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**Effectively Preparing Art Students for Artistic Careers:
A Study on Art Schools' Relation to the Art Market and their Approaches to
Preparing Students for Career Navigation**

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Sotheby's Institute of Art, New York

2022

(14,953 words)

Abstract

Master's of Fine Arts (MFAs) in visual arts have seen significant growth in their tuition and number of degrees conferred over recent decades. As the popularity of the MFA expanded during this period, the breadth, power, and influence of the global art market has as well. The commercial art market's structure and competitiveness creates serious barriers to entry for art students attempting to navigate its complexities and strengthen their creative careers. Despite the market's growth, many art schools' attitudes and curricular offerings have not adjusted to its expanded importance. According to a range of statistical studies and anecdotal accounts, many graduates who have earned arts degrees feel unprepared to operate within the commercial art market. Evidence implies that art students are not receiving sufficient curricular instruction on the nature of today's art market, personal entrepreneurship, career administration, and professional practices. Moreover, there is evidence of widespread attitudes of market-aversion within many MFA fine arts programs, as well as significant formal and informal barriers hindering the implementation of more effective pedagogical instruction in artistic professional practices.

This thesis will focus on American MFA programs in fine arts and examine these issues by analyzing the modern history of art schools, the roots of academic market aversion, various formal and informal barriers obstructing the incorporation of career-oriented curriculum into graduate arts programs, market-related challenges faced by arts graduates, as well as statistical and anecdotal studies highlighting these issues. It will also use a comparative case study on emerging professional practices curriculum in certain acting MFA programs as a potential model for fine arts MFA programs to follow. Lastly, recommendations will be made for improving professional practices curriculum in art schools and addressing academic tendencies towards market aversion and attitudes on career-based training for art students. Ideally, this thesis will contribute to pre-existing dialogue on this topic and highlight the cruciality of providing art students with skill-sets and knowledge that will allow them to effectively navigate the art market and their potential places within it.

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Introduction

As the global art market has expanded in financial importance and cultural reach during past decades, so too has the popularity of visual arts degrees.¹ However, while the art world has further leaned into a more commercial focus, the academic sphere of visual arts has largely remained entrenched in its broadly non-commercial approach to graduate education.² As a result, many Master of Fine Arts (MFA) graduates find themselves underprepared when facing challenges related to funding their creative practices, successfully marketing themselves and their work, achieving financial stability, and landing commercial representation or institutional residencies.³ According to statistical findings and firsthand accounts, many artists who earn some kind of arts degree believe their academic training helped develop their creative practices, but has not prepared them for the professional and financial challenges of an artistic career.⁴

Obviously, this widespread lack of market preparedness among MFA graduates is a problem, especially when considering the high cost of attending art schools.⁵ This means that young artists who graduate with a Master's degree are saddled with a significant monetary burden and often go into debt, yet they are not properly equipped with the tools, networks, or training to readily achieve financial stability as a working artist.⁶ When comparing visual arts MFAs to other professional graduate degrees with creative focuses (such as certain MFA degrees in theater or acting), the general lack of commercial and career-oriented training for the former is staggering.⁷

¹ Pujol, "On the Ground," 8.

² Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1464.

³ "Survey Report," *The Creative Independent*, 10.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Most Expensive Colleges & Universities in America by Average Net Price," *CollegeSimply*.

⁶ "Survey Report," *The Creative Independent*, 2.

⁷ Kurtzman, Wendy, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman" by Bill Stewart.

Comparing an MFA in visual arts to any other Master's degree in the context of commercial preparedness and chances of achieving financial stability could seem somewhat illogical. The primary focus of an MFA in the arts is for students to hone their craft, develop their artistic practice, and exchange creative ideas – valid goals which should not be underrated.⁸ However, when considering the cost of such degrees, the increasing commodification of visual art, and the financial risks associated with working as a professional artist, problems for MFA graduates often arise.⁹ One would expect today's MFA programs to incorporate training on career development and professional practices into their broader pedagogy to a more significant degree. When comparing such developments in arts academics to the heightened commercialization of the art world in general, there seems to be a lag with the MFA.

In this paper, the historical and cultural origins of MFA visual arts program and their perceived aversion towards market-based training will be examined, focusing on why this phenomenon has persisted into the present. It should be noted that, outside of the section focused on the historical evolution of arts schools, this work will chiefly focus on the current state of MFA visual arts degrees conferred in the United States. Moreover, formal and informal barriers that have prevented the expansion of market-oriented instruction within the pedagogy of today's MFA programs will be explored. Following this, professional and financial challenges faced by MFA graduates endeavoring to achieve commercial success will be investigated using both statistical evidence and firsthand accounts. Additionally, the types and amount of career-based education focused on career and market preparedness provided by other creatively focused degrees, namely Master's degrees in theater and acting, will be compared. Lastly, recommendations for improvements in the professional practices pedagogy in visual arts MFA

⁸ VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke" Interview by Bill Stewart.

⁹ "Survey Report," The Creative Independent, 2.

programs will be made regarding their coursework, career development offerings, and broader academic attitudes on market-preparedness.

Chapter 1: A Modern History of Art Schools and the Contemporary Character of the MFA

Though artists' formal education has existed for centuries in master-led workshops and European Royal Academies, the individualistic character of today's art schools began to take shape in France during the late 1800s.¹⁰ Undeniably the center of Western art at the time, many American and British students emigrated to Paris to take part in its thriving art market and fabled ateliers.¹¹ Such ateliers often had a democratic nature to their operation, as they were principally run by the authority of students.¹² Masters would endorse the portfolio of applying students, but the admission of any nouveau was voted upon by the atelier's students.¹³ Compared to the European academies that had preceded them, this new format of artistic education was far less rigid and structured.¹⁴ Instructors were not always in the classroom, students would chat as they worked, and independently go out to view and copy works in the Louvre commissioned by middle-class buyers.¹⁵

As modernist thought began to spur artistic movements (such as Impressionism and Symbolism) and photography technological advancements began to make naturalistic art more irrelevant, the importance of formalized artistic academies further waned.¹⁶ Consequently, this accelerated private art schools' growth across Britain and the U.S..¹⁷ Many of these early private

¹⁰ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹¹ "Historical Overview." n.d. Nationalacademy.org; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹² Macdonald, Stuart. 2004. *The History and Philosophy of Art Educations*, 32; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹³ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 32; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹⁴ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 281; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹⁵ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 281-86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 11.

¹⁶ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 35; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

¹⁷ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 62-63; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

art schools still exist, such as the Rhode Island School of Design and the Cooper Union.¹⁸ These schools formed the nascent version of what is recognized today as the art school, which would eventually morph into the contemporary MFA program. However, these early institutions still had a largely vocational character focused on industry-oriented design.¹⁹

As the 19th century progressed and heavy industry began to spread more widely across the world, manufacturing began to slowly shrink within the economies of the U.S. and Great Britain.²⁰ These were two of the earliest countries to undergo the Industrial Revolution and among the first to develop service-based economies – a slow process that began in the first half of the twentieth century.²¹ In this era, a variety of American higher education institutions began to establish independent art departments featuring studio-based curriculums which did not necessarily focus on industrial design.²² Many of these newly founded arts departments based their character on London’s highly influential Slade School of Art, founded in 1871.²³ It embraced a non-technical approach to figurative drawing, a pioneering outlook towards creative innovation in art, and a progressive attitude towards student admissions— accepting both male and female candidates from a variety of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and a wide age range.²⁴ Many of those who attended Slade had gotten their creative starts in Parisian ateliers or would end up continuing their studies there.²⁵

¹⁸ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 62-63; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

¹⁹ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 62-63; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²⁰ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²¹ *Ibid*, 12.

²² Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 66; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²³ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 269; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²⁴ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 269; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²⁵ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 63; MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 269; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

Though some American universities established their art schools before Slade's founding, its progressive curriculum and community-oriented teaching style influenced the incipient character of fine arts programs across the U.S..²⁶ Yale University was a leader in art school development, offering drawing as a technical subject in 1831, creating a separate fine arts department in 1863, and establishing the independent Yale School of Art in 1869— making it the first American art school connected with a higher education institution.²⁷ By the end of the nineteenth century, forty-seven other U.S. universities, both public and private, followed Yale's example and opened their own art schools.²⁸ This boom in university-associated art schools was partly related to the growing influence of Romanticism in the U.S..²⁹ This newly popularized philosophy regarded creatives like artists, writers, and musicians as generators of contemporary social consciousness and leaders in public culture, inspiring many to pursue various creative studies.³⁰

Interestingly, the Yale School of Art also admitted female students when it first opened, a century earlier than the rest of the University would go co-ed, signaling the socially progressive pedigree that would come to shape art schools' characters in coming decades.³¹ Unlike some art school models that emerged later in the twentieth century, Yale separated its creative studies according to students' chosen medium.³² It still uses this segregated model today, delineating

²⁶ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 63; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12.

²⁷ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 66; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12; "History." n.d., Yale School of Art.

²⁸ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 67; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

²⁹ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 69; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³⁰ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 69; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³¹ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 66; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 12; "History of Women at Yale," Women at Yale 150.

³² Madoff, Steven Henry, ed., "Project 5: Yale Art and Architecture Building," 115; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

their offered graduate degrees by medium and housing various departments of painting, sculpture, photography, new media, etc. within separate facilities.³³

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the growth of new art schools progressed and began to feature new models of artistic education which integrated training across a range of mediums and subjects into their wider curriculum.³⁴ The spread of university-associated art schools that began in the late 1800s progressed onward into the early 1900s, with more than two-thirds of American co-educational institutions, one-half of all men's colleges, and almost all women's colleges offering fine arts courses by 1940.³⁵ This was further accelerated by the end of World War II, when American servicemen returning home used the G.I. Bill to attend universities, contributing to the growth of fine arts and art history programs across the U.S..³⁶ As a result of initiatives like the G.I. Bill, which allowed veterans to obtain tuition grants and educational funding, the governments of North America and western Europe integrated themselves more deeply into arts education offerings through this direct funding.³⁷ This also led to higher levels of social diversity in such programs.³⁸

One important element of post-war American art schools' evolution was the influence of German fine arts education, which came to the U.S. partly through influxes of Jewish refugees fleeing Europe during World War II.³⁹ The Bauhaus would particularly have a profound influence

³³ Madoff, Steven Henry, ed., "Project 5: Yale Art and Architecture Building," 115; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³⁴ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 219; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³⁵ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 219; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³⁶ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 13.

³⁷ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 225; Massouras, "The Art of Art Students," 37-48; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

³⁸ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 225; Massouras, "The Art of Art Students," 37-48; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

³⁹ Smith, Peter. 1996. *The History of American Art Education : Learning about Art in American Schools* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press), 19; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

on arts education in America that persists to this day.⁴⁰ Founded in 1919 during the Weimar Republic era, the Bauhaus used a modernist approach to arts academics and employed a highly structured, community-oriented model similar to medieval workshops.⁴¹ In this structure – developed by founder Walter Gropius – students were encouraged to overcome the “complacent individuality” and modern isolation associated with working artists’ livelihoods in order to gain career-sustaining skills and benefit wider society.⁴²

This was done through a regimented curriculum featuring up-to-date industrial training, a six-month course on artistic theory, and three years of apprenticeship-styled studio instruction that covered metalwork, ceramics, glassmaking, carpentry, weaving, sculpture, and painting.⁴³ Industrial, artistic, educational, and vocational curriculum were combined into a singular model that rejected specialization of any kind.⁴⁴ The Bauhaus’s integrated model drastically differed from medium-segregated academic models championed by earlier institutions like the Yale School of Art. This approach was implemented with the aim of graduates embracing new, more utilitarian social roles in which artists applied their training to better ordinary people’s lifestyles, while creating art and products that could be easily manufactured and widely distributed.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Smith, *The History of American Art Education*, 19; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

⁴¹ Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 17; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

⁴² Taken and Boomgaard, "Between Romantic Isolation and Avant-Gardist Adaptation," 93; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

⁴³ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 315; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁴⁴ Esche, "Include me Out," 107; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

⁴⁵ Taken and Boomgaard, "Between Romantic Isolation and Avant-Gardist Adaptation," 93; Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 17; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 14.

When the Nazis shut down the Bauhaus in 1933, most of its faculty immigrated to the U.S., cementing the school's influence on American arts education.⁴⁶ In the wake of the Bauhaus's closure and migration of its former members, art schools across the U.S. began replacing their traditional life-drawing classes with instruction in art theory and design principles, encouraging students' experimentation in abstraction and blending mediums.⁴⁷ Many American art schools began employing the Bauhaus educational model of social workshops and community learning.⁴⁸ The most important and influential post-War American art school was Black Mountain College in North Carolina, founded by Bauhaus-members Anni and Josef Albers.⁴⁹ Black Mountain College was a leader in evolving teaching styles, utilizing an anti-hierarchical, anti-authoritarian model that abandoned traditional student-professor lecture formats, which persists in many art schools today.⁵⁰ In particular, this phenomena of rejecting authority sowed the seeds for the market-averse character that still affect today's American MFA art programs.⁵¹

After World War II's end, the center of the global art scene firmly relocated itself to New York as artists, teachers, and intellectuals left Europe to live and work in the U.S..⁵² Emerging American artists and established European modernist titans who had moved to New York because of the war began to shape the city's art scene and influenced the trajectory of art in the

⁴⁶ "Project 2: Bauhaus Building," 68.; Storr, "Dear Colleague," 59; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁴⁷ Taken and Boomgaard, "Between Romantic Isolation and Avant-Gardist Adaptation," 94; Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 217; MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 316-7; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁴⁸ MacDonald, *The History and Philosophy of Art Education*, 316-7; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁴⁹ Storr, "Dear Colleague," 59; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁵⁰ Renfro, "Undesigning the New Art School," 64; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁵¹ "Project 3: Black Mountain College," 83; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 15.

