HOW WORK WORKS

an inventory of effects

how work works

AN INVENTORY OF EFFECTS

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We are at an interesting point, all of us involved in the "hub eco-system". About twenty years have passed since the emergence of coworking as a notion, and institutions, individuals and organisations seems to finally acknowledge and understand what a *hub* is, or all of the things it might be. Still, there is a long way to go, and even those of us deeply immersed in the operations of *creative hubs* need to develop our understanding of what is it that we are actually doing, and how are we doing it. In this regard, the term *creative* should not be understood as a label that characterizes a hub as simply dealing with creative disciplines.

What we are hopefully about to discover during this forum is that creativity, as a process, underlines the way in which we work, our approaches and the ways in which we think and act: – how we deal with the challenges of setting up sustainable business models, dynamic work environments, or rich and diverse communities and audiences we are serving and supporting. We will also raise our own awareness of the impressive diversity that our own eco-system has given birth to.

**Even us deeply immersed
in the operations of *creative hubs* need to
develop our understanding of what is it that
we are actually doing, and how.**

The subtitle of this publication is borrowed from the seminal book *The Medium is the Massage* by Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, realized with additional "coordination" of Gerome Angel. Originally published in 1967, this volume - modest in size but lavish when it comes to the insights it offers and the speculations it sparks - has been a source of perpetual personal inspiration over the last two decades, since I first encountered it in the library of a friend's father. As early as the late 1960s, the book predicted numerous social, technological, communicational, cognitive, and creative challenges and shifts that humanity has been facing in the meantime, and that we are now in the middle of, well into the 21st century.

It is one of those books that you need to come back to every once in a while, for a brief reality check and reassurance. It is made of all of the components that constitute what we today regard as a good, collaborative working process: the deep knowledge, the vision, aesthetic qualities, innovative approaches and, last but not least, humor and subversion. It is as deep as it is witty, a real collective effort of a great scholar, a designer and multidisciplinary author. In this sense, it is a blueprint for how creativity works today.

The publication before you draws rich inspiration from this book, and is in itself an inventory of effects of sorts. It aims to trace back some of the origins from which the state of work today came out. Working in the "creative sphere", we too often forget that we are still *working*, that we are going to work, that we are involved in the system of labour, and that we are actually not as disconnected as it seems from the average factory worker in the suburbs. We might have more in common than we would ever imagine. As more than one of the texts in this compendium acknowledges, we need to be aware that the system, or "the machine" that we are not likely to escape from any time soon, is a highly perfidious organism that can trick us into a variety of comfort zones. But we need to remember that by being *creative*, or being professionally involved and successful in the *creative field*, we are not escaping, and we are not disconnected from the processes that are far beyond our everyday focus.

Working in the "creative sphere", we too often forget that we are still *working*.

It is a great privilege to be feeling the pulse of this new and exciting eco-system we are a part of, a world of collaborative organisations that feed on openness, creativity and multidisciplinarity, and which seem to be responding to contemporary challenges faster and better than any other type of organisations.

What we need not forget is that besides the beauty, functionality and the "cool" of the amazing spaces we are lucky to be running and working in each day, besides the impressive communities that gather around these hubs and generate so much new value – we need to keep thinking. We need to be continuously aware of the fact that hubs did not come out of nowhere, or just because we wanted to have a nicer, newer workspace. It all came from a real, tangible need for change and our responses to it, while that need is in itself a result of much greater shifts in the domains of society, economy or even geopolitics.

We should keep tracing these shifts back to their origins in order to understand them well, and thus be better prepared for the challenges that are coming next. And we should not be afraid to do so. This publication is a modest contribution to this process, *an inventory of effects* that will hopefully raise important questions, bring about new speculations, that may provoke new ideas, and ultimately lead to new solutions.

CALCULATION OF THE EFFECT OF MACHINES: CONSIDERATIONS ON THE USE OF ENGINES AND THEIR EVALUATION (REMIX)

In the beginning was the Work. God worked for six days and rested on the seventh; and how did God decide to punish Adam for the sin of eating the apple? "Cursed is the ground because of you," says God, "through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life".[1] TL; DR:[2] Work sucks.

