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## What Arts Entrepreneurship Isn't

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*A common and necessary desire in disciplinary development is the need to define the object of study. The field of Arts Entrepreneurship contains two words lacking consensus, which creates significant challenges when attempting to define a third. As an introductory examination, this article outlines how the inherent tension and hidden harmony of the field's title may serve as a foil to developing a successful, immediate definition garnering wide-spread consensus.*

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The field of Arts Entrepreneurship is gaining strength measured both in program emergence and student demand. Some programs are serving hundreds of students each academic year and the variety of efforts signify how contextualized the field has become; the academic housing of these efforts is a partial indication. Likely, it is time for the field to consider a number of consensus points and these challenging discussions have already informally begun. For example, the field seems to desire a “defining” of terms— such as the field’s title—which is not only reasonable, but necessary. As one who appreciates definitions and the processes contained therein, I submit that there may be times when the act of “defining” (broadly speaking) may be better approached non-linearly, radically (in the Schumpeterian sense), with a measure of respect for the ineffable and perhaps most importantly, patience. This article suggests that defining “Arts Entrepreneurship is...” is critical, as it demonstrates/communicates both trajectory and intellectual vitality. Yet given the realities of what it is we organically appear to be doing as field (simply acknowledging the need for defining without a clear scholarly methodology to approach the topic), “circumscribing,” “embracing” and “theorizing” might provide a stronger methodological foundation in definition development with significant benefits in the long term.

### A PRECURSOR: IS, SOMETHING

From an A(arts) perspective, “entrepreneurship” is an interesting *something* to try and define. One wonders if it is a set of actions, character traits, behaviors, processes, mindsets, etc. or some combination thereof. It certainly seems observable and replete with opinions of what entrepreneurship “is” or “is not”—as our colleagues in the business school know all too well. What obfuscates matters is that it appears one person’s “entrepreneurship” is another’s everyday activity. For example, a case could be made that starting a business (New Venture Creation) is

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not “entrepreneurial;” new businesses launch every day and The United States Small Business Administration is dedicated to their success. In fact, there is an entire cultural, educational and economic infrastructure to facilitate the emergence of these entities. But for some reason, most consider the late Steve Jobs an “entrepreneur” because he founded Apple Computer—and we should note that he was not the first one to start a computer company. One could ask “why do most consider Jobs an entrepreneur when all he did was start a business?” Most, I suppose, would answer by saying that he had a “vision” for the company that centered on the leveraging of new technology (with a sense of the aesthetic) for those who could not normally afford such things; perhaps Jobs simply recognized opportunity.

Art appears to suffer the same malady—it is an interesting *something* to try and define. If someone calls *something* “Art” and we acknowledge it as so (despite our misgivings), does this serve Art? This *something* seems observable and there are many opinions on what it is or is not. One person’s Art is another’s trash, it seems. A case could be made that creating Art is an everyday occurrence and not unique. What we call “Art” today has not only existed for millennia, it permeates today’s society to the point of commoditization; besides, it appears that anyone can *do* anything and call it Art. In fact, there is an entire cultural, educational and economic infrastructure to facilitate the emergence of A(a)rt: higher education, the arts industries, “the Art World,” etc. But for some reason, we consider Jackson Pollock’s *Number 8* Art, when Sandro Botticelli (if he had the chance to view the work) may ask why a drop cloth was hanging on a wall for all to see. It is an interesting question: why do some consider Pollock’s work “Art” when Botticelli likely would not? Most, I suppose, would answer that Pollock had a new artistic “vision” that centered on leveraging a demand for new *somethings* in the Art World. Yet all *somethings* being contextual, Botticelli’s cultural context would likely not support his judgement of *Number 8* being a work of Art at all; perhaps Pollock simply recognized opportunity.

