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Navigating Beyond the Canvas: A Comparison of the Feasibility and Viability of
Traditional Fine Artists Versus Digital Artists in Trinidad and Tobago.

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ABSTRACT

Navigating Beyond the Canvas: A Comparison of the Feasibility and Viability of Traditional Fine Artists Versus Digital Artists in Trinidad and Tobago.

Ashley Sylvester

The evolution of Fine Arts, propelled by the Digital Art revolution, has obscured the boundaries between conventional and contemporary artistic mediums, prompting both prospects and challenges for artists. This study focused on Trinidad and Tobago, delves into the practicality and longevity of both Fine Artists and Digital Artists. Fine art, rooted in tangible mediums like painting and sculpting, faces a dynamic counterpart in digital art where artists leverage digital technology for creation. This thesis aims to unravel the intricate livelihood of artists, understand career trajectories, and economic disparities, and propose strategies for stability in this evolving industry.

Key Words: Traditional Fine Arts, Digital Fine Arts, Trinidad and Tobago, Independent Artist, Feasibility, Viability, Careers, Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT)

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INTRODUCTION

The unique tapestry of Traditional Fine Art has undergone a profound transformation in recent decades propelled by such an element called the Digital Art revolution/evolution.

Traditional fine art encompasses creations that are produced using conventional, physical mediums and techniques which include painting, drawing, sculpting, and printmaking. They typically work with tangible materials like canvas, paper, clay, and pigments. On the other hand, Digital Art is a contemporary artistic medium that relies on digital technology for both creation and presentation. Instead of tools and materials, Digital Artists utilize modern devices such as computers, graphic tablets, and specialized software to create work. This medium allows for creations such as digital paintings, printing, three-dimensional modelling, digital photography, and multimedia installations. This study explores the artistic feasibility, economic value, and contemporary viability within both fields in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

With boundaries that were clearly defined between Traditional Fine Art and Digital Art blurred, a multitude of opportunities and challenges have emerged for artists seeking to make a living through their creative endeavours. This thesis, “Navigating Beyond the Canvas: A Comparison of the Feasibility and Viability of Traditional Fine Artists Versus Digital Artists in Trinidad and Tobago.” embarks on an exploration of the intricate livelihood of artists in Traditional Fine Art and Digital Art. The aim is to understand their career trajectories and economic disparities in Trinidad and Tobago. In pursuit of this, it endeavours to shed light on strategies for sustaining careers in both fields. Furthermore, it raises the question of whether Traditional Fine Artists should consider integrating Digital Art into their repertoire to boost their presence in a perpetually evolving creative industry.

As Trinidad and Tobago experiences an evolving landscape in the art scene, this thesis delves into the obstacles confronting Fine Artists and Digital Artists. Focusing on the feasibility and viability of both artists, the research dissects the challenges and opportunities that have been seen in the current art market. By scrutinizing the career paths and economic dynamics between Fine Artists and Digital Artists, the research aims to provide viable insights into effective strategies for navigating an independent art career.

RATIONALE

In the Bachelor of Art, Visual Art Special, at the University of the West Indies there has been a clear preference by students to specialize in Fine Arts versus Graphic Design. However, due to Digital Art continuously evolving, it is evident in our everyday lives, for example, in signs, logos, digital paintings, or product prints.

While Traditional Fine Artists can thrive within the field, the question posed is if most artists can use this as their only source of income. By focusing on persons who identify themselves as artists first, be they formal, University graduates, or informal, self-thought, or secondary school graduates, this study offers a comprehensive economic assessment of Traditional Fine Artists' and Digital Artists' abilities to have a sustainable career in their respective fields. Additionally, by delving into the artist's experience, it seeks to uncover the obstacles, experiences, and aspirations of artists, particularly identifying strategies for success. Furthermore, through a comparative analysis involving both Fine Artists and Digital Artists, this research can offer insights into the perception and experience of their careers, aiding aspiring artists in making informed career decisions in the region.

According to The University of the West Indies St. Augustine's "Student Statistics" report 2021, over the span of 2016/2017 to 2020/2021 the BA Visual Arts (Special) program exhibited a fluctuating enrolment trajectory, initiating 109 students and experienced marginal increases to 119 in the subsequent two years. A peak enrolment of 122 students was observed in 2019/2020, followed by a decline to 97 students in 2020/2021 (Campus Office of Planning. 2021). Simultaneously, the Caribbean Examination Council's "CXC Annual Report" for 2022, the CAPE Art and Design Unit 1 examination disclosed a consistent increase in candidates from 2019 to 2022, totalling 230 candidates in 2022, up from 216 in 2021. In the CAPE Design Unit 2 examination, candidate numbers decreased from 219 in 2021 to 160 in 2022. The CXC Visual Arts examination encountered a modest reduction in candidates in 2022 (3,270) compared to 3,360 in 2021 and a significant drop from 3,928 in 2020 (Caribbean Examinations Council. 2022).

The decline in candidates for CAPE Design Unit 2 and the CXC Visual Arts examination points towards potential challenges or evolving perceptions in the broader educational and cultural context regarding the pursuit and evaluation of art as a discipline. Overall, these trends highlight the complex and multifaceted realities influencing the study and assessment of visual arts, reflecting both changing student interests and the broader societal context in which art is perceived and valued. Given that fact, this research aims to examine the economic feasibility and viability of being an Independent Traditional Fine Artists' and an Independent Digital Artists' by conducting a comparative analysis of both careers in Trinidad and Tobago.

The core purpose of this research is to shed light on the challenges and opportunities that come with pursuing an Independent Traditional Fine Arts career versus an Independent Digital Arts career.

OBJECTIVES

- To identify the career paths taken by Independent Traditional Fine Artists and Independent Digital Artists to make a living.
- To examine the economic disparities that exist between Independent Traditional Fine Artists and Independent Digital Artists.
- To outline the factors that may impact the longevity of Independent Traditional Fine Artists and Independent Digital Artists.

PARAMETER

This study focuses on the challenges and opportunities faced by Independent Traditional Fine Artists and Independent Digital Artists in Trinidad and Tobago. Data will be gathered by using an online questionnaire from individuals who identify as artists, aiming to evaluate the economic stability of both fields and provide suggestions on navigating each career path. To gain diverse perspectives, questions related to gender and age have been incorporated to uncover nuanced insights into the experiences and trajectories of artists. This approach will shed light on potential gender-specific and age-related factors that may influence feasibility and viability in the creative industry.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This study seeks to contribute to the existing collections of research on Traditional Fine Artists' careers with the inclusion of the comparison of Independent Traditional Fine Artists to Independent Digital Artists' careers. It aims to provide current and future artists with insights into the potential trajectory of their chosen careers in the field of Visual Arts.

METHODOLOGY

To fulfil the aims and objectives, this study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research. Quantitative research employs numerical data to analyse and draw statistical conclusions about the relationships between variables, while qualitative research explores and interprets non-numerical data to understand underlying meanings to collect data on income sources, market demand, challenges, and opportunities, quantitative analysis was used for conducting surveys. In using this method, it was able to reach a wider audience and obtain more diverse answers. While being cost-effective, using surveys circumvents the need for scheduling meetings allowing participants to access them at a time that fits their schedule. A qualitative approach was then used to collect the secondary data from sourced books, articles, online newspaper archives, and verified websites.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study comprises three chapters. The first chapter, “Artistic Evolution: From High Art to Caribbean Narratives”, consists of the Literature Review, presenting the quantitative data relating to the economic standing, opportunities, and challenges available for both professions. Chapter two presents the information received from surveys, utilizing various graphs while the third chapter analyses and discusses the findings while providing recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

Literature Review

Artistic Evolution: From High Art to Caribbean Narratives

This integrative literature review delves into the nuanced landscape of artistic evolution, bridging the realms of Traditional Fine Art and Digital Art within the Caribbean context. From tracing the rich traditions and challenges faced by fine artists influenced by the region's diverse cultural history to exploring the innovative techniques and challenges presented by digital art in the evolving digital age, this review encapsulates the multifaceted dimensions that shape the narratives and trajectories of artists.

Fine Art: Tradition and Challenges

Evolution and Boundaries

In the Caribbean, artists from all the islands in the region demonstrate the existence of a diverse cultural history through fine arts. Each island boasts distinctive art forms and renowned artist who are celebrated globally for their creativity through the utilization of vibrant colours, materials, and deep connections to local culture. The legacies of indigenous Indian tribes, African slaves, and European colonialists have shaped the unique characteristics of each island's embodiment of fine arts (BDO. 2022). Fine Art encompasses a diverse range of visual experiences (Eden. 2021). It includes sculpting, painting, and printmaking. Unlike applied arts and decorative arts which have a functional purpose, fine art is created for its intrinsic beauty and expressive qualities (Attewell. 2022).

Caribbean Influence

Artists from the Caribbean, such as Wifredo Lam, have gained international recognition for their contribution to modern and contemporary art, bringing attention to the unique narratives and aesthetics emerging from the region (MacLean. 1993). Wifredo Lam's art embodies the fusion of Afro-Cuban heritage with modernist styles, epitomizing the cultural and artistic complexity of Caribbean identity in the 20th century.



