
HOW IS DAMIEN HIRST A CULTURAL ENTREPRENEUR?

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Abstract

An on-going academic debate occupying Entrepreneurship researchers for the past several decades is concerned with defining what an entrepreneur is and what an entrepreneur does. The debate also extends to exploring the influence different types of entrepreneurs have on their environment. In the new creative economy, entrepreneurship has become a central issue for the regeneration of urban space. This essay first differentiates between economic and cultural entrepreneurs and second explores what influence cultural entrepreneurs, especially, have on urban developments. By using Damien Hirst as exemplar for the discussion of the entrepreneurial character and spheres of action, the analysis of his career demonstrates how difficult it is in practice to draw a line between artistic, cultural and commercial activities in the creative economy. Hirst's approach to contemporary conceptual art and his factory-like art production are both controversial and successful as defined by the author. Nevertheless, there seems to be agreement that his entrepreneurial artistic work has had a profound impact on the revitalization of East London and thus can be used as model for urban planners. The author posits that Hirst is a cultural entrepreneur based on this model for creating/regenerating viable economic urban spaces who embraces the blending of the artistic and market spheres.

Introduction

The true artist, in other words, should presumably be conceptualized as an entrepreneur; and just as the economic entrepreneur has his imitators and followers, so does the artist. (Swedberg, 2006, p.249)

An on-going academic debate about the definition of entrepreneurship occupies researchers on the topic. To date, there is ample research but little agreement among scholars on the definition of economic entrepreneurship, while even less agreement exists for the term cultural entrepreneurship. Is this owed to the fact that entrepreneurs are individuals about whom no generalizations can be deployed? What characterizes an entrepreneur? What distinctions can be drawn to differentiate economic and cultural entrepreneurs? How are the different types influencing and influenced by the urban environment?

This essay aims first to discern between the two entrepreneurial types (economic and cultural) and second to explore the different urban spaces with which they engage. Primarily, economic and cultural entrepreneurs can be distinguished by the industries in which they operate. To this effect the essay researches how cultural entrepreneurs explicitly nurture a city's regeneration using the example of Damien Hirst's career as it reflects the transformation of East London's creative scene. Hirst is one of the most successful and widely discussed artists of this century. The controversies around his art, person, and career make him an exemplar to elucidate the discussion about cultural entrepreneurs.

Thus, the essay has been organized in the following way: the first section treats common entrepreneurial traits, which the literature attributes to the entrepreneurial character. Through the ensuing investigation of Klamer's (2006, 2011) model of cultural valorization, economic and

cultural entrepreneurship is discerned by highlighting their different spheres of influence. Subsequently, the cultural entrepreneur's role in the creative economy is expanded, with specific focus on the impact on urban innovation. Based upon these theoretical frameworks, the second analytical section discusses the question of how Damien Hirst can be considered a cultural entrepreneur.

What distinguishes Cultural and Economic Entrepreneurs?

Entrepreneurship in an economic definition depicts "someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it" (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991). Deviating from this, cultural entrepreneurship can be understood to refer to "cultural change agents and resourceful visionaries who organize cultural, financial, social and human capital, to generate revenue from a cultural activity" (Tremblay, 2013). Still, one can benefit from a clearer definition of the terms. A juxtaposition of different theories of entrepreneurial traits exposes that both cultural as well as economic entrepreneurs are perceived as a specific type or character. So what is the difference? After elaborating on general entrepreneurial traits, this section introduces Klamer's model of cultural valorization, which proves a valuable tool for visualizing and clarifying the spheres of a cultural and economic entrepreneur's activities and influences.

Theories on Entrepreneurial Traits or Who is an Entrepreneur?

Based upon both "the creation and economic exploitation" (Moss, 2011, p.163) of tangible and intangible products for audience consumption, the arts and creative industries grant experience in return for value, mostly monetary. According to Moss, the distinction between an economic and a cultural entrepreneur is that the product created by a cultural entrepreneur, an artist for example, is an idea or inner vision that invites the consumer to individually experience it. However, this distinction is disputable when considering companies that transform their products through experiential marketing strategies into brands with the aim to elicit a specific feeling when being consumed (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). Steve Jobs, the archetype of contemporary entrepreneurs, applied this tactic to his Apple devices. Moss further discerns that to design a cultural or artistic product is a creative, collective process, requiring special qualities of the creator's personality, which are described as "entrepreneurial" (Moss, 2011, p.170). These personal qualities include leadership, creativity, innovation, future thinking (i.e. planning), risk-taking, internal locus of control, non-conformism, and energy (Moss, 2011, p.164). But are these characteristics different than what economic authors depict as entrepreneurial traits? Rauch and Frese studied the psychological attributes of an economic entrepreneur and defined the successful factors related to entrepreneurship to be: the need for achievement, strategic planning, innovation, low risk taking, internal locus of control, capable deployment of resources, and environmental adaption (Rauch & Frese, 2000, p.37f). The trait theory of entrepreneurship argues likewise, noting that observing individuals with certain creative and innovative skills and competencies such as the "propensity to take risks, ability of building on organization and managing it effectively, perseverance, and foreseeability" (Entrepreneurship Blogspot, 2008) expands the study of what constitutes entrepreneurs. The alignment of attributed characteristics in Table 1 demonstrates that there exists little difference between Moss's personal attributes, Rauch and Frese's success factors, and the skills and competencies described by the trait theory of entrepreneurship (see Table 1). All of these traits represent Schumpeter's *Unternehmergeist*, which Klamer summarizes as "successful in business, interested in the arts, willing to assume responsibility, creatively break with routines and put their money where their mouth is" (Klamer, 2006). Theorists agree that entrepreneurs have some sort of innovation agenda as they pursue

and implement their own ideas. Schumpeter repeatedly notes that the entrepreneur is “a man of action (*Mann der Tat*) to underscore the fact that what characterizes any entrepreneur is action, not ideas” (Swedberg, 2006, p. 246).

