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FESTIVALS, ARTISTS AND ENTREPRENEURIALISM: THE ROLE OF THE ADELAIDE FRINGE FESTIVAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the role of the Adelaide Fringe Festival in facilitating entrepreneurialism amongst participating artists. Tracing the discursive development of the notion of the entrepreneur, the paper identifies how entrepreneurialism has been taken up by the discourses of the creative industries. While we note that entrepreneurialism is a key strategy within the creative industries framework, it would appear for artists the concept does not necessarily connote the achievement of commercial outcomes. The paper argues that these cultural entrepreneurs are defined by self-reliance, the focus on the development of their craft, and the cultural value of their work.

KEY WORDS

Arts festivals, artists, entrepreneurialism, cultural value

INTRODUCTION

The open access Adelaide Fringe Festival began in 1960 as a biennial event and in 2007 became an annual festival presenting innovative arts practices across a diverse range of artforms. Running from February – March with 705 registered events, it is now the second largest festival of its kind internationally after the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Adelaide Fringe Festival 2010). This paper is based on interviews and focus groups with participating artists in the 2009 festival. The research suggests that Fringe is successful in encouraging participating artists to organise and channel their artistic efforts in enterprising ways. However, while the Fringe promotes an entrepreneurial approach by participating artists, such entrepreneurialism is not focused on the maximisation of profit.

Much of the existing literature on the role of arts festivals emphasises their impact on cultural tourism. While many arts festivals, including the Adelaide Fringe, have demonstrable economic impacts, the current research finds that the fundamental value of the Fringe festival is cultural. Providing artists an affordable space and encouraging participating artists to develop their craft along with independence and creative autonomy is a key outcome for the Fringe Festival. The paper argues that the Fringe is notable for its support of forms of cultural (or non- profit) entrepreneurialism which are not primarily directed at economic growth.

Before discussing the research findings, we identify the discursive development of the notion of 'creative industries' in the context of general organisational reforms to encourage an attitude of entrepreneurialism.

BACKGROUND

Organisational reforms in the 1980s saw the promotion of the notion of an 'entrepreneurial attitude' within organisations. An 'entrepreneurial' workforce was seen as an antidote to the perceived rigidity and inefficiency of bureaucratic organisations and would facilitate new, more 'organic' and flexible workplaces and practices (Peters & Waterman, 1982; Peters, 1987). Where bureaucratic organisations tended to encourage a workforce focused on adherence to procedure, the new organisations stressed the importance of workers exhibiting 'more market oriented, proactive, empowered, and entrepreneurial attitudes and capacities' (du Gay et al 1996, p.266). With these changes to the industrial and organisational landscape of the 1980s came the promulgation of the idea that a certain type of person was needed for the new industrial era; workers needed to be 'enterprising, autonomous, productive, self-regulating, responsible individuals' (1996, p.266).

Since the 1980s, in the UK and Australia, all sectors and organisations – schools, prisons, businesses, hospitals, and government departments – have had to respond to the introduction of market mechanisms and relationships within their organisations (Pick & Anderton, 1999; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Terry, 1998). du Gay et al (1996, p.268) describe how, for organisations of all kinds regardless of their purpose, enterprise and entrepreneurialism now 'occupy an absolutely crucial role in contemporary discourse'. As with almost every other sector, cultural organisations and agencies have seen the introduction of a market orientation. Everyone is urged to be 'entrepreneurial' and change their workplace practice: 'Entrepreneurship is a way of thinking and behaving that has opportunity as its heart. Entrepreneurs recognise, create, engage and exploit opportunities. Creativity and innovation are fundamental' (Thompson & Doherty 2006, p.361).

The notion of the 'social entrepreneur' is also relevant here: there may be a profit objective but it is related to principles of social contribution and sustainability. Hartigan (2006, p.42) describes this as entrepreneurs who want to 'do good' with the focus on 'people not profits'. Social entrepreneurship also describes using business methods to solve social problems (Thompson & Doherty, 2006, p.362). This concept of social entrepreneurship can also be connected with cultural activity where there are social impacts.

