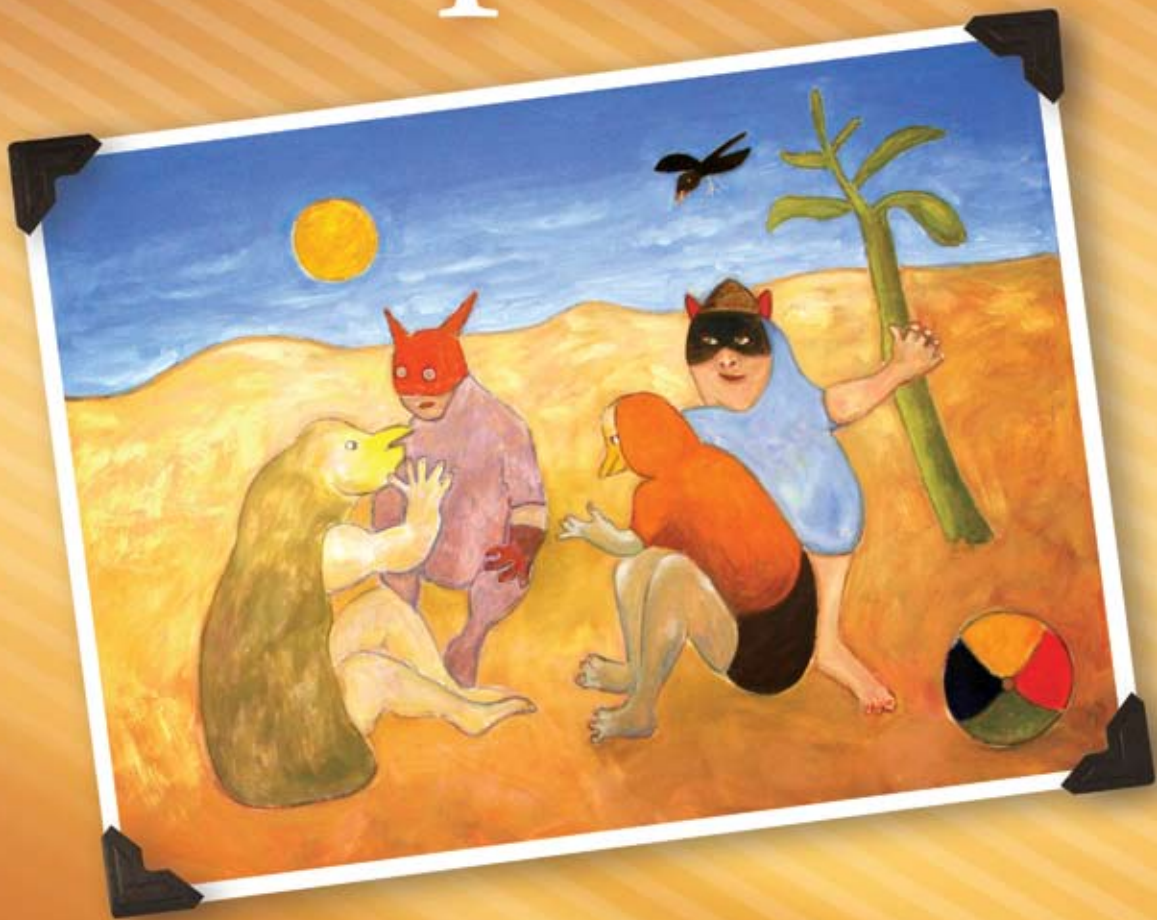


Creative Adaptation



HYBRID CAREERS OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ARTISTS
BY MEGAN WILLIAMS & HILL STRATEGIES RESEARCH

This report was produced for the Prince Edward Island Cultural Human Resources Sector Council by Hill Strategies, Kelly Hill and Megan Williams between December 2009 and March 2010.

The PEI Cultural Human Resources Sector Council is funded by the Canada/Prince Edward Island Labour Market Development Agreement (www.lmda.pe.ca).

The opinions and interpretations contained in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada or the Government of Prince Edward Island.

*Front cover painting: Erica Rutherford (1923 - 2008), Whispers, 2000, oil on canvas, 112.0 x 137.5 cm,
Collection of Confederation Centre Art Gallery,
Purchased in Memory of Joseph Sherman, with funds from The Canada Council for The Arts, 2006
CAG 2006.2*

Creative Adaptation

HYBRID CAREERS
OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND ARTISTS

Prepared for

The PEI Cultural Human Resources Sector Council

by Megan Williams & Kelly Hill of Hill Strategies Research

Submitted March, 2010

Context and methodology

It is well-known in the cultural sector that many artists hold multiple jobs. Terminology to describe this situation includes “second jobs,” “moonlighting,” “dual careers,” “multi-track careers,” “portfolio careers” and “hybrid careers.” This last term will be most commonly used in this report.

This report explores a new area of interest for the PEI Cultural Human Resources Sector Council and for Island artists. The CHRSC decided to contract with Megan Williams and Hill Strategies Research to develop a well-conceived and highly readable report that would be useful to artists in thinking about their career paths. This report should also serve associations and policy makers at the provincial and national level as they devise programming to assist artists with the management of their complex careers.

The hybrid nature of work in the cultural sector has long been recognized, but no one in Canada has delved deeply into it with the intent of providing artists with the collective intelligence that exists on the subject. A number of arts service organizations were contacted for this project, and none had specific information or research on the multiple job-holding of artists. This study is a first step in addressing this gap in knowledge.

The **PEI Cultural Human Resources Sector Council** was set up in 2006 as an independent, industry-driven, not-for-profit organization which is comprised of representatives from labour, education, business, government and professional groups. Its focus is to provide a neutral forum for industry stakeholders to identify and address human resource issues and create workforce development strategies specific to the cultural sector on Prince Edward Island. A major objective of the

CHRSC is to create a labour force that is responsive to the current and future needs of industry. The CHRSC has already produced several studies of the cultural labour market and the training needs of the sector.

