



# A REVIEW OF SCHOLARLY RESEARCH ON ARTIST SUPPORT

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# I. Introduction

This literature review looks at the role that public, private, and nonprofit organized grantmakers play in the ecology of individual artists' support system and how that role fits into the broader arts ecosystem. Individual artists are a necessary component of a thriving arts ecosystem. Creating an environment where artists can survive financially and thrive artistically is necessary to insure a healthy community of artists.

Several studies have made important strides in assessing the current status of individual artists' level and nature of support, but the research is inherently difficult to do. Each stage of the research faces fundamental challenges: there is no uniform way to define the population of individuals who are artists; the types and sources of their support are widely varied and sometimes hard to define; and there are inherent challenges in sampling artists in ways that permit comparative data analysis, and in adequately capturing the myriad ways in which they piece together the support they need to carry out the creation of their art.

These challenges do not in any way obviate the need to survey the status of individual artists, however. There are clear returns to the individuals, their communities, and our culture to identifying holes in artists' support systems and finding ways to fill them. Ann Markusen (2010) argues in her report, *Los Angeles: America's Artist Super City*, on Los Angeles' artist ecology, "nurturing, attracting and retaining artists may be more important [because of the power of a heavily networked talent pool] than devoting expensive and budget-debilitating tax breaks to employers" (p. 9). The Ford Foundation's Susan Berresford took an even longer view in her speech calling for more adequate support systems for individual artists: "[Individual artists] are, after all, the people whose efforts will shape our cultural identity in the 21st century, and our cultural legacy" (quoted in Backer et al, 2005, p. 1).

## Frame of the Review

This review surveys the literature on individual artists' sources of support and related topics by searching for and reviewing academic, foundation, and consulting reports, primarily in the last ten years. We include as well some of the seminal work on the issue done earlier, including Joan Jeffri's first installments of her *Information on Artists* series, begun in 1989, and the start of the RAND Corporation's contributions to arts policy research, which began in 2001. The focus is on research in the United States though we reference occasional work beyond our borders.

While the first decade of this century has been a period of important research into the individual artist, there is both a long history of this research in the U.S. and



abroad, and there is clearly scope for additional work. Butler (2000) provided a comprehensive annotated bibliography of studies on the economic, working and social condition of artists, “Studies of Artists: An Annotated Directory,” and is an excellent resource for those looking for the wealth of earlier studies on the topic going back to the 1950s.

Even with this rich history of research, it is clear that the world of artists’ support is sufficiently complex and multifaceted, not to mention continuously evolving, that there are still important corners of that world still to be explored. While numerous scholars have analyzed the types of support needed by artists, the ways in which that support has been provided has not been satisfactorily surveyed. More specifically, the various artist support programs provided by foundations and non-profits have not been surveyed, categorized, or comprehensively catalogued.

Despite these considerable challenges awaiting the arts research world, there have been many studies conducted in the last decade that provide us with a sense of the richness and complexity of the artists’ support ecosystem. We survey and synthesize them here. A particularly valuable resource that was critical in informing our synthesis of the literature is the 2004 symposium volume of the *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society*, which published five papers by influential researchers in the field on the topic of individual artists’ support.

## II. Ecology of support

There is an entire ecosystem of institutions and markets that artists draw upon to achieve their needed support—and to which artists contribute their passion and creativity that speaks to the human condition and our shared experience in a myriad of ways (*Economies of Life: Patterns of health and wealth*, Sharpe, 2010). As with any ecosystem, the number and types of interactions that are important in the arts ecosystem can be overwhelming, tangled, and multi-faceted. There have been several valiant efforts to bring order to our thinking about the complex system, and they have made major contributions to the field’s ability to understand—and contribute effectively to—the ecosystem.

*The Performing Arts in a New Era* (McCarthy et al, 2001), a study by the RAND Corporation, proposed a framework to describe the entire arts ecosystem along three dimensions. The first dimension is the art form; the second the sector of the economy in which the art is performed and produces; the third is the key players, including audiences, artists, arts organizations, and funders. Their framework is important and lucid, but does not have sufficiently fine taxonomies within the dimensions to fully capture the complexity of the issue at hand: individual artists’ support systems.

*Investing in Creativity: A Study of the Support Structure for U.S. Artists* (Jackson, et al, 2003; Jackson, 2004), sponsored by the Urban Institute, surveyed the arts ecosystem

primarily from the perspective of the individual artist, and compiled a taxonomy of the forms of support that artists seek out. The study defines six dimensions of support: validation, demand and markets, material supports, training and professional development, communities and networks, and information. Table 1 (below, next page) provides details about each dimension.

*Native Artists: Livelihoods, Resources, Space, Gifts* (Rendon and Markusen, 2009) offers a similar, consolidated taxonomy in their study of Ojibwe artists in Minnesota, which provides somewhat different emphases. They look separately at the economics of artists; sources of encouragement, education, training and mentors; access to space, materials, equipment, resources, technology, and markets; and finally, gatekeepers. There is not a one-to-one relationship between the types of support artists seek out and the forms of support provided by the institutions and markets to which artists turn to satisfy their need for support. Instead, it is a many-to-many relationship: an individual artist will fulfill his need for material supports through a variety of mechanisms (sale of his art, grants, outside work, etc.) and any individual mechanism will supply something towards more than one dimension of his support needs (e.g. an unrestricted grant will supply material support and also validation).

Because of these complicated many-to-many relationships, understanding the supply-side of the support structure is a separate, equally important problem. The literature to-date has not fully grappled with how to think about the supply-side of artists' support structures, however. There have been many studies that discuss aspects of the supply side, but there has not been the same kind of effort to develop a comprehensive framework for understanding the supply of artist support as was undertaken in *Investing in Creativity*. The next section discusses what has been done.