Table 1

Definitions of Entrepreneurial Traits

<u>Economic Entrepreneurs</u>	<u>Cultural Entrepreneurs</u>
“...is someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it” (Bygrave & Hofer, 1991)	“...are cultural change agents and resourceful visionaries who organize cultural, financial, social and human capital, to generate revenue from a cultural activity” (Tremblay, 2013)
“... direct their attention, experience, and action toward a business concept, set the form and direction of organizations at their inception” (Bird, 1988)	“...design products that are driven by an idea or inner vision, which invites the consumer to individually experience it” (Moss, 2011)
“...show the need of achievement, strategic planning, innovation, low risk taking, internal locus of control, capable deployment of resources and environmental adaption” (Rauch & Frese, 2000)	“...show leadership, creativity, innovation, futurism (i.e. planning), risk-taking, internal locus of control, non-conformism and energy” (Moss, 2011)
“... have propensity to take risks, ability of building on organization and managing it effectively, perseverance, and foreseeability” (EntrepreneurshipBlogspot, 2008)	“...are successful in business, interested in the arts, willing to assume responsibility, creatively break with routines and put their money where their mouth is” (A. Klamer, 2006)

Klamer’s Model of Valorization and Entrepreneurial Spheres of Action

What then, is the difference between economic and cultural entrepreneurs? Klamer’s model of cultural valorization (Figure1) provides a provisional answer: starting from the

entrepreneur her-/himself, all entrepreneurs have the *Oikos*¹ in common, meaning that they are driven by an idea or an inner vision that they strongly support. Klamer's *Oikos*-sphere represents the common denominator of attributes, skills, and competencies ascribed to "entrepreneurs" by the presented definitions. What differentiates the two types of entrepreneurs according to Klamer is the process of realization. Cultural entrepreneurs, he argues, realize values in different spheres that their economic counterparts do not: "The real challenge for the cultural entrepreneur will be to contribute to the common good that art is ... Being focused on the (cultural) content, being about the art itself and the creative process is a moral attribute of the cultural entrepreneur" (Klamer, 2011, p.154). Cultural entrepreneurs therefore have the uncompromisingly altruistic mission to provide their consumers with some kind of transcendent experience through their product. They appoint their consumers to be co-creators and need the consumer's contribution to the creative process in order to fulfill the purpose of their product, and ultimately realize their mission. Thus, cultural entrepreneurs mainly interact within the *Social Sphere*, which represents the social and cultural values that convey "a sense of meaningful life" (Klamer, 2011, p.153), such as friendships or aestheticism. According to Klamer, they perceive the *Market Sphere* as a place that follows the logic of supply and demand with the goal of monetary profit maximization. Thus to operate in a market is only a means to create an open space for the consumer's co-producing role, a space for conversation. In comparison, an economic entrepreneur might use the social contribution solely to maximize the interaction with the market: "Someone who sees in cultural trade a way of adding profit, becomes suspect as culture is his instrument and not his mission. He is rather a businessman. That does not make him a bad character but he is miscast as a cultural entrepreneur" (Klamer, 2011, p.154). In contrast to economic entrepreneurs who embrace the *Market Sphere*, the aversion of this sphere perhaps causes cultural entrepreneurs to interact with the *Governmental Sphere* in which they can find shareholders and patrons. The *Governmental Sphere* in cohesion with the *Social Sphere* facilitates communal partnerships, which extends the support, conversation and area of cultural or artistic activity. Thus, to interact within the *Governmental* and the *Social Sphere* enables cultural entrepreneurs to extensively implement their mission. In conclusion and in accordance with Klamer, the distinction between cultural and economic entrepreneurs is that cultural entrepreneurs have faith in culture and a passionate conviction to contribute to the artistic content, "everything else, including the economics, is subsidiary" (Klamer, 2011, p.155) To sum up, a successful cultural entrepreneur is "persuasive in the sense that [he/she is] able to convince good artists to work with them, bring about interest in the art, get people involved and are able to generate the necessary funds, including donations" (p.155).

Klamer outlines the theoretical conception of cultural entrepreneurs. Practically, however, the fine lines—the academic distinctions between the two entrepreneurial characters—are blurring as the overlapping spheres in Klamer's model illustrate.

¹ *Oikos* [οἶκος], Greek for eco-logy, equivalent to "household" or "family" (Cox, 1998); conceivable here as "inner household", i.e. personality, selfhood

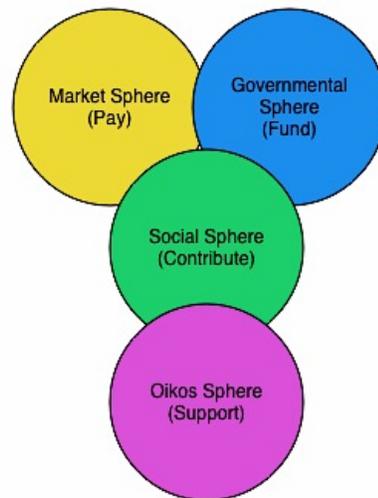


Figure 1. Cultural Valorization Model (Klamer, 2006)

Klamer discerns that just as the *Governmental Sphere* overlaps with the *Market Sphere* it likewise facilitates the moneymaking business of economic entrepreneurs by developing conducive frameworks for economic transactions (e.g. taxation, regulation). Similarly the *Social* and the *Market Spheres* interact when art and artistic services are comprehended as “common goods” that cost money in production and can be experienced by a broad public in exchange for remuneration (Arjo Klamer, 2011). He is clear to distinguish, however, that the artistic experience is singular and superior to experiences with industrial or commercial goods because the consumer’s engagement level is deeper in artistic or cultural products than in wholesale products (Klamer, 2011, Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). This circle of how artistic goods are produced and consumed illustrates the complex interaction between all spheres. Klamer therefore warns of oversimplifying and limiting the cultural entrepreneur’s scope of action to only one of the spheres: “Here you have art, there you have the market so that leaves the cultural entrepreneur with the challenge of going from here to there. This picture does not do justice to the complexities of artistic processes. The art world is not just a matter of demand and supply meeting ... and of inputs that produce an output ... Because of the commonness of art, cultural entrepreneurship has to involve more than marketing skills and sensitivity to the artistic process” (Klamer, 2011, p.153). Thus, similar to their economic counterparts cultural entrepreneurs interact with multiple spheres. Damien Hirst exemplifies this comprehensive approach of cultural entrepreneurs. His entrance into the art world supports theories of the synergies between entrepreneurial traits and actions within the creative and cultural industries and urban development.

