

From the Data Science
Team at CHF



REPORT ON THE WORKING ARTIST



Founded in 2013, The Clark Hulings Fund for Visual Artists (CHF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that equips professional visual artists to be self-sustaining entrepreneurs. CHF is run by a constellation of leaders with diverse skill sets and proven expertise in education, business, media, and the arts. We deliver a suite of integrated learning services continually, both virtually and in-person—via live events, digital channels, and portable media formats—and build professional networks of opportunity.

The Clark Hulings Fund's ***Report on the Working Artist*** is a comprehensive report on the state, needs, and ingredients for success of the working artist. It represents the data (analytics and metrics) compiled from CHF learning programs and data collated from other available published sources. After 30 months of dedicated analysis by the data science team, the release of ***Report on the Working Artist*** represents a turning point in CHF's engagement with the arts industry and a pivotal moment in our culture's recognition of the cause of working artists.

The report demonstrates that artists are entrepreneurs, with specific requirements to thrive and prosper; that programs specifically designed to meet these demands succeed in producing prosperity for them and the broader culture; and that ongoing research, programming, and engagement are needed to ensure a prosperous cultural and financial economy.

The Glaring Need for Sophisticated Data

“Casual observation indicates that most programs evaluate their success based on number of artists served [that is, an input measure] rather than number of artist careers sustained [that is, outcomes].” Further analyses on the training topics and methods of delivery that support artist sustainability in the long-term is suggested as a next step. —A report on multiple art-business training programs for artists by Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, *How it's Being Done* (2014)

“Infrastructure, medicine, energy, science—these constituencies successfully make their cases to the public (and to politicians through campaign contributions) that their domains are worthy. They do not need to fall back on flimsy re-spending arguments. In contrast, **arts advocates rely on economic impact studies that track total spending attributable to arts organizations at national, state, and local levels.** Although many arts lobbyists insist that such studies win politicians’ votes on arts agency budgets, the studies rely on **vulnerable methodologies and logic.**” —Ann Markusen, *The Economics of Arts, Artists, and Culture*

Research Methods & Aims



This report is a framework to assess the following matters as they relate to working artists in the US:

- Contributions and challenges
- Specific needs and demands
- Impact of learning programs
- Research gaps

This report includes:

- Original research findings from ongoing CHF programming including longitudinal measurement of specific impacts
- Collated published research and data from other arts organizations, businesses, and entities

Report Contents

- **The Working Artist: Contributions & Challenges**
- **The Working Artist: Needs & Demands**
- **Impact of Art-Business Learning**
 - ◆ **CHF Art-Business Accelerator™**
 - ◆ **CHF Art-Business Conference™ & Thriving Art Exchange™**
- **Gaps, Deficiencies & Further Needs in Extant Research Related to the Working Artist**
- **Research Sources**

The Working Artist: Contributions & Challenges



Snapshot of Artists in the US

EMPLOYMENT STATUS

34%

Are **self-employed** (with 75% having been self-employed at some point in their career). Just 9% of the overall workforce is self-employed.—The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting US Artists* (2016)

According to the US Census Bureau, artists are 3.6 times more likely to be self-employed than the overall US workforce.

EDUCATION

60%

Have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 39% of all workers.—BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back* (2014); Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Educational Attainment of the Labor Force* (2017)

Artists are more educated than the overall workforce. There are 3 million art graduates in the US today.

DEBT

35%

Of recent art-school graduates say that debt has had a “major impact on their educational and career decisions.”—SNAAP Annual Report (2014)

The average cost of an arts education in the US *after* grants and scholarship is \$40,000 per year.

4.7 million workers in the arts and culture sector in the US

Over 2 million of them are working artists

10% are visual artists

—BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back* (2014)

DEFINITION OF “PROFESSIONAL ARTIST”



There is an institutionalized ambiguity of definition—i.e., what constitutes a professional artist.

Academic Definitions Are Idiosyncratic

There is no universal academic definition of a professional or working artist. A recent survey of approximately 14,000 arts degree graduates includes a group of about 4,000, who “simultaneously *had been* and *had never been* professional artists, placing them in what [is] termed the ‘dissonance group.’” Findings from the largest survey taken of art-degree graduates (by Lena & Lindemann) show that levels of cultural capital and social integration contribute to, and can even predict, professional artist identity (SNAAP, 2010).

Social Definitions Often Ignore Professional Variables

“Seeing one’s self as a professional artist is an achievement that compares to entering other **elite status groups**, in that advantages accrue to those with the implicit and explicit knowledge of **group conventions, attitudes, habits, and ways of being** and can remain beyond the reach of even those who are **trained to belong**.”—Hyperallergic, *What Makes an Artist an Artist* (2014)

“There are surveys done by economic, social and cultural researchers... that create a methodological problem for those looking for information. As opposed to other occupations that require a license, permits, state testing or even reported income, **the label artist seems more like a value judgment, which is why employees of tattoo parlors (tattoo artists), comedians and exotic dancers (performance artists), chefs (culinary artists) and graffiti artists have all claimed the mantle at one time or another.**” —HuffPost, *How Do You Define ‘Artist’?* (2010)

The definitional ambiguity is catalyzed by various bureaucratic conventions and political impulses.

Federal Definitions Tend to Aggregate all Artists, Regardless of Medium

The [Standard Occupational Classification](#) (SOC) system is used by all federal statistical agencies to classify workers. The closest approximate category we can use for visual artists is “Fine Artists including Painters, Sculptors, and Illustrators” which have a mean annual income of \$58,370.

However, this category includes people who “create original artwork using any of a wide variety of media and techniques.” That includes specifically **art directors, animators, actors, and other members of the motion-picture industry.**

This makes it difficult to assess just how much professional visual artists are actually making and skews the data, since 1) art directors and animators, for example, often receive significantly higher pay, and 2) designations such as graphic illustrators in a corporate setting often receive a consistent salary. Some other occupations that are grouped with visual artists include: Automotive Artist, Blacksmith, and Ice Carver. The BLS does not actually provide specific income and earnings data for visual artists, who make up only a small percentage of the category to which they are assigned.

—Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Artist Occupation Income Breakdown*

Organizational Definitions Tend to Aggregate all Artists, Regardless of Medium

A report on multiple art business training programs for artists by Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, *How it's Being Done* (2014), likewise defines *visual artists* in a way that obscures important professional distinctions as well as distinctions between producers of crafts and fine artists: “artists who create a visual product that is not performance based, such as painting, sculpture, jewelry, and some crafts, and may also include performance artists who identify as visual artists.”

The Craft Organization Development Association underscores this general failure of delineation between the various mediums and categories of professional artists: “Professional craft artists have not been tracked comparably by guild reports or the government. Each report used a different definition of a “professional”: hours worked; income or gross sales; median, mean, or ranges of values; and individuals or households. Many economic impact studies of the creative economy cite the U.S. Census Nonemployer Statistics for NAICS industry code #7115 Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers. Artisans are a small part of this, so code #7115 is not a reliable indicator for them.” — The Craft Organization Development Association, *The CODA Review 2011: Craft Artists, Income and the U.S. Economy*

Working Definition of “Professional Artist”

For purposes of this report, our definition of "professional artist" relies on market validation and professional intent.

We define “**professional artist**” as someone who is currently selling work (validated as commercially viable) and striving to earn a full living from their practice (professional intent), even if they are resorting to other sidelines to make ends meet. Generally, we are not referring to artists who create art solely or primarily as an intended sideline to other permanent, full-time work.

A **professional visual artist** is necessarily a subset of "professional artist."

ECONOMIC & CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS



Professional artists make significant contributions yet face formidable challenges.

Areas of Contribution

- ❑ Overall Economy
- ❑ Cultural and Creative Capital
- ❑ Across Industries (working in multiple professional sectors)
- ❑ Economic Development
- ❑ Positive Work Culture (careers marked by high job satisfaction)
- ❑ Entrepreneurship—business & job creation

Challenges in Multiple Domains

- ❑ High Debt
- ❑ Self-Employment
- ❑ Gaps in Business Education
- ❑ Lack of Affordable Health Care
- ❑ Unprepared for Income Needs of Old-Age
- ❑ Often Supported by Jobs/Gigs Outside of the Arts

Working artists drive economic development at every level (national, regional, municipal, and district).

