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Ensuring the Viability of Letterpress Printing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
A Case for an Artist Space in Eugene, Oregon

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Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

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Always, thanks to Brian.

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## Professional Statement

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## Professional Experience

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| 2006        | <i>Educator &amp; Performing Artist</i> , La Caravana Arcoiris Por La Paz, Brazil <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitated workshops in circus arts and sustainability methods to rural and urban low-income communities throughout Brazil.</li></ul>             |
| 2003 – 2004 | <i>Administrative Manager</i> , Earth Economics, Tacoma, WA  |

- Provided administrative support to executive director; assisted in writing and editing of grant proposals, research documents, and media releases; oversaw intern team.

- 2003      *Arts Instructor, Nutrition Co-Coordinator*, Global Youth Village, Bedford, VA
- Wrote, taught, and choreographed performances with international youth in juggling, theatre, and puppetry; worked with a team to prepare meals for up to 100 individuals in commercial vegetarian kitchen.

#### Volunteer + Community Involvement

- 2008 – present      *Co-Director*, Coalescence Dance, Eugene, OR
- Co-directs community dance collective that emphasizes creative, freeform movement for varying ability levels, ages, and backgrounds.
- 2011      *Intern*, DanceAbility International, Eugene, OR
- Assisted in strategic planning, wrote grants, created marketing materials, revised bylaws, and conducted research regarding international governance models; attended the DanceAbility Europe Convention in Vienna, Austria, working as an assistant to a dancer with cerebral palsy.

#### Trainings + Professional Development

- 2012      How to be a Nonprofit Rockstar, Eugene, OR
- 2011      Theatre of the Oppressed Facilitator Training, Port Townsend, WA
- 2011      Community Arts Town Hall, Oregon State Correctional Institution, Salem, OR
- 2011      Visual Culture Symposium, Portland, OR
- 2010      Conflict Resolution & De-escalation three-part series, Eugene, OR
- 2010      Volunteer Management Strategies, United Way, Eugene, OR
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## Abstract

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While letterpress printing is undergoing a cultural and creative transformation, there is a significant absence of opportunities to learn, access, and practice letterpress printing in a community setting. This study explores the historical, systematic, and organizational issues that affect community access to contemporary letterpress printing. Through a comprehensive literature review and analysis from three artist space case studies, this study 1) explores the significance of artist spaces on a macro level; 2) compares and contrasts business models for nonprofit, for-profit, and social enterprises; 3) analyzes three present-day artist spaces featuring letterpress printing; and 4) provides recommendations for a letterpress-focused artist space that would be appropriate in scale for Eugene, Oregon. As several Eugene/Springfield stakeholders have preliminarily identified a need for a community print shop in the local area, this research provides a helpful blueprint toward the development of such a space.

*Keywords:* Artist space, letterpress, printing arts, business models, social enterprise

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Problem Statement

Letterpress printing is undergoing a cultural and creative transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What was once an industrial instrument charged with the task of printing the world's newspapers and books until the mainstream introduction of offset printing in the 1950s, the printing press is now finding a revitalized purpose in underground and popular niche artist markets (Holson, 2006).

In order for art to flourish, there must be a place to make it. For letterpress printers and artists, this place can be hard, if not impossible, to find. For individuals interested in pursuing letterpress printing opportunities, significant barriers to access and participation exist. Education and training are difficult to obtain. Equipment is scarce. The equipment that is available for sale is expensive and burdensome to transport: a Vandercook Universal-I flatbed press, for example, weighs approximately 1,300 pounds, while other presses may weigh up to almost 5,000 pounds, depending on the model ("Vandercook Press Info," n.d). In the blogosphere, one may find letterpress activity alive and well, from community print shops, traveling letterpress trucks, and apprenticeship programs for emerging printers. In the academic world, a mere handful of articles address contemporary letterpress activity and access in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and give scarce credence to the cultural significance of this industrial-turned-artful printing revolution. Without access, knowledge of letterpress printing, and its practical use, can only exist in the hands of the few.

## **Purpose Statement & Questions**

The purpose of this paper is to explore the historical, systematic, and organizational issues at hand that either encourage or impede community access to letterpress printing. More specifically, I will 1) explore the significance of artist spaces on a macro level; 2) compare and contrast business models for nonprofit, for-profit, and social enterprises; 3) analyze the organizational, financial, and programmatic systems of three present-day artist spaces featuring letterpress printing; and 4) provide recommendations for a letterpress-focused artist space that would be appropriate in scale for Eugene, Oregon.

My primary research question asks: How does contemporary letterpress printing remain viable through community access? Sub-questions ask:

- 1) What is the relevance of letterpress printing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?
- 2) What are the processes, steps, and challenges to create and sustain a space where letterpress printing is offered?
- 3) What models currently exist?
- 4) How would one decide on a for-profit or nonprofit entity?
- 5) What factors contribute to a good business plan?
- 6) What should one consider when forming an artist space in Eugene, Oregon?

## **Definitions**

For the sake of clarity in this paper, when I refer to the “printing arts,” this will act as an umbrella term incorporating both printmaking and letterpress printing.

Otherwise, I will identify the field specifically. However, a distinction must be made

regarding letterpress printing and the printmaking field. Printmaking refers to “a process that typically allows artists to make multiple original works of art [where] the artist creates an image on a matrix made out of metal, stone, wood, or other materials – the matrix is then inked, and the inky image is transferred to a piece of paper, often with a press, to create an original print” (“Highpoint Center for Printmaking,” n.d., para. 1). Etching, lithography, woodcut, wood engraving, linocut, and screenprinting are all common techniques of printmaking (“Wikipedia,” n.d.).

Letterpress printing refers to the relief printing process that prints from a plate with raised characters. There is specific press equipment that is used to letterpress print (for example, a Vandercook flat-bed press, or a Chandler & Price platen press). These presses have traditionally used wood and lead type, while contemporary practices have introduced the application of photopolymer plates for printing text and images. Printmakers often print their plates using a letterpress, so overlap does exist between the fields. However, it should be noted that the same is not true for letterpress printers.

Another distinction must be made between the use of traditional and contemporary letterpress practices. Traditional letterpress printing is a weighty, complex, and altogether other world compared to contemporary letterpress activity today. Traditional letterpress first printed bibles and sacred texts, then newspapers, magazines, and other functional printed matter. Today, contemporary letterpress is more often viewed as artful and is conducted on a much smaller scale. As it currently stands, letterpress is a very small player in the way that information is created and shared. More historical context on this topic can be found in Chapter 2.

Finally, it is helpful to further deconstruct the term “viability”. Viability is the “ability of a thing (a living organism, an artificial system, an idea) to maintain itself or recover its potentialities” (“Wikipedia,” n.d.). Letterpress is currently in this place of recovery, but further clarity is needed in order to understand its unique position in history and how it is relevant today.

I bring to this research my skills as a letterpress printer, writer, and admirer of thoughtful design and the written word. I have taken several letterpress printing and artist book courses at the graduate level during my graduate education at the University of Oregon. As of this spring quarter, my artist book proposal has received funding from the University of Oregon’s Office of the President, in which our Advanced Letterpress class will professionally design, letterpress print, and bind an edition of thirty books that will be distributed to the university’s major donors.

In addition, I have been in communication with several local stakeholders who have preliminarily identified a need in the Eugene/Springfield community for an artist space that can connect artists with access to printing equipment and other artists. There is demand for such a space, and there is interest in using such a space if it were to come to fruition. From a professional standpoint, I may benefit by playing a leadership role in the development process. While it is not my official role to make this artist space happen, the very nature of this research suggests that my role could play a part.

## **Limitations**

There is no promise that an artist space will actually form as a result of this research. Such a project would require extensive commitments from many individuals, as

well as a heavy input of time and resources to obtain equipment, supplies, and organizational materials, both initially and over the long term. In addition, while three case sites will provide ample information about the inner workings of community print shops, this information can only offer a partial cross-section of the kinds of models that exist in the United States and beyond. In order to capture a more comprehensive picture, one would need to employ a more thorough methodology and survey a greater swath of organizations.

### **Significance of Study**

The results of this research project will further add to the literature on artist spaces and the roles they do and could play in ensuring the viability of letterpress printing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study provides an analysis of multiple business model templates, with particular emphasis on the introduction of the social enterprise model, which makes a departure from a commonly held perception that nonprofit organizations must inherently struggle for funding, and that there is no money for the arts. This study proposes a balance between mission and money, and the success and stability that can come from this kind of fused strategic thinking.

## CHAPTER 2

The following review of literature provides an overview of several key and interrelated topics, from the historical arc of letterpress printing, the internal and external impacts of artist spaces, and the different structural models for implementing such spaces, from the nonprofit to the for-profit venture. The goal of this literature review is to provide a thorough foundation of the layers affecting the research question at hand. This foundation will help inform the second stage of my research, in which I conduct field research within three artist spaces.

### **A Historical Arc of Letterpress Printing**

Letterpress refers to a relief printing process that prints from a plate with raised characters. The process leaves a subtle impression on the paper from the brief meeting (or press) between the type and the paper. Johannes Gutenberg is often credited as the inventor of the printing press in 1454, but it was actually the Chinese who first invented movable type in 1040 (Carter, 1955). Gutenberg, however, having developed a movable type printing process that remained relatively unchanged for five centuries, has been given credit for spurring the Printing Revolution – an evolution in how information was created, disseminated, and received. Much like the Internet today, the printing press created a sea change in culture, information sharing, and educational opportunities (Holson, 2006). Fast forward to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, when the newly invented offset printing technologies promised – and delivered – a more efficient and effective way to print in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century: this rendered most printing presses, though still fully functional, obsolete in the commercial printing world (Holson, 2006). The figures below

represent just two models of printing presses that have since been rescued and are currently in use in community settings.



