job and career stages found in other professions.

Experienced artists for whom practice length is not the qualifier are those who have achieved momentum through persistent pursuit of recognisable art practices over time (Smith 2010). Those with 'professional-level expertise' derived through consistent, developmental and effortful progression through making also applies (Bennett, 2013).

An additional characteristic emerging from the primary research is that such artists have the competence to actively scope and negotiate specific terms of reference with commissioners for mutual gain. In this way, artists make a transition from knowing the implicit 'rules of the game' and hope of being accepted and validated by the transactional gatekeeping mechanisms that are the tendency within contemporary visual arts. Extrapolating further from Orrù (2019), experienced artists are those who have achieved the state of motility or volition and have ability to, and conditions for, working the existing art rules *to their own advantage*, of setting their own agenda and of 'making their own luck' (Eno, 1996).

- **Artists' livelihood assets**

Placing my assertion of three core conditions supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods over the life-cycle against Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones' (2002) sociological framework for aiding progression of individuals on low incomes provides demonstration of how these conditions enhance artists' livelihoods prospects. This

framework is pertinent for artists whose employment status and associated financial insecurity makes them exposed and vulnerable to external trends and shocks. As set out in the Introduction, a livelihood framework comprises a number of interrelated assets or capitals. Human capital includes both quantitative aspects such as a person's time to engage in income generation, and qualitative aspects like skills and education. Social capitals arise from relationships that are trust-based and reciprocal, an individual's membership of pertinent groups and their access to wider institutions, this albeit with any associated limitations due to human characteristics and access preferences. Political capital is a person's access to decision-making processes. As Chapter 1 describes, artists generally lack this 'gatekeeper asset' that has the effect of permitting or preventing accumulation of other assets (Booth *et al*, 1998:79). Physical capital comprises a person's degree of access to infrastructure including transport, communications and in the case of artists, to production equipment and facilities assistive of income generation. The final two capitals within the livelihood framework are financial - incorporating savings, pensions and social benefits such as sick and maternity pay - and natural capital through housing and access to natural and common-pool resources (Rakodi and Lloyd-Jones 2002:8).

The trio of conditions identified by the new research is conducive for artists' practices and supportive of the development of individualised livelihood frameworks. By strengthening artists' creative capabilities and skills within sympathetic environments and amplifying contexts and associated collaborations for durational practices, the conditions in combination mitigate the tensions and ambiguities inherent in contemporary visual arts practices. Artists' derive human and social capital through engagement in 'creative space'. This provides encouragement, acknowledgement and support from a carefully-forged group including family members who believe in an artist's ability to achieve artistic ambitions, and also amplifies the personalised, trustworthy professional relationships and interactions supportive of individualised artistic ambitions and livelihoods. Emotional well-being as human capital accrues from artists' creative

experimentation through cyclical, reflective deep learning and self-development processes.

The enhanced human and social capital combine to empower artists to pursue and sustain practices in a manner and at levels satisfying of their needs, contextualised within personalised definitions of fruitful artistic development. Persistent pursuit of art processes bolsters intrinsic self-motivation and strengthens the convictions and values that make artists 'who they are', thus helping to ameliorate externally-framed tensions. My new interpretation of artists' creative capital arising from 'creative space' is premised on their innate capacity for risk, experimentation and potential for failure, the outcome of this being heightened ability to imagine and effect new artistically-framed possibilities. Thus artists' creative capital is a unique product of circumstances that heighten and amplify the quality of individual human creative processes.

Artists' assets are further enhanced through 'situated practices' in which significant emotional and artistic well-being derives from belonging in a place over time. Social capital arises from being engaged with and 'cared about' by others, including through co-development of artistic ventures directly sympathetic to individualised livelihood frameworks. Fostering trust and familiarity within an environment delivers three dimensions of social capital. Structural social capital accrues from connection with like-minded people within an artist's personalised network whether physical or virtual in scope and nature. Co-validation accrued from consistent individualised relationships and repeated interactions over time framed within the artists' particular context in turn generates access to relational capital and resources. Artists gain cognitive social capital when meanings, interpretations and narratives are shared within self-generated trust-based and durational interactions and are the basis for generating common goals and aspirations (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998)

Additional social capital occurs from artists' pursuance of 'negotiated relationships' which are co-validating. Bridging social capital that enables individuals to 'get ahead' accrues from artists' arrival at the point of 'critical confluence', a development of De Mynn's theory (2016:19). This is in contrast to bonding social

capital arising from interrelationships within closely-specified groups or communities – such as the social/work networks characterised by the creative industries that just enable people to ‘get by’. Bridging capital is broadly-based, heterogeneous and inclusive in extending artists’ social infrastructures. It is valuable to individuals such as artists who are minor actors in vertical or hierarchical structures because it utilises gaps and finds room to manoeuvre and thus has the potential to subvert entrenched and exclusive existing patterns (Claridge, 2018).

Through cooperation, earning and building trust and fostering mutuality, ‘negotiated relationships’ enable artists to explore laterally-formed liaisons for synergy in nuanced ways for individual advantage, enhancing their livelihood and art practice prospects over the longer term. In addition, bridging social capital is supportive of artists’ individualised development strategies because it amplifies their existing closely-defined circle of trust into an extended ‘radius of trust’ (Ogden, 2017). Notably, mechanisms that foster acquisition of bridging social capital for artists are also relevant to arts policy ambitions to identify inclusive arts infrastructures supportive of longer-term equitable relations across diverse sections of society (ACE, 2018:11-14).

- **Structural frictions**

In summary, this new research study characterises arts policy over the last 30 years as a long-game driven as much by political imperatives as by arts ambitions, premised on the economic principle of trickle-down and associated employment precarity for artists. Since 2003, ACE has taken the role of investor in arts businesses, this rather than provider of subsidy to ensure ‘art for art’s sake’ (ACE, 2003:5). ACE-funding to arts organisations has been premised on achieving ‘sustainable business models’ and job creation (ACE, 2006d). Aligned with government imperatives for the funded arts to demonstrate greater self-sufficiency, an ACE performance indicator for NPOs for 2011-15 was increased income-generation including from philanthropic sources. Such a principle remains in place in the draft policy for 2020-30 (ACE, 2018b:17).

Where ACE has effected direct interventions, such as YOTA and ATSM/AI, designed to be supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods over the longer-term, these operated as discrete stand-alone initiatives rather than embedded, long-term programmes. Configured for management ease, they were actioned as supplementary activities to ACE's main business of enhancing the physical infrastructures for and human resources in arts organisations. 'Talent development' including support for the artistic development of individual artists became one of ACE's five strategic goals in 2011 (ACE, 2010). However, ACE failed to define the term's meaning and how any impacts from pursuit of this goal would be measured (Glinkowski, 2012:2). Although direct grants to individual artists through Grants for the Arts contributed to individualised development plans of some artists, the main delivery mechanism for talent development was ACE's regularly-funded organisations which took a selector and gatekeeping role to authenticating the career development of the relatively small percentage of the artist constituency they worked with. Notably, however, ACE itself confirmed this approach as flawed (Romer, 2019b). Whenever public funding to the arts is constrained, ACE has consistently assessed organisations' interests to be of greater importance than those of artists. Although it has *hoped* arts organisations might do a little more for artists, this has not been made a funding requirement (a-n, 2011). Over the thirty-year period studied, the persistent barrier to effective, sustained strategies to improve artists' conditions has thus been that funded arts organisations perceive artists as minor contributors to their remit and operations.

As Peter Hewitt observed in Chapter 1, rather than wholehearted endorsement of artists' interests within funded arts organisations' operations, policy which prioritised artists was tolerated provided it presented no threat to organisations' own ambitions and any artist-specific development was funded by ACE as an independent strand. After 2011, ACE expected funded organisations to take responsibility for support for artists themselves. ACE's headline ambitions thus became contaminated by the more pressing need to secure operational and financial resilience in funded organisations, including enabling the professional development of staff. Outcomes were that talent development for artists through

funded organisations was ineffective (ACE, 2018a:28) and artists' livelihoods became of marginal concern to galleries (DHA, 2013b:6). Although asserting the principle of 'fair pay' for artists, ACE provides no role model of the duty of care for artists which acknowledges their pivotal role in achieving the ambitions of funded arts organisations (Burns, 2017:10). Except where this directly aided regularly-funded organisations, resilience of individual artists *per se* fell outside the scope of ACE's review of future sustainability of the sector. Even then, there was no expectation that NPOs would foster productive relationships with artists as part of demonstrating appropriate programming behaviours (Woodley *et al*, 2018:19).

ACE's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) framework since 2011 has prioritised revenue-funding to traditionally-constituted permanent organisations such as charities. The NPO cohort is organised in three tiers, the first two for arts organisations, the 'hard infrastructure' differentiated only by ACE's scale of financial investment (Klinenberg, 2018:5). The third tier is for anything else regularly funded, including those with an artist-led or visual arts service remit which predominantly provide the 'social infrastructure' for artists' practices.⁷⁹

Such an approach by ACE exemplifies Holden's (2015) assessment in Chapter 6 of levels of importance in the arts ecology. In the top echelon are the 'guardian' arts institutions (i.e. the NPOs) and 'mediators' known, or attached to, NPOs whose role is to sift the artist landscape and identify the 'right' artists, both to amplify the organisation's public image and provide mediators with career development credentials (Leadbeater, 2009). Placing artists as of lesser importance within the visual arts sphere's workings aligns with Holden's conflation of artists with audiences for art in a secondary 'nomads' layer. The base flaw in this configuration is that artists aren't perceived by either arts policy or funded arts organisations as stakeholders in their operations. They are cast in the role of service industry from which, like audiences, value is extracted for an organisation's gain rather than co-created for mutual and wider social benefit (Banks, 2017; Mazzucato, 2018:6,83-186).

ACE's current concerns to improve arts workforce conditions in effect marks the second phase of ACE's arts policy development sequence and as addressed in

Chapter 1, notably excludes the broad constituency of artists. This narrow definition of the arts workforce and associated limited scope of workforce development and application of diversity and equality policies compounds the separation between the operations of arts organisations and the developmental practices of individual artists. By removing the artists' constituency and 'wealth' of its contributions from policy-driven measures to combat inequality and encourage meritocracy ACE continues to convey the perception that artists' interests are of minor significance.

The concept of agonistic relationships, that is to say those which accept and harness the inherent adversarial tendencies in organisational frameworks to resolve frictions and create productive results, has merit in terms of conceptualising new frameworks to create common ground between the conflicting aspirations and working practices of artists and arts organisations (Mouffe, 2000:70). Also pertinent is the assertion that enabling smaller-scale arts organisations which act as essential scouts and feeders for larger ones brings long-term infrastructural benefits to the visual arts (Thelwall, 2011). However as illustrated by the 'boulders and pebbles' analogy, contemporary visual arts infrastructures are hierarchically characterised by arts policy and there is no indication of interest in flatter, egalitarian and inclusive solutions (Leadbeater, 2009). In less-favourable arts funding environments, such as during the period from 2011 of austerity government funding to the arts, ACE consistently preserved the 'boulder' NPOs asserting that these made 'the most significant contribution to our goals' because they 'directly made art' (a-n, 2011). Although small-scale and artist-led ventures – the 'pebbles' – are more adept at dealing with external shocks and knocks, these are the first to be cut, with no supportive lobby for them by funded NPOs in acknowledgment of the strategic value of these smaller-scale ventures to their own work (Louise, 2011b; Thelwall, 2011).

