The Art of Resilience

Professional Artists' Experiences of Continuing Creative Practices in Place

Living Like an Artist

VAN EYCK

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1 — Introduction

In this report, we present the research project "Living Like an Artist," a collaborative effort between Research Master students in Cultures of Arts, Science, and Technology (CAST) from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University, Master students in Architecture from RWTH Aachen University, and the Jan van Eyck Academie. The background to this research project is the following. The final decades of the twentieth century saw a rise of the commodification of creativity in Western society making creativity the new source of economic profit and the new paradigm of social organization (Florida, 2012, p. 15). Within this paradigm, the creativity of individuals is encouraged and accommodated to stimulate productivity and success (Reckwitz, 2017). At the same time, western societies – the Netherlands included – are aging and creativity has come to be understood as an economic and social solution to this contemporary demographic challenge (Swinnen, 2018, p. 2). Artists who are seen as quintessentially creative and who often live and work into old age are increasingly celebrated as exemplary figures of successful aging (Katz & Campbell, 2005). Our qualitative inquiry focuses on the meanings that older artists themselves ascribe to the continuation of their creative practices into old age. We focus specifically on artists who are aging in place, a development that is advocated by Dutch governmental policies on aging. For this project we have worked together with Master students in Architecture to enhance our understanding of how older artists who continue to live and work in place have adapted their living and working spaces to their creative practices and, vice versa, over the course of their life. Our main research question is: What do creative practices mean for professional artists in later life who work and live in place? To answer this question, we asked three sub-questions: 1) Which subjectivities emerge from creative practices of professional artists over the course of their lives? 2) What is the relation of these subjectivities to their physical environment(s)? 3) What is the relationship between these subjectivities and the successful aging paradigm – a paradigm that will be elaborated on in the second section of this report?

The report starts with a literature review. It shows the connection between the commodification of creativity and the successful aging paradigm in which people are positioned as individually responsible for making the right lifestyle choices in order to age productively, healthily, and independently. In addition, we examine literature on environmental gerontology that concentrates on the optimization of aging in place and shows that the ways in which people experience aging and place is highly individual. Finally, literature on the artist's studio and self-fashioning illustrates that the ways in which people talk about their experiences and how they present themselves can be influenced by contemporary and historical norms and values about what being a good artist entails.

To find out what meanings the artists in our research ascribe to their creative practices while working and living in place, we conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews at their homes. The Architecture students accompanied us and drew axonometries of the artists' houses that serve as input for their own creative outlook on the future of aging in place. We subsequently transcribed and coded the interviews. From the coding process, three superordinate and fourteen subordinate themes emerged. The first superordinate theme, Positioning in Relation to the [Art] World, includes the subordinate themes Negotiating External and Internal Validation; Reflecting on [Art] Education; Positioning in Relation to Others, and Showing Knowledge of the Dynamics of the Art World. The second superordinate theme, Being an Artist, comprehends the subordinate themes A Need for Expression; Adapting to Changes; Approaching Finitude; Co-Creating Subjectivity and Place; and Striving for Autonomy. The third superordinate theme, Negotiating a Creative Environment, has five subordinate themes: Shaping a Creative Place; Valuing Tools and Materials; Weighing Artistic Collaboration; Identifying Inspiration; and Valuing Support. These themes all represent the meanings given by the professional artists to creativity, working, place, and aging.

After a discussion of our findings in relation to these themes, we answer the sub-questions presented above. We conclude that, through the course of their lives, artists are able to manage challenges that impact on their ability to continue working and living in place. It is in this sense that they can be perceived as exemplary figures. The insights that we present here serve as input for the recommendations to the Jan van Eyck Academie and the Architecture students from RWTH Aachen University. Based on the findings presented here, these students will develop a creative outlook on what the future of aging in place may hold. We hope that our insights into the ways in which artists manoeuvre uncertainties throughout life will resonate with both partners and stimulate future collaboration.

2 — Theoretical Framework

In order to contextualize our research questions, we conducted a review of existing literature. In this section, we discuss and draw parallels between literature on the commodification of creativity, the gerontologization of creativity, space and place in later life, the artist's studio, and the self-fashioning of artists.

THE COMMODIFICATION OF CREATIVITY

Creativity has been commonly conceived of as an inherently artistic quality to engage with the world in order to produce artworks. However, this conception of creativity has become rather old-fashioned; creativity has acquired a broader economic and cultural meaning that is not limited to the domains of art. From the 1970s onwards, western society has undergone a significant cultural change (Florida, 2012; Pope, 2005; Reckwitz, 2017). Although this change is generally attributed to technological development, several authors argue that, in fact, the change manifested itself in the very way of thinking about and of approaching the economic scene (Florida, 2012; Pope, 2005; Reckwitz, 2017). Workers no longer interpreted their job as a mechanical performance of an assigned task but strove for a creative way of working and living. This section of the theoretical framework is dedicated to contextualizing our research within this new trend in contemporary society, namely a shift towards creativity within the labor force.

In The Rise of the Creative Class (2012), Richard Florida explains the economic nature of this shift. He defines creativity as "the ability to create meaningful new forms" (Florida, 2012, p. 6) and the creative class as the new social class that has creativity as its "fundamental economic driver" (p. 7). Compared to the working class and the service class, the creative class is wealthier (Florida, 2012, pp. 45-46); the average wages of the creative class are double in comparison to the average of the other two classes (pp. 47-48). Creativity has become the new source of economic profit and the new paradigm of social organization (Florida, 2012, p. 15). Within professions and institutions, producing novelty is the aim. Everyone strives for a new, not necessarily better, but innovative form. This is exemplified by the way mass media have magnified the cultural importance of people – mostly men – who became famous thanks to their creative skills (Reckwitz, 2017), for instance, musicians John Lennon, Bob Dylan, and Paul McCartney, or film stars Alfred Hitchcock, Wim Wenders, and the Cohen brothers, as well as entrepreneurs Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerberg. They are all respected for their ability to produce creative content that is commercially successful and hence function as icons of the creative class.

Florida (2012) and Andreas Reckwitz (2017) argue that western society's strive for creativity originated as a reaction to the rationalization, bureaucratization, and rapid social and technological change that characterized early modernity. Early modernity found its expression in a strict organization of its economic and political systems, its standardized industries, and its urbanization (Giddens, 1971). It was a uniform movement towards a rigid system of social structures characterized by individual economic profit and without opportunities to build a sense of community spirit (Bauman, 2000). The undermining of social relations through the impersonalization of capitalist economy and consumer culture gave rise to a strong cultural reaction which led to the rise of the creative class (Florida, 2012). Within this class, self-expression and openness to experience are more valued than previously affirmed values and norms, such as conformity and homologation (Florida, 2012, p. 10).

In his book The Invention of Creativity (2017), Reckwitz accounts for the societal dynamics leading to the upgrading of creativity in late modernity. In his view, creativity is "the constant production of new things" (p. 10). The commodification of creativity refers to the societal imperative to be creative for economic purposes and the monetary value attributed to the ability to create and produce new things. The commodification of creativity implies the affirmation of creativity within all social and cultural structures (Reckwitz, 2017); creativity has permeated the western neoliberal way of thinking up to a point where social structures have been transformed to accommodate creativity. In other words, individuals strive for creativity in order to be successfully productive. Creativity is the obligatory key towards economic and social success, as social recognition derives from the individual ability to perform and to act creatively in every aspect of one's life (Reckwitz, 2017, pp. 214-215). The so-called homo aestheticus, the ideal of the active and productive creator (Gallistl, 2018), exemplifies the cultural equation between creativity and productivity.

Artists are inevitably part of the societal context that we have just described and are influenced by cultural norms. Successfully creative subjects, such as artists Damien Hirst, Jeff Koons, and Tracey Emin, are praised as the epitomes of the current socio-economic system (Reckwitz, 2017). Their way of being creative is inherently linked to the necessity of being productive. As creativity has become

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a general societal trend, artists find social recognition in the attention given to their artworks, the products of their creative selves. The commodification of creativity and the accompanying consumerist, entrepreneurial lifestyle characteristic of late modernity also seem to have infringed upon later life (Gallistl, 2018). As such this development has also influenced the position of the older artist, as we discuss in the next section.

THE GERONTOLOGIZATION OF CREATIVITY

The effects of creativity on the well-being of older adults has increasingly become a focal point in gerontology, which is the social study of aging and later life. Two opposing narratives structure the consideration of artistic creativity by gerontology. The first one measures creativity quantitatively in terms of productivity and qualitatively in terms of the degree of creativity within creative works. On the basis of these measurements, it is argued that life is characterized by a peak-and-decline narrative. That is, artistic creativity peaks around mid-life and subsequently "declines into unimaginative aesthetic expressions or hardens into static stylistic conventions" (Katz & Campbell, 2005, p. 101). The second (counter) narrative proposes instead that artistic creativity continues, grows, and renews itself throughout the lifespan "in immeasurable ways" (p. 101).

John Rowe and Robert Kahn (1998) have argued against the common myth in gerontology that old age equals decline. This myth reinforces ageism whereby people are discriminated against on the basis of their chronological age. Instead, Rowe and Kahn argue that one can age successfully by preventing disease and disability, maintaining physical and mental function and full social engagement (p. 38). Stephen Katz and Toni Calasanti (2015) note that researchers have increasingly generated "a discourse of kin terms such as 'productive ageing', 'positive ageing', 'optimal ageing', 'effective ageing', and 'healthy ageing'" (p. 26). The assumption here is that individuals can age successfully by making smart consumer choices to preserve their youth and health and, thereby, their independence (Katz & Calasanti, 2015). This narrative can be read as a response to the peak-and-decline model, by emphasizing positive growth in older age. At the same time, however, the emphasis on individual responsibility for a healthy lifestyle and independence fits within a "contemporary, consumerist, neoliberal, and entrepreneurial style of thought that dominates health and retirement politics" (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, p. 27).

The successful aging paradigm is, therefore, perfectly in line with what Florida (2012) calls the commodification of creativity, in which older adults, like everyone else in late modern society, feel the obligation to be creative in all facets of life. Katz and Calasanti (2015), however, argue against the idea that smart consumer choices can help people to age successfully. They trace the discussion about problems of individual life choice back to George Simmel and Max Weber. The latter have argued that individual choice and free will are always constrained by inequalities in material conditions that, over the span of a lifetime, accumulate into advantages and disadvantages (Weber, 1978; Simmel, 1992 as cited in Frisby, 1992). Therefore, not only the definition of success but also access to the means for success are matters of social inequality (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, p. 31).

