

2021 ENCATC Education and Research Session PART 4
Session 10: Impact of COVID-19 on the cultural and creative sectors

CHAIR: Luca Rossato, Researcher, University of Ferrara, Italy

**Precarity, connectivity and urban lives: the impact of Covid-19 on Milan
creative and cultural workers**

Jessica Tanghetti, Post Doc Research Fellow, Ca' Foscari Venice (Italy), Roberta Comunian, Reader in Creative Economy, King's College London (United Kingdom), and Tamsyn Dent, Post-Doc Research Fellow, King's College London (United Kingdom)

Type: Abstract

Keywords: creative and cultural workers; covid-19; precarity; Milan; creative city

Description of the proposal: This paper addresses the impact of Covid-19 on cultural and creative sectors.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the fragilities of creative and cultural workers (CCWs) highlighting their “low immunity” (Banks, 2020) and unheeded precarious working conditions (Comunian & Conor 2017). Sudden stark cancellation of all forms of cultural gatherings exposed the fragility of the individualized, intermittent and high-risk nature of creative and cultural employment: project-based workers reliant on income from multiple sources but with no form of job security suddenly found their income streams had disappeared, exposing the unsustainable financial model of the creative economy.

The strong connection between CCWs and cities (Comunian & Chapain, 2010; Wood & Dovey, 2014; Gong & Hassink, 2017) and the concentration of creative and cultural industries (CCIs) production and retail or consumption outlets in major and global cities has further concentrated this negative impact, as the effects of Covid-19 have been stronger in cities (Sharifi & Khavarian-Garmsir, 2020).

In Italy, CCIs are driven by the Lombardy region, with €25,4 billion of added value and approximately 365.000 workers, thanks to the primary role played by the city of Milan, contributing to 63% of the added value of the region and 56% of the employment (Symbola, 2019). At the same time, this region has been the Italian area mainly affected by the virus.

This study details the impact of Covid-19 and related restrictive measures on CCWs operating in the city-region of Milan, presenting data taken from a series of qualitative interviews with local CCWs conducted from November 2020 until June 2021 alongside a digital ethnographic analysis of blogs, social media groups and online interactions between CCWs in the area to highlight emerging forms of communication, collaboration and resistance. Among the main findings, the study highlights the role of Covid-19 as a trigger to broader debates and activism not simply for the emergency but for long-lasting changes, with the creation and reinforcement of forms of collectivism and associationism, adding to an emerging consciousness of resistance to precarious working conditions that were already operating in the CCIs, developing a heightened awareness amongst CCWs. Collectivism has emerged not only on the basis of labour issues, but also of a strong urban relationship, resulting from a shared experience of work-based precarity within the area, which brought to actions, manifestations and the beginning of an institutional dialogue in the territory.

The research highlights also the role of the city as a stage of declaration of rights for CCWs, providing recommendations on how to improve its role in terms of cultural policies. Furthermore, the study questions how cultural and creative work is valued by the society and the urban/regional economy, investigating if a ‘creative city’ brand may be de-valued by the impact of Covid-19.

Given that precarity of CCWs seems to gain attention only in moments of crisis, the study also reflects on the future of CCIs in European cities and the social securities and infrastructure necessary to allow creative and cultural work to continue to flourish in the future.



Presenter: Jessica Tanghetti

Jessica Tanghetti is a Post-doc Research Fellow at University Ca'Foscari in Venice, Management Department, where she is involved in a research project on creative clusters in collaboration with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee. She is also a Lecturer in Arts Management, Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at NABA Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and in Management at University of Brescia. She holds a PhD in "Business & Law", with a research on business investments in the arts in England, conducted during a visiting period at King's College London (CMCI) and supported by Arts Council England. Currently, her research focuses on the working conditions on creative and cultural workers and on the related cultural policies. She has founded and is a partner of a few cultural projects, focusing on fundraising, crowdfunding and innovative ways to support the cultural and creative industries. She also works as a consultant in the field of investment in the arts, art collecting and art market.



Presenter: Tamsyn Dent

Tamsyn is a Research Fellow at the Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries (CMCI), King's College London. She is currently working on a European Commission funded project titled 'Developing Inclusive and Sustainable Creative Economies' (DISCE). Her research interests are on the cultures and structures of work in creative economies with a particular interest in systemic inequalities. She is a Fellow of the Higher Education Authority and has held previous teaching roles at Bournemouth University and Oxford Brookes University. Tamsyn has provided consultant for a number of UK industry institutions including Birds Eye View, Screen Skills (formerly Creative Skillset), Women in Film and TV, Raising Films and The Offsite.

Calls for engagement: lessons for governance and management of the cultural and creative sector from the pandemic period

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Type: Abstract

Keywords: Audience participation; audience engagement; innovative management; inclusive governance

Description of the proposal: Audience engagement and participation, interpreted a strategic approach that aims to turn audience members to active participants and thus build their personal relationships with the cultural and creative organizations (Jurėnė & Krikščiūnienė, 2020), has been increasingly at the center of the professional and research debate (Cerquetti, 2016; Radermecker, 2021; Walmsley, 2021).

It has also increasingly attracted policy attention (Bonet & Négrier, 2018), especially at the European Level: it was indeed not only relevant both in 2014-2020 programming (Bamford & Wimmer, 2012) but it appears to be central to culture and creativity also in the next programming period 2021-2027 also as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.