The **goals of this project** are to study:

- i. the different types of engagement that people have in the cultural sector,
- ii. opportunities and “best practices,”
- iii. challenges and pitfalls,
- iv. and policy issues related to hybrid careers.

The report focuses primarily on artists but is also relevant to many workers in other cultural occupations. The work of primary creators is central to all the other cultural occupations. Without screenwriters there would be no scripts to fuel the film industry, without fiction writers and poets, no need for a publishing house on the Island. Therefore it is extremely important to understand the dynamics of artists’ careers and how they relate to the other cultural industries. Only if the artists are productive and successful can there be parallel development in the related cultural industries.

The consultants’ work began with two focus groups held in December 2009 and was augmented by several other interviews in January and February 2010. Studies already produced by the CHRSC and other organizations helped

“Island artists are known as being supportive of each others work across all disciplines. You will often see musicians helping out with a visual arts exhibition, actors putting on a benefit for a writer in trouble or dancers at poetry readings.”

provide the underlying understanding and context for this work.

The **key questions** in the consultants' research and in the focus group sessions aimed to:

- i. Identify multiple job holding activities in PEI and attempt to discern trends, concentrations in certain occupations and effects of gender and age;
- ii. Examine the relationship among the different occupations of artists;
- iii. Understand the effect of a second occupation on the primary one;
- iv. Enumerate the challenges of a hybrid career;
- v. Identify the reasons for multiple job holding;
- vi. Look at parallels between artists creative practice and the sector in which they undertake their second job;
- vii. Analyze the impact of a multi-track career on the ability to maintain a creative practice, what training might be needed and how to achieve a balanced career;
- viii. Identify the connection between a hybrid career and artistic success (if any);
- ix. Ask artists about their best-case scenario;
- x. Identify preparations that artists might make to anticipate the necessity of having a multi-track career; and
- xi. Generate ideas for steps that could be taken by the CHRSC and government policy makers to assist artists in this area of their careers.

The report is organized into the following **sections**:

- 1) **Findings from previous research projects**
- 2) **Findings from the PEI research**
- 3) **What we can learn from the multi-track careers of artists**
- 4) **Fine tuning the future**
- 5) **Appendixes**

1) Findings from previous research projects

A) Census data on artists and cultural workers on PEI

- Based on 2006 census counts, there are approximately 1,960 cultural workers, including 460 artists, on Prince Edward Island.
- Based on the census, the average earnings of Island artists (from all sources) are only \$15,900.
- Of the 460 artists on PEI, 25% are less than 35 years old. This is lower than the broader cultural labour force, where 37% of workers are under 35.
- Compared with all Canadian artists, there is a higher proportion of PEI artists in two arts occupations: (1) artisans and craftspersons; and (2) musicians and singers.
- Compared with the national averages for the cultural sector, PEI's broader cultural sector has fewer people in their prime working years (3% fewer aged between 35 and 44) and a higher percentage of older workers (3% more aged 55 and over).

B) Limitations of census data

- Individuals are classified in the occupation in which they worked the most hours between May 7 and 13, 2006 (the census reference week). This means that artists who worked more hours at another occupation that week are not counted as "artists" in the census.
- The census cannot inform us as to how many artists have secondary occupations.
- Those who teach in post-secondary, secondary or elementary schools are classified as teachers or professors and are therefore excluded from the count of artists.
- Because of these factors, census data is known to undercount the number of artists in Canada.

- The PEI Council for the Arts estimates the number of artists on the Island as roughly twice as high as the census estimate.
- A 2009 study of Canadian visual artists (*Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists*) estimated that there are somewhere between 22,500 and 27,800 visual artists in Canada. These figures are about 30% to 60% larger than census estimates.
- Census earnings statistics include amounts received from all employment and self-employment positions in 2005, not just the position at which the respondent worked the most hours during the census reference week. As such, the census cannot inform us about the relative importance of different sources of artists' earnings.
- The census provides occupation estimates based on a relatively large population base: the 20% of households that completed a long census form. However, this still has limits. Some breakdowns of the number of artists in areas with lower populations (such as PEI) are less accurate because of the fairly small sample of artists in these locations. In addition, Statistics Canada's efforts to ensure confidentiality of individual responses result in some distortion of the estimates of artists in areas with particularly low populations.

C) Research into multiple job-holding

The Senior Artists' Research Project surveyed 1,512 professional Canadian artists aged 55 or older in various disciplines in late 2009. The survey, conducted by Hill Strategies Research for a consortium of artists' unions and associations, was able to identify how strongly senior artists rely on teaching, arts administration or non-arts related occupations: 52% of the elder artists did other paid work in addition to their work as an artist.

In fact, a substantial number of elder artists had multiple other occupations, in addition to being an artist: 14% of respondents had more than one other occupation (including teaching, arts administration, another arts-related occupation and/or a non-arts occupation).

The research found that secondary occupations, including arts-related teaching, were the main source of income for 25% of the artists, essentially equal to the percentage having "artist" as the main source of income (24%). (Government and private pensions, as well as "other" income sources, were the main source of earnings for the other artists 55 and older.)

The research also found that an overwhelming majority of the senior artists (81%) were self-employed.

While these findings relate only to artists who are 55 or older, many other artists undoubtedly have similar work patterns. An Australian report entitled *Don't Give Up Your Day Job* examined the economic situation of artists in that country. One of the key findings was that "almost two-thirds of Australian professional artists have more than one job. Non-arts work is a very important source of income for some artists, providing on average double the amount of income that can be earned from creative practice for the same amount of time worked."

Three Canadian and Australian research projects have shown that supplementing arts earnings with other earnings is an economic necessity for many artists. Among Canadian artists 55 or older, the median earnings from their art are only about \$7,000. When all income sources (art work, other employment, pensions, government supports, etc.) were included, the median individual income level is \$30,000.

A 2009 study of Canadian visual artists (*Waging Culture*) found that artists rely heavily on other occupations for their earnings. “The bottom line for artists is dismal, with the typical artist losing \$556 in 2007 on their practice. (Other income sources bring median total earnings to \$20,000)” The report argues that visual artists themselves are the primary funders of their artistic practices.

