

# Arts Entrepreneurship Scope, Practice and Community

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## **PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP, PART 2**

William B. Gartner, Copenhagen Business School and California Lutheran University

Joseph Roberts, Webster University

Mark Rabideau, DePauw University

This is the second in our opinion series, “Perspectives,” in which we invite *Artivate*’s editorial board members and contributors to respond to open-ended prompts about their position in relation to arts entrepreneurship; how arts entrepreneurship is situated in relation to other disciplines or fields; what problems we are grappling with as scholars, practitioners, teachers, and artists; and what are the research questions we are attempting to answer individually or as a field. Following, you will find responses from: William B. Gartner, Professor of Entrepreneurship at Copenhagen Business School and California Lutheran University; Joseph Roberts, Director of the Coleman Fellows Program, Associate Professor of management at Webster University, and co-editor of *Artivate*; and Mark Rabideau, Director of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Musician program at DePauw University.

### **Arts Entrepreneurship: Scope, Practice and Community**

*William B. Gartner*

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I have struggled with writing this short article on arts entrepreneurship. What I thought would take merely a day or so to write has now consumed significantly more time. The challenge: a few thoughts about what “arts entrepreneurship” is, how might “arts entrepreneurship” be situated vis-à-vis other disciplines and subjects, and, what might be the relevant problems and questions to address in “arts entrepreneurship.” The scope of this challenge is overwhelmingly daunting. To offer a précis on “arts entrepreneurship” is the problem of Pascal’s muse: “I have made this letter longer than usual, only because I have not had time to make it shorter.” I realize this effort to write about “arts entrepreneurship” requires a much longer piece that, I hope, might be developed and published in the future. Be-that-as-it-may...

I have written about how entrepreneurship, as a subject of scholarly inquiry, intersects a variety of disciplinary topics, such as: philosophy, history, economics, sociology, psychology, political science, religion, literature, linguistics, and, the arts (Gartner, 2014). The idea that I promulgate is that the nexus of entrepreneurship with other disciplines will produce two results: (1) How and why a particular discipline takes on an entrepreneurial sensibility (for example, how artists act in entrepreneurial ways); and (2) How entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, could be better understood through another disciplinary lens (that is, the theories and methods in the arts may be used to explore and understand entrepreneurship, itself). I am interested in both perspectives: how entrepreneurship contributes to the arts, and how the arts contribute to entrepreneurship. Bringing these two broad perspectives together is more than challenging as these literatures and modes of scholarship require a substantial investment in time and effort to reach some level of expertise. What follows is my sense of what is necessary to gain some modicum of insight into entrepreneurship scholarship. I hope that art scholars will also offer some suggestions for how entrepreneurship scholars might enter their world.

Narrowing in on what “entrepreneurship” exactly, “is,” can be a bit of a conundrum. Definitions abound (Gartner, 1990) that address, in degrees of difference, issues about such

words as: entrepreneur, owner-manager, innovation, organization creation, uniqueness, value, and growth. There is no convergence on a specific definition, but the discussion of entrepreneurship is likely to include the above words rather than others. I gravitate towards viewing entrepreneurship as an organizing activity (Gartner, 1985; 1988; 2008) or, more recently as “organizing emergence” (Gartner, 2014). My empirical research and most of my writing (c.f., Gartner, in press) focuses on how individuals “organize” organizations: typically a focus on new independent for-profit businesses. Yet, organizing, as a phenomenon, can occur in various formats and situations that are not necessarily businesses, or for-profit, or, for that matter, anything other than a phenomenon that is assembled in a way that is: intentional, requires resources, bounded in scope, and entails exchanges between others (Katz & Gartner, 1988). The idea of “organizing” then, has connections to both Schumpeter’s (1934) ideas about entrepreneurship as the creation of new combinations (e.g., markets, products, materials, organizations themselves, etc.), and Weick’s (1979) ideas about organizing.

