

## **Quick recap**

This was a workshop on "Creative-Driven Enterprises: Building Financial Sustainability Through Your Art Practice" hosted by Denn Santoro from Practice Best Practices, featuring panelists Jenny Larios Berlin and Annabella Bergeron. The workshop focused on teaching artists how to build financially sustainable careers by leveraging their creative practices as assets through a multi-medium, multi-distribution channel model. Jenny and Annabella introduced the concept of "Creative DNA" and explained how artists can identify copyrightable assets from their work to create products that can generate revenue beyond traditional gallery sales. They discussed the importance of primary market research to understand potential audiences and customers before developing offerings, sharing examples of how to segment markets and conduct audience feedback through various methods including Google Forms and direct conversations. The presenters also introduced their MITx online course on arts entrepreneurship and a beta tool called "Maker State" available for free testing, while participants like Corey shared challenges about scaling sustainable practices while maintaining artistic integrity.

## **Art and Financial Sustainability Workshop**

Denn hosted a workshop on building financial sustainability through art practice, with Jenny and Annabella as panelists. The session began with technical difficulties as only four participants were in the waiting room, though Denn expected more attendees. Denn provided workshop instructions including how to ask questions through chat and mentioned that the session would be recorded and made available online within a few days.

## **Creative Industries Panel Introduction**

The meeting began with technical issues regarding screen sharing and recording, which were resolved. Denn introduced the panelists, including Jenny Larios Berlin from MIT and Annabella Bergeron, highlighting their experiences and expertise in entrepreneurship and creative industries. The session included a one-word check-in where participants shared how they were feeling, with emotions ranging from thankful to anxious and curious. Annabella expressed excitement about the discussion and the opportunity to connect with other creatives.

## **Creative Entrepreneurship Toolkit Introduction**

Jenny and Anabella introduced themselves as first-generation entrepreneurs with backgrounds in art and fashion who developed a method based on Bill Ollett's Disciplined Entrepreneurship. They discussed their personal journeys from creative pursuits to accidental entrepreneurship, highlighting how they encountered gaps in entrepreneurial skills within creative spaces and universities. The presentation focused on introducing a toolkit aimed at helping creative professionals develop entrepreneurial skills to build ventures in the arts.

## **Creative Entrepreneurship Model Discussion**

Jenny and Anabella discussed their creative-driven enterprise model, which focuses on helping established artists build financially sustainable careers from their existing creative practices. They defined entrepreneurship as the pursuit of opportunities beyond controlled resources, emphasizing that creative individuals naturally exhibit entrepreneurial qualities. The model introduces concepts like "creative DNA" and aims to transform creative efforts from a "build it and they will come" approach into market-driven opportunities through research and commercialization strategies.

## **Creative-Driven Enterprise Strategies**

Jenny and Anabella discussed the concept of Creative-Driven Enterprises, where artists leverage their art practices to create multi-medium enterprises across different distribution channels. Jenny explained using examples like George Lucas's Star Wars and Mickey Mouse to illustrate how keeping ownership of creative assets can lead to multiple revenue streams across various platforms. The discussion also covered the distinction between creative small-medium enterprises, which have a local or regional focus and operate on a linear growth model dependent on the entrepreneur's ongoing energy and time.

## **Creative-Driven Enterprise Business Model**

Jenny and Anabella discussed the Creative-Driven Enterprise model, explaining how it builds on existing art practices to create sustainable revenue-generating offerings. They described the J-curve business model, where initial audience

cultivation requires time and energy before revenue is generated, but leads to greater control and direct engagement with audiences. The discussion highlighted how social media platforms have lowered barriers to entry for artists to connect directly with their audience and how this model allows artists to scale their business through multiple distribution channels while maintaining creative control.

### **Digital Art Distribution Transformations**

Jenny and Anabella discussed how modern digital platforms have transformed art distribution, making it easier for creators to reach audiences directly without relying on traditional gallery systems. They explored various examples of how different creative disciplines can leverage copyrightable assets to build businesses, with Jenny explaining how dancers can use video content to create touring opportunities and artists can work with companies like Restoration Hardware. The discussion included experiences with primary market research, where Lamont shared feedback from students and customers, while Korie described using anonymous Google Forms to gather honest feedback from workshop participants.

### **Primary Market Research for Artists**

The group discussed approaches to primary market research for artists, with Jenny explaining the difference between audience segments and customers. Jenny advised starting with broad market research to understand potential audience segments before focusing on specific groups, using demographic and psychographic qualifiers to define target audiences. Anabella asked about applying this research to her landscape photography business, and Jenny suggested identifying specific audience segments (like goth high schoolers, urban young couples, or retirees) and conducting targeted research with them to understand their engagement with art and potential interest in Anabella's work.

### **Primary Market Research Strategy Discussion**

Jenny and Anabella discussed the importance of conducting primary market research before developing products, emphasizing the need to understand customer motivations and past behavior. They advised Korie, a natural dyer, to focus on translating her creative DNA into scalable assets while maintaining her core values. The group suggested exploring different ways to expand Korie's practice,

such as selling dye recipes or creating educational content, and considering the global impact she wants to achieve through her work.

### **Creative Enterprise Strategy Planning**

The meeting focused on building creative-driven enterprises and developing market strategies. Jenny and Anabella discussed the importance of starting with one creative asset and conducting primary and secondary market research to understand audience and customers. They emphasized the difference between audience engagement and customer purchases, and explained go-to-market strategies including B2B2C models. Participants shared their own business ideas, with Jane discussing children's books targeting parents, teachers, and non-profit organizations, and Lamont sharing his photography business focused on outdoor landscapes. The presenters introduced a new AI tool called Maker State to help with business planning and mentioned an upcoming Arts Entrepreneurship course for next year.