The Arts Industry Contributes Greatly to the GDP

The arts and culture sector contributed approximately \$804 billion to the US economy in 2016. The average annual growth of the arts and culture sector is 4.2%, as of that time. Independent artists, writers, and performers contributed \$22 billion to the US economy in 2016. —National Endowment for the Arts Annual Report (2017); *The U.S. Arts and Cultural Production Satellite Account*, National Endowment for the Arts (2016)

Commercial Arts Activity Generates \$ for Urban Economies

According to research conducted by the New York–based organizations Alliance for the Arts and R.Dot, nonprofit and commercial arts activity “generates \$17.7 billion annually for the Big Apple.” —Project for Public Spaces, *How Art Economically Benefits Cities* (2008)

Rural Area Arts Industry Brings in Money from Out-of-State

“The arts are often overlooked when states are focusing on economic development,” but data shows that the arts sector contributes greatly to the economy. Though no comprehensive state-level research exists, a Montana study shows that the arts had an economic impact of \$233 million, with 77% of goods sold to out-of-state buyers. —Montana State University, *The Economic Impact of Montana Artists* (2005)

Arts Industry-generated Activities Are Central to Tourism Interest & Revenue

In a survey by the Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs, 99% of the chief executive officers questioned stated that the availability of cultural activities in an area are an important consideration in choosing a new location. 65% of American adult travelers say that they have included a cultural, arts, heritage, or historic activity or event while on a trip of 50 miles or more (one-way) in the past year. —Project for Public Spaces, *How Art Economically Benefits Cities* (2008)

A Flourishing Arts Economy Strengthens Other Industries in the Same Region

A study highlighting artist education in German-speaking countries reported that the cultural and **creative industries have an immense impact on other sectors of the economy such as tourism**: “In Austria culture has become a stronger direct contributor to wealth than tourism.” —Cogent Education, *Educating artists in management – An analysis of art education programmes in DACH region* (2006)

Impact on Tax Revenues Is Also Net Positive

In England, for instance “Every £1 of targeted public arts funding returns £5 in tax...the contribution of arts and culture to the economy has grown fastest in regions that have been struggling to recover from the recession.” —Arts Council England, *Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the national economy* (2015)

Thriving Artists Become Self-Fueled Re-investors in the Economy

An Idaho study shows that artists reinvested their earnings back into their art: “**Many artists reported reinvesting the revenue they gained from selling their work back into their artistic practice**, a business practice that is commonly seen across many entrepreneurial fields like business start-ups and angel investing.” —Boise State University School of Public Service, *The Working Artist* (2015)

Arts education and cultural programming, such as museums and art exhibitions, improve quality of life and reduce crime—the social economy of an area.

Crime rates go down when citizens have access to arts education, art events, and art.

—Crain’s New York, *Crime found to be lower in NYC neighborhoods with arts institutions* (2017)

“Research suggests that arts education contributes to the development of cognitive processes and prosocial skills that are especially significant for justice-involved or high-risk populations (Yahner et al., 2015). In a study that employed four large, national datasets, [Catterall, Dumais, and Hampden Thompson (2012)] found that at-risk youth with high levels of arts engagement had more positive outcomes in several areas that correspond to important protective factors for justice-system involvement—including school performance and civic engagement beyond the arts (Yahner et al., 2015). Several smaller studies of arts-based programs for court-involved youth also demonstrated potential benefits ranging from reduced negative behaviors and more effective emotional communication (Yahner et al., 2015; Center for Youth and Communities, 2009; DeCarlo and Hockman, 2003) to reduced recidivism (Ezell and Levy, 2003).” —Urban Institute, *Examining the Ways Arts & Culture Intersect with Public Safety* (2016)

There is a clear correlation between cultural engagement and community well-being.

—Demonstrated by research from the University of Pennsylvania’s *Social Impact of the Arts Project*

“Artists are central, not peripheral, to social change.”

—Creative Time Reports, *Change the Culture, Change the World* (2013)

“Leaders who care about community and economic development can feel good about choosing to invest in the arts.”

—Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO, Americans for the Arts

CAREER PATH & FINANCIAL STATUS



Professional artists who work in their core career field are highly satisfied by their work.



Research and Literature Shows That Artists Are, On Average, More Satisfied With Their Careers Than Others in the Workforce

“Artists exhibit significantly higher job satisfaction, or happiness with their work, than non artists.”—Center for Research Economics, *Happiness in the Arts* (2013)

Despite often working longer hours, this high level of satisfaction is influenced by self-employment (control of one’s own work), and “superior ‘procedural’ characteristics of artistic work, such as ‘increased variety and on-the-job learning.’”—University of Zurich, *The Happy Artist?* (2011)

Despite attitudinal benefits, most artists do not make a sustainable living from their art business, which drives them into other professional practices.

Career Dilution and Dissonance

The Center for an Urban Future found that 11% of creative workers in New York City were “employed outside of creative industries” in 2013. —*Impact of the Arts on New York City’s Economy*

In a survey of CHF’s Art-Business Accelerator™ Fellows, only 30% of professional artists initially reported deriving 100% of their income from their art businesses. (Their participation in the program has boosted that percentage.)

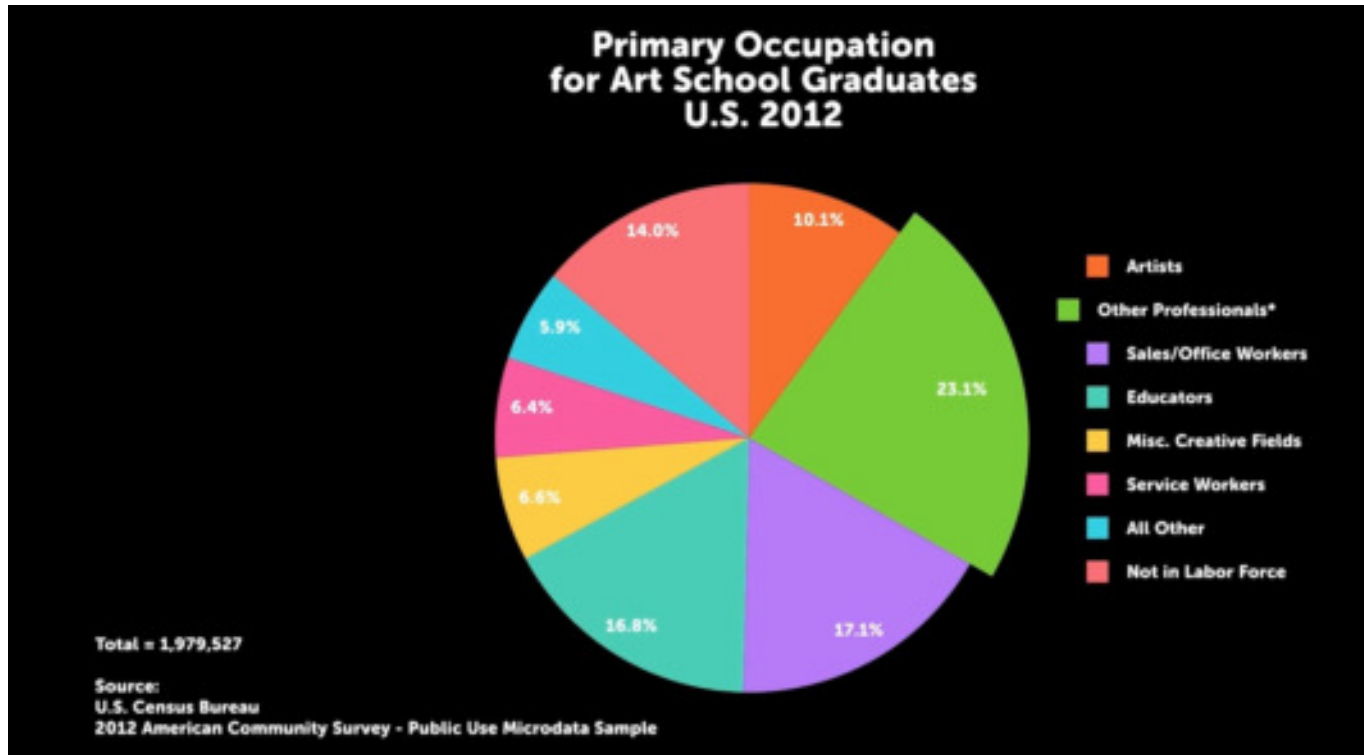
An economic study of professional artists in Australia found that over one-third of all artists have, at some time, put their creative artistic skills to use in another industry outside the arts. —*Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia* (2017)

Fewer than 10%
of art-school graduates “make
their primary earnings as
working artists”

—BFAMFAPhD, Artists Report
Back (2014)

The rise of the independent
professional revolution (gig
economy) afforded professional
artists additional options to survive
economically, but hasn’t (to date)
measurably resolved the problem of
thriving as professional artists.

