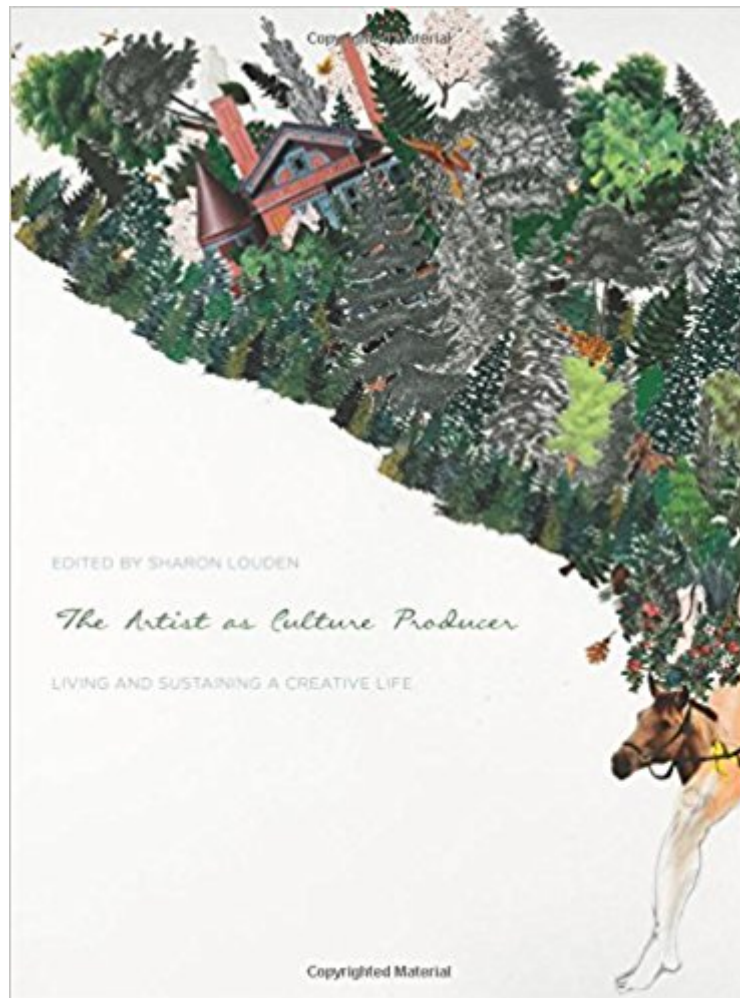




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# **The Artist As Culture Producer: Living And Sustaining A Creative Life**



## Synopsis

When *Living and Sustaining a Creative Life* was published in 2013, it became an immediate sensation. Edited by Sharon Loudén, the book brought together forty essays by working artists, each sharing their own story of how to sustain a creative practice that contributes to the ongoing dialogue in contemporary art. The book struck a nerve—“how do artists really make it in the world today?” Loudén took the book on a sixty-two-stop book tour, selling thousands of copies, and building a movement along the way. Now, Loudén returns with a sequel: forty more essays from artists who have successfully expanded their practice beyond the studio and become change agents in their communities. There is a misconception that artists are invisible and hidden, but the essays here demonstrate the truth—artists make a measurable and innovative economic impact in the non-profit sector, in education, and in corporate environments. *The Artist as Culture Producer* illustrates how today’s contemporary artists add to creative economies through out-of-the-box thinking while also generously contributing to the well-being of others. By turns humorous, heartbreaking, and instructive, the testimonies of these forty diverse working artists will inspire and encourage every reader—from the art student to the established artist. With a foreword by Hyperallergic cofounder and editor-in-chief Hrag Vartanian, *The Artist as Culture Producer* is set to make an indelible mark on the art world—redefining how we see and support contemporary artists. Loudén’s worldwide book tour begins in March 2017. More information and tour dates can be found online at [www.livesustain.org](http://www.livesustain.org).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Artist as Culture Producer is a welcome alternative to so much of the general interest writing on art and artists' lives, which tends to focus on attention-grabbing topics such as multimillion-dollar auction sales, celebrity gossip, or tragedy. The essays steer clear of literary flourishes and artspeak, offering straightforward descriptions of each individual's struggles as they navigated life and career paths. Recommended for students and aspiring artists who hunger for this kind of real-life experience, advice, and wisdom, and for those in organizations that work with them." • (Library Journal)