One consequence of the successful aging paradigm is that gerontologists have come to see artists who work and live into old age as role models for successful aging (Katz & Campbell, 2005). Increasingly, research within gerontology focuses on the effects of artistic creativity in later life and a great amount of the literature suggests that creative engagement can contribute to successful aging as well as to greater well-being in later life (Fisher & Specht, 2000; Price & Tinker, 2014; Noice & Noice, 2013). Vera Gallistl's research (2018) suggests that, indeed, the commodification of creativity is infringing upon old age through the successful aging paradigm. She interviewed older (60+) professional and non-professional artists to uncover the meanings that they ascribed to their artistic practices. From the interviews, it followed that they framed their creative practices in terms of a felt need to be productive and to create value (p. 97).

This "active, productive and anti-aging" (Gallistl, 2018, p. 98) discourse that the older artists in Gallistl's research tap into can be linked to what Paul Higgs & Chris Gilleard (2015) call the 'third age imaginary.' The latter is characterized by an active exclusion of 'old age' and 'agedness' and a focus on independence, autonomy, activity, productivity, and choice. The 'fourth age imaginary,' on the other hand, is the distorted mirror of the third age and serves as the counterpoint to activity and agency. It is associated with individuals who are dependent, inactive, and unproductive (p. 12). Gallistl's research suggests that the fourth age is a negatively charged idea, "an image of a dark future of biological decline and social disengagement, a life-stage in which the agentic and productive individual is no longer able to participate in this culture of productivity" (2018, p. 98). By living according to a third age imaginary, in contrast, individuals can showcase their productivity and, thereby, their value for society. In a similar vein, David Amigoni and Gordon McMullan (2015) argue that the positive discourse of late-life creativity is used to discipline individuals into constantly showing agency and productivity.

The emphasis on successful aging, however, "produces exclusion in old age – namely of those who cannot (or do not want to) be active and productive in old age" (Gallistl, 2018, p. 98). Moreover, within the successful aging paradigm, later life meaning-making beyond productivity is ignored and no meaningfulness is found in

[1] For the sake of clarity, we exclusively use the term 'successful aging' in this report, but this term encompasses these kin discourses of 'productive,' 'positive,' 'optimal,' 'effective,' 'vital,' and 'healthy' aging.

vulnerability and dependency. Our research is aimed at finding out how, throughout their lives, older artists ascribe meaning to their daily practices within and beyond their professional practices that goes beyond independence and productivity. Aagje Swinnen's investigation (2018) into the ways in which professional poets experience, understand, and give meaning to creativity in later life shows that creative writing practices can become essential to a way of life that departs from the successful aging paradigm. Similarly, Leo Delfgaauw (2017) shows how creative development across the life span (life-long learning) can become a powerful antidote to the peak-and-decline paradigm for professionals in the visual arts. The following sections examine literature about the ways in which artists shape and are shaped by their environment and the creative practices that take place within that environment.

SPACE AND PLACE IN LATER LIFE

We will now review literature in the field of environmental gerontology in order to gain a better understanding of how people shape places and vice versa. The definition of place is, of course, pivotal in our research. Place is distinguished from space mainly because of the meaning it acquires for a specific person or a specific group of people (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). A place is part of an environment that becomes significant for its unique qualities (Gieryn, 2000). A space becomes a place when a specific portion of physical territory is invested with value (Gieryn, 2000, p. 468). Following Thomas F. Gieryn (2000), we include place in the agentic assemblages or structures that play a role in social life. Daily choices, lifestyles, and the balance between public and private life are mutually interacting with place (Peace, Holland, & Kellaher, 2006, p. 14).

Habib Chaudhury and Graham D. Rowles (2005) argue that people's memories, relationships, and sense of well-being are tied to the relation they build with an environment (pp. 12-13). That "we transform the spaces of our life into places of meaning and significance" (Rowles & Bernard, 2013, p. 3) is crucial for a holistic understanding of a person's way of being, acting, and interacting in the world. For the scope of this report, we understand the multiple and multifaceted ways in which people are in the world as 'subjectivities.' 'Subjectivity' is a term that refers to the subject in the making, a process influenced by space and place (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). The relation that we have with our surroundings and the meanings that we attach to them are what transforms a space into a place, which, in turn, shapes our subjectivities (Peace, 2015, p. 449). As Rowles and Miriam Bernard put it, "we are engaged in converting something that is neutral and often alien into something that is a meaningful expression of our identity" (2013, p. 9).

A sense of belonging is paramount in the definition of place. When we feel that a space becomes our own, the formation of our subjectivity advances; when a place becomes inherently part of who we are, and it is personalized accordingly, it enhances our sense of self and our well-being (Peace, 2015, p. 451). Older people spend on average 80% of their time at home (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). Therefore, feeling at home in one's environment is of fundamental importance in later life. Feeling at home is not the same as being in a functional and safe space. Instead, it means a space to which one connects on a deeper level, a level that has physical and emotional dimensions (Chaudhury & Rowles, 2005). Consequently, living in place means feeling at ease with oneself and with the world one is situated in. The idea that place is important for the older population is the starting point of the field of environmental gerontology (Schwartz, 2012, p. 1). Rowles and Bernard remind us that "As we accumulate knowledge of the manner in which people experience space and make place, we are increasingly able to identify options for intervention that on the one hand enable people to sustain accustomed modes of being in place and at home and, on the other, ease the process of transition and remaking place when environmental change or a relocation becomes necessary" (2013, p. 18).

Environmental gerontology aims to improve aging in place. It assumes that the support of the physical environment is increasingly needed as one ages because aging is likely to provoke physical and cognitive challenges (Schwartz, 2012, p. 3). Moreover, environmental gerontology also assumes that growing old and growing more attached to known and familiar places go hand in hand. Attachment to place is deeply linked to the preservation of one's own subjectivity (Rowles, 1983, p. 301). As every individual ages differently and the space and the relation between space and the individual differs, environmental gerontology is mainly preoccupied with case studies. The focus on the context, on the subjective meaning that aging has for individuals, and on the subjective significance that place is given by each individual are essential for an inclusive environmental gerontology (Schwartz, 2012, p. 13). Because of our focus on how older artists' subjectivity and place influence each other, we are particularly interested in their working space, i.e., the studio.

THE ARTIST'S STUDIO

Given the above, we cannot take the meanings of place for granted and the same applies to the artist's studio. The literature presented here is meant to contextualize the existing notions of the studio that may be present in the way our artists define and experience their studio. The relation between the artist, the space of work, and what the artist does in that space has always been important (Davidts & Paice, 2009; Wainwright, 2010; Esner, Kisters, & Lehmann, 2013; Kisters,

2013). In this section, we will discuss how the notion of the artist's studio has been conceptualized differently by various theorists. We must keep in mind that the discussions of these theorists are conceptualizations and are not always in line with the way the artists in our research define and experience their studio.

In the early modern period, there was a shift from the artist as a craftsman, working in a workshop, to the artist as an autonomous master (Esner, Kisters, & Lehmann, 2013). Rachel Esner, Sandra Kisters, and Ann-Sophie Lehmann describe this shift as follows:

> The artist was no longer a man who worked, but a man who conceptualized; his studio was no longer a workshop, but a private, even sacred place – a place of inspiration rather than labour; and that which was produced there was produced by means other than with the hands. (Esner, Kisters, & Lehmann, 2013, p. 10)

Thus, the craftsman's workshop changed into a kind of sacred, romantic place for the artist as a genius master working in isolation. Esner, Kisters, and Lehmann (2013) argue that in this shift from thinking over making, certain parts of the artistic process became hidden, to the advantage of the image of the artist. Kisters (2013) notes a dichotomy of "hiding making," on the one hand, and "showing creation," on the other. The artist would hide "routine, failure and craft" from the public and show certain parts of the artistic process that "perpetuate the notions of the artistic genius and autonomy" (Esner, Kisters, & Lehmann, 2013, p. 10).

One thing to keep in mind when understanding the notion of the romantic studio as illustrated by the quote above is that this notion is a masculine conception of the studio. As Mary Bergstein argues, the studio is often portrayed and seen as a place "where domestic norms were suspended or reversed in favour of independence and self-expression" (2010, p. 197). The studio, in this sense, is seen as the place in which domesticity is rejected in favor of creative practice which must be kept separated from it. The idea that the studio is an undomestic environment runs counter to some of our findings, which will be discussed in the fourth section of this report.

During the late 1960s, the romantic notion of the artist's studio came under discussion. According to Wouter Davidts and Kimberly Paice (2009), the studio "became a prime target for critique, proclaiming it has lost its mythical stature as an 'imaginations chamber'" (p. 2). Artists investigated new ways in which art could be produced, circulated, and received (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 2). The romantic notion of the studio as a sacred thinking place was increasingly seen as restrictive for and by artists and no longer functioned as the prime site of production, as artists were looking for new forms of "making, distributing, presenting and experiencing art" (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 2). New forms of working arrangements arose; some artists no longer made their art themselves and others started making their art in the gallery, circumventing "the conventional division" (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 4) between the studio as the place where art was produced, and the gallery or the museum as the site where the artwork was received. In his influential essay "The function of the studio" (1971), Daniel Buren expressed his "desire for a 'true relationship' between the artwork and its place of creation" (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 15) and completely abandoned the studio. Buren (1971) argued that, through moving the artwork outside of the studio, the work lost some essential realness. His solution was to work at the site of reception, the museum.

These developments in the understanding of the artist's studio and its loss of meaning and significance since the twentieth century are part of what has often been called the 'post-studio era.' This era is characterized by a multiplication of workplaces. As Davidts and Paice write:

> It is now rare for art to be produced in a single spot and by a sole individual. Rather it comes into being on myriad 'sites,' via both physical and virtual bases, and through the collaboration of different people with varied skills and backgrounds (2009, p. 6).

So, is it indeed true that artists currently live and work in a post-studio era? There is much dispute about this in the literature. Even though there have been "profound changes in the understanding and processes of artistic production in the 1960s, not everyone considered the studio to be obsolete" (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 8). Esner (2013), for instance, argues that even though the ways in which we think about and use the studio may have changed, we are still intrigued by the romantic notion of the studio (pp. 121-122). She also believes that the romantic strategy of "hiding making" and "showing creation" is still "as actual a strategy today as it ever was in the past" (p. 122). She further claims that "the studio itself, if not as a workspace then at least as a concept, remains a determining factor, even for those who claim to undermine its discourse or leave it behind altogether" (p. 122). In a similar vein, Lisa Wainwright (2010) states that conceptions of what the studio is and means may have changed but the idea of the romantic studio still "persists today both in popular culture and in artistic practice" (Wainwright, 2010, p. 4).