**Table 1: Jackson et al (2003) taxonomy of artists' support structure**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Definition<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Examples</b>
Validation	The ascription of value to what artists do.	Peer recognition; audience or direct public recognition; awards; media coverage; etc.
Demand and markets	Society's appetite for artists and what they do, and the markets that translate this appetite into financial compensation.	Access to commercial, nonprofit, public and informal sectors; access to market intermediaries, such as agents, associations, service organizations, unions and guilds, and educational institutions; etc.
Material supports	Access to the financial and physical resources artists need for their work: employment, insurance and similar benefits, awards, space, equipment, and materials.	Formal employment; sales; commissions; awards and grants; residencies; cooperatives; discounts or subsidies for artist housing and live/work space; supplies; etc.
Training and professional development	Conventional and lifelong learning opportunities.	Universities and arts schools; local arts agencies; arts service organizations; community-based organizations; peer-to-peer and mentoring relationships; web-based exchanges; travel; etc.
Communities and networks	Inward connections to other artists and people in the cultural sector; outward connections to people not primarily in the cultural sector.	National and networks; regional networks; local and community-based organizations; institutional affiliations; funder-driven communities; community outreach peer to peer; access to gatekeepers; etc.
Information	Data sources about artists and for artists	Access to artists' opportunities and knowledge via online and other sources; research on artists' economic status; social contributions; support structure; etc.

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<sup>1</sup> These definitions are quoted from p. 8 of Jackson et al, 2003.

### III. Supplying artist support

This section surveys what we know about the supply-side of artists' support structure. Because this perspective on the arts ecology has not been as well defined, the survey necessarily lacks the clarity that the artist-side research has gained. Nevertheless, there are some alternative ways that researchers have addressed the supply-side in their work. They have broken down the landscape by sector, specific forms of support, career stage and discipline, and by looking indirectly at the problem through the lens of arts organizations.

#### Sectors

Perhaps the clearest way to organize an approach to the supply-side of artists' support is to divide suppliers of support by their sectoral affiliation. This has the benefit of being very well defined. It cannot provide an entirely satisfying taxonomy, however, since institutions from different sectors will often provide identical forms of support. For example, local arts councils and private foundations may both provide residencies to individual artists. They both have the potential to satisfy the same suite of dimensions of support needed by the artist (validation, material support, networks, etc.). Nonetheless, the concrete definitions also facilitate data collection, since they provide a readily implementable survey frame. As a consequence, sectoral divisions influence much of what we know about the supply-side of artists' support.

“Financial Support for Individual Artists” (Galligan and Cherbo, 2004) presents a comprehensive review of the sources of financial support made directly to individual artists. The authors divide the sources into federal, regional, state, and local government sources, foundation, service and trade organizations, and artists' residencies. Note that their taxonomy only includes sources of financial *assistance*, rather than remuneration for goods or services. As a consequence, it excludes the commercial sector.

Galligan and Cherbo also review the complexities involved in capturing the ways that each of these sources of support provide assistance to artists. Of particular note, they discuss the “submerged” sources of government support, such as copyright protection, unemployment insurance, Medicaid and tax incentives. These forms of support help make the commercial and nonprofit art sectors viable, as well as providing a safety net--albeit a relatively meager one in the U.S.--that helps individuals take the significant career risk of dedicating themselves to their art. Regranting also plays a critical, but obscured, role in the supply-side of artist support. Galligan and Cherbo discuss the difficulties of capturing the full scope of the support from one source intended to reach individual artists because of the frequent process of smaller entities (e.g. nonprofits or local governments) regranting monies they have received from larger entities (e.g. foundations or the federal government) to individual artists.

The limitations to a sectoral framework are explored in “Crossover: How artists build careers across commercial, nonprofit and community work” (Markusen et al, 2006). They look at the sources of artists’ income, both in the form of assistance and in the form of earnings, and they consolidate these divisions into the broader categories of commercial, nonprofit, and community. As the authors and Jackson et al (2003) point out, from the perspective of the individual artist who will engage in the different sectors in different ways over the course of their careers, the ways in which these different sectors interact in the broader arts ecosystem is as important as how they function separately. In particular, the nonprofit and informal sectors can operate as feeders into the more remunerative but more conservative and risk-averse public and commercial sectors. They identify and nurture both emerging artists and emerging ideas and art forms, providing them with the necessary initial validation to find commercial or public support.

There is also a “hybrid” sector, which has a demand for artists who engage in their craft in the context of a non-artistic endeavor (*Building Community: Making Space for Art*, Jackson, 2011). Common examples of this are artists who use their skills in the context of education, social services, youth development, community development, etc. Jackson et al (2003) identify a need for further identifying and communicating demand and supply in the hybrid market, since both sides of the market can have a difficult time recognizing opportunities and accessing the other side of the market effectively. However, for the artists who engage in this sector, it can provide remuneration that cross-subsidizes the artists’ independent work in a way that draws upon their artistic skills and provides a meaningful creative outlet.

## **Specific forms of support**

While sectoral divisions provide a relatively clean taxonomy, this taxonomy does not capture the specific forms in which support is provided in a particularly useful way. The most germane way to structure a survey of support to artists is to catalogue the types of support an artist might receive, regardless of the tax and legal status of its source organization. However, this turns out to be surprisingly challenging to structure. Any one program will have a variety of facets to it, and the world of formal programs of support—let alone informal forms of support—is vast and constantly evolving.

As a consequence, while there has been a robust body of research done on varying aspects of specific forms of support for artists and on the roles those forms play in developing and sustaining an artist’s career, it has not been comprehensive nor is there an evident taxonomy or organizing principle. Therefore, the forms of support often end up being presented in laundry list fashion.

We report here the types of support that has been discussed in the literature and the extent to which there have been attempts to categorize such support. We do not attempt a complete survey of the forms of support. Instead, we highlight the

challenges of organizing the ecosystem of support in a coherent fashion, and the value to the field of future research that will better accomplish such a taxonomy. We include examples from the field that have been described in the extant literature to provide illustrations of the different types of support. However, there are many important and creative providers of support that are left out of this review because they were not included in the literature we reviewed.

