

Artists at Work in the Creative Factory

**An investigation into the professionalisation of
visual arts practice under the influence of the
Creative Industries**

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Abstract

In the UK today the relationship between visual arts practice and the creative industries has become increasingly interconnected. This paper looks in more depth at the incorporating of visual artists as a constituent part of the expanding creative industries as being a relatively new occurrence in the history of the culture industry. The visual arts newfound allegiance to the creative industries is found through this study to be based on economic, political and ideological motivations.

The move to include the visual arts reveals the establishing of a more professionalised approach to arts practice, and is seen as being accelerated by instrumentalised cultural policy, and by the artists themselves. As artists adapt to keep up with the essential codes of conduct associated with being accepted as a creative industry, incorporating the domains of business, branding, marketing and the market into their practice, a struggle is explored between the arising entrepreneurialism and the maintenance of creative integrity.

The paper takes in the changing manifestations of the creative industries, since their inception, as 'cultural' to today's better known 'creative' industries, as discussed alongside Theodor Adorno's study *The Culture Industry*, which identifies the central tenets of the new way; as it was then and how it has changed to encompass artists and their advocates under today's neoliberalised political climate. Later the ideological labour constructs of the creative industries are investigated looking more deeply at the notion of autonomy, and the benefits and potential pitfalls the new freedoms afford artists. Financial independence, and with it notions of precarity, are examined utilising the theories of Angela McRobbie, and Gill & Pratt alongside Bourdieu's analysis of creative autonomy.

Lastly, the notion of the artist as 'industry' is examined. Changing labour practices including approaches to work and creativity, the differing interpretations of 'creative' rhetoric employed by artists and policymakers, and the ability of artists to juggle creativity and business are investigated. These areas are drawn upon to establish the influence the creative industries are having on the professionalisation of the visual arts, specifically around branding, marketing and an emergent desire for entrepreneurialism.