"The Artist as Culture Producer describes not only how to maintain a creative life, but how to make the creative work produced meaningful to a wider community. With essays from forty artists, Louden's collection testifies to the impactful, vital community contributions made by contemporary artists." • (Public Art Review)

"The emphasis on artistic citizenship is often scarce at institutions of higher education, and this book may be the answer for understanding that there's no direct route to guaranteed success in the art world. Louden has picked artists from the obvious U.S. cities that have a density of museums and galleries, but she's also careful to show us those who have made their life in places like Detroit, Baltimore, San Francisco, and Oregon. Artists need not always be at the center of the art universe to forge a sustainable creative practice. While the measures of what it means to be a successful artist might differ radically for each of the artists included in Louden's book, they are all decentralizing the image of success away from the mainstream picture of going to the most reputable MFA programs, being represented by a mega-gallery, living in an art hub like New York or Los Angeles or London, and living on sales of works to major collections and museums. The book posits that networking and strategizing for success don't always carry the same longterm power that sincere relationships do, and the collective narrative that emerges is one of how these artists' plans diverged in the face of feeling the need to respond to their peers and surrounding community." • (Glasstire)

"The Artist as Culture Producer contains forty wonderfully plainspoken stories of artistic life. Together, the first-person essays comprise a sort of accidental manual for finding a foothold and making a living while creating art that makes a difference in the larger community." • (American Craft Magazine)

"This manual is a testimony to the belief that art can, does, and must have an existence that goes beyond the reach of the art market. These intimate essays have a disarming frankness, disclosing the lives of artists from the inside out rather than the outside in. They reveal how social action derives from self-reflection, and such artists turn personal hardships and financial difficulties into new practical models." • (Adam D. Weinberg, Alice Pratt Brown Director, Whitney Museum of American Art)

"This fascinating set of essays reminds us that artists are not mysterious figures cloistered in studios but vital cultural contributors working right

alongside the rest of us to bring beauty, truth, joy and economic value to a society that needs all of these things more than ever. • (Ben White, Chief Economic Correspondent at Politico) • This book not only demystifies the illusion of what it means to be an artist but also positions the artist as a catalyst for productive change in our contemporary society. Insightful and inspiring, these artists align their talents with ideals of citizenship, rejecting isolationism in favor of engagement. • (Valerie Cassel Oliver, Senior Curator, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston) • This brilliant collection of personal stories about what it means to be an artist in the twenty first century should finally shred that sepia-toned and nostalgic image of the solitary, studio-bound outsider with chisel or paintbrush in hand. The ingenuity and perseverance on display here is simply awe inspiring. • (Jonathan T.S. Neil, Director, Sotheby's Institute of Art & the Center for Management in the Creative Industries, Claremont Graduate University) • The Artist as Culture Producer is a collection of stories that creates transparency into artists' lives today, inspiring audiences to challenge their ideas of the impact artists can make in our communities. • (Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Hugh Kaul Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art, Birmingham Museum of Art) • Sharon Loudon is our modern day Giorgio Vasari. With her second collection of artist essays, she has become one of our most important chroniclers of the lives and experiences of artists working in the twenty first century. Loudon has brought us an amazing group of working artists who are imagination partners, creative entrepreneurs and exemplars of the new ways artists are working in the world. • (Steven J. Tepper, Dean, Herberger Institute of Design and the Arts at Arizona State University)

Sharon Loudon is an editor, educator, advocate, and a practicing, professional artist. Her work has been exhibited at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, the Drawing Center, Weisman Art Museum, Birmingham Museum of Art, Weatherspoon Art Museum, and the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art, among other venues, and it is held in public collections such as the Whitney Museum of American Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

What an incredible book! I am midway through the book and each section is moving, thoughtful, motivating, inspiring--wow! I am so appreciating each experience of each artist or siblings as artist in the book. I teach in a violent, administratively unsupported middle and high school. This book has made me wonder--how am I feeding my creativity? How am I being creative? The book is helping me redefine what success is for me...yes, I want to make the money, but I have to say--at what cost. I really, really like this book!

