

This is the introduction to free The Creativity newspaper (circulation 10,000) that will appear during the [MyCreativity](#) convention that we're organizing at the moment. As we move closer to the event, more 'creative industries' related material will come online.

iTube, YouSpace, WeCreate  
Geert Lovink & Ned Rossiter

**\*\*Have We Been Creative Yet?\*\***

Conferences on 'creative industries' have become a set feature in many countries over the past few years. They usually consist of government policy-makers, arts administrators, a minister or two, a handful of professors, along with representatives from the business community eager to consolidate their government subsidies. What's missing? Forget about analysis or critique. And there's not going to be any creative producers or artists about - the condition of possibility for 'the generation and exploitation of intellectual property'. For students and starters, these conferences cost too much to register. These events are for captains-of-industry only. Why bother anyway to mix-up with the dressed-up? There are coffee breaks dedicated to 'networking', but the deals appear to have been done elsewhere.

**\*\*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.

#### **\*\*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 entering 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. Intellectual property regimes are the official doctrine behind that story. But how many get a taste of the revenues? Where are the property disputes and why don't we hear from dissidents that refuse to sign copyright contracts? Technologies of control and the surveillance society comprise a more sinister, invisible power. The political of creativity is never found within policy pronouncements but instead accumulates as a class tension between creative labour and creative capital.

#### **\*\*No Sublime\*\***

Where lies creativity in all this? Isn't all this talk about economy and money killing the very untamable energy to tinker? The delicate, subversive and playful act of putting things together can all too easily be destroyed by pragmatic considerations. What creative industries calls into question (and in fact destroys) is the romantic position of the artist. In this, there is the notion that the artist is destined to be poor and will have to be desperate in order not to lose inspiration. Wild gestures and inspiration will be killed by a professional approach in which the artist gets stuck into fixed patterns and styles. This, we all know: a rich artist is a dead artist and current intellectual property arrangements only further strengthen this rule. What is important to note is that today's creative work leaves behind such notions and places the creative producer in the midst of society. As a proposition this is a provocation, as the creative subject is neither a worker with rights, a trade-unionist with health care, nor is he or she an entrepreneur. The freelance position is somewhere inbetween these subjectivities and this is what makes

the Creator so precarious (to use a fashionable term).

**\*\*The Untimely Untimely\*\***

Meanwhile, creative labour establishes its own technics 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 in no time (from meme to brand in a week). We need to take these mechanisms into account when discussing alternatives.

**\*\*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 medieval '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 invent and experiment, producing culture with other economic models, on a global scale, and this newspaper wants to play a role in that process.