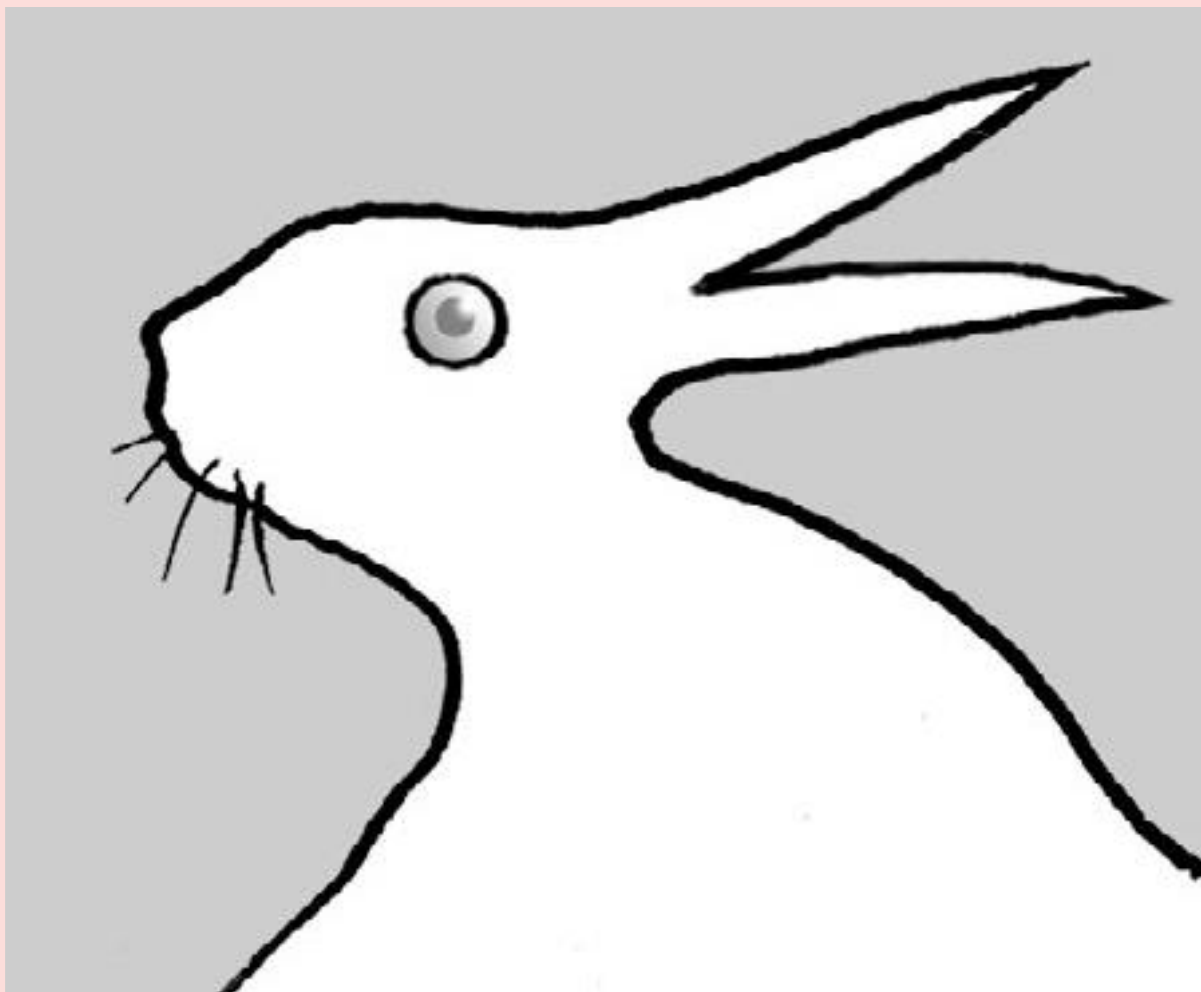


# THE PARADOX OF DEFINING THE UNDEFINABLE: VALUING INTERDISCIPLINARY ART IN THE NETHERLANDS



Quirine Korteling / 382157 / 382157qk@student.eur.nl  
Master's thesis Arts & Culture studies / ESHCC / Erasmus University Rotterdam  
Tesis advisor: Dr. Laura Braden / Second Reader: Dr. Annemarie Kersten  
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Erasmus University Rotterdam | ESHCC

Quirine Korteling | 382157  
382157qk@student.eur.nl

Thesis advisor: Dr. Laura Braden  
Second reader: Dr. Annemarie Kersten

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## **1. Introduction**

In this world, we're all connected to each other through Internet and social media, which provide us from an undefinable amount of knowledge. Back in the time of Leonardo Da Vinci, knowledge was only meant for the privileged. The scholars of that time, among others Leonardo Da Vince, were interdisciplinary; they were scientists, researchers, artists, and inventors. The knowledge they had, was used to learn more. For example, Leonardo Da Vinci's observation of birds' wings, that resulted in various drawings of flying machines. In this time, knowledge was less evident than it is these days, where it's at our fingertips. We can read, hear and see anything we want in a few seconds. These developments stimulate our multidisciplinary thinking, which means we have knowledge of various disciplines. The next step, what also happened back in time, but also increased in contemporary days, is that the knowledge of different disciplines merge; this is called interdisciplinarity. This leads to an increasing group of interdisciplinary people, including artists.

Artists have the status they work autonomous, have fewer boundaries and are free. However, their subsidizers, the art funds, contain regulations, on behalf of the government. Therefore, it's difficult for funds to classify the interdisciplinary artists

We are used to classifying everything within a genre, discipline or subject. Nowadays, artists work in an increasingly boundaryless field, where experiment and innovation, within and between different disciplines and genres, are becoming more accepted and more important to find answers for difficult overarching questions (Gill Studios, 2013). Many artists who work relatively without boundaries characterize themselves as "innovative", "multidisciplinary", "fusion", "hybrid", and "boundary crossing". This can increase and spread their chances in the market for success, but it may also have a downside. As the research of Zuckerman (1999) shows these cultural producers are disadvantaged because they are not understood, ignored or less appreciated. Furthermore, people and institutions still think within boundaries of genres and disciplines. Professionals construct a symbolic boundary, separating it from other domains, what creates authority, clarity, and control over a profession's activities (Gieryn, 1983). Subsequently, this may lead to conflicts between the artist's freedom and the limited thought from perceived boundaries from external factors. Especially in the case of ascribing capital this may be a point of discussion. Every artist is looking for economic or symbolic capital, or both to receive recognition and to pay their bills (Bourdieu, 1980). There are different ways of receiving these capitals.

In the Netherlands the government, among others, provide the art world of financial support (Rijksoverheid). This support goes to museums and libraries, but also to artists themselves. This way, it contributes to the artists' artwork and their living, but it also grants

the artists of symbolic capital. These artists can apply themselves to get subsidized so they can finance their projects or artworks and have an income. Also, they receive a symbolic approval that their art is legitimate when it's approved by experts of the field. But before it's possible to receive anything, they have to meet certain criteria. This policy is different from countries like the United States, where the arts are mostly subsidized by private donations (Dokmetzis, 2011; McCaughey & Chartrand, 1989). In the Netherlands is this kind of philanthropy for the arts rare. Therefore, subsidy is an important source of income that provides the art world of economic capital. But, as touched upon before, the chances getting subsidized are not equal, because of different ideas about legitimate art within the institutions, and among others, because of ambiguity within the arts itself. The funds have strict regulations about what type of arts are qualified for honouring. But between these funds and within the funds may be gaps, created because of the symbolic boundaries. Ambiguous artists mainly work in these areas, what can lead to being unqualified according to the funds.

Whether crossing boundaries is a benefit or a disadvantage to receive subsidy is discussable. On the one hand, these artists benefit on critical success, especially the small-scale producers in the subfield (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013). Relating this to Dutch funds, it could be that interdisciplinary artists have greater chances in receiving subsidy than regular artists. On the other hand, negative effects of ambiguous identities are dependent of institutionalizing of the classification system (Ruef & Patterson, 2009; Kovács & Hannan, 2010). This could mean that artists and Dutch funds hold on different ideas about boundaries when it comes to legitimizing art. In this case working as an interdisciplinary artist would be disadvantage.

Also, there seems to be a disjunction between the boundary workers at the one side (the Dutch funds), and the boundaryless workers, (the artists that focus on interdisciplinary, crossovers, hybridisation and fusion). This arises from different definitions of legitimate art, different genres and disciplines, and the boundaries of these, disadvantaging the artists.

*What is the relation between interdisciplinarity and the contemporary position of artists? And how do the funds correspond to these developments in their decision-making?*

To be able to answer this research question, it's important to find out how contemporary artists describe themselves and position themselves in the field. Furthermore the decision makers, the funds, are included. This can illustrate the clarification process and the position of

these artists. This way it will be possible to compare these two groups and find differences and similarities. This is done by interviewing these two groups extensively.

First, Dutch artists who requested for subsidy at governmental art funds in the past five years will be interviewed to get a more in-depth in the issues for the artists. These artists are interdisciplinary visual artists, which is the focus group in the artist field for this thesis. The definition of interdisciplinary is ambiguous, hence, this is a question that I will attempt to answer. Therefore, the meaning of ‘interdisciplinary’, in the broadest sense, refers to artists that use several disciplines when creating art. Also, in reference to interdisciplinary in a narrow sense, it refers to a specific group of artists that mix different disciplines from different fields to create art. Referring to the more specific definition will be stated when necessary.

The policies of the funds need to be researched. In this case, interviews will be performed to get in-depth information about the methods funds persist to use to qualify arts. Second, questions as if these artists feel disadvantaged or benefited, how they would ascribe themselves as an artist, and the way of approach will be discussed thoroughly. Second,

After analysing the both sides, we can look at similarities and differences in views and beliefs between and between both sides as well as different views within each group. This should result in more clarity about the, still existing, boundaries within funds and their influences on the artists.

This research will contribute to the practices of governmental funding in the artistic field in the Netherlands. It will give more clarity in the definition of legitimate art in the Netherlands, for both the artists and of the government. It will contribute to what extent distinction is still important in the arts, again in eyes of the artist and the government. An examination on whether or not involvement of the government is necessary will be discussed. And it will contribute to the theoretical research in boundary work, distinction and hegemony within the art field in who defines legitimate art. Different parties influence these concepts in the classification of art. Lastly, the relationship between the political and cultural field are examined.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

## 2.1 The field of production

Bourdieu explains in the *Production of Belief* (1993) how the production of the art field works and how different actors/agents influence value acclaimed to art works. The field of production is the system of objective relations between the agents or institutions and the continuous struggle to have the power to say what is legitimate. This system builds the reputation of the arts and artists, and gets in turn more power within the field, being seen as agents (Alexander, 1996). The value is established due to conflicts between agents in different positions and the placement in the art field. This ideology relates to the creator of the artwork. The creators in this thesis are artists who work in the field of visual arts using different genres, which includes disciplines outside the art field. In this thesis the agents that have the power to decide what is legitimate, are the art funds. They decide which artists are legitimate and receive financial support.

The charisma ideology is the basis of belief in the value of an artwork and the basis of how the field of production produces and circulates (Bourdieu, 1993). In its core, the value of an artwork and the belief that is underlying, are generated in different struggles to establish the final value (Bourdieu, 1993). With these struggles different agents are involved. It's the key to find the right people that can help you thrive in the art field. Knowing the right persons gives you more opportunities in gaining success. Gatekeepers are the persons who evaluate cultural products and inform institutions (Alexander, 2011). They can inform funds about developments in the production field and indirectly influence the financial streams.

Getting financial support from a fund increases not only the economic capital, but also the symbolic capital. Funds grant money to professional artists that meet their criteria. Being acknowledged contributes to the artist's chances in the art field to meet other agents. Important people are therefore representatives, art dealers and managers. There are certain people that can help you further in the art field as a creator, because they all influence the final value of the artwork. This means that apart from the basis of the value of a particular work and the belief that is underlying, they are formed by the influence these agents have (Bourdieu, 1993). These can cooperate together in creating value to art and have more influence when it comes to having a voice in what's legitimate. The publisher and art dealer are talent scouts who 'discover' the artist that is introduced by others, and guide the artist within the artistic field. They connect them to buyers and sellers and in the end to the relevant public. In this case, I will refer to funds, because they can influence how the value of an artwork is determined as well. It is possible to see them as a form of criticism. They decide which artists are good enough to give economic capital to, because they have confidence in



their ideas. Not only economic capital, they approve the level of the artwork as well. This means the artwork has a certain level of professionalism, which is being translated to symbolic capital. As Bourdieu explains, symbolic capital can lead to economic capital, which he calls accumulated capital (1993). In this way, subsidies contribute to the artist's reputation in an indirect way.

## **2.2 Art discourse and classification**

Classification is the process of assigning objects, artworks in this case, to classes and categories (Burrows, 2007). Each cultural product must be discovered, sponsored and brought to the public by gatekeepers and organizations before an artist can be linked to the right audience (Hirsch, 1972). Before this is possible, the product moves through the system, being classified by several gatekeepers. To classify a cultural product, agents from the arts field use certain mechanisms to justify their criticisms. These agents can function as gatekeepers, who select the legitimate artists who may benefit from the subsidy (Alexander, 2011).

Distinguishing these artists from "less legitimate" artists happens by classifying the artists on qualities and indicators. Venrooij and Schmutz's (2010) research shows that the mechanisms of legitimation are contingent on the cultural classification systems in which they operate. They research to what extent newspaper critics in the Netherlands, Germany and the US draw on high art and popular aesthetic criteria to a different extent. Resulting that critics don't exclusively only draw on high art aesthetic, but reviewing popular music also apply popular aesthetic criteria.

Among indicators of criteria typically associated with high art they considered are the following: Context, creative source, connection to high art, and high art criteria (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). First, context is used by the critic by providing the mediating knowledge needed to understand and appreciate the work. Second, creative source refers to mentioning the artist also as the creative force of the artwork. Third, the critic connects or compares the work to high art works or creators. Last, the critic evaluates the work based on originality, innovation, complexity, ambiguity, seriousness or timelessness.

They also distinguished the following indicators of a popular aesthetic: Negative stance to high art criteria, participatory experience, user orientation, and oral (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). First, the critic is clearly opposes high art criteria. Second, there's a focus on the engagement or participation of the audience. Third, the critic predicts which type of audience will enjoy the work. Last, oral refers to describing the work with reference to oral or food related metaphors that emphasize primary tastes.

