

**SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN THE ARTS:  
THE DYNAMICS OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC MOBILITY ACROSS THREE  
DECADES OF UNDERGRADUATE ARTS ALUMNI IN THE UNITED STATES**

Amy Whitaker  
New York University

Gregory C. Wolniak  
University of Georgia

Article preprint – June 1, 2021

Published article:

Whitaker, A., & Wolniak, G.C. (2022). Social Exclusion in the Arts: The Dynamics of Social and Economic Mobility Across Three Decades of Undergraduate Arts Alumni in the United States. *Review of Research in Education*, 46(1), 198-228.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X221089947>.

## **Abstract**

We explore the dynamics of social and economic mobility in the arts by synthesizing and bridging literatures and by engaging data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) data on graduates of undergraduate arts programs, with roughly half of the sample graduating before 2000. We observe an *attrition effect* from students who originally aimed to be artists but then later left the arts workforce and a *privilege effect* of arts alumni whose household income is proportionately greater than their individual income, indicating a socioeconomic safety net to their artistic pursuits. We see meaningfully different effects for racial/ethnic groups, showing structural exclusion of Black arts alumni particularly. In considering democratizing access to creative educational experiences—whether in access to careers in the arts or in access to the study of art—we find deeply intersectional factors of race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic access. We place these statistical findings in a broad interdisciplinary literature across the economic precarity of artistic practice, the need for but resistance to entrepreneurial skills in the arts, and the context of colonial histories, structural racism, hierarchies of taste, and wage compression in arts organizations. While these intersectional dynamics are nuanced and merit further empirical study, our findings underscore the importance of addressing student debt, the potential of creative pedagogies across the curriculum, and the need for imaginative approaches to renewed public funding of art and artists.

The arts have a particularly acute diversity pipeline issue. According to recent reports, 84% of art school graduates are White (SNAAP 2017). In a separate study of art museum workers, 84% of curators, educators, conservators, and managers are also White (Schonfeld et al. 2015). Lack of inclusion in the arts, and in creative educational experiences (CEE) broadly, is especially critical given that creative, integrative, and critical thinking skills are an important differentiator in an increasingly automated world of work (Pascarella et al. 2005; Whitaker 2016a). Creativity is also important to our broader society, in that creativity is a proxy for independent thinking, and independent thinking is the greatest level of power in any democracy (Whitaker 2016a). We approach the intersectional (Harris & Leonardo 2018; Crenshaw 1991) problems of social, economic, and racial inequities in the arts through two unique and rarely combined lenses: the economics of art labor, and the career and economic outcomes of college.

Our concern for diversity pipeline challenges within CEE takes root in the logic of the STEM to STEAM movement, which advocates for adding “A” for art into STEM educational initiatives in science, technology, engineering and math (Maeda 2013; Cave 2017; Henriksen and Mishra 2020; Conradt and Bogner 2018, 2019; Copeland et al. 2018). STEM to STEAM aligns with the ideals of the liberal arts as the education of the person, in contrast to the choice of a pre-professional major as the training of the worker. Notable arts initiatives such as that of Stanford University have presented both honors pathways through the arts (Zhang 2013) and creatively engaged, rigorous but more open and exploratory creative experiences, as in a year-long creativity seminar offered to life science majors (author interview, Susan McConnell, July 21, 2015; author interview, Andrew Todhunter, October 6, 2017).

This latter approach echoes Wisdom et al.’s (2006) argument that the trial-and-error exploration of creative work is sometimes anathema to the judgmental processes of higher education from grading to peer review. Deresiewicz (2014, 2008) wrote of “excellent sheep”—a term coined by one of his Yale University students—to describe outstanding students who could answer any question put in front of them but not formulate the question or more generally navigate the unknown. Akerlof (2020), a Nobel Laureate in economics, critiques his field for its inability to champion interdisciplinary, creative problem-solving, largely because of structures of academic review that favor hard over soft skills. Creativity thrives in fields and communities of people

(Csikszentmihalyi 1999), raising questions of access to creative educational experiences that run the gamut from grade school not only through university student experiences but more holistically whole research environments.

Rising costs of higher education have intensified the calculus that one's career justifies one's investment in education (Ma, et al. 2019; Carnevale, et al. 2019; Jahoda et al. 2014). Researchers have also connected graduate education to career outcomes among socioeconomically and racially diverse students (Hu & Wolniak 2010, 2013; Melguizo & Wolniak 2012; Wolniak et al. 2019). Concurrently, the intensification of student debt and pressures on governmental funding of the arts have put creative arts at risk (Knight 2017). As career pathways grow more complex, even fields of science and technology increasingly require humanity, creativity, and innovation—and related exposure to experimental and process-based inquiry—associated with CEE (Whitaker 2016a).

Paradoxically, the advice to first-generation college students to study STEM fields (Verdin et al. 2018) reinforces their exclusion from CEEs and risks hampering long-term economic mobility. Focusing on STEM may give college graduates the career earnings equivalent of steady bond-portfolio returns, while art and creativity may offer a more equity-like earnings structure—with higher volatility and risk (Migdal 2018) but potential for upside or wealth generation (Oliver and Shapiro 2006).

With this paper we contribute both a broad synthesis of interdisciplinary literature and descriptive empirical evidence, offering new perspectives on intersections of social capital, racial inclusion, and economic mobility in students' college experiences and subsequent career trajectories. The arts suffer exclusionary hurdles at the entry level—unpaid internships (Frenette 2013) and systemic low pay—followed by unpredictability or volatility in financial prospects over the course of a career, whether as artist or arts administrator. We place these circumstances within complex historical context, from the colonial histories of arts institutions (Impey & MacGregor 1985; Coleman, 1939; Bennett, 1995) to the interplay of racial discrimination and the classification systems and social hierarchies around cultural capital (DiMaggio 1982, 1987; DiMaggio & Ostrower 1990; Bourdieu 1984).

Complementing this synthesis of interdisciplinary literature, we descriptively analyze data that contain measures of college and workforce experiences of undergraduate arts alumni, roughly half of whom completed their undergraduate education more than two decades ago. We pay special attention to markers of socio-economic privilege--for instance, household income that is greater than individual artist's income--and to markers of gatekeeping--such as a pre-college desire to become an artist followed by a post-college trajectory outside the arts. In this way, the data we present strengthens our theoretical and empirical understanding of the supports and impediments to democratizing CEE.

We rely on a particularly broad definition of art and, by extension, creativity. In the essay "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger writes, 'Whenever art happens—that is, whenever there is a beginning—a thrust enters history; history either begins or starts over again' (Heidegger, 1947: 201). As developed by Whitaker in *Art Thinking*, Heidegger describes a work of art as "something new in the world that changes the world to allow itself to exist" (Whitaker 2016a: 7). Thus, if one is making a work of art in any field, one is not going from a known point A to a known point B but *inventing point B* (Whitaker 2016a). This process of moving forward without a template, akin to Sarasvathy's (2001) concept of "effectuation," can occur in the direct making of art or in creative work across a wide array of academic disciplines, life experiences, and professional settings.

This definition shares some attributes of Csikszentmihalyi's (1996, 1999) foundational work on creativity as a social and cultural, not only psychological or intrapsychic, process. However, whereas Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 8) distinguishes "big C" from "little C" creativity, we take a more holistic approach that creativity can develop in small, everyday ways that matter in and of themselves (Kelley and Kelley 2013) and that also can grow from "little C" to "big C" creativity. In the recent book *The Death of the Artist*, Deresiewicz (2020) shares some of Csikszentmihalyi's focus on "artist" or "creative genius" as distinct categories. While we appreciate this level of honoring the commitment made to serious and full-time pursuit of art, we use a broader lens in order to focus on democratizing access to artistic and creative experiences and to encompass artists' entrepreneurship as a parallel creative process. We note Ulger's study of creativity assessments (2020: 516) that isolated independent and unconventional thinking,

flexibility, originality, and fluency as core attributes of creativity. Our approach dovetails with this broader perspective on creativity as cross-disciplinary (Paek 2019; Baragheg et al. 2009; Marquis & Henderson 2015) and STEAM as an inherently transdisciplinary approach (Costantino 2018; Daly et al. 2016; Guyotte et al. 2014; Liao 2016). This transdisciplinary lens supports a larger literature on creativity as a process of combination or “bricolage” (cf. Safina et al. 2020).

The significance of this article centers on better understanding the pathways to inclusion in the arts, thereby enabling more people to make creative contributions in the arts and other fields. In democratizing access to CEE, we aim to support generative creativity among individuals from diverse socio-demographic backgrounds, building inclusion and career satisfaction and, for some, wealth-generation. We aim especially to identify multiple pathways to democratizing CEE, both in full-time professional commitments and in exposure to CEE in the course of studying in and working in other fields. Inclusive creativity benefits everyone.

This paper is organized as follows. The literature review frames our approach to creativity and synthesizes a broad set of scholarship across art, sociology, economics, creativity studies, and higher education. The next section reviews data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) and our approach to better understanding the literature through descriptive examination of those data. The discussion section draws inferences from the data and connects to the themes of the literature review. In the conclusion, we offer ways in which we might further democratize access to CEE and suggest directions for further research.

