network cultures. Critique should aim to change policies, and define alternative models, instead of merely deconstructing the agenda of today’s business politicians. MyCreativity emphasizes re: and search. Let’s formulate questions and new strategies. Neither excitement nor scepticism are sufficient responses. Since policy formation is never about the production of original ideas, but instead is a parasitical function, we have some confidence that eventually the range of activities and concepts generated within MyCreativity and similar events will trickle up the policy food chain of creative industries. No need for extensive lobbying. Copying, after all, is the precondition of TheirCreativity - an activity engaged in concept translation.

Trading the Playful
The scattered and fragmented character of experiencing work and working conditions, in short its postmodern nature, means that young people in particular that enter the labour market are fully exposed to neo-liberal conditions. The rhetoric of deregulation has always been a ruse for ever-increasing stratagems of biopolitical re-regulation.

HAVE WE BEEN CREATIVE YET?

The Tragedy of the Suits
From an anthropological perspective, such policy-meets-business events index the class composition of the creative industries. And in some respects, the endangered species might be those positioned as managerial intermediaries - the policy writers, consultants and arts administrators, government ministers and business representatives. The increasing proliferation of social networks associated with new media technologies is one explanation for this: who needs an intermediary when you’re already connected? The consultancy class is in danger of becoming extinct due to Web transparency. The other key reason concerns the disconnect between political architectures of regulation and the ever-elusive transformations of cultural production situated within information economies.

Dream, Yo Bastards
The MyCreativity project, of which this newspaper is a part, is not focussing on the critique of creative industries’ hype. It was our intention to go beyond the obvious deconstruction of the Richard Florida agenda. Our interest has always been about setting forth expansive agendas and understandings of the interrelations between culture, the economy and network cultures. Critique should aim to change policies, and define alternative models, instead of merely deconstructing the agenda of today’s business politicians. MyCreativity emphasizes re: and search. Let’s formulate questions and new strategies. Neither excitement nor scepticism are sufficient responses. Since policy formation is never about the production of original ideas, but instead is a parasitical function, we have some confidence that eventually the range of activities and concepts generated within MyCreativity and similar events will trickle up the policy food chain of creative industries. No need for extensive lobbying. Copying, after all, is the precondition of TheirCreativity - an activity engaged in concept translation.

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The Untimely Untimely
Meanwhile, creative labour establishes its own techincs of border control. Who’s cool? What’s in, what’s out? Being subversive is the ultimate consumer behaviour. This sell-out of the rebel act has made it difficult to define what is, and what’s not political. All creative expression can—and will—ultimately undermine power relations and establish a New Order. The queer muslim squatter is inevitably an agent of global capitalism and on the forefront of things to come. This cynical look on the ambivalent aspects of identity and urban life makes it increasingly difficult to act out and make a stand as all gestures, including the right to remain silent, can—and will—be integrated into the Creative Machine. Instead of desperately looking for the next wave of Artificial Dissent, we may as well reject this logic and search for common strategies. The untimely style no longer exists. All retro is in fashion, all media are cross-bred. Hyper-cultural connections in-between here and there, now and then, us and them are fully exploited. Both critical and imaginative concepts have ceased to be visionary and instead can become operational (from meme to brand in a week) in no time.

Are You Created?
Before we start talking about an ‘industry’ or an even a ‘creative economy’ we will have to sort out a variety of topics that in fact remind us more of the late mediaeval ‘guild’ system than of modern ‘industrial relations’. The guild operated as a self-regulating mechanism whereby best practices were defined within the peer-system of artisans. In this sense, we see creative workers as embodying the information-middle ages. And this is a key reason why creative industries policy rests safely in its own stratosphere of self-regulation and outsourcing, albeit with welfare recipients in the form of creative consultants, incubators low on ideas, and academics susceptible to directives from above. Art and design and many other creative processes are proclaimed to be integrated in society and are consciously no longer situated in the margins.

Operation Create Freedom
Do we really want to economize all creative efforts? Of course giving away for free is also an economic act. Peer-to-peer production is also taking place within the existing economic framework. As many have concluded before, gifts are not undermining power structures per se. Free production, outside of the money equation, should be a matter of choice, not the default option. This is the task ahead of us. To share has to be an option, a voluntary gesture. We have to think up, and experiment, producing culture with other economic models, on a global scale, and this newspaper wants to play a role in that process.

COLOPHON
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PEOPLE
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As Wittgenstein would do much later, he began by saying that the language was not calculative but expressive with its roots in freedom, Herder lead the revolt against the principles of the enlightenment project.

At the heart of the peculiar status the concept of ‘creativity’ has for our culture is philosopher Herbert, whose writings are one of the key pillars of the counter-enlightenment – the movement of the late eighteenth century we call the counter-enlightenment. Jürgen Habermas delineated this distinction in The Theory of Communicative Action [1]. The ‘lifeworld’ is the terrain of culture, personality and social networks. It is a world in which people concentrate on reaching agreement – Habermas speaks of ‘communicative action’ – about what is happening (truth), what is good (rightness) and what is real (truthfulness). The system is the terrain of the bureaucratic apparatuses of state, science and economy. The system world is less oriented to communicative action than to the achievement of concrete goals; actual instrumenting and strategically are paramount. The differentiation of lifeworld and system world increased in step with the rise of symbolic commodification.

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BY THE PLOEG – The proposal of Dutch minister of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, Sybille Dekker, to make squatting of empty houses a choice in favour of the creative underclass in The Netherlands. It seals the destiny of the creative city. Or who she doesn’t contribute to the economic system can, and will, leave.

The Landbouwbelang in Amsterdam. Some of these old squatter locations – de Balie and Paradiso in Amsterdam, Tivoli in Utrecht and Wijchen in Gelderland – are currently important cultural and creative institutions. Most of the new ones, however, do not last long. Until the end of the nineties the Graansilo, west of the central railway station of Amsterdam, was an important metropolitan centre of culture. The building was vacated by force, sold to a real-estate company and turned into luxurious apartments and lofts. More recently, the same happened to the old warehouses Vreeswijk Amerika and Pakhuizen Aler, located at the Oostelijke Handelskade in Amsterdam. The British pop-group The Prodigy did their first Dutch live-show there in 1996. People interested in underground-culture crowd the buildings each weekend. Meanwhile, creative people without money moved to other places like Rotterdam, Antwerp, Berlin and Marseille, where cheap workspaces and housing could still be found. Oddly enough, the debate surrounding the prohibition of squatting is only aimed at housing. The role squatting plays within the structuring of creativity is marginalised or ignored, not only by the mainstream media but also by the government. This, despite official policy that claims to create an environment in which creativity in the city can flourish. Thanks to the work of the American Richard Florida, the Dutch government knows that making an economy healthy implies investing in the creative industry. According to Florida, creating a liberal, relatively free and open atmosphere is essential for a climate in which creativity can thrive, such as social climates like Maastricht, Paris, Amsterdam and London. On the other hand, the city council gives people space, literally. Compared to Amsterdam, Rotterdam has not been created as a place for creatives, but everything has been taken care of. On the other hand, the cultural policy of Rotterdam lacks the juggle of terms, rules and control-mechanisms. The combination of conflict and a not extremely present government makes cities like Rotterdam attractive for the creative underclass.

In his article ‘The Creative Class-struggle’, Greit Lokvink underwrites the importance of the cities for the creative left. Lokvink states a delicate issue: “The message is clear. The creative city has no interest in collective spaces that withdrew from the money-economy, let alone pirate-radio.

The designer and the film director, no matter how mainstream, will feel some=something about the ‘quality’ of their work, and their position within an aesthetic hierarchy. At the end of the day, everyone wants to be cool. What is being cool is in an ever=elusive prospect that consumes the minds of both the finest and highest paid cultural workers. And there’s no doubt that a key part of being cool is cosmopolitanism, of being able to transcend one’s social location to be ‘at home in the world’. Returning home with tales and trinkets from afar has long been a role for a particular class of the upwardly mobile. To be cool, you know what makes a good carpinha, and are a regular at the new Vietnamese restaurant before it gets reviewed in the newspapers (by which time, you’ve found a cute new Thai-fusion joint). These displays of taste will give confidence to your collaborators and employers that your aesthetic is contemporary, in the zeitgeist.

