***Art, creativity and the economy***

**New opportunities built on a problematic past relationship**

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The ongoing debate on the social value of art and culture has been with us for some decades now. In the Netherlands, this debate has taken place mostly within the art world itself and in related political and administrative circles. There has hardly been any broad social discussion on the subject. For a brief moment in 2010 it seemed as though such a discussion might take place, when a new centre-right government, supported (and to some degree inspired) in parliament by a smaller right-wing populist party, began implementing sweeping cuts in public funding for the arts sector. However, it soon became painfully clear that the arts could count on little support from society at large, although the budget cuts and ensuing cultural crisis did gain some notice in the international media, notably the New York Times (Siegal 2013). Also, the established system of public funding has found little support from within the academic community, which has regularly questioned the effectiveness of this system. For example, any supposed causal relation between public funding on one hand, and quality or public outreach on the other, has been difficult to demonstrate convincingly (see for example Van Klink et al. 2011). Some have advocated a transition to an American-inspired model, with much less government presence and a greater emphasis on private benefactors.[[1]](#footnote-2) Meanwhile, proponents of the established system have not been particularly vocal or eloquent in their support.

Striking in the present debate is that the underlying assumption, that the economic pay off of public expenditures on arts and culture is negative, is left unaddressed and undisputed. State support for arts and culture is not considered a valuable investment in both economic and cultural development; it is actually dealt with as a leak in the economy. Empirical proof that there is a positive spin off both for culture as well as the economy is neglected. Maybe one of the reasons that this presumption remains uncontested is rooted in the art worlds themselves. Proponents of creative and artistic endeavours are hesitant to embrace the argument fully, since the dominant discourse still departs from an antagonistic relationship of culture and economy. It is necessary to open up the debate to understand the current dynamics within the arts, the creative industries and cultural policy.

**Market as encompassing principle**

The diminishing role of public financing in the arts sector naturally leads to an increased dependence on the private sector and the consumer market as a basis for the exploitation of art and culture. This is a direct consequence of the increasing role of the market as the value encompassing principle within art and culture policy. This development must of course be examined critically, and its internal contradictions exposed. At the same time, it is well worth exploring the possibilities offered by this new situation, and how to best make productive use of them. After all, the basic idea, that a dominant focus on public financing in the arts sector may well discourage other exploitation possibilities, is in itself not without merit. Moreover in many domains of creative production, the market has been the dominant mode, for instance in design, architecture and popular music. The Flemish economists Van Andel en Vandenbemt have stated that public funding can even stifle the drive for fundamental innovation, and discourage financial progress. This, combined with a primary focus on gaining reputation (for example, among fellow artists and organisations) and on aesthetic quality, may lead to what they call lethargic entrepreneurship, characterised by a lack of private initiative and a lack of growth for businesses and institutions (Van Andel & Vandenbempt 2012, p.165). In other words, the market and the private sector do not by definition inhibit freedom of artistic, creative and economic action. Moreover, the public funding system has its specific structural constraints, which can also have a stifling influence on artistic and creative innovation. Therefore the time has come to critically examine the relation between art, culture, government and market, and to judge developments on their specific merits, without automatically calling for budget cuts in the public funding of art and culture. Indeed, it may well be that increased public funding is necessary in order to achieve a fuller exploitation of the economic possibilities of art and culture resulting in net positive effects for both economy and society at large.

**Curriculum reform**

This essay provides a critical reflection on the relation between art, culture and economy, in light of recent developments in policy as well as in the world of art and culture itself. The direct incentive for this reflection is the recent curriculum reform of the Rotterdam’s Willem de Kooning Academy. The structure of the new curriculum emphasises the contemporary role of artists in society, and the challenges this poses for education programs. The social environment in which graduates find themselves, imposes new requirements on their knowledge, skills and competences. This paper maps some of the trends underlying that process. It implies that the Academy as well as the art world will have to define a new relationship with society at large. The Willem de Kooning Academy’s new curriculum distinguishes three graduation profiles: *autonomous practices, social practices* and *commercial practices*. This essay focuses mainly (though not exclusively) on developments affecting the third, more market-oriented profile. First we shall examine the shift in perception of the relation between art, culture and economy; then we shall analyse the further advent of the market as encompassing principle in culture policy, and also point out a number of contradictions in this trend. Then, we shall examine a number of recent trends which demonstrate how art, culture and economy are deeply connected and even mutually supportive: the emergence of the creative industries, art and culture as potential force in innovation, the crucial role of creative talent in the present day economy and the role of art and culture in urban environments.

**Art, culture and economy**

Over the past few decades, the relationship between culture and economy has been extremely problematic, and remains quite complex to this day. In the art world, a deep mistrust of market forces and economic power has developed throughout the 20th century. The market’s primacy of financial profit above artistic value has generally been unacceptable to the art world. Also, the formalised industrial division of labour in cultural productions, for example in the large-scale media and entertainment industry, is perceived as a negation of the principle of the individual and unique, which is so important to the arts. This is also characteristic of the gap which has developed between economy and culture. This philosophy has been most eloquently articulated in the seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (*Dialektik der Aufklärung*) by the Marxist philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1944, 1947). Here they portrayed the culture industry (a term they also coined) as a stooge of encroaching capitalism, promoting cultural shallowness through its emphasis on financial profit and standardisation of production. Meanwhile, in the United States, the theory of ‘mass culture’ offered a similar critique, but from a more conservative perspective of decrying the erosion of traditional American popular culture by the same aggressive cultural industry (McDonald, 1958). These philosophies have long played a dominant role in defining the artistic perspective on economic forces and entrepreneurship, and remain extremely influential to this day. Though they differ in their ideological orientation, they broadly agree in their rejection of the contemporary culture industry. On the other hand, the French anthropologist Edgar Morin proposed a more culturally optimistic vision. In *L’esprit du temps* (1965) he suggested an open-minded appraisal of the culture industry’s creative products, explicitly attacking the snobbish attitude of the established art world toward the media and entertainment industries. Morin maintained that the only way to really know popular culture was to immerse oneself in it; at the time, this meant for example dropping a coin in the slot of a jukebox, pressing a button, and listening to the newest hits of for instance Dalida, one of the stars in his particular day and age.

Meanwhile, cultural criticisms of the culture industry have done little to undermine its economic growth. The media and entertainment industry has developed into a booming economic sector, which has also gained notice throughout the years for the aesthetic quality of many of its products. Cinema, and later also jazz and rock music, were the subject of increasing critical appreciation, though of course this did not apply to all the products released by the industry. However, the crucial point here is that quality and innovation also exist within the commercial system; they are not necessarily determined by the production context. This has led to a reappraisal, in research and cultural criticism, of the importance of market-generated cultural products. The negative term ‘mass culture’ has gradually been replaced by the more neutral ‘popular culture’, just as the term ‘culture industry’ has been superseded by the newer concept of ‘creative industries’. It is by now quite clear that popular culture also contributes positively to social development, to the cultural identity of groups of individuals, and to the emancipation of citizens. It is also evident that the world of ‘high arts’ has become intertwined in many ways with the mainstream economy; for example, in the market of dealers and collectors of artworks,[[2]](#footnote-3) or the sponsorship deals between cultural institutions and businesses. Merely denouncing, obstructing or flatly denying the connections between art and economic market forces is no longer convincing; such attitudes do not accurately reflect the current and specific nature of the relationship between art and economy, as observed in practice.

