

# Increasing Managerial Know-How of Higher Education Art Students

Steigerung des Management-Know-hows von Kunststudenten an Hochschulen

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## Introduction

The artist's profession is changing. Art is practised in many different ways, spread differently than before, and consumed under different conditions and in different ways. Higher art education in Western European countries began to respond to these changes two decades ago (*Euro-found / European Monitoring Centre on Change* 2006; Beckman 2010; Bauer et al. 2011; *European Commission* 2007). Thoughts about about new skills needed by future professionals, in the context of changes in the profession, started appearing in Czech higher art education, only fifteen years ago (Krejčí 2005). At first, some universities offered short summer courses or individual seminars on a specific topic. Gradually subjects or modules in the field of management skills began to be included in the curricula. There is not yet a comprehensive overview of what skills an arts graduate needs to be able to work in their field of study. It is also very difficult to establish those needs, given that each of the professions for which students are being trained is slightly different (musicians usually work in a group, often work as teachers, visual artists often work individually) so different skills are needed to realise them. The environment of artistic work changes very quickly, which means that what we teach a student at the moment may not be enough in a few years. That is why it is important for an artist, as a graduate of an art college, to be ready for change and have the ability to learn new things (*The Government of the Czech Republic* 2016).

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Art colleges in the Czech Republic take different approaches to teaching management skills. They include them in curricula as either compulsory or elective subjects. The choice and focus of subjects varies—from self-management, through legal and economic issues, communication skills, entrepreneurship, marketing to fundraising and psychology. Each school and programme takes a different approach to teaching in accordance with the needs and possibilities of the school and in accordance with its accreditation (AMU 2023a-c; HF JAMU 2023a-c; *Faculty of Arts of Ostrava University* 2023).

The topic of training artists in management has not yet been taken up systematically at art universities. There is no unified requirement or methodology coming from the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, which is responsible for universities, although in the strategic documents of the Ministry and the schools the emphasis on student entrepreneurship is mentioned. Likewise, some universities support programmes to increase employability and offer entrepreneurship training that is thematically focused.

### **Subject Performing Arts Management (PAM)**

In the case of the project of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, management entitled, *Ensuring the quality of studies at AMU and strengthening reflection of the latest trends in artistic practice*, supported by the Operational Programme Research, Development, Education of the Ministry of Education and Science, management and entrepreneurship training was the focus (AMU 2023e). One activity of the project was aimed at creating a new Performing Arts Management course (AMU 2023d), taught in English, for students of all three faculties of AMU—Theatre, Film and Television and Music and Dance. The project included the creation of a methodological manual for teachers, the creation of study aids and pilot testing of the course in the summer semester of Academic Year, 2019/2020.

The structure of the semester course was determined based on analysis of the needs of students, alumni and artists. Quantitative research regarding the skills and needs of creative arts students was conducted in all three faculties in 2019. Students acknowledged basic gaps in financial literacy, contract and tax issues, economics and copyright, as well as in the use of digital platforms and marketing (Machova 2019a, b). A networking event, the Student Project Exchange, held in 2018 followed

by a speed-dating activity in the following year, met with enthusiastic response, and connected students from different disciplines (Hayashi 2019). The needs and experiences of the alumni were also assessed in joint meeting/roundtables, moderated discussions with alumni of the school and by use of a World Café format. It became clear that managing one's own creative work while being one's own producer, manager and agent is very challenging and that artists are not equipped for it, nor do they master it (Pešl Šilerová/Vojtíčková 2019).

### **Results, Evaluation and Recommendations**

In the summer semester of Academic Year 2019/2020, an elective course PAM was piloted, which consisted of five blocks: Introduction to Cultural Infrastructure in the Czech Republic, Basics of Copyright, Marketing, Fundraising and Pitching. The course was taught by AMU faculty members who have experience teaching production in music, dance, film and theatre. For the areas of marketing and law, female practitioners were brought in. Thirty students took part in the testing module. Due to the pandemic it was difficult to draw conclusive results. However, from the teaching, evaluation questionnaires and personal consultations it was clear that the students lacked knowledge in the field of production work. They did not know how to plan, they needed advice on the idea of their own projects, they had insufficient ability to present themselves and they appeared to appreciate practical advice and verification of their own skills in the implementation of an individual specific project. In terms of working on their own projects, the most requested help had to do with working on creating an artist portfolio, creating a personal website, formulating a grant application and finding a producer for their own projects. Successful projects formulated included creating a dance company, an industry-specific magazine, a film synopsis, a film trailer, organising a music festival, and producing a marketing plan for an opera project.

Based on the work with students and the verification of the effectiveness and efficiency of the course, the PAM teachers concluded that a systematic introduction of the basics of management for all students of creative fields at AMU would be very useful. In the existing conditions at AMU, it should be possible, beginning with bachelor's degree study, to enable students to realise their own entrepreneurial projects (such as a concert, performance or festival), under the guidance of a teacher in

the student's main area of study and in cooperation with students and teachers from a production background. We determined that this could be accomplished without major spatial, pedagogical and financial costs without a major risk of failure, but with the possibility of acquiring skills that will help them in practice to start their own careers.

## Conclusion

We set out to explore the possibilities of including management and entrepreneurial training to higher education art students at AMU in the Czech Republic. Although this type of training is very common in other universities, in particular in Europe and other parts of the Western world, entrepreneurial and management training for artists and art students is underdeveloped in the Czech Republic. We gathered data using a variety of methods—survey questionnaires, World Café sessions, and pilot courses to determine the feasibility, and need for such courses at AMU. We determined that there is a high need, and high receptibility among students and faculty for this kind of training. We recommend that higher education institutions not currently offering management and entrepreneurial training to art students would find value in adopting similar courses into their curriculum.

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