It was while teaching in an art school that I realised how often the development of the creative cosmopolitan was based on a disidentification with one’s cultural environment. The paradigmatic art school student (like that other cosmopolitan, the academic) is one who never quite fits into their peer group while growing up, who was forced to retreat to a world of the imagination, experiences discomfort, and that cultural exile, sending aesthetic reminiscences back to the homeland.

In his essay ‘The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers’, Craig Calhoun states that most cosmopolitan versions of the ‘creative individual’ share with traditional liberalists a thin conception of social life, commitment, and belonging. ‘What needs us to dream of the type that didn’t dream, at some stage, of making it in New York, Mumbai, Osaka, Mexico City, or Milan? Of packing up a well=imagined community of similarly exiled others, gathered from all over the world, and escaping the small=mindlessness of their immediate environment?’ I don’t mean to cheapen the cosmopolitan ideal that have been my own survival strategy in a sometimes hostile cultural environment.

However, cosmopolitanism has always raised interesting contradictions for national arts policies, because it is in unavoidable tension with cultural nationalism, and the production of national culture has been the policy justification for arts funding supported by the state. During the expansion of Western economies – largely built on colonisation – cosmopolitanism played an important role in opening up new markets and providing aesthetic narratives of globalisation that were recognizable at home: one saw one’s nation making it on the world stage. But during periods of economic decline, the creative cosmopolitan seems less tolerated, as they become a reminder to citizens that only a select few have the opportunity to move where the action will be in the future.

Deep down, even ardent nationalist realise that a discussion of ‘culture’ always exceeds the nation-state, and to closely investigate one’s own cultural heritage is a relationship to many different peoples and nations. The very existence of diverse cultures within the nation-state is attributed to its potential undoing, its artificiality. No surprise, then, that the discussion of culture so often raises discomfort, and that many desire the worldliness of the cosmopolitan, they are also aware of a visceral level of their own inability to be as cosmopolitan as they might wish, due to a lack of economic, social or cultural capital.

The shift of the creative sector’s ‘policy shelters’ from cultural nationalism to creative industries seems to be at least partially in response to these problems in mandating a static, official culture. By transferring the supposed ‘public benefits’ from the content to the economic returns, these tensions can be suppressed. ‘Listen taxpayer, you may not think that this film should be representing our nation’s exports, but I’m making money, so who are we to judge?’ After all, there are few more patriotic statements than the acquisition of wealth in the country where one lives. But the success of an economic sector is increasingly tied to its export potential and so, in a roundabout way, the linking of culture with global capitalism only increases the problem.

Even though creative industries exports might be promoted in the name of the nation’s economy, the reality is that to be a successful exporter one has to know one’s market, not just your country, and have experience outside of the nation. Exporting is not a vocation for the culturally insular. Perhaps for that reason, the cosmopolitan traders and creatives can be alternatively more successful: the exports of capital and culture open the gateway to potential cultural contamination, of the flows being reversed along the two-way trading streets. This suspicion of the cosmopolitan who claims national export as development as a justification for governmental support of their sector might be well-founded. The national support of the development of informational industries like the creative sector emphasises the threat of the manufacturing sector’s development to becoming economies of cheaper labour power. But as Christoffer May has noted, this suspicion of the cosmopolitan who believes their talent will furnish them with a successful art career. It might happen, but it’s making money, so who are we to judge?’ After all, there are few more patriotic statements than the acquisition of wealth in the country where one lives. But the success of an economic sector is increasingly tied to its export potential and so, in a roundabout way, the linking of culture with global capitalism only increases the problem. The very existence of diverse cultures within the nation-state is attributed to its potential undoing, its artificiality. No surprise, then, that the discussion of culture so often raises discomfort, and that many desire the worldliness of the cosmopolitan.

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The potential of the autonomous movement to exploit has appeared to be surprisingly small. Individual artists, designers, theatre-makers and other creatives have to alter to hip, flexible entrepreneurs who pay commercial rents for their working spaces just like everybody. In the neo-liberal society that dominates the West, most especially since 2001, there is no space for elements that can’t be translated into money, let alone being able to grasp the hegemony of society. The latter has always been the most basic function of creativity in Western society. Creating another new world, an ideal, a utopia, showing what is possible when thinking outside the existing paths. Needles to say, the neo-liberal system is not eager to give this creativity a chance and has defence-mechanisms to marginalise and exclude it effectively. To be honest, exclusion isn’t even necessary anymore. A marginal existence in contemporary culture is basically the same as a non-existence. A possible solution? That’s not easy to say. In ‘The Creative Class-struggle’, Lovink raises an interesting point about the growing class-struggle between those who see themselves as an economic factor, and the those who don’t. ‘It’s a question of whether struggle between those who see themselves as an economic class – has changed dramatically in less than ten years. Reason? A change in who stipulates the same goal: to eliminate risk. The result? Mainstream culture without any tension. The only solution to prevent real creative culture from extinction is conflict. Sadly enough the last few years the alternative left-wing institutions have given their faith to the “multitude”. To be short, the idea that, when it comes to creativity, individuals who are loosely connected can make a fist and in the end affect real change. A very naive lullaby. And therefore dangerous. Let’s make some conflict! Seen in that light the proposal of Sybille Dekker doesn’t seem to be that bad after all.

The creative sector is crying out for a similar argument. It is becoming a pet of politicians, but there is a risk hanging in the air – one which has everything to do with the notion that the creative industries will become an extension of political economic policy. After the industrial and digital revolutions, a creative revolution has evidently now dawned. The swing, however, must be and stay creative. The creative industries, as part of the field of the arts, must not be restrained. On the contrary, they need confidence, depth, experimentation, brainpower, and, especially, space. These things must come first, and rules only later. Recently I attended a gathering of the ACX (Amsterdam Creativity Exchange) at which Robert Marijnissen (the city’s creative industries project leader) was one of the speakers. With a proud look on his face, he told us the city had set aside twenty million euros for the creative industries, to be spent in the next government term. Inarguably, this was a terrific decision. He asked the audience what ought to be done with this pot of gold. But their questions about the specifics of the agenda were derisively laughed off. ‘We don’t want professional committees or artistic rationale – just good simple ideas that politicians can understand without mediation from others.’ What ideas would be honoured, and with what goals and expectations, was never made clear. It remained completely obscure what those ‘good simple ideas’ might be, and who would determine it. What was crystal-clear was that Marijnissen, too, has got Richard Florida’s The Rise of the Creative Class on his nightstand. It is the bible of policymakers.

The relationship between both groups – the creative class and the creative underclass – has changed dramatically in less than ten years. Reason? A change in who stipulates the cultural hegemony. Who is that? Hold tight; no one. There is no single party that dominates the cultural agenda. The government, businesses and media – the representatives who dominate the cultural landscape – are driven by the same goal: to eliminate risk. The result? Mainstream culture without any tension. The only solution to prevent real creative culture from extinction is conflict. Sadly enough the last few years the alternative left-wing institutions have given their faith to the “multitude”. To be short, the idea that, when it comes to creativity, individuals who are loosely connected can make a fist and in the end affect real change. A very naive lullaby. And therefore dangerous. Let’s make some conflict! Seen in that light the proposal of Sybille Dekker doesn’t seem to be that bad after all.

