

# **THE HYBRID ARTIST:**

## **Research into the professional practices of visual artists in Australia**

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Date of release: 8<sup>th</sup> June 2015

## Abstract

This thesis investigates artists' labour markets in Australia, specifically the under-investigated subject of hybridity in the practices of visual artists. It is common knowledge that artists often hold multiple jobs to support their artistic practice, also applying their skills in applied work in the creative industries. A recent study in the Netherlands and Belgium has observed the emergence of a hybrid artist who can no longer be said to have multiple jobs as their autonomous and applied practice blur, so that it is not possible to make a clear distinction between the two. There are different positions on what this means for the autonomy of the artist, that it is a threat to the autonomous space of the artist, or that the romantic ideal of artistic autonomy should no longer retain as much relevance in contemporary art. In order to observe whether this is not an isolated phenomenon, this thesis investigates whether hybridity can also be observed in the practices of Australian visual artists by obtaining data through an online survey distributed to alumni of a visual arts school based in Sydney, Australia. This thesis specifically focuses on whether there is an increase in the levels of hybridity in practice and in attitude for more recent graduates. The findings reveal that there is no consistent upward trend in hybridity levels over time, however it does reveal that graduates from the 1990s onwards are increasingly hybrid in practice and in attitude until the mid-2000s when attitudes shift, marking a clear opposition to the blurring of an autonomous and applied practice.

## Keywords

Artists' labour markets, autonomy, hybridity, multiple job-holding, visual arts

## Acknowledgements

It will not come as a surprise to many that I had limited time to devote to these acknowledgements and further throughout this process I have learnt the importance of keeping things to the essentials. So here they are.

Firstly, I would like to express my very sincere appreciation to Erwin Dekker who showed me many moments of revelation and kindness throughout this research.

To all the professors who inspired my interest in cultural economics and the direction I will pursue in the coming years.

To all the colleagues I have worked with in the Netherlands for the valuable exposure and experiences.

To Sydney College of the Arts who supported this research.

To the alumni for their personal and much appreciated contributions.

To the friends who are so meaningful to me and to this period of my life in the Netherlands. To the new friends, those that reappeared, those that never left and especially to the girls, they know who they are.

A special thank you to my dear friend Micaela who has been subjected to my strangely formulated sentences over the years.

Finally, to my family who will always be the most important to me regardless of the distance between us.

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## Introduction

In the 2015 Australian federal budget the government announced major cuts to the Australia Council for the Arts resulting in a reduction of \$27 million per year over the next four years. Over \$100 million will be redirected from the Council to the Ministry of Arts for the establishment of the 'National programme for excellence in the arts' defying the longstanding convention of cultural policy in Australia that advocates arm's length funding. While it is unclear where the ministry will direct their budget, the Art Council's recently introduced strategic plan focused on investing in funding programs to foster Australian art and artists has been significantly compromised. Independent artists will be hit hardest not only through reduced grant allocations, but there is also debate surrounding what the shift away from arm's length funding will mean for the assessment of artists' grant proposals when the interest of the Ministry is to promote works of 'popular appeal' (Berthold, 2015; Watts, 2015).

Beyond grant allocations, it is widely known that artists often work in additional jobs to support their own artistic practices, a subject that has been given much attention in research on artists' labour markets in Australia (Throsby & Zedink, 2011). According to Hans Abbing (2002) this phenomenon of 'multiple job-holding' is growing. This coincides with cultural policy increasingly focused on the creative industries, which for certain artists may be viewed as an alternative allowing them to earn an income while using their creative skills in an applied arts profession.

Although Winkel, Gielen and Zwaan (2012) observe that visual artists are working in the applied arts alongside their 'autonomous' art practice in their research based in the Netherlands and Belgium, they also observe the emergence of the 'hybrid artist'. This hybrid artist no longer has two separate practices, but their autonomous and applied art practice blur so that they cannot be distinguished from one another. Winkel et al. (2012) see the emergence of the hybrid artist as a consequence of the growing creative industries. Although they do not observe an increase in hybridity for more recent visual art graduates in their research, artists claim that their practices have become more hybrid over time. For some artists it is an undesirable alternative accepted purely out of financial necessity, while for others it is a conscious choice as they embrace the blurring of their autonomous and applied practice (Winkel et al., 2012).

There are clearly different positions on hybridity. The authors Winkel et al.

(2012) see hybridity as a threat to this autonomous space of the artist and believe that clearly separating an autonomous and applied practice is a more favourable alternative. Abbing (2002) on the other hand is not opposed to the emergence of this kind of hybrid artist, on the condition that they are fully devoted to their practice. He is more critical of multiple job-holding in the arts seeing this as a threat to the autonomy of the full-time artists. In his view the romantic ideal of autonomy attracts more and more part-time artists supported by high incomes in other jobs, which consequently stimulates the acceptance of low wages in the art world.

Despite different positions on hybridity, there are clearly concerns over what impact the creative industries have on an artist's autonomy. According to Bishop (2012) the lack of distinction between 'art' and 'creativity' in cultural policy discourse has definite consequences for an artist's practice. As she emphasises, 'artistic practice has an element of critical negation and an ability to sustain contradiction that cannot be reconciled with quantifiable imperatives of positivist economics' (Bishop, 2012, p. 16).

These concerns resonate with Australian cultural economists who see a shift from a welfarist or subsidy model of arts funding to a stress on 'innovation' and 'creativity' as stating cultural value solely in terms of economic impact (Oakley, 2002; Andersen & Oakley, 2008). In the current situation in Australia with reduced funding for artists and emphasis on the creative industries in policy discourse the question can be asked as to how Australian artists' are affected and whether in this context, a tendency for hybridity can be observed. This will be investigated through the following research question: *Are the practices of Australian visual artists becoming increasingly hybrid?*

In order to investigate this phenomenon within the Australian context alumni from the visual arts school, Sydney College of the Arts, have been observed for their level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude. As the two central concepts of this research a brief introduction is required. The 'level of hybridity in practice' refers to the blurring of an artist's autonomous and applied practice, while the 'level of hybridity in attitude' refers to the artist's attitude toward this blurring. Both forms of hybridity have been investigated in order to observe the degree to which hybridity is occurring in practice and how artists respond to this phenomenon.

This will allow for observation as to whether there is more tendency for hybridity in practice and in attitude for recent graduates in comparison with older graduates. To complement this central investigation, this research will also look further into whether there is a relationship between levels of hybridity and other attributes based on a

graduate's training, degree studied, media used and gender. This will provide more depth to this research and allow for observation as to whether these factors have any relationship to differences in graduates' level of hybridity in practice or in attitude.

Concerning the relevance of this thesis, while research has been conducted extensively on the subject of artists' labour markets in Australia, an investigation into hybridity has not been touched upon within an Australian context and therefore will be a unique contribution to the field of cultural economics. Not only is there an academic relevance but also, as the situation in Australia illustrates, this research has social relevance concerning the position of the artist in society and their ability to maintain an autonomous practice.

In order to investigate hybridity in the practices of Australian artists this thesis will be structured as follows: Chapter 1 will present the theoretical framework based upon existing literature that explores the notion of autonomy in art in order to establish the context to introduce the concept of hybridity. Critical perspectives on hybridity and multiple job-holding will then be discussed regarding the influence they have on an artist's autonomy. Chapter 2 will outline the methodology, specifically the quantitative strategy employed and the research design, including the operationalisation of hybridity. The units of analysis, details concerning data collection and data analysis will also be presented. Chapter 3 will present the results of the empirical research and provide an interpretation in connection with the literature. Reference to the research conducted on hybridity by Winkel et al. (2012) will also be made in order to compare the situation in the Netherlands and Belgium with Australia. This will be followed by the conclusion, which will reflect upon the findings, addressing any limitations and possible avenues for further research.



# 1 Theoretical Framework

## 1.1 The Autonomous Artist

In order to understand hybridity, identified by a blurring between autonomous and applied arts, it is necessary to explore the notion of autonomy and what it means for a visual artist.

Hans Abbing in his book *‘Why are artists poor? The exceptional economy of the arts’* (2002) provides a general definition of autonomy in the arts: ‘Autonomy refers to the liberty people have to follow their own will independent of others. In the arts, this is primarily seen as a matter of artistic freedom. If an artist chooses to make an artistic compromise in exchange for more rewards, he or she ends up with less artistic freedom’ (Abbing, 2002, p. 87). This statement introduces the idea of a compromise in art prompting us to question what exactly a compromise means for an autonomous visual arts practice. Although the word ‘auto/nomos’ means literally ‘to determine one’s own laws’, it will become clear that for an artist, whether their art can be considered as ‘autonomous’ or not, is under constant scrutiny by the art world and its own internal logic (Wright, 2013, p. 12).

The romantic notion of the artist is that of a gifted, inspired and spontaneous creator (Becker, 1982; Abbing, 2002). This idea of the so-called bohemian artist emerged in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, as a reaction against the prevailing bourgeois mentality (Abbing, 2002; Beech, 2015). This ‘true artist’ must be selflessly devoted and unwilling to compromise with their art, protecting their autonomy at all costs (Abbing, 2002). Abbing (2002) explains how this romantic idea of artistic autonomy became, and still remains, an ideal not only for artists but also for the art world and society in general.

Although Howard Becker in his book *‘Art Worlds’* (1982) specifically states that he will not dive into the notion of autonomy, it appears to be unavoidable in the discussion of art worlds. He describes the romantic view of the artist who should be free to focus on their core artistic activity and not subjected to the constraints imposed on other members of society (Becker, 1982). Any activities concerning business aspects or the commercial success of the artist are condemned (Becker, 1982; Abbing, 2002). Abbing (2002) expresses his own irritations that as an artist he has to treat his own practice like an enterprise, despite his position that money should not interfere with art.

The interference of money with art is, however, not always scrutinised. Artists are

known to accept money in the forms of subsidies and donations, but receiving money from this 'gift sphere' rather than the 'market sphere' is seen as more favourable (Abbing, 2002). The commonly held perception that it allows an artist to be more autonomous, with less pressure to adapt their work for an audience is, however, contested. Although aid from friends and family may well place less constraints on the artist, Abbing (2002) asserts that in the allocation of subsidies, the government promotes a certain kind of art to serve their own interests.

These positions reveal the sacred status given to art, which is also central to Olav Velthuis' book *'Talking Prices'* (2005). Velthuis reflects on ideas of the 'sacred' and the 'profane', revealing how even within the contemporary art gallery system that is geared towards money and profit, art dealers consciously try to avoid a situation where artistic and commercial values come into contact. Beyond their reluctance to discuss business practices, there is also a resulting spatial divide whereby the front room is reserved for the exhibition of artworks, suppressing any hint of commercial activity, in contrast to the backroom which is reserved for market operations (Velthuis, 2005). This supports one of Abbing's (2002) central observations that the 'economy in the arts is denied and veiled' (Abbing, 2002, p. 47). Although the market is undeniably present, commodification is commonly seen as a contaminating process in the sacred realm of art and therefore attempts are made to conceal any commercial activities (Velthuis, 2005).

This denial and veiling of commercial interests is inextricably linked to reputation. Artists and actors within the art world are aware of the influence reputation has in determining the success of an artist's career (Abbing, 2002). Becker (1982) discusses reputation building as a process that is formed by other art world participants who make 'reputational inferences' from an artist's work (Becker, 1982, p. 357). In his discussion on reputation, Becker (1982) highlights how important it is for artists to distinguish between their autonomous and applied work, giving the example of a photographer who makes it clear that their 'commercial' work should not be included in their assessment as an artist.

This example offers an opportunity to clarify exactly what is meant by the 'applied arts' in this thesis and in what way it may be seen as a threat to the autonomy of the ideal artist discussed here. Winkel et al. (2012) refer to applied arts throughout their report, however they do not provide any clear definition. They explain that an applied art practice means working in the cultural or creative industries and give examples of running a photo studio, web designer, jewellery designer and furniture designer. From

their examples it can be deduced that ‘applied arts’ aligns with what Becker (1982) refers to as ‘commercial arts’. ‘Commercial arts use more or less the same skills and materials as fine arts but deliberately put them to uses no one regards as artistic, uses which find their meaning and justification in a world organised around some activity other than art. When visual artists make drawings for an advertisement or an instruction manual, they serve ends defined by business or industry...’ (Becker, 1982, p. 296).

What is implied here is that in the ‘applied arts’ artists are more restricted due to the need to take into account the requirements of employers and audiences. Becker (1982) describes this as a ‘subordination’ of the artist, making his attitude towards engagement in the applied arts quite clear (p. 291). Returning to the romantic ideal of the artist, Becker sees artists who take on such assignments as more open to suggestion, influence or coercion, repressing their personal ideas and emotions compared to artists who remain faithful to the ‘fine arts’. What he seems to suggest is that artists who also work in the applied arts are more willing to compromise on their artistic vision. Becker (1982) does acknowledge that such compromises also occur in the age-old tradition of patronage in the ‘fine arts’, however he sees the relationship between the artist and a patron or commissioner as cooperation rather than subordination, a relationship in which the patron provides support and direction (p. 103).

