


A Sanctuary for Reflection and Debate: Introducing Art, Culture & Entrepreneurship

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Entrepreneurship seems to be here, there, and everywhere. It is, of course, an inalienable part of the business sector. But it is also present in politics, religion, academia, sports, tourism, public administration, NGOs, and the military – to mention just a few of the many societal sectors in which researchers in recent years have found it fruitful to study entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship simply seems to have no empirical boundaries, just as there seem to be no bounds to the interest researchers, practitioners, and policy-makers have in entrepreneurship.

The all-embracing empirical interest in entrepreneurship is, however, a rather novel phenomenon. It might be hard to imagine, but not long ago it would have been considered quite far-fetched, not to say peculiar, to associate entrepreneurship with anything other than commercial business, business owners, or down-to-earth capitalists. And, it would have been just as odd to perceive entrepreneurship as an exquisite object to desire, something to devote oneself to, and something to tie one's hopes to. Not long ago, entrepreneurship was considered to be a quite ordinary, not to say dull, function of more or less predictable markets, whereas today, entrepreneurship is seen as an enigma to be solved – and a panacea for all.

Not for nothing, #wantpreneur is booming on social media.

The very idea that entrepreneurship is – and should be – a desirable aspect of many different, if not all, walks of life did not begin to gather momentum until the late 1980s, presumably as part of a neoliberal agenda. It accelerated through a number of consecutive economic crisis resulting in layoffs and increasing unemployment (e.g., Marttila, 2013). In addition, the idea has been fuelled by the rapid development of an academic infrastructure dedicated to entrepreneurship, consisting of professorships, educational programs, and journals (e.g., Kuratko, 2005). Since the late 1980s, more and more aspects of life have arguably been subjected to entrepreneurship, and this to the extent that the discourse on entrepreneurship has been likened to a Deleuzian war machine, out on a mission to conquer every opposition and colonise every corner of the world (Ericsson, 2010).

Despite the war machine's great missionary capacity, one sector has, however, proven somewhat impervious to the allure of entrepreneurship. It is the sector that in broad terms revolves around 'art and culture' – or, put slightly more distinctively, the sector that is dedicated to the production, distribution, and consumption of artistic and cultural works. The apparent reasons for this reluctance are twofold.

Firstly, there is a deep-rooted and institutionalized notion of an irreconcilable conflict between the art world and the business world, between artistry and business acumen, and between artistic values and business values (e.g., Leadbeater and Oakley, 1999; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001;

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Ellmeier, 2003; Scott, 2012). According to this notion, art and business simply must be kept apart. Otherwise, both art and artists will suffer. Artistic freedom will be severely hampered and the quality of art damaged as artists are required to adapt to the logic of the market, making their works commercially viable. Art would then not be for the sake of art itself, but instead for business purposes. This notion has most vigorously been theorized by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who in a number of texts has studied the production and appropriation of cultural capital versus economic capital as the resulting outcome of distinctively separate and opposing *habiti*, that is, positions and dispositions in a given social field (e.g., Bourdieu, 1984; 1993; 1996).

Secondly, entrepreneurship as an empirical research object and scholarly subject has long been primarily associated with economics and the behavioural sciences. Only recently, within the past few decades, has it become something for sociologists, organizational theorists, and other social scientists to sink their teeth into (e.g., Landström, 2005). However, scholars within the humanities, whose main objects of study are more or less exclusively within the art and cultural sector, are still conspicuous by their absence in research conversations on entrepreneurship (e.g., Cornelius et al, 2006). It might very well be that this absence is a reflection of the aforementioned institutionalized notion of a conflict between art and business. But it might also be a consequence of how academia is organized in (and by) mutually exclusive vessels. The assertion frequently put forward, namely that research on entrepreneurship has become multi-disciplinary (*ibid.*), must therefore be modified to say that research on entrepreneurship is multi-disciplinary, but so far only within the behavioural and social sciences.

The reluctance towards entrepreneurship within the art and cultural sector, as well as amongst researchers within the humanities, does not mean that there is a research lacuna on art, culture and entrepreneurship. There are plenty of researchers that have studied entrepreneurship in the art and cultural sector (see Hausmann and Heinze, 2016, for a systematic review). Several attempts have been made to bridge the chasm between the art world and the business world (e.g., Ellmeier, 2003; Aggestam, 2007; Scott, 2012). And concepts such as ‘art entrepreneurs(hip)’ (Scherdin and Zander, 2011) and ‘cultural entrepreneurs(hip)’ (Swedberg, 2006; Konrad, 2013) have been used to make sense of the actions and activities that typically differentiate entrepreneurship in the art and cultural domains from other types of entrepreneurship. However, there is much unrealized potential in the intersection of art, culture and entrepreneurship – as well as in the intermingling of artists and researchers on entrepreneurship, especially researchers from the humanities.