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I stole the title of this essay from the 1829 book by French mathematician Gaspard-Gustave de Coriolis, who introduced basic principles of mechanics, including a new definition of work: "weight lifted through a height". Coriolis, writing in French, still used the French word for work, however: "travail", from the Latin root *trepaliare* (to torture). The working class was the tortured class.

The earliest economic texts agreed: the *Oeconomicus* by Xenophon, reminds readers that "the base mechanic arts are held in ill repute by civilized communities, and not unreasonably; seeing they are the ruin of the bodies of all concerned in them... Hand in hand with physical enervation follows apace enfeeblement of soul".[3]

Xenophon was worried that the "base mechanic arts" would not leave any time for the labourer "to devote to the claims of friendship and the state". Although an Athenian, Xenophon was a big fan of Spartans, who relied on slaves to do their hard work.

[1] The Bible, Genesis 3:17, New International Version

[2] Short for *too long* and *did not read; Urban Dictionary: http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=tl%3Bdr (ed.)*

[3] Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, circa BCE 362

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The work of slaves thus made their leisure possible, a familiar pattern as we trace the history of work to the present day. So until the industrial revolution, freedom from labour seemed impossible unless you were able to bind somebody else to labour. Coriolis' new definition of work marked a break from the world laid down in the book of Genesis, a new definition that was urgently required for the industrial revolution, with the introduction of the steam engine and the subsequent need to measure its output.

This industrial definition offered a new unit of measurement for work – the joule, defined as the work expended by a force of one newton through a distance of one meter. Thus work was converted from sin to energy. And beginning with the steam engine, that energy was derived from coal. Coal was sin, and so in the Anthropocene work was a climate issue from the very beginning.

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Slaves were no longer needed; at least not human slaves. The word 'robot' comes from Karel Čapek's 1920 play R.U.R., in which human workers are replaced by robots. The Czech word *robota* refers to the unpaid and unfree labour demanded by lords and landlords. The robots are clearly positioned as feudal slaves, and a stand-in for the contemporary working class.

Given the times in which Čapek was writing, inevitably the robots form a union and then issue a manifesto. It begins with "Robots of the world", echoing the call of the Communist manifesto to the workers of the world, but where the Communists merely wanted those workers to throw off their chains, the robots are enjoined "to exterminate mankind".[4]

This doesn't mean an end to their labour, though. After mankind is exterminated, the robots are told to "return to work, it is imperative that work continues". The fate of the robot is always to work. Our only question is who they work for.

[4] Čapek, Karel *R.U.R.*, 1920

Our biggest fear has been that they might decide that working for us is not worth the money they are not being paid.

Čapek's play was part of a wider conversation about the impact of new technology on labour, in which one of the most interesting contributions was a 1930 essay by J.M. Keynes which introduced "a new disease of which some readers may not yet have heard the name, but of which they will hear a great deal in the years to come – namely, technological unemployment".[5]

Keynes saw that automation would destroy work and leave us with plentiful leisure time, and that "the economic problem may be solved, or be at least within sight of solution, within a hundred years... For the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem – how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares... to live wisely and agreeably and well."[6]

We have trouble recognizing exactly how much of a break from the past this was, an escape from the punishment laid down by God. Keynes' got his predictions about our work habits almost completely wrong – many of us seem to be working longer for less pay – but the trend of technological unemployment has now accelerated, forcing people to take its implications seriously.

The process of automation started with industry. The factory lines that defined the modern idea of work were stripped of workers and seeded with machines. For a few decades it was possible to maintain the illusion that the factory floor was as far as those robot arms could reach, but it is increasingly clear now that entire categories of jobs we thought were safe will go the same way.