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But alas, it is not creativity that has crept into their dreams, but hard cash. The twenty million is above all else an economic investment whose goal is to strengthen the financial position of Amsterdam. The creative industries are viewed as the basis for a future economic boom. It seems to have been forgotten that creativity also implies a creative way of dealing with rules. This city is over-regulated, every square metre has a purpose. Any unexpected movement is jumped in the bad. Where is the noise? Where is the undefined? The uncontrollable? ‘A “creative city” needs a humus layer – a layer of research, space, confidence, and many, many margins. This includes unsuccessful projects. Creativity arises from dialogue and a public sector that supports it without economic motives. It arises from a physically and mentally inviting public space where people are paramount, not financial interests or carefully thought-out instructions. “Cultural” space like this needs political protection. It is not a sector in which money grows, but a field that gives shape to meaning. It is the domain in which Prime Minister Balkenende’s debate about norms and values could have achieved more depth. It is not the Minister of Economic Affairs who should be the standard-bearer of the creative revolution, but a Minister of Culture. A member of government who can convince the Lower House of the importance of culture: someone who understands the social and moral significance of creativity. It is the job of the next cabinet to appoint such a minister. And – to jump ahead of things – Femke Halsema seems to me to be the obvious candidate. Because she understands that culture begins with people, with humanity, and with ‘freedom as an ideal’ (1).

like this tends to challenge copyright or, let's say, money matters, but with the new evolvement and re-circulation of creativity, is there any longer such a thing as a copy? With every copy and paste, the context of the duplicative changes, creating a new original. On the web, the usage and modification of other people’s media has become the rule rather than the exception. Whether on the Internet or the Inception, the Internet has the most creative potential and has the standard legal notion of copyright. The Internet becomes accessible, and its usage and modularity becomes its main attraction to cultural producers. Works of art that once resided in the domain of hackers and the ‘open source’ movement are nowadays an everyday practice for many. The Internet has seen an explosion of creativity among young people who grew up with technology— their situation or position is very different from that of the Internet’s original creators. As with any visual network, the Internet is a place to find and develop ideas and methods in the real world. Things we can do online— networking, blogging, chatting, gaming, collecting, shopping and—you drive the contemporary world, offline as well. More and more, we get our groceries delivered at home, our Tom Tom navigation tool marks out our route, we buy microwaveable meals in the supermarket, and DIY stores allow us to put together our houses ourselves.

Digital media and technological developments have taught us to rank information and images, order content, and think in structures. We are skilful at designing new commercial models and innovative products and services: communities, GPS technology and throwaway culture have created a gap in the market for sustainable, new recycling methods (McDonough & Braungart, 2002). With what we produce, we try to surpass what we have made in the past, and this has indisputable consequences for the future of our environment. Not only can we see store advertising, traffic signs and billboards as logos, but also buildings, cars, high-speed trains, petrol stations and airports. In spite of our growing ability to organise, structure and institutionalise, though, change still exists. Nowadays the whole of society’s, the artist’s ideas, and the Internet become a business idea. One example is the British student Alex Tew’s famous Dollar Homepage on the Internet. His website was a way to pay for his tuition, and he did it by selling a million dollars’ worth of ads. The result was a quickly sold-out project and a beautiful image that can be considered a work of art.

The Sandberg Institute postgraduate design academy in Amsterdam has copied the idea of the Million Dollar Homepage and executed it on the front of its building. The façade consists of 16,000 tiles. We are hereby transferring an Internet idea to the physical world. We are enchanted by the exceptionally colourful effect of the multitude of logos, and in this project we are carrying out an investigation into the re-purposing of copyright as an information carrier. More and more, our environment is coming to resemble the virtual lives we lead. The Sandberg building is a result of this. Acquiring ads and selling ad space for the sake of a work of art is not the everyday activity of the artist. Commercial activity, the slow disappearance of cultural subsidies, and the rise of the creative industries teach us, though, that artists must take care of themselves. The idea of creative industries is actually not about industry but strategy—a strategy for promoting tourism and entertainment. In architecture, icons are taken as the starting point for every important new project. The question is: what images will we want to photograph themselves in front of your building, and the media will reproduce it many times and thus publicise it. As has happened with iconic structures like the Eiffel Tower in Paris and Frank Gehry’s Guggenheim in Bilbao. The effect of the creative industries is an increase in designer bar products, artist biennales, trend development and the production and promotion of superstars. Marketers will be the artists of the future.

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The Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam has sold its skin. The tiles on the front of the building are covered with art, logos, poetry, graphics, portraits, ads, one-liners, tags, declarations of love and other messages. We call it Artvertising, we consider it work of art. It reflects a contemporary society in which people, organisations and environments visually represent their identities in distinctive ways, designed as well as possible.

Today’s art is raw materials are images from the media. Images others have already created. Using others’ images to create new work is often difficult because most images are copyrighted. Digitalisation chips away at the foundations of the copyright system. Joozi Smiers has written. We expect an alternative to appear that will recognise that thanks to the Internet, the world looks very different from how it did in the 19th century, when copyright came into force and the bizarre idea took hold that an artist is a genius who invents everything he or she creates or herself, almost in the name of God, and who therefore owns his or her creation.’

The Artvertising project is an example of a work of art based wholly on the copying of an idea and a success strategy. The characteristic self-willed quality of this copy has proved its legitimacy as an artwork. The copyright system will change, and through this, the images we take will change. The intellectual property changes, economic interests will be different, and the image will take on new forms and meanings. The image will no longer belong to the other.

Arts, culture and the Internet became accessible, and its usage and modularity became its main attraction to cultural producers. Works of art that once resided in the domain of hackers and the ‘open source’ movement are nowadays an everyday practice for many. The Internet has seen an explosion of creativity among young people who grew up with technology— their situation or position is very different from that of the Internet’s original creators. As with any visual network, the Internet is a place to find and develop ideas and methods in the real world. Things we can do online— networking, blogging, chatting, gaming, collecting, shopping and—you drive the contemporary world, offline as well. More and more, we get our groceries delivered at home, our Tom Tom navigation tool marks out our route, we buy microwaveable meals in the supermarket, and DIY stores allow us to put together our houses ourselves. Digital media and technological developments have taught us to rank information and images, order content, and think in structures. We are skilful at designing new commercial models and innovative products and services: communities, GPS technology and throwaway culture have created a gap in the market for sustainable, new recycling methods (McDonough & Braungart, 2002). With what we produce, we try to surpass what we have made in the past, and this has indisputable consequences for the future of our environment. Not only can we see store advertising, traffic signs and billboards as logos, but also buildings, cars, high-speed trains, petrol stations and airports. In spite of our growing ability to organise, structure and institutionalise, though, change still exists. Nowadays the whole of society’s, the artist’s ideas, and the Internet become a business idea. One example is the British student Alex Tew’s famous Dollar Homepage on the Internet. His website was a way to pay for his tuition, and he did it by selling a million dollars’ worth of ads. The result was a quickly sold-out project and a beautiful image that can be considered a work of art.

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CREATE WITHOUT ADDING
MORE AND MORE ARTISTS ARE DANCING TO THE RHYTHM OF THEIR OWN ECHO

1. DESTROYING
Artist Michael Landy received much attention from the public and the media with Break Down, his performance at an abandoned C&A department store in London's Oxford Street. During two weeks, Landy shredded all his tangible possessions in front of an audience, including his Saab, passport and clothes, as well as other artists' works. It was a political and almost ritualistic act of self-sacrifice and creative destruction that required a complex division of labor to catalogue and destroy all of the 7,000 items he possessed.

2. ALTERNING
Gordon Matthew Clarke is most famous for his works that radically alter existing structures. His "building cuts" (he would cut a house in half vertically or drill huge holes in walls) change the experience of the building and its surrounding environment. By working with abstraction he tried to expose the ambiguity of a structure, the ambiguity of a place" in order "to redefine the given." He also had a no-choice era, where he put his Saab, passport and clothes, and other artists' works, into a container and shredded it.

3. ERASING
In 1959, Robert Rauschenberg, once said: an artist faces the danger of consuming himself. The triumph of the creative class could easily become a deadly trap. Locked in a golden image and to attract investors. City marketing depends heavily on picture postcard icons; buildings and artists that catch the imagination (and the credit card) of the rising tourist economy. The artist is therefore constantly seduced by the promise of fame and fortune or more noble ambitions without the freedom to the audience. What you hear is not the pianist's interpretation and musical pattern, but the sound of our own breath. Perhaps 4'33" could act as the new title and point of view and automatically create a new thought for that object.