The study indicates that, on average, visual artists work 51 hours per week, with 26 hours devoted to their studio practice. Another 15 hours are on paid art-related work, 8 hours on other work, and 3 hours on art-related volunteering. Those visual artists who spend the most time in their practice have lower overall earnings (from all sources) than those who do more art-related or other work.

The Australian report found that the median earnings of artists were \$7,300 from their creative practice (before tax), while median earnings from all sources were \$30,000. “On average, Australian artists are only able to spend just 50 percent of their time on creative work, having to spend the rest of their time earning income from other sources to meet their basic needs.”

2) Findings from the PEI research

A) The frequency and types of secondary jobs

Our background research found that many artists – over half of them in some jurisdictions – hold multiple jobs. Artists’ “second jobs” often take up more time than what they are able to spend on their chosen artistic activity.

Our PEI research suggests that the situation of Island artists is probably quite similar. A large number of PEI

artists, likely more than half, do have paid employment that supplements their arts income. Take the PEI Symphony as an example: among about 60 players, there are none whose only gainful employment is playing the season with the Symphony.

It is hoped that one positive outcome of this report might be a better awareness of how to assist those artists who want to pursue their profession for a life-time. It is completely reasonable for young artists to share the aspirations of others in their cohort who start their careers in other sectors of the economy, aspirations such as owning and maintaining a home, having children, and having financial security. Many artists are obliged to pursue hybrid careers in order to achieve these basic life goals that are often taken for granted by other workers.

It is clear that hybrid arts workers contribute in multiple ways to the economy. We have heard from artists who teach, work on construction, administer arts or non-profit organizations or do design work. Sometimes the secondary jobs are related to arts practice and sometimes they are in a completely different sector. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a job that is related to one’s practice, a dynamic that is discussed in section 4.

Artists, whether working as artists or in their other occupations, contribute their creative skills to the

“ At the Native Council we realize that everyone is so desperate to try to retain those traditional crafts, so if someone is going to try to learn and retain them, they get a lot of respect from the community. ”

economy. Many business groups recognize the value of creativity in the economy. The Canadian Council of Chief Executives has stated that “there is growing evidence that artistic and cultural creativity plays an important role in transforming communities into destinations of choice for skilled people in any occupation.” As such, the organization suggested a “creative leap” of abolishing taxes on creativity, helping to make Canada “a haven for creative minds”.

However, the important role that artists play in the development of the overall economy, especially its more creative segments, is not yet fixed in the minds of many policymakers. There are some things that can be done to rectify this situation.

B) Government policy can work to help artists gain financial success and balance multi-track careers

- i. Attracting and retaining artists who work on the Island is an essential aspect of the creative economy. While direct funding is obviously very important in encouraging artists to remain on the Island to practice their art, another aspect is the range of possibilities for secondary employment, especially in the most creative segments of the Island economy. The development of artists and the creative segments of the economy could go hand-in-hand.
- ii. All stakeholders should be more aware of the connection between the presence of creators and a workforce that is capable of innovation.
- iii. Attracting artists to the workforce is also attracting taxpayers. Artists contribute to the economy through their taxes, their real estate purchases, support for schools and charities, in the same way that other citizens do.
- iv. The CHRSC could collaborate with other stakeholders, including government agencies and other sector councils on the Island, to investigate the

similarities or differences with multi-track careers in other sectors of the economy. Artists can be seen as modeling the situation of “portfolio workers” who create their own employment and contribute to the economy in several different ways.

- v. A strategic approach to quantifying the segments of the workforce that overlap should be developed among the sector councils and corresponding government branches. For example, many artists work in tourism-related seasonal jobs that are counted as “tourism jobs.” However, the tourism sector is not aware of how many cultural workers are in its ranks. In order to fully understand the dynamics of multi-track careers in the arts and in other sectors, special data will should be collected and analyzed.

C) Relationship and synergies between artistic and secondary work

There is clearly a relationship between the primary occupations of artists and their secondary employment. We have examined this dynamic to build an awareness of what synergies exist between a person’s arts practice and their other employment. In some cases the secondary employment might bring some energy, insight or new skills to the arts practice. In other cases, however, the secondary employment might not be beneficial.

“ I’m looking at other ways to use my artistic skills. I’ve been asked to teach recently, which is opening up my mind to other ways I can use my skills besides selling work through a gallery. ”

Part of an artist's training is learning to innovate from established art forms. Some artists have commented that their artistic skills enable them to bring more creativity and innovation to jobs like teaching or commercial film production. Even in jobs that have no direct connection to the arts, the adaptability and flexibility of a trained artist should be valued attributes.

There can be positive returns from having more than one occupation. The most obvious one is enough financial security to allow the peace of mind to devote time to an arts practice without a constant pre-occupation about earnings potential.

“There is nothing creative about wondering whether you're going to be able to pay the rent.”

Some artists have mentioned the kind of broad experience that can be gained by working outside their primary profession as a positive influence. In areas like song writing or poetry, for example, an artist may draw on life experience for inspiration. A creative act is often stimulated by events one experiences in the outside world, such as a conversation with a co-worker or an insight expressed by a student.

On the other hand, working for an employer demands that one be at the job site at certain times which, by default, dictates a schedule for when one can engage in one's arts practice.

Most of the artists interviewed for this study were firm in their assertion that they would prefer to work full-time on their practice rather than diluting their energies by working at paid employment. However, it is extremely difficult

to earn a living anywhere in Canada working only as an artist. In most disciplines there are only a handful of top professionals who make a decent living, while the rest of the practitioners supplement their arts income with other employment.

At \$15,900, the average earnings for artists are very low. And this figure includes secondary employment. On PEI, earnings potential can be limited by the small size of the local market.

D) Effects of secondary employment on artistic risk-taking

As artists work to balance their practices with other employment, they may face challenges that affect the artistic decisions they make. One of the qualities of contemporary arts practice (in all disciplines) is its ability to juxtapose ideas, comment on society or push the limits of acceptable norms to highlight the human condition. In other words, we value the risks that artists take, yet art that is risky is more difficult to market. Artists who produce work that is difficult to sell, like light sculptures, spoken word or installation work, are faced with the necessity to obtain secondary employment to supplement their inadequate incomes.