In the arts sector, the introduction of market attitudes and relationships has been delivered through the discourses of 'creative industries' which have been dominant for the past two decades. The 'creative industries' have been defined as 'an emphasis on the specific dynamics of making profit from the production and dissemination of primarily symbolic goods' (Hesmondhalgh, 2007, p.68). Writing about the discursive development of the notion of 'creative industries', Garnham (2005, p.25) notes that what underpins it, is the belief that these industries are 'the key new growth sector of the economy, both nationally and globally, and thus, against a background of manufacturing sector decline, they are the source of future employment growth and export earnings'. In Australia and the UK the creative industries is a framework for cultural policy whereby financial or regulatory support for cultural organisations and projects is based on the criterion that they can be considered a sound financial or social investment. Having the

potential to become financially self-supporting or by providing sufficient benefits to the economy or society as a whole (such as through cultural tourism or social therapeutic benefits) is seen to justify the investment of public or private sponsorship (Jeffcutt, [Pick and Protherough, 2000](#)).

The discourse of creative industries, then, is underpinned by the drive to produce profit from the production and dissemination of symbolic goods. In this context, the notion of the entrepreneur has become central to the effort to bring the arts to the market. At one level, the notion of the artist as entrepreneur reflects the reality of working in the cultural sector which is largely made up of freelancers and small businesses. However, from within the creative industries framework there is an emphasis on 'entrepreneurialism' as connoting activity which uses a new idea to generate profit. According to the 19th century theorist J. B. Say (quoted in Drucker 1985, p.19), '...the entrepreneur shifts economic resources out of an area of lower and into an area of higher productivity and greater yield'. This definition of an entrepreneur suggests a change agent who makes money by shifting the focus of their activity to maximise their financial return. Drucker (1985, p.27) connects entrepreneurship with innovation, commenting that '...innovation is the specific instrument of entrepreneurship'. Here innovation and entrepreneurship are interconnected; entrepreneurship by definition requires innovation. Landström (2008, p.302) makes the point though that '... the entrepreneur recognizes economic opportunities and takes action to exploit them in the market'. While Drucker connects entrepreneurship with innovation, it is also seen as being directly associated with market outcomes.

The question arises, what does the term 'entrepreneurialism' convey when applied to the work of artists? Is it about finding ways to make more money by redirecting resources, or does it have other connotations? The introduction of 'innovation' into the discourse adds to the mix, as artists by definition innovate in the process of creating something new or different. Indeed, it has been argued that without innovation, art cannot exist (Bilton & Cummings, 2010). Becker (2007, p.89) observes that the notion of entrepreneurialism as it relates to artists is concerned with new ways of generating employment and professional opportunities. He notes that there are different views within the arts sector around the concept of entrepreneurialism and its applicability within the arts. For some practitioners there is a view that the term 'entrepreneur' suggests a commercial outcome which does not sit well with the exploratory nature of art making (2007, p.94). Rivers (2010) also points out that defining artists as entrepreneurs presents challenges to the curricula of arts training institutions, and reflects a market dominant paradigm to make arts products return a profit. The current study affirms Becker's (2007, p.98) conclusion, however, that entrepreneurship within an arts framework can be '...an inclusive, empowering philosophy that transcends disciplinary bounds and leverages both the intellectual and artistic self'.

As noted earlier, the notion of entrepreneurialism is frequently conjured within creative industries discourse. This is confluent with trends within management theory from the 1970s which has often found parallels between the entrepreneur and the artistic 'rebel' on the basis that: 'Both broke the rules, worked outside their "comfort" zone, trod paths at a tangent to the mainstream, and thought "outside the box"' (O'Connor 2010, p.71). This version of entrepreneurialism is one which links an appetite for artistic risk with an interest in innovation as a way to deliver new products to new markets 'leading to short term economic turmoil resulting in new levels of growth' (2010, p.71). As O'Connor points out (p.71), one of the outcomes of this association of the radical practices of entrepreneurs with those of artists is 'to allow "creativity"

to be applicable to both'. [Daum \(2005\)](#), when applying the way artists work to a generic management context, argues that artists are by their nature entrepreneurs as they have to generate their own work and are usually self-employed. [Thompson \(2004\)](#) also talks about the 'artist entrepreneur' whom he sees as championing new developments in their field.

The discourse of creative industries is directed to the promotion of commercially successful artistic activities, a concept which [Von Osten \(2007, p.55\)](#) describes as an ideology premised on 'an economy of "talent" and self-initiative'. As part of this concept, artists/cultural producers are seen as "'self-reliant" and "self-organising" entrepreneurs' (2007, p.55). Such a view has helped to rationalise diminishing state subsidies for the arts and to underpin a commitment to the nexus between cultural product and commercial outcomes ([Cowen, 2000](#); [Ross, 2007](#); [Lovink & Rossiter, 2007](#)). [Cowen](#) argues in fact that the American free market approach offering little government subsidy to individual artists, is a far more successful model in terms of artistic achievement (2000, 2006).

