Artists or Savvy Entrepreneurs? Why not both!

Visual artists and their self-identity on YouTube

Student name: Boryana Mileva

Student number: 499758

Supervisor: Dr. Sven-Ove Horst

Media and Creative Industries

Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication

Erasmus University Rotterdam

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ABSTRACT

In the post-industrial era, creative goods have increasingly become recognized for their commercial potential. With the development of digital media, barriers to entry have lowered for those seeking to build an art career through digital entrepreneurship and many new opportunities for artists to showcase their talent have emerged. The myth of the artistic identity that exist in discourse, however, rejects the commercial logic of art creation, which poses an interesting challenge to the identity of the art entrepreneur. Nevertheless, in recent years the labor market conditions have made entrepreneurial qualities an important asset for artists seeking professional development. This has further brought attention to the seeming incompatibility of entrepreneurial and artistic values, although there is evidence that the two sets of values can coexist. To investigate how art entrepreneurs cope with this predicament, this research used thematic and narrative analysis to examine content from 12 channels of visual artists on YouTube with the aim to explore how they construct their entrepreneurial self-identity through narrative.

Overall, artists on YouTube are a community that so far has not received academic attention, therefore this study had an exploratory character. This research contributes to our understanding of how artistic identity is adapting to the commodification of creative goods. The findings demonstrated a developed entrepreneurial identity among the YouTube artists, as well as a distancing from the myth of the artists as an extraordinarily gifted persona leading a bohemian lifestyle. The artists demonstrated strategic development as entrepreneurs and placed high value on developing both artistically and entrepreneurially in their profession. Additionally, they encouraged others to also try entrepreneurship and offered their experience and guidance to their audience.

This research also provides insight into self-branding, identity construction and strategizing on social media as the artists used social media for both self-expression and self-promotion purposes, demonstrating how the person and the brand fuse to create a complex mediatized identity. Further, this study highlights the increasing importance of platforms and social media as a tool for business growth and development for entrepreneurs and it also shows how the identity of artists is adapting to these new affordances.

Keywords: *media, entrepreneurship, identity construction, artists, YouTube*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The age of digital technologies provides professionals in the creative industries with many new opportunities to showcase their talent and build their identity online. Artists can now more easily connect to their audiences due to the lack of barriers to entry in social media (Chen, 2013; Hou 2018) and market their products as well as receive feedback from their audience. Social media has certainly allowed artists opportunities that were not previously available with traditional mass media. Already in 2009, Sweeny argued that that Web 2.0 is an "interactive, graphically oriented and visually stimulating" environment which creates favorable conditions for visual artists, providing them with the opportunity to share their artworks and receive feedback. Even in its infancy, 4 years after its creation in 2005, YouTube was used by artists to promote their work, showcase their process or educate viewers in art techniques and approaches (Sweeny, 2009). Ten years later, YouTube is the second most popular social media, with 2 billion monthly active users (Statista, n.d.a) and more than 500 hours of video footage uploaded every minute (Statista, n.d.b).

Overall, more and more importance is attached to social media driving entrepreneurship. A lot of research has focused on examining the entrepreneurial opportunities that YouTube provides - the business and marketing side of creating content on the platform (Bi, Zhang, & Ha, 2019; Hou, 2018; Kim, 2012; Mardon, Molesworth & Grigore, 2018; Pace, 2008; Postigo, 2018). This increased focus of entrepreneurship research is also evident from the treatment of the identity creation process as self-branding, a process where identity creation is treated the same as branding and marketing a product (Chen, 2013; Hou, 2018). Therefore, managing a YouTube channel can be characterized as an entrepreneurial endeavor since the platform offers its users an opportunity to profit through the YouTube Partner Program, where creators receive revenue from the advertisements that play on their videos (Kim, 2012) as well as from additional networks and sponsorships external to the platform (Hou, 2018). Nevertheless, visual artists are rarely a subject of research on the platform despite the existence of many channels and videos dedicated to the topic. Because of the intricacies of the artistic identity – the blurred boundaries between personality and occupational identity and need for authenticity, combined with the idea of being different (Bain, 2005, Bridgstock, 2012), the identity of artists on social media warrants more academic attention.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to focus on a group of creative professionals – visual artists. A general definition of visual arts indicates that these are creative arts such as painting, film, sculpture, photography, etc. that can be appreciated through sight, as opposed to music drama and literature (visual art, n.d; visual arts, n.d). This research will be using the term "artists" more narrowly, to refer to a specific group of visual artists who practice digital and/or traditional painting. So far, the entrepreneurial opportunities of art channels have been recognized (Sweeny, 2009) but no research exists on development of artists' identity as entrepreneurs on social media. In particular, there is a lack of understanding the "identity work" of the artists running these channels (cf. Brown, 2015). For this reason, the following research question was formulated: ***How do artists construct their entrepreneurial self-identity through narrative identity work on YouTube?***

To answer this question, four sub-questions have been formulated. Previous research suggests the incompatibility of artistic and entrepreneurial values in the eyes of artists (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006;), but there is evidence that hybrid identities incorporating both sets of values can develop (Lingo and Tepper, 2013; Werthes Mauer & Brettel, 2017). Therefore, this research will investigate *how visual artists balance an artistic and entrepreneurial identity?*

Chen's research (2013) claims that social media such as YouTube allow for self-branding that can lead to self-promotion and self-marketing. He found that identifying one's unique qualities and constructing a compelling image and presence around these attributes was an essential part of self-branding. Additionally, he noted that showcasing one's individuality through values and beliefs was something that helps one stand out on social media. The research of Horst, Järventie-Thesleff and Perez-Latre (2019) and Zuzul and Tripsas (2019) also suggests that values are an important factor for entrepreneurial identity through shaping motivations and outcomes in entrepreneurial endeavors. This leads to the question: *What are the values that they enforce when creating their identity?*

In addition to values, the reasons for being an entrepreneur are important. Horst et al. (2019) who studied entrepreneurial identity development online, outlined 3 types of entrepreneurs according to their mediatized interactions. Firstly, the solution-driven entrepreneurs who act in a clear strategic and goal-focused manner, implementing short term activities to achieve long-term goals. The purpose-driven entrepreneurs are driven by strong

values and they aim to raise awareness about social/ environmental problems and solve them. Lastly, the lifestyle driven entrepreneur enjoys organizing their life, work and social connections and appreciates openness and autonomy, who rather flexible in their strategy and often change their goals. According to Werthes et al. (2017), making money is the most common motivation that entrepreneurs share, but other than that motivations may be various. They claim that artists are different from other entrepreneurs because apart from the financial aspect, they also need to take into account their artistic and self-development needs. Based on these previous studies the following sub-question is formulated: *What are YouTube visual artists' motivations for entrepreneurship?*

Additionally, social media can be viewed as an accessory to enhance a brand and their interaction with audience (Horst et al., 2019), but it can also be much more. Khamis, Ang and Welling (2017) bring attention to self-mediation which entails creating a distinct and highly curated image of the oneself online that can be used for gaining commercial or cultural capital. YouTube offers ample opportunity for self-branding (Chen, 2013), as well as the opportunity to actually receive an income from the platform (Postigo, 2018) and to find sources of income outside the platform (Hou, 2018). This leads to the question: *In what way is having a presence on YouTube a part of visual artists' entrepreneurial journey?*

This research is *theoretically relevant* because so far research has only acknowledged the opportunity for entrepreneurial success of artists on YouTube but their identity construction, both from an entrepreneurial and artistic standpoint, remain unexplored. In the 21-st century the artistic and entrepreneurial identity have a strong and sometimes seemingly paradoxical relationship. Bain (2005) states that many contemporary visual artists tend to follow the stereotypical image of the reclusive artists, a bohemian rebel and social critic who devotes themselves to art, sacrificing their financial status and well-being meanwhile the current marketplace requires the artists to experiment and create while marketing and capitalizing upon their individuality. In other words, the artists are expected to be savvy entrepreneurs who can capitalize upon their individuality while following stereotypes to reinforce their artistic identity. Albinsson's (2018) research on musicians and their occupational identity has also reflected the shift in expectations, remarking that entrepreneurship has become an integral part being a creative professional. Furthermore, research about the entrepreneurial aspects of artists on YouTube is limited. So far it has only been explored in previous research in relation to some

communities on the platform, for example gaming commentary (Postigo, 2018), amateur performers (Chen, 2013) and beauty gurus (Hou, 2018), but the art community is left unexplored. This underscores the scientific and theoretical relevance of this research.

This research is also *societally relevant* because as Downing (2005) states, entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon and the meanings attached to it are poorly understood. Since artists often become entrepreneurs and in turn aspects of entrepreneurship become part of artists' identity, this might create tensions in their identity. As suggested by Bain (2005), artist often experience tensions between the stereotypical identity roles that they have learned and the expectation for artists in the marketplace. Eikhof and Haunschild (2006) highlight the importance of bridging the gap between artistic work and economic production because the creative industries depend upon artists as their source for production. Furthermore, the creative industries sector has been growing rapidly and so is the economic value attached to it (Bridgstock, 2012; Lingo & Tepper, 2013). This research will further explore the relationship between artistic and entrepreneurial identity which be useful for recognizing issues stemming from the hybridization of the artistic and entrepreneurial identity.

This research can be *practically relevant* for artists wanting to better understand how they can develop through social media in reflective manner. It may help them make better and more conscious choices how to position themselves, what to tell others about how they develop and using the affordances of social media more productively. In addition, the research can help companies understand better how artists develop through social media and thereby adapt to and accommodate the needs of creative professionals.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section aims to investigate topics that are relevant to the research. It aims to clarify the meaning of identity, how it is constructed, what existing narratives there are that might influence it, and how it can be observed in a mediated environment.

2.1 Identity and identity development

Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis and Sabelis (2009) claim that identity is developed in a social context through processes of interaction with others. This means, identity is constructed through social interaction, in routines what permit the constructions of personal identities and public identities as members of society. Identity is therefore a bridging concept between individual and society (Ybema et al., 2009). Identity formation involves negotiation between social and self-definition. Therefore, identity is not fixed, but rather constantly negotiated through social contacts (Ybema et al., 2009). Similarly, LaPointe (2010) argues that (professional) identity work resides in narratives that incorporate culturally and socially constructed discourses. Professional identity is defined by Slay and Smith (2011) as "one's professional self-concept based on attributes, beliefs, values, motives, and experiences" (p. 86). Previous research suggests that a person maintains multiple identities when dealing with different situations. Werthes et al. (2017) claim that identity is constructed of several micro identities that develop through the course of a lifetime. In their paper they argue that even identities that have seemingly incompatible values can be combined to create hybrid identities.

2.1.1 Mediated identity and self-branding

In today's world where social interactions are increasingly conducted online, more and more an aspect of identity formation are becoming mediated. Horst, et al. (2019) argue that social media has become a space in which people enact their social reality by networking and communicating, which means that social media has become a place to carry out identity work. Khamis et al. (2017) claim that on social media there is a distinct kind of identity construction – self-mediation, where users create highly curated images of how they want to be perceived through their social media posts. Khamis et al. (2017) explain that the practice of self-branding, also called personal branding is a popular practice on social media through which individuals seek to gain commercial or cultural capital. It involves users developing a distinctive public

image in the way that a commercial brand would develop an image for their product - by developing a selling point based on their unique qualities and interacting with the audience in an engaging way.

Chen (2013) claims that self-branding is now a growing business and YouTube allows anyone to build their own brand and build a bidirectional relationship with their audience. His article claims that YouTube allows users to transcend barriers such as appearances, personal ability and socioeconomic status and allows people to build a brand for themselves through self-representation. This self-branding demonstrates an entrepreneurial approach to one's social media image. Indeed, Chen (2013) argues that self-branding is a tool used by individuals on social media as a means to differentiate themselves from their competition. Both Chen (2013) and Khamis et al. (2017) remark that social media lowers the barriers to entry, allowing anyone to take part in self-branding practices.

2.1.2 Narrative identity work

Previous academic work suggest that professional identities do not reside in insolation in the individual but that they are rather co-constructed and negotiated through communication. LaPointe (2010) insists that individual career identities become meaningful within the wider set of cultural beliefs and narratives attached to a professional identity. LaPointe (2010) defines narratives as "the key scheme by which human beings make their experiences meaningful […] and understand temporality [...]" (p.3). She argues that there are socially and culturally constructed discourses (also called master narratives) that make available certain identity positions in professions. She further claims that career narratives borrow from these discourses that attach certain meanings to a career or profession. This was evident in Bain's (2005) research on artist identity which found that artists often built on myths and stereotypes concerning their profession to maintain and reaffirm their occupational identity. At the same time, identity work, might also entail negotiating and distancing oneself from these positions.

LaPointe (2010) examines identity work narratives as positioning, a term by Davies & Harré, which describes a process in which people both adapt the positions offered in master narratives by resisting and modifying these positions. Essentially, constructing a narrative consists of the individual positioning themselves within existing discourses that are available but at the same time having individual agency to resist and adapt those discourses and negotiate their

position in them. Similarly, Downing (2005) claims that socially constructed rules and conventions can be identified but it is through the narrative process that one can gain understanding of how these rules are negotiated, adapted and interpreted. He outlines a framework that describes structure and processes by which people build narratives about their work identity. The framework consists of storylines (1), which are remembered and often repeated stories that evoke strong emotions, (2) emplotment, which entails fitting storylines (often unconsciously) into recognizable plots as a sense-making device that creates causality, and (3) narrative structuring, which adds chronology and perspective to the story by developing an elaborate structure and contextualizing it. Although this framework was developed with the intention to be used for analyzing interactions between entrepreneurs and stakeholders, it can prove useful in understanding YouTube creators and their narrative identity work.

It can also be argued that narrative work on YouTube has a business-like nature. When discussing identity construction on YouTube, the opportunities for self-branding that have arisen with the popularization of social media cannot be neglected. Chen (2013) argues that because social media shifts attention to self-expression and self-presentation, it has created an opportunity for personal branding. He argues that YouTube and other social media have allowed individuals to create a carefully curated self-identity and to analyze and market themselves as a brand. In his research, Chen (2013) observed how YouTube creators followed the mechanism for self-branding proposed by Arruda – first identifying unique identity qualities within oneself, then constructing a compelling statement around certain attributes and, lastly, creating a strategy to make the brand visible. This highlights the potential of self-branding for entrepreneurial identity development when examining narratives presented by YouTube creators. These narratives, because of their curated nature, can be interpreted as indicative of both how creators perceive themselves as well as how they want to be perceived by others.

It also needs to be remarked that self-branding and self-marketing has a distinct entrepreneurial nature. Chen (2013) argues that for (amateur) individuals personal branding becomes a business concept because one's unique performance of identity that can help a person differentiate themselves from their competition. Social media has enabled creators to bypass the corporate and media gatekeepers, giving individuals the opportunity to gain popularity without relying on traditional media (Chen, 2013; Hou, 2018).

In conclusion, when looking into the identity of artists on YouTube there are two approaches that need to be taken into consideration. On one hand there is the occupational identity of the artists which entails both positioning oneself into existing roles – resisting and negotiating them. On the other hand, the person-as-brand perspective that is fused with entrepreneurship and entails viewing personal identity as a brand. Therefore, when looking into the narratives of YouTube artists both the occupational and brand identity need to be acknowledged.

2.2 The contemporary artist identity

In this section I will be examining literature about creative industry professionals and their identities. When discussing the occupational identity of the artist it is important to outline the market, the essence of the work of artists and common myths and discourses which they use to shape their identities.

2.2.1 The myth of the artists

Bain (2005) claims that occupational identities are often learned from myths and stereotypes that exist in broader discourses, and in the case of artists, understanding those myths is essential to studying artist's identity. She claims that for visual artists especially, these myths and stereotypes are often internalized in building occupational identity because artists often work in isolation, therefore this eliminates the possibility for building identity based on social interactions.