These different indicators function as guidelines how funds qualify the different applications. It gives insights how funders classify products, what they qualify as legitimate, and if they qualify the ambiguous products as art. When a combination is rare, agents have few other exemplars to turn to and little guidance to judge the hybrid, which may lead to less chances in receiving subsidy. (Hannan, Polos, & Carroll, 2007)

### **2.3 Conflicting pressures in the arts**

Classifying cultural products on legitimization can create conflicts between the concerned groups and institutions, because of different interpretations of what is important to be called legitimate. This has to do with different ideas about the balance between critical, financial, and commercial success. As Becker (1982) describes, the centre of an art field knows the conventions extensively, while the more general field have also more general ideas about art and aesthetics (Alexander, 2003). When in the centre of an art field innovative changes in the conventions take place, for example because of innovative art, this can create conflicts between the specific art field and the outsider world. Less involved audiences are looking for the conventions they know, but when these change, they appreciate the artwork less.

Other groups that are influenced by the conventions of the art field, aside from the less involved audiences. Non-profit organizations do not seek money as final goals, but they do need money to support their operations (Alexander, 2003). (Alexander (1996) examines the importance of funding and in what extent funders influence have on exhibitions, in her research about organizational conflicts within art museums. The funders are considered to be external forces, while the museum managers are considered to be internal (Alexander, 1996). These groups both have wishes and ideas to shape the outcomes of an exhibition. Alexander (1996) aims there's a clear connection between these external forces and the organizational output, in other words the exhibition. Obviously museum curators who set up the exhibition have a say in museums exhibit. These can create conflicting pressures with each other.

Art museums face an uncertain budget every year and must work constantly to raise funds. Depending on the artist, funding can be very important to realize their artworks and just like museums, they are always busy with getting subsidized to be able to realize their art projects. Alexander researches in what extend the external funders have influence on exhibitions. Then, she researches how the curators are dealing with the conflict between the funders' wishes and their own ideas about museum exhibitions (Alexander, 1996). Just as artists, curators strive to maintain their autonomy, their normative visions as they handle

external demands. Just as is the case with museums, funders can have their own ideas and wishes about the artworks of the artist and will try to influence the way the fund is used. And just as exhibitions, artist can be funded in different ways.

Alexander explains museums have a portfolio that reflects their exhibition styles. These portfolios are willing to mount in the consideration if they get subsidized. This is comparable to the artist's portfolio and application that reflects its art projects. In the Netherlands artists have to write about their work to be able to apply for subsidy. Factors that influence their chances can be relatable to the variables Alexander introduces: the content of the artwork, commercial vs autonomous, genre and style, and professionalism. Funders have certain conventions and ideas about what is legitimate art. These conventions change over the years and influences what type of artists have more chances to receive subsidy. Artists can adapt their work to the preferred characters of that moment to increase their chances. In this way, funds exert pressures on the artist's autonomous role.

Aside from the influences patrons can have on the content of art exhibitions, also other parties can take this role. In the Netherlands the government is one of the stakeholders of the arts by ascribing funds. The role nation-states can have in supporting the arts, is distinguished by Hillman-Chartrand & McCaughey (1989) in four roles: First, a facilitator state encourages private support of the arts through tax policies. Second, a patron state funds arts through arm-length arts councils, which means the art councils are quasi-independent. Third, an architect state relies on centralized ministries of culture to support art. The ministries, an arm of the government staffed by civil servants, attend to social as well as artistic standards in determining funding merit. Last, an engineer state promotes art that fulfils political purposes and suppresses the rest ( McCaughey & Chartrand , 1989). In the Netherlands the Architect approach is applied. Arts and culture are the responsibility of the Ministry or Department of Culture. It aims at nurturing the arts and culture that benefits the social welfare rather than excellence of the arts itself (Anzani). Culture is therefore funded directly by the government, and decisions are made by bureaucrats. This means the Dutch government would base their decision making overall on the conventions of community art.

However, the Dutch government spreads in its financial contribution to the arts over different smaller parties, which all have a different focus on the meaning of art or an art genre, which would create more variety.

## **2.4 Boundary work**

Boundary work describes how professional and occupational members “demarcate” or construct a symbolic boundary, separating it from other domains (Gienyn, 1983). It’s a way to gain authority and control over a profession’s or field’s activities. This means it’s used to explain disputes between and within professions. There are different ways to create, find, and define boundaries. Conventions are a way to recognize others from the same art field and distinguish yourself from others that don’t belong to it (Becker, 1982). People from the centre of an art field are familiar with these conventions at the most detailed level, which distinguishes them from the regular audience members (Alexander, 2003). This is in line with the thought that boundary work is enacted through symbolic boundaries, which are categorizations of who is a member or non-member and what constitutes quality (Jones, 2010). The research focuses on the funders who have symbolic boundaries, to be able to categorize artists and their cultural products, and on artists who cross these boundaries.

In the research of Jones categorization processes is explained in two kinds of boundaries, social and symbolic, that influence careers (2010). Social boundaries both form and constrain social networks. Thus, in turn, social capital provides resources through relationships such as mentorship, sponsorship, collaborations, and social embeddedness that enact and also constrain career opportunities and outcomes. By contrast, symbolic boundaries are “conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorize objects, people, practices, and even time and space” (Lamont & Molnar, p168).

Jones’ (2010) research shows how social and symbolic boundaries influence a creative producer’s career outcomes, by examining how five architects’ social and symbolic networks shaped variations in these architects’ recognition over career stages and eminence after death. These networks are built from social and symbolic boundaries, which also reveal, which finally shows that this boundary work influences boundaryless careers in two ways. First, social actors who cross symbolic boundaries or cultural categories, such as genres or disciplines, are likely to face penalties in their career outcomes. Second, members of a profession may enforce boundaries that exclude and limit career opportunities due to status differentials (Jones, 2010).

The research of Rao and Durand (2005) shows that high-status producers are more likely to cross boundaries than low-status producers. It also shows the tension producers face, because producers have to be original but also have to live up to conventions of a field (Rao & Durand, 2005). Artists have to meet certain conventions to be qualified for subsidy. The funders determine the boundaries of these conventions. Although the research shows that crossing these boundaries invites penalties from critics, which is in line with the findings of

Jones' research (2010), it doesn't apply to high-status producers. They stimulate the critics to redefine the boundaries (Rao & Durand, 2005).

## **2.5 Categorical Ambiguity**

Different studies have shown that categorical ambiguity in the arts can lead to positive and negative effects on critical and commercial success. Categorical ambiguity means that a product is classifiable within several categories (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013). The research of Venrooij and Schmutz (2013) shows the problem with objects that are unambiguous to qualify within cultural classification systems. They analyse if this categorical imperative is also found within aesthetic categories as genres and if the effects are unambiguous products within genres. The results show that categorical ambiguity, able to be categorized in different genres, is twofold in case of cultural products. Focussing on the pop music industry, substantial mainstream producers are benefited with one 'pure' identity, while a small-scale producer may have benefits with an ambiguous genre-identity (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013). These boundaries between categories are fuzzy in real life, which makes it difficult to categorize products legitimize. Therefore, decision makers develop rhetoric strategies to legitimate their judgment about products with a high level of ambiguity, uncertainty, and conflicting assessment criteria (Bielby & Bielby, 1994). Funders also have a strategy to legitimize their judgements on granting an artist or not. They have standardized commentations artists receive after rejection or permission. If these commentations are truly legitimate is a question that will be further examined.

Other articles have proven that the negative effects of ambiguous identities are dependent of institutionalizing of the classification system (Ruef & Patterson, 2009; Kovács & Hannan, 2010) or they are not well understood (Zuckerman, 1999). This relates to the suspected conflict between artists and Dutch funds about the different ideas on boundaries in the arts and the definitions of legitimate art.

The research proves that ambiguity has negative effects on commercial success, especially on commercial producers, while it has no effect to positive effect on critical success, especially for small-scale producers in the subfield (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013).

There are three factors that influence the structure of the classification system. First, the degree of competition and the barrier to enter are important factors that interrelate with each other. Second, the organization structure of record companies has influence on the heteronomous pole as well as the autonomous pole. Third, the characteristics of the audience influences both poles as well (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013).

Interdisciplinarity seems to be a relatively new phenomenon, since educational institutes started to offer interdisciplinary programs in the sixties (Townes-Anderson, 2007). Many educations all over the world offer a specific program focussed on mixing disciplines, pointing out the expectations that in the future more concepts or problems simply can't be solved by singular means so knowledge about different disciplines is necessary. (Columbia College Chicago, UW Bothwell, Ohio University, Victorian College of the Arts, SVA New York).

However, the idea of interdisciplinarity is nothing new. Interdisciplinary work has always happened, and different fields have always communicated and shared ideas. The difference now is that we've named it and institutionalized it (Townes-Anderson, 2007). In the arts the concept is strongly related to avant-garde, since both integrate new ideas or technologies into a field. But also the first art photographers what we used to relate to engineering, or Marcel Duchamp who made from industrial products art (Townes-Anderson, 2007).

### **Interdisciplinarity**

But defining interdisciplinary arts is still ambiguous, because it consists out of different disciplines. The diversity of these disciplines can be found closely with each other to reach out to strongly different disciplines. The research of Winkel, Gielen & Zwaan (2012) about the hybrid artist give it the definition that the artist (1) combines autonomous and applied art forms, and (2) the boundary between these autonomous and applied art forms are blurred in the perception of the artist him/herself or of its environment (Winkel, et.al., 2012). In general, combining two or more academic disciplines into one activity, and in that way crossing boundaries, stands for this and relatable concept. Thus artists can be interdisciplinary to a certain degree. This means, crossing boundaries between disciplines not only happens in the arts, but in multiple fields (Gieryn, 1983).

As shown in illustration 1, Daric Gill (2013) explains different forms of degrees in art disciplines: mono disciplinary, mixed media, multidisciplinary, (more specific) interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary. Mono disciplinary means an artist works within only one discipline, for example a painter (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). Mixed media means an artist works within the field with several media together to make a piece of art within a single slightly hybridized field. An example is a photo collage that has been drawn/painted on (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). Multiple disciplinary means the artist has begun to blend several disciplines together to form an altogether new field (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). Using different

disciplines within the art field can create a new form of art, but it's still recognizable as art. More specific interdisciplinary is wider and more thorough blending of different fields, as art, academic, psychology etc. A person or a team of people who are interdisciplinary use a skilled philosophy or knowledge from several fields to solve problems that outside the scope of the traditional boundaries (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). With Trans-disciplinary the boundaries are so blurred that one actually can't be described as belonging to only one field (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). They are as much an artist as a scientist or a builder or any other specific field. A person in a group can be specialist in his field, but mold together as a collective to poll processes and philosophies to solve complex issues (Daric Gill Studios, 2013). This model explains that some concepts or problems simply can't be solved by singular means.

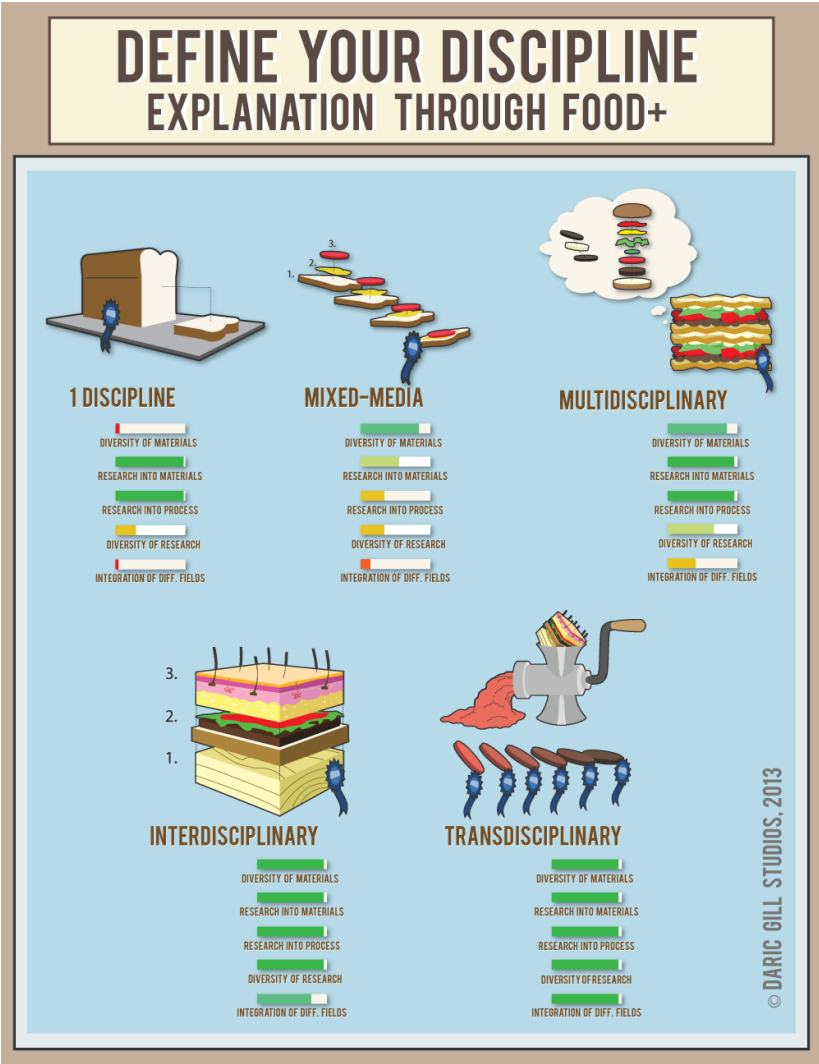


Illustration 1: five types of disciplines defined.

## **2.7 Research question**

The articles of Bourdieu (1993) and Alexander (1996) show the complex relation between the artists and the pressures of institutions. In the Netherlands, some artists are dependent of subsidy to be able to realize the artworks and to manage themselves. Therefore, they have to adapt to the pressures of the government. Here is decided which artists are good enough to give economic capital to, because they have confidence in their ideas. Also they examine the professionalism of the artwork if it's legitimate, which is being translated to symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1993). As Bourdieu explains, symbolic capital can again lead to economic capital, which he calls accumulated capital (1993). In this way, subsidies contribute to the artist's reputation in an indirect way.

Whether this is more or less difficult for interdisciplinary artists to get subsidized is discussable. On the one hand, they benefit on critical success, especially the small-scale producers in the subfield (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013). Relating this to Dutch funds, it could be that interdisciplinary artists have greater chances in receiving subsidy than regular artists. On the other hand, negative effects of ambiguous identities are dependent of institutionalizing of the classification system (Ruef & Patterson, 2009; Kovács & Hannan, 2010). This could mean that artists and Dutch funds hold on different ideas about boundaries when it comes to legitimizing art. In this case working as an interdisciplinary artist would be disadvantage.