In line with Esner (2013), Davidts and Paice (2009), and Wainwright (2010), we argue that it is not so simple to abandon the site of the studio in our understanding of the artist. Even if the notion of the studio has been disputed and discussed, the artists in our research are still working and living within them and the studio is an important component of their existence in the world. As we have seen earlier, artists are co-creating their subjectivity in and through their living spaces and studios (Rowles & Bernard, 2013). Therefore, understanding the notion of the studio and how it has changed over time will give us a greater insight into how it reflects and shapes the subjectivity of the artists in our research.

THE SELF-FASHIONING OF ARTISTS

In this final section of the theoretical framework, we discuss the idea of self-fashioning. It refers to the way in which people, in this case artists, present and position themselves. Consciously or unconsciously, people frame themselves in relation to others and subsequently act in certain ways. The intersection of certain categories and identities, such as age, gender, ethnicity, or class, can have implications for the ways in which people relate to each other in different situations. Self-fashioning is relevant for our research as a cultural context in which we can understand the individual lived experiences of artists and how they talk about themselves as situated in certain discourses that constrain but also enable their actions and experiences.

Several scholars (Battersby, 1989; McMahon, 2013) have identified repertoires of self-fashioning throughout history. These repertoires emerged against the backdrop of certain socio-political circumstances and reflect an ideal image of the artist in a certain time period. How these artists interpret and enact those repertoires varies. As Judith Butler puts it: "the body acts its part in a culturally restricted corporeal space and enacts interpretations within the confines of already existing directives" (1988, p. 527). How the artists in this research project ascribe meaning to experiences can partly be understood through repertoires of self-fashioning. In the artists' accounts, we will look for traces of these repertoires that they might tweak and twist in order to comply with this idea of the ideal artist. Two particular repertoires for artists' self-fashioning emerged from our interviews with artists: the romantic genius and the entrepreneur, both of which we will discuss below.

The repertoire of the 'romantic genius' dates back to the romantic period (Battersby, 1989). Romanticism is, among other things, characterized by an emphasis on individualism and a glorification of nature. On the basis of numerous examples of artists and scientists who fashioned themselves as 'romantic geniuses,' Darrin M. McMahon concludes that "the genius is credited with divine powers, someone who is 'charged' with a superabundance of energy" (2013, p. 114). He further argues that the romantic genius fashions him- or herself as a "modern hero in possession of superhuman powers" (p. 115). Romantic geniuses pose as nonconformist revolutionaries who disrespect tradition and established norms. They are untrained (i.e., have not learned to follow rules, guidelines, or examples) and position themselves as radically original and innovative. They often describe inspiration as something that comes to you, as a momentary insight or epiphany, as something you receive in nature and by being alone. Hence, artists that identify with the romantic paradigm value the solitary atelier; the studio as a sacred place for the artist as a genius master working in isolation, as described in the section about the artists' studio.

However, the 1950s saw the establishment of museums, art companies, art councils, funding bodies, magazines, awards, and educational programs – such as the Jan van Eyck Academie (Deresiewicz, 2015, p. 4). In other words, art was institutionalized and so was the artist. Deresiewicz states that "expertise, or in the mantra of the graduate programmes, 'technique' – not inspiration or tradition, became the currency of aesthetic authority" (p. 4). Since the 1970s onwards, a different, i.e, entrepreneurial paradigm of the artist has developed (p. 6). Artists are now expected to be their own companies or label and do their own marketing. This development is directly linked to the commodification of creativity, the idea that creativity is a means for innovation and productivity (Florida, 2012; Reckwitz, 2017). As a consequence, professional artists have to construct a "multiplicity of artistic identities (p. 9); they must have the professional identity of a "chameleon" (Fletcher, 2008, p. 148).

> Richard Fletcher states that the artist-entrepreneur is an emerging professional identity that sees a role mid-way between the internal idea-focus of the artist, and the external market-focus of the entrepreneur, and holds something of an insight for genuine economic development. (2008, p. 145)

In the age of 'the creative class,' producing art becomes an experience and the experience becomes a lifestyle (Deresiewicz, 2015, p. 9). The artist as an entrepreneur fashions him or herself as innovator and as someone who enjoys 'worldly' goods such as awards, money, and the attention of the public. For the artist-entrepreneur, external validation is a mark of quality.

In both repertoires, the artist as romantic genius or as entrepreneur, creativity is seen as an individual force within the artist. It can also be argued, however, that creativity is relational (Gallistl, 2018; Swinnen, 2018). How artists fashion themselves is always in relation to others, including other artists, and in their interaction with the art world. In Howard Becker's view, art worlds "consist of all the people whose activities are necessary to the production of the characteristic works which that world, and perhaps others as well, define as art" (1982, p. 34). The art world is an established network with links between the participants in that world (p. 35). Works of art are, thus, never products of individual makers but joint products of a particular network (p. 35). Art worlds "produce works and also give them aesthetic value"

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(p. 39). As the findings will show, evidence of self-fashioning in relation to the art world, occurred frequently in our data.

The literature discussed above provides the theoretical framework of our research into the meanings that older artists, who live and work in place, ascribe to their creative practices. As already explained, the commodification of creativity has resulted in creativity becoming increasingly equated with productivity. As this idea also seems to have spread into old age, artists are often taken as exemplary figures of successful aging, in which success equals health, independence, and productivity. The ideal of successful aging, however, discriminates against people who cannot or do not want to conform to the third age imaginary that accompanies the successful aging paradigm. Therefore, in our research we are interested in how artists themselves ascribe meaning to their creative practice beyond creativity as a tool for successful aging. We aim to find out how individual artists can be seen as examples, not only in how they continue their creative practices, but also in how they continue to live in place. The literature on environmental gerontology suggests that the creation of a meaningful place becomes more important as we age. It furthermore emphasizes that aging and people's relations to their place is highly individual. We, therefore, aim to pay attention to the meanings that the individual artists ascribe to their place as well as the creative practices within that place. Finally, the literature on self-fashioning shows that individuals, in this case artists, to a certain extent internalize norms and values that are characteristic of a certain period in time. These norms and values crystallize into repertoires that encompass these norms. We trace two of these repertoires in the artists' experiences and the meanings ascribed to their places and studios in order to see how these repertoires relate to the contemporary push towards productivity, entrepreneurialism, and successful aging.

3 — Methodological Approach

In this section, we discuss how we conducted our research. We used an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to answer our research questions, which comes with specific requirements both in terms of data collection and data analysis.

INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Researchers who work with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are interested in the "everyday flow of lived experience" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 1). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) distinguish three foundations of IPA. The first is 'phenomenology' or the detailed analysis of lived experiences. IPA sees these lived experiences as "embedded and immersed in a world of objects, relations, language and culture" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 24). The second theoretical frame for IPA is 'hermeneutics' or the theory of interpretation (p. 25). The hermeneutical approach examines how an experience appears and how to make sense of that appearance (p. 35). IPA provides a double hermeneutics, which means that the researcher interprets someone's interpretation of their experience. The third and last theoretical foundation is 'idiography' or the preoccupation with the particular (p. 44). It allows for the understanding of experiences as deeply individual as well as collective, i.e., shared with others. As Smith, Flowers, and Larkin argue: "at the deepest level we share a great deal with a person whose personal circumstances may, at face value, seem entirely different from our own" (2009, p. 48). Single interviews result in a better understanding of both the details of an interviewee's account and the general context of the interview. From these theoretical foundations of IPA, it follows that small samples are at the heart of this approach.

In our research, we have taken a particular interest in the way artists fashion themselves. Self-fashioning is a way of presenting the self in a certain manner. This implies that the way in which the artists talk about themselves and what they bring up during the interview can fulfil a certain self-fashioning function (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 98). While the notion of self-fashioning seems to move away from a focus on the participants and their thinking, circulating scripts for self-fashioning can be seen as intertwined with the experiences, meanings, and understandings of the participants (p. 99).

Although our study focuses on examining the lived experiences of the participants, it is fundamental to bear in mind that the experiences we seek to unravel are inherently intertwined with the physical, social, and cultural world. As such, "we can say that IPA research is, in part, an inquiry into the cultural position of the person, and that to understand the experiential claims being made by a research participant, we also need a certain level of cultural competence" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 269). We use IPA to analyze the interaction between a certain cultural context and people's experiences and understandings of this context.

DATA COLLECTION

Since we aim for a more profound understanding of the changing relations between artists and their creative practices in their working and living spaces, we visited and interviewed the artists in their own homes and studios. The Jan van Eyck Academie composed a sample of ten professional artists over 60 who continue to work and live in place. Nine out of these ten artists are from their alumni database. See Table 1 for the age and the profession of the artists whom we interviewed. We changed the names of the artists to pseudonyms to secure their anonymity.

Table 1: Participating Professional Artists

Name	Age	Art Discipline
Winnie	60+	Sculptor
Madeleine	70+	Fashion designer
Annelies	81	Writer
Theo	70+	Sculptor
Robert	70	Graphic designer
Dirk	78	Sculptor
Anna	86	Sculptor
Mieke	78	Writer
Bruno	92	Sculptor
Ruud	68	Painter

Each interviewer was joined by a maximum of three Architecture students from RWTH Aachen who made axonometries of the artists' houses. These axonometries functioned as input for these students' analyses and as inspiration for their outlook on the future of aging in place (Appendix 2). We conducted in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012) state that through such interviews, "researchers explore in detail the experiences, motives and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own" (p. 3). We carefully formulated topics and open questions (Appendix 1) in collaboration with the Architecture students. The interviewer ordered the questions and topics depending on what the interviewees brought up during the interview. The interviewer was always careful to leave space for the interviewee to elaborate on certain topics.

In addition to sitting down with the interviewee, we used the mobile method of walking interviews, as we are interested in the

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relation between the artists and their spaces and places. Walking interviews allow participants to interact with their everyday life situations and objects in a way that is not possible during a sitting down interview. They give the interviewer the inestimable advantage of observing the participant while he or she is interacting with the environment during the interview (Odzakovic et al., 2018). While moving around, participants had the opportunity to "emphasize, contradict, weaken or add to statements made earlier" (Odzakovic et al., 2018, p. 55). Another advantage of a walking interview is that the interviewee is leading and in a position of control (Ratzenböck, 2016). The interviewer becomes the follower allowing the interviewee to take the initiative, which is advantageous to building trust and may help the interviewee to open up more to the interviewer.

Two interviews were conducted in English, eight in Dutch. The quotes used in this report were translated into English by the interviewers.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants in this research project were all informed about the aims of the research and were aware that their participation was completely voluntary. Interviewees were informed by e-mail that the interviews would be audio-recorded and transcribed and that the interviews would be used in this final report. They could withdraw from the project at any moment and were free to abstain from answering questions or showing parts of their homes and studios during our visit. We created a consent form which described the rights of the participants. Nine out of ten participants signed the form; one participant gave us oral consent.