Figure 1: Lam, Wifredo. 1943. *The Jungle (La Jungla)*. Gouache on paper mounted on canvas.

MoMA.org.

Karen Sylvester's art is a testament to her deep connection to Trinidad & Tobago's natural beauty, urging viewers to appreciate and preserve the serene landscapes that nourish the soul. Recognized as one of the most esteemed artists in the Caribbean, Karen Sylvester's work graces prestigious collections worldwide, with her solo exhibitions consistently drawing admiration and her contributions to community art events and environmental causes earning her widespread respect.



Figure 2: Sylvester, Karen. n.d. *Observation Point*. Giclée Prints on Canvas. *Rosenstiels.com*.

Jackie Hinkson's art captures the essence of Trinidad and Tobago's landscapes and architecture through vibrant watercolours and intricate wood sculptures, reflecting a deep connection to his native region's cultural and visual heritage. While renowned primarily in Trinidad and Tobago, Jackie Hinkson's artistic contributions have garnered attention

internationally, particularly through exhibitions abroad and collaborations with acclaimed artists, showcasing the richness of Caribbean narratives and aesthetics.

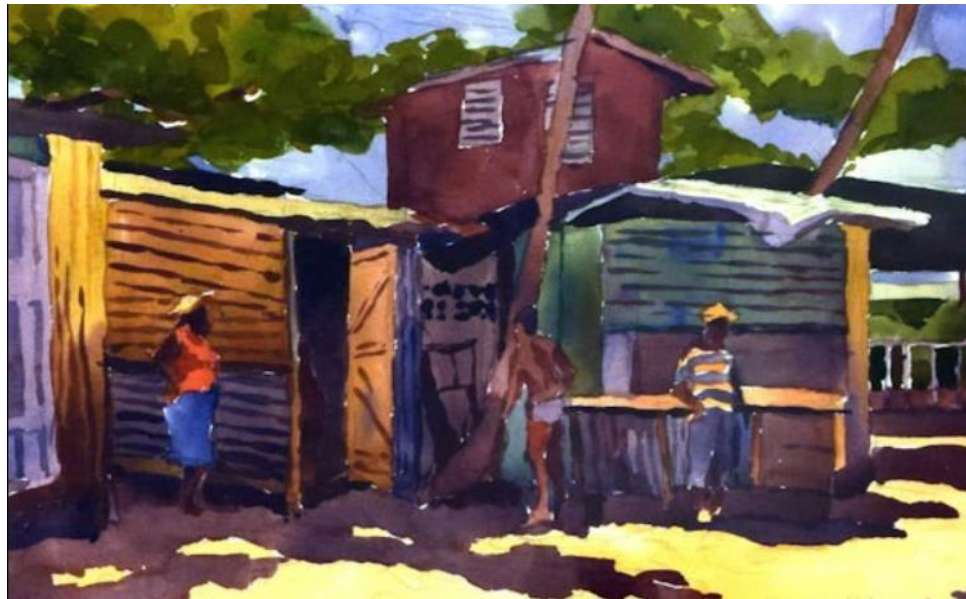


Figure 3: Hinkson, Jackie. 2015. *Icacos*. Watercolour on Paper. www.101artgallery.com.

The vibrant and dynamic nature of Caribbean art is a multitude of factors, including the socio-economic context, socio-political context, migration factors, and a fusion of cultural elements. The use of vibrant colours, symbolism, and a mix of traditional and contemporary elements are common features of the region's aesthetic community (Tromp. 2023)

Financial Realities

Artist committing to a full-time pursuit of their art career must consider the need to sell their art for survival. The decision to go all-in varies based on factors such as age, family responsibilities, and financial stability. Obtaining buyers for your art is a crucial part of the

process and even if an artist is not currently selling, they should continuously work on their craft to make it commercially viable in the future. (Market.2021).

In an article by Samantha Clark, “Employability and the Fine Art Student”, Deborah Weatherston (2004) stated that many art students pursue fine art with the understanding that it may not lead to a significant financial reward, anticipating lean years after graduation. Clark goes on to express L. Ball’s (2003) suggestion that art and design artists often have high expectations and unrealistic expectations about immediate post-graduation success (Clark. 2012). Although it is seen that artists who have attended art school are more susceptible to success, today’s creatives believe that a world-class education is also attainable outside of a classroom (Posori. 2015).

With an artist's career being so volatile, especially in the early stages, Eva Thaller’s research, “Career Perceptions of College Art Students: A Qualitative Case Study”, highlighted the crucial point of the importance an aspiring artist to seek supplementary employment during the initial phase of their career to ensure financial stability. The argument suggests that despite aspirations to dedicate themselves entirely to their artistic endeavours, they frequently feel compelled to undertake menial and low-paying jobs to sustain themselves and family. Thaller’s finding also reveals that the financial difficulties linked to solely depending on the sale of artwork drive graduates to explore additional income streams, often leading them to pursue work in unrelated fields altogether (Thaller. 1994).

This is emphasized in an interview by Christopher Gonzales for his thesis “An Examination of the Career Paths Chosen by the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Visual Arts Degree Programme Graduates 2016 – 2021” where he interviewed Adele Todd. Todd, a visual artist, and senior adjunct Visual Arts lecturer at the University of the West Indies notes that external pressure from family plays a significant part in graduates opting for jobs unrelated to their art degree. She points out the financial sacrifice made by parents and the resulting pressure to quickly secure employment often leading them to accept the first job available to meet immediate financial needs and expectations (Gonzales. 2022). Both Thaller and Todd’s perspectives, although twenty-eight years apart, offer reasonable explanations for artists going into different careers, and highlight the influence of financial consideration and family expectations on their choices.

Opportunities in the Digital Age

Like most careers, some opportunities and challenges can determine your success in the art world. Opportunities in the art market are more than ever ranging from traditional galleries and exhibitions to online platforms and public art installations. Historically, art dealers and galleries have been the key to success, with established artists often tied to specific dealers. Artist may also place their work in multiple galleries to generate sufficient sales (Salmon. 2008). With the advent of digital media, artists can now showcase their work to a global audience through social media, personal websites, and online galleries (Paige. 2016).

Alternatively, one significant challenge is the struggle for visibility in a saturated market. With an increasing number of artists contending for attention, breaking through the noise, and establishing a distinct artistic voice can be daunting (Salmon. 2008). Many artists struggle with regular income streams, relying on sales and commissions that can be unpredictable. This leaves them vulnerable to economic uncertainties where multiple sources of income then help (Coscone. 2018).

Another challenge is Non-Fungible Tokens (NFT) are disrupting the traditional art market model by allowing artists to receive royalty payments on subsequent transactions rather than paying a set price for the work. This allows them to benefit from potential price increases. The democratization of the art marketplace means more buyers and sellers from both within and outside the traditional art world are transacting across multiple platforms, making it crucial to be cautious and informed before getting involved (D. McDaniel and Galindo. 2022).

The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and the Arts of Trinidad and Tobago publicized a research paper, “Mapping Exercise of Trinidad and Tobago's Arts & Cultural Industry Sector” by Suzanne Burke, conducted on local fine artists. The survey results showed that less than half (40%) of the participants displayed their work in commercial galleries, while approximately three-quarters (73%) of the participants showed their art in public collections, locally and internationally. The paper suggests that there are barriers to the art market due to high expectation costs (Burke. 2015). The information above implies that there is a complex

landscape for artists in Trinidad and Tobago, with both opportunities and challenges influencing their careers.

Digital Arts: Innovation and Challenges

Evolution and Intersection

Digital Art is a form of artistic expression that utilizes digital technology as a medium. According to “Digital Art” by Christine Paul, “it is problematic to claim that digital artwork can be neatly categorized according to different forms; most of the time these works combine various elements (such as physical illustration with a sound and internet component) and defy a purely formal classification.” She goes on to say that formal aspects of digital artwork can include installation, film, video, animation, internet art, network art, and software art. This medium allows artists to explore innovative techniques, experiment with digital tools, and push the boundaries of traditional artistic norms (Paul. 2023).

Digital art holds a unique position within the art world, blurring the boundaries between traditional art and technology-driven innovation. Although the statement, “I wonder why I had to spend years learning to draw images in perspective when a computer can do it in seconds.” was made by a digital effects worker in 1985 (Manovich. 2002), it aligns with “With the acceptance of the computer and digital culture by mainstream users, and in particular artists' practices, around 2007 terms such as post-digital and post- Internet surfaced. Artists and critics used the terms to emphasize the influence of the Internet on artworks that were created with conventional material such as sculptures, photographs, and paintings.” (Dekker. 2018). Both quotations touch

on the intersection of traditional artistic practices and digital technologies thirty-three years apart and contribute to the conversation about the evolving relationship between traditional and digital mediums.

Artists working with this medium often use advanced software to manipulate images, experiment with colours, and create intricate designs that may be impossible to achieve through traditional methods. As digital art continues to evolve, its impact on the art world has become increasingly significant, prompting curators, critics, and institutions to explore and redefine the parameters of contemporary artistic practices (Paul. 2023). This includes some Caribbean artists where digital tools have become integral throughout their work.