A commonality in *modus operandi* between artists' and ACE's arts policy strategies is that both demonstrate long-term approaches to securing productive conditions for achieving artistic ambitions. However there is a stark contrast between the values and strategies each party brings to these endeavours. An underlying misassumption in arts policy is that the operations of the contemporary visual arts

(and thus of individual artists) are similar to the creative industries. In the creative industries, it is common for entrepreneurial individuals and small businesses to pitch creative ideas using speculative, outline and illustrative proposals as a means of securing new work contracts from commissioners and investors while leveraging the associated extrinsic artistic rewards as bi-product. However socially valuable the products invented, making a profit to sustain the business going forward is a prerequisite in the creative industries (Reiss, 2011:25-27). Thus, sustainability of a creative business over the longer-term is an outcome of good planning, fundraising and execution, with outcomes measured quantitatively and economically rather than by intrinsic and social benefits.

Arts policy interventions ostensibly supportive of artists predominantly but erroneously speak to creative industries' behaviours. However, budgets and fees provided to artists by funded visual arts organisations are fixed at minimum levels and provide neither sufficient scope for artistic manoeuvre nor conditions supportive of artists' economic and social circumstances over the longer-term. The continuous, competitive churn of job-seeking, disappointment of frequent rejection and power held over artists by intermediary gatekeepers are undermining both of artists' confidence to act independently and of the long-held beliefs which form the foundation of artists' art practices and are their *raison d'être*. The high levels of speculative and competitive work expected of artists within the contemporary visual arts is intellectually, emotionally and economically challenging.

It is pertinent here to position the new, nuanced insight on 'good' conditions for visual artists arising from the primary research within the existing cultural labour and creative occupations evidence-base. The thesis reconfirms the core mismatch between individuals' intrinsic motivations for undertaking creative endeavours and the extrinsic economic imperatives of the creative industries that undermine workers' livelihoods (Florida, 2002; Banks and Hesmondhalgh, 2009).

Commissioners and arts funders' defective assumption that visual artists' livelihoods are secured by multiple job holding or portfolio working is illustrated by Galloway *et al* (2002) and Ball (2008). This is a particularly flawed work format for fostering the talents of many visual artists because it limits both achievement of

reasonable income levels from paid work and fails to take account of artists' personal circumstances including family responsibilities within the framing of work opportunity (TBR, 2018a). More specifically and as identified through Chapter 1's review of arts policy, since the economic crash and into the austerity period Arts Council England consistently assessed the value of artists' practices as transactional: that is to say artists' worth was quantified by direct impact on others (including to an organisation's financial efficacy), this rather than any less tangible or longer-term value. This thesis demonstrates that common adoption by arts policy and the organisations awarded public funding of what is in effect a 'just in time' delivery expectation of visual artists not only undermines their artistic and economic prospects and emotional well-being, but is wasteful of *most* artists' talents and contributions to society.

In terms of structural discrimination, and as described in Chapter 2, socio-economic and career development disadvantage is consistently evidenced in cultural labour research: within new media and IT workers (Gill, 2007; Rajan, 2019; Ross, 2013), the fashion industry (McRobbie, 1998) and in aspects of performing arts (McDowell, Gamblin, Teoh, Raine and Ehnold-Danailov, 2019; Banks, 2017). Barriers in the creative industries for people from ethnic minority backgrounds are articulated by Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2009:420 and McRobbie, 2002. Limited opportunity for meritocracy for individuals from lower social class and ethnic backgrounds is well-documented (O'Brien, Laurison, Miles and Friedman, 2016, Oakley, Laurison, O'Brien and Friedman, 2017; Rajan, 2019). Friedman and Laurison (2019) illuminate the double-whammy of an entrenched 'class ceiling' due to lack of entry-points into performing and media arts careers for people from working class backgrounds coupled with substantially lower earnings for the few who manage to navigate them. As a development of TBR (2018a) and Bonham-Carter (2016), the thesis provides qualitative illustration of the economic and artistic impact of visual arts conditions on livelihoods and career development for females who are dominant within visual arts practitioners. Although visual artists with disabilities are known to be underrepresented (TBR, 2018a), Chapter 4 identifies a distinctive gap in knowledge within arts policymaking as regards the extent of neurodivergence

amongst visual artists and the implications of this on visual artists' livelihood prospects.

In terms of the contribution made by the thesis to cultural theory, Banks' exposition of the core concepts for redressing embedded discriminatory cultural work practices provides an apposite cross-check for the unique combination of conditions identified as enablers of visual artists' pursuit of livelihoods over a life-cycle. As with visual artists, Banks concludes that pursuit of intrinsic value dominates contemporary jazz musicians who – like visual artists – suffer from precarious incomes due to systemic inequalities in pay and conditions. The surplus value derived from such creators' labours is (wittingly or unwittingly) exploited by organisations and businesses of all sizes as primary means to subsistence or growth (2017:129). Aligned with Chapter 1's analysis of arts policy and its ensuing impact on the operation of funded institutions, the 'patterns of discrimination, misrecognition and inequality' are an 'endemic' feature across the creative industries. The market logic underpinning successive political policies provides a 'convenient alibi for the intentional suppression of the artistic wage' (Ibid: 127). In such a context – and in alignment with Chapter 3's articulation of key tensions for artists pursuing experimental, introverted practices - individuals can feel helpless in the face of apparently intransigent conditions (Ibid: 127). Banks' theory for tackling what he assesses to be an 'avoidable' injustice within the cultural sector is compared and contrasted here with my own thesis which argues for fostering optimum conditions for visual artists *per se* (Ibid: 135).

Direct intervention in three specific ways *by others* on behalf of individual practitioners on social justice grounds is core to the overriding feature of Banks' conceptualisation designed to 'give due', this to effect change for the better in the unfortunate circumstances of exploited individuals (Ibid: 1-63). Firstly, the paying by others of 'objective respect' for cultural workers including active demonstration of high moral standards provides a counter to current discriminations (Ibid: 146-150). Secondly through 'parity of participation' and employers' adoption of the principle of 'fairness in production', individuals' right to equal treatment regardless of social and economic status is identified and upheld (Ibid: 150-155). Lastly, and as also

confirmed in Chapter 4, the human well-being and flourishing that Nussbaum (2011) asserts is essential to people's life capability is secured through implementing 'reduction of harms' measures that explicitly protect workers against ill-treatment, including from self-exploitation. Although acknowledging the limitations of affirmative action - which is also discussed later in this chapter - Banks nonetheless positions this within an armoury of equity-forging tools (Ibid: 155-159).

There is however a significant divergence between our two theories in that while Banks articulates conditions capable of giving *all* (my emphasis) connected with the production of arts and culture 'their *due*', my own formula for this is specifically 'actor-led'. That is to say, my identification of three core conducive conditions is specifically intended to reduce disadvantage for individual visual artists who, as expounded in Chapter 5, suffer economically from the exceptionality caused by the combination of their employment status and the specificity of the environment for artistic development and associated reliance on 'trickle down' within arts policy. As identified in Chapter 6, the constraining, prescriptive hierarchies of importance in the visual arts are mitigated when individual artists are able to pro-actively negotiate their terms of reference. Chapters 6 and 1 confirm that the visual arts sector is over-reliant on the preferred practices, artistic ambitions and personal taste of mediating gatekeepers which limits artists' opportunity for artistic expression and their level of financial reward. As Chapter 1 concludes, even when notions for achieving fairness and due justice (as in Banks' 'reduction of harms') are made explicit and involve suitable 'voluble and resonant' campaigning voices (Ibid: 159), 'top down' and homogenised strategies for workforce development consistently fail to gain long-term adoption. Although Banks' concepts are sound as principles, their working application more readily relates to more formal employment circumstances in which remedial action to provide for equality, social diversity and minimum pay is legally enabled and – in the case of the publicly-funded arts – workforce development provisions are a requirement. However, these are employment contexts that most visual artists don't enjoy. In the case of these particular practitioners, common-purpose with commissioners is better fostered through the individually negotiated relationships expounded in Chapter 6,

in which the otherwise missing factor of co-validation is embedded. Negotiation processes that create and preserve such relations are human-centric. Arrangements that are jointly-conceived and customised contribute to forging 'motile' artists who by achieving volition are more capable of sustaining art practices over a life-cycle and thus less dependent on remedial measures devised and delivered 'top down' by others and which, as Chapter 1 illustrates, have the tendency to 'come and go' with political and arts policy change.

Contexts for artists to pursue their practices which emanate from arts policy and perceptions of the role and position of artists within contemporary visual arts organisations bear only a resemblance to those which my new research defines as beneficial to the many artists who comprise a broadly-based, distributed visual arts constituency. The underlying premises for sustaining artists' practices either through top-down, stand-alone strategies for artists around aspects of 'time, space, money' provision or by placing responsibility for artists' welfare within funded organisations are flawed. This is because both approaches fail to pay attention to, or foster, mutuality and cooperation in working relationships between artists and commissioners which the new research demonstrates as a requirement for equanimity over the long-term. In this way artists are placed in a parallel universe, with exchanges between them and arts organisations transitory and transactional rather than the grounds for co-development, empowerment and transformation.

Instead of 'motile' contributors to a visual arts ecosystem in which the value and relevance of each are acknowledged and value is co-created, ACE's arts policies position artists as a ubiquitous and homogenised human resource perceived and treated as immediately available, waiting and willing to be drawn in, excited by and actively responsive to arts contexts they've played no part in scoping (Morgan and Nelligan, 2015). Unless required or incentivised as a condition of arts funding to do otherwise, arts funded institutions perceive no need to take responsibility for the emotional or economic precarities endemic in the highly-competitive work environments for 'malleable' workers', nor for drawing in artists from under-represented sections to widen the constituency of participating artists.

Although beyond the scope of this doctoral study, ACE's activation since 2012 of Creative People and Places (CPP) as a means of widening arts audiences through community engagement could be construed as marking the third phase of the arts policy development sequence that commenced in 1985 with *Glory of the Garden*. However similarly to ACE's building-based infrastructural developments, rather than being premised on responding to *demand* as expressed within communities about a particular place, CPP is a top-down, funding-dependent policy manifestation conceptualised by ACE's institutional cognitive filter. The conceptual position of audiences in CPP as recipient of, rather than participant in, development and authorship of arts offerings has been assessed as structurally problematic (Gross and Wilson, 2019). This resonates with my own as regards attitudes within ACE's policies on the secondary position of artists and perception of them as a malleable supply for policy ends.

