

ARTIST CAREER RESEARCH METHODS

*A comparative analysis of research methods
for understanding artists' career paths,
work conditions, and incomes*

Full report, including Executive summary

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This report on Artist Career Research Methods was prepared for a consortium of Canadian public arts funders consisting of the Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, Calgary Arts Development Authority, and Ontario Arts Council, in partnership with the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Toronto Arts Foundation, and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

An annotated bibliography of recent research in this area is available under separate cover.

Cover design by Ashley Weegar

Executive summary

This report summarizes an in-depth Canadian and international literature search into methods used to understand artists' work conditions, incomes, and career paths. The research team also conducted 12 semi-structured interviews with arts researchers, research commissioning organizations, and representatives of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Obtain a synthesis and analysis of the different approaches and methodologies in research focused on artists' careers, practices and livelihoods undertaken in jurisdictions across Canada and internationally.
- Gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations behind the common and varied findings.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned in methodologies and approaches.

Hill Strategies Research conducted the study and is indebted all those who contributed to this project by sharing their information, time, and expertise. Miigwetch! Merci! Thanks!

Summary of findings, best practices, and research gaps

A key finding of this study is that there is no single method that is objectively a “best practice” compared with the other options. Each method has its strengths and weaknesses. Researchers should select the research method that best matches their study goals.

Research objectives and scope

The main research objective of the studies found in the literature review is to provide insights about the incomes and working lives of artists that are not available through any other means.

Outside of census data, there have been no systematic efforts in Canada aimed at understanding the situation of **all** the country's artists. Many Canadian studies have covered certain types of artists only.

Most studies have not defined “artists” per se but have relied on an identification of the types of artists that fall within their scope of inquiry.

Research into artists in Australia and Ireland, unlike most other national studies, examined the situation of all types of artists at once. Some sub-national studies in Canada have looked at all types of artists, including the Saskatchewan project *Understanding the Arts Ecology* (2014), Calgary's *Arts Professionals Survey* (2014 and 2017), and a survey of local artists in Fort

McMurray and area (part of the *Arts Impact Measurement Project*, 2016).

Most of the studies examined in the literature review targeted specific types of artists, including three studies from Quebec’s cultural observatory, studies using respondent-driven sampling, and those that have analyzed “big data”.

Most of the studies in the literature review were targeted specifically at professional artists. Those surveys aimed at both professional and amateur artists included a question to separate professional and amateur artists, usually based on self-identification as a professional.

In three recent Quebec studies, respondents were considered professional based their professional experience, including specific experience in the artform under study. Canadian studies of visual artists used the definition of professional from the Canada Council for the Arts, including specialized training, peer recognition, devoting time to artistic activities, and/or having a history of public presentation or publication.

Some unions and artist associations have conducted research to gain insight into the situations of their members. In parallel, some academics have pursued studies of artists in order to better understand situations and work patterns that might become more common in the emerging “gig economy”.

Best practices

- Researchers and research funders should carefully consider research objectives, scope, the inclusion of “amateur” and “professional” artists, definitions of professionalism, and the inclusion of all artists (or, alternatively, a focus on certain occupations).
- Survey questions should probe where respondents fit with regard to the research objectives, scope, and definitions.
- Arts unions and professional organizations could be key partners and the source of significant issues and questions to address in different sub-sectors of the arts.

Research methods

Given the limitations of official national statistics, researchers have conducted special studies of artists, including three main methods: 1) compilation of lists of artists, then survey sampling; 2) respondent-driven sampling; 3) analysis of big data.

Table 1 highlights the researchers’ understanding of some key strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and risks of these research methods, which have rarely been applied to Canadian artists.

There are other research methods that have rarely been used to examine the situation of artists. A study using one or more of these rarely-used methods – longitudinal research, quasi-experimental methods, intensive qualitative research, and arts-based research – could

fill a gap in the research literature.

Table 1: Summary of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and risks of novel research methods into artists' careers

List compilation (then survey sampling)	
Strengths and opportunities	Weaknesses and risks
Builds on existing lists of arts associations and unions	Not all artists are members of associations or unions.
Considered reliable, if well done (including sample randomization)	Sharing of lists by arts associations and unions due to privacy legislation / concerns. Method has become more difficult over time with increasingly stringent privacy laws.
	List compilation takes significant time and can be costly
Respondent-driven sampling	
Strengths and opportunities	Weaknesses and risks
Allows for surveys to be conducted of hard-to-find populations in a systematic way	Methods are not well understood by many researchers, let alone the public
Provides estimates of the total number of artists	Relies upon algorithms within the model (not transparent)
Simple to start the seeding process	Cannot generate a specific response rate or margin of error
Most efficient when sampling clustered populations (e.g., specific types of artists)	Basis in network theory might make it a less viable fit for a study of different types of artists
At a time when response rates to telephone and internet surveys tend to be quite low, RDS methods provide a working alternative.	More computationally demanding than traditional methods
	Intensive process: time, labour, cost
	Less commonly-used method: adjustments to methods in a specific study may have unknown results.
Administrative ("big") data	
<i>Note: The analysis below is relatively limited and speculative due to the few examples found in the literature review.</i>	
Strengths and opportunities	Weaknesses and risks
Mines existing datasets	Not likely to be used to examine the situation of all artists in any jurisdiction (lack of existing datasets)
Can be used to provide insights into the situation of certain types of artists in certain sub-sectors of the arts	Data may not be available for specific topics of interest. Analysis only of variables that can be captured from existing sources.

Can provide faster results (no need to wait for survey results)	Specific (programming) skills needed
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In Canada, the vast majority of custom surveys into the situation of artists have used “convenience samples”, i.e., non-random samples with the largest possible number of responses, given the size of the group being studied. Table 2 compares key attributes of random and non-random sampling methods.

Table 2: Brief summary of random and non-random sampling methods

Random sampling	Non-random sampling
Relatively expensive	Lower cost
Provides assurances that the responses offer a representative sample of all artists being studied	Uncertainty whether the sample fully represents all artists being studied
Additional time usually needed to compile and create a random sample	Faster turnaround time
Historically telephone-based, but online sampling has become more common and better accepted	Usually online

Best practices and research gaps

- Researchers should match the research method to the study goals and consider using one of the above research methods.
- Research funders should ensure that adequate finances and time are made available.
- Wherever feasible, studies should be conducted using random samples to ensure a higher degree of statistical reliability.
- Gaps in current research include the limited use of longitudinal research, quasi-experimental methods, intensive qualitative research, and arts-based research.

Variables and questions

The research identified four key studies that delved much further than conventional national statistics into two important issues: time use and incomes. As shown in Table 3, questions about time use and income contained breakdowns related to time spent and income earned related to creative activities, other arts-related activities (such as teaching), and non-arts work. Of note, all of the studies focussed on artists’ personal incomes; none reported on household income levels.

Some studies asked about receipt of grants and supports from other sources, such as spouses. Select studies contained questions related to other facets of artists’ working lives, such as years of experience, supplementary health benefits, retirement funds, recognition within the arts community, networking activities, self-assessment of their career

achievements, international artistic engagements, and the use of creative skills in non-arts work.

A study of artists in Saskatchewan included questions concerning artists’ collaborations and informal networking within and outside of the arts as well as key organizations in their work.

Table 3: Variables used to examine artists’ time use and income levels in four key studies

Study ¹	Time use	Income levels
Australia	Percentage of time spent on creative activities; arts-related activities; non-arts activities; broken down by type of artist	Creative income; other arts-related income; non-arts income. Also: sources of any grants or other forms of financial assistance that they received during the previous five years
Waging Culture 2007	Weekly hours of work; studio time; art-related work; non-art related work; art-related volunteering	Median and average income statistics for: net personal income; gross and net practice income; net arts-related income; net other income. Also: sources of average gross practice income; average hourly wages; incidence of spousal support for basic living expenses, luxuries, and arts practice expenses
Saskatchewan	Weekly hours of work; creative practice; teaching or mentorship in a creative discipline; work outside of creative practice	Gross income from art practice (average, incidence, ranges); gross personal income (average, ranges); income from employment outside the arts and culture (average). Also incidence of grant receipt over previous 2 years; perception of the importance of various funding sources as a direct source of income during their career as an artist
Quebec (visual artists)	Weekly paid hours: overall; in the creation of works of visual art and career development activities; other activities related to the visual arts, such as teaching; creative work in another discipline; non-arts related work	Total personal income; creative income; other income. Also: principal source of income; sale or rental of works; receipt of grants or cash prizes; net creative income

¹ Works cited in the table: “Australia”: Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts; “Waging Culture 2007”: Miranda, Michael (2009). *Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists*. Toronto, Canada: The Art Gallery of York University; “Saskatchewan”: Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist’s Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina; “Quebec (visual artists)”: Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec.

Best practices and research gaps

- Researchers should include important questions on artists' working lives and incomes, such as artists' time use, income details, and other characteristics of artists' working lives.
- Researchers should consider including questions about receipt of grants, other supports, years of experience, supplementary health benefits, retirement funds, recognition within the arts community, networking activities, self-assessment of their career achievements, international artistic engagements, and the use of creative skills in non-arts work.
- Gaps in existing research include the lack of questions about artists' household incomes (not just their personal incomes).

Sub-national statistics

The literature review found only one provincial attempt to capture data on all artists (Saskatchewan). Many other provincial and territorial studies have examined certain aspects of artists careers (Prince Edward Island, Nunavut, Ontario) or certain types of artists (Quebec). A few special municipal surveys and studies have been conducted (Calgary, Wood Buffalo, Montreal, Quebec City). Nation-wide studies of specific types of artists (visual artists, dancers, women in film) have provided detailed provincial or regional data.

All of the local and provincial studies used non-random samples to examine the situation of artists, with the exception of Quebec reports by the province's Cultural Observatory (random sample of compiled lists) and local and provincial data provided in national studies of visual artists (respondent-driven sampling).

Research gaps

- There is no “best practice” regarding the collection of and reporting on local, provincial, or territorial data on artists in Canada. This is a distinct gap in existing research: the lack of a systematic attempt, outside of census-based data, to collect statistics on many (or all) types of artists in all provinces and territories (let alone municipalities).

Inclusion of Indigenous people and equity-seeking groups

The literature review examined a number of reports with an Indigenous or equity-related focus that contain insights into the measurement of the situation of artists. Many of these reports were qualitative, unlike the statistical focus of most other reports reviewed for this project. Among the 12 research interviews conducted, six were focussed on the perceptions and situations of Indigenous artists and equity-seeking groups of artists.

A number of resources were found related to Indigenous artists, female artists, racialized artists, and disability / deaf / mad arts. Significantly fewer reports specifically addressed immigrant, refugee, or LGBTQ2S (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, trans, queer, and two-spirited)

artists.

