

Advancing African Development Through Art:
Artist Perspectives

by

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Duke University

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Public Policy in the Graduate School
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

While there is a common understanding that artists find it hard to make a living through their artistic activities, research is silent on how artists view and understand their lived experiences. “Creative wealth”, which is accumulated through artistic activities, is part of an untapped, unmeasured, and invisible economy (Kabanda, 2018). This qualitative, exploratory study examines the complexities of creative wealth through the lens of fifteen African and Afro-descendant performance, visual, literary, digital, and applied artists. Using a thematic analysis of semi-structured interview data, I present two conceptual themes: artistic challenges and artistic opportunities. The challenges focus on (1a) the trade-offs involved in the production and distribution of one’s art, and (1b) the lack resources to produce art, lack ownership of art, and lack of avenues to display or investigate art. The opportunities focus on (2a) how artistic activity can foster innovation and (2b) how artistic activity can be used as an individual-level and a communal-level tool of expression or “exchange of experience”. The findings of this study indicate that artists perceive their artistic endeavors to be simultaneously impeded and elevated by conditions of scarcity, and they understand that these conditions are unique to their African ancestral identity. Drawing on insights and recommendations from the artists themselves, this research sheds light on how creative wealth can improve lives – both monetarily and non-monetarily.

Contents

Abstract	iv
List of Tables	vii
1. Introduction	1
2. Literature Review	4
2.1 The Untapped Creative Economy and Creative Wealth.....	4
3. Data and Methodology	8
3.1. Qualitative Research Approach.....	8
3.2.1. Participants.....	8
3.2.2. Recruitment	9
3.2.3. Role of the Researcher.....	9
3.2.4. Data Collection Method and Procedure.....	10
3.2.5. Data Analysis	10
3.3. Establishing Trustworthiness	11
3.4. Limitations.....	11
4. Findings.....	13
4.1. The Artistic Problem	13
4.1.1. Artistic Activities and Tradeoffs	14
4.1.2. Artistic Activities and Scarcity	20
4.2. The Opportunities in Artistic Activities.....	24
4.2.1. Artistic Activities and Innovation.....	25

4.2.2. Artistic Activities and Communication.....	29
5. Conclusion	35
Appendix A: Artist-Centered Recommendations	37
Appendix B: Questionnaire	38
Appendix C: Letter of Consent	40
Appendix D: Sample of Coding.....	42
Appendix E: Participant List	45
Appendix F: Email Recruitment Script.....	46
References	47

List of Tables

Table 1: Exports of Creative Goods by Economic Group, 2002 to 2008	2
Table 2: Occupations in the Creative Sector	5

1. Introduction

Historically, artistic activity has been critical to human healing and human activity. Research in the field of psychology and clinical health finds that the arts can alleviate symptoms of mental illness and help individuals or communities recover from post-traumatic experiences (Kaimil, 2020; Stucky & Nobel 2017). Research also finds that cultural sectors, cultural products, creative industries, and culturally diplomatic activities contribute to a country's economic output through large commercial markets (Sen, 2004; Stoneman, 2010; UNESCO, 2013; UNCTAD, 2010). UNESCO (2013) defines cultural and creative industries as sectors that deal with the production and commercialization of goods and services of a "cultural, artistic or heritage-related nature".

As displayed in Table 1., the size of the global market for creative goods expanded substantially from 2002 to 2008 for developed, developing, and transitional economies. The *UNCTAD Creative Economy Report* (2010) states that "creativity fuels culture, infuses a human-centered development and constitutes the key ingredient for job creation, innovation and trade while contributing to social inclusion, cultural diversity and environmental sustainability" (p. xix). Despite creative industries being vibrant sectors at domestic and global levels, less is known on how to capture the creative economy beyond tangible economic indicators.

Table 1: Exports of Creative Goods by Economic Group, 2002 to 2008

	World		Developed economies		Developing economies		Transition economies	
	2002	2008	2002	2008	2002	2008	2002	2008
All Creative Industries	204.949	406.992	127.903	227.103	75.836	176.210	1.210	3.678
Art Crafts	17.503	32.323	8.256	11.443	9.202	20.715	45	164
Audiovisuals	462	811	425	726	35	75	3	10
Design	114.692	241.972	60.967	117.816	53.362	122.439	362	1.716
New Media	17.365	27.754	11.422	13.248	5.908	14.423	36	82
Performing Arts	9.689	26.136	8.947	22.539	698	3.323	43	274
Publishing	29.817	48.266	25.970	38.753	3.157	8.138	690	1.376
Visual Arts	15.421	29.730	11.916	22.578	3.474	7.097	31	56

Source: UNCTAD, 2010

The arts are often dismissed “on the premise that they cannot be measured, or that their data are nonexistent or invisible” and many artists find themselves “beyond the reach of official regulation and measurement” today (Kabanda, 2018; UNESCO, 2013, p. 25). Policymakers in the developed and developing world lack reliable data on artistic activities in the creative economy. To add on to these data-related challenges, research is silent on how artists understand their artistic challenges and artistic opportunities – both within and beyond the confines of “measurement”.

While this paper does not aim to resolve how artistic activity impacts the lives of artists, it does provide texture to the non-measurable (intangible) challenges and opportunities through artists’ lens. This study aims to answer three questions which have not been given adequate recognition in scholarly literature:

1. What are the artists’ perspectives on how artistic activity can be life-improving?

2. What are the artists' perspectives on how artistic activity relates with communication and community-building?
3. What do the artists perceive as the factors that impede an artists' ability to use artistic activity as a life improving tool?

This paper briefly reviews the literature on creative wealth and the creative economy, outlines the data and methodology used for this study, and presents the findings through a thematic discussion of the interview participants' views and experiences. Finally, the results of this study provide a set of policy recommendations according to the artists' lived experiences, values, and views.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Untapped Creative Economy and Creative Wealth

In his book, Kabanda (2018) takes on the task of observing art's role in development, social advancement, and economic progress. Similar to Sen (2004) who argues that cultural and artistic activities are constitutive parts of development, Kabanda asserts that creative wealth helps further the well-being and enrichment of human lives. He finds that the arts are associated with improvements in social capital: that is, artistic activity can strengthen friendships, help communities understand and celebrate their heritage, and provide a safe way to discuss and solve difficult social problems. Through his investigations, Kabanda finds that cultural outputs (such as radio stations, cultural diplomacy initiatives, and ministries of culture) are all ways of operationalizing and measuring the creative economy. His analysis utilizes an arts-inclusive and capabilities approach to development to determine just how countries can tap into their "creative wealth". His policy recommendations includes various initiatives that focus on culture. These range from the formalization of a national database on cultural assets, to the construction of measurements on value added from cultural trade, to the collection and standardization of data on the cultural sector, and the establishment of a cultural trade index (that can track patterns of trade in cultural goods and services).