When discussing the visual arts the "myth of the artists" cannot be neglected, as it contributes to shaping artistic identities. In her research Bain (2005) discovered that artists consistently borrow from myths and stereotypes established in discourse. She claims there is no formal distinction between amateurs and professionals in the field of visual arts, therefore successfully constructing and maintaining an artistic identity (committing to the myth) is the key to achieving professional artists status.

A prominent discourse about the artists today stems from the 18th century idea of the artists as a reclusive persona and a "Bohemian rebel, and social critic who sacrificed status, money and material comfort for the supposed freedom this afforded the imaginative spirit to pursue individual creative expression" (Bain, 2005, p. 29). Eikhof & Haunschild (2006) further

add that the bohemian lifestyle is egocentric, rejecting bourgeoise norms and values, including the economic sphere and stable work, opting instead for spontaneity, improvisation and irregular employment. Banks (2010) also describes the Romanticist idea of the artists lifestyle involving autonomy, self-regulation and the possession of talent, which is perceived as an extraordinary gift.

Indeed, the myth of the bohemian artists rests on the assumption that talent is a gift, and is not something that can be learned, as well as that the creation of true art is a process driven by imagination and an artistic vision (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Røyseng, & Borgen, 2007). According to Bain (2005), the creative process is perceived as something that comes from outside of the ordinary – it involves mystery, insightfulness and inspiration. Previous research has shown that the artist identity myth is indeed strongly internalized in the identities of artists in various fields, evidenced by the fact that they identify themselves in this image (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006).

While this idea of the artists as a bohemian still shapes the life of many artists to a large extent, the skillset required in the labor market has changed. The market into which the artistic professions are integrated is a significant factor in shaping the occupational identity of artists. Lingo and Tepper (2013) claim that in the post-industrial era intellectual property, especially the arts, is regarded as a means of creating and growing financial capital. Furthermore, they state that with the introduction of new technologies, production of cultural products has transformed from a craft into a corporate, structured and professional way of work. The low barriers to entry, due to lack of formal requirements have led to an oversaturation of the cultural goods market (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). This means, a new skillset is required to find work in the field, which may be more about differentiation and doing "things differently", to circumvent the oversaturation and competition. Towards this direction, established research agrees that both the requirements the market has for artists in terms of quality and skills, as well as the artist's occupational identity are changing (Bain, 2005; Lingo & Tepper, 2013). In other words, the artists today need a broader and different skillset for their identity work.

2.2.2 The artist as an entrepreneur

The changing market environment requires artists to develop qualities that clash with the myth of the artist identity. To be successful, the artists need to be innovative and creative while

building a unique and marketable image for themselves (Bain, 2005). This change has been brought about by the shift in the economy from wage jobs to temporary employment and project-based jobs and the new role of art as a means of economic growth (Lingo & Tepper, 2013). Furthermore, self-employment and freelancing are very prominent among creative professionals (Bridgstock, 2012; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Taylor & Littleton, 2008). Lingo and Tepper (2013) state that the market shift has empowered artists working as freelancers to choose their own creative projects but, because of the competition and oversaturation of the cultural goods market, they need to take more responsibility for their career by being proactive, flexible and unique. In other words, the artists need entrepreneurial qualities and skills in order to succeed in the current labor environment. Although previous studies have not reached consensus on a set of typical entrepreneurial qualities (Chell, 2008; Werthes et al, 2017), Chell (2008) found three qualities that are often present in entrepreneurs – a need for achievement, internal locus of control and a risk-taking propensity.

The shift in the necessary skillset for success on the creative labor market has also posed some challenges when it comes to the dual identity of an artist-entrepreneur which requires simultaneously holding opposing views. As mentioned prior, the myth that shapes artistic identities entails viewing talent as a gift and true art creation as a mysterious and insightful process but in a post-industrial setting art is and its production is increasingly becoming viewed as a commercial endeavor. This creates a clash between the anti-commercial orientation of the bohemian artist and the reality of the work market (Albinsson, 2018; Bain, 2005; Banks, 2010; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Taylor & Littleton, 2008). Banks (2010) states that the artists who distanced themselves from commercial society have become a product of it as a result of the commodification of art but the desire to be free from commercial logic still persists. The dilemma of artistic integrity versus commercial success implies that there is a choice to be made between the two (Taylor & Littleton, 2008), but other solutions to the dilemma have been outlined in literature. Taylor and Littleton (2008) found that artists regarded art creation and making money as incompatible but at the same time, selling artwork was regarded as a claim of success and value of their creative work. A solution that some artists found was having a job to earn money and doing creative work separately (Bain, 2005; Taylor & Littleton, 2008). Another way of dealing with the dilemma was by making a clear distinction between the art the artists created for profit and the one they created for self-expression purposes (Bain, 2005). This "dual

identity" might make artists feed into the myths about artistic identity to maintain occupational authenticity (Bain, 2005).

More recent research, however, shows that the role of an entrepreneur is becoming more integrated into the artists' identity. Bridgstock (2012) takes the position that entrepreneurship is essential to having a successful career in art. She argues that because of the lack of stable employment work for artists, artists need to create their own opportunities to succeed. She also states that the nature of the industry mostly consists of "networked clusters of sole-traders, microbusinesses, and small-to-medium enterprises" (p.124). Bridgstock (2012) makes the argument that art entrepreneurship is different from business entrepreneurship because it entails elements such as intellectual property, cultural stakeholder management and often subsidies. Bridgstock (2012) defines art entrepreneurship as skills in "application, sharing and distribution of creative work" (p.125) as well as creating new ventures and proposes that such skills should be part of arts education.

Werthes et al. (2017) focused on the identities of cultural and creative entrepreneurs and they point out that they are different from entrepreneurs that are driven by capitalist values because for creative professionals there is the added need to develop their creativity. Their study claims that creative industries entrepreneurs need to balance different types of needs regarding artistic, financial and self-development. Some chose to follow their own creative vision, but others rely on the market to determine the output.

Werthes et al. (2017) claim that sometimes there are tensions between different identities. They argue that cultural and creative entrepreneurs struggle with their entrepreneurial identity as they view artistic and entrepreneurial values as incompatible. They found that in the beginning of their careers, professionals are very reluctant to identify themselves as entrepreneurs but through communication with other entrepreneurs and gathering more entrepreneurial experience, artists gradually develop a distinct entrepreneurial identity. This show that according to Werthes et al. (2017), it is possible to combine creative and entrepreneurial values. Through a process of communication, self-reflection and tailoring an entrepreneurial identity to their own needs, artists can develop an identity that incorporates both creative and entrepreneurial values.

Albinsson's research (2018) into the Swedish music industry demonstrated that many musicians embraced the label "entrepreneur", while acknowledging that in many cases this was brought about by necessity, which is also acknowledged by Werthes et al. (2017). Albinsson

(2018) noted that this trend was more prominent among younger musicians and there was still some resistance from older generations. The insistence of Albinsson (2018) and Bridgstock (2012) that entrepreneurial skills must be a part of art education further proves how the artistic and entrepreneurial identity are merging.

In conclusion, the artistic identity of the contemporary creative professional incorporates elements of an entrepreneurial identity. These two positions, however, have been thought to be mutually exclusive, since the popular discourse of being an artist rejects creating art for commercial success. Nevertheless, the specificities of the profession and the changes in the market have led to the necessity for the hybrid identity of the artist-entrepreneur but also to strong internalization of the artists myth to reaffirm occupational identity.

2.3 Entrepreneurship on YouTube

Social networks can serve as a tool for establishing one's brand and enhancing brand loyalty through interaction with one's audience. Entrepreneurs often manage their own social media, representing themselves and their brand. In this process of self-mediation, the development of entrepreneurial identity can be observed. (Horst, et al., 2019). From this perspective social media is an additional opportunity for entrepreneurs to develop, enhance and co-create their brand. While this may be true for many, another perspective on social media presencing suggest that a mediatized presence can become an entrepreneurial venture where the self can be developed as a brand and monetized (Chen, 2013; Khamis et al. 2017).

This section maps out why "doing YouTube" can be an entrepreneurial venture, as well as the different opportunities for profit from the platform. The aspect of YouTube entrepreneurship is important to this research because of its the possibility of artists using the platform as another milieu for entrepreneurship.

Already in 2012, Kim described the tendency of YouTube content to become largely commercialized and institutionalized, despite the optimistic views of the website as a place for amateur content and community building. Kim notes that YouTube has affected old media such as television by popularizing the short video format, but YouTube has also taken on conventions from old media, such as the managed distribution of broadcasting and the smooth link between content and advertising. The article states that despite the resistance from users, the platform has

conformed to the pressures of becoming a more ad-friendly space, with ads serving as a seal of approval of the quality of a video.

Hou (2018) examined a highly commercialized and institutionalized community on YouTube – the beauty community. She built on Kim's (2012) work by pointing out how the discourse of YouTube in regard to their role as a platform has shifted. She points out that YouTube removed the "Broadcast Yourself" slogan and started framing its users as content creators and now it offers directions on how users can connect with audiences and build a business, thus encouraging them to create content that would achieve popularity and economic rewards. From this observation it can be concluded that the platform has shifted from community-oriented goals to business-oriented ones.

Hou's (2018) remark is consistent with Postigo's article (2016), who studied the gaming commentary community. He examined how technological affordances that are designed into YouTube create uses, meanings and practices for users that serve the business interests of YouTube. In his article he details how YouTube subscribers, views, likes and rankings are a currency that can translate into social capital and which can be converted into monetary rewards. Postigo (2016) remarked that advertising system as a source of revenue was important to the gaming commentary community that he examined. He states that "The system gives life to a narrative of entrepreneurship among many commentators" (p. 339). Postigo (2016) notes that this is possible partly due to the affordances provided by the platform, which strives for each video to get as many views and interaction as possible, but also by the labor that creators put into creating videos, marketing them, encouraging engagement and seeking for new audiences to achieve a stable revenue stream, which can be interpreted as an entrepreneurial aspect of being a content creator.

Kim (2012) and Hou (2018) explained more concretely the ways one can profit from making YouTube content. Kim's article (2012) explains the YouTube Partners Program, implemented since Google purchased YouTube, which compensates users for allowing advertisements on their videos. The system works by advertisers paying the platform owner (YouTube) to show advertisements in the form of banners or commercials while a video is streaming, and the revenue is then spit between the platform and the content creator. The revenue for each video depends on the number of views a video receives. Hou (2018) explains the principles of YouTube monetization and concludes that, in order to profit more from the

YouTube Partner Program, content creators need to change the content and metadata of their videos, so more advertisements play on their videos.

Additionally, Hou (2018) explains ways to profit from one's presence on YouTube through joining an MCN (Multi Channel Network) that allows content creators to professionalize and optimize their content, get better marketing, network with other creators and find potential sponsorships. Brand sponsorships entail a paid collaboration that is favorable for all parties involved – creator, brand and audience - the creator is paid to promote a product, they provide a discount link to their audience and the company makes more sales (Hou, 2018).

It can be concluded that YouTube has become for many content creators an entrepreneurial venture and some communities on the website are already very highly commercialized and institutionalized.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Choice of method

This study on the artistic and entrepreneurial identity of artists on YouTube was of an exploratory nature due to lack of previous studies on the YouTube art community and therefore I used qualitative methods.

A qualitative approach was chosen because it is recommended for studying socially constructed concepts such as identity. Identity is a social construct because its development and negotiations are social processes that happen through interaction between the self and others (Ybema et al., 2009; LaPointe, 2010). According to Brennen (2017) qualitative methods are used to gain deep insight into social realities constructed through the use of language, which means that it is suitable for analyzing narratives about identity. Furthermore, in qualitative research codes are derived from the data, albeit framed and guided from understanding the theory through "systematic combining" (Dubois & Gadde, 2002), which allows conclusions to be grounded in the data itself. Essentially, the analysis combined thematic content analysis and narrative analysis of YouTube videos, solely focusing on the spoken language that the videos present.

3.1.1 Thematic analysis

Thematic content analysis was chosen because it allows for "identifying both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is themes" (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2014, p.11). This means that this method provides deeper insight into the subject of artistic and entrepreneurial identity that less thorough methods. According to Guest et al. (2014) the strength of thematic analysis is that it accounts for complex meanings within a text. Furthermore, the codes that are developed in thematic analysis are representative of the themes identified within the text and they are linked to the raw data they originate from (Guest et al., 2014). This means that thematic textual analysis allows the researcher to stay closer to the data and draw conclusions directly from meanings existing in the text (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.1.2 Narrative analysis

Narrative analysis was chosen because it functioned in complementary manner to the thematic analysis. It allows focusing on narrative elements in the content of qualitative data and creates a sensitivity for understanding themes in a context (Fenton & Langley, 2011). This

includes a sensitivity and interpretive frame for analyzing narratives about the artist's career and their personal experiences with art and the strategic developments as entrepreneurs (Fenton & Langley, 2011). It brings the "lived experience" of the actor to the foreground (Küpers, Mantere, & Statler, 2013). Riessman (2008) defines narratives as "a speaker connects events into a sequence that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker wants listeners to take away from the story." (p.3). She claims that narrative analysis is interested in the way a narrator presents events in terms of sequence, use of language and communicating a meaning or conveying a certain point to an audience.

According to Schiffrin (1996) narratives are a resource for displaying self and identity. From her article it can be concluded that narratives are accounts of personal experience that are symbolic because they are stories about one's cultural and social standing.

Polanyi (1981, p.99) explains the significance of stories in the following statement:

"[S]tories are not told 'for no reason.' Tellers take up time and space in a conversation putting themselves and their experiences or views forward; it stands to reason then that speakers will intend their contributions to be something "worth" listening to and therefore stories."

This makes narrative analysis a method suitable for answering questions about identity, values and motivations (Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010), as the ones posed in this research, because it allows focusing on the "narrative positioning" of the interviewees and their reflections about identity and self (Soreide, 2006, p. 529). Ultimately, the narratives in this research were analyzed from three perspectives: a functional perspective, which investigates the aim and purpose of the story that is presented, a thematic perspective – analyzing the themes and topics that are determines as important and meaningful by the narrator (Pavlenko, 2009) and the story type as suggested by Saldana (2009) (p. 158), which serves to categorize the narrative in a more global context "by drawing on our cultural knowledge and expectations about typical courses of action in recurrent situations" (Schiffrin, 1996, p.168).

3.2 Data collection

This research aimed to obtain and analyze videos from channels on YouTube run by artists who create videos focused around creating visual art (traditional and/or digital), but also speak about their career and entrepreneurial ventures in art, which makes this a prime example of mediated identity work and allows for using the narrative frame to understand and interpret what

they do and how they talk about themselves and their development (Horst et. al, 2019; Watson, 2009). An example of work-related topics are pricing, time management, work process and commissions.

YouTube has defined 15 categories of videos but there is no separate category for art and creative work. The sampling was constructed and carried out in 3 stages. The first step of choosing creators was looking for words that are related to digital and traditional painting, words such as *art, artist, illustration, illustrator, drawing, painting* and *painter*. The search was performed with the option to search for channels. The initial phase of sampling was conducted between the 24th and the 29th of February 2020. The aim was to collect a database of as many channels as possible. At this stage the criteria for selection were that the channel needed to have been active in the past year, to be on the topic of art or being an artist, to have no less than 10 videos uploaded in total. Channels directed at children or containing predominantly tutorials for children were excluded, as well as channels with videos which were not in English. Corporate or organizational channels were also be excluded, as well as channels which mainly featured interviews and podcasts with guest artists. Since it has been outlined in literature that there is no clear distinction between amateur and professional (Bain, 2005; Taylor and Littleton, 2008) such distinction was not be made during sampling. The initial stage of sampling resulted in a list of 637 channels.

