‘There’s No Limit to an Artist!’

A Critical Inquiry into Age-Related Policies and Experiences at the Jan van Eyck Academie

Quality, development and authenticity

“But one day [students] learn to work as artists. A work appears, you only add more objects. It’s very pressure is very strong.” (F)

Living Like an Artist

VAN EYCK
‘There’s No Limit to an Artist!’

A Critical Inquiry into Age-Related Policies and Experiences at the Jan van Eyck Academie

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Introduction

The saying goes that age is but a number. Yet, it is also so much more than that, as many authors in the field of aging studies or cultural gerontology have shown and as we discovered over six weeks of research. The topic of aging comes with many unspoken presuppositions which often implicitly regulate and influence our perception of what it means to grow and be older. As Research Master students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (2017–2018), we collaborated with the Van Eyck Academie and Maastricht University, to conduct a qualitative inquiry into how such presuppositions play out in the art world. We focused on the context of Dutch post-academic art institutions, using the Van Eyck Academie as our primary case study. The first part of this case study focuses on the institutions and the second on the experiences of artists at Van Eyck. We conducted a literature review, a discourse analysis of policy documents, and a thematic analysis of interviews and ethnographic observations. Our main focus within Van Eyck was the Living Like an Artist program (from now on referred to as LLA), a pilot project that offered one-month residencies to three artists over the age of 40. Using the LLA program as a case study, we aim to answer the following main questions: (1) How are ageist assumptions experienced, resisted, and reiterated by professional artists?; and (2) What role do age-limiting policies play in this dynamic? We hope that this research and its recommendations will help to further the development of this program and age-friendly policies at the Van Eyck Academie.

1 — Theoretical Framework

The LLA program focuses on how artists’ lifestyles can provide models for living and aging in contemporary Western societies. In our first section, we tease out the links between successful aging, creativity and aging, being successful as an artist, and the role of age in defining a successful artistic career. This literature review helps us to contextualize our research and the activities at Van Eyck.

SUCCESSFUL AGING AND ARTS

THE SUCCESSFUL AGING PARADIGM AND ITS CRITIQUES

As the global population ages, debates on what it means to grow older are becoming increasingly important. The paradigm of “successful aging” first appeared in the early 1960s (Havighurst, 1961) and has since taken on a specific meaning. The paradigm suggests that individuals are in control of their aging process and should be able to remain independent, active, and productive. As John W. Rowe and Robert L. Kahn put it, successful aging means the “avoidance of disease and disabilities, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function and sustained engagement in social and productive activities” (1998, p. 439). Aging persons are expected to be responsible for themselves, preventing dependence on family, friends, and the state. The successful aging paradigm fosters the idea of permanent personhood, implying that individuals remain the same throughout life – the ideal older person has not aged at all as it were.

Since its conception and implementation in many health policy plans, the successful aging paradigm has been frequently criticized. Sarah Lamb et al. (2017), for instance, have pointed to four specific reasons for concern. Firstly, they argue that the stress on individual agency and choice does not take into account physical and cognitive function and sustained engagement in social and productive activities”. Secondly, Lamb et al. assert that the paradigm reinforces gender stereotypes and inequalities by addressing men and women differently; physical vigor and sexual functionality are foregrounded for men and beauty and outer attractiveness for women. Thirdly, they claim that the paradigm is ethnocentric in nature, pertaining mainly to a Western, even American value system. As successful aging is now exported globally, it colonizes the existing models of aging present in other cultures.
postulates that everyone has creative potential (Weiner, 2000), democratizing creativity for all (Glavine, 2015, p. 122). However, the i-paradigm retains the essentialistic understanding of creativity that was present in the He-paradigm. In the late 20th century, studies into the psychology of success, intelligence and resilience highlighted the importance of the arts in fostering growth in later life, and the effects of older people’s engagement in the creative arts on quality of life and well-being (Swinnen, 2019, p. 1). The latter two are specifically relevant in the context of our research. Being creative through artistic activities can enable older people to stay active in later life (van Houtte & Cambier, 2005), increase their well-being, and make it easier for them to cope with physical and cognitive changes that come with age (Cohen, 1994; Thelwell & Archer, 2014) explain that artistic and creativity-based interventions can be used as treatment of isolation and mental health issues, such as depression and lack of self-worth. Artistic activities can keep people mentally active and stave off cognitive decline. Additionally, Donald (1984) points out that engaged artists can also be a source of inspiration for others. People can enjoy and benefit from artistic works even if they do not engage in creative activities themselves. In short, creative engagement can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being.

Indeed, recent literature has emphasized that research into the lifestyle of older artists, who presumably possess both big- and little-c creative skills, can provide society with exemplary models of aging. One of the pioneers in this field is Joan Jeffri (2011), who carried out an extensive study of older artists in the New York and Los Angeles metro areas. She explains that artists fight isolation by constantly engaging in professional networking and staying in contact with family and friends. Moreover, many artists do not retire, as their art is their passion. They structure their lives in such a way that they can keep working as they get older. Their work and identity as an artist give them a sense of satisfaction, which increases their self-esteem and self-worth. Finally, Jeffri mentions resilience; someone’s capacity to grow and thrive in the face of and as a result of adversity. She believes that artists are resilient and tenacious because they use the positive and negative events that happen in their lives to create meaning and engagement in the world with their works.

A Dutch scholar who contributes to this line of thought is Leo Delfgaauw (2017) who studies artists’ lifelong learning processes and ‘learning biographies.’ Similar to Jeffri, Delfgaauw sees artists as engaging in a continuous process of learning and mastering the knowledge and skills that are necessary to the making and exhibiting of their works. This learning biography, which is at once cognitive, emotional, and practical, stretches over the length of the artist’s life and career. Delfgaauw has taught himself to deal with certain experiences by reviewing them in their works. Therefore, they are able to deal with loss in a fairly good way.

It is interesting to see that both Jeffri and Delfgaauw’s arguments simultaneously play into and subvert the successful aging paradigm. On the one hand, they look at the ways in which older artists can be a model for ‘staying young’ and can, thus, counter the problem of aging. On the other hand, they show us that, through their resilience, passion, and pride in their work, older artists also embrace older age and can help others do the same. However, care should be taken not to overlook the difficulties and challenges that artists deal with on a daily basis throughout their lives.

