The Art of Resilience

Professional Artists’ Experiences of Continuing Creative Practices in Place

Living Like an Artist

VAN EYCK
The Art of Resilience 2019

Professional Artists' Experiences of Continuing Creative Practices in Place

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# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td></td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1 INTRODUCTION**

**2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

2 The Commodification of Creativity

2 The Gerontologization of Creativity

2 Space and Place in Later Life

2 The Artist's Studio

2 The Self-Fashioning of Artists

**3 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

13 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

13 Data Collection

14 Ethical Considerations

14 Data Analysis

**4 FINDINGS**

15 “I do not feel a great desire to shine as a writer”: Positioning in Relation to the [Art] World

16 “It is not something you choose to do, it is something you cannot avoid”: Being an Artist

19 “It is not an ideal workspace, but I am lucky that I can do it all here”: Negotiating a Creative Environment

**5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

22 Which subjectivities emerge from creative practices of professional artists over the course of their lives?

23 What is the relation of these subjectivities to the physical environment(s) they move in?

24 What is the relationship between these subjectivities and the successful aging paradigm?

**6 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

27 Acknowledgements

28 References

30 Appendix 1: Interview Topic Guide

32 Appendix 2: Example of an Axonometry
In this report, we present the research project “Living Like an Artist,” a collaborative effort between Research Master students in Cultures of Arts, Fashioning & Illustrating (CASI) and Master students in Architecture from RWTH Aachen University, and the Jan van Eyck Academie. The background to this research project is the following: the final decades of the twentieth century saw a rise of the commodification of creativity in Western society making the new source of economic profit and the new paradigm of social organization (Florida, 2012, p. 10). Artists who talk about their experiences and how they present themselves can be influenced by contemporary and historical norms and values about what being a good artist entails.

To find out what meanings the artists in our research ascribe to their creative practices while working and living in place, we conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews at their homes. The Architecture students accompanied us and drew axonometries of the artists’ houses that serve as input for their own creative outlook on the future of aging in place. We subsequently transcribed and coded the interviews. From the coding process, three superordinate and fourteen subordinate themes emerged. The first superordinate theme, Positioning in Relation to the [Art] World, includes the subordinate themes Negotiating External and Internal Validation; Reflecting on [Art] Education, Positioning in Relation to Others, and Showing Knowledge of the Dynamics of the Art World. The second superordinate theme, Being an Artist, comprehends the subordinate themes A Need for Expression; Adapting to Changes, Researching Fintude, Co-Creating Subjectivity and Place; and Striving for Autonomy. The third superordinate theme, Negotiating a Creative Environment, has five subordinate themes: Shaping a Creative Place; Valuing Tools and Materials; Weighing Artistic Collaboration; Identifying Inspiration; and Valuing Support. These themes represent the meanings given by the professional artists to creativity, working, place, and aging.

After a discussion of our findings in relation to these themes, we answer the sub-questions presented above. We conclude that, through the course of their lives, artists are able to manage challenges and change their educational ability to continue working and living in place. It is in this sense that they can be perceived as exemplary figures of change. The insights we present here serve as input for the recommendations to the Jan van Eyck Academie and the Architecture students from RWTH Aachen University. Based on the findings presented here, these students will develop a creative outlook on what the future of aging in place may hold. We hope that our insights into the ways in which artists manage uncertainties throughout life will resonate with both partners and stimulate future collaboration.
The effects of creativity on the well-being of older adults has increasingly become a focal point in gerontology, which is the study of career development and growth as we age. The dominant narrative that underlies creative aging is the peak-and-decline paradigm. The focus of this paradigm on the physical and cognitive challenges of aging can lead to a sense of vulnerability and dependency. Our research is aimed at finding out how, throughout their lives, older artists ascribe meaning to their daily practices within and beyond their professions. We argue that for older artists, creativity becomes inherently part of who we are, and it is personalized accordingly. It enhances our sense of self and our being (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). Older people spend on average 80% of their time at home (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). Therefore, feeling at home in one’s environment is of fundamental importance. One’s home is not the same as being in a functional and safe place. Instead, it means a space to which one connects on a deeper level, a level that has physical as well as psychological dimensions (Cheshire & Rowles, 2005).

Consequently, living in place means feeling at ease with oneself and with the world. Moreover, it is important for the older population that the physical environment is increasingly needed as one ages because aging is likely to provoke physical and cognitive challenges (Rowles, 2012, p. 3). Moreover, environmental gerontology also assumes that growing old and growing more attached to known and familiar places go hand in hand as we age (Katz & Calasanti, 2015). Place matters, especially the preservation of one’s own subjectivity (Rowles, 1983, p. 301). As every individual ages differently and has a different relationship with their environment, the physical and individual differences, environmental gerontology is mainly preoccupied with case studies and specific situations. However, the subjective meaning that aging has for individuals, and on the subjective significance that place is given by each individual are essential for an in-depth understanding of the experience (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). Because of our focus on how older artists’ subjectivity and place influence each other, we will start by examining artists’ experiences within their working space, i.e., the studio.

The Artist’s Studio

Given the above, we cannot take the meanings of place for granted and the same applies to the artist’s studio. The literature presented here is meant to contextualize the existing notions of the studio that may be present in the way our artists define and experience their studio. The relation between the artist, the space of work, and what the artist does in that space has always been important (Davidts & Paice, 2009; Wainwright, 2010; Eiser, Kisters, & Lehmann, 2013; Kisters, 2010). The successful aging paradigm is, therefore, perfectly in line with what Florida (2012) calls the commodification of creativity, in which older adults are squeezed to add to a “contemporary, consumerist, neoliberal, and entrepreneurial style of thought that dominates health and retirement politics” (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, p. 27).