## **I. Literature Review**

Democratizing creative educational experiences crosses over a wide array of literatures. We focus on themes of economic precarity of artistic practice, studies of workforce inclusion in the arts, theories of class and taste in the arts, historically colonial and White structures of arts organizations, economics of inequality, and understanding these factors within the literature of higher education.

## A. Economic Precarity of Being an Artist

Being an artist has long been modeled as an economically precarious career (Abbing 2002; Greffe 2002) marked by lower earnings (Arts Council England et al. 2018), more uncertain income sources (Creative Independent 2018), and more independent and freelance work (Woronkowicz and Noonan 2019). At the same time, artists generally have higher levels of formal educational attainment than the general population. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), 62.9% of artists hold at least a bachelor's degree, as compared to 69.9% of "professionals" and 35.5% of the overall U.S. labor force (NEA 2019: x).

Reports on economic precarity draw substantially different conclusions depending on whether the definition of "artist" pertains to visual and performing artists or includes a broader set of creative industries (Caves 2000, 2003; Howkins 2013) in which some workers receive predictable income or higher wages. According to a recent National Endowment for the Arts study—which includes not only visual and performing artists but designers, architects, film directors, writers, and others—in 2017, over 5 million U.S. workers held jobs in the arts and cultural industries (NEA 2019: vii). The NEA study also reports that artists' income is on average 4.4 times the artists' respective local poverty thresholds (NEA 2019: xi). These salaries include substantial variation, for instance, from the annual average pay of dancers and choreographers (\$31,200) to that of producers and directors (\$65,000 to \$75,000) (NEA 2019: xi).

This dispersion in salary dovetails with the "superstar effect" observed in art and other markets that cluster around a few standout performers who receive an outsize share of the profits (Rosen, 1981) as distinct from the concentration of talent as a driver of success (Adler, 1985). Lindemann (2013) has questioned this superstar reading of artists' careers, defining artistic careers more broadly, outside the object-focused sale of artworks (Gerber & Childress 2017) associated with the global art market (McAndrew 2020), or specifically global art *markets* (Zarobell 2017).

In addition, visual artists are often not paid for their time, for instance, in the preparation of museum exhibitions. Beveridge (2005) found that artists forewent \$4 million (Canadian) in wages for public exhibition preparations. The U.S. organization W.A.G.E. (Working Artists and the Greater Economy) was founded in 2008 to address this problem by certifying organizations that pay artists fees in a sliding scale depending on the organization's budget (Soskolne 2015).

Economic precarity extends from artist to art workers as well. Britten and Grist (2019) interviewed 100 U.S. museum workers of whom 57% self-described as "working class." Of the workers in the 57%, low pay was cited by three-fourths of them as a reason they considered leaving their job (Britten and Grist 2019: 92). Jandl (2019) studied the New Museum of Contemporary Art's staff and their efforts to unionize. She found that the median salary of the museum (\$52,000) was above the New York City living wage (\$51,000), while entry level pay was closer to \$35,000. A recent study of entry-level arts workers in Los Angeles found similar pay equity issues--with entry level wages above minimum wage and below a living wage (Krieger & Mauldin 2021). That report also found substantial pay discrepancy between White arts workers and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) workers in entry level jobs. These issues of inequity across race and gender are discussed more in section C.

### **B. Artist as Entrepreneur and Investor**

We frame economic precarity of artistic practice within the idea of the artist as an entrepreneur in order to frame the risk-taking and forms of investment asked of artists. Working in the discipline of sociology, Gerber (2017) describes the "work of art" as, fundamentally, an act of investment. Based on ethnographic interviews with artists, Gerber frames "pecuniary" investment as that which is expressly financial (Gerber 2017: 37), while also describing *as investment* artists' decisions to take on more contingent, flexible, and lower paid work to support their creative practices. In this context, statistics about artists as substantially more likely to freelance than the overall workforce or to be self-employed (NEA 2019: x; Woronkowitz & Noonan 2019) can be described as acts of entrepreneurial self-investment.

Numerous scholars in arts administration have framed entrepreneurship specifically in the context of both art and education (Callander & Cummings 2020; Paulsen, et al. 2019; White



2013, 2015; 2019; Toscher 2019, et al, Essig 2013, 2015; Essig & Guevara 2016; Bridgestock 2012). Rather than focus on art for art's sake (Bell-Villada 1986), artists' can build their own careers entrepreneurially (Toscher 2019), including "portfolio careers" (Cawsey 1995). This approach even includes the entrepreneurial design of the arts ecosystem (White 2019: 55) and funding model (Wilkerson 2012).<sup>1</sup> Gangi (2015) argues for the similarities between artists and entrepreneurs, while Bonin-Rodriguez (2012) notes the identity conflicts that separate "artist" from "entrepreneur." Brooks (2002) explores ideas of artists as amateurs or volunteers as opposed to professionals. Bourdieu argued that some artists specifically reject economic success in order to underscore their commitment to art (Bourdieu 1993; Gerber and Childress 2017). Oakley (2009: 282) has proposed not a rejection of markets but "assertion of meaning beyond the commercial." In prior analysis of alumni of higher education arts programs, Frenette and Tepper (2016) find that seventy-five percent of arts graduates rate business and entrepreneurial skills as "very" or "somewhat" important, while only 25% of arts graduates say that their college or university supported them to develop this acumen. These findings echo Jackson et al.'s (2003) *Investing in Creativity* study which identified a deficit of entrepreneurship and professional development programs in postsecondary arts education.

Whereas Shane and Venkataraman (2000), in their influential articulation of general entrepreneurship, focus on new venture creation, Toscher (2019: 12) frames entrepreneurship as a set of competencies including mental models, resource skills, self-efficacy and tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty. In general, the field lacks consensus on the definition of arts entrepreneurship (Chang and Wyszomirski 2015). Greater consensus exists around Becker's ideas (2008) of "art worlds" in which the myth of the lone genius covers over collective action by many people. Entrepreneurship in the arts need not imply the deployment of venture models from the technology industries but can also include community activism and organic models of growth and change (Brown 2017). The business education of artists has grown in acceptance (Bhandari & Melber 2017; Whitaker 2016b), at the same time designing a sustainable livelihood has been taken up by artists in social practice and solidarity movements (Jahoda and Woolard 2019; Loudon 2013, 2017).

---

<sup>1</sup> Khaire (2017) has mapped some of the unusual features of the arts ecosystem, especially the reliance on intermediaries such as dealers and art prizes to organize meaning and access to markets.

From a financial standpoint, using entrepreneurship to frame artistic practice as investment also reflects the early-stage risk and uncertainty in valuing creative work (Whitaker and Kräussl 2020). Visual artists are typically paid in the primary market--when work is first sold--and do not receive a share of the proceeds when works resell in the secondary market except in jurisdictions that have resale royalties (U.S. Copyright Office 2013; DACS 2016) or by private contract (Siegelau and Projansky 1971; van Haften-Schick 2018). Because of the uncertainty around the future value of art (Menger 1999, 2001, 2014; Howkins 2013) equity-based tools of redistributing proceeds may support artists, but these systems are not yet well developed (Whitaker and Grannemann 2019).

These framings of art as entrepreneurial engage a deep philosophical debate between Nothing But (Grampp 1989) and Hostile Worlds (Zelizer 2001; Velthuis 2005). In the Nothing But view, all value can be made legible via markets. In the Hostile Worlds view, the spheres of art and commerce must be kept distinct so that money does not taint or interfere with art. Some resolutions of these views come about through Hyde's (1982) idea that all art originates in a "gift" and can be commodified or made to operate in markets, but that if a work of art ever becomes fully commodified then it is no longer art. Zelizer (2001) proposes "circuits of commerce" to describe the interactions of intimate and commercial spheres. Gerber and Childress (2017: 1533) propose a holistic approach in which artists can imagine "pathways to autonomy *through* market activity." These definitions and interactions become especially important in considering socioeconomic privilege as exclusionary to who makes art.

### **C. Lack of Inclusion in the Arts**

Racial/ethnic and socio-economic exclusion characterizes both the cultural workforce and broad participation of audiences for the arts. With regard to the workforce, the City of New York (2019) found that 39% of the workforce at nonprofit cultural organizations in New York City were people of color, as compared to 67% of the population. A joint study by Ithaca S+R and the Mellon Foundation documented underrepresentation across the United States: Across U.S. institutions that are members of the Association of Art Museum Directors, 72% of the museum staff are Non-Hispanic White compared to 62% of the population (Schonfeld et al. 2015;

Westermann 2019; Mabuchi 2019). But when they isolated the subset of the museum staff in education, curatorial, and leadership positions—that is, excluding security and facilities staff which are 45% Non-Hispanic White—they found that 84% of art museum staff was Non-Hispanic White (Schonfeld et al. 2015: 3). They repeated the study in 2018: comparing only the art museums that responded in both 2014 (published in 2015) and 2018, the researchers found that the overall percentage of White Non-Hispanic workers decreased slightly from 76% to 72% (Westermann et al. 2019: 9).

