Editorial Perspectives

What’s Past is Prologue

To launch Volume 12 of Artivate and mark the editorial team transition, we offer the following set of editorial essays to help catalyze conversations and contributions on the past and future of the field. The first is by outgoing coeditors Paul Bonin-Rodriguez and Neville Vakharia, who reflect on the field-building focus of their tenure and some of their key accomplishments. Their excellent retrospective is followed by essays from each of the new coeditors, exploring the origins and nature of their relationship to the field of arts entrepreneurship as well as the evolving topics those origins inspire.

We hope that these essays encourage a similar reflection among our community and foster a more expansive conversation and examination of entrepreneurship in the arts.

Artivate: A Field-Building Project

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We write at this moment of transition as outgoing editors not just to capture some of the institutional history of Artivate but also to articulate the goal we pursued during our terms. From the beginning of our service, we agreed that Artivate is a field-building project that supports not only the study and practice of arts entrepreneurship but also the increased number of faculty at universities pursuing this topic and a mix of practitioners and scholars.

We became coeditors of Artivate in the fall of 2018, taking the reins from Linda Essig, who had invited us to serve together. We both agreed that serving as coeditors was an essential condition of our acceptance. We would soon recognize that Linda had chosen us
well. Our scholarship and backgrounds are complementary. Paul is the head of Performance as Public Practice, a performance studies MA, MFA, and PhD program at the University of Texas at Austin. His scholarship draws from performance studies methodologies and considers the social sciences. Neville is the Associate Dean of Research and Planning at Drexel University and brings an analytical and quantitative approach to understanding entrepreneurship, innovation, and organizational change.

Linda Essig co-founded the journal with Gary D. Beckman, and the two served as coeditors for the first four issues. Joseph Roberts stepped in as coeditor and editor, respectively, for the following two issues. Then Linda served as the sole editor for the following eight issues, with one of those issues (6.2 Summer 2017) being guest edited by Maria Rosario Jackson (now Chair of the NEA) and Greg Esser (now working at the intersection of community development and arts and culture). Under Linda’s visionary and enduring leadership, Artivate emerged as the first peer-reviewed journal dedicated solely to arts entrepreneurship. Most of the journal’s editorial board appeared as journal authors for scholarly articles and/or editorials as well as book reviews in Artivate’s first seven years.

During that time, Artivate produced thirteen issues and published forty articles, nine book reviews, and a four-part series of editorials on the definition of arts entrepreneurship. Between the winter of 2019 and the spring of 2023, we produced nine issues and published thirty-three articles, ten book reviews, and one editorial series. We have hosted three guest edited volumes with Mark Clague and Susan Badger Booth; Monika Herzig; and Adrienne Callander and Johanna K. Taylor.

Our first issue as coeditors was published at Arizona State University, where Linda had been a professor. After Linda’s departure from Arizona State, we found a new home at the University of Arkansas with Linda’s guidance. Reaching a deal for us to become the university’s first free, open-access journal, under the prestigious University of Arkansas Press Artivate moved past its initial ad hoc approach—no more writing on shared drives, sending endless emails between authors and peer reviewers, while carefully checking to ensure anonymity was maintained. Our second issue was published on the Open Journal Systems (OJS) journal management and publishing platform, automating our workflows and improving the quality of communications among editors, authors, and reviewers. This significant step also enhanced the legitimacy and reach of Artivate.

Assessing what we published, and categorizing the articles on discrete terms, we note that Artivate focused heavily on the education of arts entrepreneurs (ten articles). Some of these included “The Great Generalization: Organizational Adaptation Strategies as Entrepreneurship in Higher Music Education” (Spring 2022), by Jacob Hertzog; “Universities as Cultural Anchors: Moving Beyond Bricks and Mortar to Entrepreneurship, Workforce, and Community Development Approaches” (Fall 2021), by Amanda Ashley and Leslie Durham; and “Entrepreneurial Pathways in Art” (Spring 2021), by Kaisu Tuominiemi and Scott Benzenberg.

Drawing on two domains from “Investing in Creativity” (Jackson, et. al. 2003), we note
that we also devoted considerable space to the influence of arts entrepreneurs in particular “communities and networks” (nine articles). Some of these examples include “The Network Effect of Arts Incubators” (Fall 2021), by Stan Renard and Gianluca Zanella; “Advancing Equity in Arts Entrepreneurship” (Spring 2022), by Charlie Wall-Andrews and Mary Elizabeth Luka; and “Effectual Entrepreneurship in the Arts: The Story of Austin Classical Guitar” (Fall 2021), by Jonathan Gangi.