So, who *is* the entrepreneur, who *is* the artist and which one *is* both? Jobs, Pollock, Botticelli? All three? None? One? To determine the answer with any sort of confidence, we need definitions, which typically require the verb “is.” The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines the term as: “That which exists, that which is; the fact or quality of existence.”<sup>1</sup> Obviously, this definition appears more concerned with something that is identifiable, making no distinction about its tangibility. However, at its core, “is” communicates a distinct binary value: something “exists” and “is” or something “does not exist” and therefore, “is not.” Simplicity and determination are the hallmarks of this verb, yet “is” (existence and identifiability) can be an elusive concept. There are many disagreements about a number of “is-s,” for example: “This is ART” or “blue is a state of mind.” Even “Beethoven was a great composer” communicates an unequivocal; *something* exists (Beethoven’s work) and can be *identified* (greatness). The interesting thing about the verb in these grammatical constructions is that despite its seemingly harsh pronouncements, it can engender an almost automatic contrarian response—“prove it.” As academic fields emerge, there comes a time when verbs become important. At this point in the field’s development, “is” is an important verb and “prove it” is an essential check on the definition.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “is.”

For any emerging academic field, defining its essence is obviously critical as it communicates the explicit binary—is and isn't, *the study object exists or it does not, it is identifiable or it is not*. As formal statements of significance and meaning, definitions can be vexing, wrought with disagreement, occasionally obvious and sometimes defying easy linguistic description. The inherent struggle with defining “*some things*” in this manner is not simply the process of defining (and getting it right) but gaining consensus on a definition—as our colleagues in business schools can attest.<sup>2</sup>

## CIRCUMSCRIBING

We could begin a conversation about defining the field by simply circumscribing our efforts. As educators, most appear to be in contact with students from the Fine Arts disciplines (music, theatre, dance, film, photography and Art) who desire (broadly speaking) to make a living with their Art based on their training—conservatory students are a typical example. Additionally, there are those students who are *not* pursuing a Fine Arts degree who also desire (broadly speaking) to make a living with their A(a)rt in some manner. (These students could be pursuing a business, music industry or even a zoology degree, for example; note that many gravitate to the popular arts). We also see students who (again broadly speaking) are less interested in producing A(a)rt for a living, yet still desire a significant connection with the A(a)rts as it is important to their life's work or ambitions (arts administration, for example).

Though this exposition may not be as inclusive as some educators see, it helps to prove a very simple and necessary point about defining the field. At the micro-level, the field is highly (if not hyper) contextualized according to discipline, disciplinary culture, student population and even institutional mission, yet when examined at a macro level, the field appears to serve two broad groups of emerging arts entrepreneurs: 1) those who desire to entrepreneurially produce A(a)rt and 2) those who desire to entrepreneurially impact the production of A(a)rt in some way, shape or form. Perhaps we could also broadly state that what unites the two groups is a desire to make A(a)rt a critical aspect of their life's work. Since the field's suffix contains the word “entrepreneurship,” we might also assume that our students desire an “entrepreneurial” lifestyle.

It would not take too much thought to “define” Arts Entrepreneurship (and even other permutations of the field) given this circumscription. The problem, however, becomes apparent as the title of the field contains two words—both borrowed and both lacking consensus. If we were to stop here and define the field as outlined above, we would be making two explicit assumptions: 1) We know what A(a)rt is and can identify it (with consensus on the definition) and 2) We know what entrepreneurship is and can identify it (with consensus on the definition). Obviously, we can typically define tangible things with a sense of certainty, yet once we introduce subjectivity, intangible properties, cultures (micro-, macro-, non-western, etc.) and perspective (to name but a few variables), definitions become less authoritative, more difficult to articulate and challenging to build consensus. While it is true that definitions can be contextual, is it in the field's interest to adopt a contextual definition based on assumptions?

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<sup>2</sup> A very brief example describing the discipline's challenges in this regard appear below.

A second measure of circumscription is less tangible. When pulling apart the compound construction of the field's title at its most basic level—ART and ENTREPRENEURSHIP—there are broad, undeniable distinctions. The most obvious is “Art” and the centuries of contextual meaning it possesses and “Entrepreneurship,” which appears to have no consensus in the discipline other than what appears to be two primary schools of thought (New Venture Creation and behavior) with perhaps, some tenuous connections between them.<sup>3</sup> As far apart (or as connected) as ART and ENTREPRENEURSHIP seem, they also embody significant and fundamental distinctions and commonalities the field must explore in the process of defining “Arts Entrepreneurship is...”