The successful aging paradigm is, therefore, perfectly in line with what Florida (2012) calls the commodification of creativity, in which older adults are squeezed to add to a “contemporary, consumerist, neoliberal, and entrepreneurial style of thought that dominates health and retirement politics” (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, p. 27). A sense of belonging is paramount in the definition of place. When we feel that a space becomes our own, the formation of our identity as an artist becomes more meaningful. One’s home becomes a place where we recognize and experience our identity and our creativity. The peak-and-decline paradigm for professionals in the visual arts. The following sections examine literature about the ways in which artists shape and discuss the positive discourse of late-life creativity is used to tie the relation they build with an environment (pp. 12-13). That “we transform the spaces of our life into places of meaning and significance” (Rowles & Bernard, 2013, p. 3) is crucial for a holistic understanding of a person’s way of being, acting, and interacting in the world. For the scope of this report, we understand the multiple and multifaceted ways in which people are in the world as subjectivities. ‘Subjectivity’ is a term that refers to the subject independent of its relation to the environment of the subject. In this report, the focus is on the subjective meaning that aging has for individuals, and on the subjective significance that place is given by each individual are essential for an in-depth understanding of the experience.
new forms of "making, distributing, presenting"
the artwork was received. In his influential essay
"The function of the studio" (1971), Daniel Buren
expressed his "desire for a ‘true relationship’ between
the artwork and its place of creation.” (Davidts &
Paice, 2009, p. 15) and completely abandoned the
studio. Buren (1971) argued that, through moving the artwork outside of
the studio, the work lost some essential reality. His
solution was to work at the site of reception, the
museum.
These developments in the understanding of
the artist's studio and its loss of meaning and
significance since the twentieth century are part
of what is often called the "post-studio era." This era is characterized by a
multiplication of workplaces. As Davidts and Pace write:
It is now rare for art to be produced in a
single spot and by a sole individual. Rather it
comes into being on myriad ‘sites,’ via both
physical and virtual axes, and through the
 collaboration of different people with varied
skills and backgrounds (2009, p. 6).
So, is it indeed true that artists currently live
and work in a post-studio era? There is much
dispute about this in the literature. Even
though there have been "profound changes
in the understanding and processes of
artistic production in the 1960s, not everyone
considered the studio to be obsolete" (Davidts &
Paice, 2009, p. 8). Esner (2013, p. 12) notes, however,
that even though the ways in which we
think about and use the studio may have
deprecated, we are still intrigued by the
mythical notion of the studio (pp. 121-122). She also
believes that the romantic strategy of "hiding
making" and "showing creation" is "as actual
a strategy today as it ever was in the past" (p. 122).
She further claims that "the studio itself, if
not as a workplace then at least as a concept,
remains a determining factor, even for those
who claim to undermine its discourse or leave it
behind altogether" (p. 122). In a similar vein, Lisa
Wainwright (2010) states that conceptions of
what the studio is and means may have changed
but the idea of the romantic studio still "persists
today both in popular culture and in artistic
practice” (p. 10). Esner (2013, p. 12) notes:
In line with Esner (2013), Davidts and Paice (2009),
and Wainwright (2010), we argue that it is not
so simple to abandon the site of the studio,
our understanding of the artist. Even if the notion
of the studio has been disputed and discussed,
the artists in our research are still working and
living within them. They are no longer the sole
component of their existence in the world. As
we have seen earlier, artists are co-creating their
subjectivity in and through their living spaces
and studios (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). Therefore,
understanding the notion of the studio and how
it has changed over time will give us a greater
insight into how it reflects shapes and shifts in
subjectivity of the artists in our research.

THE SELF-FASHIONING
OF ARTISTS
In this final section of the theoretical framework,
we discuss the idea of self-fashioning. Esner (2013)
has identified repertoires of self-fashioning as
the central theme in the notion of the "genius"
artist. The concept of "genius fosters individual
self-fashioning. In the artists' accounts, we
look for traces of these repertoires that they
might tweak and twist in order to comply
with this idea of the ideal artist. Two particular
repertoires for artists' self-fashioning emerged
from our interviews: romantic genius and the
genius entrepreneur, both of which we
will discuss below.
The repertoire of the 'romantic genius' dates
back to the romantic period, particularly (1889).
Romanticism is, among other things, characterized by an emphasis on individualism
and a glorification of nature. On the basis of
numerous examples of artists and scientists who
fashioned themselves as 'romantic geniuses,'
Darrin M. Mcmahon concludes that "the genius
is creative, passionate, private, who is 'charged'
with a superabundance of energy” (2013, p. 114).
He further argues that the romantic genius
fashions him- or herself as a "modern hero in
possession of superhuman powers" (p. 115). Romantic geniuses pose as nonconformist revolutionaries who disrespect tradition and
established norms. They are not afraid of failure
and have not learned to follow rules, guidelines, or
examples) and position themselves as radically
original and innovative. They often describe
inspiration as something that comes to you, as
a momentary insight or epiphany, as something
you receive in nature and by being alone. Hence,
artists who invoke this romantic paradigm value
the solitary atelier, the studio as a sacred
place for the artist as a genius master working in
solitude, as described in the section about the
artists' studio.
However, the 1950s saw the establishment
of museums, art companies, art councils,
fundation, art fairs, and educational programs
– such as the Jan van Eyck Academie (Deresiewicz,
2015, p. 4). In other words, art was institutionalized and so was the
artist. Deresiewicz stoically states: 'expertise,
or in the manner of the graduate programmes, ‘technique’ – not inspiration or tradition,
became the ‘melee of austerity and intensity’”
(p. 4). Since the 1970s onwards, a different,
entrepreneurial paradigm of the artist has
developed. Artists need to learn how to be
their own companies or label and do their
own marketing. This development is directly
linked to the commodification of creativity, the
idea that creativity is a means for innovation
and productivity (Florida; 2012; Reckwitz, 2017).
As a consequence, professional artists have
to combine creativity and entrepreneurship.
Thus, the artists themselves must also be
entrepreneurial in order to be able to
produce, circulate, and receive art. In this
section, we will discuss how the artists in this
research define and experience their studio.
We must keep in mind that the discussions of
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3 — Methodological Approach

In this section, we discuss how we conducted our research. We used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to answer our research questions, which comes with specific requirements both in terms of data collection and data analysis.

INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Researchers who work with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are interested in the “everyday flow of lived experience” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 1). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) distinguish three foundations of IPA. The first is phenomenology” or the detailed analysis of lived experiences. IPA sees these lived experiences as “embedded and immersed in a world of objects, relations, language and culture” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 24). The second theoretical frame for IPA is “hermeneutics” or the theory of interpretation (p. 25). The hermeneutical approach examines how an experience appears and how to make sense of that appearance (p. 35). IPA provides a double hermeneutics, which means that the researcher interprets someone’s interpretation of their experience. The third and last theoretical foundation is “idiography” or the preoccupation with the particular (p. 44). It allows for the understanding of experiences as deeply individual as well as collective, i.e., shared with others. As Smith, Flowers, and Larkin argue, “at the deepest level we share a great deal with a person whose personal circumstances may, at face value, seem entirely different from our own” (2009, p. 48). Single interviews result in a better understanding of both the details of an interviewee’s account and the general context of the interview. From these theoretical foundations of IPA, it follows that small samples are at the heart of this approach.

In our research, we have taken a particular interest in the way artists fashion themselves. Self-fashioning is a way of presenting the self in a certain manner. This implies that the way in which the artists talk about themselves and what they bring up during the interview can fulfill a certain self-fashioning function (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 98). While the notion of self-fashioning seems to move away from the focus on the participants and their thinking, circulating scripts for self-fashioning can be seen as intertwined with the experiences, meanings, and understandings of the participants (p. 99).

