

Between the cracks

The genre-making capacity of governmental funding and its effects on
the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists
in the Netherlands

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Master Thesis

13th of June, 2023

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the ways in which governmental funding affects the artistic careers and working experiences of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands. Given the lack of scholarly research on interdisciplinarity and its intersection with state-driven austerity within the Dutch cultural sector, I trace the insidious ways in which state funding is profoundly changing how artists relate to the art field, their practices, and themselves, teasing out its disciplinary effect on genre as an instrument of neoliberal ideology. Drawing on interviews with Netherlands-based emerging interdisciplinary artists, I map out how austerity politics and increasing professionalisation of the Dutch cultural sector condition interdisciplinary artists to a life of precariousness. Notably, I foreground issues around the intersection of interdisciplinarity and funding, revealing how experiences of austerity are not universal. Rather, I bring to the fore discrepancies stemming from contrasting perspectives of governmental funding as a normative instrument that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production, namely, in terms of genre. I tease out two clusters of interdisciplinary artists, enacting different notions of interdisciplinarity: The lingering romantic artists, committed to 'real' interdisciplinary practice; and the new ideal artists, endorsing the state-prescribed progressive language of new media as synonymous with interdisciplinarity. Crucially, my discussion highlights how state-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity endorse neoliberalism's focus on progress and technological innovation. Challenging the universalist view of cultural workers as ideal entrepreneurial subjects, my discussion of emerging interdisciplinary artists' archetypes ties in with broader debates beyond the field of sociology of arts and culture on the rise of a new model of ideal worker. Most crucially, I foreground the 'new ideal artist' as a new model of ideal worker, linking these debates to one around aesthetics. That is, I reveal how this archetype is prototyping frameworks for cementing neoliberalism's rule over the production of culture across disciplines and fields. Moving beyond the narrow view of austerity solely as an economic phenomenon, this paper expands the debate on subjectivities under neoliberal ideology, contributes to growing literature on archetypes of post-welfare ideal worker, and specifically advances understandings about cultural production and its regulation.

KEYWORDS: Precariousness, creative work, funding, genre, interdisciplinarity

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1. Introduction

How does governmental funding affect the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands? Bygone is the era of the welfare state of the 1950s, '60s, and '70s, when cultural workers and institutions throughout the Netherlands could rely on public financing as their primary source of support (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018). In 2010, the ascendancy to power of Mark Rutte's conservative-liberal political party, VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid or People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), marked the culmination of the long-undergoing entrepreneurial transformation of the field of arts and culture, initiated by Wim Kok's coalition government in 1994. Draconian budget cuts, totalling €632 million, forced many cultural institutions to permanently shut their doors or lay off innumerable artists, ensuing what the Secretary General of the Culture Council Jeoren Bartelse would later describe as a massacre (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018; Hagood & Fellow, 2016; Siegal, 2013). In addition to this austerity, the Dutch government put into effect policy measures encouraging the involvement of private actors in and the professionalisation of cultural sector, profoundly changing the frameworks and structures that had thus far regulated it (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018). Crucially, criteria relating to cultural entrepreneurship and governance were unprecedentedly equated to criteria on artistic quality or audience reach, in State Secretary Halbe Zijlstra's 2011 policy brief *More than Quality: A New Vision of Cultural Policy* (Meer dan kwaliteit: een nieuwe visie voor cultuurbeleid) (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.).

The renewed entrepreneurial rationality imposed by Mark Rutte's government, in 2010, exacerbated the already precarious working and living conditions of artists – as revealed by a 2016 study conducted by the Social and Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad) and the Council for Culture, that highlighted a significant percentage of Dutch artists struggling to sustain themselves solely through their practices. The situation may be even more alarming for young artists, as nearly all intermediary institutions that served as a link between art schools and the professional sphere vanished during the 2010s' aggressive budget cuts (Siegal, 2013). Still, and in line with arguments that the distribution of resources across sub-genres of the cultural sector is skewed (Been, Wijngaarden and Loots, 2013), the lack of state funding schemes targeting interdisciplinary practices raises additional concerns regarding emerging interdisciplinary artists' experiences of precarity – who appear to be marginalised within a system that discards unboundedness and ambiguity (Alexander, 2018). As such, this

study into the effects of governmental funding on the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands entails get social relevance, exploring the pervasive, disciplinary effect of governmental funding on genre and expanding our knowledge of cultural production and its regulation. Moreover, in light of research arguing that cultural workers are prototyping new models of post-welfare labour (McRobbie, 2016), this study's focus on a cohort that is particularly vulnerable to austerity politics (Fillis, Lee, & Fraser, 2022) – and may, therefore, be paving the way for hyper precarious and hyper constrained models of labour – presents itself as socially relevant, unveiling potential futures of work across sectors.

The state-driven entrepreneurial transformation of the field of cultural production also brings forth questions concerning tensions between art and business. Scholars have examined these with regards to models for production organisation (Davis & Scase, 2000), management styles (Howkins, 2001, de Monthoux, 2004), cultural policies (Jeffcut & Pratt, 2002), cultural organisations (Alexander, 2018), and cultural workers (Kolbe, 2022; Scharff, 2016; Loacker, 2013, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010). However, despite notable exceptions (Kolbe, 2022; Saha 2013), less attention has been devoted to exploring the disciplinary effects of state funding – which increasingly features neoliberal, or commercial, logics (Alexander, 2018; McRobbie, 2016; Locaker, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007) – on genre and the working lives of artists. The scarce scholarly focus on this subject is particularly startling in light of arguments that the narrative of entrepreneurship and productivity endorsed by neoliberalism poses serious risks to artistic motivation, the quality and diversity of artistic production, and pushes workers to their breaking point (Peters & Roose, 2022; Ashton, 2021; Saha, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). Moreover, in relation to this latter point, questions arise with regard to the types of genres and the models of creative labour promoted by state funding. This paper thus represents a valuable contribution to debates around individual action in the context of financialised neoliberalism in four key ways. First, it narrows a gap in literature regarding the genre-making capacity of state funding. Second, it explores the contours of interdisciplinary artists and arts practices and their relation to austerity within the cultural sector. Third, it adds to an expanding body of literature on experiences of entrepreneurial subjectification. Lastly, pursuing the argument that cultural workers are the prime test-subjects of neoliberalism (McRobbie, 2016), this study adds to broader debates beyond the field of sociology of arts and culture around the emergence of new archetypes of ideal worker (de Keere & Cescon, 2023).

This paper is structured as follows: Chapter two sheds light upon the relationship between the domain of restricted cultural production and the state, revealing how the latter is changing how artists relate to the art world (Alexander, 2018; Bourdieu, 1984, 1993; Becker, 1982), their practices (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007) and themselves (Loacker, 2013); foregrounds the genre-making capacity of state funding as an instrument of neoliberal ideology (Kolbe, 2022; Saha, 2013); explores the self within neoliberal ideology (Scharff, 2014; 2016; 2018) and the use of creativity for conditioning individuals to a future of work devoid of social amenities (McRobbie, 2016), in relation to the emergence of a new archetype of ideal worker (de Keere & Cescon, 2023); and, lastly, introduces cultural policy developments in the Netherlands, as well as opens pathways for discussion around the intersection of interdisciplinarity and funding within the cultural sector. Chapter three positions the reader regarding this paper's ontological and epistemological stance, and provides a detailed account of all methodological choices. Specifically, this study builds on data collected via ten semi-structured qualitative interviews with emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands, and subjected to thematic analysis. It further details the operationalisation of the concept artistic careers into analogous measuring instruments, – namely, 'perceptions of work situations', 'career aims', 'work motivations', 'strategies of navigation', and 'enactment of work-life boundaries' – and covers issues around ethics and positionality. Discussing the analysis of the data, chapter four brings to the fore the issue of the normalisation of precariousness within the Dutch cultural sector, and details two archetypes of emerging interdisciplinary artists as engendered by diverging perspectives of the normative role of state funding. Lastly, chapter five synthesises the discussions from the preceding chapter, giving particular emphasis to the genre-making capacity of governmental funding and this paper's relevance for broader debates around the emergence of new archetypes of ideal worker; discusses limitations in the data; and suggests avenues for future research, notably, questions about the interplay of collaborative work and the notions of authorship and ownership.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. The Field of Cultural Production

Any inquiry into the impacts of governmental funding on the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists must begin by reviewing the existing literature on the forces that shape the field of cultural production. Pierre Bourdieu's influential writings on the artistic field, ruled by autonomous versus heteronomous principles of legitimacy, and the theory of practice (Bourdieu, 1977; 1980; 1984; 1993), remain as one of the most significant bodies of work in research on cultural production – serving as an integral part of the lexicon of many sociologists (Peters & Roose, 2019; Alexander, 2018; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007). Bourdieu conceives the field of cultural production as a site of perpetual contestation for legitimacy, structured around a dichotomous relation between the autonomous field of restricted production and the heteronomous field of large-scale production (Bourdieu, 1993, p.52). The principle of autonomy is the prevailing force within the field of restricted production, advocating an “art for art’s sake” (Bourdieu, 1984, p.40) eschewed of commercial interests. Artists within the autonomous pole deny external measures of success and are singularly concerned with distinction or prestige awarded by their peers, adhering to the maxim “producers produce for other producers” (Bourdieu, 1993, p.39). Contrastingly, the legitimacy of cultural products under the heteronomous principle arises from the relationship with the audience (Bourdieu, 1993, p.46). That is, artists within the heteronomous pole are concerned with achieving commercial success by catering to mass-audiences, and prioritizing measures such as sales and audience attendance (Bourdieu, 1993, p.38).

As Bourdieu points out, the degree to which actors hold the power to establish and enact their “own criteria for the production and evaluation of their products” (1993, p.115) defines the level of autonomy of a field. This convoluted configuration of the field of cultural production can be outlined by a negative correlation between symbolic and economic profit: Rising economic profit produces diminishing returns of symbolic profit (Bourdieu, 1993, p.48). As such, according to Bourdieu, the potential for heteronomy in the field of restricted cultural production is bound to market forces single-handedly. The author fails to explore the state as a force shaping the field of cultural production, neglecting his own argument that the artistic field is intertwined with the field of power (1993, p.37) and disregarding the mechanisms through which the state may be enforcing its own logic about genre conventions and ascriptions of cultural value. Specifically, Bourdieu does not examine the ways

governmental funding may enact a normative capacity, shaping the forms, styles, and themes pertaining to different genres and constraining the working conditions of artists.

2.2. Heteronomy and the State

In *Art Worlds*, another seminal piece of literature of sociology of arts and culture, Howard S. Becker posits the state as a mighty artworld actor (1982, p.125-191). According to him, the state shapes the production and distribution of cultural products through legal frameworks that constrain the actions of artists, audiences, distributors, and all those involved in the making of cultural products (1982, p.125). Foreshadowing others' research pursuits, the author contends that the actions of the state are not innocuous, but rather serve to advance its agenda of what is to be deemed as art, the worth of particular genres, and the reputations of individual artists (1982, p.166). The state thus emerges as a disciplinary entity that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production through the allocation of material and symbolic resources.

Theoretically underpinned by Bourdieu's writings, Victoria Alexander pursues the claims of the two authors nearly four decades later. In her study of the supported arts sector in the United Kingdom (2018), the author echoes Becker (1982, p.125), arguing that the state shapes the artistic field through frameworks, rooted in commercial logics, that regulate access to material and symbolic resources, despite its officially non-interventionist stance characteristic of neoliberal governments (Alexander, 2018, p.25). Her analysis demonstrates how the state-led neoliberal transformation of the field of restricted production is imposing a business logic that directly counters the art for art's sake ethos (Alexander, 2018, p.24). That is, how intensifying austerity politics and increasing professionalisation and privatisation of the cultural sector coerce artists, and arts organizations, into adopting business practices and instruments that undermine its autonomy, in tandem with but operating separately from market forces (Alexander, 2018, p.28-30). In conjunction with Becker's conception of the state as a disciplinary entity that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production, particularly in terms of artistic genres, through resources allocation (1982, p.166), Alexander's analysis raises questions regarding the impact of the state's endorsement of business logics, or neoliberal values, on genre conventions. Given the many parallels that can be drawn between the cultural policies of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, as it will be further illustrated in 2.6, the present study explores how the Dutch state's adoption of neoliberalism affects interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary artists.

In line with Alexander's study (2018), other scholars have demonstrated the pervasive implications of the propagation of neoliberal values for arts organizations. Wu (2000) shows how corporate sponsorship prompted the emergence of corporate logos in cultural institutions and the instrumentalization of art for marketing intents; Macdonald (2002) argues that museums marketing strategies in the 1980s directly catered to governmental imperatives to boost attendance figures; and, Peters and Roose (2022) illustrate how independent bodies administering tax money in the form of grants are more likely to support successful artists, engendering a "pronounced Matthew Effect" (2022, p.1) that poses serious threats to the diversity of artistic production and gates access to emerging artists. Less scholarly attention has, however, been devoted to the repercussions of the diffusion of neoliberalism for individuals though many in the field of cultural production reject the ideology, raising questions about the ways in which social actors negotiate competing values and discourses (West & Smith, 2005; Bourdieu, Haacke, & Johnson 1995).

2.3. Neoliberalism and the Individual

Doris Eikhof and Axel Haunschild's study of German theatre production (2007) sheds light on the significant and enduring consequences of the clash between neoliberal ideology and art/creativity for individuals. The authors contend that neoliberalism is undermining "the very resources which creative production depends" on (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.524), posing serious threats to artistic motivation. Their analysis takes Bourdieu's understanding of logics of practice as a wider theoretical framework (1977; 1980). Namely, that internally coherent collections of rules and tenets particular to various symbolic systems, i.e., fields, structure and direct "the totality of an agent's thoughts, perceptions, and actions" (Bourdieu, 1977, p.109-110) as they strive to maintain or improve their (dis)position within a given field. In line with Bourdieu's theory of practice, Eikhof and Haunschild observe that economic logics of practice – namely, market orientation, hyper-productivity, self-economisation, and competitiveness – are superseding artistic logics of practice – art for art's sake, rejection of external validation, and incommensurability – as guiding principles for creative action (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529-535), threatening to weaken or even extinguish artistic drive. Similarly, others have argued that the intrinsic value of creative work is increasingly becoming subject to inflation (McRobbie, 2016), with artists demonstrating rising levels of self-management and -economisation (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022; McRobbie, 2016) and market-orientation (Peters & Roose, 2019).

