

Call for Papers

Taking matters into third hands: intermediaries and the organization of the creative economy

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Session organized by: Bas van Heur (Maastricht University) and Doreen Jakob (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

For the past twenty years geographers have been analyzing the meaning, role and importance of the creative economy. It is heralded as a job and wealth creator and as a prominent tool for urban and regional revitalization. Whether one agrees with these assertions or not, the effectiveness and ethics of the creative economy will largely depend on the intermediaries that shape and regulate it. While much attention has been paid recently to the political projects that introduce a focus on the creative economy, less is known about the intermediaries that organize and govern it. When implementing dominant policy imaginaries, intermediaries translate and transform them in often unexpected ways.

Various intermediaries shaping the development of the creative economy can be identified, including: arts and cultural councils, policy networks, economic development agencies, foundations and unions to arts collectives, cultural centers, creative industries incubators, festivals and tradeshows as well as crowd-sourcing and web 2.0 technologies or marketing and consumption websites. All these intermediaries are bound together by their critical involvement in and shaping of the production and consumption of creative goods and services.

This session aims to investigate intermediaries and to further explore their role in producing the creative economy. We welcome papers from diverse conceptual and empirical perspectives that address one or more of the following themes:

- Comparisons between intermediaries in various sectors of the creative economy
- Role of intermediaries in (re)producing hierarchies and in- and exclusions
- Effectiveness of state-led creative economy initiatives in supporting change and innovation in existent creative networks
- Useful methods for analyzing intermediaries that move beyond mainstream policy mapping documents or generic academic critiques
- Impact of intermediaries on the organization of creative labor and producer-consumer relations
- Role of intermediaries in the development of new models of individual and collective creativity
- Hyper-instrumentality i.e. the potential of over-regulation as a result of the proliferation of creative economy intermediaries.

Above all, this session aims to provide a forum to not only investigate these themes but also to establish a basis for future research on intermediaries in the creative economy.

If interested, send a title and abstract (250 words) to Bas van Heur (b.vanheur@maastrichtuniversity.nl) and Doreen Jakob (djakob@email.unc.edu) by October 1, 2010. Please contact us if you have any questions.