My overall conclusion is that while artists *should be* beneficiaries of arts policies because of the wealth and value of their artistic contributions, minor adjustments by ACE to arts policy implementation such as addition of stand-alone strands as in the past, or firmer inclusion of artists into arts organisations' workforce development strategies are unlikely to provide suitable grounds for, or maximise the vital contributions of, the broad constituency of 'motile' artists in the future. Nor will they resolve the structural disjuncture and incompatibility between core conditions supportive of the 'soft infrastructure' which is the most productive for artists' practices and those most beneficial to the financial and artistic sustainability of the 'hard infrastructure' of building-based arts organisations.

ACE's decision in 2018 to replace the term 'artist' with 'creative practitioner' in its policy documents is reflective of the contemporaneous lack of rapport between arts policy and artists' interests. This term encompasses 'People who use their creativity, skill and talent to create cultural content and activity... [including] artists, directors, designers, writers, choreographers, performers, composers, curators, producers and so on....' (ACE, 2018b:29). Implicit in this purposeful reframing of artists in ACE's new policy for the period 2020-30 is potential to exacerbate the 'double jeopardy' of artists' 'sustainable subsistence model' which was identified in

Chapter 5 as a core barrier to livelihood over a life-cycle. The ‘triple jeopardy’ identified by this new research is that loss of the specific designation of ‘artist’ and merger into the wider pool of ‘creative practitioners’ will result in fewer visual artists in future gaining access to subsidy towards sustainable art practices over a life-cycle. A dual arts policy conundrum has thus emerged from this new research.

- **Visual arts infrastructures are unlikely to be truly supportive of artists’ interests**

Current infrastructures for producing and presenting contemporary visual arts to the public have been systematically built up by the various incarnations of the Arts Council since 1985, aligned with political regeneration, economic growth and job creation. ACE’s NPO cohort of galleries and organisations with a public facing aspect form 68% of ACE’s 2018-22 portfolio and will cost £174.7m over that period. As this thesis demonstrates, ACE’s funding from government is always subject to fluctuation. While lack of programme budget and poor staff pay and employment terms were first identified over a decade ago, ACE has nevertheless since 2006 encouraged NPOs to increase their running costs so that these are reflective of professionalised staffing (Lindley and Galloway, 2005). Having expanded and secured the physical infrastructure between 1985 and 2015, the next phase in ACE’s policy development sequence has been to make funded organisations more resilient by prioritising workforce development through enhancing and culturally diversifying NPO leadership and management teams (Russell, 2015). ACE’s assumption after 2011 that funded galleries would look after the wider interests of artists is conceptually unsound and is disproved even by ACE’s own evaluations.

The supply of artists, which was discussed in Chapter 6, is perceived as too large to be accommodated and adequately remunerated within traditional visual arts markets, including within the operations of ACE’s visual arts NPOs (Abbing, 2002; Throsby, 2007). However, over-supply of artists is pivotal to the economics for the arts, albeit that the real value of this is insufficiently accounted for (Sholette, 2011:116-134). When the value of the arts is quantified purely in discrete social and economic terms, there is a lack of quantification within arts policy of intangible

assets ranging from those created both by ‘everyday creativity’ and the ‘wider civilising, humanising, healing and educational powers of the arts’ (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007:135-151).

At the other end of the spectrum, ACE policies encourage ‘everyday creativity’ amongst the general public citing ‘the importance of process over product, being given permission [to use creativity], and finding activity in your local area driven by local people’ (64 Million Artists, 2018:5). Recognising wider interpretations of what constitutes art by including participatory and socially-engaged practices and their co-created value has the potential to capitalise on current wastage of artists’ potential through acknowledging and defining new, diversified markets. However, ACE presently delineates such ‘non art market’ work as activities for CPP organisations whose grant allocations are comparatively small. That is to say, while North West visual arts NPOs will receive £12.6m over four years to 2022, North West CPP organisations will get £3.5m.

- **ACE’s dual role of enabling the visual arts infrastructure and supporting artists is a conflict of interest**

ACE policies specifically supportive of artists have consistently been of minor significance in comparison with the main task of uplifting the physical infrastructure and have never been sustained over the long-term. The net result is that the artistic ambitions and economic needs of most artists have barely been catered for by ACE. Unless enforced by ACE, publicly-funded visual arts organisations haven’t typically pay artists at industry rates. Artists’ ability to achieve levels of remuneration reflective of ‘full cost recovery’ have been undermined by organisations’ budgetary constraints. Both ACE and organisations funded by it either regularly or on a project basis could be construed as displaying a tendency for ‘optimism bias’ about what is possible to produce within available budgets. By capitalising on their respective positions as arbiters and gatekeepers of ‘quality’ within contemporary visual arts, funded arts organisations implicitly condone artists’ poor pay levels including the necessity for artists to self-subsidise. There is no indication in forward policy consultation and planning documentation that current attitudes to artists’ terms

and conditions in NPO organisations will be required to change (ACE 2018b). Although outside the remit of this doctoral study, it is notable that De Mynn (2016:25) and Thelwall (2011) identified particular difficulties for the small-scale, artist-led organisations funded by ACE. Similarly to individual artists, these micro ventures placed by ACE within the 'soft infrastructure' are also characterised by high levels of self-subsidy and emotional and economical precarity.

3. Propositions for future strategic support for artists

My analysis now of the nub of the artists' livelihoods 'problem' is in stark contrast from my perceptions of barriers at the outset of doctoral study. Based on prior experience of working in the arts and independently conducting research that had influenced and informed visual arts development strategies, my early assumptions were that adjustments such as amplified artist-centred funding from ACE would better acknowledge the scope and value of the wealth of artists' contributions and thus improve livelihood prospects.

This simplistic supposition was challenged by the new research that classified artists' vulnerabilities into two main categories. Firstly, those related to an inappropriate and thus ineffective employment status and secondly, those resulting from artists' underlying lack of social status. The two bold propositions for conceptualising and progressing future policy for artists following offer a means of testing mechanisms for redressing the current structural flaws in conditions to ensure future environments are conducive for artists' motility and effectively capture their wider societal contributions.

My concepts for redressing current arts policy measures, which by limiting the ability of many artists to pursue art practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle are discriminatory, purposefully removes both money and responsibility for artists' future welfare from 'the top'. My assessment is that current 'strong' economics-based arts theories and practices which have become the status quo now are 'insufficient for the task at hand'. Thus the publicly-funded arts 'cannot grow their way out of danger'. 'Weak' theory however offers lateral, alternative solutions

arising from nuanced heterogeneous 'thick' evidence which challenges the norms (Gibson-Graham, 2014:147).

My own new theory is weak because it is derived from qualitative research specifically designed to capture the nuance and diversity of artists' lives and economic practices. It is nonetheless highly pertinent to developing original perspectives on strategies for improving artists' economic status, particularly when top-down approaches over the last 30 years have effectively maintained artists' artistic and economic vulnerability. My definition of policy in this respect is as a 'web of decisions and actions that allocate values'. Rather than fixed and hierarchical, effective policy is iterative, emanating from a 'stance which once articulated contributes to the context which a succession of future decisions will be made' (Ham and Hall, 1984:11).

Together, my propositions offer new, reflexive and modulated mechanisms to develop and implement arts policy specifically for artists and a basis for effective, instruments for delivering funding to artists over the long-term. The propositions outlined below are capable of fostering the multiplicity of artists' creative, situated practices and sustainable co-validating relationships and of better providing for artists' distinctive contributions to society in future.

They deliver the core conditions conducive for artists' sustained practices and livelihoods by enabling artists to acquire confidence to act and providing the sense of belonging that fosters their capacity to 'get ahead'. ACE's efforts and interventions on behalf of artists over the last 30 years have proved to be unsustainable or ineffective. These new mechanisms thus replace ACE's remit as instrument for both for the making of policy for, and funding of, artists. They also side-step the optimism bias that the publicly-funded visual arts sector might with sufficient incentives become 'good employers' of artists over time, including taking responsibility for realising the expansive and inclusive infrastructural manifestations of contemporary visual arts more attuned to and supportive of the longer-term development and livelihood prospects of *many* artists.

- **Localised supportive infrastructures for artists**

Chapter 6 exposed how restrictive contemporary visual arts policies and practices within politically-driven neo-liberal market economies in effect ‘waste’ artists’ creativity and reduce the range and variety of visual arts manifestations offered to society. Chapter 1 showed that although direct grants for research and development empowered artists, successive government cuts to the arts constrained such funds because the financial needs of arts organisations took precedence. Only radical changes in how arts funds are allocated to artists in England can redress the structural imbalance which has been cemented over time.

Stark, Powell and Gordon advocated for side-stepping existing arts distribution instruments by putting 20% of the National Lottery funds currently allocated to ACE to new regionally-determined ‘programmes available to individual artists and artist-led projects to encourage new talent, diversity, innovation, and excellence in work locally, regionally, nationally and internationally’ (2014:14). Had such a formula been adopted, £49.26m a year might have been available in 2018-2022 for supportive direct and indirect interventions for artists and the artist-led. Instead, ACE has allocated just £3.6m annually to the highly-competitive, excellence-driven Developing Your Creative Practice grants for ‘creative practitioners’ across all art forms and production roles.⁸⁰

To similar ends, the Campaign for Cultural Democracy (CfCD) proposed creating an extra £1b government grant-in-aid to the arts, including for supportive interventions for artists working locally in communities, through a transaction tax on the UK’s art market. Such amplified and de-centralised funding would be allocated by regionally-representative, democratically-structured and administered bodies intended to empower communities concerned and – relevant to artists – to prioritise ‘investment in people over products, process not results.’⁸¹ Notions of a Commons Fund as a redistributable wealth resource drawn from a tithe on empty property and the European Union’s for a new tax on global digital companies are in the same vein (Standing, 2018: 195-206).⁸²

Whatever the source of the fund, my bold proposition for distributing enhanced resources direct to artists and the artist-led is premised on forging nuanced, localised frameworks for interaction between artists and other interested parties which utilise England's 342 county and district councils, metropolitan boroughs including London and the unitary authorities. The advantages of employing local government bodies as a new arts policy and funding infrastructure for support to artists are multi-fold. Firstly, this approach resolves the rebalancing of 'London and regions' dilemma and places the wider needs and arts interests of London's 33 differing authorities parallel to those of the North West's 41. Secondly, local authorities are democratically accountable and provide the necessary financial compliances for redistribution of public resources including for funding direct to artists for research and development, continuous professional development and artist-led and community-centred initiatives. Using existing structures also reduces establishment and running costs. Thirdly, this mechanism would in effect run in parallel to the revenue funding of arts organisations which would remain the responsibility of ACE. It thus offers an evidence base over time to contribute to strategic and comparator reviews of this new mechanism for providing direct support to artists in relation to ACE's own talent development and sectoral diversity ambitions as delivered through its funded organisations

My concept for new arts-based policy and funding frameworks is human-centric, distributed and contextualised. It is premised on co-operation, collaboration and development of modulated, place-appropriate interventions which are supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods over a life-cycle. By providing the grounds for new localised, inclusive, co-authored validation mechanisms to emerge in whatever forms are appropriate, it responds to assertions that current gatekeeping mechanisms fail to reflect the scope and diversity of contemporary visual arts applications (Ravetz and Wright, 2015). In addition, it resonates with new contemporary arguments for place-specific developments and introduction of mechanisms measuring more than the purely economic and 'creating a fairer, more socially just economy' by using progressive development concepts. (CLES, 2019:4)

[W]e must start from the local economic realities. Build on the assets of place, develop economic resilience, strengthen local networks, create conditions for local entrepreneurship, respect and nurture human and social capital (McIlroy, 2012).