There is a broad and sometimes subtle (though not exclusive) difference in how A(a)rt and non-A(a)rt products are consumed. When thinking of the products that emerging entrepreneurship students in business school-based entrepreneurship programs leverage, perhaps we in the Arts assume that the market consumption of these goods and services is as follows: an Intangible Idea yields a Tangible Product, which yields a Tangible Experience. For example, a business school-based student may see an opportunity for a new application of technology, which they develop and manifest for a market that sees value in the consumption of that application: a refrigerator, a television or software that speeds analysis, etc. In the A(a)rts, we see a similar construct, though with a significant distinction: an Intangible Idea yields a Tangible Product (a performance, a work of A(a)rt, an A(a)rts education company), yet yields an *Intangible Experience* for the market's consumers. This Intangible Experience may be described as an aesthetic experience of some sort or kind, if we 1) agree even modestly with 19<sup>th</sup> century aestheticians and 2) aesthetic experiences transcend A(a)rt's genres. I envision this as a very broad-based distinction and would caution the reader that our colleagues in the business school absolutely assist some of their emerging entrepreneurs with products and ideas that possess aesthetic properties. Automobiles, for example, can provide aesthetic experiences for certain market segments and these segments likely consume these products based on a complicated and subjective judgment of the contents and definition of subjective beauty—just like an A(a)rt consumer.

We should note, however, that our business school colleagues also help their students leverage *services* resulting in Intangible Experiences (the experience of a car repair, for example). The same could be said of students in our classrooms from the sciences who wish to aid artists with new inventions or innovations resulting in a Tangible Experience (software, again, serves as an example). What links both sets of students—and their educators—is that both sides of campus engage in the construction and leveraging of broad- and sometimes hybrid-based value propositions: tangible and intangible.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> A cursory discussion describing these two recent schools of thought appear below.

<sup>4</sup> Vivek Velamuri, *Hybrid Value Construction* (Leipzig: Springer, 2011). Note that Velamuri discusses the merging of the tangible and intangible to create a hybrid value proposition. However, deconstructing the author's definition appearing on page seven “...hybrid value creation is defined as the process of generating additional value by innovatively combining products (tangible component) and services (intangible component),” helps to articulate the similarities shared by arts-based and business school-based educators and students.

## EMBRACING

### The Role of the Business School

When examining how the field approaches its scholarship, a cursory examination of what the field has produced to date betrays a remarkable lacuna. By any measure, the field's published research demonstrates a distinct arts perspective, which in the context of negotiating the field's title seems axiomatic.<sup>5</sup> However, by either ignoring or cursorily examining the extant business school literature on the topic of entrepreneurship, the field misses a significant opportunity. Specifically, the discipline of Entrepreneurship is not only far more advanced in its examination of the topic, it possesses significant ideas, theories and frameworks suitable for application in an arts context.<sup>6</sup> By avoiding the examination, leveraging and embrace of this extant research, the field both misses an opportunity and restricts its intellectual growth. Though this literature is certainly foreign to those of us in the arts, we must both broaden our investigative context by producing research engaging more challenging Library of Congress call numbers and pull ourselves away from the overweighted integration of topics better suited for arts administration literature.<sup>7</sup>

By asking our business school colleagues to be partners with us in (at least) scholarship development and (perhaps) curriculum design, we can impact both sides of campus. As mentioned above, our field needs assistance integrating entrepreneurial theory and perhaps our partners would benefit by an exposure to the arts, aesthetics, artistic entrepreneurial desire and intention, etc. There is much to be learned on both sides of campus and I argue that intellectual uncertainty, lethargy or suspicion does not help our field and absolutely does not help our students. Indeed, there are differences in foci, but we do share a name—entrepreneurship—and not fully embracing our partner's efforts hamstrings our field's development.