These issues of gender and racial inclusion for artists are historically longstanding. Alper et al. (1996) found substantial differences in pay of male- and female-identified artists from the 1970s to the 1990s, and substantial differences by racial/ethnic breakdown too. According to NEA survey data (NEA 1978), in 1970, the median pay for male established artists was \$12,000 and for female established artists was \$5,500. There were also twice as many (38%) established male artists as there were female artists (19%).<sup>2</sup> In addition, racial/ethnic inclusion in the artist labor force was substantially lower for Black Americans in 1970. At the time, the total labor force was 95% White whereas the artist labor force was 91% White. The median income for “established artists” was \$11,000 for White artists, \$8,200 for Black artists, \$9,050 for “Spanish” artists, \$8,000 for Native American artists, and \$10,700 for “Asian” artists (National Endowment for the Arts, 1978). Even in 2019, the NEA (2019) found that women are still paid 77% of what men were paid, and the study did not break down pay by race.

#### **D. Histories of Colonialism, Class Hierarchy, and Economic Inequity**

Understanding racial/ethnic exclusion and social and economic mobility in the arts connects to the colonial founding histories of museums and the class hierarchies used to create canonical and exclusionary views of artistic taste (Bourdieu 1984). Museums were a late 19th century invention in the US, predicated on civilizing the working classes by exposure to and elevation by the arts (Bennett 1995). By the 1930s, museums were openly racially discriminatory, with limited opening hours for Black visitors (Coleman 1939, DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990: 754). DiMaggio and Ostrower cite a case in which a researcher studying art museums subtracted the local Black

---

<sup>2</sup> An established artist was, at the time, defined as an artist over thirty, who had listed artmaking as a career in both 1965 and 1970, and who worked at least forty weeks per year (Alper 1996; NEA, 1978).

population before deriving a denominator for percentage attendance (Rea 1932, DiMaggio and Ostrower 1990: 754).

Museums' colonial histories are being reconsidered, as in Sarr and Savoy's (2018) report on African cultural objects in French and other European museums. Both activist social movements (Decolonize This Place n.d.) and scholarly efforts (Ansari 2019) have tried to upend these deeply entrenched class structures. Even with the modern development of museums as deeply economic institutions (Feldstein 1991; Whitaker 2009; Bishop and Columbus 2020), these histories are deeply ingrained in the definition of the art historical canon.

These hierarchies of taste are intersectional with forms of exclusion. DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990) undertook a study of race within art consumption and art production. Working thirty years ago, they mapped nuanced and enduring patterns of both participation and discrimination. Following from Bourdieu (1984), they study "high-culture arts organizations" and "standards of taste" (DiMaggio & Ostrower 1990: 754) and participation in the arts as "a form of investment in 'cultural capital'" (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio & Useem 1978). They find some conflicting patterns of participation that lead them to conclude that Black audiences participate in some "high-culture" artistic consumption, but that some middle-class or higher status is required in order to benefit from the social capital that exposure to the arts confers (DiMaggio & Ostrower 1990: 773). They also find distinctions in which Black Americans participate more highly both in consumption of art from home via television and in art production as well as consumption. DiMaggio and Useem (1978) had thought these race-based differences in participation were due to parental exposure to art, familiarity and comfort, and access to networks of information about cultural events. However, DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990) found it was much more embedded in structurally discriminatory systems (Landry 1987).

These intersections of racial and class-based exclusion are intensified by increasing economic inequality. Piketty (2014) argues that in modern capitalistic societies the rate of return on invested capital is higher than GDP, causing wealth to be increasingly concentrated in the hands of the already wealthy. In an object-based view of the art market (Gerber & Childress 2017), the sale of artworks is especially reliant on high-net-worth and ultra-high-net-worth collectors

(McAndrew 2021; Fraser 2011). This increasing wealth inequality, in tandem with costs of education (Jahoda et al. 2014), can intensify the risks of being an artist in a superstar art market (Rosen 1981), and may therefore reinforce choice of college and career path away from the arts.

### **E. Placing These Theories within the Literature in Higher Education**

Outside the arts, these factors of economic inequality frame questions of social and economic exclusion along college-to-career pathways. Mayhew et al. (2016) consider different theories of measurement of the outcomes of higher education to frame their synthesis of a decade's-worth of evidence on how college affects students, focusing on human capital theory and status attainment theory, among others, in relation to the career and economic outcomes. These theories, when interpreted together, situate higher education as a process of skill building, where skills are later rewarded by wage differentials, and where access to certain college experiences can act to reinforce social inequalities. Several decades of research on the career and economic effects of college have shown that the experiences and choices students make within a given college environment are more influential, particularly in terms of earnings, than the selectivity or quality of institution attended--even more influential than completing certain graduate degrees (Pascarella & Terenzini 2005; Mayhew et al. 2016). Choice of one's major matters most. Earnings are most affected by majors centered on quantitative or scientific skill development with direct connection to specific occupations, such as engineering, computer science, and health sciences (Altonji et al. 2012; Robst 2007; Wolniak et al. 2008). Art majors are thus disadvantaged in entering labor markets relative to these peers. Countering this evidence is Bille and Jensen's (2016) finding that artistic education matters in the development of technical skills, social networks, and the ways in which educational credentials have a signaling effect. In addition, Wassall and Alper (2018) have found that most artists did not major in art, and most art majors did not become artists or artworkers.

The increasing burden of student debt affects student choice of art as a major (Lena et al. 2014), and carrying student debt shows some relationship to early departure from, or shorter duration of, artistic careers (Lindemann et al. 2012; Frenette & Dowd 2020). More generally than in the arts, Jackson and Reynolds (2013) have shown racial/ethnic differences in student loan factors. Using data from 1996 to 2001, they find that Black students in particular have a greater chance of

college completion if they take out loans, but also graduate with higher levels of debt and are more likely than White students to face risks of default, due to, the authors argue, family differences in socio economic status type of institution attended (cf. McMillan Cottom 2017). These factors strongly inform our interest in the intersectional ways in which socio-economic privilege, race/ethnicity, and exclusion from the arts interact.

Synthesizing across these different areas of literature, we find strong patterns of economic precarity in being an artist and wage compression in being an art worker. In addition, the identity category of “artist” is sometimes at odds with economic and entrepreneurial skill-building, at the same time students have asked for more entrepreneurial preparation. It seems clear that entrepreneurial skill is necessary for full-time careers as artists, to the extent artists are commonly freelancers and are also navigating inherently difficult structural economics. Histories of privilege in the arts workforce and of structural racism and elitism in arts organizations contribute to complex patterns of exclusion and to the persistent effects of hierarchies of taste. As we consider democratizing access to creative educational experiences, the economic factors—student debt and low wages—interact in complex and intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991) ways with economic, gender, and racial/ethnic inclusion in the arts.

## **II. Understanding the Literature Through Data**

Drawing on 2015-2017 data from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP) covering more than 57,140 records with measures of the career outcomes of undergraduate art school of alumni spanning more than 100 four-year colleges and universities, along with data from The Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), we examine pathways in the arts from college to careers. Because SNAAP defines “art” broadly—including performance, design, architecture, creative writing, film, media arts, illustration and fine art—these data represent a broad definition of CEE. The survey has been refined and studied over a number of years (Miller et al. 2016) and published in a series of working papers and recurring reports (cf. Miller et al. 2016; Lena et al. 2014).

For the purpose of this review, we consider the data descriptively to observe the socioeconomic and racial/ethnic composition of arts graduates, with particular attention to differences in attrition from the arts by racial/ethnic group. In addition to utilizing basic descriptive techniques to portray trends in the data, we engage multivariate regression analysis to directly show how different collections of variables may contribute to disparate outcomes in who works in the arts and the economic security or precarity of those career paths. Drawing on theory and empirical evidence, we organize the predictor variables in three groups: (1) Alumni socio-demographic characteristics, including racial/ethnic identity, first-generation college student status, gender identity, and year of college completion; (2) Measures of the college experience (“High-impact” experiences, including study abroad, internships, and completing a portfolio (see AAC&U 2007), educational environments (majoring in the arts, institutional control and selectivity), skill development during college (in terms of: i. entrepreneurship, leadership, and networking; ii. critical thinking and effective communication; and iii. creative problem-solving), and social relationships and group processes (such as participating in community projects, having serious conversations with diverse other students, and working with an artist in the community); and (3) Indicators of post-college education (graduate degree attainment in the arts and other fields), career transitions (securing work immediately after college in a field related to one’s major), and households (marital status).

We focus our attention on the influences of racial/ethnic identities and social class primarily, and secondarily on gender identity and year at which alumni completed their undergraduate education. We examine differences across these groups in their likelihood of employment in the arts, and income-based indicators of economic precarity. We compare sample means and perform multivariate regression analysis to understand the contributory influences related to college experiences, institutional environments, and skill development during college, as well as post-college education attainment, career transitions, and household structure. We offer these descriptive findings as empirical evidence to complement the prior sections of this review.

Within these data, 83% identify as White, 4.8% identify by multiple racial/ethnic background, 3.8% as Asian, 3.4% Hispanic, 2.3% Black, and 2.7% “other identity category (i.e., Native

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, American Indian or Alaska Native, and “Other”).<sup>3</sup> The data also show that 33% of respondents are first-generation college students, while the remaining 67% are continuing-generation students. Furthermore, 61% identify as female, 37% male, and 2% other. In terms of year alumni graduated from college, these data offer tremendous breadth; 27.9% completed their undergraduate education prior to 1988 and 15.3% from 2013-2017.

