

'There's No
Limit to an
Artist!'

A Critical Inquiry
into Age-Related
Policies and
Experiences at
the Jan van Eyck
Academie

Like Living
an
Artist

VAN
EYCK

Quality, development and
authenticity

"But one day [students] le
begin to work as artists. A
work also appears, you only
decorative objects. It's ver
A pressure is very strong." (F

University

'There's No Limit to an Artist!'

A Critical Inquiry into Age-Related Policies and Experiences at the Jan van Eyck Academie

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Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
	6 INTRODUCTION
1	7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
	7 Successful Aging and the Arts
	7 The Successful Aging Paradigm and Its Critiques
	7 Aging and Creativity
	8 The Artist as an Exemplary Figure
	8 The Successful Artist and the Link between Success and Age
	8 Defining Success as an Artist
	9 Critique on the Neoliberal Approach to Success in Artists
2	10 INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT
	10 Introduction and Methodology
	11 The Identity and Mission of Van Eyck
	12 Living Like an Artist
	13 Comparing and Contrasting Other Post-Academic Institutions to Van Eyck
3	15 ARTISTS' EXPERIENCES
	15 Introduction and Methodology
	16 Negotiating Artistic Aspirations and Market Requirements
	18 Understandings of Creative Development
	19 Understandings of Van Eyck
	21 Age in the Art World
4	23 REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
	25 Acknowledgments
	26 References
	28 Appendix 1: Summary Reflections and Recommendations
	29 Appendix 2: Topic Guides Section 2
	33 Appendix 3: Topic Guides Section 3
	37 Appendix 4

Introduction

The saying goes that age is but a number. Yet, it is also so much more than that, as many authors in the field of aging studies or cultural gerontology have shown and as we discovered over six weeks of research. The topic of aging comes with many unspoken presuppositions which often implicitly regulate and influence our perception of what it means to grow and be older. As Research Master students from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (2017-2018), we collaborated with the Van Eyck Academie and Maastricht University, to conduct a qualitative inquiry into how such presuppositions play out in the art world. We focused on the context of Dutch post-academic art institutions, using the Van Eyck Academie as our primary case study. The first part of this case study focuses on the institutions and the second on the experiences of artists at Van Eyck. We conducted a literature review, a discourse analysis of policy documents, and a thematic analysis of interviews and ethnographic observations. Our main focus within Van Eyck was the Living Like an Artist program (from now on referred to as LLA), a pilot project that offered one-month residencies to three artists over the age of 40. Using the LLA program as a case study, we aim to answer the following main questions: (1) How are ageist assumptions experienced, resisted, and reiterated by professional artists?; and (2) What role do age-limiting policies play in this dynamic? We hope that this research and its recommendations will help to further the development of this program and age-friendly policies at the Van Eyck Academie.

1 – Theoretical Framework

The LLA program focuses on how artists' lifestyles can provide models for living and aging in contemporary Western societies. In our first section, we tease out the links between successful aging, creativity and aging, being successful as an artist, and the role of age in defining a successful artistic career. This literature review helps us to contextualize our research and the activities at Van Eyck.

SUCCESSFUL AGING AND THE ARTS

THE SUCCESSFUL AGING PARADIGM AND ITS CRITIQUES

As the global population ages, debates on what it means to grow older are becoming increasingly important. The paradigm of 'successful aging' first appeared in the early 1960s (Havighurst, 1961) and has since taken on a specific meaning. The paradigm suggests that individuals are in control of their aging process and should be able to remain independent, active, and productive. As John W. Rowe and Robert L. Kahn put it, successful aging means the "avoidance of disease and disabilities, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function and sustained engagement in social and productive activities" (1997, p. 439). Aging persons are expected to be responsible for themselves, preventing dependence on family, friends, and the state. The successful aging paradigm fosters the idea of permanent personhood, implying that individuals remain the same throughout life – the ideal older person has not aged at all as it were.

Since its conception and implementation in many health policy plans, the successful aging paradigm has been frequently criticized. Sarah Lamb et al. (2017), for instance, have pointed to four specific reasons for concern. Firstly, they argue that the stress on individual agency and choice does not take into account human conditions of frailty, (inter)dependence, vulnerability, and transience. The focus on individual agency obscures social inequalities and contributes to a stigmatization of older people. Secondly, Lamb et al. assert that the paradigm reinforces gender stereotypes and inequalities by addressing men and women differently; physical vigor and sexual functionality are foregrounded for men and beauty and outer attractiveness for women. Thirdly, they claim that the paradigm is ethnocentric in nature, pertaining mainly to a Western, even American value system. As successful aging is now exported globally, it colonizes the existing models of aging present in other cultures.

Finally, Lamb et al. point out that the voices of older people themselves are mostly absent from current research.

Other important critical voices include Chris Gilleard and Paul Higgs (2011) who distinguish between a 'third' and 'fourth' age. They explain that the aging body becomes an object of abjection when the process of aging is associated with a loss of agency. People in the so-called "third" age try to distance themselves from vulnerability and dependency. They identify themselves as "young-old," prioritizing characteristics from youth, which they try to uphold through smart consumer choices, including anti-aging products, medical treatments, and self-help manuals. The opposite category of the "fourth" age or the so-called "old-old" is equated with care dependency and lack of control over themselves and their lives. Gilleard and Higgs argue that the distinction between these age imaginaries results in a marginalization of the "old-old," "othering" them in the process.

As pointed out by Jan Baars et al. (2014), making individuals responsible for aging successfully is consistent with the emphasis on individual responsibility in neoliberal modes of thinking. As criticism mounts, the search for new models of what good aging could entail intensifies. In this search, creativity is often called upon in different ways. Some of these ideas spotlight the concept of creativity, both in unintentionally reinforcing the paradigm of successful aging and in providing points of exit from it.

AGING AND CREATIVITY

Creativity is hard to define. As Aagje Swinnen writes: "It can be understood individually or relationally, tangibly or intangibly, or exclusively or democratically. Depending on the framework in which the concept is used, creativity signifies a product, process, or skill." (2019, p. 1). Definitions of creativity have developed over time and the use of the term has intensified in the past few decades. Creativity is everywhere and is seen as a solution to many contemporary problems. Keith Negus and Michael Pickering (2004) present a historical perspective on creativity and distinguish three paradigms: the creative genius (He), the creative individual (I), and the creative collaboration (We). These paradigms serve to understand how creativity works as a social construction. The He-paradigm considers creativity as a characteristic, distinguishing exceptional creators from ordinary people. This paradigm remained dominant well after World War II but gave way to the I-paradigm during the Cold War (Razik, 1970). The second paradigm

postulates that everyone has creative potential (Weiner, 2000), democratizing creativity for all (Glăveanu, 2015, p. 122). However, the I-paradigm retains the individualistic understanding of creativity that was present in the He-paradigm. In the late 20th century, studies into the psychology of creativity gave rise to the We-paradigm (Amabile, 1983; Gruber, 1998), which builds on ideas of co-creation and continuity of artistic expression (Montuori & Purser, 1995; Glăveanu, 2014). Unlike the I-paradigm, it focuses on social interaction as a foundation of creativity; creativity grows in relation to other human beings. Another conceptualization of creativity that has become canonical in creativity research is Margaret Boden's (2004) distinction between "big-C" and "little-c" creativity. Big-C creativity refers to the remarkable achievements of professional artists, scientists, and innovators. Little-c creative skills, on the other hand, are psychological skills rooted in the everyday which are attainable for everyone, an idea consistent with the I- and We-paradigms previously outlined.

The study of late-life creativity in the fields of gerontology and aging studies tends to focus on three different topics: "late style in artistic oeuvres, creativity as part of psychological growth in later life, and the effects of older people's engagement in the creative arts on quality of life and well-being" (Swinnen, 2019, p. 1). The latter two are specifically relevant in the context of our research. Being creative through artistic activities can enable older people to stay active (Katz & Campbell, 2005), increase their well-being, and make it easier for them to cope with physical and cognitive changes that come with age (Cohen, 1994). Kathryn Price and Anthea Tinker (2014) explain that art and creativity-based interventions can be used as treatment of isolation and mental health issues, such as depression and lack of self-worth. Arts activities can keep people mentally active and stave off cognitive decline. Additionally, Donald Capps (2012) claims that participation in arts activities can serve as an outlet for dealing with negative experiences of aging, such as the loss of loved ones and/or changes in mental and physical functioning. From these perspectives, engagements in the arts not only increases little-c creative skills but also results in very specific health outcomes. As such, they tend to instrumentalize the arts by positioning it as cure rather than care or creative and moral lifestyle, which risks reinforcing the paradigm of successful aging.

What could such a "a moral lifestyle for later life that departs from the neoliberal choice biography and the moral dictate to imitate youth as long as possible" (Swinnen, 2018, p. 133) look like? And what role could artists play in identifying and conceptualizing practices of "good" aging and living? These questions are guiding the collaborative research project between the LLA program and Cultures of Arts, Science and Technology (CAST).

THE ARTIST AS AN EXEMPLARY FIGURE

Indeed, recent literature has emphasized that research into the lifestyle of older artists, who presumably possess both big- and little-c creative skills, can provide society with exemplary models of aging. One of the pioneers in this field is Joan Jeffri (2011), who carried out an extensive study of older artists in the New York and Los Angeles metro areas. She explains that artists fight isolation by constantly engaging in professional networking and staying in contact with family and friends. Moreover, many artists do not retire, as their art is their passion. They structure their lives in such a way that they can keep working as they get older. Their work and identity as an artist give them a sense of satisfaction, which increases their self-esteem and self-worth. Finally, Jeffri mentions resilience; someone's capacity to grow and thrive in the face of and as a result of adversities. She believes that artists are resilient and tenacious because they use the positive and negative events that happen in their lives to create meaning and engagement in the world with their works.

A Dutch scholar who contributes to this line of thought is Leo Delfgaauw (2017) who studies artists' 'lifelong learning' processes and 'learning biographies.' Similar to Jeffri, Delfgaauw sees artists as engaging in a continuous process of learning and mastering the knowledge and skills that are necessary to the making of art. This learning biography, which is at once cognitive, emotional, and practical, stretches over the length of the artist's life and career. Artists have taught themselves to deal with certain experiences by reviewing them in their works. Therefore, they are able to deal with loss in a fairly good way.

It is interesting to see that both Jeffri and Delfgaauw's arguments simultaneously play into and subvert the successful aging paradigm. On the one hand, they look at the ways in which older artists can be a model for 'staying young' and can, thus, counter the problems that may accompany older age. On the other hand, they show us that, through their resilience, passion, and pride in their work, older artists also embrace older age and can help others do the same. However, care should be taken not to overlook and romanticize the difficulties and challenges that artists deal with on a daily basis throughout the life course.

THE SUCCESSFUL ARTIST AND THE LINK BETWEEN SUCCESS AND AGE

DEFINING SUCCESS AS AN ARTIST

Within the art world, success is defined in many different ways. Acknowledging this, we have decided to focus on how success is defined in economic and neoliberal terms, as these ideas emerged from our empirical data.