4. ERODING
The Swedish designers of Front deliberately incorporate randomness and fate in their work. They allow uncontrollable forces such as UV/sunlight, and animalistic behavior to eat away existing objects. Wallpaper by rats shows the traces of rats that have gnawed on rolls of wallpaper. The holes make a repetitive pattern that reveal the old wallpaper. Table by insects is composed of paths in wood made by insects that form a table-top pattern.

5. NEGLECTING
When asked by the hermitage to advise on the renovation of the museum the architect Rem Koolhaas proposed to do as little as possible. "Why modernize at all?" Koolhaas asked his client, "At what cost modernization? Can one abstain from it?" And, he wonders, "could authenticity flourish in what remains untouched?" Can one neglect the use of value in a museum that is rich in objects but poor in resources?

6. VANISHING
The project Vanishing Point, put together by designer Mauricio Arango, consists of a map of the world connected to a clock or the sound of our own breath. The solution might be in the idea of creating without adding, which can be illustrated with the following strategies of artistic marble craftsmen who stopped materializing their own vanity and resisted the urge to constantly inflict themselves on the world.

MORE KINDS OF DESIGN

BY HENDRIK J. GRIEVENK — Since the death of the modernist designer, style has exploded into a universe where the material world is no longer the domain of only the designer, but rather the domain of all people, including artists, architects, and trend watchers, the boundaries between culture and commerce are getting blurred.

All over the world cities and companies are forced to compete for creative talent in order to upgrade their public image and to attract investors. City marketing depends heavily on picture postcard icons; buildings and artists that catch the imagination (and the credit card) of the rising tourist economy.

Every step on the way from the initial design phase to mass consumption is affected by a set of values and beliefs that used to be the exclusive domain of the artistic world, including uniqueness, beauty and political incorrectness. From design and fabrication to marketing and logistics and even after-sales: the whole production chain has become an extension and manifestation of the creativity hype. Every product appears to have been coated with the same global gloss and everyone involved is aspiring for the same.

It’s time for them to break out of this regime and to refuse the consumption is affected by a set of values and believes that marketing campaigns for Nike, for covering up destruction that required a complex division of labor to catalogue and destroy all of the 7,000 items he possessed.

Galvanised, artists and designers are no longer outsiders, but instead they becoming part of a system that rewards the creation of the new and despises the untouched. Creative rebels are now responsible for so-called guerrilla marketing campaigns for Nike, for covering up destruction. Moreover, creative people have become the prime target group for the very conglomerates. This has become even more difficult as market forces continue to push the demand for designers and other creative people. They’re all trapped in a whirlwind of unlimited choice and all-encompassing creativity.

As for the modernist designer, style has exploded into a universe where the material world is no longer the domain of only the designer, but rather the domain of all people, including artists, architects, and trend watchers, the boundaries between culture and commerce are getting blurred.
After years of feasting precarious labour and the abstract gift economy, a Copernican shift is taking place (hopefully): the attention focuses on autonomous labour and autonomous production. Here comes a new consciousness around the creation of meaning: a creation of value and – consequently – a creation of conflict. It is the political re-employment of a generation of creative workers (before confused among chain workers) and at the same time the ‘economic’ engagement of a generation of activists (as the Seattle movement was more concerned about global issues than their own income). My creativity = my value = my conflict. And backwards.

In this article I try to frame a missing part of the debate around the ‘creative labour’. First, I point out the collective dimension of value creation: that is the social processes behind creativity, the creative power of collective desire and the political nature of any creative product (idea, brand, media, artefact, event). Question: what or who produces the value? The ‘social factory’ produces the primary value (and its attendant conflicts). Second, I spotlight the political space of cognitive competition. I dissent on labour conditions and neoliberal policies within Creative Industries, but on the public life of immaterial objects. I put cognitive products in a space of forces, framing such objects from outside rather than inside. I am also trying to answer another question: if production goes creative and cognitive, collective and social, what are the spaces and the forms of conflict? As a conclusion I introduce the scenario of an ‘immaterial civil war’, a semantic space of which the Creative Industries are only a small part.

So far it seems a linear scenario, but there is also a grey zone to take into consideration: the massification of the ‘creative’ attitude. ‘Everyone is a creative’ is a common slogan today. Many years after Benjamin’s artwork, the mass artist enters the economy of the symbolic. We are waiting for a generation of cognitive workers able to mobilise out of the ‘planetary economic war’ an aesthetic war’ between different worlds.

Immaterial are also the usual conflicts between brain workers despite all the rhetoric of knowledge sharing and digital commons. It is the joke ‘a friend of mine stole me the idea of a book on Creative Commons’. It is the well-known rivalry within the academy and the artworld, the economy of references, the deadline race, the competition for festivals, the envy and suspicion between activists. Cooperation is structurally difficult among creative workers, where a prestige economy runs like in any star system. New ideas have to confront each other, often involving their creators in the fight. As Enzo Rullani points out, there is almost more competition in the realm of knowledge sharing, where reproducibility is free and what matters is speed.

The parasite is the parallel exploitation of social creativity. There are indeed modes of exploitation of creative work that are not based on intellectual property and produce more value and conflict. As we have seen, David Harvey introduces the framework of the ‘collective symbolic capital’ and suggests that ‘cultural interventions can themselves become a potent weapon of class struggle’. Political activism in the cultural sector, creative industries and new economy has always remained within these fictional enclosures, making local protests and claiming more cultural welfare or stable contracts. Recently, a more radical request against the exploitation of social creativity is about a basic income for all (see www.euromayday.org). Conversely, Rullani notes that a welfare system transfers both innovation and risk to the state apparatus reinforcing it. However, what Harvey suggests is to take action not only on the level of collective symbolic capital, but also on the level of the parasite exploiting the cultural domain. A point difficult to grasp for the radical thought is that all the immaterial (and gift) economy has a material, parallel and dirty counterpart where big money is exchanged. See Mp3 and P2P, free music and live concerts, Barcelona lifestyle and real estate speculation, art world and gentrification, global brands and sweatshops.

A form of resistance hinted by Harvey in the case of Barcelona is an assault on the myth of the ‘creative city’ rather than wanna-be radical reactions that can contribute to make it even more exclusive. If the people want to reclaim that symbolic surplus-value vandaliised by few speculators, we can imagine but a re-negotiation of the collective symbolic capital. Here comes the option of a grassroots rebranding campaign to undermine the accumulation of symbolic capital and affect to the flows of money, tourists and new residents attracted by specific marks of distinction (Barcelona as a tolerant, alternative, open-minded city, etc.). Moreover, another field of action hinted at include the specific areas where the ‘art of rent’ plays (particular districts like the Raval or Poblenou), where the symbolic accumulation could be reset by a less symbolic sabotage. In the case of Barcelona the ‘parasite’ to spotlight is the real estate speculation, but we could apply that intuition to a broader scale.

Recent forms of resistance have almost always been quite representative and media-oriented, dreaming of the rise of a new cognitariat or of a repoliticisation of the collective imagery and its producers, just like in the golden 60s. Many activists and artists are aware of the risk of overcoding of their messages and practices. In the end, many actions of protest succeed in raising the attention economy around their target. Traditional boycotting of big brands can mutate into free advertisements promote the enemy. Creative workers should start to recognise the surplus-value of imagery they produce beyond their immaterial objects and all the remote political effects of any sign. Here we leave the symbolic, entering the economy of the symbolic. We are waiting for a generation of cognitive workers able to mobilise out of the imagery.
The games industry and the crisis of creativity

BY JU LIAN K UECKLICH

A spectacle haunts the videogame industry—the specter of E.T. The Extraterrestrial. The game, which has been elected Worst Video Game of All Time by Electronic Gaming Monthly, was released at the same time as the last games produced before the Video Game Crash of 1983. Atari made five million copies of E.T., most of which, according to legend, were buried in a New Mexico landfill because people wouldn’t even take them for free.