So, I am hesitant to champion my viewpoint on what entrepreneurship “is” as the primary lens to view the phenomenon. It would behoove those scholars from outside the entrepreneurship area to explore the field more comprehensively by starting with Brush, et. al.’s (2003) effort to identify the scope of the entrepreneurship field. A bonus of this article is that it offers an introductory reading list for those beginning their scholarly careers in the entrepreneurship field. I would also suggest current comprehensive overviews of the entrepreneurship field, such as Baker and Welter (2015) and Fayolle (2014) And, please undertake a Google search using the words “doctoral program reading lists in entrepreneurship.” Such a search will surface a number of reading lists that will provide overviews of the entrepreneurship field (particularly the excellent list prepared by Jerry Katz at Saint Louis University). It would be of great value for those writing in the arts entrepreneurship area to have some awareness of this knowledge base.

I cannot say I have any great awareness of the arts as it is related to entrepreneurship outside of Beckman (2015), Caves (2000), Essig (2013), Henry (2007) and Scherdin & Zander (2011). I would value having arts scholars offer insights into what arts scholarship entails, particularly in terms of providing reading lists on the theories and methods by which the arts are studied.

My belief (Gartner, 2013; Gartner, Davidsson & Zahra, 2006) about how scholarship develops in a field assumes “progress” based on the cumulative development of knowledge generated from scholars who are familiar with each other’s work. My hope is that the articulation of reading lists in both entrepreneurship and the arts will help the arts entrepreneurship field coalesce in a way that we can develop a community of “writers and readers.” The arts entrepreneurship area will only grow as a scholarly community when there is a concerted effort to read each other’s work and engage in dialogue through writing. Currently, scholarship tends to solidify around writing that appears in journals (such as *Artivate*). I am sure, in the not to distant future, other forms of communication may supplant journal articles, but, until then.... it is journal articles, books and monographs that will comprise the core of what scholarship “is” in arts entrepreneurship. We need to write more (and read what our colleagues write).

Assuming then, that scholars might have some shared knowledge about the arts and entrepreneurship, and, based on my ignorance of the arts, here is the one broad question I would like the arts entrepreneurship field to address. (Obviously, this issue reflects my interests rather than what might be more valuable or interesting to the arts entrepreneurship scholarly community, as a whole.) My apologies if the question I ask has already been answered; if so, please alert me to this information.

*How do artists organize themselves, both in terms of how they generate art, and, in how what is produced, as art, is valued and exchanged?*

I assume that there are various forms of artistic practice (e.g., performance arts, visual arts, etc.) that are organized in different ways. Also, that there are various ways that value is produced and perceived for these artistic practices and valued through some kind of exchange function. This is a more nuanced way of asking: “How do artists make money?” The question I pose recognizes that “art” is both a product of organizing as well as a sensibility in how organizing, itself, occurs. So, there would likely be an “organizing aesthetic” that artists are sensitive too that informs and guides organizing artistic practices. This question should also imply that there are various contexts in which artistic practices occur and that these contexts influence how and why entrepreneurial activities occur. So, for example, “dance” occurs in various contexts, and is therefore both influenced by established institutional structures in where, how and why “dance” as an artistic practice is valued by others. There are likely to be ways that “dance” is valued in certain established forms (e.g., a state subsidized ballet company, a not-for-profit modern dance company, an independent choreographer, etc.) that might be termed as the normal “rules of the game.” Then, there are ways that artists push the boundaries of the “rules of the game” to institute both new artistic forms, but, also new ways in which these forms are valued by others. This is where “entrepreneurship” as some form of practice intersects the arts and where it connects to phenomenon of entrepreneurship as both Schumpeter’s (1934) new combinations, and, how those new combinations are, themselves, organized (e.g., Weick, 1979). So, whether this view of arts entrepreneurship is interesting (Davis, 1971) to other scholars besides myself will depend on you, the reader. I look forward to your thoughts and efforts as they appear in *Artivate* as we form this community of writers and readers creating this new field of “arts entrepreneurship.”

