

## **Conducting Creativity: the role of cities as containers of cultural scenes**

Organizers: Dr. Atle Hauge & Brian J. Hraacs (University of Toronto)

Even though creativity is considered a vital engine in the contemporary economy, the catalysts of creativity remain unclear. While creative inspiration is said to stem from multiple physical and conceptual spaces and produce a diverse range of stylistic forms, intangible ingredients still exist. In recent years as cities have harnessed and commercialized creativity, to produce new ideas, sources of wealth and economic growth, cultural industries have emerged as the forerunners of the creative economy. Although several economic geographers have conducted research on specific cultural industries including fashion, design and music (Rantisi, 2002; Vinodrai, 2006; Scott, 2000) little is known about the overlapping set of aesthetics, spatial dynamics, practices and networks that tie these activities together. Cultural workers, for example, transcend occupational boundaries and have become footloose within the global economy. Indeed, the growing prevalence of project-based work has resulted in cultural workers participating in different industries and locations simultaneously. These dynamic and evolving labor practices raise questions about how cities act as clusters of cultural production and as containers of vibrant scenes and spaces, which provide the intangible ingredients for creativity and innovation.

This session will provide a forum to theorize and investigate the ways in which cultural scenes intersect, spatially and conceptually and the role cities play in generating a creatively conducive milieu, by examining the synergies between overlapping cultural activities such as fashion, music, tv, film and advertising.

Dr. Anders Malmberg	University of Uppsala	Spaces, arenas and scenes in the Swedish fashion industry
Dr. Robert Kloosterman	University of Amsterdam	Building a Career in Dutch Architectural Design. Labour Practices in a Cutting-Edge Cultural Industry
Brian J. Hracs & Dr. Atle Hauge	University of Toronto	See the Sound, Hear the Style: Musicians as Ambassadors of Fashion
Clare Karenjit	University of Cambridge	<i>Cool, Creative and Complex: Exploring social networks and gender in project-based creative industries (advertising) in London</i>
Naomi Pope	University of Victoria	Working with Giants: The Experience of Local Labor working on Foreign Productions in the Motion Picture Industry
Dr. Bjorn Asheim	University of Lund	Creativity, variety and cities: Some theoretical reflexions
Markus M. Bugge	University of Uppsala	A knowledge base approach to cultural industrial dynamics
Dr. Heike Pethe & Dr. Marco Bontje	University of Amsterdam	What Creatives Want: Residential and job satisfaction of creative knowledge workers in the Amsterdam city-region
Evangelia Daughtrey	Missouri State University	Creative Cities, artistic κάλπεις
Amy Cervenán	University of Toronto	Creatively Cultural: the fusion of scenes, spaces and symbols in Toronto
Dr. Jeff Boggs	Brock University	The constrained evolution of the Canadian book trade
Josephine V. Rekers	University of Toronto	Preparing demand: cities, scenes and the reception of creativity
Dr. Roberta Comunian	University of Leeds	Mapping and understanding the role of networks in the local creative economy: the North-East of England
Dr. Harald Bathelt & Philip Turi	University of Toronto	Co-location, Face-to-face Contact and Virtual Communication: Conceptual Fallacies About the Beginning and Ending of Geography
Dr. Tara Vinodrai	University of Waterloo	Discussant

**Conducting Creativity:  
the role of cities as containers of cultural scenes I**

**Chair: Brian J. Hracz (University of Toronto)**

## **Spaces, arenas and scenes in the Swedish fashion industry**

Dr. Anders Malmberg (University of Uppsala)

Fashion companies are involved in producing material commodities (clothes), but there is also the parallel production of ideas (fashion). The consistent use of outsourcing in the fashion industry means that production is constantly on the move to low cost locations. Still several high cost countries have managed to retain a sizable presence in the world of fashion. For firms in high cost countries, the creation of value and profitability commonly rests on the ability produce things like innovative design, brand value, efficient marketing channels, logistics and distribution. Sweden, for instance, plays host to a range of fashion firms: from giants like H&M to small innovative designers.