Although our study focuses on examining the lived experiences of the participants, it is fundamental to bear in mind that the experiences we seek to unravel are inherently intertwined with the physical, social, and cultural world. As such, “we can say that IPA research is, in part, an inquiry into the cultural position of the person, and that to understand the experiential claims being made by a research participant, we also need a certain level of cultural competence” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 269). We use IPA to analyze the interaction between a certain cultural context and people’s experiences and understandings of this context.

DATA COLLECTION

Since we aim for a more profound understanding of the changing relations between artists and their creative practices in their working and living spaces, we visited and interviewed the artists in their own homes and studios. The Jan van Eyck Academie composed a sample of ten professional artists over 60 who continue to work and live in place. Nine out of these ten artists are from their alumni database. See Table 1 for the age and the profession of the artists whom we interviewed. We changed the names of the artists to pseudonyms to secure their anonymity.

Table 1. Participating Professional Artists

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Art Discipline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Winnie</td>
<td>60+</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeleine</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Fashion designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annelies</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theo</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Graphic designer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dirk</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna</td>
<td>88+</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mieke</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>Sculptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruud</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interviewer was joined by a maximum of three Architecture students from RWTH Aachen who made axonometries of the artists’ houses. These axonometries functioned as input for these students’ analyses and as inspiration for their outlook on the future of aging in place (Appendix 2). We conducted in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012) state that through such interviews, “researchers explore in detail the experiences, motives and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own” (p. 3). We carefully formulated topics and open questions (Appendix 1) in collaboration with the Architecture students. The interviewer ordered the questions and topics depending on what the interviewees brought up during the interview. The interviewer was always careful to leave space for the interviewee to elaborate on certain topics. In addition to sitting down with the interviewee, we used the mobile method of walking interviews, as we are interested in the
The Art of Resilience

In our data analysis, we pay attention to details to understand why a specific artist answered in a specific way regarding a specific participant while he or she is interacting with the environment during the interview (Odzakovic et al., 2018). While moving around, participants had the opportunity to “emphasize, contradict, weaken or add to statements made earlier” (Odzakovic et al., 2018, p. 55). Another advantage of a walking interview is that the interviewer is leading and in a position of control (Ratzenböck, 2016). The interviewer becomes the follower allowing the interviewee to take the initiative, which is advantageous to building trust and may help the interviewee to open up more to the interviewer. Two interviews were conducted in English, eight in Dutch. The quotes used in this report were translated into English by the interviewers.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants in this research project were all informed about the aims of the research and were aware that their participation was completely voluntary. Interviewees were informed by e-mail that the interviews would be audio-recorded and transcribed and that the interviews would be used in this final report. They could withdraw from the project at any moment and were free to abstain from answering questions or showing parts of their homes and studios during our visit. We created a consent form which described the rights of the participants. Nine out of ten participants signed the consent form, one participant gave us oral consent.

DATA ANALYSIS

After conducting the interviews, we transcribed the interviews verbatim. Then, each interviewer coded his or her transcriptions, following the process of identifying important passages in interview transcripts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). We identified those passages in which participants talked about their experiences and the meaning they attach to these experiences. We subsequently checked each other’s coding, compared the codes that were used in each separate coding process and identified common themes that emerged through a systematic evaluation and clustering of the codes used in the different transcripts. From this process, three superordinate themes emerged, each with four or five subordinate themes (Table 2). Final themes had to be relevant for at least 80% of our sample.

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4 — Findings

In this section, we present and discuss our findings structured by the themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews. Quotes from the individual artists will show that their experiences and perspectives differ. We strive to provide an inclusive representation of the variety of experiences, meanings, and understandings emerging from the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate themes</th>
<th>Subordinate themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Negotiating an external environment</td>
<td>Shaping a creative place</td>
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<td>Valuing time and materials</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weighing artistic collaboration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identifying ‘inspiration’</td>
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<td>Valuing support</td>
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The superordinate theme Positioning in Relation to the [Art] world refers to how the artists place themselves in the art world and how they relate to and experience that world.

The first subordinate theme, Negotiating External and Internal Validation, refers to how artists negotiate both external validation, such as recognition and ascribed authority from the outside world, and internal validation, such as pride in one’s own work. Some artists are actively seeking external validation while others are not preoccupied with it at all. Anna, for example, continuously mentions that external validation is not an issue for her. She finds enjoyment in making her art work not in presenting it. She used to stay at home a lot and was not willing to take part in any exhibition. “I never made an effort to present my work.” In short, she values the craft of making over external validation. For Annelies, external validation results in internal validation.

To my great surprise and dismay, the book was published. ‘Coding’ was my life, and within a week, I was on television and was being interviewed by TV and my publisher thought that was amazing. Enfin, I thought then, gosh that this happens so often. I must have made something good. Anyway, I did get the necessary appreciation for my work. So, I cannot complain about that.

In this quote, Annelies expresses satisfaction with the appreciation she received for her work. “I cannot complain. But the words surprise and dismay also signal that Annelies is surprised by her own abilities. The external validation that she receives is related to the development of a sense of internal validation. Others think her work is good and, therefore, she now believes that her work must be good as well. Bruno also appreciates external validation. He notes that “many well-known artists came” to one of his exhibitions and says “all those people came to have a look and I thought that was amazing.”

Ruard, by contrast, believes that making art “comes out of yourself, and it needs to answer your own needs.” He strives for internal validation as an art necessity: “It needs to answer your own criteria.” In the next quote by Robert, we see how the meaning of external validation can change over time.

Perhaps, yes, the kind of rivalry – amongst artists – or a sort of hatred, envy or something, yes, that changed as I grew older. It’s not there. You have become wise this way. … And that was perhaps earlier, you know, he had a good exhibition and that place, I want that too, and that didn’t work. … Yes, I was told that I would never be asked to exhibit at that place or something. Now, I think, yes, whatever. Robert expresses how external validation used to be very important for him. He longed for it and envied others who did receive it. But with age, “wisdom” has put external validation into perspective.

The second subordinate theme, Reflecting on [Art] Education, includes positive and negative experiences in relation to official art education, teaching, and other ways of learning. Several artists refer to learning from other artists, friends, and family, or learning from different experiences and from places they visited or worked at. As Madeleine puts it: “I learn from life.” Learning is seen as something that happens throughout the entire life course. Theo mentions that because of life’s experiences, “I can handle my insecurities. I do not panic any longer if something fails … I have accepted my own craziness over the years.” He emphasizes how he learned to handle challenges better throughout his life. With regard to official art education, some artists talk about their rejection of the conventional school system. Some have even quit their education at Jan van Eyck or other institutions. Mieke “had enough of all that academic stuff” at one point and wanted to tell her own story. She continues: “… and that is where I kept going. And I graduated decently, the professors even thought it was original, because I dared to deviate from the usual.” Although Mieke had enough of the academic approach to art education, she did manage to impress her teachers. The notion of ‘originality,’ in contrast to doing what is expected of you, is seen as something positive in Mieke’s account. Theo, another artist who rejected the official schooling of artists, says: “I liked working with the students, I was always around them. But the bureaucracy, all those exams, I am completely opposed to that. I think you should also get the opportunity to let things fail.” Learning from your mistakes was a topic that several other artists also raised. The third subordinate theme, Positioning in Relation to Others, refers to how and to which degree artists distance themselves from or identify with other artists. One example of an artist who distances herself from others, is Annelies. She does “not feel a great desire to
Living Like an Artist

Bruno shows his knowledge of the art world not only literally when he says: “I am clever enough that [my] exhibitions, and make money. Robert, for example, says: “I am clever enough that I can make a living. In a way it is unavoidable.” As Winnie says: “It is just a way of life.”