The Bourdieusian theoretical framework offers valuable insights into how the diffusion of neoliberal ideology – entailing the tightening of evaluation criteria, adoption of business practices and instruments, and emphasis on quantifiable outputs (Alexander, 2018) – coupled with rising economic instability led to the undermining of artistic values. However, it leaves unanswered questions about the insidious mechanisms through which this transformation is happening and psychic life under conditions of financialised neoliberalism (Scharff, 2014; 2016; Layton, 2013). Indeed, scholars have more recently called for research that moves beyond the long-established art-commerce dichotomy (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022; Haynes & Marshall, 2018), as entrepreneurial tasks become increasingly inseparable from artistic work (Haynes & Marshall, 2018; Klein, Meier, & Powers, 2017; Hughes et al., 2016; Hennekam & Bennett, 2016) and disrupt conventional beliefs about ‘selling out’.

2.4. Funding Governmentalities and the Entrepreneurial Subject

Michel Foucault’s writings, and the work of others in the Foucauldian tradition, offer insights into the ways neoliberalism affects social life generally and cultural production more specifically, and advances its own agenda. In his lectures at the Collège de France, in the 1970s, Foucault coins the term governmentality to describe power as a productive force that is exerted not through coercive means, but rather embedded through discourses into social life, shaping the beliefs and behaviours of individuals and groups (Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991). Building on Foucauldian ideas of discourse, scholars have explored how the notion of governmentality plays out within the artistic field to shape the production and circulation of cultural products (Kolbe, 2022; Saha, 2013). Kristina Kolbe’s study centring UK-based art professionals teases out how economic inequality intertwines with the inner-workings of the cultural sector, and the ways in which it shapes the “organisational and curatorial practices” of the latter (2022, p.259). Remarkably, her analysis brings to the fore how austerity politics have a standardising effect on curation, pushing arts organisations to programme ready-to-consume, neatly packaged exhibitions in their pursuit of ‘the next big hit’ (Kolbe, 2022, p.261-262). This leads to a decrease of artistic offers, as “the variety and the diversity of programming” (2022, p.261) are sacrificed in favour curatorial practices that cater to white middle-class audiences. Financing thereby exercises a disciplinary capacity, dictating the types of artistic genres and narratives that are programmed and created (Kolbe, 2022, p.626). Similarly, Anamik Saha’s study of the British Asian theatre company, Rasa Productions, illustrates how the current neoliberalism governs and subsumes narratives with

disruptive potential through funding governmentalities endorsing its agenda (2013). Specifically, Saha shows how racialising funding governmentalities, i.e., structures and practices of financialised support hinging on a sense of profound racial and ethnic difference, discursively steered Rasa Productions into reproducing stereotypical depictions of Asianness “via a form of self-discipline” (2013, p.25) – despite the theatre company being co-managed by a South Asian.

Anamik Saha’s use of the term “self-discipline” (2013, p.25) hints at another of Foucault’s seminal contributions to the field of sociology. In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, the French author argues that the advent of neoliberal policies and practices has profoundly altered the ways in which power operates, such that it presently extends beyond the presumed political and economic domains into all structures and practices of contemporary life (Foucault, 1978/2008). That is, neoliberal market principles and rationalities pervade virtually all social domains as, for example, health, culture, and education. This transformation entails a shift away from the traditional relationship between the state and the individual, that hinged on state intervention and centralized power, toward a system that emphasizes individual freedom, decentralization, and entrepreneurialism (Foucault, 1978/2008). Former understandings about collective welfare are thereby replaced by a focus on self-governance and self-responsibility, that urges individuals to relate to themselves as enterprises (Foucault, 1978/2008).

Grounded in Foucauldian tradition, Bernadette Loacker’s study of the independent Austrian theatre scene explores the far-reaching consequences of the situating of art professionals as enterprises, driven by the neoliberal values within contemporary cultural policies (2013, p.130) – namely, self-autonomy and self-governance, market-orientation and self-marketing, rivalry and continuous self-assessment, hyper-productivity and flexibility, and individualization (Loacker, 2013, p.128-129). According to the author, these discursively reposition artists as culturpreneurs (Loacker, 2013, p.130), altering how they relate to their practices, and perceive the art field (Loacker, 2013, p.131-138). In line with findings presented above (McRobbie, 2016; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007), the artists in Loacker’s sample evidence an emphasis on efficiency, flexibility, self-marketing, self-autonomy, and self-governance (2013, p.134) and refrain from collectively organizing themselves to demand better working conditions, as prescribed by the maxim of individualization (2013, p.135-136). The author identifies “a certain mythological connection between creativity and

poverty” (Loacker, 2013, p.137) – which is, in turn, reinforced by neoliberal governmental policies – rooted in the belief that precarious and under remunerated working conditions are the price to pay for autonomy, self-determination, and non-repetitive work. Artistic logics, Loacker argues, thus construct artists as particularly susceptible to exploitation, prompting them to endorse and even co-create their tenuous conditions of being (2013, p.140). Still, remarkably, the author suggests that the discursive reimagining of artists as culturpreneurs has implications for the aesthetic dimension of cultural production, subsuming the heterogeneity of artistic genres (Loacker, 2013, p.128). Loacker’s analysis echoes the findings of Hesmondhalgh and Baker, who likewise identified a focus on flexibility (2010, p.8-9), self-autonomy and self-governance (2010, p.11), and efficiency (2010, p.12); a disregard of unions as a means to improve working conditions (2010, p.12); and a proclivity for self-exploitation brought about a pursuit for self-actualisation (2010, p.12-13), among workers of three cultural industries. Nonetheless, this body of work leaves unanswered questions about the psychic life of the culturpreneur.

Christina Scharff’s writings offer additional valuable insights into the contours of the self under neoliberalism (2014; 2016; 2018). Building on other writers in the Foucauldian tradition (Davies; 2014; Layton, 2010; McNay, 2009; Rose, 1992), Scharff’s study with over 60 young female classical musicians maps out 10 distinct contours of entrepreneurial subjectivity (Scharff, 2016). Unsurprisingly, the self as business appears as a foundational contour of entrepreneurial subjectivity (Scharff, 2016, p.111-112). The entrepreneurial subject relates to itself as an enterprise, fabricating a distance from itself that enables perpetual self-improvement (Scharff, 2016, p.112). Distinct features, such as age, gender, and ethnicity, are self-exploited as “unique selling point[s]” (Scharff, 2016, p.111), and no dimension of the self – mental, physical, and spiritual – is overlooked in the continuous quest for optimization (Scharff, 2016, p.112). This unceasing pursuit for self-improvement implies a hyper-productive orientation towards the use of time, hinting to the next contour of entrepreneurial subjectivity, namely, that of being “constantly active and still lacking time” (Scharff, 2016, p.112). The entrepreneurial subject is “always at it” (Scharff, 2016, p.112), engaged in constant activity, but feels that it lacks time as all domains of life must be worked upon. Following the argument that positive thinking is entangled with the “logic of neoliberal subjectification” (Binkley, 2011, p.372), Scharff identifies “embracing risks, learning from knock-backs and staying positive” (Scharff, 2016, p.113) as the next contour of entrepreneurial subjectivity. Cultural workers embrace risks like enterprises, justifying such

behaviour on the account of ‘doing what they love’. Negative experiences are dismissed; rather, the entrepreneurial subject maintains a positive attitude, understanding “knock-backs ... as learning experiences” (Scharff, 2016, p.113). Foreshadowing her own argument elsewhere (2018), Scharff points out the absence of emotional states such as anger, insecurity, despair and dissatisfaction as prompted by the depoliticising effects of the ‘always positive mindset’, that serves neoliberalism through its disavowal of systemic issues (Scharff, 2016, p.113).

Accordingly, Scharff notes that cultural workers predominantly situate their struggles in the past and (re)construct their entrepreneurial selves as resilient in face of adversity by recounting tales of past challenges (Scharff, 2016, p.114). This emphasis on individual empowerment characteristic of the survivor discourse, again, serves neoliberalism by shrugging off any questions of broader socio-political issues (Scharff, 2016, p.114). Linked to the survivor discourse, the entrepreneurial self repudiates vulnerability and assumes sole responsibility in case of failure, hinging its ability to overcome challenges on “appropriate self-management” (Scharff, 2016, p.115). Nonetheless, Scharff notes that cultural workers periodically draw on discourses besides entrepreneurial ones, specifically when discussing the emotional vulnerabilities that come with pursuing a profession so ‘close to their heart’ (Scharff, 2016, p.115). Entrepreneurial repertoires of value and meaning are thereby negotiated with other discourses around artistic labour, that may validate, undermine or contest the entrepreneurial rhetoric (Scharff, 2016, p.115). Despite negotiating competing discourses, Scharff observes that the cultural workers’ discourses almost never bring forth systemic inequalities (Scharff, 2016, p.115-116). This disarticulation of structural inequalities, the author argues, implies that impetuses for change are “turned inwards” (Scharff, 2016, p.116), rather than at socio-political domains. Analogous to the discussion of emotional vulnerabilities, cultural workers cease their performance of entrepreneurial subjectivity when discussing the precarity prevalent in the field, openly expressing feelings of anxiety, doubt, and insecurity (Scharff, 2016, p.116-117). Scharff remarks that, again, discourses expressing anger or frustration in response to the precarious working conditions are absent (2016, p.116).

Notably, the author offers an alternative reading on the issue of competition, namely, that of “competing with the self” (Scharff, 2016, p.117). Scharff notes that cultural workers’ discourses reject competition, instead focusing on their individuality. While this could entail

another interruption in the expression of entrepreneurial subjectivity, the author posits that the emphasis on individuality indicates that competition is targeted inwardly under neoliberalism (Scharff, 2016, p.117). Thus, the entrepreneurial subject competes with its self, internalizing competition rather than directing it toward others (Scharff, 2016, p.117). This assimilation of competition implies a more profound form of subjugation, where insidious power dynamics lead individuals to perpetually compete against themselves in a rigged game (Scharff, 2016, p.118). The last contour of entrepreneurial subjectivity as identified by Scharff addresses the issue of boundary work. By establishing boundaries between themselves as hard working and others as lazy, cultural workers constitute their selves as entrepreneurial (Scharff, 2016, p.119). This, the author highlights, implies the dismissal of and disregard for those whose performances are deemed unsatisfactory (Scharff, 2016, p.119).

Scharff's study with young female cultural workers introduces a comprehensive theoretical framework on entrepreneurial subjectivity, revealing the far-reaching repercussions of neoliberalism for individuals. Still, the author's discussion can be complemented by Daniel Ashton's research on the implications of the increasing significance of entrepreneurialism for British cultural organisations and workers (2021). Specifically, the notion of emotional labour as the hidden and under recognised practices associated with becoming entrepreneurial, introduced by Ashton, shines light on how the construction of entrepreneurial subjectivities happens at the cost of workers, leading many to "a breaking point", i.e., burning out (Ashton, 2021, p.9). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that Scharff's analysis drawing from interviews with classical musicians is rooted in a universalist conception of cultural workers as ideal entrepreneurial subjects, disregarding the ways in which genre and ascriptions of cultural value may intersect with experiences of entrepreneurial subjectification and, subsequently, engender distinct repertoires of ideal entrepreneurial subject. That is, how the interplay of austerity politics and funding governmentalities, imbued with commercial logics, may produce varied experiences of precariousness among workers across different sub-genres of the cultural sector, consequently yielding diverging post-welfare models and meanings of work.

2.5. The New Ideal Worker(s)

In *Be Creative: Making a Living in the New Culture Industries* (2016), Angela McRobbie extends the argument that cultural workers are the ideal entrepreneurial subjects, postulating

that the creative workforce is prototyping new forms of highly-flexible and highly-precarious post-welfare labour. Against the backdrop of the neoliberal transformation of the British cultural sector prompted by Blair's government, McRobbie argues that the notion of creativity has been appropriated by neoliberalism to create an apparatus for conditioning individuals to a future of work devoid of the social amenities (2016, p.81-90). The self-fulfilment of being creative is framed as the allegedly stimulating compensation for work without social benefits or protection (McRobbie, 2016, p.52); more even so, creativity seems to discard the 'problematic' notion of work altogether. In this context, the cultural sector is conceived to be the optimal site for experimenting with new modes of post-welfare governmentalities, with artists serving as prime test-subjects due to their susceptibility to exploitation brought about by the pursuit for self-actualisation and devotion to passionate work (McRobbie, 2016, p.91). The artist, in McRobbie's view, thus functions as a sort-of 'canary in the coal mine', providing models for what short-term and underpaid work could look like (McRobbie, 2016, p.91).

McRobbie's discussion ties in with academic debates outside of the field of sociology of arts and culture around the emergence of a new model of ideal worker (de Keere & Cescon, 2023; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015). Echoing the argument that creativity and passion are being instrumentalised by neoliberalist policies to enforce a labour reform (McRobbie, 2016), de Keere and Cescon's research on multinational organizations' employees testimonials explores how new types of ideal worker transcend the antithesis between the self and labour to narrow the divide between organizational and individual motivations and solve the issue of alienation from work (2023). In line with Foucauldian tradition, the authors' analysis departs from the understanding that the notion of ideal worker is shaped by the political, social, and organizational discourses prevalent at a given time (2023, p.4-5). De Keere and Cescon open the article by outlining the historical shifts that led to varying ideal worker archetypes. Prior to the 1980s, extended job tenure and intra-organisational mobility, coupled with the strict separation of work and personal life promoted by Fordism, typified employment relations in most industrialised nations (Neely, 2020; Vosko, 2009; DiMaggio, 2001, as cited in de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.4). These contours of labour established the abiding, and reliable white working class "family man looking for lifelong employment and a career within the company" as the ideal worker (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.4).