Likewise, we should be wary of ideas, concepts or words that appear to provide a quick fix. For example, a popular trope heard recently is "Arts Entrepreneurship is a *transdiscipline*." Michael Scriven defines a transdiscipline in two ways: first, an older conception of the term as "...meaning a theory, point of view, or perspective that has some application in several disciplines" and a second, more recent conception as "...meaning a discipline that has standalone status as a discipline *and* is also used as a methodological or analytical tool in

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<sup>5</sup> Gary Beckman, "Entrepreneurial Aesthetics: Arts Entrepreneurship and Reconciliation," in *The Routledge Companion to Entrepreneurship*, ed. Friederike Welter and Ted Baker. (London: Taylor & Francis Group, forthcoming 2014).

<sup>6</sup> See the following: Larry Cox, Stephen Mueller and Sherry Moss, "The Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Education* 1, no. 2 (2002): 1–17; Hoa Ma and Justin Tan, "Key Components and Implications of Entrepreneurship: A 4-P Framework," *Journal of Business Venturing* 21 (2006): 704–25; and Daniel Yar Hamidi, Karl Wennberg and Henrik Berglund, "Creativity in Entrepreneurship Education," *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development* 15, no. 2 (2008): 304–320.

<sup>7</sup> For example: Johan Kolsteeg, "Situating Cultural Entrepreneurship" *Artivate* 2, no. 3 (2013): 3–13; Vijay Mathew and Polly Carl, "Culture Coin: A Commons-based Complementary Currency for the Arts and its Impact on Scarcity, Virtue, Ethics and the Imagination," *Artivate* 2, no. 3 (2013): 14–29; and Debra Webb, "Placemaking and Social Equity: Expanding the Framework of Creative Placemaking," *Artivate* 3, no. 1 (2014): 35–48.

several other disciplines.”<sup>8</sup> We should note that Arts Entrepreneurship is 1) not a discipline nor is it recognized as such (we have yet to develop our own branch of knowledge) and 2) at this point in the field’s development, we appear to not possess a single theory—much less one that is used by another discipline. Therefore, according to Scriven, Arts Entrepreneurship is not a *transdiscipline*. To make such Latin-based prefix pronouncements following the verb “is” reflects the field’s youth, inexperience and demonstrates a significant misunderstanding of disciplinary development and grammatical perspective. Further, our business school partners seem to resist such grand urges, yet use prefixes to appropriately to classify the contributions of many disciplines to the development of Entrepreneurship.<sup>9</sup>

## Contents

There is one significant aspect we must consider when embracing the field’s scholarly horizon. Specifically, many of our students intend to entrepreneur directly with an aesthetic product. As briefly mentioned above, this both articulates and binds us to our colleagues in the business school. To reiterate, our compatriots across campus do not help their students entrepreneur aesthetic products exclusively. Again, this distinction is helpful as it can be used in the theorizing process as well: *A(a)rts students entrepreneur with aesthetic products exclusively and business school-based students do not, exclusively.*

Obviously, the implications of this suggestion are somewhat grand: does this mean that we must teach aesthetics in our arts entrepreneurship classroom? If we consider the question even cursorily, we may find further distinctions and commonalities with our business school partners. For example, if one examines a standard degree plan for a B.S. in Business we find that students are exposed to a broad set of basic concepts the discipline determined provides a solid *intellectual* foundation for students to enter business culture. However, in the Fine Arts, *skills* designed for Fine Arts Culture are the focus. Both prepare their students to participate in a distinct culture, yet Fine Arts students are trained to provide an aesthetic experience almost exclusively as their market’s culture demands (consciously or not) the experience. This may suggest we acknowledge the importance of aesthetic theory for our field and further, that it may be crucial in our curricular design decisions.