Best practices and research gaps

- Some overarching themes emerged in the analysis of research methods used in reports on Indigenous artists and artists from equity-seeking groups, including: the need for close consultation with these groups when designing research studies; the need to decolonize research methods and address difficult topics such as the impacts of racism, sexism and discrimination; the need to build trust with communities who have a complicated history with research; and the need for careful consideration of language, terminology, and accessibility.
- Analyzing how the cultural sector (or even each discipline) views its diversity and its overall inclusiveness would be an interesting starting point for research. Research on attitudes and assumptions can reveal disparities that are important to illuminate before progress can be made.
- Researchers should carefully and clearly note why certain demographic data is being collected and for what purposes it is being used. Researchers should give reassurances and proof that the information is being collected for improvements and real change.
- There is a research gap in terms of the discrepancy between the various possible definitions of artists and official, European-centric definitions of professional artists.

Presentation and distribution of research findings

Best practices

The literature review discovered a number of interesting ways to present statistical findings that could be considered by Canadian researchers and research funders, including:

- Interactive online dashboards, allowing users to filter key findings by type of artist, age, gender, and location.
- Data visualizations.
- Infographics (either distributed separately or integrated as charts in main reports).
- Typologies of artists (e.g., recent Quebec reports grouped artists into clusters based on net personal income and time spent on the arts).
- Unusual text elements such as artist profiles, artists' reactions to the data, funders' responses to the data, accessible summaries, and easy English versions.

Interesting ideas regarding report distribution include:

- Public debates, podcast discussions, and presentations to/with artists.
- The “throwback” idea of distributing paper reports as a way of reaching some Indigenous or marginalized artists.

Section I: Introduction

Many artists have atypical work patterns, characterized by high self-employment rates, multiple job-holding, the predominance of short-term employment opportunities, relatively low incomes, low unionization rates, challenges regarding professional development and career advancement, and unusual work flows. In addition, there are differences in how artists work between arts disciplines and regions of the country. These specificities make artists a challenging labour group to study.

This report summarizes an in-depth Canadian and international literature search into methods used to understand artists' work conditions, incomes and career paths. The report was prepared a team from by Hill Strategies Research (Kelly Hill and Alix MacLean, with contributions from Sherri Helwig).

The research was conducted on behalf of a consortium of Canadian public arts funders: Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, BC Arts Council, Calgary Arts Development Authority, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, Toronto Arts Foundation, and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

The funding agencies wanted to understand the opportunities and challenges for future Canadian research related to the situation of artists. More specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- Obtain a synthesis and analysis of the different approaches and methodologies in research focused on artists' careers, practices and livelihoods undertaken in jurisdictions across Canada and internationally.
- Gain an understanding of the underlying reasons and motivations behind the common and varied findings.
- Identify best practices and lessons learned in methodologies and approaches.

The report synthesizes information about methods used in the studies that were found in the literature search and interviews, including an analysis of the studies' goals, their definitions of "artists", their novel methods (i.e., methods that have gone beyond traditional statistical sources in exploring the situation of artists), the variables they analyzed, their analysis (or lack thereof) of sub-national statistics, methodological notes related to Indigenous and equity-seeking groups in the arts, their presentation and distribution of findings, and other methodological considerations.

Report structure

After a discussion of the research methods used in creating this report (Section 2), the remaining sections highlight the key pieces of information sought by the commissioning agencies about studies into the situation of artists:

- Section 3: Objectives and scope of research projects into artists' careers
- Section 4: Research methods used
- Section 5: Variables and questions asked
- Section 6: Sub-national research efforts
- Section 7: Inclusion of Indigenous people and equity-seeking groups
- Section 8: Presentation and distribution of key findings
- Section 9: Conclusions (including a detailed overview of best practices)

A list of works cited is provided at the end of this report, as is a list of all works included in the accompanying annotated bibliography.

Section 2: Methods for this review

In order to produce this report, the research team conducted a literature review and 12 semi-structured interviews between February and May 2018. Hill Strategies Research is indebted all those who contributed to this project by sharing their information, time, and expertise. Miigwetch! Merci! Thanks!

Literature review

The core research element was a search for and review of reports related to artists' work conditions, incomes and career paths. The literature search examined sources from Canada and abroad, starting with reports known to the research team and the funding agencies. The research team built on the initial list via an extensive literature search and email communication with representatives of several Canadian arts service organizations.

Included in the study are:

- Reports published since 2010 in English or French.
- Books, academic articles, and non-academic reports
- Blogs and webpages

The research team executed searches of web and academic sources, in English and French, using keywords for artists (including artist, musician, dancer, actor, choreographer, comedian, circus performer, puppeteer, writer, author, novelist, playwright, poet, screenwriter, filmmaker, director, composer, arranger, songwriter, curator, painter, visual artist, craftsperson, artisan, installation artist, photographer, sculptor, multimedia artist, and arts educator) in combination with keywords for their situation or identity (including employment, income, profile, situation, status, working lives, artistic practice, career development, day jobs, starving, Indigenous, Aboriginal, diversity, disability, LGBTQ, and Trans arts). Many of these searches were conducted twice, once without any jurisdiction attached and a second time appending Canadian jurisdictions (all 13 provinces and territories, in addition to Canada).

A companion document to this report contains a brief summary of key elements of select reports from Canada and around the world that have provided insights into the situation of artists, with a particular focus on novel research methods. Over 60 reports are included in the annotated bibliography.

Semi-structured interviews

In addition to the literature review, a series of 12 interviews with key informants was conducted by Kelly Hill. Interviewees included arts researchers, research commissioning organizations, and representatives of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups. The interviews

were semi-structured, were conducted via telephone or Skype, and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes.

The interviewees were:

- Mary Blackstone (Regina, SK), Professor at the University of Regina and lead researcher into Saskatchewan via the Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (SPAR), April 9, 2018
- James Doeser (London, UK), researcher on an as-yet unpublished project into visual artists in England, April 18, 2018
- Joan Jeffri (New York), Founder and Director of the Research Center for Arts and Culture and lead researcher in three American studies that used respondent-driven sampling, April 10, 2018
- Michael Maranda (Toronto, ON), Assistant Curator, Art Gallery of York University and lead researcher in the Waging Culture surveys of visual artists using respondent-driven sampling, April 20, 2018
- Cecily Nicholson (Vancouver, BC), Operations manager at Gallery Gachet, an artist-run centre with a mandate related to mental health, disability, and access, May 2, 2018
- Jérôme Pruneau (Montreal, QC), Directeur général, Diversité artistique Montréal, April 25, 2018
- Christine Routhier (Quebec City, QC), Institut de la statistique du Québec, lead researcher in surveys of artists in Quebec, April 11, 2018
- Valerie Sing Turner (Vancouver, BC), artist who is overseeing the Diverse Theatre BC project, April 27, 2018
- Samantha Slattery and Tiffany Ferguson (Toronto, ON), Founder and Executive Director of Women in Music Canada, April 27, 2018
- Robin Sokoloski (Toronto, ON), Executive Director of the Playwrights' Guild of Canada and involved in Equity in Theatre projects, April 16, 2018
- David Throsby (Sydney, Australia), Professor at Macquarie University and lead researcher in surveys of Australian artists, April 5, 2018
- Clayton Windatt (Sturgeon Falls, ON), Executive Director of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective, April 13, 2018

The interviews with researchers and representatives of research commissioning organizations typically explored elements of research projects that have gone beyond traditional statistical sources in exploring the situation of artists, such as:

- Commissioning organization(s)
- Definitions of artists
- Focus on “professional” artists (or not), and how this was defined
- Elements of the situation of artists (e.g., incomes, hours worked, career progression, etc.) focussed on in the research
- Methods used to find out this information

- Important limitations to the data quality
- Dissemination of the research findings
- Key lessons from their experience that other researchers (or research funders) might like to know

The interviews with representatives of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups explored:

- Wording and techniques for the inclusion of Indigenous people, women, other equity-seeking groups in larger research efforts
- Specific aspects about the situation of artists that they would like to see asked in a survey of artists
- Methods that have been used to find out about the situation of Indigenous, women, other equity-seeking groups of artists
- The understanding and applicability of commonly-used research terms such as “professional” and “artist”
- The nature of artists’ careers within the Indigenous, women, other equity-seeking groups, as well as similarities to or differences from other artists
- Key lessons from their experiences that they think researchers or research funders should know
- Any other particularly interesting studies in this area

Findings from the interviews are interspersed throughout this synthesis.

Note about “best practices”

Based on the above research efforts, the research team examined the methods and key findings of the research studies and distilled useful practices for researchers and research commissioners to consider when pursuing research into the situation of artists. An overview of best practices is provided in the conclusion to this report.

Section 3: Objectives and scope of research projects into artists' careers

Research objectives

Many Canadian and international research efforts have attempted to develop accurate socio-economic information about artists, including key aspects of the working lives of artists such as their careers, multiple job holding, time use, incomes, and many other aspects of their situations. In general, the studies have been conducted to provide insights about artists' working lives that are not available through any other means.

More specifically, some of the novel reports examined in the literature review have goals of:

- Creating accurate socio-economic and professional profiles of Quebec artists (dancers or choreographers, writers, visual artists).
- Establishing “a clear picture of the socio-economic status of visual artists in Canada”.
- Providing arts councils “with an up-to-date and robust evidence base to effectively support artists living and working across the island of Ireland”.
- Examining the lives and working conditions of Australia’s artists.
- Providing insights into the situation of women in the arts in the United Kingdom.

Some unions and professional associations, such as Canadian Actors' Equity and Storytellers of Canada, conduct occasional surveys of their membership, covering issues such as demographics, paid and unpaid work, fee structures, and more.² In the case of unions, the data can be a source of insight into the situations of their members and may be used in contract negotiations. Artist associations share the goal of gaining insight into the situations of their members. For example, the Storytellers of Canada's member survey has a threefold purpose, all related to understanding their members' situations (e.g., who and where they are, how they practice their art, how big their audiences are, and how their arts earnings fit into their overall incomes)³:

Key research objective: To provide insights about the incomes and working lives of artists that are not available through any other means.

- To know what members need from the organization / how the organization can best support them.

² In Canada, the results of some studies from professional associations or unions are not shared publicly (outside of the membership base), limiting their usefulness for this research project and any subsequent research projects in the sector.

³ Email communication with Marion Gruner, Communications & Development Manager, Storytellers of Canada, May 4, 2018

- To better pinpoint the organization’s advocacy efforts.
- To understand changes in the membership, especially with regard to age, language, and diversity.