In his work, Stoneman (2010) asserts that innovation, in economics literature, is examined through a technological lens and is not a focus in the arts. To explore this issue, he examines the “creative sector” via activities in audio-visual, books and press, heritage, performance, sport, tourism, visual arts areas. Occupations in this sector are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2: Occupations in the Creative Sector

VISUAL ART
2431 Architects
3411 Artists
3421 Graphic designers
3422 Product, clothing, and related designers
5414 Tailors and dressmakers
5423 Bookbinders and print finishers
5491 Glass and ceramics makers, decorators and finishers
5492 Furniture makers, other craft woodworkers
5495 Goldsmiths, silversmiths, precious stone workers
5499 Hand-craft occupations NEC
AUDIO-VISUAL
1134 Advertising and public relations managers
1136 IT/Communications managers
2131 IT professionals
3415 Musicians
3432 Broadcasting associate professionals
3433 Public relations officers
3434 Photographers and audio-visual equipment operators
5233 Line repairers and cable jointers
5244 TV and video engineers
5494 Musical instrument makers and tuners
PERFORMANCE
3413 Actors, entertainers
3414 Dancers and choreographers
3416 Arts officers, producers, and directors
BOOKS AND PRESS
3412 Authors, writers
3431 Journalists, newspaper, and periodical editors
5421 Originators, compositors, and print preparers
5422 Printers
5423 Bookbinders and finishers
5424 Screen printers
HERITAGE
2451 Librarians
2452 Archivists and curators
3551 Conservation and environmental protection officers
3552 Countryside and park rangers
4135 Library assistants/clerks
5113 Gardeners and groundsmen/groundswomen

Source: Stoneman (2010)

Creative occupations involve innovative outputs and inputs in creative industries. They provide the context under which creative ideas transform into marketable products and services. Correspondingly, Stoneman defines soft innovation as “changes of an aesthetic or intellectual nature, with significance indicated by market impact” (pg. 58). In his analysis, he emphasizes that creative industries offer a unique opportunity for measuring the magnitude of innovation.

Correspondingly, Ginsburgh and Throsby (2014) in *the Handbook of the Economics of Art and Culture* assert that both internal factors and sociocultural context matter for the “emergence of the artist”. They argue that:

“in cultural industries such as publishing, as well as in museums and in most performing arts fields such as opera, theater, and music, content innovation does not take place inside formal organizations. Instead, organizations program, exhibit, publish, or broadcast works conceived by individuals such as composers, writers/authors, painters, sculptors, photographers, and playwrights who usually come from outside the organization, except for when they are in residence” (p. 265)

The authors explain that innovation in creative industries truly materializes through the actions of artistic individuals, not the formal organizations under which they are affiliated. Yet, levels of measurement typically occur at the organizational level. This

disconnect explains why artists' innovative endeavors are difficult to measure. But, while this research does acknowledge the difficulty in capturing quantitative output from artistic activities in the creative economy, it lacks an in-depth analysis of the challenges and opportunities that are involved in the arts. *How does one begin to assign economic measurement to intangible aspects of artistic activity?* By studying the intricacies of artistic endeavors from artists' perspectives, this research takes on a critical step towards filling the gap in the literature on the arts.

3. Data and Methodology

3.1. Qualitative Research Approach

The purpose of this study was to explore artists' perspectives on how artistic activity can be used as a life-improving tool. I chose a qualitative approach because this topic is largely unexplored, particularly from the lens of artists. Qualitative research on the perspectives of artists can provide in-depth descriptions of their realities and lived experiences through words and stories (Tracy, 2010). Qualitative research involves dialogue between the researcher and participants and allows the researcher to explore the participants' elaborate thoughts and opinions. Finally, qualitative research can help fill the gaps in literature on little-known phenomena (Creswell, 1994).

In this section, I lay out the procedure for how I selected participants, how I conducted interviews, and how I interpreted and analyzed the data. In October 2020, Duke University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) declared this study exempt before initiation. Verbal consent was obtained from each participant before beginning the qualitative interviews.

3.2.1. Participants

A total of 15 participants were interviewed for this study. 13 participants lived in the United States, one lived in Guinea, and one lived in France. All participants were

either born in Africa, had parents who were born in Africa, or were Afro-descendant. All participants were involved in either performance (music, dancing, and singing), visual (drawing, sculpting, and painting), literary (story-telling and poetry), digital (data visualization and graphic design) or applied arts (architecture and fashion). All participants were above the age of 21, able to speak in English or French, and capable of giving informed consent. The artists each had varying degrees of experience with artistic activities – some were heavily involved in the arts since childhood while others recently began engaging in the arts in their adult life.

3.2.2. Recruitment

I selected artists in the U.S., in France, and in Guinea who satisfied the criteria. I contacted the artists via email and asked those eligible participants to recruit other artists who they believed should participate in the study. Using the snowball sampling method, I ended up with a total of 15 participants. All participants selected to be named and have their quotes attributed to them in my written research.

3.2.3. Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher plays the role of the primary research instrument (Creswell, 1994). Since this form of research is interpretive in nature, researcher biases can enter the data analysis. I acknowledge that my identity (as a black woman who was born and raised in the U.S. from a family of West African immigrants)

may have influenced my formulation of the interview questions and my interpretation of the data. I also acknowledge that my identity may have influenced how open and how free the participants felt to disclose their honest experiences and thoughts. Finally, I acknowledge that many interviewees could have different ideas of what “life-improving”, or what “African development” mean, as included in the interview questions. For these reasons, my analysis focused on presenting the viewpoints of the participants in a systematic, descriptive, and respectful way.

3.2.4. Data Collection Method and Procedure

I developed and employed a semi-structured interview guide to direct the collection of data on the participants’ experiences with the arts, perspectives on the arts’ function in communities, and views on using the arts to improve their lives (See Appendix B: Questionnaire). This data-collection process allowed for open-ended dialogue and deep exploration of participants’ thoughts and opinions. Finally, I audio-recorded and transcribed all interviews.

3.2.5. Data Analysis

For this study, I employed a thematic analysis to find patterns among the perspectives of the participants (Anderson, 2007). In line with the framework of Braun & Clark (2006), the thematic analysis for this study involved six phases: (1) familiarization with data, (2) generation of initial codes, (3) search for themes, (4) review of themes, (5)

defining and naming of themes, and (6) production of analysis and report. Thematic analysis is used for “systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 57). This method describes and interprets narratives while thoughtfully placing emphasis on context. It allows the researcher to observe, identify, organize, and describe shared meanings and experiences across the dataset. Finally, thematic analysis allow for making sense patterns and commonalities in a systematic way.