“I remember once I was in the studio and the work season was starting and I was really happy with the art work I was doing, but I was getting depressed because I had to go from making the extraordinary to doing the ordinary. As a tradesperson there are many people who can do what I do in the business, but nobody can do what I do in the studio.”

There can be a real loss to the public and their profession when artists pull back from taking artistic risks or from following their own artistic impulses, because then they produce work that is less inspired, more curtailed. Both artists and the public benefit when artists have the economic freedom to make their own artistic decisions. The level and quality of artistic expression, in the province of PEI and in Canada as a whole, is undermined when artists are forced to limit themselves and their creativity.

E) Seasonal ebb and flow of arts practice and secondary employment

It is understandable that on PEI there would be many artists whose work fluctuates with the seasons. This reflects the historic pattern of work in the Island's fishing, forestry and farming economy. Some artists are fully employed in the summer months in tourism-related arts activities, the Charlottetown Festival being one of the larger employers. There are also a significant number of positions in historic sites and parks where artists may be employed as craft producers, performers or interpreters.

Conversely, many creators are most productive in the winter months because their summer season is occupied by resource-based jobs, by construction or building occupations, or in tourism service jobs. In addition, there are many artists and artisans who work as retailers in their own shops during the tourist season. Although not a formal "second job", retail work does not leave these artists much time or energy during the tourist season for creativity or production. These artists tend to build up their inventory over the winter months when their shops are closed.

F) The pattern of multiple job-holding may change over time

Over an artist's lifetime, the pattern of secondary employment often evolves. The type of work that artists find upon leaving school is generally different from the work that a mid-career artist would seek.

It is uncommon for art schools to introduce the concept to students that they might have to earn their living from employment other than their arts practices. While the schools' concentration on instructing in the arts is understandable, this orientation leaves many students unprepared for the economic necessities they will face upon graduation.

The transition from university-level or other arts training into becoming a practicing artist is one of the most difficult transitions in life. As young graduates struggle to find a way to earn a living after finishing their education, they may quickly take available employment without considering how this may help or hinder their primary goal of becoming a professional artist.

It appears that younger artists are more likely to take jobs that require little commitment so that they can leave without consequences should they start earning more income in their arts profession. This is one reason for the persistence of the cliché of "actors as waiters".

“ I took a job in construction because I could just walk away from it at anytime. And it's always a short term commitment it's not going to be 40 hours a week for the next 24 months. **”**

A young musician who receives an offer to play in a festival in Vancouver should be able to leave a bartending job in Charlottetown without many consequences. Some artists, especially performing artists, could easily be seen as economic migrants.

Artists who are in mid-career often search out employment that complements their practice. For example, a writer with an established reputation may find a teaching position at a university English or French department. A musician who is already known as a performer may be able to work in a seniors' home as a music therapist. Many artists become involved in working with elementary and secondary school students through programs like ArtsSmarts.

Jobs that a lot of our younger members take are the ones where the commitment is not going to be a permanent one. They are the servers or cooks where it's a short term commitment and those are the ones who are most committed to their craft.

Some artists only engage fully with their practice after retirement from the mainstream workforce. During their employment years, they may have worked in a profession like teaching that enabled them to maintain an arts practice. This is especially feasible for artists in the area of music, drama or visual arts where they may teach in the school system and work as

singers, musicians or visual artists on their own time. When they reach retirement age, some artists can devote themselves more fully to their chosen artistic discipline.

G) The effect of multiple job holding on the longevity of an artistic career

It would be hard to demonstrate conclusively that having a multi-track career has a negative effect on an artist's ability to keep up their practice and to develop as an artist. However, it is clear that in some cases the demands of outside employment do pull artists away from their practices. There is certainly anecdotal evidence that many trained artists eventually give up their practices in favour of steady employment and higher pay. As an example of trained artists shifting to another career track, in a study of arts management produced by the Canadian Conference of the Arts, it was reported that a large percentage of arts administrators and managers in Canada were people who had trained as artists then moved into arts organizations.

The arts community is by no means static, with new artists emerging from training and joining the ranks of creators on the Island. At the same time, senior artists are contemplating their later years, often rich in experience but with inadequate resources. The 2006 census shows that, compared to the rest of Canada, PEI has fewer cultural workers in their prime and more senior workers. The wisdom of some older artists can certainly be deployed to assist the younger generations to manage the various strands of their careers more skillfully.

H) The perception of artists about the effects of multi-track careers on their peers and their reputations.

Part of working as an artist is building an understanding of the way the others in one's profession conduct their arts practices. Island artists are known for being supportive of each others' work across all disciplines, and they are also interested in each other's careers. Most of the artists we spoke with were pursuing multi-track careers, and

many artists they know are following the same pattern. There is a shared understanding that artists generally have multi-track careers and a sense that it is timely to build awareness of this phenomenon, which is so prevalent in the careers of creative artists.

While artists are well aware that many of their colleagues have multi-track careers, the general public may not be tuned into the fact that the desk clerk at the hotel is also a novelist or that the park interpreter is a member of Actors' Equity.

Some artists have conflicted feelings about discussing their arts practice on their job sites. It is not unusual for artists to keep their arts practice to themselves for various reasons related to the workplace. However, one performer described a strategy that worked to gain the respect of her co-workers. She told them when she was hired that she would need time off to play a set of concerts that she had already booked. She not only was given the time off, but she had lots of interest and support from her co-workers. Many of them attended her performances.

“If you ask anyone in the arts community what I do, they would say I was an administrator and a teacher, but when people ask me, I say it the other way around: I'm a musician first, teacher and administrator second.”

Although some artists may fear that working at other employment may harm their reputations, in small communities like the Island people generally know a person's background and understand the necessity to work on several projects to earn a satisfactory living. It's the Island way.