The arts economy is fairly distinct in its labour supply as well as the monetary and non-monetary motivations of artists. This makes the arts labour force an interesting field of study for economists, sociologists, and many other academics. Some have pursued studies of artists in order to better understand situations and work patterns that might become more common in the emerging “gig economy”.

While a few Canadian or international reports specifically mention the shortcomings of national statistical agency data on artists (e.g., via a population census), these shortcomings are certainly implicit in other reports: If census data covered all needs, then there would not be the necessity to conduct a new study related to the situation of artists.

Outside of census data, there have been no systematic efforts in Canada aimed at understanding the situation of **all** the country's artists. Many Canadian studies have covered certain types of artists only.

Research scope: types of artists

In its 1980 *Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist*, UNESCO indicated that:

- “‘Artist’ is taken to mean any person who creates or gives creative expression to, or re-creates works of art, who considers his artistic creation to be an essential part of his life, who contributes in this way to the development of art and culture and who is or asks to be recognized as an artist, whether or not he is bound by any relations of employment or association.”⁴

Very few studies have attempted to examine the situation of **all types of artists** at once.

Most studies are targeted at **professional artists**.

Rather than attempting to define what being an “artist” means (in terms of creative expression, artistic production and interpretation, or other work aspects), most studies have identified types of artists that fall within the scope of inquiry of their research effort.

Very few studies have attempted to examine the situation of all types of artists at once. Two country-wide examples are Australia and Ireland.

⁴ UNESCO (1980, October 27). *Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist*. Retrieved from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13138&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

A 2017 Australian study of artists stratified artists by occupation, using eight groups: “writers; visual artists; craft practitioners; actors and directors; dancers and choreographers; musicians and singers; composers, songwriters and arrangers; community cultural development artists”. The study excluded “Indigenous artists working in remote and very remote areas of Australia”, filmmakers, as well as interior, fashion, industrial and architectural designers.⁵

This functional grouping is quite similar to occupation codes used in Canadian research based on the national census, with the exception of filmmakers (who would generally be included as “directors” in Canadian occupation codes) and community cultural development artists (who have no similar grouping in Canada). The nine Canadian occupation codes are: actors and comedians; artisans and craftspersons; authors and writers; conductors, composers and arrangers; dancers; musicians and singers; other performers (including circus performers, magicians, models, puppeteers, and other performers not elsewhere classified); producers, directors, choreographers, and related occupations; and visual artists.⁶

A 2010 Irish study attempted to reach all types of professional artists covered by arts councils in Ireland and Northern Ireland, including the following disciplines: architecture; circus, street art and spectacle; crafts; dance; film; literature; music (including opera); theatre / drama; and visual arts. Excluded were full-time students, artists whose primary occupation was a teacher or lecturer, technical / managerial / administrative personnel in arts organizations, and designers (industrial, graphic or fashion).⁷ The inclusion of architecture differs from Canadian and Australian research into artists.

A small number of provincial, territorial, or municipal studies have looked at all types of artists, including the Saskatchewan project *Understanding the Arts Ecology* (2014), Calgary’s *Arts Professionals Survey* (2014 and 2017), and a survey of local artists in Fort McMurray and area. While some of these studies identified the disciplines within which artists worked, none analyzed the survey results by discipline or type of artist. This may be due to their lower sample sizes than major national studies.

In contrast, three recent Quebec studies targeted specific types of artists: (1) dancers and choreographers; (2) writers; and (3) visual artists.⁸

⁵ Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

⁶ Hill, Kelly (2014). *A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada*, Hamilton, Canada. Hill Strategies Research Inc.

⁷ Hibernian Consulting and Insight Statistical Consulting (2010). *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland* (Republic of Ireland version). Dublin, Ireland: The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

⁸ Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2012). *Les danseurs et chorégraphes québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession de la danse au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec. Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2011). *Les écrivains québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession littéraire au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec.

Most studies using respondent-driven sampling (RDS) or analyzing “big data” have examined specific types of artists:

- A Canadian study using RDS examined the situation of visual artists, excluding fine craft practitioners. This study was conducted in 2007 and 2012, with another iteration planned for later in 2018.⁹
- American studies using RDS have analyzed the situation of jazz musicians (2003), older visual artists (2005), and older performers in Los Angeles and New York City (2011).
- English studies using big data have examined specific types of film artists (including directors, writers, actors, and other film crew members) as well as composers.¹⁰

The structure of the RDS research method, which focusses on the networks of individual respondents, may lend itself to a focus on certain types of artists. Interview respondents who have used RDS confirmed that it might be more challenging to use RDS to examine all artists in Canada.

Both the Quebec and Australian studies slotted artists into a principal artistic occupation. Interviewees from both of these projects indicated that relatively few artists insisted on multiple “principal” artistic occupations. On the other hand, the Saskatchewan survey found that 74% of artists were engaged in multiple disciplines.

In the Quebec study, respondents must also have resided in the province for at least 12 months before completing the survey.

Research scope: “professional” and / or “amateur” artists

Most of the studies in the literature review were aimed at professional artists, with professional being assessed based on self-identification, professional experience, or other criteria. In each survey, specific questions probed whether survey respondents fit the project’s definition of professional.

In three recent Quebec studies, there were similar but slightly different qualification elements for different types of artists, based on professional experience.¹¹ Dancers were

Québec. Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec

⁹ Miranda, Michael (2009). *Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists*. Toronto, Canada: The Art Gallery of York University.

¹⁰ Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). *#PressForProgress: Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts and Sleeman, Cath (2017, September 20). *Women in film: what does the data say?* Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/women-film-what-does-data-say

¹¹ Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2012). *Les danseurs et chorégraphes québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession de la danse au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications

required to have at least two years of professional experience and to have participated in a professional performance over the preceding three years. Visual artists were also required to have at least two years of professional experience and to have created at least one work over the preceding four years and exhibited at least once during their career. The criteria for writers were somewhat different, requiring them to have published at least two books over their careers (including one in past ten years), except for arts council recipients (who were required to have published just one book over their careers).

Canadian studies of visual artists have targeted professional artists, using the definition of professional from the Canada Council for the Arts:

“An artist who:

- has specialized training in the artistic field (not necessarily in academic institutions)
- is recognized as a professional by his or her peers (artists working in the same artistic tradition)
- is committed to devoting more time to artistic activity, if possible financially
- has a history of public presentation or publication.”¹²

Some of the surveys examined both professional and amateur artists. In all such cases, they included a question to separate professional and amateur artists. This was usually phrased as self-identification (e.g., “Do you consider yourself to be a professional artist?”), but some surveys asked whether individuals earned money from their artistic activities (usually during a certain period of time).

Neither method is ideal. Self-identification as a professional artist can be tricky among some population groups, because perceptions of both of these terms – “professional” and “artist” – can vary across cultures. (The section of this report on research into Indigenous and equity-seeking groups in the arts discusses this issue in more detail.) In addition, simple humility can sometimes lead even very successful artists to answer “no” to a question about professionalism.

Challenges concerning income from artistic activities include the fact that some groups of artists (e.g., writers, visual artists) have inconsistent income flows. On the other hand, some artists who might have no aspiration to be professional could still (at least occasionally) earn income from their art.

A Saskatchewan study of professional and amateur artists included a question regarding

du Québec. Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2011). *Les écrivains québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession littéraire au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec. Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec

¹² Canada Council for the Arts (n.d.). *Glossary*. Retrieved from <http://canadacouncil.ca/glossary/professional-artist>

self-identification as a professional as well as other questions that probed whether an artist might be seen as professional. These other questions asked artists whether they:

- Had their work “presented to the public through exhibition, publication, performance, readings, screenings, etc.”;
- Received income from their creative work;
- Had received public or peer recognition for their creative work;
- Have “an agent, dealer, publisher, etc. [who actively promotes] their creative work or skills”; and
- “Hold a municipal business license associated with their creative practice”.¹³

This study found that more artists could be considered professional based on their activities and income patterns than based on self-identification.¹⁴

An American study of older performers considered a professional to be someone who selected at least two of the following eight options:

- “I consider myself a performing artist.”
- “I have earned more than 50% of my income in the last year as a performing artist or in performing arts related activities.”
- “I have been engaged (rehearsal, teaching/mentoring, performing, creative process) in my performing art more than 50% of the time during the last year.”
- “I have performed as an artist at least 5 times in the last year.”
- “I have performed as an artist for pay at least 5 times during the last year.”
- “I have been trained/educated as a performing artist.”
- “I have produced a documented body of work that is considered (self or externally) performing art (documented output = performances, compositions, collaborations, arrangements, recordings).”
- “I make a living as a performing artist.”¹⁵

Australian surveys of artists have been directed toward all “serious, practising professional artists” in the country, with definitions of each of these elements:

- Seriousness: “self-assessed commitment to artistic work as a major aspect of the

¹³ Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina, p.8

¹⁴ Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina, p.4

¹⁵ Jeffri, Joan (2011). *Still Kicking: Aging Performing Artists in NYC and LA Metro Areas, Information on Artists IV*. New York: Research Center for Arts and Culture and Teachers College Columbia University, p.4

artist's working life, even if creative work is not the main source of income”.

- Practising: “artists currently working or seeking to work in their chosen occupation”.
- Professional: “a degree of training, experience or talent and a manner of working that qualify artists to have their work judged against the professional standards of the relevant occupation”.¹⁶

A 2010 study of artists across the island of Ireland targeted professional artists, defined as “people who are active in pursuing a career as artists and who view arts work as their main profession or career, even if not their main source of income and regardless of their current employment status”. Specific eligibility criteria were elaborated:

- “Individuals active in pursuing a career as an artist – i.e. who make or attempt to make a living from arts work and who are the principal personnel in the creative process resulting in a work of art;
- Individuals who have worked in their principal artform(s) at some point in the past three years;
- Individuals who view arts work as their main profession or career (even if not their main source of income, and regardless of their current employment status);
- Individuals working or pursuing work in artform areas supported by the two arts councils, whether or not their specific work has been grant-aided;
- Individuals normally resident in Ireland or Northern Ireland.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

¹⁷ Hibernian Consulting and Insight Statistical Consulting (2010). *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Republic of Ireland version)*. Dublin, Ireland: The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Arts Council of Northern Ireland

Section 4: Research methods used

In many countries, official government statistics related to artists have strong limitations. In Canada, the most commonly-used data source is the long-form census (or, in 2011, the National Household Survey). Some limitations of Canadian census data are:

- Categories of artistic occupations that are an imperfect fit for some types of artists.
- No question regarding second (or third) occupations.
- Likely underestimation of the number of artists, because those who spent more time at another occupation than at their artwork during the reference week would be categorized in the other occupation. (Census data is tied to activities during a certain week.) Similarly, artists who taught in post-secondary, secondary, or elementary schools were classified as teachers or professors and were also excluded from the count of artists. (In some occupations, such as the visual arts, these would be some of the highest-earning artists.)
- Insufficient income details: No breakdown into categories such as artistic creation, performance, other arts-related activities, and non-arts activities. “Net self-employment income” may or may not be properly reported, i.e., account for all expenses related to an arts practice.
- No questions about time use, work-related research activities, arts-related volunteering, or other typical activities during the work week or year.
- Limited data reliability when applied to particularly small groups of artists, as might be the case for specific occupations in municipalities or smaller provinces.