Certainly most Arts Entrepreneurship educators are not trained in aesthetics and truth be told, many of our arts terminal degree training constructs do not mandate the topic. Yet how can we prepare A(arts) students to entrepreneur when their market makes aesthetic judgements *without* a discussion of the product’s aesthetic contents? If the desire for an ineffable A(art) experience is the real reason for A(art)’s consumption (yet no one can explain why), then 1) our students need to know because this core, desired experience becomes the

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Scriven, “The Concept of a Transdiscipline: And of Evaluation as a Transdiscipline,” *Journal of Multi-disciplinary Education* 5, no. 10 (2008): 65–66. For a more detailed discussion, see Atila Ertas, “Understanding of Transdiscipline and Transdisciplinary Process,” *Transdisciplinary Journal of Engineering & Science* 1, no. 1 (2010): 53–73.

<sup>9</sup> Jose Barreira, “Early Thinking and the Emergence of Entrepreneurship,” in *Frontiers in Entrepreneurship* (Johannesburg: Springer, 2010), 15–18.

broader value proposition and 2) the percentage of aesthetic content in our student's entrepreneurial product distinguishes us from our business school partners.

Aesthetics in the Arts Entrepreneurship classroom should not be considered remote as it possesses some significant pedagogical benefits. For example, when speaking about arts marketing, aesthetics can help to suggest proper ratios of cultural, semiotic and linguistic communication in the context of demographics and consumption model identification/targeting. In this case, if we consider the cause of the market's consumption of A(a)rt in combination with the way these markets consume that A(a)rt, it is likely that more effective decisions about the content and design of an art venture's marketing mix, for example, would be possible. Though this is a more elementary example, the prospect of adopting some form of aesthetic training for emerging arts entrepreneurs should be seriously considered as it impacts our student's markets—those who make buying decisions centered on an individualized determination of beauty.

## THEORIZING

### Negotiating Our Title

If there were ever two words brought together to form an emerging academic field wrought with little to no consensus on what each word means, ART + ENTREPRENEURSHIP would be a strong candidate. For roughly 2,500 years, the best minds in the history of western civilization have yet to agree on what Art is or is not, how it should be judged, or its true function in society—other than multifaceted. Definitions of “A(a)rt” abound and though one definition may account for what most call “A(a)rt,” some will inevitably disagree. Thousands of gallons of ink, thousands of years and (likely) thousands of minds have attempted to define *something* that exists (society tends to agree on this) yet defies consensus. This *something* we call “Art” may not be a *something* at all.<sup>10</sup> We know that the *something* “Art” may be a painting, a performance, etc., but when it strays outside our personalized conception or definition of the *something*, thus begins the conundrum. Without going into a philosophical discussion about Art's meaning, I would suspect that most readers at least agree with the premise: A definition of “Art” lacks consensus for many, many reasons.

The discipline of Entrepreneurship has been exploring their definition (in the modern sense) for many years. Abstracted, one more recent event in their “defining” history begins with a seminal article in 1989 by Murray Low and Ian MacMillan.<sup>11</sup> In this work, the authors suggested that the discipline confront a simple problem: there were too many research trajectories examining the discipline and thus, reaching consensus points would prove difficult. What resulted was an interdisciplinary examination of the term, which solidified two broad streams of thought: entrepreneurship is the creation of new ventures (New Venture

<sup>10</sup> See Stephen Davies, *The Philosophy of Art* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006). Davies articulates the rationale for “Art” being both a biological and cultural need.

<sup>11</sup> Murray Low and Ian MacMillan, “Entrepreneurship: Past, Present and Future Challenges.” *Journal of Management* 14, no. 2 (1988): 139–61.

Creation) and entrepreneurship is a choice to behave in a certain manner after due process.<sup>12</sup> These two camps exist to this day and are clearly articulated in graduate school seminars.<sup>13</sup>

Uniting our field is a lack of consensus on both terms, ART and ENTREPRENEURSHIP, which possesses significant methodological implications. For example, we can observe what differing definitions of each term provides. That is, we can say ‘this individual appears to be acting in an entrepreneurial manner according to definition A using art as defined by C and D.’ This methodology may produce quick definitions, but is it appropriate?