Figure 1: Vandercook Universal-4  
(California Center for the Book, n.d)



Figure 2: Chandler & Price Platen Press  
(Asheville BookWorks, n.d.)

Today, the world is shifting ever more quickly into one that captures and disseminates information through digital media. Print media is growing more in the minority. The century-year-old Christian Science Monitor closed its newsroom in 2008, and staff cuts are rampant among major newspaper publishers – especially Gannett, the largest publisher in the country, who laid off 10% of its national work force (Carr, 2008). Google is launching its digital library project, and libraries across the country are re-positioning their missions as “learning centers” to be ones that are increasingly digitally-based. According to one New York-based letterpress printer, “As ever more text is confined to the screen, the finely printed word is becoming a precious commodity” (“Wall,” 2012, para. 8).

Though letterpress printing can no longer compete on a commercial, mass-produced scale, the printed word is making a grassroots comeback. A combination of



novice printers, apprentices, established professionals, and committed 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation printers continue to produce quality and compelling work, from fine-press books, prints, broadsides, and other art, to the more ephemeral work of posters, wedding invitations, business cards, and other works (Pallister, 2010).

It is the printing press's unique capacity to evolve and adapt to current technologies that will ensure its survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It is also the creative problem solving and initiative of artists, graphic designers, writers, and seasoned printers that have kept the letterpress tradition alive. The use and application of what is known as a photopolymer plate has allowed artists to develop their artwork digitally using Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator: the file is created digitally, a negative is made and placed on the photopolymer plate, where it then goes through a similar process when one develops a photograph (see Figure 3). The incorporation and utilization of this technique may have

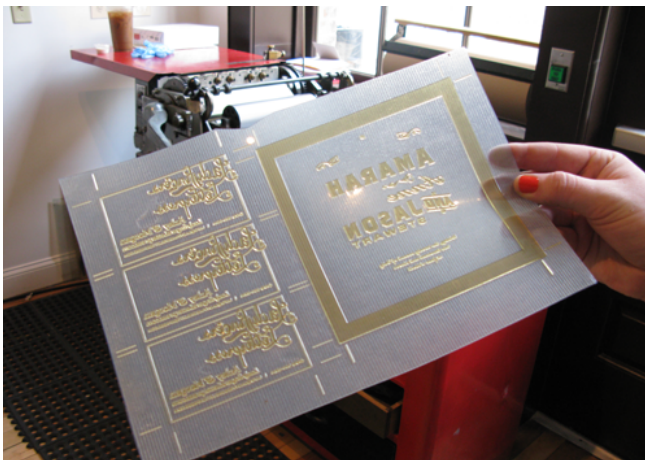


Figure 3: Photopolymer plate (Ladyfingers Letterpress, 2012)

saved letterpress printing from extinction. While many printers are still working with lead type and images, this technique has made an antique process relevant and accessible. Moreover, artists and printers are getting creative with

their printing media. Since letterpress printing is a relief-based printing process, some innovative thinkers have used objects such as Lego®, dominoes, and even bubble wrap in their work ("Physical Fiction," n.d.).

In order to make art, there must be a place to make it. While letterpress has grown in popularity, and with it, the demand to learn how to do it, there is a significant absence of opportunities to learn, access, and practice letterpress printing in a community space. A community space is precisely the kind of setting that can ensure that the future of letterpress printing will remain active and robust. For many, it is impractical to consider that one would purchase, move, and maintain letterpress equipment solely on their own (a printing press is enormously heavy, cumbersome, rare, and increasingly expensive). A more suitable and sustainable solution would be to participate in a cooperative setting in which many individuals share equipment, resources, and knowledge, while taking collective responsibility and stewardship of the space.

This notion of an artist space is fully deconstructed in the following section, which outlines the role of general artist spaces in serving artists and community members, as well as a synthesis of the current literature regarding challenges facing such spaces. This section will not specifically address artist spaces that offer letterpress printing access (see Chapter 3), but will instead discuss the overarching structures and general impact of artist spaces.

## **Artist Spaces**

There are many institutions and organizations that work with letterpress, such as museums, schools, small press shops, and personal studios. To stay within a reasonable scope, I will be focusing on organizations that offer public access for both artists and community members to practice letterpress printing. Such organizations may be called “artist-run” organizations, artist cooperatives, artist collectives, or artist spaces. Subtle

nuances exist for these terms, primarily when it comes to governance structures. For the purpose of this space, I will refer to “artist space” the most, due to its inclusive definition.

The artist space can generally be defined by at the least the following two features:

- 1) *Multi-purpose space*: “A dedicated space for gatherings, shared equipment, individual or group work areas, exhibitions and performances” (Markusen & Johnson, 2006, p. 11), and
- 2) *Inclusivity*: “Anyone who expresses an interest may become a member, have access to the events and services at an affordable price, and apply for merit-based mentorships, funding, and exhibitions” (Markusen & Johnson, 2006, p. 11).

Artist spaces can be a hybrid of sorts between public and private arts organizations. Such organizations have been recognized for producing more avant-garde work and “art of the future” and can often be years ahead of traditional galleries or other such art spaces (Byrne, Carroll, & Ward, 2002).

Artist spaces rise out of the need for artists to continue to develop their creative practice, particularly for those that have recently finished schooling (Markusen & Johnson, 2006). These arts graduates may have only utilized their program’s studio space and equipment throughout the duration of their program. Now, out in the real world, most of these artists do not have the resources to develop and invest in a personal workspace, which can be a costly and time-intensive endeavor. Artist spaces meet this need by providing the space, tools, equipment, and support for both emerging and seasoned artists.

Artist spaces serve as incubators. Many artists, if not most, tend to work in varying levels of isolation. However, many artists cannot exist nor create in a vacuum; there is much importance on the critical role of peer critiques to further inspire and reexamine the artist's work. According to Markusen & Johnson (2006), artist spaces create "depth experiences" in which artists gain access to "mentorships, equipment, workspace, technical assistance, exposure to masters at work...where artists can form networks and informal working groups that persist throughout their careers" (p. 18). Moreover, artist spaces can contribute to professional development. Many artist spaces feature cooperative galleries, which can offer a place for artists to show their work while sharing overhead costs (Gadwa & Muessig, 2011).

Artist space can very often be synonymous with the term community. Community can manifest in multiple ways. There is the internal community of individuals that primarily comprise of the artists themselves. There is the community of art lovers – those that appreciate the particular art form but may not directly participate in the practice of it. These art lovers are also art purchasers, which help fuel the economic network of the artist space. And finally, there is the geographic community: the physical surroundings in which the artist space exists and is a part of. Artist spaces have been connected with economic revitalization in neighborhoods and increased opportunities for cultural participation for local residents (Jackson & Kabawasa-Green, 2007). In addition, Markusen & Johnson (2006) discuss the benefits of artist spaces on the community-at large as contributors to "neighborhood safety, cultural vitality, and beautification of formerly vacant buildings" (p. 20). This creative ecology of community profoundly

expands the range of impact within and beyond the walls of the artist space, as well as encouraging the artistic potential of the individuals involved.

Despite the inherent benefits of artist spaces on the multiple communities involved, artist spaces are not immune to struggle and uncertainty. Nascent start-up organizations that grow in size and structure have to constantly manage growth and change (Markusen & Johnson, 2006). One specific challenge includes the identification and serving of the artist space's constituent group(s). Who are the constituents? Does the organization reach out solely to professional artists? To amateurs? To any and all that fit in between the two? To help clarify this issue of audience, it is important for artist spaces to have a clear mission statement that articulates the ability of the artist space to reach its intended audience(s).

Another challenge is that of governance. In the beginning, an artist space may be pioneered by a handful of individuals, who most likely are the artists interested in seeing such a space come to fruition. As time passes, some artist spaces end up hiring a professional manager to focus more on the administrative side of the artist space. Conflicts can arise between founding directors, new leaders, and a subsequent clash in vision. The creation of a board poses initial potential for struggle, according to Markusen and Johnson (2006), citing that "artist board members resist the recruitment of non-artists and the loss of decision-making power to staff" (p. 14).

Finally, there is the issue of financial solvency. Markusen & Johnson (2006) note that "success as an artists' center requires that leaders and staff perform the roles of a small to medium-sized business, and more – they need to raise contributed as well as earned income and to engage and satisfy diverse constituencies" (p. 30).

What will it take for an artist space – in this case, a community print shop – to thrive? What organizational models are employed? What does it mean to be entrepreneurial, particularly within a nonprofit framework? This is a suitable transition for the next portion of this literature review, which discusses nonprofit, for-profit, and social enterprise models. Each of these models could be an appropriate fit, depending on the philosophy and experiences of the individual or individuals seeking to form an artist space. Understanding the commonalities – and the differences – of each is an important first step.

### **Weighing the Options: For Profit, Nonprofit, and Social Enterprise Models**

There are many ways to define and manage an artist space, and there are benefits and challenges to each – legally, financially, socially, and logistically. The following sections will provide a general overview and discussion of for-profit, nonprofit, and social enterprise models, highlighting the potential strengths, opportunities, and limitations of each as they might be applied to an artist space.

#### *The For-Profit Model*

There are many types of for-profit entities in existence: the Cooperative, a Profit (Business) Corporation, the General Partnership, the Limited Partnership, Limited Liability Companies; and Sole Proprietorship. Figure 4 below provides a breakdown of each organization's primary definition.