In the early 2000s, Daniel Pink, writing from

the perspective of market ideology, described the emergence of a new model of behavior for succeeding in a changing market. He coined this model the 'free agent,' and emphasized this agent's ability for self-reliance and independence. Pink singled out freedom, self-expression, authenticity, individual accountability, and self-defined notions of success as characteristic of the free agent. They have become paramount in defining what it means to be successful in the art world and creative industries (Ross, 2013). According to Jonathan Schroeder (2005), successful artists are those who manage to have their work widely exhibited, bought, and collected. They can be thought of as brand managers, actively engaged in developing, nurturing, and promoting themselves as recognizable 'products' in the competitive cultural sphere. Pyykkönen and Stavrum (2018) have noticed how neoliberal government policies have required artists to have motivation, competence, and a willingness to behave as entrepreneurs in order to succeed.

'The exhibitionist turn' in Pascal Gielen's use of the term (2013) is another consequence of neoliberal policies, signifying that the output of art practices is increasingly important. Artists are required to engage with the outside world, stay relevant, find an audience and be marketable. Consequently, entrepreneurialism is highly valued in the art world. As the ideal of social relevance has become an integral, desired component of art practice, the argument of 'art for art's sake' no longer holds up. As a way of reconciling this demand for productivity and relevance with artists' desire for autonomous practice, Camiel Van Winkel et al. (2012) have introduced the concept of the 'hybrid artist.' This type of artist is someone whose autonomous or personal works blend together with the creative projects that they undertake to make a living. Since it has become difficult for artists to make an autonomous living from their works of art alone, they are forced to blur these two spheres.

Thus, the notion of the hybrid artist has become analogous with the concept of cultural entrepreneurship. However, Mari Torvik Heian and Johs Hjellbrekke (2017) show that artists are skeptical about entering into partnerships or collaborations with commercial entities. They often resist the idea of cultural entrepreneurship and this resistance is quite essential to their artistic identity. Moreover, artists can be found to have little concern for financial success and, consequently, do not embrace entrepreneurial attitudes despite having low incomes. Heian's and Hjellbrekke's work (2017) shows that artists seem to have different points of reference and ways of valuing their art in contrast to the market and certain scholars who are primarily concerned with financial aspects when defining success. This argument is reminiscent of Bourdieu's (1993) idea of the disinterested artist refusing commercial success to retain autonomy. Such incompatibilities have led other scholars to critique the mainstream contemporary definition of the successful artist.

CRITIQUE ON THE NEOLIBERAL APPROACH TO SUCCESS IN ARTISTS

Some have argued that a definition of artistic success in strictly neoliberal and economic terms naturalizes discrimination based on gender and class as well as spatial inequality. Sarah Miller (2016) argues that the ideal of the archetypal artist, like the ideal worker (Acker, 1990) who is fully committed to his work and whose career is structured in a way that perpetuates the tension between "vocational responsibilities and social-reproductive labour" (p. 122), is implicitly gendered male. She further recognizes three aspects specific to the case of the artists that similarly reinforce gender discriminations: the expectation of creative genius, bias in aesthetic evaluation, and the need for entrepreneurial labor and behavior. She claims that such labor and behavior are regarded as inherently masculine and that it is more socially acceptable for men to act in this way than it is for women. Indeed, women are penalized for showing similar traits.

Sofia Lindström (2018) also problematizes today's predominant conceptualization of the successful artist. Her research shows that many artists equate success with 'endurance.' The ability to continue one's artistic practice, regardless of present precarity, is embraced by many as a strategy to legitimize their artistic identity. A great deal of 'emotion work,' or the ability to develop emotional strategies to cope with challenging circumstances, is needed to deal with fundamentally uncertain markets and career paths. Such 'emotion work' is also instrumental in adapting to undesirable living and working conditions, an adaptation which maintains the status quo. 'Successfully enduring' artists need to display a degree of faith in the future that often ends up obscuring their need for financial support from family or friends. They also often use the concept of luck to navigate market uncertainties. However, such a concept allows them to overlook the fact that success often follows the lines of gender (mostly male artists keep practicing for a few decades after leaving the art academy) and class (only people from privileged classes can access prestigious art academies). In a similar vein, Kate Oakley et al. (2017) looked into the role of space and place in reinforcing other social inequalities in the artistic labor market. They suggest that artists and creatives who live in cultural hubs are much more likely to come from a privileged background, both in terms of class and ethnicity.

In these and similar critiques of the paradigm of the successful artist, the factor of age is neglected. Nonetheless, the ideal of youth is inherent to many definitions of the entrepreneur. An example of this is the claim by Pyykkönen & Stavrum (2018) that "cultural entrepreneurs are young and independent individuals" (emphasis added, p. 110). Such a definition creates unrealistic expectations for all artists to live up to. If staying young equals staying successful, artists are bound to conform to the ideal of youth in order to remain (or become) successful as

they age. Thus, throughout their careers, artists have to navigate normative definitions of what it means to be successful both in relation to the market and to aging. This makes aging artists such an apt case study for an exploration of two related subjects: firstly, the ageist assumptions behind the paradigms of successful aging and of successful artisthood, specifically in the context of Dutch post-academic art institutions such as Van Eyck, and secondly, the ways in which artists negotiate these paradigms in their work and life.

Section 1 showed that the focus on creativity both reiterates and offers ways out of the successful aging paradigm. Being creative and engaging in art activities is presented to older people as a way to stay active, increase well-being, and cope with physical and cognitive changes that come with age. If youth equals success, artists are bound to relate to paradigms of successful aging in order to stay (or become) successful as they grow older.

2 – Institutional Context

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In this section, we will take a closer look at the Van Eyck Academie, compare it to other post-academic art institutions in the Netherlands, and provide an analysis of the LLA program. The LLA program relates directly to the scholarly framework laid out in the previous section, as its main purpose is to study the lives of aging artists. However, if we want to have a proper understanding of LLA, it has to be contextualized. This implies that we need to examine how this program relates to Van Eyck's overall identity as an institution and how it is characteristic of a Dutch setting. The following research question guided our analysis below: What is the rationale behind the age limit of approximately 35-40 in Dutch art institutional contexts such as the Van Eyck Academie and how does the LLA program relate to it?

To answer this question, we collected a range of different sources (Table 1). These included policy documents such as grant applications (with their corresponding assessments), policy plans for different periods (both on a governmental and institutional level), and project proposals. We also conducted interviews with people involved in the overall management and organization of the Van Eyck Academie in order to study how their views related to the documents that we studied. We have included the topic guides used for these interviews in Appendix 2. Several documents that we used contained personal information. We took care to exclude personal data such as names, addresses, and phone numbers from our data archive. In addition, we have asked our interviewees for their consent to record, transcribe, and quote from the interviews (with explicit mention of their names) at the beginning of each interview. Information that we were not allowed to share was kept off the record. The majority of the interviews in this section were conducted in Dutch.

Table 1: Documents and Interviewees Section 2

Documents	Interviewers
Yearly reports De Ateliers 2014, 2015, 2016, and 2017	Rebekka Straetmans <i>director Van Eyck Mirror</i>
Plan of activities BIS De Ateliers 2017-2020	Madeleine Bisscheroux <i>public program, events, and support of residents</i>
Yearly reports Rijksakademie 2014, 2015, and 2016	Solange Roosen <i>communication</i>
Policy plan Van Eyck 2013-2016 and 2017-2020	Brigitte Bloksma <i>former director Van Eyck Mirror</i>
Project proposal LLA and symposium LLA	Karl Dittrich <i>president of supervisory board</i>
Artist applications (general and LLA)	Lex ter Braak <i>director Van Eyck Academie</i>
LLA call for applications	Margriet Schavemaker <i>member of supervisory board</i>
Fund application LLA	
LLA letters of acceptance and rejection	

We analyzed our data by conducting a critical discourse analysis, i.e., we carried out a close reading of our sources in order to illuminate the themes, words, and arguments that were characteristic of the source texts. James Paul Gee (2005) wrote in his work on discourse analysis: "We use language to get recognised as taking on a certain identity or role, that is to build an identity here-and-now" (Gee, 2005, p. 11). As such, we looked into the performative aspects of language, also referred to as 'language in action.' We asked how Van Eyck utilizes language to develop a professional identity in response to changes in the national context. What specific ideas and concepts come to the fore in our analysis of the sources? A better understanding of the identity that Van Eyck has created for itself improves our insight into the ways in which the LLA program matches its institutional context.

The discourses of an institution are shaped by developments on different levels. In order to carry out a proper discourse analysis, we need to show how the macro- (societal), meso- (institutional), and micro-level (individual) discourses are entangled and how they influence each other. We will start with an analysis of the discourses that are characteristic of Van Eyck in general. Subsequently, we will investigate the LLA program to understand its goals and how it relates to the institution's grand narrative. Finally, we will analyze the discourses used by similar post-academic institutions in the Netherlands (De Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten and De

Ateliers in Amsterdam) to compare and contrast their different institutional identities, specifically in relation to the notion of age.

THE IDENTITY AND MISSION OF VAN EYCK

In 2011, the Dutch government announced that, for the period 2013-2016, it would drastically cut its subsidies for the cultural sector (Sabel, 2011; Ministerie van OCW, 2011, p. 2). The sector should become less dependent on grants and start earning its own money. Entrepreneurship and flexibility became leading concepts, which is very much in line with section 1.3 of this report. Halbe Zijlstra, who was responsible for the planned budget cuts, claimed that "it is about more than just the quality [of art]" (Ministerie van OCW, 2011, p. 3 – our translation). Looking back at our scholarly framework, it becomes clear that the described neo-liberal influences on the art world also manifested themselves in the Dutch context. The cuts in governmental funding had a great impact on post-academic art institutions, including Van Eyck. The overall funding for these institutions would be drastically cut and, after 2016, they would receive no subsidy at all.

In light of these developments, Van Eyck presented its policy plan for the period 2013-2016. It is in this plan that we can identify the kind of identity that Van Eyck wanted to establish for itself. Van Eyck especially stressed the need for change if the institution was to have a chance of survival (Van Eyck Academie, 2012, p. 5). In spite of the obstacles inherent to a loss of income, the policy plan, entitled "The Living Mirror: Art in the World" presented the future as ambitious and exciting. Van Eyck uses the mirror metaphor to make a point about the open character of the institute and the social relevance of the work produced in its context. However, it never becomes entirely clear what the metaphor is supposed to mean. The policy plan offers several suggestions: a mirror as an instrument of reflection (p. 14), a living mirror (p. 23), Van Eyck as a mirror for other institutions (p. 27), looking into a mirror (p. 34), and, at the beginning of the policy plan, a reference is made to the story of Snow White ("mirror, mirror on the wall..." p. 6). It seems that Van Eyck wanted to relate the mirror to the idea of engaging with society as a means to open up the institution. Yet, since the actual strategies needed to reach this end are not really specified, one is left to wonder what they are and how they can be evaluated. In our recommendation section, we will return to this issue. In addition to the outward-looking perspective, innovation, internationality, and interdisciplinarity are the most prominent and recurring concepts in the policy plan.