Therefore this principle is no longer useful as a starting point for practitioners of art and culture, but rather counterproductive. A more positive debate and development should instead focus on how art and culture can help to reformulate certain underlying principles of the economy, for example in all aspects of social and economic innovation processes (cf. Rutten 2012).[[3]](#footnote-4) Artistically inspired research, as described by Florian Cramer in his essay in this publication, provides important points of reference. By showcasing new values and ideas developed and implemented in sectors such as the artistic production practice, the art world can become a breeding pool for social innovations, such as those described by Peter Troxler (2013) in his essay on open design and the resulting ‘maker movement’.

Conversely, the dominant economic discourse, particularly among policy makers, tends to see the arts as an expenditure, a liability, a leak in the economy (cf. Potts 2011). Any positive external effects of investments in art and culture are not taken into consideration, beyond some kind of ‘luxury you can afford’. Public spending on art and culture is seen as icing on the cake, which can be permitted in times of prosperity but not in times of economic downturn. The underlying implication is that cutting down on such useless luxuries (‘left-wing hobbies’) can only bring positive economic effects. This paradigm is increasingly untenable, as there is an increasing amount of evidence demonstrating that investments in art, culture and creativity in fact benefit the creation of value in various ways.[[4]](#footnote-5)

**Recent trends in cultural policy: entrepreneurship and creative industries**

In order to properly understand the increasing role of the market in the fields of art and culture, we must first consider the shifting role of government and policy. The government is a key player in the world of art and culture in the Netherlands and Europe, and thus an influential figure in this debate; not so much as a champion of one specific opinion, but rather through the results of its concrete policy. The continuity of art and culture is highly dependent on the resources made available by national, regional and local governments. Much of the artistic production which is considered socially valuable, cannot be financed solely by the private sector (a combination of funds provided by consumers, sponsors and benefactors). This is what economists call market failure: the market is unable to provide a socially desirable outcome, so that the task must be assumed by the government. In this context, governments in Europe are seen as playing an essential role in the art world, being the main source of funding for education programmes, for the creation and production of art and culture, and for organisations which make these available to European citizens, from theatres, museums and broadcasters to supporting institutions.

Throughout the second half of the 20th century, Dutch art and culture policy has seen a succession of basic principles and philosophies justifying this financial state support. Most of these, with the exception of the traditional principle of public education through art (‘Bildungsideal’), still play an important role in the contemporary policy paradigm. Criteria applied by various public art and culture funds for granting public funding to projects, artists and institutions are directly based on these principles: geographical distribution of access to art and culture, the quality of the works and performances, and the degree of cultural entrepreneurship.

In the late 1990s Rick van der Ploeg, then Dutch State Secretary for Culture, Art and Media, was responsible for introducing the concept of cultural entrepreneurship into Dutch national policy.[[5]](#footnote-7) Van der Ploeg’s tenure (from 1998 to 2002) took place under a broad Labour-Liberal-Democrat coalition, in power from 1994 to 2002. He considered the activities of makers and producers in the art world, who must be able to improvise and deal with multiple perspectives and new ideas, while managing organisations and realising productions, as a prime example of entrepreneurship. However, the notion of entrepreneurship in the context of the arts, with all its implied economic connotations, was at first not greeted with universal enthusiasm. Gradually, however, the importance of entrepreneurship as promoted by Van der Ploeg has gained acceptance in the world of art and culture, at least at the institutional level. An indication of this acceptance, in the Netherlands and abroad, is the establishment of education programmes in this field. Art management has become a given fact.

The following phase in the Dutch art and culture policy also began during Van der Ploeg’s tenure. He was keenly aware, as an economist and an Anglophile, of the intensive development of the creative industries in the United Kingdom. He was particularly impressed by the policies introduced by the neo-liberal Tony Blair and by Chris Smith, New Labour’s Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, focused on stimulating the creative industries (see for example DCMS 1998). The British focus on this sector was based on an awareness of the value for the United Kingdom of the exports of creative economic sectors, such as the music industry. In the mid-1990s, the export value of music was equal to that of the British steel industry (British Invisibles 1995). The government, even more than the sector itself, intensively promoted and showcased the creative industries, based on the insight that British creative industries were developing into an key sector of the economy (see also Rutten & Koops 2012). In the Netherlands however, a coherent policy for stimulating the creative industries was not formulated during Van der Ploeg’s tenure, due to a number of factors, notably a lack of enthusiasm from the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Such a policy would not be established until a few years later, under State Secretary Medy van der Laan (2003-2006) and her successors. Finally, in 2009 the policy paper *Ons Creatief Vermogen* (‘Our Creative Capital’) was jointly formulated by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. A number of research projects had already been conducted and published by then (See: Hofstede & Raes 2006); in the same period, an Innovation Platform established by the government had declared the creative industries a key sector for the economy (Innovatieplatform 2004). Under the new centre-right government however, the policy focusing on key sectors was dropped in favour of a business-oriented policy which in turn led to the formulation of a new sector policy, focusing this time on ‘top’ sectors. Here too, policy makers recognised the importance of creative industries, which were defined as one of these top sectors. A new ‘top team’ platform was established to focus on the potential catalysing effects of the creative industries for the rest of the economy and society in general. Rather than growth within the sector itself, the creative industries were seen mainly as an agent for innovation in other top sectors (Topteam Creatieve Industrie 2011). However, and somewhat cynically, two important subsectors of the creative industries were subjected in the same period to sweeping budget cuts. Netherlands Public Broadcasting was ordered to cut a total of € 200 million, while cuts in the arts amounted to another € 200 million. Also, the centre-right government proposed raising the value-added sales tax rate on art products and services, a measure which was eventually reversed by the subsequent (and currently incumbent) Liberal-Labour coalition. That same government however decided for an additional cut in the budget of the public broadcasters (national and regional): € 100 million. Still, it’s hard to understand the logic behind declaring the creative industries a top sector on the one hand, while on the other subjecting two important pillars of this same sector to such drastic budget cuts.

**Creative industries: a rapidly growing sector**

Western European economies have been in a state of transition for quite some time now. For several decades, traditional industrial production has no longer been the main economic pillar; other sectors now play an increasingly important role in creating added value and employment, particularly in the field of knowledge-intensive business services. Creativity, and by extension the creative industries, are seen as new and important sources of economic value. As I previously noted, the United Kingdom first understood the importance of the creative industries in the 1990s. Some years later the Netherlands followed, declaring the creative industries first a ‘key’ sector, then a ‘top’ sector. Creative industries are considered an economic field in which Western countries are able to excel on a global level. Especially in the United Kingdom, but also in the Netherlands, creative industries have shown over the past few years above-average growth rates.