Art-school graduates are typically driven to professional fields outside of the arts.



*Source: BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back: Animated*

Despite working across multiple occupations, artists generally remain underinsured & underprepared for retirement—i.e., financially unsustainable.

Artists are **2 times less likely** to have health insurance than other professionals.

Artists Can't Afford Health Insurance or Retirement Savings

A survey of 3,402 artists reported that 43% did not have health insurance—double the national average. Of those who were uninsured, 88% reported that “the primary reason they don’t have insurance is that **they can’t afford it.**”
—Future of Music Coalition, *Artists + health insurance survey* (2013)

“The bigger issue for artists...is simply finding the necessary income to survive in the present, let alone to contribute to a plan for retirement.”

—Canadian Arts Conference, *Status of the Artist in Canada* (2010)

A recent Minnesota survey reported that over 20% of the state’s most senior artists surveyed did not have any retirement plan. —Minnesota Citizens for the Arts, *The Impact of Minnesota’s Artists, Creative Workers, and Nonprofit Arts & Culture Organizations* (2017)

Most income data for professional artists is unreliable at face value, based on how it is computed.

Prevalent Methods of Calculation Make it Difficult to Determine Accurate Average Income.

In addition to the ambiguous occupational categorization of visual artists in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' SOC system, income is computed in a manner that doesn't correspond to the reality of how professional artists earn a living.

In May 2017, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the mean wage of "Fine Artists" (a category that includes painters, sculptors, and illustrators) is \$28.06 per hour, or \$58,370 per year.

NOTE: This wage is calculated by multiplying the hourly mean wage by a "year-round, full-time" hours figure of 2,080 hours," as though artists work a consistent number of hours per year—underscoring the general inapplicability of these calculations to artists who are not wage or salary (Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Occupational Employment Statistics*, 2017).

Similarly, a 2015 study from the School of Public Service at Boise State University finds that working artists earned between \$20,001-40,000 per year, but it does not account for what percentage of this income came from their art businesses.

Artists are not a uniform career group. They do not make a standard salary, hourly rate, or wage. Because of this, each area should be examined individually.

—Cherbo, Stewart & Wyszomirski, *Understanding the Arts and Creative Sector in the United States* (2008)

The lack of reliable research data exacerbates the financial condition of professional artists by obscuring its reality.

Challenges to the Integrity of Research Data on Income Levels & Career Employment Status

Much of the available data are too often hampered by three particular limitations:

1. Ambiguity of Definitions
2. Ambiguity of Occupational Classification
3. Impractical Basis for Income Computation

Core Observations

Meaningful opportunities to address the income disparities and socio-economic challenges facing professional artists—through organizational action, collective bargaining, or other means—are weakened by the lack of sufficient data; by data that are insufficiently differentiated from that of other related professions, and from income derived from non-art sources; and by data that fail to take into account the variability/unpredictability of how visual artists are paid (e.g., calculated as though their income is steady when it's not, etc.), or the amount, exact nature, and other variable characteristics of visual artists' income.

Without data, any case for addressing socio-economic disparities consists of arguments based on feeling rather than fact, an approach that serves to keep artists dependent and disempowered. It also begs the question of who benefits from keeping the information obscure, regardless of the actual results of research that WOULD make the appropriate distinctions.

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION



Working artists associate financial viability/stability with entrepreneurial skills and a professional community.

Many Artists Lack Financial Stability & Confidence

When The Creative Independent investigated the perceived financial stability (i.e., "reliably having enough money to cover basic expenses, plus reliably saving money") of over 1,000 artists, **12% of respondents rated their level of financial stability as a 1 (not at all financially stable)** as compared to only 3% of respondents who rated their financial stability level as either a 9 or a 10 (completely financially stable). —The Creative Independent, *A study on the financial state of visual artists today* (2018)

In surveys of CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellows and Learning Event participants taken before their involvement in these programs, their **average financial confidence/anxiety over their career was 5**, on a scale from 1-10 (1 being extremely anxious and 10 being extremely confident).

Business Training Produces Greater Financial Confidence

What do working artists need in order to become more financially confident and connect their creative decisions to financial goals? One survey points to a potential answer. Recent art-school alumni who developed entrepreneurial and business skills were more satisfied, and exhibited higher confidence, adaptability, resilience, and financial confidence. —SNAAP Special Report (2017)

“I wish it hadn’t taken me 40 years to understand that I have to be my own business manager and marketer.”

—Anonymous artist surveyed by The Creative Independent

Peer-to-Peer Artist Networks Fortify Financial Creativity

The Creative Independent’s survey of artists also found that “artists were most likely to credit their relationships and support network as top factors contributing to their financial stability.”

—The Creative Independent, *A study on the financial state of visual artists today* (2018)

Formal arts education falls short on business training.

Critical Gaps in Arts Degree Programs: Practical Financial, Business & Entrepreneurial Skills

When asked how well their schools helped them **acquire** or **develop** financial and business management skills, only a meager 25% of recent arts alumni and 21% of non-recent alumni indicated that their institutions helped them “some” or “very much.” Similarly, only 30% of recent alumni and 24% of non-recent alumni said they received significant help with entrepreneurial skills. —SNAAP, *Spotlight on Entrepreneurial Skills* (Part 1) (2015)

Although no comprehensive study exists on the nature and content of an arts education, a sample from the Savannah College of Art and Design found that only about 9 of the 180 credit hours in its BFA in Painting were business-related—**just 5% of the core curriculum**. In a 2015 SNAAP national survey of recent art-school graduates, 75% said they needed entrepreneurial and business skills in their art careers, but only 25 percent received this training while in school. —The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists* (2016)



“Given that over one-third of artists are self-employed, business and entrepreneurial training are vital components of arts education.”

- Elizabeth Hulings, Director, Clark Hulings Fund for Visual Artists

“Making money is art, and working is art, and good business is the best art.”

-Andy Warhol

“They don't teach art-business classes at school. I have an art minor, and they didn't teach anything for that. They barely taught how to paint.”

- Jacqueline B., CHF Art-Business Conference™ Participant

Arts degrees do not necessarily benefit artists.

“If you want to work in a creative field, you're probably better off not majoring in it.”

—The Atlantic, *What Can You Really Do With a Degree in the Arts?* (2014)

“ Art degrees are typically composed of initial coursework in theory, media, art history, and technique combined with studio time focused on implementation. Business skills are often cursory at best and frequently an afterthought.”

—Daniel DiGriz, Education Director, The Clark Hulings Fund for Visual Artists

Breakdown of Education Received by Professional Artists

Most have degrees.

60% have a Bachelor's degree or higher, compared with 39% of all workers.
—BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back* (2014); Bureau of Labor Statistics, Educational Attainment of the Labor Force (2017)

Most did not major in their field (the arts).

16% of working artists have a BA or BFA; the rest majored in varied subjects, unrelated to the arts.

—BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back* (2014)

Of those that did major in their field, most didn't end up working in it.

Just 10% of arts graduates are working artists.

“Given the expense of a BA, and the likelihood that a degree in the arts will not lead directly to a career in the arts, art-school programs need to be a lot more honest with their students.”

—The Atlantic, *What Can You Really Do With a Degree in the Arts?* (2014)

Art schools impose a financial burden.

The Atlantic calls the MFA “an increasingly popular, increasingly bad financial decision.” (2014)

Debt From Arts Education Drives Artists to Pursue Other Careers

35% of all recent art-school graduates said that debt levels had a “major” impact on their educational and career decisions, compared to only 14% of non-recent grads.

—SNAAP Annual Report (2014)

This thrusts them into other forms of work, in turn de-incentivizing working full time in professional art. We can conclude that rising tuition contributes to this increase as well.

A recent report by BFAMFAPhD found that two years after graduation, 90% of art students are no longer working in the field.

—BFAMFAPhD, *Artists Report Back* (2014)

Note: There’s a paucity of data on debt burden for artists who did not specifically attend art school.



Art degree programs make up 7 out of the 10 **most expensive** schools in the US, with the average cost (AFTER grants and scholarship aid) hovering around **\$40,000 per year for the 2010-11 school year**. Trends in the cost of college education have steadily increased. See Baumol and Bowen’s (1966) research on “cost disease.” —The Washington Post, *The Most Expensive Colleges in the Country Are Art Schools, Not Ivies* (2014)

Most professional education for working artists fails to equip them to survive, let alone thrive.

Core Observations

The financial conditions required to survive often confront professional artists with a vicious cycle:

1. Artists need business training and a peer community to achieve economic viability.
2. Art schools seldom provide sufficient entrepreneurial training, leaving critical gaps.
3. Professional education often plunges artists into debt.
4. Debt and lack of training force artists into alternate career paths.
5. Those alternate paths sustain artists in the short term, but do not create economic sustainability over the course of a career.

SUMMARY:

Definitions, Contributions, Condition, and Solutions

Definitions: Most definitions of professional, working artists are fraught with political and bureaucratic inconsistencies. A clear, consistent definition is required to understand their contributions and challenges.

Contributions: Working artists are substantial economic contributors and catalysts for social and cultural change that drive significant economic development.

Economic Condition: Despite a high level of satisfaction with their work, most artists do not maintain a sustainable living solely from their art, are often driven to work outside their practice areas, and yet remain financially unsustainable. Most financial data on working artists are obscured by imprecise definitions and/or inappropriate methods of computation.

Solutions: Artists evidence high demand for business education and peer networks. Most formal training for artists not only fails to provide these skills or significantly alter their economic condition but, in fact, actually places them in further economic peril due to debt obligation, contributing to a cycle in which they must pursue income from avenues other than art.

The Working Artist: Needs & Demands



Definition of Demand

Artist Demand is Partly a Measurement of Aspirations. Those Aspirations Are Demonstrated in the Form of Need, Desire, Affinity, and Behavior

For the purposes of this report, we categorize demand in the following ways:

- I. **Explicitly expressed demand or need:** How artists articulate their needs
- II. **Skills Deficiency:** Explicitly expressed lack of resources or training (e.g., “Art schools don’t teach entrepreneurial skills, but we need them to run our businesses,” etc.)
- III. **Routine Behavior:** Measurements of action, including searches, engagement with learning platforms, attendance at and participation in events, the use of learning platforms
- IV. **Implied Demand:** Artists’ emphasis on one thing (e.g., money, etc.) that implies demand for another (e.g., financial competence, etc.)
- V. **Market Demand:** What the public wants from artists, or the market demands from them

PEER NETWORKS



Artists feel both internal and external demand to form peer networks.

Expressed Demand (for professional skill, information, and contact-sharing communities)

Artists who were surveyed on learning approaches said they need more opportunities to interact and generate dialogue with peers (ArtWorks Alliance, 2014).

When Minnesota Citizens for the Arts (2017) surveyed artists in metro areas, it found them **most in need of a community of artists with whom they could collaborate**, as opposed to compete.

CHF Art-Business Conference™ participants have also underscored the importance of information and skill-sharing among artists; they find collaboration with other professional artists highly valuable. Similarly, 94% of artist applicants to CHF's 2019 Art-Business Accelerator were **highly interested in networking with other artists**.

"I want to collaborate in a think tank in which artists are committed to being agents for their own prosperity." —Robin H., CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellow, 2019

Market Demand (for peer validation)

According to a study on artists' support structures, one of the **most influential** and important **acknowledgements of artist success** in their field is peer validation from national, regional, and external networks (Urban Institute, 2010).

"Artists seek validation for their work as artists and recognition that they are, in fact, artists."
—Robertson, *Understanding International Art Markets and Management* (2005)

"I've built my own collective...It didn't exist where I am [in Albuquerque]. So I embedded myself in the community and then said, 'Who can I target to build a collective?'"

—Kevin B., CHF Art-Business Conference participant

"The workshops are tremendous because you're...with other artists who have such a different perspective...yet you all have this commonality...you can converse openly, freely and it's a different type of criticism that you would never receive anywhere else."

—John P., CHF Art-Business Conference participant

Artists miss opportunities to create networks.

Even Though Networks Improve Their Financial Stability, Artists Seldom Attend Events Where They're Likely to Form Connections, and They Lack Sufficient Solid Peer-Networking Opportunities.

Since about half of all artists are self-employed, they have to find outside networking opportunities to develop the professional connections needed to advance their careers. —Woronkowicz & Noonan, *Who Goes Freelance? The Determinants of Self-Employment for Artists* (2017)

69% of recent CHF Art-Business Conference participants indicate a strong need for artist networks.

31% of artists said that, during an average week, they didn't attend a single art event, even though they were most likely to credit their **relationships** and **support networks** as top factors **contributing to their financial stability**. Low involvement may also be partly due to the paucity of such opportunities in the first place. Artists who attend at least one to two art-related events per week have higher financial stability.

—The Creative Independent, *A study on the financial state of visual artists today* (2018)

Since artists often work in somewhat isolated environments, such as their homes or studio spaces, they have limited access to such networks. —Bain, *Constructing an artistic identity* (2005)

However, a report on the power of networking in the workplace found that professional networks improve organizational communication, collaboration, and knowledge transfer, and enhance employee satisfaction, specifically by “reducing social isolation.”

—Bennett, Owers, Pltt & Tucker, *Workplace impact of social networking* (2010)

*“...The collective thing. Where I come from, you don't work together, you don't share information. It's like pulling teeth out of people...you have to go it alone. Just the **thought of having a power collective is very strong and appealing.**”*

- Melissa W., CHF Art-Business Conference Participant

ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS



Artists call for entrepreneurial skills with their voices and behavior.

Expressed Demand (for business training)

A report on career skills and entrepreneurial training for artists shows that over $\frac{3}{4}$ of artists find entrepreneurial training to be very important, yet only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of them actually received this trainings in art school.

—SNAAP Special Report (2017)

A recent sampling of visual artists in Australia reported that they were “untrained in creating profitable business models from their art practice, something that was traditionally the responsibility of the intermediaries who specialised in sales and marketing.” —Carter, *The Creative Business Model Canvas* (2018)

Prior to attending a CHF Art-Business Conference, 24% of participants reported that business training was their biggest area of weakness—the area in which they needed the most help professionally.

Major arts organizations that offer business-education programs for artists generate up to ~25% of their revenue from art-business learning events. —Data collated from the annual reports of art business–focused organizations, including the New York Foundation for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Some of artists' demand for entrepreneurial skills specifically relates to effective career planning.

84% of recent art-school graduates reported that they would have benefitted from more knowledge about how to develop a three- to five-year strategic plan to realize their goals. —SNAAP Special Report (2017)

18% of professional artists surveyed at CHF Art-Business Conferences reported that career strategy and business-plan development (the most frequently stated need) were their biggest needs (aside from time), when it came to growing their careers and achieving success as working artists.