Three interesting research methods into artists’ careers involve list compilation, respondent-driven sampling, and the analysis of “big data”.

There are many other concerns with census data -- not related specifically to the situation of artists -- such as the inclusion of just two options in a question about sex (i.e., male / female).

Given these limitations, many researchers have conducted special studies of artists. A brief summary of three types of methods used to understand the situation of artists follows:

1. Compilation of lists of artists, then survey sampling
2. Respondent-driven (snowball) sampling
3. Analysis of big data

Following these summaries is a brief highlight of less-common methods (longitudinal, quasi-experimental, qualitative, and arts-based research) as well as notes regarding random sampling and time and cost considerations.

Method I: List compilation (then surveying)

In Quebec, Saskatchewan, Australia, and Ireland, major research projects have attempted to uncover details about the situation of artists by compiling a “master list” of artists and then conducting a survey of artists on the list.

In three jurisdictions (Quebec¹⁸, Australia¹⁹, and Ireland²⁰), the master list was compiled using existing lists of arts associations and unions. In the fourth case (Saskatchewan²¹), a master list was compiled specifically for the project via a central registry housed in a provincial arts association. The lists were de-duplicated before surveying took place. Interviewees from Quebec, Saskatchewan, and Australia noted that the list compilation phase of the process took substantial time: roughly three months or more.

The Australian master list consisted of over 35,000 artists drawn from the lists of 65 arts organizations. However, over 200 organizations were asked to share their lists, meaning that only about one-third did so. Increasing concerns and stronger legislation regarding privacy have led to decreased feasibility of the list compilation technique. Another limitation of list compilation is that unions and professional associations do not have all artists as members.

In Quebec and Australia, select artists were contacted via telephone after a random sample was drawn from the master list. The Saskatchewan and Irish studies did not use a random sample of artists, opting instead for a non-random (“convenience”) sample. In Saskatchewan, the survey was conducted online. In Ireland, artists were sent a paper copy of the survey and had the option to complete it online.

Custom surveys were designed for each project, but the Australian survey changed only slightly from its previous iteration.²²

¹⁸ Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2012). *Les danseurs et chorégraphes québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession de la danse au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec. Provençal, Marie-Hélène (2011). *Les écrivains québécois. Portrait des conditions de pratique de la profession littéraire au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec. Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec

¹⁹ Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

²⁰ Hibernian Consulting and Insight Statistical Consulting (2010). *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Republic of Ireland version)*. Dublin, Ireland: The Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon and Arts Council of Northern Ireland

²¹ Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina, p.4

²² Interview with David Throsby, April 5, 2018

In Australia, survey sample targets were developed for each of eight groups of artists, to ensure an accurate portrayal of each individual artist occupation.

Overall, the Quebec projects took almost three years from initial conception to final reporting, with many stakeholder discussions throughout the process. The most recent Australian project was much shorter (one year), partly because most of the survey remained consistent from a previous iteration. The design of the Saskatchewan survey instrument (alone) took about one year.

The Quebec survey of dancers was in the field for about four months, a similar timeframe as the Australian survey (November 2016 to March 2017). The Saskatchewan survey was open for just under one month.

The survey sample sizes and response rates were as follows:

- Dancers in Quebec: 375 respondents, 61% response rate.
- Writers in Quebec: 1,057 respondents, 70% response rate.
- Visual artists in Quebec: 1,220 respondents, 64% response rate.
- Saskatchewan artists: 348 respondents, 24% response rate.
- Australian artists: 826 respondents. The response rate was not specified in the report, but the 826 respondents represent 9% of the “usable sample” cited in the report. (The 826 respondents also represent just over 2% of the master list of 35,940 artists.)
- Irish artists: 1,128 respondents, including 865 in Ireland and 263 in Northern Ireland. Similar response rates in Ireland (18%) and Northern Ireland (16%).

Christine Routhier, who managed the Quebec surveys, noted in an interview that the Quebec statistical agency aims to have response rates of at least 50% to ensure a high degree of certainty in the extrapolation of the survey results to the overall population. She also outlined two key challenges: 1) motivating artists to respond; and 2) getting a hold of them, because many artists tend to move and change phone numbers quite frequently.

The research team believes that there may have been three main reasons why the response rates in Quebec were much higher than in the other jurisdictions: 1) the fact that the survey was conducted by the province’s official statistical agency, lending weight to its request; 2) the support and communications efforts of artists’ associations and unions, who regularly conveyed the value of responding to the survey; and 3) the hard work of employees at the statistical agency, who called some artists many times (over 10 times in some cases).

It is also noteworthy that the most recent telephone survey (in Australia in late 2016 and early 2017) received the lowest response rate. Response rates for telephone surveys have declined over time. (See, for example, articles from [Statistics Canada](#), the [Pew Foundation](#) and [Gallup](#) as well as an older study in the [Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation](#)).

Interviewees from Quebec and Australia stressed the importance of ensuring that project researchers have substantial expertise in and familiarity with the situations of artists. This expertise is critical in designing surveys that are as relevant as possible to the working lives of artists.

Method 2: Respondent-driven sampling

Respondent-driven sampling, or RDS, is a novel method for research into artists.

A website dedicated to RDS provides an in-depth overview of this research method: “Respondent-driven sampling (RDS), combines ‘snowball sampling’ (getting individuals to refer those they know, these individuals in turn refer those they know and so on) with a mathematical model that weights the sample to compensate for the fact that the sample was collected in a non-random way.”²³

RDS was developed by American sociologist Douglas Heckathorn for use in public health contexts. Academic research (published in *Sociological Methodology*) showed that, “using both analytic methods and simulations, when applied in a way that fits the statistical theory on which RDS is based, it produces estimates that are ‘asymptotically unbiased’. This means that bias is only on the order of one divided by the sample size, so the sampling method is unbiased for samples of meaningful size.”²⁴

RDS was first applied to artists (jazz musicians) in four American cities by Heckathorn and Joan Jeffri (Director of the Center for the Study of Arts and Culture) in a [2003 study funded by the National Endowment for the Arts](#). Jeffri subsequently applied this method to aging visual artists in New York City and aging performers in New York City and Los Angeles.

RDS has been used to study Canadian visual artists in two iterations of the same project (*Waging Culture*), run by Michael Maranda at the Art Gallery of York University. The 2007

Why is respondent-driven sampling useful?

The respondent-driven sampling (RDS) website argues that coverage of the target population is limited in some conventional surveys. “Therefore, a statistically representative sample is drawn of an unrepresentative part of the target population, so conclusions cannot be validly made about the entirety of the target population.”

RDS “represents an advance in sampling methodology because it resolves what had previously been an intractable dilemma, a dilemma that is especially severe when sampling hard-to-reach groups, that is, groups that are small relative to the general population, and for which no exhaustive list of population members is available. This includes groups relevant to public health, such as drug injectors, prostitutes, and gay men, groups relevant to public policy such as street youth and the homeless, and groups relevant to arts and culture such as jazz musicians and other performance and expressive artists.”

Source: www.RespondentDrivenSampling.org, accessed May 7, 2018

²³ Cornell University (2012). Respondent-driven sampling. Retrieved from www.RespondentDrivenSampling.org

²⁴ Cornell University (2012). Respondent-driven sampling. Retrieved from www.RespondentDrivenSampling.org

iteration of this research project had a sample size of 560 for its full financial component. However, a more recent survey iteration (2012) had a much smaller sample size (391 respondents), with some known biases (i.e., “higher than expected responses from artists 25 to 34 based in Toronto and lower than expected francophone artists within Quebec”).²⁵

The sample sizes for the American projects were:

- Jazz musicians: 733, including 300 in San Francisco, 264 in New York, 110 in New Orleans and 59 in Detroit. The Detroit sample was not considered robust enough to provide metropolitan area statistics.
- NYC aging visual artists: 213
- Aging performers in NYC and LA: 270, including 219 in NYC and 51 in Los Angeles. Given the small sample size in LA, the researcher produced fewer statistics for that city and placed a caution on those statistics that were produced.

Typically, a response rate and margin of error are not produced in RDS studies.

In respondent-driven sampling, initial “seeds” of six to ten artists known to the research team are asked to complete the survey. Each artist then refers others to participate in the study (usually about four referrals, but the Canadian research allowed ten). In Canada, the artists were not compensated for their efforts. In the most recent American study, performers were paid \$25 for the initial interview and \$15 for each completed referral, for a maximum stipend of \$85.

The American projects used in-person interviews, and the referrals were done by the use of a physical coupon. In an effort to increase the number of responses from priority groups, the study of aging visual artists gave additional recruitment coupons to respondents who had already recruited artists within the priority group.

The Canadian research into visual artists is the only known arts-related example of an RDS survey being conducted via the internet. This research effort also expanded and centralized the RDS referral process. Respondents were allowed ten referrals, when four is a more typical number. Also, instead of having artists directly contact others, their referrals were managed (and de-duplicated) in a central office. These methodological modifications may or may not have had an impact on survey results.

Research has indicated that, after four “waves” of referrals (i.e., the first set of referrals plus three more), RDS usually typically achieves “equilibrium”, where additional waves would not produce more accurate estimates.

²⁵ The Art Gallery of York University (2014). *Waging Culture 2012: Methodology in short*. Retrieved from <http://theaguisouthere.org/everywhere/?p=4375>

The sampling plan in RDS may change as the survey progresses. “These approaches are more computationally demanding than traditional methods, but they are also generally more efficient, especially for sampling clustered populations.”²⁶

Post-survey weights are always applied to RDS data. “The statistical theory upon which RDS is based is to provide the means for generating weights” to account for: 1) the non-random recruitment of initial seeds; 2) the fact that respondents recruit people they know (shaped by their social networks), not randomly; 3) the fact that “respondents who are well-connected tend to be over-sampled”; 4) the fact that “the sample reflects disproportionately the recruitment patterns of the most effective recruiters”.²⁷

One of the benefits of RDS is that estimates of the total number of artists can be derived using this method. For example, the 2007 *Waging Culture* study estimated that there were between 22,500 and 27,800 professional visual artists in Canada, estimates that were about 30% and 60% larger than the count of visual artists from the 2006 census (reinforcing the belief that census data undercounts the number of professional artists).