What had caused this mortal blow to the American videogame industry was a crisis in creativity. As videogame journalist J.C. Herz recounts, “a tide oficky-tack clones washed over 1983. Christmas videogame sales into the garbage disposal […] A flood of less-than-thrilling games triggering a vicious cycle of discounting and loss. The more games merchants relented to the discount bin, the more game companies slashed their prices just to compete.”

The game industry’s revenue dwindled from a staggering 3 billion dollars to a mere 100 million. Game companies folded, and staff was laid off. To add insult to injury, a Japanese toy manufacturer Beat the Americans at what they considered to be their own game. Three years after the crash, Nintendo introduced the Nintendo Entertainment System, which outsold every other system on the market for the first time. Twenty years later, it seems like the videogame industry is ready for the next crash. The market is awash in cheap mass production of consumer goods, the old industries are forced to reengineer the class society and the creative class was soon to be shunned by many gamers for its 600$ price tag. And while the quirky Nintendo Wii has generated quite a bit of advancement, not a single unit has been sold so far.

The games industry is still relying heavily on intellectual property created in other sectors of the entertainment industry, such as television and film. And when games companies succeed in creating their own IP, they usually exploit it mercilessly by creating sequel after sequel. The shelves of game stores are full of licensed games such as the Lord of the Rings series, and sequels of successful games such as Grand Theft Auto 3.

In the highly competitive games market only outstanding titles will recoup their costs. At the same time, however, creating games that break the mould is seen as a business risk. Hit titles can cost up to 6 million dollars to produce, and this figure is expected to do double or even triple during the lifecycle of the next generation consoles. For many game publishers failure is not an option. Concentration is often seen as the only viable way to avoid risk. Small publishers such as Electronic Arts own successful franchises which generate revenue year after year, which allows them to spend more on the marketing of games which are not yet an established brand. The example of The Sims shows that this strategy can enable publishers to create new successful franchises, which generate profits over an extended period of time.

Third-party developers, i.e. developers that are not owned by publishing houses or console manufacturers suffer the most from the publishers’ risk-averness. Not only do the contracts with the publishers require the developers to conform to a very tight schedule, they often also have to put with the rights to intellectual property after the completion of the game. In addition they receive only a fixed payment rather than royalties on units sold. For the people working in game development this is bad news. During the “crunch times” before the release of a new game, 80 hour work weeks are normal. And increasingly, crunch time is no longer the exception but the rule. Job security is also an issue, because developers tend to retain only core staff when they cannot immediately find a follow-on project after having finished a title.

The crisis in creativity thus directly affects the people working in the videogame industry. Nevertheless, the computer games sector is still regarded as an attractive employment opportunity, especially among hardcore gamers. Unsurprisingly, this is also true for the demographic from which the games industry recruits most of its members, thus creating a giant feedback loop.

And labour in the games industry may well become even more casualized. Computer game modification is a practice that still generates innovation for the industry, but it is also a breeding ground for teams of workers who are expected to work long hours without adequate compensation. While some, like CounterStrike’s creators Minh Le and Jesco Clift, may still contribute, the most will remain nameless, unacknowledged, and unemployed.

The detractors manifesto

BY BRENDAN HOWELL—It is obvious at this point that there is no such thing as the videogame industry. It is merely the production of waste. Some of this waste is unpleasant, usable or downright dangerous but a large proportion of this waste is in fact a simple matter of fashion.

People of means throw out perfectly good stuff every day, not for lack of utility, but because these objects have gone out of style. For artists who lack benefactors, survival is a key question and art and lifestyles are often compromised in the name of economic survival. Our revolutionary goal is to become parasites of the bourgeois. Like fungi and dung beetles, we must learn to live on the detritus of those more affluent than us as their waste is in fact a simple matter of fashion. We are the revolutionary cheapskate who choose her medium in defiance of trends. As the Jones toss their VCR, take up the helm of analog video. Eschew the pricey flat-screen in favor of the free CRT. Breathe new life into nearly dead personal computers. Let the local video shop be a spot of refined chaos, so you can engage in the more refined aspect of cultural production. Consider the trash heap as a new frontier for the avant-garde. The revolutionaries are those who splurge on grunge culture but save money on beer.

The real revolutionaries are those who repurpose objects that are shiny and the lights are blue instead of red but new objects are functional. Resist the seduction of the new. The trite phrase “trendy” does not even make me laugh. Replace the clutter of expensive furniture on your living room floor with a mountain of cheap furniture. This is the new era of the revolutionaries.

When Alexander the Great visited Diogenes and asked whether he could do anything for the famed teacher, Diogenes replied: ‘Only stand out of my light.’ Perhaps someday we shall know how to heighten creativity. Until then, one of the best things we can do for creative men and women is to stand out of their light. (Scott Adams)
CREATIVE CHINA: CUTTING AND PASTING?

BY MICHAEL KEANE – China’s first symposium on the creative industries was held in Shanghai in November last year. Although it was attended only by Chinese and Western speakers, the debate that ensued was emerging as a key event on the world creative scene.

During the ensuing year the idea of cultural clusters, or hotbeds of creativity, began to diffuse in both official discourse and economic planning. A short list of its benefits for Beijing and Shanghai. The creative economy was a ‘new wave’ and it was ready to break. A short list of its benefits for China included wealth creation, renewal of traditional manufacturing industries, on which China has based its development model. This is a problem that faces those who are not well equipped to understand innovation that help to understand the uptake or rejection in China of what is arguably a Western concept. I have attempted to indicate where possible if models reflect some source of inspiration, the role of external actors, and varying degrees of creativity and innovation.

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Individual creativity
The appeal of creativity is understood within society’s collective anxiety. He or she is often unconventional and irrational, challenges conventional thinking, but needs to be rationalised or developed by (non-creative) management bureaucrats. These intermediaries might be specialist/experts (e.g. agent system, promoters, psychologists); for instance, rationalisation is required to make the person work more productively, to realise their economic or creative potential, and the act is done within a team. According to cognitive psychology such individual creativity is embedded in a domain (e.g. visual arts, literature) and monitored or regulated by a (creative) field (e.g. judges, critics, censors). The usual view, however, is that individual creativity is a natural talent and this supports the Florida arguments that cities and regions need to attract those creative types and to do so must provide the stimulating open environment that these ‘types’ need. There is a corresponding emphasis on novelty and creation of pure ideas (although this is misleading: there are always precedents). This conceptual upstream model of creativity lends itself to the support of intellectual property as defined in the DCMS. This is sometimes typified as Western individualism and is borne out of society, something that is said to be frail or hardly existent in China. The western approach privileges basic research, discovery, breakthroughs and great insights. The rewards are Oscars, patents, and Nobel Prizes etc.

Cultural creativity
The ‘heroic artist’ taps into society’s collective anxiety. He or she is not just a fantastic cinematographer? In this model of creativity creativity is about innovation than creativity. The problem is that originality and participants are required to think of related ideas or applications of the idea. The idea of cultural re-creation (Canclini 1991) is a kind of adaptive creativity and refers to putting culture in new forms (for instance, traditional culture on digital media). This model is suited to applications more than breakthroughs. It ‘produces’ useful outcomes; it is more innovation than creativity. The Centraal Station, the Peace Palace in the Hague and the bridge Kronsberg in Leiden, (all in life size?) This crap and paste technique is indicative of an international corporate refusal to give Chinese people the potential of creativity, to give them a new image, a new identity and living environment. It is alarming that foreign architects (with their knowledge, content, design skills and other babblabla) are responsible for this.