Artists such as Jamaican-born Deborah Anzinger, Ikem Smith, and Taj Frances. Anzinger utilizes software like Photoshop to conceptualize compositions before transitioning them to canvas, Smith employs animation software to craft surreal alternate, while Francis mainly focuses on illustrations creating visually stunning work. The integration of three-dimensional printing further expands the possibilities across architecture, fashion, and culinary arts, showcasing the limitless potential when artistic vision collaborates with digital technology (Smyth-Johnson. 2016).



Figure 4: Anzinger, Deborah. 2018. *An Unlikely Birth*. Acrylic, mirror, and synthetic hair on canvas and polystyrene. icaphila.org



Figure 5: Smith, Ikem. 2024. *Runkus - Victim*. Illustration. [Behance.net](https://www.behance.net)



Figure 6: Francis, Taj. 2020. *Evening Sees*. Giclée Print on Archival Paper - Digital Painting.

Wowxwow.com

Caribbean Prospective

A few Caribbean creators who have entered the NFT market are Bonito Thompson, Nicholas Huggins, Rodell Warner, Stephanie Telemaque, and Anya Ayoung Chee. Jamaican-born Bonito Thompson, also known as Don Dada, specializes in augmented reality experiences that fuse art, technology, and Jamaican culture and have showcased his art at events in Jamaica, the Caribbean, and the United States.



Figure 7: Thompson, Bonito / Don Dada. 2023. *Golden Hour Beauty Canvas*. Canvas Fabric Weight. *Dondadaja.com*

Trinidadian Nicholas Huggins juxtaposes the built and natural environment of the Caribbean in his NFT work. He has contributed to commercial projects for brands like McDonald's, Johnnie Walker, and Google, where he designed doodles commemorating the Steel Pan. Huggins has exhibited his work in various locations, including Trinidad, Miami, London, and Curacao (James. 2023).



Figure 8: Huggins, Nicholas. 2022. *House On A Hill*. Print. *Creative Debuts.com*

Trinidad and Tobago native Stephanie Telemaque, a versatile artist, illustrator, and art director, initially delved into traditional art, exploring the intricacies of physical form. Transitioning into the digital realm, she made her Web3 debut with projects like Crypto Night Goddess. Currently, Telemaque holds the position of Art Director at Creator Labs, a prominent NFT production company (James. 2023).



Figure 9: Telemaque, Stephanie. 2021. *Crypto Night Goddess*. Digital Art. X.com

Valuation and Blockchain

Within the art market, the valuation of digital art has presented both opportunities and challenges. Blockchain technology, particularly using NFT, has emerged as a groundbreaking tool for establishing provenance in the digital realm. NFTs serve as a distinctive digital representation of assets, leveraging blockchain technology for authenticity and ownership verification. This has revolutionized the appeal of digital art as a tradable commodity and a store of monetary value (Conti and Schmidt. 2021).

As stated by Joe Tidy's 2023 article, "Whatever happened to NFTS?", the value of NFT transactions has recently reached the lowest point since the peak of the NFT market according to researchers at Dapp Radar, an NFT valuation and portfolio management company. The article goes on to say that the trading volume for the entire industry has experienced an 89% decline from the first quarter of 2022 to the third quarter of 2023, dropping from \$12.6 billion Bitnorm

(bn), a cryptocurrency amounting to over \$30 million USD, to \$1.39 billion BN or over \$3 million. Notably, the “Board Ape Yacht Club”, a well-known NFT series, has seen a significant decrease in value, with the floor price of the NFTs dropping from around \$268,000 BN (\$665 USD) in Mat 2022 to \$56,000 (\$138 USD) in November 2023 (Tidy. 2023). Despite a substantial decline, there is a growing realization that separating NFTs from the volatility of the cryptocurrency market could pave the way for stability and resilience in the sector (Muriuki. 2023).

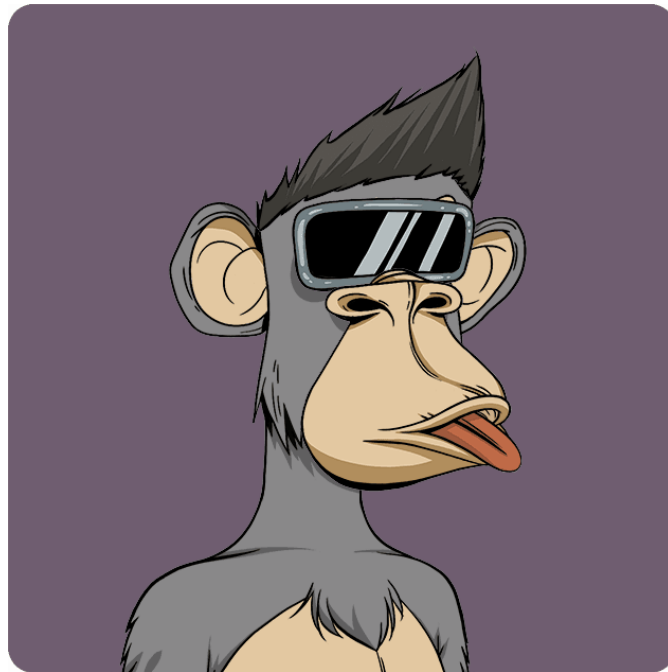


Figure 10: NFTSanctuary_eth. 2021. *Bored Ape Yacht Club*. Non-Fungible Tokens.
Boredapeyachtclub.com.

One major obstacle, according to Coherent Market Insights' “Digital Artwork Market Size & Share Analysis - Industry Research Report - Growth Trends”, the limited physical ownership and experiences associated with digital art pose challenges for traditional art collections and enthusiasts. The absence of tangible originals and the concerns regarding

ownership rights and longevity in NFT-based digital art purchases contribute to hesitancy in the adoption.

Despite advancements in technologies like Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality to enhance digital art experiences, the unique, physical ownership and intimate viewing of traditional artwork are considered irreplaceable. These factors may restrict the potential market size, particularly around conventional art buyers. “The lack of physical originals and tangible art experiences associated with digital art remains a key barrier to adoption.” (Insights. 2023.)

The intersection of Fine Arts and Digital Arts

Integration and Distinction

Fine Arts and Digital Arts intersect and diverge in the dynamic landscape of contemporary art and reflect the evolution of artistic expression in the digital age. Fine Arts, traditionally associated with conventional mediums such as painting and sculpture, now embraces digital tools and technology. This joining is evident in the digital work of contemporary artists who seamlessly integrate digital elements into their practice, for instance, David Hockney. The renowned Hockney, an 86-year-old painter, has embraced the iPad as a canvas, blurring the lines between traditional and digital art in his 2022 exhibition entitled “25th June 2022, Looking at the Flowers.” (Dalya. 2022.)

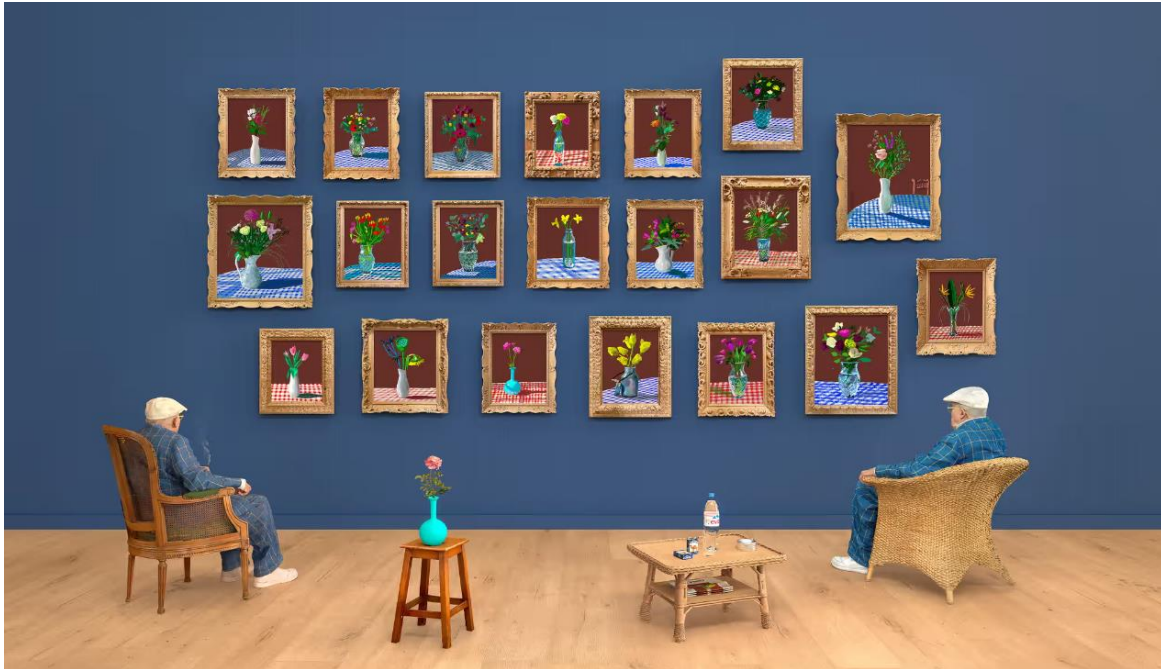


Figure 11: Hockney, David 2022. *An Incredible Work: David Hockney's New 5-Metre Digital Artwork Unveiled*. Digital Drawings. *The Guardian.com*

Despite these intersections, distinctions between fine arts and digital arts persist. Fine arts often maintain a tangible, physical presence, with traditional mediums emphasizing texture, form, and materials. On the other hand, digital art exists mostly in the virtual realm, challenging the traditional notions of art as a tangible object. The immersive and interactive nature of digital art allows for a more dynamic engagement with the audience, breaking away from the static nature of many traditional artworks. This divergence is also seen in the democratization of art creations enabled by digital tools, providing access to a broader range of individuals (Manovich. 2002.)