Key question:

What is the relation between interdisciplinarity and the contemporary position of artists? And how correspond the funds to these developments in their decision-making?

Sub questions new:

How do artists define themselves in context of interdisciplinary?

Is interdisciplinarity a benefit or disadvantage to get subsidized because of ambiguity?

How is interdisciplinarity classified by the funds?

What definitions of legitimate art do the different funds retain?

How do funds recognize and apply new developments in the art field?

## **2.8 Expectations and hypotheses**



Because this is a qualitative, inductive research there's an open position toward the outcomes of this research. As shown above, the sample group consisting of interdisciplinary artists is ambiguous. Therefore the interpretation of the artists of this concept is important before making any hypotheses or expectations. Also, as the research of Venrooij and Schmutz (2013) shows, ambiguity can be a pro as well as a con, thus again this can create expectations in all possible ways. Expectations may cause steering questions while conducting the interviews. Therefore, it's important to have no prejudices in the outcomes of this research to increase the reliability.

### **3. Data and Method**

This research focuses on the question what the relation is between interdisciplinarity and the contemporary mindset of artists, and how these developments correspond to the funds' decision-making. The main goal of this research is to define interdisciplinarity, its role is in the art world and in the society, and how funds imply these developments in their qualification criteria. Further it gives more clarity about the level of distinction in contemporary art and to what extent the boundaries of the art field are blurring. To answer these questions, an in-depth research is done by interviewing artists and funders. This research gives a total view in two parties: the artists and the funders. By interviewing both parties it's possible to (1) find out to what extent interdisciplinarity in the arts is legitimate on both sides (2) the classification criteria of art on both sides (3) the chances of interdisciplinarity projects to receive subsidy. Finally it gives more clarity about similarities and differences in attitudes and ideas about interdisciplinarity and subsidy between disciplinary artists and funders as agents.

#### **3.1 Qualitative data-analysis**

This research is qualitative and inductive which is based on subjective experiences of people, more specific, artists who work interdisciplinary and funders. In the half-structured interviews are the subjects adjusted, but the questions and answers aren't. The interviews will take about 45-60 minutes, depending on the experience and knowledge the artist has as an artist and with

subsidy. The interviews of the subsidizers will take 60-75 minutes. In the next paragraph the selection criteria of the interviewees will be discussed.

After the interviews were transcribed, the transcripts are to be coded. This is done in three steps of coding: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The first form is open coding; search in the transcripts for fragments and give these a code. Axial coding means similar codes are combined and different codes are distinguished to create codes with a more clear definition. This form is simultaneously of the operationalization, because it examines the validity of the coding and their dimensions.

### **3.2 Sample**

Two parties will be interviewed for this research: interdisciplinary artists and funders. First, interdisciplinary artists are artists who work within different disciplines or genres. As shown in the illustration of Towns-Anderson (2007) only mono-disciplinary artists who work with one discipline are excluded from this research. Fifteen to twenty interdisciplinary artists will be interviewed in 60 minutes for this research, all meeting up to some criteria. First, they work interdisciplinary. This selection will be established based on different options. (1) The artist describes itself as interdisciplinary. (2) Or in their description about artworks they make they focus on different disciplines. In this case it's possible the artist him/herself is not aware of the term interdisciplinary. (3) The artist collaborates in an interdisciplinary project. The project then could be called interdisciplinary, or the parties are from different fields inside and outside the art field as well. Second, they signed up for subsidy at least once in the last five years. Third, they work and live in the Netherlands. To find the right interviewees, I applied the so-called snowball effect, in which case the interviewees are asked if they know other artists that are qualified to include in this research. Innovative artists associate themselves with one another, because in their network they can exchange their innovative and relatively unconventional ideas (Crane, 1987).

Also, the subsidizers of governmental funds will be interviewed. Funders are defined as employees of Dutch governmental funds that focus on visual arts. Examples are Mondriaan fonds, Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie, and Gemeente Rotterdam. They are all (in)directly linked to the Dutch government. Cultural funds have different approaches and criteria when it comes to cultural disciplines. Therefore the funds that are included in this research meet up with these criteria: First, they are located in the Netherlands. Second, they focus (among others) on the field of visual arts. Third, they provide (among others) artists of subsidy. Fourth, they are governmental funds. The employees that are interviewed for this

research can have (1) an executive position, or (2) are external advisors of the commission. This is important to be sure that the interviewees know about the different criteria, trends and evaluation processes. Because of the small group of funders, their specialisms, and the difficulty to be able to get an interview with this group, I interviewed three funders. This offers the ability to indicate similarities and differences between the points of views of this group.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Background</b>	<b>Profession</b>
Stefan de Beer	M	Automotive TU Bachelor interior architecture Post-bachelor Urban design	Artist
Roland Schimmel	M	Bachelor Fine Arts	Artist
Madje Vollaers	V	Bachelor Sculptor	Artist
Christa van der Meer	V	Bachelor Fashion Design	Artist
Lucas Zoutendijk	M	Bachelor Public Space (Design Academy)	Artist
Martijn van Engelbregt	M	Bachelor Graphic Design	Artist
Ricky van Broekhoven	M	Master degree Arts Bachelor Spatial design	Artist
Rogier Arents	M	Bachelor Well-being (Design Academy)	Artist
Jalila Essaïdi	V	Bachelor 3D Art Bio Art (Honours) Master Arts education	Artist

Floris Lieshout	M	Master Moderne Letterkunde Bachelor Nederlandse Taal & Cultuur	Subsidizer
Femke Dekker	V	Master science of Film- and Music	Subsidizer
Steven van Teeseling	M	Master Art Historie Bachelor of Arts, Culturele Bedrijfsvoering	Subsidizer

Table 1: division of sample containing artists and subsidizer

### 3.3 Interview questions

To execute this research a qualitative, in-depth research method was applied with the use of interviews. With the half-structured interviews are the subjects adjusted, but the questions and answers are not. The Interview questions are about subsidies, chances, categorization and classification. The target was to get insides about the ambiguity with these artists and their personal opinions if they think ambiguity is a benefit or disadvantage in general and to get subsidized. Also the contemporary trends in the art world are an important point of discussion. The chances the artists have change over the years, because of regular adjustments at the funds. Therefore, the artists that are interviewed vary in age and experience. This will contribute to a broader image of experiences in the last 25 years in the art world, and more specific its identity nowadays.

The interview questions for interdisciplinary artists are written down below. Important to note is that the interview is half-structured. Depending on the answers the respondents gives to the questions, determines which questions were be asked next and if some questions were still relevant. Overall, these questions had to be answered:

#### **Interview questions for the interdisciplinary artists:**

Could you tell me something about yourself? (Name, age, education, profession)

Could you tell me more specific something about your work as an artist in relation to fusion/interdisciplinarity?

Why do you interdisciplinary?

Do you think interdisciplinarity in the arts happens more or less the last few years?

Have you ever ascribed for funding?

How many times did you ascribe for funds in the last five years?

And which funds did you ascribe to?

Could you tell me something about the different processes and steps you had to take to send out the request?

What kind of information was provided to explain their decision?

Why do you think you didn't or did receive any money?

Do you think the funds are open to interdisciplinary projects that combine disciplines within the art field?

Do you think the funds are open to interdisciplinary projects that combine artistic disciplines with disciplines outside the art field?

Do you think the funds make adjustments to the kind of art artists make nowadays?

Do you think that because your work is difficult to classify within the boundaries it works against you or benefits you?

The interview questions for funders are written down below. These interviews will give an inside in the definition of legitimate art per fund, and overall by funds. Also it explains more if ambiguity is a benefit or a disadvantage in the eyes of the agents and what reasons are to not subsidize an artist. It can be possible to examine if these reasons are rhetoric strategies (Bielby & Bielby, 2013) or are personal feedback to the artist. These interviews give an inside in the level of categorical ambiguity within the field of visual arts from the side of the policymakers.

Again, it's important to note that the interview is half structured. Depending on the answers the respondent gives to the questions, determines which questions are next and if some questions are still relevant. Overall, these questions were answered:

**Interview questions for the funders:**

Could you tell me something about yourself? (Name, age, education, profession)

Could you tell me more specific something about your work with this fund?

On what kind of art does the fund focus?

For which target group is this art meant to be for?

Which kind of artists are qualified to receive subsidy?

To what criteria do artists or art works have to conform to be qualified to receive subsidy?

Could you give some examples what kind of feedback you give to artists?

What are the trends of the last years that funds focus on?

Are interdisciplinary artists qualified to receive subsidy?

Is interdisciplinary art qualified to receive subsidy?

What developments in relation to interdisciplinarity have occurred in the art world?  
Do you think their ambiguity is a benefit or a disadvantage to receive subsidy?

## **4. Results**

The analysis is discussed in this chapter, which contains the results of a number of in-depth interviews with artists and subsidizers. After transcribing the interviews they are analysed focusing on important sentences or fragments. Then matching sentences and fragments are labelled with indicators. These indicators are (1) definition interdisciplinarity, (2) relatable term, (3) characteristics, (4) benefits and disadvantages, (5) vision, (6) historical perspective, (7) social perspective, (8) points that influence the chances on subsidy (9) subsidy and artists, (10) classification, (11) legitimacy, and (12) pressures in the arts. These themes are subordinate within three codes: definition, existence, and legitimacy. 1-4 forms the definition, 5-7 belongs to existence, 8-10 is part of classification, and 11 and 12 is legitimacy.

### **4.1 Definition**

The definition of interdisciplinarity in the arts is the first step in understanding its phenomenon and the first step in answering the research question. To be able to define the concept, it's important to determine what indicators will contribute to this. After analysing the interviews different indicators were found that relate to the code definition. First of all, phrases that relate directly to defining interdisciplinarity in general, but also when the interviewee point out characters what make themselves interdisciplinary. Second, comparing interdisciplinarity with other relatable terms, for example hybridisation, crossover, or multi-disciplinarity. Last, opinions about benefits or disadvantages of (working) interdisciplinary are mentioned too.

#### 4.1.1 Definition of interdisciplinarity

The definition of interdisciplinary artists is ambiguous. However, in a few ways the artists and funders all agree with each other. In their answers they all mention the application of multiple disciplines to create an artwork that couldn't be realized without the collaboration of these fields. These can relate all to specific art fields or can be an artistic discipline in combination with disciplines outside the art field. All of them also meet up to this requirement in different ways. For example, Stefan describes interdisciplinarity in the arts as “*a fusion, a crossover between different fields. It may be the case that you can't find the answers within your own field, and there's a need for something different. There are circles in this way, and somewhere in the middle they overlap.*” Illustration 2 refers is a sketch of Stefan, how he explains his working field. He is a conceptual artist who implies knowledge of architecture, automotive and urbanism. He explains he works in the overlapping area. In this way, he describes the core of interdisciplinarity.

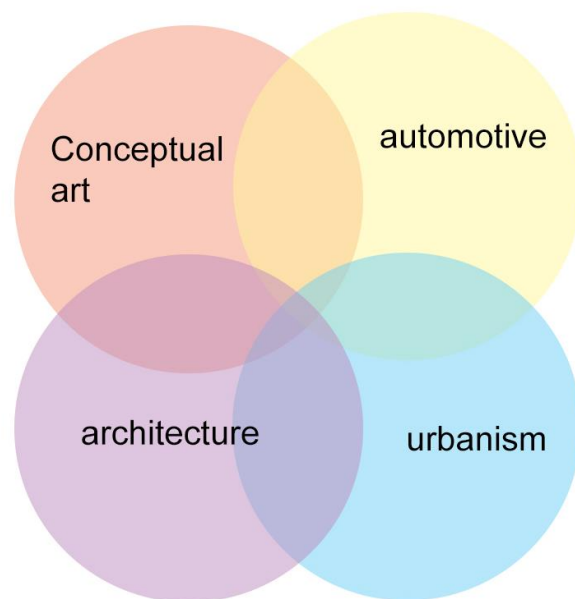


Illustration 2: sketch of Stefan's working area

Most of the interviewees also agree that there are no boundaries in which disciplines are or aren't combined. Ricky refers to the collaboration of different disciplines within the arts: “*I combine spatial design with music, and research this relation.*” Also Christa combines disciplines within the art field: “*I combined 2D drawing and portraits with 3D fashion design.*”

*These have always been separated from each other, but I combined them together... I think that's interdisciplinarity, combining different disciplines.*" Also the subsidizers think the merging of disciplines within the art field can be interdisciplinary. Floris explains that interdisciplinarity is *"an approach of artists who collaborate in any kind of way with something or someone outside its own disciplines in an art project. This can be a crossover of different art disciplines, but also a crossover of an art discipline with a social theme, for example art and the subject spatial development, the climate and energy, or economy."* He mentions the combination of artistic disciplines can be interdisciplinary, but also the merging of disciplines outside the art field. He does connect interdisciplinarity also, and more specific than the artists, to social themes. Steven also refers to the 'social' crossover: *"There may be interesting developments, crossing the boundaries to another discipline. This can be another artistic discipline, but a non-artistic disciplines as well. Then, it relates to a social genre, of a social theme."*

On the other hand, in Lucas's opinion interdisciplinarity refers to crossing fields instead of crossing sub disciplines. To the question if combining different artistic disciplines is interdisciplinary, he answers: *"I don't think so, they work both artistic. The mentality and process is both creative, only the expression is different. An economist and a fine artist are so different, they really think differently."* He refers to a bigger difference in working method. Artists seem to have a more similar way of working. However, this refers also to the mindset of interdisciplinarity, which will be discussed later. Martijn also refers Lucas's point, but in a different way. *"Is an interdisciplinary artist someone who combines fine arts with the creative industry? Or more literally sculpture, painting and video? It has become a habit that I don't see the difference. Personally, I like to involve discipline outside the art field. Science, the society, or politics."* He asks himself the question if combining disciplines within the art field is interdisciplinary, because in that case everything is interdisciplinary these days. He also refers more to crossovers of different fields.

#### **4.1.2 Collaboration**

Collaboration is a main characteristic that is discussed broadly. This discussion was mainly about its ambiguity, because it can be translated in one person that creates a collaboration of multiple disciplines itself, or collaboration between multiple parties with different disciplines that work together. To make it easier to distinguish these two dimensions, multiple disciplines from one person is called interdisciplinary work, and collaboration between parties from different disciplines is called interdisciplinary collaboration.