Broadly, we devoted slightly less space to the same study’s category of “markets and demands” (eight articles). Half focus on particular markets, such as “Meta-Analysis on the Importance of Entrepreneurship in Canada’s Music Industry” (Fall 2022), by Charlie Wall-Andrew; “Measuring Arts Markets: The Colorado Art Market in 2017” (Summer 2019), by Jeffrey Taylor, Mayela Cardenas, and Stephanie Edwards; and “Building a Heavy Metal World: Entrepreneurship in the Polish People’s Republic” (Spring 2021), by Dominic Athanassiou and George Musgrave. About half of the articles in this category focus on issues of individual and organized labor as opposed to the greater systemic forces or concerns. These articles include “Making Detroit Sound Great: the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and its Post-Strike Transformations” (Spring 2020), by Nathinee Chucerdwatanasak; and “Motivations and Intentionality in the Arts Portfolio Career” (Spring 2022), by Karen Munnelly.

To a lesser extent, we focused on arts policy and entrepreneurship (three articles), theory (two articles), and technology (one), with articles such as “Learning from Negative Space: Categorizing Success in Arts Policy Entrepreneurship” (Winter 2019), by Brea Heidelberg; “A Theory of Arts Entrepreneurship as Organizational Attack” (Summer 2019), by Jason C. White; and “Art and the Blockchain: a Primer, History, and Taxonomy of Blockchain Use Cases in the Arts” (Winter 2019), by Amy Whitaker, respectively. Finally, seven of these articles raised arts entrepreneurship in international contexts in Africa, Europe, Poland, and Canada.

When we compare our article publishing details with usage data, we note that our editorial choices, determined by the submissions we received, demonstrate a marginal, even ambivalent, relationship to the information our readers sought. During our tenure, the most viewed and downloaded article was Amy Whitaker’s “Art and the Blockchain,” with five hundred eighty-nine document accesses of the whole article (i.e., five hundred eighty-nine PDF downloads). However, running a close second is “The Great Generalization: Organizational Adaptation Strategies as Entrepreneurship in Higher Music Education” by Jacob Herzog (five hundred seventy-one PDF downloads), followed closely by “Universities as Cultural Anchors: Moving Beyond Bricks and Mortar to Entrepreneurship, Workforce, and Community Development Approaches,” by Amanda Ashley and Leslie Durham (499 PDF downloads).

The truth is that Artivate’s articles regularly defied strict categorization. Entrepreneurial effectuation is a market and labor concern as much as an opportunity to recognize and engage the community. Arts entrepreneurship education tethers theory to practice in
local contexts. Social and digital technologies are an omnipresent part of our lives. What we gain from the assessment is an understanding of how our field continues to build itself through the engagement of its scholars, artists, and activists. We offer this information to our successors to guide and support their efforts going forward as they continue cultivating and growing Artivate's field-building successes.

**Metallica, Molson, and (Too) Much Music: A Call for Trauma-Informed Arts Entrepreneurship**

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Labor Day Weekend in Canada. The year was 1995. The place was Tuktoyaktuk, Northwest Territories, Canada. An invited crowd of five hundred visitors from across North America, plus the local inhabitants of this small Inuvialuit hamlet, entered a sizable igloo-shaped tent to enjoy the sounds of four iconic 90s bands, including the headlining act—Metallica. Promoted by the Canadian beer company Molson, this Ice Polar Beach Party, as it was called, was created as a new way to advertise a brand-new beverage—Molson Ice beer—and the company's promoters worked for months to secure this remote location. In Tuk, the event was both welcomed as an opportunity to boost the local economy and feared because it promoted the consumption of alcohol in an otherwise dry community that suffered for years from extremely high rates of substance abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome. A CBC video report and a subsequent documentary film, “The Invasion of the Beer People” (Neerenberg, 2006), portrayed the complex cultural, social, and environmental aspects of this event, showcasing how even the most well-intended corporate support and strategy can produce culturally problematic and insensitive experiences and events.

As a young exchange student at the University of Alberta, I heard and read about the above event. Reflecting on this event twenty-eight years later, I have realized how much it shaped my research interests and, ultimately, my thinking about arts entrepreneurship, its trajectory as a discipline, and its many potential futures.

As one of the three new coeditors of *Artivate*, I would like to take this opportunity to illustrate how contested cultural events such as the one I just described can help us shape our thinking as arts entrepreneurs and scholars and what possible directions I see for future work in our developing discipline. I came to arts and creative entrepreneurship in a roundabout way. I was originally trained as a cultural geographer and studied how space and place are often infused with historically contested meanings. What fascinated me about the Polar Ice Beach Party was both the corporate-community collaboration initiated by Molson and the multifaceted meanings of this event.