Art, Culture & Entrepreneurship (ACE) has been established to realize such potential by providing a sanctuary for reflection and debate – without becoming a plug-in device to the war machinesque entrepreneurship discourse. As ACE’s founding editor, I will introduce you in the following pages to the journal, its aims, scope and organization, and invite you to collaborate on making ACE a premier outlet for conversations on matters related to art, culture, and entrepreneurship.

Aims and Scope

As a sanctuary for reflection and debate on art, culture, and entrepreneurship, ACE’s focus is on *initiatives within the art and cultural sector that aim to establish new forms of organized practices*. This focus is by no means set arbitrarily; instead, each of the signifiers in italics is chosen with deliberate care to delineate the journal’s orientation and *raison d’être* as clearly as possible. With ‘initiatives’, a demarcation line is drawn to exclude activities devoid of intentions and efforts. With ‘the art and cultural sector’, the journal is empirically fencing off societal sectors that are not dedicated to the production, distribution, and consumption of artistic and cultural

works. With ‘establish’, it is made clear that permanence, not evanescence, is sought after. And with ‘new forms of organized practices’, the journal shuns old and already-proven ways of doing things. By highlighting initiatives and practices, ACE also wants to orient its overarching empirical interest away from focusing only on exceptional individuals with traits or attitudes deemed to be entrepreneurial and more towards focusing on how new forms of organized practices are being established (e.g., Thomson et al, 2020).

However, it is not only the presence of these signifiers that is important. Perhaps even more important, as I see it, is the deliberate absence of certain signifiers. It should therefore be noted that ACE does not a priori focus on concepts such as ‘art entrepreneurship’ or ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ that come with more or less ready-made theoretical definitions or empirical distinctions. There are two reasons for this stance. Firstly, ACE does not want to exclude initiatives within the art and cultural sector seeking to establish new forms of organized practices that happen not to conform to theoretical or empirical preconceptions. Secondly, ACE does not want to promote definitional debates on ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ art or cultural entrepreneurship. A posteriori, it might very well make sense to conceptualize a specific initiative within the art and cultural sector to establish a new form of organized practice in terms of, for instance, ‘cultural entrepreneurship’ or to frame said initiative in such a discursive context. Theoretical or empirical preconceptions should not, however, preclude anyone from contributing to the journal a priori.

In light of ACE’s focus, the overarching aim of the journal is to promote nuanced reflections and debates based not only on empirical and theoretical grounds, but also on artistic grounds.

Empirically, ACE aims to contribute a broad repertoire of studies of initiatives within the art and cultural sector to establish new forms of organized practices. Such a repertoire, in itself, brings nuances and subtleties to the conversation on art, culture, and entrepreneurship; it also lends itself to the construction of theoretical typologies and the development of sensitive heuristics for practitioners to use in different contexts. To secure the breadth of the repertoire, the journal specifically welcomes studies of empirical cases that hitherto have been neglected or completely ignored by previous research and that, for instance, might highlight spaces, discourses, or stakeholders that are underprivileged (in the vein of Steyaert and Katz, 1994, for example).

Theoretically, ACE aspires to advance theoretical discourse on art, culture, and entrepreneurship in a cross-disciplinary manner, bringing otherwise idle frameworks into interpretative play. It also aims to develop new theoretical vocabularies and concepts, and relations among concepts, when dealing with initiatives to establish new forms of organized practices within the art and cultural sector. To capitalize on the rich unrealized potential in the intersection of art, culture, and entrepreneurship, researchers working within humanistic traditions are especially encouraged to cast new theoretical light on existing practices and research on art, culture, and entrepreneurship, in order to rethink, reconstruct, and perhaps even rewrite some of the dominating themes and narratives in both practice and theory.

Artistically, ACE aims at tickling the imagination of ‘what is’ and ‘what could be’ in the art and cultural sector concerning initiatives to establish new forms of organized practices. ACE is therefore not only a journal, it is also a creative platform for artists who wish to contribute with works that, on the one hand, problematize and destabilize ingrained notions of entrepreneurship or ossified entrepreneurial practices and, on the other hand, enact new entrepreneurial images, ideas, and practices.