3) What we can learn from the multi-track careers of artists

A) There are specific challenges for artists with multiple careers

Artists who juggle an arts practice with other employment face a set of challenges that definitely keeps them on their toes. In addition to scheduling and ensuring that there is time for the studio and time for paid employment, there is also the complexity of earning part of one's living as a freelance or self-employed worker (the arts practice) and part as an employee. Many artists retain the services of an accountant to assist with filing their income tax annually.

For artists whose secondary employment is as a freelancer, scheduling becomes even more complicated. Freelance designers, for example, must be ready to accept work as it comes along, and be able to work to deadlines. This means that their practice may have to be put on hold when a paying contract is available.

The artists whose secondary employment is seasonal and predictable are in a better position because they can plan their schedules annually and be certain of the amount of time they will have available for their arts projects.

B) There are particular circumstances for Island artists

It is well understood that the small size of the PEI's population will create particular circumstances for those who chose an artist's life here. One of the benefits is the supportive nature of an arts community where everyone knows each other. For emerging artists, there is a strong support system of older artists who help smooth the path for them.

The small size of the market takes more ingenuity to manage. A visual artist, for example, could only reasonably expect a solo show at the Island's primary public institution – the Confederation Centre Gallery – once a decade. For visual artists though, there is the possibility of shipping their work to galleries elsewhere in Canada. For performers, it means touring to off-island venues.

Artists on the Island and elsewhere in Canada use the services of agents and impresarios to help move their work into markets. There are fewer of these professionals available on the Island, so artists who have reached a certain level of professionalism are obliged to find agents elsewhere in order to further their artistic careers.

I know a musician who plays a gig at Brendan's and there's no cover, so he's doing that for \$75 or \$100 a night, then he tries to do a concert at another venue that charges \$10, but people don't even want to pay that when they can see him for free at the bar.

The music industry on the Island is in a growth phase fueled in part by the fairly new industry association, Music PEI. Music PEI has recognized that the scarcity of professional management is an impediment to further growth and is working with Holland College to set up training for music managers.

C) There are also certain advantages for PEI artists who have multi-track careers

The fact that the community of creators on the Island only numbered 460 at the last census means that new

members can readily acquaint themselves with others and learn from their experiences. "Artists helping artists" is not only the mandate of CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation), it is a time-honoured technique everywhere. The way artists learn about managing hybrid careers is ad-hoc and could benefit from being more structured.

The existence of the PEI Cultural Human Resources Council gives a real advantage to artists who want to learn more about how to manage their careers. The PEI CHRSC keeps in touch with the thinking of other culture sector councils across Canada and produces its own research and data, some of which is aimed at making a hybrid career more feasible.

Unlike the trend elsewhere in Canada where many artists cluster in urban centres, a number of artists on the Island live an alternate lifestyle outside the Charlottetown area which requires less infrastructure and expense. By reducing daily living costs some are able to afford to build or renovate their own studio spaces. Looking at the way artists live on the Island is a lesson in creative adaptation.

D) Artists need control and freedom to exercise their creativity

Managing a multi-track career requires discipline and control on the part of the artist so that the paid employment does not impinge on the time that is needed for research, reflection and replenishing one's creative powers. It is common to hear artists talk about how the stresses of their paid employment will come to mind when they are in the studio. There is definitely a need for artists to acquire the discipline to leave their paid employment behind when they embark on an arts project.

Many artists work as teachers in writing, performing or visual arts programs at the university level. They may also conduct community-based classes for children, elders or other groups within the population. The proximity of this type of work to their own practices is a particular challenge. The connection with students can be emotional and time consuming, especially with the expectation that teachers will be available to their students at all times through e-mail. On the other hand, teaching can also be rewarding, in the sense that working with students offers a creative connection with fresh new ideas and the sensibility of the younger generation.

There is a particular issue of control related to paid employment where an artist is called upon to use their professional training in the workplace. For example, a fiction writer who works as a freelance writer may find that their own standards are of a different order than those of their employer. The difference of opinion on aesthetic matters can become a breaking point in the employer-employee relationship.

An artist who is working in a related field, for example an independent filmmaker producing for television, may have to curtail their own artistic judgment in order to produce the program their employer wants. Subverting one's own creativity may have consequences when returning to one's own work. It may be difficult to find the way back to one's personal form of artistic expression.

E) Aligning the components of a career can improve one's quality of life

Given that having a multi-track career is the norm for most artists and that only a few of the practitioners on the Island will be earning all of their living from marketing their work, it is useful to take a look at the kind of strategies that will help artists to improve their quality of life.

It is evident that many employers on the Island are sensitive to the needs of artists to adjust their work schedules to their practices. Seeking out employers like the Confederation Centre or non-profit organizations that are already sensitive to the way artists' careers unfold can be a good strategy for artists.

“

My job allows me to travel for my music. My employer supports my music career by being flexible about my work hours. If I didn't have this job, I'd have to leave the Island.

”

Since most artists fall into the category of self-employed workers, finding regular part-time employment that has benefits can make life much easier. Dental or health care coverage could represent a substantial cost savings for artists. Even the more basic benefits, such as Employment Insurance and the Canada Pension Plan, are of huge importance to everyone, and especially those artists who have families to consider. Employers are obliged to pay into Employment Insurance and Canada Pension Plan on behalf of their employees. Some employers will also match contributions that employees make to Registered Retirement Savings Plans.

Being employed also is useful for artists who might want access to credit to borrow money for their arts projects or other purposes. It is much more difficult for self-employed workers to convince lenders to advance funds.

There are new Employment Insurance benefits being introduced for self-employed workers which will give them access to parental leave and other “special benefits”. Artists who are fully self-employed would be well advised to consider opting into these special benefits.

F) Anticipating having multiple jobs while training as an artist can be an advantage to young artists.

The simple realization on the part of art students that in all likelihood they will have to supplement their arts income with other employment would go a long way to making hybrid careers more acceptable and manageable. Some of the responsibility for this type of discussion rests with art teachers, but artists' organizations, like sector councils and the professional unions, should bring up the subject when their disciplines are meeting to discuss employment issues.

Even for young artists who are planning to work within one discipline, it is very helpful to study the full range of how people earn their living within it. For example, there are so many different revenue streams in the music industry that even if you are planning to be a performer, it would be well to take courses that give an overview of the industry and an understanding of how money is generated from sources like online sales, live concerts and SOCAN fees.