Historical shifts at the end of the 20th century gave rise to a new type of ideal worker. The expansion of education ensued the arrival of a growing number of highly educated individuals, displaying a disregard for traditional values of duty and obedience, in the labour market (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.4). In combination with this influx of a new generation of workers, an organisational power shift towards investors and shareholders led flexibility and inter-organisational mobility to replace long-term commitment and intra-organisational mobility as primary employment concerns (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.4). Additionally, the end of the 20th century marked the advent of neoliberalism as a political agenda, eroding the influence of labour unions and slashing workers' rights (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.4). These political, social, and organizational shifts pushed workers to prove their value by showcasing their adaptability and ingenuity and undertaking a variety of projects across organisational settings (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.5), subsequently shaping the ideal worker archetype as “an entrepreneurial and self-reliant *homo economicus* [emphasis in the original]” (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.5). However, de Keere and Cescon's analysis takes issue with the universality of the entrepreneurial subject as ideal worker, rather charting three distinct repertoires. The entrepreneur repertoire is defined by a combination of economic drive, pursuit of success and proclivity to embrace risks, with a focus on authenticity, belonging, and well-being (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.13). Risk-taking, pursuing professional success, and meeting challenges are understood to yield not only economic rewards but also psychological benefits, transmuting into issues of well-being (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.13).

The trailblazer repertoire presents the ideal worker as a passionate individual working at the cutting edge of knowledge and committed to improving the world (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14). This repertoire of ideal worker champions ecological and environmental sustainability and advocates for diversity, equality and inclusion, emphasising issues such as racism and empowerment of minority groups (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14). Interestingly, de Keere and Cescon note that diversity, equality and inclusion are formulated not only as matters of moral responsibility, but also as drivers of “innovation and progress” (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.15). Finally, the cosmopolitan repertoire introduces a different depiction of the ideal worker from the commonly presumed entrepreneurial self. Individuals enacting the cosmopolitan repertoire position themselves as multicultural and international, highlighting their knowledge of diverse perspectives and cross-cultural communication skills (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.15). Rather than the focus on individuality and competition typically

associated with the entrepreneurial self, collaboration and community-building across borders are emphasised (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.15-16). In line with this outwards stance, the cosmopolitan archetype has a moral and societal agenda, placing great value on “doing the right thing, giving back to society or helping our communities” (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.16). Thereby, the study by de Keere and Cescon offers a novel take on the notion of the ideal worker, expanding the academic debate on subjectivities under neoliberalism and providing a theoretical framework to investigate the post-welfare models and meanings of creative labour that the interplay of entrepreneurial subjectification, or austerity politics, and genre may engender.

In sum, whether following a Bourdieusian or Foucauldian route to analyse artists’ careers, the state emerges as a disciplinary entity that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production and shapes individual action through legal frameworks to advance its own socio-political agenda (Kolbe, 2022; Alexander, 2018; Scharff, 2014; 2016; 2018; Loacker, 2013; Saha, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Bourdieu, 1993; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Becker, 1982). However, despite notable exceptions (Kolbe, 2022; Saha 2013), scholars have devoted less attention to exploring the disciplinary effects of state funding on genre and on the working lives of artists. Moreover, in light of claims that cultural policies are increasingly imbued with neoliberal, or commercial, logics (Alexander, 2018; McRobbie, 2016; Locaker, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007), questions arise with regard to the types of genres and the models of creative labour promoted by state funding. In this context, interdisciplinary artists emerge as a particularly well suited cohort to investigate how state-led austerity politics and neoliberal transformation of the cultural sector intersect with genre, advancing our understanding of cultural production and its regulation. Namely, as elaborated in sub-section 2.6, the unbound nature of interdisciplinary art practices appears to clash neoliberalism’s emphasis on business logics and preference for clear-cut definitions, positing interdisciplinary artists as less marketable and more susceptible to austerity. In turn, this seemingly hyper precarious (dis)position of interdisciplinary artists within the cultural sector allows to investigate more accurately how state funding imposes genre conventions and constrains the working lives of artists, as this cohort’s struggle for financial resources provides insights into how artists negotiate tensions between art and commerce in attempts to conform to genre norms and ascriptions of cultural value. How does state funding shape genre, what happens to genre conventions when the state endorses neoliberal ideology, and

how does this all impact interdisciplinary artists and art practices are questions explored in the present thesis.

2.6. Setting the Scene

A contextual analysis of the effects of governmental funding on the careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands must be grounded in the existing literature on Dutch cultural policy. The foundations of the Dutch cultural policy can be traced back to the aftermath of World War II (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.14; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). In 1947, the Arts Council was instituted as the central authority coordinating the arts and culture (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.14). From the 1950s onwards, the national government became increasingly preoccupied with policy-making in the field, expanding cultural policy goals to encompass subsidies for artists, welfare concerns, and the legal formalization of artistic freedom (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.15; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). The extension of policy concerns led to a bureaucratisation of the field, reflected in the increasing regulations and rules that started pervading institutions (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.15). As implied in 2.2, similarly to the British cultural policy case, the 1980s observed the institution of a managerial and efficiency-oriented approach to cultural policy (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.17; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). The General Administrative Law Act (Algemene Wet Bestuursrecht), introduced in 1983, cast aside cultural workers as advisors and relegated private individuals to the part of members in boards of cultural organisations, effectively placing the national government as the leading force shaping cultural policy-making (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.17-18). In 1994, Wim Kok's coalition government initiated the entrepreneurial transformation of the cultural field, implementing measures imbued with neoliberal tendencies to increase the privatisation and professionalisation of the cultural sector, and prompt artists and cultural institutions to generate their own funds (Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). This emphasis on cultural governance and entrepreneurialism found its consecration in 1999 with the introduction of the term of cultural entrepreneurship by the Secretary for Culture Van der Ploeg, which incited artists and cultural institutions to align themselves with audiences' demands and leverage business opportunities to broaden their reach (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). Subsequent governments continued and expanded this neoliberal approach to the field; for example, in 2009, following British examples, the institution Culture+Entrepreneurship

(Cultuur+Ondernemen) was integrated into Dutch cultural policy to stimulate the entrepreneurship of cultural workers and institutions (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). These developments culminated in what the Secretary General of the Culture Council Jeoren Bartelse would later describe as a massacre (Siegal, 2013). The rise to power of Mark Rutte's conservative-liberal political party VVD (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid or People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), in 2010, ensued a series of profound changes in the cultural sector (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). Draconian budget cuts, amounting to a total loss of €632 million, forced many cultural institutions to permanently shut their doors or lay off innumerable artists (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26-27; Hagood & Fellow, 2016, p.1; Siegal, 2013). This austerity was accompanied by policy measures encouraging the involvement of private actors in the arts and culture and the professionalisation of the sector (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap, 2009), which aimed to stimulate private donations by facilitating tax benefits for donors (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26-27). Unprecedentedly, criteria relating to cultural entrepreneurship and governance were equated to criteria on artistic quality or audience reach (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.27; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). This emphasis on cultural entrepreneurship was solidified in State Secretary Halbe Zijlstra's 2011 policy brief *More than Quality: A New Vision of Cultural Policy* (Meer dan kwaliteit: een nieuwe visie voor cultuurbeleid), and, subsequently, the Cultural Entrepreneurship Programme (2012- 2016) which, among other measures, repealed the Income Provision for Artists Act (Wet Werk en Inkomen Kunstenaars) (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.28-29; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.).

The renewed entrepreneurial rationality imposed by Mark Rutte's government, in 2010, worsened the already precarious working and living conditions of artists. According to a 2016 study by the Social and Economic Council (Sociaal-Economische Raad) and the Council for Culture, a significant percentage of Dutch artists cannot sustain themselves through their artistic practices. In fact, 42% are self-employed, and countless others juggle short-term work, maintain a 'job on the side', or are dependent on unemployment benefit-schemes (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.29). Additional concerns emerge around young artists, as virtually all intermediary art institutions that bridged the gap between art academies and the professional world disappeared during the 2010s' aggressive budget cuts (Siegal, 2013). Still, this grim picture appears to be even more bleak in relation to interdisciplinary artists. No

schematic reviews of the availability of governmental funding for interdisciplinary practices or artists in the Netherlands were found. Nonetheless, in line with Been, Wijngaarden, and Loots' suggestion that the distribution of financial resources across sub-genres of the cultural sector is skewed (2023, p.1), a careful browse through the websites of the Dutch national arts funding bodies – namely, Performing Arts Fund (Fonds Podiumkunsten), Creative Industries Fund (Stimulerend Creatieve Industrie), Mondriaan Fund (Mondriaan Fonds), Dutch Foundation for Literature (Nederlands Letterenfonds), and Netherlands Film Fund (Nederlands Filmfonds) – suggests that interdisciplinary artists have been relegated to the periphery of the Dutch cultural sector by a system that prioritizes clear-cut definitions and metrics over the unboundedness and ambiguity characteristic of interdisciplinarity. In fact, out of the dozens of funding schemes and grant programs made available by these institutions for artists in the Netherlands, virtually none target interdisciplinary arts practices.

In light of the lack of research on interdisciplinary arts funding, the quantitative study of Lindell Bromham, Russel Dinnage and Xia Hua on funding success rates of interdisciplinary research projects offers insights into how the intersection of interdisciplinarity and financing may play out in the cultural sector (2023). The authors find a consistent negative correlation between interdisciplinarity and funding success, i.e., interdisciplinary research projects “have lower funding success rates”, in Australia (Bromham, Dinnage, & Hua, 2023, p.686). Bromham, Dinnage and Hua attributed this to difficulties in evaluating the quality of interdisciplinary research proposals due to the a poor match between reviewers' expertise and the topics investigated (2023, p.685), as well as funding criteria that tend to favour single-discipline projects (2023, p.686). Similarly, others recognised a variety of issues with pursuing interdisciplinary scholarship (Rafols, Leydesdorff, O'Hare, Nightingale, & Stirling, 2012, p.1; Pfirman & Martin, 2010, p.387-400; Laudel, 2006, p.57). This body of work, coupled with Been, Wijngaarden, and Loots' suggestion (2023), disputes Hesmondhalgh and Baker's findings that “found no evidence that particular industries or genres” (2010, p.17) produce varied experiences of austerity, positioning the present research as ever-more timely. How do emerging interdisciplinary artists experience this apparent lack of funding schemes targeting their practices, and what strategies do they deploy in their struggle for financial resources, are questions explored in the present study.

3. Research Design

3.1. Methodology

The present research design was guided by the question: How does governmental funding affect the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands? Qualitative research surfaced as the most fitting methodology in light of this study's focus on the micro-level of social reality (Bryman, 2012, p.408), i.e., the experiences and emotional responses of interdisciplinary artists within the Dutch cultural sector (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, p.18). Specifically, its commitment to understanding social action empathetically, characteristic of the interpretivist epistemology (Bryman, 2012, p.28), and investigating phenomena and their categories as continuously accomplished by social actors, distinctive of the constructionist ontology (Bryman, 2012, p.34-35), facilitated grounded research into how emerging interdisciplinary artists relate their careers, narrate their experiences with governmental funding, and discern those experiences. This study thus adopted an anti-positivist position and pursued inductive reasoning to unveil dimensions of a phenomenon not amenable to observation (Bryman, 2012, p.30). Namely, a contextual understanding of emerging interdisciplinary artists' views and beliefs about and attitudes towards governmental funding, and the strategies deployed by them to navigate the constraints of a neoliberal system that values precise categorizations over the expansive nature of interdisciplinarity in their pursuit of resources and cultural consecration (Lamont & Swidler, 2014, p.160; Glass, 2005, p.2).

The study builds on data collected through semi-structured qualitative interviews. Semi-structured interviews provided a flexible framework for questioning that enabled me to depart from the interview guide and follow the interviewees' lead, giving research participants the opportunity to pursue their topics of interest (Bryman, 2012, p.471). This leeway provided by the semi-structured interview method facilitated an inquiry grounded in the localized conditions shaping the interviewees' artistic careers and lives, answering Everts, Hitters and Berkers' call for inductive research that takes into account the heterogeneity of workers' experiences in the cultural sector (2021, p.111). Semi-structured qualitative interviews likewise demonstrated to be the most suitable method to investigate the interviewees' sense of where they stand in the cultural field and draw perceptions of legitimacy – further described in 3.4 – as it facilitated probing into “boundary work” (Lamont & Swidler, 2014, p.161).

The collected data consisting of 11 hours of interviewing was subjected to thematic analysis, conducted using the software atlas.ti. Thematic analysis is an inductive analytical approach that entails systematically identifying, analysing, and interpreting key systems of meaning embedded within and across data (Bryman, 2012, p. 578; Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 373; Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The degree of theoretical freedom it offers yielded a flexible research tool that enabled the teasing out of contextual nuances to provide rich and detailed accounts of “real-world problems” (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2014, p.17). The selected method of analysis repeatedly demonstrated to be the most appropriate methodology since its flexible nature facilitated the formulation of novel theoretical frameworks to comprehensively address the phenomenon of interest, as elaborated in chapter 4. The analysis process entailed an iterative movement between the data set, coded excerpts of data, and the initial analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86; Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 373). This approach posited the raw data as an integral part of the analysis throughout, ensuring the preservation of the data’s context (Bryman, 2012, p. 578). The analysis was structured into three levels of coding (Saldaña, 2013). The initial stage entailed utilising in vivo coding to generate descriptive codes that encapsulated the meanings and causal links found in the interviewees’ responses. This yielded a total of 1,565 in vivo codes, which were subsequently refined to 1,412 in vivo codes following a meticulous second reading of the data. The second level involved the focused coding of the 1,412 in vivo codes into 33 categories developed from the data that teased out connections between the different topics addressed in the interviews and their relevance to the pertinent wider social world. Concurrently, the 1,412 in vivo codes were further refined to 1,346 in vivo codes, as the issues pertaining to the phenomenon under study became increasingly emergent. Through the application of axial coding in the final level of coding, the 33 focused codes were grouped together to identify the 6 overarching themes found in the collected data (see Appendix D).

