

Tapping artist-innovators as a source of business and social value

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Leonardo da Vinci imagined and sketched helicopters, tanks, and parachutes centuries before they were produced.

With modern artists bringing problem-solving skills and unique talents, venture capital firms Kleiner, Perkins, Caufield & Byers and Khosla Ventures host designers-in-residence and MasterCard, United Healthcare and USAID work with OpenIDEO to connect with activists, experts, and social innovators to uncover new solutions.

Artist innovators are an untapped source of potential value for investors, business, government, and impact sector, says a [new report from Upstart Co-Lab and Emergence Creative](#).

“Both artists and entrepreneurs function as our society’s scouts,” cellist Yo-Yo Ma told the report’s authors. They act as “forerunners who are sensitive to changing conditions, on the lookout for broader perspectives and new opportunities.”

An IBM survey of 1500 CEOs found that creativity is the most important skill for leaders; a separate survey found 85% of employers have a hard time finding applicants to fill creative positions.

In a Returns on Investment podcast last year, Upstart Co-Lab founder Laura Callanan explained how the initiative promotes creative people and communities.