Business	Description
<i>Cooperative</i>	Owned and controlled by the people who use its services. They finance and operate the business or service for their mutual benefit.
<i>Profit Corporation</i>	Owned by stockholders or shareholders who elect a Board of Directors. Stockholders are not liable,
<i>General Partnership</i>	Two or more individuals who run a for-profit business are deemed partners. Do not need to file with state but may need to obtain licenses or permits. All partners are personally liable, share equal decisions, unless otherwise arranged, and must report profits/losses on tax forms.
<i>Limited Partnership</i>	Some of the partners take no part in the control or management, but are entitled to shares (or losses) as they have invested money. General partners are personally liable for debts; limited partners are only liable for their personal investment.
<i>Limited Liability Company (LLC)</i>	Fusion of a partnership and corporation. Taxed like a partnership. Members are not personally liable for debts. Members run affairs, or hire managers.
<i>Sole Proprietorship</i>	Completely owned by a single person; that individual is personally liable for all debts.

Figure 4: Business Model Descriptions (Cumfer & Sohl, 2005)

A key characteristic of a for-profit entity is entrepreneurship. Economist Joseph Schumpeter (p. 23) defines an entrepreneur as “someone who changes the existing economic order by introducing new products and services, creating new forms of organization, introducing new markets and production methods, and exploiting new raw materials [...] while others describe it as the pursuit of an idea or approach without regard to resources” (Score Foundation, 2010). Entrepreneurs include concepts and tools such as strategic planning, business planning, the feasibility study, and cost-benefit analysis in their business’s day-to-day operations.

Any for-profit entity is focused on the bottom line, which is the line in a financial statement that shows net income or loss. The bottom line is a tool for measuring fiscal

performance. Did the business make money or not? For-profit businesses are encouraged and expected to make a profit. According to MSU College of Law (2008), “Businesses should be built for potential growth from the outset” (p. 34).

Many for-profit businesses have the advantage of autonomy, which can often create access to capital. According to Morino & Shore (2010), “In the economic marketplace, there are structures and institutions in place for businesses that can demonstrate a return on investment. When the business succeeds, the capital responds” (p. 14).

On the down side, for-profit organizations have tax liabilities. In addition, the Score Foundation (2010) cites, “Desires for profit can conflict with community interests, and shareholder and investor interest can override employee needs and the creation of new jobs” (p. 26).

### *The Nonprofit Model*

There are three distinct nonprofit models for an organization to select from when considering the formal step to becoming an official nonprofit organization: a nonprofit corporation, a charitable trust, or a nonprofit association. For the purpose of this research, I will focus on the structure and practices of a nonprofit corporation.

A nonprofit corporation is a legal entity that is “owned by the public at large, and that excess income over expenses cannot be paid to anyone” (Cumfer & Sohl, 2005). This is one of the primary distinctions when comparing a nonprofit and for-profit entity. Another distinction is that nonprofit corporations are tax-exempt, meaning that net profits of the nonprofit are exempt from federal income taxes. Incorporated nonprofit



corporations also offer the legal protection of limited liability, in which corporation members would not be held personally liable for any debt created by the nonprofit (Cumfer & Sohl, 2005). A nonprofit corporation has the ability to own property, and may be eligible for receiving funding from foundations, so long as the corporation secures a 501(c)(3) tax exemption. The nonprofit is governed by a Board of Directors, who then, in most cases, hires an executive director, who is responsible for hiring and managing additional staff.

There is an oft-perceived perception that a nonprofit organization means *no* profit. Truly, one of the resonating and continuous challenges facing the nonprofit sector as a whole is the lack – or absence – of sufficient funding and growth capital to support organizations in growing stronger, healthier, and more effective in carrying out the organization's mission and objectives (Morino & Shore, 2004).

While a traditional business's main bottom line is profit, a traditional nonprofit's bottom line is its mission. Clear mission, vision, and values statements guide the work of nonprofit organizations. Is the organization closer to achieving its mission? Did the organization meet its program objectives? How does the organization evaluate its effectiveness? Does the organization's programs match the underlying mission?

Nonprofit organizations traditionally receive funding from a combination of sources, from member fees and government funds, to grants and individual donations (Dart, 2004). However, in addition to these financial contributions, it is important to emphasize that a nonprofit *can* earn profit. As MSU College of Law (2008) states, "The difference is that these profits must be utilized for its nonprofit purposes [...] and that no member may privately benefit from the organization. This is different from that of a

shareholder in a traditional Corporation who may earn dividends from the profits of the corporations” (p. 16).

This notion of a nonprofit earning profit poses challenges. According to Morino and Shore (2004), “In the economic marketplace, access to capital is a naturally occurring phenomenon[...]there are structures and institutions in place for businesses that can demonstrate a return on investment” (p. 14). Morino & Shore (2004) conclude, “There’s no such thing as a capital market for nonprofits” (p. 14).

Such a market could significantly impact a nonprofit’s capacity to expand its services, increasing the overall effectiveness of the nonprofit’s mission. The following section introduces the social enterprise model, which addresses these difficulties facing the nonprofit model, through a discussion of alternative funding options and socially-minded business principles.

### *The Social Enterprise*

Nonprofits are incorporating business methods and principles in their organizational infrastructure (“Illinois Facilities Fund” [IFF], n.d.). Doing so marks a significant shift in the thinking of the traditional nonprofit administrator. Indeed, the social enterprise concept is making new strides in the nonprofit sector, breaking away from traditional thinking of how a nonprofit is structured, what the nonprofit’s norms and values are, how the nonprofit carries out its mission, and, perhaps most significantly, how the nonprofit obtains funding and generates revenue.

A social enterprise can be defined as “an organization or venture (within an organization) that advances a social mission through market-based strategies, which

include receiving earned income in direct exchange for a product, service, or privilege” (“Social Enterprise Alliance”, n.d, section 2). The social enterprise is “a blurring of sector boundaries” (“Hirschfield,” 1999, para. 5) and “represents a radical innovation in the nonprofit sector” (Dart, 2004, p. 411). It is a strategic approach that encourages nonprofit corporations to both diversify revenue sources and develop new revenue-generating activities. Most would frame social-enterprise activities as “jointly pro-socially and financially motivated,” which is commonly referred to as the “double bottom line” (Emerson & Twersky, 1996). It should be noted that some for-profit businesses do incorporate a double-bottom line into their business mandate. According to billionaire Ted Leonsis (as cited in Robinson, 2011), “A company should strive to make profits, but it also should be in pursuit of a high calling or some larger purpose [...] For a double-bottom line to be truly meaningful, you need a passion to pursue” (para. 3).

However, according to Canning (2012), “Business entrepreneurs typically measure performance in profit and return, [while] social entrepreneurs assess their success in terms of the impact they have on society.” Take the Richard Hugo House, for example. This Seattle-based literary arts center was born out of a social enterprise model by three entrepreneurial women who sought to fill a gap in their community for an artist space highlighting literary arts. Hirschfield (1999) writes, “We didn’t approach the situation as a great charity. It wasn’t driven by a desperate sense of ‘give money to this dire, dire, cause” (para. 8). Instead, the three women held a vision for a space that was inclusive, creative, innovative, and meaningful for the community, all the while asking themselves, “How can we sustain ourselves and how can we offer a product to a set of clients that really improves the artistic economy?” (“Hirschfield,” 1999, para. 8).

One business strategy that the Hugo House founders employed was a “Founders Circle” dinner for potential investors. At the end of its first dinner, the organization received \$30,000 in start-up funding. While this alone is a significant achievement, the dinner also generated excitement for the vibrant endeavor, and several investors committed to contribute approximately 100 hours of volunteer time. “This is something that you want – not because you’re going to take a fiscal profit out of it – but because you’re going to help yield some profit for the community” (“Hirschfield,” 1999, para. 9). In this case, profit translates to social value.

As the case above describes, it is important that investors see their role not only as a financial contributor, but also as an educational resource. As the Illinois Facilities Fund (n.d.) outlines, “As nonprofits require the necessary capital for earned-income endeavors, they also require access to experienced business professionals, from educational, mentoring and networking resources in the areas of financial management, strategic planning, marketing and general management” (p. 11). The volunteer hours that an investor contributes may make as much of a difference in the nonprofit venture as the investor’s financial contribution.

Initial investment in a nonprofit venture can yield positive results over the long term. When Hugo House began in 1997, nearly 100% of its revenue came from a small group of investors. In 1999, Hugo House had diversified its income into the following: foundations (38%), individual donors (22%), corporate sponsorships (8%), memberships (2%), and earned income from classes, rentals, office space rentals, and ticket/merchandise sales (30%) (“Hirschfield,” 1999). Moreover, according to the Hugo House’s current website, the nonprofit’s paid staff now includes an executive director, an

administrative assistant, facilities manager, receptionist, and a half-time program coordinator (“Richard Hugo House [website],” n.d).

Social entrepreneurs, such as those at Hugo House, are tasked with the following new roles:

- Adopt a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value)
- Recognize and pursue new opportunities to serve that mission
- Engage in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning
- Act boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand
- Exhibit a heightened sense of accountability to the constituencies served and for the outcomes created (Dart, 2004, p. 414).

The fourth bullet point, “without being limited by resources,” especially stands out. Few nonprofit organizations are in a position where they have unlimited resources at their fingertips. Moreover, if they did, such nonprofits are more likely to face criticism of having such an abundant amount of resources. Jessica Jackley, cofounder of Kiva, the first online microcredit social enterprise, and one of the fastest-growing nonprofits in history, has confronted this issue firsthand. Jackley (para. 6) states, “Although perspectives are rapidly changing, and hybrid social enterprises are cropping up everywhere, people still have a lot of misperceptions about the limitations of being a 501(c)(3)” (“Coates & Saloner,” 2009). Kiva has continually evaluated its status as a 501(c)(3) organization, weighing out the costs and benefits that their current status affords them:

“If we did convert to a for-profit model, our users would probably trust us less.<sup>1</sup> If you’re a founder of a for-profit, you can just own the business and you don’t have to gain the consensus of a large set of people,” says co-founder Matt Flannery. “[But] people hold nonprofits to a high standard...they scrutinize how you spend every dollar. I’m glad because it makes us stronger. But it can also slow you down” (“Coates & Saloner,” 2009, para. 33).