The superordinate theme being an artist refers to several elements in the interviews that relate to life and living as an artist. It includes the artist’s inner motivations to make art and the ways in which the artist makes money. The theme indicates that the artist’s working practices have made adaptations in order to be able to continue creating art and to do so as autonomously as possible.

The first subordinate theme, The Need for Expression, comprises the different ways in which the artists talk about their inner drives and urges to create art. Many interviewees talk about being artist without really knowing why. For example, says: “I am clever enough that [my] works go out into the world.” Winnie explains that “artists are no longer object-based, it’s more about creating an experience.”

Bruno shows his knowledge of the art world by elaborating on the famous artists whom he admires. He refers often to real-life events and personal contacts, “getting to know the people,” is the most important prerequisite for selling art. All future artists need this knowledge, the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be successful in the art world, which contributes to their feelings of confidence and security. Yet, simultaneously, some of them also fear that nobody can afford to buy their work. Some artists already have the influence of the dynamics of the art world.

Mieke positions herself between two different worlds, the village in which there is no connection at all with art and culture, and the world of the working artists who are everything but well-behaved and compliant. Despite her efforts, Mieke was unable to fit in the artistic community at Van Eyck Academy. She found it challenging to identify with other artists as “sees something different, he looks at things differently.” Another example of an artist who finds it challenging to identify with other artists is Robert, as having a certain “child-like attitude,” one that is more about creating an experience.

Robert experienced his consideration to quit as his “all-time low,” and quickly realized that not making art “just won’t do.” This illustrates the importance that he attaches to practicing art. For Mieke, the need to express herself has been present throughout her life. “We are actually in the process of developing ourselves and trying to be better.” Well, if you make work that does not match what is being shown in the Tate in London, well then they do not want you. And then you are not known, they do not know you, and that is the way it is. As an individual well as an individual you cannot do anything about it. (Dirk)

In the 1980s-1990s coalition agree[ment], the Dutch government deci- ded to drastically lower the budget of the Nederlandse Kunstenaar Regie- ring (NKR), which had initially been created in 1966 to guarantee artists’ social and financial independence. As of 1 January 1987, the NKR was officially discontinued.

In [this sentiment] lasted only one day.” Robert argued that various changes in her life illustrate how she “just won’t do,” this illustrates the importance that she attaches to practicing art. For Mieke, the need to express herself has been present throughout her life. “We are actually in the process of developing ourselves and trying to be better.” Well, if you make work that does not match what is being shown in the Tate in London, well then they do not want you. And then you are not known, they do not know you, and that is the way it is. As an individual well as an individual you cannot do anything about it. (Dirk)

The second subordinate theme, Adapting to Changes, covers the myriad reasons artists have for adapting their living and working practices. These reasons and consequent changes were not limited to the artists’ later life but manifested themselves throughout their lives. A few interviewees mentioned the care of children as a reason for adapting. Ruud explained how having children forced him to “be effective” and “in time.” Similarly, Dirk experienced having children as “very positive” because the “rhythm and regularity” of taking care of children gave “a lot more structure” to life. Anna adapted her sculpting practice to having children and Mieke concurred. I actually started a store when I thought, ‘No, I just have to have space where I can write. And my art is art. And my art is not going to find a job … but I will just have a spot where … and so that is what I have."

A pattern that emerged from the interviews was that the female artists in our sample made adaptations in relation to children more often and more profoundly than the male artists did. As Anna explains: “There are a lot of things that I have done differently because of the children, because they were too important.” Female artists also talked more about their children and former partners, they often considered these partnerships as units (cf. the choice of the word we instead of I) in Winne’s quote “These are all models for casting.” We used these with my husband, my former husband, my partner, who is also an artist, explains how she prioritized his needs. “I have always shielded [my partner] from the world.”

Changes were also related to other circumstances, such as the need to make works that can be sold, or because an artist simply prefers a certain material over another. Changing material for financial reasons was also important to Dirk: “I have to admit that, until 1986, that was the breaking point, the end of the financial support.” As Anna explains: “I never thought I would make something that is marketable. To bring in projects that you can realize.” In addition, Dirk made a change in style: “until that point, 1986, I worked with ceramics. Because I had to adapt to having a studio located 12 kilometres from my home. He now ‘rejects’ the temperature that it affects the continuity in his work.”

Physical changes in connection to chronological age are the final cause for artists to make adaptations. This is something that an artist increasingly has to write by hand, but I have written so much that I cannot write at all anymore. That is, I cannot make letters anymore. So, I just hammer on [computers]. She used to copy the simple graphical writing device as something positive. Anna explains that she only makes smaller sculptures that are “doable with [her] body. Heavy stones and heavy tools are no longer doable.” She continues to say that “during the day you have been working with a hammer of a kilo and a grimmer, you can’t carry it anymore. That weighs too much.”

The Art of Resilience 2019

BKR was officially dissolved at the end of 2018, the Association for Collecting Art. As of 1 January 2019, the BKR was officially disbanded.
Living Like an Artist


called need to have his work out in the world rather than to keep it in private, to "share my work and my thoughts with the world". Some artists anticipated changes related to age and health in the future. Winnie, for instance, talks about renting part of her house out as an Airbnb, as a way of "spare myself. Because if I would continue … it looks old-fashioned in comparison to my work … it is horrible, at least for me. It is essential but I do not know in what way … I just need light." Similar to nature, light also serves as a source of inspiration for the artist.

The last subordinate theme, Striving for Autonomy, relates to how artists balance their desire for artistic and financial autonomy with the need to earn a living through their art works. On the one hand, artists express the wish to be independent artistically, as becomes evident in the following quote by Theo: "if someone has an assignment for me, it has to be my problem first". He wants to do the things that clients, he needs assignments that match his artistic agenda. In a similar vein, Dirk does not want to "long for the end of the month. There is actually nothing modern about my work ... it looks old-fashioned in comparison to my contemporaries. But I do not care ... if it is good, then it does not have to be modern." Madeleine also says that "I never go along with fashion. You do go along with your own times but you never follow fashion, so for me ... the other hand, some artists admit to giving up art "because it is an easier way of making a living". Winnie, for example, does applied art "because it is easier to make a living". Ruud explains that "there is actually nothing modern about my work". For many of the artists, their place reflected their artistic practice and the idea that the artist as a subject disappears without a creative practice.