Central to *Why are artists poor? The exceptional economy of the arts* (2002) is Abbing’s endeavour to debunk the mythology surrounding the romantic ideal of the starving artist who protects the sacred domain of art. He acknowledges the increasingly commercial status of contemporary art and the trend for artists to be less resistant to commercialism. Abbing (2002) reflects on the distinction often made between ‘high art’, ‘fine art’ or ‘real art’, and ‘low art’, ‘popular art’ or ‘non art’, describing how artists involved in ‘low’ or ‘commercial art’ are often more ‘openly money-oriented’ (p. 97). Despite the many distinctions made, Abbing observes how practices and attitudes to art are evolving, reducing the significance of such demarcation, a subject which will be explored further in the discussion of hybridity.

## 1.2 State Support and Autonomy

Although the relationship between autonomy and governmental support of the arts has been briefly touched upon, this requires further attention in order to establish the conditions that enabled the autonomy of the artist and determined the position of the

artist in the last century.

In Europe post-World War II there was a significant increase in government funding made available to the arts largely based on social arguments (Abbing, 2002). The initiation of the Arts Council by John Maynard Keynes in Britain towards the end of the war aimed to provide more support for the arts, providing employment opportunities for artists and improving human welfare based upon the idea that exposure to the arts would improve the quality of life of its citizens having ‘civilising’ and ‘educational’ effects (Lee, 2005; Upchurch, 2007). During this period the market and what was seen as degraded popular or ‘low’ culture was seen as a threat to ‘the democratic humanist educative function of the arts’ (Australian government and Arts council, 2009, p. 53)

Keynes (1982) himself described the artist as a figure that ‘leads the rest of us into fresh pastures and teaches us to love and to enjoy what we often begin rejecting, enlarging our sensibility and purifying our instincts’ (p. 368). This idea that art could enlighten society insisted upon the artist’s independence and freedom of expression, which was heavily influenced by the romantic notion of the artist developed in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Beech, 2015; Upchurch, 2007). In his book *‘Art and Value: Art’s Economic Exceptionalism in Classical, Neoclassical and Marxist economics’* (2015), Dave Beech traces the developments from the late 14<sup>th</sup> up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century where the production and circulation of art was controlled by guilds and for a select number of successful artists, funded by patrons. The emergence of a market for artworks in the 18<sup>th</sup> century separated artists from traditional notions of patronage tied to the church, state and wealthy individuals, a development which could be seen as contributing to the liberation of the artist (Beech, 2015).

This ideal of autonomy and artistic independence was said to have fuelled Keynes to find a new role for the state as a patron of the arts (Beech, 2015). Keynes was one of a number of artists and intellectuals who made up the Bloomsbury group, a group consisting of active voices in the cultural policy discourse at the time (Upchurch, 2007). Two influential members of the group, Roger Fry and Clive Bell shared his belief that the state had a role to play in supporting the arts, however they also expressed concern over the relationship between the state and the artist when it came to ensuring artistic freedom (Upchurch, 2007). For the artist there was the idea that in order to ‘explore the truth’ they should ‘express their innermost feeling and inspiration free from external forces’ (Lee, 2005, p. 4). The objective was therefore to develop a system of state support that supported this independence of the artist and the way in which quality was assessed

(Beech, 2015).

Beech makes the distinction between 'state funding' with what he sees as the introduction of 'public funding' under the foundation of the Keynesian welfare state (Beech, 2015, p. 132). Through the initiation of the Arts Council Keynes introduced an unprecedented structure for funding in which the state would supply the funds but would not be directly involved in the way it was distributed, a structure that in the 1970s became known as the 'arm's length principle' (Upchurch, 2007). This model would allow the Arts Council to provide artists and arts organisations with facilities, advice and funding while operating relatively independently of political agenda and government bureaucracy (Upchurch, 2007). In this way the artist would be protected from possible intervention in their work.

Although the Arts Council intended to cooperate with the private and public sectors, this novel institutional framework established aimed to essentially separate funding from both the state and the market (Beech, 2015). Keynes hoped that such a system would support new artists before their work reached the market, providing them with financial assistance and thereby granting them with a level of independence from the motives of profit and financial success which he saw as a 'prostitution' of the artist (Keynes, 1982, p. 344). This model adopted by the Arts Council in Britain was later adopted in the United States in the 1960s and followed with international acceptance by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century becoming what is now a standard form of public funding for the arts (Upchurch, 2007).

According to Judith Kapferer in her book *'The State and the Arts: Articulating Power and Subversion'* (2008), this assurance of financial supports through subsidies allowed artists to become 'almost totally independent' (Kapferer, 2008 p. 20). As mentioned earlier, Abbing (2002) emphasises that governments act as a promoter of a certain kind of art that serves their own interests, thereby countering the idea that public funding enables an artist to be autonomous. If we consider the art that Keynes was so passionate about supporting, we can certainly see a privileging of the 'high' arts over 'lower' art forms (Beech, 2015). This reality of the relative autonomy of the arts was also acknowledged by Fry and Bell in their essays in *'The Antheneum'* (1920). 'Art can rarely exist in a state of perfect freedom... Therefore, if art is to survive, it must come to some terms with the needs of society; it cannot hope to be absolutely free...' (Fry in Upchurch, 2007, p. 210).

### 1.3 Emergence of the Hybrid Artist

Exploring the position of the artist in society tied to the ideal of the autonomous artist is central to understanding the concept of hybridity on which this research is based. The concept of hybridity employed in this thesis is derived from the report of van Winkel, Gielen and Zwaan, *De hybride kunstenaar: De organisatie van de artistieke praktijk in het postindustriële tijdperk* (2012). In their research they question whether there is a new kind of artist emerging who can be said to have a 'hybrid art practice'.<sup>1</sup>

According to the authors, artistic hybridity is based on two conditions: '1. The artist combines both autonomous and applied arts; 2. The distinction between autonomous and applied arts is also faded in whole or in part, in the perception of the artist and their surroundings' (Winkel et al., 2012, p. 10).

They develop their concept of the hybrid artist to extend beyond the notion of a 'plural artist' developed in *L'artiste pluriel: Démultiplier l'activité pour vivre de son art* (2009). The authors Bureau, Perrenoud and Shapiro create three divisions of what can be considered a plural professional art practice: an artist is said to be 'polyvalent' if they perform different tasks within their own practice, for example bookkeeping alongside sculpting; an artist is said to be 'polyactive' if they engage in occupations in different social fields, for example working in a café alongside their art practice; and lastly an artist is said to be 'pluriactive' if they undertake differentiating activities within the arts.

This last variation, the 'pluriactive' artist, is the basis for the concept of the hybrid artist developed by Winkel et al. (2012). A pluriactive artist may work in the applied arts and maintain an autonomous art practice but the hybrid artist goes one step further, no longer seeing these two practices as separate from one another. While a pluriactive artist would attempt to separate their autonomous and non-autonomous work, in contrast a hybrid artist does not attempt to distinguish between the two. Therefore both autonomous and applied art forms coexist within a single production so that applied art is given autonomous status and vice versa (Winkel et al., 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> In the visual arts the term 'hybrid' is often used to describe an artist's practice in connection with multi-disciplinarity whereby an artist combines a variety of media or art forms in their art practice (Winkel et al., 2012). Although this is not the definition of hybridity this thesis will employ, it is interesting to explore in order to reflect on different positions taken on the general notion of hybridity. Contemporary art practice is characterised by what Rosalind Krauss referred to in the late 1990s as a 'post medium condition' in her criticism of art that fails to display its medium specificity (Krauss, 2000). As Peter Weibel describes 'Consequently, this state of current art practice is best referred to as the post-media condition, because no single medium is dominant any longer; instead all of the different media influence and determine each other' (Smite, R., & Smits, R., 2013, pp.148). This understanding of hybridity also emphasises the influence of new technological media, which led to new forms and possibilities in art.

Winkel et al. (2012) observe that there is indeed an emergence of a hybrid artist, which they see as a consequence of the rise of the creative industries. The rise of the creative industries to which they attribute artistic hybridity is described by Oakley (2002) as a shift from a welfarist or subsidy model of arts funding to a stress on 'innovation' and 'creativity' stating cultural value solely in terms of economic impact. Hesmondhalgh (2013) explains this situation in the context of a neo-liberal era where underlying policy is the idea that the public interest is best served by the 'free' market, legitimising political and economic strategies. Winkel et al. (2012) question whether under these conditions artists are using their creative skills in the growing creative industries to find an alternative income and investigate the impact that working in an applied art profession has on an artist's autonomous visual arts practice.

The impact of Richard Florida's *'The rise of the creative class' (2002)* and *'The flight of the creative class' (2005)* cannot be ignored in this context. Florida, an academic and policy consultant from the United States, has had a strong influence on policymakers with his 'creative city' theory, claiming that 'creativity' is a stimulator for economic development (Morgan & Ren, 2012). Artists or 'creative workers' are described as economic drivers for cities and nations, a relationship that drives governments to provide the conditions for 'creativity' to flourish, revealing an increasingly economic agenda of policy (Banks & O'Connor, 2009; Lingo & Tepper, 2013).

The argument that artists are drivers of the economy is important in this investigation on artistic hybridity. Gielen and De Bryune in *'Arts in society: Being an artist in post-fordist times' (2009)*, observe an embrace of 'creativity' and 'innovation' by governments and businesses that capitalise on the efforts of the creative worker and explore the role of the artist in the context of a post-fordist economy. Winkel et al., (2012) also suggest that the autonomy and flexibility of the creative labourer in a 'post-fordist workplace' is valued by the creative industries as a new segment of the economy. The artist is described as the model worker of this new work ethic and therefore the implications for the artist under neo-liberal labour conditions are brought into question (Gielen & De Bryune, 2009; Winkel et al., 2012).

This motivates Winkel et al. (2012) to investigate whether there is an increasing tendency for artistic hybridity. It is interesting to reflect on the paradox that Gielen and De Bryune (2009) reveal that 'post-fordist' working conditions may provide a degree of autonomy for the creative worker, but render an artist's autonomous practice impossible. Winkel et al. (2012) describe the hybrid artist as the ideal creative worker, as someone

who seeks new creative challenges and has a preference for project based work. Although these features suggest that the hybrid artist may be the ideal worker for the creative industries, the following question requires further exploration: What are the consequences of a hybrid practice for an artist's autonomy?

#### 1.4 Hybridity vs Multiple job-holding

There are different perspectives on how an artist should handle their artistic practice with the ideal autonomous artist in mind. When it comes to artistic hybridity, some see this blurring of an artistic and applied practice as a positive attribute, while others maintain that there should be a strict separation between autonomous and applied work.

The situation where an artist works in an additional job, (arts or non-arts related) separate to their artistic practice can also be referred to as 'multiple job-holding', a concept developed by Hans Abbing (2002). According to both Winkel et al. (2012) and Abbing (2002), only a minority of highly successful artists can live solely off their art practice epitomising the romantic ideal of an autonomous artist. An artist who cannot earn a living off their art often rely on their family and friends for support, however the majority of artists do not have this liberty so must find a second job if they hope to continue their artistic practice thereby diversifying their risks (Abbing, 2002). Abbing highlights that this idea of multiple job-holding is founded on the romantic ideal of the artist. He is of the opinion that artists are willing to abandon monetary income because of their belief in the sacredness of art, but are forced to find a second job or work more hours if they are to survive as artists, or what cultural economist, David Throsby, refers to as a 'survival constraint' (Abbing, 2002).

Multiple job-holding in this view is therefore seen as a trade-off for the artist as 'more artistic time means less income; and more income means less time for art' (Abbing, 2002, p. 85). This reflects Throsby's 'work preference model of artist behaviour' in which the passionate artist wants to maximise their time making art at the expense of monetary gain (Throsby, 1994). In Abbing's view multiple job-holding could even be described as a case of 'internal subsidisation' describing a situation where artists produce 'commercial art' exclusively for the purpose of serving the 'real art' practice (Abbing, 2002, p. 86). In contrast, Abbing also observes a tendency for artists to increasingly embrace the opportunity to work in multiple jobs seeing the combination of artistic skills with arts-related and non-arts skills as a way to develop capabilities that reinforce their



artistic practice. This embrace of multiple job-holding rejects the ideal of the self-sacrificing artist who considers working in an extra job as a 'necessary evil' (Abbing, 2002, p. 145).

Winkel et al. (2012) also acknowledge that artists may not only work in a combination of autonomous and applied arts out of financial necessity, but that there may be artistic reasons to combine both practices. This is also observed by Throsby and Zedink (2011) in their research on Australian artists' labour markets who observe that artists may actually enjoy applying their skills in new and imaginative ways in an industrial context. They see this as a positive development which plays a role in supporting the creative economy, however they refer to work in an industrial context that is 'far removed' from an artist's practice, unlike in the practice of the hybrid artist (Throsby & Zedink, 2011, p. 22.)

