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Creative Labour: Emancipation or Honeytrap?

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Acknowledgement to Kate Oakley for quotes and short-cuts:

“Art Works - a review of the literature on cultural and creative labour markets”,
Arts Council/Creative Partnerships, 2009.
Forthcoming Summer

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- ◉ Aims to supplant ‘arts’ and ‘cultural industries’
- ◉ Much work done on cultural Industries by *political economists* and *cultural economists*
- ◉ Draws on ‘information society’ discourse
- ◉ Contribution to economic growth
- ◉ Catalytic for innovation across the economy

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

- The current DCMS definition recognises eleven creative sectors
 - * Advertising
 - * Architecture
 - * Arts and antique markets
 - * Crafts
 - * Design
 - * Designer Fashion
 - * Film, video and photography
 - * Software, computer games and electronic publishing
 - * Music and the visual and performing arts
 - * Publishing
 - * Television and radio

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

“those industries which have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property.”

WHAT IS DISTINCTIVE?

- ◉ What is not creative?
- ◉ Copyright Industries?
- ◉ Symbolic Value
- ◉ Cultural Value
- ◉ Texts
- ◉ Expressive value

- ◉ Are they a sector?

EU CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR

Circles	Sectors	Sub-sectors	Characteristics
Core Arts Fields	Visual Arts Performing Arts Heritage	Crafts Painting Sculpture Photography	Non industrial activities. Copyright may apply but is not always exercised
Cultural Industries	Film & Video TV & Radio Videogames Music Books & Press	Recorded and live music, collecting societies Book and magazine Publishing	Industrial Sectors aimed at massive reproduction Copyright important
Creative Industries and activities	Design Architecture Advertising	Fashion design Graphic Design Interior Design Product design	Sectors described as 'non cultural' although they employ creative skills and creative people i.e. people who have been trained in the arts

Related industries	Manufacture of PCs, MP3 players, mobile phone etc		
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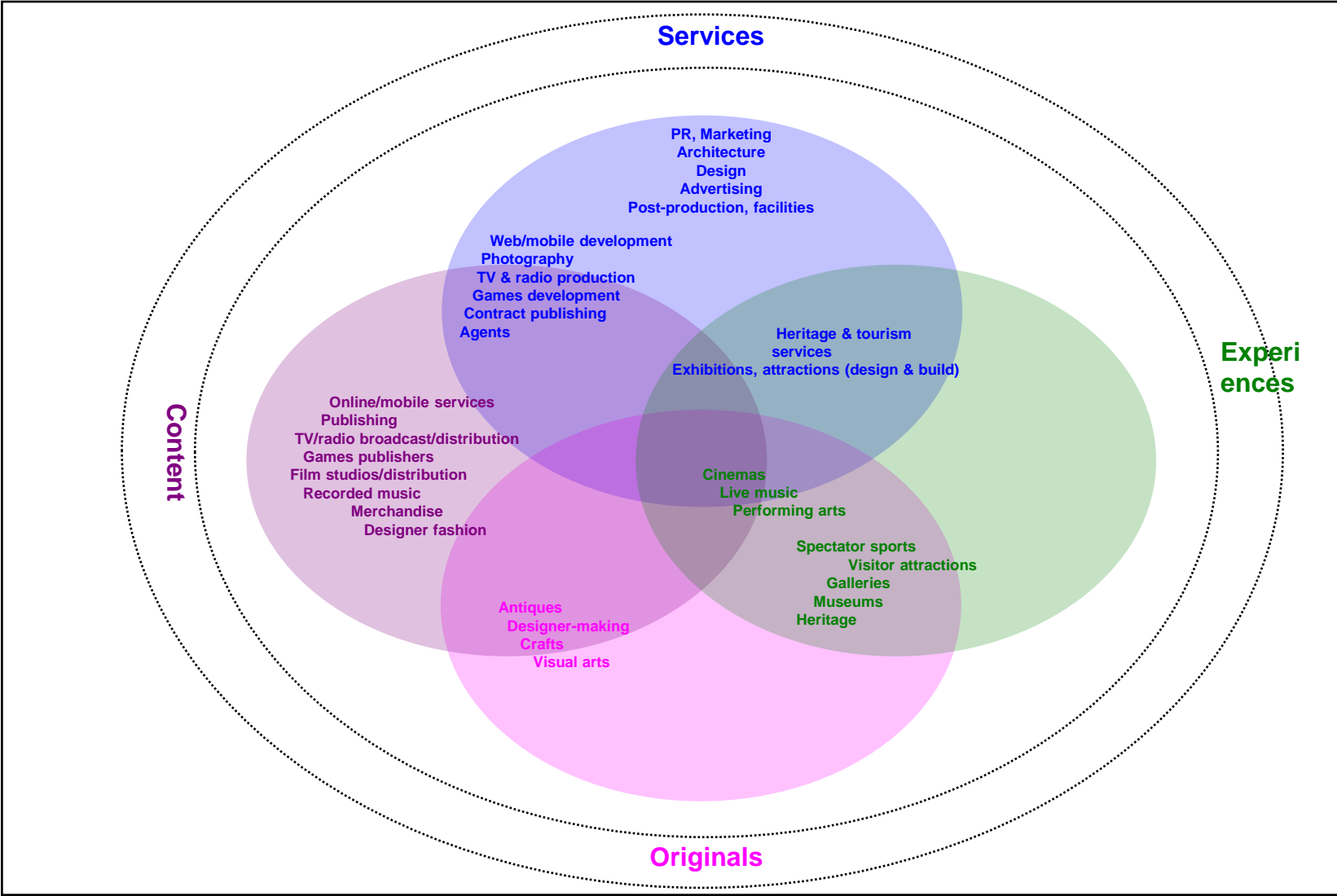
Source: KEA