Enhanced budgets vired from ACE's funding allocations specifically for locally-scoped and distributed artists' supportive interventions could contribute to redressing the decline in local authority arts funding over the prior decade (Romer, 2019a).⁸³ My own research asserted an advantage of artists' employment from local authorities as being equitably-offered, with better budgets than arts organisations (Jones, 2017:14-15). Within the North West, Manchester's supportive interventions for artists have thus far centred on provision studio and creative industries workspace.⁸⁴ More laterally and aligned with new definitions of what constitutes economic well-being, Preston City Council's 'procurement' strategy which is supportive of the city's businesses and employment and retains finance in the city offers a transferrable model for locally-scoped frameworks for interventions supportive of artists in a place (Jackson and McIlroy, 2017).

Existing inter local authority interest groups which pursue joint strategies such as for 'key cities' and 'rural services' serve to address concerns that localised actions for support to artists necessarily equate to parochial.⁸⁵ Speight (2015) confirmed that artists living and working in a place and using local amenities over a life-cycle have vested interests in securing productive cultures in local economies which are responsive to these particular circumstances. Such participatory, community-based approaches which mitigate the human deficits of globally-orientated, 'trickle down' economics attune with arguments for localised action to counter the negative impacts of systemic political and economic change (Srnicek and Williams, 2016). There is also alignment with the principle of economic justice in which reward levels are recalibrated to acknowledge the levels of 'sacrifice or effort' of individuals (Hahnel and Olin Wright, 2016:7).

In terms of providing conducive conditions for artists to sustain art practices and livelihoods, the empowering, transformative nature of funding direct to individual artists offers some comfort from the 'double jeopardy' induced by artists'

unattainable 'sustainable subsistence model', and fosters the co-validating relationships which enable artists to 'get on' over a life cycle. Such support to artist-centred infrastructures additionally suggests development of new more expansive data collection frameworks to evidence artists' assets including their creative capital and the quantification of the diverse scope and extent of artists' social and economic impacts that are currently missing when arts policies are formulated and activated. An example of such data is the 'In Kind' research project initiated by artists using Glasgow International 2018 which charted the hidden economies of the visual arts including the value of artists' unpaid labour.⁸⁶

- **Status of the artist legislation**

Achieving 'status of the artist legislation' is my second proposition for securing conducive conditions for artists' practices and livelihoods over the long-term. UNESCO's 1980 Status of artists assertion acknowledges artists' fundamental role in society by securing their right of artistic expression, responding to the distinctive manner in which they work and seeking to improve their professional, economic, social and political status (Neil, 2015). Statutes which legislatively secure artists' economic and moral rights protect them from many of the artistic and employment tensions and ambiguities which this research has identified are inherent in market-orientated cultures and economies. In particular and as confirmed by the European Parliament, such statutes are required because the 'dynamic characteristics of the culture sector prevent the structuring of true dialogue between [what are] traditionally understood [as] employers and employees' (2005:17).

The 'theoretical', impractical self-employed status of artists was demonstrated as a barrier to artists' livelihoods in Chapter 6. My proposal for strategic adoption of Statute for artists legislation in England would contribute to resolving such a barrier. In alignment with Taylor (2017), it responds to the economic ambiguities of self-employed status - such as lack of access to benefits including sick and maternity pay and pension savings – which severely limit artists' ability to sustain themselves over a life-cycle. Artists' statutes which are already in place in comparator European countries including Finland, France and Germany and in Canada address such

tensions by supporting artists by accounting for the specificity of artists' contractual and employment relations. The current omission of an appropriate means for collective bargaining for visual artists would be addressed within a new Statute. This is enabled in other countries including CARFAC in Canada and SMart in Belgium which advocate for and intervene in artists' livelihood matters. In the latter case, a levy on contracts provides artists with professional benefits including insurances and debt collection (European Union, 2005:112).

My two proactive and progressive propositions to secure favourable conditions for artists' practices and livelihoods concur with definitions of affirmative action which purposefully seeks to 'rearrange ... the status of certain group[s]' to limit known discriminatory practices (Johnson, 1990:77-99). An artists' representative body or union might offer an effective mechanism for developing, consulting on and spearheading such a Statute. However, even in countries where such unions are well-established, artists' incomes remain low (Jones, 2015). Furthermore traditional artists' representative bodies in England have consistently struggled to gain popular support (Glinkowski, 2010:75).⁸⁷ Although an unusual approach, generating and implementing policy change including formulating a new Statute for artists through localised, collaborative artists' development structures has attraction as a radical, alternative 'bottom up' experiment. The discrete, localised trials of Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a new bold approach to preventing or reducing poverty and increasing equality among citizens provide a point of reference.⁸⁸

In respect of better understanding and responding to artists' individualised and nuanced social needs, my suggestion for locally-developed and delivered arts policy measures and associated supportive infrastructures offers a counter approach to redressing current inequalities for artists. 'Hidden' disabilities such as dyslexia and neurodivergence - which are noted in Chapter 4 as being higher amongst the artists' constituency as a whole - impact adversely on their ability to work professionally. In addition and as my new study suggests, inequality is also caused by artists' chronic or unexpected illness periods and the call on their time for family, child or eldercare responsibilities, this latter a consideration for both male and female artists. My proposal for lateral reallocation of public funding direct to artists for sympathetic

structural interventions acknowledges that increased costs is a consequence of any action designed to achieve equality of opportunity (Carter, 2003:46).

Substantial policy reassessment as regards individual artists of what constitutes cost and benefit for whom, why and through what means would necessarily entail significant reduction in future of ACE's existing remit for artists' development and associated strategic redeployment of an appropriate tranche of the arts funding currently allocated to ACE. Pursuit of these propositions to reframe interdependencies in the contemporary visual arts is however intended to substantially disrupt the status quo of 'how things are done' as far as artists' long-term interests are concerned. They are thus unlikely to be of direct interest to, or met with enthusiasm by, ACE or many of its NPO and other regularly-funded organisations. Nonetheless, both are presented as fruitful future research topics to inform future arts policy for support to artists. The empirical evidence from this study that provides demonstration of the tangible and intangible benefits to artists' lives and wider social well-being when certain conditions are in place is offered towards scoping future localised, durational interventions supportive of artists' practices and livelihoods.

In terms of developing appropriate actions, the North West region offers scope for comparing and contrasting resourcing and delivery mechanisms for interventions aimed at artists in divergent localities such as the distinctive urban areas of Preston and Manchester and amongst the rural districts of Cumbria to enable identification and testing of nuanced solutions. Subsequent strategic action-based trialling akin to that employed for UBI's ambitions to reduce poverty may forge the modulated conditions that enable acquisition of artistic and economic equality of opportunity for many artists in the places they and their families live and over the life-cycle of their art practices.

Limitations of the research

Weaknesses in the research predominantly lie in the limitations of the methodology and my own bias as a researcher with existing knowledge of the particular field of study. In terms of the former, the time-scale of doctoral study restricted both

sample size and duration of data collection. The North West's heterogeneous geographical and political nature and sizeable presence of NPO visual arts organisations provided a suitable region to study and constituency of artists to sample. However had time permitted, it would have been productive to consider the scope and nature of artists' relationships with three North West region Creative People and Places initiatives, this to provide an understanding of the scope and nature of artists' interaction with a contemporaneous engagement-based policy delivery for comparison with Creative Partnerships.⁸⁹

A second limitation arose from reliance on a discrete, manageable sample from artists in one English region, with the long-list of artists arising from promotion of the research solely through intermediary contacts and subsequent self-selection. Exclusion of artists unconnected to these intermediaries and 'failed' or former artists might be construed as creating 'success bias' in the results. While no claim is made to provide generalisable evidence representative of the artists' constituency as a whole, some of the new research findings however reconfirm or resonate with prior qualitative studies (Honey *et al* 1997; Galloway *et al*, 2002). In addition and in terms of identifying the extent to which artists' motivations guide actions and variations in regional earnings and opportunity, the new research provides cross-reference to a significant contemporaneous nationwide quantitative study of artists' livelihoods (TBR, 2018a, b).

These methodological limitations are however judged to be outweighed by the benefit of trialling a new qualitative methodology premised on sequential interviews which are otherwise rare as a data collection method in arts and creative industries research. This approach gained in-depth data hitherto unavailable about the conditions supportive of the continuum of artists' practices and livelihoods. The anonymity provided to participants and sequential interview method minimised potential for selected artists to bias the evidence by unwittingly or purposefully misrepresenting achievements or playing down negative aspects of practices and lives to protect public image.

My bias as an individual with a length of research and work experience in the field under study and of previously influencing arts policy from within the funded arts

infrastructure was tempered by choice of inductive, reflexive methodology which instead privileges the voice of individual research subjects within the methods. Use of a flexible interview guide ensured questions and terminologies were personalised to each participant. My existing knowledge and access to unpublished and limited-distribution documents relating to the field of study also proved to be of great advantage to the new research which sought to analyse and understand the underlying conditions and changing contexts and perspectives within arts policy.

Notes

⁷⁷ The term Arts Council (ACE) is used throughout this chapter to identify the various versions of this body over the study period.

⁷⁸ In 1997, 123,500 people worked in the visual arts of whom 34,000 were artists. O'Brien, J. (1997) *Professional Status as a Means of Improving Visual Artists' Incomes*. London: Arts Council of England (working paper). Thus artists comprised 27.5% of the total visual arts workforce with the remainder of the workforce at 72.5%. In 2018 173, 595 people worked in visual arts occupations of whom 42,140 were artists. Thus artists now comprise 24% of the total workforce, a drop of 3.5 percentage points in the size of the artists' constituency since 1997. The remainder of the visual arts workforce has increased (by 3.5 percentage points) to 76%. CCS (2018) *Workforce analysis 2018* <https://ccskills.org.uk/supporters/advice-research/article/workforce-analysis-2018> [Accessed on 6th June, 2019]. Comparing O'Brien and CCS data gives the conclusion that the visual arts workforce has increased over a 20 year period by 40%.