3.2. Sampling

The study gathered data via 10 semi-structured qualitative interviews carried out in March 2023 with emerging interdisciplinary artists based in the Netherlands (see Appendix B). Academia has produced few precise definitions of interdisciplinary art practices or artists (Augsburg, 2017, p.131). This paper defines interdisciplinary artists as those working in a myriad of media, drawing knowledge from “disciplines, fields and discourses within and outside the realm of art” (Augsburg, 2017, p.132), and conceptualising interdisciplinarity as

an integration of practices rather than an intersection of disciplinary boundaries (Deyneka, 2020, p.41). Similarly, literature offers loose descriptions of the term emerging artists (Mason & Robinson, 2011, p.165). Building on the work of other scholars, I define emerging artists as individuals who obtained an art- or design-related degree from a higher education institution since 2019 and are actively creating artworks, even if their artistic practice is not their primary source of income (Fillis, Lee, & Fraser, 2022, p.3; Mason & Robinson, 2011, p.165). The vague definitions of these terms evidence the lack of scholarly attention devoted to a cohort that literature suggests is particularly vulnerable to precarious working and living conditions (Fillis, Lee, & Fraser, 2022, p. 3-4). This, coupled with the increasing austerity in the Dutch cultural sector in the last decades (Hagood & Fellow, 2016, p.1; Siegal, 2013), posits the present research into how governmental funding affects the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands as ever-more timely.

Research participants were selected through a non-probability sampling method, namely, snowball sampling. The absence of a sampling frame for the target population posited this methodology as the most suitable (Bryman, 2012, p.202). This was in part ensued by the loose definitions of term emerging interdisciplinary artists found in literature, despite the fact that the group of social actors can be demarcated. I ensured access to the field through my extensive network within the Dutch cultural scene, acquired through my background as a professional cultural fundraiser and programmer. Initial contact with research participants was established through an open call disseminated via my personal Instagram page on February 2023, and personal invitations extended to key emerging interdisciplinary artists based in the Netherlands. This yielded an initial sample of 5 research participants. The interviewees then referred other social actors in their network, from which I sampled 5 more units of analysis. I set out to attain as representative sample as possible, aiming to engage an equal number of men, women, and non-binary individuals, actors with different racial backgrounds, and proportionate age distribution. However, due to the hard-to-reach nature of the population, such diverse sample was not accomplished with regards to gender and race. This raises questions about the external validity of the findings (Bryman, 2012, p.309). Moreover, the use of snowball sampling, combined with the fact that some research participants were recruited from my immediate networks, gives rise to concerns about social network, sampling and confirmation biases. I attempted to mitigate such biases by engaging individuals from distinct social networks at the initial sampling stage and maintaining a reflexive stance throughout the entire analysis process.

I conducted the interviews in person or via a video call on the platform Zoom, in English. Carrying out the interviews in person facilitated establishing rapport with interviewees and enabled an informal interviewing environment that prompted research participants to speak openly about the phenomenon under study. The precise transcription of the interviews was then ensured by Whisper AI, facilitating a high degree of accuracy.

3.3. Ethics & Positionality

The present study guaranteed the physical and psychological safety of research participants by adhering to tenets of social science research ethics, specifically, voluntary participation, informed consent, the right to withdraw, and insurance of confidentiality and anonymity. I conducted all interviews in a seemly manner, creating a safe environment for interviewees that allowed them to express themselves freely and ensured their right to privacy. In accordance with the informed consent form, the collected data was stored safely in a password-protected computer and used strictly for the purposes there described (see Appendix A). Additionally, I refrained from storing the participants' names, using identifier codes to protect their anonymity.

My socio-historical background of as a professional cultural fundraiser and programmer opened pathways for inquiry, but also raised concerns about potential biases, as mentioned in 3.2. Foremost, as a former student of the Royal Conservatoire of The Hague and as a cultural fundraiser and programmer, I possess an extensive network within the Dutch cultural scene. While this facilitated the process of engaging research participants, it gives rise to concerns about whether the sample of participants accurately represents the larger population of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands. For example, nine out of the ten interviewees hold an university degree, which suggests that the experiences of individuals without formal education in the arts may have not been fully captured. Nonetheless, similar or shared backgrounds with research participants proved to facilitate access to insights and discourses unavailable to others less familiar with the field. This was particularly evident with regard to interviewees' references to funding schemes, residency programs, and the inner-workings of higher education institutions and programs. Additionally, I attempted to address any potential oversights or unconscious biases that could arise from inherent differences in social locations between myself and the research participants, conducting a grounded and contextual analysis that acknowledges the influence of distinct yet intersecting systems of power on shaping social structures (Collins, 2000, p.42). Remarkably, the friendly

character of my relationships with interviewees produced diverging repercussions on data collection: While some participants spoke openly about the phenomenon under study, feeling comfortable to disclose sensitive information, others refrained from delving into controversial topics. With regard to this latter point, I encouraged research participants to speak openly by reassuring them that their identities would remain confidential. Moreover, I took great care in assuring that my past experiences with governmental funding did not guide my research practices, asking interviewees probing questions that aimed to test whether my understandings of their responses were accurate or I was imprinting my own investments, interests, and frustrations on them.

3.4. Operationalization

To investigate the impacts of governmental funding on the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands, this study transformed the concept of artistic careers into analogous measuring instruments (Bryman, 2012, p. 164), specifically, ‘perception of work situations’, ‘career aims’, ‘work motivations’, ‘strategies of navigation’ and enactment of ‘work-life boundaries’ (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.525) (see Appendix C).

The theme ‘perceptions of work situations’ explored beliefs around the linkage between precarious working conditions and autonomy, self-determination, and creativity (Loacker, 2013, p.139). Research participants were asked to describe their current work situation, their definition of artistic freedom, and an instance when they had to compromise their artistic freedom. ‘Career aims’ investigated how emerging interdisciplinary artists define their place in the field and the reference points used to devise strategies to enhance their standing and gain legitimacy (Bourdieu, 1993, p.52). Interview questions probed how interviewees defined professional success, how their career goals had evolved over time, and their perceptions of artists they deemed successful. The theme ‘work motivations’ explored perceptions about markers of cultural consecration in relation to material and symbolic resources and status, as well as the willingness to deviate from the field’s canon (Cattani, Ferriani, & Allison, 2014, p.274-276). Research participants were asked to describe their perceptions about awards and prizes, their creative process, and how they relate their current artistic pursuits to previously successful projects. ‘Strategies of navigation’ investigated how emerging interdisciplinary artists negotiate challenges and opportunities in the field of cultural production, their sense of agency, their beliefs around governmental funding, and the tactics deployed to secure

resources and improve their positioning. Interview questions probed research participants' perceptions about the availability of public funding, their fundraising process, and the strategies used to ensure that their artistic vision aligns with the guidelines of different funding schemes. The theme 'enactment of work-life boundaries' delved into how emerging interdisciplinary artists balance their leisure time and work responsibilities, how they manage (social) networking, as well as strategies around spatial mobility and chronological flexibility (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.528-529). Research participants were asked to detail their thoughts and beliefs about the balance between their professional and personal lives, the activities they engage in during their leisure time, how their professional and social networks compare, and the ways in which they tailored their personal life to meet the demands of their careers. Grounded in data collected via pursuing lines of inquiry around these themes, the following chapter explores the experiences and emotional responses of emerging interdisciplinary artists, in the Netherlands, in relation to governmental funding.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. The Normalisation of Precariousness

I start with what is commonly regarded as the most crucial condition of creative labour, precariousness (McRobbie, 2016; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010), and its relation to governmental funding. Precarious working and living conditions emerged from the data as the default modes of being of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands. Virtually all research participants reported engaging in short-term contracts, project-based productions, and ‘juggling’ multiple jobs “because freelancing doesn’t pay properly” (Marianne, female, 32 years old). These unstable and underpaid working conditions seem to be undermining the very foundations of creative production by depleting emerging interdisciplinary artists from any “satisfaction ... because it’s just gotten to the stage where it is survivable” (Marianne), subsequently threatening artistic motivation (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.524). The findings thereby suggest that the grim scenario painted by the Social and Economic Council and Council for Culture 2016 study has not have improved (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.29). It is still worth noting that the situation may be even more dire for emerging interdisciplinary artists from historically marginalised or underrepresented communities; however, due to limitations in the collected data, this cannot be ascertained with certainty. Nonetheless, in line with Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, p.13), precarious working conditions are remarkably framed by research participants as the worthwhile price to pay for autonomy, self-determination, or, being “in total control” (Vasco, male, 27 years old), “flexibility” (Theresia, female, 27 years old), and artistic freedom. This apparent paradox can be deconstructed by recalling that artistic logics of practice lead artists to endorse and even co-produce their tenuous conditions of existence, positioning them as particularly susceptible to exploitative modes of work (Loacker, 2013, p.140). Creativity and poverty seem to be intrinsically connected in the interviewees’ imaginations (Loacker, 2013, p.137): Vasco reported never having to compromise his artistic freedom because he refrains from working for “corporate things or big things”, concluding that “[o]ne day I dream of getting my hours paid but probably won’t happen ... I tell myself that if I’m gonna spend time [doing things] I don’t like, I’d rather go to a bank and earn shit loads of money”. Any desires for or expectations of stable working and living conditions are relinquished in favour of the allegedly stimulating compensation of being creative (McRobbie, 2016, p.52), as encapsulated in Theresia’s remark that

I wouldn't do this unless I really enjoyed it because it's really hard, there's ... no money, no stability or anything ... you've got to remember ... why you have made all these sacrifices because you could do other things and make your life more stable.

Indeed, in spite of its officially non-interventionist stance characteristic of neoliberal ideology (Alexander, 2018, p.25), the data suggests that Dutch cultural policies have accomplished the feat of conditioning emerging interdisciplinary artists to a future of work devoid of the social benefits and protections (McRobbie, 2016, p.81-90). This is evident in Vasco's puzzled response "I'm thinking because what would not be freelance in this context ... what would not be freelance" to a clarifying question on the nature of the work he engages in.

Remarkably, negative emotional states, such as anger and dissatisfaction, are absent in the discourses of research participants. Rather, interviewees denote a compliant and resigned stance, as evident in the following quotes that one must "accept the situation as it is" (Anna, female, 25 years old), and "endure it" (Karolien, female, 32 years old). These findings highlight the depoliticising logic of neoliberal subjectification (Scharff, 2016, p.113), i.e., neoliberalism's overemphasis on positivity, and consequent disregard and suppression of negative emotions, castrate the potential for critical thinking, as well as the motivation to bring about any changes beyond the self (2016, p.113). This depoliticising logic of neoliberal subjectification ties in with disarticulations of structural inequalities (Scharff, 2016, p.115-116). Strikingly, the discourses of research participants rarely pointed out systemic problems, rather emphasising individual responsibility. Any fleeting allusion to potential structural issues, such as lack of or gated access to funding, mental health problems caused by hyper-productivity, and inability to make a living from their artistic practices, were quickly brushed aside on the accounts of "it's also a personal thing ... just getting a bit older" (Theresia), "just my experience" (Vasco), or "I'm not [there] yet" (Linnea, female, 26 years old). Research participants thereby internalise any desires for change, directing them away from socio-political spheres, and rather identify self-management as the key to overcome challenges (Scharff, 2016, p.114-116).

Counter to expectations (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.29), the majority of research participants reported that there is "a lot of funding" (Xena, female, 32 years old) available in the Netherlands. Interviewees stated that governmental funding in the Netherlands "is one of the best in Europe" (Zander, male, 30 years old), highlighting how this "abundance of opportunity" (Theresia) allowed them "really dream" because "the ceiling is much higher"

(Vasco). While these statements could be taken at face value, I offer an alternative reading of this seemingly idyllic reality. I suggest that Dutch neoliberal policies have succeeded in training emerging interdisciplinary artists to comply with modes of work that lack social amenities and to view the ‘crumbles’ of a formerly robust system of financial support as satisfactory, effectively subsuming any desires for change before they even emerge. This underlying explanation came to fore through the many statements contradicting initial positive outlooks on the availability of governmental funding in the Netherlands found in the research participants’ discourses. Namely, Irene (female, 28 years old) stated that her artistic goals “were over ... because I didn’t have ... the opportunity, the money for ... an artistic practice”, Vasco reported having “done projects that [were] ... very, very poorly paid” because he never “got an opportunity ... [to] get paid”, and, even more concerning, Marianne feels that she is “being pushed ... into throwing away [her] creativity to just end up ... working in a customer service job”. Again, however, research participants display reticence in openly discussing the insufficiency of governmental funding available to emerging interdisciplinary artists. Instead, they present themselves as personally accountable for their inability to secure funding, denying the existence of broader issues at play. This is evident in Stefano’s remark that “there’s availability, but I don’t have the tools or the time to check that out” (male, 26 years old), as well as in Linnea’s reply “I feel like there’s still a lot I don’t know about [the] art world” to the question of why she does not feel able to pursue a career as a full-time artist. Thereby, the emphasis on individual freedom and entrepreneurialism within Dutch neoliberal policies seem to have replaced traditional understandings regarding the relationship between the state and the individual, giving rise to a focus on self-governance and self-responsibility over collective welfare (Foucault, 1978/2008).