DATA ANALYSIS

After conducting the interviews, we transcribed the interviews verbatim. Then, each interviewer coded his or her transcriptions. 'Coding' is the process of identifying important passages in interview transcripts (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). We identified those passages in which participants talk about their experiences and the meaning they attach to these experiences. We subsequently checked each other's coding, compared the codes that were used in each separate coding process and identified common themes that emerged through a systematic evaluation and clustering of the codes used in the different transcripts. From this process, three superordinate themes emerged, each with four or five subordinate themes (Table 2). Final themes had to be relevant for at least 80% of our sample.

In our data analysis, we pay attention to details to understand why a specific artist answered in a specific way regarding a specific experience. The thoroughness of this approach is determined by the utmost attention given to small details, such as particular words, long pauses, laughter, hesitation, breaking off sentences, changing subjects, gestures, metaphors, talking in superlatives as opposed to diminutives, and the change from singular to plural pronouns within the same sentence. In our analysis, we show how such small details matter.

Table 2: Superordinate and Subordinate Themes

Superordinate themes	Subordinate themes
Positioning in relation to the [art] world	- Negotiating external and internal validation - Reflecting on [art] education - Positioning in relation to others - Showing knowledge of the dynamics of the art world
Being an artist	- The need for expression - Adapting to changes - Approaching finitude - Co-creating subjectivity and place - Striving for autonomy
Negotiating a creative environment	- Shaping a creative place - Valuing tools and materials - Weighing artistic collaboration - Identifying 'inspiration' - Valuing support

4 — Findings

In this section, we present and discuss our findings structured by the themes that emerged from the transcribed interviews. Quotes from the individual artists will show that their experiences and perspectives differ. We strive to provide an inclusive representation of the variety of experiences, meanings, and understandings emerging from the data.

"I DO NOT FEEL A GREAT DESIRE TO SHINE AS A WRITER": POSITIONING IN RELATION TO THE [ART] WORLD

The superordinate theme Positioning in Relation to the [Art] world refers to how the artists place themselves in the art world and how they relate to and experience that world.

The first subordinate theme, Negotiating External and Internal Validation, refers to how artists negotiate both external validation, such as recognition and ascribed authority from the outside world, and internal validation, such as pride in one's own work. Some artists are actively seeking for external validation while others are not preoccupied with it at all. Anna, for example, continuously mentions that external validation is not an issue for her. She finds enjoyment in making her art work not in presenting it. She used to stay at home a lot and was not willing to take part in any exhibition: "I never made an effort to go outside, no." In short, she values the craft of making over external validation. For Annelies, external validation results in internal validation:

> To my great surprise and dismay, the book was published, my first novel, and, within a week, I was on television and was being interviewed by D.B. and my publisher thought that was amazing. Enfin, I thought then, gosh that this happens to me, then I must have made something good. Anyway, I did get the necessary appreciation for my work. So, I cannot complain about that.

In this quote, Annelies expresses satisfaction with the appreciation she received for her work – I cannot complain. But the words surprise and dismay also signal that Annelies is surprised by her own abilities. The external validation that she receives is related to the development of a sense of internal validation. Others think her work is good and, therefore, she now believes that her work must be good as well. Bruno also appreciates external validation. He notes that "many well-known artists came" to one of his exhibitions and says "all those people came to have a look and I thought that was amazing." Ruud, by contrast, believes that making art "comes out of yourself, and it needs to answer your own needs." He strives for internal validation, as art needs to answer "your own criteria." In the next quote by Robert, we see how the meaning of external validation can change over time:

> Perhaps, yes, the kind of rivalry – amongst artists – or a sort of hatred, envy or something, yes, that was present ... that is also no longer there. You have become wiser this way ... And that was perhaps earlier, you know, he had a good exhibition and that place, I want that too, and that didn't work. ... Yes, I was worried that I would never be asked [to exhibit] at that place or something. Now, I think, yes, whatever.

Robert expresses how external validation used to be very important for him. He longed for it and envied others who did receive it. But with age, "wisdom" has put external validation into perspective.

The second subordinate theme, Reflecting on [Art] Education, includes positive and negative experiences in relation to official art education, teaching, and other ways of learning. Several artists refer to learning from others, friends, and family, or learning from different experiences and from places they visited or worked at. As Madeleine puts it: "I learn from life." Learning is seen by most artists as something that happens throughout the entire life course. Theo mentions that because of life's experiences, "I can handle my insecurities better. I do not panic any longer if something fails ... I have accepted my own craziness over the years." He emphasizes how he learned to handle challenges better throughout his life. With regard to official art education, some artists talk about their rejection of the conventional school system. Some have even quit their education at Jan van Eyck or other institutions. Mieke "had enough of all that academic stuff" at one point and wanted to tell her own story. She continues: "... and that is what I kept doing. And I graduated decently, the professors even thought it was original, because I dared to deviate from the usual." Although Mieke had enough of the academic approach to art education, she did manage to impress her teachers. The notion of 'originality,' in contrast to doing what is expected of you, is seen as something positive in Mieke's account. Theo, another artist who rejected the official schooling of artists, says: "I liked working with the students, I was able to confuse them. But the bureaucracy, all those exams, I am completely opposed to that. I think you should also get the opportunity to let things fail." Learning from your mistakes was a topic that several other artists also raised.

The third subordinate theme, Positioning in Relation to Others, refers to how and to which degree the artists distance themselves from or identify with other artists. One example of an artist who distances herself from others, is Annelies. She does "not feel a great desire to

[2] The Jan van Eyck Academie used to be an institute for art education. Nine of the artists that we interviewed received their art education there. In 2000, Jan van Eyck became a post-academic institute that offers one-year residencies to professional artists to work on their own projects while actively engaging with other residents.

shine as a writer. I know people around me who really want to, and I don't. My great desire is to be busy [writing]." When Anna says, "I never use the word artist, because I find it horrible [laughs]," she distances herself from people who identify as such. She identifies more as a craftsman whom she defines as a person who "sees something different, he looks at things differently." Another example of an artist who finds it challenging to identify with other artists is Mieke. She distinguishes between the world that she grew up in, "a very bourgeois environment," and art school:

> All fine, good people, but no connection at all with art and culture. You get planted in an environment [the Van Eyck Academie] there that opposes everything, you got laughed at ... and I was well-behaved and compliant, so I did not fit in the way the academy students did. I have tried in every possible way to adjust but that never really worked out. So, I just did what I had to do: my education.

Mieke positions herself between two different worlds, the village in which there is no connection at all with art and culture, and the world of the academy students who are everything but well-behaved and compliant. Despite her efforts, Mieke was unable to fit into the artistic community at Jan van Eyck and remained an outsider. Dirk finds it hard to comply with the unwritten rule of the art world to be innovative. He believes that others judge him because he "held on to what [he] started to develop, let's say, in the 70s." While the outside world does not acknowledge that he reinvents himself, he is convinced that "the renewal ... is actually in the work itself, renewed in yourself." In line with this position, Dirk distances himself from what other people see as good art: "There is great confusion about what good art is, what should be part of the art world, and what people appreciate as art."

The last subordinate theme, Showing Knowledge of the Dynamics of the Art World, refers to knowledge about how to manoeuvre in this world, sell art works, participate in exhibitions, and make money. Robert, for example, says: "I am clever enough that [my work] goes out into the world." Winnie explains that "artists are no longer object-based, it's really more about creating an experience." Bruno shows his knowledge of the art world by elaborating on the famous artists whom he knows while Dirk mentions that personal contacts, "getting to know the people," is the most important prerequisite for selling art. All of these artists have the skills, knowledge, and attitudes to be 'successful' in the [art] world, which contributes to their feelings of confidence and security. Yet, simultaneously, some of them also point to the lack of possibilities individual artists have to influence the dynamics of the art world:

> Museums develop themselves ... according to the fame of modern art. Eindhoven looks to Amsterdam, Amsterdam looks to London or Paris, London looks to New York and, maybe, to Sao Paulo. And that is how the [art] world works. They look at what is bigger and better and that is the way it should be for them as well. Well, if you make work that does not match what is being shown in the Tate in London, well then they do not want you. And then you are not known, they do not care about you and that is the way it is. As an individual ... well as an individual you cannot do anything about it. (Dirk)

This quote shows that Dirk is rather dissatisfied with his ability (and that of other artists) to change the structure of the art field. His use of the words they and them points to the distance between working artists and the world they have to position themselves in.

"IT IS NOT SOMETHING YOU CHOOSE TO DO, IT IS SOMETHING YOU CANNOT AVOID": BEING AN ARTIST

The superordinate theme Being an Artist refers to several elements in the interviews that relate to life and living as an artist. It includes the artists' inner motivations to make art and the ways in which they see themselves and their artistic practices develop in the future. Furthermore, the theme indicates that our participants have made many adaptations in order to be able to continue creating art and to do so as autonomously as possible.

The first subordinate theme, The Need for Expression, comprises the different ways in which the artists talk about their inner drives and urges to create art. Many interviews showed that becoming an artist was self-evident for the participants. As Winnie says: "It is just a way of being in the world. In a way it is unavoidable." Ruud explains that making art is a way of "fulfilling yourself," thereby suggesting that being an artist is a way of completely realizing one's ambitions and potentialities. Annelies talks about "a desire inside of [her] to be creative" [and for] multiple ways to express [herself]." In addition, being an artist can be seen, particularly for Robert, as having a certain "child-like attitude," a "way of being open to things" and not "getting stuck in what you know." This idea of the unspoilt child is related to the romantic idea that culture spoils nature (Furst, 2018).

It became evident that, at breaking points in the careers of some of these artists, quitting was simply not an option. Dirk decided not to retire at the age of 65: "that cannot be explained commercially or economically, but I have a need for it and nobody can stop me." This need to continue working was also present in Robert's account. After losing his partner, he thought: "'I am never going to paint anymore anyway,' but [this sentiment] lasted only one day." Robert experienced his consideration to quit as his "all-time low," and quickly realized that not making art "just won't do." This illustrates the importance that he attaches to practicing art. For Mieke, the need to express herself has been present throughout her daily life: "We are actually being creative in every possible way. And, I think that that is never absent in our life." Madeleine said that she "did not work for the money, just to express [herself]" – a thought that occurred in several interviews. Winnie, moreover, emphasizes that she associates becoming an artist with "poor socialization." She explains "poor socialization" as an inability to express herself to other people other than through art. In contrast to other artists, Theo articulates the "inner need to make something" rather than to express something. Lastly, Robert feels the urgency to be creative as he has "so much left to do."