G) Work/work balance

The balance between and arts practice and other aspects of a career will be different for different art forms, different temperaments and different periods in life. It takes time for an individual artist to find the right balance and it also takes experimentation. Sometimes an artist finds balance in working for a sustained period on a project, like a film or preparation for an exhibition, then returning to the workforce once that set of ideas has been expressed.

One of the successful strategies used by artists is to find an employer who will accommodate the necessity for absences caused by key events in an artist's life, such as touring a play, opening an exhibition or launching a book.

An accommodating employer can even go so far as to hire other staff to complement an artists' skills and attributes. While artists may bring creativity and many other skills to the workplace, they may be lacking in others.

Another aspect to consider when balancing a multi-track career is whether to take a job that complements an artist practice or is completely different. It is certainly common for performers to work in the food service business because of the low level of commitment it requires, allowing a worker to take a leave or quit when a professional performing job comes up. However, if an artist works in a related field there are possibilities to learn skills that aid in one's practice and also to make professional connections that help with future projects. For example, a performer who works in the box office of an arts centre can learn a lot about how audience members decide to buy tickets.

Those artists who work at several jobs simultaneously must become adept at scheduling, and not just to avoid time conflicts, but also to allow freedom for creativity. It is important that a secondary job can be integrated with a studio or rehearsal schedule so that there is time for both. Dealing with a fractured schedule will certainly undermine an arts practice. Predictable hours and a specific time commitment for both the arts practice and the secondary work are important.

When I finished the last film, one of the reasons I had to get a job, was not only because I needed money, but because it was done, the idea had been expressed. You have to wait until another idea comes bubbling up.

H) Best-case scenario: the ideal situation for artists

Most members of the creative community on the Island, the primary creators who were interviewed for this study, were firm in their best-case scenario: they wanted to devote themselves full-time to their arts practice. It would be interesting to imagine the impact on the whole cultural sector were all Island artists working fulltime on creative pursuits. It is not unreasonable to imagine that it would fuel a cultural renaissance that would bring attention to the Island on a national and possibly international scale.

Another way that artists can realize their artistic goals without taking employment outside the cultural sector is to evolve within one's own area of expertise. There are plenty of examples of actors who have become theatrical or film directors and then moved on to writing plays or scripts. Sometimes a professional can perform several roles at once and that way earn a more substantial income. A visual artist who can supplement their sales and exhibition fees by doing freelance curatorial work or critical writing is likely to be much better placed financially.

Not many artists, though, achieve a position where they can completely let go of other earned income.

4) Fine tuning the future**A) Aspects of working life that students should be discussing while in training**

Students and teachers should talk more openly about future possibilities. Many teachers know whether a music student is capable of sustaining a performance career and could offer students advice about how to use their

music training in other ways to build a satisfying creative life. Art teachers might be able to suggest that a student should study art history and critical theory because they sense that the student might be capable of adding critical writing to their studio practice as a way to supplement income.

There are certainly business skills that self-employed workers require that can be learned at university, college or through special courses. Artists who achieve a certain monetary success can and do hire agents to help with the business side of their work, but even to be able to work with an agent, a person must have a fundamental understanding of the way their art form generates money and the role of the agent and other industry players. It takes some knowledge to manage your manager.

“

There is more consciousness now at universities about different aspects of a music career like musicology, critical writing, but there's still no recognition of the need for business courses for musicians.

”

B) There are tips that senior artists have for entry level and mid-career artists.

Senior artists who are familiar with the dynamics of a hybrid career have accumulated wisdom to share with the mid-career and emerging artists. Fostering an informal ongoing discussion or a specific event where artists of all demographics could examine the nature of hybrid careers would definitely help artists manage their careers in a more enlightened way.

It is important to be flexible and open in thinking about other ways of making a living using the skills developed through arts training. A trained visual artist might be asked to do commercial design or art direction for a film. It would be reasonable for the artist to consider the possibilities of such work, including what learning opportunities a job might hold for furthering their own practice.

There are several prominent members of the PEI arts community who are married couples with spouses who each have an arts practice. Forming a life-long partnership with another artist is certainly advantageous in many ways, given that partners can often help each other with their artistic projects. That being said, many artists benefit from having a spouse with an occupation that would provide a steady income, health insurance, a dental plan and possibly a retirement savings plan.

All artists, whether they have hybrid careers or not, will need to learn to cope with rejection. The rejection that must be endured by going through auditions is constant and is experienced by all performers at one time or another. Hardening oneself to the self-doubt that follows a rejection is part of an artists' training that transfers readily into the mainstream job market.

And finally, many senior artists have managed to build up their equity and live comfortable lives because they have practiced frugality and creative adaptation over the course of many years. There are many artists who are interested in the relationship between humans and the environment and who maintain a lifestyle that is close to nature, a pattern that is common for Island artists. There are also many artists who have resigned themselves to living with less cash flow than their neighbours, and many of these accept having less cash because they have freedom to live their creative lives. That being said, all the artists we spoke to would like to earn more from their creative endeavours.

C) A checklist for young artists

- i. Recognize the centrality of retaining the creative impulse. Use it as a base, and build your career around it.
- ii. Decide how much supplementary income you need before you start looking for outside employment. Weigh the relative importance of having more freedom to make art, or more cash.
- iii. Weigh the pros and cons of whether to look for secondary work in a related field or a completely different one.
- iv. Find an employer who will accommodate an artist's lifestyle.
- v. Seek job opportunities where you can use your arts background
- vi. Sell your prospective employers on your artistic abilities: creativity, innovation, psychological strength to withstand rejection, discipline to practice, research skills, dexterity, physical fitness.
- vii. Find ways that you can advance within your career, such as moving from actor to director to playwright.
- viii. Teach yourself: when you are offered opportunities, whether in your arts practice or your other work, even if it's a little beyond your comfort zone, say "yes" and learn from the experience.
- ix. Learn to manage your own employment issues or hire professional management. Manage your manager.