We are able to organize our review of the specific forms of support into three subsections: 1) support that is predominantly monetary; 2) in-kind support that has a clear monetary value; and 3) support that does not have a readily assignable market value. Even here, however, the boundaries are not always strict.

### Forms of Support I: Monetary

These sources of support are likely to be the ones that come first to mind when thinking of the question of artists' support. They have the benefit of providing artists with an income, which in turn allows the artist to fund whatever types of sustenance—for her art or her life—she needs most.

#### *Employment*

The most basic way in which professional artists support themselves is through employment as artists. This could either be employment with an institution, such as a symphony orchestra or a ballet company, teaching in their artistic discipline, or self-employment. Self-employment could be comprised of income deriving from sales, commissions, teaching, and other entrepreneurial efforts. Formal employment could be full time or part time, ongoing or short-term.

The NEA Research Report, “Artist Employment, 2005” (Nichols, 2005), surveys the labor market for artist occupations (as defined by the NEA, see section IV below) reported by Bureau of Labor Statistics data in 2005. Employment rates and levels of self-employment differ widely across disciplines. Actors had by far the highest rate of unemployment, 25 percent, of all the categories of artists. Other, more commercially oriented disciplines had extremely low rates of unemployment, with architects' unemployment rate (1.7%) lower even than all professional occupations combined (art and non-art related). Musicians and singers, announcers, and photographers all had very high levels of multiple jobholding rates, consistent with the nature of their employment opportunities. Not surprisingly, very high rates of writers and authors (68%), fine artists (62%), multimedia artists and animators (61%), and photographers (59%) were self-employed. Performing artists of all disciplines were less likely to be self-employed.

Because of the nature of the BLS data collection process, these statistics do not count those who would self-identify as artists but who do not meet the screening criteria used by the BLS because they work non-arts related jobs to support themselves. In *Information on Artists III*, Joan Jeffri (2004a) found in a survey of San



Francisco area artists that only a quarter of respondents earned their major income through their art, though 77% earned at least some income from their art. As a consequence, only half were spending at least 20 hours per week on their art and only 14% spent more than 40 on their work.

For those artists who spend a significant part of their work life officially unemployed, unemployment insurance can provide an important form of support if the artist qualifies for the benefit. Support from a spouse or family member can also help sustain an artist (“Conceiving Artistic Work in the Formation of Artist Policy: Thinking beyond disinterest and autonomy,” Rosenstein, 2004). Finally, some artists benefit from federal support such as food stamps and welfare.

### *Grants*

Grants play an important role in supporting artists, though direct, individual grants are rarely a consistent primary source of financial support for individual artists, even though their symbolic importance may be quite large. This is because individual grants tend to be fairly small, averaging between \$1000 and \$2000 per grant, according to “Research on the Individual Artist: Seeking the Solitary Singer” (Jeffri, 2004b). On the other hand, there appears to be geographic diversity in grant size, since Jeffri (2004a) also found that San Francisco area grants to artists averaged \$8,731 in 2004, a significant growth over the previous 15 years. Jackson et al (2003) also found that while artists naturally preferred large awards, half were less than \$2000, two-thirds were less than \$5000, and more than three-fourths were less than \$10,000 (43). Even small grants can provide important stepping stones and momentum to an individual artist (Peeps, 2010). Large, unrestricted grants and prizes generally go to established artists and can be conceived of as “back pay” (Rosenstein, 2004). While the artists who receive grants may find them to be a career-changing opportunity, Joan Jeffri found, in her *Information on Artists II* (1997), that fewer than 20 percent of artists receive a grant in a given year (see also, Jackson et al, 2003).

Grants to artists also are more likely than not to have an expected duration of one year or less (Jackson et al, 2003). Long-duration awards are valuable to artists because they provide a predictable source of income. Jackson et al found that many artists did not participate in award applications because they were often cumbersome applications, highly competitive and/or sufficiently small amounts of money as to not be worth the effort.

In other cases, artists would like to participate in awards’ applications but feel that they have been excluded from available opportunities due to their art forms, demographics, or their non-elite training pedigree. Some artists also saw discrimination on the basis of geography as a significant barrier (Jackson et al, 2003). Opportunities for artists to compete for grants vary widely depending on the discipline of art they practice. From their preliminary analysis of the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA) Source database, Jackson et al (2003) found that the largest number of award programs (they combined grants and awards in their analysis) were available to literary artists, though the most money was available to

media artists. At the other end of the spectrum, folk and traditional artists had access to only a fifth of the award programs available to literary artists, and a quarter of the money available to media artists.

Grants can either be restricted or unrestricted. Artists value unrestricted grants more, due to the flexibility they provide (Jackson et al, 2003). However, restricted grants also play a valuable role in the arts ecosystem and provide additional accountability to the funder. Depending on the specificity of the restrictions, restricted grants may really function more like in-kind support than as a grant. Because of the diversity of sources of grant monies, it is a difficult area to survey comprehensively (Jackson et al, 2003). Galligan & Cherbo (2004) calculate that \$214.6 million was provided in direct monetary funding to individual artists in 1999-2000. The largest source of funding, by far, was local arts agencies, which provided \$147.3 million in funding. These statistics come with a huge caveat, however: it is thought that regranteeing from cultural, educational and other institutions provides one of the largest sources of monetary assistance (as opposed to direct remuneration for goods and services) for artists. However, there is no central data source for this type of financial support and therefore remains very difficult to measure or study (Galligan & Cherbo, 2004).

One potential reason for the complicated structure of giving is that there are significant barriers, real or perceived, to foundation grant support of individuals. As described in the Aspen Institute (2010) study on artist-endowed foundations, *The Artist as Philanthropist: Strengthening the Next Generation of Artist-Endowed Foundations*, there are IRS rules that govern the process by which foundations can make grants to individuals, designed to prevent self-dealing. These rules, combined with the larger volume and smaller size that often accompanies grants to individuals, can increase the foundation's overhead.

