



**Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in 2019:  
Resistance  
ROTTERDAM, 22 - 24 July 2019**

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## **STREAM 14**

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### **Professional Lives and Precarious Careers in the Creative Industries**

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#### **Stream Chairs:**

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Submissions to the conference can be in the form of long abstracts (5 pages minimum: length to be specified by stream and workshop chairs) and full papers, by the deadline of **April 26th, 2019**. All submissions will be subjected to peer review organized by stream chairs with two referees for each paper.

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This stream aims to advance our understanding of professionalisation and precarity in the creative industries. The creative industries in the UK include nine creative sectors: music, performance and the visual arts; museums, galleries and libraries; advertising; film and TV; publishing; fashion and design; crafts; IT, software and computer services; and architecture (DCMS, 2015). For some professions, such as architects in the UK, professional rights are secured by the acquisition of relevant qualifications and by their affiliation with statutory bodies, such as the Architects Registration Board (ARB). Qualifications, especially when they are acquired from prestigious institutions, are important in many creative fields, such as the visual arts, music or fashion design, as a means of constructing the professional identities of creative workers and distinguishing them from others (Bourdieu, 1984; McRobbie, 2016; Oakley et al., 2017). However, the careers of many creative workers seem to rely greatly on socialisation and networking within local creative scenes, as career opportunities are concentrated within metropolitan centres and creative hubs, such as London, Paris and New York (Becker, 1982; Currid, 2008; Florida, 2014; Ruth Eikhof, 2017). As recent research suggests, socio-economic inequalities persist in many creative fields, especially for creative workers who originate from lower socio-economic classes (McRobbie, 2016; Samdanis & Lee, 2017). These creative individuals experience precarity in terms of accessing opportunities in places like London, as they often cannot afford to undertake underpaid or unpaid work, such as internships, which is crucial in the early stages of their careers (Samdanis & Lee, 2017). As a result, neo-liberal forces and inequality seem to determine the professionalisation of creative workers more than merit and equal opportunity (Gill & Pratt, 2008; O'Brien et al., 2016).

The context of the creative industries raises questions about the professionalisation and precarity of creative workers, which we believe to demand more rigorous investigation by scholars. This stream focuses particularly, but not exclusively, on the context of the artistic labour market, investigating professions including artist, curator, performer, actor and

musician (Menger, 2014). This is an important and urgent context in which to investigate the dynamics of professionalisation and precarity, which are increasingly subjected to the forces of the art market, as the professional lives and careers of creative workers are determined by the private sphere which intensifies discrimination and exclusion, distinguishing successful 'A-List' creatives from precarious 'B-List' ones (Caves, 2000). At the same time, cultural policies, which vary across national contexts, only partially tackle inequalities within artistic labour markets (Hesmondhalgh et al., 2015; Kleppe, 2017; Samdanis & Lee, 2017), focusing mainly on commodification and instrumental goals, such as urban regeneration and economic growth (Florida, 2014; Gray, 2007).

More broadly, this stream aims to address topics such as: how the skills of creative workers are generally capitalised; and, more specifically, how existing organisational, market and institutional practices lead to the construction of professional identities for creative workers; and which types of discrimination and inequality still persist in the creative industries.

We invite papers that interrogate the dynamics of professionalisation and precarity in the artistic labour market and the broader creative industries from a variety of different methods and perspectives, including, but not limited to, such questions as:

- What are the social mechanisms that determine the construction of professional identities and careers for creative workers, such as artists, curators, fashion designers, musicians, video game designers and architects?
- Which types of exclusion, inequality and discrimination exist in artistic labour markets and in the creative industries, and what are their main sources?
- How does the increased commodification of culture within the creative industries affect the professional identities and careers of creative workers?
- What are the motives of creative workers when they engage in collective practices, such as social activism and unionising, in order to mitigate inequalities in the creative labour markets?
- What are the attitudes of the various stakeholders, organisations and institutions, such as galleries, foundations, museums and policy-makers, towards diversity, equality and inclusion in the art world?
- How does cultural policy at both the national and the institutional level influence the professional lives of creative workers?
- How do creative workers manage sustainable career paths within uncertain and fast-changing contemporary contexts?
- How do digital technologies and/or social media affect the processes of constructing professional identities in the creative industries?

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