A key advantage of RDS methods is that they allow for surveys to be conducted of hard-to-find populations in a systematic way. The methods allow for (and indeed focus on) questions of whether the population of interest tends to be isolated or strongly integrated. At a time when response rates to telephone and internet surveys tend to be quite low, RDS methods provide a working alternative.

RDS studies can take substantial time to produce the desired response numbers. For example, “it took a total of 16 months to recruit a sample of 215 aging visual artists [in New York City], far longer than most RDS studies. These issues illustrate the importance of community acceptance and respondent motivation for a peer-recruitment-based method to be effective.”²⁸ On the other hand, Canadian surveys of visual artists have been conducted over a three to four month period.

Other challenges with RDS include the uncertainty around using the method to survey all artists in a jurisdiction, given the method’s focus on relationships between respondents. RDS studies can also be quite expensive and labour-intensive, including “tracking for coupons, constant scheduling and re-scheduling of interviews in several languages, and substantial outreach”.²⁹ The in-person interviews in the American projects required a large

²⁶ Jeffri, Joan (2007). *Above Ground: Special Focus New York City Aging Artists, Information on Artists III*. New York: Research Center for Arts and Culture and Teachers College Columbia University, p.52

²⁷ Jeffri, Joan (2007). *Above Ground: Special Focus New York City Aging Artists, Information on Artists III*. New York: Research Center for Arts and Culture and Teachers College Columbia University, p.51

²⁸ Jeffri, Joan (2007). *Above Ground: Special Focus New York City Aging Artists, Information on Artists III*. New York: Research Center for Arts and Culture and Teachers College Columbia University, p.54

²⁹ Jeffri, Joan (2007). *Above Ground: Special Focus New York City Aging Artists, Information on Artists III*. New York:

survey team.

Method 3: Big data

While it is not likely to be used to examine the situation of **all** artists in any jurisdiction, the analysis of alternative datasets (or big data) has been used to provide insights into the situation of certain types of artists in certain sub-sectors of the arts.³⁰ For example, two recent blog posts from Cath Sleeman of Nesta (in England) highlight the number and portrayal of women in specific arts sectors.³¹

Big data approaches are not perfect (or common), but they can provide insights that would not be available in any other way. Sleeman argues that big data analysis, typically using machine learning, can provide faster results and look beyond simple counts of the number of men and women to provide insights into differences in the prominence and portrayal of men and women.³²

A key limitation of such studies is that the raw data used may be partial, limiting the studies to an analysis of the variables that are captured (or that could be captured) from existing sources. For example, no big data studies were found that examine the time use or income levels of artists.

In the research examined in the literature review, another limitation was the imperfect accuracy of inferring gender from names or faces. Also, gender has often been examined as binary (i.e., male or female) in many databases.

Nesta has conducted original research and reported on the findings of other studies³³ that have used machine learning to mine hidden but existing data related to:

- The gender of film actors and crew members (by analyzing the British Film Institute's Filmography dataset, containing a total of over 250,000 cast and crew members

Research Center for Arts and Culture and Teachers College Columbia University, p.55

³⁰ Big data can be defined as "extremely large data sets that may be analysed computationally to reveal patterns, trends, and associations, especially relating to human behaviour and interactions". Oxford Dictionaries, Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/big_data.

³¹ Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). #PressForProgress: *Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts and Sleeman, Cath (2017, September 20). *Women in film: what does the data say?* Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/women-film-what-does-data-say

³² Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). #PressForProgress: *Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts

³³ Data sources: Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). #PressForProgress: *Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts and Sleeman, Cath (2017, September 20). *Women in film: what does the data say?* Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/women-film-what-does-data-say

working in over 10,000 UK films since 1911), with an analysis of trends over time, awards, career output of male and female actors.

- The portrayal of women and men in certain occupations (by analyzing the occupations of unnamed characters and counting the female and male actors in these roles).
- Differences between lines for women and men in films (through machine learning and analysis of verbs that follow the pronouns “he” and “she” in film scripts written between 1929 and 2015).
- The gender mix of composers at the Proms (by matching names in a database of Proms composers since 1895 to a music database that contains information on the gender of composers).
- Differences in the screen time and speaking time of female and male characters in films (by using facial recognition technology to examine the 100 highest grossing live-action films in the US in 2014, 2015, and 2016).
- Differences in the prominence of male and female characters in more than 100,000 novels written by women and men over a 200-year period (through machine learning and analysis of character names and pronouns in the novels themselves).

Other methods (longitudinal / quasi-experimental / qualitative / arts-based research)

Longitudinal or quasi-experimental studies

A number of Canadian and international studies have examined trends in the situation of artists by using cross-sectional surveys that have remained relatively consistent over time. However, very few true longitudinal studies of artists were found in the literature review.

Canadian census and labour force survey data have also been mined for trends over time in the situation of artists. For example, a 2009 report from Hill Strategies examined census trends over time and a 2014 report from the same company examined trends over time based on the Labour Force Survey.³⁴

A book chapter on American artists’ careers and labour markets (published in 2006) examined two sets of data on artists: 1) the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth of 1979 (which followed up with the same respondent pool over a 19-year period and could therefore be called “panel data”, which is true longitudinal data); and 2) decennial census data from 1940 to 2000 (which the authors call “quasi-panel data”).³⁵

³⁴ Hill, Kelly (2009). *A Statistical Profile of Artists in Canada Based on the 2006 Census*. Hamilton, Canada: Hill Strategies Research Inc. and Hill, Kelly (2014). *A Statistical Profile of Artists and Cultural Workers in Canada Based on the 2011 National Household Survey and the Labour Force Survey*. Hamilton, Canada: Hill Strategies Research Inc.

³⁵ Alper, Neil O. and Gregory H. Wassall (2006). Artists’ Careers and Their Labor Markets. *Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture, Volume 1* (edited by Victor A. Ginsburg, David Throsby), p. 814

The longitudinal survey of youth was a survey of nearly 13,000 people that tracked people's careers starting in their high-school years. The authors mined the artist-related data from these periodic surveys to examine “the stock and flow of people into and through arts occupations”, who respondents “are at the start of their artistic careers”, “the transitions that occur during artistic careers with respect to the artistic and non-artistic jobs they held”, those “who permanently leave the arts and what they do afterwards”.³⁶

Australian surveys of artists have remained fairly consistent over a 30-year timeframe.³⁷ Similar to the American census data, this quasi-panel data has been used to provide insights into changes in the situation of artists over time. Similarly, national statistics in Denmark related to artists' careers have been available yearly over a 12-year period. In a study of performing artists, Trine Bille and collaborators from the Copenhagen Business School examined the lengths of artists' careers and factors that influenced the length of career.³⁸

The Australia Council's *Longitudinal study of early career artists* surveyed grant applicants for two years after their applications.³⁹ As such, the longitudinal element was relatively short-term. This report was a rare example of a quasi-experimental study found in the literature. The report compared the situation of artists receiving grants with a control group of non-recipients (although the control group still contained grant applicants, not other artists). Most other studies have compared artists with the overall population, not a control group per se.

Qualitative analysis and arts-based research

Qualitative research can help address issues that are more challenging in quantitative-only studies, including questions of “why” and “how”. However, few existing research projects on artists have incorporated significant qualitative analyses (beyond the analysis of a small number of open-ended survey questions). The keyword prompt and indexing of responses in a 2016 study of professional dance performers in Canada by Hill Strategies is one example that could be refined and expanded across larger samples.

Some arts-based or practice-based research methodologies have been used, mainly in academic research projects. For example, a Canadian theatre practitioner attempted to “quantify the acting experience”, by asking 18 actors to measure their “experiences of pleasure, satisfaction, and connectedness as they performed in front of both theatre and

³⁶ Alper, Neil O. and Gregory H. Wassall (2006). Artists' Careers and Their Labor Markets. Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture, Volume 1 (edited by Victor A. Ginsburg, David Throsby), p. 848

³⁷ The most recent Australian study is: Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

³⁸ Bille, Trine Flemming Agersnap, Søren Jensen and Trine Vestergaard (2010). *Performing artists' income conditions and careers in Denmark*. Copenhagen, Denmark: Copenhagen Business School, p. 2

³⁹ *The longitudinal study of early career artists*. (2013) Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

camera audiences”.⁴⁰ This small initial experiment used quasi-experimental techniques to simulate four audience contexts: full house audience, camera and crew, solo camera, and solo audience member. The researcher/practitioner synthesized an 80-question survey into four key variables: connectedness, difference, awareness of audience, and satisfaction. The research, while limited in scope and methods, showed some interesting correlations, including a “positive correlation between Connectedness and Satisfaction—stronger than any other of the key variable combinations”.⁴¹ These arts-based and practice-based methods have the potential to be used in combination with other social science or science-based methods to gain a more nuanced understanding about artists’ careers and working lives.

Traditionally, qualitative data include narratives from interviews and focus group sessions as well as text information from surveys. Less common forms of qualitative data include contributions from artists, such as stories, poems, oral histories, images, audio, and video.

In an interview, Mary Blackstone emphasized that the Saskatchewan arts research project took an ecological approach, which involved gathering qualitative information about connections, networks, and collaborative relationships. Through this approach, the research revealed that the more connected artists were, the more they wanted to be connected. A correlation with income statistics revealed that the more complex the artists’ networks, the higher their income tended to be.

How people communicate, and not just what they communicate, can be a source of rich insights. For example, considering the cultural context of idioms or the sources of ambiguity in multiple meanings of words could add to our understanding of regional, cultural, or other differences.

Interpretation of qualitative data includes descriptive coding of attributes and themes. Qualitative data analysis software (such as NVivo, QDA Miner, and ATLAS.ti) can be used to simplify the work of collecting and managing data through direct connections to or imports of surveys, spreadsheets, database tables, and social media data.

Challenges related to the analysis of qualitative data include the subjective nature of the data as well as the amount of time and expertise required to properly interpret the data. That being said, the inclusion of qualitative and/or arts-based information in a future study of artists could provide value and benefits that outweigh the challenges.

⁴⁰ Brubaker, Christine (2017). A Practitioner’s Attempt to Quantify the Acting Experience. *Canadian Theatre Review*, 172, 58-62

⁴¹ Brubaker, Christine (2017). A Practitioner’s Attempt to Quantify the Acting Experience. *Canadian Theatre Review*, 172, 58-62

Random sampling

In Canada, the vast majority of custom surveys into the situation of artists have used “convenience samples”, i.e., non-random samples with the largest possible number of responses, given the size of the group being studied. The strength of these studies is often related to their (relatively) low cost, allowing for some insights into the situation of artists where more elaborate research protocols are not affordable. These studies can also be conducted relatively quickly, since there is no need to gather (and de-duplicate) existing lists of artists nor to organize and manage respondent-driven methods.