⁷⁹ Arts Council England National Portfolio 2018-22 <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/how-we-invest-public-money/national-portfolio-2018-22> [Accessed on 10th June 2018]

⁸⁰ Arts Council England's website states that "Developing your creative practice is a new development fund designed to support independent creative practitioners to ensure excellence is thriving in the arts and culture sector." <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/DYCP> [Accessed on 10th June 2019]

⁸¹ Manifesto for Cultural Democracy. <https://culturaldemocracy.wordpress.com/> [Accessed on 12th December 2018]

⁸² France moved to bring in a 3% tax on digital companies such as Google and Facebook in July 2019 to bring in an estimated 400-750m euros a year. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/france-digital-tax-1.5207867> [Accessed on 22th July 2019]

⁸³ This report produced in 2019 indicated a reduction of local authority culture funding of £400m since 2011. Arts Professional <https://www.artspromotional.co.uk/news/local-authority-culture-funding-down-ps400m-2011> [Accessed on 1st February 2019]

⁸⁴ Manchester's State of the City Report (2017:31) confirmed a contemporary lack of affordable space for artists and cultural organisations and that 'Work has now started in partnership with key studio groups and cultural organisations to identify specific spaces for artistic production.' www.manchester.gov.uk [Accessed on 31st October 2018]

⁸⁵ The 'key cities' group comprising 20 cities across England, including in the North West Blackpool, Preston and Salford has a 'GVA [of] £110 billion and population of 5.6m' accepting their diversity as a significant factor for future sustainability. <https://www.keycities.co.uk/about> [Accessed on 31st October 2018]

⁸⁶ Data from In Kind generated by artists Janie Nicoll and Ailie Rutherford which quantified the hidden economies of the visual arts using Glasgow International 2018 as a case study is at <https://inkindproject.info/> [Accessed on 24th July 2019]

⁸⁷ Artists Union (1972-1983), National Artists Association (NAA) 1985-2002 and Artists Union England (AUE) 2014 - have each lacked popular support amongst artists, with AUE reporting 335 members in 2018 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/811732/Artists_Union_England_820T_2018.pdf [Accessed on 2nd January 2019]. The artists' representative body AIR was developed as a parallel function of artists' organisation a-n The Artists Information Company in 2010, as described in <https://www.a-n.co.uk/air/air-development-summary/> [Accessed on 30th October 2016]. However, Glinkowski concluded AIR to be a 'representative body that has been introduced by stealth' as it lacks legal and independent status and isn't democratically representative of members who may not be 'aware of their involvement in an organisation that aspires to speak for their interests' (2010:217-218). Contemporaneously, a-n describes itself as 'the largest artists' membership organisation in the UK with over 24,000 members'. <https://www.a-n.co.uk/about/about-a-n/> [Accessed on 24th July 2019]. It provides artists with many of the benefits such as pay and contracts guidance and insurance normally attributed to representative and professional bodies. However, the aim of the founding AIR Council in 2010 to represent the interests of the wider constituency of artists was superseded in 2019 by creation of the 'a-n Artists' Council, an *advisory group* [my emphasis] to the Board and Executive of a-n The Artists Information Company' <https://www.a-n.co.uk/about/a-n-artists-council/> [Accessed on 24th July 2019]

⁸⁸ The Universal Basic Income (UBI) definition is taken from <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/universal-basic-income-UBI> [Accessed on 12th June 2019]. Trials have taken place in specific cities and regions and in some cases countrywide including in Canada, Finland, India, Kenya, Namibia, Scotland, The Netherlands and USA. <https://basicincome.org/news/2018/07/current-ubi-experiments-an-update-for-july-2018/> [Accessed on 31st July, 2018]

⁸⁹ Creative People and Places initiatives in the North West are Heart of Glass St Helen's, Left Coast Blackpool & Wyre and Super Slow Way Pennine Lancashire <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/creative-people-and-places-projects/cpp-projects-north> [Accessed on 19th June 2019].

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Jones, S. (2017) *Artists work in 2016*. Research paper. Newcastle: a-n The Artists Information Company

Artists work in 2016

Introduction

This Research paper forms part of a series initiated by a-n in 2007 intended to provide on-going evidence and insight on changes in the context for, and nature of, employment for visual artists.

The *Key facts* arising from analysis of 2016 data are first outlined, followed by the *Context* for the Research paper. *Scope of opportunities* amplifies the evidence and includes illustrations of opportunity and employment types from 2016 and explanatory diagrams that position the new data against prior years.

In *Matters arising*, the evidence is extended into commentary on the current conditions for artists' practice. It identifies implications for artists' employment and livelihoods in future and raises two questions for consideration by those in the UK's arts and creative industries who formulate policy and measure the economic and social impact as well as the myriad of organisations who commission and employ artists. The *Conclusion* calls for reassessment and reconfirmation of what constitutes good practice between artists and public-sector employers. Also included are *Method* and *References* sections.

Key facts

- **In 2016 the total value of openly-offered work increased by 15%.** In 2013 the overall value was £19.3m and in 2016 it had risen to £22.18m.
- **The total value of commissions and average value of a commission declined.** In 2016, the total value of all commissions represents a reduction of 59% against 2013 figures which also show that the average value of a commission in 2016 reduced by 63%.
- **More residencies were on offer in 2016 but the average value was less.** In 2016 while the total value of residencies increased by 32% when compared with 2013, the average value of a residency in 2016 at £2,126 represents a

27% reduction. It should also be noted that the average value of a residency in 2016 represents a reduction of two-thirds of its average value in 2007, when it was £6,342.

- **In the category of awards, the total value and the average value of an award reduced.** In 2013, the total value of the awards was £8.8m and the average value was £55,366. By 2016 the overall value had reduced to £6.7m and the average value to £42,350.
- **There were fewer exhibition opportunities but the average value increased.** While the number of exhibition opportunities in 2016 was reduced by 5%, the average value of an exhibition at £1,078 represents an over four-fold increase from 2013 figures.
- **There was less value in the competitions category and the average value was lower.** When compared with 2013, the total value of competitions and prizes in 2016 at £751,004 represents a reduction of 20% in overall value, and the average value at £6,056 is a reduction of 8% on 2013, when the average value was £6,593.
- **The decline in employment for artists from local authorities has continued.** In 2016, the total value of work from local authorities was just 2%. In comparison, in 2010 and 2011 local authorities provided 10% of all opportunities by value, in 2012 the value reduced to 9% and in 2013 to 3%.
- **In 2016, 31% of the value of UK employment of artists came from arts organisations.** Notably however, work from arts organisations in 2016 provided an average value of only £5,305, while work from local authorities from whom employment for artists is shown to be in decline provided an average value of £11,800.
- **28% of all awards, commissions, competitions and residency opportunities openly-offered in 2016 didn't offer any money to artists.**
- **2016 data shows a substantial decline in the value of work for artists since 2007 – the UK's pre-recession year.** In 2007, the total value at £26.8m was

17% higher than the 2016 value of £22.18m. Furthermore, if this 2007 figure was translated into relative value for 2016 in order to match the purchasing power of 2007, rather than £22.18m, the total value would need to be £34.16m.

Context

Artists work in 2016 forms part of a series initiated by a-n in 2007 which by demonstrating the scope and value of openly-advertised work and opportunities for visual and applied artists and making comparison with prior years, provides important evidence and commentary on changes in the nature and scope of employment for visual artists.

By drawing on and analysing data from a-n's long-standing and well-respected Jobs and Opportunities service, these Research papers which track the key opportunities categories of awards, commissions, competitions, exhibitions and residencies, can identify and raise awareness of trends and variations in patterns of employment, and contextualise these within prevailing arts, cultural and economic contexts.

The intention is to offer nuanced insights which are otherwise unavailable about the nature of openly-offered employment and artistic opportunity and by doing so, to support not only the ambitions of artists as they seek to move their practices forward, but those in higher education charged with preparing the next generation of artists to join the sector, the diverse commissioners and employers of artists, as well as the UK institutions who formulate and measure the economic and social impact of arts, cultural and creative industries policies.

Scope of opportunities

Volume and value of opportunities

While between 2007 and 2013, the volume of opportunities remained similar with only minor fluctuations, in 2016 it increased by 36%. However, it is not possible to draw any particular conclusions from this. It might not be that more opportunities were offered in 2016 than in prior years. The increase could be attributed to more

assiduous collection by a-n's opportunities team, higher levels of self-posting of opportunities by employers, or due to variations in the data analysis process.

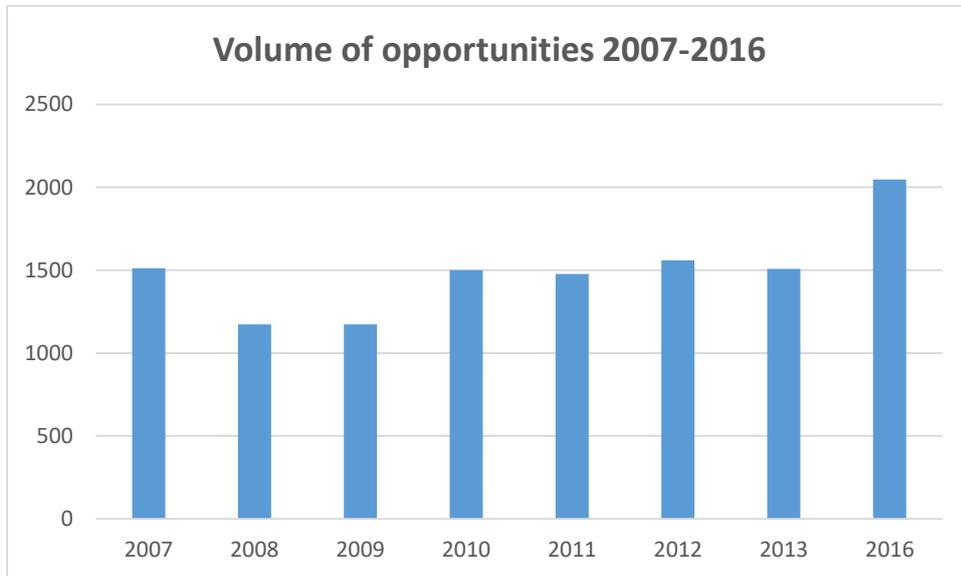


Figure 1: Volume of opportunities 2007-2016

In 2016, the total value of openly-offered work at £22.18m represents an increase of 15% against 2013 when the total value was £19.3m. Note however that in 2007 – the UK's pre-recession year – that the total value at £26.8m was 17% higher. Furthermore, if the 2007 figure was translated into relative value in 2016, that is to match the purchasing power of 2007, it would need to be 54% greater at £34.16m.