As the Floris' quote before already shows, interdisciplinarity is *“an approach of artists who collaborate in any kind of way with something or someone outside its own disciplines in an art project.”* With ‘something or someone’ he means that one person can mix its own discipline with other disciplines, but also collaboration between different parties. He thinks both can be interdisciplinary. Most of the interviewees have this same conception. For example Rogier: *“It’s possible to work autonomous interdisciplinary, which means that an artist operates in different disciplines and combines them. But it’s also possible in collaboration, collaborating with others outside your own discipline.”* He also points out that the type of collaboration is important. *“Not every collaboration is interdisciplinary”*. Femke and Floris go further into this meaning. Femke and Floris both also mention interdisciplinarity can be collaboration. They do point out that this collaboration must add value to the project, instead of ‘just’ collaboration. *“I think the base of interdisciplinarity lies in the intensification. It really has to merge instead of just collaboration. In case of interdisciplinary project the commission will examine what the added value is.”* (Femke)

Lucas from Studio 1:1 mentioned that interdisciplinary collaboration is the only way to work interdisciplinary, because one mind also has one vision, while different minds have different visions and together they are able to create something truly interdisciplinary. *“One person can work with different disciplines, but in the end you think about it as one person, one mind. As I pointed out before, what makes it interesting is that for example a physician thinks truly different. He/she has a different mindset and a different profession. I think a combination of people who think or work different, apart from the different fields, is interdisciplinary.”* Although others artists mention this as an advantage (which will be further discussed 4.1.5), they do not think this the specific character of interdisciplinarity. They do think one person can also work interdisciplinary, as Christa, Madje, and Ricky also do in practice. Because Lucas' didn't recognize interdisciplinarity from one person, his definition is similar to the definition others gave to interdisciplinary collaboration.

#### **4.1.4 Relatable terms**

During the interviews all kinds of phrases were mentioned that have a similar meaning as interdisciplinary. Multidisciplinary, crossover, social design, hybridisation, collaboration, and engaged art are terms that were mentioned many times during the interviews. Sometimes to compare it with interdisciplinarity or to mention similarities or differences, but sometimes the interviewees also mixed it up with interdisciplinarity. Therefore, defining the similarities and difference will contribute to the definition of interdisciplinary art.

Many times multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary were mixed up, while the respondents do think both have a different meaning. They are unanimous about the definition of multidisciplinary: *“I think multidisciplinary means using different disciplines on different moment, and interdisciplinary means using a the combination of disciplines. I always combine different disciplines.”* (Martijn) It means that a person or company works with different disciplines, but doesn't combine them together to create something. It's still thinking in boxes, while interdisciplinary is related to thinking outside those boxes.

Femke thinks that these terms have the same definition, but they are used in different times. *“A few years ago, if you used the word interdisciplinary everyone was satisfied. Then it became the term cross-interdisciplinary, after that crossover. I think it's something from all times, because I notice that they use every time other terms in the requests, while it means the same thing.”*

Jalila calls these terms as interdisciplinarity and crossover container concepts. This refers to a concept without a true defined meaning, in which case the user can give their own meaning to. *“Interdisciplinarity is a container concept that has become popular.”* This would mean that all these concepts are ambiguous. Jalila is also the only artist who does use terms relatable to interdisciplinary to describe her work, because our society is build upon frames. *“When people ask me if I am a scientist or an artist, I tell them that I work hybrid. Because of the frames you have to.”* Hybrid seems to be an overall term, which means you can combine anything. A hybrid artist is more specific. The research of Winkel, Gielen & Zwaan about the hybrid artist gives the definition that the artist (1) combines autonomous and applied art forms, and (2) the boundary between these autonomous and applied art forms are blurred in the perception of the artist him/herself or of its environment (Winkel, et.al., 2012). Also Martijn refers to hybridisation in the arts: *“combining different disciplines that are many times from the applied arts, it's a hybrid form of art.”* Interdisciplinarity also includes the combination of artistic disciplines with disciplines outside the artfield, and also these boundaries are blurred. Therefore, some of the interviewed artists can be called also hybridised: Ricky, Madje and Christa combine disciplines of the creative industry with fine art.

Other artists can also refer to crossovers. Roland and Stefan do work with different disciplines, but their core business in in both cases fine art. As Lucas mentions, he thinks *“a crossover is a temporarily fusion with another discipline, kind of an injection.”*

Analysing the different definitions of the relatable terms in comparison to interdisciplinarity, it seems to an umbrella term. Multidisciplinary is also an umbrella term,

which also refers to the usage of different disciplines. However, these are applied separated instead of mixed.

A hybrid artist is someone who merges different artistic disciplines. An artist who applies crossovers still has its own core business, but combines it temporarily with other discipline(s) inside or outside the art field. The terms social art and engaged art are art forms that refer already in the name itself to the different disciplines an artist applies, just as bio-art or electronic art. Therefore, these terms are covered by the umbrella term interdisciplinarity.

#### 4.1.4 Characteristics

The dimension characteristics discusses the positioning of the interviewees themselves in the field and within interdisciplinarity. As discussed above, interdisciplinarity can mean an artist works interdisciplinary and/or an artist works in collaboration with other parties interdisciplinary. This part discusses the role of categorical ambiguity for the artists, which means that a product is classifiable within several categories (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2013).

Table 2 shows different categories, resulted after analysing the interviews, which divide the artists. They can be divided in multiple categories which shows in what way they are interdisciplinary: Collaboration inside the art field and collaboration outside the art field, combining art with (1) disciplines outside the art field, (2) fine art disciplines, (3) disciplines of the creative industry. Important to note is that collaboration within the art field can also be interdisciplinary. However, none of the interviewees has mentioned this explicitly or collaborates with other artists interdisciplinary on a regular base.

Six out of nine of the interviewed artists apply interdisciplinary collaboration, of which Lucas, Martijn, and Jalila on regular base, while for Roland, Rogier and Ricky it happens sporadically. They work more often autonomous or on behalf of other parties, just as Stefan, Madje, and Christa. They imply different disciplines which they have knowledge of themselves, in other words, they work interdisciplinary. For example, Roland explains how he as a conceptual artist ended up in an interdisciplinary collaboration: *“I don’t think I’ve ever seen myself as interdisciplinary ... I was invited by the Van Abbe Museum to work on this art piece in collaboration with the TU, the Technical University. Philips used to be a part too.”*

	Collaboration within the art	Collaboration outside the	Combines discipline(s)	Combines fine art	Combines creative
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	field	art field	outside the art field		industry
Stefan				X	X
Roland		X		X	
Madje				X	X
Christa				X	X
Lucas		X	X		X
Martijn		X	X		X
Ricky		X			X
Rogier		X	X		X
Jalila		X	X	X	

Table 2: A division of the artists' activities.

Table 3 describes more specifically their work, interdisciplinary components, and shows the strength of interdisciplinarity. This strength is determined by the outcomes of table 2 in combination with the description of their work. Also the way and intensity they combine the different disciplines plays a role. Last, the focus of the artists is mentioned. The focus can be artistic or social. All of the artists with a social focus have a clear vision in what they want to contribute or change in the society. These artists are Lucas, Martijn, and Jalila. Stefan, Roland, Christa, Ricky, and Rogier have a more artistic focus. Madje is the only one who has a strong focus on both categories. Her mission is *“to morph the advertising world with the urban environment in an aesthetic better way. Advertising pays no respect to the urban environment.”* This shows she has a social focus, as well as an artistic.

However, if also their identity being an artist is ambiguous. For example, Lucas wouldn't call himself an artist. *“..... Jalila also refers to this ambiguity: “Sometimes people ask me if I'm a scientist or an artist. Then I tell them I'm hybrid”.*

These are also the artists who are ambiguous if they are still artists. (Lucas, Jalila). Except for Madje, however this could be explained with her main focus of disciplines within the arts field. With these artist is not the question if they artists, but what kind of artists. This is also the case with the artists that have an artistic focus. They have a clear vision in the arts. Some artists use other disciplines as inspiration for their work, while others need these to be able to create their work. However, it's important to note that some artists just started their career and others have more experience. The ones with more experiences turned out to be more clear about their work, while starters turned out to be more inquisitively and experimental. They are still experimenting and in search of what kind of artist they are. Therefore, defining their identity and interdisciplinarity was very difficult and is classified more neutral than the more experienced artists.

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Interdisci- plinarity</b>	<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Focus</b>
Stefan	*	Conceptual artist who implies architecture, urbanism and automotive	Artistic
Roland	*	Painter who collaborated with TU Eindhoven	Artistic
Madje	***	Designer who combines fashion, architecture and advertising what she named City Dressing.	Artistic/ Social
Christa	**	Fashion designer who works between the boundaries of art and fashion, combines 2D with 3D.	Artistic
Lucas	****	Designer with a focus on public space and the city. Combines it with disciplines outside the art field. Collaboration with other parties	Social
Martijn	***	Artist who focuses on projects in the public space or in organisations. Combines disciplines in the art field and outside the art field, big interest in health	Social
Ricky	**	Designer who combines space with music	Artistic
Rogier	**	Artist who combines art with science	Artistic
Jalila	****	Bio-tech artist, entrepreneur. Combines art with bio-technology and collaborates with parties outside the art field	Social

Table 3: Degree of interdisciplinarity in activities and activity description

Starting with Stefan, who describes himself as a conceptual artist, works also as an (urban) architect and used to work as an automotive. These different categories influence his work, but his artworks remain to be categorized as conceptual art. Therefore the strength of interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*. *“The first field I work in is automotive. This is a substantively part of my part. Also, I studied architecture and delved into urbanism ... Finally I concluded that combining these disciplines creates new findings.”*

Roland describes himself as a fine artist, who uses neuroscience as inspiration. In his last project he collaborated with the Technical University of Eindhoven, commissioned by the Van Abbe Museum. Therefore, he did an interdisciplinary collaboration by bringing art and science together. Because he’s mainly an autonomous artist, this interviewee’s interdisciplinarity is \*.

Madje of Studio VollaersZwart is a designer who combines sculpture, advertising, fashion and architecture. She classified this as a new discipline called City Dressing, which results mainly in assignments from companies or municipalities. VollaersZwart develops the designs from beginning to realization. Their interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*\*.

Christa van der Meer is a just established fashion designer and also works as a fine artist. She combines these categories also by mixing 2D drawings with 3D fashion. She thinks her work is on the intersection of fine art and fashion. Her interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*.

Lucas of Studio 1:1 works in collaborations with experts outside the art field on projects of (urban) public spaces in a broad sense. Collaboration in architecture, urbanism, biology, and technology show the broad field of disciplines that come together to realize the projects. Their function changes depending on the project, which can be commissioned but can also be autonomous. They can be designer, coach, researcher, or creative. Therefore, Lucas doubts if he could call himself an artist. Interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*\*\*.

Martijn, the founder of Studio Engelbregt, is an artist with a main focus on graphic design. However, he doesn’t always call himself an artist and sometimes gives himself another title as director or process manager. Disciplines that he implies in his work are graphic design, spatial design, social design, and the last few years he focuses also more on health. His projects are mainly assigned by the municipality or autonomous, and he collaborates more often these days with people from the field of health. He could be classified as a social artist. Interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*\*.

Ricky is a starting designer who combines spatial design with music, which focuses on the research between these two disciplines. He also collaborates in projects with the role of

designer, in which case it seems the work division is clear. His interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*.

Rogier is also a starting designer who combines art with science. He applies different disciplines as graphic design, film, and product design, while the subject is focused on scientific theories and biological processes. Last year he did an artist in residency to collaborate with scientists. His interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*.

Jalila works on a broad field of disciplines with a main focus on bio-art technology. She collaborates with biologists, dermatologists, and technologists to be able to develop her works. She also created Bio-Art Lab, a platform for Bio-Artists to collaborate. Her interdisciplinarity is ranked as \*\*\*\*. *“As an artist I work on the crossover of art and science, collaborating with many parties, also international. I work a bit as a generalist and need many specialists, especially of the field of biotechnology. Many times these are specialist islands in which case they have no idea about each other’s existence and whether it could contribute to their own research. As an artist I bring these people together to work together on research questions or develop ideas.”*

#### **4.1.5 Benefits and disadvantages**

The benefits of interdisciplinarity can be divided in two themes. First, Christa and Madje point out the diversity and freedom it comes with. Although the arts in general have conventions too, an interdisciplinary artist experiences these are not all obtained for him. *“It can go all kinds of ways. I really like that interaction in variety, because I like doing all kinds of different things in one day. It’s never boring.”* (Christa) *“It’s a benefit that we work in undefined spaces, because you have more freedom. There are no conventions, no boxes and no rules. This contributes to ideas that you wouldn’t get when you’re working in a sort tunnel vision.”* (Madje)

Second, almost all of the artists mention interdisciplinary collaboration as a way to find projects and realize the projects. Rogier relates it to networking, while Ricky mentions the practical benefits of it. *“It’s a benefit that you’re building a network. They can link you to others what can lead to other things or projects.”* (Rogier) *“Collaboration is necessary. I collaborate with someone who’s developing a ceramics 3D printer. Without him I wouldn’t be able to participate in it or develop it.”* (Ricky)

However, Roland, Lucas, and Jalila see the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in another way. They think it increases the validity of their projects. This refers to the realization. Roland mentions working interdisciplinary gives you the chance to apply

other's knowledge to your vision and make it more powerful. This is in line with Lucas' argument. He explains that interdisciplinary collaboration makes sure artists do not only linger in the concept, but also ground their ideas theoretically and enable them to put the next step in realization.