Random sampling

- Relatively expensive
- Historically telephone-based, but online sampling has become more common and better accepted
- Provides assurances that the responses offer a representative sample of all artists being studied

Non-random sampling

- Lower cost
- Faster
- Usually online
- Uncertainty whether the sample fully represents all artists being studied

However, the lack of random sampling has a significant drawback: Where respondents are not chosen at random, there is uncertainty as to whether the responses could provide a representative sample of the overall population of artists.

Time and cost considerations

Where their costs were known, the systematic studies using list compilation or respondent-driven sampling each cost over \$200,000 (and in some cases up to \$400,000) and took at least a full year to complete. The exception to this is the inexpensively-conducted study of visual artists in Canada using respondent-driven sampling.

Section 5: Variables and questions asked

A number of reports reviewed for this project went beyond typical statistics on artists' working lives and incomes. Two key areas where these studies delved much further than conventional national statistics are time use and incomes, and Table 4 summarizes the types of questions asked in four key studies in these areas. All of the studies focussed on artists' personal incomes; none reported on household income levels.

Table 4: Variables used to examine artists' time use and income levels in four key studies

Study ⁴²	Time use	Income levels
Australia	Percentage of time spent on creative activities; arts-related activities; non-arts activities; broken down by type of artist	Creative income; other arts-related income; non-arts income. Also: sources of any grants or other forms of financial assistance that they received during the previous five years
Waging Culture 2007	Weekly hours of work; studio time; art-related work; non-art related work; art-related volunteering	Median and average income statistics for: net personal income; gross and net practice income; net arts-related income; net other income. Also: sources of average gross practice income; average hourly wages; incidence of spousal support for basic living expenses, luxuries, and arts practice expenses
Saskatchewan	Weekly hours of work; creative practice; teaching or mentorship in a creative discipline; work outside of creative practice	Gross income from art practice (average, incidence, ranges); gross personal income (average, ranges); income from employment outside the arts and culture (average). Also incidence of grant receipt over previous 2 years; perception of the importance of various funding sources as a direct source of income during their career as an artist
Quebec (visual artists)	Weekly paid hours: overall; in the creation of works of visual art and career development activities; other activities related to the visual arts, such as teaching; creative work in	Total personal income; creative income; other income. Also: principal source of income; sale or rental of works; receipt of grants or cash prizes; net creative income

⁴² Works cited in the table: "Australia": Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts; "Waging Culture 2007": Miranda, Michael (2009). *Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists*. Toronto, Canada: The Art Gallery of York University; "Saskatchewan": Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina; "Quebec (visual artists)": Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec.

Other facets of artists' working lives

Other details regarding artists' working lives have been addressed in some surveys. For example, in addition to fairly typical demographic questions (e.g., gender, age, metropolitan area residence, visible minority, education, and language), the 2007 *Waging Culture* survey⁴³ also asked visual artists about:

- Enumeration (or not) as an artist in the 2006 Canadian census
- 22 benchmarks of “recognition within the art community” (e.g., having presented “work in an international gallery or festival”, whether public or commercial; having given “an artist talk at a public gallery”)
- Years of experience as a visual artist
- Gallery representation
- Ownership of their principal residence
- Media of their artwork
- Incidence and source of supplementary health benefits
- Incidence of retirement funds

A detailed Australian survey of artists⁴⁴, in addition to demographic questions that included disability and languages, asked respondents about:

- Overseas artistic engagements
- Self-assessed business skills
- Application of their creative skills in other industries
- Barriers to professional development
- Use of the internet for arts creation and/or other arts-related purposes

An Australian study of early career artists surveyed respondents regarding their perceptions of their careers, including confidence in career; artistic fulfilment; career achievements; career planning; and networking activities. Other questions concerned time spent on creative practice and creative income.⁴⁵

⁴³ Miranda, Michael (2009). *Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists*. Toronto, Canada: The Art Gallery of York University.

⁴⁴ Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

⁴⁵ *The longitudinal study of early career artists*. (2013) Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts.

A major study of artists in Saskatchewan, which took an ecological approach, asked questions concerning artists' collaborations and networking within and outside of the arts, as well as key organizations in their work.⁴⁶ For example, the survey addressed:

- The overall importance of collaborations to respondents' evolution as an artist as well as to their ability to create or interpret work.
- The importance of collaborations with artists in their discipline, artists outside of their discipline, emerging artists, and non-artists.
- The overall importance of networking / informal connections to respondents' evolution as an artist as well as to their ability to create or interpret work.
- The importance of networking / informal connections with artists in their discipline, artists outside of their discipline, emerging artists, and non-artists.
- “The most important arts organizations to which you belong”, “other arts organizations, arts agencies, educational institutions or businesses in the arts and culture [which] have made major contributions to your development as an artist and/or the realization of your creative work”, and “organizations, agencies, educational institutions, or businesses, etc. outside the arts and cultural sectors [which] have made major contributions to your development as an artist and/or the facilitation of your creative work”. (These organizational questions were open-ended.)

While many equity-focussed reports reviewed for this report provided counts of women and men, U.K. reports on women in film also examined on-screen time and speaking time.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Saskatchewan Partnership for Arts Research (2014). *Understanding the Arts Ecology of Saskatchewan from the Artist's Perspective: An Overview of Results from the Artist Survey of 2014*. Regina, Canada: University of Regina.

⁴⁷ Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). *#PressForProgress: Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts

Section 6: Sub-national research efforts

In Canada, there have been some attempts at a sub-national level to examine the situation of artists. Provincial, territorial, and municipal studies have included:

- The Saskatchewan *Understanding the Arts Ecology* project (2014). This project also highlighted the sub-provincial distribution of artist respondents but did not examine differences in their situations by municipality or region of the province.
- Three Quebec studies undertaken by its Cultural Observatory (outlined more thoroughly in other sections of this report), examining the situation of artists by region of the province (with sample size targets in each region to ensure data reliability).
- Other Quebec studies on comedians and audio-visual artists.
- Ontario profiles related to women in the music industry, people with disabilities in screen-based industries, Deaf and disability arts.
- Provincial and/or regional data on dancers.
- Prince Edward Island artists' multiple job-holding and "hybrid careers", as well as broader statistics on the cultural labour force.
- Nunavut data related to arts administration skills and resources, as well as the *Impact of the Inuit Arts Economy* in Nunavut plus four other regions: Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Inuvialuit Region, Outside Inuit Nunangat.
- Calgary's broad-based *Arts Professionals Survey* (2014 and 2017).
- A survey of local artists in Wood Buffalo, Alberta (i.e., Fort McMurray and area).
- Montreal artists and cultural workers from diverse backgrounds.
- Mid-career and experienced artists in the Quebec City area.

Some Canada-wide studies, including census data analysis by Hill Strategies, have also highlighted differences in the provincial situations of artists. Non-census examples include:

- Regional and metropolitan area breakdowns of statistics on visual artists in *Waging Culture* (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan combined, Alberta, British Columbia, the North, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver).
- Provincial breakdowns of statistics on dancers in the 2014 *Yes I Dance* report.
- A few regional statistics in the most recent *Women in View On Screen Report* (Western provinces, Ontario, Quebec, Atlantic provinces). This report tracks women working as directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, and actors (in top 4 leading roles) in film and television in Canada.

All of these studies, with the exception of the Quebec reports by the province's Cultural Observatory and the national studies of visual artists (using respondent-driven sampling), used non-random samples to examine the situation of artists.

Section 7: Inclusion of Indigenous people and equity-seeking groups

The research team spent considerable time examining reports with an Indigenous or equity-related focus that contain insights into the measurement of the situation of artists. Many of these reports were qualitative, unlike the statistical focus of most other reports reviewed for this project. Among the 12 research interviews conducted, six probed the perceptions and situations of Indigenous and equity-seeking groups of artists.

In the accompanying annotated bibliography, the researchers grouped these reports into categories based on their primary focus. A number of resources were found related to Indigenous artists, female artists, racialized artists, and disability / deaf / mad arts. Significantly fewer reports related specifically to immigrants and refugees or LGBTQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, and two-spirited) issues in the arts. While the bibliography has been organized along these lines, Valerie Sing Turner noted in an interview that there is an increasing focus on intersections between these issues: the people who are the most marginalized in our society are “multiple minorities”.

Some overarching themes emerged through an analysis of the methods used to examine the situation of artists in equity-seeking groups. A summary of key findings and methodologies from these reports is provided below.

Importance of measurement to provide an understanding of sectoral realities

Arin Sullivan, in an article in the GIA Reader (Grantmakers in the Arts in the US), notes that “without baseline information on who we are as a sector, we cannot see where we are or imagine what we might become”.⁴⁸

Measurement of sectoral realities can also challenge sectoral self-perceptions. For example, representatives from Women in Music Canada indicated in an interview that they knew anecdotally that there were significant challenges for women in the music industry, but they needed solid research to help them convince others. In the end, the reality portrayed by the

“Collecting demographic information from our cultural workforce is a sensitive undertaking, touching on our most deep-seated concerns about privacy, fairness, and identity. And yet without baseline information on who we are as a sector, we cannot see where we are or imagine what we might become.”

-Arin Sullivan, *Identity and the Cultural Workforce: Lessons Learned in Seven Years and Three Cities*, Grantmakers in the Arts Reader

⁴⁸ Sullivan, Arin (2018). Identity and the Cultural Workforce: Lessons Learned in Seven Years and Three Cities. *Grantmakers in the Arts Reader*, 29 (1)

survey results was even more challenging than they had anticipated. They noted that the research has had a strong impact on all their advocacy work: “with statistics, it’s much more difficult to ignore the reality”.

In the U.K., the 2015 *Panic!* survey found that cultural sector workers think that the sector is more diverse and equitable than the statistics bear out. Concerning the fairness (or not) involved in career advancement, the cultural sector workers “who responded to our survey believe the sector is more or less fair, with hard work and ambition being the most important things for getting ahead, and the least important things being religion, gender, ethnicity and class. A positive reading of this data is that people think the sector in which they work is fair and meritocratic. This is troubling, given the research has revealed the structural and overwhelming inequalities within cultural work.”⁴⁹

As these reports have shown, analyzing how the cultural sector, or even each discipline, views itself, particularly its diversity, and its overall inclusiveness is an interesting starting point. Research on these attitudes and assumptions can reveal disparities that are important to illuminate before progress can be made.

Careful examination of language

Many of the equity-related reports and interviews pointed to the need to carefully consider whether and how to ask demographic questions around diversity. Words like “diversity” and “inclusion” are important values of many arts organizations and funders. However, the perception of these terms by underrepresented artists, such as those with disabilities, those who are Indigenous, or racialized minorities, can be quite different than what is promoted and valued by mainstream arts organizations. Michelle Decottignies, disability artist and activist, points out that “the politics of inclusion are sometimes simply not enough. Many forms of political art do not merely seek to include the historically excluded; they specifically seek to affirm the identities and countercultural knowledge of oppressed peoples.”