The findings suggest that reduced availability of governmental funding to emerging interdisciplinary artists is not the sole factor contributing to challenges in securing financial support and precarious working and living conditions. In line with Meerkerk and Hoogen (2018, p.15), overly lengthy and bureaucratic application procedures were identified by research participants as constraining the development of their “own practice[s]” (Irene), as well as reducing “multi-layered” (Vasco) projects to their shallow versions. Competing criteria among funding bodies was named as the leading cause for inadequate project budgets; specifically, criteria enforcing “a cap of money” (Stefano) or prohibiting various sources of funding. Research participants expressed frustration over challenging and conflicting credentialing requirements that demand extensive exhibition track records for

access to state funding schemes allegedly designed for emerging artists. Marianne's comment encapsulates this experience:

I lacked experience, which is something that I actually have come across a number of times, which really irritates me because how I do gain experience if you're not given any chances to get it ... a lot of funds want to see artists who have done a lot of exhibitions ... but when artists don't have the funding, they can't really do that much, you know?

Rigorous criteria around the type of costs eligible for financing poses serious threats to securing the project partners "you need ... in order to apply [for funding]" (Zander), and imposes technical limitations because "you cannot buy your own equipment" (Stefano). Oppressive guidelines were identified by research participants as restricting their "creative freedom ... [and] experimentation" (Linnea), even leading them to stop "that playfulness at some point" (Stefano). Moreover, relating to the issues of overly lengthy and bureaucratic application procedures and the type of costs eligible for financing, yet another exploitative form of work comes to the fore in the discourses of research participants, namely, the unpaid labour of grant writing. Grant writing is a long, strenuous, and "stressful" process, that "sometimes ... [takes] years" (Zander), requiring "a lot of time" (Theresa), "a lot of work" (Irene), and "tools" (Stefano) from emerging interdisciplinary artists. However, current criteria for project-based financing do not consider or classify this labour as eligible for reimbursement, given that artists engage in it prior to commencing the project. This leaves a cohort almost entirely reliant on governmental funding for its survival (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.18) with no other choice besides engaging in countless hours of unpaid labour. Although the notion of unpaid labour in itself is worrisome, the problems arising from this exploitative form of work extend beyond it. Unpaid labour comes second to remunerated work, that is, emerging interdisciplinary artists perform tasks relating to grant writing after their regular workday, during non-working hours, holidays or leisure time. This is exemplified by Zander's statement that he "spend[s] Christmas holidays or holidays on funding writing". The significant physical, mental, and emotional toll arising from this pervasive "always-on" mentality (Scharff, 2018) must not be underestimated. Anna stated not enjoying her success because she is "worried about the next one ... [and] worked way too hard"; and, describing grant writing as "a terrible process", Xena says "I just don't want to do it anymore". But, no other remark encapsulates the exploitative nature of unpaid grant writing labour as the comment by Karolien that "I burned myself out writing funding applications ...

[because] the pressure from that is like insane”. The unpaid labour of grant writing thus may be understood as emotional labour, i.e., the hidden and under recognised practices associated with becoming entrepreneurial, that happen at the cost of workers and lead many to “a breaking point” (Ashton, 2021, p.9). Evidently, the framework regulating access to financial resources imposed by the Dutch government in the 2010s not only clashes with the reality of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands, constraining artistic freedom, weakening artistic drive (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007) and subjecting the intrinsic value of creative work to inflation (McRobbie, 2016); but, also, normalises precariousness, transcending the dichotomy between labour and leisure, and conditioning individuals to post-welfare models of labour (McRobbie, 2016; de Keere & Cescon, 2023).

In addition to this already grim scenario, governmental funding’s normative capacity on genre appears to be further constraining the working conditions of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands. Indeed, the findings suggest that the negative correlation between interdisciplinarity and funding success rates found by Bromham, Dinnage and Hua’s quantitative study on interdisciplinary academic research (2023) manifests similarly within the Dutch cultural sector. Specifically, research participants face challenges in matching their interdisciplinary practices to the existing single-discipline state funding schemes, reporting that interdisciplinary work “has difficulty hitting somewhere” (Stefano). While the findings do not allow to ascertain with precision the underlying causes for this, it seems that a lack of funding instruments specifically targeting interdisciplinarity and poor correspondence between reviewers’ expertise and subject matter of projects contribute conjointly to the challenges faced by emerging interdisciplinary artists in securing state financial support (Bromham, Dinnage, & Hua, 2023, p.685-686). This is illustrated by Marianne’s comment that it is “unclear as to which is like too fine art and which is too design-based ... it kind of feels like ... places ... really want just one or the other”. Other potential contributing factors, that call for further examination, are the relatively new and ambiguous status of interdisciplinary arts, and subsequently interdisciplinary artists, in comparison to other arts disciplines which may lead funding bodies to prioritise already-recognised, or deemed-successful, single-disciplines, engendering a sort-of “Matthew Effect” (Peters & Roose, 2022, p.1); and the hard-to-market nature of interdisciplinarity, which directly clashes with neoliberalism’s emphasis on business logics. It is nonetheless clear a desire for funding schemes that move beyond single-discipline definitions and acknowledge the complexity of

today's art world: "Why can't we just all be a happy family? Why can't we just work together?" (Marianne).

The findings thus far presented suggest that the renewed entrepreneurial rationality and austerity imposed by Dutch neoliberal cultural policies, in the 2010s, have particularly severe repercussions for emerging interdisciplinary artists, who seem to have fallen in between the cracks of a system that prioritizes clear-cut definitions and metrics (Alexander, 2018, p.33), pushing them into the periphery of the field of restricted cultural production. This study thereby disputes the findings of Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010, p.17), instead corroborating Been, Wijngaarden and Loots' suggestion that the distribution of financial resources across sub-genres of the cultural sector, and subsequently of artists' precarious levels of earnings, is skewed (2023, p.1). Strikingly, though, experiences of austerity are not universal among research participants. This discrepancy seems to arise from the fact that some research participants recognise state funding as a normative instrument shaping the field of restricted cultural production and promoting its own agenda of what is to be deemed as art, the status of particular genres, and the reputations of individual artists (Saha, 2013; Becker, 1982, p.166), and actively organise and orient their thoughts, perceptions and actions to it (Bourdieu, 1977, p.109-110), and others do not. Zander stated:

In the Netherlands, funding has ... a big influence [on] how the artistic and design climate looks like ... because they have a certain agenda, certain themes, topics they ... give money for, and if you don't fit to their agenda, then you won't receive the funding ... these places and people behind it have a really big influence on who are the new upcoming artists, designers, architects, creatives in the Netherlands.

Through the lens of interdisciplinarity, it thus becomes evident that governmental funding enacts a disciplinary capacity on genre, pushing artists to create ready-to-consume, neatly packaged works in their pursuit of 'the next big hit' (Kolbe, 2022, p.261-262). Moreover, centring research participants' experiences of the interplay of funding governmentalities and precarity, – an already well established and documented phenomenon – this study echoes de Keere and Cescon's argument. Specifically, it takes issue with the universal experience of entrepreneurial subjectification under conditions of financialised neoliberalism, foregrounding the ways in which genre intersects with austerity politics and produces diverging post-welfare models and meanings of work.

4.2. The Lingerin Romantic Artist

As suggested in the previous sub-section, intensifying austerity politics and increasing professionalisation of the Dutch cultural sector affect the careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands differently, giving rise to two distinct clusters. These originate from the varying perspectives among research participants of governmental funding as a mechanism that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production, namely, in terms of genre. The data revealed how these contrasting perceptions give rise to diverse notions of interdisciplinarity that, consequently, engender distinct experiences of precarity and construct the artists' psyches disparately. Henceforth, I will refer to these clusters as the 'lingerin romantic artists' and the 'new ideal artists'.

Individuals encompassed in the cluster lingerin romantic artists disregard the normative capacity of state funding on genre, leading them to not validate or attune to the agenda, or governmentality, of state funding. This stems from a refusal to orient themselves towards the market. As a result of this misalignment, individuals deviate from the neatly packaged and state-prescribed conception of interdisciplinarity. That is, artists in this cluster do not play into the state's agenda about the type of genres, topics and themes pertaining to interdisciplinary artists. Sub-section 4.3 will elaborate on the contours of the state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity. Here, I suggest that lingerin romantic artists embrace a more authentic conception of interdisciplinarity, working in a myriad of media, – that include traditional disciplines, as well as embracing new media such as film – integrating knowledge from discourses outside the art field (Augsburg, 2017, p.132), and conceptualising interdisciplinarity as an intersection of disciplinary boundaries. As implied above, this failure in validating state-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity has profound repercussions on the careers of these artists, hindering their ability to secure financial support. This was evident in research participants' many references to "struggling" (Karolien) and "lack[ing] ... money" (Marianne). The commitment of lingerin romantic artists to a 'real' interdisciplinary practice thereby appears to result in significantly harsher experiences of austerity than those lived by new ideal artists. This highlights how conforming to state-prescribed ideas of genre determines one's ability to compete in the increasingly neoliberal Dutch cultural sector. Indeed, lingerin romantic artists seem condemned to a life of scarcity at the periphery of the field, pursuing a career for art's sake and rejecting the very markers of external validation that could position them as competitive players (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529-535).

This is exemplified by Irene's remark that "it doesn't depend ... on how many exhibitions I am doing, or how many awards I have, or if I'm famous or not" and the comment by Vasco that "my creations are not ... motivated or steered or anything like that by economic purposes".

Nonetheless, research participants in this cluster periodically drew on discourses besides those pertaining to artistic repertoires of value and meaning. Moving beyond the art-commerce dichotomy (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022; Haynes & Marshall, 2018), lingering romantic artists negotiate and reconcile competing logics (Scharff, 2016, p.115). Namely, regarding forms of external validation, recognition and appraisal from the public are identified by research participants as markers of cultural consecration, the parameters distinguishing between the artists who "make some noise ... [and are] interesting" (Linnea) from those who do not. This is illustrated by Theresia's remark that "it's important that other people see your work ... really enjoy them [artworks] and you feel really good about that", and the comment by Linnea that "professional success as an artist really has to do with having platform, just like having a lot of people see your stuff, appreciate your stuff". Pecuniary and entrepreneurial accounts likewise came to the fore in the discourses of research participants (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022). However, these were only deployed as a means to achieve "artistic freedom" (Theresia) and "to realise ... art pieces" (Linnea), signalling some reluctance or hesitation toward entrepreneurial rationality; and, to assess the success of their peers, drawing boundaries between themselves as "not there yet" and artists displaying entrepreneurial rationality as "the real deal" (Linnea). This latter point implies that, at an underlying level, artists enacting the lingering romantic repertoire adhere to and reiterate the emphasis on cultural entrepreneurship and self-governance within Dutch neoliberal cultural policies (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.27). That is, the findings suggest that this cluster of artists inadvertently perpetuates the "exclusionary dynamics" (Scharff, 2016, p.118) through which subjectivities are constructed under neoliberalism against themselves. Consequently, they validate the status of their counterparts – and of the state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity – as legitimate, while effectively positioning themselves at the periphery of the field of restricted production.

Lingering romantic artists further interrupt their performance of artistic repertoires of value and meaning in attempts to negotiate creativity with "the requirements of the world" (Irene). Specifically, research participants reported deploying strategies to navigate the state

funding system. These include studying “the information and requirements” (Theresia) of funding schemes, tailoring their portfolio to “the essence ... of the institution” (Irene), reframing their concept by “highlighting different parts of the project” (Vasco) and “working ... [their] work to sound vaguely similar to the buzzwords they use” (Marianne), and being “smart in how you write” (Karolien). Thereby, the findings suggest that lingering romantic artists engage in genre-packaging to some extent, notwithstanding their unwillingness to adhere to the state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity, in efforts to obtain funding. Nonetheless, the deployment of navigation strategies to secure state funding gives rise to feelings of unease and apprehension within lingering romantic artists, as they struggle to fully reconcile the entrepreneurial mindset demanded by such performances with their devotion to art for art’s sake. This is evident in research participants’ descriptions of funding criteria as a “perverse” (Irene) instrument “that can deaden ... and take ... vitality” (Theresia) from art which, once again, highlight the disciplinary effect of genre conventions on artists. Remarkably, individuals in the lingering romantic artists cluster appear to partially overcome the conflict that arises from their paradoxical relationship to funding by fabricating a mental and emotional distance from fundraising activities. Describing grant writing as “a game” (Theresia), that is hackable through the use of “a cheat code” (Marianne), research participants create a sort of (game) character to differentiate between their artist self and their fundraiser or entrepreneurial self.

Nevertheless, the unwavering pursuit of a career for art’s sake, i.e., a ‘real’ interdisciplinary practice, leads lingering romantic artists to never fully embrace the practices demanded by the Dutch cultural sector’s emphasis on cultural entrepreneurship and neatly-packaged, marketable cultural products. Congruently, opposing Loacker’s findings (2013, p.134), the performance of marketing-related activities, such as promoting their work or a “persona that doesn’t really exist” (Vasco) on social media, is understood as an act of ‘selling out’: “I felt ... like a prostitute” (Karolien). These artists’ rejection of self-marketing and genre-packaging was particularly evident in Vasco’s statement that

I find [it] very hard ... to market art, it’s kind of like ... no it’s my little baby, I don’t want to sell it to you ... I struggle with that a lot actually ... how to market it, how to label things, how to tell people ... because I’m doing it for an economic end, I’m doing it to get the money, [and] there’s something with my principles that it’s ... like I didn’t go into art for this.

Research participants recognise, however, that securing a “more fair payment and [financial] support” (Vasco) for their artistic practices is contingent on attaining recognition among other actors, both those internal and external to the field of restricted cultural production. This ensues a clash between the demands of a sector that increasingly understands one’s number of “followers on Instagram” as a direct translation of “professional success” (Zander) and artistic repertoires of value and meaning, leaving lingering romantic artists in a conflictual position. This experience is encapsulated in Vasco’s statement that

I need to do it but ... I’m not able to ... because ... that’s not me ... [so] I’m kind of like hating myself a little. That’s not something I want so I’m ... trying to come up with a magic formula of ... how I can do this.”