THE SUCCESSFUL ARTIST AND THE LINK BETWEEN SUCCESS AND AGE

DEFINING SUCCESS AS AN ARTIST

Within the art world, success is defined in many different ways. Acknowledging this, we have decided to focus on how success is experienced in the economic and neoliberal terms, as these ideas emerged from our empirical data. In the early 2000s, Daniel Pink, writing from the perspective of market ideology, described the emergence of a new model of behavior for succeeding in a changing market. He coined this model the “free-agent,” and emphasized the agent’s ability for self-reliance and independence. Pink singled out freedom, self-expression, authenticity, individual accountability, and self-defined notions of success as characteristic of the free agent. They have become paramount in defining what it means to be successful in the art world and creative industries (Pink, 2009, 2013). According to Jonathan Schroeder (2005), successful artists are those who manage to have their work widely exhibited, bought, and collected. They can be the product of a brand manager, actively engaged in developing, nurturing, and promoting themselves as recognizable producers in the competitive culture (Mikkonen & Stavrum, 2015). The latter two are specifically relevant in the context of our research. Being creative through artistic activities can serve as an outlet for dealing with isolation and mental health issues, such as depression and lack of self-worth. Arts treatment of isolation and mental health issues, such as depression and lack of self-worth. Arts...
they age. Thus, throughout their careers, artists have to navigate normative definitions of what it means to be successful both in relation to the market and to aging. This makes aging artists such an apt case study for an exploration of two related subjects: firstly, the ageist assumptions behind the paradigms of successful aging and of successful artistry, specifically in the context of Dutch post-academic art institutions such as Van Eyck, and secondly, the ways in which artists negotiate these paradigms in their work and life.

Section 1 showed that the focus on creativity both reiterates and offers ways out of the successful aging paradigm. Being creative and engaging in art activities is presented as a way to stay active, increase well-being, and cope with physical and cognitive changes that come with age. If youth equals success, artists are bound to relate to paradigms of successful aging in order to stay (or become) successful as they grow older.

### 2. Institutional Context

#### INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, we will take a closer look at the Van Eyck Academie, compare it to other post-academic art institutions in the Netherlands, and provide an analysis of the LLA program. The Methode Art (Section 1) program relates directly to the scholarly framework laid out in the previous section, as its main purpose is to study the lives of aging artists. However, if we want to have a proper understanding of LLA, it has to be contextualized. This implies that we need to examine how the program relates to Van Eyck’s overall identity as an institution and how it is characteristic of a Dutch setting. The following research question guided our analysis below. What is the rationale behind the age limit of approximately 35-40 in Dutch art institutional contexts such as the Van Eyck Academie and how does the LLA program relate?

To answer this question, we collected a range of different sources (Table 1). These included policy documents such as grant applications (with their corresponding assessments), policy plans for different periods (both on a governmental and institutional level), and project proposals. We also conducted interviews with people involved in the overall management and organization of the Van Eyck Academie in order to study how their views related to the documents that we studied. We have included the topic guides used for these interviews in Appendix 2. Several documents that we used contained personal information. We took care to exclude personal data such as names, addresses, and phone numbers from our data archive. In addition, we have asked our interviewees for their consent to record, transcribe, and quote from the interviews (with explicit mention of their names) at the beginning of each interview. Information that we were not allowed to share was kept off the record. The majority of the interviews in this section were conducted in Dutch.

| Table 1. Documents and Interviewees Section 2 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| **Documents**                 | **Interviewers** |
| Yearly reports De Ateliers 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017 | Rebekka Straetmans director Van Eyck Mirror |
| Plan of activities BIS De Ateliers 2017-2020 | Madeleine Bisscheroux public program, events, and support of residents |
| Yearly reports Rijksakademie 2014, 2015, and 2016 | Solange Roosen communication |
| Policy plan Van Eyck 2013-2016 and 2017-2020 | Brigitte Bloksma former director Van Eyck Mirror |
| Project proposal LLA and symposium LLA | Karl Dittrich president of supervisory board |
| Artist applications (general and LLA) | Lex ter Braak director Van Eyck Academie |
| LLA call for applications | Margriet Schavemaker member of supervisory board |
| Fund application LLA |  |
| LLA letters of acceptance and rejection |  |

We analyzed our data by conducting a critical discourse analysis, i.e., we carried out a close reading of our sources in order to illuminate the themes, words, and arguments that were characteristic of the source texts. James Paul Gee (2005) wrote in his work on discourse analysis: “We use language to get recognised as taking on a certain identity or role, that is to build an identity here-and-now” (Gee, 2005, p. 11). As such, we looked into the performative aspects of language, also referred to as “language in action.” We asked how Van Eyck utilizes language to develop a professional identity in response to changes in the national context. What specific ideas and concepts come to the fore in our analysis of the sources? A better understanding of the identity that Van Eyck has created for itself improves our insight into the ways in which the LLA program matches its institutional context. The discourses of an institution are shaped by developments on different levels. In order to carry out a proper discourse analysis, we need to show how the macro- (societal), meso- (institutional), and micro-level (individual) discourses are entangled and how they influence each other. We will start with an analysis of the discourses that are characteristic of Van Eyck in general. Subsequently, we will investigate the LLA program to understand its goals and how it relates to the institution’s grand narrative. Finally, we will analyze the discourses used by similar post-academic institutions in the Netherlands (De Rijksakademie Van Beeldende Kunsten and De Ateliers in Amsterdam) to compare and contrast their different institutional identities, specifically in relation to the notion of age.

### THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF VAN EYCK

In 2011, the Dutch government announced that, for the period 2013-2016, it would drastically cut its subsidies for the cultural sector (Sabel, 2011, Ministry of OCW, 2011, p. 2). The sector should become less dependent on grants and start earning its own money. Entrepreneurship and flexibility became leading concepts, which is very much in line with section 1.3 of this report. Halbe Zijistra, who was responsible for the planned budget cuts, claimed that “it is about more!” (Ministerie van OCW, 2011, p. 3 – our translation). Looking back at our scholarly framework, it becomes clear that the described neo-liberal influences on the art world also manifested themselves in the Dutch context. The cuts in governmental funding had a great impact on post-academic art institutions, including Van Eyck. The overall funding for these institutions would be drastically cut and, after 2016, they would receive no subsidy at all.

In light of these developments, Van Eyck presented its policy plan for the period 2013-2016. It is in this plan that we can identify the kind of identity that Van Eyck wanted to establish for itself. Van Eyck especially stressed the need for change if the institution was to have a chance of survival (Van Eyck Academie, 2012, p. 5). In spite of the obstacles inherent to the decline of income, the policy plan, entitled “The Living Mirror: Art in the World” presented the future as ambitious and exciting. Van Eyck uses the mirror metaphor to make a point about the open character of the institute and the social relevance of the work produced in its context. However, it never becomes entirely clear what the metaphor is supposed to mean. The policy plan offers several suggestions: a mirror as an instrument of reflection (p. 14), a living mirror (p. 5), and a double mirror (p. 6). It seems that Van Eyck wanted to relate the mirror to the idea of engaging with society as a means to open up the institution. Yet, since the actual strategies needed to reach this end are not really specified, one is left to wonder what they are and how they can be evaluated. In our recommendation section, we will return to this issue. In addition to the outward-looking perspective, innovation, internationality, and interconnectedness are the most prominent and recurring concepts in the policy plan.