The second subordinate theme, Adapting to Changes, covers the myriad reasons artists have for adapting their living and working practices. These reasons and consequent changes were not limited to the artists' later life but manifested themselves throughout their lives. A few interviewees mentioned the care of children as a cause for adaptation. Ruud explained how having children forced him to "be effective" and "aware of time." Similarly, Dirk experienced having children as "very positive" because the "rhythm and regularity," necessary for child care, gave "a lot more structure" to life. Anna adapted her sculpting practice to having children and Madeleine concurs:

> I actually started a store when I thought, 'No, I just have to have space where I ... for example a store. And [my child] has to be able to come home and play and I have to be there. So, I am not going to find a job ... but I will just have a spot where they ... and so that is what I have.

A pattern that emerged from the interviews was that the female artists in our sample made adaptations in relation to children more often and more profoundly than the male artists did. As Anna explains: "there are a lot of things that I have done differently because of the children, because they were too important." Female artists also talked more about their children and (former) partners; they often conceived of these partnerships as units (cf. the choice of the word we instead of I in Winnie's quote "These are all models for casting. We used these with my husband, my former husband."). Mieke, whose partner is also an artist, explains how she prioritized his needs: "I have always shielded [my partner]. To [him] it is very important that he is able to work in his atelier without being disturbed. That is very important to him."

Making changes was also related to other circumstances. Winnie immigrated to the Netherlands because of socio-political developments in her home country that she did not approve of. Because her work "was not language based," she "could make a living almost anywhere." On a more general note, Winnie argued that various changes in her life illustrate "how your life [is] shaped partly by intentionality but ... largely by random events." Theo mentions a number of more or less mundane reasons for change:

> I used to work with ceramics. Because I had dogs – I did not have an oven –, they jumped on the unbaked stuff. Then, at a certain point, I had enough of it. Then, I started with a work in bronze ... and, then, in '96, I started with ceramics again ... because I did like the material. And with big bronze things, I cannot afford to buy them to make big things, if I do not sell them.

From this quote, it follows that changes can occur simply because of pets, for financial reasons, such as not being able to afford an oven or the need to make works that can be sold, or because an artist simply prefers a certain material over another. Changing material for financial reasons was also important to Dirk: "I have to admit that, until 1986, that was the breaking point, the end of the financial support. Well, then, you just have to try to make something that is marketable. To bring in projects that you can realize." In addition, Dirk made a change in style: "until that point, 1986, I worked abstractly. At the time, that was not so accepted or marketable." Robert, on the other hand, explained that, after he began receiving his pension benefit at 65, he was "not really financially dependent anymore." Before he turned 65, he experienced the professionalization of the field of art in the Netherlands as "a sham world ... I have also participated in that but it was just a sort of unhealthy business." The professionalization of the field is related to the entrepreneurial attitude that artists are increasingly expected to have. However, not every artist can or wants to live up to this new requirement, as the quote exemplifies. Robert also had to adapt to having a studio located 12 kilometres from his home. He now "regrets" the traveling time because it affected the continuity in his creative routines.

Physical changes in connection to chronological age are the final cause for artists to make changes. Annelies says: "I used to write by hand, but I have written so much that I cannot write at all anymore. That is, I cannot make letters anymore. So, I just hammer on [computers]." She experienced this change to a technological writing device as something positive. Anna explains that she only makes smaller sculptures that are "doable with [her] body. Heavy stones and heavy tools are no longer doable." She continues to say that "during the day you have been working with a hammer of a kilo and a grinding wheel of 22 centimetres. To knead that weight off at night, that is the conservation of your body." So, she makes bread to preserve her hands. Dirk also elaborates on the conservation

[3] In the 1982-1986 coalition agreement, the Dutch government decided to drastically lower the budget of the 'Beeldende Kunstenaar Regeling' (BKR), which had initially been created in 1956 to guarantee artists' social and financial independence. As of 1 January 1987, the BKR was officially discontinued.

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of one's body to be able to continue the creation of art: "While getting older, then at six or at five-thirty [o'clock], then it [work] is over. But I do that to spare myself. Because if I would continue ... that does not do me any good." Due to diabetes, Dirk had to make a lifestyle adjustment (eating less sugar) but it "doesn't bother [him]." Some artists anticipated changes related to age and health in the future. Winnie, for instance, talks about renting part of her house out as an Airbnb "as a way to move forward," feeling "lucky" that her house offers this opportunity.

The third subordinate theme, Approaching Finitude, refers to how the artists related to the prospect that life ends at some point in the future. In general, the artists' reflections on finitude range from being at peace with the idea that life and artistic practice will end to a resistance against or a denial of finitude altogether. Anna seems comfortable reflecting on the end of life: "The ideas that I had, I could execute and I have processed a considerable amount of stone over the years. I cannot be dissatisfied. It has been a good life, yes ... a rich life." This quote illustrates that she has come to terms with what she has accomplished as an artist. It seems that Madeleine, on the other hand, does not want to engage with the thought of finitude: "I want to keep it like this. That is my planning, to keep it like this for as long as possible." She finds it difficult to place herself in the future and anticipate an ending. In contrast, Theo says: "I will continue until I drop down. I will continue. Otherwise I would quit everything and end up in [the river] Maas." These words reflect an unwillingness to live without his artistic practice and the idea that the artist as a subject disappears without a creative practice.

Annelies changed her writing practice according to the time that she – presumably – has left: "I am not going to write a novel anymore, I do not have that time left. But I am going to, I am going to, I have an idea for a short, for a short story." Making this shift in genre can be seen as her acknowledgement of finitude. Furthermore, Annelies has deliberated what will happen to her art after her death: "[my niece] will inherit everything that has to do with my writing and I don't want her to be left with all this mess, all those scribbles. I do want to ... organize it all." Opinions on the preservation of their art works differed between the artists. Dirk imagines that people in the year 2075 might be interested in his sculptures and would want "to exhibit those, show those ... write about that, ... tell something about that, because that was actually very interesting." To find "peace with it that it ends that way," he put his sculptures in a foundation to keep them together as a collection. Other participants did not attribute the same importance to their art. Robert rather envisions giving his works away through "a lottery" in which "people can buy a lottery ticket for one euro." This plan relates to his general wish to have his work out in the world rather than hidden in his studio. Theo was even less concerned with the afterlife of his work and feels "they might as well plaster the road" with it.

The fourth subordinate theme, Co-creating Subjectivity and Place, refers to the ways in which the artists reflect on the relation between their subjectivity and their living and working environments, and how these mutually create each other. Many of the artists highly valued being close to nature, which is in line with the romantic idea that inspiration can be drawn from nature (Furst, 2018). Theo, for instance, says: "the benefit of this house is that I always keep in contact with the garden." We would like to note here that the garden is a form of cultivated nature but that it, nonetheless, can serve as a source of inspiration. Some artists preferred working in isolation. Theo says: "the loneliness of the atelier, I think, is fantastic," while Dirk admits that "living in isolation" is "very favourable," as he wishes to work without being disturbed. This preference for solitude is another characteristic of the romantic ideal (Furst, 2018).

For many of the artists, their place reflected valuable memories. Annelies, who often writes in her garden, states that "everything in [the garden] has a memory, everything that is standing here, has a memory." These memories can relate more specifically to family members or family history:

> Look, for example, this bush is very dear to me. It is 70 years old already. It was my father's. When it blossoms, my heart opens. I find it so, so beautiful, I really do. My mother also loved flowers ... I come from a [farmer's family]. I milked cows back in the days and it is as if I find that again here. (Annelies)

For Dirk, his furniture, the greater part of which he inherited from family, "gives [him] a link to his ancestors," which he highly values. Mieke describes the creation of place as an ongoing process and connects the ability to shape a space into a place to well-being:

> Because the things reflect each other, right? ... Your house looks like this because you wanted it this way. And, if the house looks like this, you feel pleasant ... We have also gradually created the house in this way.

Objects in the house are inscribed with meaning. As Annelies puts it: "Everything in here is ... this is my life." The topic of the co-creation of subjectivity and place emerged quite explicitly from the interview with Robert. On the one hand, he experienced living in a house with a studio for the first time at the age of 65 as a "return to professionality." A combined house with studio shapes Robert's subjectivity as a professional artist. On the other hand, Robert actively models his studio. An anecdote about clots of paint that he almost accidentally stepped in shows that he understands "every shred of paper" in his atelier. The studio has become "completely what I am." This identification of place with the artist's subjectivity is shared by Ruud who defines his house as "the mirror of [his] personality." Another important aspect of the studio for most of the artists is light. As Ruud puts it: "I would never want a house where no light is coming in ... that is horrible, at least for me. It is essential but I do not know in what way ... I just need light." Similar to nature, light also serves as a source of inspiration for the artist.

The last subordinate theme, Striving for Autonomy, relates to how artists balance their desire for artistic and financial autonomy with the need to earn a living through their art works. On the one hand, artists express the wish to be independent artistically, as becomes evident in the following quote by Theo: "if someone has an assignment for me, it has to become my problem first." He wants to do more than just listen to clients; he needs assignments that match his artistic agenda. In a similar vein, Dirk does not want to follow the trends within the art world: "There is actually nothing modern about my work ... it looks old-fashioned in comparison to my contemporaries. But I do not care ... if it is good, then it does not have to be modern." Madeleine also says that "I never go along with fashion. You do go along with your own times but you never follow what's in fashion, so to speak." On the other hand, some artists admit to giving up a part of their artistic autonomy to be financially independent. Winnie, for example, does applied art "because it is an easier way of making a living." Ruud explains that one of his concerns was "can I manage to earn money so that I can feed my children"? This points to the paradox involved in wanting to make autonomous art while simultaneously staying financially self-sufficient.

"IT IS NOT AN IDEAL WORKSPACE, BUT I AM LUCKY THAT I CAN DO IT ALL HERE": NEGOTIATING A CREATIVE ENVIRONMENT

The third superordinate theme, Negotiating a Creative Environment, is about the physical, inspirational, relational, and technical way in which the artists shape their environment in order to become and stay creative.

The first subordinate theme, Shaping a Creative Place, refers to how the artists in our sample shape and experience the physical space around them in relation to creativity. They described and experienced modelling the physical space in order to become creative as a process; achieving the right workspace happens over time. Mieke, for example, says: "I started with sitting there ... but you search as long as you need until you have found a spot that feels nice. And uh, that is this spot"! Besides finding a space that feels nice, Winnie and Robert adapted their working spaces according to the material they worked with or the part of the process that they were in. In relation to the process of creating the right spot, two important aspects came to the fore: the experience of a space and the practical requirements needed in order to execute the work. The most important practical requirements included light, followed by temperature, and for some humidity, enough space, and a gate big enough to transport works. Anna, for instance, states: "Well a lack of light, I cannot stand it." In a similar vein, Annelies explains: "That chair has to do with the incidence of light ... that is, yes, very important to me." These quotes illustrate the importance of light.