*“Collaboration with other disciplines brings more knowledge. Otherwise you would remain in conceptual ideas. It provides you and the project of a substantive basis or a reality check. It makes sure that your ideas are also doable and realistic. ... The project was our idea, but with the help of a planning office and Alterra, which is the ecological institute of the Netherlands, we were able to develop our idea to something realistic. It brings you further, much further than when we would work on our own.”*

Also Jalila thinks other one's knowledge is one of the most important components. She can't work in another way than interdisciplinary, because she works on very difficult questions. There are so many specialisms that she needs to apply, to be able to find answers on these questions. Also she combines art, biology, science and technology, which makes it also possible for her to put that next step to validity: *“In case of the bullet proof skin important questions are: Is it possible? Is it allowed? Is it something we should approve as society? You want to transcend these questions by substantiate it with scientific research. In this way you can seriously think about safety and its duality, because you made it tactile.”*

Next to benefits, the disadvantages of interdisciplinarity will be discussed. Many of the interviewed artists mention they have trouble to categorize themselves. This seems to be characteristic for interdisciplinary artists. For Christa it's a downside that many times people don't understand what she does. Christa finds herself between fine arts and fashion. She refers to conflicting conventions in relation to identity between different fields. Identity is very important in fashion, while it's less important in the fine arts. People from the field and some funds recommend to be unambiguous and 'to pick one identity'. *“The persons that coach me about positioning yourself in the field and at funds recommend me to be unambiguous about my work. Don't make up a story about you're also an artist ... People of Stroom and people from the work field recommend me this. Especially fashion designers, because they are more engaged with branding and positioning than artists.”*

Madje and Jalila also experience the disadvantage of ambiguity. Therefore, they define themselves with more clear terms to position themselves more clearly. Madje's design studio merges exhibition design, architecture, fashion, and advertising with each other, which results in their own invented discipline: City dressing. This contributes to be able to define your work in the field. However, this is still difficult because others are not yet familiar with it. *“It still*



*brings problems, because it's not defined... We are in the process of profiling ourselves international, but then again you really have to define yourself clearly. And people still don't understand it. We have been working since 25 years, and it's still an issue."*

Jalila mentions she gets many times questions about ambiguity, and therefore answers in terms that defines herself more clearly. *"People ask me many times if I'm an artist or a scientist. I just answer I'm hybrid... it's because the society creates frameworks to make it easier to understand. Unfortunately, it's also still the way the society thinks. That's why it's difficult to explain what I'm doing. That's why I call myself hybrid, to make it easier."* She describes herself as hybrid, because the society is focused on frameworks. That's also why it's difficult to describe yourself. This is in line with Lucas thoughts, about the difficulty to describe yourself straightforward. He can describe the studio's activities very well, but it's difficult to put one label on their profession, because of the combination of design, creative thinking, concept development and process development. He isn't sure how he should qualify his work, because of the crossovers. *"...I don't think I would call myself an artist"*.

Although some experience ambiguity as a disadvantage because other don't always understand it, Martijn experiences it's a benefit of art in regular. *"First I was a graphic designer. At one point I changed it in autonomous artist or applied artist. Every time I give myself a new professional title. Sometimes I call myself a director, a process manager. That's also the reason why I prefer to work in the arts. You have the opportunity to invent your own procession."* However, this more a intrinsic experience, while the others mention the external experience.

Another disadvantage that has been mentioned often is the loss of autonomy. Roland mentions the danger of loss in autonomy. Relating this to Bourdieu, who distinguishes the art world in an autonomous field and a popular field, Roland suggests that because of the collaboration with fields outside the art field, art may get more dependent from other factors and gives up its autonomy. This also relates to the freedom many respondents mentioned as a pro. Because they are artists, they are allowed to "do whatever they want" within the society. But Roland warns for the other side when artists blend more and more in the society. At some point the artist may lose this freedom and become too dependent from the society.

Also Lucas mentions the artists can lose their autonomy working interdisciplinary.

"I'm not sure if the development of artists who are starting to think from social interest to get projects to work on is a good development." However, Jalila doesn't think this is a disadvantage of interdisciplinary collaboration, but explains this is a development created by the government. This will be discussed more briefly at the causes and effects of subsidy.

## 4.2 Existence

As shown in the previous chapter, the interviewees recognized the existence of interdisciplinarity in the arts. This chapter refers to the code existence, which shows the results why interdisciplinary is happening, according to the artists and the funds. First, the more personal-related vision on interdisciplinarity will be discussed. Then, interdisciplinarity in historical perspective will be described. This focuses on the question if interdisciplinarity is a phenomenon of all times. Lastly, it will be discussed in contemporary social perspective. Here will be discussed which influences in the last few years have had an influence on the increase of interdisciplinarity in the society.

### 4.1.3 Vision

A few artists mention the importance of a specific mindset to be able to work interdisciplinary. Lucas refers to the mentality of different parties that work interdisciplinary. People from the same field (as an example a painter and a sculptor) have quiet similar mentalities and the same way of working, while a scientist and an artist have a very different way of thinking and working. *“I don’t think so, they work both artistic. The mentality and process is both creative, only the expression is different. An economist and a fine artist are so different, they really think differently. And because they collaborate, they have to adapt and change their way of thinking. For me that’s interdisciplinary collaboration.”* This collaboration will create something different for both parties because they have to adjust, while two artists won’t have to change their way of thinking that much.

Also Madje refers several times to ‘featuring a mission’. By this she means *“a way of thinking and working that a person must have to be able to work interdisciplinary, to be able to think about everything and create anything.”* The actual meaning of this is not clear. However, she explains it by referring to her personal vision.

Other interviewees also mention various reasons that relate to a specific vision. The artists seem to refer that interdisciplinarity triggers the creative thinking. The parties have to adapt their regular way of thinking and process to be able to collaborate. For instance, Jalila answers on the question why she works interdisciplinary: *“I cannot work in another way. The projects I start are so complex and that broad, that this is the only way for me to be able to work.”*

Although many of the interviewed artists include disciplines outside the art field, it's important to note the difference between inclusion of other disciplines as inspiration or functional. In general, artists may include different subjects to their art form that may look as they combine different disciplines. However, in this case it would be possible to conclude that every artist works interdisciplinary, because every artist gets inspiration from different sources. But interdisciplinarity refers to more than inspiration or a subject. It seems to have a more functional core. Martijn refers indirectly also to this functional role an artist can have instead of only making aesthetic artworks. *"Many times art is used as a sauce to make everything appear more beautiful. That's also important, but I think that the creativity of art can also have a different role. For example the art project which is a research whether paintings influence our health."* He also refers to a different meaning art can have, a more functional role in this case. It seems that these artists refer to a change art can initiate. Art does not have to be only beautiful or only meant for a small, passive audience. These artists seem to have a clear vision about how they want to influence the society, visual or even physical. Also Femke as an external advisor, refers to more practical role artists can have: *"There's a need in Health care for people who work in a different way, something that the art field could reply to. We really think in a different way."*

The last vision mentioned relates to innovation. Interdisciplinarity is still partly undiscovered. *"Crossovers are an exciting area, because they are still quite undiscovered, there's so much to explore. Interdisciplinarity means thinking further, thinking differently than the existing frameworks. And crossing these frameworks."* Jalila

#### **4.2.1 Historical Perspective**

Most interviewees think interdisciplinarity has always existed, but it has become more common the last few years. Different artists mentioned some examples in the arts: Dali, Seurat, Cezanne, and Le Corbusier.

*"For instance, Seurat. His paintings are based on new discoveries in theory of color relating to color perception. The study of the retina, light-sensitive cells and the effects of dots. This scientific knowledge made him able to make the composition of colored dots that the eye combines to a color. So you might say artists as Cezanne and Seurat also worked interdisciplinary."* – Roland

*“These type of persons are from all times. For instance Dali. He also composed cuisine. So it’s not anything new.” –Madje*

*“Le Corbusier is an example of an artist who combined all kinds of disciplines too.” -Stefan*

However, most of the interviewees do notice it has become increasingly important or a regular thing in contemporary times. Stefan thinks *“it’s something from all times. However, now it’s become common practice”*. Ricky and Jalila give the example of Leonardo Da Vinci, who also had these qualities. *“I think we are going back to the time of Leonardo Da Vinci. The time of being an artist, scientist, driven by a intrinsic motivation to explore, learn, work, and create.”* She mentions this has to do with the flows of artistic qualities to come and go. Back in the time of Leonardo Da Vinci, knowledge was only meant for the privileged.

However, these scholars of that time, among others Leonardo Da Vince, were interdisciplinary; they were scientists, researchers, artists, and inventors. The knowledge they had was used to learn more. The image of the Romantic artist that is of an independent genius who creates original works of art in isolation and then brings it to its public. This distance between artist and public still remains with us today (Brooklyn College, 2009). Jalila thinks these are flows during time that comes up and disappears. She says it’s now very common, and that’s no way anymore to distinguish yourself: *“I think that more and more people work hybrid nowadays. You have to start looking with a magnifying glass to find the specialized artists. This also means that calling yourself hybrid doesn’t mean that much anymore.”*

Lucas thinks interdisciplinarity has always existed, but also that it’s a trend that works as a flow. Right now it’s popular. *“I think it’s something from all times in varying strength. It’s a sort undulation which we can call almost popular at the moment... it’s applied a lot nowadays, and it’s some kind of popular term.”*

Martijn relates interdisciplinarity also to art with a social focus. *“That the arts are concerned about the society has been something of all times. Interdisciplinary and collaboration were also important during the Bauhaus. But I think there are pressures on the art field to change and become more dynamic outside its own field. The search to meaning in your work is a character of artists I think. These different layers mix up, de demand of the society and the demand from the artists themselves. More and more artists want to work in a different way.”* (Martijn)

#### **4.2.3 Social perspective**

This part refers to the more contemporary external influences from the society that contributes to the increasing interest and popularity of interdisciplinarity. As mentioned before, the artists

and the funders as well, think there's an increasing interest in interdisciplinarity in contemporary times. This chapter focuses on the different reasons that relate to this increasing interest: education, the crisis, and distinction.

*“Focusing on the society, since the 60's we have become more freely, people were more open to the world. The world has become smaller, but also bigger. Anyone can go anywhere. This leads to crossovers in cultural disciplines, but also in general” – Madje.* Many artists mention characters of today's world. Over the years the world has become smaller because of different developments. This creates chances for people to spread their ideas in a much faster way, all over the world. Roland also mentions that *“we live in a time of connection and consistency”*. These connections have increased because of Internet and social media.

*No doubt it's related to the age of the Internet, and the influences of social media. It makes the world smaller, and the role you can have in it becomes bigger, because it's much easier and faster to connect with more people. It also happens in the cultural field, in the arts – Floris.*

Jalila refers also to the influence the media has on interdisciplinarity, but in a different way. She mentions it contributed to the acknowledgement of interdisciplinarity by the funds, because of reaching a bigger audience in less time. *“You create something, it appeals to people, the media picks it up, the audience gets interested, and finally the government picks it up. And then the focus of the money flows change.”*

One of the funders, Femke, also refers to the influence education has on the trend of research and experiment, what relates to interdisciplinarity. Artists do multiple studies, because they experience they can't find a job. Because of these different studies, they teach about different fields, which can lead to crossovers. *“The fact that young designers stay unemployed when they graduate, is also a result of the crisis. There are no jobs, so young artist increasingly choose to do multiple educations.*

Other interviewees also mention the crisis as a factor that influenced the increasing interest in interdisciplinarity. Artists had to find new ways to earn money, because there was less room for culture. Floris also refers to this moment: *“In 2013, I think it was during Rutte 1, with Halbe Zijlstra as secretary of culture, that they cut off a big part of the cultural funds' financials... Hopefully it will restore.”* This resulted in artists looking for other ways to get financed. One of these ways is to play a bigger part in the society. Focussing on the social role of interdisciplinarity, among others, Roland says: *“It's turning up again, in reaction of the*

*development of the last five/ten years. It may fall together with the crisis, that artists and people too are dealing more with their surroundings than before.*” This leads to more practical art, that finds its places outside the conventional institutions: “The group of artists who want to mean something outside the walls of the museum increased over the years – Martijn”.

The crisis also has its influence on the role of networking. Stefan mentions that through the personal network the chances to collaborate or get assigned are increasing. “It has to do with the crisis. If you would work on your own, it’s harder to find work. Through networking, knowing other people, it’s easier to find a job.

Though, begin a young artist who just graduated, Christa argues against the influence of the crisis. She experiences there are enough opportunities to get financial support, also with the funds.

An effect of the crisis is that it’s more difficult to find a job. Therefore, artists try to distinguish themselves from others in gain symbolic capital, and find other channels to get economic capital. Floris mentions the groups of artists who focus on social matters *“increased in the last five years, and enhanced because of the financial cuts in the arts field. Artists are widening their horizons and searching for other solutions. They are leaving the traditional stages and are looking for other ways to reach their audience.”* – Floris Also Martijn and Jalila refer to the growing group of artists who *“want to make a difference outside the museum”* – Martijn. As mentioned before, interdisciplinarity is still partly undiscovered, what means it can contribute in distinguishing yourself from others. This difficulty of finding a job is even stronger because of the increasing number of people that work in the art field. *“An increasing amount of people are working in the production field, so you have to find a way to distinguish yourself from others.”* – Femke

The first phenomenon relates to the influence educations have on the interdisciplinarity of the students. Madje, Lucas, Christa, and Ricky mentioned that during their education they were already triggered to interdisciplinarity. Madje studied sculpture at the end of the 80’s. She explains sculpture was during that time in transition, moving from a movement to another. Artists and student were still searching what this new movement would be. Therefore, there were no conventions at that moment and everything was allowed. *“Back then, sculpture was evolving. What it used to be was dying, and something was arising. It was a good breeding place to integrate everything, all the disciplines to find out which way we are heading.”* Also Lucas explains his education was the start of ambiguity: *“I studied Public Space at the Art Academy, which isn’t a calibrated disciplines as architecture, urbanism or*

*landscape architecture is. It's a discipline based and inspired on multiple disciplines, and which you also have to collaborate with.*" Christa, who studied fashion design, mentions the influence of different classes during education and being surrounded by fine artists. She mixes fashion design with 2D fine art. *"During Art School I also followed drawing/painting lessons every week, during four years. I think that had a big influence. Also, I was surrounded by fine artists."* Ricky also refers to his education with a multiple focus: *"The education in spatial design teaches you all kinds of artistic disciplines, what makes you feel a bit manic. You got a taste of all kinds of disciplines."*

### **4.3 Classification**

Previous chapter shows interdisciplinarity is a phenomenon of all times, but it has become a trend in the last few years. This chapter focuses on the question how this increasing group of artists is classified by funds. First, the experiences of the artists on applying for subsidy at art funds will be discussed. Then, the overall points that influence the chances to get subsidized, according to the artists and the funders as well, will be mentioned. Lastly, will be discussed how the funders classify specifically interdisciplinary artists.

#### **4.3.1 Subsidy and the artist**

All of the artists have applied at least one time at an art fund to get subsidized. A few of them have requested subsidy more than five years ago, while others requested last years. This will give more information about how they think that the art funds are interested in interdisciplinarity, and how they think it has changed over the years. This will be discussed in a chronological way.

Starting with Madje, who has a studio in interdisciplinary design with Pascal for 25 years, hasn't requested at funds in 15 years because it always created problems. She does think it's easier nowadays because interdisciplinarity is more legitimate now and also recognized by the funds.