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### **Entrepreneurship in the Arts**

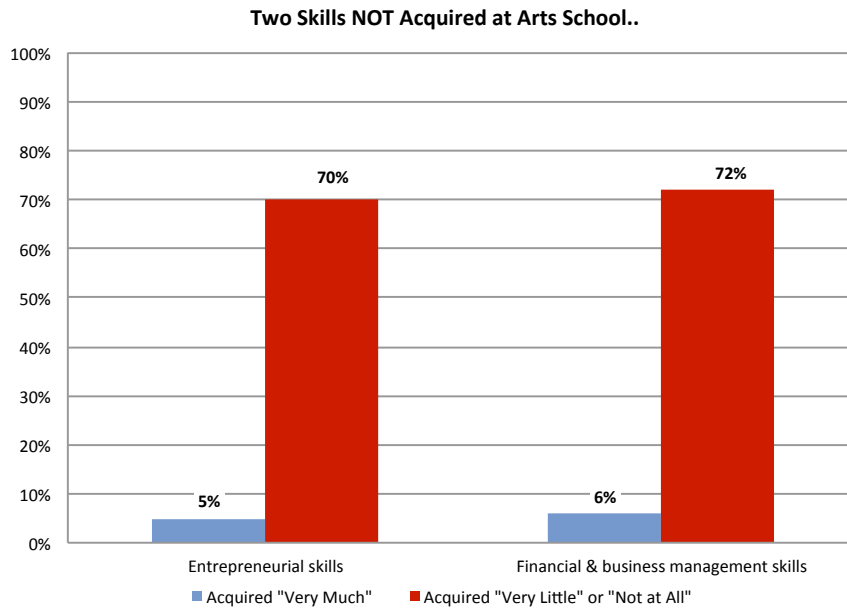
*Joseph Roberts*

*Webster University*

“When bankers get together for dinner, they discuss Art. When artists get together for dinner, they discuss Money” – Oscar Wilde

Arts Entrepreneurship educators and researchers over the years have found it somewhat difficult to define what arts entrepreneurship is or is not and outline a generally acceptable process to enable the work of the artist whereby one can make a living by practicing his or her passion for the arts. The starving artist myth that was romanticized more than a century ago has endured and perhaps helped create a divide between the arts and business. This division seems to be perpetuated by purists and practitioners alike, thus further separating the world of arts and the world of business.

In addition, it is somewhat disheartening to see survey results such as the one shown following:



Source: Strategic National Arts Alumni Project, 2011-2012

Artists are typically creative individuals and can present stimulating illustrations of life, culture, current events and nature as they observe them for their own edification and that of others. In doing so artists perhaps forget that they are themselves “producers” and “consumers” of such representations. Consider the case of Estonia, which went from a Soviet controlled central socio-economic system to a capitalistic socio-economic system almost overnight. Kristin Orav (2015) presents an interesting viewpoint of the arts in this period in Estonia that perhaps can be extrapolated to develop a post-structuralist outlook for this discussion.

“Self-Employment” in the arts is implied as “Unemployment” in the arts in some circles today. In “The Divide between Subsistence and Transformational Entrepreneurship” Antoinette Schoar (2010) argues that there are barriers that subsistence entrepreneurs, like arts entrepreneurs, cannot overcome to become successful transformational entrepreneurs who develop large-scale firms and sometimes entire new industries. One such barrier is the lack of clear pathways subsistence entrepreneurs can pursue to develop larger firms and the other is possibly a lack of desire to pursue such goals. Either way the intent as suggested here is not to add to this division but create a platform that acknowledges subsistence entrepreneurship that describes a majority of arts entrepreneurs and help them achieve success in their own terms. The expectation that such subsistence entrepreneurs should become transformational entrepreneurs is flawed and hopefully can be modified as we explore how we can develop a generally acceptable definition and process for arts entrepreneurs.