Kiva has faced several challenges with creating and managing their social enterprise. Some drawbacks of their nonprofit model include 1) limitations to commercial capital, 2) being beholden to the board, staff, and other stakeholders, and 3) public scrutiny (“Coates & Saloner,” 2009).

On the other hand, Kiva has been able to leverage significant volunteer support, attract well-known individuals to its board, and receive diverse and comprehensive donations. Kiva has been the beneficiary of donations from many big name online advertisers, such as YouTube (who donated 120 million free banner ads), Google (Kiva receives free AdWords), and Yahoo (who donates volunteer hours from employees and search marketing keywords) (“Coates & Saloner,” 2009). Microsoft, Intel, Starbucks, Facebook, and LinkedIn are also among the many that donated either goods or services to Kiva. An organization with 501(c)(3) gives donors the added benefit of giving tax-deductible gifts.

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<sup>1</sup> A 2006 survey showed that 50 percent of Kiva users would not lend on the site if it adopted a for-profit model (“Coates & Saloner,” 2009).

While the social enterprise model may be championed by some, others do or could feel uncomfortable with the notion of an entrepreneurial nonprofit organization. The public's perception of nonprofits is different than for-profits. Others express concern that a focus on generating revenue detracts from an organization's mission, thus weakening the nonprofit's overall impact in the community in which they work. Moreover, those within the nonprofit organization may reject a business model proposal, be it staff or board member. Without proper communication and investment, a move toward a more entrepreneurial approach may alienate board members who feel that business approaches should stay in the sphere of the business sector ("IFF," n.d). As such, it is essential that the board of directors be in full agreement and support if an organization's strategy for securing funds changes. Moreover, as the organization's CEO, the executive director plays an important role as the liaison between the board and the staff ("IFF," n.d).

## Summary

Indeed, for-profit, nonprofit, and social enterprise models offer many similarities: each carries out a mission, each depends on a certain level of financial solvency, and each is committed to achieving financial and social benefit (though the ratio of these benefits will depend on the organization). These models borrow, adopt, and adapt strategies and practices from each other, blurring the lines of who does what, and how. Based on the literature, these three models can all be considered businesses. It is legitimate for nonprofits to generate revenue, just as a for-profit does. According to the social enterprise model, this can offer a great advantage. The difference between these three models, of

course, is the nature of the products and services being offered, and their associated financial or social value.

With these three models in mind, the following section discusses the attributes, factors and considerations of a business plan and how it might inform a plan for an artist space.

## **Business Plans**

A business plan is a planning tool. It is a blueprint and a road map. According to Alter (2000), a business plan “allocates resources and measures the results of your actions, and it helps set realistic goals and make decisions” (p.19). Business plans are an important tool for any organization starting out (such as a nascent community print shop), as well as for already-established businesses and nonprofit organizations. When the existing business is to assume a major change or when planning a new venture, a 3 to 5 year business plan is required, since investors will look for their annual return in that timeframe.

The business planning process helps to evaluate strengths and weaknesses as a potential business owner, and can be an effective tool for a business’s start-up process (“Small Business Administration” [website], n.d.). On the financial side, many lenders require an entrepreneur to have an established business plan. Figure 5 depicts the many arms of a business plan on a macro level.



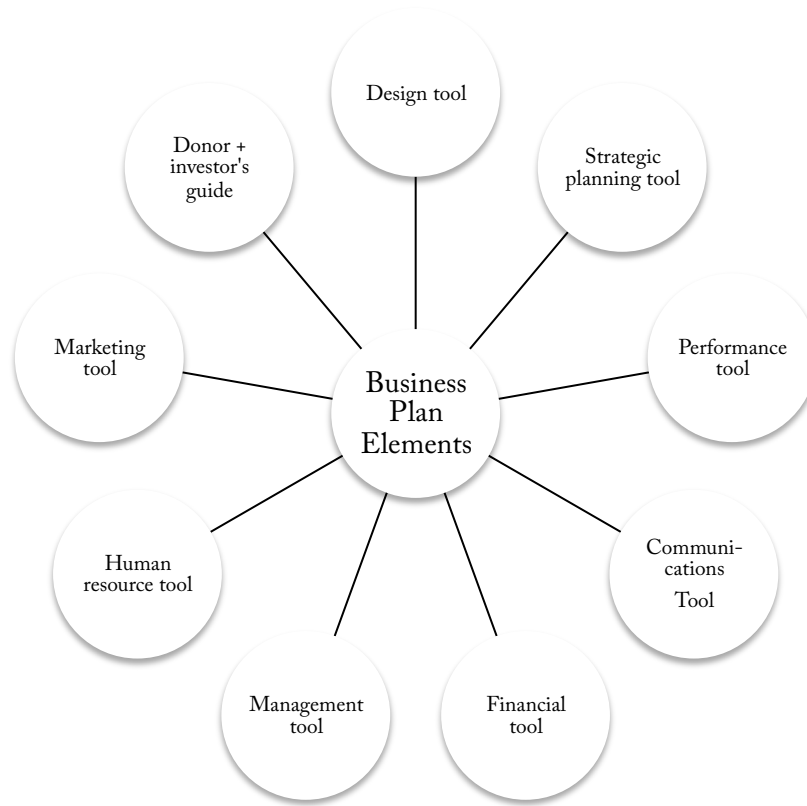


Figure 5: Elements of a Business Plan (Alter, 2000)

According to Alter (200), a general business plan should “articulate the mission of the program; define a strategy based on needs of the target population and customer, market conditions, industry forces, operating environment, and institutional profiles; outline specific actions to achieve program goals and objectives; establish target for planning, measuring, and improving performance; motivate employees; communicate the ideas and plans to stakeholders; and project necessary resources, costs, and revenues of the program” (p. 19). Business plans vary in length, though it is important to stay concise, whether the plan is a one-page summary or a full-length document.

While I expected to find distinctly different business model templates for nonprofit, for-profit, and social enterprise models, they more or less address the same information: each wanted a clearly articulated mission, purpose, and understanding of the product or service being produced or offered.

## CHAPTER THREE

My research question, which asks how contemporary letterpress printing remains viable through community access, remains at the heart of my research process. The purpose of this chapter can be separated into two sections. The first section will provide an outline of my research methodology, the steps I took to select the three sites, a description of the three case sites used in this study, and my strategy for obtaining and interpreting usable data. Thoughtful steps have been taken to receive the most credible and rich data as possible.

The second section of this chapter shares the results of my interviews with the three case sites. These firsthand narratives provide a personal and authentic foundation for understanding the process of starting, funding, and maintaining an artist space today. Most importantly, these narratives play an important role in providing answers to my research question: How does contemporary letterpress printing remain viable through community access?

### Research Methods & Procedures

Field research was a key component in addressing my research question. In order to determine if an artist space might serve as a viable solution to the lack of access to letterpress printing, I selected three organizations to investigate further: EmSpace Book Arts Center, in Portland, Oregon; Atelier Meridian, in Portland, OR; and Asheville BookWorks, in Asheville, North Carolina.

It was important in my selection process to identify organizations that hold similar missions but carry out their work in different ways. It is also important to

represent organizations that are in different stages of growth – from nascent, to firmly established – and how each organization has legally defined their entity (for instance, as a 501(c)(3), an LLC, or neither). While the organizations are based in cities of different sizes and demographics (Asheville has a population similar in size to Eugene at 83,393; Eugene’s population is 156,185, while Portland’s population is considerably higher at an estimated 583,776 [“United States Census Bureau,” 2010) their organizational structures share commonalities, differences, and variances in the scope of their programming, membership, and financial resourcefulness. All organizations offer opportunities to learn and practice letterpress printing. Figure 6 below provides a brief cross-section of the three sites.

Artist Space	Artist Space Description
<i>Em Space Book Arts Center</i>	Em Space “fosters collaborative art endeavors including community partnerships, idea exchange, exhibitions, and education” (website, n.d). Em Space provides space and rare equipment to artists and community members, through a fusion of contemporary and traditional book and letterpress arts.
<i>Atelier Meridian</i>	Atelier Meridian is a working print studio and artist community in Portland’s Lower Albina neighborhood. The studio provides 24 hour access to members, while also opening up the space to workshops, seminars, and private rentals.
<i>Asheville BookWorks</i>	Asheville BookWorks is a community resource for print and book arts located in West Asheville, North Carolina. Through classes, exhibits, lectures, and annual events like BookOpolis and Edible Book Festival, BookWorks acts as a gathering place and learning center for those wishing to practice bookbinding, papermaking, printmaking, and letterpress.

Figure 6: Artist Space Descriptions

My research methodology is qualitative in scope. The main portion of this research consisted of a broad sampling of artist spaces that incorporate letterpress in their workshop programming. It should be noted that letterpress, printmaking, and book arts are often interwoven within arts organizations due to their complementary nature. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the nature and mission of such artist spaces, how the artist space formed, and what general themes were common among seemingly unique artist spaces. Drawing on saturation, crystallization, broad representation, and triangulation techniques will help ensure that my data and subsequent analysis is credible (O’Leary, 2010).

Analysis will primarily draw from interviews, with additional references to internal documents and each organization’s website as needed. Interviewing is an essential and effective tool for conducting research in professional, academic and casual settings (Seidman, 1998). By working with first-hand accounts, I may gain a deeper, broader understanding of the issues at hand. The use of semi-structured interviews facilitates open-ended questions and responses, ensuring that I can receive both the important “nuts and bolts” information in tandem with deeper inquiry (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002).