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[5] Keynes, John Maynard, *Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren*, 1930
[6] *ibid*

Drive a truck? Gone. Work in telemarketing? Gone. Manage the accounts? Gone. The World Economic Forum estimates a net loss of 5.1 million jobs by 2020, although the truth is that nobody really knows how deep the impact will be.[7] What will be left of work is difficult to see from this distance. Whatever it looks like, it will not be enough to give any meaning to the term *working class*.

The disappearance of the working class could be a cause for celebration, as we enter Keynes' life of leisure. But when the working class is no more, the class system collapses, fundamentally restructuring entire societies along some new and unimagined axis. This is coming. We are unprepared. We are rightly unprepared, because nothing like this has ever happened before.

The tragedy of capitalism was that it turned collective action into commodified work.

The school I attended had a motto: *Per Ardua ad Astra*, or *Through Struggle to the Stars*. The struggle in this case being the hard work required to learn Latin. Before the Enlightenment, our stations in life were determined by the order laid down by God; after the Enlightenment, work became a ladder that we might climb out of poverty, from the gutter to the stars.

[7] *The Future of Jobs*, World Econonic Forum, 2016
[8] Engels, Friedrich, *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, 1876

It took a while to arrive, but hard work – at least the type of hard work provided by globalized capitalism – does seem to have lifted millions out of poverty. This is not just seen as a technical achievement but a moral victory. It has been incorporated into the Enlightenment's vision of human progress, such that work has become central to our moral concept of ourselves.

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Engels believed that labour was "the prime basic condition for all human existence, and (...) we have to say that labour created man himself"[8]. Most humans do feel a need to work, but while the forces that have propelled us to our present prosperity may bring us to life, they are insufficient to give life meaning. We ask for more, but then we realize that more of the same is not enough.

The political turmoil across the world is a sign of growing dissatisfaction with the state of work, particularly following the global financial crisis. As industrialized countries move into a post-industrial future, for the first time in generations, young people do not expect to have a better standard of living than their parents. My old school motto starts to look like a little bit of a lie.

Optimists argue that technology creates new jobs as quickly as it destroys the old, but while that might have been true in the past, it looks unlikely to be true in future. Those new jobs also tend to appear more slowly than the old ones disappear. Our only hope is to make everybody rich enough, quickly enough so that we can implement solutions that might make the workless future worthwhile.

Those solutions are likely to be as radical as the break with work itself. Universal Basic Income – the idea of giving every citizen a set amount of income per month, regardless of their employment status or any other factor, and in addition to any salary they earn – was a

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[8] Engels, Friedrich, *The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man*, 1876

fringe idea in economics 10 years ago, but is now being seriously explored by governments and charities.

This interest might be a sign of desperation, but basic income could be one of the building blocks of the new economy – if we can build it before the current economy collapses. It gives us the breathing space to answer that most basic question posed by Keynes, but expressed more succinctly by the post-punk band Gang of Four: "The problem of leisure - what to do for pleasure?"[9]

In his inquiry into the value of work, the mechanic Matthew B. Crawford suggests that "partition of work and leisure, harsh necessity and sweet pursuits, is just a fact of life".[10] Yet the internet seems to have torn that partition down, extending work into our leisure time and vice versa. Social media are what we do for leisure now – but keeping up with our news feed feels increasingly like hard work.

For internet companies, we are not just the customer, but also the product. The data we provide them with is sold to advertisers, but we get nothing in return for that work, except the nebulous reward of status. Status is one of the drivers of human activity, but systems based on status can easily be turned into methods of control, either by governments or corporations.

Social media are ultimately unsatisfying because reducing our range of actions to scroll and swipe does not meet our needs as creatures of action: although humans desire both idleness and industry, and possess an astonishing capacity for inactivity, we clearly prefer activity. Social media also remind us that we are social creatures, requiring a network of relationships within which to act.

[9] Gang of Four, *Natural's not in it*, 1979
[10] Crawford, Matthew B, *Shop Work as Soulcraft*, 2009

"Work is irksome" Thorstein Veblen wrote, yet our "common sense speaks unequivocally under the guidance of the instinct of workmanship".[11] People have not just the will to work on capitalist terms, but this more basic human impulse to collective action. Without even the pale simulacra of collective action offered by the factory floor or the cubicle farm, we wither and die.