A Sanctuary with Three Sections

To accommodate the empirical, theoretical, and artistic aims of ACE, the journal is divided into three sections, each with its specific purpose.

In the first section, *Articles*, ACE's editors have dedicated themselves to publish "*papers that are sophisticated in the use of theories, empirical materials, and methods; well-positioned in regards to contemporary scholarly debates on art, culture, and entrepreneurship; and characterized by topical relevance*"¹. Key to understanding this dedication is the meaning ascribed to the words 'sophisticated' and 'well-positioned'. With 'sophisticated', the editors want to emphasize the importance of engaging in complex and intricate ontological and epistemological matters by, for instance, seeking what lies beneath the empirical surface, reading theory between the lines, striving for intriguing contextualisation, and problematizing unintended or unforeseen consequences. With 'well-positioned', the editors want to emphasize the importance of rigorously elaborating on one's own research position versus that of others in a just, critical, and reflexive manner. As I see it, these emphases represent a kind of hermeneutic call for understanding art, culture, and entrepreneurship, and a wish for conversations that fuse horizons in order to broaden them (in the vein of Gadamer, 1975).

The second section, *Art Works*, is intended to function as a creative platform for artistic contributions. Here representations of entrepreneurship are to be curated, such as essays and poetry, but also other types of art whose format is not (solely) text-based, such as visual art, music, dance performances, and video documentaries. In this regard, this section of the journal breaks somewhat new grounds in that it challenges both the very format of an academic journal and notions of what is legitimate content to publish in such a journal. As editor-in-chief, I foresee some practical challenges associated with this section, but I have confidence that these challenges will be addressed and dealt with along the way as they present themselves to the editors. After all, this journal is dealing not only with initiatives within the art and cultural sector to establish new forms of organized practices. It is such an initiative itself, and as such it entails handling paradoxes, tensions, conflicting logics, and – perhaps above all – unforeseen consequences (e.g., Ericsson, 2018).

The purpose of the third section, *Reviews*, is not only to energize scholarly debates on initiatives within the art and cultural sector that seek to establish new forms of organized practices. It is also to spark such initiatives. To accomplish this, the section opens up a conversational space for scholars, artists, critics, and practitioners, and I envision an array of different contributions. These include research reviews (books, articles, book chapters, conferences, etc.), debate articles, and reviews of various artistic expressions of entrepreneurship, such as concerts, exhibitions, theatrical works and TV series.

On Quality Assurance

In line with the journal's aims and scope, as well as with the ambitions behind the sanctuary and its three sections, ACE ensures the quality of its contributions through three processes. Articles are subject to scholarly double-blind peer review. Art works are subject to artistic single blind peer-review; that is, the reviewers are anonymous while the names of the originators are known. And contributions to the Reviews section are developed in close collaboration with the review editor. To monitor these processes, associate editors or curators have been designated to each

¹ <https://open.lnu.se/index.php/ace/about>

section. To help the editors move these processes swiftly forward, the journal has set up an international editorial board consisting of scholars from different research traditions and with different types of research interests.

The composition of the editorial board is, however, neither fixed nor finished. Additional competencies will be added, when needed, as the journal comes into being and develops, issue by issue. In this sense, I would like to convey the notion of ACE as a kind of living matter, growing, growing organically, gradually, in a bottom-up fashion. ACE also wants to collaborate with the research community, artists, and practitioners in this way to formulate new exciting routes of research, art, and debate. For example, I envision different types of initiatives in the form of special issues, paper development workshops, seminars, exhibitions, and conferences. As I see it, such initiatives are a crucial part of a journal's quality assurance, in the sense that they function as guarantees for both relevance and excellence.

An Open Invitation

With that said, I am proud to present the very first issue of Art, Culture & Entrepreneurship, and a collection of contributions, each one of which – as well as taken together – represents the ambition of the journal: to publish a wide variety of works that are empirically, theoretically, and artistically relevant and also display excellence. I hope the issue spurs your interest in contributing to the journal, submitting your very best works. I cordially invite you to contact me to discuss manuscript ideas. You are also more than welcome to sign up as a reviewer, propose special issues, or suggest other types of collaborations.

Art, Culture & Entrepreneurship is in the making: without you, it amounts to nothing.

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