Practical requirements were often presented as a need. However, multiple artists expressed a certain gratitude for the imperfection of their workspaces. Winnie, for instance, says: "So, this is the place. It's not an ideal workspace but I'm lucky that I can do it all here ..." Robert adds: "I am actually quite happy at night with the TL-light. There are three tubes, yes, two are switched off and one is broken. That is perfect light, like this [laughs]. The more dimmed the light the better." These last quotes indicate a certain gratefulness and willingness to accept less than perfect physical circumstances. In addition to practical requirements, the experience of the space was also deemed important. When asking Annelies about the corner in which she did most of her writing during winter, she said:

> That corner, I feel a certain, how do you call it, a, a, a, not the word familiarity, but a sort of, a sort of intimacy for myself and my writing. It is as if I am ... yes salvaged. In that corner, I feel great security.

Words like intimacy, salvaged, and great security point to the experiential dimension of the workspace rather than the practical requirements and reveal a need to feel secure to be able to write. Mieke shares this understanding: "We experience this room as very pleasant and if you feel pleasant, you can work better, so that mutually influences each other." This quote strongly indicates the relationship between the experience of the room and work productivity. Multiple artists aimed to find pleasure in perfecting their work space into the ideal place for their creative practice.

The second subordinate theme, Valuing Tools and Materials, refers to the appreciation and experiences of the tools and materials used. The importance that the artists attached to specific materials and tools differed considerably. Annelies says: "The materials, yes I am quite sensitive to them. If I write with a pen then, then it has to, ehm, ehm, preferably, I have pens that write a little bit, a little bit thinly." While Annelies ascribes meaning to the kind of materials that she uses, Robert has a more functional approach to tools and materials:

> The pleasure is not really in the material. It is more what you, what you make or something. That is why I do not think about the material. ... It has to be quality. If I buy cheap acryl, I do notice it. I mean you can smear whatever you

want and still nothing comes out of the brush. I do notice that. But I am not thinking it should be top quality.

Some of the artists also expressed a certain resourcefulness and efficiency in using tools and materials. Anna, for example, mentioned:

Back in the days, I used to make soup on Sundays from a bone and I kept the bones. So, I have a whole lot of them. With those, I did things and I combined them with stones.

Re-using everyday materials like this in artistic work illustrates the resourcefulness of some artists, which more stories also revealed. Winnie explains how technological developments can have a positive impact on the efficiency of certain artistic practices: "And the big advantage we have over the Romans are power tools ... they are a huge time saver." This positive attitude towards technology, as something that generally made work easier, was shared by many artists.

Some artists ascribed their tools and materials with human-like qualities, expressing a somewhat intimate relationship with them. Winnie says: "Bronze is very forgiving, it is a nice material. I don't like chasing it. That is very annoying and noisy." The phrase I don't like chasing it implies a certain tension between the control of the artist versus the control of the material. This tension returned in the interviews, for instance in Ruud's account:

A brush? Well, a brush is the meaning of itself. It has a very dangerous meaning; the rhetorics of the brush. Ehm ... you know, let's see. It is dangerous in an effective way. And, you have, somehow, to let the brush go and, at the same time, you have to control the brush.

We see here more clearly the tension between controlling the material or tool and letting the material or tool go as well as the intimate relationship between artists and their tools or materials.

The third subordinate theme, Weighing Artistic Collaboration, refers to the way the artists discuss and evaluate collaboration. About working with her now ex-husband, Winnie says:

That was a rare collaboration. It was a real partnership, you know. In some ways, we felt that the things that we made together were better than the things either one of us made apart. Even with his paintings, I used to make the colours all the time. And, I think that, aesthetically, we were really in tune.

The phrasings a real partnership and really in tune imply that Winnie experiences working in sync with her partner as a prerequisite for successful collaboration. Other artists in relationships with peers also experienced collaboration with their significant other as positive. However, some interviewees find collaboration challenging. Theo, for instance, admits that some colleagues experience his particular attitude as an obstacle: "I can't work with everyone, I can't be friends with everyone because of that attitude. You understand that right. Then you think, pff. Then they think I'm too much or something." We can understand this quote as opposite to Winnie's quote about synergy. All artists experienced collaboration somewhere on a continuum between Winnie, who highly values collaboration, and Theo, who experiences obstacles to collaboration.

The fourth subordinate theme, Identifying Inspiration, designates the ways in which artists talk about inspiration. Theo uses a metaphor to describe where he finds inspiration:

You could compare it to a leopard who reclines on a branch and waits until prey passes by that is weak, ill, or sick. I am not going to spend my energy on, uh, I have an alert laziness.

Theo defines inspiration as something that comes to him and that he just has to catch at the right time. He beliefs that he has "the instinct of a prey animal." Dirk describes a quite different way of finding inspiration:

It is more transpiration than inspiration. In other words, you have to work really hard for it. So, I do not sit down and wait for inspiration, but inspiration comes in those moments that you are able to be open to it. And you have to do something for that.

This implies a more active process of working for it, as opposed to the idea that inspiration has to come to you. All artists acknowledge that, in order to become inspired, a certain sensitivity (openness in Dirk's quote) is required. Sources of inspiration differed between artists. Some went to certain places to get inspired. Several artists in our sample mentioned nature or their garden as an important source of inspiration. For instance, Annelies proclaims: "I work in the garden every day. I never sit in it, never! I do not have the patience to sit in those chairs, but I always see something. I am very preoccupied with shapes." Anna also remarks that nature is very important to her and she often goes on walks, visits the beach, or looks at her garden to find inspiration. Madeleine mentions that she stays in France three months a year where she goes to the forest and sees all these "beautiful things." For some artists, family life is inspirational. For Dirk, childbirth "impressed" him "immensely" and inspired him to make art. Both Anna and Mieke find inspiration in their children's creativity, for instance in their drawings.

The fifth and last subordinate theme, Valuing Support, covers what the artists say about financial, relational, social, or any other type of support that they have received in order to dedicate themselves to their art. The biggest source of support has been help from a partner, husband, or wife. Help included practical support, as expressed by Anna whose husband has helped her with the heavy work of turning stones with a crane. Relational support also came to the fore. When asking Ruud who or what influenced him during his life, he answered: "My wife. I am sorry for the domestic answer, but it is true. Why? Because she is a very clever person and she stimulated me to restart as an artist and, then, she has always supported me, whatever I did." In addition to support from a partner, friends and mentors are also mentioned by most artists. Winnie describes her mentor M.A. as "Amazing!" and Annelies says that her friends "taught" her "how to write" by providing feedback on drafts. All artists express gratitude when talking about the people who have supported them and helped them to express themselves creatively and build a career. Robert sums it up as follows: "So I think there was more help than I realized. It seems illogical to do it all by yourself." When probing the artists about support, they often realized that they had had more support than they were aware of. This realization is of course in contrast with how these artists value working in isolation.

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5 — Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, we will answer our research questions and connect our findings to the literature reviewed in the theoretical framework.

WHICH SUBJECTIVITIES EMERGE FROM CREATIVE PRACTICES OF PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES?

As the findings show, the way in which the participants account for their experiences resembles the two self-fashioning repertoires discussed in the theoretical framework: the romantic genius and the artist as entrepreneur. In our research, we understand subjectivity both as an individual and a shared experience, mediated by someone's being in the world. This implies that the artists' experiences are unique to them as individuals but also sometimes shared with peers operating in the same cultural context. The subjectivities that emerge from the creative practices of the participants show traces of as well as deviations from self-fashioning repertoires over the life course and are influenced by individual circumstances and gender.

As creativity has become a new source of economic profit and is part of a new paradigm of social organization (Florida, 2012), everyone is expected to strive for innovation. The professional artists that we interviewed are part of that same paradigm and experience the pull to become entrepreneurial artists who are productive, active, and independent (Miller, 2016). Many of them are not educated within this model and do not identify as entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, they feel pushed into that direction. Archetypical ideas about the ideal artist are still oriented towards Romanticism but the developments in the (art) world push the artist towards the repertoire of the entrepreneur. Within our research, the artists show a great variety in tweaking and twisting both the repertoire of the entrepreneur and the romantic genius.

Most interviews echoed elements of the romantic repertoire. Firstly, artists talked about inspiration as something that comes to them instead of them actively seeking it. This idea is in line with the romantic repertoire. Multiple artists also referred to nature as a source of inspiration, which is reminiscent of Romanticism (McMahon, 2013). In addition to romantic notions of inspiration, several interviewees expressed a need for working autonomously, preferably in the studio that they described as the best place to create art. This emphasis on splendid isolation is also characteristic of Romanticism (Esner et al., 2013; Kisters, 2013). One artist expressed a desire for posthumous fame, i.e., recognition and validation after the death of the artist. This desire refers to the romantic notion of the genius who is misunderstood in his or her time but is later seen as actually ahead of it (Furst, 2018).

Even though the notion of the artist as entrepreneur was not explicitly present in the way our participants expressed themselves, some of them do show some of its characteristics. A few artists were actively looking for external validation and found recognition, which made them feel confident. Contrary to the romantic notion of working in isolation, the artist as entrepreneur must be flexible and able to work together with others. Multiple artists appreciated collaboration with others, while some expressed a dislike of team work or described obstacles to collaboration. Several artists consciously chose to make money with their art. One artist explained that practicing applied art is an easy and enjoyable way to earn a living. Two out of the ten artists identified rather as craftsmen than as romantic or entrepreneurial artists. This is in line with the prominent idea in the 1950s that expertise and technique are the currency for aesthetic authority (Deresiewicz, 2015, p. 4). These artists found meaning in the craft itself rather than in validation from the outside world. They fit neither the repertoire of the romantic genius nor the entrepreneur and exemplify a middle position.