“Disabled people don't seek merely to participate in Canadian culture - we want to create it, shape it, stretch it beyond its tidy edges.”

- Catherine Frazee, disability rights activist, quoted in Tangled Art + Disability's Report on Deaf and Disability Art in Ontario

A number of reports outlined challenges in data collection and monitoring related to “diversity” data. A workforce survey from Arts Council England found that many respondents chose not to self-identify in many categories of diversity, “making it difficult to

⁴⁹ O'Brien, Dave and Mark Taylor (2016). Do the arts promote diversity – or are they a bastion of privilege. Retrieved from <https://www.thestage.co.uk/opinion/2016/dave-obrien-and-mark-taylor-do-the-arts-promote-diversity-or-are-they-a-bastion-of-privilege/>

provide a complete picture of the diversity of the workforce and boards across the National Portfolio.”⁵⁰

Another recent Arts Council England report underlined why some artists may or may not choose to self-identify as having a disability: “Some people prefer to remain private about being disabled. Some wish to be seen first as artists or creative workers, rather than being defined by an impairment or how society disables them, and many do not make work relating primarily to their disabled identity. It is vital to recognise that while working to raise visibility overall, individuals’ visibility must remain a choice.”⁵¹

These research efforts indicate that researchers should carefully and clearly note why certain demographic data is being collected and the purposes for which it is being used. The reports show that in many cases some artists have suffered in their careers and their lives as a result of being a member of one or more underrepresented groups. People need reassurance and proof that this kind of information is being collected for improvements and real change. Research into Indigenous, newcomer, disabled, or deaf artists should also consider the importance of translating surveys and reports, with the goal of full accessibility.

Definition of “professional” artists

Many reports and interviewees indicated that the distinction between “amateur” and “professional” artists is unclear, unimportant, or unwanted in some population groups. As noted in a study of immigrant artists and cultural workers in Montreal, “the line between amateur and professional is sometimes fuzzy, all the more so since artistic work is not always seen as ‘real’ work ... A ‘repertoire of shared myths’ is often the source of artistic identity and its projection onto others.”⁵²

Surveys that are openly directed at “professional artists” may therefore receive few or no responses from some immigrant and racialized artists who may meet other criteria of “professionalism” in the arts but may not self-identify as professional.

In an interview, Jérôme Pruneau of Diversité artistique Montréal indicated that the recognition of artists’ competencies and experiences from other countries (with very different education and training systems) is one of the biggest obstacles that many immigrant artists face. Often, they re-start at zero after arriving in Canada, even though they may have been artistic stars in their homeland. This may have an impact on the perception of

⁵⁰ Arts Council England (2016). *Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case: A Data Report 2015-16*. London, England: Arts Council England, p.6

⁵¹ EW Group (2017). *Making a Shift Report: Understanding Trends, Barriers and Opportunities*. London, England: Arts Council England, p.31

⁵² Tremblay, Diane-Gabrielle and Ana Dalia Huesca Dehesa (2016). Being a Creative and an Immigrant in Montreal: What Support for the Development of a Creative Career? *Journal of Workplace Rights, July-September*, p.4

them as “professional” artists in Canada, as they may not have a Canadian track record of training or artistic presentations.

Several of the reports focusing on Indigenous artists point out that “professional artist” is not a straightforward concept in their communities. In a report on Aboriginal languages, the authors note that “there is no specific word for art, but there are literally hundreds of ‘verbs’ that describe an artistic activity” in Cree, Mohawk, or Haida, and these verbs “are all related to different aspects of traditional life and culture: from singing to the child in the mother’s womb, to dancing, to welcoming the sun or the rain or the thunder beings”.

Recognizing and accepting different perspectives and situations: decolonizing research

Even with close consultation, there can still be tension around ways to sensitively conduct research involving diverse groups. France Trépanier and Chris Creighton-Kelly discuss the challenges of juxtaposing a Eurocentric view on the creation of knowledge with Aboriginal worldviews, ways of knowing, and oral culture, but the authors note that “it is a contradiction with no immediate solution.”⁵³

They also provide an overview of the concept of “decolonizing research methodologies”. They cite the work of Australian Aboriginal academic Linda Tuhiwai Smith: “The common theme among all these methodologies is the concept of decolonization, the undoing of colonial assumptions and habits as they relate to the very concept of research”.⁵⁴

Further, “Indigenous methodologies tend to approach cultural protocols, values and behaviours as an integral part of methodology. They are ‘factors’ to be built in to research explicitly, to be thought about reflexively, to be declared openly as part of the research design, to be discussed as part of the final results of a study and to be disseminated back to the people in culturally appropriate ways and in a language that can be understood.”⁵⁵

Trepanier and Creighton-Kelly’s knowledge and literature review provides an excellent example of this concept in practice, by expanding beyond a traditional literature review and incorporating many other forms of knowledge and by building the research design around the tensions between Indigenous methods and traditional scholarly methods.

A number of reports and interviewees noted that one cannot assume that the artwork of Indigenous and racialized artists is connected to their identity (in a way that is not

⁵³ Tremblay, Diane-Gabrielle and Ana Dalia Huesca Dehesa (2016). Being a Creative and an Immigrant in Montreal: What Support for the Development of a Creative Career? *Journal of Workplace Rights*, July-September, p.6

⁵⁴ Trépanier, France and Chris Creighton-Kelly (2012). *Understanding Aboriginal Arts in Canada Today: A Knowledge and Literature Review*. Ottawa, Canada: Canada Council for the Arts, p.6

⁵⁵ Trépanier, France and Chris Creighton-Kelly (2012). *Understanding Aboriginal Arts in Canada Today: A Knowledge and Literature Review*. Ottawa, Canada: Canada Council for the Arts, p.4

assumed for mainstream artists). Clayton Windatt of the Aboriginal Curatorial Collective noted that Indigenous artists are often made to feel that they are always representing their Indigeneity, that there is no “cultural anonymity”.

In some research, it might be important to ask uncomfortable and difficult questions about topics such as the impacts of sexism, racism, and colonialism. Alternative research methods might include consulting with elders about research questions, incorporating oral history as closely as possible, and exploring the histories of Indigenous arts activities in certain areas.

Flexible and appropriate research methods

In an interview, Cecily Nicholson noted that research methods and communications might need to be flexible to accommodate low-income and marginalized artists (e.g., reaching out to them through known and trusted organizations, conducting or completing surveys in a known and welcoming space with internet access, providing a meal).

Similarly, research methods and communications efforts may need to be adapted for artists with disabilities, Indigenous artists, racialized artists, Trans artists, and women artists.

As noted in an interview with Valerie Sing Turner of Diverse Theatre BC, additional outreach efforts may be needed to reach Indigenous and racialized artists. Because they may have been made to feel that their work does not meet the standards of the art world, they may not be as well connected to mainstream arts organizations.

Researchers should be flexible and inclusive in their work, and work hard to reach out to marginalized communities. Accessible locations and research tools are crucial.

Above all: the need for consultation, communication, and trust

Many concerns about questions and data use can be assuaged by partnering or consulting with Indigenous and equity-seeking groups while designing and conducting research. Several reports and interviewees noted this as a crucial element throughout the survey development and reporting processes. For example, Clayton Windatt indicated that Indigenous and equity-seeking groups often want to be involved at the ground level of survey development. Cecily Nicholson of Gallery Gachet recommended that, instead of expecting artists to come to the research, researchers should try to find ways to utilize artists’ existing connections and networks.

An Arts Council England report outlined the reassurances and careful review of questions that are required regarding people with disabilities: “Given the fear of discrimination, individuals need both to be reassured about confidentiality and persuaded that monitoring will make a positive difference... Review the questions you ask: A number of respondents were offended by the wording of questions which asked them to put them in a category in

relation to their self-definition, especially if that involved giving information about impairments or health conditions”.⁵⁶

There is an ongoing need to build trust in communities where their history with research has sometimes been problematic, is particularly in many Indigenous communities. This may be best done through decolonizing common research methodologies, centering marginalized voices in new research on artists, and constant and respectful consultation with underrepresented groups.

⁵⁶ EW Group (2017). *Making a Shift Report: Understanding Trends, Barriers and Opportunities*. London, England: Arts Council England, p.56

Section 8: Presentation and distribution of key findings

Many reports on the situation of artists have integrated interesting elements into their data presentation, such as interactive dashboards, data visualizations and infographics, typologies of artists, and uncommon text elements such as artist reactions to key findings. These key presentation elements are outlined in Table 5.

Table 5: Novel presentation elements in recent studies of artists⁵⁷

Presentation element	Information available
Interactive online dashboards with filters for type of artist, age, gender, and location (Australia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of artists (by occupational groupings) • Gender, location, age group, disability, and non-English speaking background • Mean and median incomes (including three elements: “creative sources”, “creative and arts-related sources”, and “total”) • Income sources (creative, arts-related, and non-arts) • Grants and other forms of financial assistance • Artist careers (including time spent on creative, arts-related, and non-arts activities; overseas engagements; the application of skills in other industries; and barriers to professional development) • Work status, proportion meeting “minimum income requirements”, and self-assessed business skills • Internet use for creation and other purposes
Data visualizations (various studies)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situation of female composers, women in film casts, and creative occupations (NESTA, U.K.) • Payments to artists by streaming music services

⁵⁷ Works cited in the table: “Australia”: Throsby, David and Katya Petetskaya (2017). *Making Art Work: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia*. Strawberry Hills, Australia: Australia Council for the Arts; “NESTA, U.K.”: Sleeman, Cath (2018, March 8). #PressForProgress: *Evidencing gender inequality in the arts*. Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/pressforprogress-evidencing-gender-inequality-arts and Sleeman, Cath (2017, September 20). *Women in film: what does the data say?* Retrieved from www.nesta.org.uk/blog/women-film-what-does-data-say. “Canadian Media Producers Association”: Duopoly (2017). *Women & Leadership: A Study of Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada’s Screen Industries*. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Media Producers Association. “Women in View on Screen”: Fraticelli, Rina (2015). *Women in View On Screen Report*. Toronto: Canada. Women In View. “The Writers’ Union of Canada”: The Writers’ Union of Canada (2015) *Devaluing creators, endangering creativity. Doing more and making less: writers’ incomes today*. Toronto: Canada: The Writers’ Union of Canada. “U.S. Authors Guild”: The Authors Guild (2015). *The Wages of Writing: Key Findings from the Authors Guild 2015 Member Survey*. New York, USA: The Authors Guild. “Quebec visual artists”: Routhier, Christine (2013). *Les artistes en arts visuels. Portrait statistique des conditions de pratique au Québec 2010*. Quebec City, Canada: Observatoire de la culture et des communications du Québec.