Despite these compliance challenges, foundations have found creative ways to reduce the administrative burden of individual grants. One option is to increase the size of grants, though this type of grant then tends to go to established artists. Alternatively, the foundations can make awards less frequently to consolidate the costs or can have individual grants as only a small portion of their grant-making portfolio. New York Foundation for the Arts' Strategic Opportunity Stipends (SOS) has had success replacing an intensive internal review processes with the requirement that the artist have an established forthcoming opportunity for which a grant of \$200-1,500 would help see the project to completion. This approach has been imitated by the Durfee Foundation's Artists' Resource for Completion (ARC) program (Peeps, 2010). "In Support of Individual Artists" (Guay, 2012) also reviews strategies for foundations to partner with nonprofit organizations to provide support for individuals. The foundation can grant monies to the nonprofit for the purpose of regranteeing to individuals. This strategy can significantly reduce administrative overhead, but contributes to researchers' difficulty in tracking the source of individual grants to their "true" source.

Similarly, federal grants face close political scrutiny, particularly since the 1990s. The NEA has been able to continue supporting individual artists indirectly by making

grants to states or localities, which are then able to regrant the money with less political scrutiny. State arts agencies have begun to worry, however, that their traditional approach to grantmaking was not reaching their full target population: too many of their grantees are white, wealthy, and well educated (*State Arts Policy: Trends and Future Prospects*, Lowell, 2008). This has encouraged them to shift from supporting artists and arts organizations to supporting arts participation.

Regranting programs can come with additional benefits, as well (*Native Arts and Cultures: Research, Growth and Opportunities for Philanthropic Support*, Ford Foundation, 2010). Re-granting programs can stimulate the intermediary organizations' ability and interest in fundraising additional dollars for individual grants. Engaging the re-granting organizations in the process ensured that they were invested in serving as a channel for the dissemination of the artists' work they supported.

To the extent that grant programs have been formally evaluated, they appear to play an important role in artists' development. For example, the Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship provides mid-career artists with "significant financial support that enables them to further their work and their contribution to their communities." (Showalter & Itzkowitz, 2007, 5). *Creating Broader Impact: The Bush Foundation Fellowships*, an impact study of the fellowships, found that the Bush Artist Fellowship was "critical" or "useful" to the overwhelming majority of the fellows surveyed to their ability to have an impact on the broader community. The evaluators found that the fellows did indeed have significant impact, and that the pathway of action was that the fellowship allowed fellows the time and space to effect individual change in the fellow, which over time, after the fellowship period was over, allowed the individual to grow into the professional who would have a substantial impact on her field and community (Showalter & Itzkowitz, 2007).

Despite the value of individual grants to artists, and the variety of avenues to facilitate their administration, Jackson et al (2003) found that some funders are reluctant to fund individuals because they perceive them as less accountable. There is little evidence from the funders who do fund individuals that this perception is legitimate.

### *Awards*

There is not a clear distinction between grants and awards in the research literature, and some, such as Jackson et al (2003), do not attempt to distinguish between them. However, it is clear that some cash transfers, such as prizes, are not appropriately thought of as grants. One possible way to distinguish the two categories would be to term financial rewards that were proffered largely on the basis of the promise of future work as grants, and those that are proffered largely because of completed work as awards. Alternatively, one could distinguish between monies that come from application to the funder (grants) and monies that come from nomination (awards). While both methods of distinguishing grants from awards have some intuitive appeal, neither neatly matches the terms as used by funders, which in any case appear to be used inconsistently.

Guay (2012) highlights the potential for awards to provide long term support bundled with professional development services. For example, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Creative Capital have partnered to provide comprehensive long-term support to 200 artists with unrestricted grants, access to Creative Capital's professional development services, funds for audience development, and even matching contributions to artists' retirement accounts. Prizes from competitions can provide important validation and, sometimes, meaningful financial support to artists from many disciplines and career stages.

#### *Restricted grants to arts organizations*

Guay (2012) highlights the innovative approach of the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation to include the support concerns of individual visual artists in their arts organization giving. Their effort offers a twist on the more typical re-granting situation: curators and exhibiting organizations are required to include a budget line item for \$1000 stipends to as many as twenty-five living artists who are represented in the proposed exhibition. This provides direct support to individual artists without incurring the additional overhead that would be required if the granting process were separated (either at the foundation or at the arts organization) from the curatorial process.

In addition to programs like the Tremain Foundation's direct approach to getting financial support to individual artists through their restricted grants to arts organizations, many grants (restricted or otherwise) to arts organizations are used to provide support to artists through non-financial mechanisms, discussed below. This aspect of the arts support ecosystem needs to be kept in mind when considering how grants provide support to individuals.

#### Forms of Support II: In-Kind Support with a Monetary Value

While money is flexible, some forms of needed support are better supplied in-kind, because of the difficulty of purchasing them on the open market for a reasonable price. In some cases, in-kind provision allows space, equipment and similar resources to be shared effectively.

#### *Artist residencies and other forms of access to space and materials*

Galligan and Cherbo (2004) define residencies as "places that bring artists together into a community through a formal, competitive admissions process run by a professional, not-for-profit organization for the purpose of creative work that provides housing and work space" (36). There are also organizations seeking to provide similar services that are missing one or more of the definition's aspects. For example, some are single-person residencies, which lack the community aspect; others provide work but not living space; some require rent, such as artists' cooperatives, but supply access to expensive equipment that would otherwise be out of reach for an individual; etc.

Jackson et al (2003) notes that a prominent government provider of artist residencies is the U.S. Park Service. In a similar vein, residencies offer an opportunity for non-arts organizations to bring one or more artists into their organization.