Annelies changed her writing practice according to the time that she presumed to have left: "I am not going to write a novel anymore. I have to spare myself. Because if I would continue ... it is horrible, at least for me. It is essential but I do not know in what way ... I just need light." Similar to nature, light also serves as a source of inspiration for the artist.

The third subordinate theme, Negotiating a Creative Environment, is about the physical, inspirational, relational, and technical way in which the artists shape their environment in order to become and stay creative. The first subordinate theme, Shaping a Creative Place, refers to how artists in our sample shape and experience the physical space around them in relation to creativity. They described and experienced modelling the physical space in order to become creative, or even process, achieving the right workplace happens over time. Mieke, for example, says: "I started with sitting there, but you search as long as you need until you have found a spot that feels nice. And uh, that is this spot"! Besides finding a space that feels nice, Winnie and Robert adapted their working spaces according to the part of the process that they worked with or the part of the process that they were in. In relation to the process of creating the right spot, two important aspects came to the fore: the experience of a space and the practical requirements needed in order to execute the work. The most important practical requirements included ingredients and tools, such as some humidity, enough space, and a gate big enough to transport works. Anna, for instance, states: "The back of light, I cannot stand it." In a similar vein, Annelies explains: "That chair has to do with the incidence of light ... that is, very important to me." These quotes illustrate the importance of light in their workplaces.

Practical requirements were often presented as a need. However, multiple artists expressed a certain gratitude for the imperfection of their workshops. Winnie, for instance, says: "So, this is the place. It’s not an ideal workplace but I’m lucky that I can do it all here ..." Robert adds: "I am just happy to have my right with this light. There are three tubes, yes, two are switched off and one is broken. That is perfect light, like this [laughs]." These last quotes indicate a certain gratefulness and willingness to accept less than perfect physical circumstances. In addition to practical requirements, the experience of the space was also deemed important. When asking Annelies about the corner in which she did most of her writing during winter, she said: "That corner, I feel a certain, how do you call it, a, a, not the word familiarity, but a sort of a need. That is as if I am, ..." Words like intimacy, salvaged, and great security point to the experiential dimension of the workplace rather than the practical requirements and reveal a need to feel secure in able to write. Mieke shares this understanding: "We experience this room as very pleasant and if you feel that, then you can do with what that mutually influences each other." This quote strongly indicates the relationship between the experience of the room and productivity. Multiple artists aimed to find pleasure in perfecting their work space into the ideal place for their creative practice.

The second subordinate theme, Valuing Tools and Materials, refers to the appreciation and experiences of the tools and materials used. The importance of specific materials and tools differed considerably. Annelies says: "The materials, yes I am quite sensitive to them. If I write with a pen then, then it has to be something I like. If you write with a little bit, a little bit thin." While Annelies ascribes meaning to the kind of materials that she uses, Robert has a more functional approach to tools and materials.

The pleasure is not really in the material, it is many ideas and reflections, some humidity, enough space, and a gate big enough to transport works. Anna, for instance, states: "The back of light, I cannot stand it." That is why I do not think about the material. … It has to be quality. If they cheap classy, I do notice it. I mean you can smell whatever you

18

The Art of Resilience 2019

19
Living Like an Artist

Some of the artists also expressed a certain resourcefulness and efficiency in using tools and materials. Anna, for example, mentioned:

"Back in the days, I used to make soup on Sundays from a bone and I kept the bones. So, I have a whole box of bones. With those, I did things and I combined them with stones."

Re-using everyday materials like this in artistic work illustrates the resourcefulness of some artists, which more stories also revealed. Winnie explains how technological developments can have a positive impact on the efficiency of certain artistic practices: "And the big advantage we have over the Romans are power tools... they are a huge time saver." This positive attitude towards technology, as something that generally made work easier, was shared by many artists.

Some artists ascribed their tools and materials with human-like qualities, expressing a somewhat intimate relationship with them. Winnie says: "Bronze is very forgiving, it is a nice material. I don't like chasing it. That is very annoying and noisy." The phrase I don't like chasing implies a certain tension between the control of the artist versus the control of the material. This tension returned in the interviews, for instance in Ruud's account:

"A brush? Well, a brush is the meaning of itself. It has a very dangerous meaning; the rhetorics of the brush. Ehmm... you know, let's see, it is dangerous in an effective way. And, you have, somehow, to let the brush go and, at the same time, you have to control the brush."

We see here more clearly the tension between controlling the material or tool and letting the material or tool go as well as the intimate relationship between artists and their tools or materials.

The third subordinate theme, Weighing Artistic Collaboration, refers to the way the artists discuss and evaluate collaboration. About working with her now ex-husband, Winnie says:

"That was a rare collaboration. It was a real partnership, you know. In some ways, we felt that the things that we made together were better than the things either one of us made apart. Even with his paintings, I used to make the colours all the time. And, I think that, aesthetically, we were really in tune.

The phrasings a real partnership and really in tune imply that Winnie experiences working in sync with her partner as a prerequisite for successful collaboration. Other artists in relationships with peers also experienced collaboration with their significant other as positive. However, some interviewees find collaboration challenging. Theo, for instance, admits that some colleagues experience his particular attitude as an obstacle: "I can't work with everyone. I can't be friends with everyone because of that attitude. You understand that right. Then you think, piff. Then they think I'm too much or something." We can understand this quote as opposite to Winnie's quote about synergy. All artists experienced collaboration somewhere on a continuum between Winnie, who highly values collaboration, and Theo, who experiences obstacles to collaboration.

The fourth subordinate theme, Identifying Inspiration, designates the ways in which artists talk about inspiration. Theo uses a metaphor to describe where he finds inspiration:

"You could compare it to a leopards who reclines on a branch and waits until prey passes by that is weak, ill, or sick. I am not going to spend my energy on, uh, I have an alert laziness.

Theo defines inspiration as something that comes to him and that he just has to catch at the right time. He believes that he has "the instinct of a prey animal." Dirk describes a quite different way of finding inspiration:

"It is more transpiration than inspiration. In other words, you have to work really hard for it. So, I do not sit down and wait for inspiration, but inspiration comes in those moments that you are able to open it. And you have to do something for that.

This implies a more active process of working for it, as opposed to the idea that inspiration has to come to you. All artists acknowledge that, in order to become inspired, a certain sensitivity (openness in Dirk's quote) is required. Sources of inspiration differed between artists. Some went to certain places to get inspired. Several artists in our sample mentioned nature or their garden as an important source of inspiration. For instance, Annelies proclaims: "I work in the garden every day. I never sit in it, never! I do not have the patience to sit in those chairs, but I always see something. I am very preoccupied with shapes." Anna also remarks that nature is very important to her and she often goes on walks, visits the beach, or looks at her garden to find inspiration. Madeleine mentions that she stays in France three months a year where she goes to the forest and sees all these "beautiful things." For some artists, family life is inspirational. For Dirk, childbirth "impressed" him "immensely" and inspired him to make art. Both Anna and Mieke find inspiration in their children's creativity, for instance in their drawings.