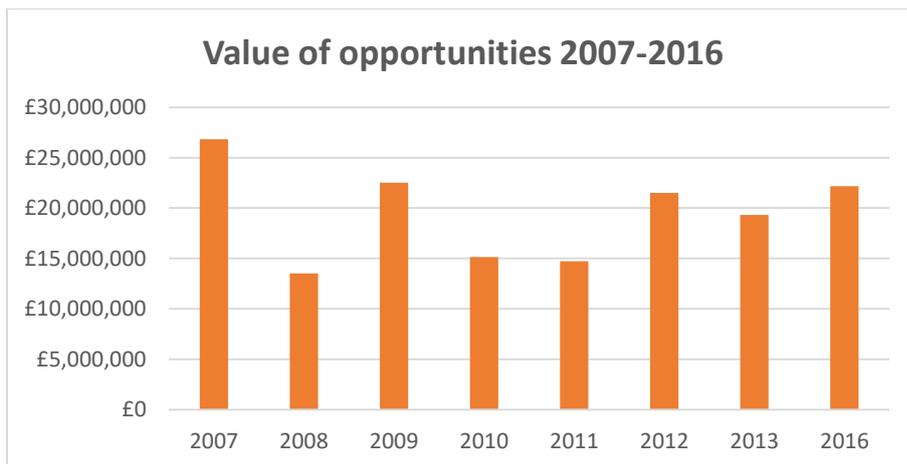


Figure 2: Value of opportunities 2007-2016

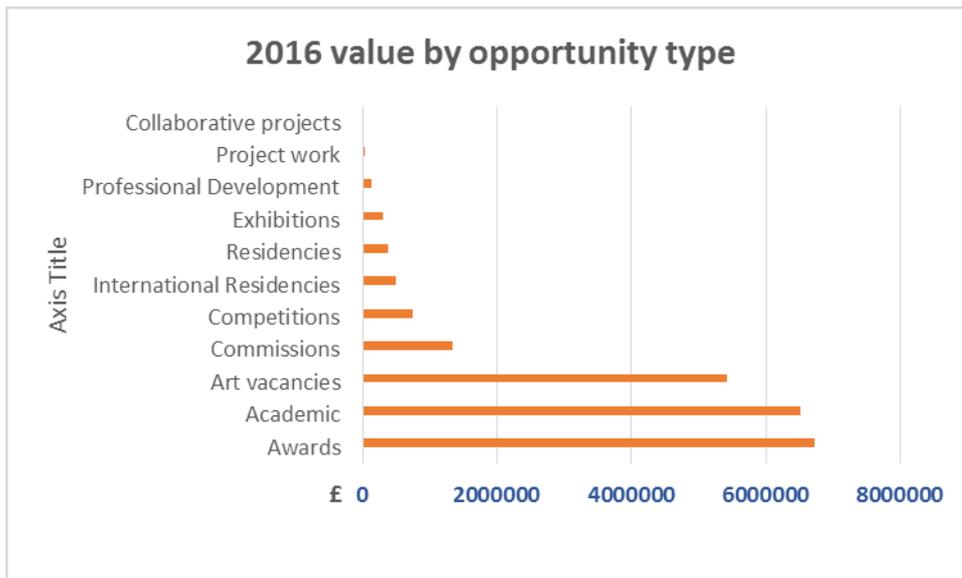


Figure 3: 2016 value by opportunity type

Commissions

In 2016, the total value of commissions and average value of a commission declined, with the total value of all commissions 59% lower than in 2013 and the average value of a commission reduced by 63% to £12,208 (from £19,445 in 2013). Note also that the total value of commissions in 2016 is only 8% of the total value of commissions in 2007, which was the UK's prerecession year. This could be one indicator of how the austerity across the arts and public sector in the intervening period has impacted adversely on the employment prospects of individual artists.

Even at 2016's reduced average value, commissions command higher budgets than residencies or exhibitions, and because they provide for a sustained period of research and development, commissions are important to artists at mid-career stage when the need to consolidate their practice is greater.

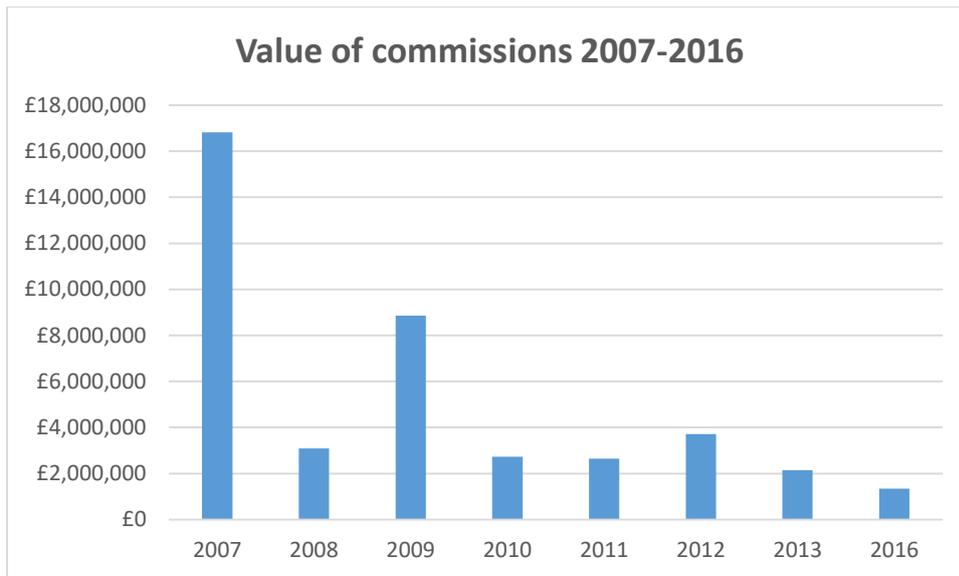


Figure 4: Value of commissions 2007-2016

COMMISSION TYPES - ILLUSTRATION

Public art: ‘Gateway features’ at £10,000 for Leeds City Council via The Tetley, site-specific sculpture or installation for community centre at £16,000 via LeftCoast, a major public art work at £450,000 for the Tinsley Locks/Blackburn area via Sheffield City Council; small scale works “to delight visitors and residents” at St Luke’s Park via Alison Turnbull Associates at £70,000, works for 3 themes within the Leavesden Country Park Heritage Trail at £74,000 each; mural commission at William Farr School Lincoln at £600.

Site specific installation: Off-site commissions in 3 places offered by Newcastle’s Hatton Gallery at £10,000, £400 for a new sound work for B-Side Festival.

Moving image: Short film commission for My Future York at £1,500, narrative films by 3 artists for Channel 4 Random Acts via Northern Film and Media at £5,000 each.

Exhibition commission: Fermynwoods online commissions for 1-7 artists with a total budget £1,400.

Note that within this category, no exhibition commissions were on offer otherwise from galleries.

Awards

In 2016 in the category of awards, both the total value and average value had reduced since 2013 when the total value of awards was £8.8m and the average value £55,366. In 2016, the overall value reduced to £6.7m and average value of an award to £42,350. Although the 2016 average value is broadly similar to 2007 when it was £43,567, to match the purchasing power of 2007, the average award in 2016 would need to be £49,126 or 13% greater.

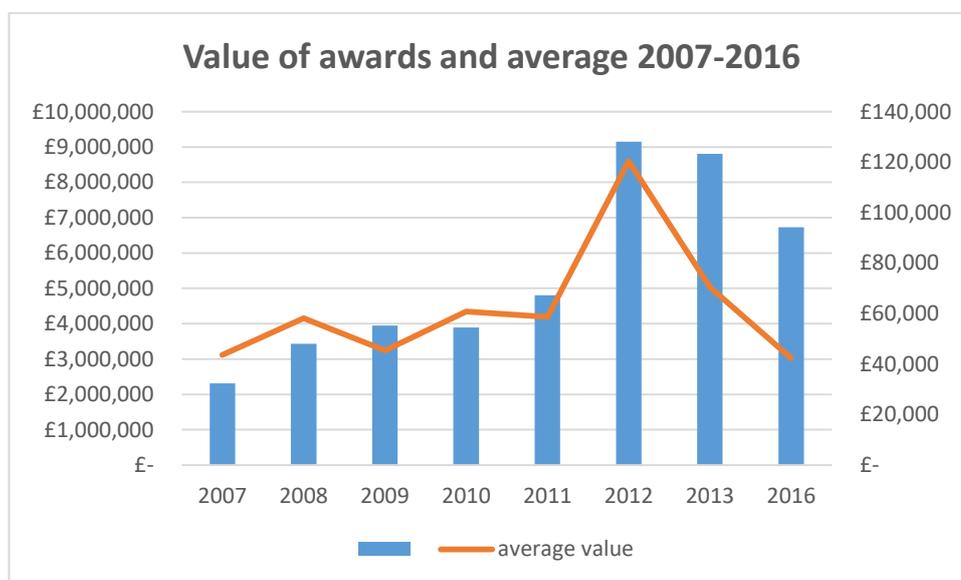


Figure 5: Value of awards and average value 2007-2016

AWARD TYPES - ILLUSTRATION

Fellowships and awards from charitable trusts and foundations including Daiwa, Pollock Krasner, Stanley Picker, Elizabeth Greenshields and Elephant Trust give artists artistic refreshment by 'buying time' to research new directions and approaches.

The Elephant Trust offers New Work Grants usually limited to £2,000 but sometimes up to £5,000 "to make it possible for artists and those presenting their work to undertake and complete projects when frustrated by lack of funds. It is committed to helping artists and art institutions/galleries that depart from the routine and signal new, distinct and imaginative sets of possibilities." Past recipients have included Rachel Whiteread, Vong Phaophanit, Gillian Wearing, Steve

McQueen, Mona Hatoum, Richard Deacon, Phyllida Barlow, Stephen Willats, Mike Nelson, Daria Martin, Cathy Wilkes, Enrico David, Daria Martin, Simon Martin, Elizabeth Price, Bonnie Camplin, Emily Wardill and younger emerging artists such as Sean Edwards, Anja Kirschner, Kim Coleman & Jenny Hogarth, Tom Woolner, Mike Cooter, Jason Dungan, Nina Manandhar and Megan Fraser.

Within awards for artists’ professional development, The Baltic Centre for the Arts Woon Foundation Prize offered a final year undergraduate £20,000, studio space, mentoring and final exhibition. Small awards included a-n bursaries of £500-£1,000 and Glasgow Life’s mentoring scheme with £1,500 attached. Cockpit Studios, Mark Tanner and Lewisham Art House awards took the form of free studio space and related support.

Residencies

The total value of residencies in 2016 increased by 32%, although when compared with 2013, the average value of a residency in 2016 at £2,126 represents a reduction of 27%. Note also that the average value of a residency in 2016 represents a reduction of over 50% of the average value of a residency in 2007 when this was £4,861. If the figure was to reflect the purchasing power of 2007, the average value of a residency in 2016 would need to be £5,638.