Most of us identify social action – activities undertaken as a collective, rather than as a pair of hands moving down a conveyor belt or hovering over a keyboard – as truly fulfilling action. Time-lapse videos of Amish barn-raising are compelling not because of their technical skill, but because they embody this type of collective endeavour, rejecting the alienated labour of capitalism.

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The tragedy of capitalism was that it turned collective action into commodified work, while promising us that accumulating enough capital will allow us to recapture that social action in our limited time away from the workplace. Neoliberalism extends that commodification into every area of our lives, not just our work. It is the corporate takeover of our leisure time.

We instinctively resist this intrusion, but the means of resistance available to us are limited – and it is difficult to throw a spanner in the works when those works have been transferred into the cloud. The best defense might be a good offense; we might be able to embrace the freedom from drudge work as an opportunity to create entirely new types of work that do not rely on global capital.

One of the emerging narratives in the era of climate change is that of *resilience* – the capacity to maintain core functions in the face of external shocks. We talk about resilient communities, but what would resilient work look like – work that could better cope with shocks such as the global financial crisis or the coming automation wave?

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[11] Veblen, Thorstein, *The Instinct of Workmanship and the Irksomeness of Labor*, 1898-99

We have already identified that the work that satisfies us fits two criteria: it favors action rather than inaction, and its value derives from its place in a wider social context. It would need to be work that is disentangled from the dynamics that lie beneath the wave of automation, and that engages with global capital only when necessary, and always on its own terms.

Resilient work would reject the type of employment offered by the "sharing economy", which embodies the worst aspects of global capital – disregard for community, alienation of the individual, precariousness of employment – while using control over information to control the worker. "This is not capitalism, this is something worse", in the words of Mackenzie Wark.[12]

The definition of resilient work would however encompass work that is not currently captured in economic statistics such as GDP. Care work – of family and friends, the very old and very young, those with physical or mental challenges – has been systematically excluded under the industrial definition of work, but might be properly valued once we escape that definition.

We could go further: resilient work might be work that engages with the money system only occasionally. One of the big questions about the automated world will be this: without work, what do we do for money? This is not just a question of how we earn money, but of what "money" even means when most of the work is done by machines that have no need of money.

Paul Buchheit, inventor of Gmail, has proposed two types of money: "machine money" to buy things produced by machines, and "human money" to buy things that can only be made by people, valuable because of some vague notion of authenticity.[13] This seems unlikely to deliver us from the death grip of global capital, but the idea of alternatives to money is worth exploring.