“At first, I was going to jump right back into my career. I'm not doing that now. Instead, I'm planning my career rather than just jumping into it. Now I feel like I've got a guide, so I can put a plan together. I didn't really have a plan before, I was just going to continue the way I was going.”
—Kay W., CHF Art-Business Conference Participant

The market demands that artists be financially competent but often deeply fails them.

Only 43% of art-school alumni without financial or business competence said they were confident in their ability to “financially manage their career.”

Art-school alumni who were not trained for financial or business competence and didn't develop those skills independently reported **39% lower levels of career development and 11% lower exposure to a network of professionals in the field.** —SNAAP Special Report (2017)

Because artists' income is often variable, financial experts can fall short at helping them, indicating a need for artists to acquire training to develop financial competency: ***“A lot of financial professionals don't even know what to do with creative people, and they don't know how to budget for variable income.”*** —Ally-Jane Grossan, *Financial Planning for Creative People* (2018)

SALES & MARKETING STRATEGY



THE STRAW MAN / 500 lb.-GORILLA IN THE ROOM

Artists want more independent business opportunities, but gallery representation can insulate them from the skills they need and prolong a silo of dependency.

The Market Has Shifted: A Dependency Model is No Longer Practical

“Artists are now increasingly responsible for being their own producers, and the vast majority must now manage the range of production, marketing, distribution, and fundraising functions once handled by agents, managers, and marketers.” —The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists* (2016)

In a study on visual artists, only 12% of working artists report gallery sales as one of their top-three sources of income. Similarly, 29% of respondents with gallery representation found it **unhelpful for their financial stability**. —The Creative Independent, *A study on the financial state of visual artists today* (2018)

Artists Understand The Shift and the Need to Adapt

“The majority of artists perceive a lack of support structures to help those operating outside the gallery system achieve and maintain external validation.” Artists surveyed for this report (at the Manchester School of Art) did not feel that gallery validation fit their needs and practices. —Ravetz & Wright, *Validation Beyond the Gallery* (2015)

Members of Meow Wolf—an innovative collective in Santa Fe that produces immersive art experiences for the public—stated that “the traditional **commercial models of galleries and art fairs leave most artists out in the cold**, while elitist attitudes in galleries and museums turn away members of the general public.” —Artsy, *This 140-Person Art Collective Is Pursuing an Alternative Model for Artists to Make a Living* (2017)

100% of the professional artists at CHF Art-Business Conferences reported that they manage their own business, yet **most who have representation feel very dependent** on their gallerist, agent, or sales rep for sales, marketing, and brand management. This implies a need for training in business skills (such as branding and marketing) and strategic support to break the cycle of dependency.

To keep up with a changing market, artists need opportunities to sell work **DIRECTLY** to collector-consumers with fewer barriers.

There has been a gradual shift from artist to artist-entrepreneur: “As art was institutionalized, so, inevitably, was the artist. The genius became the professional. Now you didn’t go off to Paris and hole up in a garret to produce your masterpiece, your *Les Demoiselles d’Avignon* or *Ulysses*, and wait for the world to catch up with you.”

Digital, for instance, allows artists to compete with institutions that “**previously had a virtual monopoly** on marketing and distribution.” —The Atlantic, *The Death of the Artist and Birth of the Creative Entrepreneur* (2015)

Similarly, 89% of recent art-school graduates have reported that they would have benefitted from more knowledge about how to **market and promote their work and talents**. —SNAAP Annual Report (2016)

Applicants to the 2019 CHF Art-Business Accelerator have been working as professional artists for an average of 15 years, and expressed a profound interest in sales-strategy training. They were only using two sales channels at the time of their application.

Given that consumers are discovering art online more frequently (37% would purchase online) than by way of galleries or museums, artists must learn to run their own branding and marketing campaigns. —Invaluable, *American Attitudes Towards Art* (2016)

“29% of millennial art buyers said they **preferred buying art online**, compared to 14% a year ago.” The online art market grew almost 10% (to 4.64 billion) in 2018. —Hiscox, *Online Art Trade Report* (2019)

“New technological tools are expanding the boundaries of artistic practice and the presence of art in daily life, as well as the ways people interact with and consume artistic products and creative content...These new mechanisms are fundamentally altering the cost structure and methods of creating, distributing, and consuming art.” —The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists* (2016)

Artists want to learn how to use new sales channels and craft effective brand communications for those channels.

80% of recent art-school graduates said that they would have benefitted from more knowledge about **how to communicate** through and about their art. —SNAAP Special Report (2017)

35% of professional artists reported that conveying their brand story and value to potential buyers was the biggest challenge to growing their career.

When asked their ability to convey a compelling brand story to potential buyers, they rated their confidence level at only 6 out of 10, on average. —Data collected at a CHF Fund Art-Business Conference (2018).

58% of artists at a recent CHF Art-Business Conference also said that marketing their art and figuring out how to reach their desired audience were among their **biggest challenges** to growing their art careers.

“[CHF’s] Business Accelerator program has given me the opportunity to review, evaluate, and develop my art business through different channels, from business strategy, marketing, sales, legal, to financial planning.”

Etsuko I., CHF Art-Business
Accelerator Fellow

SUMMARY

Peer Networks: Artists see peer validation and collaboration as key to running a successful art business, yet opportunities to engage in this way are few and far between. Peer networks are important for professional skill, information, and contact-sharing communities.

Entrepreneurial Skills: Artists have expressed demand for business training, particularly as it relates to career planning and the concrete steps they need to take their art business to the next level.

Sales & Marketing Strategy: Artists are entrepreneurs who want greater independence in managing their businesses, but gallery representation often traps them in a silo of dependence. They want to sell work directly to consumers, develop their brand, and expand their sales and marketing channels to reach a wider audience.

Financial Competence: Artists need proper training and support to develop financial competence in both their businesses and their lives, including retirement planning, savings, and health care.

Impact of Art-Business Learning



Why Measuring Impact is Important

Research and analyses of professional visual artists and the programs available to them help us validate that impact is possible, and pinpoint which steps produce measurable impact and what kinds of impact may be produced.

Impact Case Studies

CHF's Concentrated Virtual Learning programs and Boots-on-the-Ground Local-Regional Learning Events are an attempt to address the needs/demands of one population of professional artists (visual artists) by utilizing their contributions, addressing their challenges, and producing measurable impact.

As such, the programs analyzed in this report serve as case studies on the impact of entrepreneurial learning programs and business training; they are demonstrations of what is possible.

CHF

Art-Business Accelerator



Art-Business Accelerator

A 12-month Intensive Virtual Education program for Visual Artists

CHF's Art-Business Accelerator is a yearlong virtual course of business study for professional **visual artists** that is designed to impart the business training that's necessary to succeed as entrepreneurs and make a complete living through the creation of their art.

One of the National Endowment for the Arts' main categories of recommendation for supporting working artists is creating "21st-century training systems." Accelerator Fellows receive customized business training, publicity, network-building opportunities, sales assistance, and one-on-one support to boost their careers and help make their businesses self-sustaining.

CHF's educational program consists of broad strategic workshops and labs delivered by remote technology, and provides participants with practical knowledge that's actionable in the real world. Our nine practice areas help artists create viable business objectives, transmit an engaging narrative, open doors to sales and connections, connect with peers and develop networking skills, build financial confidence and competence, learn essential tech skills, manage projects and legal/copyright matters, and master the logistics of running an art business.

Each workshop is led by an expert in the pertinent subject matter, and the labs are deep dives that include extensive time for Q&A, allowing Fellows to obtain feedback on their specific questions and hear the perspectives of their peers.

Relevance of Art-Business Accelerator

CHF's Art-Business Accelerator demonstrates the effectiveness of a concentrated accelerator approach to improving the entrepreneurial skills and financial outcomes of professional visual artists.

Art-Business Accelerator Data-Collection Methods

CHF Has Been Measuring the Impact of Concentrated Business Education, Including Its Art-Business Accelerator, on Working Artists for Over 30 Months.