WORK FOUNDATION MODEL



THE WORK FOUNDATION

- ◉ **Creative Core:** all acts of original creation of expressive values
- ◉ **Cultural Industries:** commercialisation of expressive product (TV, Radio, Film, Music, Computer Games etc)
- ◉ **Creative Industries:** combination of expressive and function values (architecture, advertising, fashion, design)
- ◉ **Wider Economy:** expressive input into manufactured and service goods (Dyson, Virgin)



BACKGROUND

- ◉ Growth in cultural consumption: leisure, education, disposable income
- ◉ Growth in service economy
- ◉ Growth in cultural (design) component of non-cultural goods and services
- ◉ ‘Aesthetisation or culturalisation of everyday life’
- ◉ Ubiquitous, convergent, user-driven Media

BACKGROUND

- ◉ Bell and Tofler: Symbol workers (1970s)
- ◉ Knowledge economy; information economy, weightless economy.
- ◉ ‘Innovation’ as key economic driver; application of knowledge to knowledge;
- ◉ Innovation a ‘cultural capacity’ (Castells).
- ◉ ‘Experience’ economy; ‘attention’ economy; ‘creative economy’.

NB: ‘thingification of the media’ (Lash and Lurry)

CIS IN THE UK

- One of the fastest-growing parts of the UK economy.
- 7.3 % of UK GVA
- Grew at around 6 % between 1997 and 2005
- 3% for the rest of the economy.

CIS IN THE UK

- ◉ The majority of growth in software, computer games and electronic publishing which grew 10%, and the media sectors - TV and radio - which grew 8%.
- ◉ Publicly-funded performing arts, much slower growth rates.

CIS IN THE UK

- In 2006, employed around 1.1 million people in the UK, with a further 800, 000 ‘creatives’ employed outside the creative industries e.g. designers in retailing or musicians in education.
- Concentrated in London and the South East of England -176,000 people in London, compared to just below 37,000 in Scotland.
- Sectors like advertising are highly concentrated - around 70 % of all employment in London.

LITTLE AND LARGE

- ◉ Claims for growing corporatisation - not the case.
- ◉ Growth of big corporations in media and music and internet - but continuing rise of small business.
- ◉ 50% of all creative workers in London are self-employed. (inc. galleries, museums, BBC etc.)
- ◉ UK: 60% employed in SMEs

NORTH WEST/ UK

- ◉ 92% creative firms employ less than 10 people
- ◉ 30 or so (mostly Digital) businesses with more than 250 employees
- ◉ Small handful of large companies generate half of all turnover and 44% of employment in the sector

DE-REGULATION AND GLOBALISATION?

- ◉ Proliferation of niche and networked media
- ◉ End of Unitary (nation-state) identity
- ◉ Globalisation of flows
- ◉ TJ Clarke: Screen Capitalism (After Hegel/ Anderson's Print Capitalism)

THE NEW CULTURAL STATE?