From our analysis of the documents and interviews, it follows that, during recent years, Van Eyck's focus has shifted from being an institution mainly concerned with facilitating theoretical research to one where art practice itself is foregrounded. Van Eyck is turning into a

‘public space’ where art and society meet (Van Eyck Academie, 2012, p. 17). Artists are, therefore, encouraged to engage with the world around them and to relate to questions surrounding ‘social innovation’ – a tricky concept in itself that the policy document leaves unspecified. This encouragement reflects the earlier mentioned macro-level observations concerning the rise of hybrid artists and the influence of neoliberalism on the art world. As Gielen claimed: “The artist can no longer stand outside of or above the world” (2013, p. 20). Van Eyck seems to make a strong effort to facilitate the development of this new artist identity in order to secure funding. Its policy plan is a good example of language being used to achieve real-world goals. Interviews with the people involved with the management of Van Eyck confirmed that the outward looking character of the institution was adopted in light of the announced cuts in financial support. Most interviewees mentioned how Lex ter Braak, (now former) director of the institute, played a crucial role in those changes. One of the interviewees said that “the doors of Van Eyck have literally been opened to the outside world.” Rebekka Straetmans, director of Van Eyck Mirror, said in a similar vein:

Since 2012, we have presented ourselves as an open institution. ... with the arrival of Lex ter Braak, there was really, there was a big change in the way we presented ourselves. Because, at first, before Lex, it was a very closed institution, and he opened it up.

There is no doubt that Van Eyck wanted to emphasize its transformation from being a rather closed theoretical academy into an open institution in which the art practice and its relation to the outside world is much more prominent. Employees quickly embraced and vocalized this specific mission.

A prominent member of Van Eyck’s management stated that “all great artists have a great curiosity for the world around them.” This gives us a specific image of the ideal resident of Van Eyck. Artists working at Van Eyck should be able to reflect on themselves, their work, and the way in which both are part of a societal context. Since the report does not clearly define what is meant by the so-called open, creative, and flexible mindset of the artist, it is also unclear how his or her presence will contribute to the open character of the institution. In light of the LLA program it is interesting that Van Eyck often speaks of “young and talented” artists in its policy plans and connects this with cultural entrepreneurship and building a network during one’s stay. Even though there is relatively little emphasis on chronological age when compared to the other two post-academic institutions, we can still deduce that the prototypical Van Eyck resident is supposed to be younger rather than older.

On the basis of Van Eyck’s policy plan for 2013-2016, the Council for Culture advised the

government to grant Van Eyck a yearly subsidy of 1 million euros, while the other two institutions received significantly less. The main argument was that Van Eyck was able to present a future in which there was room for innovation despite cuts in management and size. Newly established partnerships with the ‘outside world,’ mainly through the projects initiated by Van Eyck Mirror and Hubert van Eyck, resonated well with the national policy and convinced the governmental bodies of the relevance of Van Eyck as an art institution (Raad voor Cultuur, 2011, p. 25; Raad voor Cultuur, 2012, p. 404-406). Still, the question remains whether Van Eyck has actually succeeded in opening up its doors as envisaged by the policy plan. Does an audience outside of the art world find its way to Van Eyck or is it still perceived as an elitist and closed institution? Although our main aim is not to give a definitive answer to this question, we have discussed the issue of ‘openness’ with our interviewees. In Section 3, we will show how the residents that participated in our project experienced this aspect of Van Eyck.

In 2015, the Dutch government announced its plans for the years 2017-2020. As it turned out, subsidies for post-academic institutions would not end after 2016 (Ministerie van OCW, 2015, p. 28). Nonetheless, in its policy plan 2017-2020, Van Eyck argued that it wanted to continue on the road that it had set out a few years earlier. The importance of partnerships with external parties as a means of engagement with the outside world reoccurred prominently in this new policy plan. It is in this light that we are able to examine how the LLA program fits into the larger institutional context of Van Eyck.

LIVING LIKE AN ARTIST

In the funding application for the LLA program that was submitted to Bank Giro Loterij Fonds in 2017, Bloksma, former director of Van Eyck Mirror, clarifies that it “will add to the legitimacy of the artist in society in an innovative manner.” She further explains that “it is not the value of the art that is taken into consideration, but the lifestyle of the artist” (Bloksma, 2014, p. 8). Bloksma argues that the government would not invest in art for art’s sake but rather in art for the wider society when supporting Van Eyck. Ter Braak uses a similar argument, proposing that, in order to inspire others, artists should be at the center instead of at the edges of society (Being an artist, 2013, p. 2). This sentiment was shared by other interviewees. Straetmans, for instance, told us that artists are people who look at problems differently than most other people do. Significantly, the issue of funding is not mentioned as the driving factor behind the LLA program. Instead, LLA is presented as part of the process of opening up the art world to a wider public. Van Eyck is put forward because of its expertise in connecting several societal domains while collaborating with artists (Fleskens, 2017, p. 3).

Demonstrating Van Eyck’s connection to the outer world, the opening seminar “Living Like an Artist” (December 6, 2013), an initiative of Van Eyck Mirror, was a collaboration between Van Eyck, pension fund APG, Limburg Province, Maastricht Municipality, and the Elisabeth Strouven Fonds. The aim was to present a possible response to the aging population by highlighting the lifestyle and qualities of older professional artists. Guest speaker Joan Jeffri, whose work we referred to in our theoretical section, claimed that older artists are a perfect model for society because they are flexible in dealing with bad and good news; they are persistent, and stay fit to keep working. Furthermore, they are constantly networking, which prevents the one thing that is perceived as the biggest threat of old age: social isolation (Being an Artist, 2013, p. 1). However, despite its importance in terms of systematically examining the living experiences and conditions of older artists in the NY and LA area, Jeffri’s work risks instrumentalizing artists’ lifestyles. Jeffri reads artists’ ability to network as a way of preventing social isolation and approaches artists’ drive to make art as a way of staying fit. Despite its good intentions, the LLA program runs the risk of repeating some of these more troubling aspects of Jeffri’s otherwise inspirational work.

The way in which the relevance of the LLA program is articulated in a number of documents resonates with the successful aging paradigm. With Jeffri’s work as a point of reference, Van Eyck wants to show that artists ‘stay young’ because of their lifestyles, which supposedly improves their quality of life and helps them prevent problems associated with the process of aging. Artists are meant to serve as exemplary figures in that they are able to structure their lives in such ways that aging does not affect the one thing that they are passionate about, i.e., making art. The lifestyle of older artists is seen as a guiding principle, not only for those who have reached older age but for anyone. It promises increasing independence for the ‘old’ and prevents problems for those who are still ‘young.’

The relevance of the LLA program builds on the idea of providing more positive models for aging. This focus on societal relevance matches perfectly with Van Eyck’s narrative of being an institution that engages with the outside world. However, the approach adopted in the report fails to open up a persistent neoliberal paradigm that circulates in society: the framing of population aging as a problem and the dictate to ‘stay forever young’ as its ultimate remedy, sold as successful aging. In this sense, the LLA program, as described in the policy document, refrains from effectively challenging the idea of successful aging. Youth remains the frame of reference, which implies that those who are unable to live up to this norm are blamed for a lack of effort. Indeed, the notion of successful aging holds older people responsible for their own health, well-being, and quality of life. External factors that influence

the latter are downplayed. While committed to a critical approach to aging as decline, the LLA program risks idealizing its opposite of success and identifies the artist as the quintessential embodiment of successful aging.

COMPARING AND CONTRASTING THE OTHER POST-ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS TO VAN EYCK

In the following paragraphs, we will compare De Ateliers and Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten (henceforth the Rijksacademie) with Van Eyck. Both institutes have been selected because, together with Van Eyck, they are the major post-academic art institutions in the Netherlands. The aim is to contextualize Van Eyck’s new identity and to find out what the other institutes’ perspectives on older artists are. We focus particularly on policies addressing the age of desired residents. Our analysis is based on sources that were publicly available on the websites of De Ateliers and Rijksacademie. We attempted to arrange interviews with employees of both institutes (in positions such as director, policy maker, and head of residency) with the aim of asking clarifying questions and gaining additional insights. Unfortunately, none of them were available to speak with us.

On its website, De Ateliers introduces itself as “an international institute for talent development of young visual artists, founded in 1963 by artists, for artists” (De Ateliers, 2018). The dominant focus on young visual artists is consistent throughout all documents (De Ateliers, 2014; 2015; 2016a; 2016b; 2017a). Whenever De Ateliers refers to its residents, they are called “young artists.” The frequency and prominence of this denotation is very high and, therefore, noticeable. Consequently, younger artists feel invited and welcomed while the opposite is the case for older artists. By using this kind of discourse, De Ateliers discourages older artists from applying for a residency.

Looking at the statistics presented in the annual reports (2014-2017), the consequence of this discouragement becomes clear. The average age at which artists apply for a residency is approximately 29. Throughout these reports, the average age of residents is 28 (this includes residents who are finishing, continuing, and starting their residency). On average, the youngest artist present at any given time is 23 and the oldest 34. Between 2014 and 2017, there was not a single resident older than 35. The 2014 Annual Report includes a detailed breakdown of all 773 applicants for that year (Table 2).

Table 2: Age and Applicants (De Ateliers Jaarverslag 2014, p. 21)

Age	Applicants
20-24	41
25-29	275
30-34	305
35+	152

Table 3 with an overview of the ages of all applicants shows that the age of the residents is not representative of the age of the applicants – not even for the average applicant.

Table 3: Age, Applicants, and Residents (De Ateliers Jaarverslag 2014, p. 13-21)

Age	Applicants	Residents
20-24	41	1
25-29	275	7
30-34	305	3
35+	152	0

These numbers not only show that older artists are less interested in a residency at De Ateliers. Even when they are interested, their chances of getting accepted are practically non-existent. In addition, it is quite remarkable that De Ateliers employs quite narrow age stages for applicants younger than 35 while it puts every applicant over the age of 35 together into one vast group of 35+. These statistics clearly reflect a very particular discourse that prefers much younger artists over older ones. Nonetheless, the call for applications and annual reports state that “Artists under 30 years of age are preferred, but older artists are also welcome to apply” (De Ateliers, 2017b, p. 2). De Ateliers claims that it does not enforce an age limit. However, the fact that, between 2014 and 2017, there was not a single resident older than 35, combined with the fact that 152 artists over 35 applied in 2014 (most likely 2015, 2016, and 2017 had similar numbers), makes this supposedly non-existent age limit quite implausible.