I have conducted semi-structured interviews with one founder per artist space. Each interview covered a comprehensive list of questions relating to the founding of the organization, financial information, membership process, legal issues, equipment procurement, employee and volunteer base, partnerships, programming, and location/space (see Appendix D). Additional questions addressed the impact the artist space has had on the individual in regards to artistic development and financial gain, as

well as perceived benefits to the community. Given more time, it would have been beneficial to explore with all of the interviewees their views on the historical versus contemporary context of letterpress printing and how that may relate to the mission of their organization. Due to time and resource constraints, my interviews took place over the phone, not on-site. The lives of artist space managers are busy ones. I have reviewed some organizational materials that help inform my analysis. Documents include financial reports, membership forms, and marketing materials. The materials that each organization has varies; the purpose of reviewing these materials will be to understand how the organization is run from a governance perspective, how the organization communicates its mission to the community (both artist and at-large), how (or if) staff receive financial compensation, and what resources the organization draws from to sustain operations. Using information from multiple points of access will ensure greater authenticity in the data.

## **Results from Fieldwork**

I conducted semi-structured phone interviews with 1) Rory Sparks, of Em Space, on March 26, 2012; 2) Jane Pagliarulo, of Atelier Meridian, on April 10, 2012; and 3) Laurie Corral, of Asheville BookWorks, on April 10, 2012. Sparks is the co-founder and current director of Em Space; Pagliarulo is the co-founder of Atelier Meridian and currently holds dual positions as Master Printer and Studio Manager; Corral is the founder and director of Asheville BookWorks.

The information below provides a synthesis of their interview responses, which

have been categorized under the following headings: Leadership, Vision, Constituents, Organizational Models, Fiscal Stability, Affordability, Impact, and Challenges. These categories emerged as a result of my field notes and the questions that were asked of each individual (a comprehensive list of interview questions can be found in Appendix D). These categories are not surprising, as the questions used in the interviews were summary of each organization's essential data. To provide a clear cross-section of these three organizations, the table below shows a summary of each organization's essential data.

Artist Space	Year Founded	Size of Space	Legal Entity	Current Member Roster	Membership Fee	Renewal Options
Asheville Bookworks	2004	3,500 sq. ft	Sole proprietorship	100	24/7 Access: \$375/month Co-op members: \$45.00 Regular \$100 Supporting	Annual, as needed (if electing to do a punch card)
Atelier Meridian	2006	1,200 sq ft	Limited liability partnership	6-8	\$125/mo	Monthly
Em Space	2009	2,400 sq ft	Sole proprietorship	26	\$125/mo (\$75-150, different levels)	Monthly, Annual, per Project

Figure 7: Artist Spaces, Essential Data

### *Leadership*

Em Space, Asheville BookWorks, and Atelier Meridian exist today because of the initial desire, dedication and continued commitment of Sparks, Corral, and Pagliarulo.

These three women are professionally trained in letterpress printing, book arts,

printmaking, or a combination of the three. Their personal work in the field only enhances their leadership presence at their respective artist space.

When beginning the process of creating a community-driven artist space, each woman worked with a small core group of individuals to propel the mission forward. Along the way, due to a variety of reasons, many of these individuals left their core group, leaving just the founders remaining (except in the case of Pagliarulo, of Atelier Meridian, who continues to collaborate with another co-founder). Sparks, of Em Space, who originally worked with two volunteer administrators who both stepped down at different points in the process, remarked, “It’s a lot to ask of someone.” In the case of Asheville BookWorks, Corral collaborated with a core group of four individuals, though she shared that she was the one working with most urgency. “I lit a fire under the project, probably because my name was on the lease and I was the only one financially supporting it.” In addition, Corral comments, “It takes one person to be responsible – to do it. With people having their own lives, you need one or two people who say, ‘I can devote my life to this.’”

Currently, Corral has partnered with an individual with a background in papermaking. The two have established what is called a state of grace document, a collaborative contract that “builds, sustains, and transitions internal and external business relationships with trust and respect in order to increase the health of both people and profits” (“Blueprint of We,” n.d., para. 1). While not technically a legal contract, Corral remarked that it has helped her business partner and herself stay on track in regards to their business relationship. She also stated that ultimately, she would like to develop a state of grace document that incorporates and involves each member of the artist space.

Pagliarulo initially proposed an artist space to the board of Print Arts Northwest, with the hope that it would be supported by the organization's members. While the board declined the opportunity to support a space, two individual board members volunteered to assist in the development (one was proficient in legal and financial matters; the other, networking in the printing community). As stated above, Pagliarulo continues to work with one of the original co-founders today at Atelier Meridian.

### *Vision*

A resounding trend among the three artist spaces is that each grew out of a vision of community. Corral's vision was "to build a community of book artists and printers". Sparks shared, "It was important to have a community space for access that isn't just for students, but for the public as well. I enjoy the collaboration and the nature of a community studio." With Pagliarulo, "A community space grew out of my own desire to have a place to teach, share my tools, and that's affordable. I love to teach and I was excited about sharing techniques with people."

Within the three artist spaces, another resounding vision is that of community initiative and involvement. Each space encourages its artist members to take ownership of the space, and there are structures in place to support this relationship. Sparks shared, "It's not just me running the space – all of the members take pride and ownership. We try to make it welcoming and open – it's the biggest part of our mission." Em Space asks each member to provide five hours of volunteer time per month, hosts monthly meetings, and organizes committees that work on earned income, membership, outreach and



education, and market place development (e.g. gallery openings, receptions, and an EmSpace branded line).

Asheville BookWorks takes a similar approach with member-based involvement, and relies heavily on a community-centered, community-driven model. “We started a co-op – I say ‘we’ because I see it as us, a community,” Corral states. This co-op of 100 members have developed many successful programs, including the following: an artist-in-residency program; a “share-your-skills” project in which co-op members organize monthly skill trainings; a lending library; an open studio run by co-op monitors; and critique groups. Asheville BookWorks has developed varying levels of involvement, from internship and volunteer opportunities, to “key holders” – those long-term, dedicated members who have been granted additional access to the workspace.

Finally, these artist spaces grew out of a vision for access. In Pagliarulo’s case, a local printing cooperative had just closed and its 25 members had nowhere to go. Sparks specifically referenced a lack of access to letterpress equipment in the Portland area – that it is daunting to personally acquire equipment that is old, expensive and difficult to maintain. “I decided to pool people together that had the equipment, and who would be willing to share.” After a letterpress exhibit inspired her, Corral felt drawn to make printing more accessible. She contacted several letterpress printers and book artists in the Asheville community that had their own private work spaces or studios, which put the wheels in motion for a community space.

## *Constituents*

Asheville BookWorks has a constituent base of approximately 100 members; EmSpace, 26; and Atelier Meridian, between 6-8. Members from each artist space share similar characteristics. Many have recently left college with degrees in book arts, printing, and graphic design. Some are full-time printers, while others use it as their creative outlet while working full-time elsewhere. Other members include designers, screen-printers, and bookbinders. The range of work varies as well, from fine-press publishing to wedding invitations and business cards.

It is important to note that founders acknowledged that their artist space is situated in a geographic region where there is a significant creative contingency, which is in part due to formal educational opportunities and creative institutions. In Portland, Sparks credits Oregon College of Arts and Craft and Northwest College of Art for supporting emerging and seasoned artists in the region. “Portland does not have a proprietary attitude – it’s a very supportive community,” Sparks shared. Corral acknowledged Asheville as having a long history of supporting a craft-based culture, partly due to its close proximity of Penland School of Craft, coupled with the city growing more as a destination for artists from University of Alabama and University of Iowa MFA programs. Pagliarulo discussed the presence of the Northwest Printmaking Guild as a key organization that connects and supports printmakers and artists in the region. In essence, creativity is practically inherent in the community fabric.

### *Organizational Models*

All three artist spaces are registered businesses: Em Space and Asheville BookWorks are sole proprietorships, while Atelier Meridian is a Limited Liability Partnership. All three founders created business plans at the beginning stages of the process. Unfortunately, each business plan was irretrievable, either due to hard drive damage or misplacement of the hard copy file.

The three founders shared the notion that a nonprofit model would not work for them. Asheville BookWorks did work within a nonprofit organization for a year, and a percentage of money raised was directed to the nonprofit. “It became too cumbersome and heavy, with many hoops we had to go through.” Pagliarulo shared her experiences with arts nonprofits as “headaches” and that they take a “hellacious amount of work.” Sparks, too, expressed reluctance in turning EmSpace into a nonprofit, with concerns that it would shift the mission of the organization in order to meet specific requirements for funding.

Sparks clarifies, “ We’re not a cooperative. I do like to keep everyone’s best interests in mind. When making decisions, if it’s simple, day-to-day things, I use my best judgment. If it affects the studio members, I open it up to our membership base.”

### *Fiscal Stability*

All three organizations are making it – but all three interviewees shared that they are not making very much. All three organizations are primarily supported by memberships: these dues generally cover the expenses of rent and utilities. This permits the artist spaces to be self-sustaining, but it doesn’t provide for much more. Typically,

any additional funds generated go directly back to the business for repairs, facility improvement, or purchases of new equipment. This also means that outside of teaching workshops, Pagliarulo, Corral, and Sparks are unpaid volunteers.

Pagliarulo offered, “When you start any business, expect the first three years to not bring in any profit. It was poor timing on our part, with the recession, but we honestly had no idea. It actually took us five years to make a profit. We mostly broke even; what we did make we put back into the business.” In Pagliarulo’s case, her plan was to cover rent with membership (which is currently happening). She had also hoped to create enough workshop programming and commercial printing opportunities that would pay her a steady wage. These two initiatives have not been as successful: some workshops occur, and Pagliarulo is paid for teaching them. However, the majority of the funds supplement the operations of the artist space. This is an almost identical situation for Sparks: “I don’t take a salary. It’s 100% volunteer.”

