



Arts and cultural entrepreneurship

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Abstract The topic of arts and culture in entrepreneurship holds great interest to scholars from many disciplines and to policymakers keen on “Creative Class” development and revitalizing local communities. Much research has explored the role of cultural amenities and milieu in fostering entrepreneurial activity. Having artists and cultural sector workers around provides fertile ground for entrepreneurship. Yet when one looks beyond the highly aggregated correlations and case studies of entrepreneurial artists, research on the roles played by arts workers and the creative sector as entrepreneurial agents remains underdeveloped. This special issue advances the entrepreneurship literature through a collection of articles that explore the entrepreneurial roles, natures, and practices of artists. These articles address fundamental questions about the roles of creativity, entrepreneurship, and psychology as well as more applied questions about the use and implications of online crowd funding platforms and how arts entrepreneurs adapt to their experiences and environments. The excellent work by the contributors to this special issue contributes to the literature with rigorous scholarship and set the stage for more to come.

Keywords Arts entrepreneurship · Creative class · Intrapreneurship · Motivations · Experiments · Crowdfunding

JEL classifications L26 · Z10

The topic of arts and culture in entrepreneurship holds great interest to scholars from many disciplines and to policymakers keen on “Creative Class” development and revitalizing local communities. Much research has explored the role of cultural amenities and milieu (e.g., Audretsch et al. 2010, 2019; Clark et al. 2002; Lange 2011; Qian 2013; Storper and Scott 2009) in fostering entrepreneurial activity. Having artists and cultural sector workers around provides fertile ground for entrepreneurship (e.g., Audretsch and Belitski 2013; Lee et al. 2004). Yet when one looks beyond the highly aggregated correlations and case studies of entrepreneurial artists, research on the roles played by arts workers and the creative sector as entrepreneurial agents remains underdeveloped.

Often overlooked are the mechanisms and deeper connections, where those creating the cultural expressions, shaping cultural identities, and undertaking artistic projects are themselves entrepreneurs. How artists act as entrepreneurs has received some attention (e.g., Burke 1997; Castiglione et al. 2018; Gafni et al. 2019; Kuhn and Galloway 2015; Olive-Tomas and Harmeling 2019; Pret et al. 2016; Woronkiewicz and Noonan 2019), but far more is needed to understand these important connections among creativity, culture, and entrepreneurship. For all the excellent attention and insights that these works have brought to the subject, there are important research questions that economists have yet to address thoroughly. This special issue advances

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the entrepreneurship literature through a collection of articles that explore the entrepreneurial roles, natures, and practices of artists. These articles address fundamental questions about the roles of creativity, intrapreneurship, and psychology as well as more applied questions about the use and implications of online crowdfunding platforms and how arts entrepreneurs adapt to their experiences and environments.

We lead off the special issue with an article entitled “Arts Majors as Entrepreneurs and Innovators,” by Richard J. Paulsen, Neil Alper, and Gregory Wassall. In examining college graduates with arts degrees alongside those with degrees in STEM fields and others, the authors highlight the major role of creativity in education as driving subsequent entrepreneurial and innovative economic activities. The authors use American Community Survey data to show how arts majors play a substantial role in driving entrepreneurship and work in innovative industries. Arts majors are much more likely than other graduates to work in an entrepreneurial occupation or innovative industry. That arts majors’ propensity to pursue entrepreneurial activities rivals that of STEM majors highlights both the prominence of the arts in entrepreneurship and the importance of creativity in training and education for future entrepreneurs.

The next paper, “Artists as Public Sector Intrapreneurs: An Experiment” by Jessica Sherrod Hale and Joanna Woronkiewicz, takes a behavioral (Audretsch et al. 2015) perspective in analyzing the role of artists in advancing entrepreneurship. Their novel experiment tackles a thorny problem of evaluating the impacts of embedding artists in organizations—as intrapreneurs (Antoncic and Hisrich 2001)—to catalyze creativity and innovation in group problem-solving. Their experiment shows how including artists can promote creativity and novelty in group solutions to difficult problems, and they did so without significantly increasing intra-group conflict. The random assignment may not resemble many organizations’ experiences with artist residencies, but their results are promising for the use of artists as resident intrapreneurs who can bring openness and creativity to problems facing organizations.