D) Five sets of actions to steady the balancing act

- i. It is clear that simply building awareness of the concept of hybrid careers is of great benefit to the artists who live this way. Therefore continuing to research, write and talk about the issue of hybrid careers is the first project to act on. Actions include:

- a) circulating a version of this report to arts service organizations across the country and encouraging publication in their newsletters;
 - b) moving the discussion onto the agenda of the national Cultural Human Resources Council;
 - c) preparing a CHRSC board member to speak on this topic and identifying conferences and other events where this could happen.
- ii.** Having an accommodating employer is a success factor for artists holding down regular paid employment. The employers on the Island who are known to be interested in hiring and accommodating artists could be brought into conversation with other employers as a panel at a conference or at some other event. Actions include:
- a) organizing a facilitated discussion to explore advantages of employing artists and to sensitize employers to the situation;
 - b) selling employers on the idea of flexible work hours to accommodate artists along the lines of existing initiatives for employees who do volunteer work;
 - c) promoting the idea of hiring artists through informal discussion with employers who are known to be accommodating: CBC, Confederation Centre and non-profit groups.
- iii.** There was broad agreement on the necessity of business skills training for artists, especially those that pertain to self-employment. Talking to art schools in the region about the courses they offer and encouraging more career oriented training would result in having trained artists who were also savvier about all aspects of their professions. Actions include:
- a) starting an informal discussion through the association of Community Colleges and building from there to a more concerted effort that would address offerings in universities as well;
 - b) soliciting funding to hold a series of workshops on business skills for artists;
 - c) connecting with other culture sector councils that have already developed business training for artists and investigating offering similar training on the Island.
- iv.** Artists who can work at a level that enables them to engage an agent are in a better position to manage their careers, including the multi-track aspects. Therefore it is desirable for more artists to have professional management. Actions include:
- a) working with other arts service organizations to support training for agents and impresarios;
 - b) organizing a training session for artists about the role of agents.
- v.** Artists should be made aware of the new provisions in employment insurance for self-employed workers. With these changes, self-employed artists will be able to voluntarily opt into the EI program and receive "special benefits." Overall, the benefits for self-employed individuals mirror those currently available to salaried employees: maternity, parental, sickness and compassionate care benefits. As of January 1, 2010, self-employed workers can opt into the program. Actions include:
- a) Communicating with members of Island arts organizations about the new provisions through an e-mail bulletin
 - b) Organizing an information session at the annual CHRSC forum

5) Appendixes

A) Artists by occupation based on the 2006 census

Artists by occupation on PEI, 2006 census

Occupations	Number
All artists	460
All artists as % of overall PEI labour force	0.58 %
Musicians and singers	125
Artisans and craftspersons	90
Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations	80
Authors and writers	70
Painters, sculptors and other visual artists	50
Four other arts occupations (actors and comedians; conductors, composers and arrangers; dancers; and other performers)	40

Source: Analysis by Hill Strategies Research based on 2006 census data. Originally compiled for the **PEI Cultural Sector Training Strategy**.

Note: Only those occupations with 50 or more workers are included above due to of concerns about data reliability.

B) List of interviewees for this project

Annette Campbell	Freelance	PEI Symphony
BJ Sandiford	Design/craft	Freelance
Catherine MacLellan	Music	Folk Music Award 2009
Chris Dahn	Visual arts	Freelance
Christina Patterson	Visual arts	Freelance
Colleen Casey	Traditional craft	Mik'maq nation
Deirdre Kessler	Writing	Freelance, UPEI
Don Fraser	Music	Confederation Centre
Georges Arsenault	Writing	Freelance
Gerald Beaulieu	Visual arts	CARFAC
Julia Gregory	Visual arts	Freelance
Julie Pellissier-Lush	Writing	Kwimu Messenger Editor
Lionel Stevenson	Photo/design	Freelance
Louise Lalonde	Media the Arts	PEI Council for
Marcia Carroll	ED	PEI Council of People with Disabilities
Margaret McEachern	Craft/performing	Freelance
Mark Sandiford	Media, flim	Freelance
Mireille Eagan	Visual arts	Confederation Centre Art Gallery
Nancy Beck	Theatre/writing	Freelance
Nancy MacLean	Traditional craft	Native Council of PEI
Pat Casey	Traditional craft	Tlingit nation
Patsy Thomas	Traditional craft	Mik'maq nation
Paul Whalen	Theatre	Freelance
Rob Oakie	Music	Music PEI
Roy Johnstone	Music	Freelance
Sarah Saunders	Visual arts	Freelance
Scott Parsons	Music	Freelance
Shirley St Onge,	Traditional craft	Mik'maq nation
Terry D. Stevenson	Visual arts	Freelance

C) Artistic and cultural occupations

According to Statistics Canada's *Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics*, the cultural sector includes those working in 48 different occupations. These occupations, along with their groupings by area, are provided below. The nine arts occupations are: Artisans and craftspersons; Painters, sculptors and other visual artists; Actors and comedians; Dancers; Other performers; Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations; Conductors, composers and arrangers; Musicians and singers; Authors and writers.

Architecture, Design, Crafts and Visual Arts

Architects
 Architectural technologists and technicians
 Artisans and craftspersons
 Camera, platemaking and other pre-press occupations
 Drafting technologists and technicians
 Graphic arts technicians
 Graphic designers and illustrators
 Industrial designers
 Interior designers
 Landscape and horticultural technicians and specialists
 Landscape architects
 Painters, sculptors and other visual artists
 Patternmakers, textile, leather and fur products
 Photographers
 Photographic and film processors
 Theatre, fashion, exhibit and other creative designers

Archives, Libraries and Heritage

Archivists
 Conservators and curators
 Librarians
 Library and archive technicians and assistants
 Library clerks
 Library, archive, museum and art gallery managers

Supervisors, library, correspondence and related information clerks
 Technical occupations related to museums and galleries

A/V and Live Performing Arts

Actors and comedians
 Announcers and other broadcasters
 Broadcast technicians
 Dancers
 Film and video camera operators
 Managers in publishing, motion pictures, broadcasting and performing arts
 Other performers
 Other technical occupations in motion pictures, broadcasting and the performing arts
 Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations
 Support occupations in motion pictures, broadcasting and the performing arts