From our analysis of the documents and interviews, it follows that, during recent years, Van Eyck’s focus has shifted from being an institution mainly concerned with facilitating theoretical research to one where art practice itself is foregrounded. Van Eyck is turning into a...
Living Like an Artist

2013-2016, the Council for Culture advised the rather than older. Van Eyck resident is supposed to be younger we can still deduce that the prototypical emphasis on chronological age when compared entrepreneurship and building a network during which both are part of a societal context. able to reflect on themselves, their work, and the Van Eyck. Artists working at Van Eyck should be vocalized this specific mission.

There is no doubt that Van Eyck wanted to open institution in which the art practice and there is room for innovation despite cuts in management stated that “all great artists have a

In the funding application for the LLA program that was submitted to Bank Giro Loterij Fonds in 2017, Bloksma, former director of Van Eyck Mirror, clarifies that it “will add to the legitimacy of the artist in society in an innovative manner.” She further explains that “it is not the value of the art that is taken into consideration, but the lifestyle of the artist” (Bloksma, 2014, p. 8). Bloksma argues that the government would not invest in art for art’s sake but rather in art for the wider society when supporting Van Eyck.

Lex ter Braak uses a similar argument, proposing that, in order to inspire others, artists should be at the center instead of at the edges of society (Being an artist, 2013, p. 2). This sentiment was shared by other interviewees. Straetmans, director of Van Eyck Mirror, was a collaboration between Van Eyck, pension fund APG, Limburg Province, Maastricht Municipality, and the Elisabeth Stroucken Stichting. The aim is to present a possible response to the aging population by highlighting the lifestyle and qualities of older professional artists. Guest speaker Joan Jeffri, whose work we referred to in our theoretical section, claimed that older artists are a perfect model for society because they are flexible in dealing with bad and good news; they are persistent, and stay fit to keep working.

The relevance of the LLA program builds on the idea of providing more positive models for aging. This focus on societal relevance is consistent throughout all documents (De Ateliers, 2014, 2015; 2016a, 2016b, 2017a). Whenever De Ateliers refers to older residents, they are called “young artists.” The frequency with which this denotation is very high and, therefore, noticeable. Consequently, younger artists feel invalid when comparing themselves to the case for older artists. By using this kind of discourse, De Ateliers discourages older artists from applying for the LLA program. Looking at the statistics presented in the annual reports (2014-2017), the consequence of this discouragement becomes clear. The average age of residents who apply for a residency is approximately 29. Throughout these reports, the average age of residents is 28 (this includes residents who are finishing, continuing, and starting their residency). On average, the youngest artist present at any given time is 23 and the oldest 34. Between 2014 and 2017, there was a steady decrease in the age of applicants, with the number of applicants under 30 being more than 35. The 2014 Annual Report includes a detailed breakdown of all 773 applicants for that year (Table 2).
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Table 2: Age and Applicants (De Ateliers Jaarverslag 2014, p. 21)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Applicants</th>
<th>Residents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 with an overview of the ages of all applicants shows that the age of the residents is not representative of the age of the applicants – not even for the average applicant.

Table 3: Age, Applicants, and Residents (De Ateliers Jaarverslag 2014, p. 13-21)

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These numbers not only show that older artists are less interested in a residency at De Ateliers. Even when they are interested, their chances of getting accepted are practically non-existent. In addition, it is quite remarkable that De Ateliers employs quite narrow age stages for applicants younger than 35 while it puts every applicant over the age of 35 together into one vast group of 35+. These statistics clearly reflect a very particular discourse that prefers much younger artists over older ones. Nonetheless, the call for applications and annual reports state that “Artists under 30 years of age are preferred, but older artists are also welcome to apply” (De Ateliers, 2017b, p. 2). De Ateliers claims that it does not enforce an age limit. However, the fact that between 2014 and 2017, there was not a single resident older than 35, combined with the fact that 152 artists over 35 applied in 2014 (most likely 2015, 2016, and 2017 had similar numbers), makes this supposedly non-existent age limit quite implausible.

Why does De Ateliers find young artists so appealing for residency positions? The literal answer to this question can be found in the 2016 and 2017 annual reports and in the Activiteitenplan De Ateliers BIS 2017-2020: “We [De Ateliers] focus primarily on people in their twenties, a group that, as opposed to more advanced artists, has a need for intensive feedback and is open to change and innovation” (2016b, p. 2). This is quite a sweeping statement, implying that artists over thirty are more advanced, do not need intensive feedback, and are not open to change and innovation. Based on this discourse, it seems that De Ateliers associates youth with innovation and a willingness to change.
Once collected, the data was subjected to a thematic analysis with special attention to experiential and discursive elements. Ultimately, we identified four larger themes: (1) Negotiating Artistic Aspirations and Market Requirements; (2) Understandings of Creative Development; (3) Understandings of the Jan van Eyck Academie, and (4) Age in the Art World. Within and across each of these themes and transcripts, paradoxes and tensions were present, showing that the discourses that exist in the institution and artists’ interviews are both subverted and reproduced. Understanding these conflicting discourses is especially important for further developing projects such as Living Like an Artist. It is essential that future policy-making takes into consideration the concrete ways in which artists negotiate discursive tensions in the art world. Each theme and its paradoxes will now be discussed in turn.

**NEGOTIATING ARTISTIC ASPIRATIONS AND MARKET REQUIREMENTS**

Building and sustaining a career as an artist entails navigating a complex landscape made up of uncertainty, financial needs, cultural and personal expectations, and everyday morality. Decisions related to financial success are often discussed by artists as being at odds with what it means to be a good artist. In this section, we focus on some of these tensions and the strategies artists employ to deal with them.

Upon entering the art world, artists are forced to deal with ideological and economic concerns. As reported by our interviewees, in the past, art schools used to be free and open to people from all social classes. Selma suggests that this history is at least partially responsible for the persistence of a romanticized image of the artist as someone who does not have to deal with real-life concerns and can devote him- or herself entirely to art. However, as emerged from the focus group interview, attending a good art school today entails a considerable financial investment because of the rise in tuition fees. The prestige of the institution is perceived to influence the quality of the education itself as well as the quality of the network surrounding artists.

I am very tired of this kind of system where you have, for sure, more access to residences, to galleries, just because you paid. ... So, I think it’s this as well a political choice, just to step out a little bit. It’s harder, it becomes more recognized. However, it’s true that all connected somehow – the school, the place, and your curriculum. (Monica)

Refusing to attend prestigious art schools can, thus, be a “political” choice cast in moral terms as a way of not feeding into a system that forces artists to buy their chance of success in the art world. Nonetheless, young artists often end up “taking out loans,” jeopardizing their ideological convictions in order not only to access a good education but to improve their chances of survival in the market. Once artists are out of school, they have to pay back these loans and a new urgency for negotiation presents itself.