This hybrid artist has been viewed in a critical light based on the idea that the autonomy of the artist is undermined through the blurring of an autonomous and applied practice. The authors of *'De hybride kunstenaar: De organisatie van de artistieke praktijk in het postindustriële tijdperk'* (2012) Winkel, Gielen and Zwaan, appear to take this position on a hybridity in art, expressing their concern over 'what artists are forced to give up when their labour is at the disposal of the creative industries...' (Winkel et al., 2012, p. 22). In this context they advocate the importance of an autonomous space for art exempt from religious, economic and political constraints. A more acceptable alternative for the authors is a situation of multiple job-holding where an artist keeps their autonomous and non-autonomous practice separate, which is true for the pluriactive artist mentioned earlier (Bureau et al., 2009). Winkel et al. (2012) favour the situation where an artist acts with the intention of 'safeguarding their own autonomous creative domain' by keeping their two practices distinct from one another (Winkel et al., 2012, p. 39).

Unlike Winkel et al. (2012) who see multiple job-holding as a favourable alternative to a hybrid practice when it comes to the artistic autonomy, Abbing is critical of multiple-job holding in his belief that 'art could stand to lose its autonomy' (Abbing, 2002, p. 307). What he means by this is that if society holds on to the romantic ideal of an autonomous self-sacrificing artist, art will continue to be seen as a desirable profession and artists will be willing to accept low pay to continue their practices. He sees the consequence of this as artists earning high income outside of the arts in other jobs to finance their practice, which will lead to art becoming a luxury profession for only those

who can afford to 'buy' their autonomy, pushing out serious full-time artists (Abbing, 2004, p. 9).

Abbing acknowledges that the majority of artists still maintain the importance of this romantic ideal of autonomy. He points out the misconception that autonomy is an 'all-or-nothing affair' seeing it more as extremes on a scale with different positions in between (Abbing, 2002, p. 82). This also aligns with the definition of artistic hybridity based on the idea of an autonomous and applied practice faded 'in whole or in part' (Winkel et al., 2012, p. 10). Although Winkel et al. (2012) clearly defend the autonomy of the artist and take a negative position to this 'blurring', Abbing (2004) sees this blurring as a positive feature leading to the demystification of the arts. For Abbing (2004) a 'progressive scenario' for the 'professional autonomous artist' includes the success of full-time artists even if it means 'artists working in the cultural industries will also be accepted in the circle of autonomous artists' (p. 9). Although Abbing suggests that such a future scenario would be evidence of the lessening value of autonomy in the arts he also acknowledges that some boundaries must be kept in place. According to both Winkel et al. (2012) and Abbing (2004) in the contemporary art world the boundary between what is considered autonomous/non-autonomous is still very much intact.

## 1.5 Figures of Compromise

For a hybrid artist the boundary between their autonomous and applied practice is no longer clear. Winkel et al. (2012) question whether this hybrid artist is also 'socially hybrid' observed through the blurring of value regimes derived from the theories of Luc Boltanski, Laurent Thévenot and Eve Chiapello (2012). In their book *On Justification: Economies of Worth* (1991), Boltanski and Thévenot differentiate between six worlds: the world of inspiration, the domestic world, the world of fame, the civic world, the market and industrial world.<sup>2</sup> These different 'orders of worth' or common worlds are distinguished, each with their own distinct codes and value regimes, illustrating how modern economies consist of multiple principles of evaluation (Stark, 2009). The authors explore the way in which value regimes conflict as people attempt to legitimise their position and justify their actions. In a conflict within one order of worth, different positions are evaluated through a test that adheres to the 'higher common principle' to which the world aspires (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991). Boltanski and Thévenot (1991)

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<sup>2</sup> With the addition of the project city from *Le Nouvel esprit du capitalisme* (1999) by Boltanski & Chiapello.

also describe a situation where it is not possible to resort to one order of worth and its corresponding test to resolve a conflict. In this situation a compromise may therefore be the only solution.

If we consider artists who also work in the applied arts in this framework we can observe two different ways of dealing with conflicting value regimes. The pluriactive artist discussed earlier deals with conflicting value regimes by strictly separating their autonomous and applied practice. According to Winkel et al. (2012) this artist would be guided by the world of inspiration in their artistic practice and primarily by the world of the industry or market in their applied practice. Their strategy to deal with conflicting value regimes is to allocate separate time for each practice. In this way different worlds and their corresponding tests do not present themselves together.

Unlike the pluriactive artist, a hybrid artist attempts to reconcile different value regimes. The hybrid artist can therefore be seen as a figure of compromise suspending conflict between the world of inspiration and the world of industry or market in order to create art and make money within one practice (Winkel et al., 2012). This artist can be seen as 'socially hybrid' according to Winkel et al. (2002), based on how they deal with conflicting value regimes. They attribute more importance to the values of the market and industry within their practice and diverge from the traditional image of the romantic artist who is guided primarily by inspiration (Winkel et al., 2012). According to Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) in this situation of compromise people are 'disposed towards the notion of a common good' which transcends conflicting forms of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991, p. 277). In the case of the hybrid artist they attempt to justify their worth as an autonomous artist and their worth as an applied artist simultaneously looking for a compromise within a hybrid practice (Winkel et al. 2012).

While taking into account multiple value regimes the outcome may only be 'preferable to any other solution' (Boltanski & Thévenot, 1991, p. 278). For an artist who chooses for a hybrid practice, it suggests that although their autonomous and applied practices may in fact blur, it may not be an ideal situation. Some hybrid artists may resort to a hybrid practice purely out of financial necessity while others may also have artistic motivations. In this situation there can be said to be different degrees of compromise. Just as the concept of social hybridity demonstrates, artists may attribute different levels of importance to different value regimes within their hybrid practice. Therefore in a hybrid practice one can devote more or less to art and deny other worlds to some extent reinforcing the idea that there are different degrees of hybridity in an

artist's practice (Winkel et al., 2012).

## 1.6 Conclusion

Throughout the theoretical framework the position of the artist in society has been discussed through the notion of autonomy and what it means for an artist's practice.

Firstly the notion of autonomy was discussed based on the perception in the contemporary art world that money should not interfere with art. This also introduced the idea that the applied arts or 'commercial art' can be seen as inherently different to an artist's visual arts practice.

Secondly, the origin of the romantic ideal of the autonomous artist from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century was established along with the influence this had on the development of public funding for the arts. The introduction of arm's length funding instigated a new role of the state in the support of art which can be said to have enabled an artist's independence.

After establishing the discourse surrounding autonomy in art, the concept of hybridity was introduced, referring to the blurring between an autonomous and applied art practice. The emergence of the hybrid artist in the context of the growth of the creative industries was connected to the view of the artist as an ideal creative worker.

This led to a discussion of critical perspectives on hybridity and multiple job-holding. Winkel et al. (2012) are of the opinion that multiple job-holding allows artists to protect their autonomous practice, whereas, Abbing (2002) is negative of multiple job-holding, supporting the full-time artist who devotes their time solely to their practice, whether it is a 'pure' visual arts practice or a hybrid practice.

Lastly the framework of Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) was introduced as a way of thinking about hybridity. This revealed how artists approach their practices in accordance with the traditional notion of autonomy. With this ideal in mind a hybrid artist can be seen as a figure of compromise.

It also became clear throughout the literature review that the hybrid artist may embrace or be averse to the blurring of their autonomous and applied practice. This may also depend on the artist's own conception of autonomy reinforcing the notion of relative autonomy.

## 2 Methodology

This chapter presents the research methods used in order to empirically investigate whether there is a tendency for hybridity in the practice of Australian visual artists. In order to investigate this phenomenon empirical research was conducted through an online survey distributed to alumni of a visual art school located in Sydney, Australia. The choice of a quantitative research strategy will be explained below along with the research design concerning how the key concept of hybridity was operationalised. This will be followed by identifying other variables whose relationship to hybridity will be measured and lastly the units of analysis and method of data collection used will be outlined in order to answer the following research question:

*Are the practices of Australian visual artists becoming increasingly hybrid?*

### 2.1 Research Strategy and Design

In order to empirically observe whether there is a tendency for hybridity in the practice of Australian visual artists, this research employs a quantitative research strategy, which relies on a deductive approach, developed from the theoretical basis presented in Chapter 1 (Bryman, 2012). The advantage of a quantitative approach for this research is that it involves the quantification of data for the use of statistical analysis, which enabled this investigation into the phenomenon of hybridity (Babbie, 2008).

This quantitative research was conducted through the use of a cross-sectional design also known as survey design in the form of a self-completion questionnaire distributed online to Australian visual artists. This research is cross-sectional as it involves the observation of a sample of visual arts graduates made at one point in time (Bryman, 2012).

### 2.2 Units of Analysis

In order to collect the necessary data to investigate a tendency for hybridity in the population (N) of Australian visual artists, this survey relied on a sample (n) of alumni from Sydney College of the Arts, a higher education institution based in Sydney,

Australia. Therefore the sample represents a cross-section of the population under research (Battaglia, 2008). It should be noted, however, that there are limitations when it comes to generalising the findings to the entire population of Australian artists as only graduates from one visual art school in Sydney, Australia were included in the investigation due to issues of feasibility (Babbie, 2008).

This particular art school, Sydney College of the Arts, was chosen as it is specialises in training artists for a visual arts practice unlike other institutions with curriculum geared more strongly towards a profession in the design field. It must be noted however that the school was initially formed in 1976 and combined a design diploma with a visual arts program the following year. In 1988 these two schools separated as of which SCA became devoted solely to the research and practice of contemporary visual arts (Sydney College of the Arts). Therefore it is important that out of the graduates from 1976-1988 only those who graduated from the visual arts program will be included in the sample. The existence of the visual arts program at Sydney College of the Arts covers a time span from 1976-2014.

By sourcing the sample from this school it allowed investigation as to whether there is more tendency for hybridity over time determined by the graduating year of each participating alumni. It must also be noted that as this research into hybridity relies on observing the development of the alumni and their professional artistic practice, recent graduates will have had less time to develop their professional practice, which may result in some bias. Graduates may have also studied previously in another school, which may have influenced their approach to their professional practice.

### **2.3 Operationalisation**

The concept of artistic hybridity developed by Winkel et al. (2012) and explored in the theoretical framework has informed the two central concepts that will be used in this research: hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude. Firstly a typology will be introduced which was used to determine whether an artist would be measured for both forms of hybridity, based on whether they engaged in an autonomous practice and applied/commissioned work. Secondly the two concepts of hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude will be defined along with the way they were operationalised in this research.

### 2.3.1 Typology

A model was constructed from the theory, which allowed each graduate to be placed within a typology revealing the development of their career following a degree in the visual arts. This is important for operationalising hybridity, which relies on the artist having both an autonomous art practice and an applied/commissioned practice.

This triangular model consists of three divisions: autonomous art practice; art/arts related/non-arts related; applied/commissioned as visualised below in Figure 1. Corresponding questions in the survey allowed alumni to be placed within this typology, either on one point, or alternatively two or three points, indicating multiple job holdings (Abbing, 2002).

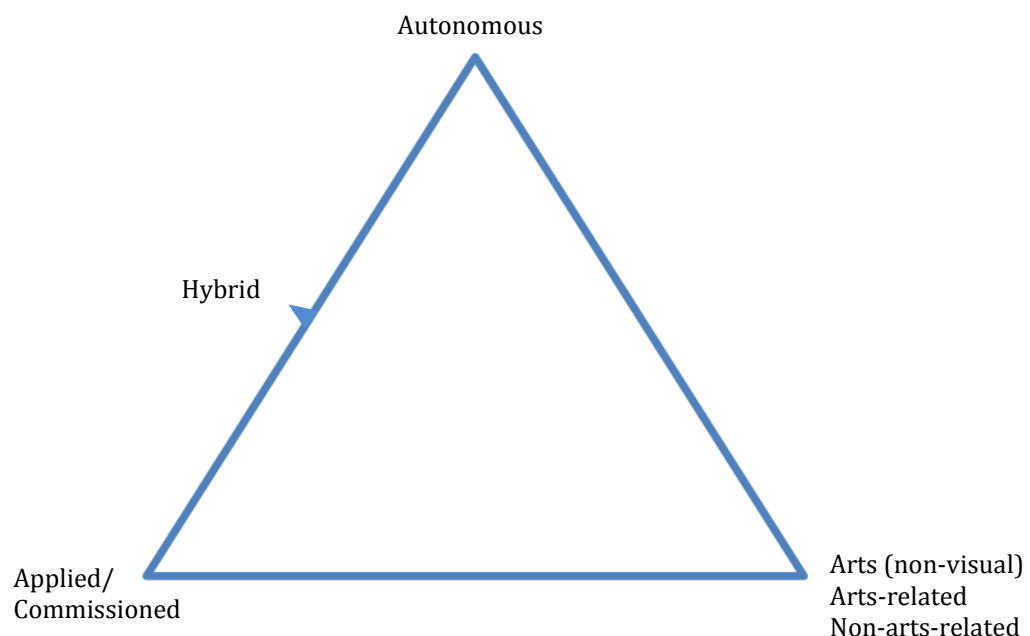


Figure 1. Professional typology of alumni

#### **Autonomous:**

In order to be placed as ‘autonomous’ within the typology, respondents were asked if they still had an active artistic practice as a visual artist. Based on the report of Winkel et al. (2012) a selection was provided allowing respondents to select multiple answers including: studio practice, exhibiting own work, installations on location (temporary), art in public space (permanent), live performance art, community art projects, art on commission or assignment basis or other (see appendix). This is important for the operationalisation of hybridity, as although commissioned or

assignment based work may be a part of an artists practice, for this research it is not considered as part of an ‘autonomous’ practice but comes under the typology as ‘applied/commissioned’ work.