This paper analyzes some knowledge-based strategies by which Swedish actors in the fashion industry have managed to carve out a role for themselves. In particular we focus on firms that use the exploitation of symbolic value and brands for commercial gain and international expansion. Symbolism and brands are highly related to the consumers' valuations and ideas. This creates an interesting strategic problem for firms: why root your knowledge intensive functions in Sweden when your customers are mainly found in distant export markets? We are concerned with what localised knowledge processes, networks and other factors make these firms keep their home base in Sweden. In the paper we suggest that certain urban spaces, arenas and scenes function as knowledge intensive hotspots where new ideas, links, and networks are being constantly (re)created.

## **Building a Career in Dutch Architectural Design. Labour Practices in a Cutting-Edge Cultural Industry**

Dr. Robert C. Kloosterman (University of Amsterdam)

A sufficiently large and flexible supply of skilled (and specialised) labour is key for the many cultural industries where demand is highly volatile. This also holds for Dutch architectural design, which has become world famous in the last decade of the 20th century when Rem Koolhaas, and in his wake a number of other Dutch architectural practices, made their names as innovative designers. Two key issues are explored in this paper: (1) what kind of strategies are used by architectural practices to deal with the volatility of the demand within the framework of a highly regulated Dutch labour market?; and (2) how is the (Bourdieu) economic logic of practice combined with the artistic logic of practises (*l'art pour l'art*) within this cultural industry? The study shows that especially the internationally famous practices employ many foreigners on temporary basis. This highly mobile labour pool enables both firms and workers to deal with the inherent economic uncertainty of the sector. The young workers are willing to work long hours against low wages with these famous practices because they see this as a part of building their career. This kind of informal guild system with apprentices and masters can only work because the workers follow (at least partly) an artistic logic of practices. This latter logic is reproduced in the educational system but also in informal institutions such as informal get-togethers and even a football competition. This paper is based on extensive fieldwork, with interviews with both the architectural practices and the workers.

## **See the Sound, Hear the Style: Musicians as Ambassadors of Fashion**

Brian J. Hracs & Dr. Atle Hauge (University of Toronto)

In 1979 Dick Hebdige explored the notion of “subcultures” and the “ meaning of style” by unpacking the connections between music, fashion, identity and politics in London’s Punk and Reggae scenes. In the years since this book was published lifestyle signifiers have gone from veiled to valued as symbolic goods and cultural branding now pervade our daily lives. In particular, individuals endeavor to develop and project unique stylistic identities, based on what they listen to, what they wear and where they are seen. This paper will consider the catalysts of creativity by analyzing the synergies between two cultural industries; music and fashion. As music and fashion, like most cultural industries, are predominantly urban activities, it is in cities that we find the most influential players. As urban occurrences, the cultural industries have complex dialectics between place and industry (Rantisi 2006), where the production of intangibles seems to rest heavily on the character of the space. This paper will examine the ways in which stylistic scenes fuse, cross-pollinate and support each other. Specifically, it will highlight the practice of bartering where individuals exchange artistic favors and share resources to mediate the precarious nature of creative work and how musicians, as cultural icons, have emerged as trans-local ambassadors of fashion who influence, disseminate and popularize sounds, imagery and behavior. This paper will draw on extensive fieldwork gathered from studies in Toronto, New York and Stockholm.

## **Cool, Creative and Complex: Exploring social networks and gender in project-based creative industries (advertising) in London**

Karenjit Clare (Cambridge University)

The recent literature on the organisation of firms has highlighted the importance of project-based firms. The significance of project-based modes of organizing in new industries has been seen by some as heralding the development of a new 'logic of organizing' in market economies, particularly in the creative industries. However, much of this literature follows a macro-level perspective. In doing so, scholars ignore workers in these industries who are said to be at the forefront of the 'new economy'.

Alongside this literature, scholars have highlighted the importance of social networks for one's reputation and career progression. Although, there has been some evidence suggesting that women and minorities have less access to network connections and are often less able to utilise the connections they have, this type of analysis has been absent from the literature on social networks within economic geography.

In light of this, I use an interview-based approach to explore working practices in the new economy, particularly in project-based creative industries, where social networks are important and gender differentiations are present. I explore these themes through a case study of the advertisement industry in London in order to show the extent to which men and women's networks differ. Hence, this paper aims to contribute to our understanding of the gendered experiences of men and women working in the new economy whilst drawing on debates about the relevance of spatiality in comprehending work practices in the creative industries.