Awards and prizes are viewed by research participants in a similar fashion, i.e., as “evil” (Karolien). While acknowledging that “a curriculum with a lot of awards makes the overall” (Vasco) and facilitates fundraising, interviewees find it hard “spend[ing] energy in these kind-of-things” (Vasco) because of the “weird ... competitive nature [that] comes about” (Marianne). This contentious relationship can be made sense of by recalling that the principle of incommensurability, which aligns the artistic logics enacted by individuals in the group lingering romantic artists (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529-535), directly contradicts competition rationales. Additionally, the juxtaposition of competition logics with the emphasis on community displayed by research participants provides another possible explanation for the fervent rejection by lingering romantic artists, as it will be shown.

Research participants in the cluster lingering romantic artists identified the establishment of resilient bonds with the cultural community as foundational to their artistic practices. Fellow artists are sought out as a source of support, knowledge, feedback, and inspiration (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2010, p.16). When asked to describe her creative process, Irene stated that “it’s ... important [to] share with other artists thoughts and have conversations ... because they have the knowledge and I trust them”, and Linnea remarks that “an important part of my process is sharing with people, talking with people ... they can help me with my practice”. Informal networks of artists likewise came to the fore in research participants’ discourses, as exemplified the following quote that “there’s these gatherings in my city where artists come together and ... you get to see the other people and ... talk about your struggles” (Linnea). Accordingly, recognition from peers is identified by research participants as the absolute marker of cultural consecration, surpassing prizes and awards or funding in their

scale of value (Bourdieu, 1993, p.39). This is encapsulated in Vasco's statement that "I feel artistically recognised when other artists ... recognise my work ... that's the ultimate recognition ... that's what I seek ... that's the prize I want". In line with this mindset, research participants not only seek resilient professional bonds with peers, but also pursue personal relationships, i.e., friendships, with fellow artists. Accounts echoing romantic understandings of being an artist came to the fore in research participants' discourses when describing the reasonings behind such pursuits. Specifically, interviewees seem convinced that only fellow artists are able to "understand that part" (Linnea), i.e., artistic facet, of their selves, reporting feeling "very misunderstood with [other] people" (Karolien). This experience is illustrated by Linnea's remark that "these [artists] are ... the kind of people that I want to surround myself with ... it's really hard for me to like make strong personal connections with [other] people". Individuals in this cluster thereby embrace and endorse the romantic figure of the artist as a character at the fringes of society, misunderstood by all those outside of the cultural field. In this context, the reasonings of lingering romantic artists to fervently reject competition become clearer, as engaging in such rationale would imply a cut-off or disconnection with their primary source of emotional support, feelings of belonging, knowledge, feedback, and inspiration.

The romantic conception of the artist further came to the fore in the discourses of research participants when drawing boundaries between 'authentic' and 'sell-out' artists. Vasco stated that "a lot of artists ... are amazing, like mind-blowing geniuses and no one knows them ... [because] they are not interested in that recognition", and Linnea mentioned that "I feel like her [Marina Abramović] practice is really pure ... she did some really dangerous ... some really messed up stuff and that is super interesting ... and just like stayed really honest through[out] the whole process". Remarkably, this latter point echoes Bourdieu's argument that artists must seem feign uninterested in monetary gains in order to attain them (1993, p.185). Moreover, Linnea's reference to "dangerous ... [and] messed up stuff" hints at another dimension of these artists' conception of their selves, namely, the figure of the artist as analogous to the romantic notion of the tortured or tormented genius, signifying the belief that personal suffering is often intertwined with artistic brilliance. Romantic understandings of being an artist likewise appear to influence participants' perspectives on housing and intimate relationships. Interviewees identify housing conditions and dating arrangements that enable mobility as preferable, allowing them to pursue work opportunities freely. Linnea's remark reflects this: "I don't have ... solid ground. I hop houses a lot. I don't have a partner

right now ... because I find it easier to like socialize in that way ... it's [her life] very far from settling down". Lingering romantic artists thus construct themselves as solitary figures, meandering the fringes of society in a tormented pursuit of a career for art's sake.

Difficulties in reconciling the state-prescribed entrepreneurial mindset (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.27) and ideas of genre with a pursuit of an authentic interdisciplinary practice, the precarity ensued by that struggle, coupled with feelings of alienation and loneliness, position lingering romantic artists as particularly vulnerable to exploitation (Fillis, Lee, & Fraser, 2022, p. 3-4; McRobbie, 2016, p.91; Loacker, 2013, p.137). Remarkably, in line with Scharff's study (2016, p.116-117) and the findings presented in sub-section 4.1, this grim scenario does not give rise to feelings of revolt. Instead, anxieties were prominent in research participants' discussion of the precarious nature of being an interdisciplinary artist. Narrating the development of their artistic careers, research participants expressed the sentiment that "it's really scary ... what if I fail ... that insecurity ... is always there" (Linnea). These insecurities arouse anxieties: "I don't think that I'm good enough to do this" (Linnea); but, most concerningly, self-doubt and personal suffering. These latter sentiments were particularly prevalent in research participants' discussions about struggles to secure state funding. Marianne stated that "I didn't expect to be floundering ... for so long. It slowly eats away at like your confidence or your ... sense of abilities and self. You kind of really [start] questioning, should I even be in this space?", and Karolien remarked that "it's so heart breaking when you're working with something that is so extremely personal and you don't receive anywhere in the world that it is important ... you're being rejected basically over and over again and it is extremely painful". The forceful self-governance imposed by Dutch cultural policies, coupled with conflicting feelings toward marketing-related activities, likewise provokes anxieties and doubts, as illustrated by Vasco's remark that "maybe I should have gone to that opening and meet the people, maybe I should be talking tomorrow [during a performance] ... maybe I should be making myself more seen ... all this kind of insecurities". The depoliticising logic of neoliberal subjectification, which effectively subsumes discourses shedding light on the influence of socio-economic structures (Scharff, 2016, p.113-117), combined with precarious working conditions, thus shape the lingering romantic artist self as anxious, self-doubting, and insecure.

The findings discussed here evidence the ways in which lingering romantic artists' pursuit of a 'real' interdisciplinary practice hinders their ability to compete in the increasingly

neoliberal Dutch cultural sector. That is, how their rejection of the state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity confines them to a life of scarcity at the periphery of the field that logics of neoliberal subjectification effectively established as normative and inescapable. Through the lens of interdisciplinarity, I thus foregrounded the ways in which governmental funding regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production and the working conditions of artists through its disciplinary effect on genre. Namely, by withholding financial resources from lingering romantic artists, the state effectively subsumes narratives of art and genre conventions that diverge from its own.

4.3. The New Ideal Artist

New ideal artists oppose lingering romantic artists in their recognition of state funding as a normative instrument, shaping the cultural field and advancing its own agenda of what is to be deemed as art, the status of particular genres, and the reputations of individual artists (Saha, 2013; Becker, 1982, p.166). Accordingly, these individuals play into the neatly packaged and state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity, endorsing the genre conventions, topics and themes that pertain to it. Remarkably, the discourses of research participants brought forward a different notion of interdisciplinarity from that asserted by literature (Deyneka, 2020, p.41). In fact, the findings suggest that the state-prescribed conception of interdisciplinarity is synonymous with new media. Virtually all research participants in the cluster new ideal artists reported working in “media art, media design” (Zander), “digital media with technology involved” (Xena), and “interactive media design” (Anna; Stefano). State-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity thereby appear to be embedded in and endorse neoliberalism’s focus on progress and innovation, championing technology as key for advancing the art world (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14). This is encapsulated in Anna’s comment that “there’s like a very high expectation of it being like a very innovative work or very new work in some way”. Notably, the term interdisciplinarity seems to arise not from variety of media used but rather from the collaborative nature of interdisciplinary art practices, that hinge on “lots of conversations that are multidisciplinary” (Stefano); and the integration of discourses from outside the art field (Augsburg, 2017, p.132), as evidenced by Xena’s remark that “artists ... collaborate with people from outside the bubble”.

Alignment with these state-prescribed genre conventions engenders benefits with regard to securing funding. In spite of accounts of precarity, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists evidence a more stable financial situation in comparison to their counterparts, the

lingering romantic artists. This is illustrated by Xena's comment that "I am in the lucky side ... I got funding for most of my projects ... but, also, there are quite, a lot of funding that I can apply to". The ratification of genre-packaging practices is, therefore, what renders new ideal artists as 'ideal' in the contemporary cultural sector. As such, in line with findings presented in 4.2, the extent to which one endorses state-prescribed genre conventions determines its ability to compete in the increasingly neoliberal Dutch cultural sector. Accordingly, state funding emerged as a marker of cultural consecration in the discourses of research participants, "opening up new doors and new possibilities" (Zander) and "reaffirm[ing] that your ideas are not crazy" (Anna). This conviction seems to arise not only from within, but also is perpetuated by other actors in the field. Talking about a current project, Stefano stated "we got contacted by a corporate organisation ... it's funny because they sent us an email as soon as they saw that we got the grant from Stimuleringsfonds". State funding thus crystallises as a powerful instrument of neoliberal ideology, regulating the aesthetic dimension of cultural production through its genre-making capacity and elevating those artists who endorse its agenda to the status of legitimate (Becker, 1982, p.166; Saha, 2013).

New ideal artists actively uphold and pursue alignment with state-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity by deploying strategies designed to improve their (dis)position in the field and enhance their ability to secure financial resources. These strategies include tailoring to funding guidelines, through "read[ing] the requirements" and writing in the "direction that the institution wants" (Xena); establishing rapport with jurors, by "reaching out to, calling ... different funding places" (Zander), as familiarity increases the chance of securing funding (Peters & Roose, 2022); strategically applying for funding schemes, namely, "get[ting] smaller grants in order to apply for bigger grants" because "you need some funding party on board to influence other parties" (Zander); leveraging relationships to enhance chances of securing funding through a peer-grant-review system, that is, asking "friends who got grants their applications to reflect upon" (Zander) and "people to give you feedback" (Xena); and refraining from creating new works that deviate from formerly successful works or established trends (Cattani, Ferriani, & Allison, 2014, p.274-276). This last strategy is exemplified by Anna's remark that "you look at the past things that did get funding and you look at current situations or current, I guess, trends". Evidently, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists enact a more pronounced "hack" logic (Stefano) than lingering romantic artists, understanding grant writing as "a science fiction script" (Zander). This claim is supported by

the absence of feelings of unease or apprehension toward the deployment of navigation strategies in the discourses of research participants. In fact, as previously suggested, the artistic practices of new ideal artists appear to materialise according to state-prescribed genre conventions. Research participants admitted to “intentionally us[ing] ... very popular topic[s] ... after looking at the funding” (Xena) and creating project ideas “based on what the open call asks” (Anna). Nevertheless, despite strategically pursuing funding opportunities, new ideal artists often face rejection. Notably, though, rejection does not give rise to feelings of revolt or frustration. Instead, research participants endorse a positive attitude, understanding “rejection [as] ... also good because then I’m often reflecting” (Zander), and embrace instability “because you’re still doing ... the things you want to do” (Anna). The findings thereby suggest that the emphasis on self-governance and self-actualisation within Dutch cultural policies (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.27; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.), coupled with the ‘always positive mindset’ promoted by neoliberal ideology (Scharff, 2018), have effectively conditioned new ideal artists to willingly pave the way for a future of work devoid of the stability and social amenities that previous generations enjoyed (McRobbie, 2016, p.81-90).

As implied above, the state-prescribed conception of interdisciplinarity brings forward another dimension of the post-welfare models of work promoted by Dutch neoliberal cultural policies. Namely, collaborative work emerged as foundational to the artistic practices of new ideal artists in the discourses of research participants, who noted that the “renaissance idea of an artist ... [as] someone in his studio [that] works [until] the end of his life alone ... [is] not valid nowadays” (Zander). Rather, the artistic practices of new ideal artists revolve around “collective efforts” (Xena) and “consultancy” (Stefano). Projects are accomplished through “a lot of negotiation” (Stefano) with “very fluid team[s]” (Xena), consisting of “various artists or experts” (Zander). Nonetheless, discourses diverge with regard to the nature of these collaborations. While some research participants highlight there is no hierarchy between collaborators because “it’s not productive for anyone if there’s someone working under someone or not feeling like they can share their thoughts or share inputs” (Anna), the majority endorses a Fordist-like division of labour. Talking about his artistic practice, Zander stated that “I have a studio structure ... I have a core team ... of one project manager and technical producer ... and then ... I start taking people on board for a certain expertise ... working on different environments together under my vision”. Projects are thereby broken

down into specialized tasks, with each collaborator performing a distinct task in the production process, resembling a factory's assembly line.

This division of labour raises interesting empirical questions around the notions of authorship and ownership, and corresponding legal frameworks. Indeed, there seem to exist discordant views on this issue among research participants, with some advocating shared and equal ownership over artworks and others stating that “I’m getting the funding and do the payment, they are my projects and I call them as my collaborators” (Zander). The emphasis on efficiency and productivity associated with assembly line production likewise appears to be the driving force behind this division of labour, enabling new ideal artist to increase revenue. This is illustrated by Zander’s remark that “I started understanding how it still works ... [with] funding ... I always work with different people and different projects because through that I can have also multiple projects running at the same time”. Taken together, Zander’s comments suggest that structures and practices of state funding, which currently fail to encompass the potential for shared authorship and ownership, likewise perpetuate a Fordist-like division of labour. Nevertheless, research participants appear aware of the potential feelings of alienation from work that this division of labour can ensue, actively attempting to mitigate them by making “these processes enjoyable for everyone” and maintaining “a circus” (Zander).