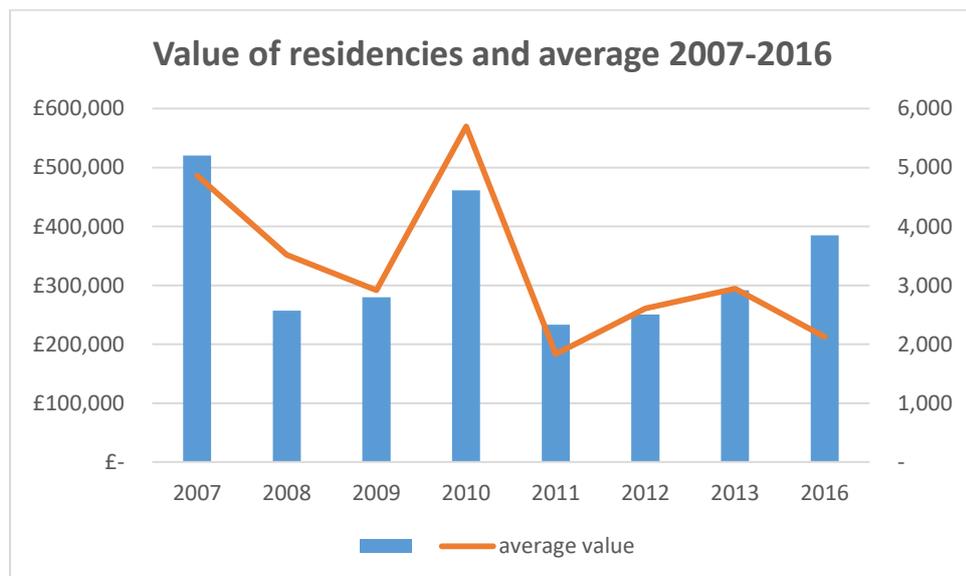


Figure 5: Value of residencies and average value 2007-2016

In the UK, the term 'residency' has become widely interpreted, as demonstrated in the opportunities on offer in this category in 2016. At one end of the interpretation scale is the residency which offers a fee and other benefits to enable an artist to spend a reasonable period of time taking stock and reflecting on their practice with an expectation of some kind of public output at the end, and at the other the micro residency in which in a short time for a small fee, the artist is charged with responding through their practice to social needs.

The 2016 data provides instances where the term 'residency' is applied to what are exhibition opportunities, in that applications were solicited from artists to propose how they would spend a period of time in 'in residence' at gallery space, in order to make new work for exhibition. However, although artists may gain 'exposure' which may aid career development, when neither fee nor expenses budget are offered, application is limited to artists who have the financial resources to undertake it at their own expense.

Even when fees and expenses are provided, applying for a residency may not be an option for all within the artists' constituency who are looking for work. Artists who may feel excluded from such opportunities include those who cannot work away from home unless there is a fee which reflects the realistic costs of doing so, artists with family responsibilities who need an additional budget for child or other carer costs, artists with existing regular contracted work commitments such as teaching, and those who require individualised support such as personal assistant or interpreter to carry out their art practice.

RESIDENCY TYPES - ILLUSTRATION

VARC (Visual Arts in Rural Communities) offered a twelve-month residency with a £9,000 fee, plus studio, accommodation and additional exhibition and materials budget for an artist to undertake community projects and make new work for exhibition.

The six-month Bridget Riley Fellowship at the British School at Rome for “exceptional artists at an early to mid-point in the career” is worth £9,000 plus board and accommodation.

As a direct response to the many residency opportunities which don’t acknowledge artists’ family commitments, artist and mother Nicola Smith (aka [We Are Resident](#)) researched and developed a model of practice for a ‘family-friendly’ micro artist’s residency. Supported by Arts Council England and Finland’s Tampere Artists’ Association, a two-week, research-based opportunity which included fee, travel and access expenses, and studio and family-friendly accommodation was offered in 2016 to a male or female artist from North-West England whose participation in the usual residency opportunities would otherwise be limited due to family or personal circumstances.

Exhibitions

In 2016, the volume of exhibition opportunities reduced by 5%, although the individual value of each exhibition opportunity increased to £1,078, this representing an over four-fold increase in value against 2013 figures. However, a trend of reduction in the volume of openly-advertised exhibition opportunities since 2009 becomes more apparent by reviewing the period 2007-2009.

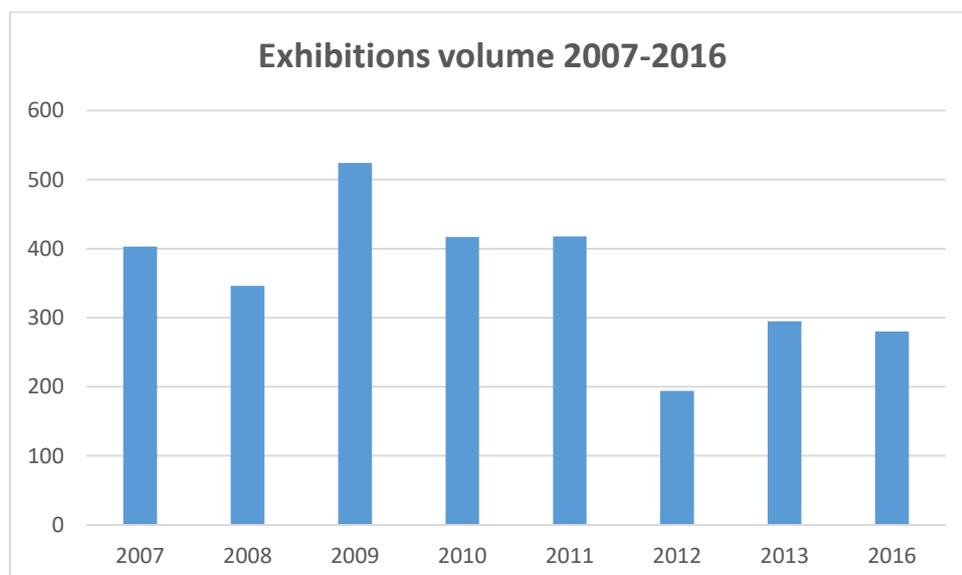


Figure 7: Reducing exhibition opportunity for artists

EXHIBITION TYPES – ILLUSTRATION

Within artist-run ventures, KARST and Platform Arts Belfast called for proposals to exhibit in the gallery programme, and Airspace Gallery to show work in the gallery window space. Within temporary or short-term ventures, Centrespace Gallery Bristol, Hidden Studios Altrincham, Edinburgh Art Festival, Fringe Arts Bath and Glasgow Open Houses sought artists' applications for pop-up or temporary shows or festival projects. With the exception of Airspace which offered a £100 artist's fee, opportunities in both artist-run spaces and temporary projects, made no mention of paying fee or expenses.

Although artists' proposals were invited by Oriel Davies in Wales for inclusion in the 'Imaginary Worlds' group exhibition, the exhibitions category contained no entries inviting artists to apply for selection for the exhibition programmes of galleries in the funding portfolios of the arts councils of England, Scotland or Northern Ireland. It is thus not possible within this Research paper to ascertain either the scope or levels of fees paid to artists in 2016 for exhibiting in publicly-funded galleries.

Competitions

Open competitions and prizes are valued by artists at all career stages, as being selected on artistic merit provides them with exposure to art world and public interest as well as to potential income from prizes and sales. However, in 2016 there was less value in the category of competitions and the average value of a competition was lower. When compared with 2013, the total value of competitions and prizes in 2016 reduced by 20% and the average value by 8%.



Figure 7: Value of competitions 2007-2016

COMPETITION TYPES – ILLUSTRATION

The 20th National Open Art Competition in 2016, open to amateur and professional artists, attracted 3,200 entries and provided £60,000 in prize money in various categories. In the Fine Art Prizes £5,000 went to Juliet Robertson, £3,000 to Kate Mieczkowska and £2,000 to Michael Calver.

The Jerwood Drawing Prize offered a £8,000 first prize, £5,000 second prize and two £2,000 student awards. “Selected from original drawings, the exhibition provides a platform to showcase the work of UK-based drawing practitioners, from student to established, and as a project helps to define a wider understanding of the role and value of drawing in creative practice.”

Open to painters at any career stage, The Marmite Prize selected 39 artists in 2016 with winning artist Mary Heilmann awarded a 4-week residency in London and £500 expenses and runners-up Emma Cousin and Sheila Rennick getting “a pat on the back”

The Young Sculptor of the Year award is open to North East artists aged 18-25, is sponsored by the Gillian Dickinson Trust and offered by Cheeseburn Sculpture. The 2016 winner Dan Gough was awarded a £6,500 commission to make new work with mentoring support, spending nine months at the National Glass Centre producing

Scurry, an outdoor installation of 2,000 ceramic squirrels temporarily sited at Cheeseburn.

Arts employers

In 2016, the HE/FE sector which offered 42% of all paid work was the largest UK employer type. Arts organisations which provided 31% of all opportunities by value were in second place. Although between 2009 and 2011 employer patterns remained fairly steady, with the HE/FE sector the major employer, by 2012 arts organisations and the HE/FE sector were neck-and-neck, with local authority employment in third place.

However in 2013, employment from arts organisations had grown to 33% while employment from local authorities, which in 2010-12 had provided 9-10% of work, dropped to just 3%. In 2016 employment from local authorities reduced to 2%. A factor in this trend of decline is likely to be the reduction in local authority arts budgets, which between 2009 and 2014 were cut by 11%. Note also in terms of the future employment of artists from this sector, a survey in 2016 [of local authorities in England and Wales](#) [1] revealed that 37% of them had neither a dedicated arts officer nor directly delivered arts services.

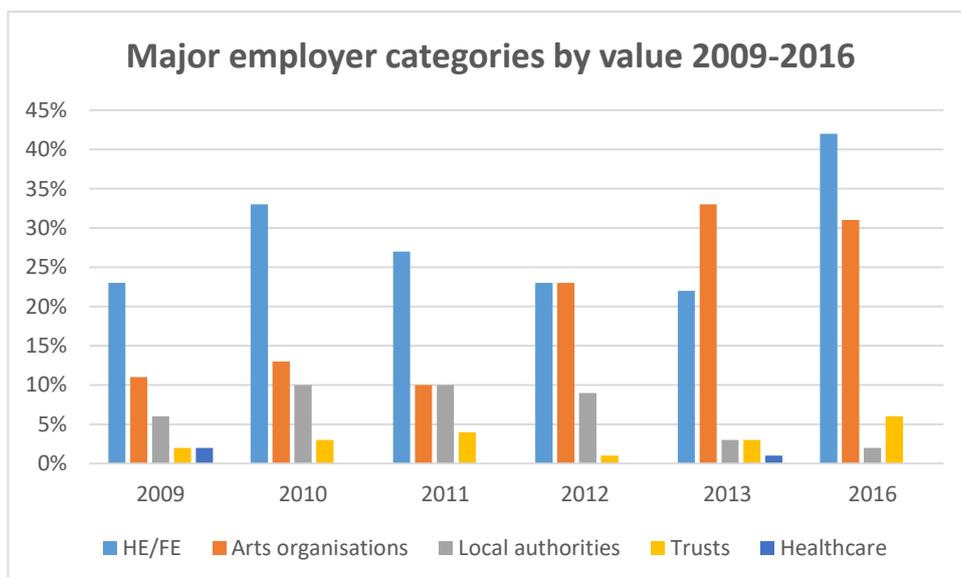


Figure 8: Major employer categories by value 2009-2016

In terms of future trends in artists' employment, analysis of the 2016 data reveals that the average value of employment from arts organisations at £5,305 is considerably less financially lucrative for artists than that coming from local authorities, where the average value was £11,800.