- ⦿ Not De-regulation but Re-regulation
- ⦿ Bennett - not abolition of cultural policy but its transformation - e.g. multiculturalism
- ⦿ State actively involved in the construction of a new 'creative workforce'
- ⦿ Political question cannot be avoided

CREATIVE ECONOMY POLICIES

- ◉ Creative Partnerships
- ◉ NESTA
- ◉ Creative Task Forces and Forums
- ◉ Regional Cultural Consortia
- ◉ Your Creative Future
- ◉ Cox report
- ◉ Creative Economy Programme
- ◉ Staying Ahead
- ◉ Creative Britain

CREATIVE WORKERS

Who are they?

IS ART WORK?

- ◉ Tradition of the free artist
- ◉ Art as creation and play - non-alienated labour
- ◉ 1980s - A proper job?
- ◉ Studying artist labour markets

ARTIST LABOUR MARKETS

“Artists as an occupational group are on average younger than the general workforce, are better educated, tend to be more concentrated in a few metropolitan areas, have higher rates of self-employment, higher rates of unemployment and of several forms of constrained employment (nonvoluntary part time work, intermittent work, fewer hours of work) and are more often multiple job holders.” (Pierre-Michel Menger)

MENGER - DOUBLED-EDGED NATURE OF ARTISTIC WORK

- ◉ non-routine aspects of cultural work give it great social value
- ◉ responding to the uncertainties of the cultural market drives artistic innovation
- ◉ artists never know whether the next film, book or piece of music will be a success, freer to express their individual creativity - they are not working to a brief (creative autonomy)
- ◉ 'freedom' comes at a cost: for individuals
- ◉ for society: as the uncertainty surrounding any new artistic creation provides, he argues, a rationale for continuing public support for the arts.

BEYOND THE ARTIST

- ◉ Cultural labour as a template for new modes of working
- ◉ As with cultural/ creative industries: from being hybrid or retrograde (e.g. craft) model moved to cutting edge of contemporary work practice

CREATIVE PRODUCERS

- ◉ Break the 9-5
- ◉ Doing it for yourself
- ◉ Fluid boundaries of work and play
- ◉ Portfolio careers
- ◉ Learning by doing (make it up as you go along)
- ◉ Reason and Intuition
- ◉ A new *habitus*

ENTREPRENEURS

- ◉ Schumpeter - capitalism about the accumulation of Knowledge
- ◉ Also about breaking the rules and routines
- ◉ ‘Creative destruction’ - must destroy the old in order to development new markets
- ◉ Entrepreneurs as visionaries and risk takers.

CULTURAL WORKERS AS ENTREPRENEURS

- ◉ Main focus of policy intervention in labour markets until recently
- ◉ Project oriented, highly networked, portfolio careers
- ◉ Part of a general shift in the process of work
- ◉ Richard Florida: Creative Class
- ◉ Liberation and self-fulfillment

CONNECTIONIST CAPITALISM

- ◉ Boltanski and Chiapello: *The New Spirit of Capitalism*: review of management literature
- ◉ Annexation of artistic critique
- ◉ ‘City of projects’
- ◉ Networking capital and mobility

RISK SOCIETY AND INDIVIDUALIZATION

- ◉ Ulrich Beck - penetration of capitalism into the life world
- ◉ Life choices now responsibility of individuals
- ◉ Uncertainty and anxiety; knowledge and information as key life skills
- ◉ Personalisation of failure
- ◉ See also Bauman - *Liquid Modernity*

RICHARD SENNETT

Corrosion of Character; The Culture of the New Capitalism

“The psychic consequences of flexible work in the new economy, where workers are denied the ‘linear narrative’ of a long term career, a process which can corrode trust, loyalty and mutual commitment’ (Oakley)

NETWORK SOCIALITY

- ◉ Risky business finds support in networks of trust, learning and information
- ◉ Granovetter: ‘The Strength of Weak Ties’ - roles of friends rather than fixed networks of family and clientele systems
- ◉ Re-invention of the self as liberating potential

NETWORK SOCIALITY

- ◉ Self-image of the creative industries labour force (encouraged by writers such as Florida who praise their tolerance and diversity), is of openness to talent and lack of overt discrimination.
- ◉ Ignores protectionism, nepotism and exclusion that are also key parts of networks
- ◉ Despite seeming tolerance, the cultural /creative sectors are not very representative of the population as a whole.