Engagement

Both careers are dynamic and multifaceted journeys marked by challenges and opportunities. Navigating the competitive landscape and achieving financial stability requires strategic planning, adaptability, and a commitment to self-promotion. With the world progressing with the digital age, it offers artists unprecedented ways to showcase their work and connect with a global audience, continuing to transform the art world.

CHAPTER TWO

Findings

Surveying Artistic Trajectories in Trinidad and Tobago

In this chapter, we delve into the responses of 35 Fine and Digital Artists about Career Paths, Economic Dynamics, and Longevity Factors for an independent career in Trinidad and Tobago. Employing a structured questionnaire, specifically designed for each artistic category, the survey aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of local artists. The objectives include identifying the trajectories artists embark on, scrutinizing economic disparities, and outlining factors contributing to career longevity.

Age

In analyzing the age distribution among fine artists, 28.86% fall in the 18-24 age range, 57.14% in the 25-34 age range, and 20% in the 35-44 age range. In contrast, digital artists show a different age distribution, with 22.8% in the 18-24 age range, 48.6% in the 25-34 age range, and 28.6% in the 35-44 age range. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of fine artists are in the 25-34 age range, while digital artists exhibit a more varied distribution across the 18-44 age groups.

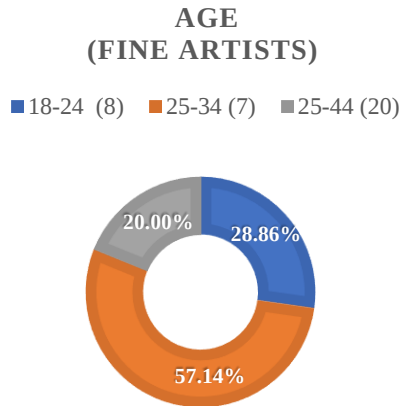


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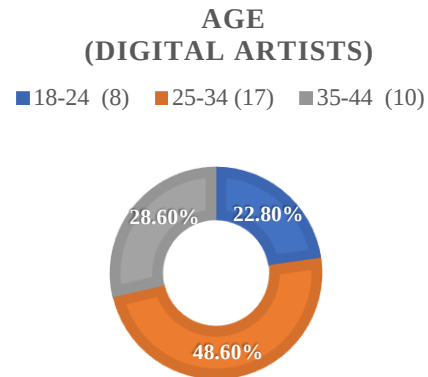


Figure. 12.1

Gender

Gender distribution unveils interesting patterns. Among fine artists, 57.14% identified as female, 34.29% as male, and 8.57% preferred not to disclose. In contrast, digital artists displayed a different gender distribution, with 45.45% identifying as female, 54.55% as male, and 3.03% choosing not to disclose. The data indicates a relative gender diversity among fine artists, with a higher percentage of females, while digital artists show a more balanced gender distribution. The gender dynamics within each group may contribute to distinct perspectives and experiences in their respective artistic endeavours.

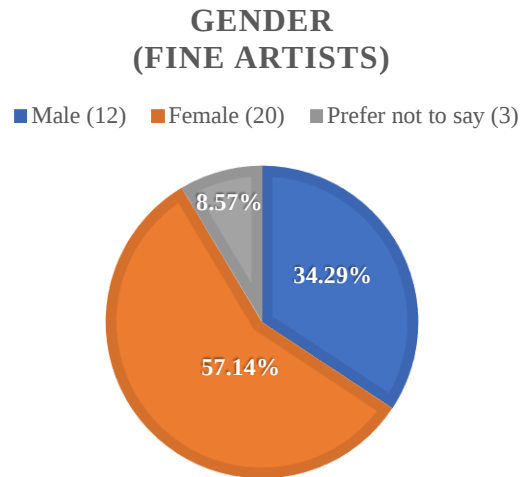


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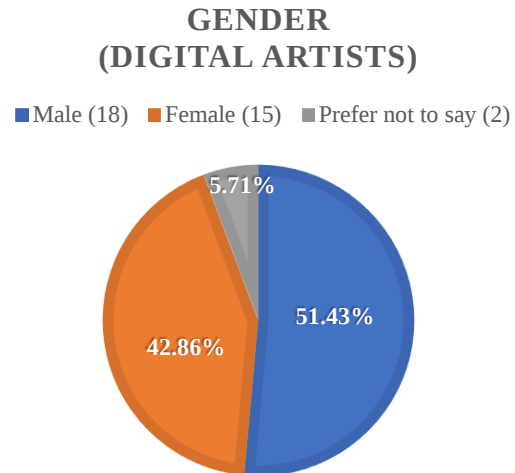


Figure. 13.1

Career Paths

Pursuing Independent Careers

When asked about the pursuit of an independent career, distinctive patterns in the career aspirations of digital artists and fine artists emerged. A substantial 77.14% of digital artists are actively pursuing or contemplating pursuing independent careers, showcasing a strong inclination to rely solely on the proceeds from their artwork sales. In contrast, 54.29% of fine artists share a similar disposition, although with a comparatively lower percentage. Conversely, a smaller proportion of digital artists (22.56%) are not pursuing independent careers compared to a larger percentage of fine artists (45.71%) who are opting for diverse career paths not solely dependent on artwork sales. Digital artists stand out for their preference towards independent careers. This might be due to the digital nature of their work and the opportunities thriving in the online art market. In contrast, fine artists show greater career diversity, with a substantial portion

choosing not to rely solely on art sales. This suggests that digital artists may have more opportunities to generate income directly from their art, while fine artists may need to explore other avenues to support themselves financially. The data highlights the different career paths and financial realities for artists working in traditional versus digital mediums.

**PURSUNG OR ENGAGED IN
AS INDEPENDENT CAREER
(FINE ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (19) ■ No (16)

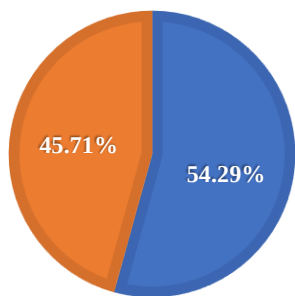


Figure. 14.0

**PURSUNG OR ENGAGED IN
AS INDEPENDENT CAREER
(DIGITAL ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (27) ■ No (8)

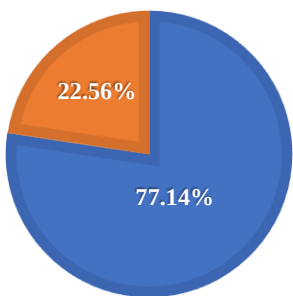


Figure. 14.1

Primary Source of Income

Delving into the financial landscape, none of the surveyed fine artists point to Fine Art as their primary source of income, emphasizing a dependence on alternative income streams. In stark contrast, a significant 57.14% of digital artists identify digital Art as their primary income source. The unanimous response from fine artists (100%) indicates that Fine Art does not constitute their primary income, while 42.86% of digital artists express a similar sentiment. This suggests that digital artists may have more opportunities to generate income directly from their art, while fine artists may need to explore other avenues to support themselves financially. The data highlights the different career paths and financial realities for artists working in traditional versus digital mediums.

Contributions to Art Career

In examining the correlation between primary income sources and artistic pursuits, fine artists exhibited a nuanced distribution. Among them, 28.57% asserted that their primary source of income contributes to their art career. Conversely, a substantial portion, comprising 71.43%, indicated that their primary income source does not contribute to their art career. Digital artists, on the other hand, demonstrated a more varied scenario. Of the respondents, 14.29% affirmed that their primary source of income contributes to their art career, while 28.57% stated otherwise. 57.14% of Digital Artists respondents did not apply to this question as Digital art is their primary source of income. Overall, the data suggests that traditional artists are more likely to have a primary income source that does not contribute to their art career compared to digital artists. This indicates a potential difference in financial support systems between the two groups of artists.