Asheville BookWorks is able to support one paid position that works Monday through Friday, for four hours daily, but it is not Corral who is in this role. This position handles registration, graphic design and communication, and volunteer coordination, among many other tasks. Corral reports, “Frank (my business partner) and I look at all the numbers at the end of the year, and we realize that I do need to be paid[...]but we would have to make a commitment to not make any improvements that year. We’d have to limit how we grow.”

In addition to membership, each space offers a range of programming opportunities and fundraising events that bring in additional funding. EmSpace hosts an annual anniversary celebration and member show, featuring a raffle, silent auction, food,

drinks, and music. The impact is two-fold: it brings in new people to the space, and it provides funding for facility and equipment improvements. Em Space receives earned income from workshop offerings, which consist of letterpress, bookbinding, box-making, linoleum block printing, and screenprinting. EmSpace also offers design, printing, binding, and cutting services, while an Etsy shop showcases members' work.

Asheville BookWorks receives earned income through an ongoing workshop schedule of courses on letterpress, bookbinding, printmaking, and papermaking. Additional programs include a gallery space, an artist-in-residency program, and book exchanges. Asheville BookWorks hosts an annual BookOpolis, a weekend event that showcases contemporary book arts and original prints. Proceeds from a raffle during the weekend support Asheville BookWorks Artist-in-Residence program.

### *Affordability*

All three founders cited affordability as a key principle of their respective artist space, with demonstrated commitments to run the space on a shoestring budget. Pagliarulo gifts 3-month memberships through Print Arts Northwest's Emerging Printmakers residency program, in addition to offering a free six-month artist-in-residency to one emerging artist.

Em Space collaborates with ADX (Art Design Portland), an artist space that Sparks described as similar in structure as Em Space, but bigger in scale, and, as a laser, welding, and wood shop, more industrial in scope. The two organizations have been involved in mutual events, and each offer discounts to the other organization's members.

## *Impact*

The impact of these artist spaces ranges from personal to community benefit. Sparks stated, “It’s really exciting to report that members make the leap to become full-time artists. It makes it more viable to have this space.” She continued, “I was able to quit my job and be here full-time. I couldn’t imagine a better day-to-day existence.” Both Sparks and Corral are able to carve out time to continue their creative practices. Meanwhile, the impact for Pagliarulo of Atelier Meridian has in part limited her personal creative work. “I was warned that this would happen. You can get tapped by enough people that by the end of the day, the creative and physical energy dissipates.”

Perhaps the most significant impact of these artist spaces as they relate to this research question is that there are thriving artist communities that currently carry on the tradition of letterpress printing. Says Sparks: “My mission is to make sure that everyone knows how to use the presses responsibly.” Moreover, each space offers ongoing letterpress classes and weekend intensives. This investment in beginner to intermediate education will ensure that individuals are well-trained and equipped with the resources they need to begin printing, or continue to print, on their own.

It should be noted that Atelier Meridian primarily focuses on printmaking, with just one Chandler and Price platen press in its equipment roster. Pagliarulo does offer regular letterpress courses, but when considering future growth, she considers the amount of room that a press and its equipment requires (particularly drawers of type). “If someone was a serious letterpress printer, I might refer them to Em Space, or another similar place – they just have more equipment.”

## *Challenges*

Aside from the already stated issues of finances, both Sparks and Pagliarulo discussed balancing workshop offerings with having space for members to work. “It can be a challenge to keep everyone happy,” shared Pagliarulo. “We’ve only lost one member because of our workshop schedule. The member couldn’t get in often enough to make prints.”

Says Sparks, “It’s more of a working space for members[...]to be in the shared studio environment. I don’t feel like we’ve reached capacity yet: it hasn’t felt too crowded, and people can access the equipment.” Sparks continued, “I really like the size of it, where it is now. I don’t want to turn it into something really big.”

All three spaces offer unpaid internships and opportunities to volunteer. While those that intern or volunteer receive certain benefits for their time (discounted workshop or membership fees), it isn’t always easy. “It takes time to coordinate people,” said Corral. “The problem is managing them – they don’t always show up,” stated Pagliarulo.

## *A Vision for the Future*

When asked the question, “Where would you like to see your role with the organization in five years,” each founder offered a similar response that mentioned enough income to pay staff (either themselves, or others), more time to devote to artwork and teaching, and more members.

Pagliarulo envisioned three phases in which Atelier Meridian could generate additional earned income: gallery development featuring fine art prints, with commissions going back to the space; a collective frame shop, which would include sub-

leasing spaces to private studio artists; and a commercial shop, in which artists would charge fees-for-services. Pagliarulo has also considered reaching out to youth, particularly those at risk, or other populations that may not have the resources to pay for classes. “It feels a little risky, but it would be rewarding,” she remarked. “But right now, my biggest challenge is time.”

Sparks has considered promoting more classes, reaching out to corporate groups, and improving advertising methods, as most classes do not reach capacity currently. “I need to be careful so members don’t feel like they can’t be in there because a class is going on. So – I’m moving forward slowly, so I don’t go too far and end up backpedaling.”

“We’re self-sustaining right now. I’d love to see it even more so, with more artists coming in to use the studio space,” Corral commented. “It would be nice to get to the point where it could run without me, so I can do more of my own work.”



## CHAPTER FOUR

Letterpress printing is indeed undergoing a cultural and creative transformation, in part due to the presence of artist spaces that offer public access to letterpress equipment, resources, and support. These spaces help to ensure that letterpress printing practices can be learned, shared, and enjoyed for personal and public benefit for more years to come.

The purpose of this research was to address the question, “How does contemporary letterpress printing remain viable through community access?” An extensive literature sought to highlight the historical arc of letterpress, the role and impact of artist spaces, and nonprofit, for-profit, and social enterprise models. Field research was conducted through the use of semi-structured interviews with three artist spaces that offer public access to letterpress printing. A synthesis of those interviews, along with additional information obtained from each artist space’s websites, found consistent and compatible results.

Paul McKee (as cited in Gadwa & Muessig, 2011) defines a successful artist space as, “one that is kept up and safe. It has amenities that the people renting it need [...] and if it continues to facilitate growth in the arts in the neighborhood” (p.55). Gadwa and Muessig (2011) also define a successful artist space using the following criteria:

1. Affordable, stable, and physically appropriate space for artists and arts groups
2. Effective internal governance and deepening artist investment
3. Active, dynamic, and artistically rigorous internal communities
4. Opportunities for public access and engagement

5. Geographic connectivity, arts density, and complimentary community-development initiatives (p. 40).

Based on the findings of my communications with each individual from Em Space, Atelier Meridian, and Asheville BookWorks, these artist spaces meet the criteria listed above. It is an achievement that these three artist spaces are self-sustaining, though there are obstacles to generate enough revenue so that the individuals spearheading and stewarding these spaces are adequately compensated for their personal investment. Nonetheless, with a dedicated cadre of leaders and members, these artist spaces are uniquely positioned for future growth.

### **Making a Case for an Artist Space in Eugene, Oregon**

I was drawn to this research because I wanted to know what it would take to create an artist space that offered community access to letterpress printing in Eugene, Oregon. At present, the only public facility in Eugene that offers access to letterpress printing is the University of Oregon. Due to insurance reasons, only those registered for a full-quarter letterpress class or a weekend intensive may use the letterpress studio, and once the course has ended, so ends one's time in the studio. Moreover, classes are expensive, and they fill up quickly. The next closest public space would be a two-hour drive to Portland. From my perspective, there is a distinct need and demand for an artist space locally.

After researching Em Space, Atelier Meridian, and Asheville BookWorks, I began to think about an artist space in Eugene. What would such a space look like? How

would it function? What sort of resources would it need? What organization model would it employ? What steps would one take to carry out such a proposal?

## **Recommendations**

Based on my research results, I recommend considering the themes of core leadership, strategic vision, diverse funding, creative programming, networking, and community engagement. These recommendations, while grounded and informed by experience, research, and practical knowledge, are by no means an ultimate, final say in regards to the development of an artist space. They are, however, a good start.

### *I. Core Leadership*

A minimum of two individuals, and ideally four, would form the core group of the artist space. I would not advise one person to shoulder the responsibility of starting a community print shop on his or her own. The risk of burnout is too great. Moreover, the very essence of a community print shop is based on the core principle of community – a community of one would not be the most accurate reflection of the values of the space. In addition, as two of the featured artist spaces in Chapter 3's field research showed, leadership groups can dwindle to one administrator. While not a guarantee, a solid group of several individuals will help safeguard against the risk of leaving one person to bear the weight of running the space.

A group of several co-founders offers more benefits than just guarding against risk. More individuals will (ideally) mean more skills, resources, connections, and support. Such a group would have a combination of skills in the following: letterpress

printing, arts administration, volunteer management, business sense, finances, and legal expertise (or a connection to someone with such knowledge). In addition, it will be key that each individual recognizes the need for and champions the cause of a community print shop: that the group is passionate, dedicated, and committed to working together to achieve such a goal.

One cannot have a community print shop without equipment to print with. With this in mind, it will be important that the core group has equipment to contribute to the space, or they have connections to others in the extended community who could provide equipment or materials.

I recommend crafting a State of Grace document (per Laurie Corral's experience with Asheville BookWorks). Such a document will help to clarify the relationship, expectations, and commitments of each of the group members. While not a legal contract, such a document could support a healthy group dynamic, while holding each individual accountable to their role in the group.

## *II. Strategic Vision*

I would like to entertain the idea of initiating a social enterprise nonprofit organization. While it is work to become a 501(c)(3), one cannot ignore the benefits of foundation and government grants and tax-exempt status, coupled with the potential for generating earned income that aligns with the mission of the artist space. Moreover, the public may be more supportive of a nonprofit entity versus a business, as the public may connect the organization more as contributing to a greater social cause and filling a vital creative need.