*"Earlier, working interdisciplinary always caused problems when we applied for subsidy. Nowadays the rules changed, it's fully accepted now by the funds. I think it's so much easier nowadays, but I haven't applied for it anymore."*

Madje tells about her experience in the beginning of her career when she designed an exhibition where 60 people presented their work. She asked them to move away from their discipline for this exhibition. Although the audience was very positive about the exhibition, the art fund first didn't want to subsidize this project. *"There was no money for this different*

*way of thinking. It didn't exist, so we were send away ... Finally, the project was funded, because of its success and we had some proponents. But the conventions were against us, because you had to stay with your discipline. Later, the funds changed the rules."*

Also Jalila explains she didn't got subsidized in the past, because of interdisciplinarity. However, this has been only 6 years ago. The first time she requested subsidy in 2009, she didn't receive it because the art fund didn't qualify it as art. *"In 2009 the phrase hybrid didn't exist ... It wasn't accepted yet, we were pioneers."* However, nowadays she does get subsidized for the same project, because these days they do understand it. This could also refer to the research of Rao & Durand (2005). Back then, Jalila was relatively new in the field. Over the years, her status as an artist increased, being an example of contemporary artists these days. Rao & Durand show crossing boundaries is a disadvantage for low-status artists, while it's positive for high-status artists.

Both artists experienced that they influenced the chances to receive subsidy for the younger artists. *"In that period, a few artists had to fight to work this way. It's much easier for the new generation, who we took under our wings"* –Jalila. *"We did clear the way for many artists who work interdisciplinary"* – Madje. As Rao & Durand (2005) also mention, high-status have a positive effect on blurring boundaries. They stimulate the critics, the funders, in redefining the boundaries. This will be further discussed in the chapter Legitimization. Analysing the younger interviewed artists, the suppositions it's easier these days to receive subsidy seem to be right.

A younger artist who just entered the professional world is Christa, a fashion designer who mixes 2D fine arts with 3D fashion. She confirms the expectations of Madje that it's easier these days to receive subsidy as an interdisciplinary artist. She notices that it's *"hot and happening"*. She also thinks in some cases it could be an advantage. She knew the Stimuleringsfonds encourages crossovers, which made it ideal for her to request subsidy there. Though, this relates to the regulations the subsidies attempt. Martijn mentions following the regulations is the main important thing. *"Crossing boundaries doesn't influence the chances at subsidy. You just have to be aware what you apply for. Every fund has several department and projects that focus on different genres.* He also refers crossing boundaries isn't an issue anymore. Also Ricky mentions it's common that people work interdisciplinary.

Christa, Lucas and Jalila do think interdisciplinarity is an advantage. Christa, Lucas and Jalila agree they can request for subsidy at more funds because they works with different disciplines. Jalila and Lucas refer also to funds outside the art field *"You work with different disciplines, so you can apply at the funds that focus on these disciplines"*. Christa mentions



the funds within the art field. The Stimuleringsfonds focuses on the creative industry, where she can apply as a fashion designer. Further, she could also apply at funds meant for fine arts, because she finds herself at the grey area between commercial and fine art.

*I think I can say it's an advantage for me, because I can request for subsidy at more funds. I make fashion and fine art as well. ... Stroom in The Hague focuses on fine arts, where I'm also registered. I think I could qualify myself to get subsidized here, because my designs are close to fine arts, and I also make fine art.*

Lucas agrees it can be an advantage, based on interdisciplinary collaboration, to receive subsidy. He thinks that involving other parties in the project is received as a positive thing, because it stimulates other parties too. *“The broad focused team was an advantage I think. And that the project is in a further phase ... These can influence the chances, but most important is the idea and its urgency.”* - Lucas

Further, Jalila also refers the advantage working interdisciplinary has, but in a different. Crossovers are at the moment a trend term, that's used by many to increase the chances on subsidy. Femke, one of the subsidizers, also mentions these terms return in many of the applications. *“You have certain trend quotes: Innovation, creativity, crossover, durability. These words are within but also outside the art field trending topics. These are all an advantage.”* This would mean interdisciplinarity in general is a trend inside and outside the art field.

Lastly, four of the nine interviewed artists combine artistic disciplines with disciplines outside the art field. Therefore, they could also apply at funds from these other fields. In the interviews turned out that Jalila is the only one of the interviewees who declares she requests not only at art funds, but also crossovers, scientific funds, and economic funds.

#### **4.3.2 Other points that influence the chances of honouring**

There are several concerns that influence the chances on receiving subsidy, according to criteria the funds persist.

First of all, they mention there are all kind of subsidies for all kind of art. As an artist you have to find the subsidies that are in line with your work. Nowadays there are also subsidies that focus, which can make it easier for these artists to get subsidized. The BKVB used to be the art fund in the Netherlands. Jalila, Madje, Lucas and Stefan have also requested subsidy here. Nowadays there are different art funds focussed on different art disciplines.

Mondriaan Fonds and Stimuleringsfonds are two out of six art funds that focus on visual arts. Ricky, Christa, Rogier, and Lucas have all received subsidy for talent development of het Stimuleringsfonds once. Since December 2014 a new temporary fund has been set up: The Art of Impact. This fund focuses on engaged art to stimulate the connection between art and society.

Second, creative source refers to mentioning the artist also as the creative force of the artwork. Although some of the artists mention an established name increases the influence on receiving subsidy, *“It really depends on your previous success, they always look at your previous work”* –Martijn, the subsidizers don’t agree this has an influence. Femke mentions this *“can work against, because the funds have high standard in this case. You have to justify why you would still need to get subsidized.”*

Also the funds mention the importance of formal art education and previous work. Floris explains that at most art funds a formal art education is one of the requirements. Also the Art of Impact claims that a project has to have one formal artist in collaboration in order to qualify for subsidy. However, the artist doesn’t have to apply for it him/herself. Also previous work is an important factor that can influence the remuneration.

Work that’s already in progress seems to influences the chances on receiving subsidy. Ricky and Lucas mention the benefit of already being in the process of the artwork. *“I understood that other people, working at the same crossover, also applied for the same subsidy, but didn’t receive it. My projects were already in process, so I think that was decisive.”*

Lastly, communicating the plans and it urgency are very important too. Femke: *“Most important is that you can make clear what you want to do and if you can convince us for its urgency. That is the most important. The quality of the project is important as well. But less important is a great resume with hundreds of presentations, or being a blockbuster in the field. We are more interested in which moment of career the supplier is at this moment. Does the request add anything to the designer’s work or career? Is the project relevant for the field he/she works in and is it relevant for the artist him/herself?”*

### **4.3.3 Classification**

Classification is the process of assigning objects, artworks in this case, to classes and categories (Burrows, 2007). Funders are the persons who assign and examine, if the products, the applications, are selected towards the right category, and if the quality is high enough.

However, interdisciplinary products are difficult to classify, because of its ambiguity. In this chapter is discussed how the funders classify interdisciplinary artworks, how these are organized relating to the boundaries they created, and how they handle applications that cross these boundaries.

All the governmental funds represent different art fields, considering the broad spectrum of the fields are all represented. These funds have their own categories en created their boundaries. The interviewed funders are all from different funds, to be able to find out their categories and their boundaries. In case these boundaries are crossed, it depends on the fund how they deal with these applications.

Steven is an employee at the Mondriaanfonds. He explains this fund focuses mainly on visual arts and heritage, but doesn't exclude crossovers, inside and outside the art field. In this case, the focus lays on the social theme. *"We subsidize of course the visual arts and heritage. But it's common there are interesting developments happening on the boundaries with other disciplines. Other artistic disciplines, but disciplines that don't relate to the arts as well. In this case, it contains societal groups or a social theme."*

The Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie is a fund introduced in 2013 to subsidize the creative industry, architecture, e-culture, and crossovers (Stimuleringsfonds). As the description already mentions, stimulating crossovers is part of the regulation, which is in line with the description of Femke: *"I notice that the fund understands that the boundaries are being crossed."*

The Art of Impact is a fund, launched December 2014, which focuses on artistic projects that cross the boundary towards the society, to focus on social issues. Floris, an employee at the Art of Impact, explains how they determine at the Art of Impact if a project is qualified to be honoured. The collaboration with external advisors at most governmental funds is common. This counteracts against nepotism between funds and artists. Also it contributes to the objectification of the qualifications, because of the various disciplines are represented by different external advisors.

*"We collaborate with external advice commissions. They do not work for the funds, but are from a big sea of advisors. I think this has been set up during the formation of the cultural funds 20 years ago. Advises were assessed by peer reviews, which means artists were criticized by fellow artists, instead of civil servants who may not know anything about art. The commission is composed based on the criteria of the regulation. They select advisors that are*

*the most qualified to give advise in certain regulation. The principle is that expertise of artistic quality with a commission is ensured.” - Floris*

How the funds classify interdisciplinary projects, depends on the specific funds and their regulations. Every fund focuses on different genres or disciplines. The Stimuleringsfonds, for instance, also focuses on crossovers. Therefore, they also tempt to subsidize interdisciplinary projects. Various interviewed artist requested subsidy at the Stimuleringsfonds. As an example, Ricky refers to his feedback on the application for the crossover subsidy of the fund: *“The commission was very positive about the crossover between sound design and spatial design”* This was a temporary regulation meant for crossovers. Rogier was also honoured for this open call. The fund noticed crossovers are common in the creative industry. Therefore they introduced this temporary initiative, focused on crossovers only. This also contains interdisciplinarity, as discussed at the chapter definition.

Femke is an external advisor, among others, of the Stimuleringsfonds. She refers to a specific application that shows the consideration a commission has to make to qualify projects. It relates to the importance of classification, to be able to place the projects in the right categories, and why this is difficult with interdisciplinary projects.

*On the other hand we often receive applications in which case the component design is not clear. As an example, the application of a cultural institute that collaborated with an artist, who focused on scenography. This is an applied discipline, so it's in line with our fund. But actually it was a project with a focus on fine art and an exhibition in autonomous setting. It was an extensive discussion if this application fit our regulations. Finally it got subsidized, also because of its high quality. - Femke*

The fact this project created a discussion and finally got honoured, relates to the positive side categorical ambiguity can have. Critics, in this case the funders, are able to understand these crossovers, and can interpret it as stratification, ambiguity & depth (Griswold, 1987). In this case, the product is evaluated by its contribution to the field; creativity, originality, and innovation (Venrooij & Schmutz, 2010). Femke refers to the products high quality, which, as discussed earlier, is one of the main requirements.

It also shows interdisciplinarity can be a discussion point. She mentions the component design is important to get qualified for a subsidy at the Stimuleringsfonds.

Though, it can be interdisciplinary, but this specific component also has to be present too. The component design wasn't that clear and therefore, it was a point of discussion. However, as the research of Hannan et al (2007) shows that common crossovers may allow agents to agree on the extension. Crossovers between the creative industry and fine arts are probably one of the most common ones. Therefore, the honouring of this project may be more likely. On the other hand, the high quality was the decisive factor. Therefore, quality is the main factor that determines its chances.

*I started one year ago at the Stimuleringsfonds, and I noticed that the external advisors all think there should be more possibilities for artists to do research, experiment and crossovers. We want it to be easier and less strict, so we don't immediately have to reject these projects. These movements are happening in the field, so it would be weird if we wouldn't move along.*  
- Femke

These kind of notifications are the first step in setting changes in the funds in motion. External advisors have, among others, influence on changes in the regulations of the funds. They function as gatekeepers notice changes in the production field. Gatekeepers evaluate cultural products (Alexander, 2011). The role of the funders, and especially the external advisors, also includes being a gatekeeper in the field and advises the funds what projects are qualified to honour. But they also inform funds, and indirectly the government, about developments, trends and movements in the field. Femke explains that the external advisors of the Stimuleringsfonds congregate a few times a year, to discuss developments and changes they notice in the art field. *"The field is always moving and developing. It would be weird if funds wouldn't move along with these developments. This is also the reason why funds work with external advisors. These people are from the field of production, and they know what is happening."* This means she, among others, notices changes in the art field and advises the funds. These changes are discussed with the funds and compared with developments noticed by the requests the funds get themselves from the artists. *"Funds respond faster to the developments noticed in the field, by aiming open calls that relate to these developments. The funds ask us for advice about these signals they notice. If this is the case, we can create an open call, funded by them"* (Femke).

#### **4.4 Legitimacy**

As shown in previous chapter, interdisciplinarity can still lead to discussion. However, the funds imply different initiatives to be able to classify these ambiguous products. Further, it's in a process of legitimacy, in a way that these artists can apply for subsidy too, and don't fall between the different regulations that focus on more specific disciplines. This chapter focuses on developments within the funds that influence the chances of these products. Further, it discusses the pressures of external parties, and the influences of the artists on changing these regulation.

#### 4.4.1 Legitimacy

Various developments within the funds have influenced the chances of these products. Last years, many regulations changed towards products that are interdisciplinary. Here is discussed to what extend interdisciplinarity is legit according to these funds, and how the process of legitimacy goes.

These days, the funds have recognized interdisciplinarity and introduced different changes that influences the chances to receive subsidy for these artists. As mentioned before, the artists think interdisciplinarity is a form of all times. The funds agree, and mention, just as the artists, it's increasingly popular these days Steven mentions *"It has become a trend that's emphasized these days, but it's not a new development"*. Femke says *"It seems to be new, but I don't think it is. There have always been crossovers. Though, it's identified these days, through subsidies that focus on it."*

Also Steven mentions the funds respond faster to changes in the field: *"As a fund, we are close to the production field. Developments and plans come out quickly... We're connected with various organisations, as an example the PKNL. Museum associations, gallery associations. They feed us also with developments they notice."*

There are different ways the funds adapt the developments they notice. The temporary open call has been pointed out before. But also other initiatives take place. Steven describes the different possibilities there are, and his role in this process. Projects that fall outside the regular regulations, because of their ambiguity, can contact him to discuss the possibilities to receive subsidy.