‘Creative industries’ is an umbrella term encompassing various economic activities, which provide goods and services resulting from individual or collective creative labour and creative entrepreneurship; the main and defining characteristic of these goods and services is the central role of content and symbolism, as demonstrated by the fact that consumers as well as business customers purchase these because of the meanings they convey, and thus the symbolic value which they ‘physically’ represent. These meanings provide end users with experiences which have cultural as well as economic value. This way, creative industries play an important role in developing and maintaining lifestyles and cultural identities within society, but also in generating employment and added value.[[6]](#footnote-8) The products created, designed and produced by the creative industries, including their meaning and symbolism and the lifestyles associated with them, are a relatively new source of economic value. What is new here is not the sector itself, but rather the identification of this sector as an entity, and the recognition of its economic importance.

The main defining characteristic of the creative industries is the dominant role of *meaning* in their goods and services, which are purchased for their content and symbolism, as these apply and relate to lifestyle value. There is a clear emphasis on articulation and representation, and often on narrative, conveyed through a language focused on evoking a specific experience in end users. The language can be one of forms, words, images or sounds. This is the binding component between the various domains which together constitute the creative industries. This applies to the works of artists, the products of the media and entertainment industry, and the services offered by designers and advertising agencies to their business customers. This specific nature largely defines how creation, production and exploitation are structured and implemented within this sector; it also defines the sector’s market, as well as the specific requirements regarding the expertise and competences of the talent employed within the sector.[[7]](#footnote-9)

Creative industries are an inherently heterogeneous sector. Still it is possible to cluster different industries according to shared characteristics. We have distinguished three subsectors: arts and cultural heritage, media and entertainment industry, and creative business services. This subdivision, and the categorisation of industries among these three subsectors,[[8]](#footnote-10) is designed to allow for the quantification of their economic importance. In the domain of arts and cultural heritage, the focus is primarily on the aesthetic experience based on works and artefacts whose creation usually stems from an artistic and cultural need, rather than commercial exploitation. Public financing plays a key role in this domain. In the case of historical buildings, the primary concern at the time of their construction was usually not aesthetic; in our time however, it is the symbolic value of these buildings which makes them cultural heritage. Cultural heritage also includes museums, archives and libraries. The arts include mainly practitioners of visual arts and performing arts. For the media and entertainment industry, the role of public financing is less important than for arts and cultural heritage; there is a greater emphasis on profitable exploitation, and on reaching a large audience. Typical industries in this sector include radio and television, books, cinema, music and live entertainment. Creative business services provide creative services to business customers, usually on a commission basis. This includes advertising and communication, design, and architecture (including landscape architecture). This subsector of the creative industries does not work directly for the consumer market. Despite the commercial context, there is definitely room in creative business services for a personal creative signature, for example in the case of architectural firms or design studios. The boundaries between the various subsectors are quite open, fluid and unsteady. For example, part of the gaming industry can increasingly be qualified as a form of creative business services, while it was first perceived as part of the media and entertainment industry. Serious games are commissioned by businesses in order to teach specific insights and lessons with greater effectiveness and efficiency to their staff, clients or other stakeholders.

The boundary between private and publicly financed within the creative industries is much less clearly defined than is often suggested. Public funding is by no means the exclusive privilege of the arts sector. For example, the film industry, an important sector within the media and entertainment industries, operates in a market-driven context, but cannot survive without public support in the Netherlands, Belgium, and many other European countries (see for instance: Nederlands Filmfonds 2013). Public broadcasting is chiefly financed through taxes, but is also an important player with a defining competitive position in the audio-visual market. The printed media sector, with products ranging from newspapers to magazines and books, enjoys a low value-added sales tax rate: an indirect form of public financing. On the other hand, governments stimulate entrepreneurial thinking and acting in the arts and culture sector, in order to achieve a higher cultural return on the public investments. The influx of private funds in art and culture as a result of cultural entrepreneurship has increased in recent years, which in turn also benefits the government (cf. Booz and Company 2013). The boundary between culture and economy is thus increasingly porous. What is obvious is that publicly financed parties as well as private ones, in so far as these could ever be clearly distinguished, both create added value, cultural as well as economic. In this respect they are socially relevant, they generate groundbreaking experiences as well as economic value, and they provide citizens with an opportunity to earn their livelihood.

Graduates of the wide variety of art education programmes offered in the Netherlands, are not solely employable within the a somewhat narrowly defined art sector, largely dependent on state subsidies, but within the broad range of creative industries, representing a broad range of value adding activities, both economically and socially. This also applies to the Willem de Kooning Academy: as a provider of creative talent, in a variety of disciplines from visual arts to graphic design and fashion design, from advertising and communication to live entertainment and media. Developments in the creative industries have direct implications for the requirements to students. Alumni of Dutch art education programmes find employment in the arts sector, where they are expected to function in an environment where cultural entrepreneurship is combined with independent artistic practice, or in creative business services, such as advertising and fashion design, where the emphasis is rather on applied creativity in a mostly market-driven environment.

**Review of the creative industries in the Netherlands**

The following table shows the employment situation in the creative industries in the Netherlands over the past decade.

*Table 1: Jobs in creative industries in the Netherlands in 2011, job growth 2000-2011 / 2009-2011*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Domains* | *Jobs*  *2011* | *Growth*  *2000-2011*  *(numbers of jobs)* | *Growth*  *2000-2011*  *(% annually)* | *Growth*  *2009-2011*  *(numbers of jobs)* | *Growth*  *2009-2011*  *(% annually)* |
| ***Arts and cultural heritage*** | ***98,874*** | ***39,808*** | ***4.8%*** | ***10,445*** | ***5.7%*** |
| Performing arts | 26,596 | 14,740 | 7.6% | 4,278 | 9.2% |
| Creative arts | 24,815 | 15,210 | 9.0% | 5,980 | 14.8% |
| Other arts and heritage | 25,186 | 9,815 | 4.6% | 696 | 1.4% |
| Cultural heritage | 22,277 | 43 | 0.0% | -509 | -1.1% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Media and entertainment industry*** | ***89,296*** | ***7,142*** | ***0.8%*** | ***-3,122*** | ***-1.7%*** |
| Radio and television | 14,620 | 2,142 | 1.5% | -1,035 | -3.4% |
| Press media | 33,794 | 1,219 | 0.3% | -1,251 | -1.8% |
| Film | 12,737 | 4,337 | 3.9% | 444 | 1.8% |
| Music industry | 2,451 | 303 | 1.2% | 243 | 5.4% |
| Book industry | 10,600 | 8 | 0.0% | -980 | -4.3% |
| Gaming and other publishers[[9]](#footnote-12) | 2,069 | -2,270 | -6.5% | -426 | -8.9% |
| Live entertainment | 13,025 | 1,403 | 1.0% | -117 | -0.4% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Creative business services*** | ***92,280*** | ***31,369*** | ***3.8%*** | ***3,223*** | ***1.8%*** |
| Design | 26,200 | 19,171 | 12.7% | 3,115 | 6.5% |
| Communication and information | 66,080 | 12,198 | 1.9% | 108 | 0.1% |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Creative industries*** | ***280,450*** | ***78,319*** | ***3.0%*** | ***10,546*** | ***1.9%*** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Netherlands economy*** | ***8065.110*** | ***729.740*** | ***0.9%*** | ***-29.030*** | ***-0,2%*** |

Source: Paul Rutten, Olaf Koops & Ottilie Nieuwenhuis (2012). *Cross Media Monitor 2012.* *Cross Media in Cijfers*. Hilversum: iMMovator. (Data from LISA 2012).