Why does De Ateliers find young artists so appealing for residency positions? The literal answer to this question can be found in the 2016 and 2017 annual reports and in the Activiteitenplan De Ateliers BIS 2017-2020: “We [De Ateliers] focus primarily on people in their twenties, a group that, as opposed to more advanced artists, has a need for intensive feedback and is open to change and innovation” (2016b, p. 2). This is quite a sweeping statement, implying that artists over thirty are more advanced, do not need intensive feedback, and are not open to change and innovation. Based on this discourse, it seems that De Ateliers associates youth with innovation and a willingness to change.

Interestingly, De Ateliers’ policy values diversity in the resident population, more specifically a healthy balance with regard to nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, culture, and artistic discipline (De Ateliers, 2016b; 2017a). However, age does not seem to qualify as a diversifying factor. The 2014 and 2015 annual reports state that “De Ateliers clearly profiles itself as a workspace of and for visual artists, a place for production, reflection, discussion and exchange between artists of different generations, nationalities and diverse artistic visions” (De Ateliers, 2014, p. 3; 2015, p. 4). It is quite striking that this quote explicitly refers to the merit of bringing artists from different generations together. However, this turns out to be a reference to the mentor-apprentice relationship in which the mentor tends to be significantly older than the resident. This emphasis on diversity does not include an intergenerational resident population.

The same is valid for the discourse of the Rijksacademie. The Rijksakademie does not explicitly focus on young artists but rather on bringing “same-generation artists” (between 25 and 35) together, providing them with older, experienced, and established artists as mentors (Rijksakademie, 2016; 2015). Its calls for applications states that “application is open to upcoming artists with a few years of professional experience after their education.” Furthermore, the 2016 annual report states: “during their time at the Rijksakademie, the residents experience a rite of passage and leave the academy more mature, self-aware and fortified.” Based on our analysis of all online available annual reports (2009, 2013-2016), the average age when applying at the Rijksakademie is 29, whilst the average resident is 32. Most residents are between 26 and 39 years old. As such, and similar to Van Eyck, the Rijksakademie attracts residents of a younger age without making this a firm condition in its policy. The framing of the candidate as fresh out of school, in need of mentors and maturity makes it clear that he or she is supposed to be young.

Based on our analysis of the policy documents and annual reports of De Ateliers and the Rijksakademie, we can conclude that both institutes associate youth with innovation, creativeness, openness to change, etc. Especially De Ateliers is lagging far behind in terms of age-related social innovation. This paints the broader Dutch context of Van Eyck

Section 2 revealed that the LLA program emerged from Van Eyck’s wish to be innovative and socially relevant. The institution established this program to conform to the new norms imposed by the Dutch government after the announcement of the 2011 subsidy cuts for cultural institutions. It reflects the image that Van Eyck created for itself in response to these cuts. LLA aims to present a mirror to society by concerning itself with the issue of population aging in the Netherlands. As such, the category of age, which is not considered an important

diversifying factor at the other institutions under investigation, is taken seriously by Van Eyck. Nevertheless, Van Eyck still talks about “young and talented” artists and makes direct references to the idea of cultural entrepreneurialism and skills associated with youth. Both a notion of the artist as an entrepreneurial being in neo-liberal terms and the discourse of successful aging seems to be partially reiterated by Van Eyck. However, identifying the artist as an exemplary figure for successful aging denies the difficult circumstances under which they often have to work as well as potentially overemphasizes health and independence as factors of success in (later) life. We recognize, though, that as a rebranding strategy, Van Eyck’s flirtation with the successful aging paradigm was a clever move in the current Dutch context. And, in opening up its doors for older residents, it created the opportunity for us to examine how these artists themselves, in interaction with regular residents, think and experience creativity in later life.

How could Van Eyck further develop the LLA program, taking into account some of the issues mentioned above, and, in doing so, increase its overall impact? How do artists relate to Van Eyck’s mission and its age implications? And how do their experiences and understandings resonate with the theoretical observations made in the first section of this report? These and other questions will be addressed in Section 3.

3 — Artists’ Experiences

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

The second part of our research focused on the lived experiences of artists and aimed to answer the following research questions: (1.1) What relations do artists see between aging, their art practice, and Big-C creativity?; (1.2) How does the development of Big-C creativity interact with artists’ little-c creative skills?; (2) How do artists plan and establish a sustainable career?; (3) What do residencies mean to artists at any stage in their careers?; and (4) How do artists feel about the age limit of 40 that Van Eyck and other institutions impose on their residents?

We collected our data over six weeks through six individual, semi-structured interviews and one focus-group interview with LLA and regular residents (Table 4 – the names of the regular residents are aliases because of anonymization) as well as ethnographic observations at the Van Eyck Academie. The individual interviews focused on the artists’ careers, their experiences at Van Eyck so far, their hopes and plans for the future, and the role of age in the art world. In the focus group, participants discussed and exchanged their experiences with the artistic labor market and their ideas on artistic development. The topic guides for both the individual and focus group interviews can be found in Appendix 3. For the focus group interviews, we also made use of a paragraph of a policy document, age-related snippets from media coverage and calls, and general statements to get the conversation started (Appendix 4).

We recruited participants based on their inclusion in the LLA program (LLA residents were obliged to participate), making contact during our observations, and through a general e-mail to all present residents. We had initially hoped to achieve a greater balance of gender and greater diversity of age but our ability to recruit a more diverse range of participants was limited by a number of factors. These included the availability of the artists selected for the LLA and regular residency programs, the arrival and departure times of residents, and the short time range in which we had to conduct our field work.

Table 4: List of Participants Section 3

<p>Name Sascha Age 30 Gender M Type of Residency Regular Type of Interview Focus Group</p>
<p>Name Annie Age 27 Gender F Type of Residency Regular Type of Interview Individual</p>
<p>Name Selma Age 27 Gender F Type of Residency Regular Type of Interview Individual and Focus Group</p>
<p>Name Magdalena Peltzer Age 65 Gender F Type of Residency LLA Type of Interview Individual and Focus Group</p>
<p>Name Natascha Rodenburg Age 49 Gender F Type of Residency LLA Individual</p>
<p>Name Anna Age 24 Gender F Type of Residency Regular Individual</p>
<p>Name Monica Age 35 Gender F Type of Residency Regular Focus Group</p>
<p>Name Paola Vela Age 45 Gender F Type of Residency LLA Individual and Focus Group</p>

All research activities took place at the Van Eyck Academie, either in communal areas or in the participants' private studios, and were conducted following ethics regulations. Interviewees were made aware via e-mail that the interviews would be audio-recorded, transcribed, and that extracts might be included in our final report. They were informed that they could withdraw from the interview at any time, refuse to answer any questions, request anonymization, or to have something edited any time. We repeated these guidelines and had them confirm their consent at the start of each interview. We took all special requests for editing or clarification seriously and have not included sensitive information in this report.

Once collected, the data was subjected to a thematic analysis with special attention to experiential and discursive elements. Ultimately, we identified four larger themes: (1) Negotiating Artistic Aspirations and Market Requirements; (2) Understandings of Creative Development; (3) Understandings of the Jan van Eyck Academie; and (4) Age in the Art World. Within and across each of these themes and transcripts, paradoxes and tensions were present, showing that the discourses that exist in the institution and artists' interviews are both subverted and reproduced. Understanding these conflicting discourses is especially important for further developing programs such as Living Like an Artist. It is essential that future policy-making takes into consideration the concrete ways in which artists negotiate discursive tensions in the art world. Each theme and its paradoxes will now be discussed in turn.

NEGOTIATING ARTISTIC ASPIRATIONS AND MARKET REQUIREMENTS

Building and sustaining a career as an artist entails navigating a complex landscape made up of uncertainty, financial needs, cultural and personal expectations, and everyday morality. Decisions related to financial success are often discussed by artists as being at odds with what it means to be a good artist. In this section, we focus on some of these tensions and the strategies artists employ to deal with them.

Upon entering the art world, artists are forced to deal with ideological and economic concerns. As reported by our interviewees, in the past, art schools used to be free and open to people from all social classes. Selma suggests that this history is at least partially responsible for the persistence of a romanticized image of the artist as someone who does not have to deal with real-life concerns and can devote him- or herself entirely to art. However, as emerged from the focus group interview, attending a good art school today entails a considerable financial investment because of the rise in tuition fees. The prestige of the institution is perceived to influence the quality of the education itself as well as the quality of the network surrounding artists:

I am very tired of this kind of system where you have, for sure, more access to residencies, to galleries, just because you paid. ... So, I think it's this as well a political choice, just to step out a little bit. It's harder, it becomes very hard, because ... it's all connected somehow – the school, the place, and your curriculum. (Monica)

Refusing to attend prestigious art schools can, thus, be a "political" choice cast in moral terms as a way of not feeding into a system that forces artists to buy their chance of success in the art world. Nonetheless, young artists often end up "taking out loans," jeopardizing their ideological convictions in order not only to access a good

education but to improve their chances of survival in the market. Once artists are out of school, they have to pay back these loans and a new urgency for negotiation presents itself:

You have to think about, when you come out of that institution, ... how, maybe, you're going to make that money back. So, you have to think about what kind of value your work has before you even make it. So, ... the choice to engage in any form of art could become limited when there is money involved (Selma)

Selma explains that, if recent graduates are to earn a living with their art, they cannot freely follow any trajectory. They must carefully consider the requests of the market. It is interesting to note how this problematizes Bourdieu's (1993) original theorization of the artist as a disinterested actor only moved by "pure aesthetic vision" (Røyseng et al., 2007, p. 2) who is not concerned with economic gains. Judging from Selma's quote, artists are well aware of, and cannot ignore, the fact that the market and financial constraints interact with the art practice to the point of impacting the very aesthetic choices that they make. Even if the myth of the disinterested artist has not completely disappeared, artists describe themselves as caught up in a negotiation between the will to follow their intrinsic motivations and the need to acknowledge their financial reliance on art (Towse, 2001).

Such negotiation between market pressures and the authenticity of one's art practice was termed by Paola Vela "the great tension and the great dilemma" faced by artists:

I ... observe many cases – many talented students. But one day [they] leave the university and begin to work as artist. [And] the content of [their] work disappears, [they] only produce very decorative objects. It's very dangerous ... the pressure is very strong.

In this quote, Vela, who holds a teaching position at the Pontifical Catholic University in Lima, refers to her students who have to deal with market pressures as soon as they graduate. If they lack the necessary rigor, they succumb to such pressures and their work, although it probably sustains them financially, runs the risk of losing its content and meaning.

Dealing with the market is, therefore, a very complex endeavor: artists need to put their work on the market because it can earn them some recognition. However, it is crucial that such recognition is only considered a secondary consequence. Artists fear that financial reliance on their art might prevent them from finding satisfaction in their practice per se. Alternatively, they may get caught up in the same vicious circle described by Vela: they find what the market likes, turn it into their brand, and start reproducing this recipe, and, in doing so, halt their exploration and artistic development. Our participants responded to such issues by trying

to avoid relying on the artistic labor market altogether:

I think artists are really resourceful. ... really creative, not just within their work but within their lifestyle. And, I think they really are creative enough to fashion a way so that art and money are separate. Like, they can find a way to just make money somewhere else and not have the art answer to the kind of lifestyle you have (Selma)

As articulated by Selma, artists think of themselves as quite resourceful people, capable of transferring their creative skills to concrete life situations. They see the creativity that they developed through art practices as applicable to concrete life circumstances. Being creative, then, also means being able to find alternative sources of income in order to keep money and art practice separate.