⁵² Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

U.S. for decades to come.⁵³ During the 1950s and the boom of Abstract Expressionism, critics like Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg contended that artists' personalized acts of expressing their innermost identities had further elevated fine art above "lower," or functional, forms of art found in the wider entertainment industry.⁵⁴ Additionally, new schools of philosophy and psychology theorized on the existence of humans' distinctive inner-selves and placed great importance on tangible expressions of one's individuality.⁵⁵

These developments in art and cultural thought directly impacted post-War American arts education. While most pre-War art schools focused on developing students' technical abilities in their chosen mediums, arts students in the immediate post-War period were evaluated by how well they expressed their individual inner-being through their work.⁵⁶ Students in the U.S. were now taught elements of complex art theory and how to wield these concepts to express themselves on a deeply personalized level.⁵⁷ This heightened focus on art school as a way to develop students' ability to creatively manifest their individuality entrenched itself within American art schools, even as the importance of Abstract Expressionism faded away.⁵⁸

By the 1960s, movements like Pop and Minimalism began to take shape within America's artistic landscape. Figures such as Andy Warhol, Donald Judd, and Robert Rauschenberg began creating new work that placed greater importance on conceptual innovation, disregarding previous notions concerning the value of personal expressions by the artist made

⁵³ Efland, *A History of Art Education*, 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

⁵⁴ Adler, "Against Moral Rights," 296; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

⁵⁵ Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr, *Postmodern Art Education*, 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

⁵⁶ Freedman, "Abstract Expressionism and Art Education," 17; Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr, *Postmodern Art Education*, 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

⁵⁷ Freedman, "Abstract Expressionism and Art Education," 17; Efland, Freedman, and Stuhr, *Postmodern Art Education*, 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 16.

⁵⁸ Freedman, "Abstract Expressionism and Art Education," 17; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 17.

directly by their own hand.⁵⁹ These developments in popular creative philosophies espoused sentiments that opposed specialization, artistic hierarchy, and emotional expressions of artists' individuality.⁶⁰ Eventually, these new American avant-garde tenets affected attitudes and approaches to arts education in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶¹ While pre-War arts education championed regimented methods of learning, postmodern arts education later in the twentieth century became an "academy of cool," in which anti-establishment sentiment was the norm.⁶² As the art market increased in size and importance during this era, establishing itself as a dominant force in the art world, these anti-establishment attitudes began taking aim at the commodification of art and the idea of becoming a career-artist.⁶³

A perfect example of this trend is the California Institute of the Arts' development (CalArts) during the 1970s.⁶⁴ In the early part of this decade, arts programs around the country debated the inclusion of material on abstraction, figuration, conceptualism, and whether having a formalized curriculum was even necessary to develop students' creative practices.⁶⁵ At CalArts, legendary faculty like John Baldessari and Miriam Shapiro promoted anti-capitalist philosophies of "détournement" across the school's pedagogy, which refers to co-opting pre-existing images to subvert their intended purposes and ideological meanings.⁶⁶ With this goal in mind, CalArts changed from a school founded by Walt Disney to prepare graduates for entertainment-industry

⁵⁹ Madoff, "Introduction," ix; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 18.

⁶⁰ Adler, "Against Moral Rights," 296; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 18.

⁶¹ Madoff, "Introduction," ix; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 18.

⁶² Solomon, "How to Succeed in Art," *The New York Times* (quoted); Madoff, "Introduction," ix; Esche, "Include me Out," 106-107; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 18.

⁶³ Esche, "Include Me Out," 106-107; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 18; Solomon, "How to Succeed in Art," *The New York Times*.

⁶⁴ Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 10; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 19.

⁶⁵ Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 10; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 19.

⁶⁶ Storr, "Dear Colleague," 60; "Détournement," *Britannica*; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 19.

careers into one focused on creating a freely structured and anti-establishment “culture industry.”⁶⁷ At CalArts, students devised study programs unique to their own goals and practices, and were encouraged to float between various classes to form individualized artistic networks that stimulated personal growth and creative collaboration.⁶⁸ Moreover, students’ art was not graded in an orthodox sense; CalArts used a pass-fail system based on individual improvement and effort, not the quality of work produced.⁶⁹ These approaches drastically differed from the structured academic format previously employed by the Bauhaus or the Yale School of Arts in prior decades.

However, changes to art school pedagogy at institutions like CalArts were not thoughtlessly made for the sake of anti-institutional rebellion. Rather, alterations to the structure of arts education were implemented to allow students to more effectively develop their own creative voice and driven by the idea that creating unique artistic practices requires individualized ways of learning.⁷⁰ In a conversation between two titans in the world of art academics, CalArts’ John Baldessari and Michael Craig Martin of Goldsmiths, state that making art is not an “orderly” process and “what’s basic for one artist is not basic for another.”⁷¹ These sentiments gained momentum among art academics and drove a shift towards loosely structured curriculum and instruction at their own institutions, then subsequently at other art schools across the world.⁷²

⁶⁷ Storr, “Dear Colleague,” 60; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 19.

⁶⁸ “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 43; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 19.

⁶⁹ “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 43; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 19.

⁷⁰ “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 45; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷¹ “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 45; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷² “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 45-46; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

Baldessari asserted that art schools became “unlikely bedmates with universities” during the 1970s and 1980s, as needs for wider ranges of courses and instructors caused many American art schools to integrate into higher education institutions.⁷³ In this process, university-associated art schools began offering more diverse course selections which necessitated the implementation of the *Discipline-Based Art Education*, a handbook for arts education standards that became widely used in the 1980s and 1990s.⁷⁴ The DBAE handbook’s four principles promote the inclusion of instruction in art production history, criticism, production, and aesthetics in artistic higher education.⁷⁵ In some ways, its implementation brought more cohesion to American arts education.⁷⁶ However, it has also facilitated a degree of complacency and stagnation in arts education since the 1990s, which will be further discussed.⁷⁷

Coinciding with rapid art market growth, there was a marked “MFA boom” starting in the mid-1990s and progressing into the new millennium.⁷⁸ Many established figures in the art world began viewing this rapid MFA growth as a troublesome trend, flooding the inherently exclusive market with many new artists often saddled with significant debt after attaining their degree.⁷⁹ To put this MFA swell into perspective, in 1996, there were more master’s degrees attained in visual

⁷³ “Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin,” 45; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁴ White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education As Essential to Professional Arts Training,” 30-31; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁵ Agustin, “Discipline Based Art Education,” 3; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁶ White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education As Essential to Professional Arts Training,” 32; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁷ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁸ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

⁷⁹ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 20.

and performing arts than there were in subjects like English, biology, or mathematics.⁸⁰ This led to increased standardization in MFA curriculum, as more and more art students could become characterized as “university artist[s]” that approached development in their practices “as a homework assignment” rather than an opportunity for creative growth.⁸¹ As this trend progressed until the 2008 global recession, the link between art schools and the art market in the U.S. occurred through talent scoping by gallerists and dealers at MFA programs’ thesis shows, especially in market-hubs like New York and Los Angeles.⁸² This still frequently occurs, but the direct link between MFA shows and the art market declined in intensity during the recession.⁸³

Though the 1980s and 1990s saw more formalized standardization in American MFA curriculum, partially due to the DBAE framework, the pedagogy of today’s arts education is still largely rooted in the anti-establishment, anti-modernism sentiment of the 1970s-80s.⁸⁴ It is likely no coincidence that many of today’s tenured MFA instructors earned degrees during these decades and retained this style of teaching, even as the art world has seismically changed.⁸⁵ In general, many professors who got their start in this era still organize their classrooms as conceptual environments promoting loose, unstructured arbitration between students and instructors.⁸⁶ Today, many art schools across all prestige-tiers favor sociocultural attitudes

⁸⁰ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21.

⁸¹ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21.

⁸² Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21.

⁸³ Solomon, “How to Succeed in Art,” *The New York Times*; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21.

⁸⁴ White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education As Essential to Professional Arts Training,” 32; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21; Freedman, “Recent Shifts in US Art Education,” 24.

⁸⁵ Pujol, “On the Ground,” 7; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21; Freedman, “Recent Shifts in US Art Education,” 24.

⁸⁶ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21; Freedman, “Recent Shifts in US Art Education,” 24; Pujol, “On the Ground,” 7.

towards creative instruction, encouraging collaboration, informal teaching environments, and open exchanges of creative ideas as a means of investigating accepted art-making practices and disrupting cultural and aesthetic norms.⁸⁷

It should be noted that this “creativity-and-innovation-above-all” mindset in MFA instruction is not an inherently bad thing. A vast majority of students entering MFA arts programs do so because of their passion for art-making, not because they seek career opportunities or immediate financial gain.⁸⁸ Most students and professors within MFA programs generally view art schools as forums to freely exchange creative ideas and promote meaningful development in participants’ artistic practices.⁸⁹

However, one cannot dismiss that the art world has rapidly commercialized in recent decades and that tuition costs for higher education have steadily increased.⁹⁰ This means there are inherently heightened risks to financial expenditure on MFA degrees and/or acquiring debt by doing so if students are not taught to effectively navigate their artistic careers. Indeed, given the expanding breadth and complexity of today’s art market, MFA programs’ goal of creating talented artists within academic settings is now inseparably tied to the question of “what to do with the artist once created.”⁹¹ As shown, the evolution of art schools is innately tied to developments in art history and theory, as well as economic, cultural, and political shifts.⁹² Yet, the issues of better preparing art students for non-creative aspects of their careers and updating arts education for the current art world realities still remain.

⁸⁷ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 21; Freedman, “Recent Shifts in US Art Education,” 24.

⁸⁸ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Adam, *Dark Side of the Boom*, 9; Boilen and Virgin, “Census Report, You.”

⁹¹ Adam, *Dark Side of the Boom*, 9; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 22; Massouras, “The Art of Art Students,” 48.

⁹² Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 22; Massouras, “The Art of Art Students,” 48.

Chapter 2: Market Aversion and Barriers to Curriculum Changes in Today's MFA

Programs

The pedigree of art schools' rebuff of authority and orthodox academic-structures largely persists to this day, with such sentiments now often directed towards art market influence and the wider commoditization of art.⁹³ As the market has grown during the past three decades, so too has enrollment in graduate arts programs, meaning that more and more students enter into a market-dominated art world where they must recover high tuition costs.⁹⁴ This can often lead to artists "[graduating] with such financial debt that they cannot afford to... take chances as artist-citizens," or worse, to abandon their creative practices altogether.⁹⁵ Obviously, this trend is a problem. Yet, arts academia's slow response to address these issues is not without reason. There are various informal and formal barriers that hinder art schools' implementation of more in-depth curriculum covering professional practices, career-development, and entrepreneurship.⁹⁶

I. Formal Barriers

It is productive to discuss some of the barriers hindering the incorporation of career and market-oriented curriculum into today's arts schools before analyzing more intangible, but by no means less impactful, informal barriers. One of the primary barriers to evolving U.S. arts education is that art schools associated with preexisting universities are often subjected to lower

⁹³ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 23; Esche, "Include me Out," 106-107; Madoff, "Introduction," x.

⁹⁴ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 23; Madoff, "Introduction," x; Pujol, "On the Ground," 8; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 28.

⁹⁵ Pujol, "On the Ground," 9 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 23; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30.

⁹⁶ From the Academy to the Marketplace," 23; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 28.

funding relative to other bachelor's and master's programs in the same institution.⁹⁷ This, plus fluctuating levels of government commitment to educational and artistic funding, can result in a programmatic stagnation and status-quo adherence regarding curriculum in many American art schools.⁹⁸

Statistical findings (analyzed in the next chapter) and supported studies reveal a general opinion in U.S. arts education that instruction in entrepreneurship and business administration can be beneficial but is non-essential overall.⁹⁹ This sentiment is partially due to the *Discipline-Based Art Education* (discussed earlier in Chapter 1) framework widely implemented in the U.S. during the 1980s.¹⁰⁰ The commonly used educational structure of the DBAE is seen as conventional, standardized, and easily-implemented.¹⁰¹ Since the DBAE's introduction, it has become somewhat of a crutch for arts education institutions that are unable or unwilling to readily experiment with their curriculum.¹⁰² Conversely, instruction in arts entrepreneurship is generally regarded as a still-emerging field that lacks standardized curriculum.¹⁰³ The DBAE's goals rely on foundational pillars which they assert will facilitate "the creation, understanding, and appreciation of art."¹⁰⁴ When defining the term "professional skills," the DBAE

⁹⁷ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28; Taylor, "Discussion with Mia Taylor," Interview by Adelaide Dunn.