With a social enterprise model in mind, a strategic vision means having a business plan. A business plan for a social enterprise would include an executive summary, a market analysis, an organizational description (including a clear mission, values and vision, as well as a breakdown in management), marketing and sales strategies, service and product line, the funding request, financials, and forecasted income. It would also detail the social return of the investment – establishing indicators to identify and evaluate the potential social impact of the venture.

A feasibility study would inform the market analysis. It will be important to ask the community what they want, what is needed, and how they think the space could be supported. A feasibility study connects with potential stakeholders and constituents and can ask individuals about their willingness to financially contribute to the organization in the future. This begins the conversation of “The Ask,” that conversation between a potential donor and the organization.

A strategic vision is one that is in for the long haul. Atelier Meridian’s Pagliarulo recommended a five-year plan to begin with.

### *III. Diverse Funding*

A social enterprise would create innovative avenues for a diverse funding stream, from earned income and corporate support, to individual donations and grants from foundations. As evidenced in the three artist space models, membership fees provide a consistent stream of revenue, while some additional fundraisers and workshops supplement the space. I am interested in exploring what can be achieved in addition to these fees.

It is now considered best practice for the Board of Directors of any nonprofit to give a financial contribution to the organization of which they govern. Board contributions will be a good start. In addition, Boards often have connections to those with additional resources – be it financial or otherwise. Drawing from Hugo House’s model, I would suggest identifying an initial group of investors and hosting a dinner, during which the core leadership group would present the business plan, with a clear financial goal specified.

Earned income is another essential piece of a social enterprise model. For example, earned income could come from a combination of any of the following (this is not an exhaustive list):

1. Workshops in letterpress, book arts, creative writing. These workshops will be an essential component of the artist space; see the section V for a more detailed description.
2. A store that features local artist’s work, in addition to commercial letterpress cards, posters, books, envelopes, and other ephemera.
3. An online shop (or a collective Etsy store) that sells local prints. These prints would be made by the member base with the dual purpose of supporting the space and the individual artists (in a 50/50 split).
4. Fees for services (wedding invitations, business cards, and so forth). Proceeds would support the artist and the space.
5. A gallery space.

Many of these suggestions might not be able to occur right away (for instance, if only a minimum amount of printing equipment exists in the space, workshops would be a

hard sell). It will be important for the core leadership group to prioritize what should come first, what the need is, how the physical space can accommodate the vision, and when the space is ready to expand and take on more responsibilities and offer more opportunities.

Ultimately, the core group would need to demonstrate a commitment to, and ongoing integration of, a double-bottom line (matching mission with adequate funding). The ability to articulate the necessity for a community print shop – and the reasons why a social enterprise model is well-suited for the job – is paramount. Should the core group lack consensus about its chosen business model, problems will ensue.

#### *IV. Networking*

A new community print shop will need artists, teachers, skills, tools, materials, equipment, and publicity – to start. Thankfully, there are many opportunities to partner, collaborate, and offer mutual support in the Eugene and Springfield region. Like Portland and Asheville, the Eugene/Springfield region has a creative culture in both higher education and community settings. It will be important to establish relationships with key stakeholders: individual artists, artist groups (such as the Emerald Book and Paper Arts workshop group), and local arts organizations (Materials Exchange Center for Community Arts, or M.E.C.C.A, and Maude Kerns Arts Center, for example). Establishing relationships with art instructors at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College will be immensely valuable. If a student is unable to register for a print class, the student could be referred to the community print shop. This could be an

important resource to these students, particularly upon graduation, as they no longer have the access of studio space that they were accustomed to.

#### *V. Diverse Programming*

A feasibility study will help determine what sort of programming opportunities the community might be interested in, what skills some may be able to offer in the form of instruction, and what the community might be less interested in supporting.

My assumption is that there will be a high need for beginning letterpress instruction – not only because letterpress knowledge is limited in this area, but because every individual that is involved in the space, either as a member or as a one-time workshop participant, needs to be trained in letterpress use, safety, and general rules of the community print shop. Providing thorough training strengthens the backbone of the artist space, particularly the culture of the workspace: do members take care of the equipment? Is the space cleaned up after a big project? Are members respectful of the space and each other? Proper and continued training ensures that each member starts off on the right foot, so to speak.

In addition to the natural cross-pollination of book arts, paper arts, and printmaking, I would also encourage the idea of incorporating more literary arts in the community print space. Collaborations with local writers and writers' groups could be a welcome addition to the space.

Diverse offerings will spark new creative interest. Em Space, Asheville, and Atelier Meridian all offer a steady, creative selection of workshops that relate to printing, printmaking, and book arts. An ongoing workshop program will also support and



highlight professional teaching artists in the community, drawing on local skills, knowledge, and talent.

## *VI. Community Participation*

The final theme I wish to mention is that of community participation. A community print shop can only be as strong as the community that supports it. Artist space members are important and essential resources, and it is essential to harness the creative potential of committed individuals through the development of a vibrant membership program. Member involvement can signify more personal ownership, investment, and continued commitment to steward the space. Such a program could place members in roles such as marketing and outreach, volunteer coordination, fundraising, education, and workshop instruction.

A community print shop requires an infrastructure that is strong enough to withstand transition and change. There will be the inevitable turnover of members. However, a solid and diverse member base – with members ranging from youth, college students, professional artists, and individuals searching for a new creative outlet – will ensure a steady stream of support.

## **What I Would Do Differently**

Part of the inquiry into my research question was the exploration of organizational models. What models exist? When I began sifting through the literature regarding for-profit and nonprofit models, I was pleased to discover the existence of a third model – the social enterprise. At that point in my research process, I had already

contacted and secured commitments from the three artist spaces that I used in my field research. Had I learned earlier of social enterprises, I would have sought an artist space that was a nonprofit entity employing social enterprise principles. This would have made a rich contribution to the notion of a sustainable artist space and to the arts field, as a whole. If I were unable to locate a social enterprise model, I would have secured at least one organization that was an established 501(c)(3). Having a diverse pool of organizational models to compare and contrast would aid in the selection process between a nonprofit or for-profit entity.

## **Conclusion**

It is possible for letterpress printing to remain viable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Based on evidence from this field research of three contemporary artist spaces offering letterpress printing, the practice of letterpress printing is alive, well, and viable. As the very definition of viability denotes, letterpress has found a way to reinvent itself through community access, educational opportunities, and collective support for individuals to explore, experiment, and redefine letterpress. While an artist space is not the only way to experience and interact with letterpress, these spaces serve a public need, produce social value, and ensure that individuals who wish to participate in letterpress have an accessible place in which to do so.

Not only can letterpress printing remain viable as a whole, this viability can translate to a local level through the formation and implementation of a community print shop in Eugene, Oregon. It is good fortune that there are many artist spaces in the nation that are working testaments to the value and necessity of such an important community

resource. These artist spaces have already laid the groundwork. Through similar persistence, innovation, and dedication, a committed group of Eugene community members could turn the idea of an artist space into a well-deserved reality. This would add to the nationwide network of organizations that are already teaching and preserving this centuries-old tradition, ensuring that letterpress printing can remain an accessible practice for many years to come.

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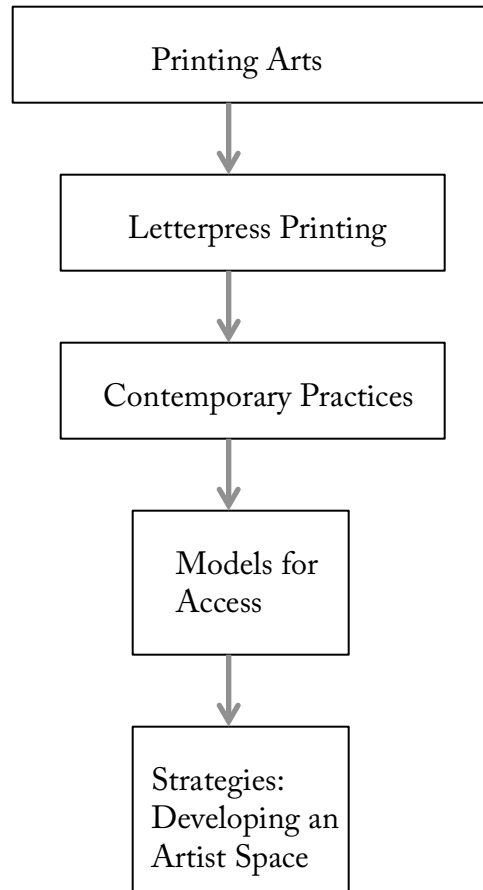
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## Appendix A: Conceptual Framework





## Appendix B: Sample Recruitment Form

Dear Ms. Corral,

Your organization, Asheville BookWorks, is invited to participate in a research project titled “Ensuring the Viability of Letterpress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Making a Case for the Printing Arts Collective”, conducted by myself, Amanda Kaler, from the University of Oregon’s Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore different models of artist spaces featuring letterpress printing and to determine what kind of artist space may be suitable for a city such as Eugene, Oregon.

Letterpress printing is undergoing a cultural and creative transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order for this art form to flourish, there must be a place to make it. For letterpress printers and artists, this place can be hard, if not impossible, to find. This research study will seek to address this gap by identifying several organizations, spaces, or projects that have created access to an industry-turned-art form that was at one point almost considered extinct. This study will 1) seek to understand the composition of each artist space, and the unique challenges that they face; 2) measure interest and support regarding the creation of a printing arts cooperative in a local community where no public access to letterpress printing exists; and 3) draft a business plan based on a synthesis of the research conducted.