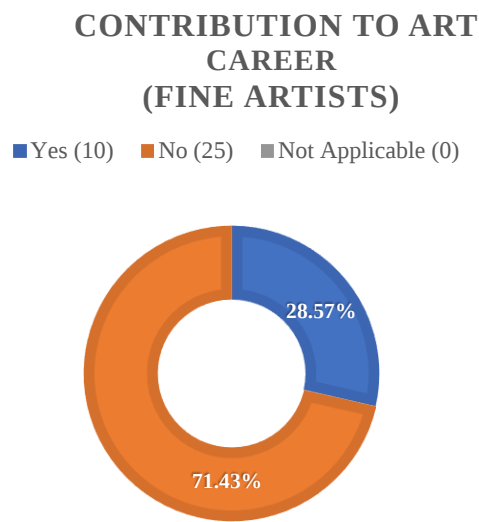


Figure. 15.0

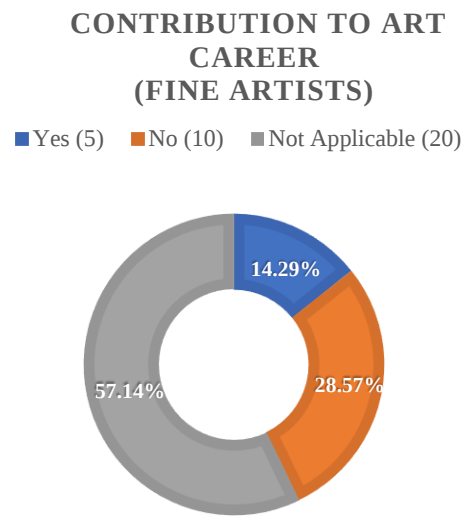


Figure. 15.1

Changed Perception

In assessing the impact of income sources on artists' perceptions, 34.29% of fine artists and 14.29% of digital artists acknowledge a discernible shift in their perspectives. In contrast, 28.57% of fine artists and 5.71% of digital artists indicate that their perceptions remain unchanged. Notably, a higher proportion of fine artists (37.14%) express wavering responses compared to digital artists (22.86%), suggesting a greater complexity in the fine artists' reflections. 57.14% did not apply to this question. It is interesting to note the noticeable contrast in income perception between Fine Artists and Digital Artists, highlighting possible disparities in earning potential and opportunities within the two fields.

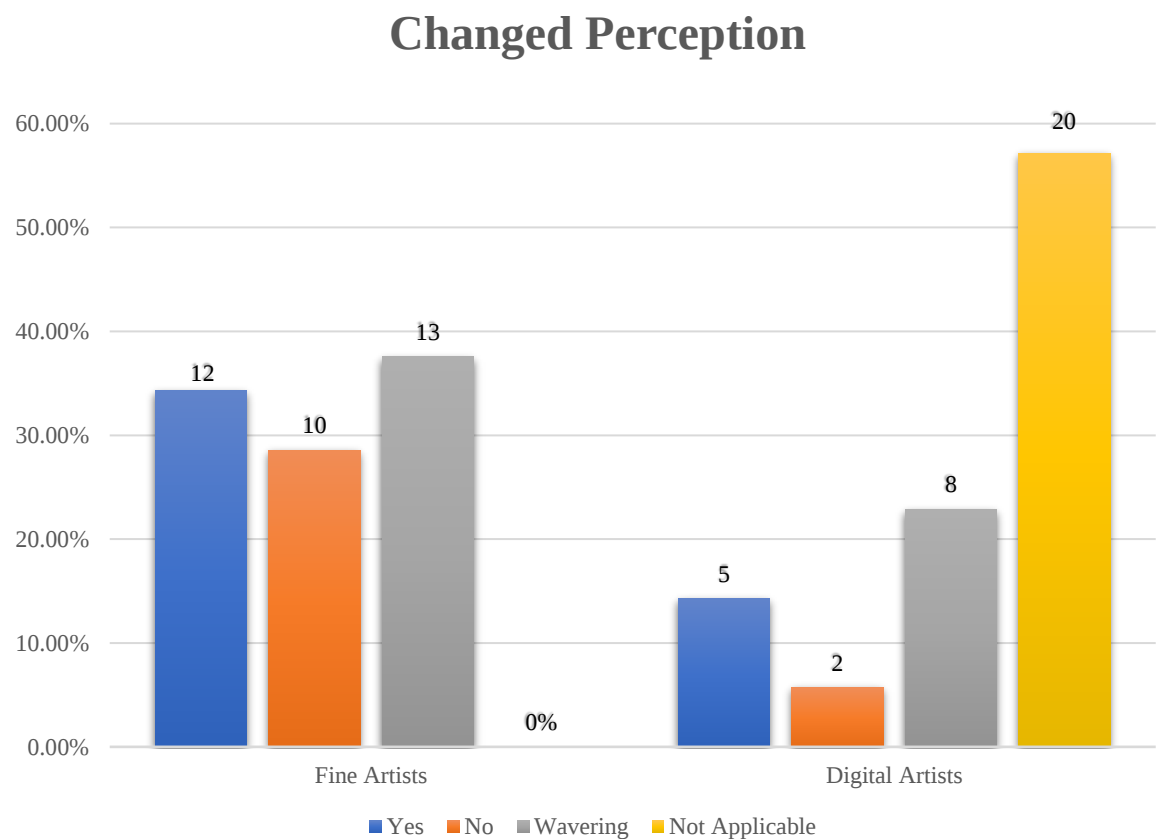


Figure. 16

Economic Disparities

Comparison of Income Perception

This difference in income perception reveals that Fine Artists seem to be more inclined towards characterizing their income as medium 54.29%, with a significant portion 42.86% acknowledging it as low and 2.86% as high. In contrast, Digital Artists exhibit a more optimistic outlook, with a substantial majority of 65.85% perceiving their income as high, and 29.27% as medium with no respondents choosing low. These findings provide valuable insights into the varied perspectives on income within the realms of Fine Art and Digital Art, shedding light on the financial dynamics perceived by artists in these distinct domains.

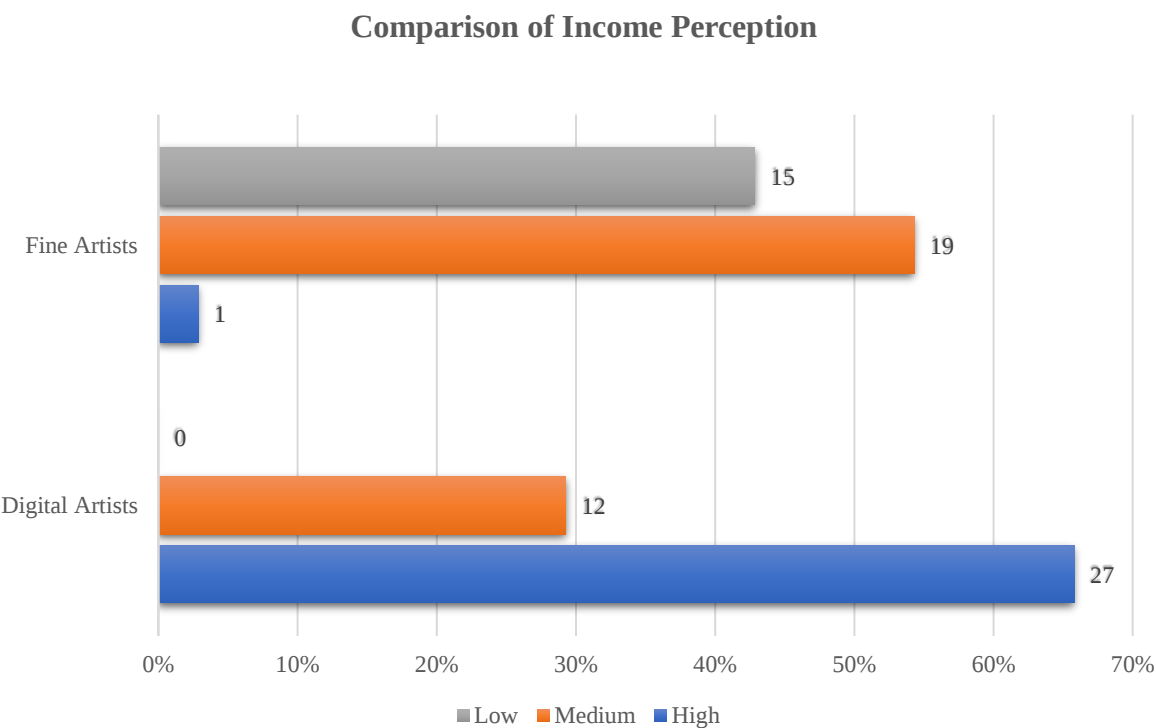


Figure. 17

Generating Income Through Art Sales

Responses on income generation through art sales reveal that 65.71% of fine artists and 68.57% of digital artists have successfully generated income, emphasizing a shared experience across both groups. In contrast, 34.29% of fine artists and 31.43% of digital artists have not derived income from this avenue. Despite Fine Art not being the primary income source for many fine artists, a significant portion of both groups demonstrates an ability to generate income through the sale of their artwork. This highlights the diverse ways artists can monetize their creations, whether through traditional fine art or digital mediums and find success through art sales, even if it is not their main source of revenue. It also underscores the importance of exploring multiple income streams in the art industry to achieve financial stability and success.