You have to think about, when you come out of that institution, ... how, maybe, you’re going to make that money back. So, you have to think about what kind of value your work has before you even make it. So, ... the choice to engage in any form of art could become limited when there is money involved ... (Selma)

Selma explains that, if recent graduates are to earn a living with their art, they cannot freely follow any trajectory. They must carefully consider the requests of the market. It is interesting to note how this problematizes Bourdieu’s (1984) original theorization of the artist as a disinterested actor only moved by “pure aesthetic vision” (Raysseng et al., 2007, p. 2) who is not concerned with economic gains. Judging from Selma’s quote, artists are well aware of, and cannot ignore, the fact that the market and financial constraints interact with the art practice to the point of impacting the very aesthetic choices that they make. Even if the myth of the disinterested artist has not completely disappeared, artists describe themselves as caught up in a negotiation between the will to follow their intrinsic motivations and the need to acknowledge their financial reliance on art (Towse, 2001).

Such negotiation between market pressures and the authenticity of one’s art practice was termed by Paola Vela “the great tension and the great dilemma” faced by artists.

... observe many cases - many talented students. But one day [they] leave the university and begin to work as artist. [And] the content of [their] work disappears, [they] only produce very decorative objects. It's very dangerous ... the pressure is very strong.

In this quote, Vela, who holds a teaching position at the Pontifical Catholic University in Lima, refers to her students who have to deal with market pressures as soon as they graduate. If they lack the necessary rigor, they succumb to such pressures and their work, although it probably sustains them financially, runs the risk of losing its content.

Dealing with the market is, therefore, a very complex endeavor: artists need to put their work on the market because it can earn them some recognition. However, it is crucial that such recognition is only considered a secondary consequence. Artists fear that financial reliance on their art might prevent them from finding satisfaction in their practice per se. Alternatively, they may get caught up in the same vicious circle described by Vela: they find what the market likes, turn it into their brand, and then start reproducing this recipe, and, in doing so, halt their exploration and artistic development. Our participants responded to such issues by trying to avoid relying on the artistic labor market altogether.

I think artists are really resourceful ... really creative, not just within their work but within their lifestyle. And, I think they really are creative enough to fashion a way so that art and life can be separate. Like, they can find a way to just make money somewhere else and not have the art answer to the kind of lifestyle you have. ... (Selma)

As articulated by Selma, artists think of themselves as quite resourceful people, capable of transferring their creative skills to concrete life situations. They see the creativity that they developed through art practices as applicable to concrete life circumstances. Being creative, they think, helps them to come up with creative sources of income in order to keep money and art practice separate.

Natascha Rodenburg, a LLA participant who had not worked as a professional artist during the past twenty years, spoke of her ability to always keep exploring the world and finding niches for sustaining herself. This constitutes an integral part of what she terms “applied creative living,” that is, applying her creative skills to enable her to get by in her everyday life. Similarly, the other two LLA participants came up with creative ways to separate their source of income from their practice. Vela finds a “fund” for her art in her teaching position and Magdalena Peltzer in the parallel business that she runs with her husband.

Me and my husband, [at some point we were out of money], and, then, we had to make a decision. ... So, we did, we made a recipe. Now, I say that we made a recipe but, then, we weren’t wild and young and [look a gamble]. We built a house and a place, so, [this] gave us a basic income to feel free to do what we like. I didn’t become a very famous artist and my husband didn’t either but what we did is, we didn’t want to do, free to develop our work. That is the most important thing and gives the most satisfaction. ... So, [now] when we sell an art piece, we are happy, happy, like children. ... “Yes, that’s why we do it!” And art should never be dependent on money. I mean, it’s an afterwards thing.

These ideas of “applied creative living” resonate with the little-c creative skills (Swinnen, 2018) that can offer a basis for the successful aging paradigm and a potential way out of it. In the context of artists’ careers, a potential way of reconceiving paradigms for aging emerges in the “applied creative living” approach (Lamb et al., 2011). The idea of resilience, especially in the case of artists, is closely related to their ability to embrace change at any stage of their life, and, in so doing, resist the neoliberal obsession with permanent personhood (Lamb et al., 2017). Artists think of their personal growth as being at odds with what they did, they didn’t want to do, free to develop their work. That is the most important thing and gives the most satisfaction. ... So, [now] when we sell an art piece, we are happy, happy, like children. ... “Yes, that’s why we do it!” And art should never be dependent on money. I mean, it’s an afterwards thing.

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These ideas of “applied creative living” resonate with the little-c creative skills (Swinnen, 2018) that can offer a basis for the successful aging paradigm and a potential way out of it. In the context of artists’ careers, a potential way of reconceiving paradigms for aging emerges in the “applied creative living” approach (Lamb et al., 2011). The idea of resilience, especially in the case of artists, is closely related to their ability to embrace change at any stage of their life, and, in so doing, resist the neoliberal obsession with permanent personhood (Lamb et al., 2017). Artists think of their personal growth as being at odds with what they did, they didn’t want to do, free to develop their work. That is the most important thing and gives the most satisfaction. ... So, [now] when we sell an art piece, we are happy, happy, like children. ... “Yes, that’s why we do it!” And art should never be dependent on money. I mean, it’s an afterwards thing.
as having to sustain an art practice which failed to provide them with stable or sufficient income, called for their art practice to evolve. Consistent with the idea of adjusting one’s life to different stages of the career, the artistic development happen not only in spite of but thanks to such difficulties (Jeffri, 2011).

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog.

However, one need not encounter life challenges in order to develop artistically. What truly drives this process is curiosity, a will to test the limits of one’s abilities, and growth. Therefore, artistic development is quite closely related to an awareness of the world and current social changes: To understand the world that we are living in, somehow where we are going, and... And this triggers me all the time to look forward, and I don’t think that I do something that can be done differently, something that can open... new possibilities. That’s the biggest trigger for me to develop my work. It’s the curiosity! (Monica)

According to Monica, curiosity goes beyond a mere exploration of the outside world. Artists do not simply reproduce what they come into contact with but process and transform it through their creativity. This resonates with the vision of openness in Van Eyck’s policies: artists should interact with society and “hold up a mirror” to it. The artists whom we interviewed consider the outside world as crucial in moving their art practice further. As Monica continued, they do not just need to keep updated on current trends and events but also to engage with people from outside the artistic “intellectual space.” Non-artists can offer artists a “fresh eye,” a perspective that they otherwise may not be confronted with. It is, therefore, crucial that artists remain open to such external points of view. This was described in very concrete terms by Sascha:

At the beginning, my art was concerned only with insects, without humans, the human was outside of my interest. But then, I put it inside a museum and people interpreted it for themselves. And, every time I had a health problem for the acids... a problem of allergies... Very complicated. And my doctor told me, “Maybe you need to make art in a different way or try to use another kind of medium.” So, I bought a camera.

I had a problem with the acids... a problem of allergies... Very complicated. And my doctor told me, “Maybe you need to make art in a different way or try to use another kind of medium.” So, I bought a camera.

Resilience and artistic development can, therefore, intersect in various ways: the ability to deal creatively with material and health-related constraints can foster artistic development by forcing artists to explore new paths. Again, in this sense, artists’ lifestyle can be considered exemplary in terms of small-c creativity.