Notably, the collaborative dimension of the new ideal artist repertoire introduces a distinct depiction of the worker imagined by Dutch cultural policies from the typical entrepreneurial self. Individuals in the cluster new ideal artists enact an outwards stance, highlighting the importance of diverse perspectives and collaboration across disciplines rather than a focus on individuality (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.15). In accordance with this repertoire, research participants distanced themselves from competition, instead emphasising community-building as a primary concern (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.16). This sentiment is encapsulated by Stefano’s statement that “let’s create community instead of competing ... my career goal now is that, you know, just continuing advancing in this direction, so how can I be of value for a community or build a community? How, you know, can I get out of this kind of individual artist career path?”. This commitment to community-building seems to arise from a focus on “giv[ing] back” (Xena) and improving the world by championing ecological and environmental sustainability and ethical decision-making (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14). This is illustrated by Xena’s remark that

I want to make work that is meaningful ... I want to make sure that it [artwork] is made with conscious decisions about the materials, also, what kind of company are you talking to? What kind of institutions are you collaborating with? Are you sure that this institution is ethical enough?

As such, new ideal artists embrace a moral and social mission, emphasising the importance of acting with integrity, contributing to society, and supporting “local” (Stefano) communities (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14-16). Notably, though, research participants do not identify these moral and social concerns solely as duties or conscientiousness, but also as catalysts for progress and innovation (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.15). When prompted to reflect on why she deems engaging collaborators from different socio-cultural backgrounds as important, Xena stated that “you are making the project better”.

Moreover, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists disrupt the performance of entrepreneurial subjectivity in discussions of artistic integrity. Adverbs such as “naturally and organically” (Zander), “easily and intuitively” (Anna), or “genuinely” (Xena) were systematically deployed by research participants to draw boundaries between themselves as authentic and others as ‘sell-outs’ (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.13; Scharff, 2016, p.118-119). Nonetheless, as alluded to in sub-section 4.1, new ideal artists organise and orient their thoughts, perceptions and actions toward the market, heeding to Secretary for Culture Van der Ploeg’s call for artists to align themselves with audiences’ demands and leverage business opportunities to broaden their reach (Meerkerk & Hoogen, 2018, p.26; Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). Specifically, market orientation became prominent in research participants’ narratives of their creative processes, who claimed that art is “for an audience ... otherwise it would be a hobby” (Anna). This is illustrated by Stefano’s remark that

Present[ing] the work for the first time ... is more like an audience testing and, then, still a lot of things can change because I could read the audience, how they respond to the artwork through their body movements, how they move in these spaces that I created and, then, there’s a certain adaptation afterwards until it gets to the final work.

New ideal artists thereby forfeit an art for art’s sake in favour of ‘commercial’ success, catering to the needs and desires of the public and prioritising measures of value such as audience attendance (Bourdieu, 1993, p.38). In line with this market orientation, research participants frequently deployed pecuniary, credentialing and entrepreneurial accounts in

narrations of their artistic careers (Everts, Hitters, & Berkers, 2022), as exemplified by Anna's comment that "there has been like a development since I graduated ... I can see it growing in terms of the works that I'm able to create or the places the work can go or the income it can generate". Accordingly, self-economisation (Loacker, 2013, p.128-129; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529-535), self-governance, and self-autonomy (McRobbie, 2016, p.52; Loacker, 2013, p.134) came to the fore in the discourses of research participants. Self-economisation emerged in discussions of strategies to manage tangible resources, such as artworks and revenue, as well as intangible ones, such as time and energy. Zander stated that he is "building two installations yearly that have their own lives ... that could be presented at several exhibitions or festivals and bring a certain revenue"; and, talking about the ways he allocates time expenditure, Stefano mentioned keeping "an Excel for every single minute" spent and asserted that a "meeting can be an email". In spite of the highly-flexible forms of labour associated with the creative force (McRobbie, 2016), research participants reported acting as their "own boss[es]" and attempting to "replicate ... a nine to five job" (Anna) to govern themselves. Remarkably, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists likewise appear to have adopted the "five-year plan" (Alexander, 2018, p.34) mindset promoted by the neoliberal model, as evidenced by Z's remark that "I'm working and creating ... a healthier structure ... [that] can develop in the next five or ten years". Still worth noting is Zander's use of the term "healthier" which denotes the belief that artistic practices should be run or operated like enterprises (Alexander, 2018, p.34). Self-autonomy became prominent in research participants' narrations of their artistic careers, whose development was presented as contingent on a series of strategic investments – that must pay off – on forms of capital (Loacker, 2013). This is encapsulated in Zander's statement that

I think that you are creating artworks that will have ... significant influence in your next steps and next years ... [so] I am always looking for new opportunities. By reaching out to the right people, by establishing projects that are thought through and thoroughly work by themselves, and as well having a successful audience, I think these are the steps that come together and bring you as an artist to the next step.

Coupled together, self-economisation, self-governance, and self-autonomy bring forth the foundational contour of the new ideal artist subjectivity, that is, the self as a business (Scharff, 2016, p.111-112). Through this lens, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists actively and willingly engage in self-promotion and self-marketing. Stefano stated that "this

artistic discipline [interdisciplinarity] is a lot about ... how you talk about the content, how you quote-unquote sell the content. I have to somehow ... sell myself or talk about my work". Drawing on this logic, research participants capitalise on distinct features, such as gender and ethnicity, as exclusive selling traits to market themselves (Scharff, 2016, p.111). Discussing strategies to advance her career, Xena expressed that

The strategy is that you also emphasise your strength that ... is given by [your] social context. If you're a minority, if you are a people of colour, if you can bring your personal stories ... always bring it up because ... they [key players allocating material and symbolic resources] probably have the diversity consideration. That's helpful, if you have dark skin.

The findings thereby suggest that, in the attempts to conform to genre conventions and improve their (dis)position in the field, new ideal artists play into the gendering and racialising governmentalities embedded in the structures and practices of state funding, subsequently serving the Dutch neoliberal government by governing and subsuming narratives with disruptive potential "via a form of self-discipline" (Saha, 2013, p.25). Nevertheless, the deployment of these self-exploitative strategies to secure funding gives rise to discord within new ideal artists, as they suppress feelings of unease and apprehension toward reproducing reductive depictions of gender, race and ethnicity to maintain the outward appearance that elicits the desired (re)actions in others (Ashton, 2021, p.3). The narrative of Xena, a young black woman, describing the process of being contracted, on a short-term basis, as a university teacher in the Netherlands encapsulates this sentiment:

[It] conflicts because I'm working with technology and I am a woman and ... of course, women in the computation field, technology field, they have to be spotlighted because the field is so dominated by men, at the same time, I don't want to be chosen by my gender. The head of department also mentioned that he chose me because they wanted to introduce ... people of colour and [a] different gender ... [but that] also conflicts like, okay, is it then because I am this person? It's complicated.

Non-white and non-male individuals thus appear to undergo additional emotional labour, in comparison to their counterparts, to become entrepreneurial (Ashton, 2021, p.9), positioning them at an enhanced risk of reaching a breaking point or burning out.

Moreover, through the lens of the self as a business, new ideal artists fabricate a distance from their selves that enables continuous self-improvement, recognising all dimensions of the

self – mental, physical, and spiritual – as viable for and capable of being optimised or improved (Scharff, 2016, p.112). That is, research participants are profoundly convinced that “an artistic practice is always a process, like, there is no success, there’s no moment where it’s like, oh, now I’m successful” (Anna) leading them to engage in a perpetual struggle for “critical growth ... a process that never stops” (Zander). The findings suggest that this relentless pursuit for “critical growth” (Zander) entails the integration and endorsement of a hyper-productive attitude (Scharff, 2016, p.112; Loacker, 2013, p.128-129; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529-535). As such, new ideal artists are ‘always at it’, a mindset endorsed by neoliberal cultural policies (Loacker, 2013, p.128-129) and further reinforced by the precarious nature of their profession (Scharff, 2016, p.112-113). This is illustrated by Anna’s remark that “you just don’t want to stop and the you’re like, oh, but I haven’t eaten today”. Remarkably, the hyper-productive attitude arises not only from within, but also is perpetuated by peers. Describing an occurrence that took place while he “was just not doing anything for like a couple of weeks ... [because of a] burnout”, Stefano noted his studio colleague’s perplexity, who asked “how do you do?”. Stefano’s remark hints at another matter predominant in the discourses of research participants, namely, the prevalence of mental health issues and stress-induced burn outs. Hyper-productivity, coupled with the crushing pressure of precarious working and living conditions, appears to be pushing new ideal artists to their breaking point. Virtually all research participants reported having experienced a burn out within the last year, as a result of the pervasive normalisation of “working ... on the weekends and day and night” (Zander). This experience is encapsulated in Stefano’s narration of the events leading to his burn out:

There was no break from professional life. I would just straight in the morning have to prove ... that I’m working. I remember being [in] such a high level of stress that my head was hurting. I wasn’t feeling great and I spent the rest of the week sick. Literally sick. High temperature. I couldn’t function because I [was] so stressed. And I think that was a burnout.

The prevalence of mental health issues and stress-induced burn outs further appears to be linked to the “always-on”, “fully plugged-in” mentality (Scharff, 2018, p.398-399) that the intersection of hyper-productivity with a relentless pursuit for self-improvement ensues, constructing the new ideal artist self as unable to disengage or disconnect fully from work and, thereby, as vulnerable to overworking. Again, precarious working conditions contribute

to the firm establishment of the always-on disposition among new ideal artists, as being constantly available or ‘at it’ is key to establishing a revenue stream in the expanding project-based economy (Scharff, 2018, p.399). This is evident in Anna’s comment that “I guess as an artist ... everything is inspiration and everything is research ... all the things you do in your personal life, they are still going to influence your professional life”, and in Xena’s explanation of why she is juggling multiple projects at the same time:

You don’t know when it’s [work] going to come again, you just have to take the opportunity to do it, otherwise, you would just refuse and maybe nobody calls you anymore ... I ... have to work even more than now because I’m not sure when I can get one [work opportunity] .

The always-on disposition seems to further organise and guide new ideal artists’ thoughts and actions around ‘free’ time (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, p.15). More specifically, the organisation of leisure activities is centred around a focus on preserving and improving one’s employability (Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.528-529). When prompted to reflect on the balance between her professional and personal lives, Xena stated that “everything I do ... [has] to be work-related, even a hobby ... should be helpful for my work, reading, it should be a helpful book for my project”. Significantly, even leisure activities not related to artistic labour emerged as seemingly contributing to their ability to be efficient and creative, signifying a profound concern with being “productive” (Anna). This is evident in Anna’s remark that “for me, it’s really important to exercise, it’s just always a really good way to clear my mind”. Leisure thus transmutes into something to be optimised, or “work[ed] on” (Xena), enabling new ideal artists to be better workers. Engaging in art-related events surfaced as an integral part of leisure endeavours for new ideal artists. These were framed by research participants as a source of entertainment and inspiration, as evidenced by Stefano’s comment that “a lot of free time goes into an art event or music event ... because that entertains me and inspires me ... not because of any professional ties to it but because it’s inspiring and ... entertaining ... I do love an art event”. Despite the disruption in the performance of entrepreneurial subjectivity implied in Stefano’s remark, an alternative reading concerning the significance of art events for new ideal artists emerged in the narratives of research participants. When urged to reflect on the dynamics giving rise to work opportunities, Anna stated that “you have to go out and network ... you should go to all the exhibitions and all the openings because that’s where you can maybe meet that person, where

there could be that spark ... if you don't go, then you, yeah, don't get those connections". The discourses of research participants thereby construct art-related events as networking playgrounds, spaces in which individuals strive to secure and enhance social capital, i.e., connections, in hopes of converting it into other forms of capital, namely, economic or cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p.233); and signal their standing in the field of restricted cultural production to other actors, drawing boundaries between those who are entitled to participate in it and those who are not (Bourdieu, 1993, p.42).

Indeed, the findings suggest that networking plays a central role in the distribution of material and symbolic resources among actors, with "the politics of cultural network[ing]" (Stefano) emerging as a primary concern in the discourses of individuals in the cluster new ideal artists. Research participants highlighted networking as a practice that contributes to the advancement of their artistic careers by facilitating work opportunities and the sourcing partners. Talking about his most recent projects, Stefano stated that "most of this was basically through networking ... networking is relevant, highly relevant ... and now that I'm making again a work of mine, I decided to reach out to Fleur, who I know". The findings further highlight that "networking in the digital" (Stefano) is increasingly relevant, that is, the practice of networking is more and more extending beyond the physical world into the digital realm, through communication technologies such as the social media platform Instagram. In a similar fashion to art-related events, individuals in the cluster new ideal artists utilise these digital spaces to signal their status in the field of restricted cultural production to other actors, reflected in the number of "followers on Instagram" (Zander), likes, or reshares, in their struggle to maintain or enhance their social and symbolic capital; and to secure new work opportunities and source partners. When prompted to reflect on the ways he leverages his network, Zander stated that "I'm more proactive in this situation so as [to] ... reaching out to people and getting my work further or my professional network", and in answer to the same question, Stefano reported that "there's a lot of these networking skills that I had to craft". As such, new ideal artists actively engage in networking practices, crafting their communication skills to advance their artistic careers. It is also worth noting that the practices of networking are endorsed and perpetuated by discourses within art schools (McRobbie, 2016, p.50), materialising into normative modes of communication, interaction and self-conduct. Talking about a colleague who he deems as a successful interdisciplinary artist, Stefano stated that "she comes from ArtScience [department at the Royal Academy of The Arts of The Hague], you know ... ArtScience teaches her to be ... social, networking all the time". Strikingly, the

findings suggest that these normative discourses give rise to tight-knit and exclusive networks that withhold vast amounts of social, economic, cultural and symbolic capital within the Dutch field of restricted cultural production. Research participants' discourses systematically alluded to other actors with a shared academic background while discussing their working lives, and key players in the field. This is evident in Stefano's remark that "We've studied [together], she was one year above me, but we studied the same things, the same department, we are both teachers in the same department now", and in Xena's answer to the question of how she first established contact with her collaborators that "they are often from the school that I graduated [from]". The art school thereby emerges in the discourses of research participants as not only a key site to develop social capital, but as an instrument of neoliberal ideology, enacting its pervasive subjectivising capacity to firmly install the idea of the network – "entailing shared sets of social and ethical norms" (McRobbie, 2016, p.87) – as a replacement for more traditional understandings about labour structures. More even so, art schools appear to work in tandem with state funding through the positioning of players who endorse the state-prescribed notion of interdisciplinarity – that is, new ideal artists – in key networks and locations within the Dutch cultural sector – as evidenced, for example, by Stefano's previous remark.