Natascha Rodenburg, a LLA participant who had not worked as a professional artist during the past twenty years, spoke of her ability to always keep exploring the world and finding niches for sustaining herself. This constitutes an integral part of what she terms "applied creative living," that is, applying her creative skills to enable her to get by in her everyday life. Similarly, the other two LLA participants came up with creative ways to separate their source of income from their practice. Vela finds a "fund" for her art in her teaching position and Magdalena Peltzer in the parallel business that she runs with her husband:

Me and my husband, [at some point we were out of money], and, then, we had to make a [decision]. ... So, we did, we made a recipe. Now, I say that we made a recipe but, then, we [were] wild and young and [took a gamble]. We built a house and let it to tenants. ... So, [this] gave us a basic income to feel free to do what we like. I didn't become a very famous artist and my husband didn't either but we are free to do what we want to do, free to develop our work. That is the most important thing and gives the most satisfaction. ... So, [now] when we sell an art piece, we are really, really happy, like children. ... "Yes, that's why we do it!" And art should never be dependent on money. I mean, it's an afterwards thing.

These ideas of "applied creative living" resonate with the little-c creative skills (Swinnen, 2018) that can offer both a basis for the successful aging paradigm and a potential way out of it. In the context of artists' careers, a potential way of reconfiguring paradigms for aging emerges in the resilience that artists display (Wild, Wiles, & Allen, 2011). The idea of resilience, especially in the case of artists, is closely related to their ability to embrace change at any stage of their life, and, in so doing, resist the neoliberal obsession with permanent personhood (Lamb et al., 2017). Artists think of their personal growth as blurring into their artistic development, which is a process that goes on through their entire life. Our interviewees often described how the concrete struggles that they had to face, such

as having to sustain an art practice which failed to provide them with stable or sufficient income, called for their art practice to evolve. Consistent with theorizations of resilience, growth and artistic development happen not only in spite of but thanks to such difficulties (Jeffri, 2011).

Jeffri (2011) singles out strategies implemented by artists to deal with these difficulties as inspiration for new paradigms for aging. There is, however, an inherent risk in doing so. Focusing on such strategies obscures money-related struggles altogether and, consequently, reinforces the status quo of the market with its oppressive mechanisms. In fact, sidestepping the market is mostly done by taking up one or more additional jobs. And, in this context, “the great tension and the great dilemma” come back:

You have many privileges as a professor because you can forget all the economic problems. But at the same time, you don't have much time to produce [art]. But, when you can produce, you have an advantage, you can focus on very interesting ideas that maybe don't work with the market. ... But you have this kind of disadvantage, too. ... I mean, an ideal situation doesn't exist. (Vela)

If having a second job, as Vela does, relieves artists of market pressures, it also leaves them with very little time to devote to their practice and experimentations. This, in turn, slows down their artistic development. Therefore, to consider artists uncritically as a model for lifestyle, as some literature does, is problematic because it covers up the struggles that the market presents them with.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Leo Delfgaauw's (2017) work on artistic development shows how this concept overlaps with ideas of lifelong learning: artists keep mastering their skills and knowledge throughout their lives, thereby creating a “learning biography.” This process of learning exceeds the mere sphere of artistic development and extends to other, more personal dimensions. This section focuses on the professional side of this process and on the ways in which artistic development is perceived to constitute a major source of meaning for a career in the arts.

Our interviewees describe artistic development as a non-linear process of experimentation, of trying out possibilities. In this process, not all work (if concrete work is even produced) is necessarily of high quality, yet every step is crucial. Consequently, artists need to be disciplined in their practice and keep working in order to create the conditions for this development to happen:

I think that's quite important as an artist, that you can make yourself do stuff. Make yourself disciplined and experiment ... because a lot of work [doesn't give any concrete] results. It's just trying out stuff and you

have to keep pushing yourself to do so. (Anna)

Artistic development is not only thought of as (eventually) adding to the quality of one's art. The expected outcome, and something that in fact seems to emerge in older artists, is knowing oneself and one's art better and being confident in the value of one's work:

I wasn't satisfied: “That is not what it is and not what I want to do.” So, I did it again and again ... And, then, all of a sudden, ... came a big change. A kind of openness. In the lines, in trusting the techniques and all that. Because you have these techniques in your [works], because they have to go free. (Peltzer)

Peltzer describes the level of technical mastery that she has achieved over the years as granting her more freedom of expression. Both she and Rodenburg refer to their ability to acquire new techniques whenever the type of work that they want to execute requires it. This is not dissimilar from the kind of experimentation described by younger artists who see themselves as “trying out all these things” (Anna) and “trying to absorb as much as [possible]” (Selma). What differentiates the older artists whom we interviewed is the degree of self-knowledge that they seem to have developed, stemming from confidence in their identity and value. This is consistent with the findings of experimental psychologist Martin Lindauer (2003). In his research, he found that older artists considered the increased self-acceptance and confidence that they gained with age as instrumental in improving their productivity and the quality of their art work. Likewise, in her study of aging Dutch poets, Swinnen (2018) shows how their openness to change allows them to increase their knowledge and experiential baggage and encourages them to undertake new challenges in their art. The ability to improve one's self-knowledge and self-confidence is a very important aspect when it comes to good aging (Jeffri, 2011).

Artistic development can also be fostered by artists' resilience, their ability to deal with unfavorable circumstances and to integrate them in their developmental trajectory. In the case of Vela, discovering an allergy to the material that she was required to use as a printmaker forced her to develop in a different direction from what she was trained in:

I had a health problem for the acids ... a problem of allergies. ... Very complicated. And my doctor told me, “Maybe you need to make art in a different way or try to use another kind of medium.” So, I bought a camera.

Resilience and artistic development can, therefore, intersect in various ways: the ability to deal creatively with material and health-related constraints can foster artistic development by forcing artists to explore new paths. Again, in this sense, artists' lifestyle can be considered exemplary in terms of small-c creativity.

However, one need not encounter life challenges in order to develop artistically.

What truly drives this process is curiosity, a will to experiment and discover new things. Therefore, artistic development is quite closely related to an awareness of the world and current social changes:

To understand the world that we are living in, somehow where we are going, ... And this triggers me all the time, to look for something I don't know, something that can be done differently, something that can open ... new possibilities. That's the biggest trigger for me to develop my work. It's the curiosity! (Monica)

According to Monica, curiosity goes beyond a mere exploration of the outside world: artists do not simply reproduce what they come into contact with but process and transform it through their creativity. This resonates with the vision of openness in Van Eyck's policies: artists should interact with society and “hold up a mirror” to it. The artists whom we interviewed consider the outside world as crucial in moving their art practice further. As Monica continued, they do not just need to keep updated on current trends and events but also to engage with people from outside the artistic “intellectual space.” Non-artists can offer artists a “fresh eye,” a perspective that they otherwise may not be confronted with. It is, thus, crucial that artists remain open to such external points of view. This was described in very concrete terms by Sascha:

At the beginning, my art was concerned only with insects, ... without humans, the human was outside of my interest. But ..., then, I put it inside a museum and people interpreted it for themselves. And, every time I received this opinion, and I started thinking “Ok, if they are thinking about it, ... I should start to discover the human.”

If external stimuli are essential in guiding and redirecting one's development, artists need, nonetheless, to “protect their imagination” and “look into the inner [world]” (Monica) when such stimuli become overwhelming. As Peltzer reflected, if the outside world “infects you too much (...) then you can't work (...) because it makes you really sad.” Finding a balance between these two sources of inspiration, the internal and the external world, is thus not only necessary for artistic development but also crucial in sustaining one's well-being. As such, artists have to strike a balance between being immersed in society and being shielded from some of its influences. The idea of being open to the “outside world,” therefore, is often experienced by artists in a more problematic way than is described in Van Eyck's policy documents. Fostering openness reveals the tension between having to be socially relevant and authentic, between being immersed in societal change and preserving one's “inner world.”

Input from the outside world can also

come through theoretical knowledge. Younger participants, in particular, seem to have a keen interest in theory. They seem to think of artistic research, an attitude that blurs the boundary between arts and academia, as a way to understand their practice and make its value more explicit. For many, research is an integral part of their development. Our artists are also quite concerned with the responsibilities that come with exhibiting their art since every medium has historical and social implications. Therefore, research enables one to be reflexive and responsible in one's art practice:

I was just reading about the technology of the camera, it comes from weaponry and war. And as the technology of war moved forwards, so did the technology of different forms of art. ... It's being really socially responsible ... it's not like oh fun! Or this very jumpy romanticized thing. It's really trying to figure out the ways in which you can bring all the baggage of all the social or political or whatever themes you think about. And then add it to the collective like a knowledge arena. And, for that, I think, you need to study your ass off! (Selma)

Although artistic development means something slightly different for every artist, it is always enabled by artists' attitudes of responsible curiosity and exploration. Under normal life conditions, artists need to balance their need for artistic development with financial constraints. As we shall demonstrate in the next section, artistic residencies, relieving artists of similar preoccupations, are thus often perceived as instrumental to artistic development.

UNDERSTANDINGS OF VAN EYCK

This section narrows in on how our participants understood Van Eyck as an institution that offered them unique opportunities for artistic development. We asked the artists to reflect on their knowledge of the institution and experience at Van Eyck to date. Emerging themes included Van Eyck's approach to artistic development and their reflections on the LLA program.

After speaking to a number of participants about artistic development and after observing Van Eyck residents, it became clear that the institution and those operating within it have a very distinct idea about what creating art and developing one's practice is fundamentally about. They see it as a time-consuming process in and of itself, not as a means to an end product. This idea is in conflict with the normative expectation of productivity present in the successful aging paradigm and the neoliberal art market. Within these contexts, the main goal of an artist is to produce work. Once they stop doing so they can no longer be considered to be artists. Our participants characterize productivity in negative terms, feeling it was something imposed on them by the commercial art market. Accordingly, the residents recognized a resistance to this need for

productivity in Van Eyck's call for applications, which they appreciated and agreed with. As Selma illustrates:

The thing I loved about Van Eyck, it even says here. ... "To discover the unexplored perspectives and delve deeper into layers of themselves." That's really optimal. You know? That doesn't always happen, and I think that's what makes Van Eyck so unique. ... I love that, that you can leave here in a year not having produced anything.

She explains here that this attitude and approach to development allows artists at Van Eyck to undergo a process of self-discovery and to try new things without the pressure of having an end goal in mind.