⁹⁸ "Federal Funding for Arts Education," PerformingArtsAlliance; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28;

⁹⁹ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 32-33.

¹⁰⁰ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30-31.

¹⁰¹ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30-31.

¹⁰² Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 28; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30-31.

¹⁰³ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30-31.

¹⁰⁴ Agustin, "Discipline Based Art Education," 2; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 30-31.

contextualizes them within artists' practices, outlining goals relating to effectively speaking about one's art and taking criticism into account.¹⁰⁵ While these are undoubtedly useful subjects that should be taught by arts educators, more utilitarian skills like understanding contracts and copyright issues, pricing artworks, navigating the art market, and financially managing one's artistic career are excluded.¹⁰⁶ By omitting any mention of these practical and career-oriented goals, the DBAE framework makes such skills seem peripheral and extracurricular within arts education.¹⁰⁷

These formal barriers to implementing entrepreneurial training in American arts education are, to some degree, exacerbated by curriculum standards set forth by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD).¹⁰⁸ NASAD is an organization that oversees the curricular standards of graduate and undergraduate arts programs in the U.S. and awards accreditation to institutions meeting their requirements.¹⁰⁹ Like any higher education institution, maintaining accreditation is absolutely vital to the success and legitimacy of arts education programs, meaning that NASAD possesses significant power and influence over art schools and their curriculum.¹¹⁰

NASAD's influential curricular requirements, plus the individual character of specific institutions and instructors, can further perpetuate academic market aversion and slow the

¹⁰⁵ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 31-32.

¹⁰⁶ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 31-32.

¹⁰⁷ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 31-32.

¹⁰⁸ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 33.

¹⁰⁹ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 33.

¹¹⁰ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 29; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential," 33.

incorporation of professional practices coursework in arts education programs.¹¹¹ In the 2021-22 NASAD handbook, its statement of purpose notes that art and design degrees should enable students to “develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the professional life of the artist/designer.”¹¹² In its “recommendations” section for general studies in fine arts programs, it says institutions should include instruction that teaches “skills necessary to... the development and advancement” of students’ careers, including “competencies in communication, presentation, business, and leadership” needed “to engage in professional practice in their major field.”¹¹³ However, the terms “business” and “professional” are undefined in these general studies sections covering all studio-based degrees.¹¹⁴ These terms’ vagueness further delay the incorporation of meaningful professional practices curriculum in studio-based degrees.¹¹⁵

There is also a NASAD studio-degree requirement that a majority of curricula be directly focused on artistic mastery in specific subjects, with all other content labeled as “general studies.”¹¹⁶ This means the nature of business and professional development coursework is decided upon by individual institutions.¹¹⁷ This indeterminate approach to inclusion of professional practices and career administration content, combined with varying levels of

¹¹¹ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29-30; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 33; Pujol, “On the Ground,” 7-8.

¹¹² “National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2021-22,” 98; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29.

¹¹³ “National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2021-22,” 101; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29.

¹¹⁴ “National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2021-22,” 101; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 34.

¹¹⁵ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29-30; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 35-36.

¹¹⁶ National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2021-22,” 98-99; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29.

¹¹⁷ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 29-30; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 34.

willingness and ability to teach such material, further perpetuates market aversion in fine arts education.¹¹⁸ Since 2018, NASAD has sharpened its focus on specific curriculum requirements regarding professional practices, but this material still falls under the general studies and has not been meaningfully incorporated into NASAD’s content standards.¹¹⁹ However, as anecdotal and statistical evidence later analyzed in this paper will illustrate, entrepreneurial skills in the context of career management are by no means “general” for working artists.¹²⁰ Moreover, market aversion attitudes and these formal barriers to the evolution of MFA programs’ curriculum are further compounded by various informal barriers discussed in the following section.

II. Informal Barriers

While the art world becomes increasingly capitalistic and infused with the luxury and entertainment industries, there is evident anxiety among art schools and professors that these forces will dissuade students from making thought-provoking and socially-relevant work.¹²¹ These attitudes reinforce somewhat antiquated notions about high versus low art (i.e., aesthetic contemplation vs. functional or entertaining), distinctions between the individual versus a personal brand, and the uncorrupted creative space of the art school versus the cut-throat capitalist art market.¹²² In the view of some commentators, such dogmatic binary attitudes about

¹¹⁸ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 30; Pujol, “On the Ground,” 7; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 34-35.

¹¹⁹ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 30; “National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2021-22,” 101; “National Association of Schools of Art and Design Handbook 2017-18,” 99.

¹²⁰ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 30; White, “Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education as Essential,” 35.

¹²¹ Groys, “Education by Infection,” 30-31; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 23-24.

¹²² Storr, “Dear Colleague,” 63; Frenette, “Arts Graduates in a Changing Economy,” 1457; Higgs, “Questionnaire,” 309; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 24.

the character and philosophy of art schools have become outdated against the backdrop of the rapidly changing art world.¹²³

Moreover, the individualistic culture inherent to today's art schools often arises through professors' opinions on art-making and the art market, which can profoundly affect programs' curricular offerings and, in turn, graduates' competency in career-navigation.¹²⁴ Faculty members' perspectives on the market and the commoditization of art can shape the very identity of the institutions they teach in.¹²⁵ This is exemplified at CalArts during Baldessari's direction, whose market-opposed pedagogy of "détournement" reshaped the school's character entirely during his tenure.¹²⁶ Another example of this is evidenced by the Yale Art School faculty, who reportedly renounce any tech industry-esque phrases like disruptive artwork or "creative entrepreneurship."¹²⁷ Both examples reflect more utopian and socially conscious faculty attitudes about art-making and art schools as uncorrupted microcosms of creativity.¹²⁸

Such perspectives among art school instructors are not inherently misguided or blindly idealistic. The widening influence of the art market and art fairs can indeed influence students, who may alter their work and practices to make them more saleable, possibly abandoning true creative growth to suit collectors' and viewers appetites.¹²⁹ Making marketable artwork should by no means be the primary focus of MFA instruction, and many professors do promote career

¹²³ Storr, "Dear Colleague," 63; Frenette, "Arts Graduates in a Changing Economy," 1457; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 24.

¹²⁴ Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 19; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 24.

¹²⁵ Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 19; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 24.

¹²⁶ Storr, "Dear Colleague," 60; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 19.

¹²⁷ Duffy, "Considering Tradition, and the Election, at Yale School of Art"; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 24.

¹²⁸ Storr, "Dear Colleague," 63; Frenette, "Arts Graduates in a Changing Economy," 1457; Llewellyn, "Introduction: Histories and Contexts," 19; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 24.

¹²⁹ VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke." Interview by Bill Stewart.

development through networking and cultural exposure.¹³⁰ If professors do teach elements of professional practices and career navigation, many elect to do so later into students' MFA programs to prevent them from becoming too market-focused when developing their practices.¹³¹

For some critics, the market has become the new "master" of both professional and student artists, shaping standards of aesthetic quality based on artistic fads and buyers' whims.¹³² However, this does not mean art schools should ignore the art market or disregard its trends. Accomplished curator and professor Ute Meta Bauer suggests arts instructors remain aware of the market and its trends, but avoid shaping their curriculum and opinions based off of it.¹³³ She asserts this encourages students to be engaged and aware of larger art world currents, improves their creative critical thinking skills, and allows them to remain wary of chasing "success" in a purely commercial sense.¹³⁴

Such viewpoints, on behalf of both students and their instructors, are partially linked to the romanticized notion of the starving artist acting as a cultural commentator who creatively expresses their perceptions of the world while remaining separate from it.¹³⁵ Moreover, the creative and seemingly detached bubble characterizing many art school environments can further contribute to students' and professors' disregard for art market trends.¹³⁶ From an outsider's perspective, it can seem like MFA programs are completely unaware "of the rest of the world" and that this cloistered artistic environment is "unrealistic" relative to the rest of the industry.¹³⁷ In some ways, this is a good thing, promoting students' uninhibited creative growth without

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Bauer, "Under Pressure," 222; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 25-26.

¹³³ Bauer, "Under Pressure," 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 26.

¹³⁴ Bauer, "Under Pressure," 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 26.

¹³⁵ Schnapp, and Shanks, "Artereality (Rethinking Craft in a Knowledge Economy)," 145; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 26.

¹³⁶ VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke" Interview by Bill Stewart.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

having to care about popular or marketable artistic trends. However, total shelter from the commercial art world can leave students wholly unprepared to professionally navigate the art market upon graduation.¹³⁸

In some cases, art schools' and faculty's avoidance of market and career-based training may have a vitriolic nature to it, even if unintentional or subconscious.¹³⁹ It is widely observed that many MFA graduates wind up remaining within academia, even if this is not the direction in which they had wanted their careers to go.¹⁴⁰ Certain professors can become embittered by such trajectories, feeling "that they should be out there participating in the art world rather than teaching students."¹⁴¹ Author Carroll Michells even perceives a malicious side to academics' tendency towards market aversion, asserting that certain faculty consciously avoid instruction which could give students professional advantages over them or imperil their own status or that of their artistic peers.¹⁴²

Additionally, observers note that many art schools are staffed by once-radical professors hired during the 1970s and 80s who have "stopped growing" creatively, yet are prevented from replacement due to an "unexpected perversion of tenure."¹⁴³ These sorts of instructors can feel "threatened by new and visiting faculty" who came into creative fruition after their time, or engage in desperate attempts to uphold their antiquated agendas, "[seeking] followers of tradition regardless of students' true needs."¹⁴⁴ Career-academic arts professors like this often have "little to offer students other than textbook ideas and textbook art," as they have never had meaningful

¹³⁸ Bauer, "Under Pressure," 225; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 26.

¹³⁹ Esche, "Include Me Out" 103; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴⁰ Esche, "Include Me Out" 103; Pujol, "On the Ground," 7; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴¹ Esche, "Include Me Out" 107 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴² Michels, *How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist*, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴³ Pujol, "On the Ground," 7 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴⁴ Pujol, "On the Ground," 7 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

professional experience as a working artist.¹⁴⁵ These sorts of rigid and tenured arts instructors found in MFA programs across the country can facilitate insidious cycles in which students graduate not only unprepared to navigate their career, but also completely unaware of the current state of the arts in general.¹⁴⁶

Under these conditions and influences, art students may adopt personal and creative identities that prove to be detrimental to their career development upon graduation.¹⁴⁷ Some argue that a key element of attending art school is not only forming a unique creative practice, but also developing one's own artistic identity and the presentation of said identity.¹⁴⁸ In this process, students can find themselves and their work designated as "sell-outs, professionals, visionaries, or colleagues" among other labels depending on the identity and practice they develop in art school.¹⁴⁹

These conflicting terms and perceptions can have serious consequences on students' career trajectories, financial prospects, and senses of artistic self-worth.¹⁵⁰ Faced with this peer pressure, art students may distance themselves from the market or career moves potentially deemed as opportunistic professionalization, damaging their long-term prospects for future earnings.¹⁵¹ In such attempts to "follow the pack" and maintain the respect of artistic peers, students who succumb to anti-market peer pressure – even if they may not wholeheartedly agree – can imperil their chances of forming professional networks, which many identify as essential to

¹⁴⁵ Pujol, "On the Ground," 7 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴⁶ Pujol, "On the Ground," 7 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴⁷ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463–86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁴⁸ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463–86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27–28.

¹⁴⁹ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1465 (quoted); Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27–28.

¹⁵⁰ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463–86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

¹⁵¹ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463–86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

career success.¹⁵² Added to art programs' widespread market aversion and students' avoidance of careerist-labels by peers and instructors, it can become difficult for graduates to form clear visions of how they want their professional development to take shape.¹⁵³

¹⁵² Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27-28 (quoted); Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463-86; Groys, "Education by Infection," 30-31; VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke," by Bill Stewart.

¹⁵³ Fine, "A Matter of Degree," 1463-86; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 27.

Chapter 3: Challenges to Artists' Professional and Financial Success: Structural and Statistical Evidence

I. Structural Barriers to Emerging Artists' Career-Success

For emerging artists, the global art market's structure can pose significant barriers for those trying to penetrate it.¹⁵⁴ Gaining information about or entry into the art market and its various sub-sectors is often reliant on artists' relations to museums, commercial gallerists, collectors, and dealers.¹⁵⁵ These sorts of influential gatekeepers can utilize "oligarchic" methods to control creators' and buyers' access to the art market and supply-levels within it.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, buyers often seek out work by a select number of artists deemed as important or valuable, a phenomenon prevalent in primary and secondary art markets.¹⁵⁷ In 2018, 63% of sales by primary-market galleries came from their top-three selling artists.¹⁵⁸ Using secondary-market auction data, sold-works by only six different artists comprised 32% of all auction turnover in 2020 and 2021.¹⁵⁹ Top buyers' gravitation towards well-established artists and works deemed as safe investments makes it extremely difficult for emerging artists to gain significant recognition and financial returns within the marketplace, where few achieve such levels of career success.¹⁶⁰ Those artists that do progress from emerging to established designations are commonly ones who

¹⁵⁴ Abbing, *Why Are Artists Poor?*, 280; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁵⁵ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁵⁶ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 8; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁵⁷ McAndrew, "Art Basel and UBS Survey of Global Collecting 2022," 95; Frenette, "Arts Graduates in a Changing Economy," 1458; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁵⁸ "Press Release Basel," 3.