Mixed creativity
Cultural mixing promotes a greater chance of useful hybridity and serendipitous insights. The question is more than what is needed, but ‘what is possible?’ Innovation occurs on the edges of cultures and disciplines. Project teams mix skills-sets, various knowledge and talents with a view to breakthrough innovations. Combinations of different types of thinking bring surprising results. These can be lead to product outcomes that are radical. The difficulty is in the translationability of terms and skills across the disciplines.

Open innovation and creativity
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THE TERM CREATIVITY IS ARGUABLY A SUPERSIGN
Adaptive innovation
The risk-taking role of the artist is de-emphasised in many eastern and indigenous traditions, where the artist is a transmitter. The adaptive creativity model favours harmonisation of the creative process through brainstorming and consensus. Adaptive creativity puts emphasis on idea refinement and recycling of ideas; the process may begin with recycling and testing of old ideas or formats; the Japanese lotus blossom or MY technique (developed by Matsumura Yusa) was the key concept behind the spreadsheet program Lotus 1-2-3. A core theme is initiated and participants are required to think of related ideas or applications of the idea. The idea of cultural re-creation (Canclini 1991) is a kind of adaptive creativity and refers to putting culture in new forms (for instance, traditional culture on digital media). This model is suited to applications more than breakthroughs. It ‘produces’ useful outcomes; it is more innovation than creativity. The Centraal Station, the Peace Palace in the Hague and the bridge Kronsberg in Leiden, (all in life size?) This crap and paste technique is indicative of an international corporate refusal to give Chinese people the potential of creativity, to give them a new image, a new identity and living environment. It is alarming that foreign architects (with their knowledge, content, design skills and other babblabla) are responsible for this.

Mixed creativity
Cultural mixing promotes a greater chance of useful hybridity and serendipitous insights. The question is more than what is needed, but ‘what is possible?’ Innovation occurs on the edges of cultures and disciplines. Project teams mix skills-sets, various knowledge and talents with a view to breakthrough innovations. Combinations of different types of thinking bring surprising results. These can be lead to product outcomes that are radical. The difficulty is in the translationability of terms and skills across the disciplines.

Open innovation and creativity
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Conclusion
Paul Rice, from the Shanghai offices of Atkins, the British firm of architects brought to supervise the building of Thames Town, replied to her following: “This is not really an accusation of copying or mimicking. What we are trying to do in Thames Town is set an upstream front-end model of creativity lends itself to the support of intellectual property as defined in the DCMS. This is sometimes typified as Western individualism and is borne out of society, something that is said to be frail or hardly existent in China. The western approach privileges basic research, discovery, breakthroughs and great insights. The rewards are Oscars, patents, and Nobel Prizes etc.

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INFORMATIONAL LABOUR IN THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

BY NED ROSSITER—Cultural and media research on the creative industries has tended towards a policy orientation, and it needs to be complemented with other methodologies, practices and fields of inquiry. Some are obvious, such as political economy, critiques of intellectual property regimes, the adoption of Creative Commons and the business implications of non-proprietary licenses such as Copyleft. And some are less obvious, such as the question of network sociabilities, the virtuosity of the general intellect, the precarity of creative labour, and so forth. By undertaking transdisciplinary practice to investigate the material conditions of international creative industries, my own approach forges connections between these complementarities with the aim of organizing new institutional forms of agency and sustainability for creative labour and life in an informational era of network cultures.

It is perhaps necessary to make a distinction between the cultural industries and the creative industries. For the occasional observer, it seems as though the cultural industries imperceptibly morph into the creative industries at some stage during the late 1990s. But this shift was no accident. The rise of creative industries corresponds with two key moments, one to do with a Blair government policy intervention in 1998 and the other to do with the informatization of social relations inscribed in 1995 by the WTO’s Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). And both need to be understood in the historical context of the dotcom era – a period in which start-ups were the unsustainable virus and boomerang infiltrated any number of discourses and institutional practices.

The shift from cultural industries to creative industries is also figured in the move from negative dialectics to network sociabilities. Such is the passage from state-regulated cultures and the broadcast media to creative production within informational economies and network media. In more hesitant way, perhaps the remainder common to cultural industries and creative industries is the continuum of creativity as instrumental in the policy realm and autonomous in the realm of experience.

The policy moment of the creative industries is a case in which a structural determination takes place. The vast majority of academic research and local government initiatives associated with the creative industries was, and still is, shaped by government policy directives. Within the institution of the university, creative industries are essentially a research perspective derived from government policy interventions reflecting a regulatory commitment that in many ways exceed that of the cultural industries. Here we find yet another contradiction internal to the ideology of the neoliberal state, which purports to deregulate institutional impediments to global capital flows. Academic perspectives have only gradually and reluctantly, if at all, articulated their own critique of creative industries in response. This stems from the mission set out by national governments for academia to undertake rather crudely understood exercises in “mapping” the empirical scope of creative industries. In 1998 and then revised in 2001, the Blair government’s Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) produced the Task Force Mapping Documents that sought to aggregate video games, film and even the arts and crafts, which are part of what is also known as the heritage industries. This diverse field of practices was subsumed under the primary definition of the DCMS, which has since gone on to define how the creative industries have been adopted internationally by governments and policy researchers: the creative industries, according the DCMS, consists of “the generation and exploitation of intellectual property”. The informational dimension of creative industries, and the move away from the cultural industries, is embodied in this definition: “economic value in the creative industries is derived from the potential of exchange value in the form of intellectual property. In other words, the creative industries are a brand economy. Even more so, the rise of creative industries has to be understood in conjunctural terms.

Witness, for example, the rise of the information-form as the dominant commodity-form, which is also how the creative industries relate back to culture industries. The WTO’s regulatory architecture for intellectual property is itself a regulatory commitment that are too frequently and easily overlooked by most researchers: namely, the neoliberal cultural and experience of creative labour as it relates to intellectual property regimes. This analytical omission and political abandon by academics who at earlier stages in their careers were not shy about their leftist persuasion is not to be unexpected. Many, after all, have been infected by the dotcom hype, and party like it’s still 1999. The reasons for this have to do with temporal rhythms that differ across institutions, and even though government and the university are firmly enmeshed in market economies, they none the less move at a speed slower than industry. And this means the crash of the NASDAQ in April 2000 might as well have not happened.

While it’s healthy for social ecologies to maintain a diversity of temporal modes, it has none the less led to a form of obscurantism in most research on the creative industries. Here, I am speaking of the invisible remainder that operates as the “constitutive outside” of the generation and exploitation of intellectual property. In assuming a link between creativity and privatization, the analytical and political oversight of most creative industries research is that it fails to acknowledge the fact that “the generation and exploitation of intellectual property” is conditioned by the exploitation of labour-power. For this reason, most of the empirical research on creative industries paraded by academics and policy-makers alike is not only deeply unimaginative, it also results in research that holds little correlation with the actually existing material conditions of the creative industries. In other words, the creative industries travel internationally as a policy discourse, the informational economies. Here, my research relates to and engages with the concept of organized networks, neither of which are rarely addressed from within creative industries research, but hold tremendous potential for the development of the kind of critical perspectives that I think are missing.

While there is a distinctive homogeneity in the way creative industries travels internationally as a policy discourse, the informational economies. Here, my research relates to and engages with the concept of organized networks, neither of which are rarely addressed from within creative industries research, but hold tremendous potential for the development of the kind of critical perspectives that I think are missing.

In studying the relations between labour-power and the creative industries my interest has been twofold: first, at a theoretical and political level, I have sought to invent concepts and methodologies that address the question of the organization of labour power within network sociabilities and informational economies. Here, my research relates to and has been informed by what the political philosopher Paolo Virno calls “the thorniest of problems: how to organize a plurality of “social individuals” that, at the moment, seems fragmented, constitutionally exposed to blackmail – in short, unorganizable?” Out of an interest in new forms of agency in the creative industries, my research considers how currently disorganized labour in the creative industries might institute a mode of organizing socially immanent to networked forms of communications media.