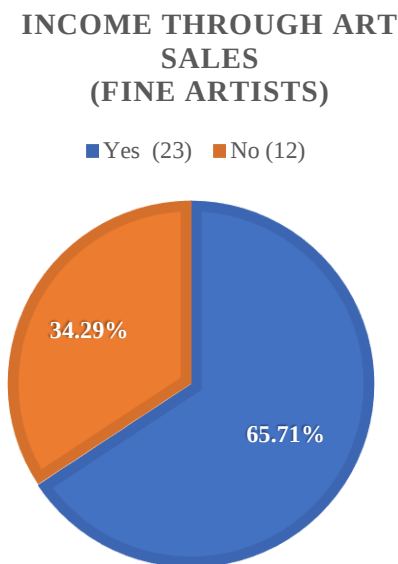


Figure. 18.0

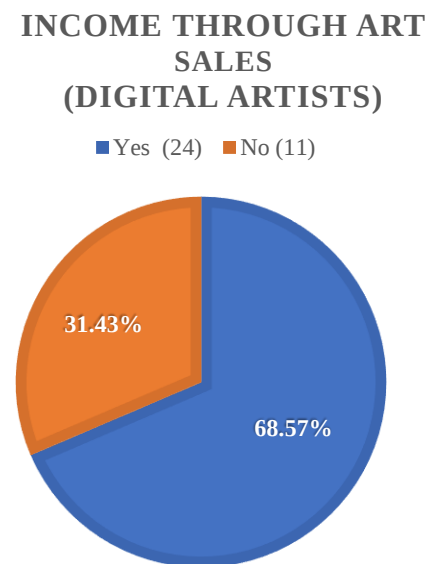


Figure. 18.1

Revenue

In terms of revenue through art sales, 40% of fine artists indicated deriving 0%-20% of their income from art sales, while 25.71% fell within the 20%-40% range, 2.85% earned 60%-80%, and 34.43% reported not receiving any income through art sales. On the digital artists' front, it was observed that 5.71% earned 0%-20% and 20%-40%, 31.43% did not receive any income through art sales, and the distribution of income exhibited a more diverse landscape. Specifically, 42.86% of digital artists generated 60%-80% of their income from sales, and 14.29% earned 80% or more. In comparison, while both groups actively pursue income through art sales, digital artists display a more varied range in their reliance on this revenue stream. This suggests that digital artists may have more opportunities for income diversification compared to traditional artists. Additionally, the data highlights the potential for digital art to be a more lucrative source of income for some artists.

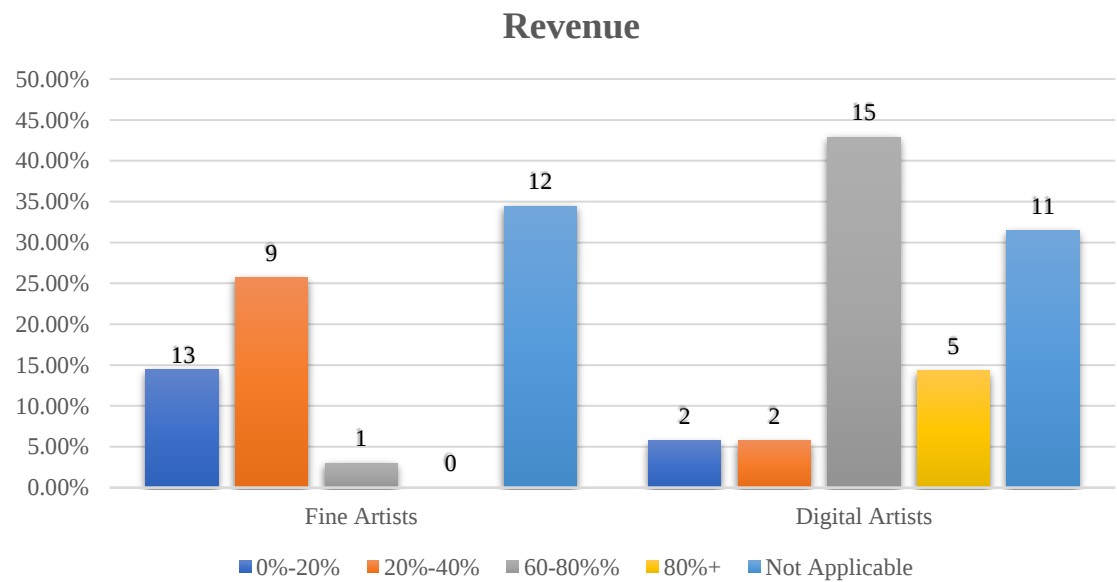


Figure. 19

Contributing Factors

Formal versus Informal Education

In exploring responses about the strategies and factors contributing to longevity, the role of formal training emerges as a crucial determinant. Among fine artists, 34.29% have received formal Traditional Fine Art training, while a larger contingent, constituting 65.71%, has not undergone such formal education. Contrary to 80% of digital artists having received formal Traditional Fine Art training, with only 20% indicating the absence of such training. This significant divergence in educational backgrounds between traditional and digital artists may explain the varying perceptions of the potential for success in the art world. When juxtaposed with the findings from question 14 on income distribution, it implies that formal education in traditional fine art may play a significant role in shaping an artist's career trajectory and opportunities for financial success.

**FORMAL VERSUS
INFORMAL EDUCATION
(FINE ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (12) ■ No (23)

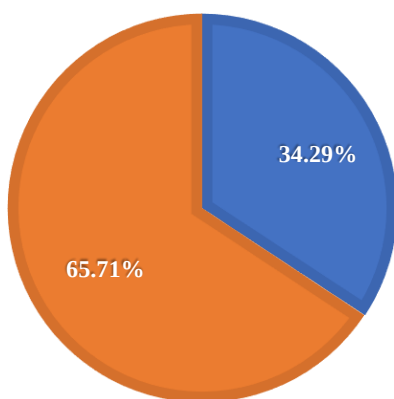


Figure. 20.0

**FORMAL VERSUS
INFORMAL EDUCATION
(DIGITAL ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (28) ■ No (7)

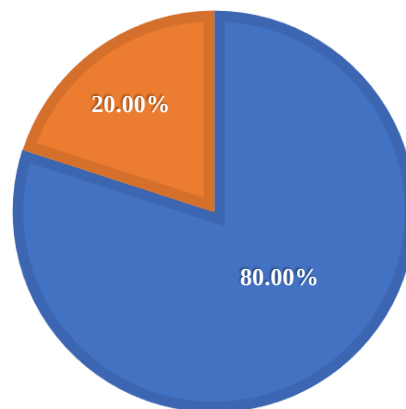


Figure. 20.1

Career Options

Among fine artists, 45.71% expressed the anticipation of numerous career options within Traditional Fine Art, while 35.71% did not share the same expectation. Additionally, 17.14% were uncertain about their career options. In the digital arts realm, a significant majority (88.57%) anticipated numerous career options within Digital Art, demonstrating a more optimistic outlook compared to fine artists. Only 8.57% did not anticipate varied career options, and a mere 2.86% were unsure. Overall, digital artists have a more positive outlook on the variety of career options available to them compared to traditional fine artists. This optimism may be attributed to the evolving nature of the digital arts industry and the increasing demand for digital art skills in various sectors.

Market Demand

In understanding the longevity strategies of artists, the survey gained their perception of the market demand for their respective forms of art in Trinidad and Tobago. None of the surveyed fine artists (0%) regarded the market demand for their art as "great," signifying a lack of overwhelming optimism. Instead, the majority (57.14%) perceived it as "difficult," while 42.86% held a neutral stance. In contrast, a significant portion of digital artists (68.57%) perceived the market demand for their art as "great," indicating a more positive outlook. Meanwhile, 28.57% held a neutral perspective, and only 2.86% found it "difficult." These answers indicate a notable contrast in how market demand is perceived by fine artists and digital artists in Trinidad and Tobago. This difference could stem from various factors, including evolving consumer preferences and technological advancements that impact the art industry.

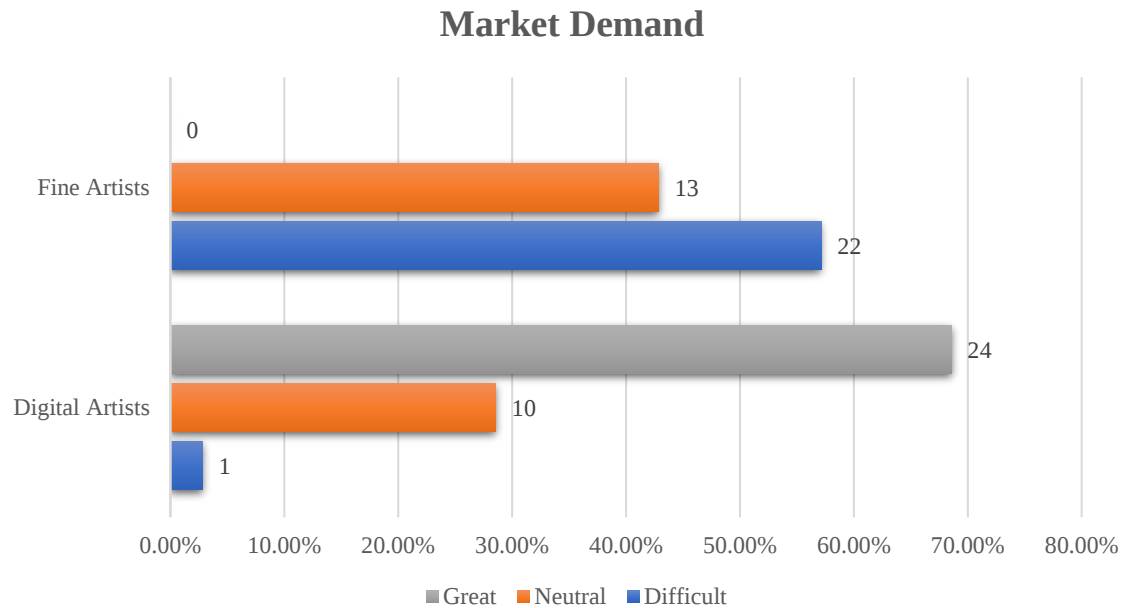


Figure. 21

When asked about the market demand for the different art forms of fine artists, 51.43% expressed confidence in a larger market for Digital Art, while 5.71% believed otherwise, and a notable 42.86% were uncertain. Digital artists displayed a distinct perspective, with only 8.57% acknowledging a greater market for Traditional Fine Art, a substantial 85.71% dismissing such a notion, and 5.71% remaining uncertain. These findings underscore the dynamic nature of the art market and the rising significance of digital mediums in expanding audience reach. The trend towards digital art signals a growing industry shift that fine artists should contemplate embracing to maintain competitiveness.