The already present trend to rethink cultural participation with reference to the use of technologies (MLAC, 2011; Milano, 2015), has been reinforced by the pandemic restrictions (Rendell, 2020; Tan & Tan, 2021; Zbucnea, Romanelli & Bira, 2021). The crisis has thus worked as a lever for experimentation and innovation in the audience engagement field, that could provide an interesting pool of best practices and lessons for the future.

After more than a year and a half from the pandemic outbreak, it seems therefore interesting to reflect on what happened during the pandemic time in terms of audience participation and engagement in the cultural and creative sector. Indeed, the crisis surely had a negative impact on the sector but at the same time it also be considered from a different angle as an opportunity to promote a different conception of the role of cultural and creative organizations and artists in and for society, as well as a new way to interpret audience engagement as an innovative alliances for management of cultural and artistic production.

By means of a comparative analysis of case studies of cultural and creative organizations that developed new ways of audience engagement and participation during and after the pandemic period, this paper aims to provide insights into this topic. The case studies, which involve different stakeholders in the cultural creative field, are used as examples to reflect on the broader paradigm of changes towards a new interpretation of audience participation. Moreover, the paper discusses the lessons we can learn from these examples in terms of new models of management and governance that are more suitable to increase and assess resilience, inclusion and sustainability in a time of profound changes as the current one.



Presenter: Elena Borin

Associate Professor for Link Campus University (Rome, Italy). Previously, she was Director of the MSc in Arts and Cultural Management and Coordinator of the Research team in Arts and Cultural Management at the Burgundy School of Business (Dijon, France). She holds a Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Ferrara (Ferrara, Italy) and was awarded the title of Doctor Europeus (European Doctor) by an international Jury Member. In 2016, she won the ENCATC Research Award for Cultural Management and Policy and the IUSS Award for Best Thesis in Economics. Her research interests include cultural management and governance with an international comparative approach, funding for the cultural and creative sector, public-private partnerships and multi-stakeholder partnerships in the cultural sector and sustainability. Her most recent scientific contributions include books with Springer and PIE Peter Lang on the theme of entrepreneurship, public-private partnership in the cultural and creative sector and cultural leadership in transition tourism, as well as book contributions and scientific papers on the topics of partnership, governance and sustainability (with a specific focus on financial sustainability) in the cultural and creative sector.

**Work and Consumption Changes of Artist in Mexico City:
precarity and professional adjustments**

Ahtziri Molina Roldan, Researcher, Universidad Veracruzana (Mexico) and Bianca Garduño Bello, Independent Researcher

Type: Abstract

Keywords: artist, creative sectors, consumers, pandemic

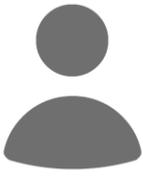
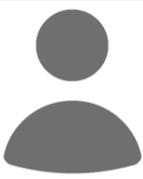
Description of the proposal: The 2020 pandemic has been a major challenge in every sphere of life. The possibilities for adjustment for economic survival in the professional field have shown vulnerabilities for all professions. Mexican artists are characterized by working in structural conditions already precarious since before the world crisis, the pandemic has meant the loss of work projects and adaptation of their creative practices, a detriment of their disposable income and an increase in limitations in their consumer practices. This paper explores a series of adaptations in the ways of participating in the labor market and the changes and challenges experienced in the consumer practices of a group of artists in different disciplines (OEI, Nivón 2021). When identifying a series of adjustments and professional decisions they made in the context of social distancing, we found a set of elements that allow us to explain the possibility of adapting to the crisis situation more or less successfully.

This research is predominantly qualitative and arises from an ongoing comparative research project entitled No Longer Poor, Not Yet Middle Class: New Consumer Cultures in the Global

South (Pertierra, et. al. 2020) from the University of Western Sydney on four cities that seeks to understand people who identify with the former urban poor category and its consequences on material well being, and symbolic such as social status, identity formation and belonging (Rico, 2010).

Mexico City is acknowledged as one of the most populated metropolitan areas in the world, beyond that, it's the capital of an emerging economy with a long tradition of cultural institutions and artistic expressions that makes it an important hub for national and international artists interested in being part of a vibrant community. Our work based on the local field work where we conducted 40 interviews among consumers with these living conditions and identity. We focus on 15 interviews among people from the artistic field that explain the damages the pandemic has brought to an already precarious community. Our interest is to identify if there have been changes in their living conditions as a consequence from the lockdown measures or whether there were already tendencies in their field, and how they have adapted to it by modifying their professional activities and changing their consumer practices. We rely on a multidisciplinary approach based on cultural studies, anthropology and sociology, combining virtual ethnographic interviews (Patchwork Ethnography Statement, 2020), case studies with key actors to identify their work activities, consumer goods, documentary and visual research techniques to obtain qualitative data on the local experience of economic and social mobility reflected in consumption practices as a result of a symbiotic relationship between these elements (Alonso, 2019, 2013).

Given these conditions we foresee some claims from this community about living and working precarity prior to the pandemic, therefore social confinement has made their income and consumption even more vulnerable. Before the pandemic, they identified themselves as no longer poor, but the pandemic has located them in a transition of material and symbolic loss of their previous status and they refer to these changes in terms of cutting, adjusting and limiting its consumption. As a consequence, in order to stay in the artistic field, the adaptation of their professional practice can be explained by the convergence of a set of factors attributed to economic and social supports from their interpersonal relationships and family, neighborhood or professional social networks, age group, and technological capital or the ability to acquire and master it in a very short time.

	<p>Presenter: Ahtziri Molina Roldan Ahtziri Molina Roldan is a researcher at the Universidad Veracruzana.</p>
	<p>Presenter: Bianca Garduño Bello Garduño Bello is an independent researcher.</p>