### A. Descriptive Evidence

As a marker of racial/ethnic exclusion from the arts, we look at those students who “intended to work eventually in an occupation as an artist” at the beginning of college. We compare that number to (a) the percentage of students who ultimately work in the arts after graduation and (b) the percentage of students who work in the *fine* arts after graduation (see Figure 1). We limit our study to those graduates in full- or part-time employment. (We include part-time workers as SNAAP data defines part-time as up to 35 hours per week.) We observe that 81.3% of all respondents intended to be artists when they entered college, but only 69.1% of them reported working in the arts and only 57.7% reported working in the fine arts, generally meaning as visual or performing artists. We term this drop-off from pre-college intention to post-college employment an *attrition effect*. This attrition effect is strongest for Black alumni, 83.9% of whom intended to become artists but 60.6% remain as art workers and 51.1% work in the fine arts. Hispanic respondents also show similarly strong attrition effects with 80.6% intending to be artists, 66.1% working in the arts, and 53.1% working in the fine arts after graduation.

---

Insert Figure 1 around here

---

To better understand how these racial/ethnic effects are intersectional with socio-economic markers, we consider income by racial/ethnic identity group. As a proxy for privilege, we look at individual artists’ income both in absolute terms and as a percentage of overall household income. We hypothesize that the lower the individual artist’s income is as a percentage of total

---

<sup>3</sup> The 83% White figure is different from the overall SNAAP figure of 84% White because we have excluded alumni of pre-college and graduate programs from the sample.



household income, the greater the social and economic safety net the artist has. We term this lower percentage of individual to household income a *privilege effect*. We use the mean rather than median wage because within the data, salary was collected in category ranges for which we are using the midpoint value, along with pareto approximation to extrapolate the top (open-ended) income category (Parker & Fenwick 1983). Figure 2 shows that we do see this privilege effect most notably for White respondents whose individual earnings are 71.4% of household income, as compared to 80.0% for Black respondents.

---

Insert Figure 2 around here

---

We then combine variables to contextualize income in terms of student debt and other factors that may inform racial/ethnic- and class-based *attrition* and *privilege effects*. We engage multivariate regression analysis for the purpose of generating descriptive statistics that show the extent to which different collections of variables account for—or explain statistically—variance in the outcomes. We term this approach an *intersectionality matrix*, as the analysis shows that many different factors including college experience, skill development, social relationships and group process, in addition to socio-demographic characteristics, together contribute to post-college outcomes in the arts. Table 1 shows the relative explanatory influence of each collection of variables on arts employment and annual-income related measures among employed alumni. The ranges reflect the share of variance accounted for among each collection of variables, depending on the sequencing of the variables in the estimation equation when explaining partial variance.

Although the socio-demographic characteristics taken together do not generally explain the likelihood of working in the arts, they do account for the large majority of variance in personal income and college loan debt relative to household income—one of the key measures of economic precarity.

---

Insert Table 1 around here

---

Next, we present estimated total and direct effects of alumni socio-demographic characteristics on employment in the arts and income-related measures. The estimated total effects are based on reduced model estimates, where the regression equation only contains the socio-demographic characteristics shown in the table. These should be interpreted as upper-bound effect sizes that do not control for, or hold constant, any other variables. For the estimated direct effects, all three groups of variables (as shown in Table 1) are included (and thus controlled for) in estimating the outcomes. We compare the estimated total and direct effects to identify ways in which socio-demographic characteristics may be mediated through individuals' access to specific college experiences (such as social relationships and group processes), environments, or opportunities to develop certain skills (such as entrepreneurial and leadership skills), as well as subsequent graduate degree attainment, career transition, and household characteristics. In Table 2, the effects on employment in the arts are based on logistic regression in which odds ratios are shown; thus values less than one signify a negative influence and those greater than one a positive influence. For the income-based estimates in the regression analysis, greater levels of economic precarity are indicated by the combination of negative effects on personal income and positive effects on both individual income as a percentage of household income and the ratio of college loan debt to household income.

The estimated total and direct effects yield three findings. First, compared to White-identified alumni, all other racial/ethnic groups demonstrate varying forms of disadvantage. For example, those who identify as Black are less likely to be employed in the arts, and carry more college loan debt relative to their household incomes. In addition, alumni who identify as Hispanic or Multiple race/ethnicities earn between seven and ten percent less than their White-identified counterparts, even after taking into account all other variables. Hispanic-identified alumni also carry more loan debt relative to their household incomes. We see more mixed evidence among Asian-identified alumni, who are less likely than their White counterparts to be employed in the arts once all other variables are controlled for, while also earning sizably larger personal incomes (by roughly 15 percent). They also demonstrate less economic precarity in terms of loan debt relative to household income, but greater economic precarity in terms of income as a percentage of household income.

Social class, as represented by first-generation college student status, yields much less influence on employment and income-based outcomes than does racial/ethnic identity. However, first-generation alumni carried significantly higher levels of college loan debt relative to their incomes, indicating higher economic precarity relative to continuing-generation alumni.

Both gender identity and elapsed time since college completion show sizable effects. Not only are female alumni less likely than male counterparts to be employed in the arts, they also experience an earnings gap that is greater than 41 percent—even after taking into account skill development, graduate degree attainment, marital status, and other confounds. Female alumni carry greater college loan debt relative to household income and also report less income as a percentage of their household income. More recent college graduates experience relatively greater economic precarity, indicating perhaps a survivorship effect for longer-graduated alumni.

---

Insert Table 2 around here

---

## **B. Reflecting Data Back to the Literature**

We make three core observations from the data. First, we see a strong attrition effect that high percentages of students of Black and Hispanic racial/ethnic groups veer away from their initial desire to be an artist. At the same time, we see a strong privilege effect in which the White alumni on average have proportionately higher levels of household support. Third, when we analyze the alumni cohorts from a multivariate perspective, we see what we can describe as an *intersectionality matrix*, that is, a set of contributory factors across race/ethnicity, socio-economics, and gender all have an impact on career in the arts and economic sustainability, as represented by income in combination with household support, and college loan debt.

These effects together underscore and reinforce the ideas we cite in the literature review with regard to the economic precarity of fine art practice and the wage compression of work in arts organizations. The data also support strong concern about racial/ethnic and socioeconomic exclusion from the arts. Furthermore, this exclusion is difficult to analyze without, as Harris and

Leonardo (2018) have proposed, employing intersectionality as a research methodology. Harris and Leonardo (2018: 18) write:

*One overarching implication of intersectional analysis is that dismantling one form of hierarchy necessitates an equally robust assault on other forms of subordination.*

*Because racism and sexism recruit capitalism, sexuality, methodology, and epistemology to their work, problem-posing proceeds organically. In education research, it means seeking a composite methodology and analytic that speak to this complexity.*

The data we examined allow an unusual ability to see “under the hood of the car” of college experience. Not only can we observe the choice of major and degree attainment, but also the skills that alumni feel that they gained. Interestingly, entrepreneurial and leadership skills together with creative problem-solving connect most strongly to success by income-related measures. That leads us to infer that focusing on these learning outcomes can support greater access to CEE. The critical thinking skills that corresponded less to income-related skills perhaps pertain to broader skepticism toward the arts and humanities, as reported in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences’ Humanities Indicators project (HIAAAS 2020). According to that survey, 70% of arts and humanities graduates had a favorable impression of the humanities, only 28% of computer science and engineering students did (HIAAS 2020: 45), and only 50% of adults aid that teaching art history to children is important (HIAAS 2020: 54). In the data we analyzed, alumni who report development of more entrepreneurial and leadership skills are less likely to be employed in the arts, and, if employed in the arts, more likely to earn significantly higher incomes with less loan debt relative to their household incomes. In other words, skill development during college is a key mechanism reducing economic precarity in the arts and will serve as the focus of future studies. Thus, focusing on entrepreneurial skills and on creative problem-solving may serve both arts graduates and be an actionable way to integrate CEE across the curriculum.

### **III. Discussion and Conclusions**

As the data have shown, the arts suffer from complex problems of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic exclusion that likely take root in colonial histories and that are maintained and exacerbated not only by continuing structural racism but by structural economic precarity and

wage compression in the arts. While artists have desired more business and entrepreneurial preparation, artistic identity as resistant to business (Bonin-Rodriguez 2012) has made that difficult. We see a focus on entrepreneurial and creative-problem-solving skills as simultaneously serving artists in the navigation of economic precarity and democratizing access to CEE for students across disciplines.

While it would be possible to conduct further empirical analysis to look at effects over time, to identify marginal improvement in racial and socioeconomic inclusion would mask the reality of entrenched systemic challenges in need of holistic attention. We likely need policy entrepreneurship (Heidelberg 2019) in order to redesign funding systems (Wilkerson 2012) with the same level of creativity one might associate with the arts. We may see new systems of support for artists develop around digital marketplaces, and more solidarity in unionization of art workers and risk-sharing of artists participating in markets. Yet lack of economic support remains a material limitation to who can have careers in the arts. Addressing student debt is a substantial part of this conversation around economic sustainability for artists and art workers.