The fifth and last subordinate theme, Valuing Support, covers what the artists say about financial, relational, social, or any other type of support that they have received in order to dedicate themselves to their art. The biggest source of support has been help from a partner, husband, or wife. Help included practical support, as expressed by Anna whose husband has helped her with the heavy work of turning stones with a crane. Relational support also came to the fore. When asking Ruud who or what influenced him during his life, he answered: "My wife. I am sorry for the domestic answer, but it is true. Why? Because she is a very clever person and she stimulated me to restart as an artist and, then, she has always supported me, whatever I did." In addition to support from a partner, friends and mentors are also mentioned by most artists. Winnie describes her mentor M.A. as "Amazing!" and Annelies says that her friends "taught" her "how to write" by providing feedback on drafts. All artists express gratitude when talking about the people who have supported them and helped them to express themselves creatively and build a career. Robert sums it up as follows: "So I think there was more help than I realized. It seems illogical to do it all by yourself." When probing the artists about support, they often realized that they had had more support than they were aware of. This realization is of course in contrast with how these artists value working in isolation.

The Art of Resilience 2019
5 Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, we will answer our research questions and connect our findings to the literature reviewed in the theoretical framework.

**WHICH SUBJECTIVITIES EMERGE FROM CREATIVE PRACTICES OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES?**

As the findings show, the way in which the participants account for their experiences resembles the two self-fashioning repertoires discussed in the theoretical framework: the romantic genius and the artist as entrepreneur. In our research, we understand subjectivity both as an individual and a shared experience, mediated by the institutional context (Florida, 2012). Many of our participants talk about the romantic genius as something that comes to them instead of them actively seeking it. This idea is reminiscent of Romanticism as individuals but also sometimes shared with others, while some expressed a dislike of team work or described obstacles to collaboration. Several artists consciously chose to make money with their art. One artist explained that practicing applied art is an easy and enjoyable way to earn a living. Two out of the ten artists identified rather as craftsmen than as romantic or entrepreneurial artists. This is in line with the prominent idea in the 1950s that expertise and technique are the currency for aesthetic authority (Derewezik, 2015, p. 4). These artists found meaning in the craft itself rather than in validation from the outside world. They fit neither the romantic genius nor the entrepreneur and exemplify a middle position.

Regarding the reliance on self-fashioning repertoires, there were differences between women and men. Self-fashioning repertoires are gender neutral. As Diana L. Miller argues (2016), the “ideal” artist that these theories build on has “stereotypically masculine traits” (p. 119). The prerequisite to “prioritize artistic creation above all else, and perform visible commitment to art as a ‘passion’ or ‘calling’” (p. 121) does not equally apply to female and male artists. All artists in our research expressed the urge to express themselves creatively and not being able to choose another profession. They explained this commitment as a natural, in-born inclination that remained unchanged over the course of life. However, the women who participated in our study had to compromise this “commitment to a single calling” (Miller, 2016, p. 121), as they also had to negotiate the expectations of motherhood and wifedom. Furthermore, in contrast to the male participants, the majority of female artists said they had not focused on exhibiting or selling. One woman explained that her insecurity withheld her from seeking out the limelight. For another woman, artist, children were her number one priority and the main reason why she did not actively look for opportunities to exhibit and earn money. It would not suffice to explain these experiences by focusing on romantic notions of inspiration, since several interviewees expressed a need for working autonomously, preferably in the studio that they described as the best place to create art. This emphasis on splendid isolation is also characteristic of Romanticism (Esser et al., 2013, Kisters, 2013). One artist expressed a desire for posthumous fame, i.e., in the words of Nefertiti (Huf, 2016), “Women who retreat from society and ignore others’ needs to focus on artistic creation are often considered selfish, dangerous, or unruly rather than heralded as geniuses.”

Even though the notion of the artist as entrepreneur was not explicitly present in the way our participants expressed themselves, some of them do show some of its characteristics. A few artists were actively looking for external validation and found recognition, which made them feel confident. Contrary to the romantic notion of working in isolation, the artist as entrepreneur must be flexible and able to work together with others. Multiple artists appreciated collaboration with others, while some expressed a dislike of teamwork or described obstacles to collaboration. Several artists consciously chose to make money with their art. One artist explained that practicing applied art is an easy and enjoyable way to earn a living. Two out of the ten artists identified rather as craftsmen than as romantic or entrepreneurial artists. This is in line with the prominent idea in the 1950s that expertise and technique are the currency for aesthetic authority (Derewezik, 2015, p. 4). These artists found meaning in the craft itself rather than in validation from the outside world. They fit neither the romantic genius nor the entrepreneur and exemplify a middle position.

From an environmental gerontological perspective, our research contributes to the study of aging and place. We have examined the relevance of space for older professional artists. As discussed in detail in the presentation of the third superordinate theme Co-Creating the Creative Environment as well as the subordinate theme Co-creating Subjectivity and Place, artists find the space that they work in of great importance. Light, for instance, is relevant for the expression of their creative self. For some of the interviewees, it was even a source of inspiration that he or she needed to be in a particular part of the house, so that the space of an artist is a place that made her feel safe.

When talking about their place, the artists articulated a sense of belonging, a feeling of safety and autonomy that they could not find in place in older age. As Peace, Holland, and Kellaher (2006) argue, this sense of familiarity expressed by the artists is linked to their ever-growing subjectivity in interaction with the place they are living in. In other words, the longer one lives in a place, the more one affects it and see oneself reflected in it. For example, all are creative individuals in their own right but the ways in which each one of them embodies and interprets creativity is different. Not only are they influenced by the romantic notion of the genius but also by the social organization (Florida, 2012), everyone is expected to strive for innovation. The professional artists that we interviewed are part of the third superordinate theme Negotiating a Creative Environment as well as the subordinate theme Co-Creating the Creative Environment and faced changes to cope with this aspect throughout their lives.

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environments, the studios. The studio plays a central role in the artists’ creative practice because it is the space in which the need to express can be turned into practice. The ways in which the artists in our sample talk about their studios can be interpreted in the historical context of the studio. Multiple artists adhered to the idea of the romantic studio in which you work in isolation and wait for ideas to come to you (Esner et al., 2013). Light and nature – two elements that occurred frequently in the interviews – are characteristic aspects of this notion of the studio.