[12] Wark, Mackenzie, *Digital Labour and the Anthropocene*, 2014
[13] O'Reilly, Tim, *Machine Money and People Money*, 2016
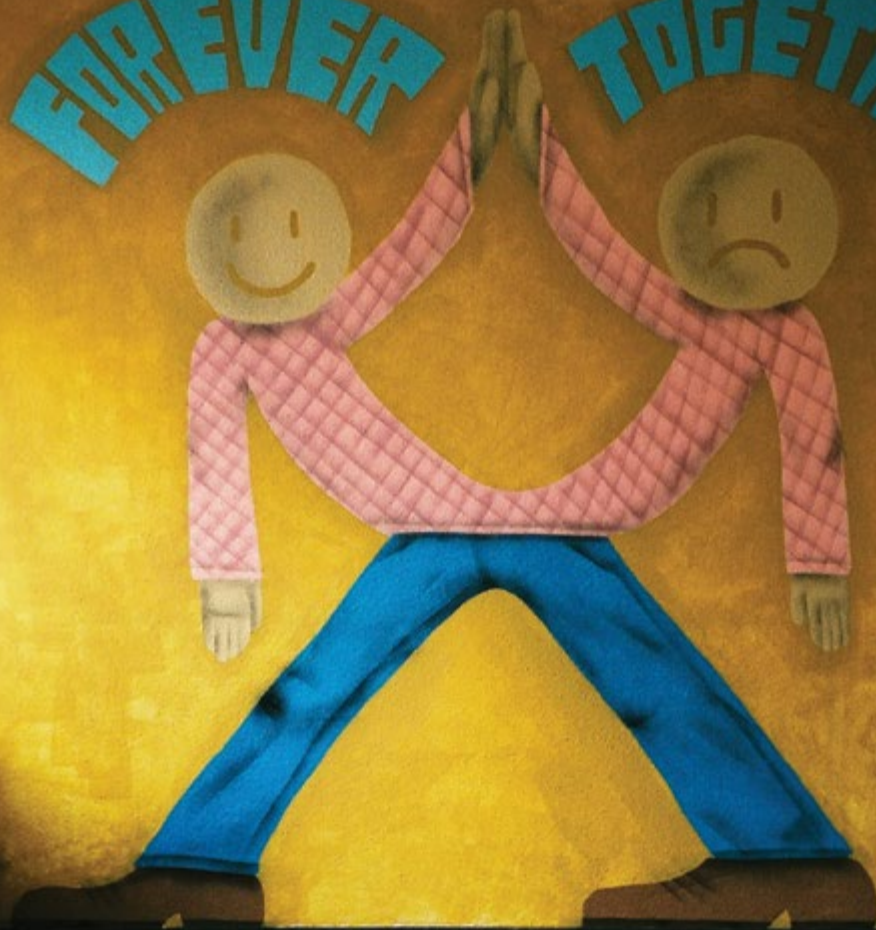
In fact there are already varieties of this type of "human money" being implemented, in the form of complementary currencies. Some of these communities interact with the mainstream economy, but many do not. Within such systems, work is relational rather than contractual, while the community produces its own value, rather than reproducing value for others.

One of the big questions about the automated world will be this: without work, what do we do for money?

Once you start thinking in these terms, things get weird. Sidestepping the existing money system calls into question the entire framework of financialization – the hegemonic way of understanding human progress in terms of the amount of money people earn – and suggests to us a more holistic measure that also may include social goods and environmental commons.

Resilient work could restore this moral aspect of labour. For most people in post-industrial economies, the purpose of our work is no longer to meet the "pressing economic cares" that Keynes described. Our work must therefore no longer look upwards to distant employers; it should look inwards to our communities, and outwards to the rest of humanity which remains in poverty, but which waits to join us.

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This sketch of resilient work is not a comprehensive vision of the new economy – but perhaps we do not need one, as long as we know where we are coming from. The history of work shows us hard-earned progress, from agricultural to industrial to post-industrial. Each step had costs and benefits, but each offered us more freedom to face the problem of leisure. The next step is ours to decide.

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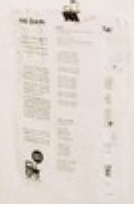
Do what you love. Love what you do.[1]

A picture of the studio of Jessica Walsh, designer and partner at Sagmeister&Walsh in NYC, first appeared on a popular design blog, but has been pinned, tumbl'd, and liked thousands of times by now[2]. The commands are framed and perched in a living room that can only be described as "well-curated." Lovingly lit and photographed, this room is styled to inspire Sehnsucht, roughly translatable from German as a pleasurable yearning for some utopian thing or place. Despite the fact that it introduces exhortations to labor into a space of leisure, the do *what you love* living room — where artful tchotchkes abound and work is not drudgery but love — is precisely the place all those pinners and likers long to be. The diptych arrangement suggests a secular version of a medieval house altar.

There is little doubt that *do what you love* (DWYL) is now the unofficial work mantra for our time. The problem is that it leads not to salvation, but to the devaluation of actual work, including the very work it pretends to elevate — and more importantly, the dehumanization of the vast majority of laborers. Superficially, DWYL is an uplifting piece of advice, urging us to ponder what it is we most enjoy doing and then turn that activity into a wage-generating enterprise. But why should our pleasure be for profit? Who is the audience for this dictum? Who is not?