In the second stage, between 1st and 5th of March, 2020, the channels were reexamined, and more criteria were implemented: channels that had only uploaded videos with no speaking or voiceover in the past year were excluded, as well as channels whose videos in the past year were only drawing tutorials, hence containing only instructions about creating art. Channels whose content in the last year consisted of only very long videos (30 + minutes) or very short ones (less than 3-4 minutes) were also excluded. At this stage the titles of content from the last year was examined to determine whether there were relevant videos that could contain information about the relationship between creating artwork and entrepreneurial activities (e.g. selling artwork, entering competitions, being successful on an online platform). Channels that contained one or more videos of that nature were included in the final list of channels. This led to a list of 91 channels ranging from 58 subscribers to 4.93 million subscribers.

Previous research on YouTube creators has usually opted for choosing the channels with most subscribers on the grounds of them being most representative and easily available to

viewers (Choi & Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Mardon et al., 2018). This is also backed by Bärtl's (2018) findings that a small minority of channels (3%) garner 85% of the total views on the platform, but older channels with more views and subscribers usually have an advantage in terms of being recommended and gaining views. For this reason, a decision was made to opt for a more diverse sample so the representation of the creative entrepreneurs on the platform can be more balanced. Since this study looked into the occupational identity of artists, a profession without a formal distinction between being an amateur or professional (Bain, 2005), this current research aimed to benefit more from a diverse sample of the art community on YouTube rather than a sample of only those who have achieved entrepreneurial success on the platform. This provided a more balanced view of the community of visual artists without discriminating based on whether they have successfully created opportunity for themselves on the platform or not.

Therefore, during sampling channels of different subscriber and view size were chosen. To achieve that, the channels that were selected in the second stage were grouped in 4 categories (quartiles) according to subscriber count. Afterwards, thee channels were selected from each category using simple random sampling. The selection was made using the Research Randomizer tool (https://www.randomizer.org/) to generate a set of numbers for each quartile, with each number corresponding to a channel. The initial sampling strived to obtain a sample of 12 channels with the option of more being added if the selected channels did not contain enough relevant data. One channel from the initial selection was replaced with the next channel on the list because the videos relevant to the topic were interviews with other artists. Since these interviewees did not put the videos on the platform themselves, it was decided to exclude these video materials from the research due to ethical concerns about the privacy of the individuals in the videos.

After the selection of channels, purposeful sampling was conducted to select videos. The number of selected videos from each channel was dependent on the number and length of the video available. The videos were purposefully selected based on their title – videos that indicate sharing of personal experience with creating art or work and other activities related to the artist occupation or entrepreneurship were chosen. The study opted to choose videos that were uploaded onto the platform in 2019 to ensure that the data and the conclusions drawn from it reflect the relevant and up-to-date identity of the artists. The resulting sample of 12 channels and

the number of videos that have been selected from each can be viewed in Table 3.1. Figure 1 contains a screenshot compilation of the channels as they appear in the YouTube search results.

Table.1.

Final Sample of channels

Channel name	Subscribers	Views	Country	Year created	№ videos
Skech Art	1090000	67,965,821	-	2007	1
Kirsty Partridge Art	819000	41,088,994	UK	2015	3
Happy D. Artist	290000	13,525,452	US	2015	4
CreepShow Art	191000	23,685,138	US	2016	5
struthless	109000	4,810,527	Australia	2017	3
Katnipp	99000	5,146,184	UK	2015	7
Anca Pora Illustration	7050	282,228	Romania	2008	5
Paint Coach	3500	130,372	-	2018	3
Savvy Painter	1890	137,313	US	2013	1
Emma Carpenter - Illustration Journey	616	23,227	UK	2016	3
Matthew Dobrich Illustration	265	3,027	-	2017	2
Frecklefox Illustrations	111	3,079	US	2019	1

Note: Number of subscribers and views are reported as of the time of sampling (1st-5th of March)
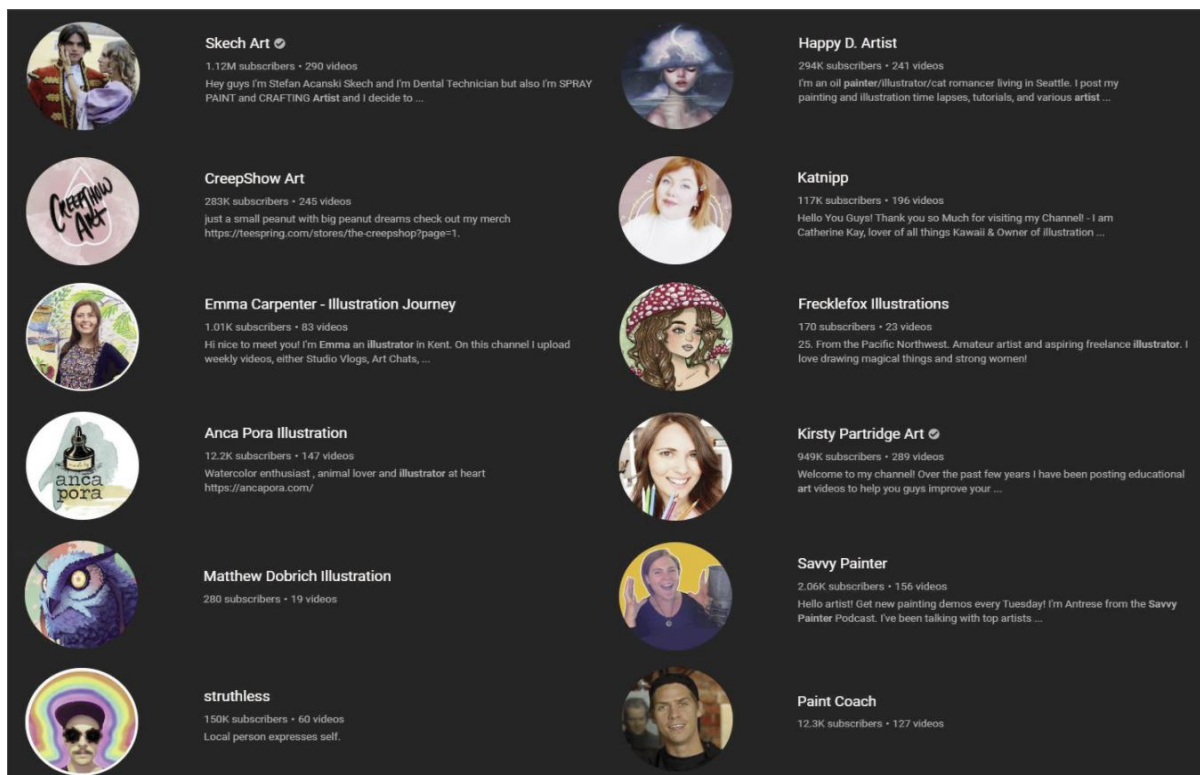

Figure 1. Screenshots of the 12 channels selected for analysis.

Note: Number of subscribers shown reflects the amount as of 21ˢᵗ June 2020 when the screenshots were taken.

The goal was to collect at least between 90 to 160 minutes (1.5 to 2.5 hours) of footage for analysis (Jansen and Verboord, 2015) but the total length of the videos exceeded that significantly. This decision was made based on the fact that the interest of this research was invested in the spoken data the artists provided, while the visual aspect of the videos was analyzed only superficially

The videos selected for the study were compiled into a list and then downloaded. The data was stored in the Microsoft OneDrive cloud space provided to each student by Erasmus University Rotterdam with their student account.

3.3 Operationalization

This research takes the stance that reality about identity is socially constructed (Horst et al., 2019; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010; Watson, 2009). As suggested by Brennen (2017), it was explored through a constructivist lens. This research chose to look at self-identity as constructed through narrative, in other words narrative as a tool for molding social reality. In this section, the main sensitizing concepts are introduced. Sensitizing concepts emerge from existing theory, they are broad and general and while they serve to guide the research, they are open to change and reinterpretation (Boeije, 2012).

The narrative is one field where identity work is manifested. As suggested in literature, many processes of identity construction can be observed in narratives. Some of them include positioning oneself in existing discourse (playing into myths), resisting stereotypes, negotiating and reinterpreting the positions set in discourse etc. (Downing, 2005; LaPointe, 2010). The analysis payed close attention to these processes to identify existing positions and potential tensions.

When examining the artistic identity in the theoretical framework of this paper two opposing conceptualizations of the artists were outlined. These positions will serve to guide the analysis and point the researcher's attention to certain parts of the data.

The first position is the artists as a "Bohemian" who creates artwork for the sake of art and self-expression and does not capitalize on their art. This ideology poses great importance on autonomy of creative expression. The Bohemian artist ideal treats talent as a gift and not a skill and it rejects production of art for the purpose of monetary gain.

The second position is that of the artists as an "entrepreneur", or manifestation of a hybrid identity (Werthes et al., 2017). This view entails a proactive individual who seeks to create opportunity for themselves and attempts to stand out in an oversaturated market of artists by being unique. This entails viewing other artists as competition and striving to capitalize on one's art and artistic talent. This ideology also incorporates commercial principles into creating artwork.

Another important factor for this research is considering the role of being on the platform. YouTube entrepreneurship needs to be considered as a guiding concept, as according to previous research it can also be a source of income for creators. YouTube entrepreneurship can manifest itself in creators promoting their content, encouraging audience interaction with their content or sponsored content and endorsements for products/services.

These positions set in discourse – the Bohemian artists, the artist entrepreneur and entrepreneurship on YouTube, serve as sensitizing concepts (Boeije, 2012), guiding the analytical process. Ultimately, the analysis stayed open-minded to new positions and patterns that might emerge from the data, also referred to as "abductive interpretation" of qualitative data (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

3.4 Data analysis

Following the selection of the videos, all material was transcribed using the transcription software AmberScript and the transcripts were subsequently edited manually to ensure quality. The resulting text files were then imported into the coding software Atlas.ti where they were read again and labels were assigned to chunks of text. The Alas.ti software was used for both the thematic and narrative analysis, which were done separately. Color coding was used to distinguish between the different levels of analysis, as well as the two separate methods. Figure 2 shows an example of how a chunk of text was labeled and coded.

Also, I should just say, my personal opinion on, on colleges is that is not worth the money. Colleges are getting insanely expensive. And I'm not saying that you don't get anything out of college. You definitely do. I mean, you're there. You're, going to be learning something. But it's designed so much just for the college to make money. And I've seen, so many artists that I've seen are like "I didn't really learn that much in art school". And like some think "you've just got to do it". You just got to really practice. And yes, instruction is important, but like I always thought, like, if you take the amount of money that you would pay for tuition and just put that to go into workshops, that, of instructors that you like, you know, you're using that for materials and being able to really dedicate yourself to practicing and doing whatever it is you need to do to get better, I feel like you'd be much further in four years spending your money on that than you would spend your money going into art school. Then again, I didn't go to a full-on arts school. I'm sure there are some art schools out there that are absolutely amazing and I have seen online a lot of really good art schools where people come out learning a ton. So, like, if that's what you do and you go that way. Go for it. Like, I'm not against that. There's probably a you know, I've done the research specifically, but there's a lot of art, art school, especially abroad. I feel like there's a lot there that just really focus on really learning a lot. But I understand that not a lot of people will have the money to do that. Or another thing, I think a lot of people won't talk about is the reality that you're you know, if you're still in high school, your parents don't want you go to an art school, they want you to do something practical, which I know that sucks, but it's understanding because, you know, I know a lot of them will probably be paying for your school and are supporting you. So you got to understand their point of view of, you know, spending money for a degree that's not going to guarantee you a job. And if you are in the situation where you do have to play ball with them and you have... like, major in business. I wish I would have majored in business. If, you know, if I was to do it again and if you're like this, like a regular four year school, not an art school, major in business, and you have electives, use all of your electives to do painting courses, you know. Do the business school. And but, you know, like hang out at the art school, you know, take art electives. Like, I know a lot of people that that did stuff like that, because no matter what you want to do, if you want to make money at it, that's business and a business degree will help you with that. It just, it just will. Like, especially if you want to just be like a full blown, on your own, independent artist, go to business school because you're going to have to... if you want to just paint on your own or, you know, do whatever your art is on your own and not have a boss and make money, you need to know business. I've been learning that just on my own the past couple years. And that is, honestly, that is why the term starving artist exists and why a lot of people say you can't make money, you know, in art. It's not that there isn't money to be made as an artist. There definitely is. It's just most artists, the minds that you kind of have to have to be good at art doesn't lend itself well to business. But you've got to be able to switch like you got to be able to have your... your art brain and your business brain. And you can see online. I've seen it a million times with a lot of people that aren't that great at their art, but they're really good at the business side and they are way more successful than the people that are amazing at the art side and not good at the business side. Now I know it's art, and you know you don't... Right now, you might think like, "oh, it's not about money". Well, you got to pay bills. And when you can't do your art because you have to go to a job you know, like to pay bills, making money sounds very good. No matter, you know, doing your art, no matter what it is. So, you know. If you are going to four-year school, I recommend going to the business school, learning business to apply that to your art.
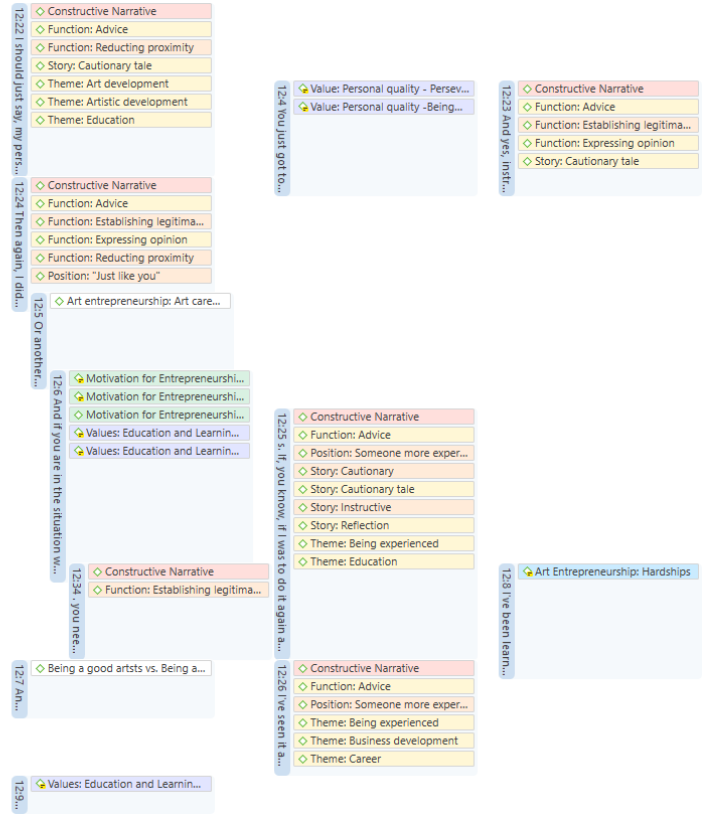
Figure 2. Sample of the coding process using Atlas.ti

3.4.1 Thematic analysis

The thematic analysis was conducted first. For coding and identifying themes, the analysis followed the procedure recommended by Guest et al. (2014).

First, the text was segmented into chunks. This segmentation was based on the text chunk being a coherent whole and carrying a certain meaning. During this process, each segment was assigned a code that explained what was being observed in the text excerpt. This process was consistent with what is termed *open coding* by Flick (2018). During coding it is also possible to use labels derived from the sensitizing concepts, developed in the previous chapter, based on existing literature (Boeije, 2012).

The following step is termed *axial coding* (Flick, 2018) and it consisted of refining the codes that originated from the data. Guest et al. (2014) suggest that after all the data is segmented and labeled, a codebook is developed where the segments of text are sorted into categories. The data is then revisited, and the codes are reexamined resulting in themes being

merged, modified and linked to one another. At this stage the main themes ad subthemes started to emerge and an initial grouping of labels was made.