Regarding the reliance on self-fashioning repertoires, there were differences between women and men. Self-fashioning repertoires are not gender neutral. As Diana L. Miller argues (2016), the "ideal" artist that these repertoires build on has "stereotypically masculine traits" (p. 119). The prerequisite "to prioritize artistic creation above all else, and perform visible commitment to art as a 'passion' or a 'calling'" (p. 121) does not equally apply to female and male artists. All artists in our research expressed the urge to express themselves creatively and not being able to choose another profession. They explained this commitment as a natural, in-born inclination that remained unchanged over the course of life. However, the women who participated in our study had to compromise this "commitment to a single calling" (Miller, 2016, p. 121), as they also had to negotiate the expectations of motherhood and wifehood. Furthermore, in contrast to the male participants, the majority of female artists said they had not focused on exhibiting or selling. One woman explained that her insecurity withheld her from seeking out the limelight. For another woman artist, children were her number one priority and the main reason why she did not actively look for opportunities to exhibit and earn money. It would not suffice to explain these experiences and their meanings as resistance to the repertoire of the artist as entrepreneur. Given that "women are systematically sanctioned for seeking attention," they may "be less active and enthusiastic in the self-promotion that is necessary to secure these positive evaluations" (Ridgeway 2011, in Miller, 2016, p. 124). In the words of Linda Huf (2016): "Women who retreat from society and ignore others' needs to focus on artistic creation are often considered selfish, dangerous, or unruly rather than heralded as geniuses" (Huf, 1983 as cited in Miller, 2016, p. 124). This could explain why some of the women artists downplayed their achievements and relied on external validation while their male counterparts exhibited more determination and confidence. Male artists also did not express obstacles related to housekeeping and the work-family balance as often as women did. This may not be surprising given the Dutch cultural context in which part-time work for women in function of care for husband and children was the norm for this generation (and still is in comparison with other national contexts in Europe and beyond). In short, individual expressions of self-fashioning have been influenced by gender.

Overall, we can conclude that all interviewees developed subjectivity through their creative practices over the course of their lives. Several artists pointed out that the ways in which they see and position themselves changed over time. An example of such change was increased professional confidence. As one artist pointed out, he does not panic anymore when things go wrong. Another artist explained that he has become wiser and now understands how relative success and recognition are even to the extent that he does no longer feel the urge to succeed. For several reasons, growing older also meant becoming more or less dependent for some artists. While one artist explained how she has become unable to do certain things by herself, others pointed out that aging meant increased financial and artistic autonomy. For women artists, responsibilities of motherhood decreased once children had grown older, providing them with more space for their art practice. The need for expression remained constant during the lives of the artists. However, the complexity of their subject formation is exemplified by the ways in which they continue to rely on existing repertoires about what being a good artist means and entails over the life course.

WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THESE SUBJECTIVITIES TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT(S) THEY MOVE IN?

From an environmental gerontological perspective, our research contributes to the study of aging and place. We have examined the relevance of space for older professional artists. As discussed in detail in the presentation of the third superordinate theme Negotiating a Creative Environment as well as the subordinate theme Co-creating Subjectivity and Place, artists find the space that they work in of great importance. Light, for instance, is relevant for the expression of their creative self. For some of the interviewees, it was even a source of inspiration. The presence of nature in the artists' living environment is another recurring element in the interviews. Nature has the double role of inspiring the artist as well as satisfying his or her need to be closer to nature. The elements of light and nature reflect both practical and more abstract prerequisites for the emergence of the artists' subjectivities. On the one hand, practical value is attached to specific parts of the house, for instance the need for a big gate to transport works. On the other hand, place is experienced on a deeper level of interaction between artist and environment, as expressed by the artist who was continuously seeking a spot in her house that made her feel safe.

When talking about their place, the artists articulated a sense of belonging, a feeling of safety and security that is crucial when living in place in older age. As Peace, Holland, and Kellaher (2006) argue, this sense of familiarity expressed by the artists is linked to their ever-growing subjectivity in interaction with the place they are living in. In other words, the longer one lives in a place, the more one affects it and is affected by it in turn. The artists of our sample are all creative individuals in their own right but the ways in which each one of them embodies and interprets creativity is different. Nonetheless, for every artist, creativity is a way of being in the world and of being in place. The interviewees' understanding of creativity ties back to their own life course, the ways in which they have lived their own life, and the perspective that they have on their life experiences.

The positive appraisal of creativity within all social structures makes creativity desirable for everyone (Reckwitz, 2017, p. 1). In this particular social and cultural context, artists are often seen as the embodiment of the very essence of creativity. This implies that creativity is not only associated with their being in the world but their being in place as well. Our analysis of primary data shows that the space of an artist is a place where, most importantly, creativity flourishes. Most artists have adapted their space in order for it to become a place of creative activity. Some of the participants had already adapted their studios to allow their creative subjectivities and practices to thrive in later life as well. Changes and challenges are part of the human life course which means that, at any stage in life, it may be necessary to adapt a space. Our professional artists have met challenges and faced changes to cope with this aspect throughout their lives.

What professional artists in later life strive for is a sense of continuity across the life course, especially continuity in their need and ability to express themselves creatively. Continuity is the driving force behind the ways in which the artists cope with changes but also behind the life routines connected to their working

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environments, the studios. The studio plays a central role in the artists' creative practice because it is the space in which the need to express can be turned into practice. The ways in which the artists in our sample talk about their studios can be interpreted in the historical context of the studio. Multiple artists adhered to the idea of the romantic studio in which you work in isolation and wait for ideas to come to you (Esner et al., 2013). Light and nature – two elements that occurred frequently in the interviews – are characteristic aspects of this notion of the studio.

Yet, the artists in our sample often echoed, tweaked, and mixed popular expressions of the studio. Some of them did not fully subscribe to the romantic notion of working in isolation as they had to negotiate their houses and workspaces against the backdrop of family and social life. Most women artists with children discussed how they adapted their ways around the house and workspace to family life more frequently than the men in our sample. These adaptations included, for example, placing a fence in-between the working space and the children to balance creative work with supervision. This finding contradicts the presupposed "undomestic" character of the romantic studio (Bergstein, 2010). We recall that Bergstein argues that the studio is often "framed as the artist's inner sanctum, a twilight zone between life and art, where domestic norms were suspended or reversed in favour of independence and self-expression" (2010, p. 197). This notion is adjusted mostly by our female artists who, apart from combining child care and creative practice, also expressed a need to balance domestic work with creative work. Domestic work was often viewed as something inevitable by these women who looked for alternative ways to be both a good mother and wife and a professional artist. Our findings demonstrate that many women had to blur the boundaries between domestic and undomestic, home and studio, care and art, which disrupts the masculine notion of the studio.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THESE SUBJECTIVITIES AND THE SUCCESSFUL AGING PARADIGM?

The successful aging paradigm incentivizes people to stay productive, independent, and healthy into old age and creativity is seen as a means to this end. The paradigm positions people as responsible for smart lifestyle choices that fit the third age imaginary of productivity, activity, independence, and autonomy (Katz & Calasanti, 2015; Higgs & Gilleard, 2015). It ignores, however, that individual lifestyle choices are restricted by social inequalities. Additionally, it overlooks that human beings are also unequal from a genetic perspective; some people are more prone to disease than others, which cannot be changed by making the 'right' lifestyle decisions. As such, the successful aging paradigm excludes those who cannot or do not want to conform to the third age imaginary. This implies that it does not leave room for value and meaningfulness beyond this narrow conception of success.

Our interviews inquired into the meanings that older artists themselves ascribe to their creative practices. What became evident most prominently is that they do not aim to stay creative in order to be healthy and independent. Rather, it appears that their need to create and express runs so deep that they want to stay healthy and independent in order to be creative. Moreover, even in moments in life when their ability to be healthy and independent was compromised, they found ways to stay creative. This is in contrast with Vera Gallistl's (2018) findings. Her research showed that older artists felt compelled to tap into the discourse of the third age lifestyle in order to show that, despite their age, they still can be of value to society. This suggests that the older artists in her sample did not find meaning beyond productivity in old age. Some of the artists in our research, on the other hand, expressed that they no longer feel the urge to prove their professional success or artistic productivity. While some of them maintain strict daily routines, it appears that these are developed to keep intact a certain flow that is beneficial to the creative process. Whereas a number of the participants expressed a concern or deliberated the future in terms of their independence and health, this was rather out of fear that they would become unable to carry out their creative practices rather than as an attempt to fit the third age imaginary (Higgs & Gilleard, 2015). In short, the successful aging discourse, although sometimes present, did not appear as prominently in our research as in Vera Gallistl's – the difference in sample could partly explain this.

It is generally assumed in gerontology that creativity can be seen as a tool for older people to stay productive, healthy, and independent. This gerontologization of creativity, however, reduces artistic achievement to the assumption that artists who live and work into old age should unquestionably be seen as creative and as "evincing of the wisdom and power of ageing" (Katz & Campbell, 2005, p. 106). The problem with this assumption is that, while it might hold true for some artists, it is just as universalizing and generalizing as the peak-and-decline narrative that it argues against. Indeed, whereas the peak-and-decline model assumes that creativity peaks around mid-life and, thereafter, inevitably declines, the positive counterpart holds that creativity always increases with experience and age. Neither leave room for the contingencies and inequalities that are characteristic of life.

As our research has shown, there are many factors that might impact the level of creativity of a person at any point in his or her life. From the interviews, it followed that a wide variety of conditions, including having children, financial (in)dependence, artistic (in)dependence, health across the lifespan, political factors, pets, and even seasons can influence the practice of creativity. Additionally, within the successful aging paradigm, it is assumed that creativity is an individual source that we can tap into in order to be creative in every aspect of life. Our research, on the other hand, shows that most of the older artists ascribe positive meanings to collaboration in as well as support for their artistic practices. This shows that, in line with Gallistl (2018) and Swinnen (2018), creativity is relational, as it is something that the artists do in a certain context with other actors.

Furthermore, the assumption of the successful aging paradigm that smart consumer choices can help in aging successfully is undermined by the prevalence of contingencies and consequent adaptations described above. As one of the interviewees eloquently put it: life is "shaped partly by intentionality but … largely by random events." In other words, smart choices not only in older age but across the lifespan are influenced by all kinds of circumstances. Whereas choices refer to changes mainly in routines and practices, some artists also adjusted their homes and studios. Adjustments were made, for example, in relation to disease but also in anticipation of possible obstacles to sustainable artistic practices in the future. To a certain extent, this might be interpreted as the artists conforming to the successful aging paradigm, as it allowed them to continue living in place.

On the other hand, while innovation and impermanence have become central to the idea of successful aging (Katz & Marshall, 2003, p. 5), we found that, in many cases, artists highly valued continuity in their homes. Many interviewees cherished inherited furniture, art, or other objects because they functioned as meaningful links to the past. Others emphasized the significance of living in their home for an extended period of time and gradually shaping it according to needs and visions. Rather than underscoring constant renewal, the participants found meaning in living in a place and with certain objects over an extended period of time. This prioritizing of continuity and personal memory over renewal and innovation can be seen as a way for the artists to distance themselves from the third age imaginary and the successful aging paradigm.