3.3. Establishing Trustworthiness

To minimize any personal bias and increase the credibility of the results, I will employ member checks for each interviewee before publishing this paper. I will write up the material I intend to use in this manuscript, present it to each participant, ask each participant to validate the quotes being used, and get their written permission before publishing this work. These member checks will be completed through email in 2021.

3.4. Limitations

This study is limited in scope because it includes 15 participants. Moreover, 13 out of 15 participants lived in the United States. A larger and more diverse pool of participants would have enriched the data set and may have produced more patterns for the thematic analysis.

Grabski (2013) stated “the art and practice of the interview are, invariably, about negotiations of meanings and definitions that we assume have been fixed by convention but are often, in reality, unstable and fluid” (pg. 44). In this vein, another limitation is that participants also may have varying ideas of what the term “African development” means. Their responses to questions pertaining to the arts and African development may have been based on differing interpretations of the concept. My analysis does not aim to resolve these interpretations; it only highlights how the artists view artistic activity as a means to improve lives. For future research, I aim to conduct follow-up interviews and focus groups with the 15 participants centered around what “African development” means to them. This research can enrich the data on arts and African development from the artists’ perspectives.

Finally, this research does not seek to determine any causal explanations or to make any predictions or generalizations. The aim in the pages that follow is to tell a rich account that respects the context that each artist is (and has been) navigating. This study is exploratory, descriptive, and interpretive in nature. The emphasis, in this regard, is on “understanding”.

4. Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to understand how artists view their artistic activity. The participants' stories added insight to the questions that were posed in this study. In this chapter, three research questions are addressed with supporting evidence in the form of quotations and additional feedback from the fifteen participants: (1) What are the artists' perspectives on how artistic activity can be life-improving?; (2) What are the artists' perspectives on how artistic activity relates with communication and community-building?; and (3) What do the artists perceive as the factors that impede an artists' ability to use artistic activity as a life improving tool?. Artistic challenges and artistic opportunities are the two conceptual themes that emerged from this data.

4.1. The Artistic Problem

While sharing their perspectives on artistic activities, artists reported many challenges. These challenges consisted of factors that constrain artists from using artistic activity as a life-improving tool. The challenges are split into two categories, presented in Section 4.1.1. and 4.1.2. The first challenge relates with the trade-offs that go into the decision of producing and sharing one's art. There are three decisions that an artist makes: (1) whether or not to dedicate their time to artistic activity (2) whether to pursue

art for fulfillment or for financial gain, and (3) for whom to produce the art. The second challenge is about scarcity: the lack of resources to produce art, lack ownership of art, and lack of avenues to display or investigate art. From the artists' perspectives, these scarce conditions can be attributed to legacies of colonialism, white supremacy, and a history of stolen art.

4.1.1. Artistic Activities and Tradeoffs

Many artists reported having to wrestle with the idea that artistic activity is not (and historically has not been) socially perceived as a secure pathway for making money or building wealth. Oumar Ba, who was born and raised in Senegal substantiated this notion by stating, *"the general trend or narrative is that it is kind of useless. It will not help you make money or help you feed your family"*. As he grew up with two artistic parents, Pierce Freelon of Durham, NC witnessed the following scenario amongst people of color and immigrants: *"when they want to pursue art or express themselves through it, they're told, 'Get a real job. You're not going to be a starving artist after I spend all this money to get you to where you're at'."* Marcella Camara (who was born in North Carolina, U.S. to a Liberian-born mother and Guinean-born father) supported this claim by stating, *"we live in a culture that doesn't value art"*. Mikka Kabugo, who was born and raised in Uganda, stressed that it is *"tough being an African artist. It's tough to dedicate your life to creat[ing] art."* Finally, Sarah Lorentzen (who was born in Maryland, U.S. to a Nigerian-born mother and Danish-born father) stated, *"if you want your artistry and your creative work to be the thing*

that sustains you, I think it's very hard. And you may have to make sacrifices". In each case, the artists recognized that the choice to pursue artistic activity comes at a sacrifice – an artist gives up a “real job” and a secure source of income to take on the risk of being a “starving artist”.

Many artists revealed that once one decides to pursue artistic activity (whether it be full-time or part-time) artists must then decide on the function that their art will take. Moreover, artists must decide whether the art is to be produced for the artist herself or for an audience. Matti Mejia (who was born in New York City to Dominican-born parents) posed the following question while reflecting on the function of artistic activity: *“what endeavors bring us profit and what endeavors bring us connection?”* Like Matti, many other artists acknowledged that artistic activity could take on various functions. Pierce F. stated the following from his experience as a musician: *“some people make music to entertain, you know, and I think there's all types of functions that music can play”*. Similarly, Aisha Benton of Detroit, MI stated that she believed:

“...for different people, their understanding of the function of art is different. Is art to be consumed? Is art to be enjoyed? Does art have transformative power? I think if you ask those questions, you would get different answers from different people”.

Aisha B. went on to further share her understanding that black artists are perceived as entertainers: *"...there's this idea that black folks, you know, are compensated to entertain – that their talent is up for mass consumption. And I think that's been kind of a prevailing mode of engagement with black artists in this country for a while"*. In her view, black artists are expected to amuse audiences. Patrick Kabanda, who was born in Uganda and currently lives in Washington, D.C., supported the idea that artistic activity can be multi-functional by stating that the benefits of artistic activities to the artist *"can be monetary (or instrumental) or nonmonetary (or non-instrumental)...and these two things go back and forth"*. Pierce F. further went on to compare an artist's monetary vs. non-monetary trade-off to the kinds of sacrifices everyday people make when deciding on their route to "success":

"Success doesn't necessarily mean money because you could have a job that you hate but pays the bills and have a low quality of life. Or you could, you know, make ends meet. Doing the thing that you love and have a higher quality of life ... You can survive and have a better chance at thriving if it's something that you love to do".