Yet, the artists in our sample often echoed, tweaked, and popular expressions of the studio. Some of them did not fully subscribe to the romantic notion of working in isolation as they had to negotiate their houses and workspaces against the backdrop of family and social life. Most women artists with children discussed how they adapted their ways around the house and workspace to family life more frequently than the men in our sample. These adaptations included, for example, placing a fence in-between the working space and the children to balance creative work with family life.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THESE SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE SUCCESSFUL AGING PARADIGM?

The successful aging paradigm incentivizes people to stay productive, independent, and healthy into old age and creativity is seen as a means to this end. The paradigm positions people as responsible for smart lifestyle choices that fit the third age imaginary of productivity, activity, independence, and autonomy (Katz & Calasanti, 2015; Higgs & Gildeard, 2015). It ignores, however, that individual lifestyle choices are restricted by social inequalities. Additionally, it overlooks that human beings are also unequal from a genetic perspective; some people are more prone to disease than others, which cannot be changed by making the ‘right’ lifestyle decisions. As such, the successful aging paradigm excludes those who cannot or do not want to conform to the third age imaginary. This implies that it does not leave room for value and meaningfulness beyond this narrow conception of success.

Our interviews inquired into the meanings that older artists themselves ascribe to their creative practices. What became evident most prominently is that they do not aim to stay creative in order to be healthy and independent. Rather, it appears that their need to create and express runs so deep that they want to stay healthy and independent in order to be creative. Moreover, even in moments in life when their ability to be healthy and independent was compromised, they found ways to stay creative. This is in contrast with Vera Gallistl’s (2018) findings. Her research showed that older artists felt compelled to tap into the discourse of the third age lifestyle in order to show that, despite their age, they still can be of value to society. This suggests that the older artists in her sample did not find meaning beyond productivity in old age. Some of the artists in our research, on the other hand, expressed that they no longer feel the urge to prove their professional success or artistic productivity. While some of them maintain strict daily routines, it appears that these are developed to keep intact a certain flow that is beneficial to the creative process. Whereas a number of the participants expressed a concern or deliberated the future in terms of their independence and health, this was rather out of fear that they would become unable to carry out their creative practices rather than as an attempt to fit the third age imaginary (Higgs & Gildeard, 2015). In short, the successful aging discourse, although sometimes present, did not appear as prominently in our research as in Vera Gallistl’s – the difference in sample could partly explain this.

It is generally assumed in gerontology that creativity can be seen as a tool for older people to stay productive, healthy, and independent. This gerontologization of creativity, however, reduces artistic achievement to the assumption that artists who live and work into old age should unquestionably be seen as creative and as “evincing of the wisdom and power of ageing” (Katz & Campbell, 2005, p. 106). The problem with this assumption is that, while it might hold true for some artists, it is just as universalizing and generalizing as the peak-and-decline narrative that it argues against. Indeed, whereas the peak-and-decline model assumes that creativity peaks around mid-life and, thereafter, inevitably declines, the positive counterpart holds that creativity always increases with experience and age. Neither leave room for the contingencies and inequalities that are characteristic of life.

As our research has shown, there are many factors that might impact the level of creativity of a person at any point in his or her life. From the interviews, it followed that a wide variety of conditions, including having children, financial (in)dependence, artistic (in)dependence, health across the lifespan, political factors, pets, and, even seasons can influence the practice of creativity. Additionally, within the successful aging paradigm, it is assumed that creativity is an individual force that we can tap into in order to be creative in every aspect of life. Our research, on the other hand, shows that most of the older artists ascribed positive meanings to collaboration as well as support for their artistic practices. This shows that, in line with Gallistl (2018) and Swinnen (2018), creativity is relational, as it is something that the artists do in a certain context with other actors.

Furthermore, the assumption of the successful aging paradigm that smart consumer choices can help in aging successfully is undermined by the prevalence of contingencies and consequent adaptations described above. As one of the interviewees eloquently put it: life is “shaped partly by intentionality but … largely by random events.” In other words, smart choices not only in older age but across the lifespan are influenced by all kinds of circumstances. Whereas choices refer to changes mainly in routines and the urge to prove their professional success or artistic productivity, other choices refer to changes in the artistic process. To a certain extent, this might be interpreted as the artists conforming to the successful aging paradigm, as it allowed them to continue living in place.

On the other hand, while innovation and impermanence have become central to the idea of successful aging (Katz & Marsh, 2003, p. 5), we found that, in many cases, artists highly valued continuity in their homes. Many interviewees choose their inherited studio space, adjustments were made, for example, in relation to disease but also in anticipation of possible obstacles to sustainable artistic practice. To a certain extent, this might be interpreted as the artists conforming to the successful aging paradigm, as it allowed them to continue living in place.

As our research has shown, there are many factors that might impact the level of creativity of a person at any point in his or her life. From the interviews, it followed that a wide variety of conditions, including having children, financial (in)dependence, artistic (in)dependence, health across the lifespan, political factors, pets, and, even seasons can influence the practice of creativity. Additionally, within the successful aging paradigm, it is assumed that creativity is an individual force that we can tap into in order to be creative in every aspect of life. Our research, on the other hand, shows that most of the older artists ascribed positive meanings to collaboration as well as support for their artistic practices. This shows that, in line with Gallistl (2018) and Swinnen (2018), creativity is relational, as it is something that the artists do in a certain context with other actors.

Furthermore, the assumption of the successful aging paradigm that smart consumer choices can help in aging successfully is undermined by the prevalence of contingencies and consequent adaptations described above. As one of the interviewees eloquently put it: life is “shaped partly by intentionality but … largely by random events.” In other words, smart choices not only in older age but across the lifespan are influenced by all kinds of circumstances. Whereas choices refer to changes mainly in routines and the urge to prove their professional success or artistic productivity, other choices refer to changes in the artistic process. To a certain extent, this might be interpreted as the artists conforming to the successful aging paradigm, as it allowed them to continue living in place.

On the other hand, while innovation and impermanence have become central to the idea of successful aging (Katz & Marsh, 2003, p. 5), we found that, in many cases, artists highly valued continuity in their homes. Many interviewees choose their inherited studio space, adjustments were made, for example, in relation to disease but also in anticipation of possible obstacles to sustainable artistic practice. To a certain extent, this might be interpreted as the artists conforming to the successful aging paradigm, as it allowed them to continue living in place.

As our research has shown, there are many factors that might impact the level of creativity of a person at any point in his or her life.
6 Reflections and Recommendations

We hope that the readers of this report can draw inspiration from the insights presented, regardless of whether they are one of our partners in the project, the artists who were kind enough to let us interview them and allow us into their homes, or other people interested in this project. We hope to have shown the diversity and particularity of the ways in which each of the artists navigates the contingencies that are inherent to their being in the art world and to their everyday lives. We believe that there is power in the realization that not everyone comes across the same opportunities and challenges in life, nor is there a perfect or ideal way of handling them.