At the last stage of the analysis, labeled *selective coding* (Flick, 2018) the objective was to identify the most prominent themes. A suggestion for identifying prominent themes proposed by Guest et al. (2014) is looking for repetitions, analogies, comparisons and patterns in narrative that reveal a link between two concepts. They also remark that the final themes that emerge should be relevant to the objective of research. At this stage the data and axial codes were reexamined again until the main themes and subthemes were clearly distinguishable from one another, without any overlap.

After following these steps, eight axial codes were formulated and three selective codes. A detailed scheme of the findings can be observed in Table 2. A more detailed coding table can be observed in Table 2 in the Appendix.

Table 2.

Findings from the thematic analysis.

Main themes	Second-order themes		First-order observation
Detailing the logistics of running an art business	Creating and selling products		- Artists share experience with offline entrepreneurial activity such as selling products and merchandise at events, fairs or participating in gallery shows - Artists share their experience with commissions
			- Artists talk about creating online content for educational purposes - Artists offer constructive feedback to their supporters' work
	Digital entrepreneurship	Platforms	- using platforms - using platforms to outsource production - using membership platforms (Patreon)
		Social media	- using social media for marketing products - using social media to grow an audience

	Networking and community building		- looking to create community with audience - looking to connect with other artist entrepreneurs
Qualities and values of art entrepreneurs	Values	Value in learning and self-development	- Encouraging development of new skills - Encouraging experimentation - Offering educational content - Sharing personal learning experiences - Recounting experience of learning from others
		Supporting other artists/entrepreneurs	- Respecting other artists' work - Supporting other artists' business
	Valuable personal qualities		- Perseverance as helpful for improving as an artist/entrepreneur - Consistency as helpful for improving as an artist/entrepreneur - organized work as helpful for the work process - being entrepreneurial as helpful to artists
Motivations for entrepreneurship	Art as a career		- creating art as an enjoyable work - expressing aspirations to have an art career
	Independence		- being independent from conventional work arrangements - being financially independent
	Empowering others		- Sharing personal experiences - Sharing personal struggles - Giving advice - Creating educational content

3.4.2 Narrative analysis

The narrative analysis was conducted second, separately from the thematic analysis. The narratives that were analyzed were selected in a focused and more theory-driven way to complement the previously abductive interpretation (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Thomas, 2010). To identify the narratives relevant to the research, three criteria were used. Firstly, the narrative

needed to be told from a first-person perspective (I, me) to ensure that the conclusions it led to were relevant to the artists. Based on Riessman's (2008) definition of a narrative, the second criterium was a requirement for a sequence of events or some implication of temporality. This allowed to distinguish narratives from instances where an opinion or a fact about themselves is stated. Thirdly the analysis looked for narratives that were related to career events, development, working as an entrepreneur and creating art.

After the narratives were identified, the analysis process was driven based on the 3 elements borrowed from Pavlenko (2009) and Saldana (2009). The process of coding the narratives consisted of identifying each narrative and identifying these 3 elements of the story The process of coding the narratives consisted of identifying each narrative and identifying these 3 elements of the story through asking the formulated questions detailed in Table 3 and attaching codes to the data. The coding process also followed the 3 steps of coding discussed in the previous section - open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

Table 3.

Guiding frame for interpreting narrative data

1. Function (purpose)	2. Themes	3. Story type
What is the goal of the narrative? What purpose does the narrator strive to achieve by telling the story?	What themes and topics are determined as important by the narrator? What themes are missing from the narrative?	What larger story frame does the narrative fit into?

When looking at narratives, the broader context in which they occurred was also examined. Chen (1997) explains that the concept of career exists in a social environment, thus social context should be examined when exploring identity work through narratives. According to Chen (1997), context matters when narrating future goals and retrospection because it establishes a relationship between the self, the social environment and events that have already occurred. Additionally, by taking into consideration the broader context of the video, the analysis was able to determine the narrative positions that the artists assumed, which in turn provides access to their values and worldview (Soreide, 2006).

From the nattive analysis two approached to the data were formulated. Two consistent patterns were found in terms of the position the artists assumed towards their aueience and four distinct types of narratives were identified in terms oftehir function. A detailed table of the findings can be observed in Table 4.

Table 4:

Coding table from the narrative analysis

Category	Selective code	Definition	Frequency
Positions	Position: Someone more experienced	The artist uses their narrative to establish themselves as someone who has more experience than their audience in the topic discussed/ the artists gives advice from a position of experience.	64
	Position: "Just like you"	Narratives where the artists details experiences that they believe they have in common with their audience, showcasing struggles.	22
Narrative functions	Constructive Narrative	Narratives used for instructional purposes or accompanying advice.	121
	Cathartic Narrative	Narratives in which the artists express their opinions, emotions and personal struggles related to their career.	46
	Goal-setting Narrative	Narratives in which the artists voce their intentions and plans for the future.	30
	Motivational Narrative	Humble beginnings narratives; Narratives about succeeding against the odds.	9

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity in qualitative research refers to the accuracy of the research's interpretation and their truthfulness but when studying cultural phenomena and social life, like media, absolute objectivity is an unrealistic expectation (Moisander & Valtonen, 2006). Nevertheless, as recommended by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), to improve the quality of this research triangulation was used in the form of using a combination of two methods – thematic and

narrative analysis. Additionally, multiple examples were provided to demonstrate the validity of the claims, as suggested by Polkinghorne (2007).

To increase the reliability of the research, as suggested by Moisander and Valtonen (2006), the sampling and data analysis were done in a systematic way after a theoretical frame was established and concepts were developed based on previous literature.

3.6 Ethical considerations

The study took precautions to make sure the study is conducted in the most ethical manner. The sampling process made sure to exclude any individuals who might be minors or videos where people other than the creator who uploaded the video are featured. The Internet Research Ethical Guidelines 3.0 (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, Ess & the Association of Internet Researchers, 2020) explains that despite content being uploaded on social media platforms and being available to the public, there is the expectation of privacy. However, the videos chosen for this research all feature the owners of the YouTube channel, and they are produced, edited and uploaded by them. Additionally, the videos chosen were those in which the creators are speaking to an audience, therefore it can be assumed that the videos are uploaded on the platform to be viewed by others.

4. FINDINGS

4.1 Thematic analysis findings

4.1.1 Context: No two artistic entrepreneurs are the same

From the analysis it became clear that there is a great diversity of opportunities for entrepreneurship within the visual arts sector. The 12 creators analyzed in this research all had in common the fact that they produced art but there was variety in the way they capitalized on it. The creators talked about and implemented various ways of profiting from creating artwork both online and offline. The entrepreneurial activity of the creators can be categorized into 3 sub-categories – *offline activities*, such as selling their products and merchandise at events or participating in gallery shows, *online activities* such as running an e-commerce shop, having a Patreon account and monetizing their online content through advertising and sponsorships, and lastly, *providing services* such as educational content for artists in the form of tutorials and providing constructive criticism to members of their community. The artists were often involved in several entrepreneurial activities.

The three themes that emerged during the analysis were ***detailing the logistics of running art business*** which covers the entrepreneurial efforts of the artists, ***desirable qualities for successful art entrepreneurship***, which delves into the qualities and values enforced by the artists and ***motivations for entrepreneurship***, which examines the motive behind the artist's business efforts.

4.1.2 Detailing the logistics of running an art business

This theme manifested itself consistently in the majority of videos from the creators. It entails the artists sharing their advice and experiences on how they go about different aspects of their business, such as, for example, the art creation process, making products, marketing and tending to financial aspects of their business. From the prominence of this theme it can be concluded that the artists create this type of content for an audience of aspiring artists/ entrepreneurs or those who are curious about what goes into running an art business. It can also be inferred that through discussing their own experiences with running a business the artists are attempting to establish their credibility as entrepreneurs.

Interestingly enough, the art production process itself was rarely a prominent topic of discussion, although it is possible that this is the case due to the sampling criteria looking for videos discussing entrepreneurial activities.

Digital entrepreneurship as central to an art career

An undeniable and prominent part of the artist's entrepreneurial journey were social media and other digital platforms. Much of what the artists did in terms of entrepreneurial activities was facilitated by e-commerce websites and print-on-demand and membership platforms, as well as using social media as a tool for growing their exposure and marketing.

Platforms proved to be useful tools for the artist entrepreneurs because they gave them the opportunity to host their businesses and outsource their production and delivery process. An important platform that nearly half of the creators used was Patreon. Patreon is a membership platform, where a user can subscribe to a creator in exchange for a flexible monthly and receive perks, such as access to exclusive content and materials, as well as merchandise form the creator. The creators used the platform to provide exclusive content, materials and products to their supporters and some creators even offered their supporters direct communication with them. One artist justifies her motivations to start a Patreon account the following way:

"So basically, why I started this is because I want to fund my illustration and I want to make better content, better YouTube videos. I want to be able to produce videos at home and products at home and prints. And for that, you kind of need money, unfortunately" - Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.4

And another example comes from an artist who acknowledged the contribution that having support on her Patreon enabled business growth.

"Another thing I'm extremely grateful for is my beautiful Petreons because they helped me go freelance because they supported me that way, which helped give me a wage, which meant that any income I got through Katnipp Etsy store I could reinvest in paying for Mike and Emily, reinvest them coming into packaging orders so I could take time to produce more products and focus on YouTube for marketing and things like that." - Katnipp, video 7.7

Enabling business growth through resources is strongly connected with gaining and including feedback – an intangible asset for artists. This is shown in the way that the platform allows artists to add value to their business by providing exclusive content to their supporters and potentially helping them with their artistic development. Patreon was a suggested way of getting critique on their work.

"There are […] really good painters out there with Patreons where you can [...] pay a monthly fee and […] every month, submit your work, give your work to them and they will critique it, tell you what to work on." - Paint Coach, video 12.2

This kind of digital entrepreneurship is interesting because it uses new technologies but it is still based on the old idea of artists being under the patronage of others.

Besides the platform that facilitate entrepreneurship, social media also proved to be a crucial part of the artist entrepreneurs' strategy. An important feature of social media for the artists was the advantage that having a large audience can bring to their business. One creator highlighted the role of social media as a marketing tool by stating:

"You need to know how to sell yourself either through social media or through building your portfolio online on a website or basically through your work and through the work you did for your clients." - Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.1

This statement highlights how social media has become a face of the business that needs to be curated and managed. It needs to be managed consciously to ensure that changes in the affordances of the platform don't damage the business. Here, another creator also identified their audience as adding an element of security to their business in the face of change:

"Etsy can change their algorithm and you could be on the first page one week and the next week you're not and it could damage your sales. But if you build up a community online on your social media and you connect with the people you will always have those people to reach out for you and they will help support your Etsy business." - Katnipp, video 7.1

In two instances amassing a large audience on YouTube was celebrated as a career milestone and the following statement demonstrates how "having a career" and "being successful" is equated with social media presence and amassing a large following, highlighting

an important element in digital media entrepreneurship. Here, the importance attributed to success is visible in the following quotes celebrating reaching a milestone of subscribers.

"When I started this YouTube channel, I couldn't believe that I will ever get 100000 subscribers. Here is a silver play button that I get for 100000 subscribers. And when I was reaching 100000 subscribers, I could never, never imagined that I will ever, ever reached one million subscribers because I knew how much effort took me to get 100000 subscribers." - Skech Art, video 1.1

"Another [achievement] was reaching my 80K goal for YouTube. So, I set myself a goal of reaching eighty thousand subscribers on YouTube and we actually surpassed that this year. I'm so, so happy." - Katnipp, video 7.7

This leads to the conclusion that social media presence has become an important part of art entrepreneurship, in some cases equated with success and YouTube was no exception. It became clear that for the artists a social media presence has become somewhat mandatory – a "sine qua non" of digital media entrepreneurship– or at least very strongly desirable for entrepreneurs. As one artist explains:

"If you don't have a good social media presence or lack the skills that come along with social media marketing, you won't get by. It's not just talent on social media." - Creepshow Art, video 6.1

Another example of using social media as a business tool can be found as in the way artists used their own YouTube videos for marketing purposes. Some artists would include announcements to entice their audience members to go through their own websites and membership platforms where they can discover more content that interests them, usually in exchange for payment, as the following quotes and image demonstrate.

"Also, like I said, the real time tutorial for this drawing is available over on my Pateron. Also, on my Web site, you can get individual courses for a one-off payment. If you're just focusing on one medium or subject matter, then I've got lots of different courses on there that you can choose from." - Kirsty Partridge Arts, video 2.1

"Last week, I gave a webinar on preparing for a stress-free gallery show, which was a lot of fun. And from the feedback I got from you, I guess it was super helpful. Many people asked if I would be doing another one and the short answer is yes. You can go to Savvy Painter dot com forward slash webinar to see what is coming up next." - Savvy Painter, video 8.1
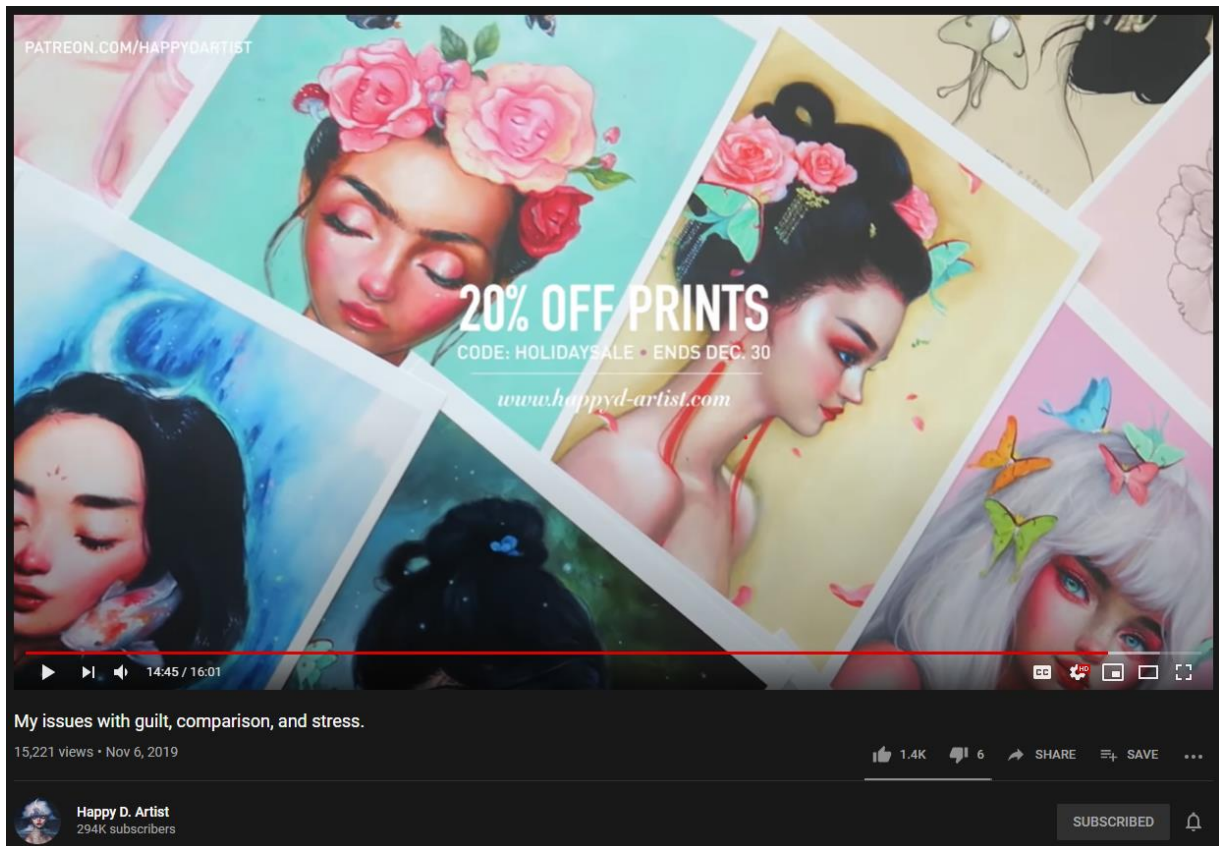
Figure 3. Happy D. Artists promoting her Patreon and prints

This promotion of exclusive content can be interpreted as a marketing strategy – similarly to a demo version, in which the artists shows part of the content for free on social media and urges the viewer to pay to gain access to the whole product. This underlines the need for entrepreneurial thinking of the artists.