On the one hand, it was a celebration of and for the community of Tuktoyaktuk, with eager youth flocking to the event to see their rock and heavy metal heroes, from Courtney
Love of the band Hole to James Hetfield of Metallica. On the other hand, there was a fear of the elders that only the positive aspects of beer and partying were highlighted, not the devastating effects of this drug on Indigenous and First Nation Canadians. Historically, Tuktoyaktuk as a community had experienced its fair share of trauma, much of which was brought to it by outsiders, from whalers establishing camps at the turn of the 20th Century to the military installations of the Cold War.

As this event illustrated, cultural festivals never occur in “innocent space,” to paraphrase Henri Lefebvre (1991). Space and place are always somehow, somewhere, and somewhat produced by someone and thus not free of value judgments, historical context, cultural traditions, ideological frameworks, or economic inequities. Many spaces represent landscapes of visible and invisible trauma.

This focus on culturally embedded value creation and trauma-informed care eventually brought me to study entrepreneurship in the creative industries. I had studied the spatial significance of music and dance for community development (Kuhlke, 2004; Kuhlke & Pine, 2014) and was fascinated with how complex, singular cultural events or celebrations can create multifaceted cultural, economic, and social landscapes. Still, about ten years ago, my attention turned away from the communities experiencing these events to the actual producers of artistic experiences. For example, together with forty scholars from across the globe, I examined in 2015 how arts, cultural entrepreneurship, and creative entrepreneurship are taught, practiced, and influenced by policy (Kuhlke et al., 2015). Again, my critical insight from this collaborative work was that no entrepreneurial activity happens in a moral vacuum. What we make and produce can impact people positively and cause trauma—often simultaneously. As entrepreneurs in the creative fields, we need to pay close attention to our consumers’ collective and individual identities, from their nationality to their gender to the detailed cultural context of their communities. If arts entrepreneurship is to be beneficial for individuals, companies, and communities, the idea and planning process of such business must be conducted through a cultural lens. If the products we make, the services we offer, and the events we put on are to benefit consumers and communities, then the context, consumption, and profit-creation must be aligned, and what we make and experience must be meaningful and beneficial in the long run. Suppose we were to avoid another Molson Polar Ice Beach Party, with its rowdy, drunken musicians and guests “invading” an indigenous community, entertaining the youth, disrupting its way of life, and worrying elders. How do we need to train and prepare future generations of arts entrepreneurs?

The arts entrepreneurship I envision for the future is both cultural entrepreneurship and trauma-informed entrepreneurship. Here are some of the critical questions that I would like to put out there as conversation items for future scholarly work in arts entrepreneurship:
1. When working in and with any community in creating for-profit and nonprofit cultural products, services, or experiences, what do arts entrepreneurs need to consider when developing their value propositions and business models?

2. What constitutes cultural appropriation or commodification? Where do the moral and ethical boundaries of art production lie?

3. How have these moral and ethical boundaries shifted or been blurred in our globalizing society?

4. What should arts entrepreneurs know about trauma and trauma-informed care, and how can it help us create better relationships with customers and communities?

5. How can we minimize the harm of what we produce?

6. What constitutes culturally “safe” production?

7. Who gets to be at the table talking about what is safe, appropriate, and beneficial?

8. What exactly does trauma-informed arts entrepreneurship look like?

Do We Need More Art in Arts Entrepreneurship?

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I began thinking about entrepreneurship in the context of the arts when I worked as a philanthropoid for the Mellon Foundation in the first decade of this Century. In the wake of the 2008 financial crisis a grand narrative emerged in the US Arts and Culture sector: the business model for the arts was broken—new models were needed along with the development of new sources of earned revenues, new industry-nonprofit collaborations, and partnerships. This discourse was fueled by the need to mitigate the loss of both endowment income and contributed income in the arts sector more generally. Put another way, it was fueled by the need for funders and donors to feel less on the hook.

Importantly, nudging organizations to cultivate earned revenue streams or to partner with industry or to explore real estate ventures, e.g., was separate from nudging them to become commercial enterprises. The implicit and rather impossible entrepreneurial directive to arts nonprofits seemed to be, “Earn your way; but do not lose your way.”