Peltzer describes the level of technical mastery that she has achieved over the years as granting her more freedom of expression. Both she and Rodenburg refer to their ability to acquire new techniques whenever the type of things that they want to execute requires it. This is not dissimilar from the kind of experimentation described by younger artists who see themselves as “trying out all these things” (Anna) and “to try absorbing as much as possible” (Selma). What differentiates the older artists whom we interviewed is the degree of self-knowledge that they seem to have developed, stemming from confidence in their identity and value. This is consistent with the findings of experimental psychologist Martin Lindauer (2003). In his research, he found that older artists considered the increased selfacceptance and confidence that they gained with age as instrumental in improving their productivity and the quality of their art work. Likewise, in her study of aging Dutch poets, Swinnen (2018) shows how their openness can change allows them to increase their technical knowledge and experiential baggage and encourages them to undertake new challenges in their art. The ability to improve one’s self-knowledge, and self-confidence is a very important aspect when it comes to good aging (Jeffri, 2011). Furthermore, artistic development can also be fostered by artists’ resilience, their ability to deal with unfavorable circumstances and to integrate them in their developmental trajectory. In the case of Vela, discovering an allergy to the material that she was required to use as a printmaker forced her to develop in a different direction from what she was trained in.

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raising three important points for consideration: finding inspiration in society) and their need for the real world. There is a tension between artists’ relationship with society is a point of contention as an artist. The one-month limit of the LLA program makes networking between the two groups difficult at times. As Rodenburg observes: "I have noticed a difference because we are only here for a month, so the new participants click straight away with the ones staying longer. The ones who have been here click also with the ones staying longer."

Thus, it seems as if the regular participants were less willing to invest in getting to know her because they knew that she would leave soon. Anna tentatively confirmed this hypothesis: "I think you’re more likely to go over to them if you know that you can bond with them over a longer period of time." Although Art World is not explicitly referring to the LLA participants, her argument that it makes more sense to invest in bonds that can be deepened over time supports Natasha’s observation. This strengthens the argument that the one-month limit of the program needs to be adjusted.

Finally, the LLA program has also provided artists with very specific opportunities, for instance Rodenburg who, despite being 49, identifies as a new emerging artist. She returned to the Netherlands after spending twenty years in New Zealand and sees the program as an opportunity to reconnect with the area where she was born, explore more of the Dutch art world, and build relationships to help her further her professional artistic career. Natasha believes that spending time at Van Eyck and working with peers who are more familiar with the Dutch context could function as stepping stones for future residencies or other opportunities.

She states: "For the future, I know that I can come here, so now I’ve got a kind of a sense of what is available here, to come with a project and I can use [the facilities] here."

Both Rodenburg’s experience and that of other, younger artists shows the importance that participants attach to the residency space at Van Eyck, as it offered them the ability to gain insight into next steps in their careers, regardless of their age. As we shall show in the next section, though, age can be a quite concrete constraint in an artistic career.

AGE IN THE ART WORLD

This section outlines how the concept of age in the art world came up in our interviews. It focuses on how institutionally-enforced age limits for residency spaces and prizes in the Netherlands influence artists’ perceptions of age in general, their assumptions concerning age and art, and the potential value of intergenerational contact.

The role of age emerges as a key, albeit underestimated, factor in the art world, most notably in the policies of residencies and art prizes. Many of them have an upper limit of 35 to 40 years old, making it impossible for artists over these ages to apply for and engage in such activities. When asked to identify a rationale for such policies, Vela was able to critically identify possible reasons, for instance the idea that younger artists have allegedly less experience and, therefore, their development should be given priority, or a liberal attitude that leads to a set and predefined career path. Selma also critically reflects on the issue of age limits and assumptions about age, experience, and development:

"The thing I loved about Van Eyck, it even says here, ‘There’s No Limit to an Artist!’ 2019

... Because as an artist you can be working on other things, or maybe you don’t have this kind of time."

Selma eloquently articulates this idea: "you can determine your own pace, and where you are, at any age," and "every single person comes from [cultural, social, economic dispositions]... that determine how and where they can get to these levels [of experience] (quote).

As a case study, Rodenburg is a prime example. Turning 50 this year, she defines herself as a “new emerging” artist, on the basis of her relatively recent entry into the Dutch art world and limited experience as a professional artist. In doing so, she defies the conflation of age and experience, and the concept of institutional age limits.

Through her actions, Rodenburg also subverts the “outdated world” they believe that 35 to 40 years old is a pivotal age in their career. For many of the younger artists whom we spoke to, this manifests itself in feeling pressured to become established before they reach this age. As we shall be stating: "you feel that you are living only until 35, and after that something is [out] there! OK... maybe you’ll be rich and famous when you reach 40,” but this pressure does appear to be intense at times, these younger artists respond to it by being active and taking practical steps to develop the present in the hope that it will lead to their future establishment. They take advantage of the opportunities and resources that are available to them now while they still can: they try to be young, developing, and emerging artists. All this is not to say that they agree with the age limits but it does indicate a certain confusion when confronted with it. They find it unfair that artists are forced into this discourse that constricts age, experience, and potential for development. Despite this reaction to and opinion of age limits, they still find that they are required to operate within this system and, thus, feel they must work hard on what exerts on them and try to work within it.

Early on, we observed how many institutions tend to conflate artists’ chronological age with their professional experience in order to define previous opportunities for development, and future potential to develop. However, our interviews with artists demonstrate that age limits are not synonymous with or indicative of one another. Selma eloquently articulates this idea: "you can determine your own pace, and where you are, at any age," and "every single person comes from [cultural, social, economic dispositions]... that determine how and where they can get to these levels [of experience] (quote)."
Living Like an Artist

in contact with younger artists also pushes her own work and further her own practice. Being in contact with her students allows her to reflect on age groups.

assumptions and to find the proper translations of differences, making it hard to debunk the possibility of finding common ground. Some ideas on art that complicate dialogue and the challenging. Participants believe that artists across generations is generally regarded as and discussed how they could benefit from and other persons of different age groups.

world experiences. Opportunities to develop artistically increase. Peltzer’s art practice and allows her to develop and try new things. In sum, the experiences and comments that we gathered from our research show that age is a flawed criterion to assess an artist’s need for a residency space, as the conflation of age, experience, development opportunities, and potential does not match real-world experiences.

We also asked participants to reflect on their experiences and relationships with artists and other persons of different age groups and discussed how they could benefit from intergenerational contacts. Communication across generations is generally regarded as challenging. Participants believe that artists of different ages have different experiences or ideas on art that complicate dialogue and the possibility of finding common ground. Some believe that each age group uses a different language to discuss art and has different notions of what is important to art and a career in the arts. The lack of exchange between generational differences could further cement these presumed differences, making it hard to debunk the assumptions and to find the proper translations that enable communication between different age groups. However, all participants feel that it is these differences of experiences and perspectives that make potential exchanges interesting and valuable. In her role as a university professor teaching fine arts courses, Vela explains that the contact with her students also allows her to reflect on her own work and further her own practice. Being in contact with younger artists also pushes her to look back on her experiences as a professional artist to help prepare students for life outside of art school, which she feels responsible for. In a similar vein, Peltzer believes that she could help the younger artists she met through reflecting on her own experiences. She values this type of intergenerational contact because it is not a hierarchical master-student relationship about teaching and learning but rather an exchange of experiences and views with a peer or colleague. Examples like Peltzer’s show the potential of LLA and the responsibility of Van Eyck to facilitate and support intergenerational contact.