Despite these advantages that having a social media audience brings, it may come with a burden. It has the potential of inducing stress and anxiety. In a video where one artist explains her struggles with lack of motivation and stress she confesses:

"The thought of taking steps backward scared me so much. I mean how could I let my paintings drop in quality, how could I let my shop drop in sales, my social media drop in numbers." - Happy D. Artist, video 3.2

This statement captures how important social media can be for creators – in terms of its significance it is placed at the same level as creating art and making product sales. The sentiment of anxiety stemming from social media is also expressed in the following statement by another artist:

"Ugh, fucking Instagram and the desire to check it, the desire to post, reading the comments, getting caught up in what some small-dick hater has to say about me. […] Even feeling like if I don't post something bad is going to happen, which is like, that is textbook anxiety." - Struthless, video 5.3

This can be interpreted as reinforcing the notion that a social media presence is desirable and even expected because of the pressure artists feel to participate. The artists feel that they need to post something, be active and continue to cater to their fans and followers. While it supports their growth and creates resources through interaction with audiences, it is a "continuous pushing" that may become tiresome. Overall it can be concluded that the artists perceive social media presence as something crucial for their business development and a factor indicative of their entrepreneurial success. When it comes to social media presence, the artists use social media as entrepreneurs, their main use of these platforms aligning with purposes of growing and securing their business.

Networking & community

Networking is a theme that is related to social media, but also includes other means of seeking community. Networking and seeking community were quoted by the artists as both a way to develop one's artistic skills and contact other creative professionals/entrepreneurs. The theme manifested itself in two aspects – on one hand there is the desire of artists to create a community in terms of their audience, visible in the way they try to encourage engagement on social media and get audiences to share similar experiences that they have had with art or

entrepreneurship by asking questions such as "*What have you got planned for your business, art, illustrations or personal life? Let me know.*" (Katnipp, video 7.7).

On the other hand, the creators highlighted the helpful influence that having a community and being surrounded by likeminded people can have on one's development both as an artist and an entrepreneur. Who the artist choose to network with is evidence of which people they identify as similar to themselves. From the artists who spoke about networking with likeminded people, it became clear that they are referring to other artists who are involved in entrepreneurial activities. The following quote illustrates how the purpose of the networking and community seeking the artists talk about is entrepreneurial. In the context of talking about ways one can improve their art skills one artists recommends taking art classes followed by the statement:

"That's just great, because, one, you're going to be in a community like you're going to start […] making friends and colleagues and connections with people that are doing what it is that you do. And that's very important because that's the way you hear about opportunities […] business related, like business wise, like also that's just seeing how other people do things can help progress your work." - Paint Coach, video 12.1

Another artist clearly identified herself as a business owner when it comes to her networking.

"And sometimes networking can be absolutely crucial and beneficial to your business, or like I said, I've just been on that business course and I networked with all the other business owners and it was great. We got chatting and now I have connections and genuine friends that I can network with." - Katnipp, video 7.6

In conclusion, the networking and community seeking aspect found in the analysis has a strong entrepreneurial purpose. Even when endorsing developing one's artistic skills, there was still an entrepreneurial motivation in terms of making useful contacts and discovering or creating an opportunity. It can be stated that the artists networked and sought to connect with others as entrepreneurs rather than artists, which emphasizes the entrepreneurial aspects of their identity. This is similar to Bain's (2005) findings where she explains that due to the isolating nature of their work, artists develop connections with their peers to exchange experience, advice and information related to their profession. This emphasis on community and networking also shows

a moving away from the artists myth of the creator as someone who is a social recluse (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006).

4.1.3 Desirable qualities for successful art entrepreneurship

The theme of desirable qualities for successful art entrepreneurship explores the values that can be deduced from the artists' content, as well as the personal qualities that are framed as desirable for artists and entrepreneurs. These values and qualities provide useful insight because they demonstrate what the artists see as important for their art and entrepreneurship, which can in turn provide hints as they see and present themselves.

Overall, the artists did not demonstrate attachment to the idea that success is tied to talent. On the contrary, it was often highlighted that both having an art career and developing artistic skills involve hard work and perseverance in the face of difficulty. The subthemes that were most prominent were the value that was placed on education and learning, as well as the personal qualities that one needs to be a successful entrepreneur and the artists' own motivations for entrepreneurship.

Values

When it comes to values, the artists were not attached to the "artist myth" about talent as an "extraordinary gift". In fact, they often highlighted that hard work is necessary to improve and succeed both in art and as an entrepreneur. Additionally, several artists expressed the sentiment that being business savvy with marketing and selling one's artwork can be more valuable than producing good art. This points a shift from the "art for art's sake" mentality towards a more business-oriented attitude for being an artist on digital media, which is clearly expressed in the following statement.

"So, yes, you drawing pretty pictures is really fun. But you have to think about how they can be used in a commercial sense. So basically, if you want to make money, you have to think commercially about your illustration."- Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.1

Value in learning and self-development

One of the most prominent themes in the analysis was education and learning. This theme entailed the artists expressing to their audience the importance of learning new things and

advocating for developing their skills. The artists actively encouraged their audience or those who might be interested in having an art career to learn and develop new skills as well as to experiment. The artists demonstrated that they highly valued the conscious constant search and need for improvement. This also had a strong underlying theme of improving as an entrepreneur, as the following quote demonstrates:

And the last thing that no one tells you about becoming an illustrator is that it's an ongoing process, learning of being disappointed and trying to keep up with current times. So you have to keep an open mind and to be flexible. - Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.1

Another quote highlights the strong individual responsibility as a potential reason why artists value education so much:

"You are responsible for your own career. If you're randomly entering competitions without any clear goal or reason to enter, you're not using your time effectively and your time is by far your most precious resource." - Savvy Painter, video 8.1

This can be interpreted a "strategic aspect" of entrepreneurial identity work (Horst et al., 2019), because the independence of being an entrepreneur requires artists to accept the full responsibility for their entrepreneurial and artistic development. Which is why, in addition to being strategic and goal-oriented, they consistently carry the burden (or responsibility) for educating themselves and experimenting with new ideas. In fact, the artists extensively talked about their learning experiences, which consisted of leaning from trial and error, experimentation and other people with more experience. It was also observed that emphasis was clearly on self-education rather than relying on traditional institutions for acquiring new knowledge. Only one artist mentioned going to art school while another one reported taking classes in college and expressed the following opinion about going to art school:

"And yes, instruction is important, but, like, I always thought, like, if you take the amount of money that you would pay for tuition and just put that to go into workshops […] of instructors that you like, […] you're using that for materials and being able to really dedicate yourself to practicing and doing whatever it is you need to do to get better, I feel like you'd be much further

in four years spending your money on that than you would spending your money going into art school" - Paint Coach, video 12.1

This quote again, like the previous one, shows that being deliberate with using one's own time and focusing on one's individual development and growth are approaches endorsed by the artist, both when it comes to learning how to be a better artist and developing as an entrepreneur. It highlights the strategic aspect of entrepreneurial development as an art-entrepreneur.

However, despite this increased and continuous focus on themselves and their own entrepreneurial development, the artists were also involved in helping others educate themselves. In their videos the artists relayed their experiences and difficulties with art and entrepreneurship, which can be interpreted as an attempt to inform others about what the work entails and offer potential solutions. This is supported by the fact that, several artists endorsed seeking educational content and some even offered their own educational content and courses.

"I decided to start growing an audience on YouTube and I knew I wanted to provide tutorials on drawing and painting. I very much knew that I wanted to go down the educational route and how people improve with their artwork." - Kirsty Partridge Art, video 2.3

Overall, the educational purpose of the content was clearly visible, and the artists strongly endorsed education and learning as a means of development, often lending their experiences to their audience. This leads to the conclusion that education and learning are essential for the identity work of artists both as artists and professionals. In fact, the way the artists discussed learning and developing as an artist exhibited a strategic and entrepreneurial nature - they advocated for artists to work hard but also be selective how they are using their time and effort. Focusing on what knowledge and skills will benefit them the most becomes key, which clearly relates to a conscious "solution-driven" aspect in their identity work (Horst et al., 2019).

Additionally, many artists shared that they themselves had been inspired and learned from other people in similar fields. This was true both for finding artistic inspiration, as well as learning how to be a better entrepreneur.

"I've been drawing some inspiration from artists who I think are particularly moody and cool. Most of all, probably my number one inspiration at this time is Jesper Ejsing." - Matthew Dobrich, video 11.1

"At first I used to go on YouTube and search tutorials, how to grow my Instagram, how to grow my Facebook, how to make enamel pins, for example. And I used to watch studio vlogs of other people." - Katnipp, video 7.6

Figure 4. Paint Coach showing a book he finds useful for artists. (video 12.3)

In summary, the artists endorsed self-development and learning both through encouraging others to be proactive and trying to provide others with the opportunity to educate themselves. This encouragement of learning and self-development can be interpreted as the artists advocating for a proactive attitude towards art and entrepreneurship as a means to achieve success. At the same time, it shows that the success through social media is not only self-made, but depends also on others. As mediated identity work is a process of co-creation, artists connect their "noble drive" for creative work with their "entrepreneurial drive" to educate, support and

facilitate the development of others, reflecting the combination of creative and entreprenerusial values described by Werthes et al., (2017).

Supporting other artists/entrepreneurs

This subtheme provided important insights into the artists' attitude towards other artists/entrepreneurs. It entails the creators advocating for respecting other artists' work or being supportive to their efforts.

One creator stood out in this respect, speaking up on the topics of art theft and a case of an artist bullying another artist online. The following quote can be interpreted as giving priority to the value of being respectful to other artists/entrepreneurs over being competitive.

"And every single person with a large audience or a huge fan base has worked to build it up just like you and you need to respect that. Social media and art or whatever it is, isn't a competition and getting the number one spot […] does not matter" - Creepshow Art, video 6.1

What is curious is that the competitive nature of art entrepreneurship was acknowledged only twice in the data. This lack of acknowledgement seems to be an existing pattern among the creators in the sample. Their lack of discussing it, along with the emphasis on self-improvement in an artistic and professional aspect supports the conclusion that the creators advocate for focusing on oneself rather than comparing oneself to others and competing with them. This non-competitive individualistic spirit was reflected in the following statement:

"Andy J. Pete said this on the Creative Pep Talk, that you shouldn't compare your beginning to somebody else's middle. Even if you're different ages, you're going to have had, like, different experiences, different upbringings, different lives, different opportunities, different mindsets. [..] So you're going to reach like different like milestones and reach different goals at different times in your lives. It's not going to be exactly the same. So take inspiration from people, but don't feel bad if your path doesn't look exactly the same as their path." - Emma Carpenter - Illustration Journey, video 9.1

This statement is in line with encouraging initiative in art entrepreneurship. This shows that the artists had a positive attitude towards starting a new venture and encouraged their

audience to try starting their own entrepreneurial journey. This can be seen as supporting other artist's efforts.

The artists express that the value of having respect for other artists' work can come in the form of respecting their intellectual property or their business, as demonstrated by the following statements:

"[...] [W]hat you should absolutely not do, ever, is pretend that your works that you made through tracing are your own original work. If you're traced over them, credit the original artists. Make sure people know that's what you did and never, ever, ever take someone else's work and try to sell it as your own." - Creepshow art, video 6.2

"Conventions are fantastic for artists to sell things like prints and enamel pins, tote bags and things like that, because that merchandise is what is expected to sell at conventions. That is why I typically save my money at conventions and go and buy. I like to buy new art prints, I like to support other artists there." - Katnipp, video 7.5

In general, the artists were supportive of other artist's work and encouraged others to be kind and respectful to other artists' efforts. Through this ideology of personal development over direct competition with others it can be concluded that the artists exhibit respect towards other artist's entrepreneurial identities as well as their own. Furthermore, they were encouraging towards their audience to try entrepreneurship themselves if they are interested, which aligns with Khajeheian and Roshandel Arbatani's (2011) claim that media entrepreneurship inspires the entrepreneurial spirit in society.

Valuable personal qualities of the artist entrepreneur
This theme explores personal qualities that were deemed as useful by the artists in overcoming challenges or becoming better at their work. A lot can be learned about the valuable qualities for the artist entrepreneurs by the hardships and personal experiences they discussed.

<u>Perseverance</u>

The first subtheme in this category was the quality of perseverance which consists of persisting in the face of discouraging experiences and being consistent. The following examples of the text illustrate why perseverance is an important quality for artists.

"I mean, what's the point of trying to learn something if it's not challenging? What's the point? You should have to overcome adversity. It gives everything context, because when you suffer for those hundreds of hours, like slaving away on these images and figuring out how to make it work, the payoff is huge when it does. It's huge. And it's worth the walk, right, it's worth every ounce of sweat and blood. It's there's nothing more rewarding than overcoming something that you thought was impossible. And the reward for achieving that is not a medal. You don't get a trophy. No one comes and pats you on the back and says, "Good job, you've done it!". Your award is that there's always more work left to do because this just keeps on going. That's the point. Learn to love it." - Matthew Dobrich Illustrations, video 11.1

"So in conclusion, I used to think that artists are born with a passion for art and that was what drove them to grow their skills through practice. But now I realize that passion can grow with practice as well. Even if we aren't born with a natural inclination to do something right off the bat, sometimes it just takes a little persistence and hard work for us to discover the joy. […] It's a much more meaningful reward when you know you've worked hard to get there." - Happy D. Artist, video 3.3

These quotes illustrate that the artist perceive being challenged and overcoming difficulties as a positive and worthy experience and in these situations the value of perseverance is clear. It is possible that framing challenges as something inherent to the work rather than a problem is a coping strategy for artists to deal with the difficulties.

This second quote on perseverance is interesting because it touches upon the concept of talent, but it is defined differently than the artist myth idea of a divine gift or something extraordinary and it introduces the notion that talent is not a necessity for becoming an artist. Another artist also rejected the idea of divine inspiration being responsible for one's achievements and development and shifts the emphasis onto the role of the individual in their pursuit of a goal.

"Action comes before motivation. It's not the other way around. I think there's this myth that motivation leads to action, that you've got to wait for some sort of moment of inspiration that strikes you like lightning from the gods. But it's the other way around. Firstly, you need to act, and only then will you find your motivation." - struthless, video 5.2

This supports the need for being self-driven and underscores the entrepreneurial attitude needed to be an artist today. At the same time, encouraging perseverance of oneself appeared as a way to cope with the lack of support from others or overcoming the challenge of staring a new venture by themselves. The following statement illustrates that to create something and "become somebody" takes effort and often beginning from nothing. Therefore, not giving up, despite facing difficulties ultimately leads to an artist's success:

"We've all started from zero followers. We all started from zero sales. The best thing to do is to read success stories from likeminded people or entrepreneurs in the field. I love those kind of "started in the garage", "started in my bedroom" "started in whatever" stories. Mine started personally in my small two-bedroom house. I had a little spare bedroom. I started doing portraits, custom portraits, and I would sell through Facebook and I would send people invoices. That's how I started in my little room and now I have two studio spaces." - Katnipp, video 7.6

This story about "humble beginnings", also discussed further in this chapter from a narrative analysis perspective, illustrates that the value the artists put on not giving up. They need to persevere to ultimately make it. This motive in their identity work therefore blends across the artistic and entrepreneurial identity. Another artist also reminisces about the beginning of her career in a similar way:

"So even if I didn't make as many sales back then or didn't have as many social media followers back then I had something even more valuable which was my enthusiasm and my work ethic." - Happy D. Artists, video 3.2

It can be concluded that the artists view perseverance as something that gives them an advantage in the pursuing of their goals. The fact that artists placed emphasis on being persistent in one's work rather than being talented reflects a rejection of the artist myth concept of the artists as a gifted individual (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006) and emphasizes one's

persistence and determination, which are thematically linked to the discourse on entrepreneurial identity and allow building "identity capital" as an entrepreneur (Lewis, 2016).