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[1] The text was originally published in *Jacobin Issue #13*, and is republished courtesy of Jacobin. The source article alongside illustrations by Leslie A. Wood can be found here: https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/

[2] http://www.designsponge.com/2013/04/sneak-peek-jessica-walsh.html

By keeping us focused on ourselves and our individual happiness, DWYL distracts us from the working conditions of others, while validating our own choices and relieving us from obligations to all who labor, whether or not they love it. It is the secret handshake of the privileged and a worldview that disguises its elitism as noble self-betterment. According to this way of thinking, labor is not something one does for compensation, but an act of self-love. If profit does not happen to follow, it is because the worker's passion and determination were insufficient. Its real achievement is making workers believe their labor serves the self and not the marketplace.

Aphorisms have numerous origins and reincarnations, but the generic and hackneyed nature of DWYL confounds precise attribution. Oxford Reference links the phrase and variants of it to Martina Navratilova and François Rabelais, among others. The internet frequently attributes it to Confucius, locating it in a misty, orientalized past. Oprah Winfrey and other peddlers of positivity have included it in their repertoires for decades, but the most important recent evangelist of the DWYL creed is deceased Apple CEO, Steve Jobs.

His graduation speech to the Stanford University class of 2005 provides as good an origin myth as any, especially since Jobs had already been beatified as the patron saint of aestheticized work well before his early death. In the speech, Jobs recounts the creation of Apple, and inserts this reflection:

You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do great work is to love what you do.[3]

In these four sentences, the words 'you' and 'your' appear eight times. This focus on the individual is hardly surprising coming from Jobs, who cultivated a very specific image of himself as a worker: inspired, casual, passionate — all states agreeable with

[3] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UF8uR6Z6KLc

ideal romantic love. Jobs telegraphed the conflation of his besotted worker-self with his company so effectively that his black turtleneck and blue jeans became metonyms for all of Apple and the labor that maintains it.

In ignoring most work and reclassifying the rest as love, _do what you love_ may be the most elegant anti-worker ideology around.

But by portraying Apple as a labor of his individual love, Jobs elided the labor of untold thousands in Apple's factories, conveniently hidden from sight on the other side of the planet — the very labor that allowed Jobs to actualize his love. The violence of this erasure needs to be exposed. While do _what you love_ sounds harmless and precious, it is ultimately self-focused to the point of narcissism. Jobs' formulation of _do what you love_ is the depressing antithesis to Henry David Thoreau's utopian vision of labor for all. _In Life Without Principle_, Thoreau wrote:

... it would be good economy for a town to pay its laborers so well that they would not feel that they were working for low ends, as for a livelihood merely, but for scientific, even moral ends. Do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for the love of it.[4]

[4] Thoreau, Henry David, _Life Without Principle_, Forgotten Books, 2008

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Admittedly, Thoreau had little feel for the proletariat (it is hard to imagine someone washing diapers for "scientific, even moral ends," no matter how well-paid). But he nonetheless maintains that society has a stake in making work well-compensated and meaningful. By contrast, the 21st century Jobsian view demands that we all turn inward. It absolves us of any obligation to, or acknowledgment of the wider world, underscoring its fundamental betrayal of all workers, whether they consciously embrace it or not.

One consequence of this isolation is the division that DWYL creates among workers, largely along class lines. Work becomes divided into two opposing classes: that which is lovable (creative, intellectual, socially prestigious), and that which is not (repetitive, unintellectual, undistinguished). Those in the lovable work camp are vastly more privileged in terms of wealth, social status, education, society's racial biases and political clout, while comprising a small minority of the workforce. For those forced into unlovable work, it is a different story. Under the DWYL credo, labor that is done out of motives or needs other than love (which is, in fact, most labor) is not only demeaned but erased. As in Jobs' Stanford speech, unlovable but socially necessary work is banished from the spectrum of consciousness altogether.