In their reflections and assessments of art's role and function, many artists revealed that there can be an inherent tension between an artist's monetary and nonmonetary goals. In Patrick K.'s view, musicians like him often have to decide

between *“pursuing music for fulfillment or money”*. He further stated, *“music enabled me to make friends”*. For him, fulfillment through the arts has allowed him to secure close friendships. Pierce F. reflected on what fulfillment could have meant for Hattie McDaniel, the first black woman to receive an Oscar. He pondered on the intricacies behind her decision to play a stereotypical maid in a film rather than to continue taking on servant-like jobs. Freelon stated, *“Who among us is so bold that they would rather be a maid than play a maid? Capitalism is the reason why we have to even have these discussions. It’s tough, we’re here trying to survive”*. He expressed his belief McDaniel made the difficult choice to lean on acting for financial gain even though it had come at the cost of her integrity as black American woman living in the U.S. in the 1940s.

In the past, Mikka K.’s motivation for pursuing artistic activity was *“to create to sell”*. But recently, his artistic motivation has stemmed from his hopes of building a legacy for those coming after him. He stated that his portraits are the basis for *“a little bit of history that [he’ll] create during this time – something to leave for others”*. Mikka K recognized that his artistic motivation went from being monetary to nonmonetary. Correspondingly, Oumar B. shared the following based on his experience growing up in Senegal: *“there are those who sell their art who are like in the informal economy, who are very much ‘hustlers’. They make art and they sell it”*. Similarly, Jamaal Reid (who was born in Maryland, U.S. by Jamaican-born parents) reflected on the essence of being artist in a *“capitalistic world”*:

"...by nature, I think artists aren't necessarily capitalists, so they're not trying to figure out how to capitalize on their art or how they can monetize it. They're just trying to express themselves. In the world that we live in now, we got to be able to figure out: 'All right. I love this. How can I monetize this?'"

Jamaal R. recognized that artists face a tradeoff between pursuing art out of sincere creative passion and pursuing art to make money. His statement revealed that artists face an inherent tension when deciding if their artistic activity will help them make a living financially. Often, that decision to capitalize off one's art comes at a sacrifice that involves an artist's audience. Bill Johnson of Washington, D.C. alluded to this tension by posing the following question while reflecting on artists' challenges: *"How do you survive? How do you eat if you can only sell your work for very low price because you're only promoting yourself within the community?"* Like Bill J., many artists acknowledged that their artistic endeavors are motivated by a precondition that is very "human": to secure a livelihood. Furthermore, the artists expressed that along with the struggle to fulfill basic needs comes a sacrifice in deciding on the targeted recipient(s) of the art.

Matti M. stated, *"I think [the challenge] is having a disconnect between the artist and the audience you want to serve and the message you want to bring. The challenge is to not leave*

the people that you're making art for behind". In reflecting on the experiences of her other friends who are artists, she stated, *"I have a few friends who are artists and [art] is their main source of income. And I've found that sometimes what they hope to do often ends up leaving behind the people that they hope to amplify".* Fei Mofor (who was born in Maryland to Cameroonian-born parents) described a similar disconnect between an artist and her audience by stating that she has seen many creative ideas fail *"because their direct network is not [aligned with] the brand of people that they want to reach".* Pierce F. expressed his understanding of the trade-off that is involved in aligning (or misaligning) an artist's authentic artistic expression with the audience or record label that pays them:

"So Marvin, Billie Holiday, and Nina Simone (those artists who have been bold enough to make these cultural commentaries) have often had to undermine the will of the people who run and own their record labels...Billie Holiday was signed to Columbia. She had to go to a smaller side label to put out Strange Fruit, which is a song about lynching."

Pierce F. recognized that, like Billie Holiday, artists often sacrifice prominent platforms of artistic distribution and promotion for the sacred opportunity to release the authentic artistic content – that which represents who they are. In Pierce's assessment, this translated to Billie Holliday's decision to attach herself to a "lesser" platform which permitted her to activate her authentic voice to an audience with which she could

closely relate. Finally, Maddi Rain Sumners of New Jersey, U.S. explained that artists like her have historically *“work[ed] under these companies that just aren’t appreciating you and valuing you”*. Overall, the artists find that tradeoffs make for risky decisions. And by adding structural barriers into the portrait of an artist’s pursuits, these tradeoffs can intensify an artist’s challenges.

4.1.2. Artistic Activities and Scarcity

The artists listed the factors that they believed were missing, hindering, or taking away from their artistic experiences. More importantly, they expressed that these factors were intricately bound to their identity as African or Afro-descendant. 6 out of the 15 artists identified lack of “exposure” as a barrier to the artistic endeavors of artists like them. Mikka K. stated that (in his view) African artists are *“lacking in inspiration, background, information, exposure”* and that this is connected to why *“African artists never really get the worth of their work”*. More importantly, from his experience living on and off the continent, Mikka K. observed that it is *“easier to make it as an artist outside of Africa than in Africa”*. As someone who planned to travel back to Nigeria, Sarah L. substantiated this claim by stating her belief that *“[Africans shouldn’t] feel like they have to go to the states to make it or they have to go to London to make it”*. In her perspective, African countries are missing the tools and platforms that can allow an artist to excel.

5 artists used the word “colonialism” to describe additional barriers to artists’ pursuits. Additionally, 2 identified “white supremacy” and 1 identified “racism” as the

context under which artists find it hard to make a living through their artistic activities. In fact, Sarah L. stated, *“the mainstream art world in different industries is like very reminiscent of colonialism”*. Similarly, Marcella Camara stated that the following was true for artists in places like Liberia: *“people are still healing from colonization and neo-colonialism”*. In accordance with this notion, Patrick K. shared a story of what it was like for him to grow up around music in the Anglican Church in Uganda. He stated that he had a *“suspicion of colonialism in Africa”* as he began to realize: *“what I was being taught was mine was actually European influence”*. He expressed that he could vividly remember seeing and hearing African drummers right outside of the church, but the *“brainwashing was so bad that African music was considered noise”*. Patrick K. stressed that these kinds of lived experiences tended to *“take mental space away from investigating what African music would be like”*. Similar to Patrick K.’s experience in Uganda, Matti M., stated that many artists like her simply feel very disconnected because they are *“not allowed access to really tap into the fullness of where we come from”*.

Pierce F. attributed the challenges artists face to *“capitalism in conjunction with patriarchy and white supremacy”*. He further alluded to how the transatlantic slave trade played a part in hindering the oral traditions of West African griots (who are often referred to as human libraries). From a U.S. lens, he stated:

“[Africans] were indiscriminately scooped up with everybody else through the black Holocaust and brought here where they were violently ripped away from the roots of those traditions. But, the practices survived and became spirituals, jazz, blues, and hip-hop”.