### **Applied/commissioned:**

In order to be placed under ‘applied/commissioned’ in the typology, the graduate was asked whether they worked in an applied profession. Based on the report of Winkel et al. (2012) a selection was provided allowing respondents to select multiple options of professions they engage with in the applied field (see appendix). The definition of an applied arts profession implies the use of creative skills and materials used in the visual arts but with an application used to serve ends defined by business or industry (Becker, 1982). For this reason commissioned work of a visual artist is coupled with applied arts, as it suggests serving a business purpose through working on an assignment basis for a patron or client (Becker, 1982).<sup>3</sup> Although this may be an oversimplification, based on this rationale, commissioned work will also be referred to as applied arts throughout this research. For example if one artist indicated that they undertook jewellery commissions in their artistic practice, while another considered a jewellery practice as an applied profession, in both cases they would fall under ‘applied/commissioned’ in the typology.

### **Arts/Arts-related/Non-arts-related:**

In order to be placed under the typology as arts/arts-related/non-arts related respondents were asked whether they engaged in an arts, arts-related or non-art-related profession. Based on the report of Winkel et al. (2012) a selection was provided allowing respondents to select whether they work in a non-arts-related job or select multiple answers for an arts and arts-related profession (see appendix). The rationale for including all three categories under the same point in the typology is based on the central objective of this research which lies in the relationship between autonomous and applied arts for a visual artist, therefore the following professions can be considered as related but not relevant for observing hybridity.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on this definition ‘art teaching’, a professions considered by Winkel et al (2012) to be in the ‘applied’ field is in this research included under the typology as arts-related.



### 2.3.2 Hybridity

Based on the typology, graduates who had an autonomous practice and an applied/commissioned practice were measured for hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude. The definition of these two concepts will be established along with how they were operationalised in this study to take the form of two dependent variables: level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude.

Hybridity in practice refers to an artist whose autonomous and applied arts practices can no longer be distinguished from one another. Unlike Winkel et al. (2012) who operationalise artistic hybridity by asking an artist with both an autonomous and applied practice whether they ‘perceive’ a blurring of their two practices, in this research hybridity will be operationalised by asking alumni to answer a number of statements which indicate their level of hybridity. Therefore this will result in a more consistent measurement of the concept unlike Winkel et al. (2012) who acknowledge that basing their operationalisation on perception led to varied interpretations that diverged from their established concept.

Whereas hybridity in practice aims to observe a blurring between an autonomous and applied practice, hybridity in attitude has been introduced in order to measure the attitude of the artist to the blurring of their practices. Although Winkel et al. (2012) investigate social hybridity, which reveals the artist’s attitude through the value regimes an artist finds important in their practice, in this research the artist’s attitude will be measured directly in relation to the blurring of their autonomous and applied practice. What this aims to discover is whether the artist’s attitude towards a blurring of their practice actually reflects the way they deal with their artistic and applied work. By making this distinction an observation can be made as to whether the artist embraces or tries to resist the blurring of their practices.

For both hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude, rather than simply observing whether hybridity was present or absent, as Winkel et al. (2012) have in their research, the ‘level’ of both forms of hybridity were measured reflecting Hans Abbing’s (2002) statement that autonomy can be seen as a scale with different positions in between two extremes.

Operationalisation of the level of hybridity in practice and the level of hybridity in attitude relied on the use of multiple indicators. These indicators took the form of four separate statements for each form of hybridity. Each statement employed a five-

point Likert scale to investigate the degree or level of hybridity of each graduate for each statement. This included a five-point range from 'strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'agree', and 'strongly agree'. A middle position 'neither agree nor disagree' was included allowing respondents to show a neutral position. The minimum score for each separate statement was 1 indicating the lowest level of hybridity, while the maximum score was 5 indicating the highest level of hybridity. Depending on how the question was formulated, each extreme position, either 'strongly disagree' or 'strongly agree' represented either a score of 1 or 5 in the level of hybridity.

For each respondent the score for each of the four statements was combined to create a total score representing the total level for each form of hybridity. The minimum score or level of hybridity attainable for each respondent was a 4 (scoring 1 for each statement), while the maximum score was 20 (scoring 5 for each statement). This has allowed the transformation of ordinal variables based on the responses ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' into a ratio variable, through the use of a multi-item scale which combines the responses of the related individual rating scales into a single score which can be used to measure both constructs: hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude (Smith & Albaum, 2005). The advantage of using a multi-item scale or multiple indicator measure is that it is more able to capture the underlying concept of hybridity (Bryman, 2012).

Operationalisation of hybridity in practice took the form of four statements that required the artist to indicate how they approach their autonomous artistic and applied professions on a practical level. This revealed to how they handle their autonomous and applied practices whereby a higher score indicated a stronger rejection of the ideal autonomous artist discussed in the theory. Based on the response to each statement the total level of hybridity in practice could be determined.

The first statement required each artist to answer whether they try to maximise the time they spend on their artistic practice, whereby a 'strongly disagree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The second statement required each artist to answer whether they adapt to their clients wishes during the creation of applied/commissioned work whereby a 'strongly agree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The third statement asked each artist whether they would choose applied/commissioned work over their visual arts practice if the financial rewards were (substantially) higher, whereby 'strongly agree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The fourth statement asked each artist to specify whether they put more energy into perfecting their autonomous work compared

with their applied/commissioned work, whereby a 'strongly disagree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The combination of scores for each statement resulted in the total level of hybridity in practice for each artist.

Operationalisation of hybridity in attitude took the form of four statements that revealed the attitude of alumni to the blurring of their autonomous artistic practice and applied/commissioned practice. This revealed their attitude to hybridity in practice whereby a higher score indicated a stronger rejection of on the ideal autonomous artist discussed in the theory. Based on the response to each statement the total level of hybridity in attitude could be determined.

The first statement required the artist to answer how important it is for them to have complete artistic control over their artwork, whereby 'strongly disagree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The second statement required each artist to answer whether it is important that there is a clear distinction between their autonomous artistic work and their applied/commissioned work, whereby 'strongly disagree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The third statement asked each artist whether it is important for them to separate the time they spend on their autonomous practice and applied/commissioned practice, whereby 'strongly disagree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The fourth statement asked the artist whether they are open to telling other artists about their applied/commissioned work, whereby 'strongly agree' indicated the highest level of hybridity. The combination of scores for each of the four statements resulted in the total level of hybridity in attitude for each artist.

Before moving forward, it is important to acknowledge the potential issues in the way hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude have been operationalised, specifically concerning construct validity. This pertains to whether the scale measures what it intends to measure (Smith & Albaum, 2005). Due to the scope of this research, validation studies to ensure the precise definition of the constructs of both forms hybridity were not feasible. For this research this means that the statements used to measure hybridity developed from the theory are presumed to relate to one another and accurately capture the concepts, hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude (Bryman, 2012; Babbie, 2008).

### **2.3.3 Independent Variables**

The level of hybridity in practice and the level of hybridity in attitude, both separate dependent variables in this research, were observed in relationship to a number of

independent variables. Therefore this research investigates the relationship between the level of hybridity and the variables outlined below. It should be emphasised that this research intends to observe relationships rather than causality, which was beyond the scope of this research (Bryman, 2012).

### **Time**

This research employs an explanatory approach in order to answer the central research question by investigating whether the graduating year of alumni can account for differences in the level of hybridity.

For this investigation, a time span of 36 years from 1978-2014 was outlined. Four cohorts were distinguished (0-1990, 1991-2000, 2001-2010, 2011-onwards). The division allows for graduates to be observed over time through comparing four cohorts and therefore whether there is a higher level of hybridity in practice and a higher level of hybridity in attitude in more recent years.

### **Training**

To add depth to the explanatory component of the research an investigation was made into whether the graduates training during and following their visual arts education could also account for differences in the level of hybridity in practice and in attitude. This took the form of two separate independent variables.

The first training variable measured the responses of graduates through a 3-point Likert scale ('Yes', 'Somewhat', 'No') to assess their satisfaction with their training during their studies at art school and whether they felt that it equipped them with skills not directly related to their artistic practice but which are important to being an independent artist, with the examples given including bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing and entrepreneurship.

The second training variable measured the responses of graduates through a 3-point Likert scale ('Yes', 'Somewhat', 'No') as to whether they followed additional courses after their graduation for the purpose of supporting their independent artistic practice, with the examples given including bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing and entrepreneurship.

### **Degree**

As this research relies on the responses of graduates of visual art school it is interesting

to observe whether there are differences in the level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude for graduates depending on the different degree(s) studied. For the survey design the options of degrees alumni could select were sourced from the visual art school and graduates could also specify a degree that was not provided (see appendix). As certain graduates may have followed a number of studies at the same art school the option to select multiple degrees was provided. The following degrees were included: Bachelor of Visual Arts (BVA), Bachelor of Visual arts (Honours), Master of Fine Art, Master of Moving Image, Master of Contemporary Art, Diploma in Visual Arts, Graduate Diploma, Diploma in Design and Bachelor of Design. As expanded upon in the units of analysis section, as this research focuses on visual artists, the design degrees mentioned above were included in the survey in order to later exclude graduates from the analysis.

### **Media**

Additionally, this research aims to observe differences in the level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude based on the media the alumni used most during their studies. This is interesting for the analysis as certain media may lend themselves more to applied/commissioned work and therefore a hybrid practice. In reality artist often use multiple media, so therefore the option was given to select multiple media including: painting, photo media, print media, film/video, sculpture, jewellery, performance art and installation (see appendix). For the survey design the media options given to graduates were those that corresponded to the degrees studied on the educational institution's website and developed from the research of Winkel et al. (2012). Graduates could also specify other media if the option was not provided.

### **Gender**

As this research relies on the responses of graduates of visual art school it is interesting to observe whether there are differences in the level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude for graduates depending on their gender, based on whether they are male or female.

<b>Dependent Variables</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Type</b>
Hybridity in practice	Four statements: autonomous and applied/commissioned practice	Ratio
Hybridity in attitude	Four statements: autonomous and applied/commissioned practice	Ratio
<b>Independent Variables</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Type</b>
Time	Date of graduation	Ratio
Training during	Satisfaction with training during studies	Ordinal
Training after	Undertaking additional studies after graduation	Ordinal
Degree	Degree(s) completed	Nominal
Media	Art form(s) used during studies	Nominal
Gender	Male or female graduate	Dichotomous

Table 1. Indicators and type for dependent and independent variables

## 2.4 Data Collection

Data collection took place within the period of April-May 2015. Distribution of the survey relied on convenience sampling as the most effective way to access the population of alumni (Bryman, 2012). The survey was created and distributed online to alumni, initially through sharing the link on social media, specifically on the facebook channel: ‘SCA – Sydney College of the Arts’. During this period the institution, Sydney College of the Arts approved a request to distribute the survey through their official alumni mailing list.

It is important to recognise that there may be limitations specifically concerning the representativeness of such a non-probability sample due to non-response, as certain members of the population are more likely to participate in the online survey than others (Bryman, 2012). Despite this limitation, this method of sampling was the most effective method of contacting alumni for this investigation into the population of Australian visual artists (Bryman, 2012).

## 2.5 Data Analysis

Responses to the survey or self-completion questionnaire were exported from the online survey software surveygizmo.com to the statistical software SPSS for analysis. This allowed for the analysis of the quantitative data collected through the use of a number of statistical procedures that will be outlined in the results presented in Chapter 3.

### 3 Results

In this chapter the results of the analysis will be introduced in order to investigate the research question: *Are the practices of Australian visual artists becoming increasingly hybrid?* In this research this was investigated through the two constructs: level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude.

Based on the data collected through the survey directed to alumni of Sydney College of the Arts, a sample consisting of 135 alumni of the population of Australian visual artists was obtained. Out of 135 alumni who participated in the survey, 72 (n) graduates or 53% were measured for their level of hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude based on their engagement with both an autonomous and applied practice. These 72 graduates are the main focus of the data analysis in order to address the central focus of this investigation as to whether there is an increasing level of hybridity observed in the practice and attitude of alumni from more recent graduating years. The size of the sample does create concern over representativeness, referring to how generalisable the results are to the whole population (Babbie, 2008). Despite this, the sample is of a significant size considering it is sourced from one specific art school. Additionally this investigation observes whether there are different levels of hybridity depending on the artists training, degree completed, media forms used and gender.