Music and Sound Recording

Audio and video recording technicians
 Conductors, composers and arrangers
 Musicians and singers

Writing and Publishing

Authors and writers
 Binding and finishing machine operators
 Correspondence, publication and related clerks
 Desktop publishing operators and related occupations
 Editors
 Journalists
 Printing machine operators
 Printing press operators
 Professional occupations in public relations and communications
 Supervisors, printing and related occupations
 Translators, terminologists and interpreters

D) References

- i. ***Prince Edward Island Cultural Sector Training Strategy***, by Hill Strategies Research and Megan Williams for the PEI CHRSC, May 2009.
<http://www.peiculture.ca/files/resources/Training%20Strategy%20publication%20final.pdf>
- ii. ***Culture + Tourism in PEI***, an initial exploration of the collaboration potential, by the Tourism Research Centre School of Business, UPEI for the PEI CHRSC, August 2009
http://www.peiculture.ca/files/resources/culture_tourism%20report%20final%20with%20photos.pdf
- iii. ***Creative Management in the Arts and Heritage: Sustaining and Renewing Professional Management For the 21st***, by Jocelyn Harvey for the Canadian Conference of the Arts, 2003
- iv. ***Senior Artists in Canada***, prepared by Hill Strategies Research for the Senior Artists' Research Project, a consortium of artists' unions and associations. Report forthcoming in 2010. With 1,512 responses, the senior artists' data can be considered reliable within 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
- v. ***Waging Culture: A report on the socio-economic status of Canadian visual artists***, written by Michael Maranda for The Art Gallery of York University, 2009. The survey was completed by approximately 1,200 visual artists, resulting in a margin of error of 4.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.
<http://www.theaguisoutthere.org/wagingculture/>
- vi. ***Don't Give Up Your Day Job: An Economic Study of Professional Artists in Australia***, David Throsby and Virginia Hollister, Australia Council for the Arts, 2003.
http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/research/artists/reports_and_publications/dontgiveupyourdayjob
- vii. ***From Bronze to Gold: A Blueprint for Canadian Leadership in a Transforming World***, Canadian Council of Chief Executives, 2006.
http://www.ceocouncil.ca/en/view/?document_id=484&type_id=5
- viii. ***Prince Edward Island's Cultural Labour Force: a Supply and Demand Study*** by MacPherson Roche Smith Associates for PEI Cultural Human Resources Sector Council, April 2008
http://www.peiculture.ca/files/resources/Supply%20and%20Demand%20Study_%20PEI%20CHRSC_final%20copy%20.pdf
- ix. ***Crossover: how artists build careers across commercial, non-profit and community work***, Ann Markuson, Sam Gilmore, Amanda Johnson, Titus Levi, Andrea Martinez, Commissioned by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2006
http://www.haassr.org/html/resources_links/pdf/caCrossover.pdf

“ I was doing some part-time teaching in an art program. It was only two days a week but it always seemed to take a day or two either side to get reoriented to my own studio work. A day or two before I went to teach, thoughts about teaching were already invading my mental space. When I’d get back to my studio, it always took a while to get my thoughts back on track. “What was I thinking here...why did I think this should be bigger? No, it was weight I wanted to add”. Inevitably as I worked, thoughts would be creeping in about my work with the students: “Maybe if I did such and such, it would help the students understand... I should remember to look up more info on... Oh, this would be a great example of... what if I compared it ...”. It seemed to be a constant struggle to contain my thoughts and ideas to the job at hand. I can’t say that I found a lot of my teaching time spent straying to thoughts of my own work as easily. It seemed like a large amount of my creative thinking/problem solving was oriented toward my “part-time” teaching job. It was my first time teaching, so maybe if the job had lasted for several years, I’d have learned to be quicker to switch gears.

Sarah Saunders

“ In a real sense the benefit of getting a break for senior artists really flows to the younger generation of artists and to the general public. What happened to me was that I got to be somewhere around 40 or 45, and I realized that I’d better think about my old age and I better start saving for it. So what can I do that will make me a little more money? And that influenced the development of my work. You’re conscious as you go along that if you continue in your present path writing plays and novels that don’t make much money, that you’re going to end up in the condition of Hugh MacLennan and his wife who I believe were eating dog food in their 80’s and you look at that sort of thing: Artists who have hideous old ages like Maureen Forrester. So somewhere around your 40’s you think it will happen to you if you don’t do something different. For me, this has had a huge impact on the work that I did and the work I could afford to do. The real impact would come if younger artists didn’t have to worry so much about being hung out to dry in their old age and maybe they could do more really creative work that would benefit the whole country.

Silver Donald Cameron

“ I thought: wouldn't it be ideal to get paid to do what I love and the curse is that when I did get a job that I loved, it was just far enough off my primary interest that it actually took the charm out of it. ”

“ It's hard to convince young artists of the benefits of acquiring business skills and practical skills. Because at school they hear about that anti-establishment, counter-culture lifestyle of being an artist but once people grow out of that and realize that they want to live as an artist the rest of their lives, they wonder: how can I make it happen? ”

“ It takes quite a bit of wangling to survive as an artist in PEI. ”

“ Art is something that seems to run through the veins of the aboriginal community but if you want to make a career you have to learn many other things besides the creation. And you have to have pride in what you do. ”

“ One of the things that artists have in common is the reality that living on such a small income, we learn to be very adaptable. In fact we've got an incredible skill set in terms of how to live with less, recycling things, reusing things, creating new uses. ”

“ I find it hard to work in a secondary career because I find it difficult to relate to the people I work for, maybe because I come from a different background, I have different opinions and tastes ”

“ In some ways doing commercial work has tended to give me hack reflexes as opposed to artistic reflexes. ”

“ If you do a show every week here, the audience does not snowball like it does in Toronto, it gets smaller. ”

“ I recently left art school where I was bombarded with this idea that capitalism is the enemy, and you can't be an artist unless you suffer somehow. ”