In this section, we have focused on how artists conceptualize and make sense of artistic development, and how they experience it as a driving force in their career. The role of residencies emerged as fundamental in fostering artistic development. Residencies position artists in an environment of like-minded people and give them the time and the space that they need to develop their art practice and that they often lack in their everyday lives. We also pointed out how developing little-c creative skills can be reflected in artists’ increased familiarity with their little-c creative skills, which help them navigate the labor market. While artists often reiterated discourses on creativity as they are articulated in institutions’ policy documents, discussing their experiences and analyzing their views pointed our attention to some interesting discursive tensions and paradoxes. Examining artists’ experiences of the labor market brought to the fore how problematic it can be to single out their ability to implement little-c creative skills as inspirational for the rest of society. Such a skill is a way of navigating the constraints of an uncertain and exploitative market. Although artists are usually proud of them, focusing on little-c creative skills fails to question the nature of the labor market that forces them to use such skills. The changing nature of the labor market also envelops artists in an interesting discursive tension that strongly affects their self-image. Artists seem to oscillate between the will, described by Bourdieu, to pursue authenticity, and the necessity to acknowledge market pressures and the inevitable commodification of their work.

Experiencing different generational groups and ages amongst residents, the most important thing in this facilitation is not to force connections. It appears important to artists that these relationships form organically, based on the desires and personalities of the artists themselves. Moreover, Van Eyck could further organize events designed to facilitate these connections. This could include symposiums, conferences, or networking events where older and younger, experienced and inexperienced artists could come together to exchange insights and form connections. Van Eyck could also use these opportunities to engage with their alumni.

Thus, a third concrete recommendation would be that Van Eyck implements a more structured approach to alumni relations and continues to engage previous participants in the current program. This knowledge and expertise present within Van Eyck’s network could be harnessed by the institution and artists. However, we feel that this is currently underutilized.

4 Reflections and Recommendations

Having discussed our data, we will now turn to our recommendations. In these final paragraphs, we distinguish three main reflections and offer recommendations for each of them (see Appendix 1). In this section, we propose a handful of concrete ideas that could be implemented by Van Eyck. The research that we have conducted has illustrated that critics of the idea of ‘successful aging’ are calling for alternative models. One such model that has been put forward is that of ‘interdependence.’ This means that people of all generations and ages have to rely on each other for the functioning of society. We have seen artists and members of the administration at Van Eyck expressing a desire and appreciation for intergenerational contact and connections.

The key to this model of community is dialogue, i.e., a two-way exchange in which both parties are able to learn from each other’s life developments and professional experiences. In light of our findings and reflections, we recommend that Van Eyck does not implement a mentorship program but, instead, facilitates more opportunities for a range of intergenerational contacts. We feel that this can be done in three ways.

First and foremost, we recommend that Van Eyck implements a more structured approach to alumni relations and continues to engage previous participants in the current program. This knowledge and expertise present within Van Eyck’s network could be harnessed by the institution and artists. However, we feel that this is currently underutilized.
Our second reflection concerns a conflation between chronological age and experience in a lot of the literature that we read on the arts, in the many policy documents that we analyzed, and the interviews that we conducted. These are two very different things. We, therefore, strongly recommend a change in perspective, in that these two aspects could be viewed as separate and not as indicative of one another. Concrete measures could be taken to achieve this.

To begin with - and it should be noted that this is the ideal scenario - we recommend a change in policy and assessment procedures. We believe that the age limit (and any requests for the age of applicants) should be removed from calls for applications and from the assessment process. If the main point of an artistic residency is to develop as an artist, the main (if not the only) evaluative point should be the individual’s need or desire to develop at any age.

In addition to removing the age limit, we also suggest that Van Eyck requests an additional sort of personal essay of their applicants in which they elaborate on why they would fit into Van Eyck as a specific intergenerational art community that is open to engagement with the world. Our rationale behind this is the following: if a curriculum vitae proves an artist’s experience and a project proposal shows both ambition and the desire to develop, this addition to the application will ensure that the artist matches with the goals of the institution. Moreover, it would give applicants the opportunity to outline or explain how their life circumstances may have impacted their art and opportunities to develop professionally up until now. Ultimately, if we want to focus on the lives of artists and if we truly believe this to be an important aspect to their work as a whole, then we need to provide them with the space to show this in their application.

Apart from the ideal scenario, we have also come up with a second and more short-term recommendation; Van Eyck should further develop the LLA program. This could be done by, among other things, extending the duration of the program. It came up multiple times in our interviews that the one-month timespan was considered too short by the artists. Additionally, giving spaces to older (less experienced) artists who show a willingness to develop would be a second improvement. This relates to the earlier mentioned conflation of age and experience. However, we do not think that a separate, specialized program should be the end goal. We very much encourage Van Eyck to take the lead in the Netherlands when it comes to opening up to older residents. Such a step would be truly socially innovative.

Our final reflection is that we noticed a number of contradictory discourses present in the language used by the administration, policy documents, and artists at Van Eyck. The first concerns the “openness” of Van Eyck and the “open and free spirited mindset of its residents” (Van Eyck Academie, 2012, p. 33). While there is much talk about Van Eyck being an ‘open institution’, open to whom is not clearly defined and we feel that this has ramifications for the activities that take place. On a number of occasions, we found ourselves asking whether Van Eyck is supposed to be open to other artists, to academics and those interested in arts and culture, or open to the public and society at large. Such a conflicting discourse can become problematic for Van Eyck’s capitalization on its identity as an institution which is open to the world. Therefore, we recommend the administration to flesh out what it means to be open and then improve the connections between the mission, the artists selected for residencies, and the organized activities. For example, if it is a goal of Van Eyck to be open to the public and to work with societal partners, it is also important that selected artists show a willingness and enthusiasm to work with such partners and who have a track record of doing so. We would like to add a caveat here by mentioning that the ‘openness of Van Eyck’ was not the focus of our research. However, we do feel that it is an important insight that emerged from our findings and deserves further research on its own.

The second set of contradictory discourses surrounding age and the arts both reiterate problematic conceptualizations of success withing the successful aging paradigm and provide points of exit out of this paradigm. We recommend ongoing critical reflection in this regard, which needs to happen both as a dialogue between the administration and the residents and within these two groups themselves, especially as new policies are created and implemented. We again have a few concrete suggestions for how this can be done.