Based on the results, none of the 72 graduates scored an absolute minimum (4) or maximum (20) level of hybridity either in practice or in attitude. Therefore it can be said that all 72 graduates are hybrid to a degree with a combined average total level of hybridity in practice of 11.64 (SD=2.585) and an average total level of hybridity in attitude of 11.39 (SD=2.286).<sup>4</sup> Although this is a somewhat modest level of hybridity in total, below the level of hybridity for different graduating years will be compared in order to observe whether levels of hybridity are increasing over time.

#### 3.1 Level of Hybridity in Practice – Level of Hybridity in Attitude

Before diving further into the analysis on graduates' level of hybridity over time, it is firstly interesting to observe whether there is a correlation between both forms of hybridity. In other words, do artists' practices actually reflect their attitude to the blurring

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<sup>4</sup> It must be noted that this represents the artists practice at time of response.

of their autonomous and applied practice? To assess the size and direction of the linear relationship between the level of hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude, a bivariate Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ( $r_s$ ) was calculated. This non-parametric test was used as the variable hybridity in attitude violated the assumption of non-normal distribution (Field, 2009). The correlation between these two variables was positive and modest,  $r_s(72) = .481, p < .05$ . Therefore it is evident that there is a correlation between the level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude, revealing that artists' practices appear to reflect their attitude towards the blurring of their autonomous and applied work. It will become clear through closer analysis, however, that this is not the case for more recent graduates. This will be expanded upon below as we investigate the levels of hybridity for different cohorts of alumni.

### 3.2 Hybridity – Time

In order to investigate whether there is an increase in the level of hybridity in practice and the level of hybridity in attitude over time in the practice of Australian visual artists, a line-graph representing the relationship between time and the two dependent variables was created (Figure 2). This was based on dividing the graduates measured for hybridity from graduating years 1978 to 2014 into four cohorts, 0-1990, 1991-2000, 2001-2010, 2011-2014.

If we consider the time period from the first graduating year of the sample of alumni in 1978, it is clear that there is not a consistent upward trend over time in the average level of hybridity in practice or in attitude. It must be noted that within the cohort 1991-2000 there are a significantly smaller number of graduates despite distributing the survey to all graduates within this period through the art schools official alumni mailing list. Out of the total of 14 graduates from this period only 8 had an autonomous and applied practice, and therefore could be measured for their level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude. This could possibly have resulted in the drastically lower average level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude in the period 1991-2000 compared to the other three cohorts. Despite this it can be said that there is not a constant increase in the level of hybridity in either form if we consider graduates from each of the four cohorts.



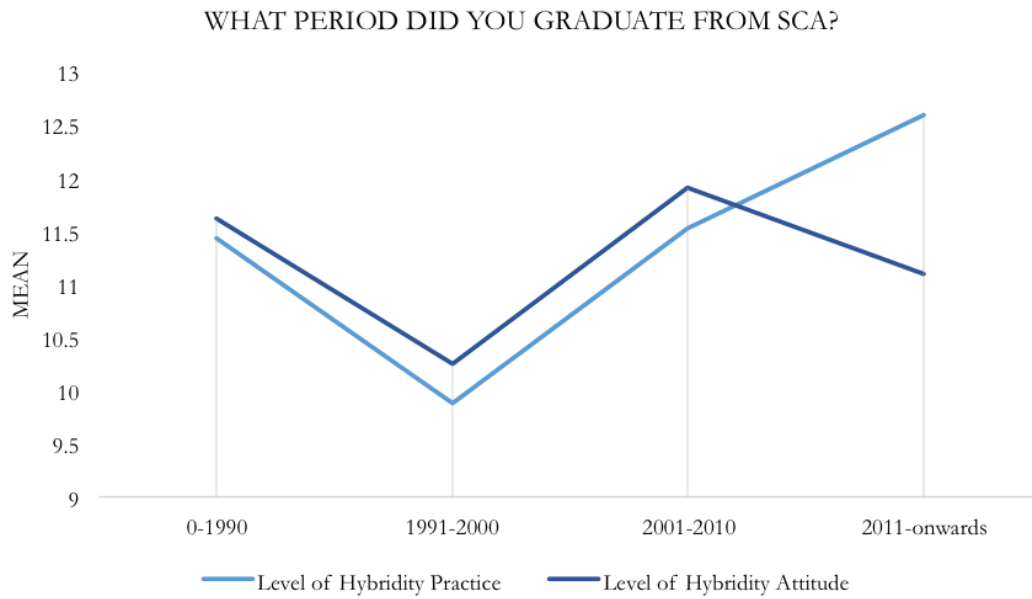


Figure 2. Mean level of hybridity in practice and attitude from cohort 1978-onwards

If we look only at the period from 1991-onwards, however, we can confirm that there are increasing levels of hybridity in practice. From this period there is also an upward trend in the level of hybridity in attitude, however this drastically falls for artists who graduated in the mid-2000s. At this point the level of hybridity in practice and in attitude radically split, whereby the level of hybridity in practice continues to increase and the level of hybridity in attitude decreases (Figure 3).

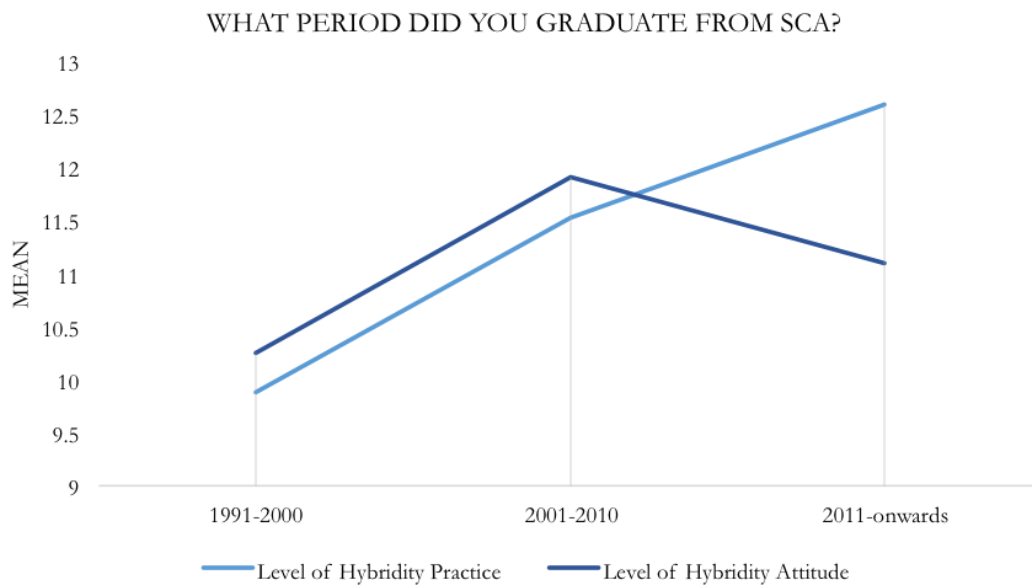


Figure 3. Mean level of hybridity in practice and attitude from cohort 1991-onwards

What this reveals is that artists who graduated after the mid-2000s began to have a negative attitude toward the blurring of their practices. This could be attributed to the creative industries agenda, which was very much promoted in the early 2000s in Australia following the first national cultural policy ‘*Creative Nation*’ report in 1994. According to the ‘*Arts and creative industries report: A historical overview; And an Australian discussion*’ published in 2009 by the Australian government and Arts council, there is an urgent need to improve the polar relationship between arts and creative industries policy. There is said to have been a more economically motivated policy emphasising ‘creativity’, which apparently made ‘art’s claim to a radical critique or unique apprehension of the world difficult to sustain’ (Australian government and Arts council, 2009, p. 79). In this report they focus specific attention to artists who have an applied and autonomous practice acknowledging the intrinsic differences between the two fields. Based on interviews with artists they observe that the idea of an opposition of art and creative industries being out-dated is certainly not true. The predominant attitude is that work in the applied arts restricts an artist’s creative freedom.

Therefore this may be reflected in the attitudes of artists who graduated from the mid-2000s onwards, coming into the professional art world at a time when there was the view that the creative industries was a threat to the autonomous space of art (Winkel et al., 2012). Despite the more negative attitude in recent graduates, the increasing levels of hybridity from the mid-2000 onwards may reveal that the blurring of autonomous and applied practice may be a necessity for financial reasons, which coincides with the growing creative industries offering employment opportunities. Therefore artists may find it important to maintain an autonomous practice but find that a hybrid practice may be a ‘necessary evil’ (Abbing, 2002, p. 145). Considering that the lower level of hybridity in practice in earlier graduates reflects their response at this point in time, this suggests that earlier graduates are more able to maintain the distinction between their two practices which may be related to Abbing’s observation that later on in an artist’s career they are able to increase their autonomy again after establishing themselves in the art world (Abbing, 2004, p. 5)

### **3.2.1 Situation in Australia vs Netherlands/Belgium**

As outlined in the methodology in Section 2.3.2, the results produced by Winkel et al. (2012) on artistic hybridity in the Netherlands and Belgium are not exactly comparable to

the Australian situation due to the difference in the way hybridity was operationalised.<sup>5</sup> Despite this obstacle, as both researches cover a similar time span from the mid-late 1970s onwards, it is interesting to compare whether artistic hybridity is more apparent in more recent years of graduation.

In their quantitative research Winkel et al. (2012) observe that 52 of the total sample of 247 Dutch and Belgian alumni or 21.1% can be identified as a hybrid artist based on their definition. Although this is significantly lower than the 53% observed in Australia, Winkel et al. (2012) still believe it is an overestimate due to the results being based on the artist's self-assessment, which may have resulted in misinterpretations of the concept of hybridity.

If we look at their findings from their quantitative research, however, we can see that there has not been a significant increase or decrease over time in hybridity. This observation is based on a how many artists identified themselves as hybrid from three cohorts 1975 (20.3%), 1990 (22.2%) and 2005 (17.8%). In this research all artist with an applied and autonomous practice are considered to be hybrid in practice to some degree unlike in the research of Winkel et al. (2012) where there are no levels observed. Therefore the number of hybrids in this research is actually more comparable to the proportion of hybrid and pluriactive artists combined in the research of Winkel et al (2012). Based on the different approaches to analysis it appears that no meaningful comparisons can be made.

Despite this, it is interesting to consider whether there are more artists multiple job-holding in the creative industries over time out of all participating graduates. In this research compared to older graduates, a lower number of recent graduates work in both applied and autonomous practices. Out of all participating alumni in Australia the results reveal 64% of alumni from the 0-1990 cohort, 57% of alumni from 1991-2000, 48% from 2001-2010 and 50% from 2011-2014 have an autonomous and applied practice (Table 2). This contrasts to the proportion of artists who also work in the applied arts in the study of Winkel et al. (2012) in the Netherlands and Belgium: 48,8% from the 1975 cohort, 47,2% from 1990 and 50,7% from 2005 we can see that there is no significant difference over time (Table 3). Despite this it is clear that this reflects the artists current professional situation. Regardless, in both cases approximately half of all graduates with a

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<sup>5</sup> Winkel et al. (2012) first asked alumni through a survey whether they felt they had a hybrid art practice whereby 85 of the 204 respondents, or 41% answered affirmatively. They then reevaluated these responses to exclude those who did not combine both an autonomous and applied practice resulting in the final figures.

visual arts practice also work in the applied arts or in the creative industries, which is a significant finding.

Cohort	Autonomous and applied practice	All graduates	Valid Percent
0-1990	21	33	64%
1991-2000	8	14	57%
2001-2010	21	44	48%
2011-onwards	22	44	50%
Total	72	135	

Table 2. Australia: Multiple job holding- autonomous and applied practice

Cohort	Autonomous and applied practice	All graduates	Valid Percent
1975	29	59	48,8%
1990	51	108	47,2%
2005	37	73	50,7%
Total	117	240	

Table 3. Netherlands/Belgium: Multiple job holding- autonomous and applied practice

### 3.3 Hybridity – Degree

Although the intention was to compare levels of hybridity for the different degrees studied by graduates, it became clear that this would not produce any meaningful results. Firstly, a number of graduates completed multiple degrees. Considering the highest level of study by each graduate, as Figure 4 illustrates, the majority of graduates studied either a Bachelor of Visual Arts, Bachelor of Visual Arts (Honours) or Master of Fine Arts which are not specialised degrees but allow the student to choose major and minor disciplines.