When I returned to graduate school a couple of years later, my thinking was influenced by select literature in cultural economics (e.g., Richard Caves, Tyler Cowen, Alan Freeman, Bruno Frey, Arjo Klamer, David Throsby, Ruth Towse, Olav Velthuis, Burton Weisbrod, Amy Whitaker) and cultural sociology (e.g., Howard S. Becker, Pierre Bourdieu, Paul DiMaggio, Stuart Hall, Walter W. Powell, Patricia Thornton, Max Weber, and Viviana Zelizer). I also began teaching courses on the Creative Economy. I became deeply curious about “earn your way, but do not lose your way” and questions about markets, missions, and morals in organizational contexts. These dynamics inspired much of my research into
the relationship between nonprofit and commercial theater in the US and, in particular, on the influence of partnerships between the two on the aesthetics of the American Stage (see, e.g., Ragsdale, 2012; Ragsdale, 2017; Ragsdale, 2021; and Ragsdale, 2023).

Had it not been for the opportunity to be a visiting guest lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2015, commercialism and values erosion in the nonprofit arts might have continued to be my primary focus, as well as tensions between the publicness required of the nonprofit form and the ownership and autonomy that can be quite important to artists and entrepreneurs (see, e.g., Ragsdale, 2017). However, when invited to propose a course I might like to teach within the aegis of the Wisconsin School of Business, I ultimately proposed to teach a course on beauty and aesthetics. I was inspired at the time by having recently read Howard Gardner's book *Truth, Beauty and Goodness Revisited*. As someone consumed with the effects of business thinking on nonprofit leaders, I became interested in the opposite question: How do artistic practices and experiences affect business leaders? In particular, I was interested in how approaching beauty—i.e., looking at the world through an aesthetic rather than economic lens—might be a pathway for teaching something akin to business ethics. In preparing my course I began reading texts by an entirely new group of scholars, philosophers, and essayists (e.g., Russell Ackoff, Nancy Adler, John Dewey, Ellen Dissanayake, John Dobson, Maxine Greene, Mark Johnson, Iris Murdoch, Elaine Scarry, Bill Sharpe, Steven S. Taylor, Sandra Waddock, Joe Winston, and Jeanette Winterson). I eventually came to understand that there was a burgeoning field interested in my driving question: neuroaesthetics, which has been introduced to many by the recently released, excellent book by Susan Magsamen, *Your Brain on Art: How The Arts Transform Us*.

I remain interested in (1) the influence of entrepreneurial methods and thinking on the outputs and values of artists/art firms and (2) the influence of an aesthetic orientation or mindset on human development and organizational ethics. Moreover, in the past handful of years, the latter has evolved and expanded to include a whole other set of questions: the value of the often undervalued methods and practices of artists and designers on the cultivation of a range of relational capacities (empathy, emergence, meaning making, cultural competence and humility, cultural identity and expression, ecosystems thinking, comfort with discomfort, transcending boundaries, collaboration across difference) necessary to imagine and collectively realize politically pluralistic, environmentally sustainable, and socially just worlds. I entered this arena largely due to the influence of ongoing conversations with my research partner Shannon Litzenberger (dancer, choreographer, and embodiment practitioner), as well as with Robert Ransick, the Vice President of Academic Affairs at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where I now run an MA in Creative Leadership. This inquiry has been fertilized by an entirely other group of scholars (e.g., Vanessa Andreotti, Kenneth Bailey, Arturo Escobar, Jason Frasca, Tony Fry, Nelson Goodman, Mark Johnson, Iain Kerr, Susan Magsamen, Iain McGilchrest, and John Vervaeke).
In a nutshell: my current interest in arts entrepreneurship is largely the methods, practices, processes, and capacities of artists and art firms and how these, as well as the transformative power of art, might have a greater influence on the means and ends of entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, here are some enduring questions with which I continue to be engaged:

1. Following Natalie Loveless (2019, *How to Make Art at the End of the World*), are we overdue to embrace “research-creation” (i.e., the ways that artistic practices are or might be understood as both method and output in higher education) for the sake of both arts entrepreneurship scholarship and pedagogy?

2. Building on my contribution to the Futurecasting Glossary edited for Vol. 11 Issue 3 of *Artivate*, how might the creation/worldmaking methods, practices, and processes inherent to artmaking and artfirm-making contribute to an understanding of how to collectively imagine/make new worlds—i.e., ways of relating to ourselves, each other, our built and natural worlds, history, the present, and the future?

3. Building on my contribution to Vol. 6 Issue 1 of *Artivate*, is there an inherent, underexamined, and perhaps necessarily unresolvable conflict between the autonomy or authority often required (or desired) by the artist/entrepreneur and the publicness required of the 501c3 charitable nonprofit? Does each potentially prevent the other from effectively fulfilling their respective roles vis-à-vis society?