Many supported the notion that, historically, artists have been forcibly separated from their artwork, their culture, and their tradition. Some of the artists shared their understanding that art has been stolen from artists like them. Whitney Kouaho, (who was born in Ivory Coast and immigrated to the U.S. as a young child) stated, *“a lot of African history has been eroded or, worse, a little harder to find because of, you know, injustices. And art has always been used as recordkeeping in African culture”*. Jamaal R. stated that the following is true for people in his community: *“a lot of art that comes from us has been stolen from us...our art is on display everywhere”*. While reflecting on art forms that have been produced from artists like her, Maddi S. also alluded to the trend that people have wanted to *“steal it and do anything they can to profit off of it without giving props”*. Marcella C. stated, *“our stories across cultures, across the world have been stolen”*. Mikka K. substantiated these claims with the following observation:

“I think almost 90 percent of African art is in European and American museums and colleges. So, for an African to look for inspiration or to draw inspiration, they have to go

outside Africa as an artist to be a better artist, to have that cultural value, and to draw that inspiration from those who came before them”.

All in all, many artists expressed that many artists of the past and present do not own the art that they created.

In reflecting on the trend in Senegal (where he was born and raised) Oumar B. stressed that artists are *“limited, and that’s not their fault. It’s just a fact. It has to do with the school, the government, the community, the family itself”*. He further shared that while *“so many things can be stored digitally so we don’t lose them”*, most people from his home country do not have access to the tools, systems, or platforms that can help them safely, easily, and cheaply store and display art. Oumar B. stated:

“It’s about the platforms, the online platforms. The world is shifting, and things are moving so fast. What Senegalese artists and black artists need in general is just exposure and the platforms to be able to say, ‘this is art, it’s mine, it’s not somebody else’s, it’s mine.’ And be able to expose that on Instagram, Twitter, personal websites”

Like Oumar B., many artists recognized that the privileges that come with technology (and the lack thereof) pose critical challenges to artistic activity. Several artists acknowledged that the production and consumption of an artist’s work is heavily

influenced by technology, particularly access to the broadband internet. In fact, Marcella C. stated, *“the internet is a doorway to so many different things”*. Despite this understanding, many artists believed that those who do not have easy access to digital systems have unique opportunity to leverage their creativity. In particular, Whitney K. stated, *“not having access to YouTube may be a blessing in disguise because your creativity may be a process of self-discovery. The challenge of reaching a destination by yourself does prove fruitful”*.

Through a similar lens, Marcella Camara stated the following based on her lived experience growing up in a family of West African immigrants: *“The thing about immigrant communities across the world is that people are used to scarcity. But, instead of living in a scarcity mindset, they innovate.”* Finally, Sarah L. stated her viewpoint on how scarcity, in many regards, is the prerequisite for art: *“the luxury of not having to worry about sustenance creates the environment for art to excel. And I think the opposite is true. I think sometimes those conditions create art”*. All in all, artists expressed their beliefs that scarce conditions can pave the way for greater innovation and ingenuity.

4.2. The Opportunities in Artistic Activities

Participants of this study expressed their views on the opportunities that come with artistic activity, particularly in the face of the scarce conditions presented in the previous section. The theme of opportunities includes two categories that will be presented in Section 4.2.1. and 4.2.2. The first is related to the how artistic activities can foster innovation, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, and what Abdoulaye Condé from

Guinée calls, “a creative spirit”. The second category is related to the notion that artistic activities facilitate expression and communication through the “exchange of experience”.

4.2.1. Artistic Activities and Innovation

Many artists stated their belief that artistic activity can pave the way for unique forms of innovation in a world dominated by technological activity. Fei M. referenced a proverb while discussing the role of artistic activity in contexts where digital systems are scarce: *“necessity is the mother of invention...lacking is the mother of creation”*. Many artists believed that the most innovative forms of support could be born in environments where resources are scarce. Abdoulaye Condé, who was born in Macenta, Guinée substantiated other artists’ claims by stating his view: *“for those who don’t have access to technology, they have a way as well. Their own way. They are supported by the right people who do have access to technology.”* “Technological support”, in his view, can be offered in places like Macenta, Guinée when provided by the right people. Similarly, Pierce F. shared his insight on what information technology (IT) support translates to in West Africa by virtue of historical and present griot traditions. He stated the following:

“there’s this African proverb, ‘when an old person dies, a library is burned to the ground’. By a whole library, that means our ancestors were Wikipedia, they were Google. That was our technology for preserving history”.

Pierce F. further went on to express his belief that art is embedded in any experience where *“you need to be able to improvise...to collaborate”*. This perspective was supported by other artists who designated “art” as the innovative practice of doing the best you can with the resources that you have. While reflecting on the shortage of bread supply at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Marcella C. shared her understanding of how communities learned to bake their own bread during this time:

“there’s a reason we called those things artisan skills – because it literally is an art form and it literally is something people were taking decades and centuries to learn how to do and pass down. Because there is an art and a science to it. But a lot of us are removed from that”.

Abdoulaye C. who currently lives in Conakry, Guinée discussed how his experience with art was one of the first ways that he began to visually explore a wider and richer spectrum of color.

“At a young age (because most things start at a young age), I began forming images in my head and in my imagination. Then I would achieve it on paper. When I was 16, I began to create things myself. I learned how to put red with yellow to make orange. I analyzed everything in my head and began designing with my hand”.

Abdoulaye C. considered these processes to be the emblems of “l'esprit creatif” (which translates to “the creative spirit” in English). Similarly, Aisha B. emphasized how artistic activity is about seeking exposure to the curious aspects in life. In sharing her belief that art nurtures a “*propensity for wonder about the world*”, Aisha B. stated that this artistic wonder can be found in many aspects of life:

“it’s conversations with friends where you become awakened to a new perspective or you think about something in a way that you hadn’t before...“Oh, gosh. I mean, I think it’s ...it can be found in food. One of my favorite scriptures says taste and see that the Lord is good. There is the consumption of food. That’s the breaking of bread. The sharing of meals between people is pregnant with all types of possibilities for wonder. It’s everywhere. If we see it, if we’re open to it...I think it’s available to all of us”

While sharing memories where he witnessed the vigor of artistic innovation in Senegal, Oumar B. stated the following: *“I’ve seen so many times when people were preparing fields, they would do it in unison. They would sing together, they would do the same movements together”*. Through this imagery (which resembles that of enslaved field hollers in the U.S.), Oumar B. expressed his belief that artistic movement and song have even been integrated in the processes of food production.

Many artists also expressed their belief that educational and economic opportunities can be integrated with artistic activity at a national level. In particular, Patrick K. expressed his vision for a system that involves cross-country exchange, tourism, jobs and innovation as it pertains to the African context:

“If we said that all school universities in Africa are going to start offering serious ethnomusicologist lessons...imagine spending summer 2021 learning about architecture in Ghana and how that can be used for development or ethnomusicology. Imagine if we could develop systems to write our music down...If Duke students have a program to go to Uganda to study African music. What are the things that we can do?”