### NUMBER OF GRADUATES BY HIGHEST DEGREE

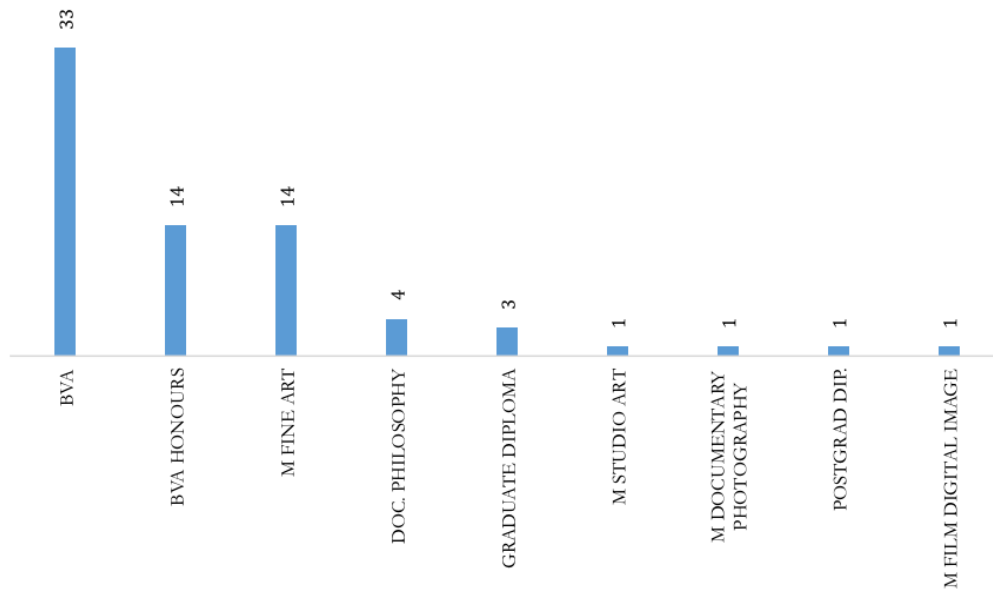


Figure 4. Distribution of graduates by highest degree studied at Sydney College Arts

As the table below (Table 4) illustrates, the different media used by graduates are not specific to one degree but are dispersed fairly evenly throughout. Therefore comparing different degrees has no particular significance as there is no specialisation, whereas comparing levels of hybridity based on the media used by alumni during their studies, as investigated below, could lead to more interesting results.

	2D Media	3D Media	Photo/Film	Total
Bachelor Visual Arts (BVA)	20 (30%)	27 (40%)	20 (30%)	67 (100%)
Bachelor Visual Arts (Honours)	11 (30%)	14 (38%)	12 (32%)	37 (100%)
Master of Fine Arts	10 (42%)	8 (33%)	6 (25%)	29 (100%)

Table 4. Media used by graduates during their studies based on highest degree completed

### 3.4 Hybridity - Media

In order to observe whether the average level of hybridity in practice and in attitude differs based on the media the graduate used most during their studies, the means of the level of hybridity for three categories of media were compared.

Each graduate was given the option to select multiple media. The results reveal that out of those graduates who were measured for hybridity ( $n=72$ ), 52 or 73,6% selected only one media, while the remaining 19 or 26.4% used more than one media during their visual art studies. As 19 students used multiple media each category is not mutually exclusive so therefore a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was not an appropriate test to compare the level of hybridity based on different media used (Field, 2009).

The categories of media included in the comparison were, 2D Media, 3D Media and Photography/Film. These categories were selected as they had the most significant response level and also as they were most in line with media that could be used in the context of autonomous and applied work, therefore likely to be used in a hybrid practice. In order to compare groups of a significant size, three categories were created, by combining a number of different media. The media included painting, print media and drawing. 3D Media included sculpture, jewellery, glass and ceramics. Photography/Film included only photography and film/video media.

To observe differences in the level of hybridity for the different media used by graduates, a multiple-line graph was created to plot the mean level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude for each media category over the four cohorts distinguished (0-1990, 1991-2000, 2001-2010, 2011-onwards).

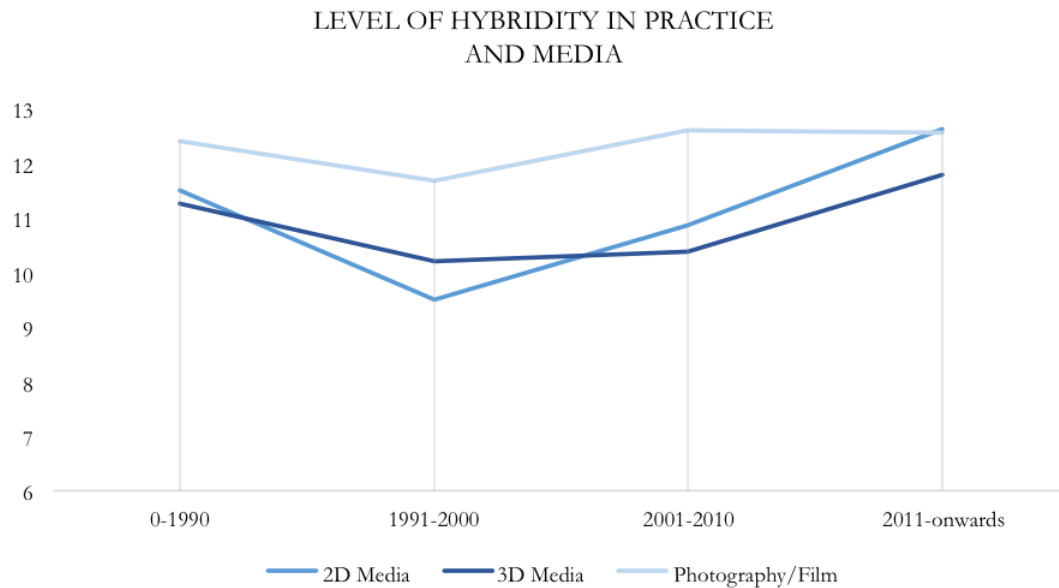


Figure 5. Mean level of hybridity in practice for different media used during studies

For the level of hybridity in practice the averages are relatively close together suggesting that there is not a large difference in the level of hybridity in practice based on the media the graduate used during their studies. There does appear to be a slightly higher total mean level of hybridity for those graduates in the media category of photography/film ( $M=12,45$ ) in comparison with 2D ( $M=11,52$ ) and 3D ( $M=10,93$ ) media. There also appears to be a more steady level of hybridity in practice over time for photography/film compared with 2D and 3D Media, which have gradually risen since the 1990s. As photography and film are media widely used on assignment or commission basis, artists working in this media may be able to accept more work and be used to adapting their work for clients unlike those who use more traditional 2D or 3D media.

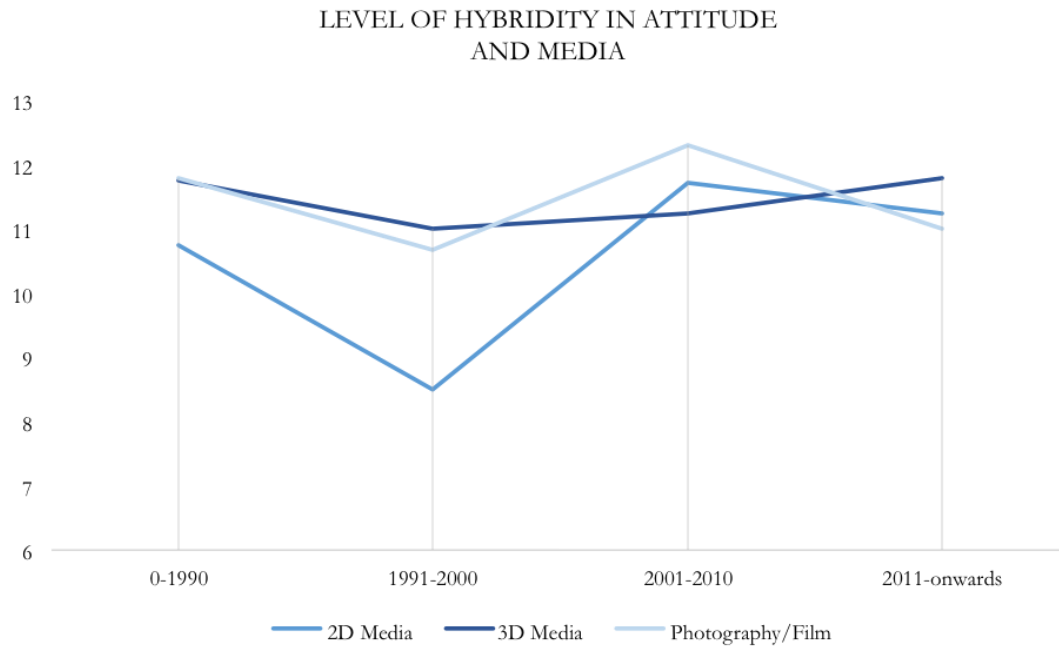


Figure 6. Mean level of hybridity in attitude for different media used during studies

For the level of hybridity in attitude, once again there is not a large difference in the averages between the three different categories of media. The total averages for all three media, photograph/film (M=11,55), 2D (M=11) and 3D (M=11,5) media are much closer together than that of the level of hybridity in practice. If we take a look at the multiple-line graph it appears that the mean level of hybridity in attitude for all three media tend to converge in the period 2001-2010. The most drastic shift in the mean level of hybridity in attitude appears to be for 2D media from the period 1991-2000 (M=8,5) to 2001-2010 (M=11,71). The significantly lower level of hybridity in attitude in the 1990s for 2D Media in comparison with other media may be due to association with the traditional idea of the romantic artist. The drastic increase once again may be linked to the acceptance that for an artist to survive, they must abandon the strict separation between their practices and embrace using their artistic skills in the applied arts.



### 3.5 Hybridity - Training during art school

In order to investigate the impact that a graduates training at visual arts school had on their level of hybridity both in practice and in attitude, a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Specifically the question was asked as to whether the graduate felt that their visual arts education equipped them with the skills not directly related to their artistic practice but which are important to being an independent artist, with the examples given including bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing and entrepreneurship.

A one-way between groups ANOVA can be used to test statistically significant differences between three or more independent sample means (Field, 2009). Hybridity in practice and in attitude were compared separately for the three groups of responses: Yes, Somewhat, No. For both tests the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. For the variable hybridity in attitude the assumption for normality was satisfied, however for hybridity in practice this was not the case. According to Field (2009), however, the ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality (p. 395).

For Hybridity in practice the ANOVA was not statistically significant indicating that there was no significant difference in the average level of hybridity in practice based on their response to their training during their visual arts education,  $F(2, 69) = .658$ ,  $p = .521$ ,  $\eta^2 = .02$ .

For Hybridity in attitude the ANOVA was also not statistically significant indicating that there was no significant difference in graduates level of hybridity in attitude on their training during their visual arts education,  $F(2, 69) = 1.902$ ,  $p = .157$ ,  $\eta^2 = .05$ .

Did your education at Sydney College of the Arts equip you with skills not directly related to your artistic practice but important to being an independent artist?		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
Yes	Mean	11,75	13,25
	N	4	4
	Std. Deviation	,975	2,217
Somewhat	Mean	11,25	11,00
	N	32	32
	Std. Deviation	2,962	2,476
No	Mean	11,97	11,53
	N	36	36
	Std. Deviation	2,336	2,049
Total	Mean	11,64	11,39
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	2,585	2,286

Table 5. Mean level of hybridity in practice and attitude based on training during studies

Based on the analysis it is clear that the training of the artist and whether they felt it supported their independent artistic practice did not have a significant effect on the level of hybridity. It must be noted however that the size of each group of graduates differed significantly. It is apparent that out of 72 artists measured for both forms of hybridity, only 4 graduates or 5.6% definitely felt that their training equipped them with skills important to being an independent artist as opposed to 36 who had a definite negative response, which is an interesting finding in itself. Of these negative responses 13 were recent graduates (2011-onwards), which accounts for 59% of all recent graduates with a hybrid practice. What this reveals is that a very small number of graduates with a hybrid practice, especially recent graduates, were satisfied with their studies at art school preparing them for an independent art practice, which may explain why they undertake applied work. As Abbing (2002) observes a minority of artists reach a successful professional position and can live solely of their art.

This is also reflected in the study of Winkel et al. (2012) although they do not only observe the responses of hybrid artists, including all participating Dutch and Belgian graduates in their analysis. Of those 42.9% fully or partially agree that their training gave them a good basis to start as a professional artist contrasting to 53% of all Australian graduates. As Winkel et al (2012) also reveal this indicates that almost half of all alumni

feel that they are fairly inadequately trained in business and professional aspects of art which may force many artists to search for work elsewhere or engage in multiple job-holding (Abbing, 2002).

### 3.6 Hybridity – Training after art school

In order to investigate the impact that following additional studies after graduating from visual art school had on the hybridity of graduates both in practice and attitude a one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used. Specifically the question was asked as to whether the graduate followed additional courses for the purpose of supporting their independent artistic practice, with the examples given including bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing and entrepreneurship.