Entrepreneurship in the Context of the Creative and Cultural Industries and within Creative Cities

In determining Damien Hirst’s role as cultural or economic entrepreneur, his work has to be put in the context of the creative and cultural industries to explore his contribution to the art market and to the urban development of London as a creative hub. To this end, the following sections introduce the creative and cultural industries concept to delineate the business sectors in which entrepreneurs work and to highlight their role in providing innovative impetus to cities.

An Approach to Defining the Cultural and Creative Economy

The terms and concepts outlined—entrepreneurship and creative industries—are descriptions of phenomena that have existed at least since the industrialization of the 1850s. Their definitions however have evolved as a consequence of globalization processes, including new information and communication technologies (ICT) and internationalization of markets (HKU, 2010). Such processes “have radically changed our environment and the way we produce and consume cultural products and services... Creativity is now acknowledged as fostering cultural, social as well as economic gains” (p.8). In this context the concept of entrepreneurship in the creative economy or cultural industries arose, which can be described as the dynamic effects of globalization on growing global “interfaces between culture, economics and technology” (BOP-Consulting, 2010, p.9). There are several terms for these industry-overlapping advancements. First labeled by the UK’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 1998, the creative or cultural industries or CCI (Hesmondhalgh, 2002) relate to the generation of knowledge “through creativity and innovation” (Landry & Bianchini, 1995, p.117). Also referred to as “creative economy,” these industries are constituted by people who work on the basis of exploiting skills and talent to create intellectual property² (Caves, 2000; DCMS, 1998; Howkins, 2001). Identified at the center of knowledge and idea creation, the CCI are characterized as a “source of innovation for the wider economy, particularly through design, branding and advertising ... [and play a role] in urban regeneration and community cohesion” (BOP-Consulting, 2010, p.12). The exploitable dissemination of intellectual property connects them through a web of knowledge to adjacent industrial sectors. Cultural industries are primarily concerned with the deliverance of cultural or social values rather than generating monetary values (Zembylas, 2005). Nonetheless, for the purpose of simplicity and to give an overview, the following list published by the DCMS recognizes twelve creative sectors: arts (fine as well as performing arts) and antique markets, crafts, design (also communication), fashion, architecture, film/ video/ photography, music, software/ computer games, publishing and advertising (DCMS, 1998).

From these deliberations on the conceptualization of CCI or the creative economy, it becomes apparent that there are myriad action spheres intertwining global cultures and industries, since creativity has become a buzzword in economic development. With a contribution of approximately 4% to the EU and U.S. GDP in 2013 and the creation of substantial employment, the CCIs provide innovative spillover effects on peripheral industries and the spaces in which they operate (National Endowment for the Arts, 2013; HKU, 2010). The British Council (2010), for instance, highlights their knock-on effect as they add value to other businesses through cultural branding, usher new educational fields, bring communities together through shared experiences and support urban regeneration (p.18). Consequently, the CCI accommodate those who have creativity and talent to pursue their own ideas either for the purpose of self-fulfillment or social inclusion (HKU, 2010). This accommodation specifically addresses cultural entrepreneurs who use their creative potential twofold and in all spheres: for themselves (*oikos*), in favor of the collective engagement (social) and urban spaces (governmental), and also to commercialize their ideas in order to make a profit (market). Entrepreneurs, however, do not only depend on the industry they work in, but also the (urban)

² Intellectual property is defined as “the creations of the mind [i.e.] inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce”(WIPO, 2014) and it is protected by law (patents, copyright and trademarks). It earns people “the recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create” (ibid.).

environment they engage with. Several authors studied the importance and impact of entrepreneurship on regenerative urban developments (e.g. Florida, 2003; Markusen, 2013; Zukin, 1995). The following sections, therefore, examine the spillover effects on urbanscapes and outline a framework for how cities can nurture and be nurtured by cultural entrepreneurs.

How Entrepreneurial Artistic Innovation changes the Urban Narrative

Space changes according to how it is used. Cities have been “landscapes of power” (Zukin, 1992, p.198) ever since urbanization. The persistent trend of metropolization has reinforced urban landscapes of power from the beginning of industrialization onwards. In the development of capital and cultural centers, metropolises like Paris in the late 19th century, New York in the first half of the 20th century, and London since the 1980s have experienced constant spatial renewal and re-invention. Metropolitan heydays have mostly been accompanied by flourishing cultural and artistic expression, leading to an agglomeration of cultural activities that eventually changed cities’ narratives. This process works on the basis of increasing a city’s creative allurements: the artistic innovation attracts a critical mass of influential dealers, galleries, auction houses, affluent collectors and tone-setting museums and critics, acting in turn as magnets for more artists, dealers etc. (While, 2003). This self-reinforcing circle of urban regeneration through a change in the population composition creates a network of relationships that spills over to adjacent industries and establishes a powerful web of actors who can make or break urban trends. It influences a city’s narrative by enriching and reproducing meaning and values. We can speak of city branding that alters an urban image through the attribution of experiences. Examples can be found throughout Western history in Renaissance Florence, postwar New York and modern London.