Think of the great variety of work that allowed Jobs to spend even one day as CEO: his food harvested from fields, then transported across great distances; his company's goods assembled, packaged, shipped; Apple advertisements scripted, cast, filmed; lawsuits processed; office wastebaskets emptied and ink cartridges filled. Job creation goes both ways. Yet with the vast majority of workers effectively invisible to elites busy in their lovable occupations, how can it be surprising that the heavy strains faced by today's workers (abysmal wages, massive child care costs etc.) barely register as political issues even among the liberal faction of the ruling class?

In ignoring most work and reclassifying the rest as love, DWYL may be the most elegant anti-worker ideology around. Why should workers assemble and assert their class interests if there is no such thing as work?

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Do what you love disguises the fact that being able to choose a career primarily for personal reward is an unmerited privilege, a sign of that person's socioeconomic class. Even if a self-employed graphic designer had parents who could pay for art school and cosign a lease for a slick Brooklyn apartment, she can self-righteously bestow DWYL as career advice to those covetous of her success. If we believe that working as a Silicon Valley entrepreneur or a museum publicist or a think-tank acolyte is essential to being true to ourselves — in fact, to loving ourselves — what do we believe about the inner lives and hopes of those who clean hotel rooms and stock shelves at big-box stores? The answer is: nothing.

Yet arduous, low-wage work is what ever more Americans do and will be doing. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the two fastest-growing occupations projected until 2020 are Personal Care Aide and Home Care Aide, with average salaries of $19,640 per year and $20,560 per year in 2010, respectively. Elevating certain types of professions to something worthy of love necessarily denigrates the labor of those who do unglamorous work that keeps society functioning, especially the crucial work of caregivers.

If DWYL denigrates or makes dangerously invisible vast swaths of labor that allow many of us to live in comfort and to do what we love, it has also caused great damage to the professions it portends to celebrate, especially those jobs existing within institutional structures. Nowhere has the DWYL mantra been more devastating to its adherents than in academia. The average PhD student of the mid 2000s forwent the easy money of finance and law (now slightly less easy) to live on a meager stipend in order to pursue their passion for Norse mythology or the history of Afro-Cuban music.

The reward for answering this higher calling is an academic employment marketplace in which around 41% of American faculty are adjunct professors — contract instructors who usually receive low pay, no benefits, no office, no job security, and no long-term stake in the schools where they work.

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There are many factors that keep PhDs providing such high-skilled labor for such extremely low wages, including path dependency and the sunk costs of earning a PhD, but one of the strongest is how pervasively the DWYL doctrine is embedded in academia. Few other professions fuse the personal identity of their workers so intimately with the work output. This intense identification partly explains why so many proudly left-leaning faculty remain oddly silent about the working conditions of their peers. Because academic research should be done out of pure love, the actual conditions of and compensation for this labor become afterthoughts, if they are considered at all.

In *Academic Labor, the Aesthetics of Management, and the Promise of Autonomous Work*, Sarah Brouillette writes of academic faculty:

... our faith that our work offers non-material rewards, and is more integral to our identity than a "regular" job would be, makes us ideal employees when the goal of management is to extract our labor's maximum value at minimum cost.[5]

Many academics like to think they have avoided a corporate work environment and its attendant values, but Marc Bousquet notes in his essay *We Work* that academia may actually provide a model for corporate management:

How to emulate the academic workplace and get people to work at a high level of intellectual and emotional intensity for fifty or sixty hours a week for bartenders' wages or less? Is there any way we can get our employees to swoon over their desks, murmuring "I love what I do" in response to greater workloads and smaller paychecks? How can we get our workers to be like faculty and deny that they work at all? How can we adjust our corporate culture to resemble campus culture, so that our workforce will fall in love with their work too?[6]

[5] Brouillette, Sarah, Academic Labor, the Aesthetics of Management, and the Promise of Autonomous Work, 2013; http://nonsite.org/article/academic-labor-the-aesthetics-of-management-and-the-promise-of-autonomous-work

[6] Bousquet, Marc. *We Work*. In Jeffrey J. Williams and Heather Steffen, eds, *The Critical Pulse: Thirty-Six Credos by Contemporary Critics*, Columbia University Press, 2012