A one-way between groups ANOVA can be used to test statistically significant differences between independent sample means (Field, 2009). Hybridity in practice and in attitude was compared for three groups of responses as to whether the graduate followed extra courses after their studies. The three options were: Yes, Somewhat, No. For both tests the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Once again for the variable hybridity in attitude the assumption for normality was satisfied, however for hybridity in practice this was not the case. As Field (2009) emphasises, however, the ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality (p. 395).

For Hybridity in practice the ANOVA was not statistically significant indicating that there was no significant difference in graduates level of hybridity in practice based on additional training following their visual arts education,  $F(2, 69) = .274$ ,  $p = .761$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ .

For Hybridity in attitude the ANOVA was also not statistically significant indicating that there was no significant difference in graduates level of hybridity in attitude based on additional training following their visual arts education,  $F(2, 69) = 0.027$ ,  $p = .973$ ,  $\eta^2 = .00$ .

After graduating from Sydney College of the Arts did you follow additional courses for the purpose of supporting your independent artistic practice?		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
Yes	Mean	11,29	11,43
	N	21	21
	Std. Deviation	2,667	2,111
Somewhat	Mean	11,82	11,47
	N	17	17
	Std. Deviation	2,455	2,695
No	Mean	11,76	11,32
	N	34	34
	Std. Deviation	2,652	2,239
Total	Mean	11,64	11,39
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	2,585	2,286

Table 6. Mean level of hybridity in practice and attitude based on training after studies

Despite the lack of significant difference in the level of hybridity in practice and in attitude it is once again interesting to observe the frequency of responses in each of the three categories (Yes, Somewhat, No). It is apparent that out of 72 artists measured for hybridity, 38 or 53% followed or partially followed additional courses while 34 graduates or 47% did not follow additional courses after graduation to support their independent artistic practice. Out of the 32 graduates who were not satisfied with their training only 9 or 25% responded that they did follow additional training after their studies. This could indicate that the majority of artists let go of the idea of relying solely on their artistic practice, taking up other professions leading to their profession in the applied field and consequently a hybrid practice.

Although all graduates measured for hybridity at least engage in applied work, the results reveal that out of those 34 who did not take additional courses following graduation 26 (76.5%) also work in an arts, arts-related or non-arts related field alongside their hybrid practice. Not only those who did not take additional courses work in these fields, however, but also 84% out of the remaining 38 hybrid artists who fully or partially followed a course following their visual arts training. This reveals that a high portion of graduates not only have an artistic practice and applied practice but also a profession in another field.

### 3.7 Hybridity - Gender

A one-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the impact of gender on the level of hybridity of graduates both in practice and attitude. Hybridity in practice and in attitude was compared for male and female graduates.

For both tests the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. Once again for the variable hybridity in attitude the assumption for normality was satisfied, unlike for the variable hybridity in practice. Despite this ANOVA is robust to violations of non-normality (Field, 2009, p. 395).

For Hybridity in practice the ANOVA was statistically significant indicating that there was a significant difference in graduates level of hybridity in practice based on their gender,  $F(1, 70) = 5.982$ ,  $p = .017$ ,  $\eta^2 = .08$ . The average level of hybridity in practice for Males ( $M = 12.84$ ,  $SD = 2.71$ ) was significantly higher than for Females ( $M = 11.21$ ,  $SD = 2.42$ ).

For Hybridity in attitude the ANOVA was statistically significant indicating that there was a significant difference in graduates level of hybridity in attitude based on their gender,  $F(1, 70) = 9.248$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\eta^2 = .12$ . The average level of hybridity in attitude for Males ( $M = 12.68$ ,  $SD = 2.06$ ) was significantly higher than for Females ( $M = 10.92$ ,  $SD = 2.2$ ).

Are you male or female?		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
Male	Mean	12,84	12,68
	N	19	19
	Std. Deviation	2,713	2,056
Female	Mean	11,21	10,92
	N	53	53
	Std. Deviation	2,421	2,200
Total	Mean	11,64	11,39
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	2,585	2,286

Table 7. Mean level of hybridity in practice and attitude for male and female graduates

What this reveals is that male graduates tend to have a significantly higher level of both hybridity in practice and attitude compared with female graduates. It should be pointed out, however, that there are a total of 19 males measured for their level of hybridity in

both practice and attitude as opposed to the larger group of 53 females. In any case the reason the higher level of hybridity in males was not addressed within the scope of this thesis but could be an interesting avenue for further research.

## Conclusion

This research has investigated whether there is an increase in levels of hybridity for Australian visual artists both in practice and in attitude. The intention was to observe the degree to which an artist's autonomous and applied practice blur, and furthermore the artist's attitude toward this phenomenon.

The theoretical framework established the importance of the notion of autonomy in the contemporary art world and consequently how a hybrid practice is perceived. The romantic ideal of the autonomous artist, a notion established in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, is perceived to be someone who can live solely off their art practice. As this is a reality for only a minority of artists, multiple job-holding and a hybrid practice are presented as alternatives, each receiving critique as to how they affect an artist's autonomy.

Winkel et al. (2012) see multiple job-holding as a preferable alternative to hybridity, allowing an artist to separate the autonomous domain from commercial imperatives. Abbing (2002) on the other hand is critical of multiple-job holding in the belief that it stimulates the acceptance of low wages in the art world, which has negative consequences for the full-time 'ideal autonomous artist' who is unable to sustain their practice in these conditions. Abbing (2002) therefore embraces the hybrid artist, on the condition that they are fully devoted to their practice.

Before reflecting on the Australian visual artist from this critical perspective, the significant findings of this research will be summarised, answering the central research question: *Are the practices of Australian visual artists becoming increasingly hybrid?*

Based on the responses of alumni of Sydney College of the Arts, a visual art school based in Sydney, it can be confirmed that there is not a consistent increase in the level of hybridity in the practice or attitude for Australian visual artists. Despite the lack of consistent upward trend based on the graduating year of alumni, it was observed that there are indeed increasing levels of hybridity in the practice of artists from the 1990s onwards. This is also the case for the level of hybridity in attitude until the mid-2000s, a period where graduates attitudes drastically alter revealing a rejection to the blurring of an autonomous and applied practice.

Although the training of alumni and the media used during their studies were also investigated for differences in the level of hybridity, there was no significant relationship observed. What is interesting to observe, however, is that male artists tend to

have higher levels of hybridity both in practice and in attitude compared with females.

Contrasting to this research, Winkel et al. (2012) do not observe an increase in hybridity in the practices of Dutch and Belgian artists, however it must be strongly emphasised that the results of their research are not exactly comparable based on the way hybridity was operationalised. What is interesting to compare, however, are the number of artists who also work in the applied arts alongside their artistic practice. The findings reveal that similarly to the Australian situation, approximately half of all participating graduates in Netherlands and Belgium have both an artistic and applied arts practice. So while the results on hybridity may not be exactly comparable, it is clear that artists are exploiting the opportunity to work in the creative industries.

### **Limitations**

After reporting the findings it is once again necessary to consider the limitations of this research, the most notable concerning the number of responses from graduates to the online survey, which determined the sample size. Non-response is one of the unavoidable limitations of non-probability sampling, however it was undeniably the most effective way to contact alumni, facilitated by Sydney College of the Arts who distributed the online survey through their official mailing list. Additionally, although a sufficient number of alumni responded, approximately half of those could be used for the analysis as they were still active as artists and also worked in the applied arts. A larger sample would have led to more representativeness over different cohorts thereby increasing the generalisability of the findings to the population of Australian visual artists. Despite this limitation, the sample was still significant in size considering it was sourced from one art school.

Another methodological concern of this research is construct validity, referring to the way hybridity was operationalised based on whether the four statements for the level of hybridity in practice and hybridity in attitude capture the concepts accurately. Although operationalisation was based upon the theoretical framework, the addition of validation studies would have been advantageous, however, it was not feasible within the scope of this research. Despite this, ultimately the chosen method of operationalisation was most reliable as it reduced misinterpretations of the concept which would have resulted had hybridity been self-determined by each artist.

Lastly, as this research is cross-sectional so that observations are made at one point in time, it is difficult to determine whether graduating years is the most appropriate



indicator in order to measure whether levels of hybridity increase over time, as older graduates may have also adapted to the current situation by finding work in the creative industries. Despite this, the advantage of using graduating years as an indicator of time is that it provides a clear point of comparison and also reflects the ideals conveyed during the period of visual art education.

### **Further Research**

As this research focused on artists from one visual art school in Australia, in order to determine whether hybridity is a more wide spread phenomenon it is necessary to extend this research to other art schools in Sydney and also beyond into other areas of Australia. It would also be interesting to compare whether the training at art school or a different educational context has any influence on levels of hybridity.

In order to extend this research further investigation into issues of causality would contribute to determining why Australian artists have different levels of hybridity in practice and also the cause for differences in the level of hybridity in attitude. This would be particularly interesting concerning the gender of graduates, considering that the results revealed a significantly higher level of hybridity in both practice and attitude for males compared with female graduates.

### **Another Critical Perspective**

Reflecting on the critical perspectives of hybridity discussed throughout this thesis, can we say that the increase in levels of hybridity in the practice of Australian artists mean that artists are compromising their autonomy? As emphasised on a number of occasions throughout this thesis, autonomy is clearly a relative concept. If each artist would strive for the romantic ideal of the autonomous artist who can live solely of their practice then only a minority of artists would meet this standard. Rather than adhering to the logic of the art world, autonomy should also be observed on an individual level. Along these lines it is interesting to return to the literal meaning of auto/nomos, literally 'to determine one's own laws' (Wright, 2013, p. 12). What this suggests is that what may be considered as an autonomous practice for one artist may be a compromise for others, as each artist develops their own conception of autonomy. Saying this however, while it is difficult to imagine a situation free from the pressures of any external forces, conditions should provide artists with a fundamental degree of autonomy, in the literal meaning of the word, enabling them to sustain their ability for critique.

What the result of this research reveal is that artists respond differently to the blurring of their autonomous and applied practice. While some are averse to this blurring, others embrace the situation. Therefore rather than taking a position on hybridity and speculating on whether multiple-job holding or hybridity is more beneficial for the artist, it is more important to really reflect on what the artists have revealed through participating in this research. Based on the discrepancy in the levels of hybridity in practice and attitude for recently graduated artists it is clear that recently graduated artists are not satisfied with the blurring of their autonomous and applied practice. This makes it clear that something needs to change. Realistically, no convincing alternatives can be proposed without reflecting on the cause of hybridity in practice and in attitude which was beyond the scope of this research, however this opens up an avenue for further research.

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## Appendix

### Survey: SCA Graduates - Artists' Practices

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We are asking alumni of Sydney College of the Arts (SCA) to answer a very short survey (5-7mins) about the development of their artistic practice. If you are a graduate of SCA your contribution would be greatly appreciated!

Research has been conducted in the Netherlands and Belgium concerning a *hybridisation* of professional visual artists' practices or an observed blurring between an artist's autonomous and applied work. There are two positions on hybridisation: one camp expressing concern over the threat it poses to the autonomy of the artist as a result of the neoliberal era; the other camp seeing this hybridisation as a reality, questioning whether the notion of autonomy is still relevant in contemporary art which is not isolated from a broader social context.

By participating in this survey you will help us to discover whether this phenomenon can also be observed in the practice of Australian artists!

1) What year did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?

- 1977
- 1978
- 1979
- 1980
- 1981
- 1982
- 1983
- 1984
- 1985
- 1986
- 1987
- 1988
- 1989
- 1990
- 1991
- 1992
- 1993
- 1994
- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2005
- 2006
- 2007
- 2008
- 2009

- 2010
- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

2) What is your date of birth? DD/MM/YYYY

---

3) Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

4) Which degree(s) did you graduate with from Sydney College of the Arts?

- Bachelor Visual Arts (BVA)
- Bachelor Visual Arts (Honours)
- Master of Moving Image
- Master of Contemporary Art
- Master of Fine Arts
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Diploma in Visual Arts
- Diploma in Design
- Bachelor of Design
- Graduate Diploma
- Other - please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

5) During your studies at Sydney College of the Arts which art form(s) did you use most?

- Painting
  - Photomedia
  - Print media
  - Film/video
  - Sculpture
  - Jewellery
  - Performance art
  - Installation
  - Other - please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### **Training**

6) Did your education at Sydney College of the Arts equip you with skills not directly related to your artistic practice but important to being an independent artist?

eg. Bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing, entrepreneurship

- Yes
- Somewhat
- No

7) After graduating from Sydney College of the Arts did you follow additional courses for the purpose of supporting your independent artistic practice?

eg. Bookkeeping, marketing, management, grant writing, entrepreneurship

- Yes

- Somewhat
- No

---

**Artistic Practice/Occupation**

8) Do you still have an active artistic practice as a visual artist?

- Yes
- No

9) Do you engage with any of the following within your artistic practice?