Working in an organized and intentional manner

A second subtheme that manifested itself almost exclusively related to the entrepreneurial aspects of the artists' work was that of going about one's work in a planned and organized manner. This referred to both everyday work schedule and a broader context of goal setting and planning out business aspects.

"Another thing is that as an illustrator, everybody thinks that being an artist or illustrator is so fun, you don't need to be organized, that thing is free and fun. But actually, you have to be pretty organized and planned. You have to set goals. You have to have a schedule. You have to meet deadlines. And I would suggest getting a planner and writing down everything you need to do." - Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.1

"So, it is important that you build a business plan on what revenue streams that you want to have. [...] Think about how you're going to promote them and how you will maintain and be consistent with them. For example, if you are thinking about offering a monthly membership site that you're going to upload new content to every month, think about whether you will be able to keep up with that workload. You want to pick a workload that's suitable for you." - Kirsty Partridge Art, video 2.3

This again showcases a rejection of the idea put forth by the artists myth that the work of artists is free and autonomous. In fact, it can be interpreted as showcasing how art entrepreneurship is similar to other occupations and being successful requires a "solution-driven" attitude to ensure that they remain organized and reach their goals (Horst et al., 2019).

Being entrepreneurial

An interesting subtheme that came up was that being a good entrepreneur and being a good artist are not synonymous. Having a sense for business was repeatedly identified as a quality that helps advance an artist's career.

"And you can see online, I've seen it a million times, with a lot of people that aren't that great at their art, but they're really good at the business side and they are way more successful than the people that are amazing at the art side and not good at the business side." - Paint Coach, video 12.1

This further reinforces the need for artists to develop as entrepreneurs to successfully build an art career. This is also echoed in the statement from another artist that speaks on the fact that the entrepreneurial art of business is important for turning art into a career.

"So it gets a bit icky in yucky, especially for an artist talking about money and stuff but at the end of the day it's very very important that you work out profit margins and you work out how much it takes to create a handmade item and how much you can then sell it for." - Katnipp, video 7.1

In conclusion, this subtheme attests to artists identifying the quality of being entrepreneurial in one's endeavors as something useful for building an artistic career, even more so than being a good artist. Again, this veers away from conceptualizing artistic talent as extraordinary gift and highlights the fusion of being an artist-and-entrepreneur on social media.

4.1.4 Motivations for entrepreneurship

In addition to the motivation of gaining an income, the analysis found three other reasons for artists to turn to entrepreneurial activity – creating art as a career, gaining independence and empowering others.

The first motivation was turning art into a career for themselves. In these cases, making art was presented as something enjoyable and entrepreneurship was presented as an opportunity to achieve this aspiration as demonstrated by the following quote:

"Business is business and you need to make a profit to keep your business afloat and to sustain your life. But at the end of the day business is made so much easier if you absolutely love what you do. I absolutely love what I do so so much and I'm very passionate about it and it keeps me motivated every day." - Katnipp, video 7.1

The joy of doing art for work provided a strong drive for artists to continue working as shown by the following statement:

"My boyfriend says that I work a bit too much and that's probably true. But when you love what you do, you kind of just want to do that." - Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.2

This drive of "loving what you do" was closely connected with being an entrepreneur. Here, entrepreneurship was presented by one artist as fueling her desire to do develop in her career as an art entrepreneur.

"I still remember how elated I was over making my first ever print sale in my online shop that wasn't to a friend or a family member and that feeling that a stranger out there in the world connected with my art enough to adopt it into their home was a high that I rode for months even though I only made one sale in that quarter, that one sale gave me enough motivation to learn how to make my own prints at home to research how to use finer printers, inks, papers and to eventually improve my website and make it more professional and official looking. And when I first sold my first original it was the same feeling. [...] All of these little moments of validation and encouragement early on naturally increased my productivity levels." - Happy D. Artists, video 3.2

This shows that the artists saw having an art career as something that brings fulfillment and motivation to work and entrepreneurship here is a means to achieving this goal.

The second reason to pursue entrepreneurship was to gain independence. This is demonstrated by this artist's quote about the motivations behind her starting a YouTube channel.

"My end goal, it's not currently happening right now as of the recording of this video, but I hope to eventually be my own boss and have this be my business. I want to do this full time. [...] So hopefully this will end up being my future job." - Frecklefox Illustration, video 10.1

This idea of entrepreneurship as a way to achieve independence can also be found by the following piece of advice by another artist:

"Like, especially if you want to just be like a full blown, on your own, independent artist, go to business school because [...] if you want to just paint on your own or, you know, do whatever your art is on your own and not have a boss and make money, you need to know business." - Paint Coach, video 12.1

The third motivation for entrepreneurship manifests itself as a motivation to create content, but the fact that some artists monetize their content by advertisements or sponsorships and use their videos to market paid content and products allows for additional interpretations. For example, this motivation for entrepreneurship entails the possibility of empowering and helping others through sharing personal experience and helping others improve and develop both as artists and/or entrepreneurs.

"I know I always try to present an atmosphere of encouragement and positivity in my channel and I always hope that whoever watches my videos can feel inspired and pumped to create art." - Happy D. Artists, video 3.2

Another quote illustrates a potential reason for artists to want to help others following the same path as them:

"My parents were against being a street artist and losing time on art. I should focus on school. I remember my grandma once told me that it is shame to spray paint on the street and my friends was like "Yeah, that is kind of cool that you're painting on street, but that is not career". You see this? This is my career and I am proud of it." - Skech Art, video 1.1

It is possible that this motivation to empower others stems from the lack of support and struggled with self-doubt that some artists acknowledge they have had to overcome in their entrepreneurial journey. The hardships that the entrepreneurs admitted to encountering can account for their eagerness to educate and empower other people to experiment and learn.

These motivations indicate that the artists enjoy entrepreneurship at least partially. There was no indication that the artists only perceive entrepreneurship as a necessity they must resort to, which highlights the blended nature of the artistic-entrepreneurial identity they create and sustain. It is worth noting that none of the artists complained about entrepreneurship as such.

In conclusion the analysis showed that the artists were entrepreneurial through social media and took advantage of opportunities offered by platforms that facilitate entrepreneurship. They engaged in a variety of entrepreneurial activities. By detailing the logistics of running an art business the artists showcased their credibility as entrepreneurs and demonstrated their strong entrepreneurial thinking.

The analysis indicated that the artists were entrepreneurial in the way they used social media and took advantage of opportunities offered by platforms that facilitate entrepreneurship. The artists also demonstrated an entrepreneurial mindset when approaching the topic of networking with likeminded people, identifying other entrepreneurs as such. Networking was identified as an important subtheme and one that established how artists view themselves in relation to others. The analysis demonstrated that artists placed other artists who participate in entrepreneurial activities in the same social group as themselves, relating to conscious choices about their identity work and "social identity" (Watson, 2008).

The analysis also showed that the values and personal qualities the artists presented as virtuous for an entrepreneur promoted seeking self-development, persevering, being proactive and organized. This indicates that the development of an individual both as an artists and entrepreneur is perceived as something one is responsible for and has control over, rather than a natural talent.

The artist's motivations for entrepreneurship did not show indication of the artists being driven to be entrepreneurial by necessity, in fact they uncovered what artists liked about being entrepreneurs – practicing their craft as work, being independent and being helpful to others.

4.2 Narrative analysis findings

4.2.1 Positions

The positions presented in this section are a testament to how the artists construct their social identities. Social identity is shaped through the discursive process and the roles that individuals assume are shaped by the roles available in wider societal discourse (Watson, 2009; LaPointe 2010). When analyzing the positions the artists assumed in relation to their audience, this study found two predominant positions – the YouTube creators presented themselves as either "someone more experienced" or "someone just like you".

The position of someone more experienced usually occurred when the artists were giving advice to their audience. These narratives presented the artist's own encounters with the topics they discussed, which served to establish them as experienced and knowledgeable. The use of this position can be interpreted as the artists attempting to make their narratives more persuasive by establishing legitimacy. The following quote demonstrates how the artists draws from her own experience to give advice to her viewers:

"This is my second failed business. I used to have one long before which I ran off ASOS marketplace called Feathers and Cotton, and it was a vintage clothes kind of shop. I would never have known it wasn't my passion unless I tried it and then gave it good go. So I'm still really, really happy that I gave it a go because Baby Blue potentially could have became a massive business. […]. My opinions on running multiple businesses: If you want to stay really small on both of them, then I would say go for it. Or if you plan on hiring someone trained or who own other businesses where they could just kind of run that business, follow you when you are out of it." – Katnipp, video 7.3

This example pretains to the artist's business experience, which was most often the theme that prompted narraives of the creators personal experiences. The advice the artists gave in their video was almost exclusively related to development as an entrepreneur and an artists, in other words, career development. This demonstrates that the artists assume both the role of an artist and an entrepreneur in their identity work.

The second position often used in the narratives was when the artists presented themselves as "someone just like you" by sharing personal struggles and insecurities. This position served to reduce the proximity with the audience, presenting the artist as someone who is flawed and encounters the same issues as their viewers. The motivations for using this type of narrative become visible from the following quotes.

"I'm doing this chat's because I have actually felt too old in some ways, which it sounds ridiculous because I'm 34. So I'm you know, I'm not really that old. I'm gonna be chatting a little bit about why I think I sometimes feel like this. […] It's something that I wanted to sort of talk about because I think it's something that other people can relate to. And it might be holding you back as well." - Emma Carpenter Illustration Journey, video 9.1

This quote acknowledges the potential shared experience that the artists and their audience have. Here the artist explained her motivations to share a personal struggle with her audience, explicitly stating her intention. A similar sentiment is also expressed by another artist who explains her motivation to share with her audience her struggle with loss of enthusiasm for her work.

"I thought no matter the nature of our relationship with art whether it's a hobby or a school degree or a career they're always going to be struggles. It's unavoidable I think, in fact, that's kind of the nature of life in general not just within the scope of art, but motivation doesn't just stem from listening to positive pep talks. It can also come from the comfort of knowing that someone else out there is in the same situation as you and knowing that you're not alone in your struggles. So hopefully me sharing my sadder and more difficult experiences can help anyone else out there going through something similar." – Happy D. Artist, video 3.2

It can be concluded that this position aims to make the artist seem relatable, humbled before their struggles and genuine in sharing them. This presentation of the self, however, can also be interpreted a strategy for the artists to establish rapport with their audience and make their content more appealing. It is similar to a strategy described by Hou (2018), where online personas use their "ordinariness" to create a sense of authenticity to their content.

In conclusion the artists often assumed the position of someone who is more experienced than their audience legitimizing their position as entrepreneurs who can give competent advice, but they also presented their own struggles, reducing the proximity between the audience and themselves and creating authenticity within their content. Both these positions can be seen as enforcing the artists' career identity in their own way – on one hand as experienced entrepreneurs and artistic professionals and on the other, as relatable individuals facing difficulties in their work, which brings authenticity to their identity.

4.2.2 Narrative function
Generally, it can be argued that the use of narratives in the data had the function of adding legitimacy to artist's career identity and/or reducing the proximity between them and their audience by presenting their emotions and reasoning behind decisions. However, when

taken in a broader context, 4 distinct types of narrative emerged from the data. Firstly, there is the constructive narrative, which aims to strengthen the instructive character of the advice the artists provide. Secondly, the cathartic narrative provided an outlet for artists to share their struggles and opinions on topics related to their career. Thirdly, the goal-setting narratives consisted of the artists discussing their desire to develop in certain areas of their career, which provides insight into what they consider attainable goals for themselves. Lastly, the motivational narrative serves to give hope and inspiration to the audience that they might also be as successful as the content creators.

Constructive narratives

Constructive narratives were the most prominent type of narrative found in the data. They consist of personal narratives that are delivered in the context of the artists giving advice or beneficial information to their audience. These narratives were often present when discussing topics about business or artistic development and usually consisted of a retelling of the artist's personal experience with the topic. The following quotes demonstrate how advice and personal experience become intertwined in this type of narrative.

"If you want to just paint on your own or, you know, do whatever your art is on your own and not have a boss and make money, you need to know business. I've been learning that just on my own the past couple years. And that is, honestly, that is why the term starving artist exists and why a lot of people say you can't make money, you know, in art. It's not that there isn't money to be made as an artist. There definitely is. It's just most artists, the minds that you kind of have to have to be good at art doesn't lend itself well to business." - Paint Coach, video 12.1

"And I hate to bring this up, but I've seen so many instances where people kind of just behave badly afterwards [not getting in a juried show]. And I've talked with artists who are jurors and they've told me stories about artists accosting them in restaurants and all this crazy stuff. I seriously doubt that any of you would do that. But watch what you say and watch how you present yourself and be careful about how much emphasis you put on this. Your thoughts about what it means if you don't get in or you don't, quote unquote win. That is what is harmful and damaging." - Savvy Painter, video 8.1

These quotes demonstrate constructive narratives where the instructive element is explicitly stated. Nevertheless, more implicit advice was also present, manifesting itself as opinions or short cautionary tales, as the following quotes demonstrate.