Table 5 (continued): Novel presentation elements in recent studies of artists

Presentation element	Information available
<p>Infographic-style elements (various studies)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender disparities in Canada’s screen-based industries (Canadian Media Producers Association) • Male-female comparison graphics (Women in View on Screen). The Women in View website reproduces the interesting graphics in a scrolling-picture style. • Writers’ incomes (The Writers’ Union of Canada) • Writers’ incomes in the U.S.: clever use of icons in charts (U.S. Authors Guild)
<p>Typologies of artists (Quebec visual artists)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six clusters based on net personal income and time spent • Descriptions of differences in income, source of income, age, gender
<p>Uncommon text elements (Australia)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist profiles and views • Funder response to the data • Accessible summary • “Easy English version”

In terms of interesting distribution elements, the *Panic!* survey in the U.K. has been disseminated in unusual ways, such as public debates and podcast discussions. The findings of the Quebec studies were disseminated via many presentations, particularly with artists’ associations.

While far from a novel approach, the benefits of distributing paper reports was noted in two interviews. Clayton Windatt indicated that there could be benefits to distributing a paper copy of reports to band offices and community group leaders. He gave the example of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which was distributed in booklet form through band offices and is now very well understood among Indigenous people in Canada. Cecily Nicholson indicated that distributing print reports through arts organizations or community centres could be a way of reaching less-connected, marginalized artists.

Section 9: Conclusions

Based on an extensive literature review, discussions with many Canadian arts service organizations, and one-on-one interviews, this research project has examined key elements of existing surveys and other efforts to understand important aspects of the working lives of artists, including their incomes, time use, multiple job holding, careers, and more.

The literature review examined research projects that attempted to surpass the restrictions of official national statistics, which have a number of known limitations in Canada (and many other countries):

- Categories of artistic occupations that are an imperfect fit for some types of artists.
- No question regarding second (or third) occupations.
- Likely underestimation of the number of artists, because those who spent more time at another occupation than at their artwork during the reference week would be categorized in the other occupation. (Census data is tied to activities during a certain week.) Similarly, artists who taught in post-secondary, secondary, or elementary schools were classified as teachers or professors and were also excluded from the count of artists. (In some occupations, such as the visual arts, these would be some of the highest-earning artists.)
- Insufficient income details: No breakdown into categories such as artistic creation, performance, other arts-related activities, and non-arts activities. “Net self-employment income” may or may not be properly reported, i.e., account for all expenses related to an arts practice.
- No questions about time use, work-related research activities, arts-related volunteering, or other typical activities during the work week or year.
- Limited data reliability when applied to particularly small groups of artists, as might be the case for specific occupations in municipalities or smaller provinces.

Outside of census data, there have been no systematic efforts in Canada aimed at understanding the situation of **all** the country's artists. Many Canadian studies have covered certain types of artists only. In addition, the vast majority of Canadian surveys into the situation of artists have used non-random samples. In these cases, as with any non-random samples, there is uncertainty as to whether the responses could provide a representative sample of the overall population of artists.

There have also been some attempts at a sub-national level to examine the situation of artists. A patchwork of provincial and local reports was found in the literature review. Among national studies, only a few have provided substantial information on a regional, provincial, or local basis (outside of census-based analyses).

Given the limitations of official national statistics, researchers from many countries have conducted special studies of artists, including three main methods: 1) compilation of lists of

artists, then survey sampling; 2) respondent-driven sampling; and 3) analysis of big data.

The goals of these special studies include:

- Examining the lives and working conditions of all artists.
- Creating accurate socio-economic and professional profiles.
- Providing arts councils with up-to-date and robust evidence to help them support artists.
- Providing insights into the situation of women in the arts.

Two key areas where these studies delved much further than conventional national statistics are time use and incomes.

An interesting finding of the literature review is that very few studies have attempted to examine the situation of all types of artists at once. In addition, most studies of artists have been targeted at professionals, but a few have incorporated responses from amateur artists.

The literature review found very few examples of other methods, such as longitudinal research, quasi-experimental methods, intensive qualitative research, and arts-based research.

Novel distribution and presentation elements related to the artists' working lives have included interactive dashboards, artist reactions to key findings, data visualizations and infographics, as well as typologies of artists.

Many reports and interviewees stressed the importance of having reliable information on artists from Indigenous and equity-seeking groups to ensure a full understanding of the situations of all artists. To do this, researchers must work to ensure that the research is accessible for people with disabilities or who speak different languages. In addition, researchers should carefully consider the terminology and survey questions for their potential perceptions among diverse groups of artists. Partnerships, input, and representation from Indigenous people and equity-seeking groups are important elements of an effective research process, one that ensures that the methods and terminology reflect the priorities of many different groups.

The project team distilled the findings from the research efforts into the following summary of best practices for research funders.

Overview of best practices and research gaps

- Each research method reviewed for this report has its own strengths and weaknesses. As such, there is no single method that is objectively a “best practice” compared with the other options. Researchers should match the research method chosen to the study goals.

Research objectives and scope

- Research objectives and scope should be carefully considered and match the overall goals of the study.
- Researchers should consider whether they wish to include professional and amateur artists but should also recognize that distinctions between professionals and amateurs might be perceived differently among different population groups.
- The definition of professionalism should be carefully considered, and survey questions should probe where respondents fit with regard to the definition.
- Research funders should consider whether they wish to target all artists or focus more specifically on certain artistic occupations. Researchers should clearly identify the types of artists that fall within their scope of inquiry.
- Arts unions and professional organizations could be key partners and the source of significant issues and questions to address in different sub-sectors of the arts.

Research methods

- Researchers should match the research method to the study goals. The literature review grouped interesting methods into three categories: 1) compilation of lists of artists, then survey sampling; 2) respondent-driven sampling; and 3) analysis of big data. A summary of the strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and risks of individual methods is available in the full report.
- Research funders should ensure that adequate finances and time are made available. (Where their costs were known, the systematic studies using list compilation or respondent-driven sampling each cost over \$200,000, and in some cases up to \$400,000, and took at least a full year to complete. The exception to this is the inexpensively-conducted study of visual artists in Canada using respondent-driven sampling.)
- Gaps in current research into artists’ careers include the limited use of longitudinal research, quasi-experimental methods, intensive qualitative research, and arts-based research.
- Wherever feasible, studies should be conducted using random samples. While random studies have higher costs than non-random samples, there is greater certainty that a random sample could appropriately represent the overall population of artists.

Variables and questions asked

- Important questions on artists' working lives and incomes include artists' time use, income details, and other characteristics of artists' working lives.
- In general, questions about time use and income could contain breakdowns related to creative activities, other arts-related activities (such as teaching), and non-arts work.
- Researchers should consider including questions about receipt of grants and supports from other sources, such as spouses.
- Gaps in existing research include a lack of questions about artists' household incomes (not just their personal incomes).
- Other questions that researchers should consider relate to other facets of artists' working lives, including years of experience, supplementary health benefits, retirement funds, recognition within the arts community, networking activities, self-assessment of their career achievements, international artistic engagements, and the use of creative skills in non-arts work.

Sub-national research efforts

- There is no “best practice” regarding the collection of and reporting on local, provincial, or territorial data on artists. This is a distinct gap in existing research: the lack of a systematic attempt, outside of census-based data, to collect statistics on many (or all) types of artists in all provinces and territories (let alone municipalities).

Inclusion of Indigenous people and equity-seeking groups

- Analyzing how the cultural sector (or even each discipline) views its diversity and its overall inclusiveness would be an interesting starting point for research. Research on attitudes and assumptions can reveal disparities that are important to illuminate before progress can be made.
- Researchers should carefully and clearly note why certain demographic data is being collected and for what purposes it is being used. Researchers should give reassurances and proof that the information is being collected for improvements and real change.
- Research into Indigenous, newcomer, disabled, or deaf artists should also consider the importance of translating surveys and reports, with the goal of full accessibility.
- Research methods into artists from underrepresented groups should take varied definitions of “professional artist” into account. However, this may limit comparability with census-based data.
- There is a research gap in terms of the discrepancy between the various possible definitions of artists and official, European-centric definitions of professional artists.
- In some cases, it may be important to ask uncomfortable and difficult questions about topics such as the impacts of sexism, racism, and colonialism.
- Alternative and “decolonizing” research methods might include consulting with elders about research questions, incorporating oral history as closely as possible, and

exploring the histories of Indigenous arts in certain areas.

- Researchers should be flexible and inclusive in their work and make substantial efforts to reach out to marginalized communities. Accessible locations and research tools are crucial.
- Research funders and researchers should attempt to build trust in communities where their history with research has sometimes been problematic. This is a particular issue in many Indigenous communities. This may be best done through decolonizing common research methodologies, centering marginalized voices in new research on artists, and constant and respectful consultation with underrepresented groups.

Presentation and distribution of research findings

The literature review discovered a number of interesting ways to present research findings that could be considered by Canadian research funders, including:

- Interactive online dashboards, allowing users to filter key findings by type of artist, age, gender, and location.
- Data visualizations.
- Infographics (either distributed separately or integrated as charts in main reports).
- Typologies of artists (e.g., recent Quebec reports grouped artists into clusters based on net personal income and time spent on the arts).
- Unusual text elements such as artist profiles, artists' reactions to the data, funders' responses to the data, accessible summaries, and easy English versions.

Interesting ideas regarding report distribution include:

- Public debates, podcast discussions, and presentations to/with artists.
- The “throwback” idea of distributing paper reports as a way of reaching some Indigenous or marginalized artists.

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List of works annotated in the bibliography

An extensive bibliography that accompanies this report contains annotations of the following reports, which have been grouped into four sections based on their primary focus.

Section 1: Particularly novel reports

Method 1: List compilation

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Method 2: Respondent-driven sampling

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Method 3: Big data

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Method 4: Other novel reports

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Lena, Jennifer C. and Danielle J. Lindemann (2014). "Who is an artist? New data for an old question." *Poetics*, 43, pp. 70-85

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Section 2: Reports with an Indigenous or equity-related focus (with insights into the measurement of the situation of artists)

Indigenous focus

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Sinclair, Bruce and Deborah Pelletier (2012). *We Have to Hear their Voices: A Research Project on Aboriginal Languages and Art Practices*. Ottawa, Ontario: Canada Council for the Arts

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Rendon, Marcie and Ann Markusen (2009). *Native Artists: Livelihoods, Resources, Space, Gifts*. Minneapolis, USA: University of Minnesota

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