Perception of Value

Examining the perceived value of both art forms among respondents 37.14% of fine artists indicated that their art form is valued in Trinidad and Tobago, while a larger proportion

(62.86%) expressed a contrary opinion. In contrast, most digital artists (85.71%) believed their art form was valued, while only 14.29% disagreed. These findings suggest that traditional fine artists may need to reassess their strategies to enhance the perceived value of their art in Trinidad and Tobago. Conversely, digital artists may leverage the existing positive perception to further establish themselves in the market.

**PERCEPTION OF
VALUE
(FINE ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (13) ■ No (22)

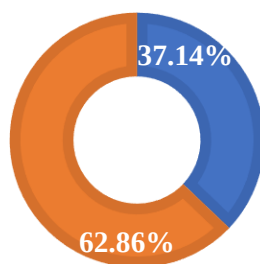


Figure. 22.0

**PERCEPTION OF
VALUE
(DIGITAL ARTISTS)**

■ Yes (30) ■ No (5)

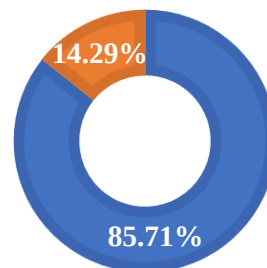


Figure. 22.1

Honourable Mentions in Artistic Insights

Exploring Artistic Crossroads

When questioned about their engagement with each other's art forms, both digital and fine artists exhibited a significant inclination towards either fine art or digital art. Among digital artists, approximately 74.29% acknowledged their involvement in fine art, while 25.71% reported no engagement. On the flip side, fine artists showcased a strong propensity for

exploring digital art, with 77.14% having participated and 22.86% indicating no such engagement. These findings suggest a mutual interest and crossover between the two art forms, highlighting a trend toward multidisciplinary creativity among artists.

Divergent Paths in Pursuit of Sole Income

However, divergent perspectives emerged when artists were asked about utilizing the other art form as a sole source of income. About 17.14% of digital artists believed their involvement in fine art could serve as a sole income source, while a substantial 57.14% expressed scepticism, asserting that it cannot. Additionally, 25.71% of responses did not apply to this question. Fine artists mirrored this trend closely, with 17.14% considering digital art as a potential primary income source, 60% expressing doubt, and 22.86% of responses not applying to this question. The convergence in percentages suggests a shared uncertainty among digital and fine artists regarding the financial sustainability of engaging in each other's art form as a sole source of income. Digital artist uncertainty may stem from the unpredictable nature of the art market and the challenges fine artists face in establishing a consistent income stream. The uncertainty for fine artists may stem from the lack of experience and understanding of how to navigate the digital art world. It may also arise from the rapid evolution of technology and the competition within the industry.

Legitimacy as a Career Path

In terms of considering the other art form as a legitimate career path for sole income, digital artists presented a nuanced perspective. About 45.7% affirmed the legitimacy of fine art

as a sole career path, while 54.3% expressed scepticism about its viability. Conversely, among fine artists, a notable 91.43% believed in the legitimacy of the other art form as a primary income source, while 8.57% held a contrary view. This suggests that while digital artists may have reservations about fine art as a sole career path, fine artists are more confident in the potential of digital art for generating income. It highlights the diverse opinions and perspectives within the art community regarding the viability of different art forms as a primary source of income.

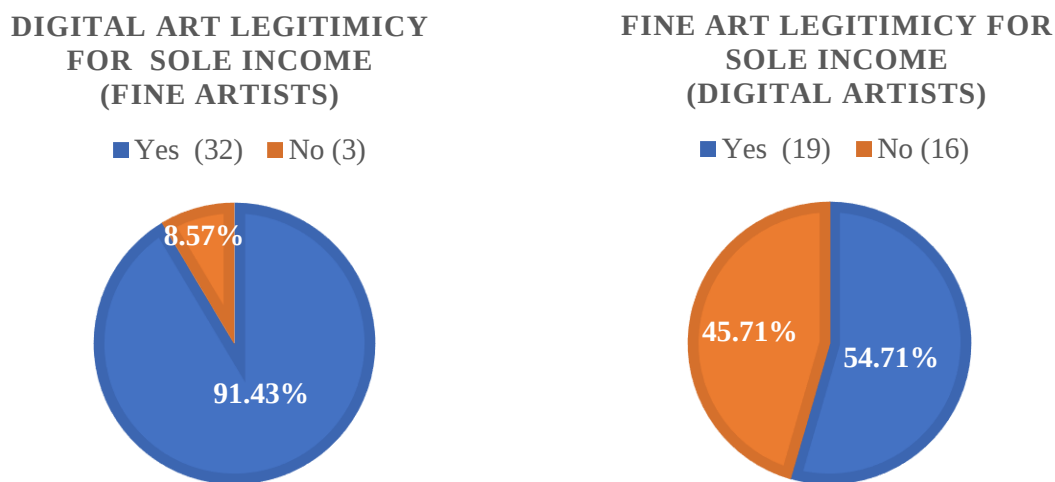


Figure. 23

Contrasting Perspectives on Integration

Finally, the inquiry into the perspectives of digital and fine artists regarding the integration of each other's art forms into their repertoire reveals a distinct contrast. Notably, among digital artists, 57.14% strongly agreed, 28.57% somewhat agreed, and 25.71% expressed neutrality regarding the incorporation of digital art by fine artists. In contrast, among fine artists, a smaller percentage of 8% strongly agreed, 26% somewhat agreed, and 66% maintained neutrality concerning the integration of fine art into the repertoire of digital artists. The findings

suggest that most digital artists believe that fine artists should incorporate digital art, while most fine artists are unsure or neutral about digital artists integrating fine art into their repertoire.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis and Discussions

Age, Gender, and Career Paths

When investigating the intersection of age, gender, and career paths among fine artists and digital artists, intriguing nuances emerge. Among fine artists aged 25-34, there appears to be a higher proportion of females, hinting at a potential gender-related trend within this age cohort. This observation suggests that female fine artists in this age group are more prominently pursuing artistic careers compared to their male counterparts. Further research could explore the factors driving this gender discrepancy within the fine art community.

Conversely, the balanced gender distribution across age groups among digital artists suggests a more egalitarian entry into the digital art field. Regardless of age, both male and female digital artists seem to have relatively equal representation within the digital art sphere. This parity may stem from the accessibility and democratization of digital tools and platforms, which have lowered barriers to entry for artists of all genders and age groups (Digital Art Effects.2024). These insights underscore the importance of considering the intersectionality of age and gender when examining career paths in the arts. Understanding how factors such as age and gender intersect with artistic practice can provide valuable insights into the dynamics shaping artistic communities and the broader cultural landscape.

Economic Realities, Artistic Contributions, and Career Trajectories

The examination of the financial landscape within the art industry unveils crucial insights into the economic realities shaping the trajectories of both fine and digital artists. Fine artists often face challenges due to the volatile nature of the art market with prices fluctuating based on changing trends, economic conditions, and shifts in collector preferences, many diversify their income streams beyond art sales (Down, 2023). A substantial 77.14% of digital artists, however, rely on digital art as their primary source of income. This statistic underscores the distinct opportunities available in the expansive realm of the online art market, where digital artists can flourish. In contrast, 54.29% of fine artists exhibit a proclivity for cultivating diverse income streams beyond art sales, recognizing the multifaceted challenges inherent in establishing a consistent revenue stream solely from fine art sales. This strategic response highlights the necessity for fine artists to explore alternative avenues to support themselves financially.

The intricate relationship between primary income sources and artistic contributions unveils noteworthy distinctions between fine and digital artists. None of the surveyed fine artists refer to Fine Art as their primary source of income, emphasizing a dependence on alternative income streams. Conversely, a significant 57.14% of digital artists identify digital art as their primary income source. This suggests that digital artists may have more opportunities to generate income directly from their art, while fine artists may need to explore other avenues to support themselves financially. This revelation underscores the importance of comprehending these financial dynamics, providing valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and artists navigating the complexities of the ever-evolving art industry. Understanding the economic

realities faced by fine and digital artists can inform strategies to support artists in their careers and promote a sustainable and thriving artistic community.