The residents at Van Eyck agree with the institution's process-driven idea of artistic development and feel it provides them with all they need to embark on this course of personal and professional growth. They perceive Van Eyck as a supportive and collaborative environment. This, Peltzer notes, has changed since her previous residency in the late 1980s. While residents are required to attend a number of lectures or symposiums and participate in certain activities, like the collaborative InLabs, they are generally quite happy with the level of flexibility that they have in terms of work hours, access to resources, and content of their projects. No one tries to impose a certain vision upon them. Artists especially appreciate the relaxed atmosphere within Van Eyck and the organic way in which their interactions and exchanges with other residents can occur. This is especially the case on Wednesdays, labelled as "Holy Days" by some, as this is when presentations are given and a communal dinner takes place. Participants value these activities particularly because they create a positive environment for exchange, give them new insights into their practices, and allow them to improve their way of discussing their work in English.

However, Van Eyck's emphasis on the artist's relationship with society is a point of contention raised by our participants. While Van Eyck labels itself as an open institution and wants to work and engage with society, many artists found this idea problematic. While many of the regular residents believe it is important for artists to have contact with the "outside world," they also feel a need to "protect their imagination from it." Some participants criticize the notion of having a studio because it removes them too far from the real world. There is a tension between artists' urge to be in dialogue with society (whether it relates to a need to be socially relevant or to find inspiration in society) and their need for self-exploration, enabled by time and quietness. For many, this can only be achieved through the isolation of residency spaces.

Participants also reflected on the current state of the LLA program and their experience of it, raising three important points for consideration: its duration, opportunities for networking, and

planning for the future. All three LLA participants agreed that the current one-month limit of the program was too short. Yet, as Vela explains, this limited time also has its benefits:

Okay, it's very short, in our case. ... right now, [I should be] in Peru, teaching at the university. But now, here, I only try to think about my work, I have all the time to do that, to produce things, or maybe not, I don't produce anything. ... It's a privilege, maybe? ... It's a special situation for me, it's a very interesting pause. ... Because as an artist you can be working on other things, or maybe you don't have this kind of time.

She explains that the brief duration allows her to consider the residency as a break from her full-time position and everyday life. As previously explained, artists often hold multiple jobs in order to sustain their practice. While this provides them with financial security, it also takes away time and concentration from their art practice. The short-term residency has enabled Vela – and potentially future residents too – to participate in a residency program without having to up-end her whole life. LLA residents are able to take a break from a job that usually takes time from their practice and, afterwards, return with new awareness and insights into their art.

Networking and connecting with others is considered an important part of a residency by all participants, as it offers opportunities to further your own development and career as an artist. However, the one-month limit of the LLA program makes networking between the two groups difficult at times. As Rodenburg observes:

I have noticed a difference because we are only here for a month, so the new participants click straight away with the ones staying longer. The ones who have been here click also with the ones staying longer.

Thus, it seems as if the regular participants were less willing to invest in getting to know her because they knew that she would leave soon. Anna tentatively confirmed this hypothesis: "I think you're more likely to go over to them if you know that you can bond with them over a longer period of time." Although Anna was not explicitly referring to the LLA participants, her argument that it makes more sense to invest in bonds that can be deepened over time supports Natascha's observation. This strengthens the argument that the one-month limit of the program needs to be adjusted.

Finally, the LLA program has also provided artists with very specific opportunities, for instance Rodenburg who, despite being 49, identifies as a new emerging artist. She returned to the Netherlands after spending twenty years in New Zealand and sees the program as an opportunity to reconnect with the area where she was born, explore more of the Dutch art world, and build relationships to help her further her professional artistic career. Natascha believes that spending time at Van Eyck and working

with peers who are more familiar with the Dutch context could function as stepping stones for future residencies or other opportunities. She states:

For the future, I know that I can come here, so now I've got a kind of a sense of what is available here, to come with a project and I can use [the facilities] here.

Both Rodenburg's experience and that of other, younger artists shows the importance that participants attach to the residency space at Van Eyck, as it offered them the ability to gain insight into next steps in their careers, regardless of their age. As we shall show in the next section, though, age can be a quite concrete constraint in an artistic career.

AGE IN THE ART WORLD

This section outlines how the concept of age in the art world came up in our interviews. It focuses on how institutionally-enforced age limits for residency spaces and prizes in the Netherlands influence artists' perceptions of age in general, their assumptions concerning age and art, and the potential value of intergenerational contacts.

The role of age emerges as a key, albeit underestimated, factor in the art world, most notably in the policies of residencies and art prizes. Many of them have an upper limit of 35 to 40 years old, making it impossible for artists over these ages to apply for and engage in such activities. When pushed to imagine a rationale for such policies, Vela was able to critically identify possible reasons, for instance the idea that younger artists have allegedly less experience and, therefore, their development should be given priority, or a liberal attitude that leads to a set and predefined career path. Selma also reflects critically on the issue of age limits and assumptions about age, experience, and development:

The thing I see often is, you are classified as an early-career, emerging, or established artist. ... And most of the time it is driven by the ... amount of money your work has made, or where you have shown your work. But ... people don't research and produce at the same pace. And there are cultural, social, economic dispositions that every single person comes from that determine how and where they can get to these levels. ... I think there's many many more categories ... you can determine your own pace and where you are, at any age.

Selma is able to clearly articulate the career categories that artists are placed in and how these categories build on an assumed connection between chronological age, time or experience, and level of success achieved. She continues by deconstructing these assumptions, pointing out that there are a variety of factors that can affect one's artistic development and career.

Not all the artists were this critically reflective, with a number of them appearing to have, at least partially, internalized this discourse and idea that 35 to 40 years old is a pivotal age in one's career. For many of the younger artists whom we spoke to, this manifests itself in feeling pressured to become established before they reach this age. Sascha summarizes this aptly, stating: "you feel that you are living only until 35, and after that nothing is [out] there! Ok ... maybe you'll be rich and famous, or... nothing"! While this pressure does appear to be intense at times, these younger artists respond to it by being active and taking practical steps to develop in the present, in the hope that it will lead to their future establishment. They take advantage of the opportunities and resources that are available to them now while they are still considered to be young, developing, and emerging artists. All this is not to say that they agree with the age limit: many express outrage, frustration, or confusion when confronted with it. They find it unfair that artists are forced into this discourse that conflates age, experience, and potential for development. Despite this reaction to and opinion of age limits, they still find that they are required to operate within this system and, thus, feel the pressure it exerts on them and try to work within it.

Early on, we observed how many institutions tend to conflate artists' chronological age with their level of professional experience, previous opportunities for development, and future potential to develop. However, our interviewees are aware that these aspects are not synonymous with or indicative of one another. Selma eloquently articulates this idea: "you can determine your own pace, and where you are, at any age," and "every single person comes from [cultural, social, economic dispositions] that determine how and where they can get to these levels [of their career]" (see earlier quote). As a case study, Rodenburg is a prime example. Turning 50 this year, she defines herself as a "new emerging" artist on the basis of her relatively recent entry into the Dutch art world and limited experience as a professional artist. In doing so, she defies the conflation of age and experience that appears to characterize institutional age limits.

Through her actions, Rodenburg also subverts the idea that a strong determination to get established is unique to younger artists. She spoke frequently about having to make the most of her one month at Van Eyck; she had to "take her chance" and was very busy planning meetings with many of the lab technicians. We witnessed this imperative to make connections first hand, observing Rodenburg take action to speak to a number of people at our final presentation and keep contact with those that she had already met. Her case shows that age does not necessarily correlate with, or perhaps cause, this determination or pressure. It is rather the position of the new, emerging artist that prompts one to feel and act in this way.

Nonetheless, when discussing artistic development, younger artists tend to connect their age with an inherent ability to be open and a disposition to be malleable. This resonates with the discourse of the post-academic institutions analyzed in Section 3. Indeed, many of our interviewees subscribe to Selma, according to whom, for older artists, development turns into a process of “narrow[ing] down their taste” and “building their own language (...) for their world.” This view suggests that younger artists have greater potential to develop, as they are more open and malleable than their older counterparts and, would, therefore, benefit more from participating in an art residency.

However, this line of thought was strongly refuted by our older participants, Peltzer in particular, who believes that development is on-going and never-ending. She suggests that, as one becomes more settled later in life when alternative sources of income to sustain oneself (and one’s family) have been found, the opportunities to develop artistically increase. Peltzer’s rationale is that increased financial security and stability in life allow artists to only seek joy and self-fulfillment in their practice. In her experience of aging as an artist, she feels that she has reached a place of self-acceptance and confidence with her art, sensing less pressure or desire for external recognition. This enriches Peltzer’s art practice and allows her to develop and try new things. In sum, the experiences and comments that we gathered from our research show that age is a flawed criterion to assess an artist’s need for a residency space, as the conflation of age, experience, development opportunities, and potential does not match real-world experiences.

We also asked participants to reflect on their experiences and relationships with artists and other persons of different age groups and discussed how they could benefit from intergenerational contacts. Communication across generations is generally regarded as challenging. Participants believe that artists of different ages have different experiences or ideas on art that complicate dialogue and the possibility of finding common ground. Some believe that each age group uses a different language to discuss art and has different notions of what is important to art and a career in the arts. The lack of exchange between generations could further cement these presumed differences, making it hard to debunk the assumptions and to find the proper translations that enable communication between different age groups.

However, all participants feel that it is these differences of experiences and perspectives that make potential exchanges interesting and valuable. In her role as a university professor teaching fine arts courses, Vela explains that the contact with her students allows her to reflect on her own work and further her own practice. Being in contact with younger artists also pushes her to look back on her experiences as a professional

artist to help prepare students for life outside of art school, which she feels responsible for. In a similar vein, Peltzer believes that she could help the younger artists she met through reflecting on her own experiences. She values this type of intergenerational contact because it is not a hierarchical master-student relationship about teaching and learning but rather an exchange of experiences and views with a peer or colleague. Examples like Peltzer’s show the potential of LLA and the responsibility of Van Eyck to facilitate and support intergenerational contact.

In this section, we have focused on how artists conceptualize and make sense of artistic development, and how they experience it as a driving force in their career. The role of residencies emerged as fundamental in fostering artistic development. Residencies position artists in an environment of like-minded people and give them the time and the space that they need to develop their art practice and that they often lack in their everyday lives. We also pointed out how developing Big-C creative skills can be reflected in artists’ increased familiarity with their little-c creative skills, which help them navigate the labor market. While artists often reiterated discourses on creativity as they are articulated in institutions’ policy documents, discussing their experiences and analyzing their views pointed our attention to some interesting discursive tensions and paradoxes.

Examining artists’ experiences of the labor market brought to the fore how problematic it can be to single out their ability to implement little-c creative skills as inspirational for the rest of society. Such skills are a way of navigating the constraints of an uncertain and exploitative market. Although artists are usually proud of them, focusing on little-c creative skills fails to question the nature of the labor market that forces them to use such skills. The changing nature of the market also envelops artists in an interesting discursive tension that strongly affects their self-image. Artists seem to oscillate between the will, described by Bourdieu, to pursue authenticity and disinterestedness, and the necessity to acknowledge market pressures and the inevitable commodification of their work.