We recommend that Van Eyck engages in more projects such as the LLA program with academic institutions (e.g., Maastricht University or Hogeschool Zuyd) to provide that external critical lens. A second recommendation would be that Van Eyck takes the lead in the Netherlands and Europe by organizing inter-institutional events and by publishing research and artist narratives that will promote such critical reflection within the art world. We suggest that Van Eyck teams up with other partners to question these discourses, as it has done before by inviting Joan Jeffri. All this enhances Van Eyck’s visibility, which in turn could inspire De Ateliers and the Rijksakademie since they are influenced by the very same restrictive discourses.

After reflecting on our work, we consider Van Eyck to be ahead of the pack. We applaud the institution for its efforts in putting age on the map and making it visible as a diversifying factor through the LLA program. However, we do believe that there is still a way to go and that now is the right time to take action. By implementing our recommendations, Van Eyck can brand itself as an age-friendly institution that takes diversity issues seriously. Such a step would be truly innovative and reward those who take this leap into the present and the future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Van Eyck Academie and Rebekla Straetmans for inviting us to participate in this public humanities project and our interviewees for their engagement. We are also grateful to Lex ter Braak (Van Eyck Academie), Leo Delfgaauw (Academie Minerva, Hanzehogeschool), and Eric de Jong (Maastricht Academy of Fine Arts and Design, Zuyd Hogeschool) for their feedback on the presentation of our research results on May 23, 2018.
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"There's No Limit to an Artist!"
## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflections</th>
<th>Concrete Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Literature urges for alternative models for aging.</td>
<td>Residency spaces for older or more experienced artists and further development of LLA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists and advisory board expressed a desire or appreciation for intergenerational contact and connections.</td>
<td>Symposium/Networking events where older and younger, experienced and inexperienced artists come together. Tailored events/programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Therefore, we recommend no traditional / one-way mentorship programs but the facilitation of more opportunities for intergenerational contact.</td>
<td>More structured approach to Alumni relations; engage previous participants in current programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2. Noticed a conflation of chronological age and experience, in institution, in literature, and in interviews. | An ideal scenario - Change policy and change assessment procedure (view these as separate):  
- Make the main evaluative point experience, years of artistic work, or need/desire to develop as an artist (creatively, as a person, or in one’s network)  
- Request a narrative that explains why artists would fit in this intergenerational community that mirrors the world in addition to a CV (proves experience) and project proposal (proves need/desire for development and ambition as an artist).  
- Further develop LLA by extending the duration of the program and give spaces to older artists with a desire/need to develop as an artist (creatively, as a person, or in their network). |
| We, therefore, recommend a change in perception.                        | Further flesh out what it means to be open.  
Improve the connections between the mission, the artists, and the activities that they organize.  
Ongoing critical reflections in the institution and in exchange with the residents  
- Invite Maastricht University back next year and engage in more projects with (academic) institutions.  
- Organize inter-institutional workshops/symposiums and publish research and artist narratives, etc.  
- Cooperate with De Ateliers and Rijksakademie.  
- Van Eyck should take the lead in the Netherlands and Europe. |
| 3. We noticed contradictory discourses about:                           |                                                                                  |
|   - The openness of Van Eyck, in our own experiences and that of the artists (they felt it was problematic to relate to the world). |                                                                                  |
|   - Discourses on age and arts both reiterate problematic conceptualizations of success and points of exit out of these models/ideas. |                                                                                  |

## APPENDIX 2: TOPIC GUIDES SECTION 2

### APPENDIX 2.1: TOPIC GUIDE INTERVIEW [FORMER] EMPLOYEES VAN EYCK
This topic guide was tailored to the individual interviewees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Introduction                            | 1. Can you introduce yourself?  
2. What is your function within Van Eyck?  
3. Can you walk us through your daily tasks?  
4. In what way do you interact with the residents?  
5. In what way are you affiliated with the LLA program? |
| 2. Image Van Eyck & Van Eyck Mirror        | 1. What would you say is Van Eyck’s mission or overall goal/identity?  
2. Was this different in the past / Has this changed or developed? Where do you see this going in the (near) future? (Refer to the policy plan 2017-2010)  
3. What is Van Eyck Mirror?  
4. What is Hubert van Eyck? |
| 3. Living Like an Artist                   | 1. How does the LLA program fit within the Van Eyck Academie?  
2. Why was the LLA project set up?  
3. How did the project develop?  
4. How was decided to focus on the lifestyle of artists?  
5. What do you personally think about the LLA program? |
| 4. The Applicants & Selection              | 1. How would you describe the profile of the (desired) applicants, or the ideal applicant for Van Eyck and LLA more specifically?  
2. What are the practicalities of an LLA residency?  
3. Do you have any knowledge of the statistics in terms of age, gender, nationality, etc. of the LLA applicants?  
Is there a pattern to be seen in applications? In what phase are the applicants in in their career?  
4. Do the LLA residents get any privileges?  
5. Why do the residents stay for only 6 weeks?  
6. How do the LLA residents interact with the other residents?  
7. How are they taken in and does this affect their work?  
8. Can you compare the ‘call for application’ for the regular residencies and for the LLA program?  
9. What are the requirements for an application? When were these decided upon and by whom?  
10. What is your position/function within the selection committee?  
11. What do you look for in a resident (selection criteria)?  
12. How do you market this program (and thus the call for applications) and on what platform(s)? |
### Possible Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **5. Support** | 1. What kind of support do you offer the LLA residents?  2. Do the LLA residents have any specific needs?  3. What problems/questions do you encounter?  4. Do you see differences between the residents? If there are differences in needs/questions/obstacles, how would you explain them?  5. If this project were to continue in the future, what (if any) recommendations would you propose in terms of support?  

If nothing comes up, we can use the following things as probing questions/ideas:  
  a) Recommendations in the building?  
  b) Recommendations concerning technology?  
  c) Recommendations concerning support for the residents?  
  d) Special help during the application? |
| **6. Comparison** | 1. What makes Van Eyck unique in comparison to other Dutch academies (De Ateliers and De Rijksacademie)?  2. Is there any interaction between Van Eyck and the other institutions?  3. What is your relationship with the other institutions? |
| **7. Expectations & Recommendations** | 1. What would you say is the direction that the LLA project is taking?  2. What are your expectations of our research?  3. Do you have advice for our research?  

a) Are there things that might be interesting for us to look into?  

b) Documents that we could use?  

c) People that we could interview? |

### Appendix 2.2: Topic Guide Interview Karl Dittrich

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. Introducitie** | 1. Algemene introductie van het project  

2. Wat is de raad van toezicht?  

3. Wat is haar functie en invloed binnen de Van Eyck?  

4. Wat is uw functie binnen deze raad? |
| **2. Betrokkenheid bij Van Eyck** | 1. Hoe bent u betrokken geraakt bij Van Eyck?  