Another side effect of urbanization is an increase in economic activity resulting in an accumulation of financial capital, which increases the level of societal wealth within a city. However, this also exacerbates disparate social stratification of wealth and becomes evident in residential settlement patterns and choice of certain goods and services, which reproduce intangible social distinctions (Thrift & Leyshon, 1992).³ “Much of the social quality of urbanity on which a world city depends reflects both the polished landscape and the gritty vernacular as well as the tension between them“ (Zukin, 1992, p.198).

Artistic innovation often revitalizes squalid areas. New York’s urban landscape for example was transformed when artists invaded Soho in the 1970s, as analyzed by Sharon Zukin in her renowned *Loft Living* (1989). However, in doing so, low-income residents are often displaced in the process of gentrification. Zukin (1992) describes this process of urban re-development as replacing “the old, diversified urban center ...for new offices and cultural consumption ... [with] governmental priorities shifting from public goods to private developments” (p.198). Gentrification is therefore largely connected to the transformation of former subcultural artistic spaces into landscapes of the intelligentsia’s commercialization. As a result, the revitalization entailed by artists’ settlement is a two-edged approach to the urban re-development as it shows the disparity between interlacing the production and consumption of urban culture and mirrors a city’s landscape of power. Thus, urban planners have to attract all sorts of investment in order to offer heterogeneous lifestyles to their manifold residents.

³ To this end, the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as a person’s network that produces mutual recognition and cultural capital as stock of commonly accepted behavioral habitus. Put simply, the difference between them is “knowing the right people and knowing the right things” (Thrift & Leyshon, 1992, p.297) .

Investments in arts and culture in particular have been fostered of late as “creative placemaking to improve the quality of life” (Markusen, 2013, p.2). A new awareness has spread among city councils that cultural entrepreneurs empower a change in urban landscapes through the creative economy. “City appreciation for cultural entrepreneurship has grown following economists’ and city planners’ documentations of the roles that artists play in the local economy” (p.2). Markusen (2013) specifically mentions the social role of cultural entrepreneurs as collective innovators, who enliven neighborhoods by attracting cultural production in large commercial industries while also boosting the cutting-edge potential of small and middle-sized companies. Concurrently, they also promote cultural consumption by supporting nonprofits and their communities with their creative capabilities. However, this creative potential is ripe for abuse by city marketers who see quick gains in branding a city with the image of bohemian creativity.

A New Policy Framework for Cultural Entrepreneurs

During the last decade, policy makers realized that traditional plans for urban development are impeding the innovative transformation of the cityscape (Markusen, 2013). As a result, urban planning has to be readjusted to encourage the mutual benefits between creative entrepreneurs on the city space. Markusen (2013) outlines, for example, that city councils need to segment their artistic workforce in order to best support their local cultural entrepreneurs. She identifies that the most pressing needs in global metropolises are adequate workspaces and low-cost-of-living communities (Markusen & Schrock, 2006). Since cultural entrepreneurs are more likely to be self-employed and on a tight budget, a city has to encourage “convening and equipment-sharing artist centers” (Markusen, 2013, p.5). This collective creative space supports cross-disciplinary learning and co-working and therefore operates as an incubator of cultural entrepreneurship. The conversion of vacant industrial warehouse areas into such creative hubs would occur occasionally, which this paper addresses later on the example of East London and the community around Damien Hirst and the Young British Artists. Creative spaces moreover offer the opportunity to build networks that overcome the “isolation of self-employment and capitalize on synergies ” (p.7) among cultural entrepreneurs. Amplifying social networks also guarantees success in the commercial realm as it exposes the artistic products to customers and other professionals from the CCI. Furthermore, as exposed above, it adds to urban modernization.

In conclusion, cultural or specifically artistic entrepreneurs remake a city. Coupled with conducive economic developments, urban planning can initialize a fruitful exchange between cultural entrepreneurs and the city, resulting in a renewal of the city’s narrative. Subsequently, this paper proceeds with demonstrating the outlined theoretical concepts in the analysis of Damien Hirst and the making of London’s East End.

Damien Hirst and the City of London - Cultural or Economic Entrepreneur?

According to Thompson (2008), Hirst is one of a few artists “who can claim to have altered our concept of what art and an art career can be. ... The story of Damien Hirst – his art, his prices, his shark and his client Charles Saatchi – is a good introduction to ... conceptual art and to the role of the artist in marketing” (p.67). At the apex of his career, in 2008, he broke the rules of the art market, only to rebuild it according to his own benchmarks. That characterizes him as an innovative entrepreneur - but what kind of an entrepreneur is he? Damien Hirst can be considered either a cultural or an economic entrepreneur. This section therefore elaborates on some of Hirst’s traits and his *modus operandi*, showing how Hirst exhibits characteristics of both

entrepreneurial types. Likewise, it aims at analyzing how Hirst and the city of London mutually benefit from each other. As the examination of his early entrepreneurial career demonstrates, his sphere of action was specifically depending on the idiosyncratic environment of East London. Thus, as the course of his artistic career shows, to portray Hirst only as cultural entrepreneur is controversial due to his significant interactions and operations within the Market Sphere. He switched the scope of his artistic production activity similarly to how East London changed its landscape of power.

Hirst's Early Career and Impact on the Creative East London

Hirst, born in 1965, grew up in Leeds. After attending an art school there and working on construction sites for two years, he eventually was accepted at Goldsmiths College in London where he studied from 1986 until 1989 (Reckhenrich, Anderson, & Kupp, 2009). In retrospect – as is often the case with an entrepreneur's path – Hirst's art school attendance was a stroke of luck, since Goldsmiths' accepted candidates with an "innovative curriculum" (Thompson, 2008, p.68). Candidates did not necessarily have to be artistically well versed but instead show creative potential. Consequently, Goldsmiths can be perceived as an incubator for new creative sector entrepreneurs, an artistic environment receptive to new ideas and concepts of art by eliminating traditional department divisions, following the Bauhaus' example. Moreover, it offered an unusual, commercial type of artistic education - it encouraged its students to engage with the art market early on, for example through actively approaching dealers in order to counteract governmental subsidy cutbacks (Shone, 1997). As a result, it taught its young artists an important entrepreneurial skill: to look for funding opportunities. Soon, a circle of artists formed around Hirst, who became known as the *Young British Artists* (YBA) and who are said to have had "more impact than any preceding British art movement" (While, 2003, p.256). Thus, already at college, a collective spirit strengthened this newly developing artistic movement. The social ties between the YBAs provided valuable creative support and "the flexibility to unite disparate artists under one banner" (While, 2003, p.257), which made it easier for potential patrons and dealers to recognize them. At Goldsmiths, Hirst laid the groundwork to expand this small artistic network into the bespoke web of powerful trend-setting actors, who lastingly impacted London's urban environment.