In 2011 there were more than 280,000 jobs in the creative industries in the Netherlands, subdivided across the three subsectors: 99,000 in arts and heritage, 92,000 in creative business services, and 89,000 in media and entertainment industry. This is 3.5% of all jobs in the Netherlands in 2011. In the period from 2000 to 2011, the average annual job growth rate in the creative industries was 3%, considerably higher than the national average of 0.9%. In the most recent years of this period (2009-2011) the growth rate was a bit more than one percent lower: 1.9%. Of the three subsectors, growth has been strongest in arts and cultural heritage, with 4.8% for the entire period and no less than 5.7% for the last three years of this period. An important reason for the high growth rate in arts and heritage, is the increase in registered jobs in the performing arts and visual arts, largely as a result of the compulsory registration since 2008 of freelance creative workers, many of which were not previously registered with the Chamber of Commerce. This has led to an inflated growth rate in the short term. The bright side is that we are now able to gain a clearer understanding of the true magnitude of these art practices. The lowest growth rate was noted in the media and entertainment industry: 0.8%. The last three years (2009-2011) even show negative growth. Creative business services have been growing on average 3.8%, a rate which has decreased by two percent to 1.8% in the last three years.

The number of businesses in the creative industries was more than 117,000 in 2011; of these, more than 46,000 were in arts and heritage, almost 41,000 in creative business services, and more than 30,000 in the media and entertainment industry. Thus 9.6 % of the businesses in the Netherlands are creative industry businesses. This percentage is much higher than the percentage of creative industry jobs within the total number of jobs in the Netherlands (3.5%). This is because the average number of employees in creative industry businesses is much lower than the national average. This characteristic small scale is due to the high number of freelancers and small operations. within the creative industries Of the three subsectors, arts and heritage has the smallest average number of employees per company.

The creative industry's total revenue grew on average 1.3% between 2000 and 2010, a bit higher than the national average of 1.1%. The growth of the creative industry's total revenue (1.3%) is markedly less than the growth in the number of jobs (3%). This is due to a number of factors, such as the fact that much of the growth was realised in the arts sector which is characterised by a relatively low revenue for each job. The creative industry's total revenue was € 32.8 billion in 2010, amounting to 2.9% of the economy as a whole. Among the subsectors, the media and entertainment industry has approximately the same number of jobs as the other two subsectors, but generates approximately twice as much revenue (almost € 17 billion) as arts and heritage (more than € 8 billion) or creative business services (almost € 8 billion). The productivity in media and entertainment is thus markedly higher than in the other two subsectors (Rutten et al. 2012a, pp. 19-31).

**Creative industries: turn towards innovation**

The first wave in the debate on the creative industries, which took place during the first years of the 21st century, tended to focus on the sector’s above-average growth rate, as expressed in terms of jobs and added value. However, in more recent years the emphasis has shifted toward the broader economic and social impact of the creative industries: the sector’s role as a producer of meaning, symbolism and lifestyle value for today’s creative economy. In this economy, the human ability to create value based on new concepts and ideas is seen as the main driving force behind increasing prosperity; most of the added value is realised through goods and services which relate to the experiences of consumers and respond intelligently to broad social needs and requirements (cf. Howkins 2001). In this context, the creative industries are increasingly perceived as an important motor for competitive strength and innovation; the contemporary debate sees here the main value of creative activity, a trend described as the *turn towards innovation* (See also: Rutten et al. 2005; Jacobs 2007).

Creative industries contribute to innovation, by giving concrete shape to the possibilities offered by new systems and technologies, and by linking these to broad social needs through processes such as (visual) representation and design. Creative professionals develop new ideas and create designs, focused on current and future needs of representation and experience, but also on practical applicability and useful social value. In principle, this practice applies to a broad range of economic and social domains. The knowledge and understanding of trends, culture and lifestyles are essential requirements for offering attractive and competitive products. This type of creativity is not only important for the development of new products and services, but also for their positioning and marketing. The ‘addition’ of symbolic and emotional value improves the market prospects of goods and services. Since in many cases their functionality has already been optimised, competitive advantage can only be realised by making connections with intangible meaning and cultural value. The combination of both types of activities, the development of new products and services based on the appropriate creative inputs, and the connection of goods and services with experience value, are all essential ingredients for innovation in the creative economy (Jacobs 2007). This has led several researchers and theorists to conclude that the creative industries are in fact becoming an integrated component of the innovation systems of contemporary economies, rather than merely an economic sector enjoying above-average growth rates. Therefore the creative industries clearly require specific and focused attention from policy makers. There has been an increasing interest and activity in recent years toward research focusing specifically on this role of the creative sector in the economy and society at large (see for example: Bakshi, McVittie en Simmie 2008; Potts en Cunnigham 2008; Rutten, Marlet & Van Oort 2011).

The assumed special role of the creative industries can be clearly demonstrated by examining the function of design as a specific branch of creative business services. Good design, and therefore good designers, are essential for the market success of products and services; not only in providing an aesthetic finishing touch, but also in contributing creative input to design processes, from the earliest phases of the development of goods and services.[[10]](#footnote-13) For example, good fashion designs are essential for the success of the clothing industry which nowadays is more commonly referred to as the fashion industry, underlining just how crucial the designs have become in determining the market value of its products. Of course, the economic value of the fashion sector goes far beyond design; the production, distribution and retailing of clothing all contribute value as well. Still, design remains the key to this value. Also noteworthy is the important role played by designers in connecting the fashion sector with the domain of new materials. Based on their user-oriented perspective and their knowledge of current social trends, designers provide valuable input to businesses developing new materials for use in clothing. There are a number of ongoing developments, in traditional fabrics and textiles as well as in the field of new fibres and materials. One of the roles of designers is to make connections between parts of the chemical sector and the fashion industry. In the automobile industry as well, design is the determining factor. The technical specifications of the various brands and types are increasingly similar; distinction is created through design, image and identity, which is precisely where the competences of designers and brand specialists come into play. The role of advertising and communication in the economy is therefore comparable to that of design. Professionals in these disciplines create value, by defining specific positions for organisations and businesses in within the field of public opinion, by guiding the launch of new products and services, and by consolidating the position of existing ones. A recent development in this sector has seen advertising agencies functioning as strategic branding and positioning advisors to businesses, a clear indication of the importance of these competences in the development and success of businesses (Nixon 2009). The creative industries are moving toward the heart of the creative economy. As a result of this development, products in an increasing number of markets are now chiefly defined by their design and their brand. Consumer electronics and information hardware are a clear case in point. In the market for media and IT services, the boundaries between technology, design, and even content are becoming increasingly blurred. The best example of this is Apple, the most successful business of the past decade. Apple has demonstrated the crucial importance of design, even more than Sony previously did with a number of groundbreaking concepts in the electronics industry. Now it seems as though Apple is already losing ground in this respect to Samsung.

The almost symbiotic relationship between information and communication technology on one hand, and creative industries on the other, can be explained by the central role of language and information in both domains. The products of the creative industries are basically immaterial: information which is shared in various formats with individual customers and business clients. Creative industries almost always make use of (newer or more traditional) information and communication technology (ICT). One of the oldest forms of this technology is writing; book printing is, relatively speaking, a much more recent development. The newest forms of ICT include digital networks and various forms of information processing (software). Innovation in the creative industries is closely related to developments in information and communication technology, and in some cases also vice-versa. Just as printing technologies once paved the way for book and newspaper publishing, the development of the Internet and new digital technologies is now causing an extensive restructuring of the media industry (including the emergence of new segments such as the gaming sector) as well as profound social transformations. Creative industries are at the forefront of this development, precisely because the sector in fact thrives on the development and exploitation of information and symbols, of lifestyle and representation. As a consequence, it is often unclear whether some businesses, including global players such as Google, Apple and Amazon, should be classified as ICT or creative industries. In the Netherlands, TomTom is a good example of the fusion between creative industries and ICT. TomTom facilitates and exploits access to information, thus functioning in many respects as a publisher. Innovative products and services which combine the qualities of creative industries and ICT are the most important generators of value in today’s economy. In the virtual domain, new creative concepts can be very rapidly scaled up to a global level.[[11]](#footnote-14) The downside to this obvious opportunity, is that a global potential market also means global competition. In the virtual creative industry, the role of local markets plays a much smaller role than in the material creative sector.

The catalysing effect of creative industries on the rest of the economy is not limited to creative business services, which include design, advertising and communication. In the media and entertainment industry as well, products, services and competences are being developed which can be applied within the economy at large, and which add lifestyle value to more generic products and services, by providing them with symbolic qualities based on the gravitational attraction of products and personalities from the world of popular culture (Wolf, 1999). Serious gaming is another example of how new applications developed within this subsector add value to another sector. Games, which first originated as entertainment products, are increasingly being applied in communication and information strategies, as well as in health care, where the use of specialised games in medical rehabilitation processes has met with some very interesting results indeed.

Also the domain of the arts, particularly artistic research, is providing contributions to broader social and even economic developments. An exploratory research of the artistic research practice of a number of leading art and technology laboratories in the Netherlands, such as Waag Society, V2\_, Mediamatic and Worm (Rutten 2011) shows how the work produced in the field of contemporary arts contributes to the development of knowledge as well as social innovation. In the current practice of the art and technology labs, artists ask questions such as: Who are we? How are we living? How do we wish to live? These questions are then the subject of a creative and research process, in which technology is deconstructed and reconstructed: a process known as hacking, broadly similar to the process of reverse engineering as applied in the world of industry. Creative works resulting from this practice call into question existing practices, and provoke new discussions and debates. Media labs thus focus on deconstructing technology from a social or aesthetic perspective, showcasing technological development processes which otherwise might have remained undetected from the dominant design perspective. This in turn allows for the development of possible alternative processes focusing on social values, targets and applications which otherwise might not have been explored. This way, media labs offer alternative and often superior uses of the social possibilities offered by technology; art provides the fundamental research for the creative industries, in much the same way as scientific laboratory research does for industrial innovation. In the United Kingdom, the connection between art, science, the creative industries at large, and ultimately social innovation, is explicitly recognised: the Strategic Technology Board’s Creative Industries innovation programme falls under the University of the Arts in London (cf. Rinnooy Kan et al. 2012). In the Netherlands, such a link has not yet been established.

The potential demonstrated in all the above examples manifests itself in the role currently attributed to the creative industries in providing solutions to broad social challenges, for example in the fields of sustainability, mobility and health care. The European Union refers to these as *grand societal challenges* which are crucial to the future of societies on our continent. These challenges require integrated responses, rather than purely technological solutions; there are cultural values at stake, requiring an approach in which the creative industries will be called upon to play an important role (See also: Amerika 2013; Topteam Creatieve Industrie 2011). This implies the necessity for the creative industries to connect with other social and economic domains; not only in order to facilitate the productive application of new technologies, but also for the design of solutions based on the creative industries’ characteristic strengths.

**Talent for the creative economy**

The developments I have described above, all have direct implications for government policy focusing on arts and culture, the creative industries in particular, for the curriculum of educational institutions, and for research focusing on the creative economy. The perspective is changing; the focus is shifting from the magnitude and growth of the sector itself, toward the broader catalysing effect of the creative industries on social and economic innovation. The crucial question therefore is: Do the ideas, methods and concepts of creative professionals contribute to social innovation, with a positive influence on quality of life and competitive strength? This question directly addresses the promise of the creative economy, in which creativity is the motor of innovation and development. This implies a greater emphasis on creative talent, rather than creative businesses, as it is the individuals working in creative professions who play a crucial role in realising the intended catalysing effect. Therefore, research and policy should focus more on the connections (relations and interactions, networks and interfaces, and of course their effectiveness) between these creative professionals and the fields of application in which they function. This is also a crucial development for education programmes focusing on the development of talent for the creative industries.

The design practice offers again an excellent illustration of the social and economic value of innovative power contained within the creative network economy. Many designers work in specialised agencies which take on commissions from third-party clients; in this respect they clearly belong to the creative industries. However, an even greater number of designers work in organisations which do not fall under the creative industries: for example, the graphic industry or the furniture industry. For these organisations, fulfilling design needs using in-house personnel proves to be a better strategic option than purchasing these designs on the market, from design agencies. This is a choice which economists refer to as ‘make or buy’. It is estimated that two thirds of all designers in the Netherlands work for businesses outside the creative industries . Therefore these professionals are not counted in the statistics of researchers focusing on creative industries, even though they are an important factor in the creative economy, and their activities are crucial in determining the value of creative competences as a driving force for innovation. As long as the research focus was still on determining the magnitude and scope of the creative industries, there was no urgent need to gain a clear understanding of the presence, range and significance of creative talent operating outside the creative industries. However, the focus is now clearly shifting towards the catalysing social effects of creativity, as a motor for innovation and for the increase of competitive strength and quality of life; conversely, there is now a decreased focus on the numbers of individuals working in a non-creative capacity within the creative industries, but who are currently still included in statistics on the creative sector. These include financial managers as well as office and catering personnel. Employment statistics in businesses with a large number of facilitary jobs relative to the number of creative jobs, are now indiscriminately counted along with businesses employing a relatively high percentage of creative professionals. An example of a sector belonging to the first category is amusement parks, which are part of the leisure industry. Most employees in this sector are facilitary staff, ranging from ice-cream vendors to attraction attendants; all these workers are counted as part of the creative industries, alongside employees of businesses with a high number of creative professionals. These include various creative business services, architects, designers and advertising and communication professionals, where forty to fifty percent of employees are creative professionals.

Statistics Netherlands has compiled a provisory list of creative professions (a selection from the more than 1200 creative professions officially recognised in the Netherlands), focused on measuring the presence of creative sector industries from this perspective as well (see Urlings & Braams 2011). Based on this list, in the period from 2007 to 2009 there were more than 180,000 individuals with a creative profession, both within and outside the creative industries. By comparison, the number of jobs (both creative and facilitary) in the creative industries in the Netherlands in 2009, was about 250,000 (Rutten et al. 2010). In the United Kingdom, by comparison, Higgs et. al (2008) determined that in 2006, there were 800,000 creative jobs outside the creative industries, in addition to the 1.1 million jobs (both creative and facilitary) within the creative industries. A remarkable conclusion of this British research is that, compared to other economic sectors, there is a much higher proportion of creative professionals working outside their ‘own’ sector, the creative industries. Creative skills and competences specific to the creative industries are thus firmly embedded in the British economy.

Recent research by Rutten, van Oort and Marlet (2011) focusing on creative talent in the greater economic region of Amsterdam, has shown how various creative sectors are firmly embedded in the regional economy. This can be seen in the migration of talent between businesses from various sectors within and outside the creative industries: creative professionals from creative industries regularly find employment in businesses and organisations belonging to other economic domains. This means there is an atmosphere which stimulates the spill over of knowledge, through mobility of creative talent, from the creative industries towards the rest of the economy. Thus the conditions necessary for the creative industries to function as a catalyser for innovation in the creative economy are clearly present. Further research will be needed in order to gain deeper insight into such processes.

There is a parallel between the shift of direction in research, which is required in order to gain a clearer understanding of the workings of the creative economy, and a similar necessary change in policy. Creative industry policy currently focuses mainly on businesses, which are still perceived as the most important actors in the creative and innovative economy. However, there is a clear need, in the context of policy directed toward the creative sector, for a shift of emphasis toward the role and significance of creative talent, and the embedding of this talent within the economy at large, particularly when one considers the promise of the creative economy. Education clearly plays a key role in this policy. Therefore, this essay is also a plea for the development of creative competences in young creative talent and to apply the resulting innovative power to meet the major economic and social challenges ahead. This can take place in the context of a freelance practice, a creative industry business, or other businesses and organisations which have chosen to employ creative professionals. This is the broad framework in which the creative economy is developing its momentum and in which institutions as the Willem de Kooning Academy play a crucial role.

**Cultuur en talent in de creatieve stad**

De creatieve industrie en creatief talent worden sinds het verschijnen van het boek ‘The rise of the creative class’ van Richard Florida (2002) nog op een andere manier in verband gebracht met de ontwikkeling van de economie. Florida stelt dat voor de ontwikkeling van de high tech kenniseconomie talent nodig is dat pro-actief kan vormgeven aan innovatie. Dat talent noemt hij de creative class. Die bestaat uit mensen die populair gezegd, out of the box kunnen denken. Ze zijn in staat om op basis van hun intrinsieke en in het onderwijs gecultiveerde creativiteit vorm te geven aan bestaande en nieuwe maatschappelijke domeinen. Ze kunnen bestaande praktijken voorzien van nieuwe impulsen waardoor innovatie ontstaat. Leden van de creatieve klasse delen een creatief ethos waarin waarde wordt gehecht aan creativiteit, individualiteit, onderscheidend vermogen en prestatie.

De creatieve klasse is te vinden in allerlei beroepsgroepen, binnen de creatieve industrie, maar ook in de wereld van de technologie en de universiteit of hogeschool of binnen de overheid. Binnen de creatieve klasse onderscheidt Florida de super creative core. Kunstenaars en professionals in allerlei creatief scheppende beroepen behoren tot die categorie, net als technologen en wetenschappers. Deze kern is het meest actief met de creatie van nieuwe ideeën, technologieën of content in wetenschap en techniek, architectuur en design, onderwijs, kunst, muziek en entertainment. De creatieve professionals lossen complexe problemen op waarvoor een onafhankelijk oordeelsvermogen vereist is. Vaak, maar niet altijd, gaat dat samen met een hoog opleidingsniveau.

Een regio die innovatief wil zijn en internationaal de concurrentie wil aangaan kan volgens Florida niet buiten de creatieve klasse. Ze is essentieel voor een innovatieve regionale economie. Een regio die barst van dit talent werkt als een magneet op innovatieve bedrijven. Het is Florida’s terechte overtuiging dat banen (zeg bedrijven) talent volgen en niet andersom. In het industriële tijdperk trokken arbeiders naar de fabriek. In de creatieve economie zoeken hoogwaardige dienstverlenende en technologiebedrijven een plaats midden in de talentpool die doorgaans geconcentreerd is in de urbane metropolen (vgl. Glaeser 2011). De creative class kiest voor een aantrekkelijke, doorgaans stedelijke woonlocatie en ziet van daaruit naar een baan om. De keuze waar te wonen maakt de creative class op basis van het culturele en sociale klimaat van een stad. Florida laat zien dat kunst en cultuur daarin een belangrijke rol spelen, net als de mate van tolerantie die een stad kenmerkt. Het talent dat vormgeeft aan de creatieve economie koestert zich graag in een liberaal, artistiek rijk en tolerant milieu. Om de creatieve klasse aan steden te binden is een rijk cultuuraanbod van essentieel belang. Daarvoor is de creatieve industrie verantwoordelijk, in het bijzonder dat deel dat consumptie van cultuuraanbod ter plekke vereist: muziekvoorstellingen, theater, galeries, musea, filmvoorstellingen en wat dies meer zij. Ook kunst als onderdeel van de openbare ruimte is hier van belang. Regionaal economen spreken in dit verband over amenities. In essentie gaat het hierbij om voorzieningen die het verblijf op een bepaalde plek veraangenamen, aantrekkelijk maken. Kunst en cultuur in de stedelijke omgeving horen daarbij. Naast de hiervoor genoemde hefboomwerking van creativiteit functioneren kunst, cultuur en creatieve industrie als indirecte aanjager van innovatie. Ze zorgen voor een omgeving waarin creatief talent dat wil en kan bijdragen aan stedelijke economische ontwikkeling en innovatie zich thuis voelt. Tegelijkertijd erkent ook Florida het directe belang van de creatief scheppende talent voor innovatie. Dat is de reden waarom hij kunstenaars, designers en creatieve professionals uit de media- en entertainmentindustrie tot de creative core rekent. Ook de vaak zichtbare presentie van creatievelingen in de stad is daarbij een belangrijke factor. Ze werken vaak in de binnensteden en frequenteren daar koffiebars en lunchplekken om in contact te blijven met elkaar, met het oog op samenwerking en met de hartslag van de stad, die een belangrijke inspiratiebron is. De zogenaamde third places, naast werk- en woonplek, bezorgen steden smaak en kleur die hen identiteit geven en de leefbaaheid vergroten. Florida onderstreept daarmee het economische belang van cultuur en creativiteit voor de stad. Niet louter omdat bezoekers van musea en theaters geld stuk staan in de binnenstad (vgl. Hietbrink et al. 1985, Booz and Company 2013), een argument dat vaak door cultuurinstellingen wordt gebruikt, maar omdat een cultuurrijke stad en regio een klimaat schept waarin innovatie floreert door haar aantrekkelijkheid voor grensverleggers waar cutting edge bedrijven behoefte aan hebben. Zowel internationaal als in ons land is Florida’s hypothese door empirisch onderzoek bevestigd. Daarmee groeit het bewijs dat cultuur, die grotendeels tot stand komt of behouden blijft met substantiële publieke investeringen, van vitaal belang is voor innovatieve steden en regio’s en op die manier substantiële economische waarde genereert (vgl. Florida 2002; Marlet en Van Woerkens 2004, 2007; Marlet 2009, Rutten et al 2011). Opnieuw een belangrijke aanleiding om afstand te doen van de aloude tegenstelling tussen cultuur en economie.