Those measures specifically address changes in attitude, behavior, business results, and business revenue or income. The methodologies of measurement include:

- Longitudinal Data
- Scaled Surveys
- Narrative Data & Interviews
- Normative Business KPIs

TRAJECTORY OF CHANGE

Results tend to follow a clear pattern, from internal (intellectual/emotional) to concrete external impact.



Change in attitude: Any change proven by ranking of career clarity, attitude towards business and finances, and changes in ranking backed by Fellows' qualitative data:

- Financial confidence
- Confidence as a career artist

Change in behavior: Any change proven by action taken towards business practices, such as marketing, sales, and networking:

- Time spent on art business
- Peer-to-peer & business Networking

Change in business results: Any tangible gains that have occurred in a Fellow's career throughout the course of the program as a result of their participation.

- Increased sales
- Increased contacts
- Increased commissions

Change in income or revenue: Any measurable change in profit or revenue that has occurred in a Fellow's career throughout the course of the program as a result of their participation:

- Increased income or profit from art business

CHANGES IN ATTITUDE: FINANCIAL & CAREER CONFIDENCE

By the end of the program, Fellows report:

10% increase in already high viability as a career artist

20% increase in financial confidence



“I feel that I now have the tools to really make it as a financially viable professional artist.”

—Kristin L. CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellow

“The financial classes have been really great...I feel more likely to use the tools correctly to determine ways to help me get my finances in order.”

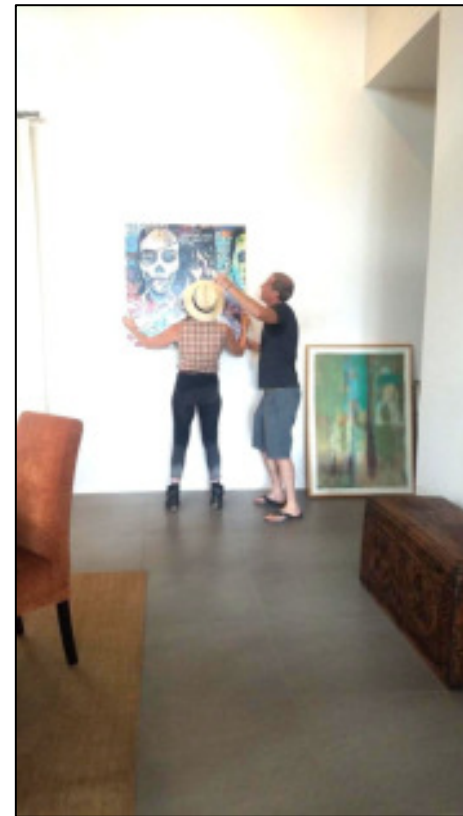
-Andie F., CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellow

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR: TIME SPENT ON ART BUSINESS

25% increase in the percentage of Fellows who spent more than 40% of their time on their art businesses.

Beginning of Accelerator program:
50% of Fellows spent 40% or more of their time on their art business.

End of Accelerator program:
75% of Fellows spent 40% or more of their time on their art business.



CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR: SALES STRATEGY

By the end of the Accelerator program:

75% of Fellows increased their involvement in sales or marketing channels.

75% were tracking their sales more consistently.

58% were tracking their marketing metrics more consistently.

83% were using more business tools.



*"I have learned how to market my work, both for and non-profit, **across multiple media platforms**. I have learned how to successfully market myself across multiple media while taking advantage of peak Internet times. I learned to focus my efforts on accomplishing certain tasks that lead to one focused goal at a time, while seeking guidance where needed from knowledgeable sources."*

—Bethany T., CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellow

CHANGES IN BUSINESS RESULTS: PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

All Fellows (100%) increased their number of professional contacts and the size of their audience reach, as well as improving their engagement with their audience.

83% improved the helpfulness of professional contacts to their career.

“Without my CHF learning, I would have been my formerly shy, gallery-visitor self and missed out on the chance to make connections, learn, and share my enthusiasm...”

—Kristin L., CHF Art-Business Accelerator Fellow



CHANGES IN BUSINESS RESULTS: SALES STRATEGY

INCREASED NUMBER OF
SALES & MARKETING
CHANNELS

75%

SHOWING THEIR WORK
IN MORE WAYS

92%

INCREASED CONVERSIONS

(referrals, responses, show attendees, etc.)

67%

“Overall, I know I am better businessman than I was a year ago. In a relatively short period of time, I have learned to shift to new avenues of sale, create more compelling copy, and submit highly professional proposals.”

—Aaron L., CHF Accelerator Fellow

“With the tools that I have gained during my time as a Fellow, I have been able to create a vibrant exhibition program which has led directly to new sales, new fans, and new art-world relationships.”

—Gregg C., CHF Accelerator Fellow

“I have begun to see how far I have come since this Fellowship started. I am able to market and talk about my work much more successfully, and I had more sales in the past two months than I had in all of last year.”

—Kristin L., CHF Accelerator Fellow

CHANGES IN BUSINESS RESULTS: INCOME

**INCREASED TOTAL
ART-BUSINESS INCOME**
75%

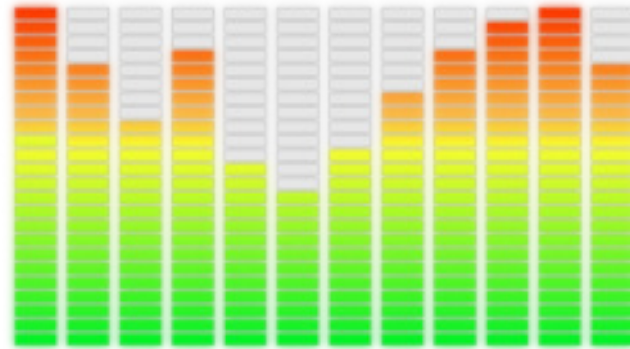
Increased their total income
from making and selling art.

INCREASED PRICES
58%

Increased their prices and/or
profit margin from their art
business.

“My sales have significantly improved and changed because of all of the work I have done for CHF. I’ve made about five times more than I normally make in this show and sold two of my highest-priced pieces, which I’ve never been able to do by myself.”

-Nadia F., CHF Accelerator Fellow



Breakdown of Program Impact

Before and After Their Participation in CHF's Art-Business Accelerator:

- All Fellows increased their number of professional contacts and the size of their audience reach, and improved engagement with their audience.
- All Fellows increased their marketing efforts and sales activity.
- 75% increased their involvement in sales or marketing channels.
- 75% track their sales more consistently.
- 58% track their marketing metrics more consistently.
- 67% are involved in more events.
- 92% show their work in more ways.
- 83% improved the helpfulness of professional contacts to their career.
- 83% use more business tools.
- 67% obtained more media coverage.
- 58% increased their prices and/or profit margin from their art businesses.
- 75% increased their total income from making and selling art.
- 67% sold more art or gained more commissions.
- 67% are applying for more grants/funding.
- 67% increased conversions (e.g., referrals, responses, show attendees, etc).
- 25% engaged an assistant, intern, or other professional to help them in their art business.

SUMMARY: Art-Business Accelerator

The results, replicated over multiple cohorts, indicate that concentrated, scalable learning programs, like CHF's Art-Business Accelerator, produce a measurable impact on the art businesses of working artists.

The most notable bottom-line changes produced by the Accelerator are:

- Increased business contacts
- Increased sales and conversions
- Increased prices
- Increased total profits and/or profit margins
- Increased total income from art business
- Increased hiring (job creation)

CHF

**Art-Business Conference
& Thriving Art Exchange™**



Art-Business Conference

Two- to Three-Day In-Person Mini-Accelerator program for Visual Artists

CHF delivers learning events all over the country where artists receive intensive business training, develop professional networks, and join with decision-makers, influencers, and funders—on an equal footing—to begin redefining their local arts ecosystem for mutual success.

These events are catalysts for working artists, spurring them toward a deeper involvement with the business side of their practice by teaching actionable business skills—including goal setting, career planning, networking, branding, sales, and marketing—in an interactive and engaging format.