Other artists recognized a unique intersection between artistic activity and entrepreneurial activity. Jamaal R. expressed his belief that art was showing up in the realm of business: *“to combine your art with business...we’re starting to see black people emerge in all of these areas”*. Similarly, Maddi S. observed that *“now you see a lot of artists, particularly black artists, being independent and taking ownership of their music. That translates into everything. People becoming entrepreneurs and starting businesses.... just really creating our own lanes”*. Not only do the artists observe a rising trend in the ownership of art, but they also see valuable doors opening for artists through business and entrepreneurship.

And with those avenues, artists believe that artistic activity can reach unimaginable heights.

4.2.2. Artistic Activities and Communication

According to Priddat (2014), K. J. Arrow is one of the few economists to integrate the concept of communication into the field of economics. Arrow posits that rational choices are derived by individuals' judgements (Priddat, 2014, p. 66). Through his theoretical framework, Arrow asserts that groups of individuals can learn together by communicating their diverse experiences. Arrow formalizes communication as the "exchange of experience" and affirms communication as the mechanism by which beliefs converge (Priddat, 2014, p. 66). This idea can be applied to the artists' perspectives on how art personifies a voice.

Many artists shared how their artistic activities had not only facilitated their communication with others, but had also allowed them to build human connection. Bill J. expressed the following based off his experience with interior design: *"I think art is just an expression of one's character and life experiences"*. He further went on to state that certain people *"may not be able to read"* and that with art *"...their minds can open up and be able to comprehend things more easily"*. While sharing his perspective on the function of art, Jamaal R. similarly stated, *"I think the ability to clearly articulate yourself is not something that everyone can do"* and this is why *"art is arguably the truest [form] of expression"*. In sharing her motivation behind her artistic activities, Fei M. stated, *"I realized art helped me*

connect with people". In her opinion, art *"speaks to the human side of everybody"*. She further went on to reflect on the reality of how art crystalized her sense of security in the Cameroonian community around which she grew up: *"all the backstories that come with how the art is made or how it transcends itself or what it finally leads to.... It's all based around me selfishly wanting to have deeper connections with people."* For Fei M. art is the means to solidifying her relationship with others.

Alexandria Glenn (who was born and raised in North Carolina, U.S.) sees her art as her *"communication to the world"*. Similarly, Whitney K. stated, *"art gives my soul a tangible, external representation"*. Aisha B. (as someone who uses her *"poetry as preaching moments"*) substantiated these perspectives by sharing the following:

"I think that art has its own language and it speaks to the human heart...it can bypass traditional linguistic channels...It's able to tap into the human experience in ways that sterile forms of documenting humanity aren't able to. It's able to get into the emotional realm...God has put [hope] in every human heart".

For her, abstract concepts like "hope" are best depicted through artistic expression and best sensed through artistic empathy. Like Aisha, Bill J. stated that *"art is about emotion. Emotion doesn't have language"*. Finally, Matti (who currently resides in Philadelphia) stated that, *"we use things like language to separate us from the fact that we're human. And I*

feel like art gives us an opportunity to just step outside of the things that lock us in". In her view, art reminds people what they share in common with others who do not even speak the same language.

From Pierce F.'s perspective, art *"is a tool for expressing righteous anger about social or political situations. It's a tool for expressing love. For storytelling"*. While sharing his own account of what Amiri Baraka (a black American writer) had shared with him years ago, Pierce F. stated, *"black folks specifically - our music is about our life. If you want to know what we did, what we thought, how we talked, what we liked, what we didn't like - you can listen to the music and find that out. Our music is our history"*. He further shared that when he was part of a musical cypher in the Congo not long ago, his interactions with other Congolese simply came down to – *"the cadence, the rhythm, the tone. The delivery. We didn't need words to translate"*. Pierce F. expressed that they had a common understanding of the "feeling" despite not speaking the same language. Mikka K. shared the following story to illuminate his experience with art as a form of communication:

"Our grandmother was mute – deaf and mute – and she used to communicate by drawing images on walls and in the sand. And I guess through her practice over the years, she become really good at it. That put it forth for me as even just a medium of communication."

Mikka K. understood that he inherited an ability to seek art as a communication tool from his grandmother.

In addition to viewing artistic activity as a means to facilitating communication, artists believed that art could express the voice of a group of people. 4 artists shared their experiences with murals. From their observations, murals effectively represented and conveyed a collective voice. In particular, Matti M. stated the following:

“The most meaningful art I think I’ve ever really come across has been street art, art on the walls, murals, huge paintings and things that I can see without entering a space that’s like deemed for a particular purpose. Philadelphia is one of the cities with the most murals - publicly accessible murals - in the nation. And they seem to breathe with the community that they’re in.”

Similarly, Marcella C. shared a recent experience that she had in Durham, North Carolina: *“we did a bunch of protest murals, like after George Floyd died earlier this year downtown on the boarded up things. And that is also art”*. On similar grounds, Fei M. stated, *“murals communicate a lot about a community. What happens after the mural? I think it changes the mindset of a community only if it changes the mindset of local officials”*. Through her statement, Fei postulated that murals could serve as catalysts for political change.

Finally, Allie also expressed her appreciation for “*paintings on walls and sidewalks through murals*” around downtown Durham.

While sharing what she believed was promising in the realm of music, Sarah L. stated the following:

“It’s kind of creating this new hub where we can define for ourselves what is successful, what is beautiful – we understand each other. And if we don’t, we’re willing to exchange that knowledge, the information, that expression, to better know each other.”

She further went on to state that “*art forces you to interact with an issue in a completely different way. It’s the ultimate marketing tool to really get people to pay attention to things that they might have otherwise just dismiss*”. Similarly, Bill J. acknowledged that “*art is kind of like a telescope or microscope that can shed light on the minute things that are below the surface; that a person may not be able to pick up on right away*”. In their respective views, art can make difficult concepts easier to understand. Oumar B. substantiated these artists claims by stating his view that “*art can make messages that are hard to hear more digestible*”. In other words, art can ease an artist’s (or a non-artist’s) absorption of critical ideas.