- Studio practice
- Exhibiting own work
- Installations on location (temporary)
- Art in public space (permanent)
- Live performance art
- Community art projects
- Art on commission or assignment basis
- Other - please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

10) Are you engaged in any of the following professions within the applied arts field?

- Graphic design
- Illustration assignments
- Industrial design
- Product design
- Fashion design
- Interior design or- landscape architecture
- Photography assignments
- Film or documentary
- Other forms of applied arts - please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Not applicable

11) Do you engage in any of the following professions within the arts field?

- Writer
- Musician (or- singer)
- Composer
- Actor (or- director)
- Dancer (or- choreographer)
- Other forms of arts - please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Not applicable

12) Do you engage in any of the following professions within an arts-related field?

- Radio
- Television
- Publishing
- Curating
- Worker by an artists initiative or cultural organisation
- Art teacher
- Art education (e.g. museum, children's workshops)

- Jury member/art commission  
 Other forms of arts-related profession - please specify:

---

Not applicable

13) Do you engage in a non-arts-related job?

- Yes  
 No

---

**Artistic + Applied/Commissioned**

These are the last few questions! Thank you for your time!

15) It is important for me to have complete artistic control over my artwork

- Strongly disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly agree

16) I try to maximise the time I spend on my artistic practice

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

17) I have no problem adapting to my clients' wishes during the creation of applied/commissioned work

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

18) If I am offered applied/commissioned work that pays (substantially) better I will take this over my autonomous artistic practice

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

19) I put more energy into perfecting my autonomous artistic work than my applied/commissioned work

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

20) It is important for me that there is a clear distinction between my autonomous artistic work and applied/commissioned work

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

21) It is important for me to separate the time I spend on my autonomous artistic practice and applied/commissioned projects

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree

22) I am open to telling other artists about my applied/commissioned work

- Strongly Disagree     Disagree     Neither Agree nor Disagree     Agree  
 Strongly Agree
-



**Thank you!!!**

Thank you for taking our survey! It is much appreciated!

Please share this with fellow graduates of SCA for a better understanding of this phenomenon!

Research has been conducted in the Netherlands and Belgium concerning a *hybridisation* of professional visual artists' practices or an observed blurring between an artist's autonomous and applied work. There are two positions on hybridisation: one camp expressing concern over the threat it poses to the autonomy of the artist as a result of the neoliberal era; the other camp seeing this hybridisation as a reality, questioning whether the notion of autonomy is still relevant in contemporary art which is not isolated from a broader social context.

By participating in this survey you will help us to discover whether this phenomenon can also be observed in the practice of Australian artists!

## SPSS Output

### 1. Total: Number of alumni

What year did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?	N	Minimum	Maximum
Valid N	135	1978	2014

### 2.Total: What period did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-1990	33	24,4	24,4	24,4
1991-2000	14	10,4	10,4	34,8
2001-2010	44	32,6	32,6	67,4
2011-onwards	44	32,6	32,6	100,0
Total	135	100,0	100,0	

### 3. Hybrid artists: Number of alumni

	N	Minimum	Maximum
What year did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?	72	1978	2014
Valid N	72		

### 4. Hybrid artists: What period did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-1990	21	29,2	29,2	29,2
1991-2000	8	11,1	11,1	40,3
2001-2010	21	29,2	29,2	69,4
2011-onwards	22	30,6	30,6	100,0
Total	72	100,0	100,0	

**5. Total: What year did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1978	2	1,5	1,5	1,5
	1979	2	1,5	1,5	3,0
	1980	1	,7	,7	3,7
	1981	1	,7	,7	4,4
	1982	4	3,0	3,0	7,4
	1983	1	,7	,7	8,1
	1984	5	3,7	3,7	11,9
	1985	4	3,0	3,0	14,8
	1986	3	2,2	2,2	17,0
	1987	4	3,0	3,0	20,0
	1988	1	,7	,7	20,7
	1989	2	1,5	1,5	22,2
	1990	3	2,2	2,2	24,4
	1991	1	,7	,7	25,2
	1992	1	,7	,7	25,9
	1993	3	2,2	2,2	28,1
	1994	1	,7	,7	28,9
	1995	1	,7	,7	29,6
	1996	2	1,5	1,5	31,1
	1997	2	1,5	1,5	32,6
	1998	1	,7	,7	33,3
	2000	2	1,5	1,5	34,8
	2001	5	3,7	3,7	38,5
	2002	3	2,2	2,2	40,7
	2003	4	3,0	3,0	43,7
	2004	4	3,0	3,0	46,7
	2005	2	1,5	1,5	48,1
	2006	3	2,2	2,2	50,4
	2007	3	2,2	2,2	52,6
	2008	3	2,2	2,2	54,8
	2009	6	4,4	4,4	59,3
	2010	10	7,4	7,4	66,7
2011	10	7,4	7,4	74,1	
2012	14	10,4	10,4	84,4	
2013	10	7,4	7,4	91,9	
2014	11	8,1	8,1	100,0	
Total		135	100,0	100,0	

**6. Hybrid artists: What year did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1978	2	2,8	2,8	2,8
	1979	1	1,4	1,4	4,2
	1980	1	1,4	1,4	5,6
	1981	1	1,4	1,4	6,9
	1982	3	4,2	4,2	11,1
	1984	2	2,8	2,8	13,9
	1985	3	4,2	4,2	18,1
	1987	3	4,2	4,2	22,2
	1988	1	1,4	1,4	23,6
	1989	2	2,8	2,8	26,4
	1990	2	2,8	2,8	29,2
	1991	1	1,4	1,4	30,6
	1992	1	1,4	1,4	31,9
	1993	2	2,8	2,8	34,7
	1996	2	2,8	2,8	37,5
	1998	1	1,4	1,4	38,9
	2000	1	1,4	1,4	40,3
	2001	1	1,4	1,4	41,7
	2002	2	2,8	2,8	44,4
	2003	1	1,4	1,4	45,8
	2004	1	1,4	1,4	47,2
	2005	2	2,8	2,8	50,0
	2006	1	1,4	1,4	51,4
	2007	2	2,8	2,8	54,2
	2008	2	2,8	2,8	56,9
	2009	1	1,4	1,4	58,3
	2010	7	9,7	9,7	68,1
	2011	5	6,9	6,9	75,0
	2012	6	8,3	8,3	83,3
	2013	5	6,9	6,9	90,3
	2014	7	9,7	9,7	100,0
	Total	72	100,0	100,0	

**7. Hybrid artists: Measures of central tendency:**

**Level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude**

		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
N	Valid	72	72
	Missing	0	0
Mean		11,64	11,39
Std. Error of Mean		,305	,269
Median		12,00	11,00
Mode		12	10
Std. Deviation		2,585	2,286
Range		11	10

**8. Hybrid artists: Frequency: Level of hybridity in practice**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5	1	1,4	1,4	1,4
	6	2	2,8	2,8	4,2
	7	3	4,2	4,2	8,3
	8	4	5,6	5,6	13,9
	9	3	4,2	4,2	18,1
	10	7	9,7	9,7	27,8
	11	10	13,9	13,9	41,7
	12	16	22,2	22,2	63,9
	13	10	13,9	13,9	77,8
	14	6	8,3	8,3	86,1
	15	5	6,9	6,9	93,1
	16	5	6,9	6,9	100,0
	Total	72	100,0	100,0	

**9. Hybrid artists: Frequency: Level of hybridity in attitude**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	7	3	4,2	4,2	4,2
	8	4	5,6	5,6	9,7
	9	9	12,5	12,5	22,2
	10	13	18,1	18,1	40,3
	11	8	11,1	11,1	51,4
	12	9	12,5	12,5	63,9
	13	12	16,7	16,7	80,6
	14	10	13,9	13,9	94,4
	15	1	1,4	1,4	95,8
	16	2	2,8	2,8	98,6
	17	1	1,4	1,4	100,0

Total	72	100,0	100,0	
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**10. Hybrid artists:**

**Mean level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude for each cohort**

What period did you graduate from Sydney College of the Arts?		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
0-1990	Mean	11,43	11,62
	N	21	21
	Std. Deviation	2,249	1,830
1991-2000	Mean	9,88	10,25
	N	8	8
	Std. Deviation	3,182	2,188
2001-2010	Mean	11,52	11,90
	N	21	21
	Std. Deviation	2,358	2,119
2011-onwards	Mean	12,59	11,09
	N	22	22
	Std. Deviation	2,631	2,776
Total	Mean	11,64	11,39
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	2,585	2,286

**11. Hybrid artists: Correlation:**

**Level of hybridity in practice and level of hybridity in attitude**

			Level of Hybridity Attitude	Level of Hybridity Practice
Spearman's rho	Level of Hybridity Attitude	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.481**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		,000
		N	72	72
	Level of Hybridity Practice	Correlation Coefficient	.481**	1,000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	
		N	72	72

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

## 12. Hybrid artists:

### Number of different media used during studies at Sydney College of the Arts

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 Medium	53	73,6	73,6	73,6
	2 Media	14	19,4	19,4	93,1
	3 Media	4	5,6	5,6	98,6
	4 Media	1	1,4	1,4	100,0
	Total	72	100,0	100,0	

## 13. Hybrid artists: Descriptives: Training during studies

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Level of Hybridity Practice	Yes	4	11,75	,957	,479	10,23	13,27	11	13
	Somewhat	32	11,25	2,962	,524	10,18	12,32	5	16
	No	36	11,97	2,336	,389	11,18	12,76	7	16
	Total	72	11,64	2,585	,305	11,03	12,25	5	16
Level of Hybridity Attitude	Yes	4	13,25	2,217	1,109	9,72	16,78	11	16
	Somewhat	32	11,00	2,476	,438	10,11	11,89	7	17
	No	36	11,53	2,049	,342	10,83	12,22	8	16
	Total	72	11,39	2,286	,269	10,85	11,93	7	17

## 14. Hybrid artists: Test of Homogeneity of Variances: Training during

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Level of Hybridity Practice	2,462	2	69	,093
Level of Hybridity Attitude	,322	2	69	,726

## 15. Hybrid artists: ANOVA: Training during

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level of Hybridity Practice	Between Groups	8,889	2	4,444	,658	,521
	Within Groups	465,722	69	6,750		
	Total	474,611	71			
Level of Hybridity Attitude	Between Groups	19,389	2	9,694	1,902	,157
	Within Groups	351,722	69	5,097		

Total	371,111	71			
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### 16. Hybrid artists: Descriptives: Training after studies

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Level of Hybridity Practice	Yes	21	11,29	2,667	,582	10,07	12,50	5	16
	Somewhat	17	11,82	2,455	,596	10,56	13,09	7	16
	No	34	11,76	2,652	,455	10,84	12,69	6	16
	Total	72	11,64	2,585	,305	11,03	12,25	5	16
Level of Hybridity Attitude	Yes	21	11,43	2,111	,461	10,47	12,39	8	17
	Somewhat	17	11,47	2,695	,654	10,08	12,86	7	16
	No	34	11,32	2,239	,384	10,54	12,10	7	14
	Total	72	11,39	2,286	,269	10,85	11,93	7	17

### 17. Hybrid artists: Test of Homogeneity of Variances: Training after studies

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Level of Hybridity Practice	,140	2	69	,870
Level of Hybridity Attitude	1,140	2	69	,326

### 18. Hybrid artists: ANOVA: Training after studies

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level of Hybridity Practice	Between Groups	3,737	2	1,869	,274	,761
	Within Groups	470,874	69	6,824		
	Total	474,611	71			
Level of Hybridity Attitude	Between Groups	,292	2	,146	,027	,973
	Within Groups	370,819	69	5,374		
	Total	371,111	71			



**19. Hybrid artists: Multiple job-holding alongside hybrid practice**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	14	19,4	19,4	19,4
	Arts	19	26,4	26,4	45,8
	Arts-Related	2	2,8	2,8	48,6
	Non-Arts-Related	9	12,5	12,5	61,1
	Arts and Arts-Related	5	6,9	6,9	68,1
	Arts and Non-Arts-Related	12	16,7	16,7	84,7
	Arts, Arts-Related and Non-Arts Related	11	15,3	15,3	100,0
	Total	72	100,0	100,0	

**20. Hybrid artists: Descriptives: Gender**

Are you male or female?		Level of Hybridity Practice	Level of Hybridity Attitude
Male	Mean	12,84	12,68
	N	19	19
	Std. Deviation	2,713	2,056
Female	Mean	11,21	10,92
	N	53	53
	Std. Deviation	2,421	2,200
Total	Mean	11,64	11,39
	N	72	72
	Std. Deviation	2,585	2,286

**21. Hybrid artists: ANOVA Table: Gender**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Level of Hybridity Practice * Are you male or female?	Between Groups (Combined)	37,368	1	37,368	5,982	,017
	Within Groups	437,243	70	6,246		
	Total	474,611	71			
Level of Hybridity Attitude * Are you male or female?	Between Groups (Combined)	43,308	1	43,308	9,248	,003
	Within Groups	327,803	70	4,683		
	Total	371,111	71			