¹⁵⁹ "Contemporary Art Market Report 2021," Artprice.

¹⁶⁰ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 5; Frenette, "Arts Graduates in a Changing Economy," 1458; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

effectively represent themselves and their work in a manner that garners notice from galleries, dealers, and collectors.¹⁶¹

Historically, commercial galleries have acted as primary gatekeepers separating emerging artists from the art market's upper echelons, providing artists with access to pre-existing collectors, promotion of themselves and their work, administrative services, and the capacity to match the supply of their work with buyers' demand.¹⁶² However, as the art market globalizes, a small number of top-tier galleries comprise a majority of gallery-sales revenue around the world, making it increasingly unlikely for emerging artists to land representation by these entities.¹⁶³ Congruently, this means that there is a shrinking number of middle-tier galleries under which emerging artists are more feasibly able to gain representation.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, middle-class buyers have started disappearing from the art market, seeking more inexpensive work through different platforms, meaning smaller galleries' customer-base is shrinking, too.¹⁶⁵ This all contributes to a new level of hypercompetitiveness among artists within the gallery sphere, with a vast pool vying for diminishing numbers of representational opportunities by commercial galleries.¹⁶⁶

Today's global art market has become a buyer's market with a high supply of works whose sale is controlled by a handful of powerful gatekeeper individuals.¹⁶⁷ Moreover, art is seen

¹⁶¹ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 5; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁶² Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 8; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33.

¹⁶³ McAndrew, "Art Basel and UBS Survey of Global Collecting 2022," 45; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 33-34.

¹⁶⁴ Taylor, "Discussion with Mia Taylor" Interview by Adelaide Dunn; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

¹⁶⁵ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 9; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, "Discussion with Mia Taylor" Interview by Adelaide Dunn; McAndrew, "Art Basel and UBS Survey of Global Collecting 2022," 45; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

¹⁶⁷ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 8; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

as a luxury commodity and Veblen good, where demand for artworks and artists goes up as the price for them increases.¹⁶⁸ This means demand within the art market is concentrated on a select number of well-known artists whose work sells for extremely high prices.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, since the art market remains highly unregulated and nontransparent, information about pricing, trends, and supply and demand levels is harder to access compared to other commodity markets.¹⁷⁰ In sum, information asymmetry abounds within the art market, making it difficult to navigate and gain entry into for emerging artists and buyers.¹⁷¹ Artists are largely seen as mere producers in this commodified landscape, preventing them from obtaining similar levels of professional legitimacy relative to other market-players like gallerists, dealers, or auction house professionals.¹⁷² This combination of structural impediments makes it extremely difficult for emerging collectors and artists to break into the art market in meaningful ways.¹⁷³

II. Statistical Evidence

Corresponding with the MFA boom's aftereffects, a number of statistical studies have emerged concerning artists' achieved levels of financial stability and career success in recent years. Such studies collect and analyze statistics regarding artists' income, expenses, and career satisfaction. The Creative Independent's 2018 study on this subject is highly in-depth, boasting

¹⁶⁸ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; Velthuis, *Talking Prices*, 104; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

¹⁶⁹ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; Velthuis, *Talking Prices*, 104; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34.

¹⁷⁰ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34-35.

¹⁷¹ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 34-35.

¹⁷² VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke" Interview by Bill Stewart; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 35.

¹⁷³ Thom, *Fine Artists' Entrepreneurial Business Environment*, 13; VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke" Interview by Bill Stewart; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 35.

1,016 survey respondents from 52 countries, with approximately 75% of respondents coming from the U.S..¹⁷⁴ Though this survey is now four years old, it is still unmatched in its scope and number of respondents; its findings remain highly pertinent.

One of the most basic and important findings by the Creative Independent was that the median income of participants was between \$20,000 - \$30,000 in 2018.¹⁷⁵ For respondents reporting from in the United States, their median reported income was slightly higher, ranging from \$30,000 to \$40,000.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, roughly 60% of artists in this survey reported that they earned less than \$30,000 a year, with 21% of participants stating earnings between \$0.00 and \$10,000 annually.¹⁷⁷ To put this into perspective, an income of \$12,140 or lower would have placed a single-person household below the 2018 U.S. poverty line.¹⁷⁸ That same year, the median household income in the United States was \$63,179, nearly double the amount reported by participants for this survey.¹⁷⁹ For comparison, only 14% of responding participants made earnings greater than \$60,000 a year.¹⁸⁰

Additionally, respondents ranked their feelings of financial stability on a scale from one (“not at all financially stable”) to ten (“completely financially stable”).¹⁸¹ To define the term “financially stable,” a vast majority of participants said that the “financial stability” term to them

¹⁷⁴ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 1-4; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁷⁵ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 4; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁷⁶ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 4; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁷⁷ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 4; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁷⁸ “2018 Poverty Guidelines,” ASPE; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

¹⁷⁹ “U.S. Median Household Income,” United States Census Bureau; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁸⁰ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 1; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43.

¹⁸¹ “Survey Report,” The Creative Independent, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

meant “reliably having enough money to cover basic expenses, plus reliably saving money.”¹⁸²

To get a better sense of the seemingly low bar most respondents had for defining financial stability, around 30% stated that this term meant “reliably having enough money to cover basic expenses” and only “sometimes saving money.”¹⁸³ Only 9% defined the term as “never needing to think about money at all.”¹⁸⁴ Most participants felt neutral in regard to their financial stability, resulting in a median ranking of five on this scale.¹⁸⁵ 12% ranked their level of financial stability as one out of ten, meaning that they felt absolutely no degree of financial stability whatsoever.¹⁸⁶ At the other end of the spectrum, only 3% of respondents ranked their financial stability at a nine or ten on this scale.¹⁸⁷

Some telling statistics in the survey revealed that most respondents have to treat their practice as a part-time job, with nearly half saying that 0 to 10% of their income came from their artistic practice.¹⁸⁸ Comparatively, only 17% of participants stated that 75% to 100% of their income came from their artistic practice.¹⁸⁹ Additionally, 61% of participants said that freelance or contract work was one of their top-three sources of income, and 42% listed jobs unrelated to

¹⁸² “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

¹⁸³ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

¹⁸⁴ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

¹⁸⁵ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 43-44.

¹⁸⁶ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁸⁷ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 2; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁸⁸ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 11; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁸⁹ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 9; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

their practice as a top source of income.¹⁹⁰ 29% said that “having family or inheritance” was a top-three source of income in their lives.¹⁹¹ The data indicates the vast majority of participants are not making significant income from their practices, with only 12% stating that gallery sales were one of their top-three income sources.¹⁹²

Another statistic suggesting that many artists treat their practice as a part-time vocation was that one-third of respondents spent only ten to twenty-five hours a week creating work.¹⁹³ 39% said that they were able to devote ten or fewer hours a week to their practice and a mere 10% of participants said they could spend a full forty hours a week making art.¹⁹⁴ Regarding the business-oriented aspect of respondents’ creative practices, 42% reported that they were able to commit five hours or fewer per week to administrative work.¹⁹⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, only 6% of participants said that they were able to spend twenty-five hours or more on the administrative side of their artistic career.¹⁹⁶

One of the Creative Independent’s most important findings was that artists do not learn how to achieve financial stability from internships or formal educational programs.¹⁹⁷ When asked how and where respondents had learned methods of becoming financially stable as an

¹⁹⁰ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 11; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹¹ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 9; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹² “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 9; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹³ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 12; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹⁴ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 12; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹⁵ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 12; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹⁶ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 12; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

¹⁹⁷ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 10; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44.

artist, 74% said that trial and error proved to be the best way, and 67% said that observing and/or talking to peers taught them most effectively.¹⁹⁸ At the bottom of the list were the responses “school” and “internships,” further reflecting how art schools are ineffective when preparing students to work professionally as artists.¹⁹⁹ Participants also picked three elements that were most helpful in their pursuit of financial stability, with most citing their support network, connections, and work ethic as the main factors bolstering them financially.²⁰⁰ Only 26% of surveyed artists said that their skills in self-marketing their work were a leading factor contributing to their financial success.²⁰¹ Though this number is low, perhaps if the artists participating in this survey had been taught more practical and effective strategies for marketing their work in a formal setting, this response may have been selected at a higher rate.

63% of the participants in this survey had earned an MFA or other art-related degree.²⁰² Of this pool, the median response was a three when asked to rank on a scale of one to ten how effective their degree was at aiding them in becoming financially stable.²⁰³ However, when asked how useful their art degree was in developing their artistic practice on the same scale, participants responded with a median ranking of eight out of ten.²⁰⁴ These responses support the idea that MFAs and other similar arts degrees are effective in helping students grow their creative

¹⁹⁸ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 10; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 44-45.

¹⁹⁹ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 10; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

²⁰⁰ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 10; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

²⁰¹ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 11; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

²⁰² “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 13; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

²⁰³ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 13; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

²⁰⁴ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 13; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 45.

practice, but simultaneously ineffective in teaching methods of succeeding financially as a working artist.

Another relevant survey was conducted by the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project (SNAAP), which examined arts graduates' professional experiences with objectives of promoting a more career-oriented curriculum in such programs.²⁰⁵ Titled "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," this 2017 report investigates the ways in which entrepreneurial skills are integrated into fine arts programs' pedagogies, how effectively alumni operate within the art world, and whether entrepreneurship-focused curriculum affects respondents' professional success.²⁰⁶ When using the term entrepreneurship, SNAAP defines this not as merely "creating a new business," but rather "creating, innovating, or otherwise making trades and deals between entities."²⁰⁷ By using this definition, the SNAAP survey better accounts for the numerous approaches artists take to "independently create their own jobs through working arrangements like self-employment, project-based or 'gig' work, and freelancing."²⁰⁸ This report took into account answers from more than thirty-thousand survey respondents from fifty-three different arts education institutions across the United States.²⁰⁹

Of those polled, 71% stated that entrepreneurship skills are either "very" or "somewhat" important to their professional livelihoods.²¹⁰ However, only 26% said that the institution from

²⁰⁵ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²⁰⁶ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²⁰⁷ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²⁰⁸ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²⁰⁹ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²¹⁰ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

which they received a degree helped them develop “some” or “very much” of these entrepreneurial skills.²¹¹ This means that nearly half of alumni surveyed felt their respective programs failed to teach them necessary entrepreneurial skills to successfully navigate their professional artistic careers.²¹² Moreover, 80% of respondents stated that their degree would have benefitted them more had it included further training on how to manage their individual finances, form strategic business plans, market themselves and their practice, monitor legal and tax-based issues, and effectively communicate through and about their work.²¹³

Surveyed alumni who stated they did not attain skills in business and financial management from their respective programs expressed lowered levels of self confidence in their potential of becoming financially stable and in their abilities “to be resilient, adapt to new circumstances, and recognize career opportunities.”²¹⁴ Respondents who reported learning skills in business and financial management from their degree stated they felt more confident overall in their professional acumen and their preparedness for a career in their field.²¹⁵ Moreover, alumni who said they acquired such skills were 6% more likely to find a job within four months of graduating and were 14% more likely to be satisfied with the income earned from their primary jobs.²¹⁶

²¹¹ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 3; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

²¹² Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 6; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

²¹³ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 17; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

²¹⁴ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 17-18; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

²¹⁵ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 17-18; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

²¹⁶ Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, “Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists,” 18; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 47.

Another insightful survey on the subject was conducted in 2014 by BFAMFAPhD, a group of artists and art school graduates who have endeavored to demonstrate the difficult professional reality and financial hardships faced by individuals attempting to sustain a career as a creative.²¹⁷ Though the report is now nearly a decade old, many of its findings are still highly relevant to this paper; the issues detailed in it have become further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on networking and exhibition opportunities for emerging artists and today's high levels of inflation.²¹⁸

This survey found that the median income for professional artists in the U.S. was \$30,621, and \$36,105 for artists who had earned a bachelor's degree (in line with similar findings by the aforementioned Creative Independent survey).²¹⁹ Notably, of the roughly 715,000 artists estimated to be working at the time of this survey that did have a Bachelor's degree, only 27% of this group majored in an arts-related subject.²²⁰ This suggests that attaining an arts degree seems to have little effect on the potential future earnings for graduates that go on to pursue a career as an artist.

Similar to the results of the other surveys previously examined, BFAMFAPhD's report indicates that only 10% of artists make their primary earnings as an artist, with the other 90% relying on other occupations as their main source of income.²²¹ Of artists based in New York City, 85% rely on non-arts related day jobs for their main source of income, and the 15% who do

²¹⁷ Boilen and Virgin, "Census Report, You," BFAMFAPhD; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 46.