Art Works and Art Worlds

E. Andrew Taylor
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My first job out of undergraduate studies was in journalism, at the intersection of music and technology. I had a BA in English Literature with a passion for music, musicians, and all things digital. So, a Managing Editor role at a small consumer digital audio magazine in Peterborough, New Hampshire, seemed an interesting fit.

When I started at *Digital Audio & Compact Disc Review* in 1986, Compact Discs were on the rise as a consumer media format. By 1988, CD sales surpassed vinyl LPs. By 1991, they overtook pre-recorded cassette tapes (Lee, 2023). The CD format was reshaping the way music was recorded, encoded, and distributed, offering new revenue streams to musicians and record labels, new opportunities for a mainstream market to experience audiophile-quality audio, and a new life for back catalogs as classic albums in all genres were remastered and re-released.

Writing and editing for the magazine offered my first front-row seat to an “art world” in transition, although I did not know Howard Becker's framing then. An *art world*, as I
would later learn, includes not only the artist and the artwork but also “all the activities that must be carried out for any work of art to appear as it finally does”—all the “patterns of collective activity” between inspiration and living practice (Becker, 1982).

As the CD format altered the terrain of recorded music, I started to notice how the expressive work of artists is shaped, channeled, amplified, and dampened by a full ecology of factors including available technology, channels of distribution, consumer and community aesthetic preferences, financial interests, social trends, conventions of creative practice, and even the shape and nature of the built environment. Artistic vision and voice were central to these worlds and their evolution, of course. However, so were social, technological, environmental, ecological, and political actions and actors. Just as a musical ensemble continually interrogates and adapts to the acoustics of their performance space, artists and others in an art world are in dialogue with the resonances, dissonances, and dead zones of their changing contexts.

I left Peterborough for Boston in 1989 to lead the development and publication of a new alumni music magazine for Berklee College of Music. And again, I witnessed the interplay of artists, artworks, and art worlds. I continued to write feature interviews with amazing musicians or producers who had just completed beautiful and compelling things. Furthermore, I started to wonder what happened upstream from that public, polished expression. What ecology (or acoustic) of people, stuff, and money made such profound creative projects possible and helped them thrive?

That led me to graduate study in Arts Administration at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and almost 30 years of teaching, researching, consulting, and supporting Arts Management practice.

My dominant focus over most of those three decades has been on formal, incorporated, not-for-profit enterprises—how they are made, how they are managed, how they wither, dither, or thrive. Nevertheless, arts entrepreneurship has always been entangled with that exploration, if not by name then by nature. Established arts nonprofits were once entrepreneurial ventures, after all. The whole concept of a nonprofit arts organization was an adaptation to a changing world. Further, tomorrow’s conventions of Arts Management practice are always under construction today.

Even Becker touched on arts entrepreneurship back in 1982, although he did not call it that:

The history of art deals with innovators and innovations that won organizational victories, succeeding in creating around themselves the apparatus of an art world, mobilizing enough people to cooperate in regular ways that sustained and furthered their idea. Only changes that succeed in capturing existing cooperative networks or developing new ones survive (Becker, 1982).

I have defined Arts Management as “the practice of aggregating and animating people, stuff, and money toward expressive ends” (Taylor, 2023). Managers tend to realize and
optimize this practice through established and conventional forms of collective action. Entrepreneurs tend to find, forge, or connect new patterns of people, stuff, and money. All of them are adaptive agents in a constellation of adaptive systems. That framing is pulling my focus now and moving forward.

Emerging biophysics and cognitive science theories suggest that any adaptive system has two ways to advance its fitness within its environment: It can shape its internal state or its external reality. In other words, it can change its thinking or its world (Friston, 2010; Sterling et al., 1988). Arts entrepreneurship can be viewed as the process and practice of doing both—making sense and taking action in new ways to advance creative expression and experience.

This framing opens an array of explorations around arts entrepreneurship, including the following ones:

1. How do the language and conventions of business shape or limit how we make sense of and take action in art worlds?
2. What other lexicons or cultural traditions—beyond a dominant North American economic lens—might inform and illuminate entrepreneurial practice in the arts?
3. How can we capture, interrogate, and analyze arts entrepreneurship initiatives from the collective or plural perspective rather than as individualistic pursuits?
4. What research or narrative methods can reveal the “patterns of collective activity” that Becker described as art worlds?
5. How might we observe and understand the evolving landscapes now shaping art worlds—inclusive and just practice, generative AI, finance and funding pathways, and others—as collective and adaptive systems?

It is an honor to work among this amazing team of coeditors to encourage these conversations and others around arts entrepreneurship.
References


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