*"Sometimes it leads directly to an adaption in our regulations. Sometimes it's more indirectly in a sense we first examine if these developments truly find place. More practically, we also*

*launch pilots, which is my working area, pilot projects and innovation. If someone develops a project or product that we don't have any room for yet, we can take a look at it and possibly support it as an exception. Then we evaluate it in its importance, its effect, and if it should be adapted in the regulations or if we have to create a new one” – Steven.*

The six governmental art funds also collaborate together, to make it able for artists who work between certain disciplines to apply to subsidy focused on their specialization; Mondriaanfonds, Stumleringsfonds, Fonds Podiumkunsten, Fonds voor Cultuurparticipatie, Nederlands Filmfonds, and Nederland Letterfonds. These funds collaborate in different ways with each other, to discuss changes in the fields, adaptations in regulations, creating open calls, or temporary collaborations. Both Steven and Femke refer to the open call for crossovers, which was a temporary collaboration between the Mondriaanfonds and the Stimuleringsfonds. *“Often we collaborate with other funds, for instance, we just collaborated with the Stimuleringsfond and launched a crossover regulation” –Steven.*

A few artists also refer to their honouring that was regulated by collaborations within funds or between funds. Also many of the artists got honoured at open calls. As an example, Lucas was honoured two times and in both cases contained collaboration, within a fund and between several funds. First, during a collaboration between the Stimuleringsfonds and BKVB. Second, was a combination of two categories at the Stimuleringsfonds:

*It was a combination of the Stimuleringsfonds and the fund BKVB. I think that changed in the Mondriaanfonds. We were honoured for unrequested advice. Also the NAI was involved, back then the Institute of Architecture. Interdisciplinarity was also an advantage ... Talent development and architecture were the type of subsidy. Because it was a combination, I think interdisciplinary collaboration was an advantage.*

This suggests crossovers within a fund are an advantage to get subsidized for artists who cross boundaries, because funds cross their own boundaries too and they blur. Floris points out that mutual collaborations between funds contribute to temporary crossovers.

*The funds also apply crossovers themselves ... But crossing the larger disciplines, for instance fine arts and performing arts, this kind of collaboration between two different funds happens less often. But if they do notice a gap between two funds, for example illustrated child literature, the funds can introduce a temporary crossover program.*

Although collaboration between funds can be established, it's temporary initiative. This would mean that interdisciplinarity between sub disciplines gives more opportunities to get subsidized than interdisciplinarity between the larger disciplines. At 'pressures in the art' this will be discussed more broadly.

Although the crossover between creative industry and fine arts are more common than others, it doesn't mean it's easier to receive subsidy. This relates to the detached institutions that represent these disciplines separately. These institutions have their own regulations and have their own boundaries, on behalf of the government. However, there are agreement or temporary solutions to fill up these gaps. *"The government made a division. Different funds serve different disciplines. That's how it's systemized. For the Mondriaanfonds it's the visual arts and heritage. But of course we're also part of a fusion organization"*. This fusion organization consists The Mondriaan Fonds and the BKVB.

One of the contemporary developments noticed by the artists and the funders as well, is the increase in stimulating crossovers. Although the funds didn't qualify interdisciplinarity as legit before, referring to the quotes of Jalila en Madje at the chapter artists and subsidy, it has become increasingly popular with the artists, and forms a new kind of trend. Therefore, funds also started to recognize it. *"Although it impersonates to be a new development, I think crossovers always have been there. But now it's identified by means of these subsidies"* – Femke. Resulting, over the years the funds changed the regulations to make it easier for ambiguous artists to qualify themselves to be honoured. They also launch temporary open calls and collaborate with each other to fill up the gaps between the funds. This way, the funds show temporary ambiguous behaviour themselves too.

Who is qualified to apply for subsidy, depends on the fund. Mainly, art funds focus on autonomous artists or artistic institutions.

*"In behalf of the government, who commissions us, it's the responsibility of the funds to support the professional artistry. So professional theatre producers, professional fine artists and so on. Except for the fund of cultural participation, which focuses on the field of semi-professional and amateur art. The government decided that the funds are meant for the arts, not for the artists that apply their knowledge and imagination in fields other than the art field. In that case the artist should find stakeholders in other parties that they collaborate with."*



*However, the program of the Art of Impact is the first that focuses on this specific group of artists” – Floris.*

Although the artist Lucas mentioned he experiences collaboration with a broad is an advantage, the funders don't agree. Artists who collaborate with parties outside the art field often cannot apply for subsidy. This has to do with the regulations that art funds are only meant to support 100% professional artists. However, the new fund The Art of Impact also includes (not artistic) companies that collaborate with artists. Since December 2014 this fund established that focuses on boundary crossing art projects. The secretary of this fund is Floris, one of the interviewed subsidizers. He mentions the gap this fund will fill up, is focused on social art projects that weren't qualified before. *“The Art of Impact focuses mainly on the social component in the arts, what hasn't been done by other funds before. Then it wasn't qualified as 100% professional art, because of the collaboration with a none-artistic party. This program also serves these projects to contribute financially in the realization.”* As mentioned before at the characters of interdisciplinarity, collaboration and art with a social focus are two characters that can relate to interdisciplinarity. Therefore, it's possible to say that this fund contributes to the legitimization of artists who work interdisciplinary.

The program's targets are different groups. Not only companies from the field can apply, but also companies outside the field.

*It varies by fund. Other funds often have clear guidelines who can apply for subsidy. As an example, the Mondriaanfonds has a specific regulation meant for only artists, and a specific regulation for institutions of heritage that only museums can apply for. At the Art of Impact this is in line with each other, so an artist, theatre group and a museum can apply, but also a company. – Floris.*

Floris mentions collaboration with an artist is a requirement, because the artist secures the artistic quality, but the other party can position itself outside the art field. This shows that the regulations of legitimate art are changing. Earlier, and also still the case at most funds, a project was only qualified to apply for subsidy if it pertained 100% professional artists. The Art of Impact introduces more tolerance in this regulation.

This contributes to the connection between the art field and the society. Not only artists or artistic institutions can apply now, but also companies that for example want to

assign an artist, may be more stimulated to do so. This doesn't only shift the type of applicants, but it could also lead to a shift in the type of clients in the artistic field.

However, one of the artists Jalila thinks differently about the reaction of the funds on the field. She experienced that the business field and the science field had noticed the interesting crossovers between artists and society earlier than the art field. *“Mainly it comes from the business field and the science field, the government has picked it up and now the art field is putting it in effect.”* She refers also that the development is happening, but it had to take five years.

#### **4.5 Pressures in the arts**

This chapter focuses on the pressures between the several parties within the arts. The different parties work in the field with different visions on legitimacy and different boundaries.

Classifying cultural products and what's legitimate, can create conflicts between the concerned groups and institutions, because of different interpretations what is important to be called legitimate (Alexander, 1996). In this case it concerns to the groups formed as the artists, the funders, and the government. The artists apply for subsidy to be able to realize their artworks. The funders decide which artists are qualified enough to receive subsidy. The artists have to meet to certain criteria, erected by the government.

Before is discussed in what way the funds adapt the focus on art movements. The role of the external gatekeepers and interaction with the production field are important in recognizing the developments. Supporting these developments may happen by introducing an open call, temporary collaboration, changing the regulations, or introduce new regulations. Many of the interviewed interdisciplinary artists mentioned they applied and received mainly subsidy during open calls and temporary collaboration between the funds. This contributes to the chances for interdisciplinary artists to receive subsidy, because of the crossover these initiatives bring.

However, these are temporary solutions. This would mean that interdisciplinarity between sub disciplines gives more opportunities to get subsidized than interdisciplinarity between the larger disciplines. This is also a point of discussion for Femke:

*When a subsidy notices an increasing number of applicant that focus on the fusion of fine arts and applied arts, or on research and experiment, they should start the discussion if a*

*temporary subsidy program is enough. I think we should consider changing our criteria to create room for these applications too, beside the regular project... “This is also the case with the open calls. It’s a one-time initiative but the effects it has for the future aren’t examined.” – Femke*

Steven argues against and mentions the funds already discuss the findings, the need, and the impact of these initiatives:

*Sometimes a one-time impulse is enough, this could lead to an adaption or widening in the cooperation. Or we set the initiative forward a bit longer ... it depends on the subject and how the supplier can deal with it. Though, the funds are often pretty agile, especially since the last years. It’s possible to react to developments that actualities and urgency in a short time – Steven.*

The Art of Impact is an excellent example of initiatives, applied to grow with the developments. The artists as well as the funders mention they all think it’s overall a positive development. Jalila and Madje point out this regulation did take some time, while the development was already happening in the production field: *“The funds weren’t familiar with it, and it wasn’t accepted yet. The response was that it wasn’t qualified as art. We were pioneers” – Jalila.* This is in line with the functioning of the funds. The funds contribute to the trends, but there will always be pioneers that introduce the development.

*I think the ministry of OCW and the art funds shouldn’t adapt changes before a development has become a trend, bringing something to life if it’s not alive yet, what results in artists changing their work. The role of the ministry and the funds is to react to developments that are happening in the field. Especially if the risk of new gaps arise with a continuing trend, that you want to support. We shouldn’t hold back these developments as an effect by lack of financial support or expertise – Floris.*

Although the establishment of the Art of Impact overall is experienced as positive, some funders as well as artists mention dangers, which relate to the influences of the government. Both Femke and Floris mention the Art of Impact has an experiment phase. After, it will be evaluate in its impact, and discussed if it will be a regulation that lasts. Floris mentions the contribution of the program is difficult to measure. *“Although we think we react*

*on a movement, the question remains what role the program will have. When the program finishes in 2017, it's the question if the program has contributed in the growth of this movement."*

This relates to the contribution the subsidies have on these projects. Femke refers to another discussion, again to the temporary solution of regulations, which is in this case the Art of Impact. She mentions there are a big amount of artists that applied for this subsidy. Therefore, the acknowledgement of these specific crossovers was required and needed:

*I think the Art of Impact is a positive development, but I'm afraid it will last only four years because it's controlled by the government. The next ministry may not understand this project and will put it down ... 400 artists have applied and only 20 can be honoured. What are we going to do with the other 380? Will there be another call? Will this be continued? It all depends on the politics. - Femke*

Femke refers to the funds' decision makers; the government. Although the funds also notice certain gaps in the occasion of ambiguity, they don't have the power to realize the change, only to inform and discuss with the government.

However, to be able to subsidize the arts, funds are dependent of the government. The ministry determines the criteria the funds have to apply. In this way, the funds are limited in proceeding changes in their criteria. They first have to get approval from the government. *"I think it strongly depends on the fact that funds are instructed by the government. We are completely dependent of the government."* (Femke)

Drawing upon the dependence of the government, different artists mention a downside that they are dependent of funds. Because the funds focus their financial streams, among others, on social arts now, some artists also shift their focus and imply this in their work, to increase their chance on subsidy. In this case, the arts may lose their autonomy. *"The funds focus these days mainly on the applied, and the autonomous gets subordinated. Hopefully that's changing too."* The funds are created to support the arts that aren't supported by the society yet. These are mainly artists that work autonomously, because they want to maintain their artistic freedom. But if funds start to support projects that have an applied focus, what happens then with the autonomy? *"However, it may lose sort of its freedom, or autonomy. If the artist starts to think from a social interest because this does lead to a project, I'm not sure*

*that's a good development. It may limit the artist's freedom" – Lucas. "Loss of autonomy is not an effect of interdisciplinary collaboration. It's an effect of 'higher forces'" - Jalila. This is also noticed by the funders. "When the criteria shift, I sometimes notice that applicants adapt their applications to conform to the criteria." – Femke*

This relates to a discussion of Jalila, who mentions the downside of fund that request specific projects. Because of these projects, artists start to focus on these requests, to be able to apply for the subsidies. As the research of Dauber (1993) shows, philanthropies have certain goals, which may be in right. However, this means this may go by the expense of their autonomy *"The downside is that many artists start to design cutlery or chairs, because the financial streams focus on that. But because of that, the autonomy decreases."*

On the other side, the regulations seem to get less strict to increase the artists' artistic freedom. It also gives more freedom in applying interdisciplinarity.

*"During the launch of the Stimuleringsfonds the boundaries were very clear, whereby the Stimuleringsfonds only focussing on applied projects, and the Mondriaanfonds on the autonomous fine arts. But these days these boundaries are blurring at the Stimuleringsfonds. Personally I think the boundaries in the art have always been ambiguous, but the fund is increasingly blurring these boundaries too."*

This means that the control of the government is loosening up, affection the decreasing steering control the funds have on the artists.

*We don't set these boundaries ourselves. The government created a division that different funds serve different disciplines. This is how the system works. The Mondriaan Fonds reaches to visual arts and heritage. But we didn't formulate this for ourselves, this is how it's structured. We work within these frameworks, but in collaboration with the other funds, because we are all part of this structure. Frequently the funds are in contact with each other, about developments, which regulations work well, which divisions we maintain – Steven.*

## **5. Conclusion & discussion**

The final chapter of this thesis entails a conclusion and discussion concerning this research. First, the sub questions will be answered. This is followed by the paragraph that answers the research question, connecting the results to the theoretical framework. Then the implications of these results for boundary work will be discussed, followed by the limitations of this research.

### **5.1 Answering the research question**

#### **How do artists define themselves in the context of interdisciplinarity?**

Interdisciplinarity in the arts means that an artist combines different disciplines from the art field with each other or with disciplines outside the art field, autonomously or in collaboration with different parties from different fields, to realize its art project. An artist can work interdisciplinary itself by combining different disciplines from or outside the art field, which is introduced here as interdisciplinary work. But also collaborating with parties from other disciplines and creating something together is interdisciplinary, more specific interdisciplinary collaboration.

The strength of interdisciplinarity depends on the background of the artists and which disciplines they combine with each other. Some combinations of disciplines are more obvious than others. Also, in some cases interdisciplinarity already started during their education, while others imply it occasionally.

Interdisciplinarity brings along diversity in the production field. Most important, it gives the occasion to realize the artist's ideas and the works can get validity. An artwork stays

many times only artwork, but now it can go further and be more functional. However, this is also the turning point that can also be a danger. Indirectly this can be a danger for the artist's autonomy, relating to the pressures of the government. Artists have the privilege to do and make whatever they want, unregarded it's functional. Interdisciplinary artists do create projects to be functional in the end, which is encouraged by the society. However, this character should stay an option and shouldn't turn into a requirement.

### **Is interdisciplinarity a benefit or disadvantage to get subsidized because of ambiguity?**

These findings show that over the years the artists experience that the funds have become more open-minded towards interdisciplinary projects. Some artists mention some years ago it wasn't accepted or recognized. They were pioneers that 'introduced' the upcoming trend. Over the years the boundaries are shifted or blurred at the funds. As Rao & Durand (2005) also mention, high-status have a positive effect on blurring boundaries. These pioneers stimulated the critics, the funders, in redefining the boundaries. Nowadays, the artists experience it as an advantage or that it has no influence anymore, because it has become common. It benefits the chances to receive subsidy because the artists can apply at various funds, within and outside the art field, that focus on specific disciplines.