Your organization was selected to participate in this study because of its diverse program offerings featuring letterpress printing, and the community model in which your organization is run. Your organization is also located in a smaller city with a population similar in size to Eugene, which will make the transferability of information more appropriate.

If your organization decides to take part in this research, you will be asked to participate in an interview, as well as to provide relevant organizational materials (such as membership forms, bylaws, and so forth). During the interview I will take handwritten notes, and with the interviewee’s permission, I will also use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. It should be noted that your participation is voluntary, and will be conducted only after consent is given. This research will be conducted between March and May, 2012.

There is certainly much to discuss! Please feel free to contact me at (541) 345-0923 and [akaler@uoregon.edu](mailto:akaler@uoregon.edu), or Dr. Doug Blandy, at (541) 346-3683. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510. Thank you in advance for your consideration. I will contact you shortly to speak about your potential involvement in this study.

Best wishes, Amanda Kaler

## Appendix C: Consent Form

### Understanding the Viability of Contemporary Letterpress Printing

Amanda Kaler, Principal Investigator  
University of Oregon Arts & Administration Program

You are invited to participate in a research project titled *“Ensuring the Viability of Letterpress Printing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Making the Case for A Printing Arts Collective in Eugene, Oregon,”* conducted by Amanda Kaler from the University of Oregon’s Arts and Administration Program. The purpose of this study is to explore different models of artist spaces featuring letterpress printing and to determine what kind of artist space may be suitable for a city such as Eugene, Oregon.

Letterpress printing is undergoing a cultural and creative transformation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In order for this art form to flourish, there must be a place to make it. For letterpress printers and artists, this place can be hard, if not impossible, to find. This research study will seek to address this gap by identifying several organizations, spaces, or projects that have created access to an industry-turned-art form that was at one point almost considered extinct. This study will 1) seek to understand the mission and composition of each artist space, and the unique challenges that they face; 2) measure interest and support regarding the creation of a printing arts cooperative in a local community where no public access to letterpress printing exists; and 3) draft a business plan based on a synthesis of the research conducted.

You were selected to participate in this study because of your involvement with Asheville BookWorks, and your experiences with and expertise pertinent to letterpress printing. If you decide to take part in this research project, you will be asked to provide relevant organizational materials and participate in a phone interview, lasting approximately one hour, to take place between March and April, 2012. If you wish, interview questions will be provided beforehand for your consideration. Interviews will be scheduled at your convenience. In addition to taking handwritten notes, with your permission, I will use an audio tape recorder for transcription and validation purposes. You may also be asked to provide follow-up information through phone calls or email. There are minimal risks associated with participating in this study, particularly since this phase of research is exploratory in nature.

With your permission, your name will be used in any resulting documents and publications. However, if you wish, a pseudonym can be assigned to all identifiable data that you provide so that your identity can be protected. It may be advisable to obtain permission to participate in this interview to avoid potential social or economic risks related to speaking as a representative of your organization. Your participation is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

I anticipate that the results of this research project will be of value to furthering the success of education, access, and participation in the field of printing arts. However, I cannot guarantee that you personally will receive any benefits from this research.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (541)345-0923, [akaler@uoregon.edu](mailto:akaler@uoregon.edu), or Dr. Doug Blandy at (541) 346-3683. Any questions regarding your rights as a research participant should be directed to the Office for the Protection of Human Subjects, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403, (541) 346-2510.

Please read and initial each of the following statements to indicate how you would prefer to be identified:

\_\_\_\_\_ I consent to my identification as a participant in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to maintain my confidentiality in this study through the use of a pseudonym.

Please read and initial the following statements to note your agreement:

\_\_\_\_\_ I consent to the use of audiotapes and note taking during my interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I consent to the potential use of quotations from the interview.

\_\_\_\_\_ I consent to the use of information I provide regarding the organization with which I am associated.

\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to have the opportunity to review and possibly revise my comments and the information that I provide prior to these data appearing in the final version of any publications that may result from this study.

Your signature indicates that you have read and understand the information provided above, that you willingly agree to participate, that you may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty, that you have received a copy of this form, and that you are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies. You have been given a copy of this letter to keep.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your interest and participation in this study.

Sincerely,  
Amanda Kaler  
1/30/12

## Appendix D: Sample Interview Questions – Artist Space Founder/Manager

1. What is your position?
2. What is your work history with this organization? (e.g. how did you get involved, how long have you been with the organization, etc.)
3. How did the organization start? Why did it start?
4. What are your programs?
5. Who runs your organization – how are decisions made?
6. Please describe the financial/funding structure of your organization. How is your situation different now as opposed to a year ago?
7. What are some success stories?
8. What have been the biggest challenges that your organization has faced? How have you handled them?
9. Have you had to work with many legal issues regarding safety and liability?
10. What was your process in acquiring equipment?
11. What is your membership process?
12. Who are your members?
13. Who would you like to reach out to more?
14. Describe your organizational culture.
15. What lessons has the organization learned since its inception?
16. Where does the organization see itself in five years?
17. Is there a need that this organization is meeting in your community? How?
18. Who are your partners?

## Appendix E: Sample business plan template

Sample Business Plan Template	
Executive Summary	Content includes: mission statement; start date of business; names of founders and their roles; number of employees; business location; description of products/services; banking and investor information; summary of company growth and market highlights; summary of future plans.
Market Analysis	Industry description and outlook; target market information; market test results; lead times; regulatory restrictions; and an evaluation of the competition.
Company Description	A description of the company, the nature of the business, and the factors that support the success of the business.
Organization and Management	Include the company's organizational structure, details about the ownership of the company, profiles of the management team, and the qualifications of the board of directors.
Service or Product Line	Description of the product or service from the perspective of the customer; how the product will meet the needs of the customer; information on the product's life cycle; research and development activities.
The Funding Request	Include the current funding requirement; future funding requirements over the next 5 years; how funds will be used; and long-range financial strategies.
Financials	Include historical financial data, such as income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements (for up to 5 years)
Prospective financial data	Include forecasted income statements, balance sheets, cash flow statements, and capital expenditure budgets, monthly/quarterly projections (for first year); monthly or quarterly statements for years 2 and 5; and short analysis of financial information
Appendix	Documents may include: credit history; resumes of key managers; product pictures; letters of reference; details of market studies; relevant magazine articles; licenses, permits, and patents; legal documents; copies of leases; building permits; contracts; list of business consultants, including attorney and accountant
<i>Source: Small Business Administration, n.d.</i>	

## Appendix F: Sample Community Survey

This survey serves to measure potential interest of the formation of a community print studio in the Eugene/Springfield area. This survey is for information purposes only – personal contact information will be kept confidential.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

1. Do you perceive a need for a community print shop/artist space in Eugene?

Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Why or why not?

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2. What geographic area should the scope of the space cover?

\_\_\_\_ Eugene town proper

\_\_\_\_ Eugene/Springfield

\_\_\_\_ Lane County

\_\_\_\_ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What inclusions would you suggest that would best represent an ideal space?

\_\_\_\_ Studio facilities

\_\_\_\_ Workshop space

\_\_\_\_ Exhibition space

\_\_\_\_ Information space (featuring examples of artists' work and directions to individual studios/galleries)

\_\_\_\_ Gathering/meeting space

\_\_\_\_ Event rental space

\_\_\_\_ Gallery space

\_\_\_\_ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What type of operating management structure would you prefer?

\_\_\_\_ An artist run organization, where artists who are exhibiting members work the gallery (time commitment based on the numbers of members)

\_\_\_\_ An on-site director, whose salary is covered by percentage of retail sales of

- artwork, membership fees, and/or fundraising efforts.
- \_\_\_ All-volunteer based
- \_\_\_ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

5. What should hours of operation be?

- \_\_\_ 4 days/week
- \_\_\_ 5 days/week
- \_\_\_ 7 days/week
- \_\_\_ Members have 24/7 hour access
- \_\_\_ Include weekends
- \_\_\_ Other, please describe \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6. How should membership be determined?

- \_\_\_ Open membership
- \_\_\_ Through a jurying process
- \_\_\_ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

7. How much would you be willing to pay for membership?

- \_\_\_ \$25-50 per month
- \_\_\_ \$50-\$75 per month
- \_\_\_ \$75-100 per month
- \_\_\_ \$100+
- \_\_\_ Drop-in rates \$\_\_\_\_\_/hr
- Other, please describe in detail:
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

8. What type of physical structure would best function for the space?

- \_\_\_ A storefront in the Eugene downtown region
- \_\_\_ A section in an already-existing art center/organization
- \_\_\_ A space close to the University of Oregon campus
- \_\_\_ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

9. Would you participate in workshops, if offered? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

10. I would be willing to volunteer at the space if it was on the following basis:

☐ More than once a week

☐ Once per week

☐ Once a month

☐ Once a year

☐ No interest in volunteering in the co-op

☐ Other, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Would you consider teaching a workshop in your area of expertise?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. Would you assist in coordinating classes or workshops? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, please

describe: \_\_\_\_\_

13. Would you help with organizing openings of shows in gallery? Yes ☐ No ☐

14. Would you consider serving as a professional consultant for frequently asked questions about technique, studio operations, materials, methods, etc.?

Yes ☐ No ☐ If yes, please describe \_\_\_\_\_

15. Would you consider serving as a board member? Yes ☐ No ☐

16. Would you be able to donate resources (time, equipment, funding)? Yes ☐ No ☐

17. I would be interested in participating in the following workshops as a student:

☐ Letterpress printing

☐ Printmaking

☐ Bookbinding

☐ Calligraphy

☐ Wood block printing

☐ Paper arts

☐ Zines

17. I have already taken classes in:

\_\_\_\_\_



18. I would be interested in learning more about:

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19. Please list any area of expertise:

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