The Adelaide Fringe Festival, supported by state subsidies, is a centre for the production of new art works and encourages participating artists to organise and channel their artistic efforts in enterprising ways. *Pace Cowen*, this paper argues that while the Fringe promotes an entrepreneurial approach by participating artists, this is not about the maximisation of profit. Fringe artists are encouraged to develop some of the attributes of independent small business entrepreneurs in the sense of being self-employed and looking to take advantage of emerging micro markets, but they are distinguished from business entrepreneurs by their primarily cultural motivations. As outlined below, artists participate in Fringe to build their identity as artists, to practice their craft, to experiment, and to generate further work opportunities. This suggests that the fundamental value of the Fringe festival is cultural, not economic.

CULTURAL VALUE

Within the scholarly literature much of the dominant discourse locates 'the arts' within an industry construct ([Bilton & Leary, 2002](#); [Caust, 2003](#); [Flew and Cunningham, 2010](#); [Holden, 2004](#); [Pratt, 2004](#); [Protherough & Pick, 2002](#)). As part of this discourse the notion of the economic value of the arts sector has been widely promoted ([Cunningham, 2006](#); [Flew and Cunningham, 2010](#); [Hesmondhalgh, 2007](#)). The focus of much of this discussion is the analysis of the benefits of arts activity through an assessment of data related to issues such as attendances, number of performances, income earned including that through retail and bar activity, hotel rooms occupied and so on. This data is translated into economic impact studies of the contribution arts activity makes to the economy and to the society at large. However while these studies have been useful in understanding the broader impact of arts activity, they do not necessarily convey the entire picture.

[Throsby \(2003, p.276\)](#) notes that the neoclassical model of economics (emphasising income distribution in markets through supply and demand) does not adequately address the concept of 'cultural value': 'Ultimately the value of art cannot be expressed in monetary terms'. The concept of 'cultural value' brings other (non-commercial) measures into play in considering the value of the arts. Scholars have defined 'cultural value' as a range of qualities - historical, spiritual, aesthetic, symbolic and social- which arts practice embodies ([Holden, 2004](#); [Glow & Johanson, 2006](#); [Throsby, 2003](#)).

Other ways of describing the 'value' of art are now emerging. Klammer (2002, p.467) defines 'cultural capital' as 'the capacity to inspire and be inspired'. Throsby (1999, p.7) describes two forms of 'cultural capital'- tangible and intangible. One of the challenges, then, in discussing the value of arts activity is its narrow definition within an economic context which attaches a specific measurement to an activity. However, any analysis of the 'value' of the arts cannot simply be concerned with an object's 'worth'; also under consideration are its tangible and intangible cultural importance or significance. Brown (2006, p.24) addresses, for example, the 'benefits' of artistic activity to the community and converges the terms 'value' and 'benefit', so that intrinsic values are also intrinsic benefits to the individual and to the community.

The current research on artists participating at the Adelaide Fringe Festival finds evidence to support the view that forms of cultural entrepreneurialism are largely focused on the production of cultural value. O'Connor (2010, p.84) supports this notion of a non- profit entrepreneurialism within the arts sector when he describes how artists, 'though working within markets and even seeing themselves as "entrepreneurial creatives", seek to "make a living" not to pursue unlimited economic growth. Balancing the need to make a living with their wider creative aspirations involves a complex set of judgments, which make up the texture of the life of a creative entrepreneur' (O'Connor 2010, p.84). Before assessing the work of the Adelaide Fringe Festival in encouraging forms of cultural entrepreneurship, we address the role of Fringe Festivals within the arts sector.

THE ADELAIDE FRINGE FESTIVAL

The study of festivals has generated considerable interest over the past decade particularly in the academic disciplines of tourism, marketing and events. Some of this literature focuses on the role festivals play in supporting cultural tourism (Long & Robinson, 2004; McKercher, 2006). Another strand of literature focuses on how festivals create a sense of place in a community (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006; Derrett, 2003; Gibson & Davidson, 2004); and more generally on the social impact of festivals within communities (Arcodia & Whitford, 2006). Literature related to the failure of festivals generally focuses on organisational and planning issues (Caust, 2004; Getz, 2002; Lade & Jackson, 2004).