²¹⁸ Buchholz, Fine, and Wohl, "Art Markets in Crisis," 465; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 47.

²¹⁹ Boilen and Virgin, "Census Report, You," BFAMFAPhD; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 46.

²²⁰ Boilen and Virgin, "Census Report, You," BFAMFAPhD; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 46.

²²¹ Boilen and Virgin, "Census Report, You," BFAMFAPhD; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 46.

work solely as artists reported a median income of only \$25,000 annually.²²² This income level is strikingly low considering that the median income for all other professions is around \$50,000 – twice the amount made by professional artists per year.

These low median incomes are especially problematic considering the high tuition of art schools, with most graduates amassing roughly \$120,000 worth of debt to attain their degrees at the time of this report’s publication.²²³ Arts schools are among the most costly academic institutions in the United States and usually offer small amounts of financial aid to students compared to other universities and degree-types, with art schools being the top four most expensive colleges by average net price in 2022.²²⁴ This phenomenon of expensive arts degrees and high debt among students has been constant over the last decade: 7% of CalArts and 8% of School of Visual Arts graduates defaulted on their educational loans in 2014 according to BFAMFAPHD.²²⁵ Their report indicates that more effective entrepreneurial training in arts-management and business is essential going forward, urging arts institutions to incorporate these subjects into their required curriculum.²²⁶

²²² Boilen and Virgin, “Census Report, You,” BFAMFAPHD; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 46.

²²³ Boilen and Virgin, “Census Report, You,” BFAMFAPHD; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 46.

²²⁴ “Most Expensive Colleges & Universities in America by Average Net Price,” CollegeSimply; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 46.

²²⁵ Boilen and Virgin, “Census Report, You,” BFAMFAPHD; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 46.

²²⁶ Boilen and Virgin, “Census Report, You,” BFAMFAPHD; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 46.

Chapter 4: Anecdotal Evidence and Individual Case Studies on MFA Programs, the State of Professional Practices Curriculum, Career Preparedness, and Potential Paths Forward

This chapter will use individual case studies and firsthand accounts on MFA program offerings in career development, opinions regarding professional practices curriculum's necessity, the effectiveness of art schools' efforts to prepare graduates for their careers, and their perspectives on potential ways forward. These anecdotal sections are based on interviews conducted by the author with arts professionals from the world of arts schools and offer varied perspectives on the aforementioned topics. Both interviewees were asked similar question sets with answers that overlap and differ in certain areas, reflecting that there are no ubiquitous experiences or perspectives for MFA graduates and professors. However, their responses bring to light new issues, opinions, and experiences that compliment aforementioned structural and statistical evidence in ways that deepen one's understanding of art schools' relation to professional practices curriculum.

I. Jonathan Van Dyke

The first subject interviewed was Jonathan VanDyke, an artist and arts instructor working in the undergraduate faculty at Bard College as an Artist in Residence in Studio Arts. He was ensconced in the world of arts academics from a young age, growing up in rural Pennsylvania with his father who worked as an arts teacher committed to the “democratizing of art education.”²²⁷ In this creative household, he was exposed to art-making at a young age as a sort of “guinea pig” for his father’s assignments.²²⁸ VanDyke says this element of his background impacted his own artistic and academic career, attuning him “to ideas around education, social

²²⁷ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke” Interview by Bill Stewart.

²²⁸ Ibid.

practice, and accessibility.”²²⁹ VanDyke went through undergraduate studies at the University of Glasgow and the Glasgow School of Art, receiving Rotary International Fellowship and earning degrees in art and sociology.²³⁰ Afterwards, he worked in curatorial administration for a small museum before earning an MFA in sculpture from the Milton Avery School at Bard College.²³¹ VanDyke has been a grant recipient, artist in residence, and student at numerous American and European institutions, including the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the Skowhegan School for Painting and Sculpture, Quartz, Yaddo, and a variety of others.²³²

His work has been shown in both group and solo exhibitions in galleries and museums including Loock Galerie Berlin, the Des Moines Art Center, Storm King, NADA New York, the Albright Knox Gallery, and the Power Plant in Toronto, among others.²³³ As an educator, he has held faculty positions and lectured in a range of subjects at schools like CalArts, Columbia University, the New School, Christie’s Education, and the Pig Iron School.²³⁴ VanDyke has been a successful artist, a talented mentor, and a veteran in the world of creative education whose opinions on art academics have been shaped by deep levels of experience.

When asked about how MFA programs can better prepare students for artistic careers, VanDyke reflects that these issues and possible solutions to them are far more complex than they seem. One of the main points he reiterates is that the nature of MFA programs is to act as “domains of ideas and conversation.”²³⁵ Moreover, he states that a vast majority of students are “passion-driven” and that their motivation for attending art school is not to learn ways to run their careers as artists, but because they are “hungry for time to just make stuff and talk about

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ “BIO | Jonathan VanDyke.” n.d. Mysite. <https://www.jonathanvandyke.com/bio>.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke” Interview by Bill Stewart.

making stuff.”²³⁶ As stated earlier, the sentiment that the MFA’s environment should be one of free creative growth and exchange is by no means something that should be disparaged. Solely focusing on making professional connections and building a marketable artistic practice can be even more damaging and fruitless for MFA students who only focus on their present creative state. While making connections and finding ways to form a career-sustaining practice are important to MFAs overall, VanDyke says that students who only care about these elements of their degree and who do not take the opportunity to develop their practices tend not to do well within their programs or their professional life.²³⁷ A balance must be struck between students’ creative and professional growth. VanDyke says that the basics of professional practices taught in MFA programs covering writing artists’ statements and applying for grants or residencies are definitely important.²³⁸ However, in his instruction on professional practices for MFA students, he stresses the importance of making connections, exploring others’ art and going to shows, and being able to effectively communicate about one’s own work.²³⁹

As shown in the aforementioned statistical studies, many MFA students feel the same way, saying that their degree was very valuable in developing their practices and forming networks.²⁴⁰ VanDyke says that one way to potentially improve MFA career-preparedness instruction would be to implement more thorough faculty and alumni mentorship programs.²⁴¹ One of the most important things that MFAs should heighten their focus on is providing formalized means to create “a robust community and a robust alumni network.”²⁴² He says that the relationships students form with their instructors can be invaluable and suggests that such a mentorship

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ “Survey Report,” *The Creative Independent*, 10.

²⁴¹ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke” Interview by Bill Stewart.

²⁴² Ibid.

program could extend even beyond graduation.²⁴³ Additionally, he says MFA programs should encourage students to seek out art world internships (and perhaps offer academic credit for them) in places like museums and galleries to kindle their understanding of the non-creative side of the industry.²⁴⁴ This inclusion of internship credits and extended mentorship programs would be most useful, as they cover issues and questions regarding one's creative practice, professional development, questions about teaching, and help to further deepen MFA graduates' networks.

Another hurdle to effectively teaching material that prepares students for artistic careers is that "MFA programs tend to be...taught by artists," and for questions on building a successful professional practice, VanDyke says "we don't always know ourselves."²⁴⁵ VanDyke and his artistic and academic peers "know some of it," but "many of us who are teaching those programs have our own difficulties sustaining a professional practice."²⁴⁶ Having professors who may not have all the answers to teach material on professional practices is asking them to "go into a terrain which is also sort of prickly."²⁴⁷ VanDyke states that this is exacerbated by a "culture of secrecy" that is inherent to the art market.²⁴⁸ This culture of secrecy goes even deeper in an American context, as many people, not just artists, "keep questions of money in [a] hazy area."²⁴⁹ He explains that "even among my very close artistic peers, it's very rare that we talk about how much our work sells for."²⁵⁰ This widespread attitude among artists, plus the creative excitement that is characteristic of the MFA environment, can mean that "professional practice stuff just gets kicked farther and farther down the road."²⁵¹

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

However, one of VanDyke's key points is that we should ask not just how MFA programs can prepare students for the market, but also "how should the market adjust to artists, as opposed to how should artists adjust to the market?"²⁵² According to VanDyke, the whole question of artists adjusting to the market is a two-way street. Indeed, for many artists, professors, and creative professionals, the art market is "shrouded in mystery."²⁵³ This attitude also exists in the commercial side of the art world, as market forces often view artists as "shrouded in mystery," while many professionals and collectors "treat artists like objects" who produce a valuable commodity.²⁵⁴ This perception by buyers and market professionals is not new by any means, as artists have relied on forms of patronage for centuries.²⁵⁵ However, as the art market has boomed and the commoditization of art has intensified in recent decades, the incentive for artists to make purely marketable work has grown. This problem is worsened by the growing prevalence and influence of art fairs, where gallerists, dealers, and fair goers tend to favor works which are eye-catching, not overly provocative, and that are easily displayed and sold.²⁵⁶

To some degree, these factors contribute to MFA instructors' reluctance to increase the amount of commercial-oriented material and professional practices curriculum included in their coursework. Furthermore, professors like VanDyke also feel that including discussion on how to build a profitable creative practice can warp newer students' creative priorities if they have not yet solidified their artistic voice.²⁵⁷ When asked if career-based material should be included early on in MFA programming, VanDyke stated that it should not, as students are still "a little too sensitive early on."²⁵⁸ MFA students should have a chance to grow artistically within productive

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

creative environments, as they may end up shaping practices that are less innovative and more marketable if they focus on pursuing a profitable career too early. Most students who seek MFAs are there because they are passionate about making art and want to develop their creative practice.²⁵⁹ It would be a travesty to prevent students from doing this, but these attitudes can deepen the divide between the art market and artists who earn MFAs, further contributing to this lack of dialogue between either side of the art world.

This lack of dialogue between market professionals and MFA students and faculty is ubiquitous and problematic, as student artists rarely get a chance to ask market figures questions about the environment they are made to work within.²⁶⁰ VanDyke says that “it’s very rare that marketplace professionals enter into art schools,” either “on panels” or “as visitors.”²⁶¹ If market professionals do visit MFA programs, “maybe they come to a thesis show,” often only to scout younger talent right out of the gate.²⁶² Overall, this avoidance of engagement between market professionals and artists in MFA programs is contributing to a “very unsustainable situation.”²⁶³

With the high profit margins of the commercial art world, VanDyke says that it would not be unreasonable to ask why mega-galleries and auction houses don’t offer free seminars for artists who want to learn about the art market and build more financially sustainable practices.²⁶⁴ Moreover, VanDyke says another potentially feasible solution is for dealers, gallerists, heads of residencies, and auction house professionals to “come and talk on a panel to MFA students.”²⁶⁵ In this setting, MFA students could access the professional knowledge of these individuals, ask questions about the art market which their professors may not know, expand their networks, and

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

form deeper understandings of the art world overall. This practice has been utilized in the past, as John Baldessari would invite art dealer Paula Cooper to CalArts to talk to his students on an annual basis.²⁶⁶ However, for whatever reason, this never became a standard practice within MFA programs in meaningful or formalized ways.

Again, VanDyke says that dialogue between artists and market professionals is the most crucial starting point for professional practices training in MFAs, and that it is a two-way path.²⁶⁷ In addition to market professionals visiting MFA programs and sitting on panels, he believes that artists should lecture more regularly at art business educational programs like Christie's Education and Sotheby's Institute of Art to "talk about what is important to them in the studio."²⁶⁸ VanDyke has done this himself, teaching courses at Christie's Education in the past to emerging market professionals who are sometimes "just as dumbfounded" about the working lives of artists "as MFA folks are."²⁶⁹

In sum, VanDyke believes that not preparing MFA students for a career as an artist is indeed a problem, but asserts that the solution isn't as simple as merely including more baseline professional practices material into art schools' curriculum. He repeatedly expressed the point that greater dialogue between art schools and market forces is "what we're really missing," and that the art market shares some of the responsibility in asking "what can they do to provide better professional practice opportunities for artists."²⁷⁰ Furthermore, he says that MFA programs should be introducing more effective ways for students to form professional networks with fellow students, professors, and alumni, as well as heightening their focus on internship

²⁶⁶ "Conversation: John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin" in *Art School (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, 50.

²⁶⁷ VanDyke, "Interview with Jonathan VanDyke," Interview by Bill Stewart.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

experiences as ways to better prepare them for professional life.²⁷¹ However, in VanDyke's view, these priorities should not overshadow or diminish the importance of the MFA as a place first and foremost that is focused on students' creative growth.²⁷²

II. Dilmar M. Gamero

Dilmar Gamero is a Philadelphia-based, Peruvian-born teacher and artist specializing in photography, documentary production, and both digital and alternative photographic processes.²⁷³ Before moving to the United States in 2017, Gamero studied philosophy, art education, theology, and audiovisual communication at the Pontifical Catholic University of Peru.²⁷⁴ He was awarded a scholarship to attend Temple University's Tyler School of Art, earning his MFA in photography in 2019.²⁷⁵ Following his MFA program director's advice, Gamero then earned his Ph.D. in Documentary Arts and Visual Research at Temple's School of Theater, Film, and Media Arts, graduating in late 2022.²⁷⁶ During this time, he also taught media arts and a photography course for filmmakers.²⁷⁷ Gamero has exhibited his work in multiple galleries and museums in the Philadelphia area while still teaching on the side, fitting the archetype of an academic who is still much committed to their artistic practice and career.