Secondly, my research has investigated the double-edged sword of precarity within post-Fordist economies, to which the creative industries belong as a service economy, modulated through informational relations. The precarity of labour-power within the creative industries is double-edged in the sense that it enables the attractions of flexibility – the escape from the Fordist form of the factory and the firm – yet accompanying these relative freedoms and expressive potential for new forms of organization is the dark side of what researchers such as Ulrich Beck, Scott Lash, John Urry and Judith Butler have variously called risk, uncertainty, complexity and insecurity. Such fields of inquiry resonate with the concept of organized networks, neither of which are rarely addressed from within creative industries research, but hold tremendous potential for the development of the kind of critical perspectives that I think are missing.

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Here it is necessary to analyze the constitutive power of intra-regional, international macro-structural and trans-local macro-political forces. In other words, in order to make intelligible the patterns of neoliberal global capitalism – its amenability and capacities for adaptation to national and city-state modulations – enables creative industry style developments to be translated in ways that seem improbable if analysis focuses exclusively at the level of policy reproduction. Such considerations reinforce the need to understand the variable and uneven dynamics of global capitalism, whose indices include the movement of creative industries, their mode of organization, labor and ideas. The modern world-system of nation-states play a significant role here in regulating such mobility through the mechanisms of trade agreements, border controls and IP rights.

Extract from Organized Networks: Media Theory, Creative Labour, New Institutions, Rotterdam: NAi Publishers and Institute of Network Cultures. 2006
In the ‘Plea for an Uncreative City’, you make a remarkable argument. You say that the concept of instrumentalisation in the function of certain political-economic processes, should make efforts on behalf of ‘uncreativity’. Aside from the use of the word ‘creative’, I wonder in the first place if it’s meaningful to assume a conspiracy theory. Okay, creative talents are often taken by crude manipulation on the part of political and economic interests. They’re often asked to live in buildings to prevent them being squatted, and are used to create a bohemian climate. This can appear to the outside world as if the creative industries are the lapdogs of real-estate agents and the government. But don’t forget that this only a half-truth. In reality, these groups are more often than not at each other’s throats. Where does this fury toward the role of the creative industries come from?

First of all, we’re not so much talking about ‘certain political-economic processes’. Creating a bohemian climate, creating differentiated living environments, and bringing light, creative forms of production which are already significant inside their residential areas, are each and every one, must do in the field of urban renewal. As you know, ‘urban development’ is supposed to be the natural successor to ‘urban planning’. We believe this is only true if you start by assuming a neoliberal ideology. We explain this in the Plea.

Fine, but my question was about criticism of the creative industries. Well, you can’t simply separate this background from the criticism of the complicity between the creative industries and the current neoliberal regime of creative urbanity. So, to answer your question: you must distinguish between objective and subjective complicity. We can speak of subjective complicity when a creative actor – a visual artist, a designer, an architect – consciously participates in the current use of culture as a means of raping the aesthetic spectacle value of public space. Or of simulating democracy there by, say, organising participatory events when you don’t believe in them. This often happens when their architects say that the focus groups brought in by city governments don’t measure anything and are hardly taken into consideration during a project’s final evaluation.

In this case, the creative actors are endorsing the dominant definition of creativity. Or, at least, they are failing to see its problematic character. But uncritical types like these are easy for a critic to dispense with…

But what about the group that consciously opposes such uncomfortably uncritical cooption? When we talk about the creative industries, we’re also talking about people who put their professional activities in the service of society in a very engaged way. They are the model of concerned citizens.

This is a much more difficult category to criticise. We definitely believe that many people in the creative industries are doing their jobs with the best intentions in the world – they are doing a difficult job under very bad conditions. Another argument was that their progressive initiative was mainly a thorn in the side of government and other groups – but without a doubt, this is not true. The complicity between the creative industries and the city councils on the official level, on the substantial level you can keep doing your own thing.

Okay, but that is part of the strategy that’s being applied: using the system’s own means against it.

It’s not that easy to undermine a system from the inside. You must not forget that objective complicity is separate from subjective attitudes. With all due credit, in practice, most creative actors don’t believe in the city managers’ decision theory. They’re just lying just to make it sound as if a seamless collaboration with the city managers only makes sense.

The Plea: ‘you’ll give me a fatherly slap on the shoulder and encourage you to be a bit more authentic in future.’

How do you explain the rising frustrations on the parts of both parties?

The city managers’ frustration is a totally different order than that of the creative industries. The creative industries frustration is not a symptom of the struggle over who will claim ‘authorship’ of creativity. To a degree, the city managers don’t know which way to turn. Can we please encourage you to be a bit more authentic in future. You must pull something novel out of your hat again and again, because this is part of the nature of your profession. You must continue to believe that the creative industries’ label is very dangerous because it obligates designers to be permanently creative. It supposes that they are part of that group who ‘see it all coming’ from the margin.

If you don’t, you might as well forget it. With that kind of strategy, you’ll give yourself a fatherly clap on the shoulder and encourage you to be a bit more authentic in future.

What changes the perspective somewhat?

You can be sure of that: it calls for a rethinking of the label ‘creativity’. We’re not arguing for ‘uncreativity’ just for fun. It’s more about setting aside the prevalent compulsion to be creative and creating a conceptual space in which we can think about the fate of the creative industries themselves. We must not claim the recuperation and cooption of so-called authenticity by the existing order.

We all know those mantras, and they often can’t disguise the fact that they’re only proof that the creative industries themselves don’t know which way to turn. Can we please have a little self-knowledge and self-criticism? The designer Daniel van der Velden was absolutely right when he said that the creative industries’ label is very dangerous because it obligates designers to be permanently creative. It supposes that as a designer, artist, or whatever, you can never stop being creative. You must pull something novel out of your hat again and again, because this is part of the nature of creativity. If ‘creativity’ still has any meaning for the creative industries, then it’s about time it unleashed its creativity and created a bohemian climate. This can appear to the outside world as if the creative industries are the lapdogs of real-estate agents and the government. But don’t forget that this only a half-truth. In reality, there are different groups that are more often than not at each other’s throats. Where does this fury toward the role of the creative industries come from?

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I'm coming up, so you better get this party started.

Mark Dytham of Klein Dytham architects (KDA) started his nightclub SuperDeLuxe in the middle of the Tokyo clubbing area Roppongi in his architectural office just after the Japanese economic ‘bubble’ collapsed. Chock full of ideas but no customers around to afford them. Mark decided to start a night club to entertain himself and his customers and not have a good time with potential new clients at the same time. 12+15 people arrived in his one room office party and one room club, which was completely taken over by theatre productions, DJ’s, dancing people and events. Employees that were not involved in the club activities had to move their desks to another place.

Sleeping around to get airtime

When the nightclub turns out to be a perfect excuse to meet interesting people, Mark Dytham comes up with a new concept for a club night in SuperDeLuxe. Tired of lengthy speeches and intellectual arguments about ideas that are not limited to the establishment of the designer world. He invites designers, architects, only 20 but also art galleries are not interested in unknown talented designers and artists. He starts to organise Pecha Kucha Night (PKN). His aim is to give people a chance that normally would have to stay with an editor of a magazine to get airtime. PKN dispenses with the formal lecture set-up where one big star stands in front of a silent audience. Instead, the audience and speakers mingle and talk. The presentations are just an excuse to bring interesting people and ideas together in one room. Like a genuine speed dating night, 12 to 15 people give presentations with the same structure. Combining the old and the new, one person has 5 minutes to give a short talk, no slides, no images can be shown for 20 seconds each. This way each presenter will have 6 minutes and 40 seconds speaking time with extraordinary presentations, no slides, no images. Architects, fashion designers, graphical designers, advertising agencies, game designers and studio directors are all invited to stand up and speak for a short time. At the end of the event, the audience in SuperDeLuxe was an instant success. Students, emerging designers, fans as well as star designers are fighting for a spot at the podium. Designers from abroad even extend their stay in Tokyo to be part of a PKN.