The focus of the majority of evaluative studies on festivals has been on their economic impact (Bowdin 2005, p.466). The Adelaide Fringe Festival has been the subject of a number of economic impact studies commissioned by the Fringe Board. Burgan (2009) evaluated the economic benefit of the 2009 Fringe noting that there were 538 registered events across 259 venues attracting an estimated attendance of 1,004,440, a 2.9% increase over 2008 attendances of 975,000 (which in turn was up from 830,000 in 2007). Total expenditure associated with the event (attendances, entertainment, accommodation etc) is estimated at \$27.2 million (Burgan, 2009). The holding of the event in South Australia is estimated to produce a net economic benefit of \$8.2 million as income to South Australia (Burgan, 2009). The Fringe also conducted an audience survey in 2009 which showed that 75.8% of the South Australians who participated in the survey thought that the Fringe was very important to their State. This result, coupled with Burgan's analysis, underlines some aspects of the social and economic value of the Fringe, but does not deliver a complete picture in terms of assessing its contribution to the cultural, social and artistic life of South Australia.

Providing artists an affordable space is a key role for fringe arts festivals. The original Adelaide Fringe Festival began in 1960 at the same time as the Adelaide Arts Festival and included some popular community and sporting events (Whitelock 1980, pp.163–5). The Fringe was originally held biennially (in every even year) in association with the Adelaide Festival from 1960 until 2007. In 2007 it became an annual festival on its own. Currently, the festival presents innovative arts practices and covers a diverse range of artforms including cabaret, comedy, dance, film, music, theatre, visual arts and writing. Where the main Adelaide festival is an entirely curated event (in which the artists are invited to perform and are paid to do so), the Fringe sees itself primarily as a service or facilitating organisation and follows a policy of 'open access'. Thus artists at the Fringe are (largely) self-nominating; anyone who wants to participate can do so, if they pay a registration fee. The role of the Fringe, therefore, is to be inclusive and accessible, and to provide resources including affordable spaces to produce work, as well as to facilitate services for participants.

The Fringe sees itself as a provider of services which facilitate artist-driven initiatives. For example, the Festival runs its own box office, Fringe Tix; all bookings are controlled through this central system which gives artists accurate figures on the numbers of bookings for every show, as well as detailed information about audience profile and booking patterns. Several guides are available to assist artists and producers to register themselves, book and manage venues, access technical, marketing and media information, and participate successfully by maximising both the media interest and box office outcomes of their event. This study finds that Fringe artists value the Fringe for the opportunities it provides to take an active role in the creation and management of their professional lives.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

A qualitative approach to gathering data was used as a means to investigate the perceptions and attitudes of Fringe artists and festival staff. The study used recorded semi-structured interviews with participating artists in focus group discussions, along with one on one interviews with individual artists, Fringe Festival staff and Board Members. Information gained from the Fringe's Exit Survey of Artists was also integrated into the analysis and provided further data from a wider pool of respondents. Sixty artists participating in the Fringe, who volunteered to participate in the study, were interviewed and surveyed during and after the 2009 Fringe Festival. Participating artists were asked to comment on any benefits and further opportunities they gained from participation. They were also asked to comment on whether and how the Fringe differs from other platforms for the production of their work; and to make an assessment of how they 'valued' their participation in the Fringe festival from the point of view of their careers and their practice as artists. A total of 5 staff and board members of the Fringe Festival were also interviewed prior to, during, and after the 2009 Festival to understand how the Fringe organisation itself viewed artists who participated in the Fringe. Immediately post-interviews, the data was sorted and coded to find key concepts and phrases and their inter-relationships. The key concept to emerge from the research was the notion that participation in the festival encouraged an entrepreneurial approach by artists, producers and presenters to the task of producing and presenting work. They see that in the context of the Fringe: 'We're responsible for trying to optimise our own situation' (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

This can mean a concern for independence, creative autonomy and self-development:

The Fringe is important for me to work; to actually act or direct, not wait by the phone for an agent to call to say that you've got a part. Participating in Fringe means you can embrace your job and your craft, and keep working, even if it's not financially rewarding (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

This entrepreneurial approach was evident in the attitudes of many of the respondents who described their active engagement in all parts of the process. This suggests the Fringe helps participating artists become self reliant, and to develop skills in presentation and promotion. As there is competition for audiences and media coverage, they need to be innovative and entrepreneurial to get the necessary attention.