Economic Disparities, Income Generation, and Financial Realities

A comparative analysis of income perceptions between fine artists and digital artists unveils valuable insights into their distinct financial landscapes and aspirations. Fine artists tend to characterize their income as medium (54.29%), with a significant portion (42.86%) acknowledging it as low, and only a small fraction (2.86%) perceiving it as high. This trend aligns with the challenges highlighted by Deborah Weatherston in chapter one, indicating the financial instability that fine artists often face, particularly in the early stages of their careers. In contrast, digital artists exhibit a more optimistic outlook, with a substantial majority (65.85%) perceiving their income as high and 29.27% as medium, with no respondents choosing low. This positive perception suggests a sense of optimism and confidence in the flourishing digital art market. The increasing demand for digital art skills and the opportunities for income diversification likely contribute to this positive outlook among digital artists.

Despite variations in income sources, both fine and digital artists share the ability to generate income through art sales. 65.71% of fine artists and 68.57% of digital artists have successfully generated income from selling their artwork, emphasizing a common experience across both groups. This highlights the diverse ways artists can monetize their creations, whether through traditional fine art or digital mediums, and find success through art sales, even if it is not their main source of revenue. The challenges faced by artists in selling their work, as well as the

need for supplementary employment to sustain themselves, resonate with the experiences mentioned in the interview with Adele Todd. This underscores the reality that artists, both fine and digital, often need to seek additional sources of income to support their artistic pursuits fully. The comparative analysis of income perceptions sheds light on the distinct financial landscapes and aspirations of fine artists and digital artists. Understanding these differences is essential for policymakers, educators, and artists themselves to develop strategies that support the financial well-being and sustainability of artists in both traditional and digital art fields.

Factors Influencing Longevity, Success, and Career Perspectives

The role of formal education emerges as a significant factor influencing artists' perspectives and career trajectories, with distinct patterns observed between fine artists and digital artists. Among fine artists, a minority (34.29%) have received formal Traditional Fine Art training, while the majority (65.71%) have not undergone such formal education. In contrast, a significant majority (80%) of digital artists have received formal Traditional Fine Art training, with only 20% indicating the absence of such training. This notable difference in educational backgrounds between traditional and digital artists may contribute to varying perceptions of success in the art world. In contrast, while fine artists express confidence in their art form, they may face the challenge of adapting to changing market dynamics and exploring diverse avenues for expanding their audience reach.

Chapter One delves into the impact of formal education on artists' perspectives and career paths, highlighting how it fosters an optimistic outlook regarding career options and market

demand. This optimism may be particularly pronounced among digital artists, given the growing demand for digital art skills across various sectors. Their confidence in the market reflects the evolving nature of the digital arts industry and the increasing recognition of digital art's value in contemporary society. The lower prevalence of formal Traditional Fine Art training among fine artists may contribute to a sense of uncertainty regarding career options and market demand, necessitating adaptability and resilience in navigating the art landscape.

The divergence in educational backgrounds between traditional and digital artists underscores the importance of formal education in shaping artists' perspectives and career trajectories. However, while education can indirectly influence opportunities, for fine artists the primary factors in a gallery owner's decision to represent an artist are the quality and consistency of their work, their personality, and their track record of sales, with education having little direct impact (Horejs. 2023).

Artistic Crossroads and Perspectives on Integration

Chapter One of the analysis investigates the intricate relationship between Fine Arts and Digital Arts, showcasing instances where traditional artists, such as David Hockney, embrace digital tools. This exploration uncovers a shared interest and crossover between the two realms, fostering a dynamic and collaborative environment within the artistic community. Among digital artists, approximately 74.29% acknowledge involvement in fine art, while 25.71% report no engagement. Conversely, fine artists also demonstrate a strong interest in digital art, with 77.14%

participating and 22.86% not engaging. This mutual interaction signifies an openness to experimentation and innovation, blurring the boundaries between traditional and digital art forms.

However, uncertainties surface when considering each other's art forms as a sole source of income. Fine artists exhibit a belief in the legitimacy of digital art as a primary income source, showcasing an openness to evolving trends in the art industry. On the other hand, digital artists express scepticism about fine art, potentially influenced by the unpredictable nature of the traditional art market. This contrast in perspectives highlights the challenges artists face in navigating the evolving landscape of the art market and adapting to emerging trends.

Moreover, the significance of embracing both traditional and digital art forms to navigate the evolving art landscape echoes the theme of mutual engagement and collaboration between Fine Arts and Digital Arts. By advocating for the harmonious integration of these mediums, it encourages artists to adapt and evolve while staying true to their creative vision amidst the ever-changing dynamics of the art world (Davey. 2023). This approach not only embraces the diverse perspectives and practices within the artistic community but also fosters an environment of mutual support and innovation, ultimately enriching the artistic experience for both creators and audiences alike.

CONCLUSION

This study has successfully explored the diverse landscapes navigated by independent Traditional Fine Artists and Digital Artists in Trinidad and Tobago. By analyzing factors such as age, gender, and career paths, this research revealed intriguing patterns in career choices and income disparities. Notably, the differential representation of genders within certain age cohorts, particularly among fine artists, warrants further investigation. Additionally, the analysis highlighted the distinct financial realities faced by each group. Digital artists often rely on their digital art practice as a primary income source, while fine artists grapple with income instability and the need to diversify their revenue streams.

Furthermore, the exploration of artistic integration between traditional and digital art forms underscores the evolving nature of artistic expression in the digital age. Embracing innovation and collaboration fosters mutual support and opens doors for artists to connect with global audiences. This approach aligns with the rich cultural heritage of the Caribbean, as highlighted in the "Fine Art: Tradition and Challenges" chapter. This chapter also emphasizes the vibrant and dynamic nature of Caribbean art, influenced by socio-economic and socio-political contexts. Understanding the challenges of obtaining buyers and the impact of external pressures, such as family expectations, further enriches our comprehension of the nuanced dynamics of the art industry in Trinidad and Tobago.

This research underscores the importance of strategic planning, adaptability, and self-promotion for artists navigating the competitive art landscape. The transformative impact of the digital age offers unprecedented opportunities for artists to showcase their work and connect

with audiences worldwide. By integrating these insights, artists in Trinidad and Tobago can thrive in the evolving art world.

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APPENDIX

FINE ARTIST QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Have you received formal Traditional Fine Art training?
4. What artistic medium do you primarily work with?
5. Fine Arts is not a legitimate career path.
6. Are you presently engaged in, or planning to pursue a career as an Independent Fine Artist, relying solely on the proceeds from the sale of your artwork?
7. Were you anticipating numerous career options within Traditional Fine Art?
8. In your opinion, do Fine Artists typically earn a low, medium, or high income?
9. How do you perceive the market demand for Traditional Fine Art in Trinidad and Tobago?
10. Is your primary source of income fine art?
11. If your answer is “No”, does it contribute to your art career?
12. If your primary income source does not contribute to your Art career, has your perspective on pursuing art changed as a result?
13. Have you generated income through the sales of your Traditional Fine Art?
14. If yes, what percentage of your income is derived from the sales of your art?
15. Would you recommend someone to pursue Traditional Fine Art? If the answer is 'No', please give a reason (optional).
16. In your opinion, is Traditional Fine Art valued in Trinidad and Tobago?
17. Have you ever engaged in Digital Art?

18. If yes, can Digital Art be utilized as a sole source of income?
19. Do you think Digital Art is valued in Trinidad and Tobago?
20. Do you think Digital Art is considered a legitimate career path for sole income?
21. In your view, do most digital artists earn a low, medium, or high income?
22. Do you believe there is a greater market for Traditional Fine Art compared to Digital Art?
23. Do you agree that Digital Artists should incorporate Traditional Fine Art into their repertoire?

DIGITAL ARTISTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What is your age?
2. What is your gender?
3. Have you received formal Digital Art training?
4. What is the main type of Digital Art that you practice?
5. Digital Art is not a legitimate career path.
6. Are you presently engaged in, or planning to pursue a career as an Independent Digital Art, relying solely on the proceeds from the sale of your artwork?
7. Were you anticipating numerous career options within Digital Art?
8. In your opinion, do Digital Artists typically earn a low, medium, or high income?
9. How do you perceive the market demand for Digital Art in Trinidad and Tobago?
10. Is your primary source of income Digital Art?
11. If your answer is “No”, does it contribute to your Art career?
12. If your primary income source does not contribute to your Art career, has your perspective on pursuing art changed as a result?
13. Have you generated income through the sales of your Digital Art?

14. If yes, what percentage of your income is derived from the sales of your art?
15. Would you recommend someone to pursue Digital Art? If the answer is 'No', please give a reason (optional).
16. In your opinion, is Digital Art valued in Trinidad and Tobago?
17. Have you ever engaged in Traditional Fine Art?
18. If yes, can your Fine Art be utilized as a sole source of income?
19. Do you think Traditional Fine Art is valued in Trinidad and Tobago?
20. Do you think Traditional Fine Art is considered a legitimate career path for sole income?
21. In your view, do most Traditional Fine Artists earn a low, medium, or high income?
22. Do you believe there is a greater market for Traditional Fine Art compared to Digital Art?
23. Do you agree that Traditional Fine artists should incorporate Digital Art into their repertoire?