6 — Reflections and Recommendations

We hope that the readers of this report can draw inspiration from the insights presented, regardless of whether they are one of our partners in the project, the artists who were kind enough to let us interview them and allow us into their homes, or other people interested in this project. We hope to have shown the diversity and particularity of the ways in which each of the artists navigates the contingencies that are inherent to their being in the art world and to their everyday lives. We believe that there is power in the realization that not everyone comes across the same opportunities and challenges in life, nor is there a perfect or ideal way of handling them.

One of the most important insights of this project is that artists are not and cannot function as examples of successful aging per definition. The common assumption is that artists are exemplary because they never retire and remain curious and flexible until the end of their lives. This definition of success, however, is very limited in its emphasis on creativity as a tool for productivity, health, and independence in old age. What we can learn from the artists in this research, by contrast, is that health and independence are useful but not meaningful in themselves. It is the ability to express themselves through their creative practices across the life course that gives meaning to the lives of the artists in our sample.

In addition, challenges related to health and dependency on care but also to family (including pets) and cultural and political circumstances are not characteristic of old age but of the entire life course. We argue that aging should not be seen as something that can be done either successfully or unsuccessfully. Therefore, rather than exemplifying the successful aging paradigm, we see the artists as examples of resilience across the lifespan who can serve, depending on the circumstances, as inspiration for others. Personal resilience is not only evident from the way our artists constantly adapt their working and living practices but also from how they have shaped and continue to shape their environment into a place where they can express themselves creatively. While a perpetual drive for innovation and renewal characterizes late modern society, we saw how many of our artists inscribe their environment and the objects within it with meaning beyond change and novelty. They connect their place with personal memories and prefer feelings of home and belonging over following trends.

Our research suggests that the way a person ages is highly dependent on the contingencies of life. The fact remains, however, that the artists involved in our project never quit their artistic practices. They have continued to work and live in place after the age of 60, rather than retiring and moving, for example, to a care facility. As we have shown, these artists may be seen as exemplary because they continue to give voice to their inner need for expression and their desire to stay healthy, active, and independent – as far as humans are ever really independent of each other – in order to be creative. Future research could also focus on narratives of retired artists and artists who do not live in place. It would facilitate an even more profound understanding of how artists who do not conform to the criteria of successful aging ascribe meaning to life and creativity. In addition, this type of research could help us flesh out what resilience really entails in relation to a specific population of professional artists (cf. Aburn, Gott, & Hoare, 2016).

From our conversations with the students and teachers from the MA Architecture of RWTH Aachen, it appeared that successful aging is not a contested concept in architecture. In that sense it resembles many other fields. Therefore, we hope that the future architects we collaborated with will carry forward the alternative view presented in this report. We argue that value and meaningfulness should not be limited to successful aging but should be extended to vulnerability and dependency. The latter may become more prominent or urgent in old age but can, in fact, occur at any point in the life course. Since aging in place is the official Dutch policy on what is the preferred space to age, it promotes for older adults to stay healthy, active, and independent. This reinforces the successful aging paradigm which is ageist in itself since it excludes people who are either unable or unwilling to conform to a third age imaginary, as described by Higgs and Gilleard (2015). Consequently, our recommendation to the Aachen students is to create a design that incorporates scenarios of both interdependency and independency.

We also recommend that the Architecture students from Aachen offer space in their design for people to create a place. Many of our interviewees have spent much time and effort in turning their space into a place. The possibility to do so was highly valued with many participants emphasizing that it takes time to create a place. While we recognize that this temporal dimension is difficult to translate into a design, we think that flexible spaces are necessary. They will enable residents to create different spatial arrangements and replace the objects that they have collected throughout their lives. We recognize that the anticipation of experiences of spaces might be a difficult task for architects, and recommend, therefore, that they invest effort in the co-creation of a design with their envisioned clients, in this case, older adults.

Finally, it is important to note that the similarities and differences between interviewer and interviewee within a setting of qualitative interviewing can affect the dynamics of the interview. During some interviews, we experienced challenges involving differences in age and gender as well as in expertise. We observed that some interviewees were more or less prone to talk openly about their experiences with an interviewer of the same gender. Moreover, given our differences in age, we were not always well-positioned to bring up the topics of aging and finitude. The fact that we visited the artists in their everyday environment made this easier, however. Finally, as the Architecture students, who can also be perceived as artists, accompanied us during the interviews, some of the artists tended to enter into conversation with them about the particulars of their houses and artistic practices rather than staying focused on the interviewer. These are all dynamics that will have to be taken into consideration when developing future research projects.

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APPENDIX 1:
INTERVIEW TOPIC GUIDE

SITTING INTERVIEW

1. Development	- Could you start by telling me something about how and why you became an artist? - How has your art developed over the years? - How have you changed as an artist over the years? - What are the highs and lows in your career? - Who or what in your environment influenced your work and your career?
2. Drive and meaning	- What does it mean to you to make art (as opposed to doing something else)? - To what extent has this changed over the years? - What are challenges that you have encountered and how did you overcome them? - What were the challenges at the beginning? - What are the challenges now? - To what extent have you ever had doubts about being an artist? - How do you see the future of your art and artworks? (e.g., archive, collection, inheritance)
3. Support system	- How are you supported in creating your art and by whom? - When and how was this support system crucial to you? - What role has financial support such as art residencies and grants played in your career? - What other forms of support do you have in your daily life?
4. Work/life arrangements	- How do you organize your professional and personal life? - How do you experience this arrangement? - What are its challenges and benefits? - How has this way of organizing your life changed over the years? - How do you think others perceive this arrangement? - How do you foresee/anticipate this changing in the future?

WALKING INTERVIEW

5. Working environment	- Where do you prefer to work and why? - How has this changed over the years? - What are the requirements for you to be able to work here? - What changes have you made to meet these requirements and when and why? (quantitative, qualitative, e.g., light, building materials) - To what extent does the studio operate as a private or public space or both? - Can you please give examples? - How does the studio represent you as an artist?
6. Working habits	- Could you tell me what an average day looks like? - How has this changed over the years? - What is a (dis)satisfying working day? - What are the routines you use to get into a certain flow? - How has this changed over the years? - How do you feel about being disturbed? - What other more mundane routines also take place in the studio? (e.g., eating, preparing food/drinks, sleeping, relaxing, smoking)
7. Tools and materials	- What are your favourite materials/tools to work with? And why? - Can you show me? - How have your preferences in this respect changed over the years? (e.g., challenges, enabling, constraining) - What does it feel like to use these materials/tools? - How did this change over the years? - What do your materials/tools mean to you? - To what extent do you see yourself continuing working with these materials/tools?
8. Working-living space arrangement	- What makes this place your home? - How does this place reflect your creative self? - What is the relation between the working space and the living space? - To what extent does your creative activity take place in the studio and what are other creative/inspirational spaces for you? (context) - How has this changed over time? - How do you plan your future in this place? - When were the instances when you already made changes to your home and why?

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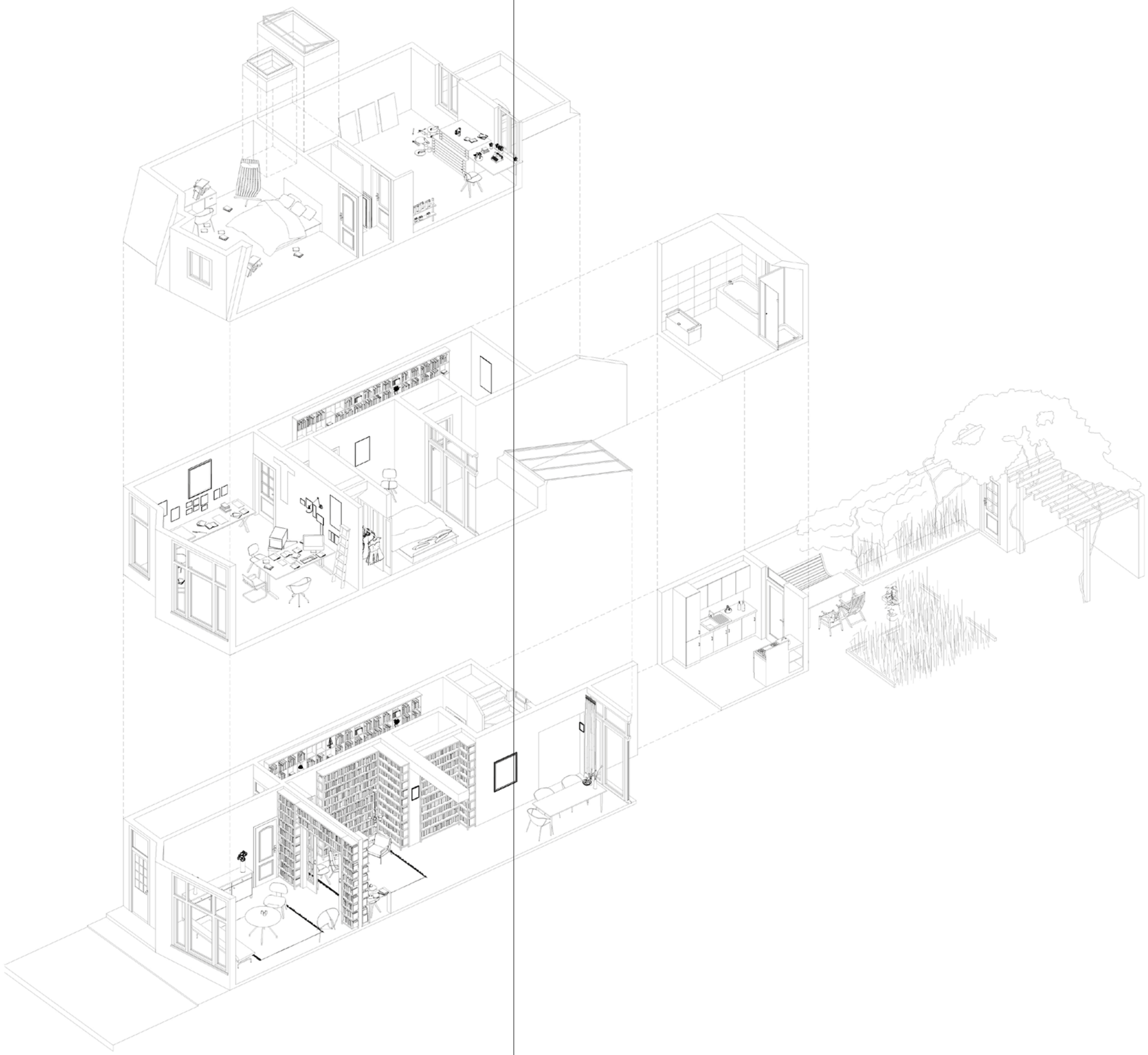
APPENDIX 2:
EXAMPLE OF AN AXOI



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