'It's about practicing craft and stage time, it is something I can't get in 18 hours' worth of gigs throughout the rest of the year, so that's a big thing' (Artists Focus Group, 2009). Such an intensive period of work helped to build the respondents' sense of purpose and identity as artists. As one commented, the experience of performing at the Fringe reassured them that: 'I'm not wasting my time, I don't need to get a proper job' (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

'Fringe is about feeling confident about being an artist, being able to say I am a professional, not just someone with a hobby, you know, it's your job' (Artists Focus Group, 2009). An intensive period of focusing on one's craft also benefits the shaping and refining of the work itself. Artists recognise the importance and value of having a season where their work, and their creative ideas, can be tested and sharpened through repetition.

It's really amazing to have a month where if you stuff something up one night you think, well I'll try this tomorrow. Or you get to know something so well that you can say, I reckon I've finally learnt what I'm doing here, and I reckon at the next show, the next night, I can try something else. You get to know your work a lot better through repetition and you never get that opportunity in the rest of the year (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

The importance of credibility was another key theme from the artists who participated in the comedy program. One respondent pointed out that, as a comedian, you need to prove your standing and experience to secure other work:

You don't actually get a job as a comedian when you're starting out, there's no certificate to say 'you are now a comedian'. At the fringe festival, at least if you've got some media recognition then you've got a leg to stand on, which helps with getting corporate work later on... Stand-up comedians need a leg to stand on! (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

The Entrepreneurial Launching Pad

Being in Fringe means putting some ideas out there and seeing what people think of them.

In discussing the role of the Fringe, an abiding metaphor for artists was the notion of the 'launching pad'. This is the idea that the Fringe creates value for participants by acting as a departure point or step towards other goals and career objectives. While artist training institutions can provide a starting point for entry into the sector, the Fringe was seen by many of the younger respondents as the next step along the path towards the development of their practice as artists.

It's a really good starting-off base, sort of like a launching pad. It's for younger people and younger artists, and it's also an opportunity to trial your work and trial your craft as well, to see what works and what doesn't (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

For respondents who were more experienced Fringe participants, the launching pad metaphor still applied. For these practitioners, the value of the Fringe centred on its encouragement of experimentation. Here, the Fringe has acted as a launching pad for new creative work and given artists the opportunity to test out their ideas.

The Fringe is a good showcase for my more unusual work; it's a time when I can get people to come and see it, which is difficult during the rest of the year. So I guess it's professional development for me, and it's seeing my work move on to the next stage. Once I've seen it in front of an audience at the Fringe, I can seriously try selling it to other people (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

For other respondents, the Fringe was seen as an opportunity to launch or on-sell new products: 'This is my fifth Fringe, and I think now, having established my profile in Adelaide, the venue managers from around the country are coming to see the work and starting to say, yes we'd like to see your stuff' (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

The Fringe can be seen as a launching pad for careers, as an opportunity to produce innovative work, to showcase product and as a commercial market for producers seeking on-selling opportunities. The notion of the Fringe as a launching pad was confirmed by several Fringe staff who expressed the view that the purpose of Fringe is to act: '...as a platform for artists to do whatever they want to do, wherever they're at in their artistic endeavour' (Fringe Festival Staff Interviews, 2009).

Entrepreneurialism and the Fringe Brand

Another finding was the idea that participating in the Fringe brought credibility to the individual production (making it easier to on-sell to other festivals and programs), and to the artists' careers in general. This suggests that the Fringe has a strong and effective brand which both performers and audiences recognise and value.

A respondent echoed the notion that the value of Fringe for many artists is that it is a calling card for one's work:

The Fringe certainly gives credibility; people recognise you better as an experienced comic rather than just somebody trying out, because apparently if you've done a Fringe show you can do anything (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

The emphasis on the development of entrepreneurial skills amongst participating artists is supported by staff who see the Fringe as an artists' service organisation. Staff see the role of Fringe as primarily 'facilitative', providing such services as: information resources (for example the program, and media and marketing guides); a ticketing service and assistance in finding venues. For Fringe staff there is commitment to the idea that the Fringe is (and remains) a non-curated festival:

It is open access and we put ourselves in the shoes of artists who are taking the risk. They're the ones taking the risk - creatively, emotionally, financially. We are here to help them and to support them and that is what the Fringe is. It's absolutely fundamental that the Fringe is always open-access (Fringe Festival Staff Interviews, 2009).