While artists acknowledged how artistic activity has the potential to bring people closer together, many artists were eager to also admit that artistic activity can also create division. In particular, Aisha B. stated that “*in truth, the way that those systems [that*

oppress people] have been erected over time...there was some creative agency that had to happen to separate one African country from another". In this example, she compared colonial activity in Africa to an artistic tool for dividing and conquering African societies. In a similar vein, Jamaal stated that *"[art] has the power to unite us or divide us"*. His perspective was further supported by Patrick K. and Whitney K. who respectively stated that *"art can be used for bad and it can have consequences...it can influence others in dark ways"* and that *"shared emotions bring people together or apart. That is the power of art."* All in all, the artists cautioned against relying on the notion that art is only used for building human connection and harmony. In their views, art has the ability to produce long-lasting ramifications for people around the world.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore artists' perspectives on how artistic activity can be used as a life-improving tool. Artistic activities involve challenges and opportunities. However, past research is silent on how these factors are perceived and understood by artists. The findings of this research indicate that artists perceive their artistic endeavors to be simultaneously impeded and elevated by conditions of scarcity. More importantly, the artists understand that these conditions of scarcity are unique to their African ancestral identity.

To overcome the artistic challenges and to build upon the artistic opportunities, this research propose initiatives that are tailored to the artists' lived experiences, values, and views. As Jamaal R. stated, artists can benefit from gaining *"business information, self-motivation, and avenues to display their work"*. Similarly, Pierce F. stressed the importance of *"building spaces to nurture the talents of others and to afford others privileged gifts... through mentorship"* and *"donating equipment to community centers where kids can nurture these skills and turn them into businesses"*. In addition, policies (both domestic and international) must protect artists' intellectual property (Kabanda, 2018). Bill J. asserted that we must all *"interact with the art positively"*. Given the world's history of stolen art, further work must evaluate the most effective form of reparations (or restitution) to African and Afro-descendant artists whose rights to their own art have been infringed upon. More importantly, this work must take the views of those artists into account.

Drawing on insights and recommendations from the interviews, domestic and international policies can support creative wealth by improving artists' access funding for art-related resources and platforms. Marcella C. stressed that *"we need to fund art in equitable ways. Funding not just in the traditional capitalist sense...we need to talk to artists about how they value their work"*. Her view highlights the importance of elevating arts-related research that engages artists. To inform proposals for equitable funding, this study gathered a list of programs, initiatives, organizations, and projects that support artists' pathway to creative wealth (See Appendix A: Artist-Centered Recommendations).

Artists in this study believed that the route to improving artistic endeavors can be best facilitated through the intersection of public policy and the arts. Many artists believed that they played a key role in filling the gap between the two realms. Most notably, Pierce F., who serves as a local politician in Durham, North Carolina, stated that his contributions are about *"[first] making art and then...providing folks in my community here and internationally (basically black people) tools to be able to do what I've been privileged to do"*. In this regard, future research must explore how artists can gain fair access to artistic tools, mentorship, and avenues so that they can improve their own lives and inspire others to do the same.

Appendix A: Artist-Centered Recommendations

- Spirit House (Durham, N.C.)
- Sister Song: Women of Color Reproductive Justice Collective (Atlanta, G.A.)
- KidzNotes (Raleigh, North Carolina).
- The Hayti Heritage Center (Durham, North Carolina)
- Blackspace (Durham, North Carolina).
- Beat Making Lab (United States; Democratic Republic of Congo; Panama; Senegal; Fiji; Ethiopia)
- Music Over Mind (Durham, North Carolina)
- Artomatic (Washington, D.C.)
- The Africa Center (NYC, New York)
- Galerie MAM (Douala, Cameroon)
- Kreative Kwame (Buea, Cameroon)
- Organization for African Students' Interests and Solidarity (O.A.S.I.S.) (Chapel Hill, North Carolina).
- African Leadership Academy(ALA) (Roodepoort, South Africa)

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Your experience with art:

1. What was your motivation for becoming an artist? What brought you to the arts?
2. What did (does) your training look like? What sorts of experiences train you or prepare you to achieve your art?
3. How have you participated artistically in the place(s) in which you were raised or have settled?
4. Kabanda describes art as a portrait of our life in our time. How does art allow you to express yourself?
5. Who does your art speak to? Who are the people and communities that typically respond to your art?
6. In your art, how do you find the medium between the identity you inherit from your parents, grandparents, or great grandparents and the identity you develop through your own lived experiences? How does that intergenerational identity translate through your art?
7. How does your art carry your values? How does it tell the story of what is important and what is valuable to you?

The facilitators and barriers to the arts as a life-improving tool:

8. In your view, what are the factors that make it challenging to use the arts as a tool to improve people's lives?
9. In your view, what are the factors that make it easier to use art as a tool to improve people's lives?
10. In your opinion, what kinds of environments are more likely to support artists and their art?
11. In this digital age, what does arts education look like for those who do not have regular access to digital technology?
12. What does an entrepreneur of the arts look like to you?

Art as a tool for building solidarity and interconnectedness:

13. In your opinion, how do the arts connect one human to another, or one society to another?
14. In your opinion, how do the arts enrich our understanding of issues and solutions at the community-level?
15. In your opinion, how do the arts allow people of different cultures and languages to communicate with each other?

Arts as a tool for improving the lives of Africans and Afro-descendants:

16. In your opinion, how have the arts played a role in improving the lives of Africans and Afro-descendants around the globe?
17. How can the arts promote traditions, customs, and practices that may be useful for improving the lives of Africans and Afro-descendants?
18. Do you know of any initiatives, programs, organizations, or projects that facilitate or promote the use of arts for improving the lives of Africans and Afro-descendants? If so, what are they?
19. How do you see yourself as playing a role in improving the lives of African and Afro-descendant people around the world?
20. If you could use your art to tell a story about “African development” the way you view it, what would you include in this art? What story would you tell?

Appendix C: Letter of Consent

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for your interest in sharing your thoughts on advancing African development through the arts. As you know, my name is M'Balou Camara and I am a graduate student from Duke University doing research on African development, social entrepreneurship, and creative wealth. I am interested exploring different approaches to African development.

Background Information:

The arts are known to be an engine for economic growth. Less is known about how artistic activities can advance African development. The purpose of this study is to get your perspective on how the arts can be used as an innovative tool for improving the lives of Africans and Afro-descendants around the world.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will:

- Receive a follow-up email with potential interview days and times.
- Receive a Zoom meeting invitation for your interview.
- You will be asked 20 to 25 questions that tell me about (1) how art has played a role in your life, (2) your thoughts on the challenges and opportunities for using art as a tool to improve lives, (3) how you believe art promotes solidarity and interconnectedness, (4) and how you believe art can advance African development.