Our literature review, echoed by the data, shows learning outcomes in entrepreneurship and leadership and in creative problem-solving that easily translate into many other careers outside the arts. The development of entrepreneurial training within the arts can help to form a bridge for the way that creative educational experiences outside the arts too. As we build those bridges laterally from the arts to other disciplines via a focus on creative problem-solving, we would also benefit from connecting the literatures of creativity studies in higher education to those in the K-12 environment so that we can see how structural inequities appear at younger ages. Chappell et al. (2013) studied the ways in which minoritized youth fell out of arts education after the No Child Left Behind movement. Rather than frame this as a mechanical pipeline problem we can frame it as an invitation to more holistic analysis. As Gutiérrez et al. (2017: 30) write, we can “see ingenuity instead of ineptness and inability, to see resilience instead of deficit.” Creativity can itself represent the necessary process of seeing communities differently and framing difference more imaginatively, with greater curiosity and care.

In the introduction we mentioned the distinction between the Stanford Honors in the Arts Initiative and the Senior Reflection seminar taught to life sciences majors by the neurobiologist Sue McConnell and the writer Andrew Todhunter. Students in the honors program did projects that were presented to a panel of judges. The students in Senior Reflection came to class in onesie pajamas (listed in the required/recommended section of the syllabus) and engaged in open-ended exploration. This distinction between creativity as achievement versus as process is perhaps the biggest opportunity to refocus access to CEE, opening space across the curriculum for imagination to co-exist alongside analysis, for the onesie pajamas to become the synecdoche of being open to the sometimes messy process of creative engagement. At stake is our ability to respond to some of the largest questions of our time, from climate crisis to structural racism to criminal justice reform. To democratize access to creative educational experiences is to enliven society through support of the arts and to support each individual's ability to make an original contribution.

## REFERENCES

- AAC&U (Association of American Colleges & Universities). (2007). *College Learning for the New Global Century: A report from the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education & American's Promise (LEAP)*. Washington, D.C.: AAC&U. Retrieved from [https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/Global-Century\\_final.pdf](https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/Global-Century_final.pdf)
- Abbing, H. (2002). *Why Are Artists Poor?: The Exceptional Economy of the Arts*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Adler, M. (1985). Stardom and talent. *American Economic Review*, 75(1): 208-212.
- Akerlof, G. A. (2020). Sins of Omission and the Practice of Economics. *Journal of Economic Literature* 58(2): 405-418.
- Alper, N., Wassall, G. H., Jeffri, J., Greenblatt, R. Kay, A. O., Butcher, S. G. W., & Chartrand, H. H. (1996). *Artists in the Workforce: Employment and Earnings, 1970, 1980, and 1990*. Washington, D.C.: Seven Locks Press.
- Ansari, A. (2019). Decolonizing design through the perspectives of cosmological others. XRDS.
- Arts Council England, TBR, a-n The Artists Information Company & Doerer, J. (2018, December 14). *Livelihoods of Visual Artists: Literature and Data Review*. London, UK: Arts Council England.
- Bain, A. (2005). Constructing an artistic identity. *Work, Employment and Society*, 19(1):25-46.
- Baregheg, A., Rowley, J and Sambrook, S. (2009). Towards a multidisciplinary definition of innovation. *Management Decision*, 47(8): 1323-1339.
- Becker, H. S. (2008). *Art worlds* (25th anniversary ed., updated and expanded.). University of California Press.
- Bell-Villada, G.H. (1986). The idea of art for art's sake: Intellectual origins, social conditions, and poetic doctrine. *Science & Society*, 50(4): 415-439.
- Bennett, T. (1995). *The birth of the museum: History, theory, politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Beveridge, K. (2005). The hidden costs of public exhibitions: Artists donate \$4,000,000 a year to the costs of public exhibitions in Canada for preparation and installation of work. *CARFAC News* (calendar) 8(1): 4-5.
- Bhandari, H. D. & Melber, J. (2017). *Art/work: Everything you need to know (and do) as you pursue your art career*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- Bille, T. & Jensen, S. (2018). Artistic education matters: Survival in the arts occupations. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 42: 23-43.

Bishop, C. & Columbus, N. (2020, January 7). Free your mind: A speculative review of #NewMoMA. *n + 1*. <https://nplusonemag.com/online-only/paper-monument/free-your-mind/>.

Bonin-Rodriguez, P. (2012). What's in a name? Typifying artist entrepreneurship in community based training. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 1(1): 9-24.

Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste* (trans. Richard Nice). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bridgestock, R. (2012). Not a dirty word: Arts entrepreneurship and higher education. *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 12(2-3): 122-137.

Britten, M. & Grist, K. (2019). Tough love: Museum salaries and the working class. In D. E. Salerno, M. S. Gold, and K. L. Durocher, Eds., *For Love or Money: Confronting the State of Museum Salaries*. Edinburgh and Cambridge, MA: MuseumsEtc. pp. 90-95.

Brooks, A. C. (2002). Artists as amateurs and volunteers. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 13(1): 5.

Brown, A. M. (2017). *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*. Chico, CA: AK Press.

Callander, A. (2019). Artmaking as Entrepreneurship: Effectuation and emancipation in artwork formation. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 8(2): 61-77.

Callander, A. & Cummings, M. E. (2020). Liminal spaces: A review of the art in entrepreneurship and the entrepreneurship in art. *Small Business Economics*, Preprint: 10.1007/s11187-020-00421-0.

Carnevale, A. P., Strohl, J., Gulish, A., Van Der Werf, M., & Peltier Campbell, K. (2019). *The Unequal Race for Good Jobs: How Whites Made Outsized Gains in Education and Good Jobs Compared to Blacks and Latinos*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce.

Cave, H. (2017). From Stem to Steam. *Professional Engineering*, 30(10), 33–37.

Caves, R. E. (2000), *Creative industries: Contracts Between Art and Commerce*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Caves, R. E. (2003). Contracts between art and commerce. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 17(2): 73-84.

Cawsey, T. (1995). The portfolio career as a response to a changing job market. *Journal of Career Planning & Employment*, 56(1): 41-46.



Chappell, S. V., & Cahnmann-Taylor, M. (2013). No Child Left With Crayons: The Imperative of Arts-Based Education and Research With Language “Minority” and Other Minoritized Communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 37(1), 243–268.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X12461615>

City of New York. (2019). Diversity & Equity in New York City’s Cultural Workforce. Retrieved from <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/diversity/index.page>

Coleman, L. V. (1939). *The Museum in America: A Critical Study in Three Volumes*. Washington, D.C.: The American Association of Museums and Baltimore: Waverly Press.

Conradty, C., & Bogner, F. X. (2018). From STEM to STEAM: How to Monitor Creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 30(3), 233–240.

Conradty, C., & Bogner, F. X. (2019). From STEM to STEAM: Cracking the Code? How Creativity & Motivation Interacts with Inquiry-based Learning. *Creativity Research Journal*, 31(3), 284–295.

Copeland, S., Furlong, M., & Boroson, B. (2018). A STE[A]M Approach to Teaching and Learning. *International Journal of Teaching & Learning in Higher Education*, 30(3), 534–548.

Costantino, T. (2018). STEAM by another name: Transdisciplinary practice in art and design education. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 119(2), 100–106.

Creative Independent. (2018). A study of the financial state of visual artists today. Retrieved from <https://thecreativeindependent.com/artist-survey/>.

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241–1299.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. New York: HarperCollins.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1999). Implications of a systems perspective for the study of creativity. In J. Kaufman, V. Glăveanu & J. Baer (Eds.), *Handbook of creativity* (pp. 313-335). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

DACS (2016). *Ten years of the Artist’s Resale Right: Giving artists their fair share*. Retrieved from <https://www.dacs.org.uk/DACSO/media/DACSDocs/reports-and-submissions/Ten-Years-of-the-Artist-s-Resale-Right-Giving-artists-their-fair-share-DACS-Feb-16.pdf>

Daly, S., Mosyjowski, E., Oprea, S., Huang-Saad, A., & Seifert, C. (2016). College students’ views of creative process instruction across disciplines. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 22, 1-13. <https://doi:10.1016/j.tsc.2016.07.002>

Decolonize This Place. (n.d.). <https://decolonizethisplace.org>.

Deresiewicz, W. (2020). *The Death of the Artist: How Creators Are Struggling to Survive in the Age of Billionaires and Big Tech*. New York: Henry Holt.

Deresiewicz, W. (2014). *Excellent Sheep*. New York: Free Press.

Deresiewicz, W. (2008, June 1). The disadvantages of an elite education. *The American Scholar*. <https://theamericanscholar.org/the-disadvantages-of-an-elite-education/>.

DiMaggio, P. (1982). Cultural capital and school success: The impact of status culture participation on the grades of U.S. high school students. *American Sociological Review*, 47: 189-201.

DiMaggio, P. (1987). Classification in Art. *American Sociological Review*, 52: 440-455.

DiMaggio, P. & Ostrower, F. (1990). Participation in the arts by Black and White Americans. *Social Forces*, 68(3): 753. doi:10.2307/2579352.

DiMaggio, P. & Useem, M. (1978). Social class and arts consumption: The origins and consequences of class differences in exposure to the arts in America. *theory and Society*, 5: 141-161.