We also analyzed the concept of artistic development as it was articulated by our interviewees. Whereas their ideas often resonated with the narratives informing most institutions’ policy documents, artists’ discourses also materialized tensions inherent to the discourse on artistic development. To develop, artists need to explore both the “outside” and the “inner world” (and often to complement this with artistic research). These two tasks are often at odds with one another and are reflected in the friction between Van Eyck’s discourse on being an open institution engaging in society and its material aspects of quietness and remoteness from the buzz of a city. This discursive tension causes artists to attribute both positive and negative meanings to such characteristics of Van Eyck. Studios are, at times, described as

lonely and too distant from “real” society; other times, the very quiet and cloistered nature of Van Eyck was depicted as crucial to enabling self-exploration and growth.

Finally, we discussed how institutionalized age limits impact artists’ perceptions both of artistic development and of their career trajectories. It clearly emerged that age limits in post-academic institutions both narrow down artists’ possibilities of establishing non-hierarchical intergenerational contacts and influence their ideas of artistic development. Artists tend to reiterate a narrative that casts older artists as unable to keep developing and broadening their horizons. Such a narrative does not match older artists’ perceptions and it also results in the reinforcement of ageist assumptions in the art world. Young artists describe themselves as essentially malleable and see older artists as stuck in the past and disconnected from changes happening both in society and in the art world.

In light of our policy analyzes and our discussion of artists’ experiences, LLA emerges as a promising program, potentially capable of countering ageist assumptions. Nonetheless, the discursive tensions that we pointed out throughout our report suggest possible ways of improving the program, on which we elaborate in the next and final section.

4 — Reflections and Recommendations

Having discussed our data, we will now turn to our recommendations. In these final paragraphs, we distinguish three main reflections and offer recommendations for each of them (see Appendix 1 for a brief overview). Moreover, we propose a handful of concrete ideas that could be implemented by Van Eyck.

Firstly, our literature review has illustrated that critics of the idea of ‘successful aging’ are calling for alternative models. One such model that has been put forward is that of ‘interdependence.’ This means that people of all generations and ages have to rely on each other for the functioning of society. We have seen artists and members of the administration at Van Eyck expressing a desire and appreciation for intergenerational contact and connections. The key to this model of communication is dialogue, i.e., a two-way exchange in which both parties are able to learn from each other’s life developments and professional experiences. In light of these findings and reflections, we recommend that Van Eyck does not implement a mentorship program but, instead, facilitates more opportunities for a range of intergenerational contacts. We feel that this can be done in three ways.

First and foremost, we recommend that Van Eyck has some residency spaces open for older or more experienced artists each year. Further developing the LLA program would be one way of achieving this. Apart from establishing diversity in ages and experiences amongst residents, the most important thing in this facilitation is not to force connections. It appears important to artists that these relationships form organically, based on the desires and personalities of the artists themselves.

Secondly, Van Eyck could further organize events tailored to facilitate these connections. This could include symposiums, conferences, or networking events where older and younger, experienced and inexperienced artists come together to exchange insights and form connections. Van Eyck could also use these opportunities to engage with their alumni.

Thus, a third concrete recommendation would be that Van Eyck implements a more structured approach to alumni relations and continues to engage previous participants in the current program. There is a lot of knowledge and expertise present within Van Eyck’s network that could be harnessed by the institution and artists. However, we feel that this is currently underutilized.

Our second reflection concerns a conflation between chronological age and experience in a lot of the literature that we read on the arts, in the many policy documents that we analyzed, and the interviews that we conducted. These are two very different things. We, therefore, strongly recommend a change in perspective, in that these two aspects could be viewed as separate and not as indicative of one another. Concrete measures could be taken to achieve this.

To begin with – and it should be noted that this is the ideal scenario – we recommend a change in policy and assessment procedures. We believe that the age limit (and any requests for the age of applicants) should be removed from calls for applications and from the assessment process. If the main point of an artistic residency is to develop as an artist, the main (if not the only) evaluative point should be the individual's need or desire to develop at any age.

In addition to removing the age limit, we also suggest that Van Eyck requests an additional sort of personal essay of their applicants in which they elaborate on why they would fit into Van Eyck as a specific intergenerational art community that is open to engagement with the world. Our rationale behind this is the following; if a curriculum vitae proves an artist's experience and a project proposal shows both ambition and the desire to develop, this addition to the application will ensure that the artist matches with the goals of the institution. Moreover, it would give applicants the opportunity to outline or explain how their life circumstances may have impacted their art and opportunities to develop professionally up until now. Ultimately, if we want to focus on the lives of artists and if we truly believe this to be an important aspect to their work as a whole, then we need to provide them with the space to show this in their application.

Apart from the ideal scenario, we have also come up with a second and more short-term recommendation; Van Eyck should further develop the LLA program. This could be done by, among other things, extending the duration of the program. It came up multiple times in our interviews that the one-month-timespan was considered too short by the artists. Additionally, giving spaces to older (less experienced) artists who show a willingness to develop would be a second improvement. This relates to the earlier mentioned conflation of age and experience. However, we do not think that a separate, specialized program should be the end goal. We very much encourage Van Eyck to take the lead in the Netherlands when it comes to opening up to older residents. Such a step would be truly socially innovative.

Our final reflection is that we noticed a number of contradictory discourses present in the language used by the administration, policy documents, and artists at Van Eyck.

The first concerns the "openness" of Van Eyck and the "open and free spirited mindset of its residents" (Van Eyck Academie, 2012, p. 33). While there is much talk about Van Eyck being an 'open institution,' open to whom is not clearly defined and we feel that this has ramifications for the activities that take place. On a number of occasions, we found ourselves asking whether Van Eyck is supposed to be open to other artists, to academics and those interested in arts and culture, or open to the public and society at large. Such a conflicting discourse can become problematic for Van Eyck's capitalization on its identity as an institution which is open to the world. Therefore, we recommend the administration to flesh out what it means to be open and then improve the connections between the mission, the artists selected for residencies, and the organized activities. For example, if it is a goal of Van Eyck to be open to the public and to work with societal partners, it is also important that selected artists show a willingness and enthusiasm to work with such partners and who have a track record of doing so. We would like to add a caveat here by mentioning that the 'openness of Van Eyck' was not the focus of our research. However, we do feel that it is an important insight that emerged from our findings and deserves further research on its own.

The second set of contradictory discourses surrounding age and the arts both reiterate problematic conceptualizations of success within the successful aging paradigm and provide points of exit out of this paradigm. We recommend ongoing critical reflection in this regard, which needs to happen both as a dialogue between the administration and the residents and within these two groups themselves, especially as new policies are created and implemented. We again have a few concrete suggestions for how this can be done.

We recommend that Van Eyck engages in more projects such as the LLA program with academic institutions (e.g., Maastricht University or Hogeschool Zuyd) to provide that external critical lens. A second recommendation would be that Van Eyck takes the lead in the Netherlands and Europe by organizing inter-institutional events and by publishing research and artist narratives that will promote such critical reflection within the art world. We suggest that Van Eyck teams up with other partners to question these discourses, as it has done before by inviting Joan Jeffri. All this enhances Van Eyck's visibility, which in turn could inspire De Ateliers and the Rijksakademie since they are influenced by the very same restrictive discourses.

After reflecting on our work, we consider Van Eyck to be ahead of the pack. We applaud the institution for its efforts in putting age on the map and making it visible as a diversifying factor through the LLA program. However, we

do believe that there is still a way to go and that now is the right time to take action. By implementing our recommendations, Van Eyck can brand itself as an age-friendly institution that takes diversity issues seriously. Such a step would be truly innovative and reward those who take this leap into the present and the future.

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APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY REFLECTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

	Reflections	Concrete Examples
1.	<p>Literature urges for alternative models for aging.</p> <p>Artists and advisory board expressed a desire or appreciation for intergenerational contact and connections.</p> <p>Therefore, we recommend no traditional / one-way mentorship programs but the facilitation of more opportunities for intergenerational contact.</p>	<p>Residency spaces for older or more experienced artists and further development of LLA.</p> <p>Symposium/Networking events where older and younger, experienced and inexperienced artists come together. Tailored events/ programs.</p> <p>More structured approach to Alumni relations; engage previous participants in current programs.</p>
2.	<p>Noticed a conflation of chronological age and experience, in institution, in literature, and in interviews.</p> <p>We, therefore, recommend a change in perception.</p>	<p>An ideal scenario - Change policy and change assessment procedure (view these as separate):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make the main evaluative point experience, years of artistic work, or need/desire to develop as an artist (creatively, as a person, or in one's network) - Request a narrative that explains why artists would fit in this intergenerational community that mirrors the world in addition to a CV (proves experience) and project proposal (proves need/ desire for development and ambition as an artist). - Further develop LLA by extending the duration of the program and give spaces to older artists with a desire/need to develop as an artist (creatively, as a person, or in their network).
3.	<p>We noticed contradictory discourses about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The openness of Van Eyck, in our own experiences and that of the artists (they felt it was problematic to relate to the world). - Discourses on age and arts both reiterate problematic conceptualizations of success and points of exit out of these models/ideas. 	<p>Further flesh out what it means to be open.</p> <p>Improve the connections between the mission, the artists, and the activities that they organize.</p> <p>Ongoing critical reflections in the institution and in exchange with the residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Invite Maastricht University back next year and engage in more projects with (academic) institutions. - Organize inter-institutional workshops/ symposiums and publish research and artist narratives, etc. - Cooperate with De Ateliers and Rijksakademie. - Van Eyck should take the lead in the Netherlands and Europe.

APPENDIX 2: TOPIC GUIDES SECTION 2

APPENDIX 2.1: TOPIC GUIDE INTERVIEW (FORMER) EMPLOYEES VAN EYCK

This topic guide was tailored to the individual interviewee.

	Topic	Possible Questions
1.	Introduction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you introduce yourself? 2. What is your function within van Eyck? 3. Can you walk us through your daily tasks? 4. In what way do you interact with the residents? 5. In what way are you affiliated with the LLA program?
2.	Image Van Eyck & Van Eyck Mirror	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would you say is Van Eyck's mission or overall goal/identity? 2. Was this different in the past / Has this changed or developed? Where do you see this going in the (near) future? (Refer to the policy plan 2017-2010) 3. What is Van Eyck Mirror? 4. What is Hubert van Eyck?
3.	Living Like an Artist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does the LLA program fit within the Van Eyck Academie? 2. Why was the LLA project set up? 3. How did the project develop? 4. How was decided to focus on the lifestyle of artists? 5. What do you personally think about the LLA program?
4.	The Applicants & Selection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How would you describe the profile of the (desired) applicants, or the ideal applicant for Van Eyck and LLA more specifically? 2. What are the practicalities of an LLA residency? 3. Do you have any knowledge of the statistics in terms of age, gender, nationality, etc. of the LLA applicants? Is there a pattern to be seen in applications? In what phase are the applicants in in their career? 4. Do the LLA residents get any privileges? 5. Why do the residents stay for only 6 weeks? 6. How do the LLA residents interact with the other residents? 7. How are they taken in and does this affect their work? 8. Can you compare the 'call for application' for the regular residencies and for the LLA program? 9. What are the requirements for an application? When were these decided upon and by whom? 10. What is your position/function within the selection committee? 11. What do you look for in a resident (selection criteria)? 12. How do you market this program (and thus the call for applications) and on what platform(s)?