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## **AE 2.0: Moving beyond the single arts entrepreneurship course model**

*Mark Rabideau  
DePauw University*

*Artivate*'s newly-launched "Perspectives" series challenges contributors to reflect upon the questions we are grappling with in our own research and teaching with the hope that these same issues resonate with the challenges and opportunities facing our readership. As I reflect upon the Sisyphean-efforts of colleagues from across the country honing pedagogical models and guiding students toward meaningful, project-based outcomes - often as one-man-bands functioning within a one-course model - I want to take a few moments and muse about what might lie beyond the single arts entrepreneurship course model.

The increasing role arts entrepreneurship now plays within our arts programs speaks to what I believe must be the core definition of a 21st Century education – preparing the next generation of change agents to make the world a better place. Considering whence we have come, arts entrepreneurship's newly legitimized standing is praiseworthy. Yet we must not lose sight of the bigger picture amidst these narrow victories. Among the early adopters who have embraced arts entrepreneurship within the curriculum, 13 now offer a certificate, 14 have adopted minors, and 66 offer a single course (Korzen, 2015). Simply put, there is more work to be done and much of what lies ahead will not find a home within the scope of a single class entitled "Arts Entrepreneurship 101." The field of arts entrepreneurship must remain forward-looking as we envision what is truly required to prepare artists from across disciplines to navigate within the shifting cultural landscape of the contemporary moment.

Situating much of my own scholarship at the intersection of the innate characteristics of the artist and entrepreneur - curiosity, creativity, collaboration, and tenacity - I find the "Perspectives" format freeing, as I imagine ways of connecting the shared worldview of the artist and the entrepreneur toward developing pedagogical practices that weave the entrepreneurial mindset throughout traditional curricular offerings of arts programs, and timely, as I transition into a new role as Director of the 21st-Century Musician Initiative, the new focus of the School of Music at DePauw University. What captivated me when first reading about 21CM efforts was this compelling phrase: "The 21st-Century Musician Initiative is a complete re-imagining of the skills, tools and experiences necessary to create musicians [think: all artists] of the future..." It begs the question: Is someone actually completely re-imagining how we prepare students for the uncertainty that lies ahead? And if so, how can we apply these efforts more broadly when developing an entrepreneurial mindset across the performing, visual and functional arts?

My role is to help facilitate broad-ranging initiatives well underway, including redefining the relationship between performer and audience through innovative concert series, creating intimate experiences for students to engage with living composers, fostering deeper relationships within the community by opening a storefront venue on the town square, and developing new courses with rich, descriptive titles such as "Chasing the Perfect Performance," "Funding Priceless Ideas," and "Psychographic Research," to complement core arts entrepreneurship classes on the "State of the Art," "Arts Entrepreneurship," and internship opportunities. Each of these dramatic steps moves the profession closer toward preparing emerging musicians to play in the messy, fertile space of the artist-entrepreneur. What stands out most notably? Faculty throughout the school, not only the singular arts entrepreneurship "expert" or an administrative

mandate is launching these efforts. The results? A more integrated approach and a more relatable model for students who self-define as musicians first.

It is my deep belief that all opportunities reside at the local level. The challenges and excitement unfolding at DePauw are likely vastly different than the internal obstacles and dynamic opportunities that can unfold within your community. So our shared challenge is to build synergy across a unique set of local conditions. What I am certain of, if Arts Entrepreneurship 2.0 is to come about, is that it must thrive in non-curricular spaces, as much as be infused across curricular initiatives; cross pollinate among faculty, regardless of generational boundaries, traditional silos, and tenured lines; and unite campus and community, with particular attention to those at the margins of society. It is time to re-imagine what lies beyond the one-course model of arts entrepreneurship and begin weaving innovative experiences throughout the broader student experience. Our charge is to prepare students for a professional life of means, meaning, and the opportunity to give back, equipped to thrive within the world they will soon inherit, a world rife with challenges, yet ripe with opportunities. This can only come to fruition when we as a profession re-imagine our work as one that leverages the shared habits and characteristics of the artist and entrepreneur, toward creating a generation of artist-entrepreneurs, ushering beauty into our communities and around the world.

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