NETWORK SOCIALITY: WITTEL

- ◉ traditional ‘narrative sociality’ based on stability, shared concerns and mutuality - shared with friends/ colleagues in a conventional workplace
- ◉ ‘network sociality’ is more instrumental, friendships become resources for finding work and workers become emotionally detached from others

ANGELA MCROBBIE

- ◉ ‘refusal of mundane work,’ connected with the autonomist notion of refusal of work and the feminist dynamic, by which this independent work becomes potential source of self-realisation.
- ◉ But ‘first wave’ of cultural independents overtaken by neo-liberal models: enthusiasm that cultural workers showed for their own businesses, is now all the resource that they have in an economy which has stripped away workers rights, benefits, students grants etc., to be replaced by a focus on individual talents - unsustainable

NOT JUST ABOUT PERSONAL BONDS BUT STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

“In a sector heavily dependent on social networks for entry and advancement and where ‘experience’ is often gained in unpaid first jobs such as film industry ‘runners,’ the disadvantage to those who lack friends or relatives in these sectors, or cannot afford to work for ‘free’ is very clear” (Oakley 2009)

RISE OF THE PRECARIAT

- ◉ Dark side of Florida's creative class
- ◉ 'Precariat' combines the notion of precariousness with 'proletariat', to suggest the formation of a new social class
- ◉ Precariousness: all forms of insecure, contingent, or flexible work, from illegalised, casualised and temporary employment, to home working, piecework and freelancing.

LINKED ISSUES

- ◉ The ‘multitude’ connected by global communications and the ever widening sphere of ‘immaterial labour’
- ◉ Precariat of the world unite?

Hardt and Negri: *Empire; Multitude*

Andrew Ross: Power to the precarious?

SUFFERING FOR YOUR ART

- ◉ (Gill 2007): new media workers: freelancers worked an average of 65 hours per week;
- ◉ lack of pension, insurance and paid holidays meant many feared becoming older or regarded having children as something that they would not be able to combine with their working lives.
- ◉ Others found many freelancers in fashion, web design or TV working excessive hours, taking no holidays and pushing themselves to physical and psychological limits, not only because of looming externally imposed deadlines, but in some cases because of their own passion for their work.

SUFFERING FOR YOUR ART

- Ross: *No Collar* (2003): traditions of self-exploitation have a long history in artistic labour

“Artists (in the broad sense of the term) come with training in what could be called sacrificial labor”

LEARNING TO LOVE WORK

Ross Gill:

“sociologists of work would be hard-pressed to find another group of workers who expressed similar levels of passion both for the work itself and for the field more generally”

WORK AND LIFE

“The pleasure, psychic income or self-realisation that cultural workers are said to find in their work often results in the blurring of boundaries between ‘work and ‘life’; another feature of the cultural labour market which can be seen becoming widespread outside of the cultural industries” Oakley, 2009

WORK AND LIFE

- ⦿ Making room for play - basketball hoops and dress down Fridays.....
- ⦿ Drinks and clubbing - Compulsory socializing?

FREE WORK

- ◉ Unpaid work
- ◉ Volunteers
- ◉ Internships
- ◉ Creative Apprenticeships

FREE WORK

- ◉ “Prosumers”
- ◉ Terranova: Free labour: “Modding”
- ◉ Market/ Non-market
- ◉ Gift/ future accumulation
- ◉ Willing exploitation?

SME CLUSTERS AND CREATIVE URBAN SYSTEMS

- ◉ Clusters of highly networked SMEs and Freelancers working around projects
- ◉ Business: mix cultural and economic motivations
- ◉ ‘Network sociality’: aesthetic/ ethical choice?
- ◉ *“our everyday knowledge continues to distinguish strictly between market-governed relationships and social relations, between the principles of equivalence and reciprocity.”*
(Berking 1996) - is this so?

CULTURE/ MARKET

- ◉ McIntyre (*After Virtue*): Practices versus markets
- ◉ Craftsmanship (Cf. Sennett)
- ◉ Recognition/ Job done
- ◉ Keat: practices within markets
- ◉ Markets and Capitalism not equivalent
- ◉ Cultural Policy: support for cultural markets against capitalisation and financialisation
- ◉ New Urban Cultural Policy?