### *Insurance*

A major issue for artists in the U.S. is access to adequate health insurance. Since most health insurance in the country is currently provided through one's employment, and since artists are often not employed full time, artists are at particular risk of being uninsured (*Health Insurance for Artists*, LINC, 2010b; *Information on Artists I, II, III*, Jeffri, 1989, 1997, 2004; *Taking the Pulse: Musicians and Health Insurance*, Thomson, 2010). Some organizations, such as Fractured Atlas, The Actors Fund, and the Future of Music Coalition (LINC, 2010) and some arts-related unions or other service organizations (Jackson et al, 2003), provide the opportunity for artists to buy pooled insurance.

As the full effects of the new health care law kick in, the landscape for artists' access to insurance will change, most likely for the better (LINC, 2010). As a consequence, some organizations may find that they are able to shift resources now used to support artists' health insurance to other needs.

### *Legal services*

Artists have need of legal services, potentially at a rate that is higher than the normal population, since they deal with copyright, workplace hazards and other issues through their work (Jeffri, 1989; Jeffri, 1997). For example, Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts ([www.vlany.org](http://www.vlany.org)) provides free legal services for low-income artists and arts organizations. Fair use issues are important for some artists, both in terms of how their work is used by others and whether their work might run afoul of the law (*Code of Best Practices: In Fair Use for Poetry*, Aufderhelde, et al, 2011).

## Forms of Support III: Intangible Support

Most forms of intangible support provide information, coordination, or social support to artists. These can help them access or leverage the more tangible forms of support discussed above.

### *Agents, gallerists and other artistic intermediaries*

Artistic intermediaries, such as agents, gallery owners, record labels, and impresarios, play an important role in many artists' lives and careers (*Artists Training and Career Project: Actors*, Jeffri, Greenblatt & Sessions, 1992; Rendon & Markusen, 2009; Markusen et al, 2006; etc.). Many opportunities to access the marketplace for their art require artists to pass through the gatekeepers in their careers, particularly, though not exclusively, in the commercial sector. For marginalized artists, such as those

representing a poorly understood folk tradition, these gatekeepers can make or break their access to markets (Rendon & Markusen, 2009). For many types of artists, the moment of acquiring an agent or gallery representation is an important moment of professional validation. On the other hand, the internet has changed the business model of many intermediaries and has made it easier for individuals to circumvent their gatekeepers and reach directly to their audiences (McCarthy et al, 2001). While much of this shift can be seen as positive for individual artists, in at least some cases, it results in a reduced incentive for intermediaries to invest in the needs of their emerging artists (*A Portrait of the Visual Arts: Meeting the Challenges of a New Era*, McCarthy et al, 2005).

### *Training and professional development*

Universities, conservatories, and art schools are, of course, a frequent source of training and professional development for emerging artists, though they are by no means the only way in which artists learn the business and craft of their art (Jackson et al, 2003). Student loans and scholarships are important sources of support that allow more aspiring artists to access these opportunities than would otherwise be able to do so. CalArts commissioned an evaluation of their impact on alumni, “CalArts Alumni Study—Pilot Project: Final Report,” finding that many alums from various stages of their careers had found the instruction at CalArts, the network of peer-artists and mentors that they had developed as students, and business of arts classes to be instrumental in their later successes (Backer et al, 2005). On the other hand, alumni also pointed out that they needed access to continuing education after graduation as they reached later stages in their careers. They were also not sufficiently introduced to support organizations and other resources for artists while at school, and it was up to them to discover these resources after graduation.

The Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) tracks alumni from many art schools (*Forks in the Road: The many paths of arts alumni*, SNAAP, 2011). They found that 41% of their respondents were currently working as professional artists, with an addition 16% having worked as a professional artist in the past but not currently. Of those who were not working in the arts, 54 percent said that their arts training was nonetheless relevant to their work. However, most of those who never started or stopped work as professional artists did so because of barriers to their artistic careers, such as pay, lack of work, and debt, rather than an intrinsic change of interest. In particular, student debt from art school has a significant impact on many alumni’s career choices.

While universities and art schools provide important training and support to artists at the start of their career, and, in some cases, to alumni, there is still significant need for on-going professional development for mid-career artists and for those artists who did not come out of an arts-oriented undergraduate institution (Jackson et al, 2003). This need is met, albeit not at the level that many artists would like, by both government and nonprofit entities.

Local arts agencies have been found to be important sources of training and professional development (Jackson et al, 2003). Some of their activity is supported



by NEA grants through the Artists in Education programs. In other instances, the local staff develops and runs professional development programs informally in response to perceived need. Given the insecure nature of the informal programs, they are not necessarily robust or long-lasting. Some notable examples of local arts agencies' business of the arts professional development programs are the Los Angeles' Center for Cultural Innovation, St. Paul's Springboard for the Arts, and Cleveland's Artist as Entrepreneur Institute (Markusen, 2010).

Foundations and nonprofit organizations also supply professional development for artists, and do so over the course of the artist's career. Some examples of their approach to professional development are: artist retreats where artists interact and network with each other, consultants, and arts professionals; artist-to-artist mentorship programs; training in strategic planning, fund-raising, web strategies, and other ancillary skills; providing access to curators, gallerists and collectors; and providing artists with information about affordable health insurance opportunities (Guay, 2012). The Emily Hall Tremain Foundation is also preparing professional development curricula for MFA students so that they might make more informed decisions as they transition out of school and into their careers (Guay, 2012). The Creative Capital Foundation was frequently mentioned in the Jackson et al (2003) interviews to be a model of the kind of comprehensive approach to professional development, combining business skills with artistic skills, needed by many artists.

Apprenticeship programs can be valuable for young artists, particularly those in traditional and folk arts fields ("Support for Individual Artists in the Folk and Traditional Arts," Dalglish, 2003). They can be poorly funded, however, drain time from the master artists, and reduce the diversity of the field if too many apprentice with one or two master artists.