## **Working with Giants: The Experience of Local Labor working on Foreign Productions in the Motion Picture Industry**

Naomi Pope (University of Victoria)

Despite the continued magnetic qualities of Hollywood in the movie industry, the dramatic decentralization of production activities in the motion picture industry is well underway. This changing geography of production functions has direct implications for local labor involved in the creative aspects of motion picture production. This research specifically examines the changes taking place as greater amounts of local labor work on foreign productions in satellite production locations. First, the data reveals key quantitative and qualitative changes in the nature foreign production work in satellite production locations. Second, it investigates how specific occupations in the motion picture production industry are adapting to the increased presence of foreign production project work. Third, the effect of different production practices and the demand for particular skill sets on foreign productions is examined. Fourth, the creative learning opportunities and challenges experienced by the local labor working on foreign productions are presented.



**Conducting Creativity:  
the role of cities as containers of cultural scenes II**

**Chair: Dr. Atle Hauge (University of Toronto)**

## **Creativity, variety and cities: Some theoretical reflexions**

Dr. Bjørn Asheim (University of Lund)

The work of Richard Florida has led to a 'hype' about an urban turn in regional development. This is based on the views that dominating and rapid growing economic activities in the new economy drawing on analytical (e.g. bio- and nanotech) and symbolic knowledge bases (e.g. film making, publishing, fashion) prefer an urban location, as well as that the talents (i.e. the creative class) employed in these sectors also have strong preferences for an urban living in large city regions. These views are underpinned among other theories by the work of Jane Jacobs who argued that the diversity of cities promoted creativity and rapid economic growth.

These postulations raise some interesting theoretical questions: First, is it a realistic assumption to anticipate that the whole of the creative class, constituting between 30-40 percent of the working force, all share the same preferences and trade-offs between firms, occupations and places. Secondly, it is quite confusing that Jacob's externalities do not separate the knowledge spillover effect stemming from related variety from the portfolio effect caused by unrelated variety. However, when focusing on creativity the question of optimal cognitive distance becomes crucial. Would it be reasonable to hypothesize the radical innovations, containing a high degree of creativity, would benefit more from an urban environment with less related or unrelated variety, while more incremental innovations (i.e. applications and adaptations of new knowledge) would benefit most from related variety. The paper will present some theoretical reflexions around these questions.

## **A knowledge base approach to cultural industrial dynamics**

Markus M. Bugge (Uppsala University)

This paper seeks to address and to contribute to our understanding of knowledge bases and knowledge flows within and across industries as an important ingredient of industrial dynamics and development. In economic geographic studies of the cultural industries it seems to be a tendency to emphasise how these industries are highly volatile and unstable, e.g. in terms of part time workers, sole traders and a higher level of labour market mobility than other industries. However, these studies often tend to treat the cultural industries as one homogenous group of industries and they also tend to operate at an industry level, which may represent a danger of oversimplifying the actual dynamics taking place. In order to supplement such an industry approach this paper seeks to take a knowledge base approach to industrial dynamics in the cultural economy. Are there differences between the various knowledge bases that constitute these industries? What knowledge bases are possibly the drivers behind the dynamic characteristics of these industries? By using employment statistics this paper seeks to map the various occupational groups that exist in advertising in the Oslo labour market region, and to track various knowledge bases in both time and space. Through such an approach the study aims to problematize whether a knowledge base approach may be a fruitful and more accurate supplement to other industry level studies and whether the various types of knowledge bases possess different career patterns in terms of intra-, inter-industrial and geographical labour market mobility.

## **What creatives want: Residential and job satisfaction of creative knowledge workers in the Amsterdam city-region**

Dr. Heike Pethe & Dr. Marco Bontje (University of Amsterdam)

In the international literature on creative and innovative cities and regions, Amsterdam is often mentioned as an attractive place for creative knowledge workers to live and work. Amsterdam at first sight seems to meet most of the specific demands that people working in creative or knowledge-intensive sectors are often claimed to have. The city has acquired an international reputation for being a diverse and tolerant place; it is a prominent centre for culture, creative industries, higher education, ICT and business services; and it is built on a 'human scale', with everything in walking or cycling distance. If we extend our horizon to the city-regional level, the Amsterdam city-region also includes attractive smaller cities and suburbs for those who like to live close to, but not in the (inner) city.