One of the most important insights of this project is that artists are not-and cannot function as examples of successful aging per definition. The common assumption is that artists are exemplary because they never retire and remain curious and flexible until the end of their lives. This definition of success, however, is very limited in its emphasis on creativity as a tool for productivity, health, and independence in old age. What we can learn from the artists in this research, by contrast, is that health and independence are useful but not meaningful in themselves. It is the ability to express themselves through their creative practices across the life course that gives meaning to the lives of the artists in our sample.

In addition, challenges related to health and dependency on care but also to family (including pets) and cultural and political circumstances are not characteristic of old age but of the entire life course. We argue that aging should not be seen as something that can be done either successfully or unsuccessfully. Therefore, rather than exemplifying the successful aging paradigm, we see the artists as examples of resilience across the lifespan who can serve, depending on the circumstances, as inspiration for others. Personal resilience is not only evident from the way our artists constantly adapt their working and living practices but also from how they have shaped and continue to shape their environment into a place where they can express themselves creatively. While a perpetual drive for innovation and renewal characterizes late modern society, we saw how many of our artists inscribe their environment and the objects within it with meaning beyond change and novelty. They connect their place with personal memories and prefer feelings of home and belonging over following trends.

Our research suggests that the way a person ages is highly dependent on the contingencies of life. The fact remains, however, that the artists involved in our project never quit their artistic practices. They have continued to work and live in place after the age of 60, rather than retiring and moving, for example, to a care facility. As we have shown, these artists may be seen as exemplary because they continue to give voice to their inner need for expression and their desire to stay healthy, active, and independent – as far as humans are ever really independent of each other – in order to be creative. Future research could also focus on narratives of retired artists and everyday lives who do not live in place. It would facilitate an even more profound understanding of how artists who do not conform to the criteria of successful aging ascribe meaning to life and creativity. In addition, this type of research could help us flesh out what resilience really entails in relation to a specific population of professional artists (cf. Aburn, Gott, & Hoare, 2016).

From our conversations with the students and teachers from the MA Architecture of RWTH Aachen, it appeared that successful aging is not a contested concept in architecture. In that sense it resembles many other fields. Therefore, we hope that the future architects we collaborated with will carry forward the alternative view presented in this report. We argue that value and meaningfulness should not be limited to successful aging but should be extended to vulnerability and dependency. The latter may become more prominent or urgent in old age but can, in fact, occur at any point in the life course. Since aging in place is the official Dutch policy on what is the preferred space to age, it promotes for older adults to stay healthy, active, and independent. This reinforces the successful aging paradigm which is ageist in its imaginary, as described by Higgs and Gillear (2015). Consequently, our recommendation to the Aachen students is to create a design that incorporates scenarios of both interdependency and independency.

We also recommend that the Architecture students from Aachen offer space in their design for people to create a place. Many of our interviewees have spent much time and effort in turning their space into a place. The possibility to do so was highly valued with many participants emphasizing that it takes time to create a place. While we recognize that this temporal dimension is difficult to translate into a design, we think that flexible spaces are necessary. They will enable residents to create different spatial arrangements and replace the objects that they have collected throughout their lives. We recognize that the anticipation of experiences of spaces might be a difficult task for architects, and recommend, therefore, that they invest effort in the co-creation of a design with their envisioned clients, in this case, older adults.

Finally, it is important to note that the similarities and differences between interviewer and interviewee within a setting of qualitative interviewing can affect the dynamics of the interview. During some interviews, we experienced challenges involving differences in age and gender as well as in expertise. We observed that some interviewees were more or less prone to talk openly about their experiences with an interviewer of the same gender. Moreover, given our differences in age, we were not always well-positioned to bring up the topics of aging and finitude. The fact that we visited the artists in their everyday environment made this easier, however. Finally, as the Architecture students, who can also be perceived as artists, accompanied us during the interviews, some of the artists tended to enter into conversation with them about the particulars of their houses and artistic practices rather than staying focused on the interviewer. These are all dynamics that will have to be taken into consideration when developing future research projects.

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### APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

**SITTING INTERVIEW**

1. **Development**
   - Could you start by telling me something about how and why you became an artist?
   - How has your art developed over the years?
   - How have you changed as an artist over the years?
   - What are the highs and lows in your career?
   - Who or what in your environment influenced your work and your career?

2. **Drive and meaning**
   - What does it mean to you to make art (as opposed to doing something else)?
   - To what extent has this changed over the years?
   - What are challenges that you have encountered and how did you overcome them?
   - What were the challenges at the beginning?
   - What are the challenges now?
   - To what extent have you ever had doubts about being an artist?
   - How do you see the future of your art and artworks? (e.g., archive, collection, inheritance)

3. **Support system**
   - How are you supported in creating your art and by whom?
   - When and how was this support system crucial to you?
   - What role has financial support such as art residencies and grants played in your career?
   - What other forms of support do you have in your daily life?

4. **Work/life arrangements**
   - How do you organize your professional and personal life?
   - How do you experience this arrangement?
   - What are its challenges and benefits?
   - How has this way of organizing your life changed over the years?
   - How do you foresee/anticipate this changing in the future?

**WALKING INTERVIEW**

5. **Working environment**
   - Where do you prefer to work and why?
   - How has this changed over the years?
   - What are the requirements for you to be able to work here?
   - What changes have you made to meet these requirements and when and why? (quantitative, qualitative, e.g., light, building materials)
   - To what extent does the studio operate as a private or public space or both?
   - Can you please give examples?
   - How does the studio represent you as an artist?

6. **Working habits**
   - Could you tell me what an average day looks like?
   - How has this changed over the years?
   - What is a (dis)satisfying working day?
   - What are the routines you use to get into a certain flow?
   - How has this changed over the years?
   - How do you feel about being disturbed?
   - What other more mundane routines also take place in the studio? (e.g., eating, preparing food/drinks, sleeping, relaxing, smoking)

7. **Tools and materials**
   - What are your favourite materials/tools to work with? And why?
   - Can you show me?
   - How have your preferences in this respect changed over the years? (e.g., challenges, enabling, constraining)
   - What does it feel like to use these materials/tools?
   - How did this change over the years?
   - What do your materials/tools mean to you?
   - To what extent do you see yourself continuing working with these materials/tools?

8. **Working-living space arrangement**
   - What makes this place your home?
   - How does this place reflect your creative self?
   - What is the relation between the working space and the living space?
   - To what extent does your creative activity take place in the studio and what are other creative/inspirational spaces for you? (context)
   - How has this changed over time?
   - How do you plan your future in this place?
   - When were the instances when you already made changes to your home and why?
APPENDIX 2:
EXAMPLE OF AN AXONOMETRY

Lex ter Braak | Zijlweg 324, Haarlem
EM1 – GBL | Living like an artist
Gianmarco Cioni | Elena Pluschnikov | Simone von Grotthuss

Credits:
Simone von Grotthuss
Elena Pluschnikov
Gianmarco Cioni
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