Goldsmiths was not the only boon to Hirst's entrepreneurial career. London of the 1990s, specifically its Eastern shores, was a key location that provided an area for the production of innovative art. Necessary to plant the seeds for a creative hub, it had a vast amount of abandoned manufacturing buildings, remnants of bygone Victorian industry (Zukin, 1992).⁴ The area of these Docklands, like Canary Wharf, offered an ideal terrain for the establishment of an artistic convening, working and living space, with spacious and cheap accommodations fostering strong creative communities. Thus, the cheap space with its attractive vacant buildings advanced the settlement of a new artistic labor force. What moreover attracted the YBAs to settle there was the Docklands' identity: "the East End as a place of deprivation, poverty and undiluted working-class culture persisted until well after the Second World War, becoming overlaid with a certain gangster glamour in the 1960s" (Wedd, Peltz, & Ross, 2001, p.140). As a result, London's East End appealed to the creative artists in the early 1990s. It became "the symbolic capital of vision ... where art, culture and design [were] in the air" (Zukin, 1995). In this favorable environment, Hirst's entrepreneurial endeavors found fertile ground. In 1988 – one year before his graduation–

⁴ Canary Warf alone had 71 acres of such vacant industrial buildings (Zukin, 1992).

he organized and curated the well-known *Freeze*, an exhibition of 16 fellow students in East London's derelict Dockland warehouses (While, 2003). Hirst not only secured the funding from the London Docklands Development Corporation, but also bore the risk that *Freeze*, mounted in an unpopular area of London, could be a failure. With this project, Hirst exhibited entrepreneurial behavior, which Weber (1898) described as: "Entrepreneurship means the taking over and organization of some part of an economy, in which people's needs are satisfied through exchange, for the sake of making a profit and at one's own economic risk" (qtd in Swedberg, 2006, p.251). Against all skepticism, *Freeze* was resoundingly successful. The 16 exhibiting artists⁵, Hirst's fellow students, later dominated London's contemporary art scene.

The success of *Freeze* showed that Hirst, at an early stage in his career, was persuasive and able to establish an artistic collaboration. In reference to Klamer's model and the theories of entrepreneurial traits, this activity represents the characteristics the literature attributes to cultural as well as economic entrepreneurs. He is what Weber described as a "charismatic person who makes other people want to follow him...by virtue of his...extraordinary personality" (Swedberg, 2006, p.251). Undeniably, Hirst held a leadership role within the YBAs. What did he do to make *Freeze* work? Alongside exhibiting art he intertwined media and marketing promotion by attracting and linking the up-and-coming *Brit Art* to an international network of influencers such as the Tate Galleries' director Nicholas Serota and Royal Academy chairman Norman Rosenthal (Thompson, 2008a). Hirst epitomized entrepreneurial behavior such as taking the initiative and strategically planning. An often-recounted anecdote is that Hirst himself picked up Rosenthal and drove him to his *Freeze* exhibition. In another feat, at his second East London warehouse exhibition *Gambler* in 1990, he invited Charles Saatchi, who is said to have stood open-mouthed in front of Hirst's installation *A Thousand Years*.⁶ Saatchi immediately started to invest in Hirst, providing him with needed validation: by involving England's postmodern Medici, the young British artist established himself on the highest rung of the career ladder. Hirst effectively used his charismatic, entrepreneurial skills to grasp the mantle and strike up a business relationship with Saatchi that provided him with a "carte blanche ... to fund whatever he produce" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p. 42). With Saatchi's full backing, he turned his early successes into an ongoing career that would revolutionize the art world around him.

The Legacy of Damien Hirst's Entrepreneurial Activity on East London

Hirst's *Freeze* initiated a gentrification process in London's East End, in particular Shoreditch, Hoxton, and Hackney, resulting in a shift of artistic production from the West to East. This relocation of creative space was reflected in numerous gallery openings, e.g. the White Cube in the 1990s and the establishment of other CCI agencies (Tinari, 2014). The increasing media interest and "pop-star status" (While, 2003, p.255) of its leading movement, the YBAs -- with Hirst at the top -- accelerated the change of London's East End narrative: "The dominance of a knowledge-based economy has brought new spatial practices and an expansion into previously undeveloped areas like Docklands" (Budd, 1992, p.281). From low-rent quarters with little artisanal workshop areas, Canary Wharf especially has developed into "a new landscape of

⁵ Tracey Emin, Rachel Whiteread, Marc Quinn, Chris Ofili, Marcus Harvey, Gavin Turk, Gilian Wearing, Sarah Lucas, Fiona Rae, Simon Palterson, Richard, Patterson, Michael Landy, Sam Taylor-Wood, Gary Hume (While, 2003, p.257)

⁶ *A Thousand Years* represents the circle of life and death in which flies inside a vitrine migrate over a cow's rotting head.

power” (Zukin, 1992 p.202). Traditionally, political, administrative and commercial activities had been performed in London’s West (Budd, 1992). The rise of the YBA’s publicity in the East End however, induced a shift in London’s cultural and economic activity spheres: “Drawing on the sudden international prominence of Young British artists (*BritArt*), architects, fashion designers (*BritFashion*, *BritStyle*) and bands (*BritPop*), by the mid-1990s the UK was being promoted by the media and politicians as a major center for innovation in culture and lifestyle dubbed “cool Britannia” (While, 2003, p. 260). Accordingly, the YBA’s spirit altered East London’s identity, laying the groundwork for a deep conversion of its economy. Today, East London is Europe’s most successful “startup ecosystem, producing the largest output of startups in the European Union” (Myers, 2014). With 3,000 tech start ups based in the “condensed area of East London” (Myers, 2014) in 2014, London’s urban landscape still experiences the potent spillover effects from a small artistic movement that had initiated this change in London’s urban narrative and the one artist that was its driving its force: Damien Hirst.