2. Hoe zou u de identiteit van Van Eyck beschrijven?  

3. Uw invloed binnen de ontwikkeling en de bezuinigingen?  

4. In hoeverre bent u betrokken bij de residents / selectieproces?  

5. Bekendheid met De Ateliers en De Rijksakademie?  

6. Wat maakt Van Eyck uniek? |
| **3. Raad van Toezicht** | 1. Aanbevelingen in het verleden?  

2. Verbeterpunten?  

3. Visie op oudere kunstenaars binnen Van Eyck? |
| **4. Nieuwe directeur** | 1. Uw functie binnen het selectieproces?  

2. Wat is belangrijk voor de nieuwe directeur?  

3. Hoe ziet u de toekomst van Van Eyck voor u en welke rol speelt de nieuwe directeur hierin? |
| **5. Living Like an Artist** | 1. In hoeverre bent u bekend met het LLA initiatief?  

#APPENDIX 2.3: TOPIC GUIDE INTERVIEW MARGRIET SCHAVEMAKER

## Topic: Mondriaan Fonds & Van Eyck
1. Wat is precies uw rol, verantwoordelijkheid en functie binnen het Mondriaan Fonds?
2. Hoe ziet de relatie tussen Van Eyck en het Mondriaan Fonds eruit?
3. Wat is de rol van het Mondriaan Fonds in de selectie van de participanten binnen Van Eyck?
4. Wat is uw rol hierin?
5. In hoeverre heeft u / het Mondriaan Fonds contact met de andere academies? (De Ateliers & De Rijksakademie)

## Topic: Jaarboekje Mondriaan Fonds
1. Over het Mondriaan Fonds
2. Krijgen het Mondriaan Fonds vaak aanvragen van oudere kunstenaars? (Statistieken?)
3. Hoe staat het Mondriaan Fonds tegenover oudere kunstenaars? In hoeverre worden zij financieel gesteund? Werkbijdrages -> is hier een leeftijdsgrens aan verbonden?

## Topic: Living Like an Artist
1. Bent u bekend met dit initiatief?
2. Uw mening hierover?
3. Zou u / het Mondriaan Fonds open staan voor een rol/ positie voor deze oudere kunstenaars als reguleren participanten van Van Eyck?
4. Prix de Rome: Vergelijkbare prijzen zonder deze leeftijdsgrens? Wat is de beweegreden achter een leeftijdsgrens in uw visie?
5. De Ateliers & De Rijksakademie lijken veel meer gefocust op de jonge leeftijd van hun participanten dan Van Eyck. Wat denkt u dat de reden hiervoor is?
APPENDIX 3.2: TOPIC GUIDE FOCUS GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Possible Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 7. Future Development | 1. Where do you see yourself in the next 20/40/50 years?  
2. How do you think your art and/or practice will change over time?  
3. How do you think your art will (continue) to affect your life planning?  
4. What do you think is the recipe for creating a sustainable and successful artistic career? |

Block 1

Introduction and Instructions

Welcome

“Thank you for taking the time today to join us in our group interview here at Van Eyck. I am and I will be the moderator today. My role as moderator will be to guide the discussion, assisted by and . In collaboration with the Jan van Eyck Academie, we are involved in the “Like an Artist” project that forms part of a study on the lifestyles of artists. Our topic is the experience of participants in artist residencies such as the ones offered by Van Eyck. We are Research Master students from Maastricht University and the results will be used for a report, presented here at the Van Eyck in May. You were selected because you are a resident at the Jan van Eyck Academie.”

Guidelines

1. Please note that the interviews will be recorded and, subsequently, transcribed. Therefore, one person speaks at a time.
2. Extracts from the interview may be presented during the “Like an Artist” symposium or quoted in our final report. Interviewees can withdraw from the focus group at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
3. The interviewer will not participate in the conversation, apart from asking questions and asking for clarification.
4. There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. Please keep in mind that the purpose of this focus group is not to reach a consensus; we are interested in hearing all your opinions and experiences.
5. The focus group discussion will take 1.5 hours, is everyone okay with this?

Introduction

At the beginning, we will introduce ourselves. You can each tell your name (this is also useful for the recording) and tell us a bit about what you’re doing at Van Eyck.

- Who you are and how did you get here?  
- Name, age, and art discipline?

Block 2

You and Your Ideas

1. What makes you an artist?
2. What has played a role in your development as an artist? (Ask good follow-up questions.)  
3. What does it mean to be successful as an artist?  
   a. What does it take to become successful?
Role of Institutions in Artistic Development

1. What grabs your attention in this text?
2. How does this idea of development occurring within an institutional setting apply to you and your experience?

Role of Life Circumstances and Personal Lives in Artistic Development

1. What is the relationship between art and life?
2. How has making art impacted upon your personal life?
3. How has your life impacted your development as an artist?
   a. [If we only get negative answers, ask for positive and vice-versa]
   b. [Life = life circumstances, life course, experiences, events, etc.]

Role of Age in Artistic Development

1. How important is age for an artist?
2. What effect does seeing statements like these have on your ideas about artistic development?
3. What do you think is the rationale behind these age limits?
   OR
   1. [Give them the statements.] What do you think about these statements?
   2. One of the programs currently running at Van Eyck is the LLA program in which the age limit is over 40. What do you think is the reason for this?

Is there anything else you want to add? Thank you and have a nice day.

APPENDIX 4

QUOTE FROM A POLICY DOCUMENT

“The Van Eyck is a multidisciplinary institute that furthers experiment, research, study, production and exchange. In our institute promising artists, designers, curators, (landscape) architects, writers and other thinkers are given the time and space that is needed to develop their talents, to discover as yet unexplored perspectives and delve into deeper layers of their selves. Apply if you feel the time is ripe to take your work to another level in an open environment, to experiment and investigate, to see your work reflected in the mirror of the world or to do what no one fully grasps yet.”

AGE-RELATED SNIPPETS

“(B)old festival: Monday 14 – Sunday 20 May 2018 Southbank Centre today announces (B)old, a brand new festival celebrating age and creativity, supported by The Baring Foundation. Championing new and established artists aged 65 years and over”

“The Prix de Rome is the oldest and most prestigious award in the Netherlands for visual artists under the age of 40 and architects under the age of 35. The nominee should be no older than 40 (visual artists) or 35 (architects) at the time of the winner’s announcement.”

“De Charlotte Köhler Prijzen zijn aanmoedigingsprizes voor jong talent (tot 35 jaar) in beeldende kunst en theater. De prijzen - van elk € 30.000 - werden in 1988 bij legaat ingesteld door actrice Charlotte Köhler (1892-1977).”

“Who can apply? Application is open to upcoming artists with a few years of professional experience after their education. Most candidates have a MA degree and are between 25 and 35 years old.”

“Nederlandse beeldende kunstenaars tot 35 jaar kunnen meedoen naar de prijs. Dit jaar zonden ruim 302 kunstenaars beeldmateriaal in.”

General statements
- Artists never retire
- Creativity develops with age
- You can peak just once in your career
- Your life course affects your art
- Your later art is better
- Living from your art makes you successful
COLOPHON

PROJECT TEAM:

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With a special thanks to the Van Eyck team, all participants, and interviewees.