### **How is interdisciplinarity classified?**

Every fund has its own artistic categories they focus on, which lead to boundaries. Interdisciplinary artists fall between these boundaries, because they work in the field of these boundaries. This can be interpreted as an advantage, but also as a disadvantage. Some years ago, interdisciplinarity was less common or popular than it is these days. Therefore, the funders weren't that familiar with this phenomenon and with its characters. They didn't have any references yet. When a combination is rare, agents have few other exemplars to turn to and little guidance to judge the hybrid, which may lead to fewer chances in receiving subsidy. (Hannan, Polos, & Carroll, 2007) Over the years, interdisciplinary projects increased and the fund got more familiar with it. These days, the funds know better how to classify these products.

The results show that the interdisciplinary artists have an artistic focus or a social focus. The artists who have an artistic focus often combine different artistic disciplines, while the artists with a social focus often cross the boundaries of the art field to other non-artistic

fields. This affects their chances for subsidy. The artists with an artistic focus can apply at several art funds, because they meet to several requirements of different funds. These crossovers are also more common. The artists with a social focus may be less attempted to receive subsidy at several art funds, because of the crossover to a non-artistic field. The funds may also argue that they should find a stakeholder outside the art field too. However, these ambiguous projects can be sent to the department of pilot projects and innovation (Steven van Teeseling, persoonlijke communicatie, 5 juni 2015). This means the project will be evaluated on originality, innovation, and ambiguity. These are also a few of the categories Venrooij & Schmutz (2010) mention in their research, which can increase a positive qualification.

### **How do funds notice and apply new developments in the art field?**

They notice this thanks to short line connections with the production field. Networking museum- and gallery associations, but also the collaboration with external advisors from the field are important sources to find out which developments are in process.

Next, communication between the funds increases the awareness of the developments in the field. This can even lead collaborations between the funds to more chances for a specific trend that used to be unqualified because they didn't meet up to the criteria. This may also lead to temporary open calls, or even adaptations in the regulations.

Since 2012 there have been various changes within the art funds in favour of the trend of interdisciplinarity. First, in 2012 the Stimuleringsfonds Creatieve Industrie has been established which focuses, among others, on crossovers. Second, interdisciplinarity has been put on the agenda of the Mondriaanfonds since 2014 (Mondriaan Fonds, 2015). This has led to, third collaboration between these two funds in the form of an open call for crossovers. Last, in December 2014 has the Art of Impact been launched, a fund that focuses on the collaboration between artists and the society, which increases specifically the chances for interdisciplinary artists with a social focus. All these developments contribute to the legitimization of interdisciplinarity in the arts.

However, the open call and the Art of Impact are temporary. There will be evaluated what the impact of both initiatives will be. The funds seems to research to what extent these developments need to be supported.

### **Valuing Interdisciplinary Art in the Netherlands – answer the research question**



This research examines *the relation between interdisciplinarity and the contemporary position of artists, and how the funds correspond to these developments in their decision-making.*

Interdisciplinarity in the arts refers to artists that combine different disciplines from the art field with each other or with disciplines outside the art field, autonomously or in collaboration with different parties from different fields, to realize its art project. It is a phenomenon of all times, although, some years ago interdisciplinarity wasn't accepted or recognized. Over the years, the smaller number of ambiguous artists 'introduced' this upcoming trend to the world. Through (social) media and the Internet these innovative, ambiguous artists seemed to inspire others, referring to the increasing number that work interdisciplinary these days. Resulting in boundaries of funds that are shifting and blurring. As Rao & Durand (2005) also mention, high-status have a positive effect on blurring boundaries. The growing group stimulated the critics, the funders, in redefining the boundaries. The amount of boundary crossing artists that apply for subsidy seems to increase, based on the several discussions how funds should create more chances for these type of artists (Mondriaan Fonds, 2015; Stimuleringsfonds, 2014).

Next, the combination of an increasing amount of artists in the field, and the still happening crisis, strengthens the application of interdisciplinarity as a way to distinguish yourself from other artists. There are still many opportunities for discovery in these boundary-crossing fields, because not many people have worked here before. This means that these artists are innovative, experimental, and explorative.

However, these ambiguous artists are difficult to classify for the funds, being boundary workers. They retain symbolic boundaries, assigned by the government, to categorize the art works (Lamont & Molnar, 2002)). These regulations create these boundaries, what makes it for the funders hard to classify the interdisciplinary artists, who are ambiguous.

Venrooij & Schmutz (2013) conclude ambiguity has no effect to positive effect on critical success, especially for small-scale producers in the subfield. This is in line with the finding of this research, that interdisciplinary artists experience ambiguity as a benefit, or they experience that it has no effect in these days. This is because of the role of the gatekeepers, who transmit developments in the field. Also the funds noticed an increasing number of applications for ambiguous projects. They inform the government about these developments and recommend adaptations in regulation. This is in line with researches that show that the

value of ambiguous identities is dependent of institutionalizing of the classification system (Ruef & Patterson, 2009; Kovács & Hannan, 2010).

Ambiguity leads to problems of positioning the artists in the field. The artists have trouble to name themselves clearly, because of the combination of disciplines. Therefore, they are sometimes not well understood, especially in naming themselves as a type of artist. This is in line with the research of Zuckerman (1999) that shows that ambiguous identities are not well understood. However, pointing out this ambiguity as a form of identity, using hybrid or interdisciplinary, is the next step some of the artists apply.

On the other side, it also has advantages. Artists that combine several artistic disciplines experience they also apply for several art funds, that have several departments and categories. The research of Hannan et al (2007) shows that common crossovers may allow agents to agree on the extension too. Artists that combine the artistic field with a non-artistic field, can also apply at funds of that field. However, this can decrease the chances on receiving subsidy in the artistic field again, because the art funds focus mainly on 100% professional art. In this case, the artist should find a stakeholder outside the art field.

Furthermore, the developments resulted also in a new fund that focuses on the crossover between art and society. This art fund introduces that also parties outside the art field can apply for subsidy. This offers chances for the artists that cross the boundary towards another field. Further, the existing funds introduced open calls for cross over projects. They also collaborate mutually for these projects, but shows crossovers themselves too in that way.

These developments increased the chances for interdisciplinary artists to receive subsidy and means it's becoming a legitimate art form, recognized by the funds. However, this is also the turning point that can also be a danger. Indirectly this can be a danger for the artist's autonomy, relating to the pressures of the government. Artists have the privilege to do and make whatever they want, whether or not it's functional. Interdisciplinary artists do create projects to be functional in the end, which is encouraged by the society. However, this character should stay an option and shouldn't turn into a requirement.

Concluding, this research shows the boundaries between art disciplines, and boundaries between the art world and other fields, are fading. It has become increasingly easier for interdisciplinary artists to get honoured by the funds, which provide them from financial and symbolic capital as (Bourdieu, 1980). This suggests interdisciplinarity is qualified as legitimate art by the art funds.

## **5.2 Implications**

The purpose of this research was to explore how funds qualify with interdisciplinary artists. Since 2013 it has become a returning topic concerning the regulations of the funds. The Raad van Cultuur also recommended funds in April 2015 to give more support to interdisciplinary artists and institutions (Raad van Cultuur, 2015). These decision-makers have to follow regulations received from the government. These regulations form boundaries that categorises the applications. But what if these applications are ambiguous?

Venrooij & Schmutz (2013) mention ambiguity has no effect to positive effect on critical success, especially for small-scale producers in the subfield. This is in line with the finding of this research, that ambiguity in the arts as a benefit or no effect in these days. Ambiguity has become common in the arts, since the boundary-workers changed regulations and created new ones to fill these gaps up. The research of Hannan et al (2007) shows that common crossovers may allow agents to agree on the extension too. This confirms the legitimacy of ambiguity. This is enhanced by the funds that starting to show ambiguous behaviour themselves too. Temporary mutual collaborations and crossovers are proceedings that confirm its legitimacy. This is in line with researches that show that the value of ambiguous identities is dependent of institutionalizing of the classification system (Ruef & Patterson, 2009; Kovács & Hannan, 2010). They still remain their own boundaries, but they also have the power to cross their own boundaries temporary too.

## **5.3 Limitations and recommendations**

In this research the main term was interdisciplinarity. However, during the interviews was noticed that crossovers and social art are bigger and more popular terms that are in discussion. These fall within the umbrella term interdisciplinarity, but these are more specific. During the interviews, the interviewees all referred to their own concept they related on. The different artists had varying characters. The only thing they had in common was that the work, in some kind of way, interdisciplinary. Therefore, it has happened several times that something can be for person A an advantage, while it's a disadvantage for person B. The character and experiences were extremely dispersed that it was very difficult to find a red line in this story. For example social art is more specific than interdisciplinarity. Therefore, some of the results from the interviews weren't representative for the bigger story of interdisciplinarity. This made it difficult to make clear conclusions. Recommended for future research, therefore, is to select a more specific term than an umbrella term. For example, social art is definitely a term

that is interesting to research its role in the field of contemporary arts. Especially in the discussion to what extent social art remains autonomous, is expected to find interesting results.

Starting this thesis I didn't notice that this subject is high on the cultural agenda. During the process of this research were some big developments that influenced my research. First, in December 2014, the Art of Impact was launched. Because of this, every artist referred to this phenomenon, mentioning the increasing interest in social design. This also falls under the umbrella term of interdisciplinarity, but would have lead to a very specific approach of interdisciplinarity again.

Further, in April 2015 the Raad van Cultuur reported the developments and changes the funds have imply in their regulations to level more with the artists. One of these points concerned that the funds should take interdisciplinarity more into account, by creating more possibilities for it in the regulations. Among others, the Mondriaan Fonds replied, mentioning that the fund is already taking this group in account. However, because this discussion took place within the art funds, I suspect that this had an influence on the interviews with the funders.

During the process of this thesis, it became clear that external advisors function as gatekeepers between the production field and the field of power. The external advisors are artists themselves, but have the privilege to inform and advise the funders about developments in the field. This could have made them a third party in the discussion, but in this thesis they are counted as funders. In future research it would be interesting to separate this group to make them a third party. This group can be critical to both sides of the discussion, what makes them valuable sources. As I experienced during the interview with Femke, an external advisor, she is critical to the artists who apply, and the fundes' regulations as well. She described very well which frictions were happening. Further, an external advisor has the benefit that it doesn't represent the funds directly. They have more freedom of speech than the funders have.

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### Appendix 1: code scheme

Text examples	Open coding	Axial Coding	Concept
<p>“We started in exhibition design what converted in functional art in public space. From that point we started to do more temporary projects in the cities. We call this citydressing.”</p> <p><b>Madje Vollaers</b></p>	<p>Different disciplines applied by the artists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Artists combining artistic disciplines</li> <li>- Artists combining artistic discipline(s) with disciplines from other fields</li> <li>- Artists who collaborate with others from different fields</li> <li>- Artists who collaborate with other artists</li> </ul>	<p>C1: Definition</p>
<p>“Disciplines are named, so you can describe them as boxes. Interdisciplinary means you find yourself between these disciplines, which are</p>	<p>Aspects of the definition of interdisciplinary have to be pointed out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Giving a definition</li> <li>- Describe differences with relatable terms</li> </ul>	<p>C1: Definition</p>



<p>indescribable places.”</p> <p><b>Madje Vollaers</b></p>			
<p>“Engaging with other disciplines where we don't know anything about. Collaborating with people from other fields. A physician works in a different way, but that stimulates and forces us also to think different and come up with other ideas.”</p> <p><b>Lucas Zoutendijk</b></p>	<p>- pointing out which benefits come with working interdisciplinary</p> <p>- pointing out what they missed in a different way of working</p>	<p>Pro's of working interdisciplinary</p>	<p>C1: Definition</p>
<p>“People don't understand what I'm doing for a living”</p> <p><b>Christa van der Meer</b></p>	<p>- Pointing out which disadvantages come with working interdisciplinary</p>	<p>Cons of working interdisciplinary</p>	<p>C1: Definition</p>
<p><i>“Many times art is used as a sauce to make everything appear more beautiful. That's also important, but I think that the creativity of art can also have a different role.”</i></p> <p><b>Martijn Engelbregt</b></p>	<p>- The personal meaning to work interdisciplinary</p> <p>- Personal vision that relates to interdisciplinary</p>	<p>Vision to work interdisciplinary</p>	<p>C2: Existence</p>
<p>“I think these type of</p>	<p>- Point of view how</p>	<p>Interdisciplinarity in</p>	<p>C2: Existence</p>

<p>persons always have existed. An example is Dali.”</p> <p><b>Stefan de Beer</b></p>	<p>long interdisciplinary exists</p> <p>-historical artists who were interdisciplinary</p>	<p>historical perspective</p>	
<p>“The group of artists who want to mean something outside the walls of the museum increased over the years.”</p> <p><b>Martijn Engelbregt</b></p>	<p>- opinion if interdisciplinary is happening now in contemporary society</p> <p>- opinion what causes interdisciplinarity</p> <p>-opinion what effects interdisciplinarity will have</p>	<p>Interdisciplinarity in social perspective</p>	<p>C2: Existence</p>
<p>“Working interdisciplinary seems to be accepted nowadays by the funds.”</p> <p><b>Jalila Essaïdi</b></p>	<p>- Referring to reasons why they think they got subsidised</p> <p>- Opinion if interdisciplinarity influenced receiving subsidy</p>	<p>Subsidy and the artist</p>	<p>C3: Classification</p>
<p>“My projects were already in process, so I think that was decisive.”</p> <p><b>Ricky van Broekhoven</b></p>	<p>-Interpretation of artists</p> <p>-Experiences of artists</p> <p>-Experiences of funders</p>	<p>Other points that influence the chance of honouring</p>	<p>C3: Classification</p>
<p>“... scenography. This is an applied discipline, so it’s in</p>	<p>- Rules of funds</p> <p>- Work method of funds</p>	<p>Classification</p>	<p>C3: Classification</p>

<p>line with our fund. But actually it was a project with a focus on fine art and an exhibition in autonomous setting.”</p> <p><b>Femke Dekker</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- how funds qualify art</li> </ul>		
<p>“Then it wasn’t qualified as 100% professional art, because of the collaboration with a none-artistic party”</p> <p><b>Floris Lieshout</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Changes in the fund</li> <li>- Recommendations for the fund</li> <li>- New regulations</li> <li>- Old regulation</li> <li>- Reasons why something is or isn’t qualified</li> </ul>	Legitimacy	C4: Legitimacy
<p>“Loss of autonomy is not an effect of interdisciplinary collaboration. It’s an effect of ‘higher’ forces”</p> <p><b>Jalila Essaïdi</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Friction between parties</li> <li>- Influences of different parties</li> <li>- Discussions between different parties</li> </ul>	Pressures in the arts	C4: Legitimacy