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Politics of Outrage and Hope, A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century; The Self as Enterprise: Foucault and the Spirit of 21st Century Capitalism, and Working in Jamie's Kitchen: Salvation, Passion and Young Workers.

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1

Introduction: Artistic Practice and Social Outcomes in a Market-Driven Landscape

Abstract This chapter explores the context in which art-based social enterprises (ASEs) are engaging young creatives in education and training and supporting their pathways to the creative industries. In doing so, it also sets the terms for how this book aims to address the complex intersecting issues of marginality and entrepreneurship, particularly in relation to young creatives from socially, economically and culturally diverse backgrounds. This chapter examines several key issues, including (1) the *social turn* in contemporary art, in which artistic practices are engaged with the lives of people and communities and with a spirit of collectivism aimed at addressing a range of issues from social exclusion to climate change; (2) rapid growth in social enterprise models across a range of sectors, including the creative industries that has been spurred, in part, by increasing economic pragmatism in the state funding and delivery of welfare, cultural and community services; and (3) significant *fourth industrial revolution* disruptions and transformations in the nature of work, a shift that has disproportionately affected young people globally in terms of their access to employment and education opportunities.

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This book explores the opportunities and challenges faced by art-based social enterprises (ASEs) in engaging young people in education and training and supporting their pathways to employment.[1] It also explores the dynamics and implications of 'enterprising' artistic practice for these and other social purposes. This study is thus set against the backdrop of what is termed the *social turn* in contemporary art, in which mainstream artistic practices have become more engaged with the lives of people and communities and with a spirit of collectivism aimed at addressing a range of issues from social exclusion to climate change. This social turn is not, in itself, new—and draws upon histories and traditions of collectivism in arts and cultural practices across the globe and historically. What is new is the ways in which these more social and collective practices have infiltrated the more hierarchical and market-driven aspects of the contemporary art world. In addition, the study is set against the backdrop of rapid growth in social enterprise models across a range of sectors, including the creative industries. This is a growth spurred, in part, by increasing economic pragmatism in the state funding and delivery of welfare, cultural and community services. Finally, this study has taken place in the context of significant 'fourth industrial revolution' disruptions and transformations in the nature of work, a shift that has disproportionately affected young people globally in terms of their access to employment and education opportunities (Neufeind et al., 2018; Panth & Maclean, 2020).

Living with uncertain work futures and amid a climate of work precarity has become increasingly normal for young people in OECD countries in the wake of the 2008–2009 global financial crisis (GFC) (BSL, 2014, Kelly et al., 2015, Standing, 2011). A decade later, the

[1] In using the term 'art-based social enterprise', we are advocating for a broad understanding of art that includes diverse media and practices and one that appeals to a cross-section of communities. We recognise the different uses of the terms 'art-based' and 'arts-based' in relation to creative research methods and have elected to use the term 'art-based' with a view to plurality in how we understand 'art.'

unfolding impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have heightened this atmosphere (and reality) of uncertainty: lockdowns, border closures and social services in crisis have all impacted significantly on opportunities for work generally, and the security of work more specifically. These pandemic impacts have been particularly felt in the creative and cultural industries, fields already subject to precarity in the form of contract work, freelancing and widespread self-employment (Throsby & Petetskaya, 2017; UNESCO, 2021b). The impact of lockdowns in the arts and creative industries in Australia and elsewhere has been significant, resulting in the closure of traditional arts venues such as theatres, galleries and museums, along with the cancellation of large and small festivals, biennales and events—all of these spaces and activities proving difficult to successfully shift online (Commonwealth of Australia, 2021; Eltham & Pennington, 2021). As UNESCO reported in response to the impacts of the pandemic: 'COVID-19 has exposed pre-existing vulnerabilities within the culture sector. Owing to its heavy reliance on venues and shared experiences, the sector has been among the hardest hit by COVID-19' (UNESCO, 2021b).

Alongside this impact on the creative industries, young people have also been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. While some young people have responded to uncertainty by staying in education to effectively 'shelter' from the precarious job market (Witteveen, 2021), those facing barriers to education (in particular young people with experiences of mental health vulnerabilities and learning difficulties, insecure housing and/or language barriers) have been doubly impacted: unable to find work while disengaged from mainstream education and training (OECD, 2021). The numbers of young people in this predicament are surprising and concerning. Responding in part to the impacts of COVID-19, the United Nations reports:

> In 2019, more than one in five of the world's young people were not in employment, education or training, a proportion almost unchanged since 2005. Quarterly figures indicate that the rate increased from the fourth quarter of 2019 to the second quarter of 2020 in 42 out of 49 countries and territories with data. (O'Higgins, 2020)

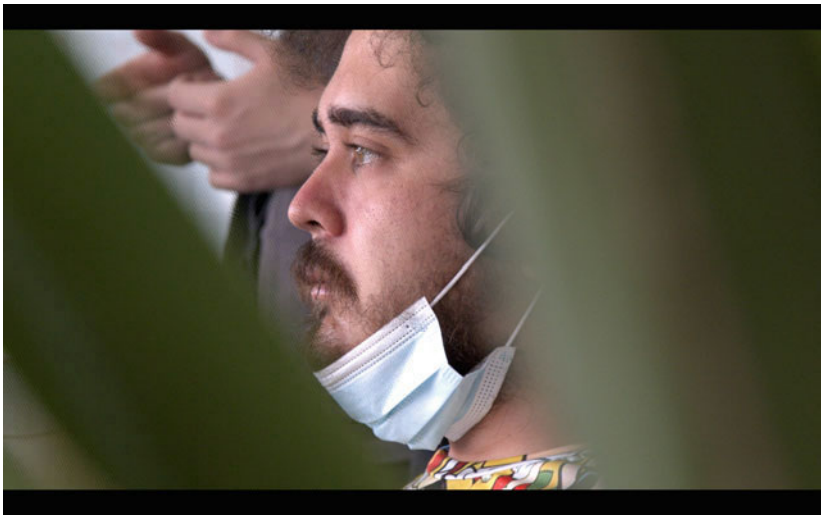

Fig. 1.1 A still from *Emerging* (2020), a video made by students of Youthworx, a media production social enterprise based in Melbourne (Image courtesy of the artists and Youthworx)

Meanwhile, youth unemployment rose in nearly all OECD countries in 2020–2021 (OECD, 2021).

It is in this context that ASEs offer the potential to support young people impacted by global economic conditions and crises, especially in terms of re-engaging them with education and providing pathways to employment (Fig. 1.1). This potential applies to both young people *generally* and those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage more specifically. This is to caution against reducing the activity of ASEs to addressing marginality alone and to insist that the term 'marginalisation' can itself be ambiguous, offensive and even damaging in its use. As we will discuss in further detail later in this chapter, we resist the tendency to associate structural marginalisation with individual identities—which often leads to deficit constructions. Instead, we privilege the skills, talents, interests and voices of young artists engaged in ASEs and understand that they are not in themselves marginal—but are *impacted by* forces of marginalisation. This humanising methodological strategy responds to Eve Tuck's (2009) call to arms for researchers to move away