	Topic	Possible Questions
5.	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What kind of support do you offer the LLA residents? 2. Do the LLA residents have any specific needs? 3. What problems/questions do you encounter? 4. Do you see differences between the residents? If there are differences in needs/questions/obstacles, how would you explain them? 5. If this project were to continue in the future, what (if any) recommendations would you propose in terms of support? <p>If nothing comes up, we can use the following things as probing questions/ideas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Recommendations in the building? b) Recommendations concerning technology? c) Recommendations concerning support for the residents? d) Special help during the application?
6.	Comparison	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What makes Van Eyck unique in comparison to other Dutch academies (De Ateliers and De Rijksacademie)? 2. Is there any interaction between Van Eyck and the other institutions? 3. What is your relationship with the other institutions?
7.	Expectations & Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would you say is the direction that the LLA project is taking? 2. What are your expectations of our research? 3. Do you have advice for our research? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Are there things that might be interesting for us to look into? b) Documents that we could use? c) People that we could interview?

APPENDIX 2.2: TOPIC GUIDE INTERVIEW KARL DITTRICH

	Topic	Possible Questions
1.	Introductie	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Algemene introductie van het project 2. Wat is de raad van toezicht? 3. Wat is haar functie en invloed binnen de Van Eyck? 4. Wat is uw functie binnen deze raad?
2.	Betrokkenheid bij Van Eyck	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hoe bent u betrokken geraakt bij Van Eyck? 2. Hoe zou u de identiteit van Van Eyck beschrijven? 3. Uw invloed binnen de ontwikkeling en de bezuinigingen? 4. In hoeverre bent u betrokken bij de residents / selectieproces? 5. Bekendheid met De Ateliers en De Rijksacademie? 6. Wat maakt Van Eyck uniek?
3.	Raad van Toezicht	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aanbevelingen in het verleden? 2. Verbeterpunten? 3. Visie op oudere kunstenaars binnen Van Eyck?
4.	Nieuwe directeur	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uw functie binnen het selectieproces? 2. Wat is belangrijk voor de nieuwe directeur? 3. Hoe ziet u de toekomst van Van Eyck voor u en welke rol speelt de nieuwe directeur hierin?
5.	Living Like an Artist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In hoeverre bent u bekend met het LLA initiatief? 2. Hoe kijkt u naar dit project? Mening/beeld.

	Topic	Possible Questions
1.	Mondriaan Fonds & Van Eyck	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wat is precies uw rol, verantwoordelijkheid en functie binnen het Mondriaan Fonds? 2. Hoe ziet de relatie tussen Van Eyck en het Mondriaan Fonds eruit? 3. Wat is de rol van het Mondriaan Fonds in de selectie van de participanten binnen Van Eyck? 4. Wat is uw rol hierin? 5. In hoeverre heeft u / het Mondriaan Fonds contact met de andere academies? (De Ateliers & De Rijksakademie)
2.	Jaarboekje Mondriaan Fonds	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Over het Mondriaan Fonds 2. Krijgen het Mondriaan Fonds vaak aanvragen van oudere kunstenaars? (Statistieken?) 3. Hoe staat het Mondriaan Fonds tegenover oudere kunstenaars? In hoeverre worden zij financieel gesteund? Werkbijdrages -> is hier een leeftijd(sgrens) aan verbonden?
3.	Living Like an Artist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bent u bekend met dit initiatief? 2. Uw mening hierover? 3. Zou u / het Mondriaan Fonds open staan voor een rol/ positie voor deze oudere kunstenaars als reguliere participanten van Van Eyck? 4. Prix de Rome: Vergelijkbare prijzen zonder deze leeftijdsgrens? Wat is de beweegreden achter een leeftijdsgrens in uw visie? 5. De Ateliers & De Rijksakademie lijken veel meer gefocust op de jonge leeftijd van hun participanten dan Van Eyck. Wat denkt u dat de reden hiervoor is?

	Topic	Possible Questions
1.	You and Your Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What type of an artists are you? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How has this changed over time? 2. What stage are you at in your career?
2.	Experience at Van Eyck	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk me through your average day. (How are you coming along at Van Eyck?) 2. What are your interactions with the others at Van Eyck? (Residents, admins, director, hanging out, etc.)
3.	Van Eyck Residency in the Context of Your Career	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why did you apply to Van Eyck? (How did you first hear about Van Eyck /residencies?) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What characteristics of Van Eyck and this residency appealed to you? b. What impact do you think or hope this residency and this experience will have on your career? c. What other reasons can you think of that would make artists apply? 2. What are you planning on doing during your residency? What have you done so far? 3. Why is this a good moment in your life to be part of the residency and institution?
4.	Age (Limits) and Art	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a number of residency programs in the Netherlands there is an age limit of between 35-40 years old for applicants. What do you think the rationale behind this is? 2. Can you think of any other instances where age has been a factor in the art world? (Also informally, art school) 3. To what extent have you considered age as a factor in artistic careers?
5.	Networking/Intergenerational Contact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does your network look like? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How important is networking within the art world? 2. Are you in contact with artists outside of your age group? What are those relationships like? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. And at Van Eyck? 3. What have intergenerational contacts already given you or what do you expect to get out of them? Do you envision this as a mentorship? What would be your contribution to that relationship?
6.	Prior Career Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How much thought and planning have you put into your career? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Has this changed over time? 2. How has your work interacted with your personal life? (Work-family balance) 3. Who are inspiring examples to you?

Topic	Possible Questions
7. Future Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where do you see yourself in the next 20/40/50 years? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What steps do you think you'll have to take to get there? 2. How do you think your art and/or practice will change over time? 3. How do you think your art will (continue) to affect your life planning? 4. What do you think is the recipe for creating a sustainable and successful artistic career?

APPENDIX 3.2: TOPIC GUIDE FOCUS GROUP

Topic	Possible Questions
Block 1	Introduction and Instructions
Welcome	<p>Introduce moderator and assistants.</p> <p>"Thank you for taking the time today to join us in our group interview here at Van Eyck. I am and I will be the moderator today. My role as moderator will be to guide the discussion, assisted by ... and In collaboration with the Jan van Eyck Academie, we are involved in the "Like an Artist" project that forms part of a study on the lifestyles of artists. Our topic is the experience of participants in artist residencies such as the ones offered by Van Eyck. We are Research Master students from Maastricht University and the results will be used for a report, presented here at the Van Eyck in May. You were selected because you are a resident at the Jan van Eyck Academie."</p>
Guidelines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Please note that the interviews will be recorded and, subsequently, transcribed. Therefore, one person speaks at a time. 2. Extracts from the interview may be presented during the "Like an Artist" symposium or quoted in our final report. Interviewees can withdraw from the focus group at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind. 3. The interviewer will not participate in the conversation, apart from asking questions and asking for clarification. 4. There are no right or wrong answers, only differing points of view. Please keep in mind that the purpose of this focus group is not to reach a consensus; we are interested in hearing all your opinions and experiences. 5. The focus group discussion will take 1.5 hours, is everyone okay with this?
Introduction Participants	<p>At the beginning, we will introduce ourselves. You can each tell your name (this is also useful for the recording) and tell us a bit about what you're doing at Van Eyck.</p> <p>- Who you are and how did you get here? - Name, age, and art discipline?</p>
Block 2	You and Your Ideas
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What makes you an artist? 2. What has played a role in your development as an artist? (Ask good follow-up questions.) 3. What does it mean to be successful as an artist? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What does it take to become successful?

Topic	Possible Questions
Block 3	Role of Institutions in Artistic Development (Give them the paragraph from the policy report – Appendix 4) 1. What grabs your attention in this text? 2. How does this idea of development occurring within an institutional setting apply to you and your experience?
Block 4	Role of Life Circumstances and Personal Lives in Artistic Development 1. What is the relationship between art and life? 2. How has making art impacted upon your personal life? 3. How has your life impacted your development as an artist? a. [If we only get negative answers, ask for positive and vice-versa] b. [Life = life circumstances, life course, experiences, events, etc.]
Block 5	Role of Age in Artistic Development 1. How important is age for an artist? 2. (Give the headlines –Appendix 4) What effect does seeing statements like these have on your ideas about artistic development? 3. What do you think is the rationale behind these age limits? OR 1. [Give them the statements.] What do you think about these statements? 2. One of the programs currently running at Van Eyck is the LLA program in which the age limit is over 40. What do you think is the reason for this?
Conclusion	Is there anything else you want to add? Thank you and have a nice day.

APPENDIX 4

QUOTE FROM A POLICY DOCUMENT

“The Van Eyck is a multidisciplinary institute that furthers experiment, research, study, production and exchange. In our institute promising artists, designers, curators, (landscape) architects, writers and other thinkers are given the time and space that is needed to develop their talents, to discover as yet unexplored perspectives and delve into deeper layers of their selves. Apply if you feel the time is ripe to take your work to another level in an open environment, to experiment and investigate, to see your work reflected in the mirror of the world or to do what no one fully grasps yet.”

AGE-RELATED SNIPPETS

“(B)old festival: Monday 14 – Sunday 20 May 2018 Southbank Centre today announces (B)old, a brand new festival celebrating age and creativity, supported by The Baring Foundation. Championing new and established artists aged 65 years and over”

“The Prix de Rome is the oldest and most prestigious award in the Netherlands for visual artists under the age of 40 and architects under the age of 35. The nominee should be no older than 40 (visual artists) or 35 (architects) at the time of the winner’s announcement.”

“De Charlotte Köhler Prijzen zijn aanmoedigingsprijzen voor jong talent (tot 35 jaar) in beeldende kunst en theater. De prijzen - van elk € 30.000 - werden in 1988 bij legaat ingesteld door actrice Charlotte Köhler (1892-1977).”

“Who can apply? Application is open to upcoming artists with a few years of professional experience after their education. Most candidates have a MA degree and are between 25 and 35 years old.”

“Nederlandse beeldende kunstenaars tot 35 jaar kunnen meedingen naar de prijs. Dit jaar zonden ruim 302 kunstenaars beeldmateriaal in.”

General statements

- Artists never retire
- Creativity develops with age
- You can peak just once in your career
- Your life course affects your art
- Your later art is better
- Living from your art makes you successful

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With a special thanks to the Van Eyck team,
all participants, and interviewees.

**VAN
EYCK**



UVH | UNIVERSITEIT
VOOR
HUMANISTIEK

Centrum
Gender en Diversiteit

BankGiroLoterij

STICHTING
EDMOND
HUSTINX

VAN
EYCK