Hirst’s Artistic Branding - the Physical Freezing of the Shock

Hirst’s oeuvre is divisible into six categories, chronologically enumerated as the formaldehyde “tank pieces” (e.g., *Away from the flock*, *Divided*, 1995), the “cabinet series,” showing medical and surgical tools (e.g., *The Blood of Christ*, 2005), the life-size reconstruction of a pharmacy (e.g., *The Pharmacy Restaurant*, 1998-2003), the spot, spin, and butterfly paintings (e.g., *In a Spin*, 2002), and finally photo-realist paintings (e.g., *A Crack Addict*, 2004) (Reckhenrich et al., 2009; Thompson, 2008a).

Hirst’s energetic creativity is reflected in his artwork. His art is provocative, “exhilarating and exasperating” (Anderson-Spivy et al., 1998, p.90) and above all, non-conforming. His early works contribute to the audience’s co-creation by drawing attention to the discomfiting experience of the antipode between the inferior human sublimity expressed in the post-modern societal paranoid denial of death to irrefutable mortality (Thompson, 2008a; White, 2013). By displaying a conserved dead shark in 1992 in his first Saatchi-funded exhibition, which is perhaps *the* symbol of primeval monstrous nature, and preserving it for eternity, Hirst allegorically reminds the viewer of the human desire for perpetuity and his inescapable transience. In an interview, he clarifies his mission: “I wanted [my artwork] to be about something particular and I wanted to say something worth saying. Life and death as a sculpture is a surprise. And the acceptable look of it is a bigger surprise ... You are or you aren’t. If you are, you’re experiencing something delicious. If you’re not, then you’re out of love with somebody” (Morgan, 1991). According to Hirst, his art unites the idea of liveliness and nothingness (Morgan, 1991). Therefore, he denoted his art to be *Neo-gothic* due to his insinuations on the divine eternity and apocalyptic mortality. Titles are an integral part of his conceptual art as “much of the meaning flows from the title” (Thompson, 2008, p.68) and resultantly, they help to construct ideas in the viewer’s mind. *Freeze*, for instance, alludes to his eponymous formaldehyde pieces and with a title like *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living* for his pickled shark, Hirst reinforces the neo-gothic tenet in his contemporary artworks (Anderson-Spivy et al., 1998). Being largely about life and death, his artworks are consequently based on anthropological and psychological concepts such as primordial fears and horror but also ecstatic joy, visualized in an iconic form and transmitted to the viewer through the experience of shock and excitement (White, 2013). Thus, his artworks represent emotive ideas.

Hirst’s skill to market his art by branding it early and onward with the ideology of “shock” is characteristic of his entrepreneurial approach and had been encouraged by

Goldsmiths' market-oriented education. He departed from the local creative East London scene in 1993, when he presented *Mother and Child divided*⁷ at the international Venice Biennale (Reckhenrich et al., 2009). Marking the beginning of Hirst's skyrocketing international career and with his shows fully backed by Saatchi, the success of his neo-gothic conceptual art was authenticated with the Turner Prize in 1995. International media attention finished the minting of this successful cultural entrepreneur when it reported on a ban imposed by New York's health office on his rotting pieces evoking "vomiting among the visitors" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.42). The ban only added to the mystique around Hirst's apocalyptic art and the media coverage leveraged him into the spotlight of an international audience. It also engendered a modification of his art production.

Hirst's Self-Branding: A Mirror of his Artistic Production

With increasing success, Hirst gradually produced – or rather let be produced by a team of forty assistants in four studios, similar to Warhol's Factory-like artistic production – what Hirst named *Science Ltd.* (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.46). This factory-like approach towards art production separates the art idea from its crafting. Hirst gave the actual making of his artworks into other, in his view more artistically skilled hands, as in the instance when he admitted to only having contributed with three dots to his total series of the *dot* paintings: "The best spot painting you can have by me is one painted by Rachel" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.46). This provocative statement demonstrates Hirst's perception of the production and authenticity of art, which certainly was influenced or even resulted from Goldsmith's schooling: Hirst produces art based on the model of outsourcing redundant business areas to optimize them. As he says, "it's a very democratic way ... and it feels like a natural evolution for contemporary art" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.46). The shift in his art manufacturing can be seen as creative disengagement from the object to validate the innovation of the artistic idea itself. This approach shows his socio-economic roots in two ways: it exemplifies his role as an artistic entrepreneur operating in the CCI as he exploits his talent to (only) create intellectual property, i.e. conceptual art, and to trade upon this skill. Furthermore, he was aware that efficient deployment of other creative resources would allow him to exceed his volume of artistic production far beyond the level of an individual's creational capability.

