

WORKSHOP: 'UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AND CREATIVITY IN BRUSSELS: IS BRUSSELS THE NEW BERLIN?'

1. CALL

In the last decade, the cultural and creative sector¹ has been a central topic on the agenda of researchers and policy makers alike. Undoubtedly, this sector has undergone significant changes under the influence of new economic realities, globalization and technological (r)evolutions. The creative workforce has changed with it and has arguably become more hybrid, flexible and easily adaptable to the current economic conditions. The evaluation of the outcomes of these changes, however, are much more debated. Some argue that the sector has responded exceptionally well to the opportunities and challenges of recent changes in our society, resulting in a growing creative workforce, in the development of innovative start-ups and in the creation of cultural and artistic infrastructures that facilitate urban regeneration, increase the attractiveness of cities and improves the social mobility of its residents. Others take a more critical position and point to the precarious working conditions, to the growing inequalities in terms of ethnicity, gender and class, to gentrification issues that such a development model might generate and to other potential harmful social, economic and political consequences of the ongoing process of neoliberalization.

Brussels is a particularly interesting case study in this regard because the city seems to have become an attraction pole for international artists and 'creative' people. The New York Times recently stated that "there's a huge drive to make Brussels the new Berlin" and numerous cultural and creative projects emerge on a daily basis in different neighborhoods around the city. Also, the divided institutional structure of the Brussels-Capital Region makes that municipalities, communities, regions and the federal government all have some sort of competence relevant for the cultural and creative sector. This creates a complex landscape of cultural policy actors that is almost impossible to navigate. Nevertheless, local policy makers do not hesitate to announce publicly the importance of a blooming cultural and creative sector for Brussels.

In this workshop, we want to bring together academics and other professionals that do research on the cultural and/or creative sector of Brussels and who use a variety of quantitative (survey, secondary data analysis, network analysis, ...) and qualitative (ethnography, archival research, (biographical) interviewing, ...) methods. Broadly speaking, we are interested in state of the art research that covers culture and/or creativity. The empirical data should at least partly deal with Brussels. The main goal of this workshop is to give the opportunity to researchers in a wide range of scientific disciplines to present their research on the cultural and creative sector of the Brussels-Capital Region and to give them the opportunity to interact with colleagues involved in similar research projects in Brussels.

We are particularly interested in research that focuses on:

- The economic and/or social impact of the cultural and creative sector
- Creative careers, work conditions and artistic work practices
- Diversity – in terms of ethnicity, gender, class - within the creative sector

¹ This sector mainly covers the activities of the cultural sector (visual arts, performing arts and heritage), cultural industries (media, audiovisual, video games, music, publishing), creative industries and activities (design, architecture and advertising).

- Multilevel governance and cultural policy
- The role of the cultural and creative sector in urban development
- The territorial and infrastructural dimensions of the creative sector in Brussels

But other topics can be addressed as well.

2. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

ABSTRACT (500 WORDS)

Interested researchers are invited to submit an abstract before the 7th of October, 20:00h to jef.vlegels@vub.ac.be and eva.swyngedouw@vub.ac.be. When submitting your abstract, please limit yourself to 500 words. Abstracts should preferably contain an introduction, a research question, and a methods and results section. It can be submitted in French, Dutch or English. We will invite speakers to give a 20-minute presentation. The invitations will be based on an evaluation of their abstract and will be sent by the 20th of October.

SHORT PAPER (3000 WORDS)

In addition to this short abstract, researchers who are invited to attend the workshop are expected to hand in a short paper limited to 3000 words by the 18th of November. This text will complement their presentation and will be used to select chapters for the edited volume.

EDITED VOLUME

We will invite a selection of researchers to contribute a chapter to a volume we are co-editing and which we are planning to publish as a peer-reviewed book. Authors to be invited for publication will be chosen based on a review of their extended abstract and their workshop presentation.

The edited volume is intended to act as a compendium of state of the art research on the cultural and/or creative sector within the Brussels-Capital Region. We want to bring together contributions from an interdisciplinary team of researchers to gain a better understanding of the cultural and creative sector in Brussels.

3. IMPORTANT DATES

- Seminar: 8 December 2016
- Deadline abstract submission: 7/10/2016
- Decision on abstract submission: 20/10/2016
- Deadline short paper: 18/11/2016

4. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE AND ORGANIZERS

This workshop is organized by the research team of an Innoviris Anticipate research project entitled 'The diversity of work in the cultural and creative industries: making it work for Brussels'. For more information on the project, please visit <http://workccsbrussel.wordpress.com> and subscribe to the newsletter to stay informed.

The research team involves researchers from the three different universities in Brussels (ULB, USL-B and VUB):

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