The next set of articles makes use of online crowdfunding platforms—an increasingly popular venue for arts and cultural entrepreneurs to find support for their ventures—to answer key questions about arts entrepreneurship. Tobias Bürger and Simon Kleinert examine the motivations of arts entrepreneurs’ supports in “Crowdfunding cultural and commercial entrepreneurs:

An empirical study on motivation in distinct backer communities,” highlighting the tensions between commercial and cultural ventures in appealing to different backers. This work gets at a core issue in understanding the development of financial support for early-stage, entrepreneurial ventures, and how it might differ between commercial and cultural projects. Their results confirm the expectation that cultural projects benefit more from community-building and engagement, pointing to important heterogeneity among supporters of entrepreneurial ventures. Developing communities of support involves a different approach for cultural entrepreneurs. Again, these cultural entrepreneurs are a major part of entrepreneurial activity on the crowdfunding platform, but they are distinct and must engage with different communities.

In “Looking for a Change in Scene: Analyzing the Mobility of Crowdfunding Entrepreneurs,” Douglas Noonan, Shiri Breznitz, and Sana Maqbool take a different look at crowdfunding platform data to examine the mobility of entrepreneurs. To start, they examine decisions by entrepreneurs who pursue crowdfunding multiple times (“repeat crowdfunders”) and observe that initial success and their initial entrepreneurial ecosystem matters for their decision to relocate their next project. Next, they estimate a choice model to identify the attributes of a region that attract these mobile entrepreneurs. The results affirm both the importance of larger markets and stronger networks for cultural entrepreneurs while also pointing to important heterogeneity among types of artists. These kinds of results have immediate implications for policymakers seeking to retain or attract the modern, early-stage creative entrepreneurs working via these online platforms.

The third crowdfunding paper, “Creative and Resourceful: How Human, Social and Psychological Resources Affect Creative Workers’ Ability to Rebound after Failure” by Jared Allen, Regan Stevenson, and Tang Wang, investigates the resources associated with success among arts-related entrepreneurs. Their work sheds light on intangible resources for entrepreneurs, especially the creative workers responding to failures. Dealing with failure presents an important, if not inevitable, part of entrepreneurship related to the arts, and this article finds some unexpected results. This work suggests that overconfidence may figure prominently in susceptibility and response to failures, reinforcing the importance of psychological resources for entrepreneurs.

The article by Pia Arenius, Swee-Hoon Chuah, Bronwyn Coate, and Robert Hoffmann explores the overlap between artists and entrepreneurs from another vantage—a psychological and behavioral one. Their lab experiment included both entrepreneurs and artists and allowed them to test hitherto anecdotal evidence about the parallels between entrepreneurs and professional artists. Though entrepreneurs appear to be more extraverted and exhibit less emotionality than artists, both groups showed much greater (self-reported) risk tolerance, intrinsic motivation, and openness to experience relative to a control group of other professionals. This juxtaposition of artists and entrepreneurs offers interesting comparisons and contrasts. It also emphasizes some interesting tensions in both entrepreneurial and artistic practices. For both groups where value creation is an expression of individuality and pressures exist to appeal to a public or market for financial support, the differences in entrepreneurial mindsets can inform how they respond to challenges and opportunities. The common ground perhaps offers starting points for building self-efficacy among artists and for enhancing pro-social inclinations of entrepreneurs.

The last paper takes a step back to examine the intersection of “arts in entrepreneurship” and “entrepreneurship in arts.” This review by Adrienne Callander and Michael Cummings offer a fundamentally multidisciplinary perspective on literatures emerging from the two cores (arts, entrepreneurship). In investigating how the characterizations of the interaction differ from these two vantages, the authors are able to illuminate both the limits/boundaries of the topic and the implicit characterizations of the topic from both perspectives. Their narrative analysis of these literatures exposes some interesting tendencies regarding topics of dissent and dissolution of boundaries between arts and entrepreneurship. This article points to ways that the field of inquiry—with boundaries for scholars in entrepreneurship and in the arts—can advance by exploring these margins where the frontiers of innovative arts scholarship and entrepreneurship research intersect.

Data availability Not applicable.

Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Code availability Not applicable.

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