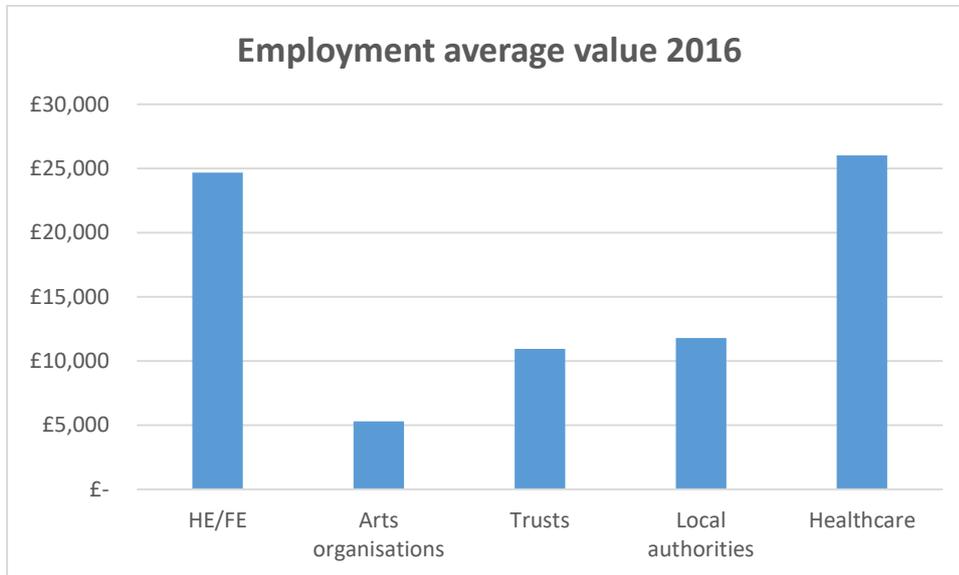


Figure 9: Employment average value 2016

Matters arising

Artists work in 2016 forms part of an on-going series which draws attention to shifts in the underlying conditions for artists' employment. It provides an indication of the extent to which employment for artists takes the form of short-term projects which are offered on a freelance basis.

Within the creative industries, of which the visual arts is part, some 47% of workers are self-employed [2]. Research by a-n has found that at least half of all visual artists are self-employed, and when those with self-employed and employed status in parallel are included, the figure rises to 81%. [3, 4]. Thus within these creative industries, visual artists are more likely to be those for whom 'looking for work' is a constant and continuous activity and having immediate access to paid opportunities is paramount to the pursuit of an artistic practice over time.

In the light of this context and the evidence contained in this Research paper about the employment prospects for artists in 2016, three underlying factors have been

identified. Firstly, the volume of opportunities for visual artists to earn income nowadays appear relatively small. Secondly, these openly-offered opportunities offer relatively low levels of monetary value and thus appear to make little contribution to artists' overall financial security. Thirdly, realising income expectations and artistic development are premised on visual artists being able to demonstrate certain attitudes and behaviours, in that they need to have an interest in, and ability to go wherever the work is, to continually adapt their practices to the needs and expectations of employers, and be capable of managing multiple personal and professional priorities while navigating the differing types and weights of artistic employment.

These factors in combination form the operating conditions for contemporary visual artists which affect not only the scope and quality of artistic practices, but impact on artists' ability to forge and sustain their lives and careers over a life-time have informed the key questions which follow.

- **Is portfolio working undermining artists' creativity and their livelihoods?**

It was Summerton [5] who first suggested that some visual artists have an active preference for portfolio working, although Galloway [6] concluded that the inherent unpredictability and financial uncertainty of it can undermine artists' creative activity. McRobbie [7] found that within the creative industries as a whole, portfolio workers were holding down three, or even four usually short-term projects at once, these alongside other jobs taken on to cover gaps in work. However, research by the Creative Industries Federation [2] concluded that the creative freelancer's portfolio is now wider, with most doing contracted work, and over half taking on an average of one to 10 contracts each year, some doing this alongside part-time employment, and others combining different sorts of freelance work over the year.

However, the nature of portfolio working presents both financial and cultural disadvantages. Research by Ball [8] into arts graduates, of whom nearly half were portfolio workers, showed that livelihood was undermined because the more of a portfolio worker they were, the less they earned. It should be noted in this respect

that in 2016, 28% of all the openly-offered awards, commissions, competitions and residency opportunities didn't offer any money to artists, and that the average value of work from arts organisations, is low when compared with work offered by HE/FE, local authorities, trusts and healthcare.

An economic impact report in 2013 [9] showed that although full-time earnings in the arts had risen by 6.8% in the five years prior, part-time earnings – one might surmise these to include freelancers and artists – decreased by 5.3%. As indicated in this Research paper, there has been a 17% decline in the value of work for artists since 2007. Furthermore, for individual artists and their livelihoods, the decline is more significant when the relative value or purchasing power is taken into consideration. In order to match the purchasing power of 2007, the 2016 overall value figure of £22.18m would need to be 54% greater at £34.16m.

This suggests that it is appropriate to refine and enhance the scope of publicly-funded commissions and residences in particular and to realign arts budgets and allocation of artists' fees to better reflect contemporary costs of a freelance practice and the value artists contribute to the success of the visual arts.

- **Should publicly-funded opportunities be openly-advertised?**

This report shows a trend of decline since 2009 in the volume and value of openly-advertised exhibition opportunities and competitions. These opportunities which enable artists to submit examples of their art work are of particular benefit to those with studio-based practices including painters, printmakers and applied artists, whether at early or mid-career stage, who haven't achieved sufficient visibility through exhibitions or gallery representation. Once selected, even if the artist doesn't win a prize, being exhibited amongst peers enhances public and art world profile, contributing to career progression and increasing the potential for sales in future [10]. Notable past examples of this ripple effect on career trajectories include Tracey Emin who was selected for the 1989 Royal Over-Seas League's exhibition and Chris Ofili winning the £300 prize in that year's Young Contemporaries. [11]

Research within a-n's Paying artists campaign [12] to reaffirm good exhibition practice and fair pay for artists in publicly-funded galleries indicates that opportunity for artists to submit their work for consideration by exhibition curators is rare. Exceptions include galleries such as Cardiff-based g39 which "invites submissions from artists throughout the year" and Brighton-based Fabrica which selects artists through "a variety of methods, including open calls for submissions and limited calls". [13]

Although a-n first reported on this phenomena in 2008 [14], no attempt has as yet been made to track or systematically analyse the volume or value of 'nominated' opportunity. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the trend to identify artists for publicly-funded exhibition and commission opportunity by recommendation may be on the increase.

RECOMMENDATION ROUTE – ILLUSTRATION

[Meeting Point 2](#) supported by Arts Council England's Museum Resilience Fund used the recommendation route to identify 30 artists who were invited to submit proposals for ten commissions of £10,000 for new installations in ten museums in the North of England in 2017.

The [Liverpool Biennial International Showcasing](#) scheme, funded by Arts Council England, provided ten artists working in the North of England with Associate status and £12,000 expenses each to participate in showcasing opportunities and improve their visibility through mentoring and networking, including showing during the 2016 Liverpool Biennial.

However, being on the radar of nominators is dependent on artists first having the opportunity to become visible. To 'get noticed' and achieve artistic success on merit, artists need to have their work in exhibitions and discussed by peers, other artists, critics, curators and academics. The decline in openly-offered exhibition and competition opportunities in favour of the recommendation route inhibits this. By doing so, it contributes to the inequality of opportunity which prevails in the creative industries where research shows that because employment opportunities

are handed on within a 'club culture', the ability for individuals to 'get on' is dependent less on their merit and more on their 'network sociality'. [7]

Furthermore, this Research paper demonstrates that while the volume of work deriving from arts organisations is on the increase, there has been a notable decline since 2009 in artists' employment from local authorities whose policies specifically uphold equality and diversity through offering opportunities openly. Although the recommendation route helps to control administrative time and costs in cash-strapped arts organisations, if the trend in publicly-funded visual arts organisations to favour this route over open application were to become more prevalent, for some constituencies of artists it is likely to contribute to amplifying the inherent disadvantages the creative industries create for creative careers and livelihoods.

A policy which expects that publicly-funded opportunities are openly-offered would ensure that those artists worthy of support and exposure, whether they are located outwith the urban conurbations the creative industries inhabit or unable for any reason to participate in the 'sociality' and networking which can make artists visible within selection and curatorial networks, do not suffer greater degrees of disadvantage as they seek to develop artistic careers and sustain livelihoods. [15]

Conclusion

Research has already concluded that the prevailing conditions of the creative industries are more conducive to workers under 35, and present inherent disadvantages for those from ethnic minority groups and for disabled people, as well as for women with or wishing to take on family responsibilities.[16, 17] However, the commitment to reducing social and economic disadvantage and inequality across the publicly-funded arts is clearly stated and the impact of remedial strategies are measured both at policy and delivery levels. [18]

Within this imperative, and in parallel with the Paying Artists and Valuing Artists ambitions [18] to devise a fair and flexible solution for artists exhibiting in publicly-funded galleries, it would be timely for the visual arts sector to reassess and reconfirm what constitutes and demonstrates good practice across the gamut of

arrangements between artists and public-sector employers, to ensure the constraints identified in this Research paper, such as portfolio working and what may be a trend to favour the recommendation route over open submission, do not undermine either the quality of the visual arts or the livelihoods of artists in future.

Method

The data source and analysis in this Research paper is the database of opportunities and jobs as published by a-n for a membership of 21,000 artists and arts professionals, over the calendar year of 2016. References and comparisons are made to prior reports in the series which have used this same method of data collection and to related published material, as cited in *References*.

Each of the entries in the 2016 database has been assessed individually, to capture details of the nature, scope and financial value and to calculate volume whether the entry contains more than (for example) one prize, residency, award or commission and the overall financial value. In instances where data is unclear or too brief to glean these details, further checking is done back to original sources, provided these are accessible online. While material in all categories are noted, the emphasis in these reports since 2005 has been on tracking changes within the key categories of awards, commissions, competitions, exhibitions and residencies. The employers' analysis follows the categories first established in 2009, segmented into UK HE/FE, local authorities, trusts, healthcare bodies and arts organisations. Falling into this latter category, which encompasses both publicly-funded and commercial ventures, are galleries, independent art agencies, cultural institutions and other arts projects including those which are artist-led.

It should be noted that the data and analyses do not represent the full gamut or total volume of employment opportunities there may have been for artists in that period, as many of these are not subject to open submission or application.

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