But how attractive is the Amsterdam city-region in fact, if we ask the creative knowledge workers themselves? In this paper we will report on the results of a questionnaire held in autumn 2007. We asked creative knowledge workers and recent graduates of higher education institutes who are living and working in the Amsterdam city-region about their satisfaction with their dwelling, residential environment, job and work environment. The questionnaire took place in the framework of the EU-funded project 'Accommodating Creative Knowledge' (ACRE), in which 13 European city-regions are compared. Although the focus of our paper will be on the Amsterdam city-region, we will also compare the Amsterdam results with those of the other 12 ACRE-cases.

## **Creative Cities, artistic κάλπεις**

Evangelia Daughtrey (Missouri State University)

Κάλπεις (ka-lpeis) bore material instrumental to the success of cities in the Classical Greek world: sometimes water, and other times votes. Modern cities function as κάλπεις themselves, being the urns that hold the nations' wealth and the resources to create it. Landry (2000) notes that human creativity and innovation are replacing natural resources and market access as urban resources.

Substantial research has been devoted to the subject of urban revitalizations, artists and relationship between the two. Most of the academic research in the past has focused on large metropolitan areas such as New York and Chicago and more recently in distinctly alternative cities such as Austin or Portland. Markusen has delineated the artistic dividend generated within the impetus of creative cities whereas Florida's pioneering and controversial work in 2000 shaped the construct of creative people and their innovative relationships to urban geographies, politics and economy into the Creative Class theory.

An emerging key question is: while large metropolitan areas and their neighborhoods as well as cities that have branded themselves as non mainstream are celebrated κάλπεις of artists and cultural industries, can otherwise innocuous mid-sized cities develop themselves as such? This project is a case study of Springfield, Missouri, whose downtown is experiencing profound revitalization. The stakeholders of the cultural industries and the synergies they form will be examined, with a specific focus on local government and non profit initiatives aimed to nurture art in the city's downtown spaces.

**Creatively Cultural:  
the fusion of scenes, spaces and symbols in Toronto**

Amy Cervenán (University of Toronto)

Culture and creativity - from personal expression to engines in the new economy are considered vital to a varied and vibrant city. Moreover, policies invoking culture and creativity are being implemented, giving rise to a new aesthetic of creativity. Based on research findings from a case study of Toronto, Canada, this paper illustrates Toronto's 'Live With Culture' campaign as an example of urban initiatives which conceptually link cultural scenes, and effectively blur the distinction between physical space, symbolic meaning, and economic significance of urban cultural creativity. While the physical redevelopment and symbolic repositioning of the city as a cultural artefact are complementary but distinct initiatives, they reflect the prominence of an instrumental and economic reading of culture in creative city discourse. Since the 2003 Culture Plan for the Creative City, Toronto has been strategic about promoting its cultural infrastructure, talent and events. Building on the wave of capital projects and iconic architecture of Toronto's major cultural venues, such as Frank Gehry's redesign of the Art Gallery of Ontario, the City's Culture Division engaged in an 18 month celebration of the arts and cultural communities in 2005/06 to coincide with Toronto's status as a Cultural Capital of Canada. This paper briefly contextualizes 'Live With Culture' amid the City's broader efforts, and documents some success and struggles of the initiative to bridge cultural scenes. The paper also offers findings from qualitative research on the campaign and some of the responses, discussions and activities sparked in its wake.

**Conducting Creativity:  
the role of cities as containers of cultural scenes III**

**Chair: Brian J. Hracz (University of Toronto)**

## **The constrained evolution of the Canadian book trade**

Dr. Jeff Boggs (Brock University)

This paper theorizes the role of path dependency in shaping the domestic and international opportunities open to Canadian-owned book publishers. Within Canada's Anglophone book publishing industry, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) takes the dominant role. The GTA is home to the country's biggest book publishing houses, the most book publishing employees, and the largest share of titles. Nonetheless, the development of the GTA's book publishing industry is constrained by long-established and deep-seated structural features which exist largely at the international scale. These include Canada's historical position within the Atlantic economy, the first-mover advantages of London and New York book publishing houses, and the scale economies garnered by the UK and US book publishing industry owing to their larger national markets. These features, among others, constrained the evolution of the Canadian book publishing industry. Only with the implementation of explicitly culturally-nationalist policies in the early 1970s did Canada really start to develop a robust domestically-owned book publishing industry. It is not amazing that this industry has taken root in the GTA, which we would expect to be replete with agglomeration economies galore. However, the GTA's growth in the last forty years despite these structural constraints is.