Relevance of Art-Business Conference

CHF's Art-Business Conference demonstrates the effectiveness of a localized approach that brings entrepreneurial and business education into the communities of professional artists.

“The in-person mode of delivery provides a connection between the organizations providing this [art-business] training and the artist or arts organization staff. By its nature, in-person training is local and...community specific.” — Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, *How it's Being Done* (2014)

Art-Business Conference Data-Collection Methods

CHF Has Been Measuring the Impact of Concentrated Business Education—including Its Art-Business Conference—on Working Artists for Over 30 Months.

These measures specifically address changes in attitude, behavior, business results, and business revenue or income. The methodologies of measurement include:

- Longitudinal Data
- Scaled Surveys
- Narrative Data & Interviews

Participant Demographics



Career Stage

Professional Artists - 75%

Amateur / Hobbyist - 9%

Other Creative Professional- 6%

Transitioning to Professional Artist - 4%

Art Students- 4%

Not An Artist- 2%

Income Derived from Art Business

55% of professional artists participants were making **25% or less of their income** from their art business. Just 13% were making 100% of their income from their art business.

Economic Contributions

25% of conference participants are job creators—they have hired someone to help them with their art business.

27% of conference participants have reinvested over 50% of the income from their art business.

Time Spent on Art Business

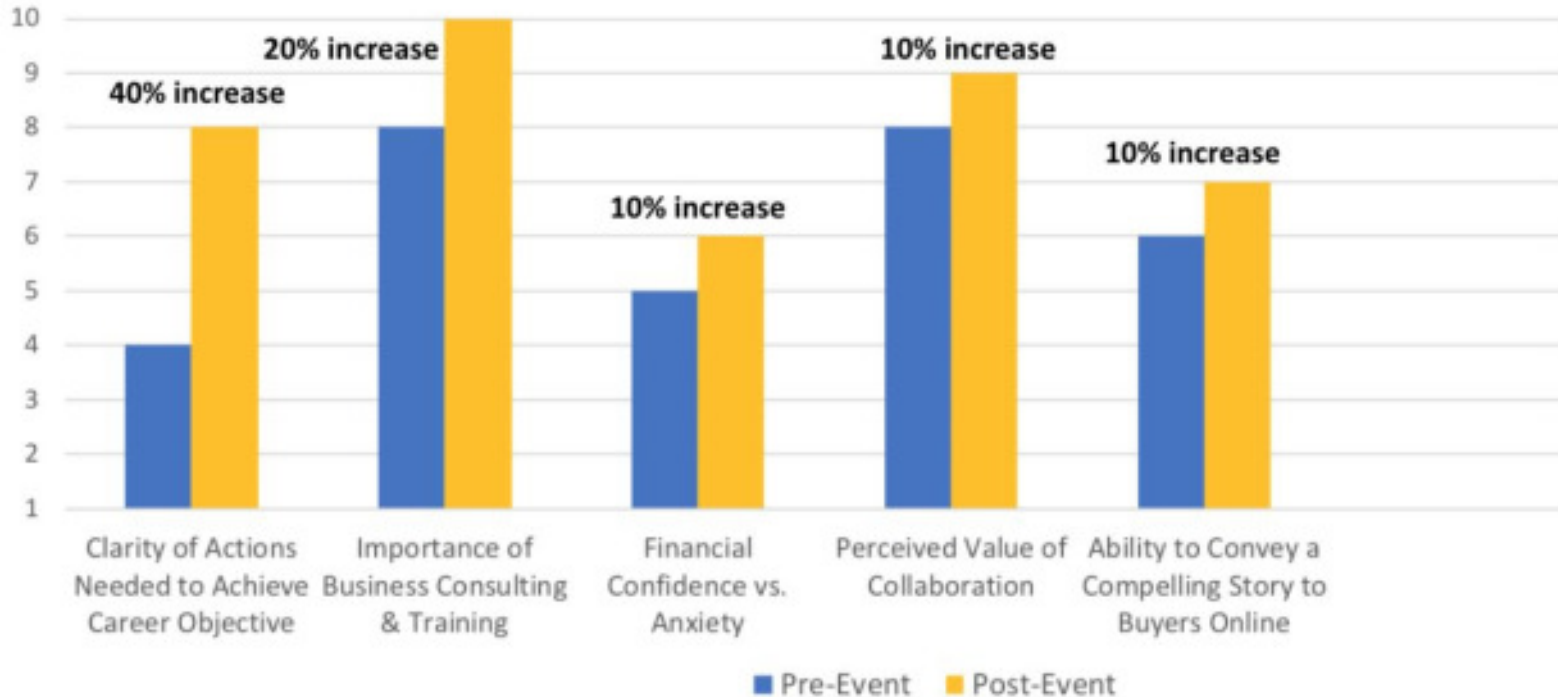
33% of the professional artists surveyed were spending less than 25% of their time developing their art business, yet they are highly committed to the business side of their career. They expressed their willingness to spend more time, with proper knowledge of next steps, sales and marketing channels, and strategic planning.

Artist Mediums/Categorization of Work

Artists who have participated in CHF conferences work primarily in painting, mixed media and sculpture.

Moving the Needle

OVERALL CHANGES IN ATTITUDE & INTENDED BEHAVIOR



Measurable Increases In Artist Identification of Obstacles and Clarity on Individual Next Steps



“The part about setting the goals and the follow-through—I realized while [CHF] was talking that I’m doing that in the other aspects of my life (but) I’m just not doing it with my art business.”

—Theresa R., Conference Participant

35% of artist participants cited some form of uncertainty about next steps—on how to move forward with their art businesses—resulting in procrastination, resistance, or lack of focus as the biggest challenge in growing their art careers.

By the end of the conference, participants reported a 40% increase in clarity around the actions needed to achieve their current career objectives.

Through post-event 1:1 interviews and narrative survey data, artists indicated that CHF events provided valuable incentive to take action, set goals, and/or overcome procrastination.

“The thing that is surprising to me, is that I’ve been to other business workshops like this before. This one feels like you walk away with something in your hand, and very specific things”.

—Rebecca B., Conference Participant

“I need to get off of the procrastination boat, and I have to take things seriously...and I have to have my six-second story.”

—Cindy A., Conference Participant

Maintaining & Bolstering an Already High Demand for Art-Business Learning



87% of artists in post-event surveys and interviews mentioned the importance of business training, and the benefit of inspiration and practical application.

20% increase in the perceived importance of business training to their careers

“I was in finance...I worked for a consulting firm for 10 years. So I've employed [business practices]...to what I'm doing, but it's just great to have it emphasized and explained.”

—Bradley R., Conference Participant

Measurably Increasing Artist Commitment to Business



“...To hear business concepts talked about so prominently...particularly some of the heavily tense business concepts, reverse engineering, things like that. To really apply that to an art practice...”

—Bradley R., Conference Participant

20% increase in commitment to the business side of their career

20% increase in perceived importance of business consulting to their career

Artist participants expressed their willingness to commit between 25-50% more of their time, on average, to developing their art businesses.

“I am so appreciative that there are organizations like yours to help artists figure out the business side of being an artist. Trying to keep the momentum going from all the inspiration I got in Santa Fe.”

—Jacqueline B., Conference Participant

Increasing Already High Demand for Opportunities for Peer Networking

Before the conference, artists rated the importance of business collaboration an 8, on a scale of 1-10. This figure increased to a 9 after the event (a 10% increase of an already high indicator of valuation and intent).

