

Adrian Margey

(2009 ongoing) Entrepreneurship in the Creative Industries:

A qualitative study of the current attitudes towards and application of business and marketing principles in Northern Ireland's visual arts and theatre sectors.

Supervisor: Mr David Grant

Research Topic:

My background spans business and the arts. As an undergraduate, I juggled studying for my BSc (Hons) Communication, Advertising and Marketing with a career as a freelance artist. During this time I developed a keen interest in arts marketing and audience development by working at the Lyric Theatre and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Upon graduating in 2007 I took up a post in communications management with a large corporate, before returning to the arts in 2008. I now continue to run commercially successful independent solo exhibitions.

I started the PhD in September 2009 under the supervision of David Grant. My research explores entrepreneurship within the sphere of arts and culture and is funded by a DEL Programme for Government Studentship. Aware of the need to move artists away from a culture of dependence on grants and subsidy to one of financial independence through entrepreneurial self reliance, my research aims to assess whether or not a business and marketing focus is being adopted by individual artists and arts organisations in Northern Ireland and if so, what effect this is having on audience development and artistic programming. With around one third of all self-employed first degree graduates in the UK coming from creative arts disciplines – the study hopes to uncover the current state of and attitudes towards a contextualised enterprise curriculum for creative industries students in Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

I have adopted an ethnographic multiple case-study approach to investigate the phenomenon of entrepreneurship within Northern Ireland's visual art market and theatre community and to examine the extent to which entrepreneurial capacities are being fostered among the region's third level arts students. I have used purposive sampling techniques and am now conducting semi-structured interviews with individual visual artists and theatre practitioners, artistic and administrative staff within arts organisations in Northern Ireland and key personnel in policy, funding and development bodies. Academics, researchers, and educators will also be asked to provide their views on issues pertinent to creative enterprise in Northern Ireland. A series of focus groups will be held with undergraduate drama and fine art students in order to determine the current gaps in skills and opportunities for entrepreneurial learning within the sector.

In first year of the PhD I was a delegate at the National Creative Industries Conference in London. In second year I hope to attend a couple of European Conferences, engage in poster sessions and deliver conference papers of my research.