Dunn, O. J. (1961). Multiple Comparisons among Means. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 56, 52-64.

Essig, L. (2013). Frameworks for educating the artist of the future: Teaching habits of mind for arts entrepreneurship. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 1(2):65-77.

Essig, L. (2015). Means and ends: A theory framework for understanding entrepreneurship in the US arts and culture sector. *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society*, 45(4): 227-246.

Essig, L. & Guevara, J. (2016). A landscape of arts entrepreneurship in US higher education. Alliance for the arts in research universities: 1-67. [https://herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/sites/default/files/a\\_landscape\\_of\\_arts\\_entrepreneurship\\_in\\_us\\_higher\\_education\\_0.pdf](https://herbergerinstitute.asu.edu/sites/default/files/a_landscape_of_arts_entrepreneurship_in_us_higher_education_0.pdf)

Feldstein, M., ed. (1991). *The Economics of Art Museums*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Fraser, A. (2011, September). Le 1% C'est Moi, *Texte zur Kunst* 83: 114-127. Available via Whitney Museum of American Art: [https://whitneymedia.org/assets/generic\\_file/805/\\_22L\\_1\\_\\_C\\_est\\_Moi\\_22.pdf](https://whitneymedia.org/assets/generic_file/805/_22L_1__C_est_Moi_22.pdf).

Frenette, A. (2013). Making the intern economy: Role and career challenges of the music industry intern. *Work and Occupations*, 40: 364-397.

Frenette, A., & Dowd, T. J. (2020). Careers in the Arts: Who Stays and Who Leaves? SNAAP Special Report. Spring 2020. In *Strategic National Arts Alumni Project*. Strategic National Arts Alumni Project. <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED605409>

- Frenette, A., Tepper, S. J. (2016). What difference does it make? Assessing the effects of arts-based training on career pathways. In Comunian, R., Gilmore, A. (Eds.), *Higher education and the creative economy: Beyond the campus* (pp. 83-102). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Gangi, J. (2015). The synergies of artistic and entrepreneurial action. *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society*, 45(4): 247-254.
- Gerber, A. (2017). *The Work of Art: Value in Creative Careers*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Gerber, A. and Childress, C. (2017). The economic world obverse: Freedom through markets after arts education. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 61: 1532-1554.
- Grampp, W. D. (1989). *Pricing the Priceless*. New York: Basic Books.
- Grefe, X. (2002). *Art and Artists from an Economic Perspective* (trans. Latika Saghal). Paris: UNESCO.
- Gutiérrez, K. D., Cortes, K., Cortez, A., DiGiacomo, D., Higgs, J., Johnson, P., Ramón Lizárraga, J., Mendoza, E., Tien, J., & Vakil, S. (2017). Replacing Representation With Imagination: Finding Ingenuity in Everyday Practices. *Review of Research in Education*, 41(1), 30–60. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X16687523>
- Guyotte, K. W., Sochacka, N. W., Costantino, T. E., Walther, J., & Kellam, N. N. (2014). Steam as Social Practice: Cultivating Creativity in Transdisciplinary Spaces. *Art Education*, 67(6), 12–19.
- Harper, R., and Hendrick, K. (2017). Doing the work: A discussion on visioning and realizing racial equity in museums. *Journal of Museum Education* 42(2): 163-68. doi:10.1080/10598650.2017.1306665.
- Harris, A., & Leonardo, Z. (2018). Intersectionality, Race-Gender Subordination, and Education. *Review of Research in Education*, 42(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X18759071>
- Heidegger, M. (1947). The origin of the work of art, in David Farrell Krell, ed., *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (New York: HarperPerennial) pp. 143-206.
- Heidelberg, B. M. (2019). Learning from negative space: Categorizing success in arts policy entrepreneurship. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 8(1): 23-44.
- Henriksen, D., & Mishra, P. (2020). Of Metaphors and Molecules: Figurative Language Bridging STEM and the Arts in Education. *Leonardo*, 53(3), 316–320. [https://doi.org/10.1162/leon\\_a\\_01607](https://doi.org/10.1162/leon_a_01607)
- HIAAAS (Humanities Indicators of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences). (2020). *The Humanities in American Life: Insights from a Survey of the Public's Attitudes & Engagement*. Cambridge, MA: American Academy of Arts and Sciences.
- Howkins, J. (2013). *The Creative Economy: How People Make Money from Ideas*, (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) London: Penguin.

Hu, S., & Wolniak, G.C. (2010). Initial evidence on the influence of college student engagement on early career earnings. *Research in Higher Education*, 52, 750-766.

Hu, S., & Wolniak, G.C. (2013). College student engagement and early career earnings: Differences by gender, race/ethnicity, and academic preparation. *Review of Higher Education*, 36, 211-233.

Hyde, L. (1983) *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property*. New York: Vintage.

Impey, O, and MacGregor, A., eds. (1985). *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe*. Oxford: Clarendon.

Jackson, B. A. & Reynolds, J. R. (2013). The price of opportunity: Race, student loan debt, and college achievement. *Sociological Inquiry*, 83(3): 335-368.

Jackson, M. R., Kabwasa-Green, F., Swenson, D., Herranz, J., Ferryman, K., Atlas, C., Wallner, E. and Rosenstein, C. (2003). *Investing in Creativity: A Study of Support Structure for U.S. Artists*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Jackson, N. (2006). Making Sense of Creativity in Higher Education. In Erickson, B., Peters, C., Strommer, D. (Eds.), *Developing Creativity in Higher Education*. (pp. 197-215). New York, NY: Routledge.

Jahoda, S., Murphy, B., Virgin, V., Woolard, C. (2014). Artists report back: A national study on the lives of arts graduates and working artists. Retrieved from [http://bfamfaphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BFAMFAPhD\\_ArtistsReportBack2014-10.pdf](http://bfamfaphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/BFAMFAPhD_ArtistsReportBack2014-10.pdf)

Jahoda, S. E. & Woolard, C. (2019). *Making & being: Embodiment, collaboration, and circulation in the visual arts, a workbook*. Brooklyn, NY: Pioneer Works Press.

Kelley, D., & Kelley, T. (2013). *Creative confidence: Unleashing the creative potential within us all*. New York, NY: Crown Pub.

Khaire, M. (2017). *Culture and Commerce: The Value of Entrepreneurship in Creative Industries*. Sanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Knight, F. (2017). The ultimate calamity scenario in US arts funding: Eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts. *Cultural Trends*, 26(4): 341-344.

Krieger, C., & Mauldin, B. (2021). *Race and Ethnicity in Entry-Level Compensation for Arts Administrators in Los Angeles County*. Los Angeles, CA: Department of Arts and Culture and Claremont University.

Landry, B. (1987). *The New Black Middle Class*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Lena, J. C., Lindemann, D. J. (2014). Who is an artist? New data for an old question. *Poetics*, 43, 70-85.

Lena, J. C., Gaskill, S., Houghton, R. F., Lambert, A. D., Miller, A. L., & Tepper, S. J. (2014). *Making it work: The education and employment of recent arts graduates*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Strategic National Arts Alumni Project.

Liao, C. (2016). From Interdisciplinary to Transdisciplinary: An Arts-Integrated Approach to STEAM Education. *Art Education*, 69(6), 44–49.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2016.1224873>

Lindemann, D. J. (2013). What happens to artistic aspirants who do not “succeed”? A research note from the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project. *Work and Occupations*, 40, 465-480.

Louden, S. (2017). *The artist as culture producer: Living and sustaining a creative life*. Chicago, IL: Intellect.

Louden, S. (2013). *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life: Essays by 40 Working Artists*. Chicago, IL: Intellect.

Ma, J., Baum, S., Pender, M., & Libassi, C. (2019). *Trends in College Pricing 2019*, New York: College Board.

Mabuchi, J. (2019). Decentralizing the Whiteness in the Museum: Sustainable Framework of DEI. M.A. Thesis, NYU Visual Arts Administration.

Maeda, J. (2013). STEM + Art = STEAM. *The STEAM Journal*, 1(1), 1-3. DOI: 10.5642/steam.201301.34

Marquis, E., & Henderson, J. (2015). Teaching creativity across disciplines at Ontario universities. *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*, 45(1), 148-166.

Mayhew, M. J., Rockenbach, A. N., Bowman, N. A., Seifert, T. A. D., Wolniak, G. C., Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2016). *How College Affects Students: 21st Century Evidence that Higher Education Works*. Newark: Wiley.

McAndrew, C. (2021). *The New York City Art Market Report*. The Independent Art Fair. <https://nyartmarket.independenthq.com>.

McAndrew, C. (2020). *The Art Market Report 2020*. UBS and Art Basel.

McMillan Cottom, T. (2017). *Lower Ed: The Troubling Rise of For-Profits*. New York: The Free Press.

Melguizo, T., & Wolniak, G.C. (2012). The earnings benefits of majoring in STEM fields among high achieving minority students. *Research in Higher Education*, 53, 383-405.

Menger, P.-M. (1999). Artistic labor markets and careers. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25: 541-574.

Menger, P.-M. (2001). Artists as Workers: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges. *Poetics*, 28(4): 241-254.