While we can define “Arts Entrepreneurship” using extant definitions, we must ask whether or not a precise definition is even possible in the future—and if it is—who is best positioned to create the definition? Are we as Arts Entrepreneurship Educators in a position to define the field’s title when our colleagues across campus cannot define and reach consensus on the title’s components. Though the last question is for others to answer, I posit that quickly defining the field as “Arts Entrepreneurship is...” both misses the point and provides a learning opportunity: embracing the uncertainty of their discipline’s title is what our business school partners have done for decades, they have simply (with consensus) theorized (for now) a (present) ineffable—we are both in liminal space.

Embracing uncertainty is not a weakness, nor is saying everything matters. Stephen Davies would suggest that if Art is contextual then so is the judgment of its constituent properties.<sup>14</sup> This broader-based conception of Art is helpful in my view as it pulls the constituent “parts” of Art’s discussion together and raises it above the fray—it allows us to theorize a broader definition based on the “working out” of evolving issues. We may disagree with a definition of Art’s contents but a broad-based *theory of art* encompassing differing definitions and opinions is helpful.<sup>15</sup> This allows us to discuss the parts and judgments of Art in a myriad of contexts while retaining the observation and consensus that there is this *something* called “Art.”

Using this methodology, we may find it more helpful to discuss art and entrepreneurship (both separate and together) as a *phenomenon* within a broader *theory* (or theories) of Arts Entrepreneurship.<sup>16</sup> This way, the field can account for the observations of human actions and behavior without being drawn into arguments about constituent and contextual definitions. Indeed, the idea is to observe the broader *phenomenon* of arts entrepreneurship within theoretical constructs that can be proved, disproved or adapted as the

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<sup>12</sup> A singular piece of representative literature for both schools of thought would include Jeffrey Timmons and Stephen Spinelli, *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century* (Homewood, IL: McGraw Hill, 2004) and Kelly Shaver and Linda Scott, “Person, Process, Choice: The Psychology of New Venture Creation” *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice* 16, no. 2 (1991): 23–45.

<sup>13</sup> Karen Verduijin, “Tales of Entrepreneurship: Contributions to Understanding Entrepreneurial Life” (Ph.D. diss., Vrije Universiteit Amstredam, 2007).

<sup>14</sup> Davies, *The Philosophy of Art*, 10.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 45–47.

<sup>16</sup> The OED defines *phenomenon* as “A thing which appears, or which is perceived or observed; a particular (kind of) fact, occurrence, or change as perceived through the senses or known intellectually; *esp.* a fact or occurrence, the cause or explanation of which is in question.” Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “phenomenon.”

field's scholarship—and time—progresses. Our business school partners have been doing this for decades.

If a theory is intended to explain a phenomenon, then perhaps positing a *definition* of Arts Entrepreneurship at this point is premature.<sup>17</sup> Using this “theory” methodology can account for multiple observations of the phenomenon, thus providing distinct data points and hypotheses with which to develop not only a unified theory, but help to disprove theories that cannot support predictions. A theory of Arts Entrepreneurship allows us to agree on the observation of a broader phenomenon while keeping intact the observations that generated the theory's hypothesis, perhaps to be used in future theorizing.

Ptolemy's geocentric model of the solar system provides an apt example. Based primarily on the solar system's constituent parts as they were known and observed from earth, Ptolemy theorized that the earth was the center of the solar system. This theory was widely accepted for roughly 1500 years. Though we credit Copernicus for disproving geocentrism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, heliocentricity *still accounted for* the observed movements of the solar system's constituent parts as viewed from earth, yet with more accuracy.<sup>18</sup> The lesson here is that the *observation of the phenomenon of heavenly bodies moving in the sky was correct*—it was the theory explaining the phenomenon's observation that was incorrect. It should also be said that without an understanding of key concepts we take for granted today such as gravity and laws of motion, heliocentrism failed to enjoy immediate public adoption.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of observation, I argue, is key at this point in the field's scholarly development. Keeping with the example above, we see that constant observation of heavenly bodies was critical to both theories. That is, by being able to securely predict where heavenly bodies rose and set helped to both prove geocentricity *adequate* for 1500 years and prove heliocentricity *correct* for 500.

