Artisan entrepreneurship makes significant contributions to the economy and society (Al

Dajani et al., 2015; Luckman, 2015) and has thus generated sustained interest from scholars

(Bhagavatula et al., 2010; Kuhn and Galloway, 2015), practitioners (Holmes, 2015;

Svejenova et al., 2007) and policies makers (Bouette and Magee, 2015; McAuley and Fillis,

2005). Prior research has shown that artisan entrepreneurs find creative ways to discover and

exploit opportunities (Bruni and Perrotta, 2014; Ramadani et al., In Press), which often

involves turning their hobbies and passions into sustainable businesses (Biraglia and Kadile,

2017; Danson et al., 2015). Artisan entrepreneurs also create social value through work in the

community and engaging in prosocial business practices (Cater et al., 2017; Pret and Carter,

2017). Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of artisanal products (Barlow et

al., In Press; Ranganathan, In Press; Verhaal et al., 2015) and their impacts on regional

competitiveness and tourism development (Ramachandran et al., 2012; Teixeira and Ferreira,

In Press; Thomas et al., 2013). At the same time, research has shown that the motives and

goals of artisan entrepreneurs are diverse (Fillis, 2004; Tregear, 2005) and that their practices

can vary significantly depending on the contexts in which they are embedded (Drakopoulou

Dodd et al., In Press; Pret et al., 2016). As such, it is important to delineate the existing body

of research. To date, there is no comprehensive overview of the literature on the subject. This

study therefore seeks to advance knowledge by systematically reviewing and critiquing

research into artisan entrepreneurship.

In order to facilitate this exploration, it is important to first position the reviewed

literature within its knowledge domain and provide definitions. Research into the practices

and products of artisan entrepreneurs is situated within the field of cultural entrepreneurship

(Johnson, 2007; Jones et al., 2016; Ratten and Ferreira, 2017). As the study of culture and its

role in business activities continues to gain popularity (Chua et al., 2015; Dalpiaz et al.,

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2016; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001), it has resulted in a rich variety of theoretical perspectives

(Gehman and Soublière, 2017; Giorgi et al., 2015). It has been argued that Swedberg’s (2006,

p. 260) perspective, which defines cultural entrepreneurship as ‘the carrying out of a novel

combination that results in something new and appreciated in the cultural sphere’, is most

applicable to artisan entrepreneurship research (Pret, 2017). This ‘making culture’ approach

originates in DiMaggio’s (1982) work, which focuses on the production and distribution of

cultural products. Cultural products, in turn, are defined as goods ‘directed at a public of

consumers, for whom they generally serve an esthetic or expressive, rather than a clearly

utilitarian function’ (Hirsch, 1972, p. 641-642). Creating and selling such products lies at the

core of both craft and artisan entrepreneurship (Tregear, 2005). Importantly, given that many

studies use these terms interchangeably (e.g. Blundel, 2002; Bouette and Magee, 2015; Kuhn

and Galloway, 2015), this review of the literature does not differentiate between them, but

rather employs artisan entrepreneurship as an overarching label to refer to both.

This Systematic Literature Review (SLR) finds that artisan entrepreneurship research

contributes to understanding of entrepreneurial behaviour, context, motivation, development,

resources, diversity and classification. In its coverage of these seven main themes, this

scholarship provides timely insights into coopetition practices, the reciprocal relationship

between place and entrepreneurship and the coexistence of social and economic goals. It also

reveals characteristics which facilitate venture development, discovers the mutability of

various forms of capital, highlights the necessity of studying diverse experiences and

identifies benefits and limits of typologies. In reviewing and critiquing the artisan

entrepreneurship literature, this SLR not only provides an overview of the state of the field,

but also identifies areas where this scholarship contributes to understanding of

entrepreneurship and upon which future research can build. Artisan entrepreneurship is thus

established as worthy of investigation in its own right and as an appropriate context in which

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to explore entrepreneurial processes. Based on the analysis of the extant literature, this SLR

also develops an agenda for future research. Main recommendations include pursuing

longitudinal and quantitative research, devoting further attention to context and engaging in

more holistic treatments of a broader range of cultural contexts and geographic areas.

The next section of this paper presents the methodology adopted by this review,

which is followed by the discussion of findings. Subsequently, conclusions are drawn and

suggestions for future research directions are made.