Menger, P.-M. (2014). *The Economics of Creativity: Art and Achievement under Uncertainty*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Migdal, R., 2018. Freelancing and the future of museum work. *Theory and Practice*, 1. Retrieved from <https://www.themuseumscholar.org/theory-practice>.

Miller, A., Dumford, A.B., Gaskill, S., Houghton, R., and Tepper, S.J. (2016). To be or not to be (an arts major): Career aspirations and perceived skills of graduating seniors across multiple disciplines. Working paper. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Research-Art-Works-Indiana.pdf>.

Miller, R., Liu, K., & Ball, A. F. (2020). Critical Counter-Narrative as Transformative Methodology for Educational Equity. *Review of Research in Education*, 44(1), 269–300. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X20908501>

Murray, D. (1904). *Museums, Their History and Their Use: With a Bibliography and List of Museums in the United Kingdom*. London: J. MacLehose and Sons.

NEA (National Endowment for the Arts). (1978, January). *Minorities and Women in the Arts: 1970*. Research Division Report #7. Retrieved from <https://credo.library.umass.edu/cgi-bin/pdf.cgi?id=scua:mums686-b002-i030>

NEA (National Endowment for the Arts). (2019). *Artists and Other Cultural Workers: A Statistical Portrait*. Washington, D.C.: National Endowment for the Arts.

Novak-Leonard, J., & Skaggs, R. (2017). Public perceptions of artists in communities: A sign of changing times. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 6(2), 5–22.

Oakley, K. (2009). From Bohemia to Britart: Art students over 50 years. *Cultural Trends*, 18, 281-294.

Oliver, M. L. and Shapiro, T. M. (2006). *Black wealth/White wealth: A New perspective on racial inequality*, 2nd Edn. London: Routledge.

Paek, K.-M. (2019a). The transformative potential of creative art practices in the context of interdisciplinary research. *Creativity Studies*, 12(1), 183–197. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/10.3846/cs.2019.9701>

Parker, R. N. & Fenwick, R. (1983). The Pareto Curve and its utility for open-ended income distributions in survey research. *Social Forces*, 61(3): 872-885.

Pascarella, E.T., Wolniak, G.C., Cruce, T.M., Seifert, T.A., & Blaich, C.F. (2005). Liberal arts colleges and liberal arts education: New evidence of impacts. *ASHE Higher Education Report*, 31(3). ISBN: 0-7879-8123-0.

Paulsen R.J., Alper, N., and Wassall, G. (2020). Art majors as entrepreneurs and innovators. *Small Business Economics*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11187-020-00416-x>

- Piketty, Thomas. (2013). *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (trans Arthur Goldhammer). Cambridge, MA: Belknap (Harvard University Press).
- Rea, P. M. (1932). *The Museum and the Community: A Study of Social Laws and Consequences*. The Science Press.
- Robinson, M. & Novak-Leonard, J. (2021). Refining understandings of entrepreneurial artists: Valuing the creative incorporation of business and entrepreneurship into artistic practice. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 10(1): 1-19.
- Rosen, S. (1981). The economics of superstars. *American Economic Review*, 71(5): 845-858.
- Sarasvathy, S.D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of Management Review*, 26(2): 243-263.
- Sarr, F. & Savoy, B. (2018). *The Restitution of African Cultural Heritage: Toward a New Relational Ethics* (trans. Drue S. Burk). Retrieved from [https://www.about-africa.de/images/sonstiges/2018/sarr\\_savoy\\_en.pdf](https://www.about-africa.de/images/sonstiges/2018/sarr_savoy_en.pdf)
- Schonfeld, R., Westermann, M. and Sweeney, L. (2015). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey. Report. New York City, New York: The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.
- Shane, S. and Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *The Academy of Management Review*, 25(1): 217-226.
- Siegelaub, S., & Projansky, R. (1971). *The Artist's Reserved Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement*. School of Visual Arts, New York. <https://primaryinformation.org/product/siegelaub-the-artists-reserved-rights-transfer-and-sale-agreement/>
- Skaggs, R., Frenette, A., Gaskill, S., & Miller, A. L. (2017). Artists in their communities (SNAAP Annual Report). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University, Strategic National Arts Alumni Project.
- Soskolne, L. (2015, February 22). On Merit. *The Artist as Debtor: The Work of Artists in the Age of Speculative Capitalism*. <https://artanddebt.org/artist-as-debtor/>.
- SNAAP (Strategic National Arts Alumni Project). (2018). 2015, 2016 & 2017 Aggregate Frequency Report. [http://snaap.indiana.edu/pdf/2017/SNAAP15\\_16\\_17\\_Aggregate\\_Report.pdf](http://snaap.indiana.edu/pdf/2017/SNAAP15_16_17_Aggregate_Report.pdf)
- Toscher, B. (2019). Entrepreneurial learning in arts entrepreneurship education: A conceptual framework. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 8(1): 3-22.
- Ulger, K. (2020). A review of the criteria of the prediction of students' creative skills in the visual arts education. *Creativity Studies*, 13(2), 510–531. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.library.nyu.edu/10.3846/cs.2020.11860>
- United States Copyright Office. (2013, December). *Resale royalties: An updated analysis*. Retrieved from <https://www.copyright.gov/docs/resaleroyalty/usco-resaleroyalty.pdf>

Van Haaften-Schick, L. (2018). Conceptualizing artists' rights: Circulations of the Siegellaub-Projansky Agreement through art and law. *Oxford Handbooks Online*.

Velthuis, O. (2005). *Talking Prices*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Verdin, D., Godwin, A., Sonnert, G., and Sadler, P. M. (2018). Understanding how first-generation college students' out-of-school experiences, physics and STEM identities relate to engineering possible selves and certainty of career path. 2018 IEEE Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE), Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE), October 1, 2018, 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE.2018.8658878>.

Wassall, G. and Alper, N. (2018). The importance of a college major in the arts to artistic success. National Endowment for the Arts Working Paper. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Research-Art-Works-Northeastern-rev.pdf>.

Westermann, M., Schonfeld, R., Sweeney, L. (2019). *Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey 2018*. New York, NY: Mellon Foundation and Ithaca S+R.

Whitaker, A. (2016a). *Art Thinking*. New York: Harper Business.

Whitaker, A. (2016b). Why teach business to artists. *Hyperallergic*. <https://hyperallergic.com/312390/why-teach-business-to-artists/>

Whitaker, A. (2018). Artist as Owner Not Guarantor: The Art Market from the Artist's Point of View. *Visual Resources*, 34(1-2): 48-64.

Whitaker, A. & Grannemann, H. (2019). Artists' royalties and performers' equity: A ground-up approach to social impact investment in creative fields. *Cultural Management: Science and Education*, 3(2): 33–51.

Whitaker, A. & Kräussl, R. (2020). Fractional Equity, and the Future of Creative Work. *Management Science*, 66(10): 4359-4919.

White, J. C. (2019). A theory of arts entrepreneurship as organizational attack. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 8(2): 47-59.

White, J. C. (2015). Toward a theory of arts entrepreneurship. *Journal of Arts Entrepreneurship Education*, 1(1), 4-23.

White, J. C. (2013). Barriers to recognizing arts entrepreneurship education as essential to professional arts training. *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts*, 2(3): 28-39.

Wilkerson, M. (2012). Using the arts to pay for the arts: A proposed new public funding model. *Journal of Arts Management, Law and Society*, 42 (3), 103-115.

Wisdom, J., Jackson, N., Oliver, M. & Shaw, M. (2006). *Developing Creativity in Higher Education: An Imaginative Curriculum*. New York, NY: Routledge.



Wolniak, G.C., Mitic, R., & Engberg, M.E. (2019). Diverse Pathways to Graduate Education Attainment. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/dhe0000141>.

Woronkiewicz, J. and Noonan, D. S. (2019). Who goes freelance? The determinants of self-employment for artists. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 43(4), 651–672.