“My biggest business challenge, other than time, in growing my career as an artist is finding my tribe.”
—Conference Participant (anonymous)

“The exercises that were done in developing groups are really valuable because that’s not my best skill set. And so, to me, public speaking, learning how to interact in a group, learning how to develop a group, learning [with] people is very helpful because...that is part of why I came.” —Rebecca B., Conference Participant

“...I’d say what I really learned was more reinforcement, the power of learning each other’s skills and drawing upon them.”
—JoAnne T., Conference Participant

Creating Additional Powerful Changes in Business Attitude

TOPIC AREA: ARTIST P2P NETWORKS

10% increase in the perceived value of collaboration with other artists

TOPIC AREA: BRAND STORYTELLING / MARKETING

10% increase in the ability to convey a compelling story to potential buyers online

TOPIC AREA: SALES & PRICING STRATEGY

19% increase in artist certainty about the pricing of their work

TOPIC AREA: CAREER VIABILITY

20% increase in perceived viability of a career as an artist

TOPIC AREA: FINANCIAL CONFIDENCE (derived from financial competence)

10% increase in financial confidence



Breakdown of Program Impact

By the End of a Two- to Three-Day Local-Regional Event:

- 87% of artists in post-event surveys and interviews mentioned the importance of business training, and the benefit of inspiration and practical application.
- 40% increase in clarity of actions needed to achieve current career objective
- 20% increase in perceived importance of business training to art career
- 20% increase in commitment to the business side of an art career
- 20% increase in perceived viability of a career as an artist
- 20% increase in perceived importance of business consulting to their career
- 19% increase in artist certainty about the pricing of their work
- 10% increase in perceived value of collaboration with other artists
- 10% increase in ability to convey a compelling story to potential buyers online
- 10% increase in level of financial confidence
- Artists are willing to commit between 25-50% more of their time, on average, to developing their art businesses.

Sample Size & Sources



SAMPLE SIZE

TOTAL PARTICIPANTS: 105

PRE-EVENT RESPONDENTS: 97

POST-EVENT RESPONDENTS: 105

DATA SOURCES

PRE-EVENT SURVEY MEASURES

POST-EVENT SURVEY MEASURES

ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE DATA COLLECTION

Photography by <https://www.kellyheckphotography.com>: @Kelly Heck Photography, Sofia Perez & CHF Team

DATA FROM ART-BUSINESS CONFERENCES IN: SANTA FE (2018), DALLAS (2019), FORT LAUDERDALE (2019), & WASHINGTON D.C. (2019)

SUMMARY: Art-Business Conference

The results, replicated over multiple cohorts, indicate that boots-on-the-ground local-regional learning programs like CHF's Art-Business Conference produce a measurable impact in a short period of time (i.e., two to three days of intensive programming).

This type of training produces changes in attitude and behavior that lead to business results for professional visual artists.

- **Clarity on next steps:** Artists increased clarity on the tangible actions and next steps to take for their art businesses.
- **Increased demand for business training:** Artists underscored the importance of business training to their art businesses both pre- and post-event.
- **Increased commitment to art business:** Artists were willing to spend more time on the business side of their art businesses post-event.
- **Increased perceived value of peer collaboration:** Artists value peer networks and see their ability to cultivate change and business results.
- **Additional powerful changes:** These include changes in attitude, behavior, and business results related to marketing and sales, finances, and networking.

Summary

Impact of Business Education for Professional Artists

Key Findings:

- Concentrated virtual learning programs and boots-on-the-ground local-regional learning events are wanted, welcome, and adopted where implemented.
- It's possible to move the needle. Art-business education produces results.
- Rigorous business training (i.e., concentrated or accelerated learning) in particular is effective.
- Programs that deliver this training are scalable (i.e., multiple cohorts) and produce replicable results.

Gaps, Deficiencies, and Further Needs in Extant Research Related to the Working Artist



“Unless artists and their allies work to *shift how society talks about and measures the value* of creative and cultural work, provide income security for people who work in unconventional employment structures, find solutions for unmanageable levels of debt, ensure that training pathways are aligned with the realities of artistic work today, and create more responsive artist support organizations, we are nibbling at the margins of the challenges that artists face. ”

—The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting U.S. Artists* (2016)

Gaps in Research on Professional Visual Artists

Until now, there has been no full report on the state of working artists.

Consistent Definitions That Permit Accurate Assessment of the Financial Condition of Visual Artists

We need an agreed-upon industry-wide definition of *professional visual artist* that is accepted by public and private researchers, and that takes into account vital distinctions in order to accurately analyze the income and financial data of working visual artists.

Data Analysis that Recognizes Crucial Financial and Educational Distinctions Within the Creative Sector

Visual artists are grouped with other professional artists, which makes it difficult to determine specific data. The National Endowment for the Arts **categorizes visual artists with art directors and animators**. Therefore, much of the data in these reports are unspecific to the niche category of professional visual artists.

More Assessments of the Impact of Non or Post-Academic Business Education on Professional Visual Artists

There is a paucity of published data on art-business learning programs that don't fall within the specific confines of higher learning or academia. One of the major implications of research by The National Endowment for the Arts report is the need to “work to acknowledge qualified apprenticeship and mentoring programs outside of academic institutions as valid modes of professional education.” —The Center for Cultural Innovation for National Endowment for the Arts, *Creativity Connects: Trends and Conditions Affecting US Artists* (2016)

More US-based Data to Take Into Account the Particulars of the American Economy

There is less research that's focused specifically on US-based visual artists than artists elsewhere in the world, which makes it harder to make the strongest argument about the US economy and the role of artists within it. We collated a body of research from other countries that specifically examines visual artists in relation to their work, income, and needs. Beyond a small body of research from the National Endowment for the Arts and other nonprofit arts organizations, US-specific research is lacking.

Data That Is Specific to the Student Debt Burden Faced by Professional Visual Artists

Additional research is needed so that we can analyze the impact that debt has on artists' career choices.

More Research is Needed

More data are required to fill critical gaps in research. More programmatic research is required to measure the impact of different types of learning vehicles upon a wider array of key performance indicators (KPIs) for artists' businesses.

While various organizations provide targeted business learning for artists, there are generally no published, peer-reviewed, or rigorously analyzed data that show the effects that this programming has on participants as entrepreneurs or upon their art businesses.

CHF is committed not only to collating all published sources of relevant data but also to innovating learning programs and research methodologies that elucidate the kind of programming that is most effective in tangible, concrete ways.

Toward a Roadmap to Ongoing Research

“Traditional economic data does not exist on the arts.”

—Robin Keegan, Deputy Director, The Center for an Urban Future

We will continue to:

- Measure the contributions and challenges of working visual artists
- Assess the needs and demands of working visual artists.
- Study the impact of learning programs on working visual artists
- Identify gaps in available research

We will begin to:

- Measure the impact that artists who have received business training exert on their communities.

“In organized job settings, scientists are given space and tools to work, research funds and assistants, feedback from superiors and peers, and time and resources to travel to professional meetings for training, presentation of their results, and further training. Their salaries are ample enough to include membership in and attendance at meetings of organizations (e.g., the American Association for the Advancement of Science; AAAS) that promote their occupation and image in the broader society. They don’t have to rely on weak economic impact arguments. Artists offer very different skills, contributions, missions—difficult but essential to articulate.”

—Ann Markusen, *Diversifying Support for Artists* (2013)

The Data Analysis Team

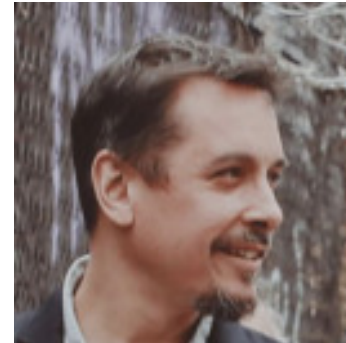
Lily Dulberg

As the Research Data Analyst for The Clark Hulings Fund for Visual Artists (CHF), Lily compiles, analyzes, and develops internal survey measures and data reports. Her findings inform all CHF programming, including events, the Art-Business Accelerator, and digital learning programs.



Daniel DiGriz

In his role as CHF's Programming and Education Director, Daniel also guides the Data Analysis Team's analytic logic, research communications, and data-collection methodologies. He is the host of CHF's *Thriving Artist*™ podcast and leader of the organization's Brand Story, Peer Networking, Sales Conversations, and Technology practice areas.



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AND ARTISTS SHOULD RUN IT.**

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