Like many international students who come to the U.S. to earn their MFA, Gamero worked at the institution where he was studying under the guidelines of his student visa and applied for an Occupational Practical Training visa to continue working after graduation.²⁷⁸ It is much more

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ "Bio," DILMAR GAMERO - VISUAL ARTIST. 2022.

²⁷⁴ "Bio," DILMAR GAMERO - VISUAL ARTIST. 2022.

²⁷⁵ Gamero, "Interview with Dilmar Gamero," by Bill Stewart.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ "Bio," DILMAR GAMERO - VISUAL ARTIST. 2022.

²⁷⁸ Gamero, "Interview with Dilmar Gamero," by Bill Stewart.

common for international students from backgrounds like Gamero's to wait to earn their MFA, electing to work for some time after getting their Bachelor's degree before seeking a Master's.²⁷⁹ After his period of working and cautiously thinking about what kind of degree he wanted to pursue due to the financial burden of such a degree, Gamero had concluded that he wanted to teach after earning an MFA in photography.²⁸⁰ This set him apart from some of his younger art school peers, most of whom were from the U.S. and had recently earned their BA.²⁸¹ Gamero knew he wanted to continue teaching after earning his MFA, then subsequently his Ph.D., establishing this direction after accumulating years of artistic and academic experience in Peru.²⁸²

However, even with these more concrete goals relative to his peers, Gamero still says that his MFA did not provide him with much formalized coursework regarding professional development and career administration.²⁸³ He says his program undoubtedly helped him to develop his practice, define himself artistically, and grow as an individual. Yet, when asked if he thought that MFAs push students more towards academic careers rather than careers as working artists, Gamero said that he sometimes felt "that the university wants you to get you closer to academia."²⁸⁴ Even though this was what he wanted to do after earning his degree, he states that having a successful career as both an artist and academic are not mutually exclusive goals.²⁸⁵ For many graduating artists with solidified teaching goals, Gamero observed, "you have this kind of struggle that you want to be in academia, but you want to continue doing your work at the same time."²⁸⁶ He says that just because an MFA graduate wants to stay in academia, they likely still

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

want to maintain their own artistic practice, meaning that some knowledge of professional practices within the art market is needed, even for career professors.²⁸⁷ Regarding the topic of MFA's academic focus for graduates, Gamero says that some students in his program only sought out degrees to have the option to teach after graduating. These students wanted to keep making art but wanted the option to teach as a way to “support themselves,” believing they could not “make enough money selling [their] art.”²⁸⁸

Mirroring statements made by Jonathan VanDyke, Gamero says that many professors in MFA programs may not be equipped to teach elements of market-related career administration.²⁸⁹ They may be talented artists with impressive portfolios, but oftentimes career-academic professors can also be in the dark about how to administer their artistic career, navigate commercial art spaces, and price their own work.²⁹⁰ His professors “tried to do their best” in preparing students for career navigation, but often fell short of what was truly needed.²⁹¹ In his MFA program at Tyler, there were seminar courses that included instruction in writing artist statements and applying for residencies, but they were never in-depth enough to be effective.²⁹² Gamero recounts one story where a seminar professor gave an assignment to apply for at least two residencies. However, the professor only wanted students to show an online confirmation that they had done so without even “reviewing what was there” or giving them pointers on how to bolster their applications’ quality.²⁹³

Similar to points from VanDyke and aforementioned statistical studies from chapter three, Gamero says that his program emphasized the importance of forming professional and creative

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Ibid.

networks while in school.^{294 295} However, in Gamero’s case, his professors did not really provide students with any effective “direction on how to do that.”²⁹⁶ Moreover, he says that forming meaningful professional networks “likely depends on your personality,” and that many students who may be highly innovative and talented artists can struggle with this.²⁹⁷ MFA students in these positions would likely benefit from some degree of formalized instruction on effective networking and confidently communicating about their art and practice within professional environments.

Gamero says that such coursework likely needs to be taught by art market professionals. He states that he is not alone in thinking this is “something that is missing in academia and in MFA programs,” with himself and other students wishing to hear outside perspectives by non-academic, non-artistic individuals regarding administrative elements of his practice, his artist’s statements, and his artwork.²⁹⁸ Gamero remarked that his MFA program indeed invited gallerists to come speak with them for a few hours, but that this was not a sufficient time frame to address all of their questions and concerns.²⁹⁹ In his opinion, having art world professionals with backgrounds in galleries, auction houses, and/or institutional curation review their artwork and their approaches to career administration should be part of a full-time course that includes “a lot of consistent work.”³⁰⁰

Gamero believes that a course focused solely on professional practices, career administration, and navigating the art market should at the very least be a mandatory

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ “Survey Report: A Study on the Financial State of Visual Artists Today,” *The Creative Independent*, 10.

²⁹⁶ Gamero, “Interview with Dilmar Gamero,” by Bill Stewart.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

full-semester course.³⁰¹ Additionally, it would preferably be taught by instructors with art market backgrounds who are not necessarily career academics.³⁰² In a potential career-preparedness and administration class, students should not explore changing their practice to make it more marketable, but rather examine “how to survive with the resources that you have as an artist.”³⁰³ Gamero says that an ideal course on artists’ professional preparedness would cover topics in “administration, economic management, and exposure,” with “exposure” referring to effectively applying for grants, scholarships, jobs, and other educational programs.³⁰⁴ It would need to include the basics of writing artists’ statements as well and applying for grants and residencies. Yet, it should also cover making these documents malleable, with students learning how to most effectively revise their writing based on whatever it is they are applying for.³⁰⁵ Moreover, one of the key pillars of Gamero’s ideal course would be learning about pricing work, with a partial focus on the basics of taxes in this context.³⁰⁶ He says that he and some of his peers are often troubled by this, as they include material and time-related costs, but can run into tax-based issues later if they incorrectly overprice or underprice works.³⁰⁷

When asked if he thought such topics being taught in an MFA course could negatively affect a student’s approach to their artistic practice or incentivize them to alter their work to make it more marketable, he said this should not be a concern. Gamero asserts that the “more points of view” one receives during their MFA program, the more one can “enrich [their] practice.”³⁰⁸ It does not matter if these perspectives come from a market outlook, since students can make up

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

their own minds regarding whether these critiques are valid or constructive. Hearing commercial perspectives on one's practice and career does not mean that students will automatically change themselves in radical ways.³⁰⁹ Gamero asks "what is the risk" of hearing art market professionals' perspectives?³¹⁰ It's not as if students taking career administration courses will immediately come out wanting to greedily commoditize their art or suddenly conclude that they should "be an economist now."³¹¹ After hearing such alternate opinions, students could "discover another side of [themselves]" or their practice.³¹² Or, perhaps they disagree with market professionals' critiques and reaffirm their own perspectives on their work and artistic identity in more meaningful ways. "Those kinds of things happen all the time" during professors' critiques on students' work, so what is the harm in getting them from another perspective?³¹³

He reiterates that the MFA is all about developing one's creative practice and mind as an artist. "You have to be open to some kinds of changes in the way you make art" as well as "in the way you see life."³¹⁴ Artists cannot avoid these topics if they want to make a living off of their practices, effectively apply for grants and residencies, or navigate commercial elements of the art world.³¹⁵ "You cannot justify" a disregard of the art market's prevalence or avoid training in career administration by proclaiming that "I'm an artist and a free spirit."³¹⁶ In Gamero's opinion, whether students follow through on structured training in career administration, the professionalization of their practices, or the commodification of their work is besides the point, but for programs to outrightly ignore these topics constitutes a disservice to students.³¹⁷ If one

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

does end up wanting to take their artistic career in a market-oriented direction without any training in the subject, they can spend significant “time and... energy trying to learn by [themselves].”³¹⁸ At the end of the day, this expenditure of time and energy takes away from graduates’ opportunities to actually create art and further their careers.³¹⁹ This material is essential to the potential success of MFA students, because if they do in fact want to commercialize their practice in some way, having such knowledge helps “optimize [their] time, energy, and work.”³²⁰

Overall, Gamero’s statements indicate he is not alone in feeling that this is an essential element of what MFA degrees should be about: teaching effective self-management in a manner allowing for improvement to one’s practice and life as an artist. He states that offering students better opportunities “to explore different areas” of the professional world they are entering should not take away from the creative focus of the MFA, but potentially enhance it.³²¹ He concedes that the two year span of most programs is a “tight” window to include all of this career-based instruction without impeding on crucial studio elements, and that professors do indeed “[try] their best” in preparing students for artistic careers after graduation.³²² Gamero acknowledges the primary focus of the MFA should be giving students meaningful opportunities to develop their practices, do studio-work, and grow as individuals.³²³ However, he says most programs are “very much focused on the creative part, but not the administrative part” of an artist’s career.³²⁴ This administrative element is “also essential” to post-graduation artistic

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid.

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid.

success, and cannot be continually thrown by the wayside by art schools.³²⁵ If MFA graduates are consistently struggling with financial stability and career development, then it is schools' responsibility to address this.³²⁶

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

Chapter 5: Comparative Study Between Professional Practice Curriculum in MFA Visual Arts Programs and New Courses in MFA in Acting Programs

This chapter will compare career-oriented training offered in MFA visual arts programs to similar emerging coursework being implemented within certain MFA programs in acting and theater. It is based on an interview with Wendy Kurtzman, an actor, teacher, and accomplished professional in the television and film casting industry. During the past decade, Kurtzman has provided professional services for emerging actors seeking resources in career growth.³²⁷ She has developed and taught multiple BFA and MFA courses on career development and post-graduation professional practices for actors at multiple academic institutions, including Pace University and UCLA's School of Theater, Film, and Television.³²⁸ Her experience and viewpoints on bridging gaps between the academic and professional spheres of theater and acting provide considerable insight on the implementation of effective career-development curriculum within creatively focused higher education programs. Though there are undeniably many differences between the academic spheres and professional industries of acting versus visual arts, both are creatively centered fields facing similar issues in terms of preparing students for their careers and teaching methods of commodifying one's creative talents.³²⁹ Kurtzman's methods, experiences, and perspectives on teaching professional development to students offer an apt example in which art schools' instructors and administrations could take valuable lessons.

Kurtzman's professional and academic experiences led her to teach this subject and advocate for its wider implementation into postgraduate programming. She began her career acting in musical theater after graduating from UCLA with a degree in theater.³³⁰ Kurtzman soon

³²⁷ Kurtzman, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman," by Bill Stewart.

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ "Adjunct Faculty | Wendy Kurtzman," Pace University New York.

pivoted into casting as a network executive before working independently in the field.³³¹ She has earned an Emmy nomination for her work, cast blockbuster films like *Independence Day*, and collaborated alongside acclaimed actors, producers, and directors.³³² After noticing growing disconnects between the academic and professional worlds of acting, she temporarily stepped away from casting and founded College to Career Acting in 2013, a business providing guidance to emerging actors regarding networking, personal financial strategies, self-marketing, and career development.³³³

Following this experience, Kurtzman realized there was a larger need for this material to be included within graduate and undergraduate acting programs, prompting her to approach multiple institutions about creating a full-time course in the subject.³³⁴ In 2014, she joined Pace University and launched their BFA Intensive Program.³³⁵ In this program, students travel to Los Angeles to meet and talk with casting directors, agents, managers, writers, producers, and a myriad of other accomplished professionals to demystify the industry's infrastructure and provide students with opportunities to grow their understanding of its operations.³³⁶ Following the BFA Intensive Program's launch, she began regularly teaching a "Business of Acting" at programs including Pace, NYU, and Chapman University, which instructs student-actors on matters of professional practices and career-development.³³⁷ Subsequently, she wrote a book on the subject, titled *Acting is Your Business: How to Turn a Craft Into a Career*, which will be published in 2023.³³⁸

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² "Wendy Kurtzman | Lecturer," UCLA School of Theater, Film, & Television.

³³³ Kurtzman, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman," by Bill Stewart.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid.

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid.

The barriers that Kurtzman faced when implementing this material pose stark similarities to the problems and academic attitudes seen within art schools. When her academic journey first started, Kurtzman says she was taken aback by the “disconnect between what the students [were] presenting to the industry” within classrooms and end-of-program acting showcases “versus what the industry [was] looking for.”³³⁹ She believes this is due to a “basic systemic problem,” with two major causes, the first of which being professorial tenure.³⁴⁰ Kurtzman asserts that “the longer [professors] stay within the academic paradigm, the less handle they have” on the current realities of the professional industry.³⁴¹ Such problematic trends regarding tenured professors reaching points of intellectual and creative stagnation are also common within visual art schools, as noted in chapter two, reflecting commonalities of certain issues present in both degree types.³⁴²

The second issue contributing to the disconnect between professional and academic realities and attitudes stems from instructors trying to balance their own acting careers alongside their professorial obligations.³⁴³ She believes that full-time professors’ workloads are nearly impossible to negotiate with a vibrant professional life, meaning that they can become further disconnected from the present state of the industry students are entering into.³⁴⁴ Professors “can’t be in all those places at once,” and unless they still have their “hands firmly in the industry,” it becomes increasingly unlikely for them to provide students with current and effective information on career-development.³⁴⁵ Again, Kurtzman’s insight here mirrors aforementioned issues hindering the implementation of meaningful professional practices coursework within

³³⁹ Ibid.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Pujol, “On the Ground,” 7.

³⁴³ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁴⁴ Ibid.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

graduate-level art schools. Similar to previous points made by Jonathan VanDyke, many arts professors experience their “own difficulties sustaining a professional practice” that may impede their capability to teach effective career-based material or make them skittish about doing so.³⁴⁶

Another issue that Kurtzman raises that mirrors earlier assertions about art schools’ own struggles to implement career-building curriculum into their program is the element of the extreme prioritization of creative growth at the expense of providing students with pertinent information on professional development.³⁴⁷ She says students’ and professors’ focus on honing their acting craft can result in little time or focus put towards preparing students for their professional lives after graduation.³⁴⁸ Moreover, faculty attitudes towards the acting industry and their opinions on what is worth teaching to students can definitely shape the character of the programs they operate within, a phenomena that can be similarly seen within at schools as mentioned in chapter two of this paper.³⁴⁹ Kurtzman believes that the practice of solely training students creatively means that MFA programs often “push these graduates out of the door” and forces them to figure out how to sustain themselves professionally, a act she views as “pretty brutal” given the time, effort, and money that students put towards their degree.³⁵⁰

Yet, she does not believe in the sweeping professionalization of the MFA degree either, stating that “there's a lot of beauty” in being part of an environment where students can “immerse [themselves] and just enjoy it strictly for the experience” of creative growth.³⁵¹ These perspectives by Kurtzman are reflective of similar points about art schools made earlier by VanDyke, who says that the primary focus of the MFA should be to act as “domains of ideas and

³⁴⁶ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁴⁷ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁴⁸ Ibid.

³⁴⁹ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart; Llewellyn, “Introduction: Histories and Contexts,” 19; Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 24.

³⁵⁰ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

conversation,” a valid goal which should not be derided.³⁵² Kurtzman’s outlook on this aspect of MFA programs also mirrors Gamero’s observation that art schools are “very much focused on the creative part, but not the administrative part” of students for their post-graduation practices.³⁵³

However, Kurtzman asserts it is a disservice for MFA programs to solely include material that focuses on developing one’s acting craft. She states that “it’s immature and a bit naive to think that [students] shouldn’t be connecting” their creative training to “what’s going to happen next.”³⁵⁴ Moreover, she concedes that changing such attitudes and effectively implementing this material is not an easy process that can be done with the wave of a wand. There are serious structural and informal barriers to doing so, and one has to “respect the fact that these institutions are behemoths and they do not change overnight.”³⁵⁵ Like MFAs in visual arts, acting degrees are attained within a narrow window of time and already packed with important material to be covered.³⁵⁶ This turns the inclusion of effective professional practices coursework into “a hard conversation to have” for students already burdened with other schoolwork during the third and final year of their MFA, when Kurtzman’s “Business of Acting” course is taught.³⁵⁷ This issue regarding the time frame in which one can implement such training reflects statements from the previous chapter by Gamero, who mentioned the “tight” schedule already present in art school curriculum.³⁵⁸ Kurtzman believes that her course and conversations around professional development should ideally start in the MFA’s second year, believing the students’ first year should be used to “settle in,” mirroring earlier perspectives by VanDyke on students potentially

³⁵² VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁵³ Gamero, “Interview with Dilmar Gamero,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁵⁴ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ Gamero, “Interview with Dilmar Gamero,” by Bill Stewart.

being “too sensitive” to career-oriented material when developing their practice in their first year.³⁵⁹

Kurtzman says that providing students with tangible skills in career navigation is essential while they are still within “the safety of academia,” where they can make “mistakes and ask lots of questions.”³⁶⁰ This recalls Gamero’s statement that it is better to learn these skills while in school; otherwise, graduates will expend lots of time and energy trying to figure out career administration on their own, eating away at the time they have to actually grow their practice and professional standing.³⁶¹ Kurtzman states that instruction in career preparedness is undeniably part of MFA programs’ duty to give students “360 degree” training in their field.³⁶² “What good” is a degree if students don’t know how to effectively correspond with industry professionals, “create robust contact lists,” or know how to foster meaningful “mentorship and connection” within their careers?³⁶³

Moreover, she says there are industry expectations that graduates conduct themselves professionally once they are working full-time, and that individuals who are incapable of this will likely not succeed compared to those who do possess such skills.³⁶⁴ For MFA programs to not provide students applicable “professional language” and skill-sets is “not acceptable” in Kurtzman’s view.³⁶⁵ If students are not able to efficiently navigate their careers and the complexities of the industry they are entering into, then they will forever be “beholden on other people’s yes or no.”³⁶⁶ Again, visual arts MFA programs should take note of this attitude. In

³⁵⁹ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart; VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁶⁰ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁶¹ Gamero, “Interview with Dilmar Gamero,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁶² Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

today's market-centric art world, deferring conversations about career preparedness and implementing meaningful curriculum on it is simply no longer acceptable.

The actual content of Kurtzman's "Business of Acting" course features many elements from which art schools and students could immensely benefit if they were to implement a required, full-semester course featuring similar material. In its syllabus, some of the course's goals include learning how to make professional self-tape auditions, identifying "types" of characters that suit students, cultivating audition material that fits these types, staying up to date with industry happenings through provided sources, and learning how to professionally correspond with different types of professionals.³⁶⁷ In the art school context, these goals could translate into students identifying potential markets and buyers for their work, keeping up with current art market news and trends, competently interacting and communicating with art market professionals, and how to effectively apply for different grants and residencies. All of these goals, applied to an art school context, perfectly match some of the elements Gamero identified for an ideal professional practices course in the previous chapter.

Another beneficial goal in Kurtzman's class that could translate well into potential visual arts MFA programs' professional practices curriculum is what she calls the "boardroom" exercise.³⁶⁸ In this exercise, Kurtzman has students view themselves and their practice as an incorporated company, divided into seven different departments that act as "placeholders for a myriad of facets" comprising a creative career.³⁶⁹ The first is the HR department, which creates one's "bill of rights" that outlines what work they feel comfortable doing and what they will not do.³⁷⁰ In an artist's context, this could mean identifying commissions, side jobs, or group shows

³⁶⁷ Kurtzman, "Syllabus: Business of Acting 1."

³⁶⁸ Kurtzman, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman," by Bill Stewart.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Ibid.

they feel comfortable doing that are not opposed to their own creative and personal values. The next “board member” is one’s CFO, which manages the personal and professional finances, helping students handle their money in a professional sense.³⁷¹ Kurtzman also provides students with specific financial advice, like keeping separate bank accounts for income from one’s creative craft and one for income coming from any side jobs they might work, advice applicable to an artistic career as well.³⁷² For art students, this department could cover the money they spend on materials for their practice, studio-spaces, professional websites, and how to manage income they may receive from selling their works. The next “board member” is business development, which encompasses all professional networking activity and keeps up with creating industry contact lists.³⁷³ The representation department covers self-management and seeking professional representation through an agent, which in a visual arts context would be done through galleries or dealers.³⁷⁴ One’s marketing department is in charge of creating and updating personal social media accounts and professional websites, an increasingly important part of an artistic career as well.³⁷⁵ The final member of the board is the outreach department, which covers and identifies one’s professional creative identity.³⁷⁶ This department is where students explore how they portray themselves to the rest of the world, interact with others in professional settings, and talk about their work effectively.³⁷⁷ Another facet that could be added to benefit artists would be a legal department, as understanding elements of art law relating to business, taxes, zoning regulations, copyright, and fair-use can benefit them significantly.³⁷⁸

³⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁷² Kurtzman, "Syllabus: Business of Acting 1."

³⁷³ Kurtzman, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman," by Bill Stewart.

³⁷⁴ Ibid.

³⁷⁵ Ibid.

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ Jones, *Art Law: A Concise Guide*, 18

In this exercise, Kurtzman says that “anybody pursuing a creative career can look at these different facets and apply them to their own industry.”³⁷⁹ Indeed, all of these departments translate well into a visual arts practice. It may seem like a simple task, but providing students with the tools and frames of mind to envision goals for their professional lives and methods of managing a creative career is essential to their ability to prepare for life after graduation. Breaking an artistic practice down into these categories could greatly benefit art school students, who receive very little instruction similar to this as shown in previous chapters. By utilizing similar exercises and covering the specific professional material mentioned in the course goals, art students would very likely feel more confident in thinking about their practice as a career and envisioning where they would like to take it after graduation.

Another perspective of Kurtzman’s from which art school students could benefit would be if their instructors were to promote the importance of “the pivot” to one’s career.³⁸⁰ Kurtzman encourages her acting students to take “career adjacent” professional opportunities, like working in casting or talent-scouting, and to avoid staying “single-minded” in their purpose.³⁸¹ If a graduate is pursuing an acting or theater-related career, she advocates that any side-jobs they may take are related to their creative goals as well.³⁸² In a visual arts context, this could take shape in formally encouraging students to work in fields such as galleries, auction houses, museums, and art handling. By being willing to pivot in one’s career does not mean that graduates are “giving up anything,” but instead “just adding to [their] knowledge.”³⁸³ Though many art school professors may advise students to do this, having this guidance as part of a

³⁷⁹ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

formalized class would reinforce such messaging.³⁸⁴ In working jobs adjacent to their long-term creative career goals, students are exposed to industry forces that “actually [monetize]” others’ creative output, get a sense for the “appetite of the public,” expand their professional network, and see how other creatives present their own work.³⁸⁵ This, Kurtzman says, can turn working graduates into “smarter and better creative[s].”³⁸⁶ Again, Kurtzman’s advice here recalls some of VanDyke’s earlier ideas about arts MFAs promoting internship for students in more meaningful ways, and could act as a possible model for art schools to follow.³⁸⁷

Additionally, Pace’s aforementioned BFA Intensive Program, which Kurtzman devised, is a perfect model for art schools to mimic, as it perfectly mirrors VanDyke’s idea of a “panel” of art market professionals coming to MFA programs to meet with students and allow them to ask questions.³⁸⁸ However, Kurtzman says that it is the onus of academia to organize such programs, and that MFAs must take the first step in approaching professionals and working alumni to visit, talk with students, or teach courses in an adjunct capacity.³⁸⁹ She adamantly believes that waiting for professionals to approach academic institutions is simply “deflecting” blame and “pushing off the responsibility” of preparing students for the non-creative elements of their career.³⁹⁰ In her view, it is fully the responsibility of academia to “incentivize” alumni and professionals to collaborate with MFAs.³⁹¹

She also asserts that programs like the BFA Intensive not only better prepare students for life after graduation, but also make MFA programs that feature opportunities for professional

³⁸⁴ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁸⁵ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁸⁶ Ibid.

³⁸⁷ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁸⁸ VanDyke, “Interview with Jonathan VanDyke,” by Bill Stewart; Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁸⁹ Kurtzman, “Interview with Wendy Kurtzman,” by Bill Stewart.

³⁹⁰ Ibid.

³⁹¹ Ibid.

interaction “destinations” can lead to greater enrollment in the future.³⁹² Kurtzman says that this practice is still not widespread within acting programs, but it is growing slowly in some places, and that students’ reaction to the program has been overwhelmingly positive.³⁹³ Visual arts programs and faculty could benefit from adopting such attitudes. If students are feeling professionally unprepared, then it is folly to wait around for the market to approach or accommodate them. Rather, schools must make the first moves in promoting greater dialogue between academia and the art market if meaningful changes are to be made.

It is apparent there are significant parallels between the academic landscapes of MFA acting programs and the current state of graduate art schools. By adopting similar attitudes, goals, methods, and curriculum into MFA arts programs, visual arts graduates could stand to greatly benefit. Kurtzman says that her students’ responses to her coursework and professional programming events have been extremely favorable, with many contacting her after graduation saying that her curriculum has significantly helped them as they begin to navigate their careers.³⁹⁴ Though such coursework and intensive programs are by no means widespread in acting and theater MFA programs, Kurtzman states that she and her students are already seeing tangible results from their implementation. If art schools were to incorporate similar required courses and utilize organized professional networking programs like the BFA Intensive Program masterminded by Kurtzman, they could make meaningful progress in preparing students for career success after graduation. However, the onus is now on art schools to take these steps if they truly want to change their approach to preparing students and fostering deeper dialogue between academia and the commercial side of the art world.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Ibid.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion: Recommendations for Professional Practices Curriculum in MFA Visual Arts

Programs

Evidenced in chapter one's historical analysis, the causes of market aversion in today's American art schools run deep, largely rooted in still-prevalent attitudes from the 1970s-1980s. Chapter two highlights the formal and informal barriers related to accreditation standards, accepted teaching frameworks, professorial tenure, students' and instructors' personal attitudes towards art-making and the market, and the individualistic nature of art schools' environment. Using structural and statistical evidence, chapter three examines the career and market-related challenges faced by art students after graduation. Chapters four and five used firsthand accounts of individuals from the worlds of arts and theater academia that illustrate similar challenges present in both academic fields, further identify issues in creative-based MFA programs, and spotlight potential solutions. Given all of this, one sees that the necessity of sufficiently preparing art students for career and market navigation has never been stronger. Moreover, academia must take steps to acknowledge that "the market is an ocean we all swim in" and "everyone needs a boat" to navigate.³⁹⁵ Indeed, the art market's inherent problems could be more effectively addressed by "putting tools of business in the hands of artists," allowing them "to think creatively and independently about the future of the world."³⁹⁶

Initial steps addressing these problems require introspection and restructuring within arts academia. To start, NASAD must take more leadership in defining curricular standards related to business and professional skills for artists, offering specifications on types and amounts of

³⁹⁵ Whitaker, "Why Teach Business to Artists?" *Hyperallergic*; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 1, 70.

³⁹⁶ Whitaker, "Why Teach Business to Artists?" *Hyperallergic*; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 1, 70

career-navigation and market-related material required in art schools' coursework. Moreover, individual programs must exercise greater caution in tenure awards, and more thoroughly scrutinize tenured professors' pedagogical practices to address widespread creative stagnation among career-academic instructors.

On administrative levels, arts programs should take meaningful steps to implement formalized programs of alumni outreach, lecture-series, and mentorship for students; perhaps even getting permission from participating alumni to create student-accessible databases of their portfolios, artist statements, and contact information. Using this, students and alumni could access these resources and engage with others from their program who may have similar practices or professional goals and directions. Additionally, MFA programs must begin to foster structured engagement with art world professionals such as gallerists, dealers, curators, advisors, and collectors. Through formalized programming like panels, guest lectures, or adjunct professorships, art students could greatly benefit from asking these individuals questions about the art market to which their studio-professors may not have answers. Moreover, art schools should introduce programs providing academic credit for internships and other art-adjacent work and formally promote students to take such opportunities. By doing this, students will gain experience within different facets of the art world, understand these sections' operations, and observe how seasoned individuals within the art world act professionally.

Lastly, arts MFA programs must implement required courses in career-preparedness, professional practices, and art market navigation to better prepare students to work as artists after graduation. Ideally, such courses should be taught by professors with significant art market experience who have held meaningful positions outside of academia. Institutions like Sotheby's Institute of Art or Christie's Education could act as models, or even as potential collaborators, in

this effort. Identifying effective curricular and pedagogical approaches to improving art students' lack of entrepreneurial training must be based on promoting practical outcomes for them.³⁹⁷

Based on the studies and interviews included in this thesis, potential curriculum for such a course would include basic art law for artists (copyright, taxes, fair-use), networking, contract negotiation, financial and budget-related strategies, pricing work, art market-navigation, self-marketing, professional correspondence, studio administration, creative communication, and effective application methods.³⁹⁸ A mock-syllabus for such a graduate-level course is included in the appendix.

Implementing meaningful and effective changes to current pedagogies, curricula, and academic attitudes within America art schools is now more vital than ever. It is undeniably the onus of MFA fine arts programs to prepare students for all aspects of their artistic careers while still maintaining their status as a space primarily focused on creative growth. As shown, these two goals do not have to be mutually exclusive. By taking steps to implement new required career-based curricula, mentorship initiatives, approaches to professorial-tenure, programming by market professionals, and credit-based professional experience offerings, MFA programs can reshape themselves to reflect current art world realities and better the lives of their graduates in the process.

³⁹⁷ White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education As Essential to Professional Arts Training," 30-31; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 69.

³⁹⁸ Jones, *Art Law: A Concise Guide*, 18; Gamero, "Interview with Dilmar Gamero: Interview by Bill Stewart; Kurtzman, "Interview with Wendy Kurtzman," by Bill Stewart; Skaggs, Frenette, Gaskill, and Miller, "Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists," 3; White, "Barriers to Recognizing Arts Entrepreneurship Education As Essential to Professional Arts Training," 30-31; Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 69.

Appendix: Mock-Syllabus for Potential Professional Practices and Career-Navigation Course

This appendix offers a mock-syllabus that covers material related to potential coursework outlined in the above conclusion and recommendations section of this thesis. It would be best applied to American graduate visual arts programs. Ideally, it would be a required course taken by students in the second year of their MFA program after they have had time to focus on and expand their creative practices. Moreover, it would feature a variety of guest speakers from relevant backgrounds to lecture students and let them ask questions regarding specific topics included in the coursework. Where possible, this syllabus includes relevant readings and case studies pertaining to subjects covered in the course, as well as specific guest speakers meant to serve as models for the types of individuals who would ideally visit and lecture in these classes. It includes topics, exercises, and readings mentioned throughout different chapters of this thesis as well as supplementary materials that could constitute potential curriculum for a MFA-level professional practices and career navigation course tailored for student-artists' post-graduation needs.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES AND CAREER-NAVIGATION:

Preparing for Life as an Artist

Catalogue Description: This course will introduce students to issues related to professional practices and career navigation as artists. It will cover topics concerning basic art law for artists, contract negotiation, forming relationships in the art world, navigating the art market, studio administration, self-marketing and branding, financial and budget-related strategies, and methods of effective correspondence, communication, and application. Case studies, readings, and guest lecturers from various facets of the art world will enrich student learning and class discussion

where pertinent. Students will be assessed via class participation, projects, and by various assigned case-study responses and homework assignments.

Course Objectives: This course will familiarize students with essential elements of career-navigation faced by many emerging artists. It will introduce effective methods of professional practices for artists and help them better understand the industry they may exist within after graduation. Its aim is for students to know their rights as artists and give them the languages and skill sets to help them with self-advocating and the navigation of their careers with the resources they have.

Goals and Student Learning Outcomes:

- Making sure that students are able to fairly and efficiently price their work.
- Giving students professional mindframes in which they do not see themselves and their practices as profit-centric businesses, but rather as thoughtful creatives who are able to capably administer their careers and navigate the art market.³⁹⁹
- Challenging the trope of the starving artist and perceptions of careerism.⁴⁰⁰
- Creating tools to sustain and grow artistic practices and careers.
- Fostering deeper knowledge of the art market so that students are able to effectively maneuver and advocate for their work within it, understand its structure, and challenge it.
- Understanding common legal issues faced by artists and knowing your legal rights.
- Grasping key elements of administration in their artistic practice.⁴⁰¹
- Envisioning potential future paths for your practice and career as a professional artist.

³⁹⁹ Dunn, “From the Academy to the Marketplace,” 85.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

- Understanding the nature of key professional relationships within the art world, fostering them, and maintaining contacts.⁴⁰²
- Knowing basic elements of in-person and digital self-marketing.

Class Schedule

Class 1: Introduction

- The Art Market – Navigation and Existing Within It
 - Understanding key players: galleries, dealers, collectors, auction houses, residency programs, museums, and incubators.⁴⁰³
 - Covering sub-sectors within the primary art market
 - Do you fit into a niche? Identifying potential market niches for your work without feeling the need to directly cater to them.⁴⁰⁴
- Guest Lecturer (art advisor or dealer)
- Exercise: Creating Your Personal Boardroom (see chapter 5, pages 58-60).⁴⁰⁵
 - Envisioning yourself professionally
 - Challenging the myth of the starving artist⁴⁰⁶
- Reading:
 - “Why Teach Business to Artists?” by Amy Whitaker. Hyperallergic. July 20, 2016. <https://hyperallergic.com/312390/why-teach-business-to-artists/>.⁴⁰⁷
 - (Selected sections) Michels, Caroll. 2018. *How to Survive and Prosper as an*

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Ibid, 85-86.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, 85-86.

⁴⁰⁵ Kurtzman, "Syllabus: Business of Acting 1."

⁴⁰⁶ Dunn, "From the Academy to the Marketplace," 86.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid.

Artist: Selling Yourself without Selling Your Soul. Skyhorse Publishing Company, Incorporated.

Class 2: Basic Art Law for Artists

- Avoiding Potential Legal Disputes in Your Art
 - First Amendment rights as an artist
 - Case Study: Chris Ofili, the Brooklyn Museum, and the City of New York.⁴⁰⁸
- Copyright and Fair Use
 - Case studies: 1) Cariou v. Richard Prince. 2) Warhol Foundation v. Goldsmith.⁴⁰⁹
 - Copyrighting your work and intellectual property rights
 - Authorizing uses of your copyrighted work
- Introduction to the Moral Rights and Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA)
 - Guest Speaker: Renée Vara, Founder and CEO, VARA ART (<https://www.varaart.com/about>).⁴¹⁰
- Readings:
 - Prowda, Judith B. *Visual Arts and the Law: A Handbook for Professionals*. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2013. Chapter 4, “Copyright Infringement and Defenses,” pp. 79–100.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ Prowda, “SYLLABUS ART LAW II,” 10.

⁴⁰⁹ Prowda, “The Legal Life Cycle of Art from the Studio to the Market,” 8.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 16.

⁴¹¹ Ibid, 8.

- Prowda, Judith B. *Visual Arts and the Law: A Handbook for Professionals*. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2013. Introduction, “What Is Art in a Legal Context?,” pp. 14–19.⁴¹²
- Prowda, Judith B. *Visual Arts and the Law: A Handbook for Professionals*. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2013. Chapter 5, “Moral Rights,” pp. 101–117.⁴¹³

Class 3: Contract Negotiation and Art World Relationships

- Understanding the Fiduciary Relationship of Galleries to Their Artists
 - What questions to ask
 - Acceptable and relevant contractual demands
 - Confident and responsible negotiation
- Discussion of your Negotiating Power as an Artist
- Different Types of Artists’ Contracts
- Guest Speaker (gallerist or gallery talent scout)
- Readings:
 - Merryman, John Henry. *The Artist and the Dealer; The Artist-Dealer Relationship and the Law; Contracts and Understandings* (Merryman, pp. 849– 854).⁴¹⁴
 - Prowda, Judith B. *Visual Arts and the Law: A Handbook for Professionals*. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2013. Chapter 7, “The Artist-Dealer Relationship,” pp. 134–150.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² Ibid, 6.

⁴¹³ Ibid, 16.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 11.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid.

Class 4: Financial and Budget-Related Strategies and Pricing Work

- Pricing your work
 - Elements of valuation
 - Researching your potential markets and identifying relevant collectors approaching them, and maintaining correspondence with them
 - Factoring in costs of materials and time
 - Pricing and selling work in the context of taxation
 - Making sure you are not overly burdened by taxes from underpricing or overpricing your work
 - Pricing in direct sales, commissions, solo vs. group exhibitions
- Assignments:
 - Price two of your artworks using lessons from this class
- Guest speaker: Professional from auction house valuation department
- Readings:
 - (Selected sections) Michels, Caroll. 2018. *How to Survive and Prosper as an Artist: Selling Yourself without Selling Your Soul*. Skyhorse Publishing Company, Incorporated.
 - (Selected sections) Velthuis, Olav. 2007. *Talking Prices: Symbolic Meanings of Prices on the Market for Contemporary Art*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Class 5: Self-Marketing

- Marketing yourself as an artist
 - Communicating about your work in-person
 - Writing about your work online
- Artist marketing in the age of social media
 - Advantages, drawbacks, and effects of social media on artists' lives
- Reaching desired audiences
- Effective artists' websites
 - Elements of a successful, well-crafted website for your practice
- Guest speaker: Head of social media or marketing department for a large gallery
- Assignment: Build or update your website using lessons from this class

Class 6: Studio Administration

- Running an efficient, professional, and productive studio
- Financing your practice
 - Budgeting strategies
 - Banking strategies
 - Negotiating practice-based income vs. other income sources
- Insurance costs associated with artistic careers
 - Shipping
 - Exhibition
 - Studio insurance
 - Studio costs

- Material costs
- Potential studio-assistant costs
- Assignments:
 - Create a one-month and one-year budget for your artistic practice considering income from works sold, other income sources, studio costs, material costs, and personal costs.
 - Using our provided alumni database, identify and reach out to an artist alumni from this program whose practice matches similar elements/goals of your own (see conclusion, page 64 where this idea is mentioned).

Class 7: Effective Application Methods, Networking, and Professional Correspondence

- Networking in the art world
 - The importance of meeting people and attending events/exhibitions
 - Maintaining up to date contact lists
 - Effective communication in the context of networking
- Maintaining standards of correspondence with art world professionals
- Writing artist statements for different contexts
 - How to make your creative voice match your goals
- Effective application practices
 - Tailoring portfolios and applications for different opportunities such as grants, residencies, jobs, incubators, and educational programs.
- Case study:

- Hamiltonian Artists, a creative and professional training incubator for emerging artists (<https://www.hamiltonianartists.org/historymission>).
- Guest speaker: Lily Siegel, Executive Director of Hamiltonian Artists (<https://www.hamiltonianartists.org/about/team-board>).

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