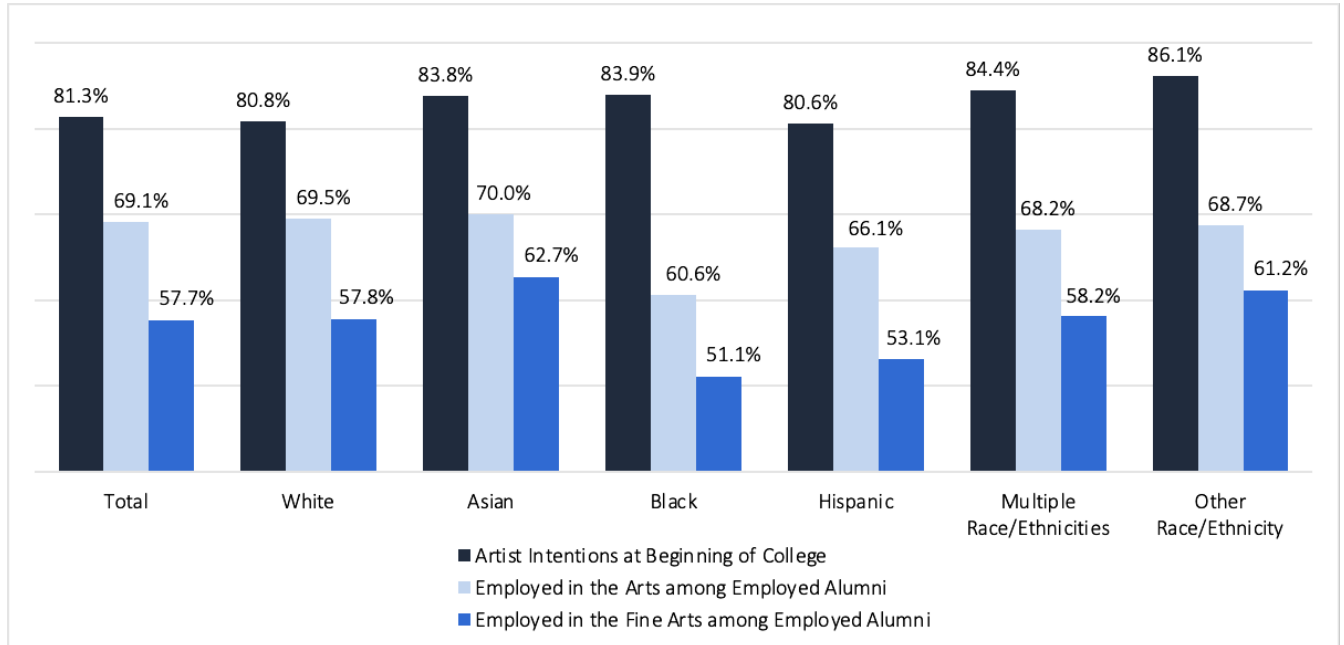
Zarobell, J. (2017). *Art and the global economy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California.

Zelizer, V. A. (2001). How and why do we care about circuits? *Accounts Newsletter of the Economic Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association* 1 (2000): 3–5.

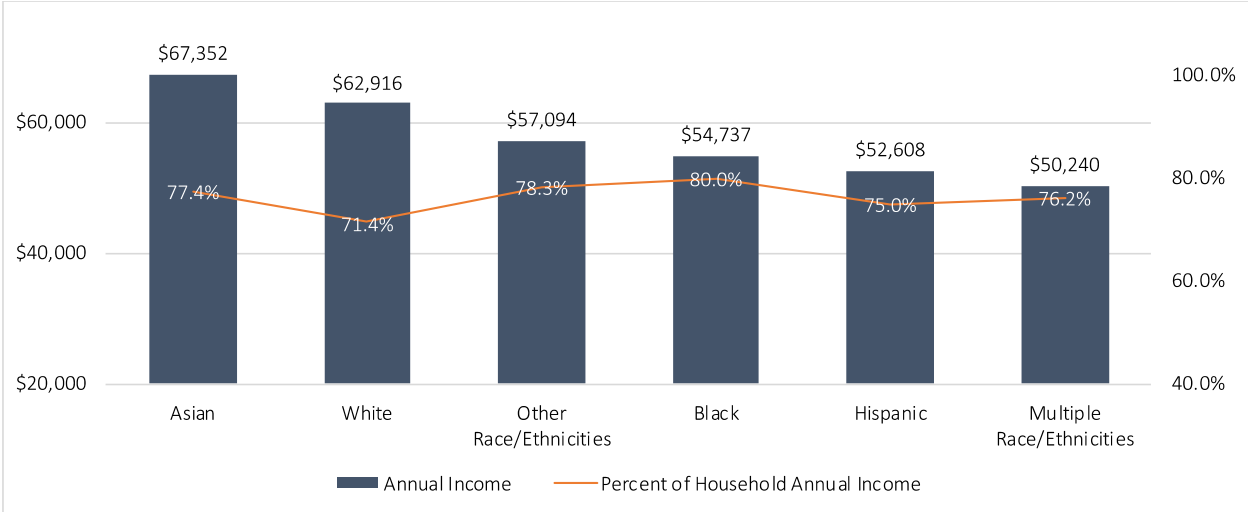
Zhang, A. (2013, August 8). Stanford Arts Institute to pilot new interdisciplinary honors program,” *Stanford Daily*, <http://www.stanforddaily.com/2013/08/08/stanford-arts-institute-to-pilot-new-interdisciplinary-honors-program/>.

## TABLES & FIGURES

**Figure 1. The Attrition Effect: Intention to Practice Art vs. Employment in the Arts or Fine Arts**



**Figure 2. Comparison of Annual Income for Individual and as Share of Household Income**



**Table 1.** Variance Explained of Alumni Employment in the Arts and Income-related Outcomes

	Employment in the Arts	Annual Income-related Measures Among Alumni Employed in the Arts		
		Personal Income (log)	Income as % of HH Income	College Loan Debt to HH Income
Total Variance Explained <sup>(a)</sup>	.148	.229	.129	.075
Partial Variance Explained by Variable Group (range):				
1. Socio-demographics <i>Race/Ethnicity; First-generation college student; Gender; College graduation cohort</i>	.001 – .004	.158 – .194	.016 – .034	.038 – .052
2. College Experiences, Environments, & Skill Development <i>Intended to work as an artist at the beginning of college; Majored in art-related field; Skill development as a result of college<sup>(b)</sup>; Social relationships &amp; group processes<sup>(c)</sup>; “High-impact” experiences<sup>(c)</sup>; Institutional control (public, private); Institutional selectivity</i>	.044 – .072	.019 – .021	.001 – .005	.018 – .020
3. Post-college Education, Career and Households <i>Post-baccalaureate education attainment (MFA, Other Master’s, Doctoral degree); Relatedness of first job or work experience to undergraduate training; Marital status (married/partnered, other)</i>	.072 - .102	.009 – .052	.094 – .112	.003 – .020

SOURCE: Strategic National Arts Alumni Project Data, 2015-2017.

**Table 1.** *Continued*

---

NOTES: Sample sizes varied by outcome variable, as follows: Employment in the Arts,  $N = 27,080$ ; Annual Income,  $N = 17,174$ ; Annual Income as % of Household (HH) Income,  $N = 16,148$ ; College Loan Debt per HH Income,  $N = 17,434$ . (a) Variance explained is based on *Pseudo-R*<sup>2</sup> (Cox & Snell) for Employment in the Arts and *Adjusted-R*<sup>2</sup> for the Annual Income measures. (b) “Skill development as a result of college” includes three factorial-derived scales measuring self-reported skill development in the following domains: Entrepreneurship, Leadership, & Networking (5-item scale,  $\alpha = .889$ ); Critical Thinking & Effective Communication (5-item scale,  $\alpha = .835$ ); and Creative Problem-Solving (3-item scale,  $\alpha = .707$ ). (c) “Social relationships & group processes” includes the following liker-type (1=Never, 4=Often) measures: Participated in community project; Participated in co-curricular activity; Had serious conversations with diverse other students; and Worked with an artist in the community. (d) “‘High-impact’ experiences” includes the following dichotomous (0=No, 1=Yes) measures; Participated in study abroad; Participated in an internship; and Completed a portfolio.

**Table 2.** Estimated Total Effects (TE) and Direct Effects (DE) of Alumni Socio-demographic Characteristics on Employment in the Arts and Income-related Outcomes

Socio-demographic Characteristics	Annual Income-related Measures Among Alumni Employed in the Arts							
	Employment in the Arts (Exp( <i>b</i> ))		Personal Income (log) ( <i>b</i> )		Income as % of HH Income ( <i>b</i> )		College Loan Debt to HH Income ( <i>b</i> )	
	TE	DE	TE	DE	TE	DE	TE	DE
Race/ethnicity: Asian	1.04	.82**	.17***	.15***	.16***	.12***	-.12	-.23**
Race/ethnicity: Black	.78**	.82*	-.05	-.04	.09**	.03	.72***	.72***
Race/ethnicity: Hispanic	.86*	.91	-.09**	-.07*	.03	-.00	.31***	.30***
Race/ethnicity: Multiple	1.00	.98	-.11***	-.10***	.04	.00	.18*	.13
Race/ethnicity: Other	.99	.99	-.08	-.06	.06*	.03	.14	.06
First-gen college student	.95	.94*	.01	.01	-.01	-.01	.34***	.33***
Gender: Female	.78***	.90***	-.42***	-.41***	-.11***	-.12***	.17***	.18***
Gender: Other	.79*	1.00	-.55***	-.47***	-.01	-.03	.46***	.35**
Grad cohort: 1988-1997	.95	.90*	.06**	.03	-.02	-.01	.24***	.24***
Grad cohort: 1998-2002	.95	.94	-.05*	-.09***	-.02	-.02	.47***	.47***
Grad cohort: 2003-2007	.88**	.90*	-.13***	-.164***	.02	-.02	.50***	.50***
Grad cohort: 2008-2012	.89**	.94	-.33***	-.37***	.09***	-.02	.69***	.66***
Grad cohort: 2013-2017	.92	.92	-.88***	-.93***	.20***	.01	1.29***	1.27***

SOURCE: Strategic National Arts Alumni Project Data, 2015-2017.

NOTES: Sample sizes vary by outcome variable, as shown in Table 1. Comparison (omitted) groups include: Racial/ethnic identity = White; Gender identity = Male; Graduation cohort = Prior to 1988. The Total Effects (TE) are based on reduced model estimates and includes only those variables shown in the table. The Direct Effects (DE) are estimated from the fully-specified model that includes all categories of variables shown in Table 1. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .