

**Experiences of Establishing and Managing 'Artist-Run' Exhibition
Spaces in Dublin, from 2005 to 2015.**

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Declaration

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Summary

This research analyses the *modus operandi* of visual arts organisations known as ‘artist-run spaces’ in Dublin, from 2005 to 2015. This marks a period of unprecedented growth of the phenomenon, within Dublin, followed by a rapid decline. The organisations are Basic Space Dublin, Block T, The Market Studios/Unit H, Ormond Studios, Pallas Projects and Studios, thisisnotashop, MART, Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, and The Joinery. This is nine out of ten identified organisations that fit the sample criteria; this sample size increases the reliability of the research findings and allows for analysis at the level of the population as well as of individual organisations.

The research is based on interviews with the founders and managers of the organisations; nineteen individuals were interviewed. Through these interviews, the research provides a unique portrayal of the *modus operandi* of the organisations that would not have been available from other sources. The personal accounts also provide additional material that contextualises the *modus operandi* by providing insight into the factors that influenced the development of the organisations, and how this was experienced in practice.

Additional data was also sourced for this research from websites, funding guidelines, and decision documents of the Arts Council of Ireland and Dublin City Council, the National Irish Visual Arts Library and the Artist Led Archive, and through supporting interviews with artists that had exhibited with the organisations. These sources are used in dialogue with the main interview accounts and allow for further critical scrutiny of the organisations.

Through the research it is revealed that these organisations were usually established by visual artists and creative practitioners as a response to a lack of available studio facilities and exhibition opportunities. This research finds that these organisations potentially played an important role in supporting artists, and they were reported to facilitate a transition from third-level education into professional practice. They also played a role in building skills and experience in the managers of the organisations. However, while personal need is an influencing factor in establishing the organisations, creative ambitions are often waylaid due to demanding administrative and managerial workloads.

The research finds that the founders were often unexperienced and did not have training in the areas of business, management and entrepreneurship, in some instances this led to them making mistakes or being ill equipped to face challenges at the level of governance and management. However, through their hands-on experience with the organisations the management often acquired a significant skill set.

The research highlights issues at the governance level of the organisations, particularly the widespread use of the Private Limited Company form, which is identified as inappropriate for these organisations. While the organisations favoured formal legal structures, their internal operations were largely informal, organic, and driven by a culture of mutuality and collaboration. However, this brought challenges in terms of the distribution of power, workloads, and interpersonal conflict.

The organisations primarily worked with artists in the student-to-early-career range. However, there were also examples of engaging with mid-career artists. There was a particular focus on artistic development and the production and dissemination of experimental work. This often took precedence over a focus on audiences. Thus, the research finds that these organisations are ‘artist-centric’. In exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the organisations the research finds that they sometimes fell short of their claims to support artists due to a lack of practical assistance for exhibiting artists. Similarly they did not always implement curatorial supports, however the exhibiting artists that were interviewed identified that the autonomy that this brought was in fact one of the benefits of working with the organisations.

Key challenges to sustainability are identified regarding tenancy and finances. Tenancy challenges included the poor condition of premises and the non-renewal of lease. The research identifies a number of challenges regarding funding structures and concludes that they did not meet the needs of the organisations. Frustration was evidenced from the interviewees towards State funding agencies both regarding challenges around funding and a lack of advisory supports.

Studio rental presented an opportunity to generate revenue and the scale of the studio facilities had an inverse relationship to resource dependence. Gallery rental as an income-generating activity is identified as an ethically problematic practice as it devalues the exhibition and restricts access to opportunities to those with resources. However, it is also identified that for some organisations this source of income is necessary both due to limited alternatives and limited discretion in resource allocation.

Until recently there has been little research on these types of organisations in the Irish context. This research provides an historical account of these organisations. It also provides analysis of their remit, working methods, and environments. It represents a significant art historical insight into an important dimension of the infrastructure for the creation, display, and communication of visual art in Ireland. As such the research potentially has value to artists, educators, policy makers, and funding bodies, as well as to future leaders of these organisations.

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List of Abbreviations

ACI	Arts Council of Ireland
AFG	Annual Funding Grant (Arts Council of Ireland)
ALA	Artist Led Archive
APG	Annual Programming Grant (Arts Council of Ireland)
ARC	Artist-Run Centre (Canada)
CI	Culture Ireland
CLG	Company Limited by Guarantee.
CRO	Companies Registration Office
DCC	Dublin City Council
DIT	Dublin Institute of Technology
IADT	Institute of Art, Design, and Technology (Dun Laoghaire)
FÁS	Irish National Training and Employment Authority
HEA	Higher Education Authority
MTGS	Monster Truck Gallery and Studios
NCAD	National College of Art and Design
NIVAL	National Irish Visual Arts Library
PAC	Project Arts Centre
PP/S	Pallas Projects and Studios
RHA	Royal Hibernian Academy
TBG+S	Temple Bar Gallery and Studios
VAI	Visual Artists Ireland
BSA	British Sociological Association
LTD	Private Limited Company

Introduction

This research explores the phenomenon of 'artist-run spaces' as they manifest in Dublin, between 2005 and 2015. Its focus is on organisations which operate a visual-art exhibition space, although this may not be their exclusive activity. The importance of this research has been recognised; the historical emergence of artist-run exhibition spaces internationally is credited as being 'one of the most significant changes in the contemporary social organization of art'.¹ This research is particularly significant within the Irish context due to the limited extant research into these organisations, prior to this thesis.

The nine organisations examined within this research are: Basic Space Dublin (Basic Space), Block T, The Market Studios/Unit H (The Market Studios), Ormond Studios, Pallas Projects and Studios (PP/S), thisisnotashop, MART, Monster Truck Gallery and Studios (MTGS), and The Joinery. These were selected as they were collectively-run organisations, in operation during the focus period, and offered exhibition opportunities to artists outside of the organising group or membership. The sample is a significant portion of organisations in operation during this period and they can be conceived of as a 'second generation' population of artist-run spaces. This thesis provides a comprehensive examination of activity at field level within this population, as well as an account of the experiences of individual organisations.

This research draws on the accounts and experiences of the founders and managers of these organisations; thus it explores their perspectives. It draws from sociological methods in its data collection which is centred on qualitative interviews with these key individuals. These interviews provide insight into personal individual experiences, are used to investigate the histories of individual organisations, and enable analysis of recurring themes and shared experiences across the organisations. Through this, a deeper insight is gained into the nature of activity operating under the category 'artist-run exhibition space', the motivating factors which inspire individuals to establish the organisations and the major purpose to which they aspire, how the organisations are structured and operated, and the internal and external influences that shape the organisations. This Introduction Chapter outlines the research question, aims, and objectives, key definitions, ethics, methods employed during this research, methodological frameworks, and literature consulted.

¹ Batia Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - A Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," *Qualitative Sociology* 2, no. 1 (1979): 4.

Aims and Objectives

This research is heuristic and records the process through which these organisations evolved and developed in order to provide exhibition opportunities to artists. It does so through exploring the experiences of key people involved within the organisations. This research records their process of discovery as they establish and develop their organisations. The perspectives of individuals involved in these organisations provides a unique insight into their development. The research seeks to find out what can be learned about the development of artist-run spaces in Dublin through analysis of the experiences of those involved in running them, how these personal experiences shape the organisations, and the impact of participation upon individuals. The research asks the question:

What can be learned about the *modus operandi* of visual arts organisations known as ‘artist-run’ spaces in Dublin, from 2005 to 2015, through an analysis of the experiences of the individuals involved in their development and management?

In order to answer this question this research addresses the following questions from the perspective of the interviewees: why did the founders establish these organisations; how do they define the major purpose and role of their organisation; how are the organisations structured and operated; what do they believe to be the key concerns and factors that shape the field; and what are the impacts of participation for individuals within the management structures of these organisations?

The objectives of the research are: to telegraph historical activity in the field; to document the reflexive narrative accounts of practitioners in the field; to identify common and novel experiences; to critically explore the strengths, achievements, and weaknesses of the organisations, and to identify the challenges they face.

This research represents an original contribution to knowledge by documenting and critically examining these organisations within the historical and cultural specificities of Dublin. It provides an important account of a largely undocumented field of activity. The research provides an important historical account of the individual and collective experiences of the artists and others who run these organisations. Through this perspective this thesis provides an important insight into an infrastructure which supports the production and exhibition of art works and so contributes to art-historical knowledge about the period 2005 to 2015. The focus on a recent time period increases the potential importance of the research as it has ongoing relevance to contemporary practices and experiences within this field.

Method and Methodology

This section will start by outlining core definitions of the term 'artist-run' and 'non-profit' that were central to the selection criteria of this research. This is important to establish because through this research the accuracy of this terminology will be explored and in some instances revealed as contradictory. This discussion distinguishes the use of these terms within the selection criteria of this research, as well as highlighting how the terms are utilised by the sample organisations. Following this, the section outlines the ethics of the research. The primary data used in this research is two sets of interviews and issues relating to these are the central focus of the ethics discussion, in particular a focus on researcher identity, and the issue of facilitating anonymity for interviewees. The first set of interviews are with the founders and managers of artist-run spaces; these are referred to as the main sample. The second set of interviews are an augmenting study comprising interviews with artists who have exhibited in these spaces; these are referred to as the exhibiting artists' interviews. Both sets of interviews are addressed within the ethics section. The section then outlines the methods employed in the design, administration, and analysis of the interviews that were undertaken. In this discussion the two sets of interviews are discussed independently as they were subject to different procedures. Finally, the methodological parameters that have informed the research are addressed.

Definitions

A variety of terminology is used historically and internationally to describe art spaces run by artists. The most common of these are artist-run initiatives or ARIs (Australia), artist-run centres ARCs (Canada), and artist-run gallery or artist-run space (USA and Europe). Within Ireland artist-run gallery or artist-run space predominates; the two are often used interchangeably and there is no discernible distinction between them. The primary focus of this research is the exhibition or gallery based activities of the organisations. However, in discussing the sample at organisational level the broader term 'artist-run space' is used in order to acknowledge that these are not the sole activities undertaken by the organisations, particularly in the instance of the dual-function spaces which also run studio facilities.

While there is a strong history of artists playing a pivotal role in the dissemination of their work throughout the development of western art, it is in New York in the 1940s that the artist-run gallery space first emerges as a phenomenon.² In particular the Jane Street Gallery (1943–49) and

² Marcia Bystryn, "Art Galleries as Gatekeepers: The Case of the Abstract Expressionists," in *Art and Society: Readings in the Sociology of the Arts* ed. Arnold W. Foster and Judith R Blau (New York: SUNY, 1989); Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - A Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts.," Joan Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth* (New York: Praeger, 1980); J. Samet and I.

the subsequent Tenth Street Galleries (1950s) provide significant early examples of artists running their own co-operative or non-profit galleries in (semi)permanent spaces. Thus, as observed by Joan Jeffri, this model of independent action emerged as a distinctly American phenomenon.³ However, their success would influence a movement of such activities on an international scale throughout succeeding decades.⁴

With the international spread of the practice, a medley of aesthetic and ideological motivations and operational models evolved.⁵ Examples of the variety of characteristics and methods used include their relationship to the institution and arts markets, whether they are assembled around aesthetic or social justice concerns or are arbitrarily congregated, how artists are selected for exhibition, whether they are operated according to membership models or run by a static group of individuals, how they are structured and funded, and how they evolve over time; this diversity precludes us from reducing or generalising the organisations to a narrow definition of 'one thing'.⁶ Furthermore, attempts to absolutely define what we mean by 'artist-run space' has, 'often served to confuse their purpose and goals'.⁷ Understanding how these variables are positioned within the Irish context is a key focus of this research. Despite these variables a number of commonalities can be identified which allow us to identify these organisations as part of a shared cultural heritage; they are understood to be established collectively by artists and creatives, and each is run on a non-profit basis. However, within the context of this research there is, in some instances, a dissonance in organisational affiliation with the terms 'artist-run' and 'non-profit' and the practice evidenced by the organisations.

The status of organisations within this research as 'artist-run' is central to the research question and to the title of this thesis. All organisations within this research were identified as engaging

Sandler, *The Jane Street Gallery; Celebrating New York's First Artist Cooperative* (New York: Tibor de Nagy Gallery; 2003); Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days : The Co-Ops of the 50s; an Artist-Initiated Exhibition Works from 1952-1962* (Education Art and Service Inc, 1977). Samet and Sandler, *The Jane Street Gallery; Celebrating New York's First Artist Cooperative* ; Irving Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties* (Harper Collins, 1978), 29-42; A *Sweeper-up after Artists: A Memoir* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 41-44.

³ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 87.

⁴ Ibid.; Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - A Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts."

⁵ Julie Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Gabriele Detterer and M Nannucci, "Artist-Run Spaces," (Zurich: JRP| Ringier Kunstverlag AG, 2012); Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*; Clive Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2006); Lauren Rosati et al., *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960 to 2010* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012); Jacqueline Cooke, "Art Ephemerata, Aka "Ephemeral Traces of 'Alternative Space': The Documentation of Art Events in London 1995-2005, in an Art Library" (Doctoral Thesis, Goldsmiths, University of London, 2007).

⁶ Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture*, 14.

⁷ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 5.

with this term during their life-span. This included identification with the term within their web pages or published materials, denotation as 'artist-run' within press and media coverage, self-selection for inclusion within the Artist-Led Archive (ALA), or participation in events designed for 'artist-run' organisations. Furthermore, the invitation to participate in this research made explicit that it was concerned with organisations operating as 'artist-run' exhibition spaces, and agreement to participate thus provides further confirmation of affiliation with this identity. This research, at the outset, takes a broad approach to the definition 'artist-run' in order to reflect the definitions engaged within the field itself. That is, it allows for the self- and peer- identification of these organisations as 'artist-run' and seeks to explore this identity rather than imposing an external definition upon the field.

However, while all organisations conformed to these parameters for some of the period under review, the research found that over the entire focus period, the term 'artist-run' was not consistently accurate as an ongoing factual description of these organisations, in some instances. The details of the founding members are provided in Chapter 1. While some organisations were from the outset, and continued to be, run by practicing artists, for others there had been an evolution in the occupation of the founders or a change in the profile of successive managers. In more limited examples organisations were established by a mixture of artists and individuals from other creative backgrounds, and so not exclusively run by 'visual-artists' at initiation but through a broader profile of 'creative practitioners'. This is of interest to the understanding of these organisations as they are manifest within the context of Dublin and the reasons for these shifts, where they occur, are analysed in detail as a major topic of this thesis in Chapter 3.

It is important therefore to distinguish between the term 'artist-run' as a term commonly applied to and engaged by a population of organisations with reference to the organisations' origins, and the description 'artist-run' as factual description of the current occupational status of those who run these organisations. This dissonance is indicated by the use of quotation marks in the thesis title. For the purpose of identifying a population of organisations, organisational affiliation with the term 'artist-run' during the lifespan of the organisation, as outlined, satisfied the selection criteria for this research.

The second definition that necessitates consideration is 'non-profit'. By non-profit it is meant that while revenue may be generated from commissions, rentals, and other activities, the organisation does not distribute these profits to owners or members but reinvests any surplus back into the organisation. It is important to observe that this definition does not preclude the generation of surplus profits but focuses on the behaviour of the organisations in respect of the surplus they generate.

It can be expected that organisations take up the legal forms that provide a structure which is appropriate to their behaviour. Within non-profit arts organisations this is typically governance by constitution, or incorporation as a Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share capital (CLG).⁸ In both of these the non-profit behaviour of the organisation is inscribed into the governing papers of the organisation through a 'non-distribution constraint' which is a prohibition on 'the distribution of residual earning to individuals who exercise control over the firm, such as officers, directors or members'.⁹ It is again noted that operation as a non-profit does not preclude the generation of profits:

[T]he absence of residual claims does not mean that nonprofits make no profits. It means that alienable claims to profits do not exist.¹⁰

Thus, legal frameworks provide protections that facilitate, compel, and constrain, the behaviour of the organisation in respect of the surplus profits that they generate.

This research revealed an apparent inconsistency between the legal status of some of the organisations and their behaviours; it emerged that five of the organisations were at the time of research, or had previously, incorporated as a Private Company Limited by Share (LTD). These companies have shareholders and are not bound by a non-distribution constraint. Thus, this is the appropriate form for a profit making and surplus distributing entity and would thereby appear antithetical to non-profit agendas. However, those organisations which incorporated as a LTD reported that in practice they operated on a non-profit distributing basis. Thus, there is an anomaly between the legal status of some of the organisations that are structured as profit distributing entities and their reported behaviour wherein, in the absence of legal compulsion, the shareholders relinquish their rights as 'residual claimants' at their own discretion.¹¹

For the purpose of the selection criteria used in this research, the behaviour of the organisation and not their legal status was considered. Precedence for considering the organisational behaviour over legal definition is provided by Salamon and Anheier. They developed what is

⁸ Phelim Donlon. "Practitioner Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance: Governance in Arts Organisations in Ireland." Dublin, 2005; Freda Donoghue et al. "The Hidden Landscape." Dublin, 2006. Irish Nonprofits Knowledge Exchange. "Irish Nonprofits: What Do We Know?" Dublin, 2012.

⁹ Henry B. Hansmann, "Economic Theories of Nonprofit Organization," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 28. See also: "The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise," *Yale Law Journal* (1980), 838

¹⁰ Eugene F Fama and Michael C Jensen, "Agency Problems and Residual Claims," *Journal of Law and Economics* (1983): 342. See also: "The Role of Nonprofit Enterprise," *Yale Law Journal* (1980), 838

¹¹ Eugene F Fama and Michael C Jensen, "Separation of Ownership and Control," *Journal of Law and Economics* (1983); "Agency Problems and Residual Claims."

termed the 'structural/operational' definition.¹² This definition is predicated not on the legal status of the organisations but on their behaviours. They define non-profit distributing as:

Non-profit-distributing, i.e., not returning profits generated to their owners or directors. Nonprofit organizations may accumulate profits in a given year, but the profits must be plowed back into the basic mission of the agency, not distributed to the organizations' owners, members, founders or governing board. The fundamental question is: how does the organization handle profits? If they are reinvested or otherwise applied to the stated purpose of the organization, the organization would qualify as a nonprofit institution.¹³

They also state that an organisation must be organised, i.e. it must have an 'institutional reality'. This may be achieved through legal form or more informally through internal organisation, organisational goals, and the presence of organisational boundaries; it must be private, i.e. it must be institutionally separate from the government, although this does not preclude a relationship with the state; it must be self-governing, i.e. it can control its own activities, have its own governance, and 'enjoy a meaningful degree of autonomy'; finally it must also be voluntary, i.e. it must involve a degree of voluntary and non-compulsory participation.¹⁴ This definition is engaged by the United Nations in the 2003 *Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*. Their structural-operational definition stipulates that non-profits 'may be profitmaking but they are non-profit distributing'; this may be governed not only by law but also by 'custom'.¹⁵ Thus, the structural-operational definition based on behaviour is highly validated.

The organisations within the study fulfil this behavioural definition of non-profit despite the contradiction, in some instances, with their legal status. It is this behavioural definition that is used in developing selection criteria for inclusion within this research. The broader question of

¹² Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, "In Search of the Non-Profit Sector. I: The Question of Definitions," *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 3, no. 2 (1992); *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-National Analysis* (Manchester University Press, 1997).

¹³ "The International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations: Icnpo-Revision 1 1996." Baltimore, 1996: 3.

¹⁴ "In Search of the Non-Profit Sector. I: The Question of Definitions."; *Defining the Nonprofit Sector: A Cross-National Analysis*. "The International Classification of Nonprofit Organizations: Icnpo-Revision 1 1996," 3.

¹⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. "Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts." United Nations, New York, 2003: 17-18. See also: United Nations. "System of National Accounts." United Nations, New York, 1993.

why they engage legal forms that appear to be contradictory to their purpose and practice, and the implications of this, is addressed in Chapter 3.

Ethics

The interview process preceded but nevertheless complies with the 2013 *Ethics Policy of Trinity College Dublin's School of History and Humanities*.¹⁶ In respect of ethics there are two areas that require explication. The first is processes in regard to informed consent, including issues of confidentiality, anonymity, and harm. The second is in respect of researcher identity, bias, and conflicts of interest.

Informed consent is defined within the School of Histories and Humanities Ethics Policy as the 'fully formed and freely given consent of participants' which is to be given 'voluntarily and without coercion' and it is stipulated that there should be transparency regarding the use to which the material will be used.¹⁷ The policy advises that evidence of consent should be obtained. This is consistent with best practice guidelines from research associations such as The British Sociological Association, which states:

As far as possible participation in sociological research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied. This implies a responsibility on the sociologist to explain in appropriate detail, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking and financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be disseminated and used.¹⁸

For both sets of interviews potential interviewees were approached by email, at which time they were given an information sheet outlining the parameters of the research and their participation. In the main sample, at the time of the face-to-face interview this information was again provided to them in printed form and was orally explained. If in agreement with the conditions, the interviewees were requested to sign two copies of a consent form, one of which they kept. In the exhibiting artists' interviews, which took place via Skype/Phone/FaceTime, the artists were emailed the consent form in advance of the interview; this could be returned either before or after the interview. At the start of the interview process the information was again orally explained and the interviewees were asked if they had any concerns or questions.

¹⁶ Trinity College Dublin. "School of Histories and Humanities Ethics Policy." 2013.

¹⁷ Ibid., 2.1.3.

¹⁸ British Sociological Association, "BSA Statement of Ethical Practice," <https://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/> para. 16

As is evidenced in Figures 1-4, these documents adhered to best practice recommendations and outline the conditions of participation, how information will be used, the right to withdraw from the study, and provide contact information for both myself and my research supervisor. Thus, the research followed best practice in regards to obtaining informed consent.¹⁹

A key concern of informed consent relates to issues of confidentiality and anonymity. Walford distinguishes between the two.²⁰ He outlines anonymity as the practice wherein 'we do not name the person or research site involved' and observes that this is 'usually extended to mean that we do not include information about any individual or research site that will enable that individual or research site to be identified by others'; confidentiality 'is information that is private or secret'.²¹ The interdisciplinary nature of this research – as an art-historical enterprise engaging with sociological methods creates some conflict.

Best practice within sociological enquiry has traditionally been to anonymise both places and individuals.²² Walford identifies this as embedded within research association guidelines within both the UK and the US.²³ The principle behind anonymisation is primarily to protect subjects and the organisations that they are involved in from harm; either through direct consequences or as psychological harm.

Within the discipline of history, including art-history, where the objective is in part to archive specific experiences and histories, including through the collection of oral, narrative, and life histories, the specificities of the setting and person are of import to enquiry.²⁴ The Oral History Society draws from the UK Data Archive Guidelines and advises that the researcher has a 'duty of confidentiality (though not necessarily anonymity) towards informants and participants'.²⁵ They specifically advise against anonymity stating that '[i]nterviewers and custodians should avoid agreeing to anonymise interviews unless the content is of great value or significance, and there is no alternative'.²⁶ This contrasts with the sociological approach.

¹⁹ Ibid.; Trinity College Dublin, "School of Histories and Humanities Ethics Policy."

²⁰ Geoffrey Walford, "Research Ethical Guidelines and Anonymity," *International Journal of Research & Method in Education* 28, no. 1 (2005).

²¹ Ibid., 84, 85.

²² Ibid., 83.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Tony E Adams, "A Review of Narrative Ethics," *Qualitative Inquiry* 14, no. 2 (2008): 186.

²⁵ Oral History Society, "Is Your Oral History Legal and Ethical," <http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/2/>.

²⁶ "Informed Consent," http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/informed_consent.html.

The principle of anonymity within sociological research has been drawn into debate.²⁷ Three key concerns are raised. Firstly, in regard to the effectiveness of this process, i.e. those local to the study or those invested in uncovering the identities of site or subjects are often able to deduce the information despite best attempts at anonymity.²⁸ Secondly, the process of anonymisation 'naturalizes the decoupling of events from historically and geographically specific locations'; this increases the 'claim of generality' in order to make them 'movable, replicable, and citable' but also 'lead[s] researchers to unreflectively produce representations of the world that obscure or ignore the connections linking places, writers, participants, and readers'.²⁹ Finally if immovably applied, the principle of anonymity denies participants autonomy and disenfranchises them from the research.³⁰ These concerns have been reflected in changes to some research association guidelines, for example the British Educational Research Association allows that participants may waive their right to anonymity; this is also outlined in the 2013 Ethics Policy of Trinity College Dublin's School of History and Humanities where anonymity may be waived where there is 'explicit written consent'.³¹

A differing approach was taken across the two interview sets. Within the main sample interviews a dual pronged approach was undertaken in order to both meet the research objectives and to protect the participants from exposure to harm as effectively as possible. With exceptions, to be outlined, sites and participants, from the main sample, are named within this research thesis; written permission was obtained within the consent forms. Given the relatively small and local field from which the sample drew, it would have been highly problematic to effectively disguise the specificities of the individual sites and thus the subjects.

Secondly, anonymisation of sites would be antithetical to the stated objectives of this research which include creating an historical account of activity within the cultural and geographic

²⁷ James Giordano et al., "Confidentiality and Autonomy: The Challenge(s) of Offering Research Participants a Choice of Disclosing Their Identity," *Qualitative Health Research* 17, no. 2 (2007); Jan Nespore, "Anonymity and Place in Qualitative Inquiry," *Qualitative Inquiry* 6, no. 4 (2000); Caitríona Ní Laoire, "To Name or Not to Name: Reflections on the Use of Anonymity in an Oral Archive of Migrant Life Narratives," *Social & Cultural Geography* 8, no. 3 (2007); Walford, "Research Ethical Guidelines and Anonymity."; Liz Tilley and Kate Woodthorpe, "Is It the End for Anonymity as We Know It? A Critical Examination of the Ethical Principle of Anonymity in the Context of 21st Century Demands on the Qualitative Researcher," *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 2 (2011); Cheryl S Le Roux, "Xvii International Oral History Conference: Buenos Aires 2012."

²⁸ Nespore, "Anonymity and Place in Qualitative Inquiry," 549. Walford, "Research Ethical Guidelines and Anonymity," 85.

²⁹ Nespore, "Anonymity and Place in Qualitative Inquiry," 549, 51, 51, 55.

³⁰ Giordano et al., "Confidentiality and Autonomy: The Challenge(s) of Offering Research Participants a Choice of Disclosing Their Identity," 265.

³¹ British Educational Research Association, "Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research," <https://www.bera.ac.uk/researchers-resources/publications/ethical-guidelines-for-educational-research-2011>; Trinity College Dublin, "School of Histories and Humanities Ethics Policy," para 2.1.5.

specificities of Dublin, based on personal reflective experiences of key practitioners in the field. Finally, this research engages a social constructionist paradigm; that is, it takes the position that subjective meanings are negotiated both culturally and historically and developed through interaction with others.³² The process of decoupling the narratives and subsequent analysis from the specificities of person and place would be contrary to this methodological position.

Within these main sample interviews it was made explicit to participants that they would be named within the research and that information would be attributed to them. However, they were also invited to identify any information that they wished to be used anonymously. They were provided with two mechanisms for this, they could indicate this within the interview, and later following consultation of the transcript of the interview. By providing these opportunities the research was able to benefit from naming sites and subjects, while still providing participants protection from embarrassment or harm in respect of select sensitive discussion. Where interviewees indicated that they wanted anonymity in regard to select information they are each assigned a number and are indicated as 'Anon. interviewee [number]'.

Not all of the interviewees identified such information or offered a response to the transcript. However, as per best practice guidelines, it remains incumbent upon the researcher to protect subjects from harm. For example, The British Sociological Association guidelines state:

It is [...] therefore incumbent upon members to be aware of the possible consequences of their work. Wherever possible they should attempt to anticipate, and to guard against, consequences for research participants that can be predicted to be harmful. Members are not absolved from this responsibility by the consent given by research participants.³³

Therefore, I also used the anonymous attribution in additional instances where I felt it would be detrimental to the individual or organisation to be identified.

Within the exhibiting artists' interviews, full anonymity was given. This includes confidentiality about participation in the interview process, as well as the anonymisation of the information used. Within this interview set it was made explicit, both in writing via the information sheet and consent forms and orally at the start of the interview, that information would be directly quoted from the interviews but that it would be anonymised. This approach was necessary as in many

³² John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 2 ed. (California, London, and New Dehli: Sage, 2007), 21.

³³ British Sociological Association, "Statement of Ethical Practice - Anonymity," https://www.britsoc.co.uk/equality-diversity/statement-of-ethical-practice/#_anon. para. 26.

instances these individuals continue to exhibit within Ireland; they may fear that negative comments about experiences made in interview could have potential future detrimental impacts upon their career opportunities. In contrast to the previous interview set, the very large number of artists who have, overall, exhibited with these organisations meant that it is possible to take reasonable precautions to prevent the deductive identification of the interviewee by the reader.

The concern of researcher identity is a further area that necessitates ethical scrutiny. Discussing 'validity' and 'researcher reflexivity' Creswell and Miller state:

It is particularly important for re-searchers to acknowledge and describe their entering beliefs and biases early in the research process to allow readers to understand their positions, and then to bracket or suspend those researcher biases as the study proceeds.³⁴

From 2009 to 2012, I was involved with Monster Truck Gallery and Studios (MTGS), first as a casual volunteer and then as Gallery Manager and Co-Director. MTGS is included within this research. Involvement in the organisation stimulated my interest in this area of research and, through an 'insider' status, gave a specialised insight into the subject.³⁵ As is evidenced within this research the organisation is of note as one of the more enduring of the sample organisations. Thus, to exclude this organisation from discussion would be to the detriment of the research as a whole.

My involvement with this organisation was made explicit in my research proposals to Trinity College Dublin and to the Irish Research Council, both of whom approved the research topic and design including the use of this organisation within my sample. In order to reduce potential conflict of interests I ceased both formal and informal involvement in the organisation prior to commencing the interview period. Given this involvement it was necessary to manage researcher identity both in regards to the interview process, and given the inclusion of MTGS within the study, in the analysis of the interviews.

I undertook interviews with three founders from MTGS. Two of these had resigned executive involvement prior to my own participation, they remained involved in the organisation on occasion as artists and curators but were no longer involved in the day-to-day operations; thus, I had a limited personal or professional relationship with them. By undertaking interviews with

³⁴ John W Creswell and Dana L Miller, "Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry," *Theory into Practice* 39, no. 3 (2000): 127.

³⁵ Danny L Jorgensen, *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* vol. 15, Applied Social Research Method Series (California, London, and New Delhi: Sage, 1989), 21.

several representatives of MTGS I was able to garner a substantial amount of information about the organisation in order that a saturation of knowledge was achieved from these sources, to the exclusion of my own first-hand knowledge. Much of the information discussed predated my involvement and thus described events and experiences of which I had no first-hand knowledge. When discussion intersected with the period in which I was involved in the organisation it was necessary to 'bracket' my own experience in order to eliminate bias as much as possible.³⁶ In doing, when discussing this organisation, I draw only from information presented within interviews and not directly upon my own experiences; this includes instances where my own experience and understanding was contrary to, or potentially provided supplemental insight to, those represented in interview.

Across the thesis a varying degree of focus is given to different organisations, this is dependent upon the particulars that they present. This research reveals that MTGS is one of the older and more enduring organisations, with a comparatively high-level of public funding, that explicitly moved away from being artist-run into management driven structure, and was one of the limited number of organisations that remained as a LTD; therefore it provides an important case for consideration in the investigation and analysis of each of these areas which are all major topics within this thesis. The focus given to this, or any, organisation is driven by the research findings and is not indicative of researcher bias.

This same bracketing of experience was applied to 'insider' knowledge I had about the broader field. Disadvantages to doing this include curtailing potential critiques of the narratives offered. However, this was essential in order to avoid 'hearsay' and to ensure that the research is based upon the data and evidence collected and is without bias. In order to off-set this, additional perspectives were introduced through the exhibiting artists' interviews. These were important in allowing for critical discussion of the topics arising; subsequently they increase the validity of the research.

During my time working with MTGS I had no involvement with any of the interviewees from other organisations within the main sample who participated within this research; thus there was no potential bias in regard to this. As my involvement in the organisation had been primarily in an administrative or 'backstage' role, interviewees were not necessarily aware of my previous involvement in this organisation at the time of approach. As my involvement had ceased at the time of the interviews there was no ongoing direct conflict of interest. Nonetheless, in order to

³⁶ Creswell and Miller, "Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry," 127; Clark Moustakas, *Phenomenological Research Methods* (California, London, and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1994), 60.

be transparent, this prior involvement was disclosed to interviewees in the preamble to interviews.

Within the interview context, my previous involvement with an artist-run space had both potential advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it made me a peer to the interviewees which could help stimulate trust in regard to my intentions. On the other, it could potentially provoke hesitancy or mistrust in some groups that may be in competition with MTGS for limited resources. The candid responses that were given across the interviews indicate that the researcher identity did not prove problematic for the interviewees. Upon reflection, I believe that this identity was of benefit in stimulating trust and building rapport with the interviewees.

In regard to the exhibiting artists' interviews, it was necessary to select artists that collectively had a broad range of experience across the sample organisations. In two cases the artist had exhibited with MTGS', in only one instance was this during the period that I had been involved in the organisation. All of the interviewees had exhibited with multiple organisations within the sample group and in no instance was this the single experience under discussion.

In any instance that I was aware from my preparatory research that the artist had exhibited with MTGS, I informed them of my own involvement in my email communication prior to the interview. In these examples, my connection potentially constrained direct critique of this organisation. However the interview questions gave scope to give both generic and specific answers allowing interviewees to discuss either individual organisations or their overall experiences with this type of gallery. This approach allowed for interviewees to be as direct as they felt comfortable with in their replies.

In all other instances my previous involvement in MTGS was disclosed at the start of the interview; interviewees were also informed that, at present, I no longer had involvement with this or any other artist-run space within Ireland or elsewhere. My previous involvement in this role was potentially more difficult within this interview set as if there were concerns from interviewees about bias or future repercussions this would constrain their reporting. However, once again the responses given were candid and my identity did not, in my opinion, cause significant concern from or constraint by the artist interviewees involved.

Sample Criteria

Initially this research was designed as a country-wide undertaking. However, after undertaking a country-wide survey of activity which revealed a potential sample of twenty-six organisations, and following the advice that this sample was potentially too large, from the then Director of Post-graduate Teaching and Learning within the School of Histories and Humanities, the focus

was narrowed to Dublin. This city had the highest density of these organisations. This focused study increased the scope for an in-depth consideration of the organisations under analysis as well as allowed for them to be considered as a population existing within comparable environmental conditions.

This discussion concerns the main sample interviews; the exhibiting artists' interviews are addressed in a separate section. The main data for this research comes from qualitative interviews undertaken with nineteen interviewees from nine organisations (Figure 5). Miles and Huberman state: 'To get to the construct, we need to see different instances of it, at different moments, in different places, with different people.'³⁷ In order to gain insight into artist-run exhibition spaces in Dublin, it is necessary to garner a range of experience from a number of organisations. For this reason the research looks at multiple examples rather than at singular case studies. Research samples were explored both *across*, and where possible *within* the organisations by interviewing more than one participant.³⁸ The concern is not of parrying the accounts in order to adjudicate their truth but rather to engage with the complexity of multiple experiences. This was important as a number of interviewees were clear that while they were discussing their experience of the organisation they were not speaking on behalf of the organisation. Multiple interviews were not possible in all instances. The process by which this main sample was selected and secured is outlined forthwith.

The first task of the research was to identify the level of activity in the field. It was necessary to identify a population that shares some common features or have what Hannan and Freeman define as 'unit character'.³⁹ However, it was also necessary that these criteria remain broad enough to accommodate both the comparative diversity of the organisations as a field, and also the flux in activity and form that occurs across the lifespan of the individual organisations. Criteria were developed with which to undertake purposeful sampling.⁴⁰ Here 'information-rich cases'

³⁷ Matthew B Miles and A Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1994), 29.

³⁸ Ibid.; Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 3 ed. (New York: Routledge, 2007), 136.

³⁹ Michael T Hannan and John Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 (1977): 934.

⁴⁰ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 27-31. Lawrence A Palinkas et al., "Purposeful Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis in Mixed Method Implementation Research," *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research* 42, no. 5 (2015).

are selected through which 'one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research'.⁴¹

The criteria for inclusion within the study include that organisations should be collectively run, identify as 'artist-run' and operate on a 'non-profit' basis; these terms were used according to the definitions outlined earlier in this chapter.⁴² A further key criterion, that is central to the research question, was that the organisation must host a space for the public display and dissemination of artwork, this may be termed 'exhibition', 'gallery', or 'project' space. This must be undertaken on an ongoing, although not necessarily constant, basis and may occur within a single, or across multiple successive spaces.⁴³ No limitations were given as to other activities undertaken by the organisation. A final criterion was that exhibition opportunities were not confined only to the core membership of the organisation.

It was also necessary to put some boundaries on the time-frame under consideration. Here it was necessary to balance the generally short lifespan of the organisations with the fact that: '[r]eflection on lived experience is always recollective; it is reflection on experience that is already passed or lived through.'⁴⁴ Thus, some level of organisational duration is necessitated in order for a retrospective view. The criterion was used that they must have operated an exhibition space for a minimum period of one year between the year 2005 and the time of commencement of the interview phase of the research in 2012. Finally, they should be operational in some form at the time of survey in 2011, which maximised the potential for access to individuals and information.⁴⁵

The archives consulted for the research were the ALA and NIVAL's gallery online database.⁴⁶ Internet searches were used to further identify recent and ongoing activity in the field. Finally,

⁴¹ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3 ed. (California, London, New Delhi: Sage, 2002), 264.

⁴² As was earlier outlined the definition of artist-run included the implication of being collectively run. It is unclear from available information as to whether Mother's Tankstation (est. 2006) is run in partnership or solely by Finola Jones. The organisation was contacted by did not respond to requests for information and participation in the research. The clearest source of information is Booth's MA dissertation which used the organisation as a case study. She writes that it was established by Finola Jones and David Godbold, but that Godbold acts as a background Director. Therefore the organisation has been included here as run by a single person but the inclusion is undertaken advisedly. See: Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?" (University College Dublin, 2007), 38.

⁴³ Thus, collectives that organised once-off exhibitions, projects, and initiatives were excluded from the research.

⁴⁴ Max Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy* 2ed. (Ontario: The Althouse Press, 1997), 10.

⁴⁵ This excluded Four Gallery (2005-2009), Joy Gallery (2008-2010), and One Gallery (2006-2007).

⁴⁶ The Artist-Led Archive is a curated project by Megs Morley and documents a variety of artist led initiatives from the island of Ireland 1970-2006. The project reactivated in summer 2015. The directory of the archive has been an important resource in this task. However, there are limitations to the comprehensiveness of the archive as organisations had to self-select for inclusion. Therefore defunct

advantage was taken of the contemporary nature of research to ask professionals currently or recently operating with the arts if they were aware of any further organisations. A full discussion of the findings of this survey of activity are given in Chapter 1 which focuses on the emergence of the organisations within the Irish historical context.

On consulting the operational dates of these organisations Project Arts Centre (est. 1966), and Temple Bar Gallery and Studios (est. 1983) stand out as forerunners to the other organisations. These organisations are crucial to understanding the field of artist-run spaces in Dublin. It was decided to not include these organisations within the main sample within this research and to instead focus on a second-generation of artist-run spaces. These two organisations are already, comparatively, well recorded through archival collections; for example the National Library of Ireland holds an extensive indexed archive on PAC, and the National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL) an unindexed archive on TBG+S. Thus, while these archives provide significant scope and opportunity for valuable studies of these two organisations, there is greater value to the current research in offering an in-depth study of the field that developed subsequent to these organisations and that may potentially otherwise remain unrecorded due to poor archival records and a lack of other documentation. Furthermore, due to their prominence and the length of their histories these two cases if included, would potentially dominate the discussion.

In consideration of both of these aspects the limitations of this research as a doctoral thesis was taken into account and the decision was made to focus on a collection of galleries that represented a subsequent generation to these organisations. In making this distinction it was possible for the remaining organisations to be configured as a 'peer group' of organisations; that is, that they were what Di Maggio and Powell describe as 'structurally equivalent'. This is defined as when organisations have 'ties of the same kind to the same set of other organizations, even if they themselves are not connected'.⁴⁷ However, and importantly, the context and comparison provided by TBG+S and PAC are essential in order that the research findings are not fragmented from the historical trajectory and cultural context within which they operate. Thus, a summary outline of their histories, as relevant to this analysis, is presented in Chapter 1.

TBG+S is of particular interest as a point of comparison being the more recent of the two organisations, engaging a gallery-studio model similar to a number of the sample organisations, and for the fact that it continues to frame itself as an artist-run space; additional details of its

groups or short term initiatives may not have participated. Megs Morley, "The Artist-Led Archive Inventory,"

http://www.nival.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Documents/The_Artist_Led_Archive_Inventory_2012.pdf.

⁴⁷ Paul J DiMaggio and Walter W Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* (1983): 148 fn1

development garnered from the sources given above as well as the archives of NIVAL are included throughout the thesis, as the analysis unfolds, when it intersects with issues arising from the sample organisations. NIVAL holds an extensive but unindexed collection on TBG+S, so it was not feasible to consult this full body of documentation. Therefore, focus was given the first fifteen years of its development (1993 to 1998) as this period provides the most direct comparison in terms of life-stage with the sample organisations. This is useful in providing additional context to the discussion.

During the course of the research, a further organisation emerged that was positioned as a 'peer' to these organisations. MART had been operational since 2007, but did not open their gallery until December 2011; thus, at the time that the interviews commenced, in 2012, they did not fulfil the necessary criteria of having operated a gallery for the period of one year. No other excluded organisation was comparable to this circumstance. Given the prolonged interview period, 2012-2016, and the emergence during this period of this organisation as a structurally equivalent contemporary to the sample and a key operator in the field, excluding it would be detrimental to the research. Therefore, this organisation was included within the main sample. Thus, the sample criteria to a limited extent incorporated an evolving or opportunistic character.⁴⁸ With this addition the sample, overall, comprises a comprehensive group of organisations that were operational during this period.

Selecting Participants

Founders and subsequent directors or managers were identified as the ideal informants in terms of being the most knowledgeable and experienced and thus best placed to provide breadth and depth of information. Hammersley and Atkinson observe that often those who have left settings may be better informants than those who are still engaged within them.⁴⁹ However, given the youth of these organisations access to this profile of informant was limited. Benefits to both types of informant are acknowledged; those who have left a setting may be more willing to provide enhanced levels of critical reflection, while those still in the setting can provide the most up-to-date information. Thus, where appropriate and possible, there are advantages to having multiple informants to incorporate both of these benefits.

As noted above there are limits to the extent that these interviewees may be willing or able to provide critique of their experiences and organisations; that is, they may speak for posterity or

⁴⁸ Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 31; Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, 29.

⁴⁹ Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 138.

be inherently biased. As a primary objective of this research is to specifically understand participation in these organisations as experienced by the founders and managers their contributions are not undermined by this potential bias. However, in order to provide additional critical reflection and context, additional augmenting interviews were undertaken with artists that had exhibited with the organisations. These are detailed later in this method section.

Sample Size

Potential interviewees were contacted within the ten identified organisations that fulfilled the criteria. From this, seventeen interviews from nine organisations were secured, see Figure 5. As there were a number of changes within the field during the course of the research interviewees or their successors were invited to participate in a follow up interview; this had potential to be particularly valuable in instances where the first interview was held early in the research period. These follow up interviews were secured in three instances: McEvoy of Block T, and Prendergast of MTGS were both re-interviewed. As the original interviewees from Basic Space had left the organisation they referred me instead to the current directors Welch and Bermingham who were interviewed together; thus the follow up interview was conducted with different interviewees than for the original interviews and the total number of interviews was raised to twenty. In instances where a second interview was not secured additional documentation was consulted where possible, such as press releases and media sources. Considering the organisations across a period of time was of benefit to the research in allowing it to garner enhanced insight into organisational lifecycle and to incorporate discussion of significant environmental changes that impacted the organisations during this period.

This research is interdisciplinary drawing from both historical and sociological perspectives. The sample represents a relatively small sample from a sociological perspective; for example in grounded theory which aims towards data saturation, Creswell recommends twenty to thirty individuals and notes that this number may be much larger; he also notes studies in excess of three-hundred participants within phenomenological research.⁵⁰ Conversely, the sample represented is a relatively large sample from the perspective of the discipline of history which often focuses on single or several case studies. A case study approach allows for depth of insight into individual cases but limits the ability for generalising. A middle ground is provided by Miles and Huberman who recommend a minimum of five cases within multiple case sampling in order

⁵⁰ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 127-28.

to allow for a degree of generalisability and caution against allowing the sample to become excessive and 'unwieldy'.⁵¹

Scholars also recognise the contingency of recommended sample sizes. For example, Sandelowski advocates the use of the researcher's 'judgement and experience in evaluating the quality of the information against the uses to which it would be put'.⁵² Patton states that there 'are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry' rather it is dependent upon 'what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with the available time and resources'.⁵³

The benefits and disadvantages of sample size were weighted against the opportunity provided by the comprehensiveness of the sample available. The research sample although small overall, within sociological parameters, is proportionally significant when considered alongside the available organisations that met the sample criteria; i.e. it represents nine out of ten eligible organisations and so is a highly significant 90 percent of the identified population. While a large sample within art-historical parameters the opportunity, presented within the high response rate to this research, to document and examine such a comprehensive portion of the population has significant historical value and also enhances the value of this research as a resource for individuals engaged within this field. Furthermore, the opportunity to do this was considered as both unique to this research endeavour and as time limited due to the rapid changes occurring throughout the research period.

The challenge within the research was to thus incorporate multiple accounts in order that common experiences can be identified and explicated, but simultaneously to preserve the potential to engage with the individual cases in hand in order to construct coherent individual histories. Thus, while the benefits of selective case studies are acknowledged, the approach undertaken throughout the thesis is to provide a discursive account which compares and contrasts the individual experiences across the sample, where possible and relevant to do so. This approach has been selected as to focus on singular examples would undermine the potential of this research in providing a valuable account at field level.

⁵¹ Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, "Qualitative Data Analysis: A Method Sourcebook," CA, US: Sage Publications (2014): 33.

⁵² Margarete Sandelowski, "Sample Size in Qualitative Research," *Research in Nursing and Health* 18, no. 2 (1995): 183.

⁵³ Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 311.

Data Collection

The initial research design incorporated mixed methods via a questionnaire-survey and an interview. A mixed approach allows one to address the 'complexity' of social research and gain 'more insight' than from a singular approach.⁵⁴ This was consistent with the method used by Sharon in her 1979 study of artist-run spaces in California; further detail of this study is provided later in this chapter in the Review of Literature.⁵⁵ The survey for this thesis was designed to garner operational information about the organisation such as that concerning legal formalisation, formal structure, and finances and intended to be distributed and returned in advance of the interview. However, upon piloting the study the questionnaire was identified as a barrier to participation, as participants believed it to be too time consuming to complete. The questionnaire was discarded and the most essential questions were incorporated into the main interview.

Sources of public record were identified, through which further operational and environmental information could be sourced. For example, company papers filed with the Companies Registration Office (see Appendix B), and grant decisions publications and databases from Dublin City Council (DCC) and the Arts Council of Ireland (ACI) (see References).

The interview took the form of a semi-structured framework (Figure 6). It was exploratory in design and discovery oriented, in keeping with the heuristic methodological framework of the research.⁵⁶ Following a format recommended by Creswell it opened with an 'ice breaker' question: How did you come to be involved in [organisation]?⁵⁷ This was followed by a number of questions and probes which were used to elicit further information or detail.⁵⁸ These were based within themes that the research sought to address: The thematic areas were: Motivations and Ideology; The Physical Space; Internal Structures and Relationships; Artistic and Curatorial Practices; External Relationships; Reception, Reflections and Aspirations. The thematic areas within the interview were designed to elicit information across the areas of enquiry highlighted within Sharon's study: Basic organisational forms and major purposes; experiential and ideological grounds for creating artist-run galleries; membership; decision making and

⁵⁴ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3 ed. (California, London, New Delhi, and Singapore: Sage, 2009), 203.

⁵⁵ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 3.

⁵⁶ Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 107; Van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*; Andrew Abbott, *Methods of Discovery* (New York and London: Norton, 2004); *ibid.*; *Chaos of Disciplines* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

⁵⁷ Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 183.

⁵⁸ Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 183.

organization of work; contacts with audiences; perceptions and actualities of success.⁵⁹ At the end of the interview, interviewees were asked if there was anything else they would like to add.

The 'icebreaker' question was designed to encourage a narrative format to the interview. Many of the themes were spontaneously addressed by the interviewees who were given scope to describe the phenomena according to their own subjective experience and to move between and across the areas as they narrated this.⁶⁰ This interviewee led process allowed for the possibility of the emergence of 'unexpected constituents'.⁶¹ This benefited the research by allowing for new areas of exploration that provided an enhanced understanding of the experiences of the research interviewees and therefore of the organisations.

Administering the Research

Interviews ranged from 60 to 90 mins. They were conducted face-to-face with one exception for a respondent now based in the USA, which was conducted via Skype. The interviews were all conducted either at the gallery or studio premises or in a private room within Trinity College Dublin; the location was given as a choice to the interviewee in order that they could select the setting in which they were most comfortable.⁶² The interviews were, with the permission of the interviewees, digitally recorded. One exception to this is the interview with Bermingham and Welch; due to availability constraints this was undertaken in a public place with significant ambient noise, therefore the recording was unusable. As this problem was anticipated, notes were taken during the interview which were then forwarded to both of the interviewees for review, and if necessary, correction.

Following the interviews, the recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and an electronic copy of the transcript provided to the interviewee.⁶³ The process aided the interview itself in two key ways. Firstly, it served the purpose of facilitating the natural flow of the interview; knowing that information could be clarified at a later date ensured that interviewees did not get stuck on a given question or topic. Secondly, the anticipated return of the transcript served an essential role in establishing a relationship of trust between the researcher and

⁵⁹ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts."

⁶⁰ Barbara Czarniawska, *Narratives in Social Science Research* (London, California and New Delhi,: Sage, 2004).

⁶¹ Donald E Polkinghorne, "Phenomenological Research Methods," in *Existential-Phenomenological Perspectives in Psychology*, ed. R.S. Valle and S. Halling (New York and London: Springer, 1989), 49.

⁶² Hammersley and Atkinson, and Creswell, highlight the importance of the interview setting. This is both concerned with the practical requirements of a suitable environment and due to the fact that location is imbued with power dynamics. Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, 149; Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 165.

⁶³ For discussion on this practice see: Liz Forbat and Jeanette Henderson, "Theoretical and Practical Reflections on Sharing Transcripts with Participants," *Qualitative Health Research* 15, no. 8 (2005).

interviewee. The promise of this opportunity was key in allowing the interviewees to be confident that they could relax and speak openly and honestly. This helped minimise the potential for them to restate official established narratives or speak for posterity.

Coding the Transcripts

The interview transcripts were analysed on an ongoing basis. Transcripts were initially annotated to identify the thematic areas that structured the interviews and to also identify emergent areas of interest. Once all of the interviews were completed these themes were collated and the full set of interviews was again reviewed. Text pertaining to the identified areas was extracted, grouped into themed categories, and made into separate documents. These documents were then reviewed and descriptive units identified and annotated. These documents were utilised alongside the original interview transcripts to drive the research analysis.

Exhibiting Artists' Interviews

The purpose of this second interview set was to provide an augmenting study to the main interviews. They provide indications of how some artists experienced the organisations, and thus provide either a supporting or counter-narrative to the main sample. In selecting artists for interview the criteria were set that all of the artists invited to participate should have exhibited with at least two of the sample organisations, and that each organisation should be represented at least three times in the potential artist sample.

Where records were available the organisations' websites were consulted and cross referenced; the type of information available from these sources was inconsistent across the organisations. Once a potential artist was identified I did a further online search to find their C.V. or further details about their exhibition histories; this allowed for the identification of further organisations with whom they had exhibited. Finally, I sought to identify a means of contact either via their personal published emails or via social media such as Facebook or LinkedIn. This process was repeated until a potential sample of seventeen artists were identified and invited to participate; nine artists agreed to participate. Collectively these nine artists had exhibited in thirty exhibitions, including both group and solo exhibitions, across all of the organisations within the study.⁶⁴

The procedures regarding communicating the purpose of the study and obtaining consent were previously outlined. The interviews were structured and comprised an opening discussion to

⁶⁴ The breakdown of this is: Block T 6; Basic Space 3; PP/S 5; The Joinery 5; The Market Studios 3; thisisnotashop 1; MTGS 2; MART 3; Ormond Studios 2.

verify details, followed by four thematic areas for discussion: why exhibit with an artist-run space; the process of getting an exhibition; the experience of exhibiting with artist-run spaces; general reflections on artist-run spaces. A number of prompts were used to probe within each area (Figure 7). These interviews were conducted via Skype, FaceTime, or phone. There was one exception to this which was conducted face-to-face by request of the interviewee. The interviews were approximately fifteen minutes in length. They were digitally recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. The interviews were then anonymised and each given a reference letter (letters are used to avoid confusion by the reader with the main sample interviews); they are referred to as 'Anon. Artist [letter]'. The interviews were then coded into thematic units.

The small sample size and selective sampling procedure means that this sample is not representative of the overall experience of artists who exhibit with these organisations. Undertaking this task exceeds the limitations of this as an augmenting study within a doctoral thesis; rather it would require a dedicated study of its own.⁶⁵ This challenges the ability to hypothesise from this sample. However, the sample is of a sufficient size to recognise a number of recurring narratives which allows for tentative suggestion of shared experiences. They are also valid in providing a point of departure for critical analysis by providing either supporting or counter-narrative to the opinions expressed in the interviews in the main sample. Thus, despite the limitations, this augmenting study fulfils an important role within this thesis, in particular in Chapter 2 in discussion of the activities of the organisations.

Methodology

This research engages a social constructivist paradigm. The subject of this research, 'artist-run spaces', denotes three interrelated discussions of the character of the organisations: the identity of the artist/individual, the action in which they are engaged, and the organisation which is therein produced. This research looks to engage with all aspects of this and frames 'artist-run space' as a 'sociohistorical object'; that is, 'as a relatively self-contained set of events, sequences, patterns, or outcomes, rendered coherent by historical actors' convergent invocation of them as meaningful'.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ This would require extensive research into the exhibition histories of the organisations, a significant task due to the incomplete and ephemeral documentation of this, it would then require a larger sample of potential artists. Furthermore, the selection of artists based on the information available online through websites and the availability of contact details suggests that these are artists who have continued within arts practice; for a comprehensive discussion, artists who discontinued their practice following exhibition would also need to be included.

⁶⁶ John R Hall, "Where History and Sociology Meet: Forms of Discourse and Sociohistorical Inquiry," *Sociological Theory* (1992): 185.

The research seeks to understand the object of enquiry through the situated knowledge of multiple actors through which it explores the particularities and specificities of experience.⁶⁷ This is important as '[t]he presence of common practices can mask diversity in enactments'; this diversity is uncovered through the reflections of interviewees.⁶⁸ Critical reflection upon the observed patterns provides an expanded critique of both the commonalities between and specificities within these organisations.⁶⁹ In doing so it seeks to provide 'explanation' of the phenomenon of study.

The research draws on sociological methods, however it is framed as an art-historical undertaking. As stated by Robertson:

Whatever else artist-run activity is or has been that is worthy of study, it is situated and re-situated within a functioning discourse of art-making and art history'.⁷⁰

Additional perspectives from organisational theory, and cultural policy are also engaged within this research thesis. Friction in the relationship between some of these disciplines has been noted by a number of scholars.⁷¹ However, the combining of multiple perspectives has also been theorised as positioning the researcher as a bricoleur.⁷² Rogers defines that, 'Bricoleurs allow for dynamics and contexts to dictate which questions get asked, which methods to employ and which interpretive perspectives to use'.⁷³ Such an approach adds 'rigor, breadth, complexity, richness

⁶⁷ Haridimos Tsoukas and Mary Jo Hatch, "Complex Thinking, Complex Practice: The Case for a Narrative Approach to Organizational Complexity," *Human Relations* 54, no. 8 (2001): 998.

⁶⁸ Patricia Bromley, Hokyu Hwang, and Walter W Powell, "Decoupling Revisited: Common Pressures, Divergent Strategies in the Us Nonprofit Sector," *M@n@gement* 15, no. 5 (2013): 470.

⁶⁹ Tsoukas and Hatch, "Complex Thinking, Complex Practice: The Case for a Narrative Approach to Organizational Complexity," 1000.

⁷⁰ Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture*, 1.

⁷¹ Alfred Kieser, "Why Organization Theory Needs Historical Analyses—and How This Should Be Performed," *Organization Science* 5, no. 4 (1994); Philip Abrams, "History, Sociology, Historical Sociology," *Past & Present*, no. 87 (1980); Anna Greenwood and Andrea Bernardi, "Understanding the Rift, the (Still) Uneasy Bedfellows of History and Organization Studies," *Organization* 0, no. 0 (2013); Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question*, vol. 18 (Sage, 1993); Hall, "Where History and Sociology Meet: Forms of Discourse and Sociohistorical Inquiry." For further discussion, and a survey of approaches to art and sociology, see Eduardo de la Fuente, "The 'New Sociology of Art': Putting Art Back into Social Science Approaches to the Arts," *Cultural Sociology* 1, no. 3 (2007).

⁷² Norman K Denzin, "Romancing the Text: The Qualitative Researcher-Writer-as-Bricoleur," *Bulletin of the Council for Research in Music Education* (1994); Norman K Denzin and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2 ed. (California, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage, 2000); Joe L Kincheloe, "Describing the Bricolage: Conceptualizing a New Rigor in Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 7, no. 6 (2001); Matt Rogers, "Contextualizing Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research," *The Qualitative Report* 17, no. 48 (2012).

⁷³ "Contextualizing Theories and Practices of Bricolage Research," 6.

and depth'.⁷⁴ By engaging with multiple disciplines a more saturated understanding of the subject emerges.

Consistent with the approach of the bricoleur is that of 'theoretical eclecticism'.⁷⁵ Here multiple theoretical schemas are used 'as tools that allow us to reflect on reality from a distance and to imagine alternative possibilities, rather than as grand narratives that explain social reality in totality'.⁷⁶ Thus the research does not provide a 'reading' of artist-run spaces through a specific theoretical lens but utilises different theories as heuristic tools to probe and further develop discussion and to stimulate reflexivity. These are introduced as discussion progresses.

Review of Literature

This section gives an overview of the literature identified relating to artist-run exhibition spaces. As will be demonstrated, this is limited and especially so within the Irish context, a factor which highlights the importance of the current project. For the most part the history of artist-run spaces is telegraphed via fractured and tangential inclusion within broader discussions of arts and cultural movements of a given period. However a number of dedicated texts were also identified.

International Literature

The primary source of literature available was catalogues of artist-run spaces in a particular locale or period often accompanied by reflections by those contemporary to the period. For example, Rosati and Staniszewski's *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces 1960 to 2010*, and Ault's *Alternative Art New York: 1965-1985* are of note.⁷⁷ Chang et al's publication *decentre: concerning artist-run culture* provides critical reflections on artist-run organisations from primarily, although not exclusively, a Canadian perspective.⁷⁸ Detterer and Nannucci's *Artist-Run Spaces* limits the scope of enquiry to the 1960s and 1970s and takes a broader international approach.⁷⁹ A further publication *Artist-Run Europe Practice/Projects/Spaces* is anticipated for publication; the publication is edited by Mark Cullen and Gavin Murphy who are Directors of PP/S and are participants in the current research.

⁷⁴ Denzin and Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 6.

⁷⁵ Kari Karppinen, Hallvard Moe, and Jakob Svensson, "Habermas, Mouffe and Political Communication: A Case for Theoretical Eclecticism," *Javnost-The Public* 15, no. 3 (2008).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁷⁷ Ault, *Alternative Art, New York, 1965-1985: A Cultural Politics Book for the Social Text Collective*; Rosati et al., *Alternative Histories: New York Art Spaces, 1960 to 2010*.

⁷⁸ Elaine Chang et al., eds., *Decentre: Concerning Artist-Run Culture* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2008).

⁷⁹ Detterer and Nannucci, "Artist-Run Spaces."

A limited number of monographs on particularly prominent individual spaces were also identified for example *112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970-1974)* by Jessamyn Fiore, and John Burgess et al's personal account *City Racing: The Life and Times of an Artist-Run Gallery, 1988-1998*.⁸⁰

The recent interest in producing these accounts can be seen in part stemming from the fact that the value of these organisations has perhaps only been fully recognised retrospectively. Secondly, and related to this, the lack of documentation on many of these organisations and a lack of archiving of ephemera means that oral histories form an integral source of information, and one which is time limited, thus there has been an increased interest in archiving both the histories and ephemera on these organisations.⁸¹ While these accounts provide interesting background context for this research they have limited direct applicability at the critical level.

Until recently Jeffri and Sharon each provided the main critical texts for consideration, and remain of relevance to researching artist-run exhibition spaces; both examine organisations in America.⁸² Sharon's account draws on qualitative interviews and explores the 'organization, operations and viability of visual artist-managed galleries in the San Francisco and Santa Cruz areas of California as an alternative to the established organization of the art market'.⁸³ The account is published in 1979 and examines organisations contemporary to that time.

Jeffri's research was published the following year and takes a broader look at emerging arts organisations across disciplines; the account focuses on New York tracing the development of organisations from the Tenth Street emergence and through the 1970s, and she is concerned with management, survival and growth within the organisations.⁸⁴ Focus on the lifecycle of the organisations, and on the structural and operational concerns, intersects with the areas of discussion that arise from the current research; this informed the interests and approach of this analysis and, as previously outlined, Sharon's methodology has been of influence in structuring the current research.

Sharon's account is particularly useful as, while it highlights the work undertaken by these organisations, it also, in parallel, questions some of the narratives that are entrenched within discourse on artist-run spaces. The first is regarding the avant-garde nature of the art work shown

⁸⁰ Jessamyn Fiore, *112 Greene Street: The Early Years (1970-1974)* (New York: Radius Books, 2012); John Burgess et al, *City Racing: The Life and Times of an Artist-Run Gallery* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2002)

⁸¹ Cooke, "Art Ephemera, Aka "Ephemeral Traces of 'Alternative Space': The Documentation of Art Events in London 1995-2005, in an Art Library."

⁸² Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*; Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts."

⁸³ "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 3.

⁸⁴ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*.

in such environments; while it is certainly true that there is historical precedence for this claim, Sharon highlights that this is not always the case. She states:

It is not unlikely that the art shown in these galleries represents future, not yet acceptable, trends in art; but it is also quite possible that the explanations that the artists have for being rejected by the established gallery/museum system are self-deluding.⁸⁵

She also questions the ideological claims by some of the artists in her study regarding the rejection of the mainstream and commercial institutions in light of the fact that there was not, within her study, evidence of successful artists continuing to engage primarily with this organisational format. Finally, she highlights that there exists '[un]resolved ambivalence toward audiences and competitive feelings among the artists'.⁸⁶ All of these themes are addressed within this research thesis in regard to the sample organisations.

Reports provide a more contemporary focus. Two Canadian Reports are of note. The first is the 2011 *The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology* (2011) (known as the *Burgess Report*) which was commissioned by the Canada Council for the Arts, and *Understanding Canadian Arts Through CADAC Data: A Portrait of 75 Artist-Run Centres* by the Council's Research and Evaluation Section.⁸⁷ The former report traces the historical development of artist-run centres, identifying four key characteristics to define the role of these organisations within the Canadian context: self-determination and artistic experimentation, collaboration and networking, a grounding in larger social movements, and a more recent trend towards increasing professionalisation.⁸⁸ Their findings considered that:

ARCs play a central role in the overall ecology, supporting the production and critical advancement of emergent artistic practices and contributing to the development of the careers of artists.⁸⁹

These findings are relevant as there is significant resonance with the findings of the current research. The second report comprises a quantitative analysis of organisations that receive recurrent funding from the Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council. It provides a statistical

⁸⁵ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 10-11.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁷ Marilyn Burgess and Maria De Rosa. "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology." MDR Burgess Consultants, 2011; Canada Council for the Arts. "Understanding Canadian Arts through Cadac Data: A Portrait of Artist-Run Centres." Online, 2015.

⁸⁸ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 5.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 7.

breakdown of economic aspects of the organisations and audience access and participation. While this report is of interest and provides context to the enquiry its direct application is more limited. It would however be of interest to a potential extension of the research with regard to the areas of financial sustainability and public finances.

Two further commissioned reports are from England. Both are authored by Susan Jones and funded by the Arts Council of England. In *Measuring the Experience: a study of the scope and value of artist-led organisations* Jones highlights impacts of participation on audiences, artists, and the arts environment.⁹⁰ For artists these impacts include creative independence and self-determination, and the development of professional status and information networks. This echoes earlier outlined comments from the Burgess Report. Jones perceives that:

—the work of artist-led organisations is valuable to the arts environment because it is perceived as being experimental and innovatory, and therefore as filling gaps in the existing range of visual arts provision.⁹¹

Drawing on this research, the second report *Roles and Reasons, The Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations* provides case study overviews of a number of UK based artist-run groups.⁹² These reports are of particular interest due to their geographic and historic proximity to the sample.

Finally, two independently produced reports from the UK are of note although they are not exclusively concerned with artist-run organisations: *Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations* by Thelwall (2011), and the subsequent *Value, Measure Sustainability: Ideas towards the future of the small-scale visual arts sector* by Nesbitt (2012).⁹³ Nesbitt's report is a critical discussion drawn from a symposium comprised of organisational directors, which took Thelwall's report as its point of departure. Both research reports were published by Common Practice which describes itself as 'an advocacy group working for the recognition and fostering of the small-scale contemporary visual arts sector in London'.⁹⁴ The member organisations of Common Practice include, but are

⁹⁰ Susan Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations* (Susan Jones, 1996).

⁹¹ Ibid., 4.

⁹² "Roles and Reasons: The Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations." Susan Jones and AN Publications, 1997.

⁹³ Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt. "Value, Measure, Sustainability: Ideas Towards the Future of the Small-Scale Visual Arts Sector." London, 2012; Sarah Thelwall. "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations." London, 2011.

⁹⁴ Common Practice, "About," <http://www.commonpractice.org.uk/home/>.

not limited to, artist-run spaces and this is reflected in the scope of organisations are included within these two research reports.

Echoing the previously outlined reports, Thelwall finds that the approaches of small organisations, like artist-run spaces, 'are as vital to a healthy visual art ecosystem as those of larger institutions'.⁹⁵ The report identifies the need to reconstitute the definition of 'value' through which organisations are measured, claiming that the dominant understanding of value as engaged through social policy does not account for the specific and unique value of these organisations. She identifies four areas in which 'value accrues over the lifetime of an object or idea': artistic, social, societal and fiscal.⁹⁶ She calls this 'deferred value'. As they are often situated at the beginning of this lifetime small organisations often appear less successful, as their value is neither overtly visible nor measurable at that stage.⁹⁷

These international sources have informed this thesis through providing important background research. They have provided an important basis for critical reflection within the preparation of this thesis and in identifying a number of themes that intersect with the research. As will be demonstrated below there is limited research available on Irish artist-run exhibition spaces, therefore these international sources are used on occasion within the thesis, in conjunction with primary research on Irish historical examples, to give general context to some of the findings of the research in order to consider if experiences are specific to the Irish example or are more typical of the artist-run model and experience. However, as it is beyond the scope of the current research to undertake a fully comparative international study, the direct application of these texts within the text of this thesis, in some instances, is limited.

Irish Literature

There was limited literature and research on artist-run exhibition spaces within the Republic of Ireland. The recent publication *Generation: 30 years of creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios* is of note; the book presents the history of the organisation since its inception in 1983.⁹⁸ This book was particularly useful in providing a history of TBG+S, as is given in Chapter 1, and for providing comparative insights into this preceding organisation.

⁹⁵ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 6.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 7, 24-26.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios* (Dublin: Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, 2013).

Only one published scholarly text was identified, a 2006 study by Byrne *et al.* on artist-cooperatives.⁹⁹ The study considered seven organisations that were operating as cooperatives; of these five were under one year old and only three had gallery spaces.¹⁰⁰ Thus, the substance of this study is of limited application to the current endeavour.

Another academic source was post-graduate dissertations. This indicates both the growing interest in the area and the increased value of this developing field of research. No doctoral studies were identified on the subject; however two unpublished master's dissertations were identified from University College Dublin's MA in Arts Management and Cultural Policy. Rayne Booth's 2007 study 'Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer' and Samantha Keely's 2013 'Supporting Artist-led Activity in Ireland'.¹⁰¹ Both studies utilised a qualitative approach to explore the relationship with the ACI from a policy perspective. While both of these studies are limited in length, circa ten-thousand words, they provide interesting intersections with the current study.

Booth case studies five galleries. All but G126 are based in Dublin, and two of them, MTGS and PP/S, are also within this study. Her focus on management structures and funding is of relevance to the same interests within the current research. Keely's 2013 dissertation is based on four interviews. These include participants in two artist-run organisations, Claire Doyle (Head of Visual Arts, ACI), and myself (in my capacity as an academic researcher); as I participated in this study its application within the current research will be curtailed in order to avoid circularity. Her focus was to explore the relationship of these organisations with the ACI, including but not limited to funding.

Of particular interest in these two studies are interviews undertaken with Claire Doyle, Head of Visual Arts at the ACI. Doyle did not respond to invitations to participate in the current research and so it has not been possible to represent the views of the ACI in response to topics arising from the interviews. Thus, these dissertations provide a useful alternative secondary source.

⁹⁹ Noreen Byrne, Bridget Carroll, and Michael Ward, "Artists' Co-Operatives and Their Potential to Contribute to the Development of the Visual Arts Sector in Ireland," *Review of International Cooperation* 99, no. 1 (2006).

¹⁰⁰ Of these Blue Umbrella Gallery in Kerry, the Crow Gallery in Dublin, and Limerick Printmakers in Limerick had gallery space. Of these only Limerick Printmakers, at the time six years old, had been in operation for over a year.

¹⁰¹ Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?."; Samantha Keely, "Supporting Artist-Led Activity in Ireland" (University College Dublin, 2013). It is of note that both of these individuals were involved in MTGS. Booth was an organisational founder and involved in the organisation at the time of her research, and is an interviewee within the current study; Keely was involved in the organisation, as an intern, in the period preceding her research.

The key source of information within the Irish context is the recent report *FOOTFALL: Articulation the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland* (2015), funded by the ACI.¹⁰² *FOOTFALL* explores eleven organisations nationally; three of these are also included within the current research, Basic Space, Block T, and PP/S. As the information presented within this report is anonymised, and due to the cross over in the sample it is not possible to combine data as this would lead to potential bias. Data was collected for the *FOOTFALL* research via video call interviews and questionnaires and via symposium discussion. The report was published during the course of the current research and shares several key objectives. As outlined in the report:

[T]he FOOTFALL report outlines the reasons why artist led organisations are established, how they are run and the type of work they do. Those perceived to benefit from this work, and the inherent value of such activity[.]¹⁰³

This has direct intersections with the outlined aims and objectives of the current research.

The two research items share interests at multiple points and are complementary to each other's purposes. The national scope of the *FOOTFALL* report, provides additional context to the current research. Additional areas of research included within the report, for example audience surveys, provide useful supplementary information. The extended interviews undertaken as part of the current research provide additional complexity and depth to the discussion identified within the *FOOTFALL* report. This provides both additional qualitative data and also allows more scope for the narrative development of the history of the organisations from participant's perspectives. The enquiry into a specific geographic locale also allows for an in-depth exploration of local conditions. Relevant details of this report will be explicated as discussion progresses throughout this research.

Overview of the Thesis Structure

Following this Introduction, the thesis is organised into four thematic chapters, followed by a Conclusion. Each chapter contributes to understanding the modus operandi of the organisations.

The first chapter examines the emergence of the organisations. This Chapter draws on archival sources, desk research, and interviews to construct a narrative of the establishment of the sample organisations, and the emergence of a field of activity. This provides an important insight into

¹⁰² Joanne Laws. "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland." 126 Artist-Run Gallery, Galway, 2015.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 7.

the development of the phenomenon at field level, introduces the sample organisations, and considers why they were established and the major purpose to which they are oriented. This information is important in establishing a new art-historical platform of knowledge, which provides a background to and basis for enquiry in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 focuses on the activities of organisations with a primary focus on exhibition activities. This includes examination of the structures and processes around the programming and curatorship of the spaces, and considers the role that they play within the careers of artists. The chapter examines how and why practices change over time. This chapter is key to understanding the delivery of art within these organisations.

Chapter 3 is concerned with how the organisations are structured and operated. This includes issues of legal governance, decision making, and the organisation of work. The chapter also analyses the impacts of participation for individuals within the management of these organisation. This chapter is important as it is through these structures and processes that the social and artistic goals of the organisation are facilitated, thus understanding this dimension is vital to understanding the modus operandi of the organisations.

Chapter 4 examines the financial aspects of the organisations, it outlines their key financial sources. In discussion of grant income a particular focus is given to the relationship of the organisations with the ACI. The issue of resource dependency is explored. The chapter considers issues of sustainability as it relates to both finances and the need for secure premises. Finally the chapter provides critical reflection on the closure of a number of the sample organisations during the research period. The issues identified within this chapter are important in understanding the challenges that the organisations face and that impact upon their ability to undertake activities.

The Conclusion chapter brings together and reflects on the main findings of each chapter, it highlights the importance of the research and the ways in which the thesis makes a novel contribution to knowledge on this topic, and finally it identifies areas for future research.

Chapter 1: The Emerging Field of Artist-Run Spaces in Dublin.

The focus of this research is artist-run exhibition spaces, known as artist-run spaces, in Dublin in the period from 2005 to 2015. In order to understand how these organisations emerged and functioned in their socio-historical context, individually and collectively, this chapter starts with an overview of the field prior to 2005 and also of the broader environment of such organisations at a country-wide level. Collectively, such overviews allow for the identification of field level patterns that provide context to the enquiry. Here field is defined as indicating a domain of similar activity occurring within the city of Dublin; the question of whether there is cohesiveness to this field is one which is addressed within this chapter.

To enable a chronological understanding of how the field evolved, a synopsis of each of the organisations within this study are addressed in order of their establishment. These accounts provide a platform which will be developed in the ensuing chapters. Next the chapter considers the stated and potential rationale for the pattern of the emergence of the field. Given that the sample represents a significant proportion of the field with Dublin during this period, these accounts collectively present vital insight into factors of influence. This section draws on both interviews and on broader contextual socio-economic factors to inform the analysis. The stimuli to the development of the field are identified as a combination of factors including an imbalance between supply and demand, an increase in density and visibility which promotes the occurrence of these types of enterprise, and access to buildings providing opportunity. Finally, the chapter reflects on the cohesive or fragmented nature of the field both in geographic terms and in respect of inter-organisational engagement.

Precedents of Artist-Run Space in Dublin

As the focus of this thesis is artist-run exhibition space in Dublin, only precedents of this specific model are examined. Other artist-run activities such as studio only groups and cooperatives, exhibiting organisations, one off projects, and curatorial groups do not form part of this account as to include them would require a deviation from the main focus of the thesis which concerns organisations that run exhibition space on an ongoing basis. The focus on organisations in the late twentieth century allows for the discussion to focus on the context that is directly relevant to the emergence of the sample organisations.

At the outset of the research process, an archival and web-based survey of historic activity in the field was undertaken; reflecting the sample criteria, this survey used the basic criteria that the organisations must identify as artist-run and have an exhibition space for use of artists beyond resident studio members or the management members. As shown in Figure 8, the earliest established organisation identified through this search was the Project Arts Centre in 1966; only six further organisations were identified via this method within the subsequent thirty years. This indicates a low level of activity and indeed artist-run exhibition spaces are conspicuously absent from press coverage. For example, White's 1983 *Circa* review of gallery and exhibition spaces in the Republic of Ireland does not mention any such initiatives.¹⁰⁴ Such omissions do not confirm the absence of these enterprises, but it may be that they were not considered notable enough to warrant mention. However, the evidence as a whole suggests that there was limited activity.

It seems that a decade later, this type of organisation had become more visible. For example, in 1993, journalist John Farrell, writing in the *Sunday Press*, observed a 'sudden flourishing of galleries and exhibition spaces' and stated that 'it now seems that hardly a week goes by without some disused church or basement being renovated to receive ever-newer artists'.¹⁰⁵ The Basement Gallery and Brownes Gallery were identified as such initiatives, while The Accidental Gallery described itself as a 'mobile exhibition space' and utilised a succession of spaces.¹⁰⁶ However, despite Farrell's observation, there is limited remaining record of further groups. The evidence suggests that activity in the form of sustained initiatives offering exhibition opportunities remained sparse and one-off exhibitions or temporal or transient forms of exhibition space have been the primary model of artist-run exhibition historically within Dublin.

Of those organisations identified in Figure 8 as established prior to the timeframe of this thesis, three had a lifespan of one year or under while the other four survived and are therefore relevant to this research. Of these PP/S is included within the main research sample, Broadstone Studios declined participation. As previously explained, PAC and TBG+S are not included as cases within this research but are nonetheless relevant to understanding the broader field of artist-run activity within Ireland; a synopsis of their histories is outlined below.

¹⁰⁴ Nicola White, "Gallery and Exhibition Spaces in the Republic of Ireland," *Circa* (1983).

¹⁰⁵ John Farrell, "Second Showing for Students' Work Pays Off," *The Sunday Press*, 01/08/1993.

¹⁰⁶ Tom McDonough, "Working Girls Making Waves," *ibid.*, 21/02/1993; The Accidental Gallery, "Press Release," news release, 1992; Anne-Marie Smyth, "Roving Gallery Must Take to the Road One More Time," *The Evening Press*, 1992.

Project Arts Centre and Temple Bar Gallery and Studios

Understanding of the operations of Project Arts Centre (PAC) and Temple Bar Gallery and Studios (TBG+S), in the account below, is drawn from press accounts of the organisations' development and from their websites. In addition, the previously outlined text *Generation* published by TBG+S in 2013 is also used. These institutions provide useful points of reference against which to consider the practices of the sample organisations.

PAC evolved from an initial plan, by theatre practitioners Jim FitzGerald and Colm O'Briain, to produce a single play in 1966.¹⁰⁷ These early plans expanded to become a three week festival, known as Project 67, at the Gate Theatre in Dublin incorporating 'experimental music, visual arts, seminars, children's theatre and a hot debate on censorship'.¹⁰⁸ The success of the festival prompted O'Briain to establish Project Gallery as an artists' cooperative and he held the position of Chairman until 1973; the other founding members were artists John Behan, Michael Kane, John Kelly, and Charles Cullen, who had exhibited in Project 67.¹⁰⁹ The ambition was to 'establish a permanent alternative centre for the performing and visual arts'.¹¹⁰

Project Gallery was originally located on Lower Abbey Street, initially on the second floor of an engineering premises and then, in 1969, in the basement of the YMCA.¹¹¹ The programme was here expanded to include film screenings and plays and the organisation was renamed The Project Arts Centre. In 1972, they moved to a disused factory on South King Street and, in 1974, to former printing works on East Essex Street in the Temple Bar district of Dublin. Apart from temporary evacuation following a fire in 1982, and fifteen years later for renovation, they have occupied the same site for over forty years. The current venue consists of a ground floor gallery space which is internally curated, and two multi-purpose spaces with seating capacities of ninety and two-hundred and twenty respectively, as well as additional facilities such as dressing rooms, and a bar.¹¹² The PAC website states that the organisation 'has developed from a voluntary, artist-led cooperative to the current structure of a full-time artist-driven company'.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ Victor Merriman, "'As We Must': Growth and Diversification in Ireland's Theatre Culture 1977–2000," in *Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish Theatre* (2016).

¹⁰⁸ Project Arts Centre, "About Us," <http://projectartscentre.ie/about-us/>.

¹⁰⁹ Barry Houlihan, Maire Ni Chonallain, and Luke Kirwan, "Collection List No. 152 Project Arts Centre Papers," (National Library of Ireland, 2009); Aidan Dunne, "The Great White Hope," *The Irish Times*, 17/09/2002; Merriman, "'As We Must': Growth and Diversification in Ireland's Theatre Culture 1977–2000."; Anon, "Radical Renovation for Artists' Centre," *The Irish Times*, 09/05/2000.

¹¹⁰ Project Arts Centre, "About Us".

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

Temple Bar Gallery and Studios (now TBG+S) was originally established in 1983 as a multi-disciplinary centre called The Temple Bar Centre. Founder Jenny Haughton was a young arts administrator who had recently returned to Dublin following an internship with the Franklin Archive and Performance Gallery in New York.¹¹⁴ Although Haughton was not an artist the organisation is at the outset and on a continuing basis considered to be artist-run as although it engages an administrative structure which includes non-artists, at the governance level it is a membership-driven organisation overseen by a board of directors that was initially comprised of, and continues to include, artist studio members.¹¹⁵

TBG+S was initially set up in a four storey disused shirt factory in the Temple Bar district of Dublin; in 1994, as part of the redevelopment of the area the site was developed and extended. The organisation benefited from a purpose-built premises comprising thirty artists' studios and a street level gallery space.¹¹⁶

The gallery currently hosts five exhibitions a year; the programme is focused on Irish and international artists 'who are at pivotal points in their career and who demonstrate a coherent contemporary artistic practice'.¹¹⁷ In 2013, the *Irish Times* declared TBG+S to be Ireland's 'Best Gallery' citing its 'public presence' which 'brings challenging contemporary art unignorable onto the streets of Dublin with its glass fronted gallery space'.¹¹⁸

As explained in the introduction, TBG+S is of particular interest as a point of comparison. Additional details of its development are included throughout the thesis, as the analysis unfolds, when it intersects with issues arising from the sample organisations.

Artist-Run Spaces, 2005-2015

While Dublin is the primary focus of this research, it is useful to briefly consider activity on a country-wide level during the period of study in order to provide additional context to the discussion; information for this purpose was compiled in 2011 and the forthcoming discussion is representative of the field at the initiation of the research undertaking. Consistent with the preceding discussion, there continue to be limited records of activities, and short-term initiatives

¹¹⁴ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 32.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 11, fn15. For list of current board members see: "Information: Our Board," <http://www.templebargallery.com/info/about/board>.

¹¹⁶ *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 13, 130; "Our History," <http://www.templebargallery.com/info/about/history>.

¹¹⁷ "Exhibitions: Gallery Policy," <http://www.templebargallery.com/gallery/policy>.

¹¹⁸ *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 178.

may be undocumented. Thus, while the account here is indicative of the levels of activities in the field, it is not exhaustive.

In 2011, twenty-six organisations were identified country-wide as consistent with the selection criteria of this research, detailed in Figure 9. Illustrating this, the country-wide population is represented in graph form in Figure 10.¹¹⁹ This illustrates the population at any given time during this period, as well as the number of new organisations. Country-wide there was a rapid increase in the numbers of artist-run spaces, from six in 2005 to twenty-three in 2011. Dublin-based spaces accounted for a large proportion of these figures, fourteen of the total twenty-six identified, and therefore have a significant impact on these identified patterns. However, if the Dublin and non-Dublin spaces are considered independently the same pattern emerges. This is of significance to note and it raises the question as to whether the same conditions that influenced the growth of this field of activity in Dublin at this time were also applicable country-wide. These patterns provide additional context to this research, however the limitations of this research as a doctoral thesis restrict the ability to explore this question, it does however indicate an area where the research could be extended.

The dominance of Dublin as a site for activity is supported by figures published in the *FOOTFALL* report, in 2005; here thirty spaces were identified in Ireland of which thirteen were in Dublin.¹²⁰ The later date of their survey and differences in selection criteria account for the discrepancies between the two sets of figures. However, this point of reference is useful in validating the representativeness of the figures compiled for this thesis. The dominance of one locale is not unexpected and in a 1999 article reviewing research by sociologists, economists, historians, and geographers Menger observes that artist activities typically 'show a very high level of spatial concentration in a few locations or even in one dominant city in each country'.¹²¹ The higher concentration of these organisations in the capital city is unsurprising, not least because it hosts a higher portion of third level arts institutions than any other city in the Republic and, as outlined later in this chapter, these enterprises are typically established by recent graduates. The dominance of Dublin as a locale for these organisations supports the focus of this research on this city.

¹¹⁹ This includes three additional organisations Four Gallery, Joy Gallery, and One Gallery. These were peers to the main sample but did not fulfil the sample criterion to be operational in some form at the time of survey.

¹²⁰ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 2.

¹²¹ Pierre-Michel Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," *Annual Review of Sociology* 25, no. 1 (1999): 541, 549.

The historic low level of incidence of artist-run spaces in Dublin has been identified earlier in this thesis; this continues into the new millennium until the identified increase from 2005. Following the initial survey of activity undertaken for this research, in 2011, the Dublin field was monitored until 2015, the research period 2005 to 2015, is illustrated in Figure 11. Writing for *Circa* in 2005, artist Alan Phelan laments:

What marks Dublin as different from other similar sized cities [internationally] is that there are very few artist-run spaces. For whatever reason these simply have not developed in a sustainable way.¹²²

He notes the recent Pallas Heights, a project by PP/S, as an exception to this and lists Gallery for One, Broadstone Studios, and Mother's Tankstation as upcoming initiatives. In 2006, journalist Billy Leahy adds Attic Gallery and Gallery Four [sic] to this list. He locates these as select examples amid what he describes as 'a mushrooming of new, innovative gallery spaces around Dublin'.¹²³ This supports the pattern of increased activity presented in Figure 11 and suggests that the pattern may in fact have been further pronounced if information were available on further unnamed initiatives. As is seen in Figure 11 the increase in population continued incrementally until 2013.

Neither 'pop-up' style space nor individually run initiatives, are the focus of the study. However, they are noted in order to observe a pattern of significant levels of enterprise in congruent activities during the mid to late aughts. This provides a broader cultural context to the ongoing enquiry. As shown in Figure 12, the trend of increased activity in the artist-run field is further emphasised if additional initiatives in Dublin that were established by an individual are included. They include: Flood (2008) Paul McAree, Talbot Gallery (2005) Elaine Grainger, Mother's Tankstation (2006) Finola Jones, Gallery for One (estimated 2005) Vaari Claffey, Irish Museum of Contemporary Art (2007-ongoing) Kay Bear Koss, and Common Place Studios (2007-ongoing) Sally Timmons.¹²⁴ There is also observed a boom in 'slack' space or temporary gallery initiatives circa 2012.¹²⁵ While, as observed, this activity has persisted historically it proliferates during this period

¹²² Alan Phelan, "Exhibiting in Dublin – Closed Shop, Open Door or Back Alley?," *CIRCA* 113, no. Autumn 2005.

¹²³ Billy Leahy, "A New Time," in *The Village* (2006).

¹²⁴ The inclusion of Mother's Tankstation as an individually run initiative was addressed in the Introduction. The date given for Gallery for One is given in estimate based on the date of references that could be found to the initiative, no records of the date of operation itself was found, attempts to confirm details from Claffey were unsuccessful.

¹²⁵ The term 'slack space' is an appropriated term that was originally used to describe wasted or unused space on a computer's hard-drive; within the appropriated use it indicates premises such as vacant shop fronts that are not in use for their primary purpose and are engaged as arts spaces in the interim. For a discussion of slack space see: Annette Moloney, "Art in Slack Spaces," (Online: Annette Moloney, 2010).

not least through initiatives such as PrettyvacantT Dublin (2009), a project by artists Louise Marlborough and Philip Rowley, and Dublin City Council's (DCC) Vacant Space Initiative which was launched in December 2011 by Dublin City Arts Officer Ray Yeates.¹²⁶ Both initiatives sought to increase artists' access to unused space in the city, largely on a short-term basis. This is in addition to similar spaces that were sourced directly from private landlords by the artists.

Overview of the Sample Organisations

This section outlines the educational and occupational background of the founding members, how they are connected with the other founding members of their organisation, and details about their physical premises. It emerges from discussion that the majority of the founders had a formal arts-based qualification, although this was not exclusively fine or visual arts, but that few had prior experience of working in arts organisations or running businesses. An unexpected finding is that the founders were on occasion only loosely connected with the other founding members of their organisations. This is discussed further following the organisational outlines. For convenience, a reference list of founders and date of establishment of each organisation is given in Figure 13, and to demonstrate the geographic patterns that will be considered in some detail later a map of the locations of the organisations within the city is given in Figure 14.

Pallas Projects/Studios

Pallas Studios, now Pallas Projects and Studios or PP/S, is the only organisation within the sample group which existed prior to 2005 and was included in the earlier historic figures.¹²⁷ It was established in 1996 by Brian Duggan and Mark Cullen, both of whom graduated in 1995 having studied Fine Art at Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), and Crawford College of Art and Design, with Cullen completing his studies at the National College of Art and Design (NCAD).¹²⁸ PP/S have been resident in a wide variety of spaces. They started in the floors above a knitwear factory on Foley Street, Dublin 1, from which they took their name. The space was primarily used as studios and as a 'place to launch projects from' with occasional exhibitions on site.¹²⁹ They held this space for five years, simultaneously with a number of exhibition spaces. From 2003 to 2007, they undertook a project named Pallas Heights based in Sean Tracey Flats, in Dublin 1, which had been

¹²⁶ PrettyvacantT Dublin, "About Us," <http://www.prettyvacantdublin.com/content/about-us>. Dublin City Council Arts Office, "Vacant Spaces," <http://www.dccartsoffice.ie/vacant-spaces/>. For discussion of Slack/Vacant Spaces see Moloney, "Art in Slack Spaces."; Emma Loughney, "Long-Lerm Let," in *The Visual Artists' Newsheet* (2012).

¹²⁷ Details of the history of the various premises were provided in interviews and correspondence; these spaces are placed in chronological order, however the exact dates for all of the spaces were not available. Mark Cullen, Email correspondence with author, (27/07/2016).

¹²⁸ Brian Duggan, "Brian Duggan," <http://balzerprojects.com/brian-duggan-cv/>.

¹²⁹ Mark Cullen, Interview with author.

earmarked for demolition. The space comprised four two-bedroomed flats which were reconfigured as gallery and studio spaces.

Following the closure of the studios in Foley Street in 2007/08, PP/S held studios on Sheriff Street (2001-circa2003) before opening studios and a gallery on Grangegorman Road/North Brunswick Street Dublin 7 (2005-2011). In 2007, they subsequently took on an additional exhibition space in the area – a former milking parlour on Grangegorman Road Dublin 7. In March 2011, their Grangegorman Road studios closed following an arson attack and they took residence on the ground floor of a Georgian building on Dominick Street in Dublin 1. In 2012, they moved both gallery and studio facilities to a former school premises in the Coombe, Dublin 8.

thisisnotashop

thisisnotashop was founded by Aideen Darcy and Marius Stanely in 2006. This was the only organisation where it was not possible to secure an interview with a founding member; consequently, despite efforts it was also not possible to directly confirm biographical details regarding Aideen Darcy and Marius Stanley, the founders of thisisnotashop; nor were these available from public sources. However, a subsequent director Jessamyn Fiore reported that she and Darcy met while both working with Dublin Fringe Festival, thus indicating Darcy's involvement in this area. thisisnotashop was based in a shop front on Benburb Street, Dublin 7, until 2009; at this time the organisation became non-venue based and the then directors, Jessamyn Fiore and Michael Kynaston, continued to curate independent projects under the thisisnotashop name until 2011.

Monster Truck Gallery and Studios

Monster Truck Gallery and Studios (MTGS) was established in 2006 by artists Peter Prendergast, Colm MacAthlaoich, Rayne Booth, and Alan Butler. MacAthlaoich, Booth, and Butler were 2004 graduates from NCAD, from various strands of the Fine Art degree.¹³⁰ Booth was commencing an MA in Arts Management and Cultural Policy at University College Dublin (UCD). The remaining founder, and Director, Prendergast had graduated some years earlier, in 1999, with a degree in Design Interactive Media in Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art and Design (IADT) after which he worked in industry as a graphic designer.

MTGS initially resided in a shopfront premises on Francis Street, Dublin 8. The building had a ground floor gallery with two floors of artists' studios above it. In 2011, the organisation opened

¹³⁰ Colm MacAthlaoich, "Colm Macathlaoich," http://macathlaoich.com/?page_id=4. Alan Butler, "Alan Butler," <http://www.alanbutler.info>. Rayne Booth, "Linkedin Profile," <https://www.linkedin.com/in/raynebooth>.

a gallery space in Temple Bar, Dublin 2. The original Francis Street space was retained and for a short period the gallery space was used as a project space with exhibitions running simultaneously with the newer gallery; later in the same year it was converted into additional studio space.

The Joinery

Miranda Driscoll and Feargal Ward co-founded The Joinery in 2008. Driscoll completed a BA(hons) in Photography from University College Falmouth, in 2006. Feargal Ward graduated in 1998 with a degree in Film Production from the National Film School in IADT, ten years prior to establishing The Joinery.¹³¹ The Joinery was based in a shop front premises on Rosemount Terrace, Arbour Hill, Dublin 7. On the ground floor, the two spaces were used interchangeably as exhibition and performance space and on the first floor there were six studio spaces.

The Market Studios/Unit H

Deirdre Morrissey, Monica Flynn, and Claire Behan established The Market Studios/Unit H in 2008, the same year that they graduated from IADT's MA in Visual Arts Practices (MAVIS).¹³² While the gallery and studios were given separate names, the umbrella organisation is commonly known as The Market Studios and this is used throughout this thesis. Their building on Halston Street, Dublin 7 had once been the headquarters of Visual Artists Ireland (VAI). The fifteen studios and gallery were on the second floor of the building.

Ormond Studios

Ormond Studios was established in 2009 by a group of eleven graduates of that same year, from IADT and NCAD; Jennette Donnelly, Jackie Gray, Eithne Griffin, Kevin Kirwan, Sandra McAllister, Martina McDonald, Nicky Teegan, Jane Stewart, Jason Dunne, Sinead Reilly.¹³³ They were all visual artists from a variety of courses within the two colleges. Ormond Studios occupied the second and third floor of premises on Ormond Quay, Dublin 1, which had been advertised for use as a dance studio.

¹³¹ Feargal Ward, Email correspondence with author, (29/06/2016).

¹³² Deirdre Morrissey, "Deirdre Morrissey LinkedIn Profile," <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/deirdre-morrissey/37/886/45b>; "Deirdre Morrissey," <http://www.mavis.ie/index.php/component/content/article/2-alumni-bio/65-deirdre-morrissey>, Monica Flynn, "Monica Flynn LinkedIn Profile," <https://www.linkedin.com/in/monicaflynn2>; "Monica Flynn," <http://www.mavis.ie/index.php/component/content/article/2-alumni-bio/29-monica-flynn>, Claire Behan, "Clair Behan," <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/clair-behan/3a/457/8b0>

¹³³ The name of the eleventh member was unconfirmed although it was reported that they left soon after the organisation established. Details confirmed in personal correspondence between researcher and McAllister: Sandra McAllister, Email correspondence with author, (08/07/2013).

Basic Space Dublin

Basic Space was the only organisation where all founders were still in Art College at the time of organisational establishment in 2010. Greg Howie, Hannah Fitz, Kari Cahill, and Hugo Byrne were in the second year of their undergraduate Fine Art degrees at the NCAD, Dublin.¹³⁴ Hugo Byrne was reported as leaving shortly after the commencement of the project and so is not further referenced within this research.

Between 2010 and 2012, Basic Space held a 10,000 square foot warehouse space on Vicar Street, Dublin 8. Following the closure of this space, in late 2012, they undertook a four-month residency in the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA); this was a studio space and had no gallery facilities. Fitz described that they were 'curating studio time' and providing people with opportunities to develop works that would be disseminated elsewhere, while also themselves pursuing 'immaterial work [...] radio, or sound, or smells, or film [...] something that is not connected to a certain space of art dissemination'.¹³⁵ At the time of interview with Fitz and Howie, in December 2012, they were anticipating a move to a new space in Marrowbone Lane, Dublin 8, which happened in March 2013 and comprised artists' studios and occasional gallery space.¹³⁶

Block T

Block T was founded, in 2011, by Grace McEvoy, Laura G-Dovns, Simon McKeagney, Ben Readman, Lili Heller, and Joe Salam. McEvoy, G-Dovns and McKeagney were 2010 graduates from the Fine Art (media) degree at NCAD, where they were part of the Dodo Collective.¹³⁷ Readman had graduated in 2003 from Fine Art at Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and had since been pursuing his own career as an artist, as well as being involved in organisations such as the Button Factory Studios and the Visual Arts Centre studios.¹³⁸ Heller was also established as an artist having graduated in 2004 with a Masters of Visual Arts from the Ecole Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Marseille and in 2005 Masters of Theoretical Art Studies from the Université de Provence in

¹³⁴ Hugo Byrne was reported as leaving shortly after the commencement of the project and so is not further referenced within this research.

¹³⁵ Hannah Fitz, Interview with author.

¹³⁶ James Merrigan, "So...Who? What? When? Where? Why?," *+Billion-*, 27/08/2014 2014.

¹³⁷ Laura G-Dovns, "Laura Garbataviciute LinkedIn Profile," <https://www.linkedin.com/in/lgdopen.>, Simon McKeagney, "Simon Mckeagney," <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/simon-mckeagney/2a/768/519> ,

¹³⁸ Ben Readman, "Ben Readman LinkedIn Profile," <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/ben-readman/18/661/403> ; "Ben Readman Bio," http://www.benreadman.com/BEN_READMAN_ARTIST/BIO.html; "Ben Readman: Visual Artist and Marketing Director of Block T," <http://www.dit.ie/creativearts/people/alumni/alumniarticles/alumniname,82827,en.html>.

France.¹³⁹ In contrast Linder's background was in electrical engineering and he had been working for almost ten years as a gallery technician. It was not possible to confirm biographical details regarding Salam, except that he had previously managed the Dice Bar a popular venue in the same locality as Block T. McKeagney left the organisation at an unverified date soon after its establishment so his inclusion in this analysis is limited.

MART

Ciara Scanlan, Matthew Nevin, and Chloe Freaks established MART in 2006 as an online platform to showcase artists via their website and through projects and exhibitions; Scanlan and Nevin opened the MART Gallery in 2012.¹⁴⁰ Freaks ceased involvement with the organisation within the first year of MART's operation and before the MART gallery was established; therefore as Scanlan and Nevin were the founders of the gallery space the enquiry here focuses on their participation.¹⁴¹ Scanlan graduated in 2005, with a degree in Fine Art from CIT Crawford College of Art and Design, and Nevin in 2006 from Film and Television, and Scenography from The University of Wales.¹⁴² Freaks' date of graduation is unconfirmed, however it was reported that her attendance at college overlapped with Nevin's.

MART has inhabited multiple venues simultaneously. Their primary space is their gallery and studios housed in an old firestation on Rathmines Road, Dublin 6. At the time of interview, in July 2015, they also had four other studios locations, Casino Studios (offices above a casino) and House Studios (a four storey terraced building with a social area, and later a pop-up restaurant in the basement) both also on Rathmines Road, Parker Hill Studios (office space), and Lennox St Studios in Portobello (basement studios).¹⁴³

Overview of Founders' Profiles

Arising from the organisational overviews are two key themes that are outlined below and will be relevant to further discussion later in this thesis. These are the profile of the founders, and the social links between them. The typical profile of individual involved in these organisations was someone, at the outset, in their twenties. They were typically although not exclusively recent graduates, at either under- or post- graduate level from an arts related discipline. This observation is important for two reasons. Firstly, as recent graduates the majority of the

¹³⁹ Lili Heller, "Lili Heller Webpage," <http://www.liliheller.com/pages/Biouk.htm> ; "Lili Heller," <http://www.richmondroadstudios.com/index.php?/artists/lili-heller/>.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew Nevin, MART, (<http://www.mart.ie/catalogue/2013>).

¹⁴¹ Ciara Scanlan, Email correspondence with author, (28/06/2016).

¹⁴² MART, "The MART Team," <http://www.mart.ie/about/the-mart-team/>.

¹⁴³ MART, "MART Studios," <http://www.mart.ie/studios/>.

participants came into these roles with limited or no relevant occupational history in regards to running arts organisations, in business, or entrepreneurship. This will be important to discussion in Chapter 3 regarding management. Secondly, it is important to observe that the educational histories of the founders comprises a variety of creative disciplines, dominated by but not limited to the fine and visual arts. The participation of non-artists within key roles is not without local precedence, Jenny Haughton founder of TBG+S was an arts administrator, and some of the founders of PAC were theatre practitioners. Thus, within the Irish context 'artist-run' spaces, even if primarily concerned with the visual arts, are established and run by individuals who are creative practitioners in the broader arts field.

It is proposed that, despite differences within the disciplines studied, the similarities in the profiles of the founders in respect of age and general educational background provided some common ground; shared values, identity and experiences unite the efforts of the founders. Habermas' thesis of the 'lifeworld' resonates here. The lifeworld is the tacit, assumed and unquestioned knowledge and understanding of the individual.¹⁴⁴ It 'refers to the background resources, contexts, and dimensions of social action that enable actors to cooperate on the basis of mutual understanding'.¹⁴⁵ Shared values and mutual dependence are important to establishing trust.¹⁴⁶ This is particularly important because there is a mixture of circumstance regarding the personal ties and relationships between the individual founders at the time of establishing the organisations.

Common assumption often conceives that these types of organisations are the coalescence of established friendship groups. This is not exclusively the case within the sample group. In the cases of Ormond Studios, MTGS, and Block T not all of the members knew each other before initiating the project. For example, MacAthlaoich of MTGS provides a connection between Prendergast and the other founders – having shared a studio with Prendergast and gone to college with the others. Ormond Studios contains members from different art colleges who did not know each other but were linked through the two members who worked together in Four Gallery. In Block T, G-Dovn, McEvoy, and McKeagney who went to college together, met the other founders by chance while viewing the building in which they would later establish the organisation.

¹⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas, "The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I," (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984); "The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason, vol. 2" (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985).

¹⁴⁵ James Bohman and William Rehg, "Jürgen Habermas," <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/habermas/>.

¹⁴⁶ Hans Westlund and Roger Bolton, "Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship," *Small Business Economics* 21, no. 2 (2003): 97

Where there is a weak connection between the founders, Granovetter's thesis on the strength of weak ties is useful in analysing the resultant dynamic.¹⁴⁷ He defines the strength of ties as:

—the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie.¹⁴⁸

Strong ties reduce conflict and enhance cooperation; weak ties enhance access to a wider range of information and resources and stimulates innovation.¹⁴⁹

In the sample organisations with two founding members the ties are strong, as they are within Basic Space. Within the other groups we see more variance. This includes variation in the strength and number of ties between different members of the same group. These groups can be considered low density networks according to Granovetter's thesis, that is 'one in which many of the possible relational lines are absent'.¹⁵⁰

In strong ties intimacy, intensity, and reciprocity increase trust. In respect of the weak ties between the founders Linders, of Block T, reflected:

—it took a year maybe two years for us all to be properly trust each other, and to beyond trusting each other to actually rely on each other and to understand that we were all in this together, and we were building it together, and it was important to all of us.¹⁵¹

The observation that weak ties can increase interpersonal conflict is notable, as interpersonal relations will be highlighted in this thesis as one of the chief challenges that a number of the organisations faced. However, there were also highlighted advantages of weak ties, they created an extended network of resources on which the organisations could draw. Linders again provides an example:

¹⁴⁷ Mark S Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," *Sociological Theory* 1, no. 1 (1983); "The Strength of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* (1973). Reed E Nelson, "The Strength of Strong Ties: Social Networks and Intergroup Conflict in Organizations," *Academy of Management Journal* 32, no. 2 (1989). In the 1973 text Granovetter states 'Unlike most models of interpersonal networks, the one presented here is not meant primarily for application to small, face-to-face groups' (1376). His latter text does not provide this limitation and includes discussion of ties at the individual level. However, the premise provides a useful framework for discussion.

¹⁴⁸ Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," 1361.

¹⁴⁹ Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties." "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited."; Nelson, "The Strength of Strong Ties: Social Networks and Intergroup Conflict in Organizations."

¹⁵⁰ Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited," 202

¹⁵¹ Nick Linders, Interview with author.

Luckily through the seven partners we had enough influence and friends to be putting on these gigs, or if some little plumbing needed doing someone would know a plumber, or if we wanted to have an exhibition and we needed it photographed we'd know [someone].¹⁵²

The presence of weak ties and the indication of their benefit is highlighted as an unexpected finding of the research.

Stimulus to and Rationale for Establishment

It can reasonably be deduced from the research that the primary reason for establishing the organisations was the recognition of a shortage of opportunities for artists, especially recent graduates, to benefit from studio space and/or exhibition opportunity. The relative significance of these two functions was not identical across the spaces. What is consistent is that this recognition was based within the needs of personal circumstance as well as the desire to extend these opportunities to others. It is asked whether the increasing visibility of a select number of artist-run spaces stimulated the establishment of subsequent organisations. Discussion also considers the socio-cultural environment and considers the degree to which this potentially supported or constrained the development of the organisations.

Supply And Demand

In contrast to historical precedents, none of the organisations report political, ideological or social-activist concerns as motivating factors for establishing. Howie, from Basic Space, reported that a key factor in establishing the space was exerting 'autonomy from the college.'¹⁵³ With this exception, it was not reported that the organisations were stimulated by a desire to resist commercial or institutional structures. This is important because, as explained, artist-run spaces have often been framed as typically anti-institutional or, conversely, as established in reaction to perceived rejection by the institution, key themes arising from responses within Sharon's study, for example.¹⁵⁴ There was no evidence of such agendas from respondents in the present study. It is of note that the *FOOTFALL* report found that one reason for such organisations to be established was as a response to a 'fear of infrastructures around them'.¹⁵⁵ There was no reporting or evidence of this within the sample group; indeed, as is demonstrated through this research the organisations often provided vehicles through which individuals could actively

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Greg Howie, Interview with author.

¹⁵⁴ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts."

¹⁵⁵ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 25.

engage with and participate in the wider arts infrastructures through networking and collaboration. Rather, the main reason given within the sample group was a response to a lack of either studio or exhibition space. This is consistent with the 2005 study by Byrne *et al.* of Irish co-operatives which found that the provision of space was the primary driver for the organisations in their study establishing themselves, with other goals developing subsequently.¹⁵⁶ Lack of opportunity was also identified as a factor in the *FOOTFALL* report.¹⁵⁷

The dominance of dual- or multi-purpose spaces is significant as interviewees from Ormond Studios, PP/S, MTGS, The Joinery, and Block T, stated their own need for workspace or studio space as a contributing stimulus to establishing the organisation.¹⁵⁸ Driscoll, from The Joinery, and MacAthlaoich and Prendergast, from MTGS, already had studio spaces. Driscoll reported the desire to move from working in isolation to working within a more communal setting drove her to establish The Joinery. In the case of MTGS, Prendergast recalled that the organisation was established as a direct threat to losing the studio space in which he was already a tenant.

The only thing I wanted to do was keep the building because everyone was moving out because the building got closed down. [...] So that was the only motivation.¹⁵⁹

With the exception of Basic Space whose founders were still at college, the desire for studio provision was reported as, at least partially, in direct response to losing access to college facilities. For example, as McDonald of Ormond Studios explained:

We had full time studios in college and then we wanted somewhere after college, because otherwise you can just drop off and you've nowhere to go.¹⁶⁰

Echoing this McEvoy, of Block T, stated:

¹⁵⁶ Noreen Byrne, Bridget Carroll, and Michael Ward, "Artists Co-Operatives and Their Potential to Contribute to the Development of the Visual Arts Sector in Ireland," in *International Co-operative Alliance International Co-operatives Research Conference on The Contribution of Cooperatives to Community Culture* (Cork, 2005), 9.

¹⁵⁷ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 25.

¹⁵⁸ Cullen, Interview with author; Miranda Driscoll, Interview with author; Sandra McAllister, Interview with author; Grace McEvoy, Interview with author; Peter Prendergast, Interview with author.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with author.

¹⁶⁰ Martina McDonald, Interview with author.

When you leave college you literally have no studio, no facilities, no tutors.¹⁶¹

Thus, one factor that stimulated the establishment of these organisations was the fundamental necessity for studio space.

This situation occurred against a backdrop of a shortage of studio spaces within the sector. Speaking to the *Irish Times* in 2000 Stella Coffey, Executive Director of the Artists Association of Ireland stated 'the availability of affordable studio space is at crisis point in Dublin'.¹⁶² This shortage continued throughout the aughts with the 2010 ACI Report *Visual Artists Workspace in Ireland* stating there was evidence of 'a substantial level of unsatisfied demand for workspaces in Ireland'.¹⁶³ The report reveals that there were, at that time, '997 artists in shared production facilities and 545 artists in 447 studios in studio complexes' within Ireland as a whole, the majority of which (seventy-one percent) were in Dublin and Cork.¹⁶⁴ This number includes several of the sample organisations that were in operation at that time, whose contribution of facilities is evidently significant.

MART and Block T each provided around seventy studio spaces; as these were on occasion shared spaces the number of artists benefiting at any given time, within an organisation, was in excess of one-hundred.¹⁶⁵ At the other end of the scale, The Joinery provided six studio spaces. The contribution of artist-run spaces in providing studios was reflected upon by one artist:

Their provision of (generally affordable) studios spaces is absolutely essential in Dublin. The lack of studio spaces in the city is something that has been directly tackled by these artist-run spaces.¹⁶⁶

Over time, the numbers of artists supported can be significant. For example, Market Studios reported in their closing statement that they had had housed '60 creatives' over six years.¹⁶⁷ MTGS' website noted in 2015 that the organisation had, by that date, provided workspace for

¹⁶¹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

¹⁶² Stella Coffey cited in Anon, "Artists Paint Grim Picture of Future as Urban Redevelopment Robs Them of Space," *The Irish Times* 04/10/2000.

¹⁶³ Arts Council of Ireland. "Visual Artists' Workspaces in Ireland - A New Approach." 2010.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. See also CHL Consulting Company Limited (produced for the Arts Council). "Review of Visual Artists' Workspace." 2009.

¹⁶⁵ Figures correct at the time of interview with Scanlan in 2015; following interview MART continued to expand.

¹⁶⁶ Anon. Artist B.

¹⁶⁷ The Market Studios, "The Market Studios Facebook," <https://www.facebook.com/The-Market-Studios-83691744457/>; "Closure of the Market Studios," www.themarketstudios.ie/?p=1825.

fifty artists.¹⁶⁸ Overall, the contribution by the sample organisations was significant proportional to the market.

This shortage of space was compounded by an increase in demand due to high numbers of graduates. For example, in 2007, 630 students graduated country-wide from BA(hons) courses in either Fine Art or Design; this figure understates the total who may have sought space as it does not include the numbers of graduates with other qualifications including diplomas, ordinary degrees, postgraduate degrees, or crafts-based courses.¹⁶⁹ The number of arts graduates produced increased annually. For example, in NCAD there was an eighty-eight percent increase in student population during the twenty-year period 1994–2014, i.e. from 697 to 1311 graduates.¹⁷⁰ The increase in demand for studio space, resulting from this increase in numbers put pressure on an already limited sector. The increase in graduates is also relevant because, as outlined, these organisations are primarily established by recent graduates. Also the organisations hosting studios identified their studio artists as primarily part of an emerging-to-early-career cohort.

The personal need for studio space was a feature of discussion with interviewees from dual-function organisations. However, as a single-function studio organisation would have answered these needs, this does not satisfy the question of why artist-run exhibition spaces were established. In interview, it was reported that in some of the organisations the desire to establish an exhibition space was a major purpose of the organisation from conception, while for others this function developed as a response to the opportunities presented to them during the process of establishing the organisation.

Only in Ormond Studios was the intent to establish a gallery space not reported as explicitly present at the outset or during the process of establishment as a major purpose; rather the studio space was primary. McDonald stated:

I am not really sure what everybody else thought but at the start I was just looking for somewhere to work.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, "Artists' Studios," <http://www.monstertruck.ie/artist-studios/>.

¹⁶⁹ Figures compiled by the author from Higher Education Authority statistical reports: Higher Education Authority, "HEA Higher Education: Postgraduate Graduates of HEA Institutions," <http://www.heai.ie/en/statistics/postgraduate-graduates>.

¹⁷⁰ Figures compiled by the author from Department of Education and Skills Annual Statistical Reports 1994–2014. All reports available: Department of Education and Skills, "Statistical Reports," <http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Statistical-Reports/>.

¹⁷¹ McDonald, Interview with author.

She continued that the gallery space later occurred ‘organically, because people started to realise that this is something we all wanted’.¹⁷²

It was previously detailed that the formation of MTGS occurred primarily as a response to potentially losing the studio facilities and so, like Ormond Studios, the studio element of the organisation was the primary driver; however, in this example, the gallery ambitions emerged immediately following that decision:

When myself and Pete [Prendergast] took it on, we initially wanted to obviously run the studios and we wanted to establish the gallery downstairs as something that would really work.¹⁷³

Therefore, although not the initial driver, it was present as a major purpose of the organisation from the point of establishment. MacAthlaoich described the model as accidental:

So having a studio-gallery space, that happened by accident in a way but we were conscious of that good dynamic of having both.¹⁷⁴

Driscoll, of The Joinery, also reported an initial idea to have a ‘working space so that things were going on but not necessarily exhibiting or performing or anything like that’.¹⁷⁵ Echoing MacAthlaoich, she continued that the dual function model happened by ‘accident’ and the physical building ‘dictated’ the idea to them.¹⁷⁶ However, it was not entirely unanticipated and Ward, of The Joinery, states that he had ‘a long held desire to set up a creative private/public space’.¹⁷⁷

Interviewees from Basic Space, Block T and, The Market Studios, reported their organisations as developing from an initial intent to host a single exhibition or event. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported that they were initially looking to rent other gallery spaces to curate projects in, but that the plan changed once they found the building.¹⁷⁸ The gallery was paramount to their plans:

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Colm MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Driscoll, Interview with author.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ward. Email correspondance with author.

¹⁷⁸ Deirdre Morrissey, Interview with author.

We wanted to have a space that we could also curate shows in [...] myself and Claire [Behan] knew when taking on the studios that we wanted a gallery space to be a large part of it.¹⁷⁹

Fitz, of Basic Space, reflected that their plan for a one-off exhibition got ‘thrown away pretty early’ and it ‘became a bigger plan as soon as we found it difficult to get a vacant space for an exhibition’.¹⁸⁰ They revised their objective to that of securing a space where they could both work and exhibit.¹⁸¹ Similarly, in Block T, G-Dovn, McEvoy, and McKeagney were initially looking for a space for a one-off exhibition.

From the outset, PP/S, intended to have exhibition activity and space and Cullen explained that the vision was to make something ‘whereby exhibitions could take place in coincidence with a working space’; physical parameters precluded a designated exhibition space in the first instance.¹⁸² The founders of MART, had previously been curating and managing projects but Scanlan stated that they had ‘always wanted a space’ and that since moving to Dublin they had ‘been looking for a space for a long time’.¹⁸³ Having already established themselves in a curatorial role, the gallery facilities were given as the primary driver of the organisation. Thus, despite the dual-function models of these examples, there is a significant emphasis on the exhibition function of the organisations from the outset. In thisisnotashop, as a single function space, the provision of exhibition opportunities was paramount from the start.

The sampling criteria of this research stipulated that exhibition opportunities must be extended to artists beyond the core group or members of the organisation; however, it is pertinent to consider the degree to which personal promotion influenced the establishment of these organisations and how it was engaged in practice. Consultation of the various organisations’ web archives demonstrates that in those organisations established by practicing artists there are multiple examples of founders participating in exhibitions within their own organisation; Block T stands as an exception to this. Where it occurs, founder participation includes both solo and group exhibitions, although primarily the latter.

However, while this practice occurred, self-exhibition was only reported as a direct motivating factor in limited examples. While the desire for an exhibition opportunity provided the circumstance that preceded the establishment of Block T, these ambitions were abandoned and

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Fitz, Interview with author.

¹⁸¹ Howie, Interview with author.

¹⁸² Cullen, Interview with author.

¹⁸³ Ciara Scanlan, Interview with author.

replaced with the larger organisationally oriented plans. However, in Basic Space and Ormond Studios it was reported that the organisation established the gallery aspect of their enterprise explicitly as a vehicle for self-exhibition. Basic Space, operated a double-pronged approach with the intent (by some members) of both self-exhibition and the extension of the opportunity to others. Ormond Studios, the only members based group of the sample, initially had the intent to exclusively exhibit their own work and use the organisation 'as a platform'.¹⁸⁴ However, while their opening event saw them exhibit work in their own studio spaces, this narrow practice of promoting only their own work was dropped and the focus extended out to other artists as well; both interviewees explain this shift as rooted in a desire to add value and credibility to the exhibition opportunity, which would be unobtainable within a purely self-selection model. Across the remaining organisations the desire for self-exhibition was not reported as a primary reason for establishing the organisations, rather the focus was on extending opportunities to others and participation in a curatorial role.

Recalling the previous discussion of studio artist profile, it is significant that the artists with whom the organisations engaged with at the outset were largely, although not exclusively, graduate or early career artists. Again a lack of opportunity for this cohort was identified as an influencing factor by Booth of MTGS:

We felt that there was no other outlet really for really young artists, artists, to show their work.¹⁸⁵

MacAthlaoich, of the same organisation, describes this as a 'massive grey area' between being a graduate and a professional artist.¹⁸⁶ He stated:

The recent graduates, they're brilliant artists [...] we recognised that there was a good spot there, you know a bit of a gap in the market I suppose.¹⁸⁷

Similarly Fiore, of thisisnotashop, recalled:

You had these great graduate programmes that were happening and there were so many artists that were making works, great works, who just literally needed a platform, and there were so few venues.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁴ McAllister, Interview with author.

¹⁸⁵ Rayne Booth, Interview with author.

¹⁸⁶ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Jessamyn Fiore, Interview with author.

As is further explored in Chapter 2 this profile of artist features heavily in the artistic activities of the organisations, especially at the outset. Thus the founders, at the outset, were often interested in the provision of opportunities to artists that could be considered their peers in terms of career stage.

This theme of peers is important. For those that related the establishment of the organisation to their move away from education the motivation is given as a response not only to the loss of facilities but also of the peer support and community that existed around their college experience. The theme of creating a community traversed discussion of both the studio and gallery aspects of the organisation as a major motivation. Fiore describes thisisnotashop as ‘a nexus of this emerging community’ and Fitz describes Basic Space as ‘a place for people’.¹⁸⁹ MacAthlaoich considered:

When you do spend four years in art school—it was important to keep that live and keep that going and generate an art community.¹⁹⁰

McEvoy, of Block T, reflected that:

Originally we had that support group in our class and we wanted to continue that when we left.¹⁹¹

Cullen, of PP/S, echoed this:

I finished college and wanted to set up a situation where I could work with a bunch of peers, and work in a group.¹⁹²

As previously noted Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported a desire to move from working alone to working within a group:

I was working in a space on my own and I was looking for kind of a communal work space.¹⁹³

She also likened the intended environment to that within a college context:

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.; Fitz, Interview with author.

¹⁹⁰ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

¹⁹¹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

¹⁹² Cullen, Interview with author.

¹⁹³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

There would be something that would evolve just from artists being in each other's company, almost like college, when you are studying and you do crits [critiques] and things like that.¹⁹⁴

Similarly Morrissey, of The Market Studios, considered that peer support was the major stimulus for artists to use the space:

The reason people come into the studio space is because they want that element of having that peer support.¹⁹⁵

The importance of this aspect was also acknowledged by Scanlan, of MART, who described arranging formal group critique sessions to encourage interaction across the sizable group of artists who use their various studios.¹⁹⁶

It is also indicated that the idea of a community of peers was not just based in directly supporting the production and distribution of work but was also highly social and extended to audiences. Booth recalled that MTGS' openings were held weekly and:

[T]he students from NCAD would come down, all of our extended group of people who had had shows there and were going to have shows there, and our friends, we would all meet there every Thursday.¹⁹⁷

These themes were also identified in the *FOOTFALL* report which finds that:

One of the main driving forces (raised during the discussion as an underestimated strength) is friendship within the arts community: 'having parties, sharing food, finding common interests with like-minded people'.¹⁹⁸

And:

Artist led spaces are often initially devised as places to gather, pool resources and maintain the momentum generated through peer-learning in art college.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ Morrissey, Interview with author.

¹⁹⁶ Scanlan, Interview with author.

¹⁹⁷ Booth, Interview with author.

¹⁹⁸ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 26.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

The theme of wanting to create a community of peers as a motivating factor was far more pronounced within the sample than had emerged in the historical and international literature. To clarify, the creation of a community emerged within these as an outcome of the organisations but was not explicitly stipulated as an initial purpose, as it is within our sample.

Density, Visibility, and Legitimacy

According Carroll and Hannan, '[d]ensity increases legitimacy [...] [l]egitimation increases founding rates'.²⁰⁰ Following their thesis, the question is raised as to whether following an increase of activity circa 2005/2006, the previously incrementally increasing field became self-replicating and thus gained momentum. However, this thesis alone does not account for why this change occurred when it did. The findings of the current research develop on this perspective, and it is possible that not only increased density but also increased visibility played a role by demonstrating the legitimacy of these types of organisations.

PP/S, thisisnotashop, and MTGS were all operational in 2006. The popularity of these organisations with their peers is demonstrated through self-reporting in interview, this was highlighted in the earlier discussion of peer and community. This participation by peers is important as it raises awareness of this model of organisation among the profile of individuals that continued to establish some of the subsequent organisations. The level to which organisations directly influenced each other is assessed below. However, before doing so, a second aspect of visibility and legitimacy is proposed as of potential relevance, namely that there were a number of high-profile ventures and collaborations undertaken particularly by PP/S, and also by MTGS, at this time.

In the period 2003 to 2007, PP/S undertook several high-profile ventures. The period marks the life-span of their Pallas Heights projects. Reporting on the closure of Pallas Heights, art critic Aidan Dunne writes in the *Irish Times*:

The project was one of the more intriguing off-site ventures that have been attempted in recent years, and it produced some memorable responses from artists, many of whom rose to the exceptional challenges posed by the setting.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ Glenn R Carroll and Michael T Hannan, "On Using Institutional Theory in Studying Organizational Populations," *American Sociological Review* (1989): 545. See also "Density Dependence in the Evolution of Populations of Newspaper Organizations," *American Sociological Review* (1989). And for a critique Lynne G Zucker, "Combining Institutional Theory and Population Ecology: No Legitimacy, No History," *ibid.*

²⁰¹ Aidan Dunne, "Artistic Farewells to Sean Tracey House," *The Irish Times* 17/05/2006.

One of these other off-site projects, which raised the profile of the organisation, was a 2005 collaboration with Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane. Cullen, of PP/S, described that representatives from the Hugh Lane had been attended Pallas Heights on a number of occasions and then approached PP/S to curate the Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane space over the summer months when the main collection had been removed in preparation for renovations. PP/S responded with a robust curatorial. This included both an exhibition within the Hugh Lane Gallery and offsite exhibitions, two live events were also programmed within the gallery space.

Writing in *Circa* Noel Kelly described the exhibition as 'a coherent, and at times frenzied, view of a very particular aesthetic in contemporary practice' and considered it to be 'ambitious and laudable'.²⁰² Similarly, it was described as 'ambitious, compendious' although 'uneven' in a review in the *Irish Times*; the reviewer continues that while '[s]ome pieces do disappoint [...] Most of what they've come up with is good, and some of it is exceptionally good'.²⁰³

While the reviews of the exhibition were mixed, the collaboration of PP/S with this major Irish arts institution is highly significant in raising the profile of the organisation. They also undertook a collaboration with Dublin Docklands Authority in 2006, whereby PP/S curated an exhibition in the CHQ building. Thus, while PP/S had been operational since 1996 their profile increased during this key period.

MTGS also undertook a high profile collaboration during this period. MacAthlaoich recounted that Patrick Murphy, Director of the Royal Hibernian Academy (RHA) used to 'pass by the gallery to and from his apartment when he was going to work and he'd throw his head in'; he subsequently invited MTGS to collaborate with the RHA in 2008, while the RHA were undertaking renovations.²⁰⁴ The collaboration included the exhibitions *Big Foot* and *Let'go*. The relationship was launched at the opening event for *Big Foot*, which was an exhibition of sixty-eight artists each of whom had previously exhibited with MTGS in either group or solo shows. Laura McGovern, writing for *Circa* considered that the show delivered 'mixed results', while some of the presentation of the work was considered 'shoddy'. Overall she considered that '[t]he eclecticism of the works on the display, though, results in an exhibition with an abundance of vitality'.²⁰⁵ *Let'go* was curated by RHA curator Ruth Carroll. The collaboration also included tours of the MTGS space by the friends of the RHA, an 'art swap' between MTGS and RHA members and resource support such as access to the RHA accountants for a period. MacAthlaoich considered that their

²⁰² Noel Kelly, "Dublin: Offside and Offsite Live at Dublin City Gallery the Hugh Lane," *CIRCA* Autumn no. 113 (2015).

²⁰³ Anon, "On the Wall and Off the Wall," *The Irish Times*, 31/08/2005.

²⁰⁴ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²⁰⁵ Laura McGovern, "Big Foot, Monster Truck Gallery and Studio, Dublin," *CIRCA* February 2008.

collaboration provided MTGS with a 'stamp of approval'.²⁰⁶ In return Patrick Murphy, Director of the RHA, felt that it brought the RHA 'great credibility' and gave the RHA 'oxygen' while their own gallery was closed.²⁰⁷

The significance of these collaborations and subsequent press coverage is that they indicate that these organisations, although relatively young, had established a reputation. Thus, the organisations were both popular with peers and were regarded as relevant by other individuals and institutions within Ireland's art world indicating enhanced visibility of an initial small population of organisations. It is proposed that this visibility may have further encouraged those considering undertaking such initiatives and thereby contributed to increases in population density. The proposal of enhanced legitimacy and visibility is speculative; however, the question of influences was directly addressed in interview and several cross-influences are evidenced.

A general awareness of historical precedents of the artist-run gallery model was demonstrated by interviewees. Driscoll, of The Joinery, described:

The model of The Joinery is something I couldn't take credit for, it's an embedded thing because artist-run spaces have been around for years.²⁰⁸

Knowledge of international activity was also demonstrated. However, reporting of direct influence by international examples was limited; only PP/S and MART indicated this. Scanlan, of MART, reported that The Art Foundation (TAF) in Athens, WASPS in Glasgow, and ACME in London all influenced their entrepreneurial and self-sustaining working model. Cullen, of PP/S, reported that Matt's Gallery in London was a direct influence in the curatorial model that they engaged within their Pallas Heights project, whereby there are two exhibition spaces and work is developed by an artist in one space while a public exhibition is held in the other.²⁰⁹

Irish organisations were commonly cited as of general influence and as sources of direct advice and guidance, especially in the early days of the new organisations. Despite their origins and success, neither TBG+S nor PAC were referenced as a direct sources of influence; this would seem to indicate that the sample organisations do not place themselves as peers to these forerunners. Rather, there was evidence that they were influenced by more recent enterprises.

²⁰⁶ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²⁰⁷ Anon, "The Art of Reaching Out," in *Press Cutting (source unknown) From Monster Truck Gallery and Studios' Archive* (2008).

²⁰⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

²⁰⁹ Cullen, Interview with author.

Fitz, from Basic Space, reported that they had spoken with The Exchange (Dublin), Block T, Occupy Space (Limerick), and Faber Studios (Limerick) for practical advice while they refined their own organisational concept and model. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported getting advice from Broadstone Studios, as well as having contact with PP/S, and previously holding a studio at MTGS. McAllister, of Ormond Studios, reported initial advice from The Market Studios and later advice from Duggan founder of PP/S. Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported that following establishing the space they had contact with Broadstone Studios, and she also noted influence from MTGS and PP/S. There was also evidence of direct links between the organisations. McDonald, of Ormond Studios, was simultaneously an intern at PP/S. Jessica Foley, following her role as Gallery Manager of thisisnotashop, sat on the board of The Market Studios. Similarly, before opening the MART gallery space, Scanlan is also listed as a board member of The Market Studios; at the time of interview she also held a studio at MTGS.²¹⁰

Reflecting on the topic of inter-field influence Linders of Block T reported providing informal guidance to subsequent organisations:

—just through friends of friends, and through the art world itself, you know even when you are out [socially] you have a sit down and a chat about these things or people would just ask you your opinion on how to move forward on this.²¹¹

This suggests that informal influence was in excess of the substantial connections outlined above.

It is important to note that while these interviewees acknowledged advice and support from other organisations this does not necessarily, in the view of several interviewees, translate to homogeneity within the field and several interviewees sought to emphasise the uniqueness of their models and practices:

We were definitely doing it completely differently than everybody else was.²¹²

—we would literally be building something that had never come before [in Ireland].²¹³

²¹⁰ Market Studios Limited [462674], "8349146/1: B10 Change of Director or Secretary Details," (Companies Registration Office, 16/11/2012 [04/02/2010]); "8349213/1: B10 Change of Director or Secretary Details," (Companies Registration Office, 16/11/2012 [17/02/2012]).

²¹¹ Linders, Interview with author.

²¹² Fitz, Interview with author.

²¹³ Linders, Interview with author.

We knew what we wanted ourselves and what worked within our own parameters [...] we had different possibilities from everyone else, and the best thing to do [was] to build this ourselves in our own model.²¹⁴

A more conservative reflection was given by McAllister, of Ormond Studios:

I don't think it is the most unique thing to ever hit Dublin, but then I think that every artist-run space in Dublin is necessary. I don't think any of them do the same thing.²¹⁵

It is not unsurprising that those involved in the organisations focus on the qualities that differentiate them from other organisations. The extent of both these similarities and differences are explored throughout this thesis. At the current juncture it is noted that there is evidence that there was a high level of exposure to other organisations at the time of establishment and there is potential for significant influence between the organisations. Thus, it is proposed that the visibility and success of several early Dublin-based artist-run galleries potentially influenced successive organisations by promoting the legitimacy of the model and by offering a supporting resource in the form of information.

The Economy and Access to Premises

Consideration of development during this historical period cannot be independent from consideration of the economic climate of the period, as it coincides with a particularly notable time within the Irish economy. The economic climate can be anticipated to impact organisations in two ways: it effects resources available to artists and arts organisations, and in the case of spatially based practices it impacts property prices. Finances are a major topic of Chapter 4 and details relating to this area are, within the current chapter, contained to a summary of sources at the point of establishment. The main focus of the section is discussion regarding access to premises at the time of establishing the organisations, the implications of the compromises often made in order to access space are explored within this chapter and throughout this thesis.

It is of note that Ireland's economy was particularly strong during the early years of the millennium. From 1990 to 2007 the economy grew by an average rate of 6.5 percent per annum.²¹⁶ This can be characterised as an economic climate focused on risk and speculation, and

²¹⁴ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²¹⁵ McAllister, Interview with author.

²¹⁶ The Economist, "Ireland's Economy: The Party Is Definitely Over," <http://www.economist.com/node/13331143>; Tejvan Pettinger, "Irish Economy Summary," <http://www.economicshelp.org/blog/7344/economics/irish-economy-summary/>.

an atmosphere favourable to creative and vocational enterprise. The increase in activity in the field circa 2005 to 2008 corresponds with the final years of a period of economic growth, between 1995 to 2008, known as 'The Celtic Tiger' following which, in 2008, the country fell into recession.

Access to personal and external resources is important because the models of artist-run space dominantly engaged by the sample groups demands access to resources. With the exception of Ormond Studios, these organisations eschewed the more traditional membership models of operation. Deprived of this vital income source the organisations would require alternative financial sources. This variously includes significant investment of their own individual resources or access to business loans, depends on the ability of artists to pay to exhibit in the space, and draws on public funding sources where available. As is detailed in Chapter 4, while several organisations benefited from early funding none received public assistance to establish the organisations in the first instance; the primary source of financing at the outset was personal investment and loans.

The potential to access these is supported by the economic conditions of the time. This would suggest that the strong economy supported the emergence of these organisations. However, conversely, limiting the applicability of this thesis is the fact that, as shown in the figures presented earlier, the growth that began during this period continued following the economic downturn of 2008, and continued to grow until 2013. Thus, while the economic conditions may have supported the establishment of these organisations through increased access to resources, this alone cannot be considered as the primary driver, as there is evidence that organisations continued to establish despite the latter economic downturn. Furthermore, it can be suggested that the benefits from increase in access to resources during a strong economy is counteracted by a high level of associated costs.

The strength of the economy in the early years of the millennium is indicated as having the negative impact of increasing the cost of renting buildings. Booth, of MTGS, reflected:

Economically space was just at such a premium at the time, and it was really hard to get space even to have a studio. Rents were really high.²¹⁷

This creates a condition which would appear to be antithetical with the increase in such initiatives circa 2006; it might also be expected that the subsequent decline of the property market circa 2008 was more accommodating in providing opportunities. In interview in 2013 Morrissey, of The Market Studios, believed this to be the case reflecting:

²¹⁷ Booth, Interview with author.

As soon as the recession hit and rents went down it just meant that an artist or a group of artists getting together to rent a building became a really achievable thing. And the scene of artist-run spaces the last couple of years, it's just got really vibrant.²¹⁸

However, while these reflections anecdotally consider the broader field, if we focus on the direct reporting by interviewees of their own experiences, regarding accessing buildings, there was a mix of experiences irrespective of date of establishment.

As was noted in the earlier overview of individual organisations, a variety of premises were utilised. This included shop fronts, industrial space, office space, and even an old fire station; only in the example of MTGS' Temple Bar premises did an organisation occupy a space specifically developed as a gallery. The majority of spaces were leased from private landlords. Exceptions to this are PP/S' Pallas Heights, MART's Firestation gallery, and Basic Space's space at Marrowbone Lane, all of which belonged to Dublin City Council (DCC). MTGS' Temple Bar space was part of Temple Bar Cultural Trust's portfolio but was sublet to MTGS by Black Church Print Studios.

Interviewees from Basic Space and PP/S both discussed the challenge of finding a space in the first instance. Fitz, of Basic Space, reported that despite a prevalence of vacant properties around Dublin it can be 'very difficult, completely impossible actually to get access'. The key challenge reported was identifying and gaining access to individuals who could make decisions regarding their requests; Fitz reflected that initially they were 'speaking to the wrong people'.²¹⁹ She also believed that the perception of their youth was a challenge in dealing with potential landlords. Cullen, of PP/S, also highlighted the ongoing problem of finding space over the years:

You are always chasing your tail trying to find somewhere else and spaces were becoming smaller and more expensive.²²⁰

G. Murphy, of the same organisation, reflected that, 'art is a messy business, so a lot of landlords wouldn't want artists in their building'.²²¹ Cullen reported that the majority of their premises were found through word of mouth.

In contrast, interviewees from The Joinery, The Market Studios, and Ormond Studios reported that the process was relatively straightforward: the founders of Ormond Studios found their

²¹⁸ Morrissey, Interview with author.

²¹⁹ Fitz, Interview with author.

²²⁰ Cullen, Interview with author.

²²¹ Gavin Murphy, Interview with author.

property through an advert on property website daft.ie; Flynn, one of founders of The Market Studios, worked for the previous occupants of their building and alerted her co-founders to its availability; and Driscoll, of The Joinery, reports that they happened to be passing by the building while the agent was showing it.

In the instances of MTGS' Francis Street space and thisisnotashop the founders were already tenants in the building before establishing the organisation. Previous to becoming the gallery thisisnotashop's building was being rented by founder Stanley as a 'rough and ready' apartment; Stanley and Darcy decided to use the front area as a creative space and the premise was retained after Stanley moved out. As previously identified MacAthlaoich and Prendergast were already tenant in their building and renting studios from another organisation, also called Monster Truck, which had reportedly run into arrears with the landlord. MacAthlaoich recalled:

One of the previous managers was saying 'well we're going to have to lock up here' and myself and Pete [Prendergast] quickly decided, and agreed, together that we would take it on.'²²²

They established themselves as a new organisation, although paid homage to their predecessors by retaining the Monster Truck name. A more formal experience was reported in regard to their second space; Prendergast reported that he had been looking for a space for some time during which he had registered his interest with Temple Bar Cultural Trust regarding future opportunities.

In respect of the buildings rented from DCC, interviewees from PP/S and the MART described a longer process of gaining access to the building. In discussion of the Pallas Heights project, Cullen reported that they identified several potential spaces and then approached DCC about 'provision for studios and provision for space for artists'.²²³ With agreement from DCC and after liaison with a resident they secured the support of the community to take up residency in the space. Scanlan reported that they identified their firestation property themselves during a search for suitable venues and that they 'hounded Dublin City Council' to get agreement to take on the building.²²⁴ In these examples a more proactive and sustained approach to gaining access to the buildings was necessitated.

Discussion has considered access to buildings across the sample and therefore across a changing economy. A mixture of experiences were reported but while difficulties were encountered in

²²² MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²²³ Cullen, Interview with author.

²²⁴ Scanlan, Interview with author.

some instances there is no evidence that the economic growth, and subsequent high property prices, were ultimately prohibitive to these organisations establishing. This is of interest as it is contrary to what is more broadly associated with artist-run spaces. For example within Ireland in the 1980s low rents are credited as stimulating an increase in studio groups in general as well as leading to the cultural revival of the Temple Bar district.²²⁵ However, this is not to say that property prices do not impact these organisations but rather that they gain access to property *despite* these conditions. In order to contextualise discussion on access it is necessary to consider the locations and conditions of the buildings and the compromises that sometimes are necessary in order to gain this access.

In the first instance, it is noted that with the exception of MTGS' Temple Bar space and MART's suburban Rathmines spaces, all of the other locations were located in the centre, or on the periphery, of the city centre in relatively socio-economically deprived areas, see Figure 14. Discussing studio spaces, which he identifies as primarily artist-run, artist Alan Phelan described that:

The story of artist work spaces or studios is sometimes tied to the search for affordability as many artists [...] are happy to work in the wrong part of town if it means that the outlay on rent is not too much.²²⁶

In an article for *The Irish Times* Aidan Dunne describes PP/S' Grangegorman Street space:

It's off the beaten track but still relatively central, a slightly anomalous location in a city where property is at a premium.²²⁷

In the example of MART other factors that made the buildings accessible to artists include their willingness to 'take buildings that no one else wants' for other reasons.²²⁸ For example, Scanlan described that they were able to rent one of their buildings because of its less than desirable location as 'no one wants to have an office above a casino, professionally'.²²⁹

In regard to condition, while the spaces used by Ormond Studios and The Market Studios were reported as in relatively good condition, many of the other interviewees reported that their

²²⁵ Mary Burke, "Looking Back and Going Forward," in *A Newsletter From New Art Studio*, ed. New Art Studio (1998); John Montgomery, "The Story of Temple Bar: Creating Dublin's Cultural Quarter," *Planning Practice & Research* 10, no. 2 (1995): 138.

²²⁶ Phelan, Alan 'Spaces for Artists - possibilities for an independent future' in Liz Burns and Leah Johnston, "Fireside Conversations," (Firestation Artist Studios, 2009), 90-96.

²²⁷ Aidan Dunne, "Off the Beaten Palette," *The Irish Times*, 10/05/2007.

²²⁸ Scanlan, Interview with author.

²²⁹ Ibid.

buildings were in poor conditions and often without basic amenities; interviewees from both Basic Space and MART report that there was no electricity supply when they moved in. The condition of the buildings often required extensive renovation; this is both in initial and subsequent spaces.

Interviewees from The Joinery, Block T, and MTGS all report a period of three months of preparing their initial space in order to achieve a basic standard. MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, recalled that they 'gutted' the premises:

I'll never forget it! The back courtyard was, I'd say, two metres high in bin sacks that were never thrown out [...] It took us three huge skips, industrial skips, to clear the whole area out, furniture, the old shed, dead pigeons, the works. It was a huge amount of work.²³⁰

This thus entailed substantial clearing of the space of detritus. A similar experience is reported by Linders with respect to Block T:

The old warehouse [...] at that time was an absolute mess. It had been for about fifteen years [...] So it was not a very nice place.²³¹

Echoing MacAthlaoich of MTGS, Linders of Block T described: 'That was literally the seven of us dragging that out, emptying skips, all that kind of stuff.'²³² Scanlan, of MART, described how they walked in to the Firestation building on the first day to find the premises 'absolutely derelict, covered in pigeon [mess], no floors, no walls, absolutely run down'.²³³

For some of the organisations the issues were structural and new floors needed to be laid. In addition to the examples already given, Cullen of PP/S highlighted that in their gallery space in Grangegorman Road, previously a milking parlour, a new floor had to be installed, as well as plastering the walls. Similarly in describing the renovation of their Georgian building on Dominick Street, which was formerly divided into bedsits, he described that 'the floors were in bits'.²³⁴ Interviewees from thisisnotashop reported that it was necessary to re-lay the floor during their tenancy. Indeed, it was discovered that the building was in a state of disrepair to the extreme that DCC declared the building unfit. In her account, Fiore described arriving at the premises to find that:

²³⁰ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²³¹ Linders, Interview with author.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Scanlan, Interview with author.

²³⁴ Cullen, Interview with author.

[T]he door had been bolted and locked by the city. It turned out that the city had come and inspected the premises and had told the landlord [...] that there were certain repairs that had to be done, that it was unsafe. [...] we had twenty four hours to get everything out of the space when it was closed for a month while he made those repairs.²³⁵

Block T also encountered problems from a health and safety perspective after the fire department issued them with notice that they were in violation of safety regulations, and they consequently had to close that building for renovation.

Thus, it is evidenced that many of the buildings were taken on initially in a dilapidated state and required extensive renovation at a basic level; with the exception of Basic Space further renovations were also undertaken in each instance to develop the buildings to be fit for purpose as studios and galleries. For Basic Space, while Fitz reports that they spent energy ‘washing the floors’ and ‘cleaning the place out and putting a lot of back work into it’, it was also reported that, despite the deteriorated condition of the space, they did not undertake further renovations.²³⁶ This was reported as due to the lack of security in their lease. She explained:

We were forced to make the realisation that we’re never going to add to this building because this building can be taken away from us.²³⁷

However, despite the efforts of the organisations, for some, there was reported persistent challenges. For example, issues such as heating were often problematic in the older, or larger buildings. Fitz described the Basic Space warehouse as ‘freezing’.²³⁸ Similarly discussing the warehouse part of Block T, McEvoy stated:

Upstairs became unusable [in the winter] because that building is so difficult to heat. In the winter time we actually had fog in the building [laughs]. When it was snowing we had to open the windows to let the heat in, it was really bad.²³⁹

²³⁵ Fiore, Interview with author.

²³⁶ Fitz, Interview with author.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

Office buildings and smaller premises were more fortunate in this regard. However, despite the renovations the spaces were often described by interviewees in affectionate, if pejorative, terms such as 'crumbly', 'brittle', and 'grungy'.²⁴⁰

It is proposed that the period of establishing the organisations, and in particular the process of renovating the property, played a role in coalescing the energies of individuals towards a common goal and was perceived as important to social cohesion within the groups. For example, MacAthlaoich of MTGS recalled:

[W]e managed to do a massive, massive clear out and I suppose it was that investment of time, like those three months that we poured ourselves into it, that it really became that this was our baby now, and that's how it began really.²⁴¹

Indeed, while as outlined the renovations were often challenging and extensive, the recollection of these periods were particular vibrant accounts within the interviews. This reflects the formative experience that they represent. Recalling Granovetter's definition that the strength of ties is predicated on *emotional intensity*, *intimacy* and *reciprocity* it is proposed that the process of establishing the organisations accelerates and reinforces ties.²⁴²

The finding that these organisations are often established in poor quality buildings in socio-economically deprived areas is not an unexpected finding when considered against historical precedents. This pattern has proliferated internationally with shop fronts, offices, and industrial units often utilised by artist-run organisations either for temporary or more long term projects. Within the Irish context it is witnessed in both PAC and TBG+S; recall that the former took both a factory and a printing works as premises, while the second was housed in a former shirt factory. Similarly, the location of these types of organisations in socio-economically deprived areas is not unusual. However there are implications and consequences for using these types of buildings and locales for gallery, as opposed to singularly studio, activities. The location and condition of the buildings is evidenced within this thesis as having an impact on the curatorship of the spaces and on the potential for developing audiences.

One artist interviewed explained that artists' groups 'acted as unofficial caretakers of buildings awaiting redevelopment'.²⁴³ Furthermore, the presence of these initiatives is considered as an

²⁴⁰ Booth, Interview with author; Linders, Interview with author; MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²⁴¹ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

²⁴² Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," 1361.

²⁴³ Anon. Artist B.

indicator for future regeneration of an area. This is variously seen as either positive for local communities, through enriching and regenerating the neighbourhood, or negative by gentrifying the area, driving up prices and displacing the original community, and indeed the artists themselves.²⁴⁴ Both Fitz and Howie, of Basic Space, credit their eventual success in securing a property to a formal proposal that they authored; this included case studies of other similar spaces and their contribution to urban regeneration. The regenerative potential of these organisations is perhaps one reason that landlords are willing to entertain them. However, as a result they may also wish to limit their tenancy in anticipation of future developments and financial opportunities.

The issue of tenancy arose in discussion with interviewees from all of the organisations except The Market Studios, Ormond Studios, and The Joinery. It was reported that, in some instances, the organisations were prepared or obliged to accept insecure or compromised tenancy agreements. The willingness of organisations to engage short term arrangements, either by choice or through lack of other options supports access to premises.

Basic Space's initial warehouse space was 'slack space' and the landlord allowed them to use it rent free. However the consequence of such a space is that they had no lease agreement and could be asked to leave at any time. This detracted from any desire to renovate the property, precluded them from undertaking long term programming, and was a risk that had to be communicated to each exhibiting artist or group:

And someone opening a show, you had to say, 'look, you have to know with all the money and all the time you are putting into the show, this could be closed down the night of your opening'.²⁴⁵

For the interviewees of Basic Space it was reported that, on balance, the benefits of their arrangement outweighed this negative aspect.

This balance of benefits was also considered by Linders who reported, in reference to some of Block T's ancillary projects, a willingness to compromise on tenancy rights in order to facilitate access to premises on a short term basis. He reported that they 'don't actually want to sign a short term lease agreement because that gives us more rights than we feel we need'. He felt an

²⁴⁴ Carl Grodach, Nicole Foster, and James Murdoch III, "Gentrification and the Artistic Dividend: The Role of the Arts in Neighborhood Change (Working Paper)," (2014); Carl Grodach, Nicole Foster, and James Murdoch III, "Gentrification and the Artistic Dividend: The Role of the Arts in Neighborhood Change," *Journal of the American Planning Association* 80, no. 1 (2014). For further discussion on culture and urban regeneration see Geoffrey Crossick and Patrycja Kaszynska. "Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project." Wiltshire, 2016.

²⁴⁵ Fitz, Interview with author.

alternative arrangement that exempted them from these rights would be more beneficial.²⁴⁶ He envisaged that this would benefit both parties:

So [landlords] aren't going to find [themselves] in a position where [they] can't get rid of us but at the same time we are promised that [they must] give us a certain amount of notice to get in or out.²⁴⁷

In discussion of MART's studios spaces, Scanlan reported an acceptance that some of the spaces were temporary arrangements. She stated:

It doesn't matter if we get evicted or it's moved out because we are able to move, we are adaptable to new spaces.²⁴⁸

Thus, there is evidence that in order to gain access to spaces these organisations, in some instances, are prepared to compromise on tenancy rights. However, this was largely limited to projects or aspects of the organisations that were planned from the outset as short term; where ambitions were focused in the medium to long term there was a reported a desire for more stable tenancy arrangements. Indeed insecure tenancy and non-renewal of lease are identified in Chapter 4 as a key challenge to the sustainability of the organisations.

In respect of the willingness of artists to take tenancy in often poorly appointed buildings, in socio-economically deprived neighbourhoods, or in buildings unattractive to other businesses, both opportunities and challenges have been identified; however, the practice of engaging such properties plays a significant part in allowing these groups to access buildings despite changes within the economy. Thus, at the point of organisational establishment access to buildings was not evidenced as prohibitive despite the economic climate. However, this observation does not diminish the problems identified as a consequence of these conditions later in their development.

As indicated at the start of this discussion it is essential to consider the economic climate of the period and the influence that this may have had, as this was a particularly significant period within the Irish economy. However, it is suggested through discussion of both financial resources and access to buildings that while both the strong and weak economies present opportunities and challenges to be negotiated, these did not unilaterally promote or constrain the establishment of the organisations. They did however have impact upon the environment that the organisations

²⁴⁶ Linders, Interview with author.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Scanlan, Interview with author.

negotiated. The longer term impact of the environment, including tenancy and finances is explored in Chapter 4.

A Fractured Field

The focus of this chapter has primarily been on the emergence of the field in respect of the histories of the individual organisations. This section considers the extent of the cohesiveness of this field, considered both from a geographic and an inter-organisational perspective, both of which potentially intersect. The section starts with an account of the historic role of Temple Bar as a cultural hub within the city and the significance of this for TBG+S and PAC. It then provides an account of the sample period as comparatively dispersed geographically. Finally it identifies a fractured quality to the relationships between the organisations.

The question of proximity is raised by Blessi *et al.* who observe that high density art clusters increase 'the conditions for cross-fertilization among a variety of different experiences, practices and methods'.²⁴⁹ Rosenstein considers that decentralisation, among numerous impacts, undermines infrastructure including informal networks, intergenerational mentoring, and impacts accessibility to audiences.²⁵⁰ These interactions may be either formal or informal. Where they are formal collaborations, potential benefits are identified by *The Burgess Report* as including increased 'capacity and reach', as well as, 'access to facilities, or pooling of resources to do projects of larger scale, or for greater visibility'.²⁵¹

Such a hub is observed in Dublin's Temple Bar in the 1980s and 1990s. Temple Bar is a 218 acre section of Dublin city situated along the south bank of the River Liffey, Dublin 2.²⁵² In the 1980s it was developed into a cultural hub within the city. A full history of the development of Temple Bar is provided by Montgomery.²⁵³ In summary, in the 1980s the State bus company, CIE, began to buy up property in the area with plans to develop it into a bus station.²⁵⁴ In the interim, as Montgomery explains, the low rents in this district attracted artists and others to the area.²⁵⁵

²⁴⁹ Giorgio Tavano Blessi, Pier Luigi Sacco, and Thomas Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," *Cultural Trends* 20, no. 2 (2011): 152.

²⁵⁰ Rosenstein's comments are made in reference to the displacement of artists from established arts neighbourhood; nonetheless they can be applied also to the absence of these districts in the first instance. Carole Rosenstein, "Conceiving Artistic Work in the Formation of Artist Policy: Thinking Beyond Disinterest and Autonomy," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 34, no. 1 (2004): 71.

²⁵¹ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 35.

²⁵² Montgomery, "The Story of Temple Bar: Creating Dublin's Cultural Quarter," 138.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 138.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 138-39.

Clíodhna Shaffrey (Director of TBG+S, 2014-present) reflects that in the 1980s the area had become a 'Bohemia – a free space where people and ideas circulate'.²⁵⁶

The planned bus station development was met with resistance from local residents, artists, and traders, as well as by *An Taisce* The National Trust for Ireland.²⁵⁷ As a result, in 1990, Taoiseach, Charles Haughey, acceded to the protesters in favour of the establishment of a cultural hub.²⁵⁸ Legal specificities regarding the development of the area were set out in the *Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act*.²⁵⁹ Temple Bar Properties Limited was established with the powers of compulsory purchase and the remit of acquiring the property holdings of CIE (Ireland's National Transport Provider) and Dublin Corporation; Temple Bar Renewal Limited was also established as a policy making body tasked with overseeing the development of the area.²⁶⁰

Included within this policy were limitations on the use of properties. Montgomery describes how a key part of the remit of Temple Bar Properties Limited was to 'strengthen cultural activity in the area, by a combination of measures, incentives' including making affordable property available.²⁶¹ A survey of activity in the area, undertaken by Nexus Europe in 1991, revealed that 73 organisations, comprising a combined thirty-three percent of activity in the area, were concerned with cultural production and consumption.²⁶²

The redevelopment of the Temple Bar district of Dublin plays an important role in the histories of both PAS and TBG+S; while both organisations preceded these redevelopments they both benefited directly from them. In 1977, with the financial assistance of the ACI, Project Arts Centre purchased its building.²⁶³ The TBG+S building was part of the portfolio of Temple Bar Properties Limited and was redeveloped and expanded by architects McCullough Mulvin. Importantly a Cultural Use Agreement was negotiated between the organisation and Temple Bar Properties including a fair rent clause; this was the first such agreement within Ireland and secured the

²⁵⁶ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 13.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Montgomery, "The Story of Temple Bar: Creating Dublin's Cultural Quarter," 153.

²⁵⁹ Oireachtas, "Temple Bar Area Renewal and Development Act, 1991," (1991).

²⁶⁰ Montgomery, "The Story of Temple Bar: Creating Dublin's Cultural Quarter," 154-55.

In 2006 Temple Bar Properties Limited became Temple Bar Cultural Trust. The Trust's focus was not only on managing the property portfolio but also managing and programming cultural output in the area. However in 2013 following an audit by the city council the trust was accused of "control weaknesses and/or regulatory violations [that] represent unacceptable exposure and risk" to the company. Consequently in 2014 the trust was dissolved and their responsibilities transferred to the city council. See: Olivia Kelly, "Analysis: Temple Bar Cultural Trust to Have Assets Sold Off.," *The Irish Times*, 08/08/2015.

²⁶¹ Montgomery, "The Story of Temple Bar: Creating Dublin's Cultural Quarter," 160.

²⁶² Ibid., 140.

²⁶³ Project Arts Centre, "About Us".

future tenancy of the organisation.²⁶⁴ The location of PAC and TBG+S in Temple Bar is highly significant. The redevelopment of their buildings funded by state and European money indicates that although artist-run these organisations were valued cultural contributors within the city.

However, of the sample organisations, only MTGS located a premises in this area; and none of the other organisations expressed ambition to reside in this district suggesting that it is perceived as either inaccessible or undesirable to them. No clear alternative hub is identified with a comparable density within such a small locale. However, the Dublin 7 district does emerge as of note. It is important to note that not all of the sample organisations were resident in the district simultaneously and thus the density at any given time is less than may be suggested by Figure 14 which presents the cumulative pattern of location across the entire period. However, it is also of note that a number of other single function (i.e. no exhibition space) artist studios, not shown on the map, did reside in this district.

A project to connect these organisations was initiated in 2012 by Block T, called LINK Culturefest. LINK Culturefest aimed to bring together 'a number of partners who have been integral in the establishment of a thriving cultural and creative community in this area' in a weekend long festival which aimed to 'celebrate and showcase the culture, art and people that make up the diverse community that exists in Smithfield and its surrounding areas'.²⁶⁵ This event comprised a series of public events as well as an international exchange with eighteen artists from Château de Servières in Marseille, and Castelo d'If in Lisbon, and various Dublin based studio groups from the Smithfield area; the event included The Joinery, The Market Studios, and Ormond Studios.²⁶⁶ In this instance, the proximity of the organisations encouraged collaboration.

A further collaboration example was thisisnotashop's *Flux Clinic* held as part of their *Fluxus* series of events, in 2009, which was held at Market Studios; again, the two organisations were broadly in the same locale. However, no other significant examples emerged either in interview or through a websearch. Reflecting on this one interviewee reported that 'the other visual arts organisations are tough enough [to collaborate with], in Dublin anyway'.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 13; "Our History".

²⁶⁵ Block T, "Link Culturefest," <http://www.blockt.ie/#!link-culturefest/ijvlz>.

²⁶⁶ "Press Release: Link Culturefest,"

<http://www.newartstudio.org/images/LINK%20Culturefest%202012%20Press%20Release.pdf>.

Organisations, as listed on their website, included The Joinery, NAS (New Art Studio), bio.space 033, The Complex, Lighthouse Cinema, Market Studios / Unit H, Supafast Building, Ormond Studios, Brunswick Mill Studios, Flat Pack Studios, The Chancery Studios, Visual Arts Centre, The Little Green Street Gallery, The Lilliput Press, Loom Studios, Satellite Studios and support from d.ploy.

²⁶⁷ Anon. interviewee 8.

Organisational cooperation is not limited to collaboration. For the most part interviewees were delicate in their reflections on their relationships with other organisations; this is to be expected given the continued co-existence of several of the organisations and given the relatively bounded social community that they operate within. Cullen, of PP/S, considered that although they had limited formal collaborations with Dublin based organisations:

But we have plenty of working relationships in terms of sharing equipment or sharing resources, that sort of thing, that happens quite a lot.²⁶⁸

His claims of positive working relationships are supported by Fiore of thisisnotashop who considered that PP/S was ‘a *phenomenal* ally’; she continues that there is ‘no point’ in ‘competing with one another’.²⁶⁹ In a further intersection Prendergast reports that Basic Space used MTGS’ Francis Street space for a period.

McAllister, of Ormond Studios, observed that there had been an attempt by some of the studio organisations to cooperate:

We were trying to organise a kind of mesh of Dublin studios. We went to some meetings about it. I can’t remember what exactly we were calling ourselves but it was Block T, and Basic Space, and I think Market Studios, and Exchange, as well [...] It was [that] all these spaces had gotten together just to discuss maybe pooling ... whatever we have, information and ... equipment, I guess to make more links between us really.²⁷⁰

The attempted initiative was not raised by any of the other organisations. While this indicates a willingness to collaborate this was not universally perceived and one interviewee considered that other organisations ‘keep to themselves’ and another that ‘it didn’t feel like we were part of a Dublin wide art community’.²⁷¹ This latter interviewee reflected that engagement between their organisation and other organisations was ‘probably more through personal connections than a strategic “let’s join the dots and support each other as a cultural movement”’.²⁷² One artist also raised this issue stating ‘some of the artist-led spaces in Dublin operate as separate units’. This was seen by the artist as a particular feature of Dublin based spaces that was different to other

²⁶⁸ Cullen, Interview with author.

²⁶⁹ Fiore, Interview with author.

²⁷⁰ McAllister, Interview with author.

²⁷¹ Anon. interviewee 8; Anon. interviewee 1.

²⁷² Ibid.

organisations they had worked with, particularly in Belfast where there was described by comparison 'a huge camaraderie'.²⁷³

Overall, there were limited levels of interaction between the organisations, especially at the formal level. One suggested reason for this is the relatively dispersed geography of the sample group. However, it could be expected that the high level of interpersonal connections between the organisations, previously discussed, would counteract this. Furthermore, contrary to the thesis that geographic dispersal limits collaboration, a variety of curatorial exchanges or residencies were reported from outside of the Dublin area.

In particular, PP/S reported a variety of exchanges 'whereby Pallas might curate something for their space and vice versa'. In interview, collaborations with SOMA (Waterford), the Black Mariah (Cork) and Catalyst Arts (Belfast) were given, and further examples are listed on their website.²⁷⁴ Both interviewees from Ormond Studios noted residencies and exchanges with Cow House Studios (Wexford) and Basement Project Space (Cork). MTGS also highlighted collaboration with Catalyst Arts (Belfast), G126 (Galway) and The Good Hatchery (Co. Offaly). They also participated, alongside Block T, in *in_flux* 2011 an 'alternative art fair' hosted by Occupy Space Limerick which included a selection of Irish and international artist-run organisations.²⁷⁵

Thus, it is observed that organisations were more likely to collaborate with organisations from outside of the Dublin area. Although not raised by interviewees, a speculative reason for the limited inter-organisational engagement is that competition for limited external resources and the consequential need to define and distinguish one's own organisation, at the local level, creates a competitive climate that is not conducive to collaboration within the Dublin area.

It is evidenced that despite the advice and guidance that occurred at the inter-organisational level at the point of establishment, there was limited continued engagement between the organisations, although interpersonal connections remained. Based on the given examples it is proposed that although the sample comprises a 'field' in the sense that the organisations are a 'structurally equivalent' domain of activity, as manifest within Dublin exhibits a primarily fractured rather than cohesive character. Thus, the advantages of a hub built around networking and reciprocity (of resources or information) that were outlined at the opening of this section are limited within the sample group.

²⁷³ Anon Artist B.

²⁷⁴ PP/S, "About," <http://pallasprojects.org/index.php/about>.

²⁷⁵ Occupy Space, "In_Flux," http://www.influx2011.com/2011_05_01_archive.html.

Chapter 2: Exhibitions and Activities

The major purpose of the sample artist-run organisations has been established as the provision of gallery and, in many cases, studio opportunities. This chapter examines in detail the nature of activities undertaken by the organisations as they are understood and communicated by key personnel, with supplementary insight from a sample of exhibiting artists.

The activities of the organisations can be split into studio, gallery, and other activities. The discussion begins with a synopsis of the studio activities and overview of the relationship and level of interaction between studio and gallery. While the primary focus of this research is artist-run exhibition space, the predominance of the dual function model means that it is essential to consider studio activity and the interaction between gallery and studios in order to develop a holistic understanding of the organisations.

This is followed by a detailed consideration of the main arts programming in the galleries. As the gallery activities are the main focus of this thesis, this forms the core discussion of the chapter and provides an important art-historical insight into the delivery of arts within these organisations. This chapter provides an original insight into the artistic programming of these organisations and how this develops over time. The chapter identifies the artistic priorities within the organisations and the criteria and processes through which artists are selected. Here the theme of experimentation is highlighted as of particular importance. The curatorial involvement of the organisations, and the supports that they give to artists, are analysed. Reflecting the diverse activities of the organisations discussion also includes consideration of inter- and trans-disciplinary practices.

Through analysis of the relationship between organisation and audience a tension emerges between the role of these organisations as developmental forums for artists and the more traditional role of the gallery as a means for the display of art, and for the delivery of exhibitions to the public. In exploring this definitions of 'value' are explored.

Studio and Gallery Relationship

Given the identified importance of the studios to motivations for establishing the organisations, and also given the focus on community, it is of interest to consider the relationship between studio and gallery both in terms of their physical location and, within each organisation, the level of interaction between the two functions.

The analysis explored the extent to which the activities were either co-located within a single building, or segregated into different locations, as such factors can affect the dynamic and

experience of those using the spaces for both of the functions. The findings revealed that across the dual-function spaces within the sample, the studio and gallery aspects of organisational activity were predominantly co-located within the same building rather than split between different locations, with two exceptions, PP/S and MTGS. As earlier outlined, PP/S' gallery and studios were located in separate buildings until their most recent premises in the Coombe, Dublin 8. MTGS' gallery and studios were co-located until they moved their gallery activities to Temple Bar.

In both organisations, interviewees expressed that co-location was preferable, due to the complementarity between the two activities, each enhancing the dynamic and energy of the other. G. Murphy, of PP/S, explained that 'it's just much more natural to have that kind of link'.²⁷⁶ Prendergast, of MTGS, considered that:

The gallery-studio model in the one building is great – there is always a great sense of energy about them coexisting.²⁷⁷

This indicates that there is, in these examples, a reciprocal relationship between the two at the level of community. Reflecting on their decision to conduct these activities from two separate buildings, Prendergast stated that the studio activity was a 'very integral part of the energy, the life-blood of [the] organisation' and that 'splitting the gallery and studio project across two buildings was a mistake'.²⁷⁸ This mistake was both in splitting this dynamic and from a practical perspective it added to the management burden.

The Market Studios provides a contrast to these experiences. While their studio and gallery were co-located Morrissey reported that the two aspects of that organisation did not often intersect:

Mainly people just want to have their studios as a work space, they don't really as a rule tend to get involved in the shows and the other events that happen here.

Thus we see, across these examples, that the studio and gallery functions of these organisations were reported as variously discrete and intersecting. However, it is observed that the degree to which these intersect is predicated on organisational culture rather than an inevitability.

The studios were rented by both visual fine artists and others working in a broad range of creative disciplines. An overview of this is useful in establishing the potential for integration between the

²⁷⁶ Murphy, Interview with author.

²⁷⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

studio and gallery functions. McDonald, of Ormond Studios, reported that although designers and photographers were not precluded, fine artists dominated in their studios. Fine artists were also reported to dominate in MTGS. However, this focus was not exclusive and in correspondence with Prendergast it was reported that historically a broad remit of visual practitioners including designers and illustrators were resident.²⁷⁹ PP/S' webpage stated that their studio tenants are comprised of, 'artists working in the contemporary visual arts'.²⁸⁰ The Market Studios' website stipulated 'visual artists' and consultation of their 2014 artist list evidences fine artists as dominant.²⁸¹ In contrast, Driscoll reported that the physical dimensions of The Joinery space precluded them from hosting painters and their catchment was primarily 'mixed media, film, photography, sort of laptop animation' and similar mediums.²⁸²

Block T and the MART present a much more varied profile. According to Linders, in their Smithfield premises, only around twenty-five percent of Block T's tenants were from visual fine arts and 'everybody else works in all sorts of different aspects of the creative community'.²⁸³ Similarly Scanlan, of MART, reported a disciplinary mix depending on which studio building the artist is located in. These variously included fine artists, illustrators, designers, musicians, film makers and creative start-ups. Thus, overall a broad range of practices is evidenced as facilitated within the studios. However, the high level of fine artists means that there is potential for the two organisational functions to overlap.

Evidence of this integration is possible through analysis of the level to which studio tenants exhibited within the gallery, and the degree to which this was a direct result of their tenancy. This differed both across the sample and across the lifespan of the individual organisations. As previously discussed, Ormond Studios stands alone as a membership-based organisation, and they exhibited both members and non-members. All of the other dual-function organisations had tenant artists.

The Market Studios and The Joinery are unusual as neither reported studio members' shows, nor were these evidenced on their websites. However, interviewees from MART, PP/S, Block T, and MTGS all indicate hosting 'studio members' group shows.²⁸⁴ For MART and MTGS these were

²⁷⁹ Email correspondence with author, (11/11/2015).

²⁸⁰ PP/S, "Studios," <http://pallasprojects.org/index.php/studios>; The Market Studios, "The Market Studios," http://themarketstudios.ie/?page_id=915.

²⁸¹ "The Market Studios".

²⁸² Driscoll, Interview with author.

²⁸³ Linders, Interview with author.

²⁸⁴ A number of the organisations used the term 'members' to describe the artists tenant within the studios however, with the noted exception of Ormond Studios, no formal 'membership' systems were in operation.

annual events; MART's annual exhibition opened on April Fool's day each year and MTGS, while operating their gallery from their Francis Street premises, hosted a seasonal Christmas show. Cullen highlights three instances of group shows of studio artists where 'anyone who was in our studio could show'.²⁸⁵ The first exhibition was in their Foley Street space. The second, *By Diverse Means We Arrive at the Same Ends* (2006), was hosted in the CHQ building, in association with the Dublin Docklands Authority.²⁸⁶ In 2011, a group of studio artists exhibited together in Dominick Street; the exhibition was called *Hell's Microwave*, a reference to the microwave that was set alight in the arson attack on their previous studio building.²⁸⁷ Block T launched their gallery space in 2011 with an exhibition featuring studio members; this was the only example from this organisation highlighted in interview. Finally, while in their Marrowbone Lane space, Basic Space held a studio members' exhibition entitled, *Spirit of the Stairs* (2015).

Group showcase exhibitions are a common practice within artist studio groups and it is unsurprising to observe that these were supported within the dual-function remit of the organisations. Nonetheless, through these group shows the studio artists undoubtedly benefited from enhanced opportunities due to the dual nature of the organisations that they were tenant with. In no instances were these exhibitions discussed or promoted as the endeavour of a collective with a distinct identity but were rather the showcasing of a group of independent individuals.

This same dynamic is apparent in the predecessor TBG+S. Early in their development they exhibited studio artists, for example in the 1984 exhibition *The October Exhibition*, but they also maintained that 'There will be no such thing as 'Temple Bar Artists Group''.²⁸⁸ However, it remains that by hosting studio group exhibitions, the organisations publicly incorporate these artists under their brand and there is an exchange of cultural capital between the two.

Group shows represent one example as to how studio and gallery facilities may exhibit integration. Consideration of whether there was enhanced access to solo exhibition opportunity gives further relevant insight into this matter. The question of studios artists' exhibitions was one that arose in the development of TBG+S. In the book *Generation Clíodhna* Shaffrey (current Director of TBG+S) outlines 'clashes of opinion' and 'heated debate' around the issue of the

²⁸⁵ Cullen, Interview with author.

²⁸⁶ Dublin Docklands Authority, "Pallas Studio to Exhibit in Dublin's Docklands," <http://www.dublindocklands.ie/index.jsp?p=94&n=224&a=151>.

²⁸⁷ Cullen, Interview with author. Exhibited artists were: Darren Barrett, John Byrne, Andrew Carson, Aoife Cassidy, Garrett Cormican, Orla Gilheany, and Ian Slattery.

²⁸⁸ Anon, "Untitled Document " (NIVAL Box 9, 1986).

representation of studio artists within the gallery programme, circa 1994.²⁸⁹ An undated press release from the same decade announces the launch of the 'studios gallery' which was described as a dedicated exhibition space showing the 'work of studio artists on an ongoing basis'.²⁹⁰ Consultation of the organisation's website shows that this practice is currently engaged.²⁹¹ However, within the main gallery space exhibition policy documents from 1997 state that 'There is no prioritising of TBG&S member artists for exhibition'.²⁹²

Returning focus onto the sample organisations, Morrissey of The Market Studios was explicit that studio members did not benefit from enhanced exhibition opportunities:

Because you have a studio here doesn't necessarily mean you are going to be in the exhibition programme [but] certainly, if people have an idea for an exhibition we always try to encourage them to send in proposals.²⁹³

G. Murphy, of PP/S, stated that the relationship between studio and gallery has 'fluctuated' and that:

The curatorial side and the studios aren't dependent on each other, but equally they are not utterly separate either.²⁹⁴

He reported that with the recent co-location of their studios and gallery spaces, an increasing 'dialogue' was anticipated between the two aspects of the organisation. Cullen also reported that they encouraged the use of the gallery by studio artists by giving them reduced rental rates of the gallery space. As an example of working with studio artists within the main (non-rented) programme of the gallery, Cullen highlighted Niamh Moriarty and Ruth Clinton's 2013 exhibition *ROTATOR*. This exhibition is of note as it was an invited exhibition with an extensive run of ten weeks and was thus particularly high profile. The differences between the two types of exhibition are outlined in detail shortly.

Only interviewees from MTGS reported offering solo exhibition opportunities to studio artists as a specific benefit of their tenancy. MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, recalled that:

²⁸⁹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 14.

²⁹⁰ "Press Release: Studios Gallery," (NIVAL main file TBG+Sn.d.). A newspaper article in 1996 also discusses this: Anon, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios," *The Irish Times*, 26/06/1996.

²⁹¹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Exhibitions: Now + Next," <http://www.templebargallery.com/gallery>.

²⁹² "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios Policy on Exhibitions and Studio Allocations," (NIVAL Box 9, 1997).

²⁹³ Morrissey, Interview with author.

²⁹⁴ Murphy, Interview with author.

For a while we offered the studio members one show a year as part of the deal of renting a studio space in Monster Truck. We had that for I think probably a year and a half or two years.²⁹⁵

However, the practice was reportedly discontinued as the organisation needed to use those programming slots to generate revenue for the organisation. With the exception of the annual show, earlier noted, later examples of studio artists exhibiting in either of MTGS' spaces are not reported as predicated on their status as studio members. Rather this status is incidental and exhibitions were the outcome of curatorially driven decision making.

The duality of function of these organisations is an important part of their identity. The Market Studios provides a significant divergence from the other organisations by operating the gallery part under a different name, Unit H, rather than using an overarching name for both parts of the organisations' activities, which reflects the distinction that has been described in the relationship between the two functions within this organisation. Distinction between studio and gallery activities is also seen in The Joinery and it is relevant that these two organisations have the most developed disciplinary allegiances within their curatorial focus; this gives their arts programme a distinct identity of its own which may not align with the practices of the artists within the studio facilities. Within the other organisations there is evidenced some crossover in respect of solo shows and certainly it can be considered beneficial for artists to be exposed to decision making individuals in these circumstances. However only in MTGS' early practices is an explicit advantage evidenced.

Overview of Exhibition Structure

There are two types of exhibition hosted by these organisations: the first was variously referred to as 'invited' or 'in-house' shows, or as the 'main' gallery programme, here no fee was charged to the artists, and sometimes the artists was paid a fee; the second were often termed 'rental' shows and the artists paid a fee for the use of the gallery space. For clarity, in forthcoming discussion distinction is made between 'in house' and 'rental' exhibitions. While all the organisations hosted both group and solo exhibitions, no distinction was made in interview about practices related to group or solo shows, therefore no distinction is made in the forthcoming discussion. However, there was a significant distinction between the in-house and rental practices, in a number of instances, and is explored below in detail. An overview of the speed of

²⁹⁵ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

turnover of the exhibition schedule and its implications for both the organisations and the artists is then explored.

In-house and Rental Exhibitions

In practice, in-house and rental models were used to varying degrees by the organisations. Basic Space and Ormond Studios did not use the rental model. The Market Studios utilised a rental model only to a limited amount, undertaking just a ‘couple of gallery rentals a year’ with the rest of the programme consisting of five curated shows and a series of live art events called *Livestock*.²⁹⁶ Interviewees from Block T, The Joinery, MTGS, and MART reported that rental exhibitions constituted the majority of their programming at the point of establishment. It also constituted a significant portion of the programme for thisisnotashop.

The findings indicate that financial necessity was the driving motivation for the rental model, as Driscoll, of The Joinery, explained:

The point is that we need the money to finance the place and so unfortunately we had to charge people to use the space the same as someone working upstairs [in the studios] pays to use the space.²⁹⁷

Similarly, Booth of MTGS contended that renting the space out to artists was:

—the only way we could actually pay the rent for the whole building [...] our attitude was ‘either we do that or we don’t have the space’.²⁹⁸

Echoing this Scanlan, of MART reported:

[W]e had to start hiring the gallery out a lot to get it to pay to cover costs [...] So we do curate and manage a lot of the shows but we have to hire it out an awful lot.

In contrast, The Market Studios engaged the rental model only to a limited degree, undertaking just a ‘couple of gallery rentals a year’.²⁹⁹ However, these were described by Morrissey as ‘additional’ income rather than as the ‘bread and butter’ of the organisation, the larger income coming from studio rental.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ Morrissey, Interview with author.

²⁹⁷ Driscoll, Interview with author.

²⁹⁸ Booth, Interview with author.

²⁹⁹ Morrissey, Interview with author.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

As noted Ormond Studios and Basic Space did not engage the rental model. It is observed that there was comparatively reduced financial pressures on these organisations. Ormond Studios' building rent was covered by the cost of studio members' rental fees, and Basic Space had no rental overheads for their building which they used rent free. Howie, of Basic Space, stated that they 'felt it was important' that the space was provided to artists without charge.³⁰¹ He acknowledged the role of circumstance in allowing for this operational model:

A lot of the decision that we were able to make, like not charging any money for the use of the space, was because we were in college at the time and the warehouse was not costing us anything.³⁰²

The exhibiting artists were responsible for all additional costs incurred in the production of their own exhibition.

While the finances of the individual organisations is the major focus of Chapter 4, it is pertinent to the current discussion that this practice was utilised out of a perceived necessity to varying degrees across the organisations, and also varied over time. The portion of the programme assigned to these types of exhibition was evidently dependent on the income from other sources. Cullen, of PP/S, reported:

There is potential to hire out the space during certain slots in the year and depending whether we have programme funding or not would directly proportionally relate to how many slots we'd have per year.³⁰³

Having to charge rent or to accept shows on that basis was clearly an unattractive if necessary option because, as the evidence suggests, once alternative funding was available, rental shows were decreased or eliminated. This was the case for The Joinery, PP/S and MTGS. As Driscoll, of The Joinery, reflected:

Last year we got awarded an Arts Council Project Award [...] so we knocked a lot of the paid shows on the head [...] which was great because it's actually the model that I would love to be working on where you are actually not having to rely on paid stuff.³⁰⁴

Scanlan, of MART, also expressed the ambition to move away from this practice:

³⁰¹ Howie, Interview with author.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Cullen, Interview with author.

³⁰⁴ Driscoll, Interview with author.

We are trying to eliminate any hires of the gallery; we want to have the exhibition space free.³⁰⁵

Interviewees from Block T described both in-house and rental programmes but did not express a desire to eliminate the former. McEvoy, of Block T, reported that the rental shows had been their main programme to date and they ‘haven’t actually self-curated that many shows’ but that this was changing.

The conditions associated with exhibition in the in-house part of the programme varied across the organisations. For example, artists exhibiting with Basic Space, although not paying a fee, were given only the venue; they were responsible for all the services and artefacts needed to present the exhibition.

Because we weren’t asking for money from people we were allowed, to be saying: ‘Here you can use the space—[...] and you do everything once you are inside those walls, everything is your own. You know, the toilet paper, the electricity, a mop, a bucket, if you need anything you have to get it yourself’.³⁰⁶

Morrissey, reported that while The Market Studios covered some expenses, no individual was paid a fee:

We offer a small amount of financial and admin support [...] we just cover expenses on things like drinks on the opening night, or a small amount of maintenance work that may need to be done, things like that. There isn’t enough of a fund there to pay artists or to pay curators.³⁰⁷

Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported occasional payments to curators when funding allowed:

[I]f we had invited a curator we might give them [a fee].³⁰⁸

In contrast to their practice of charging artists to exhibit within the rental part of their programmes, interviewees from PP/S and MTGS reported that in the in-house portion of the programme the artists received a fee to exhibit.

³⁰⁵ Scanlan, Interview with author.

³⁰⁶ Fitz, Interview with author.

³⁰⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

³⁰⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

Now, it's the exact opposite. We pay artists fees and production costs to be in the space.³⁰⁹

[E]verybody gets paid when we show them.³¹⁰

This is in keeping with best practice. For example, the importance of payments to exhibiting artists was central to the 2012 *Ask! Has the Artist Been Paid?* campaign by Visual Artists Ireland (VAI) which promotes the fact that artists should be paid to exhibit.³¹¹

The rental model has historical precedence, for example Jeffri reports it occurring in the example of 55 Mercer Street (New York, 1969). However, it does not find significant precedence within the Irish context. Minutes of a meeting of TBG+S' Board of Directors discusses a limited occasion when this occurred within their Atrium space and the potential to continue the practice:

[I]t was agreed that we do not want to sacrifice the artistic principles of the organisation in an attempt to earn money on the space rental.³¹²

As the quotation indicates the practice is problematic. Indeed Booth, of MTGS, reflected that their engagement of the practice was controversial:

— we did come under a bit of criticism for charging for a space.³¹³

The problem is two-fold. Firstly, this practice can be seen to delegitimise the artistic value of the art itself. An awareness of this is evidenced in interview by Driscoll, of The Joinery:

Paying for a space is a weird thing for an artist because it means that you are just renting space and anyone can do that.³¹⁴

The rental model was understood to devalue the work exhibited. Ackerman reflects:

³⁰⁹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

³¹⁰ Cullen, Interview with author.

³¹¹ Visual Artists Ireland, "Celebrate Your Organisations Commitment to Equitable Payment Conditions for Artists," <http://visualartists.ie/vai-news/celebrate-your-organisations-commitment-to-equitable-payment-conditions-for-artists/>. More recently this has culminated in guidelines for artists and arts organisations: "Payment Guidelines for Professional Visual Artists."

³¹² Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 14/11/1995 " (NIVAL Box 9, 1995).

³¹³ Booth, Interview with author.

³¹⁴ Driscoll, Interview with author.

The credibility of an entrepreneur's claim to "quality" art, may be enhanced by firm's claim to have rejected profit as a goal.³¹⁵

Secondly, this practice can externally be perceived as a profiteering exercise which takes advantage of the artist.

The interviews undertaken with artists provide a useful insight into this discussion. Of the nine artists interviewed six had paid a fee to one of the sample organisations, on at least one occasion, three had received financial payment from the organisations on at least one occasion, and in three examples no financial transactions took place in any of their exhibitions with the sample organisations.

All of the interviewees, regardless of their experiences, were asked to reflect on the practice of charging artists to exhibit. One interviewee spoke strongly about this practice as taking advantage of the artist, describing it as 'hideous' and that artists were 'being parasited off'.³¹⁶ The interviewee reflected that it fundamentally changed the dynamic between the two parties and shifted the artist role into that of 'consumer'.³¹⁷

[I]f you were asked to pay to exhibit your work in one of these places would be that it was a service that the institution was offering you. Which seems somehow as if it is giving you something, versus you giving it something.³¹⁸

Only one interview saw a benefit to the practice:

The provision of exhibition spaces to hire is also very important as it allows the artist (particularly emerging artists) to break away from the traditional format where they apply for open calls or get a call from a curator who is interested in their work and they get a show on this basis. [...] Being able to hire a gallery space to exhibit [...] gives a huge amount of freedom and give artists an autonomy apart from the ingrained exhibition 'systems' that exist in the city.³¹⁹

These represent polar positions.

³¹⁵ Susan Rose-Ackerman, "Altruism, Nonprofits, and Economic Theory," *Journal of Economic Literature* 34, no. 2 (1996): 720.

³¹⁶ Anon. Artist I.

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Anon. Artist B.

Overall, across the sample, interviewees were generally opposed to the practice. However empathy was expressed by a number of interviewees with the situation faced by the organisations:

[T]here always is a little bit of a conflict, if something is set up as an artist-run space for the benefit of artists, but it does have to survive.³²⁰

I don't like doing it myself but I can see both sides of the story maybe, especially when the funding was very low.³²¹

I am ethically a bit against that actually. I don't think artists should have to pay for shows. I understand though that say for [organisation] that is how they survive.³²²

A further artist also held this oppositional but empathetic position but found some advantage to the experience. They said:

I can't see how else studios or artist-run spaces could survive if they didn't charge a fee. So I can see where they come from but I don't agree with it, I don't think it is a good idea.³²³

Later they reflected:

[F]or me as an artist if I am paying for the space it gives me a sense of entitlement [...] I don't have to be thankful or watch myself.³²⁴

They conveyed that this resulted in more artistic freedom. This freedom came from their status as consumer and thus this provides an interesting counter perspective to the previous interviewee who saw this as a negative dynamic. Across both of these perspectives it is acknowledged that the transaction changes the relationship between the artist and the organisation into one based on exchange value.

This identified acceptance is of importance as, despite being opposed to the practice, it indicates that these artists that were interviewed recognise the challenges faced by the organisations. However, significant criticism was levied at the level of fees:

³²⁰ Anon. Artist B.

³²¹ Anon. Artist G.

³²² Anon. Artist H.

³²³ Anon. Artist A.

³²⁴ Ibid.

[T]here are some spaces that I do question the amount that they charge for gallery hire[.]³²⁵

It is something I have an issue with because the rental prices are usually incredibly high[.]³²⁶

It does seem exorbitant some of the fees are just insane I think.³²⁷

[W]e thought it was a great thing when we were selected, because we thought it was quite prestigious and we were very excited about it, but we were then handed a €1200 fee for a week long show, which was shocking to us.³²⁸

Thus, despite the noted empathy, it remains that a number of the interviewed artists expressed their belief that there was potential for extortion in terms of the amount being charged and there is the perception that the fees were excessive and therefore take advantage of the artist. It is not possible to adjudicate on this, however a lack of transparency in regard to the level of fees charged (none of the organisations publically published these) and how these are calculated is identified through this analysis. Increased financial transparency could have helped artists to better understand how these charges were calculated this would have benefited the organisations by helping to defer accusations of profiteering if this is not the case. Increased transparency would also potentially act as a deterrent to organisations implementing excessive charges if this were occurring, and so would benefit artists.

The organisations within the study that engaged the rental model did so out of what they described as financial necessity. Nonetheless, this practice can place a financial strain on an already economically deprived group and privileges access to those with independent resources. The details of the economic status of the artist was addressed in the 2010 ACI report *The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland*.³²⁹ The report found that 'on average, artists earn less than other professionals with similar qualifications, and often less than the average worker in the labour force'.³³⁰

³²⁵ Anon. Artist B.

³²⁶ Anon. Artist C.

³²⁷ Anon. Artist A.

³²⁸ Anon. Artist D.

³²⁹ Arts Council of Ireland. "The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Republic of Ireland Version)." Dublin, 2010.

³³⁰ Ibid., 29.

Analysis of the data shows that 25% of ROI artists had total personal incomes of €11,475 or less and 75% had total personal incomes of €31,000 or less.³³¹

This income included money from arts related employment, other employment, and social welfare payments.

Given the recent graduate status of many of the artists with whom these organisations worked (to be explored in discussion of Artist Profile in this section) it is reasonable to believe that they would typically have an income at the lower end of the identified scale. It emerged from artists' interviews that the costs of the exhibition included not just the rental fees but also production costs, and the opportunity of cost of time lost in paid employment:

I would do an exhibition and I would spend all my time and all my money making the work, it seems also strange to have another form of expenditure [rental] which relates to it.³³²

It is incredibly prohibitive for peoples work, because it is not just a rental fee, if you have to look after the show you are losing time from your own work, and that might be work where you are getting paid as well.³³³

When the opportunity to exhibit is vital to the development of an artist's career, this resource-dependent model is problematic and creates inequality of opportunity based on an individual's financial status rather than solely on merit.

Payment to artists to exhibit was an early established practice within Irish artist-run space TBG+S. Evidence of this includes, for example, a letter in 1996 to their accountants stating: 'Every artist is entitled to be paid for exhibiting at the Gallery, usually either £250 or £100 per exhibition'.³³⁴ It is of note that within the sample the ability to pay artists correlated with the award of Project Funding from the ACI which places an emphasis on 'artistic' related expenses thus facilitating, and indeed encouraging, this practice.³³⁵ I conclude that where possible the move towards an in-house programme was a positive development in terms of supporting artists and ensuring the

³³¹ Ibid., 10.

³³² Anon. Artist I.

³³³ Anon. Artist C.

³³⁴ Jeni Baker, "Letter from to Liam Twohig and Mack Dolan O'Hare Associates. 22 /05/1996 " (NIVAL Box 8, 1996). The consulted documents did not state when this practice started but this is the earliest mention of this practice found within the consulted materials.

³³⁵ This is further evidenced and discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. For guidelines on payments to artists see: Visual Artists Ireland, "Payment Guidelines for Professional Visual Artists".

selection of artists based primarily on consideration of their artistic practice rather than being impacted by their financial circumstance, it is also a move towards best practice. However, within the sample, even where introduced, the practice is not always consistent due the fluctuation of resources. Consequently a dual-pronged approach is often engaged and organisations pay some artists while charging others thus creating a two-tiered exhibition structure with differing conditions.

Turnover of Exhibitions

The Market Studios and Ormond Studios did not run a continuous programme of exhibitions; PP/S' programme changed over its lifespan depending on the circumstances of their premises. However, overall across the sample there was a reported high turnover of exhibitions especially at the outset. Three or four exhibitions a month in addition to other activities was typical:

The door was open all the time and there'd be an artist taking down their work and walking out the door and the next artist would be coming in with their [work].³³⁶

We would do often times a couple shows a month. I remember, I think May of 2008 was our craziest, it was five different events and shows within one month.³³⁷

Multiple simultaneous exhibition was reported in Basic Space and PP/S (during the Pallas Heights project).

It is of interest that this early high level of activity is also seen in TBG+S; in 1986 there were eighteen exhibitions. Three years later in 1989, there was an increased number of exhibitions each running for two weeks and, in 1996, the atrium space was introduced to the public as a second programmed space.³³⁸ This intense programming can therefore be seen as characteristic of emerging arts organisations.

This schedule is evidenced as unsustainable. MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, recalled:

³³⁶ Driscoll, Interview with author.

³³⁷ Fiore, Interview with author.

³³⁸ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 20/07/89 " (NIVAL Box 9, 1989); Jenny Haughton, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios Secretary's Report 1986," (NIVAL Box 9, 1986); Anon, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios."

Everyone was putting a lot of their own time into it and we couldn't sustain the rapid exhibitions that were going on.³³⁹

Driscoll, of The Joinery, similarly reflected:

We got tired of the number of shows that we were turning over, it was insane!³⁴⁰

These short exhibition times also had reported detrimental impacts in limiting both press coverage and audiences. Booth, of MTGS, recalled:

At the time Aidan Dunne was doing the weekly reviews in the Irish Times, and he did give us a few reviews of some of the exhibitions that were there. But it was hard for him as well because the exhibitions were only a week long. And I remember him saying that in one of the reviews [...] by the time it comes out the show will be over.³⁴¹

Similarly interviewed artists reflected:

But the run was very short because they generally did very short runs and they probably didn't get a huge kind of audience and I think it is always difficult to get any national press in artist run spaces.³⁴²

The problem with artist-run spaces is the shows are so short people don't get a chance to go and see them, you have to be at everything all the time.³⁴³

Consistent with this, in conducting this research there were limited examples identified of press coverage of the exhibitions, reporting more typically being focused on the organisations themselves.³⁴⁴

Two key responses to the issue of the challenging schedule are a slowing of activity and to a lesser degree an augmentation of the administrative structure. Again, precedence of both of these

³³⁹ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

³⁴⁰ Driscoll, Interview with author.

³⁴¹ Booth, Interview with author.

³⁴² Anon. Artist H.

³⁴³ Anon. Artist C.

³⁴⁴ For example: Emma Cullinan, "The People's Pallas," *The Irish Times* 10/02/2007; Dunne, "Off the Beaten Palette."; Ian Maleney, "A Former Fire Station in Rathmines Becomes a Cultural Hot Spot," *ibid.*, 19/08/2014. Gemma Tipton, "The Ideas Factory," *ibid.*, 28/04/2007.

developments is indicated in the predecessor TBG+S; in 1990 the exhibition length was extended to three weeks and in the following years, under the directorship of Norah Norton, the gallery programme was reduced to eight exhibitions a year, and the Atrium programme was discontinued.³⁴⁵ For the sample organisations, the reduction in programming alleviated the pressure and allowed space for them to attend to artistic, administrative and strategic matters.

Reflecting on this slowing of the process Driscoll, of The Joinery, stated:

I was concerned at the beginning that people would think there is something wrong [if we don't] have the door open [... But] you need time to plan and prepare and it's hard to do that when you've always got something [going on], when you've got an artist coming in every week to do, to meet, or whatever.³⁴⁶

In this example, the organisation instigated a move away from what Driscoll perceived as traditional or institutional exhibition standards:

So we started [to] change up the hours or maybe have an opening and closing all in one day, so have an art exhibition that lasts for five hours or something like that, or have a performance, or have a talk, or have something going on during the course of the exhibition. So we termed it an 'active exhibition' as opposed to 'static exhibition'. And, how it changed and then, sometimes some of the exhibitions would be more process based or would be more about a talk or a publication or something like that.³⁴⁷

Prendergast, of MTGS, described that the slowing of the process allowed for an increased focus on quality and standards:

We have less shows, we've standardised them to at least once a month with a sort of a one week install. So it's just tweaked and tightened and become [...] more about each individual artwork now.³⁴⁸

In contrast to the previous example, this represents a move towards institutional practices.

³⁴⁵ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 20/07/89 " 18; "Exhibition Programme 1999," (NIVAL main file TBG+S, 1999); *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*.

³⁴⁶ Driscoll, Interview with author.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Prendergast, Interview with author.

Within the sample of those organisations that initially ran a continuous programme of exhibitions, the reported benefits of reducing exhibition turnover included allowing opportunity for more developed work, encouraging a more considered response to the space itself, and facilitating larger scale and installation works. This reflects the evolving artistic ambitions of organisations as they mature. As was earlier outlined some of the organisations were reliant on income generated through these exhibitions and so for those that engaged the rental model this slowing of exhibitions had financial implications and thus brought additional challenges (see Chapter 4).

Artist Profile

Historically artist-run spaces have been associated with artists who are early in their career and who do not have extensive previous exposure. These are often referred to as 'emerging artists'. For example, this term is used in early documentation from TBG+S in 1992.³⁴⁹ However, problematic for the current discussion is that there is an inconsistency in the general use of the term in respect of the specific career stage to which it refers; that is, there remains an ambiguity in terms of emerging from what, and to what. Therefore, while in forthcoming discussion the term is used within quotations, the discussion itself distinguishes between specific career stages i.e. student, recent graduate, early and mid-career, all of which are sometimes contained within this term. These career stages are discussed chronologically.

In Chapter 1, it was outlined that the exhibition activities were a response, in part, to a perceived lack of opportunity experienced by the founders. It is unsurprising then that the profile of artist with whom the organisations worked reflected this experience and recent graduate to early career Irish artists are initially the primary group to which the organisations were oriented. However, the organisations also worked with students and mid-career artists, i.e. artists at each side of the 'emerging artist' spectrum. Of the artists interviewed, with one exception, all identified that at the time of exhibiting with the sample organisations they were variously between the student and early career stage; the remaining interviewee identified as mid-career at the time that they exhibited.

Several interviewees, from the sample organisations, report that at the beginning the artists utilising the exhibition space were primarily students. For Basic Space, whose founders were still themselves at college, students were an intended constituent from the outset.

³⁴⁹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Untitled Document (Letter to Patrons)," (NIVAL Main File, 1992).

Primarily, it was just based [in] NCAD students and graduates, and people we knew from around.³⁵⁰

Howie considered that the space offered students a place to exhibit and work with ‘autonomy’ from the college. He also highlighted that in college artists were limited in terms of the scale in which they could work and that this space gave them the opportunity to ‘broaden or upscale if they needed it’.³⁵¹ Fitz, of the same organisation, also emphasised an early focus on students but a rejection of the end-of-year class show format:

Our shows were never just [a] third year’s Christmas show, it was more like ‘this group’.³⁵²

The group show format was particularly prevalent within the student shows. McEvoy, of Block T, reported that their opening coincided with the student end-of-year exhibition season and that these shows were a staple of their initial exhibitions. Similarly Scanlan, of MART, reported that many of their gallery rentals come from student groups from across the various colleges, both at BA and MA level. MTGS and thisisnotashop also evidenced, on occasion, exhibitions from student groups. For MTGS, this also included regularly accommodating the NCAD end-of-second-year print show, in the Francis Street space. Engagement with this cohort was also evidenced in the early practices of TBG+S, for example in their 1985 *The Graduate Show*.

It was expressed that there was a genuine desire to extend the emerging community and supports to the next generation of artists. McEvoy, of Block T, explained:

We did want to provide a platform for emerging artists and students in college because that is where we came from³⁵³

This sentiment is also advanced by Booth and McAllister, of MTGS and Ormond Studios respectively.³⁵⁴ However, it is noted that this profile of artist is most prevalent in respect of rental exhibitions, discussed earlier in this chapter. This profile also prevailed in Basic Space where there was no rental fee but the artists carried the full costs of the exhibition. Fitz reflected on this:

Students are willing to do things for free and they are also willing to put money towards—they are not paying for the space, and they are not paying

³⁵⁰ Howie, Interview with author.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Fitz, Interview with author.

³⁵³ McEvoy, Interview with author.

³⁵⁴ Booth, Interview with author.

for anything really, so the group of them get together completely separately to Basic Space and say, 'we want a catalogue'.³⁵⁵

Here the willingness of the student artists to contribute their own resources to the project was significant.

Student artists represent a population that were often willing to pay to exhibit work that possibly would not have been otherwise selected for exhibition; thus, there is suggestion of a tension between this artist profile and curatorial standards. The fact that, within the sample, student artists are for the most part confined to the rental exhibitions indicates that engagement with this group financially benefited the organisations by contributing to their costs. However, contrary to the position that the relationship with students is solely financially driven, and supporting the authenticity of the desire to support students, is a variety of graduate awards and exhibitions offered to these students as they made their transition from college into professional practice. For example, since 2010 Ormond Studios have offered a graduate award comprising of a 'peer supported residency and solo exhibition'.³⁵⁶ In its inaugural year Ormond Studio members selected artists based on their degree show works from across the various educational institutions, in subsequent years it was administered by a process of open submission.³⁵⁷ McDonald, of Ormond Studios, considered the graduate programme as a particular success as it was 'helping artists get their first solo show and then they could say that they had had a solo show the same year that they graduated'.³⁵⁸

MTGS engaged a similar format in 2009 for the exhibition *Neu*, an exhibition of seven artists from NCAD, DIT, and IADT selected by the MTGS curators on the basis of their degree shows.³⁵⁹ In 2014 MTGS, in collaboration with the Royal Dublin Society (RDS), offered a studio residency and bursary of €2000 to a graduating artist. Again, this was an open submission award adjudicated upon by the MTGS curators. Block T offered graduate awards, in collaboration with Fingal County Council, since 2014. Thus there is, in several organisations, a commitment to supporting artists while students and at the point of graduation.

³⁵⁵ Fitz, Interview with author.

³⁵⁶ Ormond Studios, "Ormond Studios Graduate Programme," https://ormondstudios.wordpress.com/ormond_programme/ormond-studios-graduate-programme/.

³⁵⁷ Ibid.

³⁵⁸ McDonald, Interview with author.

³⁵⁹ Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, "Neu! New Emerging Undergraduates," <http://www.monstertruck.ie/projects/neu-new-emerging-undergraduates/>.

There are also other examples of providing formal supports to this cohort. Ormond Studios provided an avenue of support through a public professional development event entitled, *PRACTICE*. The three-day event was aimed at recent graduates and covered a breadth of topics of relevance to this group:

The topics covered areas such as setting yourself up as an artist or curator; getting involved with collectives; setting up your own space; grants and financial options.³⁶⁰

It included speakers ranging from members of Ormond studios, to representatives from DCC, and advisors from the Citizens Advice Bureau. A similar programme at Block T was described by one artist interviewee:

— they had [...]people coming in to talk about applications for funding, and where to go from leaving college so that was very helpful.

The most formal programme of supports and facilities was evidenced in Block T. Linders stated that from the outset they wanted to:

—be there to support young artists as they came out of college, but very much from the point of view that needed some kind of idea of more kind of business management and finance management and agenting as opposed to just being an exhibition space to put up their work.³⁶¹

Support included assisting artists to financially assess and structure their projects that they planned to undertake with the organisation. It extended this to direct management and representation of creative practitioners. At the time of interview Linders highlighted the recently commenced relationship with *Slipdraft* as a key example of this.

Furthermore, as explained on their website, following graduation ‘access to equipment, studio space, tutorials, group discussion and critiques become a much more difficult process’. They held an expanded portfolio of facilities and activities oriented to this purpose. McEvoy explained their rationale:

³⁶⁰ Ormond Studios, "Practice 2010,"

https://ormondstudios.wordpress.com/ormond_programme/exploring-cultural-production-and-studio-practice/practice-2010/.

³⁶¹ Linders, Interview with author.

We wanted to build more workshop facilities so that there would be an educational aspect to the organisation itself.³⁶²

Their workshop facilities expanded to include a dark room and screen printers and, in addition to traditional studio spaces, they also provided hot-desks, classrooms and meeting rooms. The provision of such facilities was unique to Block T. These facilities were vital to their *FUEL* graduate programme. This breadth of facilities provision and professional supports represents a substantial portfolio of services that Linders describes as a 'creative and artistic infrastructure for people to develop their ideas'.³⁶³

The accessibility of supports through formal programmes and organised events is evidentiary although only in limited examples. However, when considered alongside the more expansive graduate awards structures offered by some of these organisations, the supports offered are significant. Through these the organisations undertook a pedagogical role, indicating a way in which they support graduate and early career artists and add value to the Irish visual arts world.

The limited opportunities for early career artists to exhibit have been discussed from the point of view of the main sample interviewees. However the limited opportunities are not confined to this cohort. Several of the artists interviewed also reflected generally on the lack of exhibition opportunities within Dublin:

There isn't anywhere else in Dublin to exhibit, other than artist-run spaces.³⁶⁴

In Dublin [...] there are very few galleries so the opportunities to show are very limited.³⁶⁵

[T]here aren't many gallery spaces in Ireland really, commercial ones, so [artist-run spaces] provide those opportunities.³⁶⁶

This was also identified, in 2005, by artist Alan Phelan.³⁶⁷ In an article for arts magazine *Circa* he reported that there was, at this time, a limited number of public galleries, many of which he perceived as dominated by cliques or having large portions of their programme dedicated to

³⁶² McEvoy, Interview with author.

³⁶³ Linders, Interview with author.

³⁶⁴ Anon. Artist A.

³⁶⁵ Anon. Artist C.

³⁶⁶ Anon. Artist F.

³⁶⁷ Phelan, "Exhibiting in Dublin – Closed Shop, Open Door or Back Alley?."

international artists. Thus it is identified that artist-run spaces potentially play a role beyond student, graduate, and early career artists.

Fiore, of *thisisnotashop*, spoke passionately regarding limited commercial opportunities for mid-career artists:³⁶⁸

To say 'midcareer' artists in an Irish context, I think it is very different than when you are talking about [...] American or [other contexts]. Because what opportunities in Ireland are there?³⁶⁹

Thus the issue of lack of opportunity is not limited to early career artists. While mid-career artists undoubtedly benefit from a wider remit of opportunities than their younger counterparts, artist-run spaces potentially provide a meaningful contribution to opportunities available to artists across career stages.

There are some examples of organisations working with artists with a more developed profile within their first year of operating a gallery space. Garrett Phelan's exhibition *NOW:HERE* at Pallas Heights (2003) is mentioned as an early example. Howie, of Basic Space, noted Colin Martin's 2011 exhibition *Cyclorama* in an example of working with a more established artist; however, he notes that this was not their primary remit which remained 'young and emerging artists'.³⁷⁰ Although of note, these are just a few examples in respect of the early established organisation. However, for many of the organisations, this developed over their lifespan, often at a rapid pace, to include mid-career artists alongside early career practitioners.

No significant research internationally was identified on the evolution, or otherwise, of artist profiles within individual organisations. However, within the Irish context an evolution in artist profile is observed in TBG+S who, by 1997, shifted their focus to 'mid-career' artists 'who possibly because of the experimental nature of their work, have difficulty in sourcing other venues' and currently seek to work with 'artists who are at pivotal points in their career and who demonstrate a coherent contemporary artistic practice'.³⁷¹ While in TBG+S there is a shift in focus, this is less pronounced within the sample group to-date.

³⁶⁸ Exceptions include Kerlin Gallery, Mother's Tankstation, Kevin Kavanagh Gallery, Rubicon Gallery and Green on Red Gallery. Brian Coyle writing in 2004 for the Irish Arts Review outlined that the commercial market that was previously dominated by representational painting had expanded to begin to include contemporary abstract works; however while he considers this an improvement for young artists the examples he gives focuses on artists with established careers and market value. Brian Coyle, "The Irish Art Market," *Irish Arts Review* 21, no. 3 (2004).

³⁶⁹ Fiore, Interview with author.

³⁷⁰ Howie, Interview with author.

³⁷¹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Exhibition Policy," (NIVAL Box 8, 1997); "Exhibitions: Gallery Policy".

Within the sample, an expansion rather than a shift of focus is more commonly evidenced. For example McEvoy, of Block T, stated:

We have [...] a really high standard, quality of work, for established artists but also it does work as a platform for other emerging artists still.³⁷²

Cullen, of PP/S, reported:

[It is] quite an interesting space, whereby we were working with artists who were showing in institutions, and working with institutions as well, but then also being very 'ear to the ground' grass roots organisation.³⁷³

This comprised working with artists who had previously exhibited with the organisation, wherein 'the gallery has grown along with a lot of those artists', and working with new artists.³⁷⁴ The evolution of artist-run organisations to continue supporting those artists with whom they have initiated a relationship, as they mature in their practice, is significant as it represents a change in the original objectives of the organisations and enhances their potential import in supporting individual artists' careers.

Cullen, of PP/S, believed that working with their organisations allowed more established artists to develop, 'to bring forward their practice' and Linders, of Block T, that it also allowed them some latitude in expression, i.e. to 'go wild a bit, and do whatever they want'.³⁷⁵ This was verified in the experience of one interviewed artist (who identified as mid-career at the time of exhibition). They stated that they 'felt less bounded in making the work' and that they 'could take more risks as an artist' compared to when they exhibited with commercial galleries; this enabled a 'break' in their practice and new ways of working.³⁷⁶ The theme of artistic development through the freedom to experiment recurs as theme in discussion of curatorship.

As is explored shortly in discussion of curatorship, there is evidence of evolving ambitions within some of the organisations to raise the artistic merit of their work. Engagement with a more experienced artist is consistent with this. The introduction of this profile was reported to be mutually beneficial. Prendergast, of MTGS, outlined the perceived benefits:

It is always good to intermingle [younger artists] with artists that are more established because [...] for artists it's the company you keep and I think it

³⁷² McEvoy, Interview with author.

³⁷³ Cullen, Interview with author.

³⁷⁴ Prendergast, Interview with author.

³⁷⁵ Cullen, Interview with author; Linders, Interview with author.

³⁷⁶ Anon. Artist H.

is good to help younger artists be exposed and to see how somebody more established might react to the space.³⁷⁷

Exhibiting more developed artists can enhance the status of the organisation and increase its profile and credibility within the broader arts infrastructure.

The engagement of artists from across career stages refutes a common conception that artist-run organisations exist solely to provide 'a 'visual arts critical mass' from which the arts infrastructure can select the most appropriate artists and the highest quality work'.³⁷⁸ Rather, while early engagement with these organisations undoubtedly and primarily represents an important career stage for artists the engagement of more experienced artists offers some evidence that these sample organisations are more than a clearing house for larger institutions but rather offer a distinct contribution to the Irish visual arts world both through responding the lack of provision and also, as will continue to be discussed throughout this chapter, in providing a forum for artistic development across career stages.

The artists engaged with the organisations were primarily Irish or resident in Ireland.³⁷⁹ There is also evidence, over time, of working with international artists within some of the organisations. Again this pattern is consistent with the early practices in TBG+S who in their exhibition policy of 1997 state that the programme is oriented to Irish artists but that they aim to programme a minimum of one international artist annually.³⁸⁰ Within the sample group this development was especially noted in respect to the in-house exhibitions. For some, such as MART, this was the realisation of an initial intent, for others it occurred more organically.

LINK Culturefest, organised by Block T (detailed in Chapter 1) presents an example of engagement with early career international artists. There were also examples of organisations working with international artists from a variety of career stages. For example, in 2007 thisisnotashop hosted an exhibition by the late New York conceptual artist Gordon Matta-Clark. In 2008 they programmed a month-long showcase of Spanish contemporary avant-garde *Márgenes: Experimento y Praxis*, in collaboration with curator Esperanza Collado. In 2009, they hosted an exhibition by artist Larry Miller who has been associated with the International Fluxus group of artists since 1969. In 2011, American sound artist Tristan Perich exhibited at MTGS. PP/S have hosted a variety of international artists, some notable examples include John Smith, Alex Martinis

³⁷⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

³⁷⁸ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 40.

³⁷⁹ There is limited research with which to undertake an international comparison on this. However, it is of note that within Canadian ARCs ninety percent of exhibiting artists are Canadian. Canada Council for the Arts, "Understanding Canadian Arts through Cadac Data: A Portrait of Artist-Run Centres," 11.

³⁸⁰ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Exhibition Policy."

Roe, and Gardar Eide Einarsson, all in 2011 and E.S.P. TV in 2012.³⁸¹ In 2014, German artists Nina Fischer and Maroan el Sani exhibited at MART in an exhibition curated by Barry Kehoe.

This international dimension was particularly important in MART and thisisnotashop. Here the focus was not only on showcasing international artists in Ireland but also promoting Irish artists overseas. For example, in 2009 thisisnotashop participated in the inaugural *No Soul For Sale* at X Initiative in New York.³⁸² Their exhibition was identified by Holland Cotter in the *New York Times* as being among the better group contributions.³⁸³ Fiore, of thisisnotashop, reported that following the closure of the gallery space there was a shift to promoting Irish artists overseas:

—we were without a gallery space but working with the same group of artists that had built up over the years and promoting emerging Irish arts abroad.³⁸⁴

This included participating the second *No Soul for Sale* festival in 2010.³⁸⁵

Scanlan reported that the ethos and vision of MART is ‘about bringing international artists in and sending Irish artists out’.³⁸⁶ She outlined that this vision has been way-laid due to the need to direct energy into the establishment and survival of the organisation. At the time of interview, Scanlan said they were in a period of ‘refocusing’ and ‘looking back now at our original plan of bringing exciting art into Ireland, and still working with Irish artists.’³⁸⁷ Similarly Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that the organisation needed to be:

—that sort of well-structured artist-driven space that is constantly looking towards new ideas and new artists, both Irish and international level.³⁸⁸

He described the organisation as at a ‘crossroads’ in this respect.

³⁸¹ "Events," <http://pallasprojects.org/index.php/events>.

³⁸² Artists included: Clive Murphy, Wendy Judge, Kathryn Maguire, Robert Carr, Jessica Foley, Esperanza Collado, Gillian Lawlor, Paula Barrett, and Catherine Barragry. Jessamyn Fiore, "Jessamyn Fiore," <http://jessamynfiore.com/?p=111>.

³⁸³ Holland Cotter, "Restoring the 'Eek' to Eking out a Living," *The New York Times* 24/06/2009.

³⁸⁴ Fiore, Interview with author.

³⁸⁵ Exhibiting artists in 2010 were: Clive Murphy, Marta Fernandez Calvo, Kathryn Maguire, Wendy Judge, Robert Carr, Catherine Barragry and the Writing Workshop spearheaded by Jessica Foley: "Jessamyn Fiore".

³⁸⁶ Scanlan, Interview with author.

³⁸⁷ Ibid.

³⁸⁸ Prendergast, Interview with author.

Other noted examples of the sample organisations exhibiting Irish artists overseas, include MTGS' 2011 exhibition *1.7 Trillion Euro* at Solas Nua, Washington.³⁸⁹ Cullen of PP/S noted the exhibition of *Automatic* in partnerships with *Auto Italia South East* in London, the exhibition showcased international artists as well as including Irish artists Karl Burke and Linda Quinlan. Other exhibition exchanges noted on their website include *Project 304*, Bangkok; *Sub-Urban Video Lounge*, Rotterdam; *Gertrude Contemporary*, Melbourne. Cullen, of PP/S, reported that the plans for more engagement with international artists was in the process of being 'actively set in motion'.³⁹⁰

With the exception of MART engagement with international artists was not within the initial remit of the organisations. It can be argued that the inclusion of these outside artists diminishes already limited opportunities for Irish artists to exhibit and potentially diverts financial resources and other supports from them. Nonetheless, the practice enriches the visual arts programme and provides important networking opportunities within an international arts world. The exhibiting of Irish artists abroad represents a more definitive example of these organisations enhancing opportunities for Irish artists. These international group exhibitions are also of enhanced significance, they involve a presentation of works and artists that the organisations select as representative of their ethos, and is thus a form of what O'Neill calls 'self-presentation'; moreover they also perform a 'mediating' function and produce knowledge about Irish art to an external audience.³⁹¹

Visual-Arts Programming and Curatorship

The process by which artists were selected and supports that they received differed across the life-span of the organisations and also with reference to whether they were rental or in-house exhibitions. It is important to consider these processes because, as indicated by O'Neill:

The exposure of the various decision-making processes through which exhibitions are produced demonstrates what is disseminated as art and how information about art is mediated.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ The show featured Irish artists: Sheila Rennick, Alan Butler, John Byrne, Francis John Luke Wasser and Declan Hurley.

³⁹⁰ Cullen, Interview with author.

³⁹¹ Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge MA, London England: MIT Press, 2012), 30, 4.

³⁹² Ibid., 32.

Through the choices made, subjective value is converted into cultural capital.³⁹³ The importance of understanding these decision-making processes is emphasised in respect of the function that these organisations play in what the Canadian *Burgess Report* calls a 'professional entry point' into a further career as a professional artist.³⁹⁴ That is, decisions made as to who may or may not participate may influence future opportunities at the individual level.

Selection Process

Interviewees from several of the organisations reported that, at the outset, there was an absence of gate-keeping functions within the organisations, this was particularly in regard to rental exhibitions. Discussing their initial programme MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, reflected:

I suppose we started taking on absolutely everything; anyone who wanted to have a show, we gave them a show.³⁹⁵

Howie of Basic Space also observed, on their early (in-house) programme:

At the start we were a lot keener to say 'yes'.

It was also reported that with reference to the early rental shows there was often, at the outset, a short period between approach and exhibition:

Somebody would say can we have an exhibition in three weeks' time, and we would be like, 'yeah, fine'.³⁹⁶

We would be booking shows a couple of weeks before hand.³⁹⁷

A positive benefit of this working model was reported as allowing for the facilitation of exhibitions that 'wouldn't have seen the light of day' within more established organisations.³⁹⁸

Speaking of the position of 'small experimental' organisations relative to the broader artistic field, DiMaggio considers that:

³⁹³ Ibid., 87.

³⁹⁴ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 27.

³⁹⁵ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

³⁹⁶ Booth, Interview with author.

³⁹⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

³⁹⁸ Anon. interviewee 16.

[T]he openness of a field to artistic innovation depends on keeping entry barriers low.³⁹⁹

One interviewed artist reflected on this in respect of rental shows enhancing diversity:

The availability of space to hire in a way eliminates the 'gatekeepers' to exhibitions [...] and give artists an autonomy apart from the ingrained exhibition 'systems' that exist in the city. This hugely enhances the city's visual arts scene providing a much needed diversity of work.⁴⁰⁰

However, one interviewee from a sample organisation reflected that this early model, on occasion, resulted in some 'questionable' shows during the early period of their organisation.⁴⁰¹

The issue of quality within artist-run galleries was also raised in respect of the early American organisations where the galleries were also subject to criticism by other members of the arts community as perpetuating 'dullness' and towards the end of the 1950s producing 'mediocre, derivative, and eclectic work'.⁴⁰² More recently Sharon reported that art critics and gallery dealers in the San Francisco area, perceived work within the artist-run galleries in her study to be at best of an inconsistent quality and often 'immature, unprofessional and mediocre'.⁴⁰³ Also of interest is that the early exhibitions of TBG+S were deemed of inconsistent quality and Jenny Haughton's 1986 Secretary's Report states, 'Mediums have been mixed and also the quality'; here there were application processes in place from the outset and so increased gatekeeping does not necessarily guarantee 'quality'.⁴⁰⁴

There are insufficient independent sources, such as critical reviews, of the organisations to consider the question of 'quality' across the sample, and the subjectivity of perceptions of 'quality' within art is also acknowledged. However, the fact that it was identified as an issue by one of the organisational interviewees, and is also identified as a broader issue of artist-run spaces is revealing. It can be inferred that, in general, quality control is a challenge for artist-run spaces. This is a particularly relevant issue early in the development of organisations such as these for reasons including, but not limited to, low entry barriers, inexperienced artists, and, as

³⁹⁹ Paul DiMaggio, "Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts," in *The Nonprofit Sector: A Research Handbook*, ed. Walter W. Powell and Richard Steinberg (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press., 2006), 448.

⁴⁰⁰ Anon. Artist B.

⁴⁰¹ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁴⁰² Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days : The Co-Ops of the 50s; an Artist-Initiated Exhibition Works from 1952-1962*, v. Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties*, 42, 281, 83.

⁴⁰³ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 10.

⁴⁰⁴ Haughton, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios Secretary's Report 1986."

earlier explored, high exhibition turnover. Thus, the early absence of entry barriers combined, in some cases, with the financial necessity to accommodate a high turnover of exhibitions is challenging to presenting an artistically credible programme.

Within the sample group, the introduction of a more structured approach to programming was widely reported as increasing quality. All of the organisations who utilised the rental show format reported that artists submitted applications directly to them on an ongoing basis. This could be in response to an ongoing open call, or through unsolicited applications. Linders, of Block T, recounted:

A lot of projects would come our way through people we know, as in literally as in somebody, maybe one of the artists in the building, would say 'a friend of mine would love to speak to you about this' [...] other times it is literally somebody emails and says, 'I want to do this on this date, can you accommodate me?'.⁴⁰⁵

Interviewees from MART, MTGS, and The Joinery reported that they developed an annual or twice yearly open call for submissions. The development of this process, either from the outset or later in the organisations' development, is attributed to the volume of applications received for a limited number of programming slots. For example, Prendergast of MTGS estimated that in one submission season they received approximately 140 applications for twenty available exhibition slots. These numbers are significant and indicate that exhibiting with these organisations is highly desirable despite, in some instances, the financial requirements attached to the exhibition.

The introduction of a formal submission process is also observed in TBG+S. In the book *Generation*, Shaffery writes that TBG+S started out 'without defined policies for exhibitions'.⁴⁰⁶ However, this changed. For example, in 1997, TBG+S published a formal policy document outlining the submission and selection processes and stating that the majority of exhibitions are selected via submissions, this stated that between sixty and one hundred submissions are assessed annually.⁴⁰⁷

The artists interviewed reported a mixture of experiences in how they come to exhibit with the sample organisations. This included informal connections, formal approaches made to the organisations, invitations from the organisations, and participating in open calls. One interviewee

⁴⁰⁵ Linders, Interview with author.

⁴⁰⁶ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 18.

⁴⁰⁷ "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios Policy on Exhibitions and Studio Allocations."

expressed frustration at the application process calling it 'time consuming', 'frustrating', 'difficult', and 'painful'.⁴⁰⁸ However, overall there was general satisfaction with the process which one interviewee described as 'fair and concise' and another stating 'it was really about the work which differs from if you are applying for funding from other organisations; I felt that there was a purity there which was refreshing'.⁴⁰⁹

Within the sample, the engagement of a submissions process was reported as having several benefits. Firstly, the organisations were able to exercise discretion and make judgements based on the perceived merits of the various applications and consequently raise quality. Secondly, the process also, importantly, gives legitimacy to the work of exhibiting artists. As outlined by Driscoll, of The Joinery:

You can go and rent any space you want and have an exhibition and that's easy. But we wanted to give value to it so that's why we did it all on submission basis, so that you're selected.⁴¹⁰

Thus, this change is highly significant and with the expanded selection procedure quality becomes a central issue. The planning element of this process also allowed, in some instances, for a more considered approach to an overall programme rather than a fractured succession of individual shows. However, this was not unilateral and late decisions in funding applications often prohibited such planning. Finally, Howie, of Basic Space, highlighted that, on the occasions it was utilised, the open submissions process encouraged applications from a broader group of artists beyond the immediate social circle of the founders.

With the exception of those exhibitions overseen by guest curators, all of the group-based organisations reported that it was a shared decision as to which events to host, or which artists would be suitable for exhibition. Similarly, in those organisations run in partnership it occurred jointly in conversation. This is consistent with the early practices of TBG+S which were committee driven until 1992, at which time exhibitions were selected by the Director, a practice which continues with advice from a curatorial panel.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁸ Anon. Artist A.

⁴⁰⁹ Anon. Artists B. and D.

⁴¹⁰ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁴¹¹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 25/04/1995," (NIVAL Box 91995); "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios' New Policy," (Art Bulletin October/November 1997, NIVAL Box 81997); "Exhibitions: Gallery Policy".

Interviewees from the sample organisations described that this process involved sitting down together and reviewing the submissions or discussing potential artists to approach. MacDonald, of Ormond Studios, reported:

Anything to do with events we would discuss them at meetings and see if we all wanted to do that specific [event ...] It would be a group discussion.⁴¹²

Booth, of MTGS, recalled:

I remember sitting in the gallery with [the curators] and going through all of these applications with a projector and categorising them all, and deciding, and then going through them again. I think we even had a marking system for them.⁴¹³

Similarly Driscoll, of The Joinery, stated:

So a couple of times a year we would put out a call for submissions. We'd get them in and then there'd be myself Feargal [Ward (Co-Founder)] and whoever was working with us in the gallery, there'd usually be about three or four of us sitting around over a couple of days and go through all the submissions. And then we would select a couple of people to come in and have a chat, and then we would pick from those a couple of the artists that we wanted to work with[.]⁴¹⁴

McEvoy described the process in Block T:

We would get an application or a proposal or an enquiry in for use of the gallery space and then there would be myself and Ben, [Readman] we would oversee the visual arts side of Block T. So we would meet them, have a look at their proposal, have a chat with them about it.⁴¹⁵

As indicated, for the most part the group making the decision comprised the founding members and their successors.

Block T and Basic Space present minor digressions from this practice. As indicated above, in Block T, McEvoy and Readman took a lead role in the visual arts programming. They had some

⁴¹² McDonald, Interview with author.

⁴¹³ Booth, Interview with author.

⁴¹⁴ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁴¹⁵ McEvoy, Interview with author.

discretion in terms of the programme, they decided which ideas to present to the group and provided guidance in decision making. Linders elaborated on this:

[A] lot of things would just be kind of an 'I' as in whatever Grace [McEvoy] and Ben [Readman] are doing or developing within the creative arts programme, especially at the development stage, it's just to say 'Ah it's a great idea' and we discuss it. We'd throw around ideas if any of us had anything but otherwise they'd head on with it.⁴¹⁶

McEvoy reported that a recent shift had meant that this was becoming more her solo responsibility.

In the example of Basic Space, while potential exhibitions were collectively discussed, the ability to simultaneously host projects allowed for founders to propose and support projects on an individual level:

[W]e had this *massive* place, we could fit a huge amount of people in there so it was quite easy if I felt strongly about something I just decided that I was going to support it, I was going to open the door for it.⁴¹⁷

Fitz reflected that as the organisation developed, arising opportunities brought new challenges:

So they [who to exhibit] were the easy decisions, the hard decisions came when the name got a bit bigger and we had to present the name Basic Space.⁴¹⁸

An example of such a project was the *New Ecologies of Practice* exhibition at NCAD in 2012.⁴¹⁹ Here the group exhibited alongside other artist-run groups. They were invited to represent 'our own histories and the importance of these autonomous spaces in relation to institutional [organisations]'.⁴²⁰ In response they installed a 'Basic Space shop [...] like IMMA would have a shop [...] selling Basic Space t-shirts and pencils and mugs and all this kind of stuff'. They also exhibited 'fragments' and 'mementos' left over from the various exhibitions the organisation had hosted, 'a signifier of the piece that was there before'.⁴²¹

⁴¹⁶ Linders, Interview with author.

⁴¹⁷ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁹ NCAD, "New Ecologies of Practice," <http://www.ncad.ie/gallery-event/view/new-ecologies-of-practice>.

⁴²⁰ Howie, Interview with author.

⁴²¹ Ibid.

In regard to the in-house exhibitions, it was widely reported that the organisations had a prior knowledge of the artists and gave an invitation to exhibit rather than selected from the submissions. Exceptions to this were Basic Space and The Market Studios who both report that the open call format was utilised on the occasion of a specific invited project. It is of note that the practice of approaching and inviting artists to exhibit was also included in the previously-mentioned 1997 exhibition policy of TBG+S; at that time it was the minor portion of the programme but subsequently evolved to be the sole selection method.⁴²² Within the sample, prior knowledge of artists included personal or professional connections or because an organisation had previously worked with the artist within the rental programme. The Joinery provided an example of this:

[W]hat was kind of nice actually, [the] artists that we invited a lot of them, some of them anyway, had been artists that we worked with in the past, that may have actually rented the space from us once-upon-a-time, and then we were inviting them to work with [us]. So there is a bit of a carry on there with a follow through I suppose, with some of the artists that have paid for the space that we've ended up working them again and there's no financial things in it.⁴²³

Thus, in general, across the sample organisations it can be seen that, while the open submission process of the rental programme is open to a broad community of artists, the in-house part of the programmes were drawn from a smaller network of artists.

Re-engaging with these artists is seen by the organisations as a positive undertaking. It may be framed that this latter opportunity assuages some of the perceived problems associated with charging the individual for their initial exhibition, in terms of a perception of profiteering. On an individual level this is certainly a positive development. However, this further emphasises the problem of the discriminatory nature of this model, as within this scenario the rental exhibition provides an entry point to the organisations and future opportunities.

With the exception of Basic Space and Block T, the programmes were also, over time, supplemented or supported by guest curators or additional personnel. MTGS introduced a curatorial panel that were additional to those involved in the day-to-day management of the space:

⁴²² Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios' New Policy."; "Exhibitions: Gallery Policy".

⁴²³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

[W]e felt that having a four person diverse group was a good way to feed diversity into the space, you know, so that it was multi-disciplinary—it also helped with the day to day having other people there to do the ground work about art-work and finding new works. So it was a good way of bringing new work—because everybody has different influences and a different body of artists that they are looking at, so it worked very well.⁴²⁴

This included several of the founding members of the organisation, following their resignation from executive duties, supplemented with other local curators with whom the organisation had established a working relationship. The Market Studios' invited programme was concentrated on inviting guest curators rather than individual artists. Again these were often individuals with whom they already had a connection:

[S]ometimes it would be people that we know that are in our circle that we like the work that they do and we'd be interested in them putting something on here, it would evolve from a conversation like that.⁴²⁵

However, The Market Studios also took this a stage further and undertook an open call to engage curators. Reflecting on this practice Morrissey also considered that it brought more diversity to the programme:

[T]hat was probably in a way a bit more interesting, because you were meeting people that you wouldn't necessarily have met and there were different types of shows that evolved from that.⁴²⁶

The same benefit of working with external curators was identified by Cullen of PP/S:

Each year we invited in an external curator so that would broaden the range of potential artists who would show with us, with a range of subjective responses to the space.⁴²⁷

Their annual *Periodic Review* series (since 2011) is selected by Cullen and G.Murphy alongside guest panel members. They describe the process on their webpage:

The format has PP/S invite two peers – artists, writers, educators, curators – at the beginning of each year to review and subsequently nominate a

⁴²⁴ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁴²⁵ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Cullen, Interview with author.

number of art practices, which at the end of that year will be selected via an editorial meeting.⁴²⁸

McEvoy, of Block T, reported that they had plans to work with invited curators.

Working with external curators can thus be seen to broaden the artistic reach of the organisation beyond its direct community and help foster innovation and artistic excellence. This can be considered to be a boundary-spanning activity, which opens up the community of the organisation into a broader network. dal Fiore distinguishes:

—communities are the social containers for specialization-based (hence, linear) innovation, networks are the places for boundary-spanning learning and as a consequence, for combinatorial, radical, and breakthrough innovation.⁴²⁹

The concern of whether these organisations are accessible to artists beyond the immediate personal networks of the founders and directors is important. Focusing on a select group of artists can be a positive thing and can help propagate the community that was so central to the central aims of a number of the organisations, as previously explored. However, on the other hand, when personal relations impact the artistic programme there is a risk that cronyism supersedes merit.

This concern is expressed in the literature consulted regarding the history of artist-run spaces elsewhere. For example, the Tenth-Street galleries of the 1940s and 1950s were criticised by contemporaries as driven by judgements based on friendship rather than quality.⁴³⁰ Discussing American artist-run spaces in the late 1970s, Jeffri suggests that the practices of some organisations are 'inbred' and 'smacks of a vanity operation'.⁴³¹ This suggests that this can be a potential issue in organisations such as these. Therefore, the measures that the organisations take to expand their networks are important to understanding them and with respect to claims to artistic integrity.

⁴²⁸ PP/S, "Periodical Review #1," <http://pallasprojects.org/index.php/project/periodical-review-1>.

⁴²⁹ Filippo Dal Fiore, "Communities Versus Networks the Implications on Innovation and Social Change," *American Behavioral Scientist* 50, no. 7 (2007): 861.

⁴³⁰ Joellen Bard, *Tenth Street Days : The Co-Ops of the 50s; an Artist-Initiated Exhibition Works from 1952-1962*, v. Sandler, *The New York School: The Painters and Sculptors of the Fifties*, 42, 281, 83; Thomas B Hess, "Review of Ninth Street Show of 1951," *Art News* 50, no. 46 (1951).

⁴³¹ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 100. Jeffri continues that this is countered by the fact that they 'have taken a daring and important step in introducing new and unknown artists' to audiences.

The question of being open or closed communities arose in interview. However, mixed reports were given; for example one interviewee reported:

—the space itself garnered a very diverse profile of exhibition and that’s as well I suppose what made us different from a lot of other spaces; where we didn’t set up a space and instantly have our clique, we set up a space that was all-inclusive to everyone.⁴³²

Contrarily, in a very candid response, one interviewee considered that, on reflection, their community was relatively closed:

With all its ideas of openness it came down to the very personal and small elite community that were working in there and developing work for there.⁴³³

The interviewees are not the ideal witnesses to this subject which is more objectively considered from an external perspective. Within the artist interviews several respondents noted that their personal connections had enabled them to secure exhibition opportunities; none reported that they had found organisations difficult to access in the absence of such connections. However, a larger study, including participation by unsuccessful applicants, would be necessary to draw conclusions on the subject of the application process and the accessibility, or otherwise, of the organisations.

It is not possible to evidence or adjudicate on the openness, or otherwise, of these communities. However, it is recalled that with the exception of the early programming in MTGS there were only limited additional opportunities provided to studio artists. Although this is a limited sample it provides some indication that the organisations are not characteristically ‘inbred’. Furthermore, as has been outlined, over time, measures were taken to expand the network of artists with whom they are engaged. However, against this it must be measured that this expansion does not equate to diversification and the profile of artists remains relatively stable in terms of demographic, one which reflects that of the founders especially in terms of age and educational level. Thus, the openness of the community is expanded beyond the immediate network of the founders and their successors but still remains within a relatively contained, consistent group.

⁴³² Anon. interviewee 16.

⁴³³ Anon. interviewee 13.

Selection Criteria

Interviewees from the sample organisations were asked about the criteria with which artists and work were selected for exhibition. Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that early selection criteria included consideration of the circumstance of the artist:

I think it was commitment to their practice, whether they were practising artists at a full time level. Whether they were interested in creating new visual artworks, that [they] had the background and the ability to do that. So it was really based on the quality of their own work, their commitment and their desire to make new things happen.⁴³⁴

This was the only example where the background of the artist and the status of their current circumstance were explicitly stated as factors in the selection process. However, the emphasis on early career artists as a target group for these organisations suggests that these factors were more widely taken into account.

Overall interviewee responses to questions about the selection of artists were somewhat ill-defined and based on categories such as personal interest and taste with other less tangible aspects such as 'quality' and 'merit' also being reported, probing revealed only limited further detail as to how these were defined and recognised.

It was stuff that was personally of interest to us as curators.⁴³⁵

[M]ostly it was myself and Brian [Duggan (Co-Founder)] selecting artists on the basis of our, of being interested in their work and thinking that they would be able to pull off something in this particular location.⁴³⁶

We would see the credibility of the work, or its artistic merit. Like are the ideas well produced, are they well developed ideas, that kind of thing. It was very general at the beginning.⁴³⁷

Echoing previous discussion of low entry barriers and potential quality concerns, Fitz, of Basic Space, reported that some projects were supported, despite personal reservations, simply because the organisation had space and time at that moment to facilitate it. Others were

⁴³⁴ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁴³⁵ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁴³⁶ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁴³⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

supported because a founder was prepared to personally invest time in it. Overall, she considers that 'really it did come down to getting our interest' on a personal level.⁴³⁸

The candid admission, across several organisations, that personal tastes influenced selection criteria contrasts with TBG+S' published exhibition policy of 1997, which advises that, for their organisation, selection 'has nothing to do with the personal taste of the selector [the Director], but an assessment of exciting and significant work'.⁴³⁹ While none of the organisations reported an overt and exclusive allegiance to a particular medium or style as organisational policy personal interests were reported weighting the programme in some instances. According to MacAthlaoich, of MTGS:

The result is always quite reflective of the interests of the people involved in it, because at the end of the day they are the people who are going to be there who are willing to do the work, normally for free [...] And a lot of the people and the skills that they have, I think, often lend themselves to determining what the whole programme is going to be.⁴⁴⁰

This is most pronounced in The Market Studios and The Joinery. For example Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reflected that both herself and co-founder Behan 'would definitely be very much interested in performance art and would have curated exhibitions where performance definitely was a big part of it'.⁴⁴¹ However, she stressed that this is neither 'prescribed' nor exclusive.⁴⁴² Similarly, Driscoll reported that when The Joinery was first established they, 'had an interest in lens-based work because that was [their] area of expertise',⁴⁴³ though this was not exclusive. She continued that this changed over time to a focus on 'installation and conceptual work,' before subsequently reverting towards film.⁴⁴⁴ Across these examples, it is most accurate to consider that there is as an inclination towards certain types of work rather than an exclusive allegiance to it. However, even in the examples where a particular interest developed, all of the organisations reported a diversity of visual arts practices within their programme.

The qualities and characteristics of the physical buildings also impacted the potential activity within the space, and subsequently impacted curatorial decision making. Scale was a major issue. For example, considering Basic Space's warehouse space, Howie reflected:

⁴³⁸ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁴³⁹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios' New Policy."

⁴⁴⁰ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁴⁴¹ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁴⁴² Ibid.

⁴⁴³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

Because the warehouse space was so big and a dominating space it took the work that could address that. So we didn't show any print or just a very small amount of painting. So just by the nature of it, it took on large sculptural, quite physical pieces.⁴⁴⁵

Fitz, of the same organisation, observed how the value of the space had a greater impact than had been expected by explaining:

[The space] demanded a certain type of work because it was a really powerful, huge, awesome space. And very quickly we learnt how to tackle that rather than get consumed into it and just make decorations for the space.⁴⁴⁶

It has become practice for galleries to seek ways to creatively moderate and control space through movable internal walls; this was the solution adopted by Block T. McEvoy described how they built movable walls for their warehouse space that allowed them to 'change the shape of the gallery'.⁴⁴⁷ The potential to develop large scale site-specific works was identified by some of the artists interviewed as an exciting opportunity offered by some of these organisations.

In contrast, the shop-front style galleries were reported as more suited to wall-based work or more intimate performance. For example, MacAthlaoich recalled MTGS' Francis Street building:

The space is so quaint it actually nearly demanded a certain sort of exhibition out of it [...] I guess the size of the gallery as well, it wasn't huge so it suited smaller work, you would be quite limited in that way.⁴⁴⁸

However, there is some evolution of this over time and, potentially assisted by the deceleration of exhibition turnover which provided an increase in time available to install the exhibitions, there is an increase in installation work in these smaller locales. Select examples of installation works include Neil Carroll *Working Backwards* (2011) and Ciara McMahon *Détruis* (2010), both at The Joinery, James Merrigan's *Hardware* exhibition (2009) at thisisnotashop, and *Iridescence A* (2009) by Carl Giffney and Ruth Lyons of the Good Hatchery at MTGS (Francis Street).⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁵ Howie, Interview with author.

⁴⁴⁶ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁴⁴⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁴⁴⁸ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁴⁴⁹ These examples are drawn both from examples raised in interview and from the archives of the organisations various websites. The Joinery, "Neil Carroll : Working Backwards," <http://thejoineryarchive.org/events/neil-carroll/>; Gound Up Artists Collective, "Ciara McMahon," <http://guac.ie/members/ciara-mcmahon/>; thisisnotashop, "James Merrigan,"

The quality of the building and the architectural features also impacted the exhibitions and art works. The Market Studios and Ormond Studios' spaces had formal attributes in terms of clean walls and lines. Booth described that while MTGS' Francis Street space was a 'bit crumbly' it nevertheless:

—worked quite well as a white cube kind of space and it would recede, I used to think, for exhibitions; you wouldn't notice it.⁴⁵⁰

The challenge of negotiating between the gallery space and the artworks, and the impact of this on curatorship was addressed by a number of interviewees.

Prendergast described how the architecture of MTGS' latter Temple Bar space proved 'dominating' and challenging to curate:

It was the sheer scale of the robust architecture—that nineties architecture. Each exhibition, each artist, nearly had to break the architecture first before they could put their work in [...] trying to curate into the space, how to use that space, took us years to figure out.⁴⁵¹

Significantly, he reported that the building instigated a shift in the artists that they were able to show and that this required a higher level of curatorial consideration. Renovations were undertaken in the space to try and alleviate some of the problems encountered:

We made adjustments to the architecture in 2012, the start of 2012, that increased wall space and 'dumbed down' some of the architectural features. And that helped it become better for wall based work. We also re-polished the floor and that made it suitable for subtle floor based works, sculptural pieces. So we did a lot of work on the space to make it more suitable for different types of art work. We definitely really tried to win that battle.⁴⁵²

Cullen, of PP/S, reported that consideration of the building impacted their curatorial decisions across a number of their spaces. For example, with reference to their Pallas Heights project:

<https://thisisnotashop.wordpress.com/2009/02/24/james-merrigan/>; Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, "Iridescence A," <http://www.monstertruck.ie/projects/iridescence-a/>.

⁴⁵⁰ Booth, Interview with author.

⁴⁵¹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁴⁵² Ibid.

[For] each show we targeted specific artists that we thought could work well within the context of that particular, problematic, and interesting, location.⁴⁵³

Discussing their Grangegorm Street space, Cullen reported that despite its formal qualities, that they achieved through renovations, for example ‘plasterboarding all the walls and giving it as nice a finish as we could afford,’ the space was not neutral.⁴⁵⁴ Rather, it was described as an ‘odd’ and ‘idiosyncratic’ space which was ‘long and narrow and the ceiling was quite low’ and ‘it was instructive in how it required artists to work in relation to it’.⁴⁵⁵ Similarly Fiore, of thisisnotashop, recalled:

The space was so particular and small that by far the most successful exhibitions and the ones that we were most interested with, were site specific—not necessarily meaning that the work could never be shown outside of that particular space—but that the work was created or evolved to address the specificity of the space.⁴⁵⁶

Thus the buildings are reported as having significant impact on the types of work that can be exhibited within the spaces.

As explained above, a number of the organisations aspired to neutralise the idiosyncrasies of their space and develop attributes of the ‘white cube’ style environment. The idea of the ‘white cube’, how it impacted on the relationship of object to space, and how it can be experienced and understood within the hierarchies of relational aesthetics was notably analysed by O’Doherty who identified it as a phenomenon of late modernity with the attributes of being ‘unshadowed, white, clean, artificial’.⁴⁵⁷ He writes that:

The ideal gallery subtracts from the artwork all cues that interfere with the fact that it is “art”. The work is isolated from everything that would detract from its own evaluation of it itself [...] The outside world must not come in.⁴⁵⁸

⁴⁵³ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁴⁵⁷ Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 15.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 14-15.

Evidenced within the preceding examples are some instances of organisations aspiring to these qualities. The advantage of the gallery presenting artists in a formally conventional environment allows the artist to showcase a 'professionalism'. However, such aspirations are perhaps undermined by the incongruous characteristics of these appropriated spaces.

In contrast others embraced 'the impure and ordinary space of the everyday'.⁴⁵⁹ Here the space does not recede but demands it is 'experienced' as an integral part of the exhibition; this is akin to Kwon's phenomenological paradigm of site specificity.⁴⁶⁰ For example, a *Metro Life* review of Brian Duggan's 2006 exhibition at Pallas Heights stated:

The ideas fizz, but it is difficult to escape the rather cold and unforgiving environs of the flat, which is as much a part of the exhibition as the individual pieces.⁴⁶¹

In this example, the site is specifically highlighted; the presence of the building as site was also identified in the preceding descriptions and examples.

As reported above, the specificities of these galleries as 'sites' encourages, though does compel, the production of new works for exhibition or new ways of presenting works within the exhibition. However, in some instances the condition of the building was highly detrimental and brought practical challenges; for example reflecting on their original warehouse space McEvoy, of Block T, recalled:

We had exhibitions upstairs at the beginning but then as winter crept in the walls were getting damp, some of the work was getting damaged.⁴⁶²

Kynaston, of thisisnotashop, recalled installing works:

Because it was an old Victorian building there were very solid walls so we had to become innovative in how we actually got artwork on the walls [...] There was one wall that was virtually unusable for drilling.⁴⁶³

However, it was also reported that for some interviewees the imperfect buildings offered opportunity for more experimental practice. Foley, of thisisnotashop, described that 'it was horrible and it was just brilliant for that [...] I think it enabled a lot. And maybe that was why you

⁴⁵⁹ Miwon Kwon, "One Place after Another: Notes on Site Specificity," *October* 80 no. Spring (1997): 86.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., 86, 95.

⁴⁶¹ Daragh Reddin, "Last Chance to See: More Often Than Most" *Metro Life* 2006.

⁴⁶² McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁴⁶³ Michael Kynaston, Interview with author.

could do anything'.⁴⁶⁴ Speaking of the deteriorated condition of Basic Space's warehouse, Howie described that the experience of 'not being precious' about the spaces 'liberated' them; he reported, 'it was really freeing how bad it was'.⁴⁶⁵

Speaking of site oriented art Kwon cautions that 'values like originality, authenticity, and singularity are also reworked in site oriented art – evacuated from the art and attributed to the site'.⁴⁶⁶ While there is not evidence of such evacuation, the quotes given above do provide evidence of, in some instances, attributing these values to site as much as art works. Thus, the buildings which these organisations occupy, which are demonstrated as often based on availability and opportunity rather than by design, are inevitably part of the artistic identity of the organisation and exert significant influence upon the artistic activities in general and upon each exhibition and art work specifically.

Experimentation and Risk

It is significant to note that in the majority of examples, as reported by the interviewed artists, they exhibited new (i.e. previously unexhibited) works within these spaces, including work made specifically for these exhibitions. The exceptions to this were some of the graduate showcase exhibitions when the work had previously been exhibited within their degree shows. G. Murphy, of PP/S, stated:

Often the ability to show work is a catalyst for making work itself [...] actually having a space to show the work is as vital as having space to make the work.⁴⁶⁷

This catalyst is particularly important following graduation once the nurturing art college environment has been left behind. Thus, a way that the organisations contribute to the Irish arts world is through providing a stimulus to create new works.

Importantly, as is explored within this section, it was outlined by both the main sample interviewees and the interviewed artists that the scope for experimentation within new works was supported through these organisations and that this was this was a characteristic specific to this type of organisation. Some specific working models and practices were reported as

⁴⁶⁴ Jessica Foley, Interview with author.

⁴⁶⁵ Howie, Interview with author.

⁴⁶⁶ Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (London: MIT Press, 2002), 52.

⁴⁶⁷ Murphy, Interview with author.

supporting the artists in experimentation. For example, Cullen highlighted that PP/S sometimes provided:

—long term access at the start of a project before the opening happens, so that artists can really play around in the space and use the site as an experiment to create work.⁴⁶⁸

An alternative strategy, engaged by the same organisation, was outlined by G. Murphy who reported they also provided opportunities for ‘more spontaneous short-run projects and events which gives artists the opportunity to test things out as well’.⁴⁶⁹ For The Joinery, experimenting with the exhibition format, as previously outlined, provided opportunities for artists to experiment with both the form and content of their exhibition. However, for the most part the support was posited as through general encouragement to pursue experimentation or simply through allowing the artist autonomy to do as they wished.

The theme of experimentation was raised by a number of the sample interviewees as a key curatorial concern across artist profiles. For example Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported:

We like to encourage things to be as experimental as possible [...] it is about people developing their own practice and us supporting that. So in that way we would definitely push things to be as experimental or as out there as they can be.⁴⁷⁰

Foley, Fitz, G. Murphy, and Prendergast all referred to their respective galleries as spaces to ‘test’ ideas.

The theme of experimentation also repeatedly arose in interview with the artists:

The advantage is the freedom, sometimes because, I don’t know why, but there is a possibility to be more adventurous in terms of the work.⁴⁷¹

I do find that they are so open to getting in artists that will experiment, that will take a chance.⁴⁷²

⁴⁶⁸ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁴⁶⁹ Murphy, Interview with author.

⁴⁷⁰ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁴⁷¹ Anon. Artist A.

⁴⁷² Anon. Artist B.

I think in some cases they let us experiment and do what we wanted which I think is actually really, really good.⁴⁷³

I find that artist-run spaces, tend to be a lot more open and experimental to what I want to do.⁴⁷⁴

Thus, there is consistency between both sets of interviewees in identifying these organisations as spaces that support experimental work.

As outlined in the review of literature in the Introduction, discussing UK based artist-run spaces, Jones perceives that the value of artist-run spaces is that they are ‘experimental and innovatory, and therefore as [they fill] gaps in the existing range of visual arts provision.’⁴⁷⁵ Comparing thisisnotashop to other types of organisation Fiore talked about ‘risk’:

We were there to support them, as a platform to take a risk. Because we were not putting them under the pressure to sell or to define who they were. But giving them the opportunity to push their practice that bit further, to take that risk that they might have been thinking about but couldn’t necessarily take.⁴⁷⁶

Two artists also highlighted this as a difference between artist-run and other types of exhibitions:

[Y]ou can get away with doing things that you wouldn’t be able to do with a commercial space or different galleries. You are a little bit more free to do things, you can be a bit more experimental rather than having to do a nice show/exhibition.⁴⁷⁷

There is a freedom because there is not necessarily an expectation from an institution[.]⁴⁷⁸

Consistent with the reported production of new works, and echoing the claims made by the main sample interviewees, the artists described the spaces as ‘process’ oriented:

⁴⁷³ Anon. Artist D.

⁴⁷⁴ Anon. Artist F.

⁴⁷⁵ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 4.

⁴⁷⁶ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁴⁷⁷ Anon. Artist C.

⁴⁷⁸ Anon. Artist I.

I see them as organisations who support the process of art-making as well as its outcomes whereas many galleries are concerned with finished work only.⁴⁷⁹

[Y]ou can try out big work [...] they are great experimental spaces, process spaces.⁴⁸⁰

Thus across these quotes it emerges that this focus on development and experimentation is manifest within these organisations as a distinct and unique characteristic.

The potential for ‘failure’ is inherent within experimentation and risk. Fitz, of Basic Space, considered this:

So although there was still a lot of support for development it had to be considered experimentation and considered failure.⁴⁸¹

This theme was also raised by an artist interviewee:

[T]hey do give you the space, and I know it is an awful cliché—not to fail not necessarily to fail—but you know you can make mistakes that can turn into even more interesting work.⁴⁸²

This point of view is also observed by Jones in reference to UK based spaces, she considers that there is a need to tolerate what she calls ‘competent mistakes’.⁴⁸³ She cites Landry and Bianchini that ‘failure may contain the seeds of future success if it is analysed and not automatically punished’.⁴⁸⁴ Based on the evidence emerging in both sets of interview the sample organisations are tolerant of such mistakes.

Both sets of interviewees related this opportunity for risk and experimentation as important in supporting the development of the artists’ work. Considering this dynamic Foley, of thisisnotashop, discussed what she called the ‘permissiveness’ of the space. She defined this:

In terms of that permissiveness, it was a safe enough environment for something new to be tried out. And it wasn’t that criticality wasn’t an issue, or it wasn’t that the work wasn’t being scrutinised by an audience, and it

⁴⁷⁹ Anon. Artist B.

⁴⁸⁰ Anon. Artist G.

⁴⁸¹ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁴⁸² Anon. Artist B.

⁴⁸³ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 38.

⁴⁸⁴ Landry and Bianchini cited in *ibid.*, 37.

wasn't that it was not of high calibre. It was rather more that it was a space that these things could be tried out and presented to an audience and through a curatorial conversation, and that the artist would develop.⁴⁸⁵

She gave examples of Wendy Judge and Kate Minnock as two artists who she felt particularly brought their practice forward during their time with the space, developing new ways of working that she observed as evidenced as continuing within their subsequent practice.⁴⁸⁶ This is also consistent with Blessi *et al.* who describe these types of organisations, within the Canadian context, as an 'R&D platform'.⁴⁸⁷

For Driscoll, of The Joinery, the importance of development was particularly pronounced. She discussed how the artists use and experience of their time in the space was a measure of the success of an exhibition:

If someone comes into the space and ten days later they walk out the space and they feel it's almost like you've squeezed everything you possibly can out of those ten days; that to me is successful. [...] So that maybe the artist comes in and ten days later they leave and something's changed.⁴⁸⁸

She gives an example that this change may be as rudimentary as a change in their 'way of thinking'.⁴⁸⁹ These examples demonstrate a focus on artistic and personal development as priority over the final product of the exhibition.

Reflecting on their exhibitions some of the artist interviewees also highlighted personal and artistic development within these spaces as having ongoing impact within their practice:

I would associate them with some personal and artistic growth. [...] [Organisation] was the first time that I was using [this] installation material, and I have continued to do that on and off. Also just the thematics that I was focusing on then have remained to this day.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁵ Foley, Interview with author.

⁴⁸⁶ For information and images of these exhibitions see: [thisisnotashop](https://thisisnotashop.wordpress.com/2008/09/30/kate-minnock/), "Kate Minnock," <https://thisisnotashop.wordpress.com/2009/01/26/wendy-judge/>.

⁴⁸⁷ Blessi, Sacco, and Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," 142

⁴⁸⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁰ Anon. Artist D.

I installed a much larger piece than I had ever made before, so success in that sense for me was learning about a way of working with the building with scale and with [materials that] I hadn't done before [...] So that was really an opportunity to develop that part of my practice that I wouldn't have had otherwise.⁴⁹¹

Thus, although the sample of artists interviewed is limited in size, there is exhibited across the discussion of experimentation notable consistency within the sample with the claims made by the main sample interviewees that these organisations support experimentation.

It is important that distinction is made between the previously identified quality concerns that were reported in respect of some of the early practices of the organisations and latter practices of supporting experimentation, including tolerating risks and accepting potential failure, as an organisational ethos. However, the degree to which the organisations themselves can be credited for actively stimulating experimentation and supporting artistic development is in part predicated on their level of active involvement in exhibition development via their curators. This was reported as varying between organisations, and across the lifespan of the organisations.

Curatorial Practices

The role of the curator within the visual arts has changed from a caretaking function to that which O'Neill describes as 'a creative, semi-autonomous, and individually authored form of mediation (and production), which structured the experience of the work of art and affected the ways in which art was made and communicated to an audience'.⁴⁹² O'Neill traces this evolution as seeded within arts practice since the 1920s, but emerging as an historical reflex in the late 1960s. Artists undertaking curatorial roles is not a novel development. O'Neill dually outlines the development of both the emergence of curators as creative practitioners and the emergence of artists as curators.⁴⁹³

The findings as revealed by the main sample interviews indicate an inconsistent engagement of the term 'curator' and curatorial activity. In some instances this referred to a role as exhibition organiser and was limited to selecting from submissions, programming the space, or practical assistance in installation. When their involvement ceases at the point of selection they fall short of O'Neill's definition. Although one interviewee contended that selection 'would be a curatorial

⁴⁹¹ Anon. Artist I.

⁴⁹² O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, 1, 4.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

role anyway wouldn't it?', such a role is more akin to that of a selection jury than the contemporary understanding of curator.⁴⁹⁴

This approach is not evidenced across the whole sample. In some instances it reported that there was involvement in developing the concept of the exhibition alongside the artist, undertaking studio visits, and helping to edit and direct the installation of the work. This more involved approach is taken in some cases to rental exhibitions, and in all instances to in-house exhibitions. However, in this there was a significant contrast with the experiences reported by some artist interviewees.

The frequency of exhibitions and consequent demanding schedule, affected curatorial involvement at the level of the individual exhibition. Further factors given for limited curatorial involvement included a short preparation time and limited resources. One interviewee reported that early in their development:

It was all so last minute that the work was usually [already] there. [...] So I think curatorially it was quite open.⁴⁹⁵

Also, in some instances, the demands of the day-to-day operational needs of the organisation was reported as detracting from curatorial focus:

[T]he curation of the space has definitely been affected by the day-to-day activities.⁴⁹⁶

Furthermore, one interviewee describes that at the outset there was hesitancy to be overly involved within a curatorial role as, given their own early career stage, they questioned their authority to adjudicate on and guide their peers.

When we opened the space we didn't feel ready to be curators in any sense.⁴⁹⁷

Thus, for a number of organisations there was limited initial curatorial involvement beyond the selection of artists.

Typically, it was reported by the sample organisations interviewees that curatorial involvement increased alongside the deceleration of the programming as has been outlined. This allowed for both increased time between confirming and installing the exhibitions as well as an increased

⁴⁹⁴ Anon. interviewee 19.

⁴⁹⁵ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁴⁹⁶ Anon. interviewee 17.

⁴⁹⁷ Anon. interviewee 13.

installation time. The benefits of this have already been outlined. Interviewees from both The Market Studios and Ormond Studios reported a high level of curatorial engagement from the outset. McDonald, of Ormond Studios, reflected:

We were curators in every sense I guess [...] trying to understand with the artists what they wanted to convey and think how to help that and to get it out of them, and assist in having a great solo show in as much as a way as you can.⁴⁹⁸

Morrissey, of The Market Studios, described that she and Behan were 'very hands on curators'.⁴⁹⁹ She described how exhibitions 'evolve certainly from a conversation, they have evolved even from months and weeks of conversations and meetings and studio visits'.⁵⁰⁰ Neither organisation ran a continuous exhibition programme. This may have enhanced the time available to pursue this level of involvement. It is recalled that The Market Studios predominantly hosted in-house exhibitions and Ormond Studios *only* in-house exhibitions; this is relevant because for the sample in general, there was some distinction between the levels of involvement for the two types of exhibition.

In respect of the rental exhibitions, the sample organisations interviewees reported a varied level of involvement which, in some instances, represented a 'hands off' approach in terms of both the development and execution of the exhibitions:

Because they were rental shows we didn't really have much involvement in the development of the work or anything like that.⁵⁰¹

For the [rental] shows that would be very much up to the artist themselves to go in and utilise the space. There wouldn't be, necessarily, a dialogue between us and the artists.⁵⁰²

However, for other organisations, a more involved approach emerged:

Anything that we show there, it is always going to be under a Block T brand as such, it is not really seen as an independent type of show. [...] we would definitely give them curatorial advice and we would like to have input into how the show looked. Because obviously we want the shows to have a good

⁴⁹⁸ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁴⁹⁹ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁵⁰² Anon. interviewee 12.

standard and that it is produced well, and we want to get known for that. So we would make that a really important part of the relationship that we would have with whoever was exhibiting there.⁵⁰³

Thus, according to these main sample interviewees, despite some variation, a low level of curatorial involvement in rental exhibitions was the norm.

A more involved approach was reported within the sample in regard to the invited exhibitions, as demonstrated earlier in respect of The Market Studios and Ormond Studios. G. Murphy, of PP/S, described the very involved process within the invited exhibitions but that there remained flexibility:

It's different for every exhibition, quite often you let the artist run with it and you act as a sounding board, offer advice or feedback as things go along. Other instances are quite hands off, and then other instances are more of a dialogue. And that depends on the artist a lot as well.⁵⁰⁴

Prendergast, of MTGS, reflected on their invited in-house exhibitions:

The tightening of the curatorial has taken place incrementally over the years as we have had more time and more ability to commit [to it].⁵⁰⁵

He noted this as a shift in role from the organisation as 'facilitator' to that of 'curatorial entity'⁵⁰⁶ which progressed to what MacAthlaoich termed a 'refined' curatorial.⁵⁰⁷

For Driscoll, of The Joinery, it was important that no public distinction was made between the two parts of the programme:

I really must emphasise that I don't want there to be a difference between the two. If you came into the gallery I'd like you not to consider which is which, it doesn't matter at all.⁵⁰⁸

However, more typically, there was reported a distinction between rental and in-house shows and based on reporting by the main sample interviewees, there was some evidence of a two-tier

⁵⁰³ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁵⁰⁴ Murphy, Interview with author.

⁵⁰⁵ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁵⁰⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

system predicated not only on differing financial arrangements but also on the curatorial involvement and supports offered.

This distinction is problematic in terms of the external perceptions of the organisation. While it may seek to distinguish between the two types of show, exhibitions from both practices contribute to its public identity. It is unlikely that an audience member will be versed in the practices of the organisation and be able to distinguish between the two types of exhibition; thus, they will judge the quality of the gallery accordingly. This was recognised in the earlier quote from McEvoy, of Block T, who talked about the 'brand' of the organisation. From this perspective, a lack of curatorial engagement, if it results in a lower standard of exhibition, could be detrimental to public perceptions of the organisations.

When asked about their experiences of curatorship within the galleries a variety of experiences were reported by the artist interviewees. In some examples they submitted their work and then had no further involvement – it was all undertaken by the curator. Few gave examples of occasions where they were curatorially supported, rather for the most part it was reported that there was a more 'detached' approach from the organisation.⁵⁰⁹

Given that the rental shows are more often engaged by younger, less experienced artists, the discrimination between supports offered could be interpreted as antithetical to the stated aims of the organisations in supporting this target group. However, an unanticipated finding of this research is that the hands-off curatorial of some of the organisations was framed by a number of artist interviewees as a positive experience. In order to support this statement an extended selection of quotes are given in evidence:

[T]he curatorial input is more hands off, that works in being able to push the work.⁵¹⁰

I could try out things, sort of stretch boundaries and things like that with no curator hanging over my head a little bit too much - the work was un-interfered with, I think later on curators take your work apart, so it was nice to show the work as is, or how you , meant it to be.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Anon. Artist D.

⁵¹⁰ Anon. Artist A.

⁵¹¹ Anon. Artist G.

They are not sitting on your shoulder watching everything that you do. I always found that I was given a huge amount of freedom and personally I just benefit hugely from that.⁵¹²

I would say because of the more detached curatorial, or more fluid and changeable curatorial, it allows for more experimentation I think.⁵¹³

[M]ostly I see the autonomy the sense of autonomy as an advantage. Just creative and curatorial freedom. I just felt like we could just do whatever almost, and that would be okay by everybody.⁵¹⁴

So they have had very much a confidence and a hand over the keys scenario to me [...] and they very much let me do what I wanted to do which was great.⁵¹⁵

It was probably the best experience I think I have had as an artist working with them, because I just felt really facilitated and able to carry out your vision on your own terms.⁵¹⁶

Thus, this approach was signalled as supporting innovation within their work and promoting autonomy.

When asked about the difference between artist-run and other types of gallery spaces this autonomy was foregrounded by the majority of interviewees. These responses can be summarised in the following two quotes:

[T]he difference is the independence, the ability to make decisions on how the work is exhibited so I feel like there is more independence more freedom in an artist-run gallery than other ones. I guess as an artist your voice is heard, you are discussing how things will work out with the people who are running the gallery, whereas with the other ones I didn't really have that experience, I just gave in 'here is my work' and whatever, just exhibit it as they wish and I don't have any say on that.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹² Anon. Artist B.

⁵¹³ Anon. Artist D.

⁵¹⁴ Anon. Artist E.

⁵¹⁵ Anon. Artist F.

⁵¹⁶ Anon. Artist H.

⁵¹⁷ Anon. Artist E.

[In other spaces] a lot of the times the work is removed from you, whereas these spaces it is very much hands on, and they are really the next step on from the studio. Whereas [other] galleries it's a bit more removed and the work is taken a little bit out of your hands I think.⁵¹⁸

Thus, this hands-off practice, engaged partially as a result of limited capacity within the organisations contributes to the distinct characters of artist-run spaces and influences a way in which they are positively experienced by exhibiting artists.

This finding is important for two reasons. Firstly, it disrupts initial critique that this particular lack of support is detrimental to artists. Rather, this is revealed as a distinctive and potentially positive characteristic and not a weakness of the organisations. Secondly, this provides some challenge to the aspirations of some of the organisations to move towards a more formal curatorial practice. In this there is a potential conflict between the aspirations of the organisations and the point of view of the artists. This provides an important finding of this research and enhances insight into these organisations.

Given the fact that the main sample interviewees described some curatorial involvement, while artist interviewees largely reported minimal engagement in this area, it is interesting to consider the issue of formal attribution. Toby Dennett (former committee member of Catalyst Arts, Belfast) warns of the danger that 'the work or the show can simply become a readymade for the artist-curator.'⁵¹⁹ There was no evidence of this within the main sample interviews, nor was it evidenced in consideration of the organisations' webpages. The basis of this statement is that, while invited external curators were often named as contributors, for those exhibitions curated in house there are few examples of the 'selection' panel or curators being named.

The online presence for the majority of internally curated exhibitions omits the attribution of 'curated by—', an attribution which O'Neill considers 'articulates a semi-autonomous authorial role for the curator'.⁵²⁰ Typically, on occasion when this occurred, the attribution was made to the organisation rather than an individual. However, one artist interviewee pointed to an instance where this attribution was (what they believed to be) inaccurately claimed, at the organisational level:

⁵¹⁸ Anon. Artist G.

⁵¹⁹ Toby Dennett in Daniel Jewesbury, "Alternative, Mainstream, Mainstream Alternatives: The Viability of the Artist-Led Initiative," *Variant 2*, no. 7 (1999): 1.

⁵²⁰ O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)*, 32.

A gallery I [exhibited at] last year [...] created a series of programmed artists. They didn't curate the shows, they did one or two visits with the work, and they were very supportive in the sense that they put a lot of faith into the work that I was doing and they let me do what I wanted to do. But on the day when the posters went up and we actually started showing the work, it would say that [the organisation] curated this.⁵²¹

As this was the only reported instance of this kind of occurrence, a larger sample would be necessary to reveal if this practice is more than an isolated incident.

The question of curatorial attribution is complex. One interpretation is that the absence of attribution allows for the artists to remain primary and their work is not appropriated by the curators or selectors. However, given the reported experiences of artists it is possible that the level of curatorial involvement indicated in interview was in some instances aspirational rather than an accurate representation of practice; thus following this the absence of attribution was in fact representative of practice. Where it occurs there is also a dual dynamic resultant from attributing curatorship to the organisation. On the one hand this enhances the reputation of the organisation rather than the individual career of any person involved in it. However, in doing this the organisation emerges as a ubiquitous, authoritative, and autonomous entity. This creates an opaqueness which obscures the highly subjective process of selection previously outlined.

Supports for Exhibiting Artists

While the hands-off curatorial was widely reported as positive, a less positive response was given by the interviewed artists in regards to other supports around the exhibition process.⁵²² One main sample interviewee considered that they 'were clueless' themselves at the outset and so provided limited supports.⁵²³ However, with evolving experience came the development of skills that could be shared in support. McEvoy, of Block T, stated:

It's about building and developing your own set of skills and then sharing the knowledge with others.⁵²⁴

Booth, of MTGS, stated:

⁵²¹ Anon. Artist F.

⁵²² These supports were separate to the supports offered through the formal graduate programmes, previously outlined.

⁵²³ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁵²⁴ McEvoy, Interview with author.

We wanted to be a resource for graduate artists really.⁵²⁵

The Market Studios, MTGS, thisisnotashop and MART all discussed their willingness to assist artists through guidance in areas such as developing a *curriculum vitae*, funding applications, and proposals. Other identified supports included technical support with installations, and assistance with writing press releases. Fiore, of thisisnotashop, stated:

Talking to a lot of the artists that were involved in it, the work, the experience they had showing with us, and working with us, really helped [...] and we were able to support them in ways that they were not getting from anybody else at the time.⁵²⁶

In each of these examples the support was largely informal.

In a contradicting experience, when discussing the exhibition process, it was widely reported by the artists interviewed that they had to 'figure it out all by ourselves, there wasn't that much support'.⁵²⁷ Two interviewees reported that they received limited support but contextualised this against the fact that they 'never sought it out' or didn't 'pursue it'.⁵²⁸ One artist interviewed reflected that the 'main support is good will', however others were more critical of the lack of guidance and practical supports.⁵²⁹

I think artist-run spaces, it doesn't cost anything to talk to the artists as they are installing or to be floating around. [...]. that's not about money it's about floating around and talking, and I think that's a pity.⁵³⁰

[T]here needs to be proper support for young artists who haven't had a chance to do a show or don't know how to put a show together.⁵³¹

I found that at the time, when I was exhibiting myself there wasn't a huge amount of support in what you are paying for: in that I found out that you are really just paying for this room, where they promote a little bit more.⁵³²

⁵²⁵ Booth, Interview with author.

⁵²⁶ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁵²⁷ Anon. Artist E.

⁵²⁸ Anon. Artists B. and D.

⁵²⁹ Anon. Artist H.

⁵³⁰ Anon. Artist A.

⁵³¹ Anon. Artist C.

⁵³² Anon. Artist F.

In this area there was a desire indicated by some of the artists interviewed for higher levels of general engagement and additional practical supports.

As indicated in the quotes the lack of support is antithetical to the stated aim of supporting young and inexperienced artists it is of enhanced significance given that these are typically the same artists who are disadvantaged by having to pay a rental fee for their exhibition. Thus, it is clear that in some instances organisations fall short of their claims to support artists, a situation often due to circumstances such as a lack of human or financial resources but never-the-less one that represents a potential shortcoming in the organisations.

The small sample size of artists interviewed when considered against the large number of artists who have exhibited with these exhibitions limits the ability to consider these experiences as representative. Nonetheless, the candid responses from artists, made possible through the anonymity granted to them as a condition of participation of this research, potentially provides a useful insight for those involved in the management of these organisations.

Some of the main sample interviewees reflected on a desire for evolution in the delivery of supports and practices around exhibition production and delivery. For some interviewees it was essential to maintain a distinction between their organisation and other types of arts organisations, for others a process of professionalisation according to institutional standards was seen as desirable.

Fitz, of Basic Space, proffered a broad critique of institutional models and norms:

Why run a place that is like a gallery in every way, the commission, the posters that having the logo on them of the gallery and the name—there is so many structures in place for the way to run a gallery and the way to run studios and there is no reason to follow them, unless they make sense for you at the time.⁵³³

In rejecting these structures both Fitz and Howie emphasise the autonomy and freedom of the group and the ability to foreground the work itself without distraction. Bermingham and Welch discussed how the organisation was seen as a ‘first generation’ artist-run space, and there was an internal resistance to the idea of developing into what they called a ‘second generation’ space.⁵³⁴

⁵³³ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁵³⁴ Daniel Bermingham and Lee Welch, Interview with author.

Driscoll, of The Joinery, also reported that there was a conscious rejection of aspects of the established arts model:

We started to question the whole thing [...] here we are scrapping along in an artist-run space with no money and very little funding and everybody relying on each other for favours, yet we're mimicking the model of commercial galleries.⁵³⁵

As previously quoted, she applied this comment to standard practices such as formal openings, programming schedules, and curatorial practice, access and opening hours, to the physical presentation of the gallery itself.

A divergent evolution of practice is exemplified in MTGS. Reflecting on the early days of MTGS Booth considered:

We were quite aware that we can't do the things that other galleries do, because we don't have any staff or expertise. And I think we felt that that was out there already, that we didn't need to replicate that.⁵³⁶

However, Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that upon moving to the Temple Bar space there was an increasing desire to 'behave institutionally' despite what he identified as the lack of institutional levels of supports.⁵³⁷ At this time, Prendergast felt that the organisation was moving 'into a new sphere' and he saw the potential for it to be 'indoctrinated into the national arts [scene].'⁵³⁸

Both PP/S and Block T positioned themselves in more intermediary positions. For PP/S, like MTGS, this evolved over time. It was conceived that they eventually came to occupy a space 'between the artist-run and the institution'⁵³⁹ For Block T this was reported as occurring within the early stages of the organisation and McEvoy considers that:

it is not overly formal, it is not overly institutionalised, but it still has the same quality and standard [...] I think it is straddling the line between institutionalised and a more informal and experimental type of thing.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁵³⁶ Booth, Interview with author.

⁵³⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁵³⁸ Ibid.

⁵³⁹ Murphy, Interview with author.

⁵⁴⁰ McEvoy, Interview with author.

Negotiating the institutionalisation in its various guises was given as an active challenge within the organisations. For Driscoll, of The Joinery, the concern was pressing:

It's a project [and the question is] do you become mainstream, or not 'mainstream' but [...] an institution. I don't know that is what we want to do but I think the challenge now is to define yourself and decide which way you are going to go, or shut down and start something else.⁵⁴¹

Negotiating the process of evolution was reported by some interviewees as challenging.

It is pertinent to recall that a number of these organisations were established in a response to opportunity with limited mid-to-long term planning. This lack of planning presents a challenge to the organisations as they mature and evolve. One interviewee considered that the shift in focus within their arts programme caused some internal identity confusion in the organisation, while another discussed the evolution of their operational model and processes as casting them into 'institutional trauma'.⁵⁴² The question is one of organisational identity and how to remain authentic to the key values and unique attributes that shape the organisation, while also improving the delivery of these; this is one of the key challenges that organisations face as they seek to define themselves. Opening a dialogue with artists about their experiences provides an important resource for these organisations to identify which practices could evolve to enhance supports (for example, technical supports) and which unique practices are a strength of these organisational types (for example, open curatorial practices).

Offsite Events, Festivals, and Cultural Initiatives

In addition to exhibitions at their premises, the organisations also undertook a number of off-site collaborations and events. A selection of collaborations both with other artist-run organisations and with institutions were highlighted in Chapter 1. In particular, PP/S' 2005 collaboration with Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane, was noted alongside MTGS' collaboration with the RHA. Earlier in the current chapter Basic Space's participation in *New Ecologies of Practice*, at NCAD, was outlined. Collaborations with larger institutions are not limited to these examples. Subsequent to their Hugh Lane gallery collaboration PP/S contributed to *Dorm* at The Model in Sligo, an exhibition featuring twenty-two international artists' collectives, and they curated a show of work by Martin Healy at St Carthage Hall at Lismore Castle Arts in 2011.⁵⁴³ In 2014, The Joinery undertook an off-site music performance, called *J@NCH*, at the National Concert Hall which

⁵⁴¹ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁵⁴² Anon. interviewees 14. and 8.

⁵⁴³ The Model, "Dorm," <http://themodel.ie/exhibitions/dorm>.

comprised improvised performances by local solo musicians. thisisnotashop's *Márgenes: Experimento y Praxis* included film screenings at the National Gallery of Ireland.

In addition to direct collaborations there was also evidenced participation in a variety of broader visual arts projects, events, and initiatives. Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported that the organisation had participated in *Fringe Fest*, *DEAF* and *Darklight*. Basic Space, Block T, Market Studios, MTGS, The Joinery all, at some stage, participated in *First Thursdays Dublin*, a project by Temple Bar Cultural Trust wherein organisations remain open late on the first Thursday of the month. All but Basic Space are noted as participating in *Culture Night*, a project by *Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht* wherein cultural organisations provide free late night opening on one night per year.⁵⁴⁴

The dialogue that exists between institutions and the sample organisations, and their participation in festivals and initiatives is important. Some literature suggests that organisations such as these exist 'in the shadows of the formal art world'.⁵⁴⁵ Sholette terms this 'creative dark matter'; that is, the invisible activity that props up the more visible arts market.⁵⁴⁶ It is evidenced that, within the Irish context, they are significant, and importantly visible, parts of the arts ecology. Furthermore, it provides evidence that there is not an antagonistic relationship between these organisations and larger institutions. This is an important observation as the rhetoric of anti-institutionalism is often attached to artist-run initiatives.

Trans- and Inter- Disciplinary Activities

The activities of the organisations were not solely limited to the visual fine arts. A number of the organisations reported engaging multi- or trans- disciplinary practices. The role of these events as ancillary or integral to the organisational programming varies across the sample. McAllister and McDonald, of Ormond Studios, highlighted their event *Ormond Cinema Social*. This public screening comprised a feature film preceded by an artist's film. For example, studio member Eithne Griffin showed her film *Gogo Sangoma* in opening for Neill Blomkamp's *District 9*.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴⁴ It is of note that that in 2016 the department was renamed the *Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs*. Participation in Culture Night was confirmed via reporting in interview and a web search. Information was sourced on all organisations except Basic Space, it was not possible to confirm this directly with them.

⁵⁴⁵ Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art and Politics in the Age of Enterprise Culture* (London and New York: Pluto Press, 2011), 1.

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid.* Alternative analogies are provided by Miranda who discusses the 'underground' (following Lucas Ihlein) and the 'iceberg' (following Katherine Gibson). Maria Miranda, "Dark Matter, Icebergs and the Underground: Potentials and Possibilities for Artist-Run Initiatives," in *Artist Run Festival Conference* (Copenhagen 2014).

⁵⁴⁷ McAllister, Interview with author.

Booth, of MTGS, also reported film screenings at a roof top event called *Videodrome*, in their Francis Street premises, as well as hosting music events and poetry readings. This was especially focused in their Francis Street space. Later, in Temple Bar they shifted to primarily focus on exhibitions of visual fine art. However, amongst these there is also evidence of performances such as artist and composer Tristan Perich's performance as part of the 2010 *Interval Studies* exhibition. Outside of their visual arts programme is a month of curated music events *Minimum Maximum*, curated by Nialler9.

The Joinery's website described that the gallery space was '[t]raditionally a site for the exhibition' but was 'also considered a space for events'.⁵⁴⁸ These were predominantly music based. The Joinery's music programme demonstrates a degree of formality and of the galleries analysed has the most integrated relationship between visual art and a cognisant discipline. Driscoll stated:

We were trying to have the two things meet each other, visual art and music; where the cross over there is, and how they influence each other.⁵⁴⁹

Thus, the two stand dialogically within the overall programming. This programme primarily took place in the gallery but also included the noted offsite event, *J@NCH*, at the National Concert Hall. They also hosted a variety of workshops including DSLR photography, music workshops (aka sonic arts) and book binding.⁵⁵⁰

Block T and MART both present extensive variety in their events. For a time MART had a dedicated space for events, *Martcade*, located on the ground floor of one of its studio buildings:

We had [for example] open mics, and comedy, and we had a mixture of cross disciplinary things happening there.⁵⁵¹

The activity was adjunct to the visual arts practice and the space was relinquished as it was too demanding upon their administrative capacity to maintain; the space was subsequently reutilised as a pop-up restaurant space.

Interviewees from thisisnotashop reported a variety of activity. However, as reported by Kynaston, these were not subsidiary activities but always had a link to the visual arts, for example music was performed at an opening, a play reading was for a play about artists. Fiore and Foley also discussed this and highlighted a writing workshop that was conceived for 'writers and artists

⁵⁴⁸ The Joinery, "The Gallery," <http://thejoineryarchive.org/the-space/the-gallery>.

⁵⁴⁹ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁵⁵⁰ Information drawn from interview and from organisation's webpage: *ibid*. The Joinery, "The Joinery Workshops," <http://thejoineryarchive.org/workshops/workshops>.

⁵⁵¹ Scanlan, Interview with author.

that work with text' and in which art and writing were approached 'as a conversation between one form and another'.⁵⁵²

McEvoy, of Block T, outlined that while the gallery programme was dedicated to visual art the organisation as a broader entity is conceived as 'trans-disciplinary' in both its onsite and offsite activities:

We knew that we wanted it to not be so restrictive that it wouldn't be focusing just on visual art, and that we wanted it to be kind of trans-disciplinary. And so that's why at the very beginning we were running a lot of different types of events we did some music events, and we did flea markets, and we did theatre, and we did different types of workshops, and then exhibitions.⁵⁵³

This was reported as an intent from the outset. The specificities of the premises such as size were of benefit to the organisation in facilitating a broad range of activities. For example, McEvoy described the ground floor as 'a concrete box' that 'contains all the sound inside the building so you weren't disrupting neighbours or anything like that'.⁵⁵⁴ In addition Block T also developed, in time, an extensive programme of public courses and workshops known as *Skill Set*. These courses range from drawing to music theory.⁵⁵⁵

Speaking in interview, G. Murphy of PP/S stated that they intend to develop more interdisciplinary events in the immediate future:

We have been talking with people say involved in contemporary dance, people involved in independent music, that kind of thing, to put on a number of events or performances, short one off performances in the space.⁵⁵⁶

He continued that this does not detract from visual arts as the main focus of the organisation.

⁵⁵² Fiore, Interview with author; Foley, Interview with author.

⁵⁵³ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁵⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁵ In November 2015, Block T's website lists the following workshops: introduction to animation, introduction to music theory, introduction to ableton, machine sewing for beginners, introduction to animation, darkroom and photography, relist painting the figure in oils, from drawing to painting., cast painting. Block T, "Block T Skillsets," <http://www.blockt.ie/#!/skillsets/c1ppg>.

⁵⁵⁶ Murphy, Interview with author.

Interviewees from Basic Space and The Market Studios presented a limited remit of activities. Basic Space cited the conditions of their occupancy as a limiting factor; this required them to stay ‘under the radar’:⁵⁵⁷

It was mainly art exhibitions, just because there was noise restriction so we couldn’t do any music or anything like that.⁵⁵⁸

Morrissey, of The Market Studios, also described a limited ability to accommodate events such as music performances. She reported that events such as these were unsuitable to their premises as a large volume of attendees would have compromised the security of the studio facilities.

For many of the organisations these events were variously used as fundraising events, usually via a nominal door charge. However, in practice, as will be detailed in Chapter 4, these events raised minimal funds for the organisations; furthermore, fundraising declined as a revenue source over time. The continuation of events such as these in these circumstances suggests that there was more than a financial impetus for undertaking them. Reflecting on this MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, considered:

The decisions that put these sort of events on are two-fold. One would be out of necessity, ‘we need to raise money let’s put on a music event’ or ‘let’s bring in a money making fundraiser kind of idea with creative people outside the art world’. But it was always ‘let’s make money to facilitate more art’. That model is kind of funny; should we only do it to raise money or should we do it because it’s actually a really, really, good creative thing in itself? I think it’s a massively creative thing in itself, it’s all culture.⁵⁵⁹

It is also of note that these activities are predominantly of a social nature in that they facilitate a collective experience. This reinforces the earlier highlighted theme of community. Engaging with a broad range of creative practices is reflective of the breadth of interests and backgrounds of the founders, and also of the audiences as is outlined below, and can be seen as supporting artistic creativity in general rather than putting visual fine arts in a vacuum.

This socially oriented multi- or trans- disciplinary approach is not unique to the sample but has been central to the phenomena since its inception. Writing about the Jane Street Gallery (1943-49) in New York, which is considered as the predecessor to the Tenth Street Gallery movement, Samet describes how opening nights went on late into the evening and their communal activities

⁵⁵⁷ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁵⁵⁸ Howie, Interview with author.

⁵⁵⁹ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

included debating aesthetics, arranging jazz performance nights and even set design for theatre.⁵⁶⁰ Discussing Canadian ARCs, Robertson describes how, 'Artist-run centres are multiply coded and constructed as intermedia spaces for production and display practices, as material sites, and as *loci* for cultural and community activities'.⁵⁶¹

In a more recent and local example, TBG+S initially described itself as 'a public space for any form of specialisation in the sensual arts. (Film, video, painting, sculpture, dance, music, print, performance, exhibitions)'.⁵⁶² Activities included the visual arts, film, and theatre, as well as a food cooperative, and they hosted a variety of workshops and activities such as dance, and meditation.⁵⁶³ PAC, which originates in both theatre and visual arts, continues as an arts centre incorporating a multitude of disciplines.

In terms of considering the relationship between the visual fine-arts and these other practices Bourriaud's thesis of relational aesthetics is of note. He writes:

Meetings, encounters, events, various types of collaboration between people, games, festivals, and places of conviviality, in a word all manner of encounter and relational invention thus represent, today, aesthetic objects[.]⁵⁶⁴

Through this lens it is possible to theorise the often diverse activities of the organisations, which are complimented by the earlier outlined focus on the social, as contributing to a broader aesthetic practice within the organisations.

Artists and Audiences

The focus of this research is on the experiences of the founders and their successors and not on the reception of the work. However, it is pertinent to consider the role audiences play within the organisations given the previously identified emphasis on process, the encouragement of experimentation, and the identified emphasis on creating peer communities. These factors suggest that the organisations are not 'consumer', i.e. audience, focused but are rather focused on the artists. This dynamic is important as it affects the understanding of the purpose of and the location of 'value' within these organisations.

⁵⁶⁰ Samet and Sandler, *The Jane Street Gallery; Celebrating New York's First Artist Cooperative* 8.

⁵⁶¹ Robertson, *Policy Matters: Administrations of Art and Culture*, iv.

⁵⁶² Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Temple Bar Studios: An Introduction (Request for Support Document)," (NIVAL main file TBG+S, 1984).

⁵⁶³ "Brochure Sent to NCAD," (NIVAL main file TBG+S, 1984).

⁵⁶⁴ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du reel 2002), 28.

There was, overall, limited active audience development; instead it was reported that the organisations relied largely on word of mouth and social media. For example, one interviewee stated:

In terms of the audience we never tried to reach out to certain demographics [...] we weren't too worried about who was going to come because so much focus went on getting it together and then people just showed up.⁵⁶⁵

Fiore, of thisisnotashop, reported a recurring audience:

We would have people coming out for show, after show, after show.⁵⁶⁶

McAllister, of Ormond Studios recalled:

You would see the same people again and again at exhibitions, and not just exhibitions that you would have in your studio but whenever you go to exhibitions you would generally see the same crowd there.⁵⁶⁷

In addition to this audience, it was also reported that the audience expanded incrementally as each show introduced new people to the organisations.

It was bringing in a new audience every time [and] in the following weeks or months you'd have those trickling of people coming back in again.⁵⁶⁸

Driscoll, of The Joinery, explained that the engagement by audiences with either the visual arts or music focus of the organisation, often expanded audiences for the other area of activity on subsequent occasions.

The lack of active audience development and reliance on social media and word of mouth creates conditions that are likely to develop a relatively homogenous community in terms of audience profile. Where reported within the sample interviews, the age demographic was given as primarily, but not exclusively, in the eighteen to thirty-five year age range. This overlaps with that found by the *FOOTFALL* report, they sampled 222 audience members of which the largest cohort was found to be in the twenty-five to thirty-four year age range (39.2%). However, overall their findings indicates a tendency to a comparatively older demographic as the second largest group

⁵⁶⁵ Howie, Interview with author.

⁵⁶⁶ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁵⁶⁷ McAllister, Interview with author.

⁵⁶⁸ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

was found to be the thirty-five to forty-four age group (28.4%).⁵⁶⁹ Thus, there is some inconsistency between the current research and the *FOOTFALL* report; in respect of this it is noted that the current research relies on perceptions of audience age while the *FOOTFALL* report benefits from having surveyed the audiences. Despite some discrepancy, the overlap between the two sets of figures is broadly indicative of a youthful audience of a similar age to those involved in running the organisations.

The key audience was reported as the artists and their peers, supplemented by other creatives:

[G]enerations of students and artists that had gone through the colleges would be coming down to support the activities down there.⁵⁷⁰

It's mostly artists and people involved in art and maybe musicians that come.⁵⁷¹

You would be very connected with a lot of different colleges and students, and then you'd have more established and emerging artists, musicians, designers, performance artists, and then the crowd that are usually socially oriented within that.⁵⁷²

This is consistent with the findings of the *FOOTFALL* report where sixty-eight percent of audience respondents identified as artists.⁵⁷³ It is also consistent with the artist interviews. One artist interviewee considered that artist-run spaces, 'are more arts community based, rather than public' and in reflection of this shared involvement in the artists described the audience as 'trade'.⁵⁷⁴ Another reflected:

[I]t is my experience that the openings are largely drawn by the artists themselves and their cohort, and people they know, as opposed to joe public turning up.⁵⁷⁵

This is not unique to Irish artist-run spaces. Speaking of the Australian context, artist Alex Gawronski declared that the 'truth of engaged and successful artist spaces [...] lies in the fact that

⁵⁶⁹ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 19, 28.

⁵⁷⁰ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁵⁷¹ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁵⁷² McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁵⁷³ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 28.

⁵⁷⁴ Anon. Artist H.

⁵⁷⁵ Anon. Artist A.

their primary audiences are other artists'.⁵⁷⁶ Thus, these audiences are consistent with what Blessi *et al.* describe as 'inner circle' audiences; that is, those who 'are already familiar with, and very knowledgeable about, the latest trends in experimental contemporary visual art'.⁵⁷⁷ This artist audience is potentially more empathetic to the experimental nature of the works exhibited.

This artist audience is also significant to the identified goals of creating a community. Fitz, of Basic Space, included audiences within her definition of community:

Whoever was involved and who had made work in the space or someone who had come to quite a lot of the shows.⁵⁷⁸

Booth, of MTGS, also reflected on this:

I think that the biggest success was into year two and three where we had such a loyal and amazing group of people that would come to all of our exhibitions and there was a real sense of community there and I think that was amazing.⁵⁷⁹

As indicated in these quotes the audience were considered as a central component of this community.

This community was reported as highly social. For example, exhibition openings were a focal point. Booth described how MTGS' Francis Street space had a backyard which was a social hub during exhibition openings:

We would have the bar out there in the summer time. And we had a brazier, an outdoor stove, so we would light a fire out there in the winter time to give people a little bit of warmth. So [the building] worked really well as a social space, and as an exhibition space.⁵⁸⁰

Fiore, of thisisnotashop, recalled:

[T]hey would come to our gallery even if they had no clue who the artist was. They would come down because they always found it to be an interesting experience. They would always meet somebody new, they

⁵⁷⁶ Alex Gawronski, "Out of the Past: Beyond the Four Fundamental Fallacies of Artist Run Initiatives," in *We Are Here*, ed. Brianna Munting and Georgie Meagher (Potts Point, New South Wales: NAVA and First Draft, 2012), 72.

⁵⁷⁷ Blessi, Sacco, and Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," 156.

⁵⁷⁸ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁵⁷⁹ Booth, Interview with author.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

would see something they hadn't seen before. Just the environment was such that it encourages conversation and camaraderie.⁵⁸¹

Cullen, of PP/S, stated:

I always felt like art is not necessarily about just making objects, it is about instigating situations and setting up relationships and having social occasions around the art.⁵⁸²

This statement intersects with Bourriaud's thesis of relational aesthetics that was previously noted.⁵⁸³ Through this lens it is possible to theorise the social life of the organisation, and the transdisciplinary practice previously outlined, as contributing to a broader aesthetic practice within the organisations.

The opening nights were reported across both sets of interviewees as comprising the majority of the footfall within the gallery. For one artist the audience figures were not a central definition of success within their exhibition:

I knew that the footfall wasn't going to be as big, so they would be contained to an open night and then invitations, and in their own gallery support I suppose people who regularly go to those galleries. And they were successful in the sense that I made what I needed to make, I knew they weren't going to be viewed massively.⁵⁸⁴

The same interviewee stated:

If five people turn up to an exhibition it is the fact that it happened that is the more exciting part.⁵⁸⁵

This is echoed by Driscoll, of The Joinery:

It doesn't matter how many people have been there and seen it or not. It's more about things happened.⁵⁸⁶

However, for some artists the overall lack of audience was 'frustrating'.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸¹ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁵⁸² Cullen, Interview with author.

⁵⁸³ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 28.

⁵⁸⁴ Anon. Artist F.

⁵⁸⁵ Anon. Artist F.

⁵⁸⁶ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁵⁸⁷ Anon. Artist A.

The reported success of opening nights compared to continuing footfall suggests that the exhibitions are as much about the event of the exhibition as they are about the art works. This focus on the opening night as a socially-oriented event, centred on a recurrent audience, and populated by a broad peer group, facilitates the development of community within the organisations.

The reported participation of the general public, outside of the noted cohorts, varied across the organisations. To a limited degree, people who worked or lived in the area were reported by several organisations as attending the exhibitions. However, engagement by the general public was largely reported as predicated on the visibility and accessibility of the premises. For example thisisnotashop, MTGS, and MART, had street level galleries and were located on prominent thoroughfares. Interviewees from these groups, reported individually that they desired to engage with the general public:

We are always about new audiences as well and not just art audiences. So in a way the building couldn't be more perfect for us, the red doors open fully and you actually become a public space, you become a street space.⁵⁸⁸

This is why we took this very public facing space is that we get new audiences for every show, because they can get to us and it is accessible.⁵⁸⁹

There was an awful lot of engagement with passers-by because it was on the Luas line, and so there was always just that random audience. And that audience was always quite exciting.⁵⁹⁰

Of interest is that, in all of these examples, the organisations visually expanded into the public space: MART by opening the doors that comprised the front of the gallery; MTGS through a large window giving full visual access to the space during the day and a video projection project at night; and thisisnotashop who also had shop-front style windows and utilised the gallery shutters to display artworks.

In contrast, those organisations that were in less public places or that were not at street level reported that there was more limited engagement with the general public:

⁵⁸⁸ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁵⁸⁹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁵⁹⁰ Foley, Interview with author.

I think it was hard to be inviting when all they see on the outside is this dark hallway leading up some stairs.⁵⁹¹

I suppose one of our drawbacks is the fact that the gallery isn't at street level so you don't get a passing trade; people who are coming in to see the exhibition do so purposely.⁵⁹²

One interviewee reflected on the field as a whole and considered that the poor condition of buildings was unappealing to the general public as it can make people 'feel cold or damp or bad about themselves'; as a result the interviewee believed that audiences for some spaces are limited to 'niche' audiences.⁵⁹³ The same interviewee also commented on the location of gallery spaces and considered that, '[t]he public, especially the non-visual art public, don't understand spaces that are down lane ways, they don't go there even'.

Thus the buildings, in terms of conditions, facilities, and locations, of the various organisations are seen to have impact upon their ability to connect with the general public. There is not clarity as to whether the barriers presented by building and location are problematic to the main purpose of these organisations or not, due to the fact that there are mixed opinions through the interviews about the desired participation of the general public within these spaces.

The inconsistency in responses about the general public, was also seen in respect of curatorial decisions concerning the accessibility of artwork. The idea of inclusivity was raised by Fiore of thisisnotashop:

We wanted it to be friendly and welcoming, and still have a *rigorous* programme but have it be [...] something that was incredibly inclusive too. To maintain a rigorous programme in terms of quality, in terms of embracing even difficult and experimental works but allowing those experiences to be inclusive, that the space would become a place where anyone could engage with art and the artist.⁵⁹⁴

Scanlan, of MART, reported:

We didn't want to be elitist, we wanted to engage with a wider audience and make stuff and make sure it is not isolating people even intellectually or socially [...] Because some people might produce a certain art work that

⁵⁹¹ McAllister, Interview with author.

⁵⁹² Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁵⁹³ Anon. interviewee 8.

⁵⁹⁴ Fiore, Interview with author.

is very much about a certain line of philosophy [...] And then you want anyone who sees that to understand that and read about it. But that is not what we are interested in showing, work like that [...] we want to be accessible.⁵⁹⁵

This demonstrates a desire to move beyond an 'inner circle' audience.⁵⁹⁶

In contrast Morrissey, of The Market Studios, directly attributed the lack of general public engagement with her organisation, and their lack of focus on audience numbers, as central to their ability to undertake innovative and risky practices:

Because this is a small artist led space, and I suppose because we don't have as much as a general public audience, there is a freedom with that [...] because we don't need to have specific audience figures.⁵⁹⁷

This freedom was fondly reflected upon by Booth as a benefit of not trying to 'appeal' to anyone during the early years of MTGS:

We weren't trying to appeal to anyone or trying to keep up with our established programme.⁵⁹⁸

In these examples, the interviewees place themselves as un beholden to consumer values and thus free to propagate innovation.

According to Alexander and Bowler there is usually a distinction between artists and audiences within the fine arts.⁵⁹⁹ In contrast to this there is, within the sample, a blurring of the boundaries between producers and consumers and the artist can be conceived as the total art world actor, producing, distributing, and consuming the art. Here production and consumption of works are symbiotic moments within what is part a largely homogeneous community. This artist community-based audience potentially reinforces and expands the artists' networks. This is important because expansive networks characterised by loose ties and structural holes are

⁵⁹⁵ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁵⁹⁶ Blessi, Sacco, and Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," 156.

⁵⁹⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁵⁹⁸ Booth, Interview with author.

⁵⁹⁹ Victoria D Alexander and Anne E Bowler, "Art at the Crossroads: The Arts in Society and the Sociology of Art," *Poetics* 43 (2014): 12.

optimal for the career development of artists because they give access to novel information and increase opportunities.⁶⁰⁰

Returning to the question of how the audience is situated, it has been observed within this chapter that in a number of instances the audience is a secondary concern with focus rather being on the professional development of the artists. The relegation of the audience is not confined to the sample organisations. As outlined in the introduction, in her study on artist-run spaces in California in the late 1970s, Sharon identified that artist-run spaces were often 'ambivalent' to audiences.⁶⁰¹ Within the current research there are limited examples of this; more typically the audience is secondary to the artist but nonetheless is an important part of the community. A more accurate comparison is found in Jeffri who considers that the organisations within her study could be considered as in the 'artist business' rather than the art business.⁶⁰² This artist-centric approach emerges within the sample through the interview narratives.

The focus on the artist is challenging given the dominance of 'instrumental' and 'institutional' value as measures of value and worth within the cultural sphere.⁶⁰³ Holden defines that the former 'involves the use of culture as a tool or instrument to accomplish some other aim', for example, employment, urban regeneration and increased revenue from tourism.⁶⁰⁴ The second 'refers to the social goods created or destroyed by cultural organisations', for example, community development, increase in wellbeing, participation, and engagement with socially excluded demographics.⁶⁰⁵ These approaches focus on outcomes, including for audiences, and seek to justify, or otherwise, investments in the arts in accord with a 'value for money' paradigm.

An example of this, within the Irish context, is the 2015 report, *Value for Money and Policy Review of the Arts Council* undertaken by The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht which considered the activities of the ACI 2009–2012, and identified 'the need to establish an evidence-base for the societal outcomes of the Arts Council's work'.⁶⁰⁶ The steering committee that produced this research was chaired by economist, John O'Hagan. Reflecting on this report, in an article published in the *Irish Times*, O'Hagan states:

⁶⁰⁰ Katherine Giuffre, "Sandpiles of Opportunity: Success in the Art World," *Social Forces* 77, no. 3 (1999): 829. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties."; "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited."

⁶⁰¹ Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - a Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 25.

⁶⁰² Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 109.

⁶⁰³ John Holden, "Valuing Culture," in *Twenty Years of Ideas*, ed. Ralph Scott and David Goodhart (London: DEMOS, 2013), 106.

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁶ Heritage and the Gaeltacht Department of Arts. "Value for Money and Policy Review of the Arts Council." 2015.

It is not the number of artists assisted, or the number of events sponsored that matter but the benefits (or value) to wider society, and hence taxpayers, that accrue from this expenditure.⁶⁰⁷

He continues to describe the arts as a 'vital "glue" for social cohesion'.⁶⁰⁸

This definition of value is inherently problematic to organisations such as those within the sample that have emerged as artist-centric. This has potential implications for understanding the importance, or otherwise, of these organisations within the broader context of arts and culture within Ireland, as they are delegitimised within this framework. Given the dominance of these discourses within cultural policy frameworks, the responses given by some of the interviewees can be considered as particularly candid and offer an important insight into these organisations and how they critically frame themselves.

However, the instrumental and institutional approaches are subject to a number of critiques. Gray considers that across these approaches:

[T]here is a burden of expectation that cultural policies should provide a host of solutions to problems that were economic, social, political or ideological (or some combination of these).⁶⁰⁹

Gray considers that in replacing 'use value' with 'exchange value' there is a 'commodification' of culture.⁶¹⁰ Crossick and Kaszynska identify that a problem with the focus on audience numbers is that it does not 'take full account of the experiences of those most directly involved in cultural activities and practices'.⁶¹¹ It is these experiences that emerge as central within the sample organisations. Similarly, Holden considers that:

Too much concentration on impacts and outcomes downplays the role of artists and curators in favour of audiences and non-attendees.⁶¹²

Furthermore, focus on audience numbers omits consideration of level of engagement.⁶¹³

⁶⁰⁷ John O'Hagan, "Weighing up the Value of the Arts in Ireland," *The Irish Times*, 17/09/2015.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Clive Gray, "Commodification and Instrumentality in Cultural Policy," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 13, no. 2 (2007): 207.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Crossick and Kaszynska, "Understanding the Value of Arts & Culture: The AHRC Cultural Value Project," 22.

⁶¹² John Holden. "Capturing Cultural Value." (DEMOS: London, 2004), 25

⁶¹³ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 32.

This is of significance to artist-run organisations which, as this analysis has shown, tend to have limited audience numbers but given the focus on peer and community a high level of engagement and impact within that audience. These critiques indicate the potential for broader acceptance that there is value in focusing on artists and creative practitioners, rather than only on the delivery of arts to audiences and subsequent impacts. Through these alternative approaches the value of artist-run spaces is legitimised within broader cultural discourse in a way that is largely denied through the dominant public good lens.

The Role of Artist-Run Spaces for Exhibiting Artists

As has emerged from this analysis, the major purpose of these organisations, from the point of view of the founders, was the provision of facilities and opportunities primarily to student, recent graduate, and early career artists. This later developed to include midcareer artists. In discussion of their curatorial practices a strong focus on artists' professional and artistic development has emerged across career stages. There is consistency between this purpose and these practices. As previously discussed, one role of these organisations is identified as providing an arena for experimentation, a further area where they provide an important role is also through building experience and exposure which enables access to further opportunities.

The sample organisations often facilitated early and in some instances inaugural exhibitions, both in the group and solo format. Interviewees reflected that the exhibitions provided an opportunity for artistic development, and an important early career opportunity to disseminate works. One artist interviewee reflected on this:

I suppose mentally [it was] quite important for me, gave me confidence that I could carry a show, that I could carry a solo show.⁶¹⁴

Driscoll believed that the rental programme provided opportunities for artists to be 'active at the beginning of their practice when they're just coming out of college and they're emerging and they need to show their work'.⁶¹⁵ By exhibiting in this early stage Prendergast, of MTGS, identified the early career benefit:

[A key impact for the artists is] an ability to hone their work, a chance to exhibit a couple times a year, to see whether they are really committed to their practice long term, a trial arena.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁴ Anon. Artist A.

⁶¹⁵ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁶¹⁶ Prendergast, Interview with author.

Similarly, Kynaston, of thisisnotashop, reflected that artist-run galleries fulfil a vital role giving artists a 'chance to find themselves as an artist, and to evolve as an artist'.⁶¹⁷

In undertaking this, one artist described that it was 'almost like a mediating stage between college and a professional practice'.⁶¹⁸ This transitionary roll was described by Driscoll of The Joinery, Howie of Basic Space and McAllister of Ormond Studios as providing a 'stepping stone' for graduates. McAllister, considered that 'there is no way that you could break into [the art] scene without a stepping stone' and she saw the organisation as assisting with that. One artist interviewee considered:

[T]he spaces are [...] places to try out things, they are really great stepping stones to bigger places.⁶¹⁹

Thus, there is consistency by both sets of interviewees in regard to this role.

The artist interviewees provide insight into the detail of how this transition manifested. This transition may either be for artists entering the professional sphere for the first time or, as per an earlier example, for more established artists following a change of direction in their work. Some reported that the general exposure was positive:

Just from having people constantly seeing your name and you are showing regularly that helps a bit.⁶²⁰

[W]ith future applications, and other proposals to established spaces, I was able to say this is the experience I had with these spaces and this is what I did, and that opened doors for future shows in established spaces.⁶²¹

I got, [...] more exposure actually. I think being associated with those artists [in the group show] was good for me.⁶²²

There was constant curators coming in, there was video blogs made of me in the space, there was them taking pictures. And again, just that promotion that is needed for after.⁶²³

⁶¹⁷ Kynaston, Interview with author.

⁶¹⁸ Anon. Artist D.

⁶¹⁹ Anon. Artist G.

⁶²⁰ Anon. Artist C.

⁶²¹ Anon. Artist D.

⁶²² Anon. Artist E.

⁶²³ Anon. Artist F.

One artist interviewee considered it as a rite of passage:

In terms of being taken seriously for public commissions or public invitations to do shows, my impression is that one of the things people are interested in is track record of exhibitions within artist-run spaces, so it is a necessary process one has to go through even if there isn't a lot of critical response to the show at the time. It's clocked, so it adds weight.⁶²⁴

Two interviewees reflected that it is 'hard' to know what opportunities came about as a result of exhibition in artist-run spaces.⁶²⁵ As one reflected:

You could be lucky someone could have walked in and seen something and then down the line they might have thought of something.⁶²⁶

However, some interviewees reported direct impacts. Two reported further exhibitions as a direct result of exhibiting with artist-run spaces:

On the basis of those shows I would have, maybe in the space of six months or a year, I would have got additional shows on the basis of them.⁶²⁷

I got invited to contribute to a survey exhibition [...] so that was a really huge success that came out of that developing that work for me as well.⁶²⁸

While another reflected that it helped with securing funding:

[I]t definitely helped on a funding level. And I had the work documented they put it up on the website and things like that.⁶²⁹

Participation in these organisations is therefore identified as enhancing professional status, and providing exposure and they represent an important transitional mechanism for artists, especially (but not exclusively) in their early career. This is consistent with Jones' analysis of UK based artist-run spaces where she highlights the impacts of participation as including creative independence and self-determination, and the development of professional status and

⁶²⁴ Anon. Artist A.

⁶²⁵ Anon. Artists B and C.

⁶²⁶ Anon. Artist C.

⁶²⁷ Anon. Artist B.

⁶²⁸ Anon. Artist I.

⁶²⁹ Anon. Artist H.

information networks.⁶³⁰ The organisations are evidenced as providing what was previously noted as a 'professional entry point' for artists.⁶³¹

As has been outlined above, the organisations can play an important part in the professional development of artists through the provision of opportunities. This was also identified as a key achievement of Canadian ARCs in the *Burgess Report* which defines professional development as:

Professional development can take a number of forms such as providing access to professional production and exhibition opportunities to emerging artists or providing opportunities for technical training and mentoring.⁶³²

Access to opportunities has been discussed above. However, in regard to technical training and mentoring it is recalled that artist interviewees reported a deficit in the technical support offered around the exhibition experience in some instances.

Based on the testimony of both the main sample interviewees and the exhibiting artist interviewees, exhibiting with these organisations has emerged as an important opportunity within the development of artistic practice, and in the development of a professional profile; as such the organisations provide a gatekeeping function to the wider art world. It is also recalled that in discussion earlier in this chapter the scope to operate with autonomy and to engage in innovative and experimental work unencumbered by consumerist or commercial concerns was highlighted as a distinct aspect of these organisations when compared to other types of exhibition organisation. Combined these represent a distinct key contribution made by these organisations to the Irish arts world. However once again this contribution is overshadowed when the rental model is used as this discriminates on economic grounds regarding who may access these opportunities.

Earlier within this chapter it was proposed that these organisations are 'artist-centric'. This claim is fortified through considering the role that they play and the impact that they have on the careers of, in particular, early career artists. As earlier identified this approach can be problematic to the dominant discourses of 'value' within the arts sector. Some alternative approaches have already been proffered; however following the discussion of these organisations as transitional and developmental forums a further framework of value emerges of interest, that of 'deferred

⁶³⁰ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*.

⁶³¹ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 27.

⁶³² Ibid.

value'.⁶³³ This is centred on the development of individual ideas, objects, and careers, over a time period. This is important to highlight because Belfiore *et al* identify that '[t]alent development and deferred benefit' are potential fissures in research on value within the arts.⁶³⁴

There are two facets to deferred value. The first is engaged by Thelwall in her research on the value of small arts organisations within the UK arts ecology. She identifies four areas in which 'value accrues over the lifetime of an object or idea': artistic, social, societal and fiscal.⁶³⁵ This focuses on deferred value within the art practice or art work. This resonates strongly with the sample organisations. In example of this, Kynaston, of thisisnotashop, considered that institutions:

—need to feed off new artists—new blood—and that only comes when an artist has been given that chance to find themselves as an artist.⁶³⁶

This suggests that other arts organisations benefit from the experience that artists garner from exhibiting with the artist-run organisations. Belfiore *et al*. suggest an additional understanding of this concept, this is centred on '[t]he artist and the experience and trajectories of individual artists'.⁶³⁷ No expanded definition of this is offered by Belfiore *et al*. However, this definition suggests the role of deferred value within individual artist's careers, and intersects with the definition of professional development given earlier in this chapter.⁶³⁸ This may include additional areas such as building a professional profile, networking, and skills development. Based on reporting in interview the sample organisations provide a key role in the early stages of the development of artistic ideas, objects, and careers.

The concept of deferred value is a useful one and was also explored as part of the Footfall Symposium as was reported in the subsequent publication *FOOTFALL Report* (2015). Here it was reported as having been met with some reservation, as some participants felt that the term 'reinforces notions of hierarchy which place small artist led organisations on the bottom rung of a competitive ladder'.⁶³⁹ However, deferred value as a concept is not focused on the relationship

⁶³³ E Belfiore, C Firth, and D Holdaway. "How Do We Value (and Undervalue) Culture?" 2014; Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 7, 24-29.

⁶³⁴ Belfiore, Firth, and Holdaway, "How Do We Value (and Undervalue) Culture?," 14.

⁶³⁵ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 7, 24-26.

⁶³⁶ Kynaston, Interview with author.

⁶³⁷ Belfiore, Firth, and Holdaway, "How Do We Value (and Undervalue) Culture?," 14.

⁶³⁸ This is also a concept raised by one participant within the Footfall symposium, as was reported within the subsequent publication; no further discussion of the statement was provided. Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 56.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

between organisations and institutions through which the artist and art work move, but on an evolution within the artist and art work. Furthermore, as outlined in the preceding discussion the role of these organisations is distinct from other institutions and so not in competition with them.

The professional and artistic development elements of deferred value as a concept are consistent with the preceding discussions regarding experimentation and professional development. However, an issue arising from deferred value is that it is a value that is less overtly visible or measurable than other types of value as it may not come to maturation until a later date nor may it be quantifiable.⁶⁴⁰ This was previously recognised by some of the artists interviewed. For this reason reflective narratives provide an important resource; this research provides an initial contribution to this conversation.

⁶⁴⁰ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations."

Chapter 3: Governance, Management, and Organisation of Work

This chapter demonstrates how the organisations are structured and operated and analyses the extensive work that occurs in order to deliver the opportunities and exhibitions that were explored in the previous chapter. The modus operandi of the organisations involves the process of decision making. This framework has been constructed from a combination of sources, primarily information given in interview as well as various company papers filed with the CRO; the full list of papers consulted is included Appendix B of this thesis.

This chapter analyses both governance and management functions. These are succinctly distinguished as follows by UNESCO:

Management encompasses processes, structures and arrangements that are designed to mobilize and transform the available physical, human and financial resources to achieve concrete outcomes. Management refers to individuals or groups of people who are given the authority to achieve the desired results. Governance systems set the parameters under which management and administrative systems will operate. Governance is about how power is distributed and shared, how policies are formulated, priorities set and stakeholders made accountable.⁶⁴¹

Anheier observes that the functions of governance and management often overlap in small organisations, and this certainly holds true for the sample organisations within the study.⁶⁴²

In interview, little distinction was made between the delivery of governance and management which were discussed simultaneously. This is in part due to the fact that the same individuals, primarily the founders, are involved in both functions simultaneously, and who comprise the locus of decision-making. However, for clarity it is useful to the current research to consider select aspects of these functions in turn because governance structures embrace externally determined legal requirements, while management practices generally comprises practices and policies decided or evolved internally. It is particularly useful to make this distinction as it allows for focused attention on why the organisations engaged specific legal types; as has been previously

⁶⁴¹ UNESCO, "Education: Concept of Governance," <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/strengthening-education-systems/quality-framework/technical-notes/concept-of-governance/>.

⁶⁴² Helmut K. Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations : Theory, Management, Policy* (London: Routledge, 2005), 231.

identified these types are not always consistent with the non-profit ethos and behaviour of the organisations.

In order to provide context, the chapter begins by outlining the level of skills and experience, if any, that individuals brought to the management and governance of these organisations at the outset. This is important to the discussion as a deficit of management knowledge and skills are characteristic of these organisations at the point of establishment, causing commensurate difficulties and challenges.

The legal status and governance practices within the organisations are then documented and analysed. An overview is provided of the legal types engaged by the organisations, why these were selected, and how they were negotiated. In analysing the key factors that inform these decisions discussion includes consideration of how in interacting with external institutions the organisations negotiate pressures to conform to structural arrangements; it considers both acquiescence and resistance to these.

Moving to discussion of management, the chapter explores the nature of participation and the processes of decision-making and how decisions are made within the organisations. Understanding practices pertaining to decision-making is integral to understanding the structural and systemic dynamics of the organisations. It also defines the relationship of the individual to the organisation and demarcates their place within the social structure through their ability to participate and 'to influence others and to acquire desired outcomes'; it is thus a question of power and how power is managed in order to shape and deliver the activities of the organisations.⁶⁴³

The chapter then turns to consider the day-to-day operation of the organisations. Key topics of discussion include coordination methods and role differentiation. This is examined both in regards to the founders and subsequent members of the organisations. Through this discussion it is possible to consider the structural qualities of the organisation.

A key discussion that emerges, based on the experience of interviewees, is the issue of workload. The chapter analyses the impacts of an excessive workload, both upon the individual and the organisation, and the responses made by the organisations to this challenge. A number of negative impacts are identified and leading from this the question is addressed as to why

⁶⁴³ Edward J. Lawler and Jeongkoo Yoon, "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations," *American Sociological Review* (1998): 872.

individuals participate in these organisations at the managerial level, in spite of detrimental impacts. In this discussion a variety of soft incentives are identified.

Skills and Competencies

Bromley *et al* contend that 'some nonprofits lack the skills or knowledge to implement managerial tools'.⁶⁴⁴ Several interviewees identified knowledge deficit as a concern in respect of governance and management. This was not unilateral; for example G-Dovns of Block T had previously run a business and the organisation also benefited from several business mentorships during their development. However, for the majority these skills were lacking. Interviewees described being 'clueless', 'ignorant', 'thrown in at the deep end' and acting on 'intuition'.⁶⁴⁵ As one typical respondent explained:

I don't have any business management experience or education; I don't have any arts management experience or education.⁶⁴⁶

With reference to this deficit, significant discontent was expressed in respect of the 'professional practice' modules provided by the colleges. This was described by a number of interviewees.

They have professional practice seminars in college but I don't really think that they're well suited or even contemporary enough. They just didn't seem to be all that helpful I suppose.⁶⁴⁷

[T]he professional practice experience that we would have got in college was just, 'look at this [...] established artist and here is his work'. But it didn't really tell us how to support ourselves, or get galleries to look at our work, or get funding, or anything like that.⁶⁴⁸

One interviewee reflected on this lack of training as it impacted upon the skills needed to establish an artist-run organisation:

⁶⁴⁴ Bromley, Hwang, and Powell, "Decoupling Revisited: Common Pressures, Divergent Strategies in the US Nonprofit Sector," 471.

⁶⁴⁵ Anon. interviewees 9, 13, 8.

⁶⁴⁶ Anon. interview 8.

⁶⁴⁷ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁶⁴⁸ Anon. interviewee 3.

Just coming straight out of college you don't get taught these things, you don't get taught about artist-spaces, you don't get taught how to run your own studios.⁶⁴⁹

They also reflected:

They don't teach those kind of skills that you need when you leave college and [are] trying to sustain yourself or to create employment for yourself in the art world, or the artistic scene.⁶⁵⁰

Consultation of online details of course curricula for arts courses, that were contemporary with the research process for this thesis, also indicated a lack of training in the area of business and entrepreneurship.⁶⁵¹ Although this is subsequent to the period discussed by interviewees it does provide some indication of support to their accounts.

This deficit is coherent with research pertaining to international trends.⁶⁵² Beckman and Bridgstock each identify that, internationally, the professional development modules that are typically included within arts education largely focus on specific task based skills development such as portfolio development and writing artist statements, rather than on more entrepreneurially oriented curricula focused on what Beckman calls, 'the innovative delivery of art to the marketplace'.⁶⁵³ The artist-run space, whether gallery or studio, represents one such entrepreneurial enterprise.

⁶⁴⁹ Anon, interviewee 18.

⁶⁵⁰ Anon, interviewee 18.

⁶⁵¹ Online course curricula were consulted for third level fine arts courses in the Republic of Ireland. Only Crawford/CIT explicitly referenced legal and financial topics within the fine art programme of study as part of the professional practice curricula. There was comparatively a marginally increased delivery of business courses within applied arts courses. Some of these areas are also addressed in Masters courses in Arts Management.

⁶⁵² Christine Bauer, Katharina Viola, and Christine Strauss, "Management Skills for Artists: 'Learning by Doing'?", *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 17, no. 5 (2011); Gary D Beckman, "" Adventuring" Arts Entrepreneurship Curricula in Higher Education: An Examination of Present Efforts, Obstacles, and Best Practices," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 37, no. 2 (2007); *Disciplining the Arts: Teaching Entrepreneurship in Context* (Lanham, New York, Toronto, Plymouth (UK): R&L Education, 2010); Ruth Bridgstock, "Skills for Creative Industries Graduate Success," *Education and Training* 53, no. 1 (2011); "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education," *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 12, no. 2-3 (2013); K Mark Weaver and Susan Bowman, "Entrepreneurship and the Arts: Illusion or Reality?" (paper presented at the USASBE/SBI 2006 Joint Conference, 2006).

⁶⁵³ Beckman, "" Adventuring" Arts Entrepreneurship Curricula in Higher Education: An Examination of Present Efforts, Obstacles, and Best Practices," 89; Bridgstock, "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education."

There is limited empirical or longitudinal research regarding the impact of specific skills development on arts careers.⁶⁵⁴ Nonetheless, the importance of entrepreneurial grounding and appropriate cognisant skills for artists' career development is identified in a number of studies.⁶⁵⁵ Bauer *et al.* advocate the inclusion of business related courses as essential within arts education in order to 'avoid professional mistakes caused by ignorance or inexperience'.⁶⁵⁶ However, for each of Beckman and Bridgstock this is insufficient for needs, and they advocate entrepreneurially-focused curricula.⁶⁵⁷ Beckman believes:

Arts entrepreneurship curricula should reflect the economic and cultural environments arts students will inhabit when launching entrepreneurial ventures by transitioning them from higher education to a professional arts environment.⁶⁵⁸

Furthermore, they advocate that this should be defined apart from traditional entrepreneurship and give particular respect to the distinctiveness of the arts environment, the intrinsic motivators at work in artistic enterprises, and should include both the for-profit and non-profit fields.⁶⁵⁹

John Carson, Senior Lecturer at Central St Martin's Art College London (1999) considers that:

While the system must produce artists, it is also about the creation of a broader constituency of those who will support and promote the visual arts

⁶⁵⁴ There are two key studies of note in regard to this. The first is Jacob W. Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's (1976) longitudinal study of graduates from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. The second is a report commissioned by The London Institute in 2000 exploring the views of graduates from their programme (1993-1995) on the adequacy of skill acquisition within their educational experience. However, given the limited geographic parameters and timeframes of these studies their results, while supportive of this argument, are limited in terms of evidentiary qualification. See: Jacob W Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Creative Vision: A Longitudinal Study of Problem Finding in Art* (New York: Wiley, 1976); Ivana La Valle, Siobhan O'Regan, and Charles Jackson, *The Art of Getting Started: Graduate Skills in a Fragmented Labour Market. les Report 364* (The Institute for Employment Studies, University of Sussex, 2000).

⁶⁵⁵ Beckman, "" Adventuring" Arts Entrepreneurship Curricula in Higher Education: An Examination of Present Efforts, Obstacles, and Best Practices."; *Disciplining the Arts: Teaching Entrepreneurship in Context*; Bridgstock, "Skills for Creative Industries Graduate Success."; "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education."; Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers."; "Artists as Workers: Theoretical and Methodological Challenges," *Poetics* 28, no. 4 (2001); Robert Moussetis and Gary Ernst, "The Artist as an Entrepreneur: An Exploratory Study and Propositions" (paper presented at the USASBE 2004 Conference, 2004); Weaver and Bowman, "Entrepreneurship and the Arts: Illusion or Reality?."; La Valle, O'Regan, and Jackson, *The Art of Getting Started: Graduate Skills in a Fragmented Labour Market. les Report 364*.

⁶⁵⁶ Bauer, Viola, and Strauss, "Management Skills for Artists: 'Learning by Doing'?", 639.

⁶⁵⁷ Beckman, "" Adventuring" Arts Entrepreneurship Curricula in Higher Education: An Examination of Present Efforts, Obstacles, and Best Practices."; *Disciplining the Arts: Teaching Entrepreneurship in Context*; Bridgstock, "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education."

⁶⁵⁸ Beckman, "" Adventuring" Arts Entrepreneurship Curricula in Higher Education: An Examination of Present Efforts, Obstacles, and Best Practices," 92.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

and sustain a visual culture. It must produce an all round education which will create a general social and cultural awareness and import transferable skills to enable graduates to make a living if they are not making a fortune out of their art work [...] there is no pre-determined career path or definitive map[.]⁶⁶⁰

The increase in graduates engaging the artist-run enterprise evidences these as both an increasingly important aspect of the 'boundaryless', 'portfolio', or 'protean' career type.⁶⁶¹ These career types comprise short-term or project-based work, and multiple employments, both related to and not related to the production and distribution of an individual's own work.⁶⁶²

In the absence of formal training or experience an intuitive approach based on trial and error, i.e. 'learning by doing', dominated within the sample.⁶⁶³ It was through this process that interviewees and their colleagues accumulated skills and competencies.⁶⁶⁴ Reflecting on this McEvoy, of Block T, stated:

I feel like I've just done a master's in arts administration or something like that, and project management'.⁶⁶⁵

This experience is common to artist-run spaces and Jones also highlights the lack of initial skills and the 'steep learning curve' experienced with UK-based spaces.⁶⁶⁶

It can be considered that learning by doing and working intuitively provides the potential for new and innovative models to emerge, as organisations are not bound to conform to convention. However, it is essential that ignorance is not idealised as in practice it can propagate

⁶⁶⁰ John Carson, "Professional Practice," *a-n Magazine* 2012, 5.

⁶⁶¹ Bridgstock, "Skills for Creative Industries Graduate Success."; "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education."; Jon P Briscoe and Douglas T Hall, "The Interplay of Boundaryless and Protean Careers: Combinations and Implications," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 69, no. 1 (2006); Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 563. Bridgstock develops the idea of protean career following Hall: Briscoe and Hall, "The Interplay of Boundaryless and Protean Careers: Combinations and Implications."; Douglas T. Hall, *Careers in Organizations* (Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company 1976); *The Career Is Dead--Long Live the Career: A Relational Approach to Careers* (Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1996); "The Protean Career: A Quarter-Century Journey," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 65, no. 1 (2004); Douglas T. Hall and Philip H. Mirvis, "The New Protean Career: Psychological Success and the Path with a Heart," in *The Career Is Dead--Long Live the Career*, ed. Douglas T. Hall (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1996).

⁶⁶² Doris Ruth Eikhof and Axel Haunschild, "Lifestyle Meets Market: Bohemian Entrepreneurs in Creative Industries," *Creativity and Innovation Management* 15, no. 3 (2006); Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 565.

⁶⁶³ Bauer, Viola, and Strauss, "Management Skills for Artists: 'Learning by Doing'?", Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 560.

⁶⁶⁴ "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 560.

⁶⁶⁵ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁶⁶⁶ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 29.

inefficiencies, can leave organisations vulnerable to internal error, and can hinder their ability to negotiate environmental factors. Indeed, inexperience and lack of appropriate technical skills is stated as a central component of Stinchcombe's 'liability of newness' theory, as a factor for enhanced death rates within young organisations.⁶⁶⁷

There needs to be a balance between what March terms 'exploitation of things already known' and 'exploration of things that might come to be known'.⁶⁶⁸ He states:

It is clear that a strategy of exploitation without exploration is a route to obsolescence. It is equally clear that a strategy of exploration without exploitation is a route to elimination.⁶⁶⁹

'Learning by doing' provides opportunity for organisations to translate the application of, i.e. to exploit, their emerging competencies on their own terms. However, when not underpinned with basic business and management skills the position is precarious.

Education, knowledge, and skills are a form of cultural capital.⁶⁷⁰ The educational lacuna, as has been described, deprives graduating artists of this source of capital. With regard to impact on organisations, such as the sample group, the deficit of education in this area is of concern. As will emerge throughout this chapter, at minimum an education in business curricula would have assisted a number of the interviewees and would have had significant benefit both in terms of the internal organisational approaches and also in assisting organisations to negotiate environmental factors with enhanced critical awareness. It would also support the individuals in their broader professional undertakings. In addition to education at third level, continued mentorship and training opportunities, appropriate to the developmental stage of the organisations, would potentially provide substantial benefit to their ongoing development.

Legal Status and Governance

Unincorporated organisations, Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLG), and Private Companies Limited by Share (LTD) are each subject to different governance structures. Therefore, organisational type has distinct implications at the level of how governance is enacted and who

⁶⁶⁷ Arthur L Stinchcombe and JG March, "Social Structure and Organizations," *Advances in Strategic Management* 17 (1965). Robert A Burgelman, "Intraorganizational Ecology of Strategy Making and Organizational Adaptation: Theory and Field Research," *Organization Science* 2, no. 3 (1991): 255.

⁶⁶⁸ James G March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," *Society and Economy* 25, no. 1 (2003): 3.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁷⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984); "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47.

participates in that process. In reviewing company papers filed with the Companies Registration Office (CRO), for this research in 2013, it was observed that within the sample group there was a high level of incorporation as companies; seven out of the nine sample organisations had incorporated as a company. A company is defined, by the CRO, as:

A company is a legal form of business organisation. It is a separate legal entity and, therefore, is separate and distinct from those who run it.⁶⁷¹

The form offers protection to directors, shareholders, and members, as it is the company and not the individual that is liable for debts and is the subject of legal action and penalty.

Only Basic Space and Ormond Studios remained unincorporated. Ormond Studios was governed by Constitution which stipulates the equal participation of all studio members in the governance of the organisation. Basic Space had no formal governance structure but was rather driven solely by an informal management structure.

In contrast to unincorporated organisations, the governance structures of incorporated companies are legally prescribed. There are two types of incorporated company relevant to this research, Companies Limited by Guarantee (CLGs) and Private Limited Companies (LTDs). At time of initial incorporation only two organisations incorporated as CLGs and five of the sample organisations initially incorporated as a LTDs. However three of these later amended to the CLG type. Thus although the LTD type is more prevalent at the outset the CLG form is more popular on an ongoing basis.

The CLG and the LTD companies have different governance structures. The CLG has a board which may be comprised of what Byrd and Hickman, following Basinger and Butler, identify as 'inside directors', 'affiliated outside directors', and 'independent outside directors'.⁶⁷²

Inside directors are typically corporate officers or retirees and members of their families. Affiliated outside directors are not full-time employees of the firm but are associated with it in some way. [...] Independent outside directors have no affiliation with the firm other than their directorship[.]⁶⁷³

⁶⁷¹ Companies Registration Office, "Company Registration," <https://www.cro.ie/Registration/Company> See also: "Information Leaflet 1: Company Incorporation V 7.10." Dublin, 2012.

⁶⁷² John W Byrd and Kent A Hickman, "Do Outside Directors Monitor Managers?: Evidence from Tender Offer Bids," *Journal of Financial Economics* 32, no. 2 (1992): 199. See also: Manohar Singh and Wallace N. Davidson III, "Agency Costs, Ownership Structure and Corporate Governance Mechanisms," *Journal of Banking & Finance* 27, no. 5 (2003).

⁶⁷³ Byrd and Hickman, "Do Outside Directors Monitor Managers?: Evidence from Tender Offer Bids," 199.

Often the CLG form has a revolving board wherein a stipulation may be included that the number of years any director can serve is limited.⁶⁷⁴ The CLG form is legally a non-profit distributing entity and so does not have shareholders. In contrast the Limited Company has directors and shareholders. The directors run the company on behalf of the shareholders who collectively own the company.⁶⁷⁵ The shareholders are eligible to be paid dividends on the company's net profits.⁶⁷⁶ These are the 'residual claimants' that were previously discussed in the Introduction Chapter with respect to the distribution of profits.⁶⁷⁷

Reasons for Incorporation

Figure 15 shows the details of the incorporated organisations including the company types, year of incorporation or reincorporation, and legal names. Across both types of incorporated organisation, it is observed that incorporation largely occurred either immediately upon establishment or within a year of establishment. PP/S and MART are the exceptions to this. PP/S was established in 1996 and incorporated in 2000. MART was established in 2007, opened their gallery in December 2012, and incorporated in January 2014. Thus, there is, in this example, one year between gallery establishment and company incorporation.

The evidenced pattern of high levels of incorporation is significant as it is contrary to the patterns of behaviour observed at the country-wide level. Country-wide contemporaries to the sample group present a low level of incorporation, see Figure 16. Rather either no legal status was identified or they were registered as businesses, but not companies. From an historic perspective, it is unlikely that the previously identified undocumented initiatives within Dublin were formalised in this way. However, significantly PACS and TBG+S incorporated and did so relatively early on in their development, in 1971 and 1985 respectively. Similarly Broadstone Studios, which is an early peer to our sample but, as earlier identified, declined participation within the study, also incorporated in 1998.

The observed pattern within the sample is in contrast to broader behaviours observed among the population of artist-run spaces in Ireland, since its documented emergence and during the period of the study, but it is not without precedence within Dublin. It is also observed that historically,

⁶⁷⁴ This is seen for example in Catalyst (Belfast), 126 (Galway), and Transmission (Glasgow). Transmission Gallery, "Committee," <http://www.transmissiongallery.org/Info#tab-about-committee>; Catalyst Belfast, "About," <http://www.catalystarts.org.uk/about/>; 126 Galway, "About the 126 Team," <http://126.ie/the-team/>.

⁶⁷⁵ Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement. "Information Book 2: Decision Notice D/2011/1, the Principal Duties and Powers of Company Directors under the Companies Acts 1963-2009." Dublin, n.d., 6

⁶⁷⁶ "Information Book 4: Members and Shareholders." Dublin, 2015.

⁶⁷⁷ Fama and Jensen, "Separation of Ownership and Control."; "Agency Problems and Residual Claims."

within Dublin, those organisations that incorporated are the most enduring of these enterprises. This would seem to suggest either that incorporation provides a structure which encourages longevity, or alternatively an inclination towards longevity encourages the engagement of formal structures. The reasons for incorporation within the sample are analysed in detail.

In her 2007 dissertation, Rayne Booth considered stimuli for incorporation within four Irish artist-run spaces: this includes PP/S and MTGS from the sample, and also included Four Gallery and G126. She reports legal liability, insurance and an overall desire to professionalise internal structures shaped the decisions as well as, to a degree, access to Arts Council funding.⁶⁷⁸ Although her sample is small it is of interest as it was undertaken early on in the development of the organisations. Although there is some difference between Booth's research and this thesis in terms of the weight of influence given by interviewees to these individual stimuli, the general overlap in the findings reinforces the influence of these factors.

In interview with the sample organisations, financial reasons were the primary reported stimulus to incorporation. In his research on non-profit arts organisations within the USA, DiMaggio observes a direct correlation between the overheads of organisations and their rate of incorporation. He terms this 'the relationship between capital intensiveness and form'.⁶⁷⁹ This resonates with the sample. Those organisations who reported incurring costs at initiation or in development were evidenced as favouring a more formal structure via incorporation. In contrast, Basic Space and Ormond Studios, who both reported minimal start-up costs and limited ongoing overheads, adopted low levels of legal formalisation.⁶⁸⁰ This suggests that the conditions of accessing funds to satisfy these demands, whether as earned income or through other means, encourages formalisation.

Two of the most common reasons stated for incorporation were securing a lease and access to business loans. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, recalled:

We set up the studios as a small company and we knew we'd need a loan because there was a lot of building work to be done and we had to pay a

⁶⁷⁸ Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?," 57, 63.

⁶⁷⁹ DiMaggio, "Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts," 442-43.

⁶⁸⁰ Basic Space demonstrated significantly less financial need than the incorporated groups. They did not pay rent and they did not undertake any renovation to the premises. They also had no earned income. As outlined, Ormond Studios do not rent studio facilities to individuals outside of the organisation; space is rented, exclusively, by members of the collective and this covers the full capital costs of the studio facilities thus they do not require the generation of additional finances. The finances of the organisations are discussed in Chapter 4.

deposit. So we were thinking, 'if we have to take up a loan, we will need to go into the bank with some kind of structure'.⁶⁸¹

Birmingham and Welch, of the unincorporated Basic Space, reflected that not having a legal structure had in practice restricted their ability to take on leases, as liability fell upon individuals rather than the organisation. The reduction of overheads via tax exemptions were identified by interviewees as a benefit of, but not necessarily stimulus to, formalisation and incorporation. While neither loan facilities nor tax exemptions are exclusively dependent upon incorporation, it was reported as a favourable condition when seeking to secure these.⁶⁸²

A further reason reported for formalisation in general, within the sample, is access to grants. Of note is that this is also seen in TBG+S. In minutes from a Directors meeting in February 1985 the organisation decided to incorporate as a CLG and highlighted anticipated benefits of financial assistance and rates relief.⁶⁸³ Within the interviews the main discussion regarding the influence of funding bodies was given in reference to securing funding from the ACI. However, it is of note that this was neither the sole nor the initial grant funding secured by several of the organisations. Within the sample, formalisation in response to this occurred to varying degrees across the organisations both at the unincorporated and incorporated levels.

Wishing to access public funding was identified by McDonald as the impetus for Ormond Studios' formalisation, via Constitution. Indeed, McDonald relays that while it was possible to get funding without formalisation as a non-profit entity it was perceived as 'more appealing for funders' to do so.⁶⁸⁴ Furthermore, both Howie and Fitz of Basic Space reported that they were considering formalising their structure since 'money got involved' through ACI funding, in the form of a workspace scheme grant and anticipated future rental income.⁶⁸⁵ Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that they incorporated '*purely* to draw down the Arts Council funding' [original emphasis].⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸¹ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁶⁸² Block T, Market Studios, MTGS and Ormond Studios all specifically reported that they benefited from tax exemptions. There is no publicly accessible database through which to verify this information. Furthermore, not all of the interviewees disclosed information in this area. Thus, the reported information cannot be considered as comprehensive and the author proposes that it does not reflect the full extent of these financial benefits within the sample group.

⁶⁸³ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 22/02/1985," (NIVAL Box 9, 1985).

⁶⁸⁴ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁶⁸⁵ Fitz, Interview with author; Howie, Interview with author.

⁶⁸⁶ Prendergast, Interview with author. (original emphasis).

The perception that funders prefer formal structures finds precedence with international literature; Jones (UK) states:

There does appear to be a tendency amongst funders to make a direct correlation between certain types of organisational structure [i.e. formal legal status] and the requirement to be publically accountable.⁶⁸⁷

It is also substantiated to a degree within the practices of the ACI and consultation of ACI literature demonstrates the perception that the ACI favours formalisation as well placed. The earliest funding received by an organisation within the sample was by PP/S, who received an Exhibitions Assistant Grant in 1999, and Capital and Revenue Grants in 2001. The conditions of the Annual Revenue Grant (ARG), during this period, stipulated that organisations must have a tax number and be at minimum governed by a Constitution.⁶⁸⁸ However the guidelines also stated:

Usually (though this is not essential) arts organisations in receipt of annual revenue grants are incorporated under the Companies Act on a not-for-profit basis[.]⁶⁸⁹

As noted this form is preferable but not essential. In 2007, there was a major revision of the funding structures of the ACI. However, it remained that both incorporated and unincorporated organisations were eligible to apply for Annual Programming Grants (APGs) and Annual Funding Grants (AFG).⁶⁹⁰

It is therefore confirmed that a level of formalisation is required by the ACI, but it does not compel incorporation at all levels. Nonetheless, it remains that there is an association of larger awards with more formalised structures due to a phased reporting process which requires more formal reporting mechanisms, for example audited accounts, for higher awards. A culture of accountability is therefore embedded within the ACI's funding structures which are anticipated and interpreted by the organisations. Here there is an association that increased levels of

⁶⁸⁷ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 27.

⁶⁸⁸ Arts Council of Ireland. "Revenue Funding." Dublin, 1998.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁰ The 2006/2007 application forms and application form guidelines were provided to the researcher by the ACI. However, the award eligibility guidelines and terms and conditions were not available; nor were they available online. Booth's (2007) dissertation was undertaken contemporarily to this period and provides a reliable source of the details of these awards to supplement the direct sources consulted by the researcher.

formalisation, and of accountability, are favourable to larger awards. This in itself encourages higher levels of formalisation.

Consultation of Dublin City Council's arts funding guidelines similarly requires more formal financial reporting procedures for higher awards, requiring certified accounts for organisations with a turnover of more than €5000 per annum and audited accounts for Revenue funding.⁶⁹¹ Their governance requirements are more ambiguous and apply only to the Revenue funding whereby:

It is anticipated that organisations applying for Revenue funding will have adopted the standard principles of governance as appropriate to their organisation's needs.⁶⁹²

Thus while this broadly also reinforces this culture of accountability, it is not as overt as in the example of the ACI and it is of note that DCC were not cited by any interviewees as being a factor of influence.

Theories of 'isomorphism' provide a useful lens with which to further explore this.⁶⁹³ Isomorphism refers to the development of shared characteristics, or homogeneity, amongst a given population. Isomorphic pressures are diverse and 'may be felt as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join collusion'.⁶⁹⁴ They are thus not always a direct imposition upon the agent. To a degree there is evidence of DiMaggio and Powell's concept of 'coercive isomorphism' whereby pressure is applied, albeit informally or subtly, for an organisation to change by an external group on which they are dependent.⁶⁹⁵ This is evidenced directly in the requirement of a minimal level of formalisation within the organisations by the ACI, as evidenced in funding guidelines.

Other isomorphic tendencies are stimulated by perceptions of success in two key ways. The first is 'mimetic isomorphism', whereby organisations model themselves on others that they perceive as successful.⁶⁹⁶ MTGS and PP/S are the two longest established organisations within the sample, both incorporated early and both achieved early and ongoing success in securing awards from

⁶⁹¹ Dublin City Council, "Arts Grant Criteria and Guidelines for 2015," (2014).

⁶⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁶⁹³ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields."; John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977); Hannan and Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations."

⁶⁹⁴ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," 150.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 152. Also see: Amos H. Hawley, *Human Ecology; a Theory of Community Structure* (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1950), 202.

the ACI. This potentially sets precedence for formalisation as one perceived contributing factor to success.

This is set against a climate of competition for limited resources. Hannan and Freeman outline that:

As long as the resources which sustain organizations are finite and populations have unlimited capacity to expand, competition must ensue.⁶⁹⁷

Therefore, I suggest that 'competitive isomorphism' is also potentially a factor. Hannan and Freeman cite Hawley's thesis that 'competitors become more similar as standard conditions of competition bring forth a uniform response'.⁶⁹⁸ However, they ultimately settle on a more tempered position wherein 'uniformity of response and community diversity [are] consequences of combinations of certain competitive processes and environmental features'.⁶⁹⁹ Thus, it is proposed that formalisation occurs in anticipation of the perceived preference of the ACI for more formalised structures with more stringent structures of accountability.

The thesis of isomorphic pressures suggests one way in which the organisations respond to their financial situations. This theory would contribute to accounting for why this high level of incorporation is seen specifically within this local population who are gaining direct influence from each other, as well as competing against each other for limited resources, in contrast to the country-wide contemporaries, who are not in direct competition for the same resources.

The Private Limited Company

The finding that the Private Company Limited by Shares (LTD) type was engaged by the majority of the organisations in the first instance is significant, as this behaviour has not been previously formally identified nor is it widely perceived as common practice.⁷⁰⁰ Further reinforcing this pattern of behaviour is the fact that Broadstone Studios also chose the LTD company type. The importance of this observed trend is enhanced by the fact that this company type is antithetical to the stated non-profit distributing aims and behaviour of the organisations. The contradictory dynamics of this was outlined in the Introduction Chapter.

A further significant finding is that this behaviour is largely limited to the sample. There is no mention of similar patterns of behaviour in international literature, there is no historical

⁶⁹⁷ Hannan and Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," 940.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibid., 941.

⁷⁰⁰ PP/S initially incorporated as a Workers Cooperative which is legally a type of LTD.

precedence for this within Dublin (as both TBG+S and PAC incorporated as CLGs), and within the contemporary context it is not seen on a country-wide level, see Figure 16. The dominant forms of artist-run spaces within these broader contexts have been collectives and cooperatives, or CLGs (or the equivalent structure for that country).⁷⁰¹ Country-wide, within the Republic of Ireland, of the two organisations that did incorporate, Limerick Printmakers, similarly to The Market Studios, incorporated first as a Limited Company before amending their legal type to CLG within the same year. Tactic, which is a space within Sample Studios in Cork, engaged the CLG format from the outset.

The identified trend of incorporating as a LTD company is also antithetical to established best practice in the broader non-profit field in general and of Irish arts governance specifically.⁷⁰² Finally, it contradicts ACI preferences, as were outlined in earlier in this chapter.⁷⁰³ This is singled out as of significance because of the high emphasis that was given, by some of the interviewees, to the influence of this agency. Indeed, engaging in this contradictory behaviour potentially indicates that the influence of this agency was less clear-cut than the interviews suggested. Why then, did the majority of the sample organisations choose to incorporate as LTDs and what were the governance implications of this? Suggested reasons for selecting organisational types and the consequences of this are each analysed in detail below.

As noted only the ACI were directly reported as of significant influence in regard to practices of formalisation, including incorporation. However, it is of note that for several of the organisations their incorporation as a LTD was favourable to alternative early grant funding that they received. PP/S' secured early financial support from FÁS (the Irish National Training and Employment Authority), and both Block T and The Joinery also benefited from early grants aimed at business and entrepreneurship. These preceded ACI support and, in each instance, the LTD form is appropriate to these sources. Thus, although there is no evidence of causality there is suggestion that there was advantage to this form in these examples.

⁷⁰¹ Examples of organisational types are given in Sharon, "Artist-Run Galleries - A Contemporary Institutional Change in the Visual Arts," 5; Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 110; Blessi, Sacco, and Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," 153; Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology."

⁷⁰² Donlon, "Practioner Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance: Governance in Arts Organisations in Ireland."; Donoghue et al., "The Hidden Landscape," 32. Irish Nonprofits Knowledge Exchange, "Irish Nonprofits: What Do We Know?," 66.

⁷⁰³ See also: Arts Council of Ireland. "A Practical Guide for Board Members of Arts Organisations." Dublin, 2006; "A Practical Guide for Board Members of Arts Organisations." Dublin, 2015.

However, it was also reported that there were financial disadvantages and penalties for using this company type. For example, Morrissey, of The Market Studios, stated:

We were initially a Limited Company; it was limited by shares, which meant that we would be making a profit from it. But that structure didn't suit us because we found out down the line that we then had to pay Corporation Tax and rates and things like that. So, the reason we went not-for-profit [CLG] is so that we could get funding money from the Arts Council, which is absolutely instrumental to us surviving, and so that we would be exempt from corporation tax and from rates, from building rates.⁷⁰⁴

In respect of financial prejudice, Prendergast, of MTGS, estimated that they had, at the time of the second interview for this research in 2014, paid circa €40,000 in avoidable rates. However, interestingly, he did not believe that this company type had prejudiced the ACI against them, and as is evidenced in Chapter 4 MTGS were very successful in securing grants from this agency on an early and ongoing basis. Overall, he felt that, although desirable it was ultimately 'unnecessary' to reincorporate as a CLG and that the costs involved were prohibitive to doing so.⁷⁰⁵

Thus, the evidence suggests that while the ACI expressed a strong preference for the CLG form, and were reported as influential in the decision of both The Market Studios and PP/S to reform to this type, they were prepared to support organisations based on their behavioural structure as non-profits and to overlook the anomaly of their legal form. This can be viewed positively in providing essential support to these organisations, but also as a collusion which enabled the continued engagement of the LTD company type.

The question of legal status was reported to be a significant challenge for some of the organisations. McEvoy, from Block T, described that negotiating legal status was one of the main challenges the organisation faced when they established. Echoing this Howie, from the unincorporated Basic Space, stated that incorporation was considered but described the complexities of negotiating this prospect as a 'nightmare'.⁷⁰⁶ Related to this challenge, interviewees from The Market Studios and MTGS retrospectively considered that their initial incorporation as a LTD was not ideal, a decision that Morrissey identified as largely due to lack of internal knowledge regarding the appropriate format. She stated:

⁷⁰⁴ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁷⁰⁵ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁷⁰⁶ Howie, Interview with author.

The way we were initially set up, the structure didn't suit us. We were naive and we didn't know enough about how to go about it.⁷⁰⁷

A similar experience was reported by Prendergast, from MTGS who also retrospectively considered that, with the benefit of hindsight, there may have been a better alternative. He expressed disappointment and frustration at a lack of opportunity for advice and support on this matter at the time of the decision. Subsequently he felt that the advice they accessed may not have understood their specific needs as a non-profit arts organisation. In particular he felt that advice that was centred on governance of the organisation did not necessarily reflect its collective nature. These two examples indicate that relevant training in business and entrepreneurship could have benefited some of the organisations either through increasing the capacity to negotiate the concern internally or assisting in anticipating and communicating their organisation's needs to external parties in order to access appropriate advice.

Some interviewees also expressed concerns about the governance structures of the CLG form. This was in respect of both those that incorporated at the outset as a CLG and those that revised to this form later. In particular, the issues of autonomy and efficiency were raised with respect to the introduction of a larger board of directors including external directors. Cullen, of PP/S, described an initial hesitancy to reform to the CLG type amid concerns that managing the change could bring an extra burden of work. These concerns within MART reportedly influenced them to restrict their CLG board to 'inside' directors only:

We were more concerned about the nature of a board. I don't know, it is probably stupid, there is probably no reason to be afraid of it. But it was just that they would have power over a lot of your decisions. So we just sometimes need to make very quick decisions and just do things.⁷⁰⁸

The concern is about delay in particular in relation to efficiency concerns and their perceived requirement for quick decisions.

The LTD company type allowed the founders, as directors, to retain full governance control of the organisations. The founders and their successors dominate the company director positions as well as holding all of the shares. The history of company directors is given in Figure 17. Consultation of company documents for the LTDs demonstrates that, at the time of incorporation, the positions of company director and company secretary were exclusively

⁷⁰⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁷⁰⁸ Scanlan, Interview with author.

occupied by the organisations' founders. Only PP/S diverged from this, where a third individual, McLoughlin, is included as a company director alongside the founders Duggan and Cullen. However, Cullen describes McLoughlin as a 'silent partner' with no active role in the organisation; rather, he fulfilled the legal requirement for a worker cooperative (a type of LTD) to have a minimum of three directors.⁷⁰⁹ Within organisations with two or three founding members, The Joinery, The Market Studios, and PP/S, each of the founders held a directorship. Within Block T and MTGS, each of which was founded by small groups of individuals, only two of the founders in each instance held a directorship at the time of incorporation.

As shown in Figure 17, the directorships largely remained stable within the organisations while incorporated as LTDs. PP/S and Block T are exceptions to this both making additions to their boards of directors. For Block T, this comprises the addition of the other founding members as internal directors. PP/S included a further internal appointment as well as outside directors; this is the only LTD with external directors listed in their CRO documents. Across the organisations it is evidenced that founders retain their position as director on an ongoing basis, this continues in instances where their executive involvement in the organisations ceases.

Across all of the LTDs, the initial division of shares was documented as an equal distribution between the named directors. In all instances shares continued to be held exclusively by the founders and their successors. However, in several of the organisations this distribution evidenced variance over time both in terms of the included shareholders and the weight of the share distribution. In the first instance, with the exception of Block T, the founding directors who relinquish their executive duties also partially relinquish their shareholdings. With this exception, there remains among *active* founding directors an equitable distribution of shares. Disparity occurs only between the founding and the recessive, and the founding and the successive shareholders.

This flux within the share allocation is of interest. Given that the shareholders within the sample organisations do not invoke their rites as residual claimants it appears that the share allocation fulfils a symbolic function representing the contribution, past and present, of the individual to the organisation. That is, it may be conceived as a distribution of symbolic recognition in lieu of pecuniary benefits.

⁷⁰⁹ Cullen, Interview with author.

The thesis of recognition and reward can also be applied to directorial appointments. For example, Linders, of Block T, reflected that initially the directorships were designated based on financial backing and professional experience, but that this was then expanded because:

—we were all putting in basically so much time and effort into it. So we are now basically all seven of us are the directors.⁷¹⁰

In the instance of thisisnotashop, Fiore was not a founding member but was a named director at the point of incorporation having already established herself in a key role within the organisation. Similarly, G. Murphy of PP/S took on a leadership role at the executive level in advance of ascension to a directorship.

While this is, as identified, symbolic, this recognition potentially has concrete impacts, both in terms of the initial and continued recognition of key individuals. As proposed by Bourdieu, '[t]itles are symbolic capital' and are thus a form of recognition.⁷¹¹ Recognition and reward stimulates 'stay behaviour' through increasing 'affection' towards the organisation; 'affection' is defined as 'an emotional or cathartic attachment to the collective' and is a central aspect in the commitment of the individual to the organisation.⁷¹² Formal recognition serves not only as a symbolic function but as a mechanism through which to embed the individual within the organisation.

Contrarily, withholding formal recognition decreases 'stay behaviour'. This was reported in interview. For example, Prendergast reported that they were professionally advised to restrict the number of directors and shareholders. While this policy may be appropriate in some circumstances, in this case, restricting this form of recognition may have impacted the dynamic within the organisation and could explain the later withdrawal of some key individuals if, as he suggested: 'we couldn't get the buy in from the other people as a result'.⁷¹³ This is consequential as he reflected that non-retention of key personnel was a factor which ultimately contributed to the decision to close the gallery space.

⁷¹⁰ Linders, Interview with author.

⁷¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," *Theory and Society* 14, no. 6 (1985): 733.

⁷¹² Edward J. Lawler and Jeongkoo Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange," *American Sociological Review* 54, no. 4 (1993): 465; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion," *American Sociological Review* (1996); "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

⁷¹³ Prendergast, Interview with author.

There is evidence, across the organisations, of individuals ceasing executive involvement regardless of their formal recognition. Within the interviews, discussion pertaining to the ongoing involvement of these director-shareholders was somewhat circumspect. In consideration of this, it is acknowledged that the circumstance of the ongoing nature of the relationships under consideration may constrain reporting. The responses given ranged from individuals being 'still very much part' of the organisation, to 'offering silent support', to not being involved except on paper.⁷¹⁴

Where it occurs, the continued presence of founding members as directors, whether active or inactive, could potentially indicate a proprietorial claim to the organisations. While the ongoing presence of these members may prove detrimental if they are resistant to advisable organisational change. However, this presence may also bring a benefit to both the organisation and the individual in terms of reciprocated capital. Through provision of ongoing participation the director continues to provide human capital to the organisation. Human capital is defined as the private resources such as specialist skills, knowledge, and capabilities.⁷¹⁵ Social capital is defined by Bourdieu as 'networks of connections'.⁷¹⁶

Social Capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition.⁷¹⁷

Continuity of individuals within the organisations helps build trust and maintain social capital. Their continued involvement fortifies established external relationships as well as providing access to their newly emerging networks and relationships. Social capital and broad networks are important in both promoting innovation and fortifying organisations against morbidity.⁷¹⁸ In

⁷¹⁴ Anon. interviewees 10, 16.

⁷¹⁵ James S Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital," *American Journal of Sociology* (1988): s100; See also: Gary S Becker, "Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis," *The Journal of Political Economy* (1962); *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education* (New York and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁷¹⁶ Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," 52; *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. For further discussion of the characteristics of social capital see: Paul S Adler and Seok-Woo Kwon, eds., *Social Capital: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, Knowledge and Social Capital: Foundations and Applications (Oxford and Woltham (MA): Butterworth-Heinemann, 2000); "Social Capital: Prospects for a New Concept," *Academy of Management Review* 27, no. 1 (2002); Westlund and Bolton, "Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship."

⁷¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu and Loic Wacquant, "An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology," *Cambridge: Polity* (1992): 119.

⁷¹⁸ Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties."; "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited."; Ronald S Burt, "The Network Structure of Social Capital," *Research in Organizational Behavior* 22 (2000); "Structural Holes and Good Ideas," *American Journal of Sociology* 110, no. 2 (2004). Mark A. Hager,

return for this, the individual potentially reciprocally benefits from the reputation and goodwill extended to the organisation from its wider network. Indeed, Westlund and Bolton highlight that the status and social networks afforded by participation in non-profits are key non-material returns on the investment of time and energy by the individual.⁷¹⁹

While the reasons given for use of the LTD form have been explicated relative to the individual organisations, this does not account for the prevalence of this practice within the sample group which contrasts to both historic and country-wide practices. Given an initial lack of formal organisational and business management skills it is possible that 'mimetic isomorphism' may represent a factor that contributes to organisational type.⁷²⁰ It is recalled from Chapter 1, that there are significant interactions between the individual members of the organisations.⁷²¹ In particular, PP/S and MTGS were of note in terms of providing advice, both of whom incorporated as LTDs. Similarly, Broadstone Studios, which is also a LTD, was repeatedly identified by several interviewees as a source of informal guidance and advice.

The practices engaged by these organisations, thus constituted an influencing norm in an environment of otherwise uncertainty due to lack of training and experience in the area. This thesis of mimesis propagated through informal networks would help, in part, to account for why this pattern of behaviour is seen in the Dublin sample but not in the country-wide contemporaries. Of significance is that while the LTD form is prevalent at the establishment of the organisations, only Block T and MTGS chose to remain as this company type, all of the other incorporated organisations re-incorporated as a CLG.

Companies Limited by Guarantee.

MART and thisisnotashop, from the outset, each incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share capital (CLG). The Market Studios registered both their LTD and a CLG in 2008, the former in March and the latter in September.⁷²² The Joinery and PP/S both reincorporated as CLGs in 2011. The most dominant reason, cited in interview, for moving to the

Joseph Galaskiewicz, and Jeff A. Larson, "Structural Embeddedness and the Liability of Newness among Nonprofit Organizations," *Public Management Review* 6, no. 2 (2004): 160. See also Jitendra V Singh, David J Tucker, and Robert J House, "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 31, no. 2 (1986).

⁷¹⁹ Westlund and Bolton, "Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship," 83.

⁷²⁰ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," 152.

⁷²¹ These include personal or social ties, previously or presently holding studios in an established organisation, or coopting an ex-member from another organisation onto the board, and seeking advice from other organisations at the formative stage.

⁷²² It is of note that of the organisations that reincorporated as public guarantee companies, at the time of writing, only The Market Studios had dissolved the previous LTD.

CLG type was financial prejudice associated with the LTD type and the financial benefits of the CLG form; this was previously outlined. Discussing their re-incorporation Morrissey, of The Market Studios, stated:

[T]he reason we went not-for-profit [CLG] is so that we could get funding money from the Arts Council, which is absolutely instrumental to us surviving, and so that we would be exempt from corporation tax and from rates, from building rates.⁷²³

PP/S also reincorporated on what Cullen reported was direct advice from the ACI.

We had advice from the Arts Council that they would like it [incorporation as a CLG] and that they felt that it would be wise for us to do it.⁷²⁴

The influence of the ACI was previously posited as potentially over-stated given the high engagement of the LTD form; however within these examples the influence is clear and direct in regard to the amendment of the company type. This provides examples of coercive isomorphic pressures.⁷²⁵

The presence of a board within the CLGs potentially expands the boundaries of the organisation. As previously outlined assurance is provided by the recommended presence of external parties on the board of directors.⁷²⁶ It increases the perceived legitimacy of organisations in two ways: it acts as a mechanism of accountability and it reifies and adds status to the organisation by association with individuals of good reputation.

As previously identified, one concern raised in respect to engaging external members onto the board of directors is that it could dilute autonomy and control, and complicate decision-making. As previously noted, MART restricted their CLG board to inside directors only. In examples where external directors were included on the board, all of the CLGs reported that in practice they had positive experiences.

Across all of the organisations, it was reported that autonomy was retained and that the boards operated in primarily advisory roles.

⁷²³ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁷²⁴ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁷²⁵ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," 150.

⁷²⁶ Singh, Tucker, and House, "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness," 177.

We had board meetings and people helped out. But the board wasn't as involved as a traditional board would be [...] it was more just for advice.⁷²⁷

I suppose they are kind of a passive board in that way; they certainly don't dictate to us. It is more a case of us letting them know but we wouldn't make any big decisions without informing the board, without having a board meeting and getting their feedback on it.⁷²⁸

Their roles were described as providing assistance and specialist expertise when required. For example Cullen, of PP/S, stated:

[W]hen their particular area of interest is active on our horizon, we do try a reel them in!⁷²⁹

In all instances, the principal power of decision-making was reported as being retained by the executive directors. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported that she and co-founder Behan, 'would have final say on everything that happens'.⁷³⁰ By retaining both the management and control rights within the founding directors, both autonomy and efficiency concerns are assuaged.⁷³¹

The composition of an organisation's board is important is it provides increased access to otherwise lacking expertise. As explained by Pfeffer and Salancik:

When an organization appoints an individual to a board, it expects the individual will come to support the organization, will concern himself with its problems, will favourably present it to others, and will try and aid it.⁷³²

Across the sample organisations, the boards contained all three director types identified by Byrd and Hickman: 'inside directors', 'affiliated outside directors', and 'independent outside

⁷²⁷ Fiore, Interview with author.

⁷²⁸ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁷²⁹ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁷³⁰ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁷³¹ Fama and Jensen, "Separation of Ownership and Control," 83. Fama and Jensen write that the separation of management (initiation and implementation) and control (ratification and monitoring) strengthens the survival prospects of non-profits. An exception to this is in small noncomplex organisations where the concentration of information into a small number of agents is beneficial to efficiency. Ibid.; "Agency Problems and Residual Claims."

⁷³² Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 163.

directors'.⁷³³ The board of directors in the sample organisations were variously comprised of the founding directors, artists, arts professionals, and members from other professions. For example, Cullen, of PP/S, included members with accounting, legal and marketing knowledge. He reflected:

Having initiated it, it worked out to be very valuable to have a board.
Because the areas of expertise that you are able to bring in, and advice and settling you when times are tough, it can be very very good to have people to talk to.⁷³⁴

Fiore, of thisisnotashop, highlighted Fleming as a board member who brought essential knowledge and experience in respect of corporate accountancy and legal matters.

It is of note that both MTGS and MART engaged advisory boards within their structures, while these did not have the legal remit of official boards they nonetheless were able to provide additional expertise when required. Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that this was comprised of other key individuals who 'are not artists—that work in business, that sort of thing'.⁷³⁵ Parallel to this, Scalan, of MART, outlined that their panel includes people who work in areas as extensive as education, environmental policy, and construction.

In no instance was it reported that representatives from any of the funding agencies were appointed to the board. This represents a contrast to the early board of TBG+S which included ACI representatives. The composition of their board was a subject of ongoing discussion between TBG+S and the ACI. In 1988 a letter from Lawrence Cassidy, Community Arts Officer at the ACI, to TBG+S states that 'the role of outside directors' will be a 'crucial' element in determining whether the organisation's future is as a studio-cooperative or an arts centre.⁷³⁶ Minutes of a directors meeting in 1991 shows disagreement between the ACI and TBG+S over the proportion of the board which should comprise tenant artists and the number of ACI representatives.⁷³⁷ However, this was discontinued and their current board comprises member-tenant artists and independent external directors.⁷³⁸

⁷³³ Byrd and Hickman, "Do Outside Directors Monitor Managers?: Evidence from Tender Offer Bids," 199. See also: Singh and Davidson III, "Agency Costs, Ownership Structure and Corporate Governance Mechanisms."

⁷³⁴ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁷³⁵ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁷³⁶ Lawrence Cassidy, "Letter from Lawrence Cassidy (Community Arts Officer at the Arts Council) to Clair Stanbridge TBG+S 25/10/1988," (NIVAL Box 9, 1988).

⁷³⁷ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 25/04/1995."

⁷³⁸ "Information: Our Board".

Phelim Donlon (previously Film, Drama and Opera Officer for the Arts Council, from 1984 to 2001) notes that a problem in allowing funding bodies to nominate board members is that, 'they often see themselves as being REPRESENTATIVES of the body/entity which appointed them' (original emphasis).⁷³⁹ This can cause problems because 'the operating culture of a local authority is quite different from that of an art centre'.⁷⁴⁰ It also has implications for organisational autonomy. However, no interviewee reported that funding agencies had requested nominating rights to the board, nor did they report extending invitation to this.

As demonstrated within the preceding discussion, by simultaneously engaging a board of directors while retaining autonomy in day-to-day decision-making, the founding-directors of the CLGs are able to incorporate centralised decision-making with accessing wider expertise when required. Collaboration in process allows for the organisation to benefit from enhanced legitimacy, expertise, and innovation; reduced participation in day-to-day decision-making allows for defined leadership that is able to respond quickly to the environment.

As has been explored the CLG form has direct benefits. The engagement of external directors on a board is very beneficial to organisational development. Through enhanced access to expertise it can offset the internal knowledge deficit identified in respect of the founders. It also increases social capital by providing access to a broader network and thus creates ties with additional external constituencies.⁷⁴¹ These broad networks increase access to novel information and encourage innovation.⁷⁴² Both age and size are established as significant factors in organisational mortality.⁷⁴³ However, as pointed out by Hager *et al.* if 'organizations can 'connect' more with stakeholders in their environment, many problems associated with the liability of newness can be overcome'.⁷⁴⁴ Thus, the board serves to offset the liability of both newness and size.⁷⁴⁵ However, it is significant to note that young organisations may not have the established reputation secure the support of directors of this calibre in order to build such a beneficial board

⁷³⁹ Donlon, "Practitioner Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance: Governance in Arts Organisations in Ireland," 4.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁴¹ Singh, Tucker, and House, "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness," 177.

⁷⁴² Burt, "The Network Structure of Social Capital."; "Structural Holes and Good Ideas."; Mark S Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *ibid.* (1973); "The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited."

⁷⁴³ J. Freeman, G. R. Carroll, and M. T. Hannan, "The Liability of Newness - Age Dependence in Organizational Death Rates," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 5 (1983); Singh, Tucker, and House, "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness."; Stinchcombe and March, "Social Structure and Organizations."; Hager, Galaskiewicz, and Larson, "Structural Embeddedness and the Liability of Newness among Nonprofit Organizations."

⁷⁴⁴ "Structural Embeddedness and the Liability of Newness among Nonprofit Organizations," 160. See also Singh, Tucker, and House, "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness."

⁷⁴⁵ "Organizational Legitimacy and the Liability of Newness."

and an inexperienced board could potentially prove disruptive to an organisation. This presents a potential challenge within this organisational type.

Reflections on Legal Status

It has been evidenced that concerns related to the governance of the organisations were influential in regard to decisions concerning legal form. The desire for autonomy over the organisations is understandable considering the sacrifices made by the individuals and the investment of time, effort, and sometimes money that they put into them. However, emerging from this research it is apparent that the CLG form is operationally the most appropriate form for organisations of this type. It matches the structural-operational behaviours regarding the distribution of profits with a legal form which is structured for this purpose. Here the non-profit distributing ethos of the organisations is assured and not operated simply on trust. This acts as a legitimating mechanism. The shared governance form of the CLG also contributes to offsetting the liabilities of size and newness, not least through increasing access to expertise and expanding the network available to the organisation. This finding is important given the proclivity of the sample group to initially engage the LTD form, it can therefore be of use to future artist-run spaces as they establish their organisations.

Decision-making

Across the organisations, decision-making in regard to curatorship has already been outlined. In discussion of governance it was indicated that decision making, irrespective of legal form, primarily resided internally within the organisational management. The current discussion outlines decision-making processes and considers the characteristics of decision-making in the organisations within the management structures.

In discussion of decision-making, Hartnett distinguishes the decision-making process (i.e. that which contributes to the decision making), from what he calls the 'decision rule' applied at the end of the process (i.e. that which is the mechanism by which the decision is finalised). In example, he defines the latter to include 'unanimity, majority rule, or supermajority'.⁷⁴⁶ The discussion below will distinguish between 'process' and 'mechanism'. Within the sample, the process is seen to be consistently deliberative, the mechanism is more heterogeneous.

⁷⁴⁶ Tim Hartnett, "Thinking Flexibly About Consensus," in *Communities* (2012), 62.

Participation in Decision-Making

Across the organisations the founding members primarily formed the locus of decision-making at the outset, later supplemented, in some examples, by additional members. However, variance is seen in how these new members come to be involved at this level and whether they hold equal participatory rites as the founding members.

In the example of Basic Space, the incorporation of new members, Simon Cummings, Daniel Toumey and Michael FitzGerald, was based on a need for more people to manage the workload, and selection occurred organically:

There was lots of people who were involved in the community day-to-day. We said, 'okay, how many people do we need and who sticks out?' And it was a pretty easy choice. There was three people who were around making work all of the time in our facilities, taking on responsibilities, [...] we also knew them, we had talked to them[.]⁷⁴⁷

The time-span that these individuals were involved were not available; however, it is of note that they were involved at the time of interview in December 2012, and in 2015 only Cummings remained.⁷⁴⁸ This later changed to what was described by Bermingham and Welch, in 2016, as a consultant type role. Subsequent directors included Oisín O'Brien (exact time-span is not available), Michelle Doyle (2015-2015), Lee Welch (from 2015) and Daniel Bermingham (from 2016). In contrast to the organic selection process outlined above incoming directors Doyle, Welch, and Bermingham were recruited by advertisement and application process.

In the informal parameters of Basic Space, acceding members were reported as enjoying the same participatory rites as the founding members while their involvement continued. It was reported that agreement was reached with the founders that once they retired from their position within the organisation they would cease to have any influence upon its continued progression.

A formal process of accession was also evidenced in Ormond Studios. New members were recruited both through word of mouth and through advertisement. The process required them to submit a Curriculum Vitae and information on their art practice. As stipulated in their Constitution, decisions regarding new members required a majority vote of eight of the current

⁷⁴⁷ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁷⁴⁸ Information taken from posts on their Facebook page: Basic Space, "Basic Space Facebook Page," <https://www.facebook.com/BasicSpaceDublin/?fref=ts>.

members.⁷⁴⁹ Again it was reported that new members engaged the same participatory rites as the established membership body and departing members relinquished all participatory rites.

The incorporated groups present varied behaviours. While at the outset the founders held all management positions, this evolved, and a number of organisations included additional personnel at management level as the organisations progressed. However, these roles focused on the day-to-day delivery and administration of activity rather than on key decision making. Exceptions to this are G. Murphy in PP/S, and myself in MTGS. G.Murphy's appointment to legal director indicates his participation in decision-making. My own appointment to co-director was only executive and not legal; however, in this role I participated at the levels of strategic and artistic planning and decision-making. Kynaston, of thisisnotashop, also acceded into a directorial position; however, he indicated this as primarily concerned with administering the decisions made by Darcy and Foley both in respect of organisational strategy and artistic programming, rather than taking a lead role in strategic decision making.

As outlined, with the exceptions of Fiore in thisisnotashop, the various incoming members of Ormond Studios, and the latter directors of Basic Space, all acceding members participated in the organisations prior to their accession into key management or governance positions. This period is potentially important in establishing a 'good fit' between the values of the organisation and the individuals, it builds trust, and stimulates a sense of mission, and it also offers the potential for a period of informal socialisation within the organisation.⁷⁵⁰

Through this prior involvement accession was of low impact to the organisations. For example, Fitz of Basic Space in discussion of their early appointments states: 'There no big change getting them on board.'⁷⁵¹ This is important, as accession in many instances incorporates the individual into the decision-making and management core of the organisation. Herein, they are able to influence what occurs under the name of the organisation.

Decision-Making Process

All of the organisations reported that the decision-making process was primarily facilitated in face-to-face meetings, and that these were both formal and informal. The CLGs had prescribed board meetings supplemented with informal executive meetings. However, informal meetings

⁷⁴⁹ Ormond Studios, "Constitution," (Unpublished document provided to the author by Sandra McAllister).

⁷⁵⁰ For distinction between this informal socialisation and formal indoctrination see: Henry Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research* (Prentice-Hall, 1979), 97.

⁷⁵¹ Fitz, Interview with author.

occurred also across both the LTDs and the unincorporated organisations. For example, Fitz, of Basic Space, reflected:

The type of structure [...] made us into a group that were able to sit down together and make these critical decisions between us.⁷⁵²

Across all of the organisations discussion and deliberation was central to the decision-making process both in regard to activities and management.

The deliberative ideal accords with Habermas' thesis of deliberation; that is, the 'inclusive and noncoercive rational discourse among free and equal participants' that are committed to such a process.⁷⁵³ However, Mouffe considers the 'impossibility of the ideal speech situation'.⁷⁵⁴ She proposes an alternative paradigm, that of 'agonistic pluralism'.⁷⁵⁵ Here, not deliberation between equals, but conflict between adversaries is foreground. Mouffe states:

An adversary is a legitimate enemy, an enemy with whom we have in common a shared adhesion to the ethico-political principles of democracy.⁷⁵⁶

This acknowledges power as inherent within the social. A similar thesis engaging less emotive language is posited by Flora and Flora who consider 'constructive controversy'.⁷⁵⁷ These theories of deliberation allow for a more critical consideration of how deliberation manifests within the organisations.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵² Ibid.

⁷⁵³ Jürgen Habermas, "Reconciliation through the Public Use of Reason: Remarks on John Rawls's Political Liberalism," *The Journal of Philosophy* (1995): 117. See also: "Between Facts and Norms" *Cambridge: Polity Press* (1996).

⁷⁵⁴ Chantal Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?," *Social Research* 66, no. 3 (1999): 752. See also: John Parkinson, "Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 51, no. 1 (2003).

⁷⁵⁵ Mouffe, "Deliberative Democracy or Agonistic Pluralism?."

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 755.

⁷⁵⁷ Cornelia Butler Flora and Jan L Flora, "Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure: A Necessary Ingredient," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 529, no. 1 (1993): 51.

⁷⁵⁸ For discussion of the limitations of the deliberative process see: James Bohman and William Rehg, eds., *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, MA, and London, England: MIT press, 1997); James Bohman, "Survey Article: The Coming of Age of Deliberative Democracy," *Journal of political philosophy* 6, no. 4 (1998); Stephen Elstub, "A Double-Edged Sword: The Increasing Diversity of Deliberative Democracy," *Contemporary Politics* 12, no. 3-4 (2006); "The Third Generation of Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies Review* 8, no. 3 (2010); Dennis Thompson and Amy Gutmann, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996).

The centrality of deliberation demarcates the practice within these organisations as *collaborative* practice which, beyond cooperation, is defined as ‘a longer-term integrated process’.⁷⁵⁹ Gray outlines ‘collaborative integration’:

Collaborative integration is the *voluntary participation* in the process of joint decision-making among *interdependent* parties, involving *joint ownership* of decisions and *collective responsibility* for the outcomes.
[emphasis original]⁷⁶⁰

Therefore, collaborative working both involves and promotes mutuality. Lawlor and Yoon outlined that the positive feelings instigated from collaborative working become attributed to the relation itself thus reaffirming group identity, and promoting ‘stay behavior’.⁷⁶¹ This denotes a positive group dynamic based within the deliberative process.

The engagement of collaborative practice, to which deliberation is central, locates the organisations within the historical trajectory of artist-run spaces; this is thus a form of legitimisation of authenticity. Collaborative decision-making lends authority to decisions and fortifies the judgements of the group. This is important both in respect of the management and the curatorial aspects of the organisations, as participants often come to these organisations with little formal previous experience of working within arts administration or curatorial roles. This is of particular import at the outset. All of these support the collaborative working principle as an appropriate choice within the organisations. However, it is not without its challenges and in practice the deliberative process became problematic in a number of instances. Highlighted issues were inefficiency and deteriorated interpersonal dynamics.

It was reported by interviewees, from several of the groups, that decision-making was at times a laborious process due to the multiple opinions that were taken into account. This experience reflects Mintzberg’s thesis that communication comes at a high cost and thus propagates

⁷⁵⁹ Ann Marie Thomson and James L Perry, "Collaboration Processes: Inside the Black Box," *Public Administration Review*, no. Special Issue (2006): 23.

⁷⁶⁰ Barbara Gray, *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems* (San Fransico: Jossey-Bass, 1989); cited in Hans Weigand, Frank Van Der Poll, and Aldo De Moor, "Coordination through Communication" (paper presented at the 8th International Working Conference on the Language-Action Perspective on Communication Modelling (LAP 2003).

⁷⁶¹ Lawler and Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange," 465; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion," 91; "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

inefficiency.⁷⁶² One way of circumventing this was the granting of autonomy within individual roles. Linders, of Block T, reflected:

Our meetings can go long enough without actually having to go through each and every thing we each do.⁷⁶³

Across the sample, group decision-making was largely limited to the strategic development of the organisation, curatorial decisions, and the representation of the organisation in outside contexts.

However, even within this framework meetings were reported as protracted. One interviewee, jestfully, describes that decisions were made via:

— long, long talking, debates/fights [laughs].⁷⁶⁴

Although the tenor of this comment must be accounted for, it tentatively highlights an issue of the deliberative ideal and provides an example of 'constructive controversy'.⁷⁶⁵

For one interviewee the benefits of mutuality over-rode the discomfort of interpersonal conflict:

We obviously had personal problems with each other, we obviously had fights and arguments and things like that. But at the same time the strength of the project and the strength of what we each saw in ourselves and in each other, in the project, got us through it.⁷⁶⁶

However, for others, the process was more contentious. This was reported by interviewees:

It can get quite personal and emotional to share the decision-making with a big group or committee.⁷⁶⁷

It is hard to do it in a collaborative way. It all depends on personalities, and the power issue, and power play, and all that kind of stuff.⁷⁶⁸

⁷⁶² Henry Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 218; Henry. Mintzberg, "The Structuring of Organizations," in *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases*, ed. Henry Mintzberg, et al. (Harlow and Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2003); Weigand, Van Der Poll, and De Moor, "Coordination through Communication," 128.

⁷⁶³ Linders, Interview with author.

⁷⁶⁴ Anon. interviewee 15.

⁷⁶⁵ Flora and Flora, "Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure: A Necessary Ingredient," 51.

⁷⁶⁶ Anon, interviewee 2.

⁷⁶⁷ Anon, interviewee 16.

⁷⁶⁸ Anon. interviewee 9.

Several others stated interpersonal relationships as being problematic and ‘annoyances,’ ‘conflict,’ ‘fights,’ and ‘arguments,’ were all referenced in response to the question of challenges faced during participation.⁷⁶⁹

Interpersonal relations were highlighted as one of the key challenges faced by the organisations. As one interviewee reflected:

Working together as a group, while it was one of the best things it was also one of the most difficult things.⁷⁷⁰

This was on occasion reported as deteriorating into a problematic dynamic:

It was quite traumatic [...] there was quite a competitive attitude [...] communication in the team just completely broke down.⁷⁷¹

This indicates that the deliberative ideal was not always achievable. Furthermore, this interpersonal conflict is indicated as in some examples exceeding Mouffe’s adversarial model of deliberation and Flora and Flora’s constructive controversy previously outlined, instead becoming destructive.

Interpersonal conflict was also experienced in TBG+S. In the book *Generation Vaari Claffey* (curator and former employee of TBG+S) praises the work of founding member Joe Hanley in negotiating a difficult dynamic within the organisation circa 1999-2000. As she describes it:

There were very big fissures and problematic relationships between one person and another that were ... the programming was the last thing on anybody’s mind after all that stuff. It was very unfortunate.⁷⁷²

So significant were the conflicts that independent research was undertaken to collate a professional ‘psychological profile’ of the organisation as part of a ‘safety audit’.⁷⁷³ The research found that ‘[t]here is an obvious air of antagonism present that is effecting all personnel’ and that ‘[b]ullying is a major factor in the operation of the Temple Bar Gallery and Studios’.⁷⁷⁴ Interpersonal conflict is indicated as a challenge within the group working scenario and not

⁷⁶⁹ Anon. interviewees 3, 15, 9.

⁷⁷⁰ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁷⁷¹ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁷⁷² Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 133.

⁷⁷³ Anon., "Psychological Profile of Temple Bar Gallery and Studios," (NIVAL Box 9, 1999), unpaginated.

⁷⁷⁴ Ibid.

limited to the examples within the sample. However, the continued success of TBG+S indicate that these challenges are not insurmountable.

Few of the sample organisations developed with a long term plan; change and goal succession often developed organically. This contributed to conflict within the groups. One interviewee reflected:

People had different ideas as to how they wanted to move forward, and they were conflicting ideas. And so there was a split in the group.⁷⁷⁵

Echoing this, an interviewee from a further organisation considered that the lack of 'unified vision' caused conflicting agendas.⁷⁷⁶ In contrast, there is some evidence to suggest that those organisations that developed clear goals and a coherent vision were more inclined to overcome difficulties. This recalls the thesis of 'collaborative integration' earlier outlined, which foregrounds mutuality and joint ownership.

The deliberative model preferred by these organisations has advantages, as was outlined in discussion of collaborative integration, however it can also create antagonistic relationships between individuals with detrimental outcomes. Within the sample, in some instances, interpersonal conflict was reported as precipitating the withdrawal of members; however, in no instance was it reported that poor interpersonal relations resulted in the closing of an organisation. There was no evidence that strength of ties perpetuated or assuaged these difficulties. Learning how to negotiate working in a group and 'conflict resolution' was given as a key personal skill that was developed through participation within the organisations.⁷⁷⁷ While conflict within group decision making is not unique to artist-run spaces, it is nevertheless a key challenge that they face.

Decision-Making Mechanism

Majority rule, unanimous consent, and autocracy were all reported as decision-making mechanisms within the sample organisations. Ormond Studios exhibited the most formalised process in respect of this. As stipulated within their Constitution a majority vote, within a quorum of seven members, was necessary to pass decisions within the management meetings.⁷⁷⁸ The decisions to which this applied were reported as largely pecuniary or regarding the organisation's direction and activities.

⁷⁷⁵ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁷⁷⁶ Anon. interviewee 9.

⁷⁷⁷ Anon. interviewee 3.

⁷⁷⁸ Ormond Studios, "Constitution."

McDonald, of Ormond Studios, reported it was their preference to reach agreement, if possible, by unanimous consent in the first instance:

We used to have meetings and then we would just go with majority vote. If there was a huge divide within the group we would just talk about it more, and then just come up with some sort of compromise, I guess with the majority way anyway.⁷⁷⁹

However, majority rule was invoked where necessary and reported as being engaged to an increasing degree as the organisation developed. Across the other organisations, majority rule and unanimous consent were the prevalent decision-making mechanisms, with interviewees reporting either reaching a communal agreement or turning to majority vote where necessary. For example MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, recalled that they would say:

—‘well what do you think let’s have a vote on this’ you know, ‘yes or no’ type of thing.⁷⁸⁰

In a further example, interviewees from Basic Space reported that on issues pertaining to the organisation as a whole, they continued the deliberation process until resolution was reached, in a protracted process often spanning several days, which is evidently a time-consuming process involving delays.

There are two examples where the explicit devolvement of decision-making to one individual occurred. When Darcy withdrew from the executive operations of thisisnotashop, Fiore operated with relative singularity in regards to decision-mechanism. At the outset the majority rule prevailed in MTGS. Following the move of the gallery operation to Temple Bar in 2011 there was reported a contraction of the decision-making process to favour what was described as a ‘lean’ management.⁷⁸¹ The curatorial group moved to an advisory role and Prendergast, the remaining founder, with support from myself as co-director, executed relative discretion; upon my departure, he became the sole decision-maker at this level. This thus represents a marked change in decision-making mechanism.

There is some variation in the decision-making mechanism across the sample. Consensus and majority rule are both evidenced, as is autocracy. The move away from full consensus does not undermine the focus on collaboration within the organisations. It is important to note that ‘you

⁷⁷⁹ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁷⁸⁰ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁷⁸¹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

can have a very collaborative, cooperative, agreement-building discussion even if you do not require unanimity'.⁷⁸² This represents a distinction between process and mechanism. Each decision-making mechanism brings with it advantages and disadvantages and has suitability to the specific circumstances and environments of the organisations; inevitably each brings with it the potential for different outcomes, which shape the activities and, in turn, the identity of the organisation.

In practice the deliberative ideal may become problematic and interpersonal dynamics and power are concerns that traverse each of the organisational structures and decision-making mechanisms. As seen across the sample, unanimity is problematic within larger groups due to the additional opinions that must be accommodated and reconciled.⁷⁸³ Small groups or partnerships are prone to being dominated by individuals. For some organisations a move to majority rule can help alleviate some of the problems associated with consensus. However majority rule may prove divisive within small groups that have close interpersonal relations. Either type of collective decision-making necessitates the full commitment of all participants to both the process and the mechanism. Potential problems related to this are that not all members may make themselves available to participate, some individuals may wield more influence than others, and individuals may not abide by the decisions made. One example arose where this was an issue and one of the organisations reported that the principle was not always upheld and one member of the group overrode group decisions. Another general issue with the collective principle is that not everyone who is involved in decision-making necessarily plays an equal role in implementation and so the decisions may impact participants unequally.

Autocracy may occur by design or be as the result of an organisation decreasing in size. Autocracy allows for rapid decision-making and a singular vision and leadership.⁷⁸⁴ This can be of benefit in responding to challenging and hostile environments. However, it is limited by the skills, capacity and capabilities of one person. This can place an excessive workload and burden on one individual through the responsibility they carry. It may also limit the affection that encourages 'stay

⁷⁸² Hartnett, "Thinking Flexibly About Consensus," 62.

⁷⁸³ *ibid.* Hartnett's account focuses on the decision rule. A further discussion of scale as it relates to deliberation process and group size is given by Parkinson: Parkinson, "Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy."

⁷⁸⁴ For discussion of the qualities and challenges of autocratic leadership see: Henry Mintzberg, "Power and Organization Life Cycles," *Academy of Management Review* 9, no. 2 (1984): 214.

behaviour' in others.⁷⁸⁵ If this occurs then this further reduction of the organisation can compound some of the challenges identified within the autocracy.

Organisational Structure

Scott identifies, 'the division of labor' and the 'coordination and control of work' as two key features of organisational structure.⁷⁸⁶ This section starts with consideration of coordination and then turns to the division of labour. Malone and Crowston identify simultaneity constraints, and *task/subtask dependencies* (italics original) as two of the key concerns of coordination.⁷⁸⁷ The first is concerned with issues of 'scheduling' and 'synchronisation'; that is, when 'activities [...] need to occur at the same time (or cannot occur at the same time)'.⁷⁸⁸ The second is concerned with 'goal selection' and 'task decomposition'; that is when 'a group of activities are all "subtasks" for achieving some overall goal'.⁷⁸⁹

Chapter 2 outlined the evolution of activities within the organisations. Consequently, the task of coordinating constraints and dependencies also changed over time. In negotiating this the interviewees reported that individual roles and responsibilities emerged; the formality of these roles varied across the sample. Building on the findings of this discussion, analysis is then given of the structural characteristics of the organisations. Here the organic, informal and social attributes of the organisations are foregrounded.

Evolving Constraints and Dependencies

Within the dual-function organisations the coordination and administration of the studios was reported as much smaller than that of the gallery activities. Scanlan, of MART, stated that 'the studios are actually the easiest thing' and Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that 'the studios don't take a lot of running'.⁷⁹⁰ The overall organisational management, the arts and events programming, and the management of exhibition spaces were reported as requiring significant coordination efforts.

⁷⁸⁵ Lawler and Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange," 465; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion."; "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

⁷⁸⁶ Scott et al., 2000 cited in W. Richard Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 5th ed. International ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2003).

⁷⁸⁷ Thomas W Malone and Kevin Crowston, "The Interdisciplinary Study of Coordination," *ACM Computing Surveys (CSUR)* 26, no. 1 (1994): 87.

⁷⁸⁸ Ibid., 95.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibid., 91, 95.

⁷⁹⁰ Prendergast, Interview with author; Scanlan, Interview with author.

The early rapid turnover of exhibitions maximised the potential for accommodating activity. This limited simultaneity constraints in regard to the programming itself but intensified the amount of coordination required overall. This early period was reported as a busy time in respect of the administration of the programme, fundraising activities, and the practical demands of facilitating this level of activity – for example liaising with artists, general house-keeping, maintaining the exhibition space, installing exhibitions, invigilation, and hosting openings. It was evidenced that, across the organisations, dependencies were also managed by limiting the scope of organisational tasks within the delivery of the exhibition, for example, requiring that the exhibiting artists themselves contribute to areas such as invigilation; this was evidenced as a prevalent practice early on in the organisations' life-span.

With the introduction of a more limited programme, there is a shift in the dependencies to be managed. Slowing the rental exhibitions provided relief, primarily although not exclusively, to the turnover of work undertaken at the operational level of the organisations. However, the introduction of formal submission procedures increases the demands necessitated to manage the simultaneity constraint. The parallel introduction, in some examples, of increased supports to exhibiting artists and diversification of activity also brings with it an expanded administrative and operational load. Specifically, there is reported an increase in additional services such as the installation of exhibitions, provision of invigilators, and supports with press releases. The rationale for this was a desire for overall professionalisation as well as a desire to 'balance out' the necessity to charge the artists with the services offered in return.⁷⁹¹ This required increased coordination. However, as previously noted the delivery of these services may not be as comprehensive as reported.

As previously outlined, within some of the organisations, an evolution of artistic activities occurred to include international and mid-career artists as well as the occasional collaboration with external organisations. This also acts as stimulus towards professionalisation of practices and procedures. As the organisations aspire to nurture such relationships an increased standard of interaction is necessitated. For example Prendergast, of MTGS, reported that when in their Temple Bar space the organisation felt that it was important that artists think '[t]his is a professional outfit to work with'.⁷⁹² Where it occurs, professionalisation brings an increased workload and increased need for coordination.

⁷⁹¹ For most of the organisations this entailed the increase of services at no cost, within Block T the additional service were broken down and included as services that artists and event organisers could opt in or out of for a set charge; this was central to their business model.

⁷⁹² Prendergast, Interview with author.

As raised earlier in this chapter the primary mode of coordination was through face-to-face communication. This is consistent with Mintzberg's 'mutual adjustment' which is defined as 'informal communication' where 'people interact with one another to coordinate [and] adjust with one another's actions'.⁷⁹³ It is a horizontal relation. The evolution of organisations often necessitates the evolution of coordination mechanisms.⁷⁹⁴ The concern is one of efficiency. With the expansion of the organisations' activities, which increases the dependencies to be managed, and the introduction of additional personnel, such as interns, there are changes to practices of gatekeeping and coordination. Specifically, direct supervision is engaged as a coordination method. Direct supervision is defined by Mintzberg as when 'one person coordinates by giving orders to others'.⁷⁹⁵

Role Differentiation

At the outset the founding members occupied all positions within the organisation. As such, in addition to management and administration, they undertook tasks ranging from cleaning, renovation, and invigilation, to management and curatorship. By example, Prendergast of MTGS reflected:

This was a bunch of people [...] trying to sort something out. So there were no roles, no structures, no intern programmes.⁷⁹⁶

As reported in interview, across the organisations there was little or no reference to role differentiation or task division between the founding members at the point of establishment. This early willingness to adjust to one another's actions via fluidity of roles and responsibilities suggests an 'improvised' quality to the organisation.⁷⁹⁷ This continued to differing degrees across the organisations over time.

Basic Space continued to engage informal structures on an ongoing basis; they reported rejecting the idea of job titles and task allocation was present only as far as people 'naturally fall into roles' according to their strengths, but specific roles were 'never outlined'.⁷⁹⁸ Interviewees from Ormond Studios reported assigning tasks according to 'what people did naturally within the

⁷⁹³ Henry Mintzberg, *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases* (Harlow and Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2003), 210.

⁷⁹⁴ Weigand, Van Der Poll, and De Moor, "Coordination through Communication," 121.

⁷⁹⁵ Mintzberg, *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases*, 211.

⁷⁹⁶ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁷⁹⁷ Karl E Weick, "Organizational Redesign as Improvisation," in *Organizational Change and Redesign: Ideas and Insights for Improving Performance*, ed. George P Huber and William H Glick (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁷⁹⁸ Howie, Interview with author; Fitz, Interview with author.

group'.⁷⁹⁹ MacDonald explained that allocated responsibilities had to be 'something they actually enjoy doing because otherwise it wouldn't get done'.⁸⁰⁰ Participation in an administrative role was stipulated as a precondition of membership of Ormond Studios; in respect of incoming members roles were allocated dependent upon where their 'interest lies'.⁸⁰¹ In assigning job titles, albeit after the fact, they engaged a more formalised structure than Basic Space.

Common to both of these organisations, is that the limited division that did occur is characterised as a division of workload at the administrative level. Furthermore, the informality of these roles and positions is of note:

I think it's a close enough community that if someone is not happy with what they are being in charge to do they can say and we will switch it around.⁸⁰²

[R]oles have changed sometimes so that, a couple of people wouldn't be there and other people would have to take the reins.⁸⁰³

Thus, across these two examples, we can locate a highly fluid structure that incorporates either temporary or more permanent fluidity of roles and responsibilities.

The Joinery, The Market Studios, and PP/S showed a continuation of minimal role differentiation at the administrative level during their development. In the instance of the founder-directors operating at the management level in these organisations, the roles were not reported as distinguished by formal job titles, nor was evidence of job titles found on their webpages.

Neither interviewee from PP/S reported formal or informal task division between the directors either at the onset or following the accession of G. Murphy. Similarly, Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported that there was no formal differentiation between the management roles of the two co-directors, and that the distribution of the workload and responsibilities was fluid:

We both share [the roles ...] It kind of happened more organically than us making that decision.⁸⁰⁴

⁷⁹⁹ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁸⁰¹ Ibid.

⁸⁰² Howie, Interview with author.

⁸⁰³ McAllister, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁴ Morrissey, Interview with author.

In contrast, Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported that while the co-directors both cooperated at the administrative level, a degree of differentiation developed over time based on disciplinary interests and expertise:

A couple of years ago we restructured and I took over more of the gallery stuff and initially Feargal [Ward] took over more of the music stuff[.]⁸⁰⁵

Scanlan, of MART, reported that differentiation in responsibilities occurred:

I am more in charge of current studio members, and Matthew [Nevin] would be over new members coming in. And then we assigned bigger roles to each other, so that we just make the decisions.⁸⁰⁶

This division was reported to be in order to facilitate the efficient running of the organisation.

As earlier indicated, there were, at the outset, no set roles between the founders of MTGS. There is, however, evidence of the development of a division of tasks with respect to administrative and operational roles, for example Press Officer, and Exhibitions Coordinator. However, echoing earlier discussion of the unincorporated organisations, Booth noted that titles were, in practice, largely assigned as a reflection of the role undertaken rather than an advance formal assignment. Following the restructuring, there were more clearly defined roles in respect of management and curatorial domains. The defined roles engaged by thisisnotashop have already been outlined.

The highest degree of differentiation was evidenced in Block T. Linders and McEvoy reported that there was intent to differentiate between roles from the outset, and that each of the seven founders 'took a very specific interest in specific parts of Block T'.⁸⁰⁷ However, these roles were not fully realised until later in the organisation's development, as 'it became much more day-to-day we'd all have to pull together and actually make sure something worked or happened'.⁸⁰⁸ Thus, reporting in 2012, Linders stated:

It meant that only now, in the last couple of months, that we've actually been able to take a breather and think about how we are building this and going forward with it, that we actually get to sit down now and say, 'I'm doing this, you're doing that'[.]⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁵ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁶ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁸ Linders, Interview with author.

⁸⁰⁹ Ibid.

These roles comprised Managing Director, Artistic and Marketing Director, Operations Director, Visual Arts Director, Production and Business Development Director, Education Director, and Team Facilitator. It was reported that the individuals had autonomy within their individual roles and that they deployed specialised work teams around specific projects. This thus required a higher level of coordination, which was achieved by the oversight of G-Dovns.

It was previously outlined, in regards to governance, that funding bodies encouraged formalisation. Funding applications often ask for the roles, responsibilities, and areas of expertise, of key persons. However, it was not reported that the internal practices of the organisations were significantly affected by these requirements. Thus it is possible that the actual roles were less formal than the job titles might indicate in these early documents. This potential dissonance conforms to the thesis of 'symbolic adoption' by Bromley *et al*⁸¹⁰ which proposes that: 'practices do not result in meaningful implementation due to the lack of will or capacity, creating a 'gap' between policy and practice'.⁸¹¹

Where non-founding members were assimilated into the management structure, there occurred an enhanced formalisation of roles via assigned job titles and demarcated roles and responsibilities. Driscoll, from The Joinery, reported that one named individual surpassed his role as intern, although no alternative formal job title was designated.⁸¹² Interviewees from MTGS, The Joinery, and thisisnotashop all made reference to individuals occupying positions as gallery manager; Jessica Foley and Michael Kynaston in thisisnotashop; myself, in MTGS; no further information was given in regards to The Joinery.

MTGS and thisisnotashop both engaged individuals in a prior capacity before appointing them as gallery managers. Foley was appointed as gallery manager of thisisnotashop in 2008. She had previously been involved in the organisation as a co-organiser of a writing workshop. Foley reported that there was no job description but that she was involved in the day-to-day running of the gallery, liaising with artists and overseeing an intern programme that she established. After her departure, these duties were taken on by Kynaston who had been volunteering with the gallery, he recalled:

I was interning for about three months or so when the Gallery Manager left
and I took on that role. And then, towards the end of us having a gallery

⁸¹⁰ Bromley, Hwang, and Powell, "Decoupling Revisited: Common Pressures, Divergent Strategies in the US Nonprofit Sector," 470; Patricia Bromley and Walter W Powell, "From Smoke and Mirrors to Walking the Talk: Decoupling in the Contemporary World," *The Academy of Management Annals* 6, no. 1 (2012).

⁸¹¹ Bromley, Hwang, and Powell, "Decoupling Revisited: Common Pressures, Divergent Strategies in the US Nonprofit Sector," 470.

⁸¹² The individual was identified only as Will, no second name was given.

space, I took on a bit more responsibility and was eventually made a director.⁸¹³

Similarly my own appointment with MTGS followed an initial ad hoc voluntary involvement. Other formal positions of note included Studio and Intern Coordinator positions in PP/S and within MART, Katherine Nolan was reported as a key contributor to the organisation as Education and Performance Coordinator, although it was reported that her involvement exceeded this title.⁸¹⁴

As previously noted, there was autonomy within the individual roles both for the founding and succeeding members of management. For example, MacDonald of Ormond Studios stated:

You can just do whatever you want as long as you are doing it [...] you wouldn't really have to follow people around and make sure that they are doing it properly.⁸¹⁵

This was important in minimising the amount of coordination needed. Weick outlines that:

—coordination occurs not so much because people have identical views of 'the' design, but because they have equivalent views of what is happening and what it means. Equivalence allows both coordination and individual expression to occur simultaneously.⁸¹⁶

Mutual adjustment compliments the thesis of improvisation; it allows for autonomy within individual roles while still working towards the collective goal. However, as was earlier observed this design is not without problems and as was earlier evidenced the lack of agreement regarding ongoing organisational design and goals can potentially cause significant interpersonal problems.

The Formalisation of Volunteers

Within the sample, gate-keeping and boundary maintaining mechanisms evolved over time. At the outset the external boundaries of the organisations were depicted as highly porous and as

⁸¹³ Kynaston, Interview with author.

⁸¹⁴ Her job title as given on the MART website is Education and Performance Coordinator. MART, "The MART Team". In interview, Scanlan reported that Nolan's opinion was often consulted on other matters.

⁸¹⁵ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁸¹⁶ Weick, "Organizational Redesign as Improvisation," 347.

what Scott describes as akin to 'sieves' rather than 'shells'.⁸¹⁷ We see this principally in the participation of occasional volunteers. For example, Prendergast, of MTGS, stated:

Whoever wanted to get involved got involved.⁸¹⁸

Thus, there are few barriers to participation. As previously outlined, at the onset a number of organisations report significant informal support from family and, for the most part, peers and individual artists on an ad hoc, project, or task basis. This continued throughout the life-span of the organisations and expanded to include supports requiring specialist skills, for example design of printed materials and technical support.

Thus, while open, the community, in practice, is predominantly comprised of the founders' broader network of peers and remains a relatively contained community. This enhances the potential for a shared 'lifeworld', as previously outlined and is important in the absence of formal processes and procedures.⁸¹⁹ It is of note that, as an isolated example, Scanlan from MART reported accessing specialist trade skills such as carpentry and electrical work through Tús a community work placement scheme.⁸²⁰ Here formal agreements based around short-term relationships were engaged.

It is evidenced that, over time, additional volunteers evolved as a key and semi-formalised component of the structure, primarily via volunteer and 'intern' programmes. MTGS, Block T, The Joinery, PP/S, and thisisnotashop all reported engaging volunteers and unpaid 'interns' to varying degrees of formality. In the majority of instances, interns contributed a short to mid-term involvement within the organisations and augment the existing structures.⁸²¹ Interns and formal volunteers were primarily recent graduates of a subsequent generation to the organisational founders. They were from a variety of educational backgrounds, including but not limited to arts practice, and including analogous disciplines such as art history. However, in the example of Block T there was reported a move towards selecting interns based on the specific skills that they could bring from specialist areas such as business management, accountancy, and law.

⁸¹⁷ W. Richard Scott and Gerald F. Davis, *Organizations and Organizing : Rational, Natural and Open Systems Perspectives*, International ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007), 151.

⁸¹⁸ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁸¹⁹ Habermas, "The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I."; Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, 2.

⁸²⁰ "Tús – Community Work Placement Initiative," <https://www.welfare.ie/en/Pages/Tus-Community-work-placement-OG.aspx>.

⁸²¹ Casual volunteerism continues, to a more limited degree, on a project or ad hoc basis than predominated at the outset.

Semi-formalised and formalised application procedures were reported as gatekeeping tools. Principally, this was used to assess suitability in terms of commitment or requisite skills. In respect of these recruited interns, no familial, friendship or prior professional engagement was specifically reported. Thus, at the outset they represent a weak or absent tie to the organisations and thus an expansion of the network.

The introduction of unconnected personnel and formalised gatekeeping procedures presents a shift in the dynamic of the organisations. There is, within recruited members, no assumption of a shared 'lifeworld', or of equivalence, between these and the founding members.⁸²² Furthermore, at the point of affiliation, the sense of mission that is so profound within the founders at the outset, is yet to be developed. This has implications regarding coordination mechanisms and thus impacts the qualities of the organisational structure. As previously noted 'direct supervision' is introduced.⁸²³

Intern duties were reported as spanning a wide variety of tasks both within and across the organisations. At the basic level, duties included areas such as general housekeeping and invigilation and ranged to technical and administrative assistance. Linders, of Block T, reflected:

What they will all do, is they will all at some stage end up with some horrible dirty job, or have to carry boxes, or have to take down a show, or clean up, or put bins out, and that kind of stuff. So they all have to do kind of that kind of day-to-day [stuff], just because it has to get done.⁸²⁴

Echoing this Cullen, of PP/S, stated:

[T]he way our interns are now and it's everything from painting walls to helping artists install exhibitions, to helping run openings and events, to burning images onto discs and sending them away to artists or curators or things like that.⁸²⁵

Foley, of thisisnotashop, reported occasions when interns participated in art performances.

Consultation of job titles listed on MTGS' webpage evidences that select interns were distinguished via several 'gallery and studio assistant' positions.⁸²⁶ However, in practice,

⁸²² Habermas, "The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. I."; Habermas and McCarthy, *The Theory of Communicative Action: Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, 2.

⁸²³ Mintzberg, *The Strategy Process: Concepts, Contexts, Cases*, 211.

⁸²⁴ Linders, Interview with author.

⁸²⁵ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁸²⁶ Three individuals are listed within these 'Assistant' positions Dani Lynch, Gallery and Studio Assistant; Sam Keely, Gallery and Studio Assistant; Una McMahon, Gallery and Studio Assistant with responsibility

Prendergast reported that there was no formal structure to the internship programme; rather, individuals were utilised according to their experience and ability and 'played to their strengths'.⁸²⁷ Similarly Driscoll, of The Joinery, stated:

We have an internship programme, and I use that word, that term, lightly because it's not a structured programme.⁸²⁸

However, some structure was reported in terms of interns being assigned to assist either Driscoll or Ward within the visual arts or music programme, respectively.

Within Block T, a more enhanced participation was undertaken. Roles were expanded to include appointment to a specific area of activity at the administrative and operational levels:

They could be [doing] day-to-day stuff—they could be helping with front of house, with accountancy, communication, with book keeping. Then again, they might be researching various social entrepreneurial grants that they think we should do, or reading through our various business management's [...] strategic documents for various things—how to make them more effective or how they should properly work within the greater scheme of the project, all that kind of thing.⁸²⁹

This represents a more formalised structure than reported by the other organisations.

In discussion of the interns at thisisnotashop, Kynaston questioned the appropriateness of this term to discuss their contribution. He reflected:

We started thinking of different titles for them as well, to reflect the amount of effort that they put into the gallery.⁸³⁰

This intersects with previous discussion of recognition and reward. Thus, in the first instance the title 'Intern' itself can be seen as a mechanism of recognition.⁸³¹ Specifically, it sets them apart from the previously noted casual volunteers who have a more fluid relationship and acts as a symbolic contract which binds the individual to the organisation and propagates a sense of

for booking keeping, volunteers and events coordination. It is of note that these individuals were discussed as intern positions and Keely's Assistant position was offered through the Job Bridge National Internship Scheme: Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, "Jobs Bridge: Gallery and Studio Assistant," <http://www.dublinwork.com/jobDetail/787-Monster-Truck-Gallery-Studio-Assistant.html>.

⁸²⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁸²⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁸²⁹ Linders, Interview with author.

⁸³⁰ Kynaston, Interview with author.

⁸³¹ Bourdieu, "The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups," 733.

obligation. As previously discussed, such recognition is potentially important in stimulating affection and increasing 'stay behaviour'.⁸³² This is important given the entirely voluntary nature of these positions. In a further example of recognition and reward there was reported a practice, in PP/S and thisisnotashop, of allowing interns to propose projects and curate exhibitions. Again, this reinforces their ongoing participation in the organisation.

The contribution of interns was recognised as central to many of the organisations as they develop. For example discussing interns, Linders of Block T stated:

We wouldn't have been able to run without it.⁸³³

Echoing this Foley, of thisisnotashop, reflected:

The things that we did would not have happened without them, absolutely not.⁸³⁴

This sentiment was echoed by interviewees from several organisations. However, it was not unilateral and one interviewee felt that 'you can't rely on volunteers'.⁸³⁵ A further interviewee reflected on their own management skills and considered that the volunteers were underutilised resources as they were 'bad at delegating' and utilising them to their potential.⁸³⁶ Thus, while these can help support the organisations this is contextualised by the fact the management and coordination of these individuals requires additional management skills and a change in coordination methods.

Structural Characteristics

Analysis of organisational structure extrapolates from the examples and discussion already presented within the current chapter and places this within a theoretically derived framework. Providing this context allows for an expanded examination of the merits and challenges of these practices and structures. This is important because organisational structure is not an inevitability but is the result of choices that may incorporate strategic or ethical considerations, and may be either planned in advance or be reactive to the environment; the structure is not incidental but has consequences for the working practices and outcomes of the organisations. Understanding

⁸³² Lawler and Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange," 465. *ibid.*; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion."; "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

⁸³³ Linders, Interview with author.

⁸³⁴ Foley, Interview with author.

⁸³⁵ Anon. interviewee 8.

⁸³⁶ Anon. interviewee 7.

organisational design via a theoretical lens not only gives a deeper insight into the organisation but also provides opportunity to give a broader context to their experiences.

Across the sample the organisational structures are both organic and informal. Organic is defined by Mintzberg as a lack of standardisation and by Burns and Stalker as a system subject to continual redefinition.⁸³⁷ Although complimentary to organic structures, concerns of formality extend beyond role definition. While the former addresses the degree to which positions are specified, the question of formality is also concerned with the degree to which they are fixed beyond the occupancy and characteristics of the individual.⁸³⁸ That is, do individuals exist in a position of 'structural equivalence', and are thus substitutable?⁸³⁹ The structures engaged by the organisations in the sample are primarily informal; that is, they are predicated on the uniqueness of the individual. This was evidenced by the fact that the individual interests and skills preceded the allocation of responsibilities.

This organic, informal structure predicated on mutual adjustment and collaborative working exhibits affinity with Gomez and Zimmerman's thesis of organisational culture (which is placed in opposition to structure).⁸⁴⁰ Zimmerman opposes 'technocratic' and 'social' cultures.⁸⁴¹ Technocratic culture emphasises 'economic performance' and 'task achievement' and is formalised through 'set procedures', 'formal task description', 'rule-bound, manuals' and conceives of the 'organization as "machine"'.⁸⁴² In contrast social cultures entail 'people orientation' and 'symbolic orientation'.⁸⁴³ People orientation comprises an emphasis on 'social aspects', 'motivation and person', and 'personalised criteria of role fulfilment'.⁸⁴⁴ Symbolic orientation emphasises 'flexible procedures', 'evolving tasks', 'evolving rules and expectations', and conceives of the organisation 'as a family'.⁸⁴⁵ The sample clearly exemplifies the concept of social culture, as has been explicated throughout this chapter.

⁸³⁷ Tom Burns and G. M. Stalker, *The Management of Innovation* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1968), 121. Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations*, 87.

⁸³⁸ Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 265.

⁸³⁹ Helmut K Anheier, Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P Romo, "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography," *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 4 (1995): 861.

⁸⁴⁰ Peter Gomez and Tim Zimmermann, *Unternehmensorganisation: Profile, Dynamik, Methodik*, vol. 2 (Campus Verlag, 1993). In Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations : Theory, Management, Policy*, 249.

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

⁸⁴² Ibid

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid.

Informal, organic and culturally oriented internal organisation is a contrast to the highly formal legal structures engaged by the majority of the organisations. Meyer and Rowan describe this as a practice of 'decoupling':

[D]ecoupling enables organizations to maintain standardized, legitimating, formal structures while their activities vary in response to practical considerations.⁸⁴⁶

Thus there has been identified 'two orthogonal sources of structuring'.⁸⁴⁷ Their outward-oriented legal structure, and officially stated internal structure, may be decoupled from their informal internal structure that is engaged in practice.⁸⁴⁸ For example, one interviewee stated:

We'll be anything once we can be our own thing behind closed doors!⁸⁴⁹

This allows organisations to maintain external indicators of legitimacy while maintaining the internal structural and cultural attributes that are central to their collaborative ethos.

The foregrounding of culture over structure emphasises that the organisations exist as verbs, (i.e. as process) just as much as they do as nouns, (i.e. as objects).⁸⁵⁰ The distinction lies in the world view undertaken as to whether 'processes represent change in things' or if 'things are reifications of processes'.⁸⁵¹ The ontological difference is important, as it defines the object of study, its constitution, and how change and evolution occur. If an organisation is an entity, it follows that its natural condition is one of stability or inertia; change is thus periodic and destabilising.⁸⁵² If the organisation is a process then flux and change are fundamental and constant.⁸⁵³ In consideration of the internal structures and systems, change emerged as a defining feature of the organisations.

⁸⁴⁶ Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," 357.

⁸⁴⁷ Scott, *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*.

⁸⁴⁸ Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony."

⁸⁴⁹ Anon. interviewee 13.

⁸⁵⁰ Andrew H. Van de Ven and Marshall Scott Poole, "Alternative Approaches for Studying Organizational Change," *Organization Studies* 26, no. 9 (2005): 1379; Haridimos Tsoukas and Robert Chia, "On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change," *Organization Science* 13, no. 5 (2002).

⁸⁵¹ Van de Ven and Poole, "Alternative Approaches for Studying Organizational Change," 1379.

⁸⁵² Larry E Greiner, "Evolution and Revolution as Organizations Grow," (1972); Hannan and Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations."; Henry Mintzberg and Frances Westley, "Cycles of Organizational Change," *Strategic Management Journal* 13, no. S2 (1992); Michael T Hannan and John Freeman, "Structural Inertia and Organizational Change," *American Sociological Review* (1984); Mintzberg, "Power and Organization Life Cycles."

⁸⁵³ Wanda J Orlikowski, "Improvising Organizational Transformation over Time: A Situated Change Perspective," *Information Systems Research* 7, no. 1 (1996); Tsoukas and Chia, "On Organizational Becoming: Rethinking Organizational Change."; Van de Ven and Poole, "Alternative Approaches for Studying Organizational Change."; Weick, "Organizational Redesign as Improvisation."

Change as it occurred in regards to the internal system is seen to be incremental, often based on trial and error, and both proactive and reactive to endogenous and exogenous forces.⁸⁵⁴

While the organisation as 'process' is foregrounded, a combined approach is useful, and following Van de Ven and Poole, this can move beyond a 'partial' to a richer view of organisations.⁸⁵⁵ Giddens' thesis of structuration is useful in this respect and it outlines the relationship as a duality rather than dualism; here, 'the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organize.'⁸⁵⁶ The organic and informal characteristics of the organisations do not undermine the existence of structural attributes within them.

Mintzberg's archetype of the simple structure (also known as the 'entrepreneurial' organisation) and its derivative the 'simplest structure' are particularly useful in exploring the attributes of the sample organisations.⁸⁵⁷ The simple/est structure is characteristically 'unstructured'. It has little in the way of behavioural regulation through formalised means. Within this configuration there are little or no middle level (or 'middle line') parts, with focus rather being on what Mintzberg terms the 'strategic apex' and the 'operating core'; that is the location where governance and strategy are formed, and the basic work of production of products and services.⁸⁵⁸

This description of the simple/est structure exhibits clear resonance with the sample. In the simple structure there is minimal mediation between the apex and the core and direct supervision is a coordination method, while in the simplest structure it is wholly absent and the primary method of coordination is mutual adjustment. The simplest structure is typical of the organisations at the outset wherein the small founding group or the partnership represented the totality of the organisational structure, with support from ad hoc volunteers. Recall that within the core group, hierarchy and role differentiation at management level was largely absent in the first instance. This also applies to Block T who, despite a planned horizontal division of roles from the outset, reported that this was not realised until later in development. Thus, within the sample organisations there is at the early stage, evidenced both limited layers of hierarchal distinction,

⁸⁵⁴ See Weick, "Organizational redesign as improvisation," 364

⁸⁵⁵ Van de Ven and Poole, "Alternative Approaches for Studying Organizational Change," 1393.

⁸⁵⁶ A Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Polity Press (Cambridge 1984), 25.

⁸⁵⁷ Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research* 305; "Structure in 5's: A Synthesis of the Research on Organization Design," 322, 331-332. See also: *Structure in Fives: Designing Effective Organisations*; *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations*;

⁸⁵⁸ Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organizations: A Synthesis of the Research* 305; "Structure in 5's: A Synthesis of the Research on Organization Design," 331.

that is vertical relations, and of discrete stratification across levels, that is horizontal relations; this also resonates with the simple/est structure.

Where it occurs, the evolution of roles and responsibilities and the introduction of additional personnel as managers is typical of the development of organisations as they evolve from the simplest to the simple form. According to Mintzberg managerial roles introduce direct supervision and represents the 'first *administrative* division of labour in the structure'.⁸⁵⁹ Thus, where this occurs, the development of the artist-run organisations can be seen as typical of young organisations in general.

The interviewees' concerns of efficiency within governance and management structures was previously explored. According to Mintzberg, the benefit of the simple structural types is that informal centralised decision-making allows for a rapid response compared to bureaucratic types.⁸⁶⁰ This helps organisations to respond quickly to the challenges of the environment, as well as allowing them to rapidly facilitate internal innovations. This is due to the organic nature of the organisation, as organic structures are given as well suited to dynamic, i.e. unpredictable, environments as they are able to respond to 'fresh problems and unforeseen requirements for action'.⁸⁶¹ Responding to environmental factors such as changes in funding structures and insecure tenancy agreements were foregrounded by the sample organisations as key challenges.

Across all of the organisations change in response to environmental factors to varying degrees occurred on an 'improvised' basis.⁸⁶² This is consistent with Weick's thesis of improvisation:

[T]he way out of turbulence may lie in continuous improvisation in response to continuous change in local details.⁸⁶³

Thus, this change model is proposed as appropriate to responding quickly and flexibly to the immediate needs of the environmental conditions. This is therefore essential to the short-term survival of the organisations.

Based on these qualities outlined above this organic and informal structure is well suited to the early organisational needs and, as previously evidenced, the interviewees actively identified these benefits; this suggests the possibility the form was engaged by design. However, it is of consideration that the according to Mintzberg, the simple/est structure is the typical structural

⁸⁵⁹ Mintzberg, *The Structuring of Organisations*, 18

⁸⁶⁰ Ibid, 307.

⁸⁶¹ Burns and Stalker, *The Management of Innovation*, 121.

⁸⁶² Weick, "Organizational Redesign as Improvisation."

⁸⁶³ Ibid., 376.

type for new and small 'entrepreneurial' organisations.⁸⁶⁴ Furthermore, it is important to note that for some organisations the small group size limited the working models available to be engaged; specifically, the predominance of collaborative partnerships was prohibitive to engaging the cooperative model more traditionally used by artist-run spaces. Thus, for a number of organisations the simple/est structure was inevitable to a degree. Discretion was, in these instances, largely limited to the internal interaction with that structure and to its ongoing development and evolution, namely the introduction of a board to expand the organisational boundaries. The larger groups i.e. Block T and Ormond Studios also fit within this structural archetype. In these examples the organisations had expanded options regarding how to approach their organisational structure. Overall whether by necessity or choice these structural characteristics are typical of the sample and thus of the population under consideration. During the period under consideration none of the organisations evidence that, in practice, they developed beyond the forms of the simple/est structure.

A number of favourable conditions have been identified as being provided by these structures. However, they also have limitations. For example, in Block T this structure in conjunction with group size and a high level of simultaneous activity was reported as a challenge at the outset in respect of 'communication processes [and] lines'.⁸⁶⁵ In consideration of the simple/est structure there are three main concerns. Firstly it is best suited to simple environments, i.e. environments which are easily comprehensible; conversely it is ill suited to complex environments. Secondly, it limits access to expertise. Thirdly it subjects individuals to high levels of pressure and responsibility. Across the organisations lack of expertise (as previously discussed), alongside high levels of pressure, and unsustainable workloads were identified by interviewees as among the key challenges faced within their experiences and in some cases these contributed to the closure of the organisation. This emphasises the importance of the preceding analysis as the structures engaged by the organisations are consequential.

The Challenge of Workload

At the individual level, interviewees reported that the workload was overwhelming and unsustainable. Early on this was exasperated by the lack of requisite skills to manage the organisations. This workload was comprised of administrative and operational facets as well as

⁸⁶⁴ Mintzberg, "Structure in 5's: A Synthesis of the Research on Organization Design," 331.

⁸⁶⁵ McEvoy, Interview with author.

negotiating environmental factors, such as precarious funding sources and the relationships with funders, and insecure tenancies.

The biggest challenge was the strain on human resources [...] you know just how much a gallery demands from anyone involved in it is really hard to quantify.⁸⁶⁶

An interviewee reflected:

It's like a monster, it's so busy all the time [...] everyone is over worked.⁸⁶⁷

Managing a large workload was cited by a number of interviewees as a key challenge to participation and to the ongoing development of the organisations.

The day-to-day operational or 'routine' aspects of running the organisations were seen as demanding and time consuming.⁸⁶⁸ It was reported by Prendergast that being 'bogged down in the weeds of the day-to-day' operations of the gallery detracted from the ability to 'find new artists and do studio visits and take the time to research'.⁸⁶⁹ This was echoed throughout several interviews. In example, in discussing their ambitions to work with international artists Scanlan, of MART, reflected that they didn't always have time because:

It [is] much more time consuming trying to do stuff like that, sometimes we are actually unblocking a sink or something or sweeping. Because we do probably eight people's jobs. So the curation of the space has definitely been affected by the day-to-day activities.⁸⁷⁰

Similarly Linders, of Block T, reflected:

When we started we all had this idea, but to be honest we all lost the idea in about, in the first year and a half. We didn't have time to really think about it. We were literally dealing with the roof falling in, or we needed money, or we were producing some show. So for the first year and a half we only naturally dealt with those kind of issues.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁶ Foley, Interview with author.

⁸⁶⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁸⁶⁸ For a discussion of 'routine' work in artistic careers see: Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers."

⁸⁶⁹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁸⁷⁰ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁸⁷¹ Linders, Interview with author.

Such comments were made in discussion of how management of the day-to-day dependencies of running the organisation impacted the ability for enhanced engagement with the curatorial and artistic goals of the organisation.

The workload was reported as having impact on individuals at a personal level. As was outlined in the Introduction Chapter, inclusion within this research was predicated on the self-identification of the organisation as 'artist-run' and within the sample the organisations were found to be established by individuals within the creative sectors; this was primarily but not necessarily exclusively visual artists. Where established by artists or creative practitioners, the workload of the organisations commonly, although not exclusively, led to the deterioration of personal arts practice and a move towards managerial, administrative, and curatorial roles over time.

Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported:

I've hardly had any time at all for my own practice, which is the downfall of it.⁸⁷²

Echoing this Driscoll, of The Joinery, stated:

But the personal practice [...] it's the last thing that I do [...] so it has impacted my own work definitely.⁸⁷³

McEvoy, of Block T, described how a space intended to be used as a studio space for the founders was eventually turned into an administrative office. Scanlan, of MART, and McAllister, of Ormond Studios, both described that when they attended their studio space they were distracted by organisational needs. For example, McAllister reflected:

Originally I just wanted to do work and to be honest I don't think I did any work the whole time I was there, except for the running of the studio.⁸⁷⁴

Scanlan reported that in an attempt to remedy this she had taken a studio space in MTGS, away from her own organisation. However, at the time of interview, she reported that she had had limited opportunity to avail of it.

This impact is important considering that, in many of the organisations, the individual and shared desire for the facility of a studio space and a context within which to produce and exhibit work

⁸⁷² Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁸⁷³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁸⁷⁴ McAllister, Interview with author.

was a stimulus to setting up the organisation in the first instance. Reflecting on this one interviewee stated:

I found it really challenging actually, providing all these opportunities for other artists that might be a similar age to me, and I'm providing them all these opportunities and then I actually don't even have a practice anymore. That had been quite tough.⁸⁷⁵

Whenever it arose, the impact on personal practice was an issue of contention. It was reported by Booth as having potential to impact the continued involvement of individuals. Booth reflected:

It is the sort of thing you can do for a certain amount of time but then after a while you just want someone to look after—especially if you are an artist—you want someone else to paint the walls, or someone else to do the Arts Council application. And if you want to go down the route of focusing on your own practice, you get away from it.⁸⁷⁶

Thus the two roles are, in this example, posited as, in practice, incompatible on a sustained basis.

The balance and relationship between the administrative and artistic occupations of the individuals is important. As previously defined, artistic careers are characterised as 'portfolio', 'boundaryless', or 'protean'.⁸⁷⁷ Roles included within these career types are those of curators, arts managers, and arts administrators. Taken from this point of view the curatorial, managerial, and administrative roles do not denigrate the artistic identity of the participant but in fact compliment and expand it. For example, Rosenstein considers that:

[T]he role of administrator or manager can represent a legitimate creative trajectory in an artist's work [...] reconstituted within the practice of artistic work itself.⁸⁷⁸

⁸⁷⁵ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁸⁷⁶ Booth, Interview with author.

⁸⁷⁷ Bridgstock, "Skills for Creative Industries Graduate Success,"; "Not a Dirty Word: Arts Entrepreneurship and Higher Education."; Briscoe and Hall, "The Interplay of Boundaryless and Protean Careers: Combinations and Implications."; Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 563. Bridgstock develops the idea of protean career following Hall: Briscoe and Hall, "The Interplay of Boundaryless and Protean Careers: Combinations and Implications."; Hall, *Careers in Organizations; The Career Is Dead--Long Live the Career: A Relational Approach to Careers*; "The Protean Career: A Quarter-Century Journey."; Hall and Mirvis, "The New Protean Career: Psychological Success and the Path with a Heart."

⁸⁷⁸ Rosenstein, "Conceiving Artistic Work in the Formation of Artist Policy: Thinking Beyond Disinterest and Autonomy," 63.

In particular the curatorial aspects of the roles that are reported as developing provide a complimentary practice, although as analysed in Chapter 2 it is possible that these were on occasion overstated.

While Rosenstein's perspective provides an attractive prospect in reconciling these aspects of artists' occupations it is not always the case. Artist Orla Ryan propounds that distinction must be made between 'an artist who incorporates the multitude of roles in their actual art practice and those artists who occupy different roles but keep them, in some way, separated'.⁸⁷⁹ One interviewee critically reflected on this dual dynamic:

There [are] galleries and studios that are run by artists but it's artists doing two jobs, it's an artist being a studio administrator and a curator as well as being an artist.⁸⁸⁰

Fitz, of Basic Space, provides one example wherein the management of the organisation, including the broader programming, was not perceived as separated from artistic practice. She stated:

We were never doing anything else other than what we perceived as being an artist.⁸⁸¹

Reflecting on the importance of continued arts practice Cullen considered that the management of the organisation and pursuing personal arts practice are two 'part[s] of the whole'.⁸⁸² In both of these examples personal arts practice was maintained and participation in the respective organisation is seen as intersecting with this practice.

Although these represent two different approaches it remains that their respective models were key in allowing them to continue in their practice. In the instance of Basic Space, the low level of administration minimised demands upon them, but when these increased they supplemented the core group, as previously described, so that they can 'all continue to be artists as well as doing the boring emails and administration and back and forth'.⁸⁸³ For PP/S the ability for the organisation to employ the two key members on an ongoing basis was key to their ability to continue in arts practice, as it precluded the need for them to undertake further employment

⁸⁷⁹ Orla Ryan in Jewesbury, "Alternative, Mainstream, Mainstream Alternatives: The Viability of the Artist-Led Initiative," 2.

⁸⁸⁰ Anon. interviewee 13.

⁸⁸¹ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁸⁸² Cullen, Interview with author.

⁸⁸³ Fitz, Interview with author.

elsewhere. The board of directors, when introduced, further supported this working model, providing additional supports where necessary.

Thus, the organisational structure is evidenced as one significant factor in alleviating the strain of administration. However, this is not always the case and one interviewee reflected on other organisations stating:

An awful lot of artist-run studios, or artist-run galleries, aren't necessarily run by artists any more, they were run by artists, but they are not anymore.⁸⁸⁴

What then are the implications of this at the level of the individual and the organisation?

The shift in the individual occupations of the managers and directors of these organisations has implications at the organisational level. Specifically, given the identified detrimental impact that participation has on the artistic practice of participants the identity of the organisation as 'artist-run' is called into question. This is further compounded, in two examples, by the inclusion at management level of individuals like Kynaston in thisisnotashop, and myself in MTGS who do not actively identify either as artists or other types of creative practitioners.

The ongoing identity as artist-run was negotiated differently by TBG+S and PAC. As was previously identified, Jenny Haughton founder of TBG+S was in fact an administrator. However, it is important to note that the governance structures, as previously outlined, engaged by TBG+S, kept artists central to the process by including them within the board and thus justifies the organisation's continued engagement of this term. This is not the case within the sample organisations who did not engage the artist-board members structure. In contrast PAC has moved away from the artist-run model and has evolved 'from a voluntary, artist-led co-operative to the current structure of a full-time artist-driven company'.⁸⁸⁵ The shift from artist-led to artist-driven is subtle but significant and makes room for larger managerial input.

Within the sample organisation only in the instance of MTGS was the identity of artist-run overtly relinquished. Prendergast reports that partially as a response to this workload MTGS evolved to be 'driven by a new wave of arts managers' and that it consequently became 'an administrative curatorial-led organisation with artists at its core'.⁸⁸⁶ However, in contrast to TBG+S and PAC, it

⁸⁸⁴ Anon. interviewee 19.

⁸⁸⁵ Project Arts Centre, "About Us".

⁸⁸⁶ Prendergast, Interview with author.

is recalled that artists played no formal role within the governance of this organisation. Within the other organisations, the identity of artist-run remains active.

Given the identified portfolio career type, the distraction from practice may be temporary for some of the artists involved; there is here a difference between a suspended and a relinquished practice. Of the interviewees that had left organisations there was evidence of a return to practice and so the identity as artist remains. Thus, it is likely that the individuals continued to actively consider themselves artists despite the negative impact upon their practice, and self-identification as artists may be based on a wider identity across their career rather than on the focus of their occupation at that given time.

However, it is also possible that the continued invocation of this title fulfils an important function for some of the organisations locating their working model, ethos, and practices within a bigger history. This is another example of decoupling where the outward identity is detached from the internal operations.⁸⁸⁷ Thus, the title remains useful to the organisations for their public identity. Through engaging with this title these organisations find continuing context and therefore legitimacy. It provides an important statement in terms of the values of the organisation, their working models, and how they distinguish themselves from other organisations; these distinctions were outlined from the point of view of exhibiting artists in Chapter 2. This may be particularly attractive as, at present, there is no established alternative terminology for these organisations as they evolve.

Thus, it is evidenced that in terms of personal impacts the workload of the organisations was often detrimental to pursuing arts practice. However, there is not consensus within the sample as to how the roles of administrator and artist are reconciled, or indeed if they can be. As has been evidenced in this analysis this has implications at the level of the individual occupation and the organisational identity. However, the evolution of these organisations is not necessarily a negative development. Although not put forth by interviewees, it is important to consider that while for some artists the denigration of artistic practice is a negative outcome for others it could indicate goal succession in terms of their personal career development; this would provide some rationale for continued involvement despite the negative impacts it had.

International precedents are identified for a transition away from strictly 'artist-run' organisations. Jeffri identifies that artist-run organisations often change to manager-run organisations 'the managers coming most often from the artistic or curatorial ranks'.⁸⁸⁸ This is

⁸⁸⁷ Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony," 357.

⁸⁸⁸ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 127.

consistent with the sample. Of interest is that the initiation of this process within the sample is comparatively rapid in contrast to some more mature artist-run fields in countries such as Australia, Canada, and the USA where it occurred over a number of decades. How to negotiate this shift, either in acquiescing to it or resisting it, is a major challenge faced by the organisations.

For some interviewees the impact of workload had consequences beyond their arts practice and participation was reported as being detrimental to their health and wellbeing. As explained by the sample interviewees:

[It has been] *really, really* difficult; *loads* of long hours, *loads* of hard work, no sleep, constantly under loads of stress, and you just get consumed by it all as well. Sometimes it can be bad, burnout is definitely one thing that has cropped up for many of us on occasion. And you forget yourself sometimes. [emphasis original].⁸⁸⁹

It does take up an awful lot of your personal time, and even head space [...] emotionally, mentally, it definitely took a big toll, I think.⁸⁹⁰

You don't actually anticipate it, until you actually are involved in it on a day-to-day-level, how much of an impact it has on your life.⁸⁹¹

A particular strain was given in the fact that, as previously outlined, the members were at the outset themselves volunteers and thus having to balance their participation with other work and personal demands. Driscoll, of The Joinery, reflected:

Being organised is a big struggle, like moments when it got really busy with other stuff and [...] you have to do your Joinery stuff late at night; so it is just balancing the other stuff in your life I guess as well, wherever you work.⁸⁹²

Similarly Morrissey, of The Market Studios, recalled:

The three of us work and there have been times where me and Claire [Behan] have been up here until two or three in the morning working on stuff for exhibitions, and then gone to work the next day [...] You will get a

⁸⁸⁹ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁸⁹⁰ Anon, interviewee 17.

⁸⁹¹ Anon. interviewee 10.

⁸⁹² Driscoll, Interview with author.

call about something, if like a light is broken or something like that, you are the person they contact and you have to haul ass out on a freezing morning and fix it.⁸⁹³

Another reported that maintaining the balance of both employment elsewhere and negotiating the various challenges of participation in the organisation had detrimental impacts on their health:

I suffered a lot with my health – it got really, really, really bad [...] I just completely broke.⁸⁹⁴

Consequently, this interviewee relinquished their external paid employment.

The finding that there are several examples where participation in these organisations was detrimental to health and well-being is concerning and emphasises the importance of research, such as this thesis, into the experiences of individuals participating in these organisations. In particular through exploring the shared experiences of the organisations, their strengths and weaknesses it is possible to identify where changes could be made to alleviate the strain upon individuals; this is both in terms of the internal practices of the organisations, for example in the governance and management structures that they engage, and in external supports provided to them. These extend from education and training to appropriate funding opportunities.

From Volunteerism to Employment

It is typical that the founders and successors are initially engaged in largely non-arts based, part-time employment in order to subsidise their participation in these organisations. Only a limited number reported arts-related employment, and others are dependent on social welfare payments for income. Anheier discusses this in terms of cross subsidisation of jobs held; that is, that those which provide for the subsistence needs of the individual subsidise the unpaid activity.⁸⁹⁵ In some of the organisations these situations are alleviated by a shift from participating in the artist-run space as a volunteer to receiving remuneration for participation. This may be via occasional payments on a project basis or through formal employment. This alleviated the need for them to undertake additional employment elsewhere and maximised the time they were able to give to the organisation.

⁸⁹³ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁸⁹⁴ Anon. interviewee 18.

⁸⁹⁵ Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations : Theory, Management, Policy*, 219.

Interviewees from Basic Space, The Market Studios, Ormond Studios, and thisisnotashop all reported that the founders' participation remained entirely voluntary throughout.⁸⁹⁶ Driscoll, from The Joinery, reported that the founders did not receive any payment for their management roles although, on occasion where funding had been available, they had received a fee payment for curation; this was equivalent to the amount paid to their outside curators. Driscoll expressed a desire to be paid for her management work but cited organisational finances as prohibitive.

Interviewees from Block T, MTGS, and PP/S reported that one or more of the founders eventually received a regular salary for their work within the organisation. G-Dovns, as managing director of Block T, was employed full time. While in late 2012, employment was extended to the other directors, this was not sustained and ceased in 2014. At the time of final interview with McEvoy, in 2016, all participants were entirely voluntary. Prendergast was reported as the sole founding member of MTGS to receive a salary. Cullen reports that when PP/S changed to a CLG he became an employee of the company. Within PP/S, thisisnotashop, and MTGS regular payments were also extended to non-founding directors, i.e. G. Murphy, Foley and Kynaston, and myself. The Intern Manager position in PP/S was also reported as being a paid position.

The wage and payment amounts were not disclosed for these various positions. However, it was reported that payments and salaries were for the most part not equitable with the time invested, i.e. it is part-time pay for full-time work. This is reported by Nesbitt as typical of small UK based arts organisations:

[R]epresentatives of small visual arts organisations reported working vastly in excess of the hours for which they were being paid.⁸⁹⁷

Thus, even when paid the participants continue to in effect subsidise the organisation through volunteerism.

The Irish report *FOOTFALL*, reports that only twenty percent of the organisations within their study made payments to people for their participation at the organisational level.⁸⁹⁸ This figure includes directors, project staff, administrators, curators, tutors, and technicians. This indicates that the sample organisations comparatively represent a relatively high level of payment to staff for administrative and managerial work compared to national organisations; this position is fortified by the fact that, of the three organisations which are included in both studies, two were

⁸⁹⁶ Interviewees from Ormond Studios report subsidised studio rent (via grants) as a financial benefit.

⁸⁹⁷ Nesbitt, "Value, Measure, Sustainability: Ideas Towards the Future of the Small-Scale Visual Arts Sector," 10.

⁸⁹⁸ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 30.

organisations that made payments and thus contribute to the twenty percent indicated. However, it is not possible to identify whether this difference in practice is regional or is caused by other variables such as organisational age.

The payment of individuals within artist-run spaces is not without precedence. In documents from TBG+S requesting financial assistance, in 1984, funds were requested for staffing as an ongoing annual expense.⁸⁹⁹ Documents from 1985 indicate that an ACI grant allowed for a salary payment to the director.⁹⁰⁰ A 1986 letter from Haughton to the ACI echoes discussion throughout this chapter, it states:

Jenny Haughton is the only staff member of the studios receiving a regular salary. Her work load is enormous and multi-faceted, being continually interrupted and involving extremely long hours, often taking over the weekend and late evenings.⁹⁰¹

By 1989, the provisional budget for the organisation, submitted to the ACI, requested £26, 000 in staffing costs.⁹⁰² Through increasing funds over subsequent years TBG+S now has a staff of seven which, in addition to Director and Programme Curator, includes positions such as Learning and Engagement Curator, Marketing and Fundraising Executive, and Finance Coordinator.⁹⁰³

There is also evidence of international precedence of payment to participants. The 2012 *Burgess Report* shows that in Canadian ARCs almost half of organisations employ curators or artistic directors, though similar figures are not given for administrators and managers.⁹⁰⁴ However, the Canada Council for the Arts report, *Understanding Canadian Arts Through CADAC Data* states that fifty-seven percent of operating costs for ARCs in 2013 was made in salaries and professional fees and thirty-five percent of those positions were full-time.⁹⁰⁵

In consideration of UK based organisations, Jones also observes payment to key personnel following the escalation of activities; these may be the founding artists or external employees.⁹⁰⁶ Within the sample organisations, with the exception of The Market Studios who employed a part-

⁸⁹⁹ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Temple Bar Studios: An Introduction (Request for Support Document)."

⁹⁰⁰ "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting (n.d.)," (NIVAL Box 9, 1985).

⁹⁰¹ Jenny Haughton, "Letter to All Members of the Arts Council 06/06/1986," (NIVAL Box 9, 1986).

⁹⁰² Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Board of Directors Minutes of Meeting 11/05/1989," (NIVAL Box 9, 1989).

⁹⁰³ "Information: Our Staff," <http://www.templebargallery.com/info/about/staff>.

⁹⁰⁴ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 32.

⁹⁰⁵ Canada Council for the Arts, "Understanding Canadian Arts through Cadac Data: A Portrait of Artist-Run Centres," 6.

⁹⁰⁶ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 33.

time administrator, all of the positions were 'internal' appointments. It was reported that The Market Studios had originally hoped to employ one of the founders but the funding they received stipulated the external appointment. Morrissey reported that they decided to use this strategically:

We thought, 'well, let's use this to our advantage [...] let's bring in someone else who has skills that we don't have and can set up a proper administrative system, get it ship-shape and get the place back on its feet'.⁹⁰⁷

Thus, an external appointment at the administrative level proved beneficial in enhancing efficiency and alleviating some of the workload demands.

Jones highlights the advantages and disadvantages of internal and external employees at the directorial level. By employing the founders there is continuity:

Where originating artists move on to direct an organisation, they provide a continuity which tends to ensure that an organisation maintains a relationship with the artist-constituency whilst at the same time enabling it to forge the new links which are necessary with other bodies and sectors. In such cases, the vision of the originating artists which was crucial to the initial development of the organisation is more likely to be retained and be enhanced as it is shared and developed with others who have an interest in the organisation's work.⁹⁰⁸

This continuity reflects earlier discussion about the benefits of retaining founders as directors.

As indicated by Jones, internal appointments have the benefit of allowing for the exploitation of the intimate knowledge that the individuals have of the organisations. However, the practice of internal appointments must also be put in the context of what has been self-identified as a deficit of training in management and administrative skills. While it is identified that significant competencies are gained on the job, it remains that the professionalisation of these roles, via employment, would benefit from additional training or mentoring. For reasons of accountability and responsibility this is particularly important where the positions are funded through public money.

⁹⁰⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁹⁰⁸ Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*, 33-34.

Jones highlights a disadvantage of internal appointments as resistance to change:

A disadvantage is that individuals may find it impossible to 'let go' of an organisation, or be willing for it to change radically in response to new circumstances.⁹⁰⁹

Again the CLG board can help assuage some of this difficulty by providing diversity of opinion and ideas. However, this could also potentially cause conflict between the employee and the board of directors. Given the young age of the sample organisations the case for continuity and focus on the original vision of the organisation is strong and supports the practice of internal appointments. However, resistance to change is a dynamic that will need to be addressed as the organisations negotiate any ambitions for longevity and their future development.

There is evidence that that the transition to paid employment was necessary or desired on the personal level. In the instances of MART and Block T this was an organisational goal from the outset and was implemented at the first opportunity. Scanlan reported that it was essential that this was possible as both she and Nevin left their outside employment in order to undertake the project:

It comes to '—we've quit our jobs for this [...] we need to have a wage, we need to survive'.⁹¹⁰

Linders, from Block T, stated:

If everyone is not getting enough to live on at the end of the day then why are we doing this?⁹¹¹

However, for others it was an evolving concern. For example, an unpaid interviewee reflected:

I'm five years older and I don't have that excitement for something that isn't going to pay me, anymore.⁹¹²

McEvoy, of Block T, asked:

We are all working voluntarily on this project, how long can we do this for, and sustain it?⁹¹³

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁹¹⁰ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁹¹¹ Linders, Interview with author.

⁹¹² Anon. interviewee 7.

⁹¹³ McEvoy, Interview with author.

For The Market Studios, even with the identified administrative assistance, the situation became untenable. In a statement on The Market Studios website in October 2014 they wrote:

Over the last few months we have worked through a number of scenarios looking at how the studios might continue, but having explored the options available to us we now have to concede that the voluntary commitment needed to run the space has run its course.⁹¹⁴

Thus, the need to resolve the issue of workload is paramount to sustainability.

This shift to payment of key persons is important in consideration of organisational evolution. It moves the rhetoric from one of volunteerism to one of 'work'. The move to employment either as an initial or evolving intent is seen by some as problematic. Indeed in an audience survey as part of the *FOOTFALL Report* only forty-three percent of respondents believed that administrators should be paid for their participation in artist-run spaces.⁹¹⁵

Anecdotally, it is suggested that there exists a concept that payment is a move away from mutuality and altruism towards individual gain; at best this is conceived as denigrating authenticity, at worst as a means by which to exploit artists. This is especially levied at organisations who continue to engage the rental exhibition format parallel to paying staff. This was raised by one of the artist interviewees in discussion of the perceived high rental charges which they considered were set at this level to accommodate multiple salaries within the organisation.⁹¹⁶

Overall, resistance to paying individuals is, I suggest, predicated on the identity of participants as 'artists' and is grounded in the modernist paradigm of the artist as an 'economically disinterested' individual.⁹¹⁷ This conceives of the status of artist as a 'life-style' rather than a job.⁹¹⁸ Consequently, their labour as applied to these arts organisations is perceived as vocational, irrespective of extrinsic advantages brought forth. By denying the right of individuals to be compensated for their time and labour the contribution of the individual is devalued and by implication this also devalues art oriented work in general. Furthermore this perspective fails to

⁹¹⁴ The Market Studios, "Closure of the Market Studios".

⁹¹⁵ Laws, "FOOTFALL: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland," 31.

⁹¹⁶ Anon. Artist D.

⁹¹⁷ Rosenstein, "Conceiving Artistic Work in the Formation of Artist Policy: Thinking Beyond Disinterest and Autonomy."; Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 554; Rudolf Wittkower and Margot Wittkower, *Born under Saturn* (New York: New York Review Books, 2007). Alexander and Bowler highlight the separation between art and commerce as emerging as early as the Renaissance. Alexander and Bowler, "Art at the Crossroads: The Arts in Society and the Sociology of Art," 3.

⁹¹⁸ Jones discusses 'life-style' as an approach to artists. Jones, *Measuring the Experience: A Survey of the Scope and Value of Artist-Led Organisations*.

acknowledge the contribution of these organisations to the visual arts infrastructure and the career development of individual artists.

Benefits, Incentives, and Rewards

It has been evidenced that participation within these organisations is a high cost activity. In some instances it carries a financial burden both in regards to direct financial expense and in limiting the ability to pursue paid work elsewhere due to the time commitment; this high level of time and commitment required is also often to the detriment of artistic practice; finally associated high levels of stress have potential impacts on health and well-being. Employment, although in limited examples, can be seen as an example of a 'hard' incentive to continued participation as it provides a tangible benefit through financial recompense. However, it is also possible that 'soft' incentives, for example intrinsic satisfaction, skill development, and social networks, also contribute to the continued participation of individuals within the management of these organisations in spite of the disadvantages that have been outlined.

In considering the incentives and rewards for participation it is useful to recall the initial conditions which stimulate involvement in the organisations. In Chapter 1, it was identified that the organisations were in part established as a response to external conditions, such as identifying a deficit of facilities, and also as a response to opportunity. These external conditions directly impacted the personal circumstances of the founders and in part their motive was to provide themselves with opportunity, in particular for access to studio space. The potential for personal benefit represents one early incentive to participation.

It was also identified that extending the opportunity to others and creating a community of peers was a key factor in a number of examples. Thus, their actions can be classed, at the outset, as in part self-interested and in part altruistic. The two are not opposed. By allowing for the possibility of self-interest within altruism, definitions predicated on cost-benefit relationships are refuted.⁹¹⁹ That is, 'altruists do not have to be martyrs'.⁹²⁰

Within this framework it is possible to locate an intrinsic reward which is present from the outset; this directly relates to the focus on community. Participation can be theorised as in part motivated by 'excess of zeal'; zeal is put forth by Coleman as the antithesis of 'free riding'.⁹²¹ The free rider spurns contribution while reaping the benefit of other's actions. In contrast the

⁹¹⁹ March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," 5.

⁹²⁰ Robert Scott Gassler, "Altruism and the Economics of Non-Profit Organisations," *Financial Accountability & Management* 14, no. 3 (1998): 180.

⁹²¹ James S Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks," *Sociological Theory* 6, no. 1 (1988).

individual with zeal contributes even when the rewards do not directly outweigh the personal costs.⁹²² For example MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, reflected:

If you were on a wage you'd be nearly evaluating the amount of work that you do to a certain sum of money that you were earning or something, but nobody was earning anything I suppose and so people just gave unlimited amount of time and love and effort into it.⁹²³

Coleman locates the motivation for zeal both in the achievement of the direct aim, but also in the interchange with others who share a common aim.⁹²⁴ In the research sample this thus reinforces collaboration, community, and mutuality. This is stated in contrast to cooperation. Rather mutuality is itself an aim, motivation, and reward and this research suggests that at the outset a significant incentive to participation was the psychic benefit of operating within a collaborative, or mutual, community. This is in line with the identified goal of the organisations to create a community of peers. MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, again provides a clear example of this:

There was so much happening, it was a real great buzz, I had tonnes of energy, we all did, to throw into this. And that fun element of things, that was nearly payment you know.⁹²⁵

This mutuality was collectively manifest as not merely cooperating towards a common goal but rather a 'sense of mission'.⁹²⁶

At the outset the 'missions' of the organisations are rudimentary or embryonic. However across the organisations the 'sense of mission' is prolific. This was described by Prendergast as a sense that 'we were all in it together'.⁹²⁷ This is echoed by McDonald who stated that everyone had 'the best interest of the whole space' at heart.⁹²⁸ Reinforcing the authenticity of the sense of mission is the fact that the energy of the founders was voracious enough to galvanise and invigorate the participation and support of others.⁹²⁹ Here there is participation without hard reward. Again mutuality is identified as a potential intrinsic reward.

It is thus proposed that in addition to the goal of providing personal opportunity, the early incentives and rewards for individual participation were primarily intrinsic, i.e. performed for

⁹²² Ibid.

⁹²³ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁹²⁴ Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks," 53.

⁹²⁵ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

⁹²⁶ Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations*, 224.

⁹²⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁹²⁸ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁹²⁹ Mintzberg, *Mintzberg on Management: Inside Our Strange World of Organizations*, 225.

‘inherent satisfaction’ rather than extrinsic and performed for ‘separable outcomes’.⁹³⁰ Community and mutuality were at the heart of this. Within the individual this manifests as an ‘excess of zeal’ as they participate in and contribute to a common purpose.⁹³¹

As identified, in time there was an increased desire within a number of the organisations for hard rewards in the form of payment. How does this increase in personal advantage impact the dynamics of mutuality and altruism? There was no indication that payment to individuals undermined the altruistic quality of motivations to participation, or that it denigrated the authenticity of the mission and the mutuality that were seminal to the organisations. Recall that even where payment was received this was reported as being inequivalent to the hours worked, indicating that motivations to participation continue to exceed financial benefits. The desire to provide services and opportunities to artists continues as a significant driver; indeed, these supports develop and expand as individual competencies increase and services are professionalised. Furthermore, as outlined above altruism is not based on a cost-benefit relationship, nor does it demand martyrdom.⁹³² Thus, payment does not automatically undermine zeal or altruism.

However, it is also important to observe that over time additional benefits do develop for participants via an increase in soft incentives and rewards. These are both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Namely, the development of personal and professional skills, networks, and individual reputation. Consequently, there is reporting of increased personal and professional opportunities.

Psychic benefits were reported such as an increase in confidence or becoming more ‘driven’.⁹³³ Skill development was identified as a consequence of participation and was based around transferable skills. For example, McAllister considered that she is ‘better at problem solving’, Driscoll observed, ‘I just feel like I’m more of an adaptive person’, and Booth that it brought a good ‘collaborative attitude’ to future endeavours.⁹³⁴ Recalling earlier discussion of the challenge of interpersonal skills, one interviewee considered it afforded them the opportunity to:

⁹³⁰ Richard M Ryan and Edward L Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions," *Contemporary Educational Psychology* 25, no. 1 (2000). See also: Bridgstock, "Skills for Creative Industries Graduate Success."

⁹³¹ Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks."

⁹³² March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," 5. Gassler, "Altruism and the Economics of Non-Profit Organisations," 180.

⁹³³ McAllister, Interview with author; McDonald, Interview with author.

⁹³⁴ Driscoll, Interview with author; McAllister, Interview with author; Booth, Interview with author.

–manage different personalities and work with different people and [...to] change the way you communicate with people [...] diplomacy I suppose.⁹³⁵

Other more tangible skills were also evidenced. McAllister, of Ormond Studios, reflected:

I am just more aware I guess of what is needed and what goes into running a space like that, about budgets, how to deal with the Arts Council, just ticking all the boxes when it comes to those situations.⁹³⁶

McEvoy, of Block T, stated:

I'm gaining work on a curatorial experience, and project management and things like that.⁹³⁷

These impacts occurred in respect of developing skills and experience, relative to management, curatorial, and administrative aspects.

It is of note that while multiple interviewees reported these as benefits only one interviewee cited the anticipation of skill development as a direct stimulus to get involved. Thus, although this represents a benefit of participation its role as an incentive is more limited. There were examples where the development of these skills were externally recognised and this had positive impacts for the interviewees. Six of the interviewees, i.e. Cullen, McAllister, McDonald, Booth, Morrissey, and Driscoll all stated that participation had directly had a positive impact on their careers and had allowed them to access external opportunities. These included both arts and employment opportunities. Only one interviewee reported that participation had hindered their career; they explained that they had found that they were over-qualified through experience for 'entry level jobs', but still underqualified for some positions which required more formal qualifications.⁹³⁸

Association with the reputation of the organisation secured a broader personal visibility and opportunity. Getting 'respect [...] from people that you respect' was cited by one interviewee as an important facet of recognition.⁹³⁹ This recognition was reported as bringing benefits to participants:

Monster Truck Gallery and Studios was really well respected and recognised in the artistic community and it definitely opened doors for me.⁹⁴⁰

⁹³⁵ Anon, interviewee 9.

⁹³⁶ McAllister, Interview with author.

⁹³⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁹³⁸ Anon. interviewee 1.

⁹³⁹ Fitz, Interview with author.

⁹⁴⁰ Booth, Interview with author.

In particular, of benefit to participants were the increasingly broad networks of association developed through the organisations. Cullen of PP/S, Morrissey of The Market Studios, and MacDonald of Ormond Studios reflected on this:

[T]he various networks that Pallas grew would have been grown by me and Pallas at the same time [...] So it is generally a boost to my career.⁹⁴¹

A lot of the work that myself and Claire [Behan] have got through curating and being involved in other exhibitions and artists outside of Market Studios has come about because we run this space, and because of the amount of people that we meet[.]⁹⁴²

I met lots of people through it and I got jobs out of it as well.⁹⁴³

Thus, Weslund's thesis that status and social networks are key nonmaterial (or soft) incentives for participation in non-profits is evidenced as applicable to participation within the sample group.⁹⁴⁴

As previously noted 'broad-ranging weak ties and numerous structural holes' is the preferable configuration for career success of artists.⁹⁴⁵ These organisations increase the domain in which the individual operates and enhances their access to weak ties, and the potential for third party collaboration. Thus, access to these networks can be considered as a soft incentive to participation and an important way of increasing social capital, which potentially has extrinsic impacts. For those who wish to prioritise their art making practice these rewards may not be enough to compel continued participation. However for some individuals these rewards provide insight into one reason why participation continues despite the negative impacts outlined.

Participation in these organisations is evidenced as providing a pedagogical function. This is of particular significance in light of the previously identified deficit of tuition in these skills within third level education, and the importance of them within the protean or portfolio career. Thus, while the delivery of services, facilities, and opportunities to other artists remains the primary objective of these organisations, it is evidenced that there is also professional benefit to the individuals who found and manage the organisations also. If these individuals continue to pursue a career in arts management or curatorship then the impact of these organisations and their importance to the visual arts field in Ireland is extended. Again, these organisations provide a

⁹⁴¹ Cullen, Interview with author.

⁹⁴² Morrissey, Interview with author.685

⁹⁴³ McDonald, Interview with author.

⁹⁴⁴ Westlund and Bolton, "Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship," 83.

⁹⁴⁵ Giuffre, "Sandpiles of Opportunity: Success in the Art World," 829.

‘professional entry point’ for artists, but in this instance it is focused on those participating in the management of the organisations.⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴⁶ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 27

Chapter 4: Finances, Resource Dependency, and Sustainability

This chapter concerns organisational survival. Pfeffer and Salancik state that, '[t]he key to organisational survival is the ability to acquire and maintain resources'.⁹⁴⁷ For the sample organisations the key resource required is financial input and the chapter explores how in practice the organisations acquire and maintain finances. This analysis is important to understanding the *modus operandi* of the organisations, as without this resource they would not be able to undertake their activities. Through this analysis the topic of sustainability is addressed. Human labour and secure tenancy are also identified as factors that affect sustainability. Human resources was already addressed in discussion of workload in Chapter 3 and is not further considered within the current chapter. The topic of securing tenancy was introduced in Chapter 1, and the current chapter extends this discussion to consider challenges of tenancy as an ongoing issue within the organisations.

The chapter starts with an overview of the finances of the organisations. It then moves onto consideration of how income is secured by the organisations. The primary sources of income identified in interviews were earned income and grant funding. This was supplemented by fundraising events, bank loans, and the founders' own financial contributions. The balance between these is evidenced as changing throughout the lifespan of the organisations. The various streams of income are assessed individually with reference to their ongoing success, suitability, and desirability.

The key repeat sources of grant funding are from the Arts Council (ACI) and Dublin City Council (DCC). Pfeffer and Salancik contend that 'The context of an organisation is critical for understanding its activities'.⁹⁴⁸ They outline that:

Organizations are embedded in an environment comprised of other organizations. They depend on those organizations for the many resources they themselves require.⁹⁴⁹

In order to place the sample organisations within their environment an extended outline is given of each of these agencies. This comprises a synopsis of their development, governing legislation, and key developments in the policies, priorities, and funding structures.

⁹⁴⁷ Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, 2.

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 19.

⁹⁴⁹ Ibid., 2.

The balance between earned and grant income is central to the exploration of resource dependency. The question of dependency is addressed, that is, the degree to which the sample organisations are reliant on these grants as an income source. This is explored with particular reference to the relationship of interviewees with the ACI, in regards to autonomy, sustainability, and dependence. This focus reflects the emphasis that the respondents gave to the ACI within the interviews.

The discussion of sustainability is then expanded to include analysis of the challenges brought about from insecure tenancy arrangements. Finally, the chapter considers the closure of a number of the sample organisations within the research period and explores whether there is desire and capacity for longevity within the organisations themselves.

This chapter draws on the main sample interviews, as well as financial records filed with the CRO, and reports from DCC and the ACI regarding their funding allocations. Information regarding the breakdown of the income streams and expenditure was not detailed consistently across the organisations in submitted accounts; where available this is referred to in the text of this discussion. Discussion predominantly relies on the testimony of the interviewees regarding the income of the organisations. This allows for the identification of sources but limits the availability of evidentiary figures. Records from the DCC and ACI allow for consideration of grant aid awarded. Together, these sources provide an overview of streams of income within the individual organisations as well as patterns at field level.

As these CRO, ACI, and DCC records and reports are extensive in number they are only included in citations when reference is made to an individual specific report, a comprehensive list of the reports and documents consulted is included within the Appendix B and the reference section of this thesis.

Overview of Finances

The turnover of the organisations potentially provides useful information that allows us to understand the size of the organisations, in select examples, in financial terms. This usefully provides context for the forthcoming discussion of earned income and grant aid by providing a measuring against which the magnitude of resources can be gauged. However, access to this information was limited. The qualification of all of the LTDs as 'small companies' according the *Companies Acts 1963-2013* allows that they may submit abridged financial statements.⁹⁵⁰ More detailed information was, however, secured in respect of the CLGs, as is shown in Figure 18. Of

⁹⁵⁰ Oireachtas, "Companies Acts 1963-2013."

note is that while they incorporated in 2011, The Joinery did not list any financial activity within the CLG until 2014. Overall there is not enough information to observe field level patterns; similarly the ability to postulate based on sequential years within any given organisation is limited.

As can be seen there is significant variance in the turnover of the organisations. Indeed in 2014 the turnover of PP/S is in excess of five times that of The Joinery. Thus, there does not appear to be a 'typical' size to the organisations represented within these figures in financial terms. When year of establishment is considered there does not appear to be a correlation between organisational age and turnover. For example, both The Joinery and The Market Studios established in 2008 and yet there is a large disparity in turnover and operation costs. Thus it would indicate that the difference occurs at the operational level rather than as a result of a clear life-cycle pattern.

Also indicated in Figure 18 is the expenditure of the organisations, given in brackets. This indicates that the expenditure of the organisations is similar to the turnover. Again this is useful in giving a broad understanding of the variance in the financial size of the operations. However, these figures are potentially misleading if they are considered without analysis of the circumstance and operational model of the individual organisations. For example, in considering the 2014 figures The Joinery makes a profit of thirty-three percent of its turnover, compared to a loss of nine percent in MART and profit of fourteen percent in PP/S; thus, it appears in these terms to be successful.⁹⁵¹ However, as has emerged through Chapter 3, the limited finances of The Joinery meant that it was unable to pay its managing directors despite a desire to do so, in contrast to both of the other organisations in that table. As will emerge throughout the current chapter, The Joinery was relatively unsuccessful in grant applications and had limited opportunities for earning income; thus despite the apparent success indicated by the profit margin, the model is precarious.

The profitability, or otherwise, of the organisations demonstrates the ability of the founders to adjust their model to the resources available to them, but does not necessarily represent the sustainable needs of the organisations. In some examples it was reported that lack of finances restricted the ability of the organisations to carry out activities.

Sometimes the financial pressure is pretty intense to try and keep things going and that we don't have the money to do lots of things.⁹⁵²

⁹⁵¹ Exact figures: MART -8.6%, The Joinery 33.22%, PP/S 13.75%.

⁹⁵² Anon. interviewee 8.

In other instances the organisational model may be adjusted to off-set the financial shortfall through increasing voluntary participation, for example financial turnover of the organisation impacts the ability to pay key personnel and to pay artists. Thus, the financial turnover does not reflect the true 'cost' of doing business. Therefore although useful to consider the financial aspects of the organisations, turnover cannot provide a gauge of the level of activity undertaken by the various organisations.

Information regarding annual profit or loss was available for all of the incorporated organisations. This more comprehensive account of profit and loss consideration of the issue of financial sustainability. Figure 19, demonstrates that the total activities and income streams in fact generated minimal overall surplus profits. Indeed, with the exception of PP/S from 2004 to 2006, the organisations were at best operating at break-even level and more commonly operated at a deficit. The highest given surplus is Block T, at €10,068 in 2013, and only The Market Studios shows profits for two consecutive years, from 2012 to 2013.

Overall, the financial stability of these organisations is at best tenuous and there are few reserves to cushion them against shortfalls in their budget. This provides initial indication that the organisations were highly vulnerable to changes within their financial environment whether as a decrease in income or as increased expenditure. Closer examination of the different income sources of the organisations will allow for deeper insight into how this is negotiated and the implications of the models engaged for the longer term sustainability of the organisations.

In-Kind Support

As was evidenced in discussion of volunteerism within the organisations, in-kind support is demonstrated as of significance both at the outset and on an ongoing basis both by the founders and others; although the focus of this support changes from hands-on labour at the outset to a focus of an administrative and operational nature later on. At the outset, costs were reduced as a benefit from substantial 'in kind' support from the founders and their networks. As was outlined, many of the premises were in a deteriorated state at the time that tenancy commenced. It transpired that large amounts of physical work was undertaken by the founders. The founders' personal networks were crucial and represented an important resource in the early development and activities of the organisations.

This high level of volunteerism from the founders and others offset the limited resources. On an ongoing basis many of the founders in effect subsidised the organisations with free labour by

undertaking employment elsewhere.⁹⁵³ This continued even when paid employment was introduced due to the excessive hours worked compared to the wages received.

Further in-kind support was seen in respect of rental agreements with private landlords. For Basic Space there was an ongoing arrangement that they used their Vicar Street property rent free. Interviewees from both Block T and MTGS report a period of three months' rent free tenancy at the establishment of the organisation. Basic Space also benefited from in-kind support from the National College of Art and Design which provided them with insurance free of charge.

In-kind support therefore plays a very important resource role in the establishment and development of the organisations at the outset. However, as was detailed in the previous chapter, volunteerism is not sustainable at the level initially invested as this is highly demanding on the individuals involved. Furthermore, in-kind support is limited as it cannot fully extinguish the need for financial resources for operational overheads and increasing expenses related to professionalisation.

Personal Contributions

One-third of the organisations reported the donation of their personal finances into the project. Interviewees from both MTGS and Block T reported that they contributed their own money into the initial renovation of the property. *thisisnotashop's* 2008 accounts documents extensive donations from the directors totalling €22,230.⁹⁵⁴ No interviewee reported that this investment was intended as a loan to be recouped at a later date. Where it occurs the behaviour is significant as it indicates the commitment of the individuals to the project. It also raises the implications of organisational failure which would represent a personal financial loss to those who had donated.

As was previously outlined artists in Ireland tend to subsist on low incomes comprised of various employments and/or social welfare supports.⁹⁵⁵ This pattern was previously identified as typical within the research sample. These early donations represent vital income at key points within the organisations' development. However, given the circumstance of the founders, continued personal financial contributions are neither desirable nor sustainable as an ongoing practice.

⁹⁵³ Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations : Theory, Management, Policy*, 219.

⁹⁵⁴ *thisisnotashop's* accounts from 2008, detail a total of €25,890 in donations. This includes extensive donations directly from the directors. Fiore is documented as donating €17,946 and Darcy €4184. Interviewees made reference to a philanthropic donation from the Gordon Matta Clark Estate with whom Fiore had a familial connection as well as personal contributions from Fiore. It is unclear as to which this donation pertains. *thisisnotashop Limited* [445635], "6872478/2: Account Details," (Companies Registration Office, 10/02/2010 [31/12/2008]).

⁹⁵⁵ Arts Council of Ireland, "The Living and Working Conditions of Artists in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland (Republic of Ireland Version)," 10, 29.

Loans

The founders of PP/S, MART, and The Market Studios, all took out business loans for their respective organisations, for which they acted as guarantors.

We got a loan from microfinance because we got refused the bank and then we got friends' credit cards and all sorts[.]⁹⁵⁶

We knew we'd need a loan because there was a lot of building work to be done and we had to pay a deposit.⁹⁵⁷

These loans were reported as essential to the establishment of the organisation and the renovation of the premises. As outlined, PP/S has inhabited numerous premises and Cullen and G. Murphy report that financing from the bank was the key income source for the subsequent renovations; only for their Grangeegorman Road space did they receive funding assistance, and this was from the ACI.

Thus, there is again evidence both of the level of personal commitment of the individuals to these projects and the personal risk they were prepared to accept. While this can provide a vital source of finances at key times, it was not sustainable as a source for ongoing operational costs. It was vital for the organisations to generate alternative sustainable finances for these costs and activities as well as generating enough income for the repayment of loans.

Corporate Support

Corporate support can occur through philanthropy, sponsorship, and competitive awards. Providing context to the observations of corporate giving, the 2009 McKinsey and Company report, *Philanthropy in the Republic of Ireland*, finds that:

Corporate philanthropy [in Ireland] is very low.⁹⁵⁸

However, despite this, in the 2009 Business to Arts/Deloitte *Private Investment in Arts and Culture Survey Report*, it is stated that:

⁹⁵⁶ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁹⁵⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁹⁵⁸ McKinsey and Company. "Philanthropy in the Republic of Ireland: An Assessment of the Current and Future Potential of Philanthropic Giving in the Republic of Ireland." Dublin, 2009: 9.

Business is the largest contributor of private investment to arts and cultural organisations.⁹⁵⁹

These contributions primarily are through cash and in-kind sponsorship.⁹⁶⁰ Comparative to the general arts and culture sector the investment by private businesses into the sample organisations, as outlined below, is very low, i.e. only thisisnotashop secured philanthropic funding, none reported corporate cash sponsorship, and only MTGS and Block T were awarded competitive awards.

Limiting the comparison it of note that the Business to Arts/Deloitte report does not give a breakdown of this information by discipline or organisation size; it is relevant that the visual arts represented only eighteen percent of the sample organisations and that thirty-seven percent of the total organisations had in excess of five employees, thus they were bigger than the sample organisations. Therefore, the sample organisations were not typical of the organisations within the study and it is possible that the figures for corporate support of smaller organisations are substantially lower than those reported by Business to Arts/Deloitte. However, the context provided by the report is useful because two-thirds of the income in their sample was reported as used to support core programme and overhead costs and outlined throughout this chapter is the fact that raising money for these purposes was particularly challenging for the organisations.⁹⁶¹ Thus, in theory this represents an avenue of funding that could assist the organisations.

Despite the introduction of the *Charities Act* (2009) 'Charity' was not a registered legal status within the Republic of Ireland for the majority of the research period; this changed with the introduction of *The Companies Act* (2014).⁹⁶² However, throughout this period a CHY number could be awarded for tax purposes.⁹⁶³ Having a CHY number financially benefits corporate donors through tax relief and also potentially makes an organisation more attractive by acting as a means of legitimisation. thisisnotashop were the only organisation with a CHY number. Board member,

⁹⁵⁹ Deloitte and Touche. "Private Investment in Arts and Culture Survey Report." Dublin, 2009: 5

⁹⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁶¹ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁶² Oireachtas, "Charities Act, 2009 (6/2009)," (2009); "The Companies Act, 2014," (2015).

⁹⁶³ Donoghue et al., "The Hidden Landscape," 15. Despite the introduction of the "Charities Act, 2009 (6/2009)." The proposal for registration of charities was, at the time of interview, yet to be implemented. As such the status does not currently exist within the ROI. Organisations may, however be recognised as a charitable body and assigned a CHY number for the purposes of tax relief on donations under the *Scheme of Tax Relief for Donations to eligible Charities and other Approved Bodies under the terms of Section 848A "Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997. 3.5,"* (1997). See: Office of the Revenue Commissioners, "Charities," <http://www.revenue.ie/en/business/charities.html>. (Addendum: "Charities Act, 2009 (6/2009)." was brought into effect on 16th October 2014) This was to change after the interview and research period with the introduction of Oireachtas, "The Companies Act, 2014."

Fleming, was a corporate accountant and was reported as assisting the group in securing charitable donations. An interviewee from thisisnotashop also made reference to a philanthropic donation from the Gordon Matta Clark Estate, with whom Fiore had familial links; this was not evidenced in the available company papers.⁹⁶⁴

It is evident that thisisnotashop benefited from having the CHY designation as well as from the expertise available to them. Without a doubt the legal status of some of the organisations would provide a disincentive to corporate giving as would the omission of CHY numbers, as it removes the opportunity for givers to avail of tax incentives. Furthermore, the limited expertise and time available within many of the organisations would have been a barrier to the organisations pursuing this income. This is acknowledged as a problem by Deloitte who consider that often, due to organisational size, 'a full-time focus on fundraising is impractical and unrealistic. Moreover, thirty-five percent of organisations [within the Deloitte study] that sought private investment were unsuccessful'.⁹⁶⁵ Also relevant to consideration is the issue of incentives to businesses to donate beyond tax incentives, specifically brand building and marketing through audience exposure and association. The niche audiences and low public profile of the artist-run organisations have limited appeal within this framework.

The outlined challenges for organisations in general when pursuing this source of income, alongside the limited time and expertise and limited commercial appeal of the sample organisation type in particular, presents limitations to the previous observation that this is a potential resource for the organisations. Furthermore, brand association is a two-way relationship and corporate support is not always a positive opportunity. For example, in 2014, traditional Irish music festival Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann came under intense criticism for accepting a particular corporate sponsor of their event and in the face of public criticism they eventually returned the money.⁹⁶⁶

As no organisations benefited from corporate cash sponsorship this is identified as an under-explored area by these organisations and one which could provide resources over which there was discretion. However future endeavours should be cautious as pursuing corporate sponsorship is a time-consuming enterprise that may have ethical implications, namely that the association with certain brands may not be desirable to the organisations. The dynamic of sponsorship, rather than philanthropic exchange, also implicates the organisations as the product

⁹⁶⁴ Kynaston, Interview with author.

⁹⁶⁵ Deloitte and Touche, "Private Investment in Arts and Culture Survey Report," 10.

⁹⁶⁶ Una Mullally, "The Ethical Minefield of Arts Sponsorship," *The Irish Times*, 18/08/2014; Brian McDonald, "Fleadh Cheoil Criticised for Accepting Shell Sponsorship," *ibid.*, 06/08/2014; Brian McDonald, "Fleadh Bows to Pressure and Gives Money Back to Shell," *ibid.*

within a consumer relationship with the corporate body and this dynamic may also be undesirable to the organisations. Further support from intermediaries such as Business to Arts, or direction from expert board members, are essential to further exploration of this as a suitable potential resource.

Awards offer both cash and in-kind rewards through mentorship and access to expertise. In 2008, MTGS won The Dublin Airport Authority Arts Award as a part of Business to Arts Allianz Award; the award was in part given in recognition of their collaboration with the RHA.⁹⁶⁷ Prendergast reports that the prize fund of €5,000 funded half of their creative programme for the year. In 2011, BLOCK T won the Noone Casey Mentorship Award. In 2013, they were winners of the Emerging Arts Entrepreneur category of the David Manley awards and received €1,000 in cash and mentoring. It is of note that the legal status of both of these organisations as LTDs did not disadvantage them in these awards.

Individual Donations

For the most part peers, artists, and audiences comprised the donor body for the organisations. Some ad hoc donations were reported, for example Basic Space was able to facilitate the installation of power sockets within their Vicar Street warehouse space through a donations box at an exhibition. However, the key source of donations was via crowdfunding. The advent of the crowdfunding platform, Fundit in 2011, an initiative by Business to Arts, offered a new opportunity for organisations to secure donations towards specific projects from individual supporters.⁹⁶⁸ This was engaged by MART, MTGS, PP/S, Block T, and The Joinery. MTGS raised €6,295 to purchase the material and equipment to install a large scale projection screen in their street front window in Temple Bar.⁹⁶⁹ The Joinery raised €18,740 to help towards their 2013 programming costs.⁹⁷⁰ PP/S secured €6,525 towards the production costs of two projects by artists Carol Anne Connolly and Cliona Harmey.⁹⁷¹ MART used the platform to raise €3,435 towards funding extensive electrical work and a fire certificate.⁹⁷² In 2016, Block T also utilised a similar platform called 'gofundme' and raised €8685 towards their move to a new premises. It is

⁹⁶⁷ Business to Arts. "Allianz Business to Arts Awards, 2008." Dublin, 2008.

⁹⁶⁸ "About Fund It," <http://fundit.ie/info/about/>.

⁹⁶⁹ Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, "Large Scale Dedicated Digital Art Screen," <http://fundit.ie/project/large-scale-dedicated-digital-art-screen>.

⁹⁷⁰ The Joinery, "The Joinery," <http://fundit.ie/project/the-joinery>.

⁹⁷¹ PP/S, "2 Artists Projects at Pallas Projects," <http://fundit.ie/project/2-artists-projects-at-pallas-projects>.

⁹⁷² MART, "The Mart 'Fund It' Video," <https://vimeo.com/47541686>; "The MART - Help Turn the Lights On!," <http://fundit.ie/project/the-mart-help-turn-the-lights-on>.

of note that many independent artists have also used the Fundit platform to help finance the costs of exhibitions hosted in the premises of the sample organisations.

This represents a contrast to the Deloitte report which found that individual giving represented a relatively minor source of private investment, sixteen percent, in Irish arts and cultural organisations.⁹⁷³ However, it is more in keeping with broader trends of philanthropy within the non-profit sector in Ireland, as put forth by McKinsey, where charitable donations are very high; eighty-nine percent of Irish adults give to charities.⁹⁷⁴ Also in keeping with this, is that these donations are characterised as ‘spontaneous giving’ rather than regular, planned donations. This is useful and appropriate in securing funding towards specific projects or one-off purchases but it not available as a sustained or core source of income. As identified by McKinsey:

Besides limiting charities’ ability to forecast their donation income and plan accordingly, a major drawback of spontaneous giving is that individual donations tend to be quite small.⁹⁷⁵

It is also of consideration that there is a shared audience across many of the spaces and so they in part draw on the same donor body. Thus, despite the success of this to date there are potential limitations on the repeated use of this platform within and across the organisations.

Fundraising Events

Fundraising via events is a key source of income for many of the organisations, especially early within their development. This was reported as a source of initial funding by Basic Space, Block T, MART, and MTGS. For example, Linders of Block T reported that they had a ‘massive fundraising party’ with live bands.⁹⁷⁶ Similarly, MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, reported that they ‘raised money in many ways, doing gigs and auctions’.⁹⁷⁷ As indicated by these examples, fundraising events were varied in nature. Film screenings and music performances were given as particularly popular activities. In keeping with the community focus of the organisations these events are very social in character. This also extended into further activities across the organisations, for example PP/S hosted fundraising barbeques, and both the MART and Block T hosted Christmas Markets.

A variety of further innovations in fundraising centred on visual art itself, in the form of art swaps and auctions. McDonald and McAllister of Ormond Studios both highlighted the 2010 event *15x15*

⁹⁷³ Deloitte and Touche, "Private Investment in Arts and Culture Survey Report," 7.

⁹⁷⁴ McKinsey and Company, "Philanthropy in the Republic of Ireland: An Assessment of the Current and Future Potential of Philanthropic Giving in the Republic of Ireland," 5.

⁹⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁷⁶ Linders, Interview with author.

⁹⁷⁷ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

as a key example of fundraising. In this event, they invited friends to submit works that were 15x15 centimetres, which were sold during the course of the exhibition. The Market Studios held an event called *Draw 2012* where works by five artists were raffled; Morrissey reported that the event raised crucial funds to offset an unexpected ESB bill totalling €4500. Both Booth and MacAthlaoich highlight MTGS' *Art Swap* event as of note. In 2014, PP/S also engaged an auction format. This was hosted in collaboration with Whyte's auction rooms and raised net proceeds of €20,000.⁹⁷⁸

These fundraising events were socially significant enough to audiences, artists, and peers to be able to translate the momentum of moral support to organisations into financial support for them when needed for specific projects. However, these are an unreliable source of sustained income, and they take up significant energies. When fundraising activities are centred on creative and cultural events these burdens are offset as the events fulfil a dual purpose and contribute to the central mission of the organisations at the same time as raising money. However, although often relied on by the organisations, this source is highly unstable as a core source of income. As with the discussion of individual giving, this source of income does not allow for financial planning within the organisations.

Commission

With the exception of the fundraising events as outlined, sales were reported as a minimal income source within the organisations. Basic Space, Ormond Studios, and The Market Studios reported that they did not take commission on works sold. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, stated:

We don't [charge commission] because again it is down to the fact that everything here is more idea based and a lot of the work is very ephemeral and wouldn't really sell anyway.⁹⁷⁹

In the discussion in Chapter 2 of the curatorial policy and decision making of the organisations, there was no evidence that commercial concerns played a factor.

MTGS, Block T, thisisnotashop, and The Joinery all reported earning commission on sales at some point. For MTGS this applied only in their Francis Street premises and commission was offset against any rental costs incurred by the artists. Prendergast reported that this was 'bonus' income

⁹⁷⁸ Visual Artists Ireland, "Pallas Projects/Studios Raises 27k with Gala Benefit Auction," <http://visualartists.ie/news/pallas-projectsstudios-raises-27k-with-gala-benefit-auction/>. PP/S, "Pallas Gala Charity Auction with Whytes."

⁹⁷⁹ Morrissey, Interview with author.

and was not substantial enough to feature in their projected budget.⁹⁸⁰ An exception to this was a curated exhibition that they undertook in 2009 in the offices of AWAS Aviation where, according to interview findings, they sold fifty percent of the works they showed, earning an undisclosed but substantial commission. PP/S reported an annual fundraising exhibition since 2011. This event, *Periodical Review*, is described on their website as 'a review type exhibition' selected via an 'editorial meeting' of invited artists, writers or curators.⁹⁸¹ Commissions from sales were allocated towards PP/S' programming costs.

Fiore, of thisisnotashop, described that a negotiable commission was received from sales. While Fiore expressed that there was a desire to 'cultivate collectors', no artist was under pressure to sell.⁹⁸²

Our programming was not coming from a purely commercial consideration.
We were choosing the artists first and then their saleability was determined
by the artist, by their preference.⁹⁸³

thisisnotashop was the only organisation that listed a breakdown of their income sources in their published accounts. In their operating statement for the period ended 31st December 2008 they list that they received €2,133 'commission on works sold'; this represents a minor portion of their income for the year of €39,538.⁹⁸⁴ Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported that the commission system was only invoked on one occasion and this was by request of the artist; they did however operate on a 'profit share' basis for performances in the space.⁹⁸⁵ This was not defined apart from other earned income in the company accounts. Finally, for Block T, McEvoy reported that 'if we are doing a screen printing exhibition we would sell those and take a bit of commission from that'.⁹⁸⁶ Again, this is not presented as a substantial income.

Commission and sales represents a negligible source of income, if at all, for the organisations. The organisations have neither the infrastructure nor the appropriate audience to form a collector base to develop this as a significant sustained revenue source. Moreover, the experimental and process-driven nature of much of the work exhibited is not conducive to sales.

⁹⁸⁰ Prendergast, Interview with author.

⁹⁸¹ PP/S, "Periodical Review #1".

⁹⁸² Fiore, Interview with author.

⁹⁸³ Ibid.

⁹⁸⁴ Income was €39,538 and expenditure was €36,371.

⁹⁸⁵ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁹⁸⁶ McEvoy, Interview with author.

Earned Income

In the Introduction Chapter of this research the definition of non-profit was explored. Here it was outlined that non-profit status does not preclude the generation of profits, rather it dictates what happens to those profits that are generated.⁹⁸⁷ That is, the generation of financial surplus does not undermine an organisation's status as a non-profit. This is important as through a number of activities, detailed throughout this discussion, the organisations generate income. This income, irrespective of legal status of the organisations, was reported as being reinvested into the organisation. The dissonance between the legal status of a number of the organisations as LTDs and their claims to non-profit status based on their behavioural practices has already been addressed in Chapter 3. Forthcoming discussion is concerned with the behaviour of the organisations, thus they will continue to be collectively considered as non-profit entities based on their actual behaviour towards the surplus they generate, irrespective of their legal status.

Earned income provided a core income especially for the dual-function organisations. Jeffri observes that artist-run spaces are limited in their self-generated income as they do not have opportunity to make money from door and box office charges to the same extent as non-profit arts organisations from other disciplines.⁹⁸⁸ Sources of income within the sample can be broadly categorised as studio rental, gallery space rental, and other income. In line with Jeffri's observation no organisation charged an entrance fee for their exhibitions; however charges were made on occasion for performances and events.⁹⁸⁹

Only thisisnotashop and The Joinery provided discrete figures pertaining to earned income separate from grant, commission and other income in their accounts. thisisnotashop's accounts provided that €6,170 of their total €39,538 came from gallery rental; the rest primarily coming from donations, as previously outlined.⁹⁹⁰ The Joinery reported, in their accounts for 2014, that €7895 of €18983 was garnered from their activities; this included door charges, gallery rental, studio rental and subsidiary activities, while the balance represents awards and grants.

Studio Rental

Within the dual-function organisations studio rent was reported as comprising the substantive portion of earned income. Both Block T and MART highlighted their large scale studio provision

⁹⁸⁷ Fama and Jensen, "Agency Problems and Residual Claims," 987.

⁹⁸⁸ Jeffri, *The Emerging Arts: Management, Survival, and Growth*, 27.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁰ thisisnotashop Limited [445635], "6872478/2." As a single function organisation there were limited opportunities for additional income generation from rental.

as central to their sustainability as organisations. McEvoy, from Block T, reflected on the importance of this at the outset:

The most important thing when you are getting into this kind of space, is that you need to be able to pay the rent. So you have to put the studios out there for rent for people, just to keep it self-sufficient in a way and to keep it up and running.⁹⁹¹

Linders reflected on the importance of this over time:

We have ninety-five studios and a waiting list of a couple of hundred people trying to get in. So now we have that stability that foundation is here.⁹⁹²

Scanlan, of MART, stated:

The more studio buildings we get, the more sustainable and secure the business is and also the more freedom we will have to do what we want.⁹⁹³

All of the dual-function organisations reported that the studios were self-sufficient via the incoming rents.⁹⁹⁴

Income generated from studio facilities also allowed for a degree of cross-subsidisation. Scanlan reported:

Every building we take has to fully sustain itself, or we don't take it; and it has to generate some kind of income back into the business.⁹⁹⁵

MacAthlaoich, of MTGS, also reflected on this:

It was a good business model because the revenue that the studios were creating were able to facilitate the gallery space and in turn the constant flow of activity downstairs appealed to a lot of the studio members.⁹⁹⁶

⁹⁹¹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

⁹⁹² Linders, Interview with author.

⁹⁹³ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁹⁹⁴ It is of note that many of the organisations were awarded the Workspace Award/Workspace Scheme (to be detailed later in this chapter). This was able to be used to offset and subsidise rent payable by the tenant artist. Thus the cost to the studios artists themselves often fluctuates. However, overall as an enterprise, the studios are self-sustained.

⁹⁹⁵ Scanlan, Interview with author.

⁹⁹⁶ MacAthlaoich, Interview with author.

In Block T, MART, MTGS (while at Francis Street), and The Market Studios it was reported that income from the studios wholly or partially contributed towards either the rental or overhead costs of the exhibition space. Morrissey, of The Market Studios, reported:

The whole building is basically paid for by the studios so they are the main source of income.⁹⁹⁷

Ormond Studios' building and core overheads were paid for through membership rents of the studios.

This cross-subsidisation is of vital import to the sustainability of many of the organisations. It is of particular importance early on in the organisations' development when opportunities to develop other revenue sources or to secure grant income are limited. Across the dual-function organisations this represents the primary stable revenue stream for the organisations, both at the onset and throughout their lifespan. For example, Driscoll of The Joinery stated that the studios provided the 'guaranteed income every month'.⁹⁹⁸ However, reflecting on the scale of their studio, she reflected:

The problem is the building isn't big enough [...] If we had a really big building with loads of studios and work-spaces that would be our bread and butter, that would be our income, but we've two rooms with six people working in them.⁹⁹⁹

The scale of studio provision was significant to the organisations' sustainability. This is important to understanding the development of artist-run spaces in the context of the Republic of Ireland, where it has been evidenced that the majority of sustained initiatives engage the dual-function model.

Gallery Rental

Additional rental income is garnered directly from the gallery space. The gallery spaces were rented out for two types of activities. The first was to artists for exhibitions. This was evidenced in all of the organisations with the exception of Ormond Studios and Basic Space. The second was for other activities such as filming or private events.

As was outlined in Chapter 2, renting the gallery out for exhibitions provides an income and in some ways meets the core criteria of the organisations. However, as outlined it is also

⁹⁹⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

⁹⁹⁸ Driscoll, Interview with author.

⁹⁹⁹ Ibid.

problematic. This analysis also detailed the extent of the practice and the rationale for engaging it. In summary the practice of renting out the gallery space was one of direct need. The portion of the programme assigned to this type of exhibition bears a direct correlation to the degree to which the organisation cross-subsidises with their studio activity and the levels of grant funding received. Although the number fluctuates there is generally a greater proportion of rental exhibitions early on in the organisations' development. The introduction of grant aid, primarily through the ACI and DCC grants, directly offsets the need for these. The shift is a desirable one for many of the organisations who, as explored in Chapter 2, identify a move away from these types of exhibitions as a key developing goal.

Gallery rental also became an unsustainable source of income over time, due to the high turnover of shows that were necessary to make the required income. This was given as untenable for the organisational founders. However, the consequences of decreasing the rental programme is increased resource dependency upon grant income.

Another source of rental income was identified as privately hiring out the spaces for other types of activities. This was reported only in limited examples. McDonald, of Ormond Studios, reported an example of their space being used for a photoshoot but emphasised that this was not standard practice as the space was primarily intended for projects led by studio members. Booth reported that MTGS tried to develop corporate rentals as an income but this was unsuccessful as 'it was a bit rough and ready for corporate rentals'.¹⁰⁰⁰

Also limiting this as a revenue source was a desire to retain control of the organisation's identity and brand. McEvoy, of Block T, listed music video shoots and talks as examples of rentals undertaken; however, she also reported that they turned down a number of proposals for events that they felt were not in keeping with the goals of the organisation. Scanlan, of MART, expressed a preference for facilitating filming as a revenue strand. She stated:

They don't bother you. They come in, they film, they'll do rehearsals. They will do things that are not the public face of MART but they are behind the scenes still supporting creativity.¹⁰⁰¹

She continued that facilitating film based activities means that they 'don't have to sell [their] souls and rent it out for something [they] don't want to'.¹⁰⁰² Thus, this was reported as preferable to the rental exhibitions as an income stream.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Booth, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁰¹ Scanlan, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁰² Ibid.

Gallery rental for these kinds of activities is therefore a potential but limited source of income. While it can provide a source of income for the organisations it can also potentially be seen as compromising. It is also very dependent upon the quality and location of the premises which as previously outlined were often not advantageous.

Other Earned Income

Across the organisations, there is a varied capacity and desire to further develop commercial revenue streams. Driscoll of The Joinery reflected on the potential of developing additional streams through larger numbers of studios and increased commercial avenues, such as bar and café facilities. She contended that 'we just can't in that building, we can't do any of those things'.¹⁰⁰³ This experience resonates with Thelwall's research on small arts organisations in the UK. She states:

[S]mall organisations have consistently lacked the investment in tangible assets that has been available to larger organisations. As a result, few small organisations with a turnover of less than £1m per annum achieve any substantial income from their buildings, archive or collection. Those which do so tend to be renting out space to other organisations. They also lack income from shops or cafés and have very little access to sponsorship and donor income.¹⁰⁰⁴

Developing and maintaining these 'assets' requires investment. This may be out of the reach of small organisations or be 'disproportionate' to turnover.¹⁰⁰⁵

In contrast to this position, interviewees from Block T reported the most diverse range of self-generated revenue sources. Although operating as a non-profit enterprise in terms of the distribution of profits, they nevertheless conceived of the project in terms of a business in regards to the need to generate profits to reinvest into the project. Linders stated:

Yes, this is an artist-run space [...] but at the same time we felt that it is necessary to run it as a profitable business. Because if you don't run something as a profitable business then where is it going? It is never going

¹⁰⁰³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 6.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., 14.

to stand on its own two feet [...] and it's never really going to go anywhere.¹⁰⁰⁶

This quotation demonstrates the desire for self-sustainability that was central to this model.

McEvoy acknowledged that these concerns shaped the organisation's identity:

I think those kind of practical elements do play a really big role in informing what an organisation is.¹⁰⁰⁷

They embraced commercial initiatives as an integral part of the organisations' remit. This included the rental of enhanced facilities such as workshops, meeting rooms and hot desks, and a coffee shop.

Block T also provided artist management services, for which they charge a fee. Block T's model here includes evidence of maximising on what Thelwall calls 'intangible assets':

These include: individual and organisational expertise and experience, intellectual property, research skills, professional methods and processes.¹⁰⁰⁸

McEvoy considered this as an area for future expansion:

We are, at the moment, looking into what different kinds of services we can provide to bring in money to help sustain the organisation.¹⁰⁰⁹

It is noted that, comparative to the other sample organisations, Block T has enhanced capacity both in terms of the size of their premises and of their team; this supports their ability to pursue both tangible and intangible assets, and is by design.

A variety of approaches and attitudes to earned income is in evidence. Earned income is shown as important to many of the organisations in providing a consistent and regular income, important to organisational stability. Studio rental was shown to be a particularly important source of income, with the size of the studio operation significant to organisational stability. This is a preferred method of revenue generation as it is consistent with the founding remit of the organisations. In contrast, gallery rental was largely seen as a necessary but undesirable source

¹⁰⁰⁶ Linders, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁰⁷ McEvoy, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 6.

¹⁰⁰⁹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

of income. Through the example of Block T additional areas for revenue generation are identified. However, it is also noted that appropriate facilities as well as human resources are required to manage these. Continuing her reflection on potential income sources, Driscoll of The Joinery stated 'we don't want to do some of them'.¹⁰¹⁰ This indicates a possible resistance within some organisations to pursuing additional earned income sources which are outside of the central remit of the organisation.

Grant Income

Securing grant income was generally identified as a challenge:

I guess the biggest challenge was probably the learning point in between having no money and having funding, and trying to figure out how to get it.¹⁰¹¹

As will be detailed in this section, this challenge was set against an environment of increased competition for declining available resources. The primary sources of grant support were from DCC'S Arts Office and the ACI. However, a number of other key sources were also identified. These are presented in summary and then a detail account of the DCC and ACI support is given.

PP/S received early funding from Foras Áiseanna Saothair's (FÁS) Cooperative Development Unit. Cullen states 'that paid wages for a few years'.¹⁰¹² Driscoll, of The Joinery, reported that a grant from the Historic Area Regeneration Project (HARP) North West Inner-city Partnership, 'really helped us with getting the place up and running'.¹⁰¹³ She also reported early financial support from Dublin City Enterprise Board.

thisisnotashop and MART secured Culture Ireland (CI) support to showcase Irish art internationally. Before establishing the gallery space, CI was reported as a key source of funding for Scanlan and Nevin of MART. Fiore, of thisisnotashop, highlighted CI as an ongoing key funder. She reflected:

¹⁰¹⁰ Driscoll, Interview with author.

¹⁰¹¹ McDonald, Interview with author.

¹⁰¹² Cullen, Interview with author. The exact dates of the award are unavailable. FÁS is the state agency concerned with training and employment. The FÁS Cooperative Development Unit (1998-2002) was set up in 1998 in response to the Programme for National Recovery Report (Oct, 1987). For more information on the CDU and on the status of worker cooperatives in Ireland see Forfás. "Ireland's Co-Operative Sector." Forfás, Dublin, 2007. The Workers Cooperative Network. "Worker Cooperatives, Sustainable Job Creation Engines - Report to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Jobs Enterprise and Innovation." 2012.

¹⁰¹³ Driscoll, Interview with author.

Outside of Ireland we were getting opportunities, and also more support because of Culture Ireland. Because while the Arts Council and Dublin City Council Arts Office seemed to be having no or lessened enthusiasm for what we were doing, Culture Ireland was incredibly supportive.¹⁰¹⁴

Other international funding sources allowed organisations to bring international artists into Ireland. The Goethe Institute (Germany) was cited by interviewees from both MART and PP/S. Cullen, of PP/S, also noted the Mondriaan Foundation (Netherlands) and the Cervantes Institute (Spain) as organisations that had assisted them.

Dublin City Council

Between 1985 and 1999, a network of local authority arts officers was developed across the Republic of Ireland.¹⁰¹⁵ Arts funding is provided to the authority annually by the ACI (the details of the ACI are outlined shortly). In accordance with Section 6 of the *Arts Act 2003*, Dublin City Council's Arts Office provides financial assistance for the purpose of '[s]timulating public interest in the arts, [p]romoting knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts, or [i]mproving standards in the arts'¹⁰¹⁶

Following application to Dublin City Council (DCC), information regarding awarded grants was obtained from 2006 to 2014; 2015 was available online.¹⁰¹⁷ Although this omits the early years of operation of PP/S, the information is useful as it pertains to the majority period of this research and the key years of operation of the sample organisations. This period is also significant as it marks the commencement of a revised arts grant scheme within DCC. This was approved in 2005, following a report from the Strategic Policy Committee for Arts, Culture, Leisure, and Youth Affairs.¹⁰¹⁸ Changes included a 'new system of adjudication [...] which included members of staff, elected representatives and independent arts experts'.¹⁰¹⁹

The award reports from 2006 and 2007 designate that the scheme was initially divided into three categories: 'Neighbourhood', 'Revenue', and 'Seeder'. All awards for the sample organisations within these two reports were made in the Revenue category. From 2008 to 2014 inclusive, no

¹⁰¹⁴ Fiore, Interview with author.

¹⁰¹⁵ Colm O'Briain, *The Arts Council and the Visual Arts*, ed. Andrew Carpenter, Catherine Marshall, and Peter Murray, 1 ed., vol. V, Art and Architecture of Ireland Volume V Twentieth Century (Royal Irish Academy, 2015), 35.

¹⁰¹⁶ Oireachtas, "Arts Act 2003," (2003), Section 26.

¹⁰¹⁷ DCC supplied documents 20016-2015 are listed in the Reference section of this thesis, also consulted was the website: Dublin City Council, "Who We Support," <http://www.dublincityartsoffice.ie/supporting-artists/who-we-support>.

¹⁰¹⁸ Dublin City Council. "Arts Funding for 2006." Provided to researcher by DCC, 2006.

¹⁰¹⁹ Ibid.

categories are specified in the reports which presents a barrier to a full analyses of the awards made. In 2013, there was a further overhaul of the funding structures and the Seeder category, which was a three year programme of awards. It was replaced by a Projects grant which was focused on one-off initiatives; DCC also announced that no new organisations would be considered under the Revenue category.¹⁰²⁰ The report from 2015 is unique, in that it includes information on the rationale behind the recommended award amounts.

Figure 20 shows the grants awarded under this scheme, from 2006-2015. Consultation of the funding reports shows that grants were awarded primarily for exhibition and programming purposes. As is illustrated, the available grant fund increased from €426,000 in 2006, to €601,000 in 2009, following this it decreased in 2010 and remained at the consistent rate of €530,000 per annum for the subsequent five years. These changes are of interest because it was following the decrease that the majority of the organisations successfully secured funding for the first time, with 2010 and 2011 key years for this.

Entering into a funding structure within this climate is a significant achievement and indicates the strength of the applications made by the organisations as well as suggesting a track record which was accomplished enough to convince the adjudication panel. Block T are of particular note as their 2011 award was made within their first year of operation and thus without the advantage of a track record to support the application. It is of note that the amounts awarded to PP/S are often equitable with or in excess of that awarded to TBG+S. The significance of this is it shows that this younger organisation was being assessed at a particularly high level and alongside more established organisations.

PP/S have received funding across all of the reports and so are worth considering in detail. Early reports indicate that PP/S' awards at the outset of this period were made under the Revenue category. Relative consistency is demonstrated within the award amounts, and changes to the amounts reflect the changes to the total fund available. Comparing the amount of grants awarded from this source to the turnover figures (that were previously shown in Figure 18) it is evidenced that this source represents between six percent and nine percent of the organisational budget for the years 2012 to 2014. Thus, this can be considered a significant financial input into the organisation, but it is not the key source upon which they rely. Nonetheless, the consistency of the award enhances its importance as it provides stability which is important in allowing for financial planning.

¹⁰²⁰ "Arts Grant Criteria and Guidelines for 2013." Online, 2013.

The 2015 report recommended that PP/S be moved from Revenue to the Projects category. The amount awarded remained consistent. However there are implications for the future opportunities for the organisation as the potential award range is significantly less; Revenue Grants are in the range of €5,000 to €40,000, whereas Project Grants are €2,000 to €10,000.¹⁰²¹ The 2015 report recommended this change based on the fact that although the organisation shows 'ambitious and innovative work' the application 'does not adequately address the strategic core competencies as stated in the [application] criteria'.¹⁰²² This examples how details of arts policy and strategic objectives have direct implications for organisations if they do not align. This revised status is also of significance as it fundamentally alters the relationship with DCC from what they outline as 'a strategic partnership' to one of once off support.¹⁰²³ Thus this change, although it does not have any immediate financial repercussions, has both strategic and symbolic implications.

PP/S' funding is notably higher than the other organisations. Across the other sample organisations awards range from €2,000 to €5,000. It is not possible to know if this is a reflection of the amount applied for or is a reflection of the success of the applications. Block T, MART, The Joinery, and The Market Studios also all benefit from consistent or increasing funding. In contrast, MTGS evidences much more variance in the grant amounts.

By comparing grant income to turnover it is possible to identify the importance of this income source. Information on turnover was available for The Joinery and The Market Studios. The 'relative magnitude of an exchange and the criticality of the resource' are two factors identified by Pfeffer and Salancik as defining resource importance i.e. the extent to which it is needed for survival.¹⁰²⁴ The first concerns the 'proportion of total inputs [...] accounted for by the exchange', the second 'the ability of the organization to continue functioning in the absence of the resource'.¹⁰²⁵

Neither magnitude nor criticality are at high levels within The Market Studios. This grant was inconsistently awarded to this organisation and in 2012 and 2013 they garnered just four percent of their total turnover from this source; their majority income comes from studio rental. In 2012 and 2013, the years when awards were received, they operated at a profit (as was previously

¹⁰²¹ "Arts Grants Criteria and Guidelines for 2015." Online, 2015.

¹⁰²² "Arts Funding for 2015." Provided to researcher by DCC, 2015.

¹⁰²³ "Arts Grants Criteria and Guidelines for 2015."

¹⁰²⁴ Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, 46.

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid.

indicated in Figure 19). Combined, these conditions indicate that this is not a key income source for the organisation.

In contrast the income from this source is of high importance to The Joinery who have limited income from other sources and for whom this input represents a high portion of turnover, twenty-six percent in 2014. In considering the 'criticality' of the resource for The Joinery, the available turnover figures are incomplete but from those available it is noted that in 2010 and 2011 they operated at a deficit thereby designating this resource as of high importance, in 2014 they operated at a profit in excess of the grant amount thereby reducing its importance in this respect on this particular occasion. However, once again it is noted that, in this example, the resource importance is enhanced by the consistency of the award which allows for financial planning. As the turnover was not reported in financial documents for the other organisations it is not possible to consider the magnitude of the resource for them. However, with reference to profit and loss, which demonstrated minimal if any profit and often a loss, the criticality of this as a resource is magnified.

As the category under which the awards were made is not detailed, it is not possible to provide a full context to the discussion of stability across the sample. However, the 2013 decision to close the Revenue grant to new entrants and to replace the Seeder grant with the Project award is potentially of significance. The 'partnership' approach of the Revenue grant provides indication of an ongoing commitment to an organisation. Similarly, the three-year programme of the Seeder grant provides some ability for organisations to plan. In contrast, the Project award does not demonstrate such a commitment and thus there is the prospect of instability within the resource, irrespective of whether or not that resource in practice remains consistent. This potentially inhibits the ability for strategic and financial planning and so increases the vulnerability of the organisations.

The Arts Council of Ireland, An Chomhairle Ealaíon

The Arts Council of Ireland, An Chomhairle Ealaíon, (ACI) is 'the national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland'.¹⁰²⁶ It was established in 1951 operating under the *Arts Act* of 1951 which outlined the functions of the ACI, which included:

- (a) stimulate public interest in the arts,
- (b) promote the knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts,
- (c) assist in improving standards of the arts,

¹⁰²⁶ Arts Council of Ireland, "Arts Council Homepage," <http://www.artscouncil.ie/home/>.

- (d) organise or assist in the organising of exhibitions (within or without the State) of works of art and artistic craftsmanship.¹⁰²⁷

In practice, initially the ACI's main role was as a 'financial underwriter' of exhibitions.¹⁰²⁸ One key change came following the 1973 Arts Act when the ACI introduced direct State-sponsored assistance to artists, via annual application and peer assessment.¹⁰²⁹ The current remit of the ACI is outlined in the *Arts Act* of 2003. This provides that the ACI may grant funding with the purpose of:

- (a) stimulating public interest in the arts,
- (b) promoting knowledge, appreciation or practice of the arts,
- or
- (c) improving standards in the arts, or
- (d) otherwise assisting in in the development or advancement of the arts.¹⁰³⁰

Although State funded, the ACI operates independently from the Government under the 'arms-length' principle where '[t]he government determines how much aggregate support to provide, but not which organizations or artists should receive support'.¹⁰³¹ These decisions are made through assessment by arts professionals and peers. This principle 'enshrines the State's acknowledgement that the artist's relation to society is one of critical detachment and independence'.¹⁰³²

The arm's-length principle was widely perceived to come under threat with the discussion document *Towards a New Framework for the Arts*, in 2000, by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The document raised concerns about the transparency and accountability of the system.¹⁰³³ However, the independence of the ACI was reiterated in *Arts Act 2003* which states:

¹⁰²⁷ Oireachtas, "The Arts Act 1951," (1951).

¹⁰²⁸ O'Briain, *The Arts Council and the Visual Arts*, V, 31.

¹⁰²⁹ Ibid., 33.

¹⁰³⁰ Oireachtas, "Arts Act 2003," 6.

¹⁰³¹ Harry Hillman Chartrand and Claire McCaughey, "The Arm's Length Principle and the Arts: An International Perspective-Past, Present and Future", in *Who's to Pay for the Arts*, ed. Milton C Cummings Jr and J. Mark Davidson Schuster (New York: American Council For the Arts, 1989).

¹⁰³² Pat Cooke, "The Artist and the State in Ireland: Artist Autonomy and the Arm's Length Principle in a Time of Crisis," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies* (2011): 107.

¹⁰³³ Colm O'Briain, "Arts Council Must Stay at Arm's Length," *The Irish Times*, 27/02/2001; Victoria White, "Keep the Arm's Length Principle," *ibid.*, 03/08/2000.

(2) The Council shall be independent in the performance of its functions under this section.¹⁰³⁴

The principle persists and is central to the current ACI.

The ACI's annual budget is made up from grants from the Irish Exchequer and from the National Lottery, as well as from other sources such as trust funds.¹⁰³⁵ Exchequer and Lottery figures are reported in a combined format as State funding. In 2000, the ACI budget was €45.1m this increased to €48.2m in 2005 (the start of the research focus period).¹⁰³⁶ The funding peaked in 2008 at €82m; a further €3m was allocated for 2007 for touring. However this was to be spent in the 2008 funding cycle therefore bringing this number to €85m.¹⁰³⁷ These combined figures represent a €5m increase on the previous year's budget, however it fell short of the €20m increase that the ACI had sought.¹⁰³⁸ Grant aid to the ACI subsequently underwent a series of cuts and reached a low of €56m in 2014; this cut of almost €28m since 2008 represents a cut of thirty-three percent of the annual budget. A small increase is observed the following year, the end of the research focus period, to €56.9m.¹⁰³⁹

The focus of the ACI, and its primary justification for funding the arts, has undergone a number of shifts which have seen fluctuation in the balance between intrinsic, instrumental, and institutional justifications for funding the arts. These approaches were explored and critiqued in Chapter 2 which analysed these in particular reference to the role of audiences in artist-run spaces. The forthcoming discussion outlines the changing focus within the history of the ACI. Kennedy outlines that:

In the early 1980s, the Arts Council followed its counterparts in Europe by seeking to justify State aid to arts organisations on economic grounds.¹⁰⁴⁰

¹⁰³⁴ Oireachtas, "Arts Act 2003."

¹⁰³⁵ Arts Council of Ireland, "About Us: Faqs," <http://www.artscouncil.ie/FAQs/About-us/>.

¹⁰³⁶ "Annual Report 2001." Dublin, 2002. The conversion figures from Irish pounds to euro is as per ACI publications.

¹⁰³⁷ "Annual Report and Accounts 2008." Dublin, 2008.

for breakdown of the 2008 allocations see: Anon, "Arts Council Unveils Final Set of Funding Figures for Coming Year," *The Irish Times*, 31/12/2007; Emily Mark-FitzGerald, "Budget 2008 and the Arts," <https://artsmanagement.ie/2007/12/06/budget-2008-and-the-arts/>.

¹⁰³⁸ Anon, "Arts Council Unveils Final Set of Funding Figures for Coming Year."; Mark-FitzGerald, "Budget 2008 and the Arts".

¹⁰³⁹ These figures are taken from the ACI published Annual Reports, these are listed in the Reference section of this thesis.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Brian P Kennedy, "Dreams and Responsibilities," *Dublin: The Arts Council* (1989): 211.

However this changed in the late 1990s when the ACI published a series of strategic *Arts Plans*, commencing in 1994 with *The Arts Plan 1995-1997*.¹⁰⁴¹ The subsequent *The Arts Plan 1999-2001*, repositioned the ACI as investing in, rather than subsidising, the arts.¹⁰⁴² It also rejected economic grounds as the primary justification for funding the arts and foregrounded the role of the ACI in establishing 'cultural, rather than economic bench-marks'.¹⁰⁴³ This indicated a move from instrumental to intrinsic justification for supporting the arts.

In 2009, the ACI commissioned Indecon to undertake independent research into the economic impact of the arts in Ireland.¹⁰⁴⁴ In its introduction the resulting report states:

While the economic consequences are not and should not be the main rationale for support of the arts, an understanding of the economic impacts is an important component of the value of the arts.¹⁰⁴⁵

It was stated that the ACI wished to 'establish a rigorous and credible evidence-based assessment of the economic impact of the arts as an input to policy'.¹⁰⁴⁶ Thus, there is an increase in recent years a return to the desire for, in part, economic justification for the funding of the arts. This increase in economic justification is perhaps a reflection of the economic decline of the period, whereby in September 2008 the government declared that the country was in recession, and subsequently implemented cuts to the ACI budget.

This shift is potentially problematic for organisations such as those within the sample who do not directly generate economic benefits. Rather, as was outlined in Chapter 2, their value is focused on benefits to the individual artist, and even this benefit is not always immediately apparent but may be 'deferred'.

The focus of artists over audiences within the organisations has already been addressed. However it is useful to the current discussion to telegraph how this balance has developed in regards to ACI policy over recent decades as this has implications for the funding streams and structures available. Cooke highlights the fact that artists were not explicitly referenced in the 1951 *Arts Act*.¹⁰⁴⁷ He writes:

¹⁰⁴¹ Arts Council of Ireland. "The Arts Plan 1995-1997." Dublin, 1994.

¹⁰⁴² "The Arts Plan 1999-2001." Dublin, 1999.

¹⁰⁴³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁴ Indecon International Economic Consultants. "Assessment of Economic Impact of the Arts in Ireland: Arts and Culture Scoping Research Project." 2009.

¹⁰⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, i.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴⁷ Cooke, "The Artist and the State in Ireland: Artist Autonomy and the Arm's Length Principle in a Time of Crisis," 105-06.

The individual artist, far from being at the heart of arts policy, existed at its outer margins.¹⁰⁴⁸

The artist was omitted from the 1973 *Arts Act* also; however art policy began to shift towards a focus on the artist.¹⁰⁴⁹ Under the directorship of Colm O'Briain (1975-1983) the focus of ACI funding shifted from support to organisations, to support for artists.¹⁰⁵⁰ This included a scheme of artists' bursaries established in 1975 and the establishment of Aosdána.¹⁰⁵¹ A further focus in the late 1970s was support for building arts centres and 'housing the arts'.¹⁰⁵²

A continued focus on individual artists is also observed in more recent documents. For example, in 2004, the ACI published *Action Plan*.¹⁰⁵³ Arts production and participation are at the heart of this plan and the ACI declared that 'The artist is at the core of the Arts Council's support for the visual arts'.¹⁰⁵⁴ This is reflected in the development objectives identified within the same plan.¹⁰⁵⁵ 'Artists' Supports' is identified as one of six key objectives. Within this a key strategy is stated as 'Strengthen capacity among programmers and producers to undertake artistically ambitious programmes'.¹⁰⁵⁶ *Partnership for the Arts* was a further publication in 2005. This emphasised the importance of supporting artists 'in realising their artistic ambitions', but also of strengthening organisations 'so as to secure the basis of a vibrant and stable arts community'.¹⁰⁵⁷ Thus a dual approach of supporting both artists and organisations is evidenced.

Corresponding with the final years of the current research there is a shift in focus. In the strategic plan of 2014, the ACI critiqued what it identified as:

[A]n almost exclusive emphasis on the production/consumption model of the arts. Within that model most Arts Council attention is paid to the 'supply side' with relatively little focus on the 'demand side'.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Ibid., 107.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Kennedy, "Dreams and Responsibilities," 212.

¹⁰⁵¹ Ibid., 817, 212. Aosdána is a self-regulated association of artists. Membership is through peer nomination and election. Members are eligible to apply for a financial stipend called the Cnais. See: Arts Council of Ireland, "Aosdana," <http://aosdana.artscouncil.ie/>; O'Briain, *The Arts Council and the Visual Arts*, V.

¹⁰⁵² Kennedy, "Dreams and Responsibilities," 190, 93.

¹⁰⁵³ Arts Council of Ireland. "Action Plan." Dublin, 2004.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Ibid., 37.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵⁷ "Partnership for the Arts." Dublin, 2005: 15

¹⁰⁵⁸ "Inspiring Prospects: Arts Council Strategic Review 2014, Report of the Steering Group." Dublin, 2014: 5.

This indicates a decisive move away from the focus on artist, and organisations, and onto audiences. As given in the report, the ACI looked to re-vision itself as a 'development agency for the arts focused on the public good'.¹⁰⁵⁹ Subsequently, as outlined in Chapter 2 the 2015 *Value for Money and Policy Review of the Arts Council* called for evidence of the societal outcomes of ACI funding decisions.¹⁰⁶⁰

Thus, within the research period there is increasing focus on instrumental and institutional justification for the funding of the arts. This has implications for individuals and organisations including the sample organisations which, as has been analysed, are largely outside this framework. This suggests a decreasing rationale for funding these types of organisations. Analysis in this section considers how successful the organisations were, in practice, in respect of this. Before doing so it is useful to outline key changes in funding policy and the categories under which they were eligible.

During the term of the *Arts Plan 1999-2001*, the ACI made important changes to the funding system. In 2000, a revised grant system divided grants into four categories: Awards and Bursaries, Project Grants, Revenue Grants and Capital Grants.¹⁰⁶¹ Changes included the introduction of multi-annual grants; over thirty percent of organisations receiving recurring supports were moved to three year funding.¹⁰⁶² The benefits of multi-annual funding was identified by the ACI in their *Evaluation of the Arts Plan 1999-2003* document.¹⁰⁶³ Here it was stated that 'it gives arts organisations stability and enables them to plan ahead' this has the benefit of enabling 'longer planning horizons and so higher standards of management'.¹⁰⁶⁴ However, there is no evidence of organisations within the sample group benefiting from multi-annual funding.

A further overhaul occurred in 2007.¹⁰⁶⁵ The core funding available to organisations changed to a streamed structure comprising: Regularly Funded Organisations, Annual Programming Grant, Annual Funding Grant, Projects: Once Off Award, Project: New Work Award, and Small Festivals Scheme. It is the Annual Programming Grant (APG), Annual Funding Grant (AFG), and Projects: Once Off Awards (hereafter Project Award) that are of chief concern to this research. The APGs

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Department of Arts, "Value for Money and Policy Review of the Arts Council," 5.

¹⁰⁶¹ Arts Council of Ireland. "Evaluation of the Arts Plan 1999-2001." Dublin, 2001.

¹⁰⁶² O'Briain, *The Arts Council and the Visual Arts*, V, 36; Arts Council of Ireland, "Evaluation of the Arts Plan 1999-2001," 8-9.

¹⁰⁶³ "The Arts Plan 1999-2001," 3.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹⁰⁶⁵ There is some contradiction between the awards listed as available that year in ACI guidelines under the new structure, and those listed as awarded on their decisions database; this may be due to different dates and funding cycles across the various awards.

allow for administrative and production costs related to programming but not core costs. The AFG provides core revenue into the organisation.¹⁰⁶⁶

The terms of the Project Award designate it as mutually exclusive to the AFG and APG.¹⁰⁶⁷ The award was administered twice a year. It aimed to enable 'individuals and organisations to carry out stand-alone projects' which includes 'artist/curator-led exhibitions, and artistic projects and initiatives'.¹⁰⁶⁸ Ineligible items under this funding stream include expenses for which funding is available under other schemes – this includes capital expenses, ongoing administration and 'those proposals that replicate an organisation's existing work programmes'.¹⁰⁶⁹

In her 2007 dissertation 'Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations', Booth (also Founder of MTGS) also notes these changes.¹⁰⁷⁰ She reports that Claire Doyle, (Head of Visual Arts at the ACI), described these changes as intended to benefit organisations that 'might not have heavy governance and managerial structures but programme exciting work'.¹⁰⁷¹ At this time, Doyle advised Booth that APGs and AFGs were most suited to artist-run spaces. This is important to forthcoming examination of the funding of the sample organisations, as a later shift in ACI practice meant that by 2011 the sample organisations were no longer funded under these streams but rather were funded via the Project Award.

Further changes were made in 2009 following the ACI's *Review of Visual Artists' Workspaces in Ireland* and the introduction of the Visual Artists Workspace and Minor Capital Grant.¹⁰⁷² The Visual Artist Workspace and Minor Capital Grant Award, introduced in 2009, initially allowed for capital grants up to €5000 'to purchase/maintain essential equipment for the use of artists and/or

¹⁰⁶⁶ The 2006/2007 application forms and application form guidelines were provided to the researcher by the ACI. However, the award eligibility guidelines and terms and conditions were not available; nor were they available online. Booth's (2007) research was undertaken contemporarily to this period and provides a reliable source of the details of these awards to supplement the direct sources consulted by the researcher. Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?."

¹⁰⁶⁷ This is stipulated in the 2007 and 2009 funding guidelines. The 2008 and 2010 guidelines were not available for consultation; however it is of note that both PP/S and MTGS are in fact reported in the Arts Council decisions database as receiving both AFG and Project awards in 2010. Arts Council of Ireland. "Arts Council Awards 2009." Dublin, 2009; "A Guide for Individuals to Arts Council Awards 2007." Dublin, 2006.

¹⁰⁶⁸ "A Guide for Individuals to Arts Council Awards 2007," 16.

¹⁰⁶⁹ "Supports for Artists Guide 2006." Dublin, 2006; "A Guide for Individuals to Arts Council Awards 2007," 16.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?," 43.

¹⁰⁷¹ Claire Doyle (Head of Visual Arts ACI) cited in *ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰⁷² Arts Council of Ireland, "Visual Artists' Workspaces in Ireland - A New Approach."; CHL Consulting Company Limited (produced for the Arts Council), "Review of Visual Artists' Workspace."

to undertake improvements to the quality of the artists' workspace'.¹⁰⁷³ In 2010, in anticipation of the 2011 funding cycle, it was renamed The Visual Artists Workspace Scheme (hereafter Workspace Scheme) the grant limit was raised to €30,000 and the eligible expenses expanded to include 'running costs such as light, heat, rent, artists' development programmes, administration and/or appropriate salary costs.'¹⁰⁷⁴ It was now administered by Visual Artists Ireland (VAI) on behalf of the ACI.¹⁰⁷⁵

Arts Council Funding of Artist-Run Exhibition Spaces in Dublin

The ACI has a history of supporting select artists' facilities. In *The Art and Architecture of Ireland* Colm O'Briain (founder of PAC and director of ACI from 1975 until 1983) highlights supports given to a number of artist-run facilities: Dublin Graphic Studio, Blackchurch Print Studio (Dublin), The National Sculpture Factory (Cork), Leitrim Sculpture Centre.¹⁰⁷⁶ In addition to the cited examples, it is of note that PAC and TBG+S both received support from the ACI.

PAC received only limited early support from the ACI. In the book *Dreams and Responsibilities: The State and The Arts in Independent Ireland*, Kennedy reports that:

Those involved with the Project Gallery felt especially aggrieved that the Arts Council had not publicly supported their policies and activities. The Council had contributed limited funding but the Gallery was still forced to move to cheaper premises and to plead for more funds in order to survive. The Project Gallery received £3,000 in grant aid between 1969 and 1973.¹⁰⁷⁷

He cites founder O'Briain as propounding that:

The Council should stop buying works and instead plough the money into providing facilities for young artists.¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷³ Arts Council of Ireland, "Visual Artists' Workspace Minor Capital Grant," [http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Visual-artists_workspace-minor-capital-grant\(1\)/](http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Visual-artists_workspace-minor-capital-grant(1)/).

¹⁰⁷⁴ Visual Artists Ireland, "Visual Artists Workspace Scheme 2011," http://www.artscouncil.ie/News/Visual-Artists_Workspace-Scheme-2011/ The conditions of the award state: 'capital costs and public programmes such as exhibitions/public events cannot be applied for through this grant programme'

¹⁰⁷⁵ Information pertaining to these awards was sourced from the ACI 'Who we funded' webpage for 2010 and from the VAI website thereafter. Details of these websites are included in the Reference section of this thesis.

¹⁰⁷⁶ O'Briain, *The Arts Council and the Visual Arts*, V, 34.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Kennedy, "Dreams and Responsibilities," 168.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Ibid.

The first available figures from the ACI show that support did increase and in 1976 the ACI granted PAC £16,000, an award which more than doubled the following year to £34,000.¹⁰⁷⁹ In 2005, the start of the research focus period, this had increased to combined Capital and Revenue funding of €725,500; funding peaked the following year with Capital and Revenue funding of €1,051,377 with an additional €65,000 in other awards. Following the 2007 restructuring of the funding categories the organisation was moved into the Regularly Funded Organisations category; here they experienced a series of reductions to their core funding and at the end of the research focus period, in 2015, their award stood at €644,250 with additional awards totalling €60,000.¹⁰⁸⁰

In contrast, TBG+S secured early support from the ACI. In TBG+S' book *Generation* it is reported:

Arts Council support, once secured, grew tenfold over the four years of Jenny Haughton's directorship from £3,000 to £30,000.¹⁰⁸¹

In fact, the 1984 ACI Annual Report details two payments to TBG+S, one under the Exhibitions Grant Scheme for £3,280 and the other for circa £3,000 which is listed under grants made to Arts Centres and Festivals (a typographic error, which reads 3^09, prohibits disclosure of the exact figure).¹⁰⁸²

However, this support was perceived as inadequate and in her Secretary's Report for 1986 Haughton writes:

We are still the most underfunded arts centre in Ireland, despite the fact that we provide more services (studios, gallery, print workshop, typesetting, design and layout, photos, film and video production, outreach programmes, research and advice to name but a few.)¹⁰⁸³

Dissatisfaction with support received was further expressed in 1994 in a letter from the organisation to Lars Cassidy who was the assigned ACI liaison officer to TBG+S. Following a grant offer of £65,000 they wrote:

¹⁰⁷⁹ Arts Council of Ireland. "Annual Report 1976." Dublin, 1976; "Annual Report 1977." Dublin, 1977.

¹⁰⁸⁰ All figures taken from ACI Annual Reports, these are listed in the Reference section of this thesis.

¹⁰⁸¹ Aiden Dunne cited in Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 11.

¹⁰⁸² Arts Council of Ireland. "Annual Report 1984." Dublin, 1984.

¹⁰⁸³ Haughton, "Temple Bar Gallery and Studios Secretary's Report 1986."

The grant offered is so critically low that it seriously jeopardises the future survival of this organisation.¹⁰⁸⁴

The support to the organisation continued and by 2005, the beginning of the research focus period, Capital and Revenue funding to the organisation totalled €339,000.¹⁰⁸⁵ This continued to increase and reached €372,000 in 2009, before being subject to cuts in 2010 that reduced the support to €240,000; subsequent years have seen further reductions and at the end of the research focus period, in 2015, their AFG was €233,575.¹⁰⁸⁶ Thus, TBG+S have seen fluctuations in their level of support from the ACI.

Although there are significant cuts evidenced to these organisations it remains that they continue to receive considerable repeated funding. Despite the initial low level of funding for PAC, both organisations have benefited from funding from relatively early in their establishment, which is advantageous to the continued viability of these organisations. The funding categories under which awards were made allowed for flexibility in resource allocation. This experience provides a contrast with the sample group.

ACI annual reports and account documents, and the ACI decisions database, were consulted for the years 1999 to 2015 in order to ascertain the funding received by the sample organisations.¹⁰⁸⁷ Figure 21 shows the total awards per annum for each organisation; Figure 22 shows the breakdown of the allocations by individual award. These figures include awards made under the Workspace Scheme.

All of the organisations secured funding on at least one occasion. PP/S are evidenced as in receipt of funding since 1999. Both MTGS and thisisnotashop secured their initial funding during the 2008 peak in the ACI budget. All of the other organisations successfully enter into the ACI funding portfolio subsequent to the start of the recession and the beginning of cuts to the ACI budget. Again, securing funding in such a climate is a notable achievement. In particular MTGS, PP/S, The Market Studios, and The Joinery initially evidence increases in funding for several years following this. The success of these organisations is further emphasised by the fact that the expanded number of these types of organisations means increased competition for the limited resources.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, "Letter to Lar Cassidy (Arts Council Liason to TBG+S) 02/05/1994," (NIVAL Box 8, 1994).

¹⁰⁸⁵ Arts Council of Ireland. "Annual Report 2005." Dublin, 2005.

¹⁰⁸⁶ "Annual Report and Accounts 2009." Dublin, 2009; "Annual Report and Accounts 2010." Dublin, 2010.

¹⁰⁸⁷ 1999 was identified as the first year of funding for any of the sample organisations; this was PP/S, the only organisation in operation at that time. All figures from the ACI 'Who We've Funded' website and Annual Reports (See Reference Section of this thesis.)

PP/S and MTGS are the most consistently funded of the sample organisations, however even within these there is fluctuation in the amount awarded. Considering the overall ACI awards for the period succeeding 2007, it is observed that PP/S incurred a gradual reduction in their total secured income until 2010 when they receive €63,125. Following this, the awards once again decline. In contrast, MTGS accessed funding for the first time in 2007 and secured funding in an upward trajectory thereafter, until 2013, when their total funding was cut from €43,000 to €27,500. When viewed overall there is a variable rate of funding both within and across the organisations.

Figures pertaining to organisational turnover, although only available in limited instances, can provide some indication of the relationship between ACI funding to overall operational financial costs. In 2008, ACI funding accounted for eight percent of thisisnotashop's turnover; no figures are available for other years. Recall that the directors made substantial personal contributions in this year, if these are extracted from the turnover the ACI contribution represents seventeen percent of the remaining amount, this increases the importance of the resource. In 2011, ACI funding accounted for twenty-eight percent of The Market Studios' turnover; by 2013 it had decreased to eleven percent. For PP/S the decrease was from seventy-two percent in 2012 to twenty-eight percent in 2013. Although not evidenced in company documents, Linders reported that grant income in total accounted for around three percent of Block T's overall revenue in a three year period.

Given the limited examples, it is tentatively interpreted that ACI funding declined not only in amount but also as a percentage relative to other financial sources within these organisations. Thus, in terms of resource importance it is observed that there was a decline in magnitude, but not in criticality. As organisations were operating at subsistence level, or at a loss, even these reduced amounts were vital to the organisations. However, the figures alone do not fully illustrate the impact of these changes, as outlined earlier the organisations reported adjusting their activities in response to the awards made, thus adjusting their income and expenditure. Therefore, in some instances, the reduced award may represent a decrease in activity or a change in the practice of the organisation in their financial exchanges and relationships with artists.

It is not just the amounts of the awards granted that are of importance but the category that they were made under. PP/S was in receipt of a selection of Capital and Revenue grants from 1999 onwards; their awards were made under a variety of strands within these grants. Overall, we see a pattern of steadily increasing funding. No other organisation received funding under these strands. Following the 2007 revision of the funding structures they secure AFGs. PP/S continued under this stream into the 2010 funding cycle. MTGS secured an AFG from 2008 to 2010, and

thisisnotashop an APG in 2009, and the Joinery in 2010. This is consistent with the guidance earlier reported as given by Doyle (Head of Visual Arts at the ACI), in interview with Booth, as the appropriate grants for these organisations.¹⁰⁸⁸ It is possible that the success of these organisations in securing early funding in these awards could have influenced the expectations of other organisations. However, there is evidenced some shift in the field itself during what was a formative period for many of the organisations.

In 2010, several of the organisations secured Project Awards as well as Workspace Scheme awards. This was the last year in which any of the organisations receive funding under APG or AFG. Instead, in 2011, all of the funding is secured via Project Awards and the Workspace Scheme. The Workspace Scheme comprises a significant portion of the overall ACI awards secured by the organisations; in the examples of Basic Space, Block T, and Market Studios, it is the exclusive funding until 2013.¹⁰⁸⁹ The least stable of the awards is the Project Award. The implications of this shift are substantial.

Within the dual-function organisations this funding structure separates the activities of production and presentation of work. This distinction is not easily made at the administrative and operational levels, given that they often occur in the same premises and are managed by the same individuals. Furthermore, in previous discussion, it was observed that income from the studios often cross-subsidised gallery overheads and exhibition activities. However, the Workspace Scheme restricted organisations from using awards for the purpose of cross-subsidisation.¹⁰⁹⁰ The guidelines specifically state: 'Funding is not available for public programmes such as exhibitions/events' or 'core costs relating to non-workspace e.g. electricity or heating costs for a gallery'.¹⁰⁹¹ Thus, although the Workspace Scheme provides vital funds to the organisations it is a resource for which there is limited autonomy.

While there is a degree of stability in the awarding of the Workspace Scheme, although not in the amount awarded, there is a much more inconsistent pattern in respect of the Project Award. This award was reported as bringing further challenges both in terms of securing the award and in regards to discretion of resource use. As earlier outlined the Project Award was designed for 'stand-alone projects' which must not 'replicate an organisation's existing work programmes'.¹⁰⁹²

¹⁰⁸⁸ Lola Rayne Booth, "Sustainability in Artist-Run Gallery Organisations: Is Public Funding the Answer?."

¹⁰⁸⁹ The following year Block T is evidenced as receiving a Project Award. Linders of Block T reported that they received a Capital Grant from the ACI in the first year of operation. However, no reference to this is found within the published ACI reports or in the decisions database, therefore, it is excluded from the current discussion.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Visual Artists Ireland. "Visual Artists' Workspace Scheme 2015 Guideline for Applicants." Online, 2014.

¹⁰⁹¹ Ibid., 4.

¹⁰⁹² Arts Council of Ireland, "A Guide for Individuals to Arts Council Awards 2007," 16.

By nature the activities of these organisations are repetitive. Cullen, of PP/S, reflected on this shift:

We had to apply separately for programming which is really problematic because we are applying for programming into a project fund and the project fund favours once off projects. So when you are being assessed [it is] on the fact that you have done more or less the same thing again from the previous year.¹⁰⁹³

Consequently, he reports that the funding was 'intermittent'.¹⁰⁹⁴

When the total awards received are broken down into award categories (Figure 22) it is evidenced that since the organisations were moved onto the Project Award in 2010, only PP/S and MTGS have secured the award on more than one occasion. This is a challenging dynamic to negotiate for the organisations. The benefits of predictable funding were previously highlighted in respect of multi-annual funding. The Project Awards are a stark contrast to this and are in practice inconsistently awarded. This is highly problematic, it creates administrative, curatorial, and financial challenges in terms of planning.

Sam Keely interviewed Doyle (Head of Visual Arts within the ACI) in 2013 for her dissertation. In this interview Doyle stated:

Artist-led organisations are probably the most critical area for the Arts Council, for us to sustain a vibrancy and vitality in the sector.¹⁰⁹⁵

However, the practice of allocating funding to the organisations via the Project Awards does not support this assertion that these organisations are 'critical'. This criticism is made as this award supports the project and not the organisation. It precludes expenditure on some of the key expenses of the organisations; the fund cannot be used for 'on-going administration' or 'Capital expenses'.¹⁰⁹⁶ As administration and overheads related to the gallery activities are not eligible under either the Workspace Scheme or Project Award it is necessary for the organisations to pursue other revenue streams, as have previously been outlined. This included rental exhibitions, despite the controversy of these and their contradiction to best practice. Furthermore, it is of

¹⁰⁹³ Cullen, Interview with author.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Keely, "Supporting Artist-Led Activity in Ireland," 39.

¹⁰⁹⁶ The Arts Council of Ireland, "A Guide for Individual Awards 2007," ed. The Arts Council of Ireland (Dublin2006), 16; ———, "Supports for Artists Guide 2006," ed. The Arts Council of Ireland (Dublin2006), 19

note that the organisations were in competition for this award against not only other artist-run spaces, but against individual artists; often the same artists that they sought to support.

Interviewee Reflections on Grant Funding

Reflecting on the inconsistency of the awards, one interviewee discussed their beliefs about the dynamic between organisations, such as those in the sample, and the ACI:

If you were an organisation that was relying on them you would be [in trouble] actually, because you wouldn't know where you stood or why.¹⁰⁹⁷

It is indicated in the emotive language that ensued that the interviewee expressed a high level of frustration at their understanding of the situation.

The perceived precariousness of this funding is echoed throughout the interviews. Interviewees from one organisation reported that they were informed, in 2009, that their organisation would no longer be funded due to a shift in ACI spending priorities in light of budget cuts. One interviewee described the impact of this for their organisation:

If you know there is not going to be any more funding there's no chance. While you got some funding you could feel that you could build up a relationship with the Arts Council, maybe get a bit more, but there was a really drastic cut to our budget.¹⁰⁹⁸

There was broad criticism expressed of the ACI's funding practices. Frustration was expressed on an ongoing basis in the belief that the agency prioritised financing more established institutions:

You are the last ones to be considered as an artist-run space.¹⁰⁹⁹

It's just an unfortunate product of the stagnancy of it, is that you have the established organisations [being awarded] all the money and ... maintaining their status quo.¹¹⁰⁰

This sentiment was echoed by other interviewees, sometimes in emotive terms. While several interviewees refrained from levying criticism at specific organisations one interviewee noted TBG+S as one such institution.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Anon. interviewee 2.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Anon. interviewee 1.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Anon. interviewee 7.

¹¹⁰⁰ Anon. interviewee 2.

It was believed by some interviewees that funding artist-run spaces would provide what one interviewee called 'more bang for your buck'.¹¹⁰¹ Another reflected:

You have all the grass-roots organisations who are growing up by leaps and bounds [...] and who a small amount of capital funding could just take it to the stars.¹¹⁰²

While it is possible that disappointment may colour perceptions of fairness it is nevertheless evident that, at the level of perception, there is a dissonance in the interviewees' understanding of the ACI's approach to artist-run spaces, and the position earlier articulated by Doyle in interview with Keely which stated their 'critical' importance to the sector.¹¹⁰³ This may suggest a value in further clarification and communication between the two.

Responses from some organisations also indicated a strain in the relationship with DCC and VAI. One interviewee expressed frustration:

With DCC and the Arts Council, and VAI, and with any of the established state bodies, you are just never sure where you stand with them. And you can't get any straight answers out of them.¹¹⁰⁴

Another interviewee reflected that managing these relationships was a source of anxiety:

Managing relationships can be quite stressful. I think for me personally the organisations that are dedicated to trying to support artists more make the lives difficult for organisations that are trying to do the work for artists on the ground. It can be quite challenging to get people on board with you.¹¹⁰⁵

Issues such as poor internal communication between agency departments, a lack of transparency, and poor engagement were all reported as perceived challenges in dealing within these agencies.

Several interviewees outlined, that in their opinion, where they had sought help and advice from these agencies there was a lack of support. It was the reported experience of interviewees that the engagement between these agencies and their organisations was largely limited to the administration of funding. Analysis of the capacity of these agencies to respond to these desires for increased engagement is beyond the scope of the current research however it has been

¹¹⁰¹ Anon. interviewee 11.

¹¹⁰² Anon. interviewee 2.

¹¹⁰³ Keely, "Supporting Artist-Led Activity in Ireland," 39.

¹¹⁰⁴ Anon. interviewee 2.

¹¹⁰⁵ Anon. interviewee 8.

demonstrated that, at the time of interview, there was generally a dissatisfaction in the relationships from the perspective of the artist-run organisations.

Interviewees reflected on the complexities of their funding relationships with these agents including the benefits of not receiving funding. In particular, anxiety was expressed around issues of how funding impacted autonomy. A challenge raised was how to find a balance between the need for public funding for sustainability reasons and the belief that receipt of funding potentially compromised artistic innovation and autonomy. This dynamic is also noted by Solhjell who considers that parts of the arts sector experience reduced autonomy because of their dependencies.¹¹⁰⁶

Within the interviews, this concern regarding autonomy was evidenced both in those in receipt of funding and those who were not.

If the government funding requires you to change the nature of the space in order to fit their criteria then they are not really supporting the project.¹¹⁰⁷

I suppose money is always a big problem and it is just weighing up the real cost of that money if you do get money.¹¹⁰⁸

Several interviewees focused on the autonomy of being an unfunded organisation:

Because we didn't have any funding we could do what we wanted, that was really nice.¹¹⁰⁹

I'm torn between the rights for the artist-space to be acknowledged and considered by the Arts Council. But in saying that if you are not a regularly funded organisation you do what you want as well. And there is no one telling you 'actually you need to spend the money this way, this way, and this way' because there isn't any to spend so there is no one telling you what you can and can't do¹¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰⁶ Dag Solhjell, "Poor Artists in a Welfare State: A Study in the Politics and Economics of Symbolic Rewards," *International Journal of Cultural Policy* 7, no. 2 (2000): 365.

¹¹⁰⁷ Anon. interviewee 11.

¹¹⁰⁸ Anon. interviewee 6.

¹¹⁰⁹ Anon. interviewee 9.

¹¹¹⁰ Anon. interviewee 7.

We had no one to please, other than our own agenda for the space.¹¹¹¹

Such reflections were primarily focused on the early days of the organisations.

Cooke raises the question of autonomy and how this relates to the arm's-length principle of funding. He reflects:

[T]he arm's length principle appears to embed contradictory purposes. While claiming to protect artistic autonomy, it channels funding to the arts on the grounds of increasingly instrumental expectations that seek to establish the economic value of the investment.¹¹¹²

The earlier discussion of a shift in arts policy focus from the intrinsic to instrumental, and institutional values is here recalled. As focus shifts, so too do the requirements of organisations to present themselves against those metrics; recall that, with reference to DCC funding, PP/S' failure to do this resulted in their demotion to a less stable grant category. Thus organisations must choose between being disadvantaged in their application for funding, or re-visioning the organisation itself to meet these changing policy focuses.

Despite a tendency among some organisations to be critical of funding agencies and funding structures there was nevertheless also a belief expressed in interview that 'funding should be hard to get'.¹¹¹³ Interviewees also considered that there was a balance between the need for support at the infrastructural level and a potential impact of being 'a bit too comfortable' marring dynamism.¹¹¹⁴ It has been proposed by Menger that uncertainty and risk propagates innovation as well as increases intrinsic feelings of achievement and gratification.¹¹¹⁵ There is some evidence to support this within the sample group. Reflecting on early financial struggles, one interviewee considered:

The sense of urgency, of never knowing how long you are going to last for, at one point in time fed into a really exciting programme.¹¹¹⁶

Another asked:

¹¹¹¹ Anon, interviewee 13.

¹¹¹² Cooke, "The Artist and the State in Ireland: Artist Autonomy and the Arm's Length Principle in a Time of Crisis," 114.

¹¹¹³ Anon. interviewee 12.

¹¹¹⁴ Anon. interviewee 2.

¹¹¹⁵ Menger, "Artistic Labor Markets and Careers," 548, 58.

¹¹¹⁶ Anon. interviewee 7.

If we had been given a huge chunk of money at very beginning without proving anything, what would have become of [our organisation]? How would it have evolved? Would it become lazy?¹¹¹⁷

They continued that after the first year of operation they had a clearer idea of how money could add value in supporting the organisation. A further interviewee posited that being fully funded by the ACI would not be beneficial to their organisation as it would negate the need to 'think dynamically or develop these projects'.¹¹¹⁸

These quotes imply that uncertainty can be seen to bring dynamism to the organisations which promotes innovation; however it must be noted that the context of these quotes is in discussion of the early period of organisational development. This proviso is important. As a long term condition uncertainty undermines the sustainability of the organisations, both in terms of workload and finances.

This dynamic was discussed as part of the *FOOTFALL* symposium as reported in the subsequent report.¹¹¹⁹ The conclusion of this research thesis is consistent with the conclusion of the *FOOTFALL* report:

The idea that good art comes out of struggle and constant reinvention due to capricious funding is 'highly damaging' for artist led organisations.¹¹²⁰

As articulated by one participant in the *FOOTFALL* symposium, 'it is dangerous to aspire to, fetishise or idealise precarity'.¹¹²¹

In reconciling this dynamic it is useful to consider the life-span of the organisations and the process of 'exploration' and 'exploitation', as previously outlined in Chapter 3.¹¹²² In the early period of the organisation, exploration prevails and organisational identity is developing. In this stage precarity is evidenced as stimulating the organisations. However, if it is a continuing and constant condition it is detrimental to the organisations exploiting their developing knowledge and competencies. This thus impedes them fulfilling their potential; this requires 'development and practice'.¹¹²³ That is, if the issue of sustainability in the routine aspects of the organisations is resolved then there is more energy to focus into innovation and exploration. Thus, while the

¹¹¹⁷ Anon. interviewee 16.

¹¹¹⁸ Anon. interviewee 2.

¹¹¹⁹ Laws, "Footfall: Articulating the Value of Artist Led Organisations in Ireland."

¹¹²⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹¹²¹ Ibid.

¹¹²² March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," 3,4,9.

¹¹²³ Ibid., 8.

excitement of precarity was identified in interview it was also recognised that this had to be balanced with sustainability in the longer term.

Varied proposals were given in regards to how to balance these dynamics. For example, two interviewees considered that early funding could provide essential support to the development of artist-run spaces at the structural level but that ultimately sustainability should be the goal. Another discussed their own experience of incrementally increased funding earned over time as a positive model. This is coherent with a life-cycle model proposed by UK based advocacy group Common Practice.¹¹²⁴ In her report for Common Practice, Thelwall considers it necessary to identify the similarities of experience in the lifecycle of small organisations and advocates that this be used to inform funding opportunities that 'vary during the lifecycle of the organisation to reflect the changing skills, modes of delivery and leadership'.¹¹²⁵ Another interviewee proposed that a more flexible approach based on the unique experience and circumstance of each organisation would be beneficial:

Funding bodies shouldn't be afraid to have conversations with them and talk to them about their organisation on a case by case basis; rather than just a blanket conversation with a supporting documentation form.¹¹²⁶

Again this is parallel to Thelwall's proposals, she highlights needing to better understand 'the variety of organisations themselves' in order to articulate appropriate funding approaches.¹¹²⁷

The relationship to funding is complex. As has been indicated in the current discussion it was considered that high levels of funding could potentially mar innovation in the early part of the organisations' life-span and that funding potentially impacts autonomy. On the other hand, funding helps facilitate innovation by providing opportunity to exploit knowledge gained and providing stability so that energies could be focused on the main activities of the organisation. It is not the focus of the current research to make recommendations regarding funding but rather to reflect on the experiences articulated by the interviewees. In doing so, as has been evidenced throughout this research, it is clear that there is dissatisfaction with the current funding system although there is not consensus as to how this is best addressed.

¹¹²⁴ Common Practice, London is 'an advocacy group working for the recognition and fostering of the small-scale contemporary visual arts sector in London.' Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 4. See: <http://www.commonpractice.org.uk/>

¹¹²⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹¹²⁶ Anon. interviewee 8.

¹¹²⁷ Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations," 7.

Resource Dependency

Resource dependency is concerned with the degree to which organisations rely on resources from other organisations within their environment. Pfeffer and Salancik, propose three factors that determine the extent of this dependence.¹¹²⁸ The first is 'resource importance' - that is, the extent to which it is needed for survival, this was previously discussed in terms of magnitude and criticality.¹¹²⁹ The second is 'discretion over resource allocation and use' - this is the extent to which the organisation commands the use and purpose of the resource.¹¹³⁰ The third is 'concentration of resource control' – this concerns the degree to which the organisation may source alternatives.¹¹³¹ The largest external resource upon which the sample organisations have developed dependencies is grant income. As explored this primarily comes from DCC and the ACI.

Analysis of resource dependency and DCC was provided earlier in this chapter. As has been outlined throughout discussion of the ACI, accessing both Workspace Scheme and Project Awards gives access to valuable resources but it also provides constraints upon the organisations in terms of how those resources can be used. With the exceptions of MTGS and PP/S, the actual income garnered from this source is truncated and it is not the principle source of income for most of the organisations; nonetheless it has a high level of importance.

While the more regular Workspace Scheme awards are integral to funding core costs within the studios, the Project Award is not able to be used for such costs but only to fund artistic activities. Thus, in terms of resource importance, as it relates to the basics of organisational survival, there is seen a greater reliance on the former award than on the latter. The importance of these awards as resources is brought into relief by limited opportunities, previously identified within a number of the organisations, to pursue other revenue streams. Therefore, this would seem to create conditions that propagate a degree of resource dependence, in the outlined examples, in accord with all three aspects of the definition given above.

Organisations can be situated along a continuum extending from 'culture of dependency' at one end, wherein they are dependent upon the state, to 'enterprise culture' at the other.¹¹³² Alexander defines the latter as enshrining 'the values of liberal economics, emphasizing three key principles: the efficiency of markets, the liberty of individuals, and the noninterventionism of the

¹¹²⁸ Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, 39-61.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹¹³⁰ Ibid., 47.

¹¹³¹ Ibid., 50.

¹¹³² Victoria D Alexander, "State Support of Artists: The Case of the United Kingdom in a New Labour Environment and Beyond," *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 29, no. 1 (2007): 4.

state'.¹¹³³ Situated between these is a 'mixed-economy' approach.¹¹³⁴ One interviewee observed that 'the Arts Council want to encourage you that they can't be the sole financier'.¹¹³⁵ This indicates the desire of the State agency to discourage a culture of dependency. This was echoed by a number of interviewees who themselves acknowledged the need to develop additional funding streams and not be wholly reliant on the ACI. Thus, a mixed economy approach is posed as potentially desirable from both perspectives.

The two key identified sources of self-generated income are studio and gallery rental. Within the dual-function organisations it has been observed that there is an inverse relationship between resource dependency and the scale of the studio operation. This is congruent with Pfeffer and Salancik's contention that growth enhances survival value, control over the environment and provides slack to buffer against organisational failure.¹¹³⁶ Cross-subsidisation from the studio rents represents a primary source of earned income. For those organisations where dual facilities are co-located there presents some scope for continued cross-subsidisation in terms of building rent and utilities. However, as previously noted the ability to cross-subsidise is curtailed for those organisations in receipt of the Workspace Scheme grant; the limiting of discretion in resource allocation potentially increases resource dependency.

There was, in instances, either limited will or limited ability to pursue additional revenue streams. One reason for this was that the increase in dependencies to manage, associated with the development of additional revenue streams, diverts energy from the main focus of the organisation. As identified by Thelwall:

The challenge for small organisations is to make the best use of assets without allowing this to consume all the energy of the team, thus allowing the focus to remain on the development and delivery of projects.

This diversion was reported in Block T and MART both of whom had developed sustainable models. In the instance of Block T these additional activities were given as central to the organisational model; nonetheless they were seen at the outset to detract energy from primary artistic activities. Scanlan of the MART considered that, 'trying to sustain a business can be a creativity killer'.¹¹³⁷ The balance between commercial activity and artistic goals is a crucial one

¹¹³³ Ibid.

¹¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹¹³⁵ Anon. interviewee 19.

¹¹³⁶ Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, 139.

¹¹³⁷ Scanlan, Interview with author.

and both DiMaggio and Anheier warn that such activity risks becoming an end in itself.¹¹³⁸ Interviewees from both MART and Block T reported that over time they had been able to start to reorient themselves towards their artistic goals, a move enabled by the financial stability they had generated.

One interviewee expressed the view that, in their opinion, the success of their self-generated income prejudiced the ACI against them. They reported that a representative from the ACI directly communicated concern regarding their subsidiary activities to them. It was perceived that the issue was one of control:

We are not reliant on them so they don't have the control they might usually have or want.¹¹³⁹

There is not evidence to confirm or dispel the reported discrimination. However consideration of the awards made provides an example of how these perspectives are reinforced.

Evidence of the awards made demonstrates a lower rate of successful applications for awards among in organisations with higher self-generated income. Those organisations with larger studio facilities, and thus higher self-generated income, exhibit a lower success rate in respect of the Project Awards. Furthermore, Block T and MART, who are the most self-sustaining of the organisations and each of whom provide substantial studio provisions, had limited success with the Workspace Scheme. Indeed MART, at the time of interview in 2015, had not received any funding under this scheme:

We don't get funded. Last year we didn't get the Workspace Grant which is supposed to support artists' studios – and we have one of the largest studio providers in Dublin, but we didn't get that.¹¹⁴⁰

Block T has been in receipt of funding since 2010, however it is not proportional to the facilities they provide comparative to the other funded organisations within the sample. It is of note that these organisations both have different legal statuses and so this cannot be attributed as the reason for limited support. It is possible that other factors, besides income generation, influenced these funding decisions however as the ACI did not, during this period, make the rationale for decisions publically available means that it is not possible to confirm this either way.

¹¹³⁸ DiMaggio, "Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts," 58; Anheier, *Nonprofit Organizations : Theory, Management, Policy*, 105.

¹¹³⁹ Anon. interviewee 2.

¹¹⁴⁰ Scanlan, Interview with author.

When brought together, resource dependence on outside agencies, the consequential external control of allocation and use of resources, limited opportunities for sourcing alternative finances, and increase in expenses through increasing rents and wage costs, coalesce to provide significant financial challenges for some of the organisations. Discussion has focused on financial challenges due to environmental factors, specifically regarding grant funding. However, issues pertaining to sustainability and resource dependency were also aggravated by changing needs and in some instances, a lack of strategic planning.

There was a variable level of mid- to long-term strategic planning within the organisations. Block T and the MART both entered the field with a strategic plan. At the heart of this for both organisations was the need to be self-sustaining. For example McEvoy, of Block T, recalled:

We were thinking, 'Okay we can't be overly reliant on government funding' because there is loads of cut backs and everyone isn't getting as much funding as they used to.¹¹⁴¹

As previously outlined, for both organisations, this is centred on studio and facilities provision and both have achieved this through scale.

For other organisations, the establishment of the organisation as a whole or establishment of the gallery aspect of the organisation, was a spontaneous response to opportunity rather than preconceived. For example, one interviewee recalled:

It was never strategic, there was never an analysis done, none of that. It was just freefall, there was no analysis.¹¹⁴²

It is the immediacy of this and the organic development of the organisations, that in some instance account for limited advance engagement with the implications of the funding structures and the potential implications of resource dependency.

Thus, with the exception of those organisations that were self-sustaining, it is observed that organisations often entered into a changing field, with limited mid-term financial planning. This was aggravated by evolving needs, for example as a result of professionalisation, decrease in gallery rental income, employment of key personnel, and unforeseen expenses. Therefore, for many of the organisations resource dependency was a developing trait as expenses increased and

¹¹⁴¹ McEvoy, Interview with author.

¹¹⁴² Anon. interviewee 8.

early sources of income became less dependable or less attractive. These factors combined made for an uncertain relationship with financial stability.

Overall, funding support is a significant need for some of the organisations. However, the findings of this research suggest that the current funding structures and systems do not provide adequate frameworks with which to support these kinds of organisations. However, this research has also shown that it is possible to develop models that are largely self-sustaining and can operate with minimal or no state funding. This is either because they have minimised expenditure, or have developed independent revenue streams. However, the former is highly conditional on environmental factors and is potentially not sustainable, in the latter instance the necessity of scale to achieve this means that it is a potentially limiting factor and not accessible to all organisations. Furthermore, in order to manage scale and increased activity additional labour is required which in turn requires additional money to maintain. A challenge of this model is that in pursuing independent revenue streams the nature of the organisation fundamentally changes as it becomes a profit seeking enterprise, this change as has been demonstrated within this thesis is subject to criticism even if in practice the profits are reinvested in the organisations.

Sustainability and Longevity

The impact of financial instability is tangible, placing the organisations within what was a precarious relationship to ongoing sustainability.¹¹⁴³ Pfeffer and Salancik state:

Instability with respect to an important resource means the organization's survival has become more uncertain.¹¹⁴⁴

In the instance of thisisnotashop, financial instability following the withdrawal of grant funding was given as a direct reason for the closure of the gallery space. Financial challenges also contributed to the closure of The Joinery, and of MTGS' gallery space, both in 2014. A year before the closure of The Joinery, Driscoll stated:

Funding is becoming ever harder to obtain and we need it more than ever before. There has to be a limit to the good will and the unpaid assistance that the Joinery has received from the many artists, musicians and

¹¹⁴³ Anon, in interview with author.

¹¹⁴⁴ Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, 46.

volunteers that have helped make it what it is [...] Staggering on is not an option.¹¹⁴⁵

In a press release in late 2014, Driscoll stated that the organisation was to close because:

We feel at this point that, without a permanent funding structure, we can do no more'.¹¹⁴⁶

Prendergast, of MTGS, reflected on the necessity for resources to support the organisation:

In the end we just needed money, and we needed a space that was ours.¹¹⁴⁷

Financial sustainability is clearly identified as a key challenge for the organisations.

As indicated in the above quote from Prendergast a further challenge related to premises. Secure tenancy enhances the stability of organisations. Project Arts and TBG+S both benefited from security in their tenures; this was achieved within relatively early stages in their development Project Arts Centre through the purchase of its building and TBG+S through the fair rent clause in place within their Cultural Use Agreement.¹¹⁴⁸ However, this is not reflective of the experience of the subsequent generation of artist-run gallery as represented through the sample.

In Chapter 1, it was outlined the organisations often took on poorly maintained properties, in economically deprived areas, and/or compromised on their tenancy rights in order to secure premises. While this was a compromise that some of the organisations were demonstrated as willing to make initially the issue of safe, secure and long-term tenancy becomes more problematic over time, in particular problematic relationships with landlords, short term leases, and nonrenewal of lease was raised as an issue by several interviewees.

Fiore, of thisisnotashop, reports a problematic relationships in respect of their landlord. According to Fiore, in addition to the poor condition of the building, the landlord repeatedly accessed the property without authorisation and rented out 'sheds' in their backyard as bedsits with no discrimination as to the tenants. Alongside the funding cuts, this was reported to contribute to the closure of the gallery space, as Fiore felt that it was not possible to continue within that space.

¹¹⁴⁵ Rashers Tierney, "An Interview with They Joinery: "Staggering on Is Not an Option", "<http://www.rabble.ie/2013/03/14/an-interview-with-the-joinery-staggering-on-is-not-an-option/>."

¹¹⁴⁶ Miranda Driscoll, "News," <http://thejoineryarchive.org/news/news>.

¹¹⁴⁷ Prendergast, Interview with author.

¹¹⁴⁸ Project Arts Centre, "About Us"; Temple Bar Gallery and Studios, *Generation: 30 Years of Creativity at Temple Bar Gallery and Studios*, 13; "Our History".

Prendergast reports that the lack of formal tenancy agreement in their Temple Bar based space was problematic. In a unique arrangement Prendergast reports that they had a 'memorandum of agreement' with Blackchurch Print Studio from whom they sublet the building. However, in the absence of a traditional tenancy agreement Prendergast felt that there was 'ambiguity' in the relationship.¹¹⁴⁹ He also highlights that the continued inclusion of agreement that Blackchurch Print Studios were able to programme annual shows within the gallery space as problematic in respect of the autonomy and 'brand' of the MTGS and its ability to respond to opportunities and challenges; he felt that the organisation was 'beholden to another company that had access to the space for a significant amount of time in the year'.¹¹⁵⁰

However, it was non-renewal of lease that presented the most common problem. Bermingham and Welch from Basic Space reported a change in their desires in regard to wanting a long term premises. In contrast to the conditions surrounding their initial premises, they reported that the organisation had hoped for a renewal of their lease at their subsequent venue on Marrowbone Lane.¹¹⁵¹ However, for reasons reportedly unknown to them, DCC did not renew their lease; as of August 2015 the building remained empty.

Cullen reported that PP/S had been 'nomadic, not necessarily by choice but by the fact that it has been so difficult to find somewhere with a long lease'.¹¹⁵² PP/S have found a more stable residency in their current space in the Coombe for which they have a ten year lease; however in discussion of their history Cullen described the frequency with which they had to move as 'taxing' and 'traumatic' while G. Murphy considered it to be 'one of the biggest impediments to us existing, continuing'.¹¹⁵³ Furthermore, the repeated constant renovations were reported as creating additional financial strain for which little external relief was received. The crux of the problem encountered by PP/S, as identified by G. Murphy, is rooted in the regulation of commercial rents. In accord with the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1980, once a tenant has occupied a property for five years they have statutory entitlement to a lease of up to twenty-five years.¹¹⁵⁴

Scanlan, of MART, also reported that this statutory entitlement has worked to their disadvantage. She reported that it is anticipated that their lease may not be renewed at the end of the stipulated period for this reason:

¹¹⁴⁹ Prendergast, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵¹ Bermingham and Welch, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵² Cullen, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵³ *Ibid.*; Murphy, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵⁴ Oireachtas, "Landlord and Tenant Act," (1980).

We have a five year lease here at the Firestation, and it is up in two years and we could be gone in two years, because otherwise we will be digging our feet in more and they probably don't want that.¹¹⁵⁵

However, a more immediate concern for them is a plan by DCC to demolish the building in order to allow access to a planned development. In regard to this, Scanlan reported that they recognise the benefits of the planned development to the local community but aspire to be included as part of the development. In respect of this they are undertaking meetings with various representatives from DCC. They have also submitted a protection order to try and get it listed as a protected building.

Thus, the early compromises that some of the organisations necessarily make in order to access premises have longer term implications. It has emerged that inability to secure a long term premises is detrimental to the ongoing sustainability of the organisations. Repeated moving is a drain on resources in both financial and human terms. As outlined the issue of suitable tenancy contributed to the closure of the galleries of two organisations, thisisnotashop and MTGS and has threatened the sustainability of others.

So far this section has outlined the key threats to sustainability within the organisations. However, it is important to note that there were a variety of different perspectives expressed regarding the desired longevity of the organisations. One interviewee, questioned the necessity for the ongoing sustenance of the organisations:

I think the answer to the artist-run space is that it is a temporary type of project.¹¹⁵⁶

In contrast, Block T and MART's self-sufficiency models were designed with a specific goal of longevity. When asked about the future for their organisations, interviewees from both groups focused on the continued development and evolution of their organisation.

Interviewees from Ormond Studios, The Market Studios, and PP/S explicitly stipulated a desire for the organisation to continue beyond the involvement of the founders. While it is noted that The Market Studios closed in 2014, as an impact of the workload, speaking in 2013 Morrissey considered that while her own involvement was time limited, she:

¹¹⁵⁵ Scanlan, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵⁶ Anon. interviewee 7.

—would like it to evolve and in two or three years’ time still be running [...]
it is a handy little organisation.¹¹⁵⁷

Echoing this intent G. Murphy, of PP/S, stated:

We feel it is something that is necessary to visual arts practice in Dublin.¹¹⁵⁸

In these two examples, interviewees do not claim ownership of the organisation, but prioritise its importance to the broader arts ecology.

In the instance of Ormond Studios and PP/S, organisational governance structures were specifically designed to support longevity. In Ormond Studios, the progressive replenishing of members denotes the structure as one explicitly designed to supersede the originating members.¹¹⁵⁹ In the example of PP/S, reincorporation as a CLG was intended to fortify organisational longevity. Thus, we see in these examples that the organisations develop to be distinct and autonomous from the specificities of individuals. It is evidenced in individual examples that a legal form may be engaged as a strategic move to promote longevity; however legal type and longevity are not given as correlative across the sample.

In contrast to these examples, in 2012, both Fitz and Howie from Basic Space emphasised that the organisation was focused on the ‘here and now’.¹¹⁶⁰ Howie stated:

We don’t think it is important that Basic Space is going to last into the future
[...] as soon as we are not interested, then we are just going to drop it’¹¹⁶¹

He rejected the model whereby members are interchangeable and can ‘just swap out for someone else’ so that the ‘organisation keeps running without the original founders’.¹¹⁶² This point of view was consistent with the conceptualisation of their organisation at that time, which Fitz described as a ‘fiction’ through which they are able to operate:

It’s six people now who work within that name [...] so that name is a
structure that allows us to be completely free [laughs]. I like to think about
it as false walls that we can actually move around whenever we want. [...]

¹¹⁵⁷ Morrissey, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵⁸ Murphy, Interview with author.

¹¹⁵⁹ The process for this is outlined in their Constitution.

¹¹⁶⁰ Fitz, Interview with author; Howie, Interview with author.

¹¹⁶¹ Interview with author.

¹¹⁶² Ibid.

it's completely fictional really but it's something that we can use how we want to.¹¹⁶³

Thus, longevity was not a goal. Rather, at that time the organisation is a conceptual entity of which the founders retain proprietorship by virtue of the name of the organisation. However, in practice incrementally, by 2016, all of the original founders of Basic Space, had left the organisation and a number of other directors were appointed.

From 2005 to 2013 there was a steady increase in the size of the field. Subsequent rapid decline in 2014 resulted from both the closure of established organisations and an absence of new organisations. As has been outlined, thisisnotashop had already closed their gallery premises in advance of commencement of this research, they ceased their continued projects in 2011. The Market Studios closed in 2014, and The Joinery in 2015. MTGS closed its gallery space in 2013 and continues to operate as a studios only. The relocation of Block T to Basin View entailed a loss of facilities in which to host regular exhibitions. At the end of the research period Basic Space were temporarily without an exhibition premises.

Of further note, although not included within the central sample, Broadstone Studios, a peer to the sample organisation and a stalwart of the artist-run landscape in Dublin since 1996 also closed in 2015. A similar pattern is observed nationally. Of the organisations included in the original country-wide sample Faber Studios (Limerick), Basement Project Space (Cork) and Soma (Waterford) have also closed, while Occupy Space (Limerick) since 2012 have had no set space from which to operate.

The decline as outlined is substantial. As has been indicated not all organisations have the desire for longevity and thus, mortality is not automatically a sign of failure. However, across the sample financial strain, workload, and loss of premises were all given as reasons for closure which indicates that organisational failure is a significant factor.

A degree of replenishing of the field at this level is proposed as desirable. This corresponds to March's conception of 'disposable organisations' that are oriented to 'exploration'.¹¹⁶⁴ However, as noted by March, while this has some attractions, a system built entirely on semi-permanent organisations is problematic. Not least it 'works only if there is a steady flow of new organisations'.¹¹⁶⁵ Within the Irish context, the recent closures have not been met with an equivalence in number of new ventures. Rather, entrance to the field has slowed considerably.

¹¹⁶³ Fitz, Interview with author.

¹¹⁶⁴ March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," 9.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Thus, there is evidenced a decline in organisations with the high energy and low entry barriers that are characterised by the early life of artist-run spaces; it is not clear as to why this has occurred and this is an area which requires further qualitative study.

A further problem of the disposable organisations is that they do not allow for organisations to exploit the knowledge they have gained.¹¹⁶⁶ This is only possible with persistence. The exploitation of knowledge has been outlined as central to change within the organisations through earlier discussion of learning by doing.¹¹⁶⁷ This brought a professionalisation of process and procedures and an extension and diversification of activities undertaken and supports offered. Through this, there is an increased value contribution to the middle level of the Irish arts field.

The generation of organisations that formed the sample are/were still relatively in their infancy, it is unknown the full potential that these evolved forms may take and the contribution they may bring. In the examples of TBG+S and PAC it is seen that the continued support of the organisations allowed for them to evolve and mature, both are now central institutions within Dublin's visual arts landscape. However, what is clear is that the current raft of closures denigrates that potential within the current populace of artist-run galleries, a fact which will have impact for the current and future generation of Irish artists.

¹¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁷ Bauer, Viola, and Strauss, "Management Skills for Artists: 'Learning by Doing'?"

Conclusion

In this thesis, I set out to discover what can be learned about the modus operandi of visual arts exhibition organisations known as ‘artist-run’ spaces in Dublin, from 2005 to 2015, through an analysis of the experiences of the individuals involved in their development and management. This phenomenon is important as it contributes to the delivery of art within Ireland. The time-span is of particular importance as it is a period of significant growth of the phenomenon within Dublin. The objectives of the research were: to discover the nature and extent of historical activity in the field; to document the reflexive narrative accounts of practitioners in the field; to identify common and novel experiences; to critically explore the strengths, achievements, and weaknesses of the organisations, and to identify the challenges they faced. The methodology involved the collection of primary, factual information, its organisation/collation in order to develop objective and probing perspectives, and the identification of, and familiarisation with, relevant interpretative and theoretical analytical approaches to inform aspects of the critical analysis. Through this strategy of investigation and analysis, the thesis illuminates the processes and contexts that enabled and influenced the facilitation of creativity and its display in the form of art exhibitions within these organisations and how these evolved. This had implications for the selection of artists exhibited, the conditions that they experienced, and the art-works that they presented.

This thesis makes an important contribution to Irish art history because it provides an account of the development of this phenomenon within this historical period which has otherwise remained largely undocumented and unexamined due to poor archival accounts and the ephemeral nature of much documentation, for example websites and social media. To achieve this I identified, collated, and analysed a variety of primary sources. The main source was in-depth qualitative interviews that I undertook with the founders and managers of these organisations. These interviews provide a vital source of information about how the organisations operated and the reasons why they operated in the forms they did, from the point of view of these individuals. This period occurred within both recent history and contemporaneous with the research process, which supported access to key individuals and provided opportunity to record oral histories as to close the event as possible thereby enhancing detail and accuracy of recall. This oral history was supported by consultation of archival materials, company papers, ACI and DCC funding decisions and reports, and additional interviews with artists who had exhibited with the organisations. Nine out of ten organisations that met the selection criteria, participated within the research; therefore this thesis provides a meaningful account of the population within this generation of artist-run exhibition spaces.

Research Findings

In the introduction to this thesis I identified the research sub-questions: why did the founders establish these organisations; how do they define the major purpose and role of their organisation; how are the organisations structured and operated; what do they believe to be the key concerns and factors that shape the field; what are the impacts of participation for individuals within the management structures of these organisations? These questions provided a point of departure for this research to explore the *modus operandi* of the organisations.

In each chapter I presented one thematic aspect of the organisations that contributes to understanding the *modus operandi*. In Chapter 1, I provided essential background information regarding the establishment of the organisations and the context in which they operated. This chapter is important in providing a basis for the subsequent chapters but also in providing an original account of the emergence of these organisations which has not previously been recorded. In Chapter 2, I investigated and analysed how the organisations were structured and operated in regard to their artistic programming and other activities. This chapter revealed the evolving framework through which the art exhibitions are delivered and the organisational practices that influence this as well as how this is experienced by some artists. This has art historical significance because it provides important insight into the processes and factors that shape the artistic programming of these organisations. In Chapter 3, I focused on the management and governance of the organisations. Understanding the internal structures, processes, and procedures is extremely important to the *modus operandi* of the organisation and provides the framework through which action, i.e. the delivery of art exhibitions, occurs. Finally, in Chapter 4, I analysed the finances and other factors impacting the sustainability of the organisations. This is important as without resources the organisations would not be able to deliver the arts exhibitions that they do and because sustainability dictates whether the phenomenon continues and in what form, i.e. long or short term organisations. Collectively, these chapters provide comprehensive insight and analysis of the *modus operandi* of these organisations and through this an original contribution is made to the understanding of this phenomenon within Irish art history.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 focused on revealing the historic emergence of these organisations both at the level of the population, and of the histories of the individual organisations. Following scrutiny of archival sources and journalists' commentaries, I found limited examples of directly comparable organisations in the preceding decades; major exceptions to this included PAC and TBG+S. The limited records kept on these types of organisations mean that it is probable that additional

undocumented organisations may have been in operation. It is an aim of this thesis to ensure that the generation under research does not succumb to the same erasure and this emphasises the value of this thesis. The evidence consulted suggests that in the preceding generations artist-run activity was centred on studio-only groups or in temporary exhibition events, rather than in the type of activity typified within the sample organisations which is centred around a defined organisation dedicated to the provision of exhibition opportunities on an ongoing basis.

While I identified a pattern of growth, during this period, country-wide, I found that Dublin was the dominant hub of activity with fourteen of twenty-six organisations identified being based in the capital, emphasising the value in the focus of this thesis on this locale. In analysing this emergence, I suggested that the high concentration of third- and fourth-level art and design based educational courses concentrated in Dublin contributed to this as these organisations were primarily established by recent graduates. The founders were dominantly graduates from Fine Art courses. However due to the variety of other courses represented, it is more accurate to consider that these organisations are run by 'creative practitioners' rather than strictly visual fine artists. Understanding this background is important to understanding what we mean by 'artist' in the title 'artist-run' and therefore to the core identity of the organisations.

Through this research I found that organisations were dominantly established as a response to the founders' personal circumstances post-graduation, namely a lack of facilities and opportunities for studio and exhibition space, and a loss of the peer contexts that were previously provided by their art college. I identified that their motivations comprised both a desire to improve their personal opportunities and also a desire to create a community and extend opportunities to others. No political, ideological, or social activist concerns or motivations were evidenced. I proposed that a potential second reason for the increase of artist-run exhibition spaces during this period was the enhanced visibility of some of the earlier organisations within the sample at this time, through which the model gained increased legitimacy and subsequently encouraged further initiatives.

Reflecting the identified need for both studio and gallery provisions, a dual-function studio-gallery model was utilised by the majority of the organisations and typifies artist-run exhibition spaces in Dublin. The influence of either element as the impetus to establishing the organisations varied between the groups, and while for some organisations the gallery was paramount, for others it evolved as a response to the opportunity provided by their premises. This opportunistic approach in part may account for why a number of the organisations had little long term planning in regard for the sustenance of their gallery activities.

I also considered the economic context of the period and I found that these organisations established both during the economic boom and decline that occurred during the research period. The economic climate brought challenges in particular with regard to premises. The strength of the property market often compelled organisations to take tenancy in buildings that were in poor condition and that were not optimally located. This brought about immediate challenges in terms of the renovation of the properties. Furthermore, in Chapter 2 I identified that this had significant implications in terms of curatorial practices and audiences, and in Chapter 4 I analysed the challenges arising from problems related to security of tenure.

When observed collectively no clear geographic hub emerged of these organisations. Scholarly literature indicates the benefits to clustered or centralised configurations.¹¹⁶⁸ When the relationships between the sample organisations were considered in isolation there was some evidence that the fractured geography impacted community and collaboration. However, there was evidence of collaboration with other Dublin-based arts institutions, or organisations from outside of the Dublin region. Thus, proximity alone does not account for this dynamic. I suggested the increased competition between the organisations, in particular for limited resources (evidenced in Chapter 4) could also contribute to this fractured population within Dublin.

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2, I analysed the key artistic activities of the organisations and the processes around the delivery of art exhibitions. The activities included studio provision and I undertook a closer examination of the relationship between studio and gallery activities in the dual-function organisation. This is important given the dominance of this model within Dublin. I found a varied level of interaction between the two functions across the organisations. Overall, the gallery programme was largely distinct from the studio tenants. Nonetheless, based on the accounts of interviewees the co-location of these two functions was seen as a positive dynamic in terms of creating community and 'energy' around the projects.

The activities of the organisations were not confined to the visual fine-arts and often other creative activities were engaged as part of the main programme within a broad interpretation of 'visual art' or as an auxiliary activity. The social focus of these events and of the exhibition openings reinforced the sense of community.

¹¹⁶⁸ Blessi, Sacco, and Pilati, "Independent Artist-Run Centres: An Empirical Analysis of the Montreal Non-Profit Visual Arts Field," 152; Rosenstein, "Conceiving Artistic Work in the Formation of Artist Policy: Thinking Beyond Disinterest and Autonomy," 71.

The main focus of the chapter was the structures and processes surrounding the exhibition activities. There is not documentary evidence or records of all of the exhibitions, and therefore it is impossible to know for certain how many artists have exhibited. However, based on the high turnover of exhibitions including group exhibitions it can be inferred that the number is substantial. I identified that when the founders participated in exhibitions within their own organisations this was primarily within the group format. This finding is important as it reinforces the fact that the founders' participation was motivated beyond only self-promotion despite the fact that their own circumstance stimulated their involvement in the projects.

I found that over time there was evidenced a pattern of increased gatekeeping through curatorial panels and peer review within the arts programming. Initially the selection decisions were made in-house. However the introduction of external curators and open calls helped to expand the network of the organisations and the artists with whom they work. The criteria for selection within these organisations was vague. None of the organisations in the sample evidenced a formal curatorial policy nor had a formal allegiance to any medium and decisions were described as often based on personal interest and taste of the selectors. Despite the lack of formal policy the organisations generally exhibited early career Irish artists, although they also exhibited student and mid-career artists. Factors such as scale both created and limited opportunities, and the buildings' condition and architectural idiosyncrasies often encouraged site specific responses in terms of either the work or its presentation.

Both sets of interviewees believed that these organisations favoured innovative, risky, and experimental work. I identified an emphasis on the personal, professional, and artistic development of the artists through the exhibition process, rather than solely focusing on the delivery of the exhibition to the public. According to interviewees, these organisations supported the career development of young artists by developing their work and building their profile and also of mid-career artists who also benefit from the artistic freedom and autonomy granted within these organisations. Based on these accounts I found that these organisations could enhance artists' professional status, provide exposure, and act as a transitional mechanism. I identified them as 'artist-centric' and this makes them unique from other arts institutions.

By contrasting the two sets of interviews, I identified that in some instances the curatorial participation of the organisation, after the selection of the artist, was potentially overstated by the management interviewees. However, the artists identified this hands-off approach as one of the strengths of the organisations and considered that this made them distinct and unique from other arts organisations. In this finding there is an apparent dissonance between the point of view of the interviewed artists and the more institutional curatorial ambitions of some of the

organisations. This is important as it indicates where these organisations potentially provide a unique value to the arts infrastructure but one of which they remained largely ignorant. Therefore, I found that characteristics such as open curatorial practices might develop incidentally but were a central and important aspect of the distinct role that these organisations had.

Two main types of exhibition were 'in-house' and 'rental' exhibitions. The practice of rental exhibitions, where engaged, was more dominant in the earlier period of the organisations' life-span and I found that there was overall a desire to modify this practice. Rental exhibitions were identified as a financially necessary but less desirable practice from the point of view of the organisations. The ethics of charging artists was also raised by some of the artists interviewed. However, they expressed some sympathy with the need for these fees from an operational point of view, but questioned the level of the fees that were charged and the lack of practical supports sometimes provided in return for this payment. On this subject the management interviewees presented varied accounts. Some claimed that they provided practical and professional supports to artists, others explained that this occurred predominantly only in the in-house shows. While the high workload experienced by the management of these organisations impacted upon their work capacity it is my opinion that the failure to provide these supports undermined their stated remit of supporting this generation of artists. It was also potentially detrimental to the quality of the exhibitions that they delivered and thus to their own reputations. Furthermore, when there is a deficit of support to rental artists, comparative to in-house projects, it supports the negative perceptions of these exhibitions as being financially driven activities.

The necessity of the rental exhibition model was identified. However through analysis I proposed that the practice of charging artists to exhibit creates a financial barrier to participation within an economically disadvantaged group and may prohibit some talented artists from exhibiting. These organisation were identified as a potential 'professional entry point' for artists and this practice potentially disadvantages artists from career development based on their ability to access independent resources, which has implications for both their future career and the development of visual arts in Ireland.¹¹⁶⁹ I conclude that where possible the move towards an in-house programme was a positive development in terms of supporting artists and ensuring the realisation of the most ambitious and innovative projects.

The demographic of the audience was typically reflective of the founding and exhibiting artists and was largely comprised of artists and other creative practitioners of a similar age. This

¹¹⁶⁹ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 27.

reinforced a sense of community. There was a variety of opinion as to whether the engagement of the general public was important. Organisations whose premises had a more visible presence, due to location, were more engaged with the idea of being accessible to the general public. Other organisations were more indifferent to this audience instead focusing on the artistic development of the artists. I identified this as problematic given the instrumental and institutional approaches to value that predominate in the public funding sphere, as was evidenced by discussion of the ACI in Chapter 4. Following Thelwall, and Belfiore *et al.* I proposed that an alternative thesis of deferred value was more appropriate to understanding the contribution of these organisations.¹¹⁷⁰

Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 I analysed the management and governance of the organisations, this is important as these provide the structures which enable the artistic activity. I found that management and governance overlap in these types of organisations and are primarily located in the same people, i.e. the founders. At the point of taking on these roles the individuals were often ill prepared with little business or arts management experience. This was compounded by the fact that, as reported by interviewees, third level Art College education did not provide them with training in this area. Investigation of course curricula, contemporary to the research process, revealed a gap in this area. I concluded that there was indication of a failure to prepare students for the reality of the typical portfolio careers that they faced following graduation. This is problematic, and is a liability from which mistakes can occur. However, through 'learning by doing' the individuals involved in these organisations reported developing the skills and knowledge that they needed to manage these organisations over time.¹¹⁷¹

Through consulting company documents for the sample organisations and similar organisations countrywide, I identified that seven out of nine of the sample organisations incorporated as companies and that this was a high rate of incorporation when compared to country-wide contemporaries; incorporation also occurred early within their development. The key reasons that the sample organisations incorporated were financial and those organisations with higher costs exhibited higher levels of formalisation. In my analyses I also identified that public funding regulations often demanded more formal structures for higher awards and that this created a

¹¹⁷⁰ E Belfiore, C Firth, and D Holdaway. "How Do We Value (and Undervalue) Culture?" 2014; Thelwall, "Size Matters: Notes Towards a Better Understanding of the Value, Operation and Potential of Small Visual Arts Organisations."

¹¹⁷¹ Bauer, Viola, and Strauss, "Management Skills for Artists: 'Learning by Doing'?"

culture of accountability. Coercive, mimetic, and competitive isomorphism were all identified as factors of potential influence.¹¹⁷²

I discovered that five out of nine organisations incorporated as LTDs in the first instance, this is important as it is a trait which was specific to this population. The reasons for incorporating as an LTD included error and a lack of knowledge. I also suggest that mimesis perpetuated this through the substantial interactions of the organisations at the interpersonal level and in regard to the networks of advice that were given between the various organisations at the point of establishment.

It is my opinion that the CLG type is the legally appropriate form for the organisations. The LTD type has financial penalties, is not in keeping with the non-profit behaviour of the organisations, and is antithetical to best practice as provided by the ACI. It also deprives organisations of access to expertise and support that can be provided by the board, which is particularly relevant given the knowledge deficit identified by interviewees. The CLG structure increases access to expertise and raises perceptions of transparency and so adds legitimacy and accountability to the organisations which can act as a buffer to perceptions of profiteering. The reincorporation of a number of the organisations means that eventually the CLG form is the typical form engaged.

The reservations of some of the interviewees about the CLG structure were examined. In practice, it is encouraging that the organisations incorporated as CLGs had positive experiences of working with boards. However, the initial concerns regarding increased workload, complication of decision making, and a loss of autonomy provided an opportunity for an insightful analysis into the experiences and point of view of the interviewees.

Decision-making was undertaken by the founders and their successors usually through deliberation, although the decision-making mechanism varied throughout the organisations, usually between consensus or majority rule. The deliberative process as an ideal promotes mutuality and joint ownership of the organisations, and also lends authority and legitimacy to the decisions made. However, the evidence suggested that in practice the process was sometimes unwieldy and inefficient, furthermore it requires the commitment of all members which was not always the case. These disadvantages were in part alleviated by autonomy within individual roles as the organisations developed thereby reducing the number of day-to-day decisions that required deliberation.

¹¹⁷² DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields."; Hannan and Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," 940.

Individual roles were limited at the outset but evolved over time often as a reflection of the work that they had naturally gravitated towards. It is my opinion that these organic informal models are appropriate to the organisations at the outset and are perhaps necessary given the voluntary nature of the organisations and thus the changing availability of individuals. This model is particularly effective when 'mutuality' and 'zeal' promote 'affection' thus encouraging commitment to participation.¹¹⁷³ With the addition of further personnel both at management level and through intern programmes, slightly more differentiated roles developed. This can be useful in order to exploit developing expertise, increase efficiency, improve the distribution of workload, and manage more dependencies. Set roles can also reduce one cause of conflict within the organisations, which may be important because interpersonal conflict was identified as a challenge.

A further key challenge highlighted was the workload associated with participation in the management of these organisations. The impacts of this upon individuals was identified as detrimental to their personal arts practice and sometimes to health and wellbeing. The response of the founders in creating organisations that respond directly to the challenges they faced following graduation demonstrates their determination to continue to develop their professional creative practice. However, while the organisations were widely successful in the provision of opportunities to others, based on the evidence presented throughout this thesis, they are largely not successful in supporting the artistic practices of the founders themselves. When these two roles cannot be reconciled the result is either that individuals leave the organisations or that they shift their personal focus to concentrate on management or curatorial aspirations. These evolutions provide challenges to the continued identification of these organisations as 'artist-run'. This change in status is not in itself problematic if it is part of a purposeful shift. However within the sample organisations it appeared that this occurred as a reaction to circumstance rather than as defined strategy and that there was consequently some ambiguity in organisational identity.

It is evident that the organisations within these models can place tremendous strain upon individuals. Furthermore, human resources and work demands were identified as significant threats to the sustainability of the organisations. It is clear that the model of individuals working in these organisations on an unpaid basis, while undertaking part-time work elsewhere, and trying to sustain an arts practice is unsustainable in the long term. One way of alleviating this

¹¹⁷³ Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks." Lawler and Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange."; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion."; "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

strain was by providing employment through the organisation. The first challenge of this is that not all of the organisations have the resources to do this. The second challenge is that evidence suggested that the payments to the management of these organisations was not widely supported by the public.

There appears to be no clear rationale as to why these individuals should not be compensated for their labour through which they benefit others. The devaluation of artists' labour in respect of their creative output is widespread and recent campaigns by the VAI have sought to publically oppose this.¹¹⁷⁴ Extending this, it can be argued that, as artists and creative practitioners are typically engaged in portfolio or protean type careers it is important that they receive fair payment across *all* of their activities that constitute their occupational profile if they are to be able to support themselves. Within the sample this could have supported individuals in continuing in their creative practice alongside running these organisations.

It was identified that rewards are not only financial and some motivation for continued participation was focused on 'soft' rewards.¹¹⁷⁵ Intrinsic satisfaction through mutuality and zeal were evidenced.¹¹⁷⁶ Beyond this interviewees reported benefiting from developing skills, professional networks, and gaining professional reputation at the individual level as well as benefiting from association with the organisations' reputation. Based on the accounts of interviewees, through participation they developed considerable transferable skills. This has personal benefits, by acting as a training forum for arts managers and curators, which also has benefits for the wider arts field within Ireland. Thus the organisations can be considered to provide a further 'professional entry point' this time for the managers.¹¹⁷⁷ There were also reports of participation bringing direct opportunities through employment or connections.

Chapter 4

In Chapter 4, I analysed the sustainability of the organisations both in regard to financial and non-financial factors; this is important in considering the continued viability of the phenomenon in its documented form and in identifying some of the key challenges. Through analysis of the finances of the organisations I identified that this population operates with few monetary reserves and

¹¹⁷⁴ Visual Artists Ireland, "Celebrate Your Organisations Commitment to Equitable Payment Conditions for Artists". More recently this has culminated in guidelines for artists and arts organisations: "Payment Guidelines for Professional Visual Artists".

¹¹⁷⁵ Westlund and Bolton, "Local Social Capital and Entrepreneurship," 83.

¹¹⁷⁶ Ryan and Deci, "Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions."; Coleman, "Free Riders and Zealots: The Role of Social Networks." Lawler and Yoon, "Power and the Emergence of Commitment Behavior in Negotiated Exchange."; "Commitment in Exchange Relations: Test of a Theory of Relational Cohesion."; "Network Structure and Emotion in Exchange Relations."

¹¹⁷⁷ Burgess and Rosa, "The Distinct Role of Artist-Run Centres in the Canadian Visual Arts Ecology," 27.

often at a deficit. This is important both in identifying the tenuous sustainability of these organisations and also in contextualising the importance of the various income streams in terms of criticality, even if they are limited in magnitude. Through analysis of information on profit and loss I identified that there was substantial difference in the size of the organisations in financial terms but that this did not reflect the full size of the organisation in operational terms as it did not account for in-kind supports, including free labour.

The non-monetary model engaged by Basic Space is attractive at entry level but is not sustainable as it is dependent upon environmental factors that provide support in-kind. For the sustainability of the organisations, financial input was required. I analysed the various income streams that the organisations had available to them and considered their suitability at different life-stages and for ongoing sustainability. I found that many of the sources provided important early income for the organisations but were unsuitable or undesired for ongoing regular income. The two key sources of ongoing and regular income was grant income and earned income and I analysed these two sources in detail.

Grant income came from a variety of sources but the two main sources were DCC and the ACI. I analysed the funding policies of these two organisations alongside the awards made. As the ACI were a central focus of discussion by the respondents, I provided extended critical context on this organisation by considering legislation and policy related to them. Under the ACI's revised funding structures it was evidenced that the organisations exhibited some success in securing funding for their studio activities but that support for artistic activities through the project award was less successful with only two organisations securing this on a repeated basis. Through critical analysis of the conditions of these awards I identified a number of challenges for the organisations and based on this, I believe that these awards were problematic and ill-suited for these organisations in terms of supporting their ongoing overhead costs and their repeated activities. Some interviewees expressed frustration at the current funding structures within the ACI in particular and the perceived low priority of artist-run spaces within this. There was not agreement between the interviewees regarding how the funding structures could be improved.

Despite the strong feelings expressed towards the ACI, it was evidenced by a number of respondents that they did not desire to be fully funded by this or any other funding body and criticism was levied at more established institutions within Dublin that are fully dependent upon grant aid. This finding is of interest given the limited capacity and sometimes will for the organisations to develop alternative income streams. In particular, concerns were raised regarding how funding potentially mars autonomy. There was also indication from some interviewees that sometimes innovation develops as a result of adversity. However, based on the

evidence emanating from the interviews I argued that the needs of the organisation change over time and that too much precariousness as they develop can detract from the artistic aspirations of the organisation and undermines their ability to exploit the benefits of their developing expertise.

The relationship with the ACI is complex. I believe that the level of frustration expressed was not just based on the financial relationship but that it is possible that this relationship also has a symbolic dimension. DiMaggio and Powell contend that 'organizations compete not just for resources' but also for 'institutional legitimacy, for social as well as economic fitness'.¹¹⁷⁸ Similarly, Crane contends that artists compete for both material and symbolic rewards, a perspective that can be applied also to artist-run spaces.¹¹⁷⁹ Predicated on their status as the 'national agency for funding, developing and promoting the arts in Ireland' the ACI are the principle agent in conferring symbolic legitimacy and distinction upon individuals, organisations and their arts activities.¹¹⁸⁰ Symbolic recognition can be conceived to act as a reward to participants in lieu of hard or tangible benefits. This theory helps illuminate why the ACI was important to the organisations despite the various problems that have been highlighted.

The ability to develop independent revenue streams differed across the sample. Earned income was primarily from studio and gallery rental. Gallery rental provides an adjustable source of income and one over which the organisations have autonomy. Throughout the thesis, and earlier in this conclusion, I have identified that this source is less desirable. However, when the full financial scenario of the organisations is taken into account, the practice is in some instances necessary from a practical point of view.

This research identifies that scale within studio facilities is a central aspect of the financial sustainability of the organisations, thus whether by strategic design or opportunity, the dual-function model is beneficial to the organisations. I found that income from studio rentals not only increases access to resources but provides a source of income over which organisations have autonomy including the cross-subsidisation of their gallery costs where necessary. This is a clear benefit to the dual-function model that predominates within Dublin. As an activity this source does not detract from the core focus of the organisations. However the affordability of these studio spaces is important in terms of the objective of supporting artists, and therefore there are

¹¹⁷⁸ DiMaggio and Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," 150.

¹¹⁷⁹ Diana Crane, *The Transformation of the Avant-Garde: The New York Art World, 1940-1985* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987). See also "Reward Systems in Art, Science, and Religion," *American Behavioral Scientist* (1976).

¹¹⁸⁰ Quote is given as per the ACI's tagline.

limits as to how far this income source can be exploited. Despite the importance of this as a resource, only two organisations entered the market with scale as part of their strategy when establishing their organisations and selecting premises. This finding is important in terms of the potential impact of this thesis upon establishing organisations. However, the evidence shows that, despite achieving a degree of stability, these large scale enterprises continued to struggle to fully finance the model including the full time staffing which is required to run these expanded organisations. Thus, while studio provision and scale is important, based on the evidence in this research, it could not singularly finance the organisations.

In addition to workload and finances the final challenge and threat to organisational sustainability was identified as insecure tenancies and long term access to a suitable quality of premises. It was evidenced through the precedence of TBG+S and PAC that stable accommodation can support organisations. While some organisations were able to accommodate changes to their premises, with particular respect to studio premises, others reported that it was highly detrimental to the organisation.

The chapter concluded by investigating the question of whether their survival was desired or necessary. In respect of this the concept of 'disposable' organisations was considered and it was proposed that a balance is needed whereby some organisations are replaced by new and innovative organisations, while others persist and evolve.¹¹⁸¹ However, as is evidenced within this research the decline of the field is due to both the often undesired closure of the sample organisations and the absence of new organisations. Reflecting on the totality of this research it is my opinion that these types of organisations made a contribution to the arts infrastructure that exceeded what could have been achieved through more short-term projects. The organisation provides an important infrastructure within which to work and one which accumulates skills and knowledge. Furthermore, it is only through ongoing enterprise that the community that was at the heart of these organisations could be fully developed. Thus, there is an argument that there is benefit to the survival of at least a portion of the population; this is especially strong in light of the contribution that has been made by their predecessors, TBG+S and PAC, through their continued success.

Reflections on the Research

This thesis plays an important role in exposing the huge amount of often invisible work that goes into sustaining these organisations. It provides important insight into the structures and processes that are engaged and of the environments that are negotiated. It identifies and

¹¹⁸¹ March, "Understanding Organisational Adaptation," 9.

telegraphs the role that these organisations play for those participating in them either as managers or as artists. In each of these areas the research provides a novel contribution to Irish art history as it both records and analyses the experiences of those who are directly involved in the organisations. Through discovering and analysing the *modus operandi* of the organisations from this perspective a unique understanding is provided into these organisations which act as a vehicle for the delivery of art exhibitions and thus contribute to the arts in Ireland.

This research provides a previously undocumented view and analysis of these organisations and provides an important base for further extended research into the area. For example there is art-historical value in the continued longitudinal study of the remaining sample organisations and also in extending the research countrywide. Furthermore, comparative analysis of how the identified challenges have been negotiated by similar organisations internationally, and parallel organisations (for example single-function studio groups) within Ireland would also prove useful particularly to practitioners and policy makers. These studies represent important extensions of the current thesis that are made possible by the investigation and analysis that I have provided and which constitutes an important, original, and in-depth foundational knowledge of these organisations and the individuals involved in them.

Appendix A: Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Main Sample Information Sheet

Dear _____,

My name is Alexandra Murphy and I am a ____ year PhD student in Art History at Trinity College. As part of my research I am conducting interviews to explore the experience of artist-run gallery spaces in Dublin from the perspective of those involved in them. The research is funded by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Science (IRCHSS).

There is very little research to date on artist-run gallery spaces. Much of the research that has been conducted to date has been in the United States of America and Canada. However, this has not been researched in the Irish context. Furthermore, little research has investigated the artist-run gallery spaces from the perspective of those involved in them. The purpose of this study is to a deeper understanding of artist-run gallery spaces in the contemporary Irish context.

I would like to invite you to take part in an interview for the study. The interview will focus on your own experience of participation in _____. Interviews are anticipated to take between 60 and 90 minutes.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to respond to individual questions is entirely at your own discretion. If for any reason you do not wish to respond to a question, please feel free to decline. If there is any information that you disclose during the interview that you wish to be treated as anonymous you can advise me of this at any time during or after the interview. Such information will be presented either in aggregate form or in an anonymous manner and will not be attributed to yourself as an individual or your organisation. If you wish I can provide you with a transcript of your interview for review and you may use this to identify any information that you would prefer to remain anonymous.

Consent may be withdrawn, and participation terminated at any time without prejudice. You can do this via e mail or by mail to the researcher. Interviews will be digitally recorded and then transcribed. All data collected will be stored securely and confidentially for five years and then destroyed.

If you are willing to take part in the interview process I would be grateful if you would contact me by return of email. I will then contact you to arrange a time and place convenient to yourself. I would be happy to provide you with an outline of the key themes for discussion in advance of the interview. **Please do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during your participation – my full contact details are listed at the end of this information sheet.**

I will be happy to share my research findings with you on completion of the PhD.

Alexandra Murphy
PhD Student
Dept. History of Art and Architecture
Trinity College
Dublin 2.

Dr Yvonne Scott
Head of Dept
Dept. History of Art and Architecture
Trinity College
Dublin 2.

0863074164
Email: murpha10@tcd.ie

Email: scotty@tcd.ie

Figure 2: Main Sample Consent Form

The nature and purpose of the study have been explained to me both verbally and through the information sheet supplied.

I _____ understand that I am consenting to participate in a study, which explores the experience of participation in artist-run gallery spaces in contemporary Ireland.

I understand that in signing this consent form I am agreeing to participate in a face-to-face interview of approx. 60-90 minutes conducted by the researcher Alexandra Murphy. I am aware that this consent includes granting permission to have my interview with the researcher recorded and transcribed and to having the data included in her dissertation. I am also aware that the data in this dissertation may be published in journals and used in workshops and seminars.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time without prejudice. I also understand that if I disclose any information that I do not wish to be attributed to either myself or my organisation I may indicate this to the researcher at any time and this information if included in the research will be presented in an anonymous manner. If I wish I may request a copy of the interview transcript to review any information that I wish to be treated as anonymous.

I have been provided with the contact details of the researcher and the research supervisor should I have any questions or concerns regarding the study.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Participant)

Signed _____ Date _____ (Researcher)

RESEARCHER

Alexandra Murphy
PhD Student
TRIARC
Trinity College Dublin
0863074164

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Dr Yvonne Scott
Head of Dept
History of Art and Architecture
Trinity College Dublin

Figure 3: Exhibiting Artist Information Sheet

My name is Alexandra Murphy and I am a PhD student in Art History at Trinity College. As part of my research I am conducting interviews to explore the experience of artist-run gallery spaces in Dublin from the perspective of those involved in them, including the artists who exhibit in the galleries. The galleries that are involved in the study are Basic Space Dublin, Block T, The Market Studios/Unit H, MART, Ormond Studios, Pallas Projects and Studios (PP/S), thisisnotashop, Monster Truck Gallery and Studios, and The Joinery. The research is funded by the Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Science (IRCHSS).

I would like to invite you to take part in an interview for the study. The interview will focus on your own experience of exhibiting in the galleries that form the study. Interviews are anticipated to take approximately 15 minutes.

Your participation in the study will be anonymous and information and direct quotes used within the research will be presented in an anonymous format. Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to respond to individual questions is entirely at your own discretion. If for any reason you do not wish to respond to a question, please feel free to decline. Consent may be withdrawn, and participation terminated at any time without prejudice. You can do this via email or by mail to the researcher. Interviews will be conducted via Skype (or another agreed method) and the audio will be digitally recorded. All data collected will be stored securely and confidentially for five years and then destroyed.

If you are willing to take part in the interview process I would be grateful if you would contact me by return of email. I will then contact you to arrange a time convenient to yourself. I would be happy to provide you with an outline of the key themes for discussion in advance of the interview. **Please do not hesitate to ask any questions about the study either before participating or during your participation – my full contact details are listed at the end of this information sheet.**

I will be happy to share my research findings with you on completion of the PhD.

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Dept. History of Art and Architecture
Trinity College
Dublin 2.

Email: scotty@tcd.ie

Figure 4: Exhibiting Artist Consent Form

The nature and purpose of the study have been explained to me through the information sheet supplied.

I _____ understand that I am consenting to participate in a study, which explores the experience of participation in artist-run gallery spaces in contemporary Ireland.

I understand that in signing this consent form I am agreeing to participate in a telephone/Skype interview of approximately 15 minutes conducted by the researcher Alexandra Murphy. I am aware that this consent includes granting permission to have my interview with the researcher recorded and transcribed and to having the data included in her dissertation. I understand that my participation will be treated as confidential by the researcher and my identity will be kept anonymous. I am also aware that the data in this dissertation may be published in journals and used in workshops and seminars. I understand that this includes the use of anonymised direct quotes from the interview.

I understand that participation in this study is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent and terminate my participation at any time without prejudice.

I have been provided with the contact details of the researcher and the research supervisor should I have any questions or concerns regarding the study.

Signed _____ Date _____
(Participant)

Signed ____Alexandra Murphy_____ Date _____ (Researcher)

RESEARCHER

Alexandra Murphy
PhD Student
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RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Dr Yvonne Scott
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Figure 5: Sample Organisations and Interview Schedule

Organisation	Interviewee	Date of Interview
Basic Space	Daniel Bermingham, Director Greg Howie, Founding-Director Hannah Fitz, Founding-Director Lee Welch, Director	29 th July 2016 7 th December 2012 7 th December 2012 29 th July 2016
Block T	Grace McEvoy, Founding-Director Nick Linders, Founding-Director	5 th December 2012 4 th July 2016 25 th February 2013
The Joinery	Miranda Driscoll, Founding-Director	19 th October 2012
The Market Studios/Unit H	Deirdre Morrissey, Founding-Director	13 th March 2013
MART	Ciara Scanlan, Founding-Director	27 th July 2015
Monster Truck Gallery and Studios	Rayne Booth, Founder Colm MacAthlaoich, Founding-Director Peter Prendergast, Founding-Director	3 rd January 2014 16 th November 2012 21 st November 2012 9 th January 2014
Ormond Studios	Sandra McAllister, Founding Member Martina McDonald, Founding Member	10 th April 2013 16 th May 2013
Pallas Projects and Studios	Mark Cullen, Founding-Director Gavin Murphy, Director	3 rd June 2013 3 rd January 2013
thisisnotashop	Jessamyn Fiore, Director Jessica Foley, Gallery Manager Michael Kynaston, Gallery Manager	13 th July 2015 26 th August 2014 4 th December 2012

Figure 6: Main Sample Interview Design

	Theme	Question	Probes/Anticipated discussion
	Ice breaker	How did you originally become involved in setting up an artist run space?	Personal/Professional circumstance Social relationships External conditions Influencing models
1	Motivations and Ideology	What were your aspirations in establishing an artist run gallery space?	WHY an artist-run gallery space? Personal/professional anticipated impacts. Anticipated engagement with or impact on specific art types/artist profiles/organisational ethos. Anticipated engagement with /impact on wider arts community. (Change and development)
2	The Physical Space	How did you select and develop the physical space of the gallery?	Process and factors in finding a space (Key physical qualities and requirements for space and reasons for these, aesthetics, locale etc). Interventions, renovations of space. Impact of physical space group identity and artistic decisions. (Change and development)
3	Internal Structures and Relationships	Who are the main individuals and groups of people that make up the organisation and what roles do they play?	Organisational structure Roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes. Skills needed and skills learned. Membership and gate-keeping Collective identity (Change and development)
4	Artistic and Curatorial Practices	What is the process for the selection and realisation of exhibitions and activities?	Process and factors (ideological, aesthetic, external) in the selection of artists for shows. Curatorial practices and processes Engagement with artists prior to/during/post exhibition (Change and development)
5	Reception	Who are your audience and how do you communicate with them?	Contact with media and critics. Audience profile (openings and general). Other activities & audience development. (Change and development)
6	External Relationships	Outside of your core membership group what relationships do you have with individuals and organisations?	Connections and collaborations with artist-run groups and galleries. Funding bodies. Situate artist-run generally and organisation specifically within Irish visual arts landscape. (Change and development)

7	Reflections and Aspirations	What are the main successes of the organisation and what have been the main challenges faced?	How success is defined and measured. Overcoming challenges. Link to aspirations for the future and challenges to achieving these. The long-term future of the organisation.
	Closing Question: Is there anything else you would like to add?		

Figure 7: Exhibiting Artists' Interview Design

Introduction	• Thank for participation. • Inform that are recording audio as per information sheet and consent form. • Disclosure of research involvement in MTGS. • Review consent and the use of information. • Any questions before proceeding? • Confirmation of which organisations the interviewee had exhibited with.
Why exhibit with an artist-run space?	• Why you choose to exhibit with artist-run spaces? • Why these spaces in particular?
The process of getting an exhibition.	• Were the exhibitions invited or through application? • Reflections on the application procedure? • Did you pay a fee or were you paid a fee in any example? • Reflections on the practice of some artist-run spaces of charging artists to exhibit?
The experience of exhibiting with artist-run spaces.	• Did you make new work or draw from a pre-existing body of work? • Did you receive curatorial supports or other professional supports? • Did you consider your exhibition to be a success or not, and how do you define this? • Did the exhibition have any impacts either on your art practice or on your career?
Overall reflections on artist-run spaces.	• In your experience what are the advantages/disadvantages of working with these spaces? • In your experience how do they differ from other types of galleries?
Closing.	• Do you have anything else that you would like to add? • Thanks

Figure 8: Artist-run Gallery Spaces in Dublin pre-2005

Start Year	End Year	Name
1966	ongoing	Project Arts Centre
1980	1981	Third Policeman Gallery
1983	ongoing	Temple Bar Gallery and Studios
1992	1992	Basement Gallery
1992	1993	Brownes Gallery
1996	ongoing	PP/S
1996	2015	Broadstone Studios

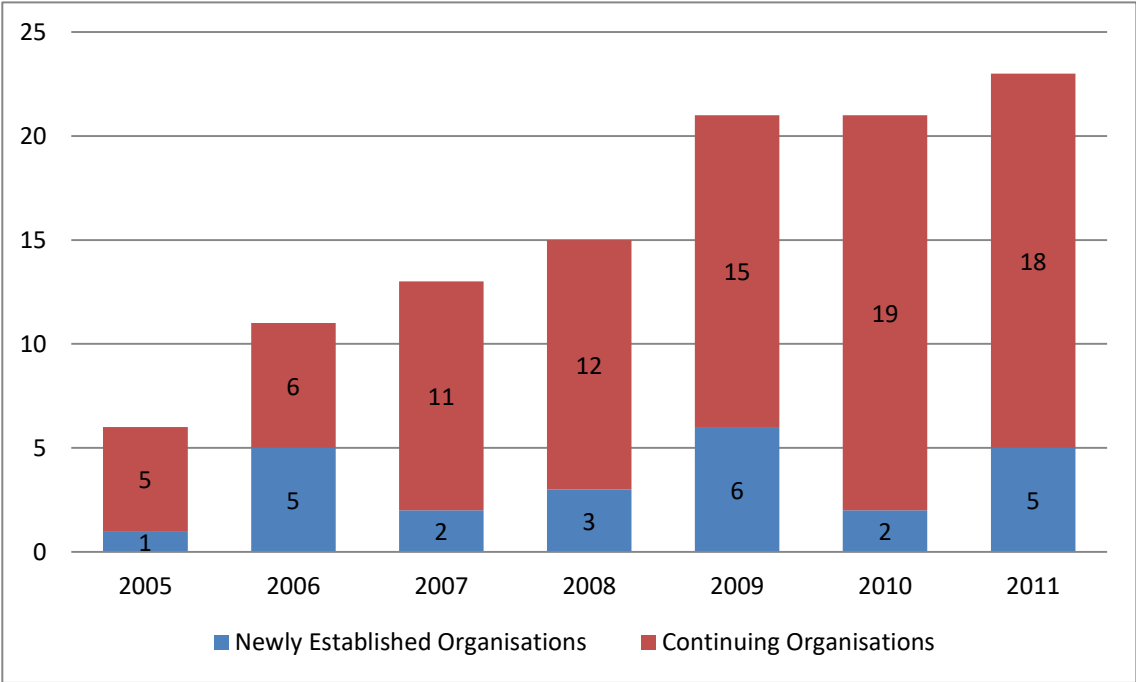
Source: Data compiled by researcher from NIVAL Gallery Database and Artist Studios Files, ALA, and Companies Registration Office documents (as listed in Appendix B).

Figure 9: National Survey of Activity, 2011

	Gallery Name	Location	Year Established	Status in 2015
1	Basic Space	Dublin	2010	Ongoing
2	Little Green Street Gallery	Dublin	2011	Closed 2013
3	Block T	Dublin	2011	Ongoing
4	Temple Bar Gallery and Studios	Dublin	1983	Ongoing
5	Monster Truck Gallery and Studios	Dublin	2006	Gallery closed 2013
6	PP/S	Dublin	1996	Ongoing
7	The Joinery	Dublin	2008	Closed 2014
9	The Market Studios/Unit H	Dublin	2008	Closed 2014
10	Ormond Studios	Dublin	2009	Ongoing
11	The Complex	Dublin	2009	Ongoing
12	NAS	Dublin	1983	Ongoing
13	Broadstone Studios	Dublin	1996 Gallery 2005	Closed 2015
14	thisisnotashop	Dublin	2006-2011	Gallery closed 2009, activities cease 2011
15	Askeaton Contemporary Arts	Limerick	2006	Ongoing
16	Occupy Space	Limerick	2009	'nomadic' since losing gallery in 2012
17	Limerick Printmakers	Limerick	2000	Ongoing
18	Ormston House	Limerick	2011	Ongoing
19	Faber Studios	Limerick	2009	Closed 2013
20	Basement Project Space	Cork	2009	Closed 2012
21	TACTIC	Cork	2011	Ongoing
22	Courthouse	Clare	2007	Ongoing
23	The Black Mariah	Cork	2007	Ongoing
24	126 Gallery	Galway	2006	Ongoing
25	SOMA	Waterford	2009	Closed 2012
26	Hive	Waterford	2011	Ongoing

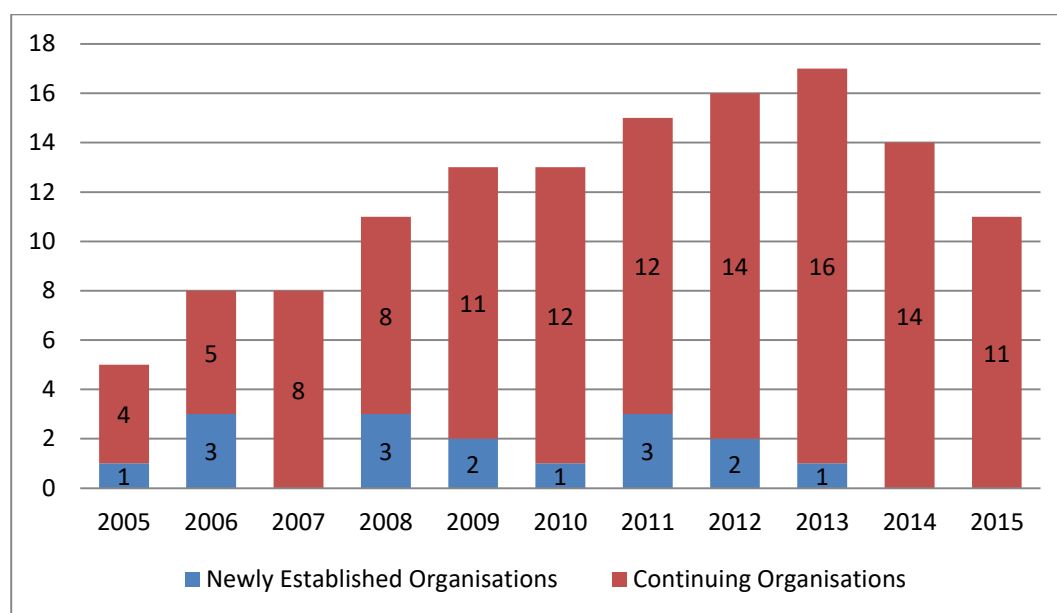
Data compiled by researcher from NIVAL Gallery Database and Artist Studios Files, ALA, and Companies Registration Office documents (as listed in Appendix B), unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 10: Country-wide Population of Artist-Run Gallery Spaces in the Republic of Ireland, 2000-2011



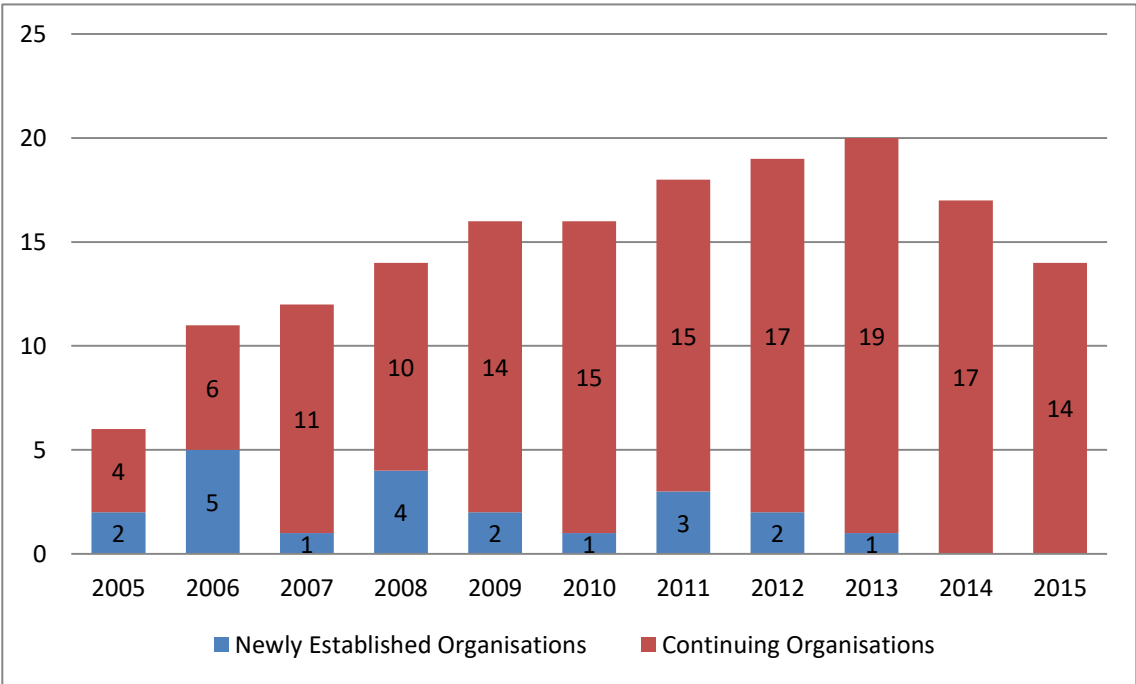
Source: Data compiled by researcher from NIVAL Gallery Database and Artist Studios Files, ALA, and Companies Registration Office documents (as listed in Appendix B).

Figure 11: Population of Artist-Run Gallery Spaces in Dublin, 2005-2015



Source: Data compiled by researcher from NIVAL Gallery Database and Artist Studios Files, ALA, and Companies Registration Office documents (as listed in Appendix B).

Figure 12: Population of Artist-Run Gallery Spaces in Dublin, Including One Person Organisations, 2005-2015

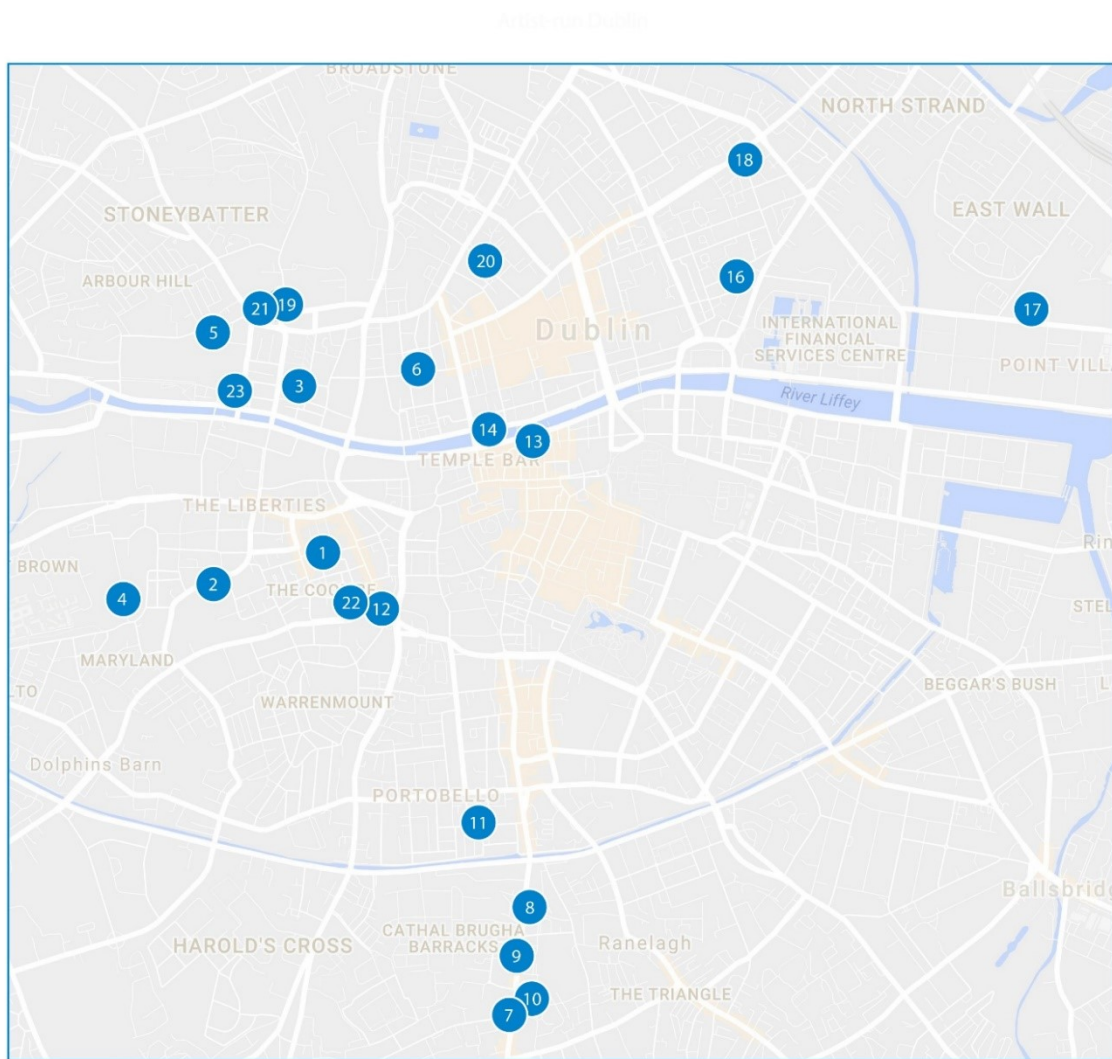


Source: Data compiled by researcher from NIVAL Gallery Database and Artist Studios Files, ALA, and Companies Registration Office documents (as listed in Appendix B).

Figure 13: Founding and Early Members of Sample Organisations

Organisation	Year Established	Founders and Early Members
Basic Space Dublin	2010	Hugo Byrne* Kari Cahill Hannah Fitz Greg Howie
Block T	2011	Laura G-Dovns Lili Heller Nick Linders Grace McEvoy Simon McKeagney* Ben Readman Joe Salam
The Joinery	2008	Miranda Driscoll Feargal Ward
The Market Studios	2008	Claire Behan Monica Flynn Deirdre Morrissey
The MART	2006 (Gallery 2012)	Chloe Freaks[*] Ciara Scanlan Matthew Nevin
MTGS Gallery and Studios	2006	Alan Butler Rayne Booth Colm MacAthlaoich Peter Prendergast
Ormond Studios	2009	Jennette Donnelly Jackie Gray Eithne Griffin Kevin Kirwan Sandra McAllister Martina McDonald Nicky Teegan Jane Stewart Jason Dunne Sinead Reilly
PP/S and Studios	1996	Mark Cullan Brian Duggan
thisisnotashop	2006	Aideen Darcy Marius Stanley Jessamyn Fiore#
*left shortly after establishment # joined shortly after establishment		

Figure 14: Map of Locations of Sample Organisations in Dublin



- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Basic Space, Vicar Street (2010-12) | 13 MTGS Temple Bar (2011-14) |
| 2 Basic Space, Marrowbone Lane (2013-15) | 14 Ormond Studios (2009-ongoing) |
| 3 Block T, Smithfield (2011-16) | 15 PP/S Foley Street 1 (1996-2001) |
| 4 Block T, Basin View (2016-ongoing) | 16 PP/S Foley Street 2 (2000-07/08) |
| 5 The Joinery (2008-14) | 17 PP/S, Sheriff Street Upper (2001-circa 03) |
| 6 The Market Studios/Unit H (2008-14) | 18 PP/S Pallas Heights (2002-07) |
| 7 The MART Gallery (2013- ongoing) | 19 PP/S Grangegorman Lower (2005-circa 11) |
| 8 Mart House Studios (ongoing) | 20 PP/S Dominick Street Lower (2011-12) |
| 9 MART Casino Studios (ongoing) | 21 PP/S Brunswick Mill (2004- circa 08) |
| 10 MART Parker Hill Studios (ongoing) | 22 PP/S The Coombe (2012- ongoing) |
| 11 MART Lennox St Studios (ongoing) | 23 thisisnotashop (2006-11) |
| 12 MTGS Francis St. (2006-ongoing) | |

Figure 15: Incorporation Details of the Sample Organisations

Organisation	Year of Incorporation	Company Type	Legal Name
Block T	2012	Private Limited Company	Block T Limited
The Joinery	2008	Private Limited Company	The Joinery Studio Limited
The Joinery	2011	Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital	The Joinery Gallery Limited
The Market Studios	2008	Private Limited Company	Croretice Limited
The Market Studios	2008	Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital	Market Studios Limited
MART	2014	Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital	The Mart Gallery Ltd
Monster Truck Gallery and Studios (MTGS)	2007	Private Limited Company	Monster Truck Gallery and Studios Limited
Pallas Projects and Studios (PP/S)	2000	Private Limited Company	Pallas Studios Limited
Pallas Projects and Studios (PP/S)	2011	Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital	Pallas Projects Limited
thisisnotashop	2007	Company Limited by Guarantee without a Share Capital	Thisisnotashop Limited

Figure 16: Legal Status of Country-Wide and Historic Organisations

Name	Date Operational	Formalisation
Project Arts Centre (Dublin)	1966 [exhibitions from 1967]	CLG, 1971
The Third Policeman Gallery (Dublin)	1980-1981	None identified
Temple Bar Gallery and Studios (Dublin)	1983-ongoing	CLG, 1985
New Art Studios (Dublin)	1983-ongoing	CLG 1983
Broadstone Studios (Dublin) (i)	1996-2015	LTD 1998
Limerick Printmakers (Limerick) (ii)	1999 [2000]-ongoing	LTD 2010
		CLG 2010
The Guest House (Cork)	2004 [2007]-ongoing	(collective)
G126 (Galway)	2005-ongoing	None identified
Four Gallery (Dublin)	2005-ongoing	Registered as a business (sole trader) in 2006
Askeaton Contemporary Arts (Co. Limerick)	2006-ongoing	None identified
The Black Mariah (Cork)	2007-	-
Joy Gallery/Redspace/Hellooperator* (Dublin)	2008-2010, 2011	None identified
The Complex (Dublin)	2009-ongoing	Incorporated as CLG 2008
Occupy Space (Limerick)	2009-ongoing	None identified
Basement Project Space (Cork)	2009-2012	Registered business (partnership) 2009
SOMA Contemporary (Waterford)	2009-2012	Registered as a business (individual) in 2011.
Tactic		Registered as public in 2011) also registered as business name partnership in 2011.
Faber Studios (Limerick)	2009-ongoing	(collective)
Ormston House (Limerick)	2011-ongoing	Registered as business (sole trader) in 2011.
The Hive Waterford	2012-ongoing	Registered as a partnership when established in 2012.
Flatpack Gallery	2011	None identified
Loom studios	?-2013	Business name registration (partnership) 2011.
Avenue Road (Dublin)	2012-2013	Business name registration(partnership) 2013
Chancery Studios (Dublin)	2012	None identified
Little Green	2012	None identified

Source: Data compiled by the researcher through consultation of the Companies Registration Office database of business and companies filings.

- (i) Broadstone Studios registered under the name Trumpetview Trading Limited in 1998 before changing the name to Broadstone Studios Limited in the same year. A second company Broadstone Artist Studios Limited was established in 2013. Both companies were Limited Companies, the latter became a single member company later in 2013.
- (ii) Limerick Printmakers originally registered as Robert Street Studios, within 12 months they changed the company name to Limerick Printmakers. They started providing open call multidisciplinary exhibition opportunities in 2000.
- (iii) Developed a project space in 2007

Figure 17: History of Directors in Incorporated Companies

Block T Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Laura Garbataviciute-Dovn	20/01/2012	ongoing
Director	Laura Garbataviciute-Dovn	20/03/2012	ongoing
Director	Ben Readman	20/03/2012	ongoing

The Joinery Studio Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Feargal Ward	14/02/2008	ongoing
Director	Feargal Ward	13/02/2008	ongoing
Director	Miranda Driscoll	13/02/2008	ongoing
The Joinery Gallery Limited			
Director	Feargal Ward	18/11/2011	ongoing
Director	Miranda Driscoll	18/11/2011	ongoing

Croretfice Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Claire Behan	06/03/2008	28/01/2011
Director	Claire Behan	06/03/2008	28/01/2011
Director	Deirdre Morrissey	06/03/2008	28/01/2011
Director	Monica Flynn	06/03/2008	28/01/2011
Market Studios Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Claire Behan	29/09/2008	ongoing
Director	Claire Behan	29/09/2008	ongoing
Director	Deirdre Morrissey	29/09/2008	ongoing
Director	Monica Flynn	29/09/2008	ongoing
Director	Jessica Foley	04/02/2010	ongoing
Director	Alex Davis	04/02/2010	ongoing
Director	Ciara Scanlan	17/02/2012	ongoing
Director	Rachael Gilbourne	17/02/2012	ongoing
Director	Eleanor Lawler	20/12/2012	ongoing
Director	Francis Fay	17/12/2012	20/12/2012

The Mart Gallery Ltd			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Ciara Scanlan	31/01/2014	ongoing
Director	Matthew Nevin	31/07/2014	ongoing
Director	Ciara Scanlan	31/01/2014	ongoing

Monster Truck Gallery and Studios Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary-joint	Alan Butler	02/11/2007	ongoing
Secretary	Alexandra Murphy	11/04/2010	ongoing
Director	Colm MacAthlaoich	02/11/2007	ongoing
Director	Peter Prendergast	02/11/2007	ongoing
Secretary	Lola Rayne Booth	02/11/2007	11/04/2010

Pallas Studios Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Mark Cullen	18/05/2000	ongoing
Director	Mark Cullen	18/05/2000	ongoing
Director	Brian Duggan	18/05/2000	ongoing
Director	Helen Carey	08/07/2009	ongoing
Director	Garrett Phelan	08/07/2009	ongoing
Director	Patrick Murphy	08/07/2009	ongoing
Director	Gaby Smyth	08/07/2009	ongoing
Director	Patrick Ambrose	08/07/2009	ongoing
Director	Gavin Murphy	01/01/2011	ongoing
Director	Michael McLoughlin	18/05/2000	28/04/2002
Pallas Projects Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Mark Cullen	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Patrick Ambrose	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Lisa Alison	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Gavin Murphy	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Sarah Searson	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Brian Duggan	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Helen Carey	15/09/2011	ongoing
Director	Mark Cullen	15/09/2011	ongoing
Thisisnotashop Limited			
Position	Name	From Date	To Date
Secretary	Jessmyn Fiore	04/09/2007	ongoing
Director	Jessamyn Fiore	04/09/2007	ongoing
Director	Aideen Darcy	28/03/2008	ongoing
Director	Anne Fleming	04/09/2007	16/11/2011

Source: All information compiled from directors reports generated from Vision-net.ie April 2013. Where a Company Formation Agent was it is not represented in the information.

Figure 18: Turnover and Expenses in CLGs, as per filed Annual Accounts

Turnover (Operational and Administrative Expenses)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
The Market Studios					€ 35,409 (€ 34,905)	€ 51,818 (€ 44,570)	€ 47,238 (€ 43,396)	
MART								€ 76,284 (€ 82,838)
The Joinery						€0 (€0)	€0 (€0)	€ 18,983 (€ 12,676)
PP/S						€ 78,596 (€ 74,918)	€ 103,750 (€ 114,278)	€ 117,876 (€ 101,671)
thisisnotashop		€ 39,538 (€ 36,731)						

• Blue border denotes year of incorporation

Source: Compiled by author in 2015 from annual accounts submitted to the CRO. All documents are listed in the Appendix B of this thesis.

Figure 19: Trends in Profit and Loss of Organisations 2001-2014

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Block T Limited													€ 10,068.00	€ 6,926.00
Coretface Limited														
Market Studios Limited											€ (12,198.00)	€ 7,193.00	€ 3,842.00	
The MART Gallery Limited														€ (6,554.00)
Monster Truck Gallery and Studios Limited								€ (2,774.00)	€ 941.00	€ (446.00)	€ (8,355.00)	€ (230.00)	€ (15.00)	€ (1,732.00)
The Joinery Studios Limited									€ (9,841.00)	€ (3,351.00)	€ (521.00)	€ -	€ -	€ -
The Joinery Gallery Limited												€ -	€ -	€ 6,307.00
Pallas Studios Limited	€ 1,196.00	€ (11,361.00)	€ (21,359.00)	€ 13,092.00	€ 11,531.00	€ 32,580.00	€ (22,755.00)	€ (25,345.00)	€ (12,295.00)					
Pallas Projects Limited														
thisisnotashop Limited						€ 2,807.00						€ (1,078.00)	€ (9,539.00)	€ 16,146.00

Source: Compiled by author in 2015 from company documents submitted to the CRO. All documents are listed in Appneix B of this thesis. No information was available on the unincorporated companies.

Figure 20: Dublin City Council Arts Grants 2006-2015

<i>Total DCC Grants Awarded</i>	€426,000	€526,000	€601,000	€601,000	€601,000	€530,000	€530,000	€530,000	€530,000	€530,000	€530,000	€530,000
Basic Space						-	-	-	-	-	-	€530,000
Block T							€2,000	€3,000	€3,000	€3,000	-	-
MART								€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	-
MTGS	-	-	-	-	-	€2,000	€4,000	€3,000	€4,000	€2,000	€2,000	-
Ormond Studios						-	-	-	-	-	-	-
pp/s	€5,000	€7,000	€8,000	€8,000	€8,000	€8,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000
The Joinery						€2,000	€3,000	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000	€5,000	
The Market Studios						-	-	€2,000	€2,000	€2,000	-	
thisisnotashop	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Project Arts Centre	€22,000	€29,000	€27,000	€27,000	€27,000	€27,000	€28,000	€27,000	€27,000	€27,000	€27,000	€27,000
TBG&S	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€5,000	€6,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€7,000	€8,000

SOURCE: Funding decisions documents provided by DCC to the researcher. These are listed in full in the reference section of this thesis.

Figure 21: Total Arts Council Funding for Organisations, 1999-2015

(i)	Basic Space 2010-ongoing	Block T 2011-ongoing	The Joinery 2008-2014	The Market Studios 2008-2014	MART 2012(2013)- ongoing	MTGS 2006- (2013)ongoing	Ormond Studios 2009-ongoing	PP/S 1996 (1999)- ongoing	thisisnotashop 2006- (2009)2011
1999								£2,000	
2000								£2,000	
2001								€30,242	
2002								€10,000	
2003								€20,000	
2004								€34,492	
2005								€49,305	
2006						€0		€76,000	€0
2007						€0		€58,863	€0
2008			€0	€0		€10,000	€0	€52,556	€3,000
2009			€0	€0		€10,000	€0	€49,500	€3,000
2010		€4,000	€5,000	€1,500		€31,000	€11,150	€63,125	€0
2011	€0	€0	€19,000	€10,000		€31,500	€5,000	€60,000	
2012	€0	€6,000	€3,000	€10,000	€0	€43,000	€4,000	€57,205	
2013	€3,000	€5,000	€3,000	€5,000	€0	€27,500	€0	€29,000	
2014	€2,500	€26,665	€3,500	€4,500	€5,500	€7,000	€3,500	€23,000	
2015	€10,000	€0			€0	€7,000	€4,000	€34,000	

Source: Compiled by the author from VAI and ACI funding announcements as published online and from the ACI Annual Reports. See: The Arts Council of Ireland, 'Who We Funded' webpage: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/funding-decisions/> and <http://visualartists.ie/advocacy-advice-membership-services/visual-artists-workspace-scheme/>. The individual ACI reports are listed in the Reference section of this thesis.

- (i) The operational dates represented are for the entire organisation, bracket indicates date of gallery activity if differed from overall organisation.

Figure 22: Breakdown of Arts Council Funding of Organisations, 1999-2015

	(i)	Basic Space	Block T	The Joinery	The Market Studios	MART	MTGS	Ormond Studios	PP/S	this is not a hop
1999		2010-ongoing	2011-ongoing	2008-2014	2008-2014	2012(2013)-ongoing	2006-(2013)	2009-ongoing	1996 (1999)-ongoing	2006-(2009)2011
2000	Exhibitions Assistance								£2,000.00	
2001	Exhibitions Assistance								£2,000.00	
	Visual Arts Project (Capital)								€8,242.00	
	Operating (Revenue)								€10,000.00	
	Operating (Capital)								€12,000.00	
2002	Revenue								€10,000.00	
2003	Revenue								€20,000.00	
2004	Revenue								€30,000.00	
	Programming (Capital)								€4,492.00	
2005	Revenue								€48,000.00	
	Programming (Capital) Small Festival								€1,305.00	
2006	New Projects						€0.00		€25,000.00	€0.00
	Revenue (Resource and Service Organisation)						€0.00		€51,000.00	€0.00
2007	Professional Development and Training						€0.00		€363.00	€0.00
	Capital (Resource and Service Organisation)						€0.00		€6,500.00	€0.00
	Rev						€0.00		€52,000.00	€0.00
2008	Travel and Training			€0.00	€0.00		€0.00		€556.00	€0.00
	Annual Funding/Revenue			€0.00	€0.00		€10,000.00		€52,000.00	€3,000.00
2009	Annual Funding/Revenue			€0.00	€0.00		€10,000.00		€49,500.00	€0.00
	Annual Programming			€0.00	€0.00		€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€3,000.00

	(i)	Basic Space	Block T	The Joinery	The Market Studios	MART	MTGS	Ormond Studios	PP/S	thisisnotas hop
2010		2010-ongoing	2011-ongoing	2008-2014	2008-2014	2012(2013)-ongoing	2006-(2013)	2009-ongoing	1996 (1999)-ongoing	2006-(2009)2011
	Project Award			€0.00	€0.00		€10,000.00	€8,150.00	€18,125.00	€0.00
	Annual Programming	€0.00	€0.00	€5,000.00	€0.00		€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00
	Annual Funding/Rev	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00		€15,000.00	€0.00	€40,000.00	€0.00
	Visual Artists Workspace and Minor Capital	€0.00	€4,000.00	€0.00	€1,500.00		€6,000.00	€3,000.00	€5,000.00	€0.00
2011	Project Award	€0.00	€0.00	€16,000.00	€0.00		€21,500.00	€0.00	€30,000.00	
	Visual Artists Workspace Scheme	€0.00	€0.00	€3,000.00	€10,000.00		€10,000.00	€5,000.00	€30,000.00	
2012	Project Award	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€35,000.00	€0.00	€28,205.00	
	Visual Artists Workspace Scheme	€0.00	€6,000.00	€3,000.00	€10,000.00	€0.00	€8,000.00	€4,000.00	€29,000.00	
2013	Project Award	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€19,500.00	€0.00	€0.00	
	Visual Artists Workspace Scheme	€3,000.00	€5,000.00	€3,000.00	€5,000.00	€0.00	€8,000.00	€0.00	€29,000.00	
2014	Project Award	€0.00	€26,665.00	€0.00	€0.00	€3,000.00	€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	
	Visual Artists Workspace Scheme	€2,500.00	€0.00	€3,500.00	€4,500.00	€2,500.00	€7,000.00	€3,500.00	€23,000.00	
2015	Project	€0.00	€0.00			€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€16,000.00	
	Visual Artists Workspace Scheme	€10,000.00	€0.00			€0.00	€7,000.00	€4000.00	€17,000.00	
	Travel and Training	€0.00	€0.00			€0.00	€0.00	€0.00	€1000.00	

Source: Compiled by the author from VAI and ACI funding announcements as published online and from the ACI Annual Reports. See: The Arts Council of Ireland, 'Who We Funded' webpage: <http://www.artscouncil.ie/funding-decisions/> and <http://visualartists.ie/advocacy-advice-membership-services/visual-artists-workspace-scheme/>. The individual ACI reports are listed in the bibliography.

- (i) The operational dates represented are for the entire organisation, bracket indicates date of gallery activity if differed from overall organisation.

Appendix B: Documents Filed with the Companies Registration Office

Avenue Road Gallery [483913] (02/01/2013 [23/01/2013]). 8450803/1: RBN1A Registration of Business Name, Companies Registration Office.

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