Entrepreneurialism and making a profit

Building a profile and reputation, developing new skills and testing new ideas were key interpretations of 'entrepreneurialism', rather than the expectation of financial return: 'Making money - it's only a consideration. You have to figure out how much potentially you're going to lose, before you say, oh it's not worth me doing this' (Artists Focus Group, 2009). For some of the entrepreneurial Fringe artists, the opportunities sought were related to the development of self-generated work and not to making money.

Looking for financial reward from participating in Fringe is probably fairly naïve. I mean, if you can cover your costs, then you're doing really well, but the real reason for doing it is that it's a calling card; it's to get some momentum going (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

Some artists and producers reported that they did see their participation in the festival as an opportunity to make money from the production of work, but even for some of these respondents, the business of making a profit was not an essential motivation or expectation.

I made quite a bit of money for myself...but the amount of money you get for it doesn't really correspond with the amount of time you put in behind the scenes. I appreciate the fact that I get some financial reward from it, even though I don't necessarily expect it (Artists Focus Group, 2009).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The evidence gathered from the focus groups, the interviews and the exit survey suggests that while the festival is an open access festival, it is also an increasingly competitive environment. The Fringe in fact shares many of the characteristics of successful cultural enterprises within the so-called 'creative industries'. Some of the hallmarks of the creative industry model, as noted by Hesmondhalgh (2007), are manifested in the artists' perceptions of the Fringe: the mixing of creativity with commerce; the emphasis on entrepreneurial skills; successful brand promotion; and the management of diverse stakeholders. The artists who participate in the Fringe need to be 'entrepreneurial' to be successful, but this is not necessarily about making money (although participants did express a concern that they not actually *lose* money in the process and for a few

it is an opportunity to make money). It is generally about being 'seen'; gaining recognition from peers and having the opportunity to develop artistic work. This reflects the framing of artistic entrepreneurship as defined by Becker (2007).

The high rate of repeat participation by Fringe artists is an indicator of the level of satisfaction the Fringe delivers to one of its key stakeholders – the artists. The anecdotal evidence from the focus groups confirms that artists feel the Fringe successfully provides professional development, production and on-selling opportunities. They see the advantage of participation in terms of building their profile and reputation. This cultural and social value provided by the Fringe is similar to that articulated by [Thompson & Doherty \(2006\)](#) when describing the 'people' benefits that social entrepreneurs offer. The Fringe Festival is therefore a successful social, as well as cultural, entrepreneur.

The focus groups confirmed that the Fringe works well as a launching pad for artists' careers. Evidence from the focus groups suggests that one of the cultural benefits of Fringe participation is the development of an attitude and practice of entrepreneurialism. We note that this does not necessarily mean that artists are seeking to make money from their work, but are adopting an independent and self-reliant approach to their careers. This is consistent with Von Osten's definition of the self-realising artist (2007). They are using the Fringe as a launching pad for the next stage in their careers, recognising it as a place for innovation and risk taking in terms of both the work and the audience. This attitude of Fringe artists also supports O'Connor's (2010) notion of the creative entrepreneur. There may be the opportunity to make money (or not lose it) given the low overheads, but the main attraction is the opportunity to experiment, innovate and find a new audience. Fringe staff say they want to see the Fringe's reputation further develop as a marketplace for independent arts, and are developing strategies to enhance opportunities for producers (both national and international) to present work. The future possible expansion of the Fringe's role as a marketplace is (generally) consistent with the wishes of participating artists. The opportunities provided by Fringe as a place for artists to be entrepreneurial as it relates to self-development, artistic innovation, marketing and reaching new audiences are likely to increase.

CONCLUSION

The Adelaide Fringe Festival has grown over the past 50 years from an off-shoot of the main Adelaide Festival, to be a major arts festival in its own right. The Fringe started as a place for (mainly) South Australian artists who could not be part of the main festival. It is now an international event attracting local, interstate and international artists. Yet participants are not necessarily artists who seek to be part of a mainstream festival; often these are artists who actively choose to be part of a 'fringe' or 'alternative' festival.

The artists who participate in the Fringe Festival are entrepreneurial; they need to be, just to participate. This is demonstrated here in several ways; the capacity to take artistic risks and innovate, the need to self-manage and promote, and the necessity of presenting something that will attract an audience. The definition of entrepreneurialism that emerges from this picture is a mix of formally and informally acquired skills; the building of complex networks involving support agencies, artist services, peers, venues, and audiences; and making a living that is not primarily driven by the desire for economic outcomes, but shaped by creative and cultural imperatives.

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