The intertwining of leisure and labour is further evident in research participants' discussions about their social and professional networks. Zander stated that "I have a lot of artist friends ... sometimes they are also frenemies ... I think almost ... 70 per cent are creatives", and Xena noted that "by working together, we become friends". In spite of the clear convergence of social and professional circles, Zander's use of the term "frenemies" hints at an underlying dimension of this issue. Remarkably, new ideal artists diverge from lingering romantic artists, who actively pursue friendships with fellow artists on the basis of conceiving those relationships as the primary source of emotional support and feelings of belonging, rather reporting feeling uneasy and conflicted due to the underlying omnipresence of economic logics, brought about by the always-on disposition (Scharff, 2018, p.398-399), that underpin such interactions (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2010, p.15; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007, p.529). Specifically, challenges in differentiating between leisure and labour, or personal and professional, were identified by research participants as contributing this sentiment, as evidenced by Stefano's remark that "she's a friend of mine, she would invite me for dinner and then talk about work ... at some point ... I didn't even know what to allocate to it anymore because is this dinner work or is this social life?". The findings further

suggest that “to be professional” (Stefano), i.e., to become entrepreneurial, new ideal artists perpetually engage in impressions management to cultivate the outward demeanours that evoke the intended (re)actions in others (Ashton, 2021, p.3), thereby undergoing emotional labour. This experience is encapsulated in Stefano’s comment that

There are events, social events that happen to actually be very professional because you want to make a good impression, and that’s where I notice that actually there is no boundary between personal and professional life, that even in my most social moments, I have to be professional ... when artists leave work, they talk about work ... because there is some intrinsic need for us to outreach ... there’s always some professional in the social.

Moreover, the intertwining of professional and social network appears to expose new ideal artists to abusive and harmful working environments, as ‘hard’ lines of proper conduct are often crossed:

We would be in the gallery and she would actually have fights with the other developer ... so, they would have fights, a lot of fights and she would come to me with this stress that she would just project on me ... and then at some point she actually got personal, what the fuck have you done the whole day? (Stefano)

Notably, in spite of the conflict – both internal and external – that the overlap of the social and professional engenders, new ideal artists “understand that it is like this” (Anna), denoting a resigned stance toward the lack of boundaries between these two domains of life. Once again, precarious working conditions seem to contribute to the poor enactment of work-life boundaries as, within the expanding project-based, network economy (Scharff, 2018, p.399; McRobbie, 2016, p.87), one’s social capital – sustained and enhanced through constant availability – is key to establishing a revenue stream.

The findings discussed here show the ways in which new ideal artists’ endorsement of state-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity renders them as ‘ideal’ cultural workers in the increasingly neoliberal Dutch cultural sector. That is, sacrificing ‘true’ interdisciplinarity, new ideal artists embrace the state-prescribed progressive language of new media as synonymous with interdisciplinarity to position themselves as competitive players in the field and enhance their ability to secure funding. Though the lens of interdisciplinarity, the discussion thus foregrounded the ways in which precariousness and genre intersect, positing governmental funding as a disciplinary instrument that exercises a genre-making capacity to regulate the aesthetic dimension of cultural production and the working conditions of artists.

Namely, by allocating financial resources to only those players who endorse its funding governmentalities, the state effectively advances its agenda of what is to be deemed as art and the conventions of particular genres.

5. Conclusion

This paper mapped the ways in which governmental funding affects the artistic careers of emerging interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands, drawing on empirical data gathered via semi-structured qualitative interviews. In line with previous research (Alexander, 2018; Scharff, 2014; 2016; 2018; Saha, 2013; Loacker, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007), my analysis revealed that state funding is profoundly changing how emerging interdisciplinary artists relate to the art field, their practices, and themselves, while conditioning them to a life of precarity. In relation to this latter point, I offered an alternative reading of the idyllic reality seemingly foregrounded in the accounts of research participants, arguing that Dutch cultural policies' emphasis on self-governance drives emerging interdisciplinary artists to hold themselves accountable for their inability to secure funding – and subsequent life of precarity – and deny the existence of structural issues (Scharff, 2016). Notably, in contrast to the findings of Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2010), my analysis supports the argument proposed by Been, Wijngaarden and Loots (2023), highlighting the disproportionate impact of austerity measures on interdisciplinary artists, who are caught in between the cracks of a system that emphasises clear-cut definitions and metrics. Specifically, I brought to the fore the challenges faced by emerging interdisciplinary artists in 'fitting' the unboundedness of their practices into single-discipline funding schemes, echoing the case of interdisciplinary academic research (Bromham, Dinnage, & Hua, 2023). A lack of funding instruments targeting interdisciplinary practices, a poor correspondence between reviewers' expertise and project's subject matter, and the less marketable nature of interdisciplinarity in comparison to other genres seem to contribute conjointly to these challenges; however, limitations in the data hindered a precise analysis of whether these propositions are substantiated. In this vein, this paper strives to represent the beginning of an empirically informed discussion of the nuances of the intersection of interdisciplinarity and financing within the cultural sector.

Strikingly, in spite of widespread accounts of precarity, my data illuminated discrepancies in research participants' experiences of intensifying austerity politics within the Dutch cultural sector. These emerged as stemming from diverging perspectives of governmental funding as a normative instrument that regulates the aesthetic dimension of cultural production, namely, in terms of genre (Kolbe, 2022; Saha, 2013; Becker, 1982). Specifically, I teased out two clusters of interdisciplinary artists, enacting different notions of interdisciplinarity: The lingering romantic artists, committed to 'real', unbound

interdisciplinary practice; and the new ideal artists, endorsing the state-prescribed progressive language of new media as synonymous with interdisciplinarity. Taking issue with the universal experience of entrepreneurial subjectification under conditions of financialised neoliberalism (de Keere & Cescon, 2023), my discussion revealed the ways in which precariousness and genre intersect and evidenced how the extent to which one endorses state-prescribed conventions of genre determines its (dis)position in the cultural sector. That is, while lingering romantic artists are confined to a life of scarcity at the periphery of the field – a life that logics of neoliberal subjectification effectively established as normative and inescapable – due to their refusal of state-prescribed ideas of interdisciplinarity, new ideal artists position themselves as competitive players and enhance their ability to secure funding by sacrificing ‘true’ interdisciplinarity in favour of state-prescribed genre conventions. The endorsement of genre-packaging practices is, therefore, what renders artists as ‘ideal’ workers in the increasingly neoliberal Dutch cultural sector. Still worth noting is that state-prescribed conventions of interdisciplinarity appear to be embedded in and endorse neoliberalism’s focus on progress and innovation, championing technology as key for advancing the art world (de Keere & Cescon, 2023, p.14). Placing the field of restricted cultural production as contained within the field of power (Bourdieu, 1993; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991), my analysis thereby supports a rich tradition of sociological research positing state funding as an instrument of neoliberal ideology, that constrains artistic freedom, weakens artistic drive, and subjects the intrinsic value of creative work to inflation (Kolbe, 2022; Alexander, 2018; Loacker, 2013; Saha, 2013; Eikhof & Haunschild, 2007; Bourdieu, 1993; Burchell, Gordon, & Miller, 1991; Becker, 1982). Additionally, collaborative work emerged as foundational to the state-prescribed practice of interdisciplinarity, opening new pathways for research around the interplay of collaborative labour with notions of authorship and ownership, as well as the accompanying legal frameworks. Through the lens of interdisciplinarity, I thus foregrounded the disciplinary effect of governmental funding, that pushes artists to adhere to genre conventions via a form of self-discipline (Saha, 2013) and produces varying models of post-welfare creative labour, expanding our knowledge of cultural production and the mechanism that govern it.

Moreover, as alluded to above, my discussion of distinct archetypes of interdisciplinary artists takes issue the universalist conception of cultural workers as ideal entrepreneurial subjects, tying in with academic debates outside of the field of sociology of arts and culture around the rise of a new model of ideal worker (de Keere & Cescon, 2023). Specifically, my

analysis elucidated the ways in which the new ideal artist archetype aligns with notions of ideal worker, integrating distinct repertoires of post-welfare models and meanings labour (de Keere & Cescon, 2023). That is, it incorporates a combination of economic drive, pursuit of critical growth and proclivity to embrace risks, with a focus on authenticity; a passion and commitment to improving the world, with sustainability and ethics; and an emphasis on collaboration and community-building, with technological innovation and productivity. Crucially, against the backdrop of the neoliberal transformation of the Dutch cultural sector, I foreground the new ideal artist archetype as a new model of ideal worker, linking these academic debates outside of the field of sociology of arts to one around aesthetics. Namely, my analysis reveals that the new ideal artist serves neoliberal ideology, discarding the 'problematic' notion of work altogether by surpassing the antithesis between the self and labour; but, more even so, it sheds light upon the ways in which this archetype is prototyping frameworks for cementing neoliberalism's rule over the production of culture across disciplines and fields. As such, my thesis contributes to growing literature on archetypes of post-welfare ideal worker and inherent practices and meanings of labour, expands the academic debate on subjectivities under conditions of financialised neoliberalism, and specifically advances understandings about cultural production and its regulation.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH

Project Title	Between the cracks: Mapping the artistic careers and values of interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands
Name of Principal Investigator	Sofia Vieira
Name of Organisation	Erasmus University Rotterdam – Erasmus School of History, Culture, and Communication.
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Sofia Vieira. I am inviting you to participate in this research project about how governmental funding affects the artistic careers of interdisciplinary artists in the Netherlands. The purposes of this research project are to gain insights into the experiences of austerity by interdisciplinary artists, and investigate individual action under conditions of financialised neoliberalism.
Procedures	You will participate in an interview lasting approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. You will be asked questions about your perception of the repercussions of governmental funding on your career. Sample questions include: How would you describe professional success? You must be at least 18 years old.
Potential and anticipated Risks and Discomforts	There are no obvious physical, legal or economic risks associated with participating in this study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your participation is voluntary and you are free to discontinue your participation at any time.
Potential Benefits	Participation in this study does not guarantee any beneficial results to you. The broader goal of this research is to contribute to the development of better cultural policies.
Sharing the results	The results of the thesis will be shared with all research participants by May 24, 2023, at the latest via e-mail.

<p>Confidentiality</p>	<p>Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. No personally identifiable information will be reported in any research product. Moreover, only trained research staff will have access to your responses. Within these restrictions, results of this study will be made available to you upon request.</p> <p>As indicated above, this research project involves making audio recordings of interviews with you. Transcribed segments from the audio recordings may be used in published forms (e.g., journal articles and book chapters). In the case of publication, pseudonyms will be used. The audio recordings, forms, and other documents created or collected as part of this study will be stored in a secure location in the researcher’s password-protected computer and will be destroyed within ten years of the initiation of the study.</p>
<p>Right to Withdraw and Questions</p>	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the primary investigator: Sofia Vieira at 568886mg@eur.nl</p>
<p>Statement of Consent</p>	<p>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree that you will participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</p> <p>For research problems or any other question regarding the research project, please contact the coordinator of the Master Thesis Class <u>Dr. Timo Koren via koren@eshcc.eur.nl</u></p> <p>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</p>
<p>Audio recording (if applicable)</p>	<p>I consent to have my interview audio recorded</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> no</p>

Secondary use (if applicable)	I consent to have the anonymised data be used for secondary analysis <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no	
Signature and Date	NAME PARTICIPANT	NAME PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR
	SIGNATURE	SIGNATURE
	DATE	DATE

APPENDIX B

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Anna	25	Female
Irene	28	Female
Karolien	32	Female
Linnea	26	Female
Marianne	32	Female
Stefano	26	Male
Theresia	27	Female
Vasco	27	Male
Xena	32	Female
Zander	30	Male

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Welcoming Interviewee

- Thank you for meeting me! I really appreciated it.
- Today, I would like to ask you some questions about your perception of effects of public funding on the careers of interdisciplinary artists.
- There are no wrong answers - it's all about your own personal perception.
- Please feel free to ask me to rephrase a question or to clarify any other doubts you might have.

Introduction

To start, I would like to know a bit about you and your background:

- How old are you?
- Where were you born?
- Can you share with me how you came to live in the Netherlands?

Perception of Work Situations

- How would you describe your current work situation?
- Can you please tell me the story of how you reached your current work situation?
- What does artistic freedom mean to you?
- Can you recall an instance when you have had to compromise your artistic freedom in the past?

Career Aims

- How would you describe professional success?
- Can you tell me about a particular instance in which you felt successful?
- How have your career goals changed over time?

Work Motivation

- How would you describe your creative process?
- How do you balance your artistic vision with the need for funding to support your work?

- How does funding allow you to pursue your artistic vision?

Strategies of Navigation

- How would you describe the availability of public funding for artists like you?
- Can you please walk me through your fundraising process?
- Imagine a fellow interdisciplinary artist ask you for advice on how to secure public funding for their project. Could you please describe what your advice would be?

Enactment of Work-Life Boundaries

- Can you please tell me about how you spend your free time?
- In what ways do your professional and social networks compare?
- In what ways do you tailor your social life to meet the demands of your career?

Wrapping-up

- Is there anything you would like to add to your answers or anything you want to expand and elaborate on?
- Or is there anything I might have missed?
- Do you have any questions about our study?
- Thank you so much for your answers and your time!