Hirst not only manufactured his artistic creation because he liked the idea: with this step of alternation in Warhol's and Koons's tradition, he established the "Damien Hirst" brand. He reused the entrepreneurial course of his own biography, with his working-class background resembling the self-made manner in Warhol's tradition. As one of the first of his kind, the American cultural entrepreneur Andy Warhol went from roustabout to pop-art magnate by equally selling his ideas and not his craftsmanship. Additionally, with the shift from individual to mass artistic production, Hirst mass-customized his ideology of shock and provocation. The anticipation of a universal interest in the shocking was what empowered Hirst's art to rewrite the art market's history: through his marketing skills, he was able to capitalize on people's demand to be entertained by the shock (Jalloh, 2012). Saltz appositely discerns that "Damien Hirst is producing Damien Hirsts" (Thompson, 2008, p.73) on the image of the "bad boy of contemporary art" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.42). He anchored his branded reputation by parting with Saatchi and exhibiting next to Francis Bacon in 2006 at the Gagosian Gallery. *The Tranquility of Solitude*, a triptych of his bisected animals in formaldehyde inspired by Bacon was

⁷ A cow and a calf sliced in halves and displayed in juxtaposed glass tanks of formaldehyde.

a strategic move that positioned his art next to an established market operator like Bacon and intended to assure skeptical dealers and buyers. Consequently, Hirst's next production in 2007 was designed to finally secure and solidify his brand position on the contemporary art market. *For the Love of God* stretched all boundaries of art production as this human skull adorned with 8,601 diamonds cost £15 million to manufacture and was labeled with a stiff price of £50 million. It sparked a controversy around the extravagance of Hirst's iteration of art history's popular *Vanitas* or *Memento Mori* subject, effectively contrasting the piece's artistic to its economic value. Although Hirst and the White Cube gallery brought the skull in, this artwork guaranteed Hirst the full entry into art history. He was finally affirmed throughout the art world when it was exhibited in the "well-established home of traditional art" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.4), the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam. Thus, in the patrilineal succession of other art manufacturers and in branding himself as well as his oeuvre, Hirst established his "role in popular culture, which has translated into high prices in galleries and at auctions" (Thompson, 2008b, p.72). The success of Hirst's neo-gothic concept catapulted him not only into renowned circles, it proved that there was a "multimillion dollar market for artworks incorporating rotting meat, maggots, dead sheep and all manner of other unique materials that stretched the boundaries of the physical manifestations of art" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p. 46). These developments mark a turning point in the perception of Hirst as cultural entrepreneur.

From Cultural Entrepreneur to Economic Businessman: How Hirst Rebuilds the Contemporary Art Market

"It's clear by now that the entrepreneurial artist ... is first and foremost a genius at self-promotion" (Anderson-Spivy et al., 1998, p.90). Hirst absorbed the art market capitalization, the *zeitgeist* of the 1990 and early millennium decade. *Sensation*, YBA's and Hirst's third groundbreaking exhibition in 1997 was the most successful UK art exhibition (While, 2003). The breakthrough of Hirst's individual and international success in the years after characterize a shift in his entrepreneurial behavior as he expanded his action sphere beyond the scope of East London. According to the critic Anderson-Spivy, the Royal Academy exhibited more a "sophisticated awareness of marketing, design, and techniques of self-promotion rather than an aesthetic innovation" at *Sensation* (1998, p. 89). Evoking rejection, Hirst's artistic element of success – the shock – was said to have become comparable to the "sex sells" ticking the box. White (2013) goes so far as to say that viewers of Hirst's art miss the encounter with the intrinsic nature of the artwork and therefore lack the sensation. By comparing Hirst's shark to the inhumane capitalist infiltration of the art world, White (2013) explains how Hirst self-marketed his personal brand to capitalize his art: "However much this art work may in other respects accommodate itself to the spectacular forms and ideologies of the market, it nonetheless speaks volumes about the experience of being locked within spatio-practical logics of modern, capitalist and technocratic society" (para. 20). For some art critics like White, Hirst became the shark himself, a predator for the "soulless" capital.⁸ Appropriately, Financial Times author Skapinker depicts Hirst as businessman, revealing his four faces of commerce: showman, adman, luxury brand manager and trader (Skapinker, 2012). After 2003 and his establishment in the art world,

⁸ Aptly, Hirst's second stuffed shark was purchased by the American hedge fund broker Steve Cohen for \$12 million; the art critic Robert Hughes commented "the idea that ... Cohen, out of a hypnotized form of culture-snobbery, would pay an alleged \$12 million for a third of a ton of shark, far gone in decay, is so risible that it beggars the imagination" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.45).

Hirst's name emerged more and more in business magazines, which illustrates that his extrinsic monetary success is intertwining with what Klamer's model refers to as the Market Sphere. In 2010 the *Economist* announced Hirst's market value at US \$210 million (The Economist, 2010).

Still at the zenith of his economic success, Hirst demonstrates his entrepreneurial spirit when he self-initiated auctions at Sotheby's and Christie's and thereby bypassed his long-term relationship with dealers and galleries. With total revenues of £111 million for 218 items, Hirst skimmed off the profit that his brand yielded. Auctioning his artworks first-hand like primary art market dealers countered claims that his way of mass artistic production would negatively impact the prices for his art. Quite the contrary, it set a world record for first-time auctioneered artworks from a single artist. One of Hirst's collectors was the prominent luxury fashion designer Miuccia Prada, who bought *The Dream* for US \$10 million and who considers his work beyond monetary value (The Economist, 2010). Another bidder at Hirst's auctions was the Ukrainian steel magnate Viktor Pinchuk. Perceiving his art as a valuable asset, oligarchic buyers trust in the future return on their investment, which Hirst assures through the constant incremental growth of his brand value. Whether the escalating profit margins of the post-millennial art market have shifted Hirst's sphere of artistic activity to a high-end clientele or he himself has deliberately pushed his artworks in that direction with the aid of marketing and media is mostly irrelevant to the current discussion. The question should rather be rephrased to how Hirst adopted the contemporary art market's mechanisms for his own purpose.