De Brit Charles Landry heeft in verschillende publicaties het belang van creatief talent en de creatieve industrie voor de ontwikkeling van steden geadresseerd. Zijn benadering is generieker dan die van Florida en komt er in essentie op neer dat cultuur en creativiteit essentiële onderdelen van hedendaagse steden zijn, zowel met het oog op de ontwikkeling van stedelijke identiteit als sociale samenhang. Steden zijn niet louter systemen die bestaan uit een stapeling van met elkaar verbonden economische systemen en logistieke infrastructuren, ze hebben ook een identiteit nodig en moeten zorgen voor waarden en normen in de lijn van hun historische ontwikkeling die samenhang kunnen definiëren. Landry pleit voor een vorm van stedelijkheid op basis van creatieve productie en lokale identiteit waarbij de materiële en immateriële cultuur van een stad maximaal benut worden. Maatschappelijke en economische ontwikkeling komen daarin samen en zijn deels synoniem (vgl. Landry 2000, 2006). Onderdeel van die beweging is de bevordering van lokaal cultuuraanbod van de aanwezige creatieve industrie en aandacht voor cultuurparticipatie. Deelname aan cultuur verrijkt mensen, onder andere door ze uit te rusten met kennis en cultureel kapitaal dat ook in andere domeinen van het menselijk samenleven rendeert. De creatieve industrie levert daar een bijdrage aan. Meer dan bij Florida ligt bij Landry de verbinding van het creatieve en culturele met het sociale. In dat verband hebben veel steden de aandacht voor zowel de creatieve industrie als de creatieve klasse aangegrepen als startpunt voor stedelijke herontwikkeling. Dat heeft onder meer vorm gekregen in het hergebruik van industrieel erfgoed voor creatieve bedrijvigheid. In lijn met de filosofie van de Amerikaanse urbaniste Jane Jacobs heet het: “New ideas require old buildings” (Jacobs 1969). In die lijn worden cultuur en creatieve bedrijfsontwikkeling ingezet bij de herontwikkeling van wijken.

**Conclusie**

In dit essay heb ik laten zien dat de context waarin afgestudeerden van kunstvakopleidingen momenteel terecht komen volop in beweging is. Dat geldt zowel voor zij die in het autonome veld willen gaan opereren, hun opdracht meer in maatschappelijke termen formuleren als voor hen die een toekomst zoeken in de meer toegepaste creatieve domeinen als design, digitale media en reclame. Er is op dit moment weinig sprake van eenduidigheid. Voor alumni van opleidingen als de Willem de Kooning liggen tal van opties open, mogelijk gemaakt doordat er in de brede samenleving sprake is van een uitermate sterke focus op de mogelijkheden van creativiteit.

Opvallend daarbij is dat in het bijzonder de landelijke overheid in verwarring is over de wijze waarop het creatieve potentieel in onze samenleving benut kan worden. Als gevolg daarvan blijven kansen liggen. Aan de ene kant betoont zij zich in ieder geval in woord bijzonder begaan met het bevorderen van de ontwikkeling van de creatieve industrie ten dienste van innovatie in maatschappij en economie. De sector is aanvankelijk tot sleutelgebied uitgeroepen en daarna als topsector benoemd, allereerst met het oog op omvang en groeitempo en later ook op basis van de haar sleutelrol in innovatie binnen de creatieve economie. Contrair met die ontwikkeling kiest diezelfde overheid voor de beknotting van de sector door het terugschroeven van overheidsondersteuning voor de kunst en cultuur, inclusief de publieke omroep. De brede productieve bijdrage van deze dragende onderdelen van de creatieve industrie, maatschappelijk en economisch, wordt daarmee onvoldoende onderkend. In het voorgaande ben ik daar uitgebreid op ingegaan. Subsidiering van creatieve activiteiten die in zichzelf niet direct renderen hebben een aantoonbaar positief lange termijn effect. In het politieke discours over kunst en cultuur wordt dat niet of nauwelijks gezien en worden zij eerder gezien als een luxe voorziening die louter geld kost, weglekkend via de subsidiekraan. Ironisch genoeg bieden professionals in de sector zelf hieraan nauwelijks tegenwicht, hoogstens vanuit hun eigen wens zich te blijven koesteren in een door publieke middelen gekoesterde vrijplaats waarin economische argumenten louter in zeer afgeleide vorm een plaats hebben.

Direct daaraan gerelateerd is de inmiddels volstrekt onhoudbaar strikte scheiding in het praten en denken tussen markt en overheid die binnen de landelijke politiek en het beleid nog immer persisteert. Juist binnen het kunst en cultuur domein is er sprake van een gemengde economie waarin de overheid mee-investeert maar ook mee incasseert door de opbrengsten uit belastingen die het resultaat zijn van succesvolle creatieve instanties en ondernemingen die mede kunnen ontwikkelen en expanderen op basis van overheidsinspanningen in het creatieve veld. De daaraan gekoppelde positieve maatschappelijke opbrengsten zoals participatie in het arbeidsproces, kwalitatief hoogwaardige, innovatieve steden en een innovatieve creatieve economie legitimeren overheidsinvesteringen bij uitstek. Dat hoeft uiteraard niet louter in termen van subsidies, maar kan ook op andere manieren, bijvoorbeeld fiscaal of via innovatief lead customership opgepakt worden.