The interview is expected to take one hour, though we can talk for as long as you feel comfortable. Moreover, I am requesting your permission to audio-record our conversation. This will allow me to really engage in our discussion rather than take notes as we converse. Once the recording has been transcribed, I will delete the recording.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

This study is completely voluntary. You can skip any question, and you can stop the interview at any point in time. You can also decide to not be audio-recorded.

Risks:

Being in this study does not involve any expected risk. However, please let me know if you would like to decline from answering any question or take a pause in the interview.

Benefits:

You may receive no benefit from participating in an interview, but I hope you might enjoy the opportunity to reflect on and voice your authentic perspective as an artist. I also hope that my research may bring to light the narratives of African and Afro-descendant artists whose input in African development can be valuable for future policy. It will improve our knowledge and understanding of creative initiatives for African development.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

At the beginning of our interview, I will ask if you choose to remain unnamed or to have your stories and quotes attributed to you.

If you choose to remain unnamed, all information you provide will be handled with utmost confidentiality. I will not use your responses for any purposes outside of this research project. I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the report that I write. You will not be recognized as I present the results from the interviews.

If you would prefer to be named in this research, I will credit all your quotes to your name in the report that I write.

Contacts and Questions:

If you have any questions about the study and interview process, you may contact me, M'Balou Camara, at mbalou.camara@duke.edu or my advisor, Dr. Darity at William.darity@duke.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Duke University Campus Institutional Review Board (IRB) at campusIRB@duke.edu. In your communication, please include the Protocol ID# 2021-0189.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
M'Balou Camara

Appendix D: Sample of Coding

Theme	Category	Codes	Description	Quote
Opportunities	Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Community • Connection 	Art as a pathway to exploring/understanding identity and feeling a sense of community	"A lot of my doodling and my drawings right now are about really tapping into my Afro Caribbean roots and centering my blackness as part of my identity"
Opportunities	Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family • Community 	Art centers around stories of her doing things with her family and her communal identity	"I started to draw a lot of images around my parents doing my hair and the pain of getting my hair done. And I also started to integrate like poetry around chores that felt like home. I started writing and drawing things that were more important to me and my Dominican identity and culture. So like poetry about doing the dishes and doodling on t-shirts and writing poems for my mother, of course."
Challenges	Monetary vs Non-Monetary Trade-offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendships • Audience 		On her friends who are artists "I've found that sometimes what they hope to do ends up leaving behind the people that they hope to amplify"
Challenges	Monetary vs Non-Monetary Trade-offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monetization • Connection 		"What endeavors bring us profit and what endeavors bring us connection? The challenge is to not leave the people that you're making art for behind"
Opportunities	Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Justice Issues • Community • Awareness 	Street art and murals as a way of expressing the voice of a community	"The most meaningful art I think I've ever really come across has been like street art, like art on the walls, like murals, like huge paintings and things that I can see without entering a space that's

				<p>like deemed for a particular purpose.</p> <p>Philadelphia is like one of the cities with the most murals, publicly accessible murals in the nation.</p> <p>And they seem to breathe with the community that they're in."</p>
Opportunities	Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Community 	Creating art with what you have	<p>"I think that it's really important to dismantle what you see as art and what you think is valid art.</p> <p>If it just means that we make a little street party to, like, encourage all the kids on our block to just dance then that's what we got to do."</p>
Opportunities	Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universality Empathy 	On how art can allow people who speak different languages to communicate	"Because feeling, seeing, touching, hearing, it's really universal."
Opportunities	Exchange of Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication Connection 	Art gives you a common sense of grounding	<p>"We use things like language to separate us from the fact that we're human. The fact that we're here and the fact that we won't be that we're impermanent.</p> <p>And I feel like art gives us an opportunity to just step outside of the things that lock us in"</p>
Opportunities	Community-Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identity Connection 	Art can build connection and allow for exploration of identity	<p>"Art gives us space to be different but connected"</p> <p>"helping folks walk through the intricacies of their identity"</p>

Challenges	Lack of Access, Lack of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection • Access • Identity 	On being an Afro-Latina artist	<p>“sometimes, yes, we feel really, really disconnected from where we come from. And it's because we're not allowed access to really tap into the fullness of where we come from”</p>
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Appendix E: Participant List

	Participant Name	Current Location	Birthplace	Birthplace of Parents
1	Abdoulaye Condé	Conakry, Guinée	Macenta, Guinée	Macenta, Guinée
2	Fei Mofor	Maryland, U.S.	Bamenda, Cameroon	Bamenda, Cameroon
3	Aisha Benton	Michigan, U.S.	Michigan, U.S.	Michigan, U.S. and Georgia, U.S.
4	Mikka Kabugo	North Carolina, U.S.	Uganda	Uganda
5	Whitney Kouaho	North Carolina, U.S.	Cote d'Ivoire	Cote d'Ivoire
6	Marcella Camara	North Carolina, U.S.	North Carolina, U.S.	Liberia and Guinea
7	Patrick Kabanda	Washington, D.C., U.S.	Uganda	Uganda
8	Oumar Ba	Paris, France	Thiès, Senegal	Saint-Louis, Senegal
9	Madison Rain Sumners	New Jersey, U.S.	New Jersey, U.S.	New Jersey, U.S.
10	Sarah Lorentzen	New York, U.S.	Maryland, U.S.	Nigeria and Denmark
11	Bill Johnson	Washington, D.C., U.S.	Washington, D.C., U.S.	Mississippi, U.S. and Georgia, U.S.
12	Madelin Mejia	Philadelphia, U.S.	New York, U.S.	Jamo, Dominican Republic
13	Alexandria Glenn	North Carolina, U.S.	North Carolina, U.S.	North Carolina, U.S.
14	Jamaal Reid	Maryland, U.S.	Maryland, U.S.	Jamaica
15	Pierce Freelon	North Carolina, U.S.	North Carolina, U.S.	Pennsylvania, U.S. and Massachusetts, U.S.

Appendix F: Email Recruitment Script

Dear (Artist Name),

I hope that this email finds you healthy and well supported.

I am a graduate student in Public Policy at Duke University, and I am interested in exploring different approaches to African development. I am conducting interviews as part of a research study to increase our understanding of how the arts can advance the development of Africans and Afro-descendants around the world. As an African (or Afro-descendant) artist, you are in an ideal position to provide some valuable insight on this topic.

The interview will be conducted virtually via Zoom, will be audio-recorded, and will take one hour. I will be asking open-ended questions to explore your experiences with art and to discuss your views on how artistic activities can advance African development.

If you would like to learn more about my research, please read the informed consent letter attached and let me know if you would be interested in being interviewed

I look forward to hearing your perspective.

Sincerely,
M'Balou Camara, Duke University

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