"I don't really like this income stream [commissions]. I find it very time intensive. I find that it puts a lot of pressure on the artist, not all artists get pressure from it, but personally I found that it really put a lot of pressure on me and stress and you have to deal with a lot of clients wanting to tweak things and change things. And so this might not be suitable for you but you might love it and you might really enjoy doing commissions. Bear in mind that it is very time-intensive, and you can't really scale that revenue stream. There's only so many drawings you can do." - Kirsty Partridge Art, video 2.2

"Now, I didn't do a convention until I've done at least five craft fairs, and I was comfortable with kind of standing behind my booth. I kind of had a lot more product to sell at conventions. Yeah, I had the product inventory behind, which can also be the downside to selling at conventions is particularly if you're starting up, you do need a lot more inventory, which means you could potentially come away from the convention, if it's quiet, with a lot of backstock." – Katnipp, video 7.5

Constructive narratives, besides their function to deliver advice from a point of personal experience, can be interpreted as a persuasive device, which establishes the legitimacy of the artists as entrepreneurs. It can be concluded that through these personal anecdotes the artists perform identity work by attempting to establish legitimacy as experienced entrepreneurs. Further, from the prominence of these constructive narratives which aim to give advice and help others, it can be stated that the artists also assumed the role of mentors, using their social media to help others.
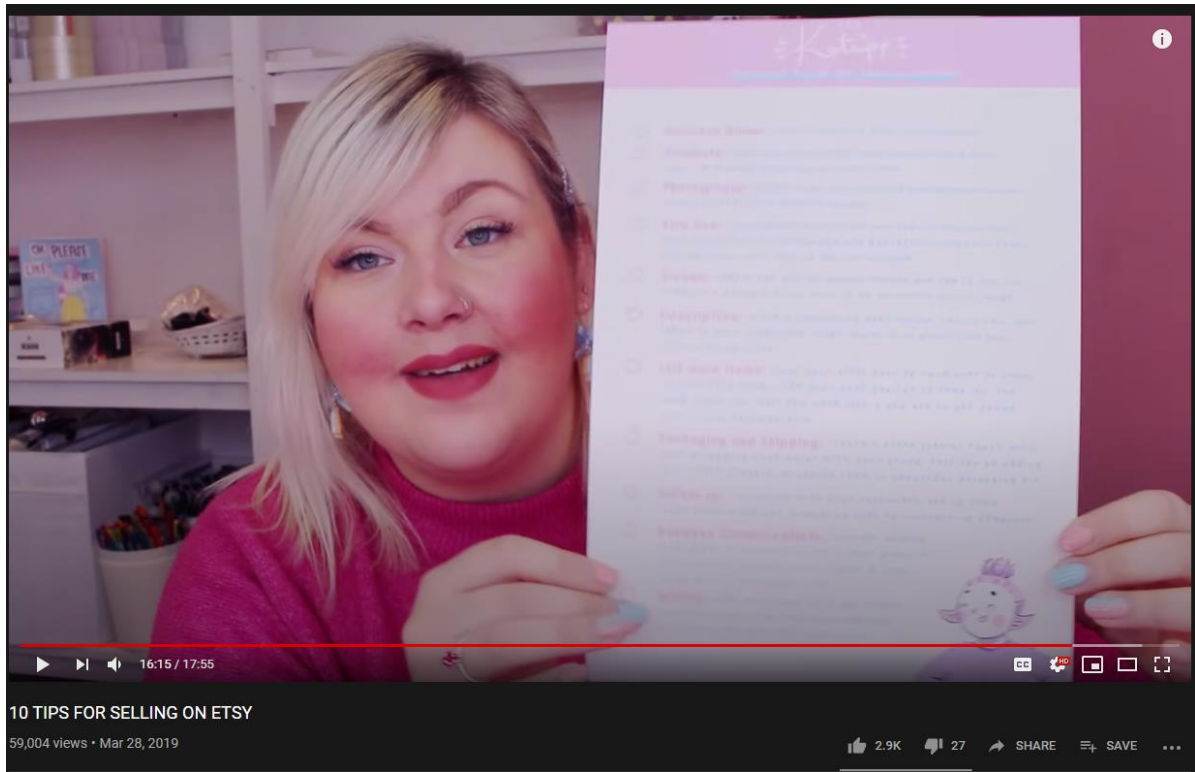
Figure 5. Katnipp showcasing a checklist of advised steps for selling on Etsy (video 7.1)

Since the artists also placed high value on education, as already established in the findings of the thematic analysis, incorporating the role of mentor into their self-concept is consistent with their beliefs. This type of identity work demonstrates the enactment of an authentic and stable set of values and beliefs that the individual deems defining to their self (Ybema et al., 2009).

Cathartic narratives

This type of narrative entails the artists sharing experiences that relate to difficulties and struggles the artists face in their career. Typically, they had the function of reducing proximity with the audience by exposing the struggles and uncertainties that the artists were experiencing in their entrepreneurial or artistic development, often exhibiting the "someone just like you" position. An example of a cathartic narrative is the following statement where the artist discusses leaving her full-time job to pursue a career.

So, yeah, I'm excited. But also to be honest I don't actually have any work coming in at the moment so I was sort of thinking – do I admit that this is something that I'm doing that [...] I'm trying to be a full-time freelance illustrator or should I just kind of wait until [...] I've got some work coming in. And I kind of feel like I know what I'm doing more. But I think it's kind of nice to share the times when you don't really know what you're doing. And also it means as well, like if there's other people out there that are sort of, you know, further ahead of me they can, like, if you want to give me some tips which would be really nice." - Emma Carpenter Illustration Journey, video 9.3

This narratve demonstartes how the artist is leveling herself with ther audiece that might be facing the same struggles by exposing her vulerabilities. It exhibits the more personal side of the artist, making them easier to sympathyse with, which again ties to the performace of ordinairiness described by Hou (2018) that sets apart YouTube creators from traditional media personas.

What is also worth noting is that when discussing the difficulties in their careers, the artists did not aim to complain, but rather to aknowledge that these struggles are part of the profession which the following quote demonstrates.

"I really don't want to spend too much time ranting and complaining because I am super grateful that I get to do art as a career and I wouldn't trade it for anything, even its ups and downs. So please don't interpret this video as me trying to gather pity or anything like that. I'm just simply putting this out there to the world in hopes that anyone else in a similar situation will know that they're not alone. - Happy D. Artist, video 3.2

Instead of a complaint about entrepreneurship, the narratives often contained a element of self-reflection, which was useful for determining what the artists found hard about their career and what they wanted to improve. This is demonstrated in the following examples.

"I realized drawing now for me has like this reward built in where I'll be like I'll finish drawing and then automatically my brain starts going 'All right, now for thousands of people on the Internet to tell you it's great'. So messed up, man, I never wanted that relationship to my art. But of course, by pure association and the way that social media is designed, that had started getting into my brain." – struthless, video 5.3

"But, yeah, illustration is a pretty hard job. You have to think of a lot of stuff if you want to make it a full-time job. And yeah, let me know your thoughts on this subject. I'm curious to know what struggles you have encountered as an illustrator. For me personally, I'm not really a sales or marketing person." – Anca Pora Illustration, video 4.1

"I find it really hard to do that [be a salesperson]. And sometimes I would force myself to do that, but I found it really hard to kind of sell myself in that respect. I tried to let my work sell itself and then they ask me how much everything was which isn't the greatest sales tactic. Sometimes I was on the ball if I had a coffee. I'd be like "Oh, well, if you get one greetings card, it's like three for five if you want to pick one up", I'd be like that but it definitely gets very, very draining." – Katnipp, video 7.5

"I've done a couple of sort of topical instructional videos recently, and now I'm having a lot of fun with them, but they take a lot of time to put together and they also prevent me from actually doing what I love about art, which is the painting process. So I dedicated some time over the past couple weeks to just paint something that I wanted to paint and it's a weird one." - Matthew Dobrich Illustration, video 11.2

These quotes can be examined as the artists developing an entrepreneurial strategy through narrative (Fenton & Langley, 2011), as the artists expose their desire to do better in certain areas of their career (e.g. selling products, painting for pleasure or having a better relationship with social media). Additionally, the need for developing artistically, financially, and personally (Werthes et al., 2017) becomes apparent through these examples.

In summary, cathartic narratives served for the artists to expose the difficulties they faced in their career, reducing the proximity with their audience and creating a sense of shared experience. The self-reflection and retrospection serve to expose the artists as flawed, therefore rendering them more relatable and genuine. Cathartic narratives expose vulnerable moments for the artists but also serve to normalize the experience as a natural part of the artistic/entrepreneurial journey. The need of artists to develop in their career also became apparent, highlighting that the artists incorporated entrepreneurial strategy in their narratives

through self-reflection. This demonstrates a drive to learn from difficult experiences and seek self-improvement.

Goal setting narratives

Goal setting was a prominent narrative type that emerged from the analysis. Assuming the perspective of the self as an active agent (Chen, 1997), goals, plans and objectives bring insight into how one makes sense of their own career. Chen (1997) presented Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, which describes people's assessment of their own capabilities to organize and carry out actions required to achieve a goal and explains that the options that one considers available to them are largely shaped by social context. The analysis showed that most predominantly the goals that the artists set were related to developing as entrepreneurs.

"Another thing is more professional packaging, which I've mentioned twice, I don't know. More professional packaging. And another is plan more so use my bullet journal and everything." – Katnipp, video 7.7

"My end goal, it's not currently happening right now as of the recording of this video, but I hope to eventually be my own boss and have this be my business. I want to do this full time. Right now, I work at a coffee shop in my local town and I really like it, but it's just not what I want to do the rest of my life. So hopefully this will end up being my future job." - Frecklefox Illustration, video 10.1

The artists setting entrepreneurial goals can be interpreted as them seeing entrepreneurship as part of their career identity, but also as an endeavor compatible with their artistic values. With their goal-setting narratives the artists demonstrated a need for achievement, which is a quality Chell (2008) considers characteristic of entrepreneurs. Overall, goal-setting narratives proved to an avenue for artists to perform identity work through strategizing. Going beyond this study, it can be argued that this orientation towards entrepreneurial goals reflects the new requirements of the creative labor market where entrepreneurial qualities are becoming highly valued (Bain, 2005; Lingo & Tepper, 2013).

Motivational narratives

In this subsection I examine one narrative that were often used to inspire and encourage the audience – the humble beginnings narrative. This narrative manifested itself throughout the data, with five of the twelve artists referencing the beginning of their career in their videos. The narrative usually consisted of the artist reminiscing about the start of their career when they lacked experience or a support system, as exemplified by the following statements.

"When I first started my art career, I didn't have much of a foot in the door. I didn't have much of a resumé or social media presence. I didn't even have an online shop set up and outside of a few lucky instances I virtually made zero sales. So during that phase any small success felt so monumental." – Happy D. Artist, video 3.2

"I know before I started [my business], I definitely had a reputation of being, like, kind of a party animal, going out, and wasn't really took seriously, and still I'm not because I'm kind of not taking myself seriously. But when it came to my business and unlocking my true potential, I educated myself. I kept learning new things and people were quite surprised that I actually made it. Including people who were closest to me, like Dean, my fiancé. I don't truly believe he saw I could get to where I am today. He always had faith in me, and he did always support me, and I think I shocked him a little bit about just how far I managed to take it. And I'm only, I feel, at the very beginning of my journey. So you have to surprise those people who genuinely think, you know, you're not capable of it." – Katnipp, video 7.6

Another common trait of the majority of these narratives is the theme of succeeding against the odds through not giving up and overcoming obstacles, as demonstrated by the second quote. Another example for this can be seen in the following statement where the artists details the high cost of educational materials.

"I must say I'm not against learning to paint from YouTube. I have a YouTube channel, as you probably know from being on this video. But I did, I learned a lot from videos online when I first started out painting. A lot of the videos weren't on YouTube because YouTube wasn't exactly what it is today. Not a lot of people were putting out content on oil painting, so actually, I had to go out and buy these instructors hundred plus dollar videos. Yes, that's how much they

costed. So all you new, beginning painters out there feel very lucky. You have so much access to free content." – Paint Coach, video 12.2

These narratives of a humble beginnings and succeeding despite difficult circumstances can be interpreted as motivational stories that serve to ecourage others to also try to build an entrepreneurial career. It must also be noted that the artists attributed their success to their own efforts, demonstrating a strong internal locus of control which according to Chell (2008) is a prominent quality of entreprenerus.

In relation to Bandura's concept self-efficacy (Chen, 1997), these types of narratives make the process of becoming a successful artist-entrepreneur seem more achievable – since the artists managed to attain this, in a social context this makes it appear as an available option for others as well.

Overall, the narrative analysis demonstrated that through their identity work the artists simultaneously assumed the role of an experienced entrepreneur and a mentor, but at the same time showcased their ordinariness. The strong presence of constructive narratives and the implementation of the value of self-development in practice demonstrate the artists' entrepreneurial identity, as well as their drive to flourish professionally and help others do the same.

5. DISCUSSION

This research examined identity as constructed in the process of social interaction and formed by negotiation between social and self-definition (Ybema et al. 2009). The study focused on the construction of the self-identity of artists on YouTube by examining it against existing discourses about artists described in previous research, most notably the stereotype of the bohemian artist and the image of the artists as an entrepreneur.

5.1 Mediated identity

This study examined identity formation in relation to mediated identity and self-branding, as it focused on the presence of the artists on a social medium, where users can create a highly curated image of themselves (Khamis et al., 2017).

The findings of this research confirm that social media has become a space in which people enact their social reality by carrying out narrative identity work in connecting with audiences and through networking with followers (Horst et al., 2019). Social media was part of the artists' digital entrepreneurship endeavors that was recognized by themselves as being essential to how they develop as entrepreneurs. The analysis provided the opportunity to both understand how artists use social media as entrepreneurs and observe it at the same time, since YouTube itself is a social media platform. The multifaceted processes of mediation and thereby also multileveled way of identity-construction become visible (Couldry & Hepp, 2013; van Dijck, 2013). Through these processes, the artists used social media strategically to enhance their business by marketing their products and gain exposure and security by acquiring an audience, which aligns with what is described by Khamis et al. (2017) as the practice of self-branding - a desire to acquire commercial or cultural capital.

Analyzed from the perspective on social media offered by van Dijk (2013), it can be observed that the artists were using YouTube both for self-expression purposes (e.g cathartic narratives) and as well as self-promotion (e.g. etsblishing legitimacy as entrepreneurs through cathartic narratives). Unlike on other social mediums, where usually only one of these forms of self-presentation is present, in the content of the YouTube artist examined in this research, the two coexisted. This is explained by the fact that the artists in this study are independent entrepreneurs who as individuals constistute the business, therefore there are no clear-cut boundaries between their artistic, entrepreneurial and their personal identity.

It is also possible that use of self-expression serves as a self-branding thechnique wich relies on establishing rapport with the audince based on shared experiences and the artist's ordinariness as described by Hou (2018). Hou (2018) that performing authenticity in this way can be used as a commercial tool for marketing purposes. Indeed, the findings in relation to the creators' social media behavior showcased that the artists exhibited an attitude towards their artwork and exclusive content as a product of their brand to be marketed and sold. This finding is reinforced by some artists using their videos to market their paid products or content, which makes their content on YouTube similar to a free demo version or simply an advertisement. Additionally, the narratives that were present in the videos served the purpose of establishing legitimacy or making the artists more relatable, which from a person-as-brand perspective can be viewed as strategies to add value to their social media presence. Social media seems "indispensable" and a strategic means of achieving their brand visibility, as demonstrated by both the artists' statements, the way they used their YouTube videos to promote paid products or services that they offer and the way they positioned themselves in relation to their audience through narrative.

This is consistent with Chen's (2013) observation that YouTube is an avenue for self-branding and his claim that artists use their values and unique qualities to construct a mediated self-identity. While Chen's (2013) findings fit neatly into Arruda's theory about the three stages of self-branding – (1) identifying unique identity qualities within oneself, (2) constructing a compelling statement around certain attributes and (3) creating a strategy to make the brand visible, in this research only the second and third stages were visible. This might be due to a difference in methods between this study and Chen's (2013), nevertheless, the construction of a compelling statement around their values was visible. Here, the artists repeatedly used anecdotes from personal experience when giving advice and showcasing their values of learning and self-development and support for other artists, as well as when they discussed personal qualities useful for the nature of their work. This can be interpreted as an attempt to lend more credibility to the image the artists were trying to construct for themselves by using personal experience to make their statements more convincing. From the perspective of Khamis et al.'s (2017) view on self-mediation as a process in which one constructs a highly curated image of how they want to be perceived, it can be concluded that the artists were building an image of themselves as experienced entrepreneurs. Taking this one step further theoretically, this characteristic of the

artists identity work points to another interpretation. Essentially, the concept of identity work highlights the processual and emergent nature of identity that is created out of the mediated interaction with others (Brown, 2015; Horst et al., 2019; Ibarra & Barbulescu, 2010). Seeing identity as "process and flow" shifts our theoretical attention exactly to these aspects of identity (Gioia & Patvardhan, 2012). Further, it highlights the view of an organization as having an identity similar to the one of individual (Gioia & Patvardhan, 2012) as a perspective that is highly relevant to new media endeavors, especially cases when a single individual constitutes a business and manages their brand's social media.

5.2 Digital entrepreneurship and artists

The analysis demonstrated how important social media has become for entrepreneurial activity, as remarked by Horst, et al. (2019), as the artists viewed it as a necessity. As for the role of YouTube, for artists it seems to play a role similar to other social media. The artists promoted the idea of using social media as a marketing and business development tool and YouTube was no exception. This can be concluded from the fact that the artists made their values and motivations apparent and marketed their products on the platform. Some artists took advantage of the entrepreneurial opportunities available on YouTube that Hou (2018) described in her research - including sponsored content and offering affiliate links to their audience. It can be stated that from the perspective of this research YouTube can be defined as a social media platform that serves the purpose of marketing and business growth through audience building and offers its own opportunities for entrepreneurship.