This is the 2nd Loudén compilation of artist's essays I've read, and it's just as engrossing as the first. I especially appreciate that she finds artists in diverse locations across the country.

Sharon Loudén's two books, and her further writing and speaking support an important ideology where in which artists are being supported to talk about their monetary as well as cultural worth, which is translated in these books. They create a new ideology about the way that an artist lives, balances several commitments and continues to make time for their practice. The first books contain essays from artists discussing their own lives and practices. This book contains essays about how artists work with their community. Hrag Vartanian (wrote the forward) believes that the artist should be involved in every area of our lives and involved in planning and politics and business, whereas Sharon Loudén goes one step further, believing that the artist needs to make this move themselves, to integrate and share with communities, and move away from the traditional white box scenario. The series of essays written by artists in this book has shown how, and why artists have expanded their practice to include a social or community based element. Buy both of these books. I loved them, they are powerful. Dr Kyle Jenkins, Head of Visual Art at the University of Southern Queensland has made the books a course text. Loudén has been generous in sharing these important ideas. Alexandra Lawson Co Founder and Director of RAYGUN PROJECTS (Toowoomba, Australia)

This book (as well as her previous one) provides stories that inspire anyone to live a more creative life. I am not a professional artist. I am a business person and amateur musician. Music has played a central role throughout my life. I agree with Ms. Loudén that creativity is key to living a full life, be it music, visual art, writing or any other creative pursuit. Her books provide the reader with real-life case studies of how artists create and sustain creative lives. I have found both books inspiring, interesting and uplifting. The illustrations are gorgeous as well.

Sharon Loudén's book of essays, *The Artist as Cultural Producer*, is vitamins for the artist who is seeking to innovate, organize and participate in the community around them. As artists, we can get worn down and discouraged by engaging in initiatives and projects that don't necessarily produce immediate results. This book provides encouragement that our efforts do produce a lasting impact. It also gives an accurate picture of how multifaceted the artist's life is. We can be professionals, spouses, parents, entrepreneurs, advocates and servants, all while pursuing our own studio

practice. It's helpful to read these stories and learn from others who have walked a similar path. It is also a good read for those outside the art community to find out how the artist's practice is intertwined with all aspects of life and society. **The Artist as Culture Producer: Living and Sustaining a Creative Life**

I just finished reading *The Artist as Culture Producer*. As a memoirist/biographer, I'm always intrigued by how people's lives unfold in planned and unplanned ways. Especially those who need to have their creative juices flowing in order to do what they know and love. How does one find the time and place for inspiration when the dog needs to go the vet, the toilet's leaking, your dad fell and looks like he's headed to a nursing home, your back hurts, the internet just went down, and there's not enough money in the checking account to cover the latest batch of bills? Life gets in the way of one's calling so frequently. Those who can rise above all of this are special people. All essays were good, but I particularly liked those by Brett Wallace and Steve Lambert. My congrats to Sharon for taking on this ambitious project and for completing it. Her book has been, I'm sure, an inspiration to many and will continue to serve as such in the future.

What I found most inspiring of Loudon's book was the straight up truths behind so many of the artists' beginnings. How more than one candidly admitted they "didn't ever think they had what it took to be a talented artist", and after years of dedication to their craft, a heart-felt passion to pursue an endeavour that made them feel whole and accomplished, and the unconditional support many had from their parents and mentors, they championed ahead with their beliefs and aspirations to turn into wonderfully talented artists. Every day normal people turning their dreams into reality. Is this what we would all love? Well done Sharon for unearthing these wonderful stories and putting it at the reach of the general public out there. May you be more prolific in your work and keep sharing the magic!

*The Artist as Culture Producer* edited by Sharon Loudon is a treasure, especially for those of us who have no artistic ability whatsoever, little understanding of the creative process, a paucity of expertise, but who love art. It gives us a first hand view of the humanity of artists and the breadth of their contribution to our world, both aesthetic and societal. It could not have been published at a better time in that the essays both challenge and inspire. Vicki F.

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