Support for strengthening marketing, distribution and presentation skills is much needed throughout the arts world, and is particularly an issue for artists from marginalized communities (Dalglish, 2003; Rendon & Markusen, 2009). Professional development is also needed by artists working in the hybrid or arts-related sectors. *A Documentation and Analysis of Surdna Arts Teachers Fellowship Program (SAFT): The first decade 2000-2010* found that art teachers who had received the Surdna fellowship found themselves reinvigorated both as artists and as teachers. As artists, they were able to develop concrete artistic skills, find their own voices as artists, gain an increased appreciation of the role of arts in society, and develop an increased entrepreneurial confidence to continue to seek out ways to continue to enhance their skills. As teachers, they gained new techniques and resources, confidence in the classroom, better understanding and empathy for their students' process, learned how to model artistic production for their students, brought increased cultural exposure to their instruction, and had more energy and appetite for risk-taking in their teaching (Levine, 2010).

#### *Information dissemination*

An important form of artist support whose value can far exceed its expense is providing various information services, such as job listings; directories for grants,

colleagues, in-kind and web services; etc. (Galligan and Cherbo, 2004). Many artists are unaware of the services available to them, or how to access them, and therefore a centralized repository of such information that is accessible to them – particularly if they are from a marginalized community – can be invaluable (Rendon & Markusen, 2009; Dalglish, 2003).

State Arts Agencies are important vehicles for information dissemination, both information directed towards artists, such as advocacy information, business and career management, job listings and calls to artists, and health insurance information, and information directed towards the public to connect them with their local arts scene, such as teaching or touring artist registries, presenter/venue listings, cultural calendars, cultural tours or trails, showcases, and reviews or podcasts of arts events (Lowell, 2008). State arts agencies are vulnerable to budget cuts, however, and many have been adversely affected by the recent recession.

NYFA Source, a program of the New York Foundation for the Arts, began as the Visual Artist Information Hotline in 1996, and has been developed to become a comprehensive national repository for information for and about artists (Jackson et al, 2003). It provides information about formal programs of support for artists nationally, with an eye towards both providing this information in a useful manner to individual artists seeking support and to researchers wishing to track the landscape of artists' support.

#### *Facilitating community-based support*

This form of support has the end result of artists receiving financial support from individual members of their community, and so therefore could be categorized as a form of financial support. However, the organizations involved in the facilitation of connection between artist and community members does not itself necessarily contribute any financial resources to the artist. Its facilitation role is, therefore, an intangible form of support.

Recently, there has been a flourishing of innovative “stone soup” approaches to connecting artists with financial support (Guay, 2012). There are several organizations that are helping artists connect with members of their community who would like to support them directly but on levels that are too small to make sense without facilitation and aggregation. The Sunday Soup model, happening in a number of communities nationally, combines a fund-raising meal with artists pitching their proposals directly to the audience. After the meal, the proceeds of the fund-raiser go to those artists who win the audience's vote.

Modeled directly on community-supported agriculture, Springboard for the Arts has launched Community Supported Art, where participating artists provide three boxes of three artworks each to shareholders who have paid \$300 to participate. In addition to the giving and receiving of art, the pickup events are an opportunity for shareholders and artists to meet and interact directly.



While it was not designed for artist support specifically, Kickstarter.com has been a successful venue for artists to go directly to a virtual community for support. Other “microphilanthropy” sites, designed along a Kickstarter model, are springing up to help artists specifically.

Some organizations work to match more significant individual donor capacity with individual artists (*Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change: High impact strategies for philanthropy*, Sidford, 2011). The Fund For Artists Matching Commissions Program (FFMAC) offered grants of up to \$10,000 to artists for the creation of new work, where each grant was matched by contributions from individual donors. The program involved more than 4,600 donors and 240 artists, which, in addition to providing an intimate form of support to artists, stimulated a taste for arts philanthropy in many first-time donors (25).

## **Career stage**

Another way to parse the provision of support to artists is by considering separately each career stage, since there may be greater differences in needs and types of relevant support across the career stages than there are across the disciplines. A common way of categorizing career stages that is often used, but not clearly defined in the literature we reviewed, is: emerging, mid-career, established, master, retired. Joan Jeffri and her colleagues have developed a seven-stage model of an artistic career: Initial Influences; Training and Preparation; Professional Institutions; Peer Influences; Marketplace Judgments; Critical Evaluation; and Late Careers (Jeffri, Greenblatt and Sessions, 1992).

The Jerome Foundation focuses on “emerging artists” in a variety of disciplines. They define the term as those artists who, along with being the principal creators of new works are those “who take risks and embrace challenges; whose developing voices reveal significant potential; who are rigorous in their approach to creation and production; who have some evidence of professional achievement but not a substantial record of accomplishment; and who are not recognized as established artists by other artists, curators, producers, critics, and arts administrators.” (<http://www.jeromefdn.org/apply/general-program/definition-emerging-artist>) They are careful to specify that the term refers to “artistic development, professional accomplishment, and recognition, not to evolution within an artist’s work.” They also emphasize that career stage is not linked to age.

The Greenwall Foundation is another organization whose mission is to support emerging artists. It has reported on how artists view the notion of “emerging” versus “mid career” and it is immediately apparent that there is no clear boundary between the two stages (*A Commitment to Emerging Artists: The Greenwall Foundation’s Arts and Humanities Program, 1991-2011*, Arnal, 2012). Their evaluation cites Sibyl Kempson’s reflections on the issue: “I’ve been emerging for a long, long time. I don’t want to call it a stepping stone because it means more than that, it’s something that carries you from this kind of oblivion or obscurity to a place where you’re

acknowledged as doing something that is legitimate and that matters in some way.” (19)

The report also acknowledged that artists’ need for support does not end at the emerging stage, but instead changes for mid-career artists. The HERE Arts Center Residency Program (HARP) was started to help fill that gap. According to its founder, Kristin Marting, there is a crisis for mid-career artists: “I felt like we were losing all these smart talented artists because they were overwhelmed. As they were becoming mid-career they were burning out because there was too much that they needed—time, space, promotional support—that they didn’t have to take their work to the next level.” (21)

Another career stage that has received important, emerging research attention is the transition to retirement or a working old age (Jeffri, 2007, 2011; Jeffry and Throsby, 2006). This research has identified significant sources of need—pensions, living spaces, and work opportunities. The organized sources of support for aging artists are some service organizations, such as The Actors Fund, and some unions. They offer pensions, emergency support, and, in some cases, run retirement communities. As Jeffri (2011) points out, however, that only a very small proportion of professional artists have worked consistently enough in one union to be eligible for their pension benefits.