Wat in dit verband opvalt is dat regionale en stedelijke overheden veel meer doordrongen zijn van deze ontwikkelingen en de daaruit voortvloeiende publieke rol. In steden en regio’s wordt de waarde van een rijk cultureel klimaat voor economische en sociale ontwikkelingen vaak sneller en directer ervaren dan door de landelijke overheid. Dat geldt in ieder geval voor grote steden als Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht en Den Haag. Of hun beleidsreflex adequaat is, is een ander verhaal. Het is onmogelijk om daar generieke uitspraken over te doen. Wat wel duidelijk is, is dat de mogelijkheden die bestaan op dat niveau steeds beter worden onderkend. In dat verband is het zuur dat Eindhoven, een stad wiens middle name innovatie is, recentelijk de benoeming tot Europese culturele hoofdstad 2016 is misgelopen. De stad heeft immers juist de ambitie om dat deel van de stedelijke identiteit verder te ontwikkelen, ten dienste van haar profiel als innovatieve stad. Daarmee zij overigens niets ten nadele gezegd van de andere kandidaatsteden: Maastricht en Leeuwarden. De laatste kwam zoals bekend als winnaar uit de competitie.

In het debat over het maatschappelijk en economisch belang van de creatieve industrie verschuift het zwaartepunt van de omvang en groei van de bedrijven die samen de sector vormen, naar de hefboomwerking vanuit de sector naar de rest van economie en samenleving. Binnen de creatieve economie telt het mogelijke vliegwiel effect van de creatieve sector veel meer dan zijn eigen omvang. Creatief talent in de creatieve industrie kan innovatie in economie en samenleving aanjagen en vormgeven door nieuwe kansen en technologische mogelijkheden te vertalen in nieuwe diensten en producten die passen in de tijdsgeest en aansluiten bij wat gebruikers nodig hebben en appreciëren. Tezelfdertijd zien we dat datzelfde creatieve talent uitwaaiert over de gehele economie en binnen bedrijven en instellingen, bijvoorbeeld als ontwerper of communicatie-expert diezelfde rol vervult. Dat impliceert dat het belang van creatief talent in de creatieve economie dat van de bedrijven uit de creatieve industrie overstijgt. De sleutel ligt eerst en vooral bij het talent. Dat besef is stedelijk en regionaal steeds verder doorgedrongen. De voorbije jaren hebben uitgewezen dat talent eerder de primaire kritische factor is binnen een innovatieve regionale economie. Bedrijven zijn afhankelijk van talent. Zonder dat komen ze niet of verhuizen naar elders. Dat zou voor de landelijke overheid moeten betekenen dat ze het huidige economische beleid wellicht meer moeten enten op talent. Talentbeleid moet primeren boven het huidige bedrijvenbeleid.

De invulling van de belofte van de creatieve economie is voor een belangrijk deel belegd bij het onderwijs. Onderwijsinstellingen zijn verantwoordelijk voor het opleiden van creatief talent dat uiteindelijk in staat is om innovatie in de brede economie en samenleving mede vorm te geven. Daarbij gaat het zowel om sociale innovatie die betrekking heeft op de productieve inzet van creatieve competenties in bijvoorbeeld stedelijke ontwikkeling en ten bate van maatschappelijke uitdagingen als om doorslaggevende bijdragen aan de concurrentiekracht van het bedrijfsleven. In dit essay heb ik tal van voorbeelden aangedragen die de mogelijkheden daartoe laten zien. Hier liggen in het bijzonder de uitdagingen voor onderwijsinstellingen als de Willem de Kooning Academie. De insteek van de drie uitstroomprofielen (autonomous, social en commercial) bieden ieder op zich tal van mogelijkheden, gerelateerd aan de verschillende onderscheiden maatschappelijke domeinen. Tegelijkertijd is het onverstandig om ze onderling te strikt af te bakenen. In de combinatie van die drie benaderingen is ook veel winst te halen. Binnen de autonome praktijk kunnen nieuwe toepassingen ontwikkeld worden die bijvoorbeeld in een het sociale en het commerciële domein benut kunnen worden en mogelijk ook vice versa. De relatieve vrijplaats die de autonome sfeer kenmerkt moet echter niet belast worden met targets die moeten leiden tot commercialiseerbare toepassingen. Dat spant het paard achter de wagen. Kansen die zich voordoen moeten echter zeker benut worden.

Kunstopleidingen moeten hun studenten voorbereiden op een maatschappelijke praktijk die dynamisch en veel kansen biedt. Het spreekt voor zich dat ondernemersvaardigheden en de juiste competenties om in een steeds meer vernetwerkte samenleving een eigen pad uit te stippelen daarbij nodig zijn. Wat de statistieken immers laten zien is dat creatievelingen steeds meer aangewezen zijn op hun eigen initiatief en ondernemerschap om hun ambities vorm te geven. De huidige tijd biedt daartoe tal van mogelijkheden.

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1. See for example statements by Arjo Klamer, professor of Art Economics at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, in the Cultural Supplement of the NRC Handelsblad newspaper, August 15/16, 2013 (see Steenbergen 2013). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For an interesting perspective from within the world of the arts, see: Sarah Thornton (2008). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Peter Troxler’s essay in this publication shows how recent developments in technology and technological applications can give shape to these new values and ideas. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Interestingly, there has been relatively little research demonstrating the direct benefits to citizens of the consumption of art and culture by these same citizens. What is the value of a culturally developed population, whose citizens have acquired a sensibility to artistic expression, compared to a population whose citizens have not acquired these competences? The main reason why there is little well-founded insight into this issue, has much to do with the methodical complexity such research would entail, in combination with the research tools usually applied by economists for instance. Scientists from disciplines other than economics on the other hand are usually less concerned with quantifying the social and economic return value of art and culture. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Several years earlier, Giep Hagoort had already explicitly introduced the concept in the context of research and education of cultural management (Hagoort 1992). [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
6. This definition was proposed in the context of a study of creative industries in the Amsterdam area (see Rutten et al. 2004), inspired by earlier research by Caves (2000) and Scott (2000) as well as the British Directorate for Culture, Media and Sports (1998). Based on this study, three subsectors were identified in 2004, which in turn encompass various industries. The definition was updated according to the international redefinition of the standard classification of economic activities from 2008 (Rutten et al. 2010).. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
7. The specific business models within the creative industries are an important field of new research: see for example van Andel & van der Beemt (2012). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
8. For a further specification of the industries categorised under these subsectors, see for example Table 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
9. The experience in recent years has shown that employment statistics are not keeping up adequately with actual developments in the industry sectors. Within the creative industries, the gaming sector is showing strong growth. Statistics Netherlands and the Chamber of Commerce have recently added a category for gamers. The registration of businesses and jobs in this category is still under development and therefore incomplete. Still, we have included for the sake of completeness the statistics for gaming and other publications in table 1. There is, incidentally, no indication that a similar situation might also apply for other categories. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
10. Research conducted recently at the Erasmus University and the Technical University of Delft showed that the financial performance of a new product improves by almost 20% when the development phase focuses heavily on design (Candi, Gemser and van den Ende, 2010) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
11. A challenging new development in this context is 3D printing, discussed by Peter Troxler in this volume. 3D printing is a kind of full circle technology enabling to reduce the material world to information and use information infrastructures for distribution enabling the material reproduction through 3D printing on different locales across the globe. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)