Speed dating in creative wonderland

Pechakuchas avirus

Within a year the concept of PKN spreads over the metropolises of the world like a good virus. Infected visitors, former employees and others take the concept home and start organising it themselves. Soon after its start in Tokyo, London, Paris, Los Angeles, and New York City. In Manchester and London, Creatives get together in sweaty nightclubs and theatres to tell each other about their latest ideas. But the PKN flu does not stop there. The number of events and places is rapidly growing. New, Rotterdam, Bogota, Glasgow, Bangalore, London, Berlin, Buffalo, Delhi, Groningen and Melbourne are now all playing a regular role for the PKN. The条件 Classes to meet and exchange ideas.

The power of the weak links

This encourages firms to cluster together, and this creates new connections between parties that normally would not meet each other. In Tokyo PKN offers the Creative Industries the chance to grow in importance and strength. More importantly, PKN installs global nodes around which local networks of the Creative Industries can enhance themselves.

Creative Wonderland

In London, the city where the notion Creative Industries was invented, PKN demonstrates its full potential. Theatres are transformed into nightclubs, and new opportunities to meet local network partners is offered. PKN offers the possibility to create new connections between parties that normally would not meet each other. In Tokyo PKN offers the Creative Industries the chance to grow in importance and strength. More importantly, PKN installs global nodes around which local networks of the Creative Industries can enhance themselves.

Where do ideas come from? How do they get to the right people? The PKN epidemic proves that beyond Tokyo and London, ideas get to the right people and not only to the right people. The PKN epidemic proves that even after Tokyo and London, ideas are not restricted to magazine and television only. PKN demonstrates its full potential. The organisers choose the events, the audience chooses the events. But the PKN epidemic proves that beyond Tokyo and London, ideas are not restricted to magazine and television only. PKN demonstrates its full potential. The organisers choose the events, the audience chooses the events. PKN flu does not stop there. The number of events and places is rapidly growing. New, Rotterdam, Bogota, Glasgow, Bangalore, London, Berlin, Buffalo, Delhi, Groningen and Melbourne are now all playing a regular role for the PKN. The Creative Industries live up to their hype reputation and transform into a real economic power.
INTERVIEW WITH LARS NILSSON

Lars Nilsson is an artist based in Sweden. In 2005 he created the Talented, an ongoing documentary project about creative entrepreneurs and freelance collectives in his hometown Gothenburg, Sweden.

Why did you start making the Talent Community series?
I was at my last year of art academy in Umeå and I was wondering about how to do after school, how to arrange your life, how to earn money and so on. The two friends, Torkel and Per, started at Stenhamra in Stockholm and their video about this discussion around immaterial labour and precariousness, not in the least bit because me and most of my friends found ourselves in the same “flexible situation”. When I moved back to Gothenburg I decided to do a local version of Marion’s video Schönergatan 5 (the original film is about a freelance collective in Zürich), I was also very influenced by Angela McRobbie’s investigation of young fashion designers in London (British Fashion Design: Kit, Trade or Image Industry?). For me it was natural to situate the project in the town where I live. I also wanted to do this kind of investigation in a smaller city like Gothenburg, since you tend to think about the cultural industry in connection to the glamorous metropolis.

Can you describe the local creative industries? What is the difference between the traditional Stockholm and Gothenburg?
The Swedish culture industries are centred around the traditional universities cities of Stockholm, Umeå and Malmö-Lund (to some degree also Umeå in the north). Stockholm is of course the most popular option with the capital’s concentration of money, media, institutions, etc. Gothenburg used to be Scandinavia’s major harbour city, and home of export industries like Volvo, Ericsson and SKF. Now, like so many other small cities, Gothenburg tries to reinvent itself as a culture and information industrial cities in the world, Gothenburg tries to reinvent itself as a culture and information industry and immaterial labour is dancing with the Hollywood lobby, but their activities are not illegal so the servers were up an running again in a few days.

As a documentary maker, artist, teacher and journalist, are you an archetypical member of the creative class?
Yes, I’m particularly interested in how they work in a group and I could definitely see myself form some kind of collective with friends in the future.

How do you feel about the precarious side to your field of work? As you call it: “flexible work”.
I hate the precarious side to my profession! Now, I’m happy to be teaching part time at an art school, so at least I know I can pay the rent every month. It’s okay to have this wobbly life, but you have to be healthy and don’t have kids. One of the worst things is not being able to plan for the future.

Do you have a trade union for creative freelancers in Sweden?
Journalists, software programmers, museum people (everyone with a normal, steady job) are all organized, but freelancers aren’t. Actually, the Swedish dancers and actors do have a powerful union, who fought for better conditions and benefits in-between theater jobs. There are two union-like organizations for artists (KRO and IKK), but they are very weak unfortunately. Recently, there has been a discussion about “getting paid better when exhibiting in institutions”. Someone found out that less than 1% of Moderna Museet’s budget went to artists, and everyone was upset about that. Maybe this will change to the better.

The people you interview have all started new companies, or formed collectives, or labels, or you are part of a label?
No I’m not part of any group or label, although me and my girlfriend help each other with many projects (she is the photographer of my most recent video, More and More and More, and she is a visual artist). But it’s a group of ideas that work in a group and I could definitely see myself form some kind of collective with friends in the future.

Is this documentary series some kind of research or does it intend to learn from your successes and mistakes?
Yes, I’m particularly interested in how they work in a group and I could definitely see myself form some kind of collective with friends in the future. And not the least is this idea of temporary contracts; you must be able to trust your companions to some degree, but then if someone gets an offer from somewhere else they might just disappear... It’s like a marriage somehow.

What will be the future of creative industries?
In the future a growing part of creative industries will be outsourcing to East Asia. The latest thing I heard was that the biggest Swedish animation studio was born in another country. We have 10,000 not-for-profit cultural organizations, 700,000 artists, and 90,000 cultural firms. If we can’t keep attracting talent we will be facing a real crisis in the future.

California boasts a massive economy – only five nations have larger ones – and a wonderful internationalization – more than a quarter of the population is foreign. We have 10,000 not-for-profit cultural organizations, 700,000 artists, and 90,000 cultural firms. If we can’t keep attracting talent we will be facing a real crisis in the future.
According to a recent report of the Amsterdam city council, more houses are about to be demolished in coming years than ever before in the turbulent history of this town. It is the so-called ‘restructuring neighbourhoods’ - poor areas such as Westelijke Tuinsteden, Noord en de Bijlmermeer, where most of the houses will have a close encounter with the wrecking ball. The pre-war neighbourhoods, such as the Staatsliedenbuurt, the Oosterparkbuurt, the Indische Buurt or the Kinkerbuurt are the subject of thorough renovations. Overall, tens of thousands of social housing apartments will disappear, but there seems to be no need to worry about the impact this will have on the city’s future.

The urban planners have no reason to complain. The amount of Amsterdammers earning double the mean income has risen in the short period from 1999 to 2003 from 10,8% to 18,6% of the total population. The result is a highly educated and talented workforce – the ‘creative class’ – that is shifting from the suburban to the inner city. Allegedly, this new class is also extremely mobile and legend has it that Amsterdam has become a magnet that attracts this new generation of young professionals. In the west of the city, where one of the biggest urban renewal – the I Amsterdam model – is currently taking place, the number of shops and business locations for creative entrepreneurs has increased sharply. The local council has acquired the services of a PR agency which contributes a colourful glossy. Leafing through its pages, you will see images of only white people – in an area where seventy out of every hundred inhabitants are first- or second-generation immigrants.

The new cultural establishments in the vicinity.

The new Amsterdam model

The urban renewal plans are part and parcel of a bigger metamorphosis hitting the city, preparing it for the ‘creative era’. In a age in which the creative knowledge economy has become an often talked about phenomenon, all city regions are flirting for the attention of the higher ‘creative economy’ employees. Meanwhile, many inhabitants in poorer neighbourhoods are being displaced from their homes. One of the trends that legitimises large amounts of subsidies meant for backward neighbourhoods being meant for forward neighbouring communities.

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