## **Discipline-specific issues**

Not all issues faced by artists of different disciplines are the same. Some are specific to the particular discipline, and some are much more likely to be an issue in some disciplines rather than others. For example, dancers have significant need of post-career transition support (Jeffri and Throsby, 2006) and recording artists sometimes need help dealing with playlist issues (Thompson, 2009). A full exploration of the idiosyncratic needs of different disciplines is beyond the scope of this review. However, no review would be complete without recognizing the invaluable oeuvre of Joan Jeffri’s research, stretching over 20 years, into the details of many different artistic disciplines’ careers. She and her colleagues have investigated craftspeople (Jeffri, Greenblatt and Greeley, 1991), painters (Jeffri, Friedman, and Greenblatt, 1991), actors (Jeffri, Greenblatt, and Sessions, 1992), visual artists (Jeffri and Throsby, 1994; Jeffri and Greenblatt, 1996; Jeffri, 2004c), playwrights (Jeffri, 1999), jazz musicians (Jeffri, 2003a, b), dancers (Jeffri, 2006), and composers (Jeffri, Oberstein and Reed, 2009).

There are also several discipline-specific arts service organizations that regularly publish information on the specific needs and opportunities for their members. Some examples of these are: Future of Music Coalition, Craft Emergency Relief Fund, National Performance Network, and others.

## Relationship between arts organizations and artists

The relationship between arts organizations and artists is, of course, critical to the support of each and to the vibrancy of the arts ecology overall. While the focus of this review is on how organized institutions support individual artists directly, this review would be incomplete without touching on arts organizations and how they often mediate among funders, audiences, and the broader public and individual artists. As a consequence, support for arts organizations ultimately translates at least in part to support for individual artists: the two cannot be considered completely separately.

A RAND Corporation study, *Arts and Culture in the Metropolis: Strategies for Sustainability* (McCarthy et al, 2007), has done a careful taxonomy of arts organizations and their support system, though they explicitly exclude individual artists from much of their analysis because of data difficulties. Their taxonomies can also partially translate to the question of individual artist support.

The RAND study divides arts organizations into six main categories: arts presenting, funding, promoting, arts councils, service, and professional societies. Arts-presenting organizations include theaters, museums, dance troupes, orchestras, etc. They are major sources of employment in the arts for individual artists. Association with these presenting organizations can also provide artists with the institution's visibility and prestige, and with assistance in building audience demand and marketing support. The non-arts-presenting organizations are often the entities that supply the support forms reviewed in the previous section.

Arts organizations are themselves supported financially by two categories of revenues: earned income and contributed income. Earned income comes from admissions or ticket sales, and also ancillary revenues from facilities rentals, gift shop sales, and restaurant or café earnings. Contributions come from a wide variety of sources: individuals, corporations, government and foundations. Some organizations also have endowment income. By far the largest sort of contributions across the sector in dollar amounts comes from individuals, and as such are a major focal point for small dollar individual giving in support of the arts. Government grants are not a significant source of revenues for any type of organization and are more important for their legitimating role, which helps attract private sources of funding.

McCarthy et al describe five functions of services provided to arts organizations: grants, technical assistance, presentation, promotion, and economic development.

Since the large majority of arts funding from foundations are to arts organizations rather than individuals, some individuals incorporate as a 501(c)3 organization. Some artists find the effort to incorporate worth the effort, but the decision can come with drawbacks (Jackson et al, 2003). First, there is considerable administrative work that comes with becoming and remaining a 501(c)3 organization, including building a board of directors, creating articles of incorporation and filing with the IRS. Then, once the nonprofit arts organization is off the ground, some artists

discover that while they have access to significantly more funding for their own and others' work, they spend more time as arts administrators than as artists.

An alternative route to accessing arts organization-based foundation money is for individual artists to seek out fiscal sponsorship by arts organizations that specialize in providing these services to artists. Rather than creating one's own 501(c)3, the artist applies for sponsorship from a fiscal sponsor to administer any grants or donations that are made to support the individual artist's project. A pioneer in this form of artist support is Fractured Atlas, which combines fiscal sponsorship with other forms of business and administrative support for artists (Galli, 2011).

## IV. Who are Artists?

In any discussion of the arts ecosystem as it relates to individual artists, it is important to consider that the very definition of "artist" is contested. The choice of definition of who constitutes an artist or a professional artist is an ideological choice ("Do Artists Benefit from Arts Policy? The Position of Performing Artists in Flanders (2001-2008)," Segers et al, 2010; Rosenstein, 2004). The choice of a definition will necessarily influence how data are collected and what conclusions are drawn.

There are three dimensions of the definition of an artist that seem to be important in the literature on individual artists in defining the scope of inquiry: discipline, level of professionalism, and sectoral participation. In general, there is a trade-off between inclusiveness and coherence: one could easily ignore populations of artists that are of interest if one defines "artist" too narrowly, but on the other hand, the issues facing individuals who meet only a less stringent definition of "artist" are likely to be quite different from those who meet traditional, core definitions of professional artists. Jeffri (2004b) provides a useful taxonomy of the sources of a definition of who qualifies as an artist: one could look to the marketplace to provide the definition, the individual's education and affiliation, or to self- and peer-identification. The first source limits the definition to those who have some measure of market success and whose output consumers identify as "art", the second could exclude the self-taught and disenfranchised, and the third has the potential to lack any meaningful filter. The definition appropriate to a particular situation will balance these limitations in such a way as to best meet the needs of the particular research question or policy goal.