In general, the artists reliance on online platforms to be able to run their business shows the reliance on opportunities provided by "digital entrepreneurship" (Kraus, Palmer, Kailer, Kallinger, & Spitzer, 2019; Nambisan, 2018). Indeed, it is plausible that these platforms have made entrepreneurship more accessible to artists, giving them the opportunity to outsource and find work. Furthermore, a positive attitude towards media entrepreneurship and tone of encouragement was exhibited in the content of the artists. By the experiences shared in most of the videos and the direct advice given to their audience, it is clear that the videos were intended for an audience that is interested in art entrepreneurship in some capacity. This encouragement of entrepreneurship by the artists and the general lack of concern for competition was an interesting finding because previous studies have captured in depth the competitive nature of the creative

industries as well as the oversaturation and precarity of the sector which are pointed out as characteristic of the sector in multiple studies (Røyseng, & Borgen, 2007; Higgs & Cunningham, 2008; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010; Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016). This attitude can be explained by the claims made by Khajeheian and Roshandel Arbatani (2011) about media entrepreneurship having low barriers to entry, low capital requirements and encouraging of media entrepreneurship in society.

5.3 Identity

This research explored artistic identity in relation to two broader discourses. On one hand, the myth of the artists as a recluse, bohemian rebel who rejects economic values in the name of creating art for art's sake (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild (2006) and on the other hand the hybrid identity of the artist as an entrepreneur (Bridgstock, 2012; Werthes et al., 2017).

This study examined the values and motivations of entrepreneurs to make conclusions about their entrepreneurial identity. Despite there being no consensus about common values or personality traits among entrepreneurs (Chell, 2008; Werthes et al., 2017), Chell (2008) found 3 traits that are prominent: need for achievement, locus of control and risk-taking. The values and qualities found in this study are consistent with Chell's (2008) findings. Firstly, the need for achievement defined as a strive to achieve goals and tackle challenges, resulting in feeling fulfilled was visible in this study as well. The artists insistence on perseverance and organized work were discussed as qualities that eventually lead to success. Additionally, the artist's passion for learning can also be interpreted as being motivated by a need for development and achievement.

Secondly, the locus of control trait was also visible among the artists. Chell (2008) defines internal locus of control as the belief of individuals that they are in control of their own destiny, and that was reflected in the way the artists encouraged self-development and constant learning as a way to achieve goals and advance as artists and entrepreneurs. The artists highlighted the importance of being proactive and expressed the sentiment that one is responsible for their own career and development, which is consistent with the internal locus of control trait described by Chell (2008). Lingo and Tepper (2013) also remarked on the new need for artists to take more responsibility for their own career development because of the shift of the market towards freelancing and project-based employment and this research indicates that the artists

have adapted to this way of thinking. The emphasis on personal effort rather than relying on luck or talent was visible throughout the data. The values of perseverance and organized work combined with the sentiment that a person's career is their own responsibility is clear evidence that the artists exhibited an internal locus of control.

Lastly, Chell (2008) introduces risk-taking as a personality trait of entrepreneurs, which was the least pronounces of the 3 personality traits in the artists in this research, but the artist's tales of lack of support and starting their career from nothing might point to risk-taking in some capacity. Nevertheless, the risk-taking trait of artists entrepreneurs in YouTube is left for future research to explore.

The clash between the anti-commercial orientation of the bohemian artist and the reality of the work market described in previous research (Bain, 2005; Taylor & Littleton, 2008; Lingo & Tepper, 2013; Albinsson, 2018) was not visible in the findings. In fact, the artists showed a detachment from the artist myth described by Bain (2005), Banks (2010) and Eikhof and Haunschild, (2006). The artists from in this strayed away from the idea that talent is a gift of extraordinary nature and instead repeatedly highlighted how hard work and perseverance in the face of challenges and frustrations is what ultimately helps one develop as an artist and an entrepreneur, even more so than being a good artist. Additionally, the artists were encouraging to their audience to think about the commercial value of their art and be entrepreneurial, which is clear evidence that they are detached from the artist myth according to which artistic and commercial values are mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, the artists exhibited a strong entrepreneurial strategy not only in the way they thought about their art, but also in the way they used their social media and the narrative strategies they employed in their videos, which further indicates the blending of entrepreneurial identity with artists identity on YouTube. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the artists examined in this study developed an entrepreneurial identity and did not see a conflict in creating artwork and then monetizing it. This is in line with the findings of Werthes et al. (2017), who found that combining artistic and entrepreneurial values is indeed possible.

The findings of this studies have some similarities with what Werthes et al. (2017) discovered. Although the evidence suggest that the artists already had an entrepreneurial identity there were some clues that indicated the process through which it was formed. The first step of becoming creative entrepreneurs according to their findings was that the artists begin an

entrepreneurial journey voluntarily. Judging by the motivations exhibited in this study and the lack of evidence that the artists were forced to start acting entrepreneurially by necessity, it can be concluded that this step present.

The second step according to Werthes et al. (2017) is self-reflection on one's own business and defining one's own values which enables them to combine entrepreneurial and creative strategies. This was visible in the findings when the artists expressed the idea that one should think about their artwork entrepreneurially and evaluate what they can do with it. The goal-setting narratives that the analysis found also prove that the artists engaged in self-reflection and strategic planning as entrepreneurs. Additionally, Werthes et al. (2017) remarked that entrepreneurs also develop through communicating with others in the same sphere and discovering similarities. It can be speculated that the value placed on communication and networking in this study comes from the personal experience of artists with developing as entrepreneurs. Additionally, the artists' narratives about their own development and experience with entrepreneurship can also be interpreted as normalizing art entrepreneurship through sharing experience and struggles.

The third and final step that Werthes et al. (2017) described was the stage at which the creative entrepreneurs gain entrepreneurial experience and start identifying themselves as belonging to the same social group as entrepreneurs. This self-dentification was evident in the findings when some of the artists covered the topic of networking and communication with likeminded and identified other business owners or artist involved with entrepreneurs as such. This shows that these artists have already developed a hybrid identity, incorporating entrepreneurial identity as part of themselves.

Something curious that this study found was that the artists assumed not only the role of entrepreneurs but also the role of mentors. Of the possible explanations, three make sense in the context of this research. Firstly, it is possible that the artists assume this role as a means to add more value to their media content, thus making it more appealing to an audience, but also drawing more attention to their business, which would make this an entrepreneurial strategy. This explanation is viable because part of the artists openly promoted their own paid educational materials and content.

Secondly it is possible that this assumed role reflects a wider societal change brought about by the new opportunities of digital media. Since a considerable part of the artist's business

involves social media and media platforms, it is possible that this role of mentor reflects how new media entrepreneurial ventures inspire entrepreneurship is society (Khajeheian & Roshandel Arbatani, 2011). This is also reinforced by the artist's low concern for competition and open encouragement towards their audience to try entrepreneurship.

Lastly, previous research shows that it is not uncommon for visual artists to be employed in education as means to achieve financial stability, social status and have access to other artists (Bain, 2005). Furthermore, parallels can be drawn between the artist myth (Bain, 2005; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2006; Røyseng, & Borgen, 2007) and discourses about teacher identity (Soeide, 2006). Both professions require special competences and knowledge, a high dedication to the job and both professions can be characterized by demanding but sometimes lonely. Another trait the two professions have in common is that both are regarded as being altruistic and public service oriented or in ther words, contributing to the good of society (Kezar, Chambers & Burkhardt, 2005; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010). Assuming the role of mentor might be a way for the artists on YouTube to demonstrate their more altruistic and "noble" motivations which align with artistic values. Aditionally Zuzul and Tripsas (2019) claim that "When individuals internalize particular identities, they set internal and external behavioral standards for their activities and their performance." (2019, p.15), adding that behaving consistently with these standards brings forth positive emotions. It is tehrefore possible that the artists assuming the role of mentor is an act of reaffirming their value of self-development and education through identity work.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this research contribute to how artistic identity is adapting to the commodification of creative goods. Furthermore, the study shows the current trend around art entrepreneurship on social media and how artists sustain their entrepreneurial identity through mediated identity work. Through their strategic use of social media for marketing and business growth, as well as through a process of self-branding through which they showcased their entrepreneurial values, they are active as digital media entrepreneurs (Horst & Hitters, 2020). Furthermore, digital platforms and social media prove to be a significant part of the artists businesses. This combined with the encouragement of entrepreneurship that the artists showed attests to digital entrepreneurship lowering barriers to entry and encouraging entrepreneurial activity in society, even in a sector as saturated as the creative industries.

The artists did not subscribe to the stereotype of the bohemian artist but instead embraced the commercial values of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the artists placed being entrepreneurial, being persistent in the face of difficulty and good organizational skills above being talented, which demonstrates a detachment from the traditional concept of talent as a gift of extraordinary nature. Assuming the role of mentors, the artist showcased their passion for self-development and their profession. The emphasis of values and personal qualities as a means to successful art career demonstrates that the artists have adopted the entrepreneurial mindset of one being in charge of their own career. A conception of self as a digital media entrepreneur that blends creative-artistic elements with a passionate form of cultural entrepreneurship that they uphold and sustain through narrative identity work on YouTube.

This study was limited due to the lack of research on the YouTube art community and the lack of a designated category for art content on the platform. Furthermore, there is no official information about how the YouTube algorithm works and even research exploring it in depth is partially based on speculation, which posed challenges for sampling.

Future research can benefit from examining the artist's mediatized identity across multiple social media platforms to gain insight into how consistent the entrepreneurial identity of artists is across different media. Based on the finding that artists assumed a mentor role to their audience, it would also be interesting for following studies to explore the connection between the artistic profession and vocational work.

7. APPENDIX

Table 1.

Full list of creators and videos used for the analysis

Channel name	№	Video name	Length
Skech Art	1.1	UNBOXING GOLD PLAY BUTTON THAT YOUTUBE SENT ME!	5:23
Kirsty Partridge Art	2.1	THIS HOLDS YOU BACK...BIG Beginner Artist Mistake!	10:41
	2.2	15 Ways to Make MONEY as an Artist	18:51
	2.3	TURNING ART INTO A CAREER- How I make $250K/ Year	12:38
Happy D. Artist	3.1	HOW TO MAKE AN ONLINE SHOP + WEBSITE (for artists) 🖼️ Beginner's Tutorial	16:00
	3.2	My issues with guilt, comparison, and stress.	16:01
	3.3	TALENT VS. HARD WORK 🖤 Gouache Painting Time Lapse	10:03
	3.4	5 SECRETS TO A GOOD WORK ETHIC 🎨 Oil Painting Time Lapse	13:36
Anca Pora Illustration	4.1	5 THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT BECOMING AN ILLUSTRATOR	TERRARIUM SPEEDPAINTING	5:26
	4.2	STUDIO VLOG 03	PAINTING CLIENT WORK, TAKING A DAY OFF	13:46
	4.3	STUDIO VLOG 02	PACKING FOR A DESIGN FAIR & DOING A BLIND DRAWING	7:41
	4.4	STUDIO VLOG 01	PATREON LAUNCH, LANDSCAPES AND CLAY PINS	10:38
	4.5	HOW TO BALANCE YOUTUBE AND A FULL TIME JOB	POSCA MUSHROOM PATTERN	6:42
struthless	5.1	Advice for people who feel like their art isn't unique	10:19
	5.2	The drawing advice that changed my life	10:06
	5.3	ADVICE FOR CREATIVES: 7 Life Lessons I've Learned from 2019 so far	13:46
Creepshow art	6.1	Twitch Artist RUINS His Career In Under 2 Minutes! My Reaction	12:45
	6.2	BluePotionCo: Tracing isn't a talent	18:40
Katnipp	7.1	10 TIPS FOR SELLING ON ETSY	17:55
	7.2	I'm On Patreon WAHOO!	4:42
	7.3	Running Multiple Etsy Businesses	My Experience & Failure	15:15
	7.4	HOW I ILLUSTRATED A CHILDRENS BOOK	14:53
	7.5	SELLING: CRAFT FAIR VS CONVENTIONS	18:07
	7.6	No Support from Family or friends & what to do about it 💪	Creative Entrepreneur	20:27
	7.7	PLAN WITH ME ✏️ ~ Reflecting on 2019 & Goals for 2020	19:01
Savvy Painter	8.1	Special Q&A: Navigating Art Competitions, Argentina Update, and Productivity Tips, and more!	21:21

Emma Carpenter - Illustration Journey	9.1	ART CHAT | Too LATE For A Creative Career? - Story Time	12:44
	9.3	I Quit My Day Job ~ Following My Freelance Illustration Dream	14:01
	9.4	Pros + Cons of Print On Demand ~ For Artists	11:16
Frecklefox Illustrations	10.1	Meet the Artist - 25 facts about me	11:16
Matthew Dobrich Illustration	11.1	Overcoming Art Block	22:09
	11.1	Are you a lazy artist?	16:00
Paint Coach	12.1	PAINT TALK: Do you need art school?	18:46
	12.2	PAINT TALK: What to be aware of when learning to paint from YouTube	11:40
	12.3	Oil Painting Studio Tour 2020	7:08

Table 2.

Coding table for the thematic analysis

Selective codes	Axial codes	Definition	Frequency
Logistics of running and art business	Art Entrepreneurship: Ins and outs of running an art business	Describing how they personally go about organizing their work process in terms of creating artwork, managing production and delivery.	39
	Art Entrepreneurship: Digital entrepreneurship - Platforms	Using digital platforms as a means of monetizing their art, finding work or selling products.	31
	Art Entrepreneurship: Growth and Development	The artists discuss their development path, plans for development, or give advice about how to develop as an artist/entrepreneur	30
	Art Entrepreneurship: Hardships	The artists discuss difficult aspects or moments from their artistic career	28
	Art Entrepreneurship: Digital entrepreneurship - Social Media	Using social media to attract an audience, build a community and market their products.	23
	Community and Networking: Seeking community for artistic development	Seeking contact with other artists or likeminded individuals to trade experience about developing artistic skills.	3
	Community and Networking: Seeking community for entrepreneurial development	Seeking contact with other artists or likeminded individuals to trade experience about becoming better entrepreneurs.	9
Motivations for entrepreneurship	Motivation for Entrepreneurship: Income	Being motivated to be an entrepreneur and develop to earn an income.	16

	Motivation for Entrepreneurship: Art as a Career	Being an entrepreneur to be able to make art as a career.	13
	Motivation for Entrepreneurship: Empowering others	Producing content that helps motivate others to improve art and entrepreneurship skills (tutorials, instructional videos, podcasts, courses, etc.)	10
	Motivation for Entrepreneurship: Independence	Seeking financial independence or independence from standard corporate work arrangements	10
Qualities and values of art entrepreneurs	Values: Education and Learning - Developing as an artist	Seeking out education and learning tools that can help develop one's artistic talent. Being encouraged to develop artistic skills.	45
	Value: Personal quality -Being organized in your work	Artists talk about showing consistency, good self-management skills and planning in one's work.	35
	Values: Education and Learning - Developing as an Entrepreneur	Seeking out education and learning tools that can help develop one's entrepreneurial skills.	30
	Value: Supporting other artists	Showing support or respect to other artists and their work	17
	Value: Personal quality - Perseverance	Artists discuss persevering in the face of difficult circumstances, being resilient and not giving up	16
	Values: Education and Learning: Drawing inspiration or learning from others	Talking about learning or drawing inspiration from other entrepreneurs/artists, giving other artists/entrepreneurs as example	12

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