### Example

As an oversimplified example, we may be able to craft a *theory* about Arts Entrepreneurship Education. If we observe that most arts students typically do not make a living with their art upon completing their college training despite their desire to do so, we may identify a multitude of reasons: poor professional development in Arts training culture, a lack of status quo opportunities in the A(a)rts job markets, economic conditions and individual temperament, to name a few. However, if we see some A(a)rts students successfully leveraging A(a)rt as their primary source of income through the creation of for- or non-profit ventures, this may appear opposite of the typical status quo employment outcomes for this population.

<sup>17</sup> The OED defines *theory* as “A scheme or system of ideas or statements held as an explanation or account of a group of facts or phenomena; a hypothesis that has been confirmed or established by observation or experiment, and is propounded or accepted as accounting for the known facts; a statement of what are held to be the general laws, principles, or causes of something known or observed.” Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “theory.”

<sup>18</sup> The increased accuracy of the heliocentric model is well documented, even in the Greek era. See Thomas Heath, *Aristarchus of Samos: The Ancient Copernicus* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004).

<sup>19</sup> Alan A. Kubitz, *The Elusive Notion of Motion: The Genius of Kepler, Galileo, Newton and Einstein* (Indianapolis: Dog Ear Publishing, 2010): 41.

We may then identify this smaller group (popularly conceived) as “arts entrepreneurs” since these individuals are creating new ventures by leveraging or creating art products, experiences or products that impact the production of A(art).

Subsequent observations may reveal that student ventures and desires are as diverse as the genres and sub-genres of A(art). Some may start these ventures because they find non-A(art)s environments abhorrent. For others it may be that A(art) is the only pursuit that sustains them emotionally, religiously, intrinsically or ethically. Still others may be drawn to a popular mythos of the entrepreneurial hero and aspire to recreate the narrative through A(art).

Next, when considering the role of the Arts Entrepreneurship educator, we may observe a desire to help A(art)s students make a living with their A(art). We may also observe that, again, students do not receive professional development or entrepreneurship education during their arts training. Finally, we might observe that both sides of the classroom agree that students want to make a living with their A(art).

With these observations in hand, we can create a working hypothesis concerning the purpose of Arts Entrepreneurship Education. In this example, we have the following:

1) Students who desire to make a living with their A(art) are having significant difficulties achieving this goal and there are many reasons why. (abstract: students desire to make A(art) their livelihood and cannot).

2) Some students are successfully making a living with their A(art) by creating new and highly diverse arts ventures, which are not status quo professional outcomes for this demographic. (abstract: some appear to act “entrepreneurially” and are successful doing so).

3) The diversity of rationale for starting an arts venture is as diverse as the ventures themselves. (abstract: diversity is a hallmark of the decision-making process and outcome).

4) Arts Entrepreneurship educators and students may share a desire for the same outcome: for students to make a living with their A(art). (abstract: both sides of the classroom desire professional success for students).

Given these four observations, we can begin to construct a hypothesis explaining the field’s educational arm. Compressing the elements above, we can express the following: a desire for success by both student and educator + some students succeeding “entrepreneurially” + a high level of diversity throughout the process. This may lead us to the following statement:

*Arts Entrepreneurship Education provides tools to facilitate multifaceted and self-determined success modalities for emerging artists or those providing tools to artists.*

Whether this hypothesis describes the educational arm of the field or not is the field’s decision. However, it highlights three critical aspects of theorizing and definition development: 1) broad-based and contextualized observation is crucial 2) the diversity of our student’s desired outcomes require the field’s educators to adopt a multi-disciplinary understanding of A(art)’s cultures in addition to a working knowledge of basic entrepreneurial theory as exposed by our business school partners and 3) our student’s success depends on communicating an A(art) product’s unique value proposition.