### Self-identification

The most inclusive way to define an artist is to accept individuals' self-definition. This has at its root deeply political implications: only the individual gets to define their self-expression. Not surprisingly, this is the definition of an artist UNESCO takes in its human rights platform:

‘Artist’ is taken to mean any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association.

Many surveys of artists also begin with self-identification. For example, the LINC 2009 survey merely required an individual to self-identify as an artist and list at least one field, which could be a write-in.

A major Australian longitudinal study of artists also chooses to define artists through their “self-assessed commitment to artistic work as a major aspect of the artist’s working life, even if creative work is not the main source of income” (*Do You Really Expect to Get Paid? An economic study of professional artists in Australia*, Throsby & Zednik, 2010, 7). The survey chooses self-definition even though their goal is to reach “serious, practising professional artists.” Ex post, however, they excluded artists in design-related fields (interior, fashion, industrial or architectural) and those artists who work primarily in the film industry.

## **Disciplines**

The common core definition of artistic disciplines used in the literature seems to be the four categories: musicians, writers, visual and performing artists. Some studies do not refine the definition further (e.g. Rendon & Markusen, 2009). Others break down these four categories into more specific subcategories. Those that use the U.S. census as their source of data use that survey’s categories, which include, in addition to the obvious disciplines, such categories of artist as producers and directors, choreographers, and TV, video and motion picture camera operators (see *The Artistic Dividend*, Markeson and King, 2003 and *The Artistic Dividend Revisited*, Markeson et al, 2004). Also using census categories, Markeson et al (2004) expand their focus to the creative professional fields of architects, designers, announcers and other entertainers.

The NEA pulls 11 categories from the census categories, which for the agency constitute artists: (1) Actors; (2) Announcers; (3) Architects; (4) Fine artists, art directors, and animators; (5) Dancers and choreographers; (6) Designers; (7) Entertainers and performers; (8) Musicians and singers; (9) Photographers; (10) Producers and directors; and (11) Writers and authors. These categories are also used in the Current Population Survey, which allows for more frequently updating information on employment.

Throsby & Zednik (2010) categorized self-identified artists by their principal artistic occupation into (1) writers; (2) visual artists; (3) craft practitioners; (4) actors and directors; (5) dancers and choreographers; (6) musicians and singers; (7) composers, songwriters and arrangers; and (8) community cultural development workers.

## **Professionalism**

Most policy-oriented research on artists has clear interests in focusing on “real” artists, rather than on hobbyists who dabble in an artistic field. However, separating the two groups is challenging, since many in the target population are not able to practice their art full time. By setting income or time thresholds, one risks excluding the most marginal populations of artists and, perhaps, those that might benefit the most from more effective support.

The LINC survey found that there wasn’t a clear line between the “professional” and “amateur” artist or between the “commercial” and “independent” (LINC 2010a, p. 7). It reflects that in our society, an “artist” can be any of: an identity, a career, a temporary engagement, a philosophy, etc. (LINC 2010a, p. 7). The boundaries are even blurrier among immigrant communities and the young.

However, for many studies, some sort of filter keeps the scope manageable. To ensure a focus on those individuals who engage in the arts in such a way as to reach the broader community, the Markeson et al (2006) survey restricted their scope to artists who spent at least 10 hours a week on their work and who shared their work with people beyond family and close friends.

The Jackson et al (2003) definition also found a way to define professionalism in as inclusive a way possible while still retaining focus. They define an artist as: all adults who have expert artistic skills; have received artistic education or training (formal or informal); attempt to derive income from those skills; and are or have been actively engaged in creating artwork and presenting it to the public. (6) They remain neutral as to which disciplines qualify as art and do not require that the artist succeed in deriving an income from her work, merely that she attempt to do so. Furthermore, they recognize that artists might only be active artists sporadically, as their situation allows, and therefore to attain their standard of artist, the creation and presenting component of the definition need not be current.

The census and Current Population Survey (CPS) only identify individuals into an occupational category if it is where they dedicate the most of their time during the reference period. This misses many artists whose career is sporadic. The CPS also identifies those with a secondary income from an artistic source (Nichols, 2006).

## **Economic sector**

As Carole Rosenstein discusses in her 2004 paper, in some conceptions of “artist,” there is a need for the artist to remain disinterested from commercial concerns. In other words, they should be subsidized (either by self--working a “day job”--or other--grants and patrons) rather than remunerated. As a consequence, some endeavors denoted as artistic by the census and others may be too commercial to

qualify as art in other circumstances. Architects, designers, and other commercial artists will routinely face this definitional challenge. However, as noted by LINC and Jeffri (2004b), many artists self-subsidize by working in the commercial sector, and they have differing opinions about the artistic worth of the work they do primarily for pay. Furthermore, even highly commercialized creative endeavors enrich and enhance the arts ecosystem in their own right (e.g. Florida, 2002).

As the walls between economic sectors and artistic disciplines continue to crumble and as commercial works continue to seek out active enrichment from the arts, these concerns about financial disinterest will seem more and more outdated.

## V. Conclusion

As this literature review has demonstrated, the supply of support for artists is a complicated, multi-faceted ecosystem. There remains significant research to be done in surveying the forms of support and then in understanding their effectiveness. In order to properly survey the ecosystem, it would be helpful to have a framework or taxonomy with which to understand the different types of support for artists. As with artists' need for different types of support, the forms of support offered by institutions operates on multiple dimensions simultaneously and interact with the entire arts ecosystem in complex ways. Untangling these interactions would allow us to better assess the system's strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, we could map the flow of resources and support from the complicated universe of entities interested in the promotion of artists, via the different forms of support, to the needs that the support addresses. This review has found that aspects of this ecosystem-wide mapping are currently possible, but that additional work on the conceptual framework for understanding forms of support remains to be done.



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