## **Preparing demand: cities, scenes and the reception of creativity**

Josephine V. Rekers (University of Toronto)

In addition to being 'novel', creative and innovative products need to be perceived as valuable in order to be successfully introduced to the market. While research in economic geography and related fields seeks to understand the processes through which knowledge is created, combined and shared, the demand, market and consumption processes have remained largely unexplored. What factors impact the uptake of innovation and creativity? How do people, organizations and cities lend credibility to creative outputs? How can these factors be mobilized to create a perception of value and capture demand? The geography of innovation and creativity implies that cities not only play a role in the production process as sources or ingredients, but also in the consumption process. Where creative outputs are introduced to the market plays an important role in their successful uptake and diffusion, in addition to where they are produced. Cultural scenes, creative cities and sites of innovative clusters not only contain knowledge inputs, but also contain market institutions and intermediaries, and contribute to fabricating demand. This research investigates the production of institutions and strategies that seek to create, capture and redefine demand to facilitate the successful uptake of creative and innovative products. This paper presents potential insights gained from such a perspective on the reception of creativity through empirical research on the musical theatre scenes in Toronto and London.

## **Mapping and understanding the role of networks in the local creative economy: the North-East of England**

Dr. Roberta Comunian, (University of Leeds)

A large part of the recent research and theoretical debate in economic geography underlines the central role of networks and relational perspectives. Although networks and their social dimension are recognised as central to the regional economic development, not many research have tried to bridge the gap between theories and praxis and investigate the role of networks in knowledge sharing, collaboration and sociality.

In particular, in the context of creativity and cultural industries, there has been a growing interest in the way the social and cultural dimensions are intertwined with the sites of exchange and consumptions but also the value of productions systems and supply-chains. The creative industries sector counts mainly small and medium size companies, often as small as solo trader. It is therefore essential for them to build networks in order to run their business and to receive the support they need. Although in the economic argument networks specifically relates to inter-firm trade and collaboration, the creative industries seem to rely on networks differently, often not specifically pushed by a supply-chain argument.

The paper presents an empirical case study of the North-East region of England highlighting the importance of networks in the regional cultural economy. The methodology adopts both qualitative interviews and social network analysis questionnaires as an integrated approach to the mapping and understanding of networks. The case study shows the central role of local networks in the creative economy and their strategic importance in terms of public policy and sector sustainability.

## **Co-location, Face-to-face Contact and Virtual Communication: Conceptual Fallacies About the Beginning and Ending of Geography**

Dr. Harald Bathelt & Philip Turi (University of Toronto)

A large part of the literature in economic geography leans toward the argument that local and regional contexts are decisive arenas for economic action and interaction, be it in production, consumption or innovation. The “end-of-geography” metaphor of non-geographers is often rejected through some “space-matters” argument. As a result, many studies in geography assume that local or regional interaction is superior to non-local interaction. Criticism to this view is often not taken seriously or pushed aside without convincing counter-arguments, as if the role of proximity and focus on regional agglomeration would be constitutive for the discipline per se. There is relatively little empirical evidence, however, to support strong claims about the predominance of proximate relations in economic interaction. We argue that the “local” cannot be seen in isolation from other spatial levels in that local knowledge and competencies are continuously and systematically enriched, fed and challenged by relationships and exchange with global agents and sources of information. Permanent co-location and face-to-face interaction might be efficient in some contexts but not in others. Agents within firms might not like one another or have different goals which are inconsistent with one another, thus ruling out economic interaction within the same region. In contrast, interaction in global production contexts or networks has become quite widespread, and even small and medium-sized firms engage in organizational configurations which span different locations, cultures and nation-states. New virtual spaces have become key in establishing global networks of interaction. This paper aims to investigate systematically whether local interaction can still be a prime source of innovation and under which conditions it is not. The argument will be developed that there are different spatial settings which can be structured in a way such as to enable efficient economic interaction, even over large distances.

Dr. Tara Vinodrai (University of Waterloo)

Discussant