*Lex parsimoniae:* If we agree that our field concerns the study of those artists desiring a lifestyle outside the economic and cultural status quo, then we are simply dealing with artistic individuals far more interested in “being different” or “doing differently,” which may fall in line with the basic scholarly trajectory of our partners in the business school. However, for those of us with any experience in the field, we also know that many emerging 2- or 3-D artists enter our classes to insert themselves into the status quo economic and cultural system of the “Art World”—something far from “being different” or “doing differently.” This simple reality yields a number of vital and significant questions perhaps far more pertinent for the field’s short term development as these students appear far more interested in selling the Art they produce and perhaps, come to us searching for an understanding of *that* status quo economic and cultural system. Do they desire to “be different” or “do differently” in this case? Could our role for these students be described as “painter of the Arts economic and cultural landscape” rather than teaching them “Arts Entrepreneurship?” What delineates a class on the economic and cultural landscape of the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s “Art World” from “Arts Entrepreneurship Education?” Is Arts Entrepreneurship Education’s primary role to helping emerging artists become successful at “being different” or “doing differently,” or just successful or both or all three? Is “being different” simply being different than non-artists or other artists? Though the field must answer these vital questions, I submit a paraphrase of two seminal works by William B. Gartner: What Arts Entrepreneurship “is” is the wrong question, because in our effort to explain a whole, we may be trying to explain a hole—for now.<sup>20</sup>

## CONCLUSION

If we agree that Arts Entrepreneurship *Education* “is” hyper-contextual at this point in the field’s development, then defining Arts Entrepreneurship with the verb “is” will likely require a broad-based definition; to fully understand the phenomenon demands expertise from many disciplines. As important as this is for the field, a definition that reaches consensus may take significant time. In the interim, this time may be better spent articulating observations and theorizing about the phenomenon of entrepreneurial action in the arts domains to provide data points for our campus colleagues as they help us define the field. What needs to be said, however, is that determining what Arts Entrepreneurship *is not* also provides critical data points.

We should also acknowledge that significant observations about the field can occur anecdotally, then exposed through scholarship. For example, after attending a conference in 2008, I was speaking with a colleague who opined that his *music* entrepreneurship students “... do not want to be rich, they just want to play music and earn a living.” Six years later, I heard from another colleague uttering virtually the same words about his *arts* entrepreneurship students. These educators are on opposite sides of the country; one is not teaching in the field at this time and there is no possibility of the two knowing each other. If the field possessed

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<sup>20</sup> See William B. Gartner, “Who is an Entrepreneur is the Wrong Question,” *American Journal of Small Business* 12, no. 4 (1988): 11-31; and William B. Gartner, “The Edge Defines the (W)hole” Saying what Entrepreneurship is (not) in *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship: A Second Movements in Entrepreneurship Book*, ed. Daniel Hjorth and Chris Steyart (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004), 245–254.

empirical data from students that this is the case, this would go far in articulating commonalities and differences with business school-based entrepreneurship students and help to form educational goals, desired outcomes and curricula in parallel with our student's desires. The same can be said of considering Arts Entrepreneurship as a phenomenon. Just a few months ago a colleague used the term to describe the actions of arts entrepreneurs—and coupled with other scholarship describing entrepreneurship similarly—our possible adoption of the term appears worthy of significant and immediate exploration.<sup>21</sup>

To answer the question “can Arts Entrepreneurship be defined?” I submit the following;

$$2x + y = 1$$

$$-3x + 2y = 0$$

and put to the field that after sufficient—and proper—effort, *lex parsimoniae*. Our solution will likely be the result of a partnership with those studying the tangible, the intangible and the aesthetic (which unites us in this effort); apprehension of the unknown (which intellectually divides us and thwarts our effort) is no excuse to embrace a larger, more circumscribed, theory-based methodology. Yet when human behavior and beauty are our equation's variables, can the process be as elegant when two unknowns can make a known?

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<sup>21</sup> For an all too brief list of examples, see Christian Bruyat and Pierre-Andre Julien, “Defining the Field of Research in Entrepreneurship” *Journal of Business Venturing* 16 (2000): 165–180; Scott Shane and S. Venkataraman, “The Promise of Entrepreneurship as a Field of Research” *Academy of Management Review* 25, no. 1 (2000): 217–26; and Alain Fayolle, *Entrepreneurship and New Venture Creation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

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