Similar to how shrewd he acted when initiating *Freeze*, Hirst broke with traditional concepts of an artist career and formed himself a market space for his artistic products. To this effect, the economists Reckhenrich, Anderson, and Kupp (2009) point out Hirst's ability to overcome what they label as "the inattentive blindness" (p. 42). Adopted from psychology, inattentive blindness denotes the human inability to multi-task when we are strongly focused on one specific task. To think "out of the box" indicates the creative talent of entrepreneurs. According to the authors, Hirst recognized that what defined art in the 20th century has become narrowly limited. For this reason Hirst reinterpreted the archaic artistic topic of life and death that would also grant him unique symbolism. "While animals (alive and dead) had been exhibited in museums ... for centuries, the art world had remained largely blind to the potential of incorporating biological elements" (Reckhenrich et al., 2009, p.45). Hirst himself sarcastically commented this strategic move:

I can't wait to get into a position to make really bad art and get away with it. At the moment, if I did certain things, people would look at it, consider it and then say 'fuck off'. But after a while you can get away with things. (qtd in Stallabrass, 1999, p.31)

The jewel encrusted human skull particularly epitomizes the *Vanitas* reiteration and refinement of commodity value on the global art market (Hopson, 2014).

Finally, Hirst also set a new framework for an artist's prototypical career: from the beginning on he relied on the provoking effect that would distinguish his art from others. Additionally, he would bypass impeding traditional hierarchies in order to reach a potent class of buyers. In a way, one could assume that all the professional relationships he had established were foremost to boost his career. In being his own curator, brand manager and dealer, Hirst inaugurated himself as paradigm of economic artistic entrepreneurs.

Criticism of the Damien Hirst Brand: What Kind of Artistic Entrepreneur to be?

Recapitulating the question of whether Hirst is to be seen as cultural or economic entrepreneur, the analysis explicitly reveals the dilemma that a distinction between those two entrepreneurial concepts illuminates. In regard of Hirst's career, his entrepreneurial skills made a

Damien-Hirst artwork the most successful self-established brand worldwide. “Because branding raises the value of the ordinary, the public activities of a branded artist like Hirst often end up being about money and publicity” (Thompson, 2008, p.73). Hirst has been accused of prioritizing money and some critics such as Hopson (2012) have argued that this has come at a price: “... his oeuvre has been characterized by financial exchange, both by money spent on production and of price reached at sale, rather than on artistic merit” (Hopson, 2012, para. 2) Similarly, Graw interprets Hirst’s skull “as compensation for a symbolic value that falls short of the high expectations placed on it, coming up instead with platitudes.... At best, the work can be taken as an opportunity to sound off about death and transitoriness, or about the fact that luxury alone will not lead to happiness, especially as death awaits us all” (Graw, 2010, p.38). In accordance, Hirst’s art has been belittled as lacking complexity for the purpose of being easily consumable but being disappointing on an artistically transcending level. This view of Hirst’s art also portrays the collision between the altruistic perception of the cultural entrepreneur, whose artwork should figuratively build a bridge between the real and the transcendent world of imagination, and the purpose to embark the viewer on a mission of transformational experience. In contrast to Jeff Koons, who is also a disputed artist due to his focus on sexuality and factory-styled production and who shows a modest and conservative market behavior, Hirst desires to offer pieces at any high price (The Economist, 2010). In consideration of Klamer’s valorization model, the noticeable jumping between the *oikos*, social, governmental, and market spheres in Hirst’s career reflects the fluctuation and interaction with all spheres that artists encounter on their path. Consequently, artists have to ask themselves: What is my mission? Are markets still only a means to realize the creation of a co-productive space to exchange my work with the audience or am I producing for the market and for making profit? “I’ve definitely had the goal to make the primary market more expensive” states Hirst in an article in *The Economist* (2010, p. 99). Whether this is an explicit testimonial, indicating that he became a businessman rather than remaining a cultural entrepreneur or not, this analysis presents how difficult it is in practice to draw a line between artistic, cultural or social activities in the creative economy.

Conclusion: From Beery Bluster to Blowy Bathos?

Saltz incisively summarizes how Hirst transformed himself from a cultural entrepreneur to a grand-scale undertaker:

What's sad about Hirst's new show is that this rebel of 1988 (when he curated the legendary "Freeze" exhibition in London), this grandfather of oldschool British shock tactics and entrepreneurial razzmatazz, this minimogul who has the means to make images of anything he wants in any style at all [...] this artist chose to render such runofthemill sensationalist subjects in such runofthemill ways. This truculent pumpkin, once so adept at failing in flamboyant ways, has gone from beery bluster to blowy bathos. (Saltz, 2006, para. 2)

As delineated above, Hirst serves as a paradigm of cultural entrepreneurship by exemplifying Klamer’s (2006, 2011) model of valorization: his inner drive, referring to the *Oikos* and Social Sphere, made him the cutting edge artist of the 1990s, lauded for his innovative entrepreneurial spirit. The energetic activities as a cultural entrepreneur in his early career and his preeminent leadership of the artists collective YBA nurtured East London as a creative hub: Hirst symbolically returned the city’s favor by boosting East London’s economy, for the Docklands provided him with vast, vacant and cheap space. The spillover effects to other CCI

are still noticeable. East London today attracts more cultural and artistic production than any other metropolis (Myers, 2014). In advancing his international career, Hirst likewise leveraged London's artistic scene so that it has become the art center of the millennium, catching up to New York and Paris. Thanks to Damien Hirst, London plays a tone-setting role in the art world, and as he constantly augments his brand imperium he rallies evermore crucial art market players around his personality. By reiterating oblivious artistic concepts of life and death or joy and fear and by shifting from individual- to mass-production of art with expensive materials in a Factory-like manner, Hirst set up new rules for price conceptualization on the art market. He formed a niche market for his shock-art, whose profit he appropriates almost exclusively. This involvement with the Market Sphere rewarded him with higher prices, however problematizing his credibility in the cultural sector. The future Hirst will still be confronted with questions about the authenticity of his art production and his reiteration of outmoded artistic concepts. Notwithstanding such criticism, his entrepreneurial skills might once again set a precedent in the art world. "Perhaps in his death he will get his assistants to diamond encrust his pickled grinning face, suspended in formaldehyde in a gilded, butterfly decorated vitrine and call it *The Inevitability of a Record Breaking Sale of an Artist who is Now Entirely Spent*" (Hopson, 2014).

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