**If *do what you love*
denigrates or makes dangerously
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No one is arguing that enjoyable work should be less so.
But emotionally satisfying work is still work, and acknowledging it
as such does not undermine it in any way. Refusing to acknowledge
it, on the other hand, opens the door to the most vicious
exploitation and harms all workers. Ironically, DWYL reinforces
exploitation even within the so-called lovable professions where
off-the-clock, underpaid or unpaid labor is the new norm: reporters
required to do the work of their laid-off photographers, publicists
expected to Pin and Tweet on weekends, the 46% of the workforce
expected to check their work email on sick days. Nothing makes
exploitation go down easier than convincing workers that they are
doing what they love.

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Instead of crafting a nation of self-fulfilled, happy workers, our DWYL era has seen the rise of the adjunct professor and the unpaid intern — people persuaded to work for cheap or free, or even for a net loss of wealth. This has certainly been the case for all those interns working for college credit or those who actually purchase ultra-desirable fashion-house internships at auction. (Valentino and Balenciaga are among a handful of houses that auctioned off month-long internships. For charity, of course.) The latter is worker exploitation taken to its most extreme, and as an ongoing Pro Publica investigation reveals[7], the unpaid intern is an ever larger presence in the American workforce.

Instead of crafting a nation of self-fulfilled, happy workers, our *do what you love* era has seen the rise of the adjunct professor and the unpaid intern — people persuaded to work for cheap or free.
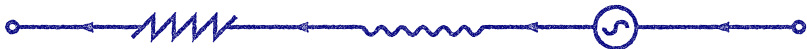
It should be no surprise that unpaid interns abound in fields that are highly socially desirable, including fashion, media, and the arts. These industries have long been accustomed to masses of employees willing to work for social currency instead of actual wages, all in the name of love. Excluded from these opportunities, of course, is the overwhelming majority of the population - those who need to work for wages. This exclusion not only calcifies economic and professional immobility, but insulates these industries from the full diversity of voices society has to offer.

[7] https://www.propublica.org/series/internships

And it is no coincidence that the industries that rely heavily on interns — fashion, media, and the arts — just happen to be the feminized ones, as Madeleine Schwartz wrote in *Dissent*[8]. Yet another damaging consequence of DWYL is how ruthlessly it works to extract female labor for little or no compensation. Women comprise the majority of the low-wage or unpaid workforce; as care workers, adjunct faculty, and unpaid interns, they outnumber men. What unites all of this work, whether performed by GEDs or PhDs, is the belief that wages should not be the primary motivation for doing it. Women are supposed to do work because they are natural nurturers and are eager to please; after all they have been doing uncompensated childcare, eldercare, and housework since time immemorial. And talking money is unladylike anyway.

The DWYL dream is, true to its American mythology, superficially democratic. PhDs can do what they love, making careers that indulge their love of the Victorian novel and writing thoughtful essays in the *New York Review of Books*. High school grads can also do it, building prepared food empires out of their Aunt Pearl's jam recipe. The hallowed path of the entrepreneur always offers this way out of disadvantaged beginnings, excusing the rest of us for allowing those beginnings to be as miserable as they are. In America, everyone has the opportunity to do what he or she loves and get rich.

Do what you love and you'll never work a day in your life! Before succumbing to the intoxicating warmth of that promise, it is critical to ask: "Who, exactly, benefits from making work feel like non-work?" or "Why *should* workers feel as if they aren't working when they are?". Historian Mario Liverani reminds us that "ideology has the function of presenting exploitation in a favorable light to the exploited, as advantageous to the disadvantaged."

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[8] https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/opportunity-costs-the-true-price-of-internships

In masking the very exploitative mechanisms of labor that it fuels, DWYL is, in fact, the most perfect ideological tool of capitalism. It shunts aside the labor of others and disguises our own labor to ourselves. It hides the fact that if we acknowledged all of our work as work, we could set appropriate limits for it, demanding fair compensation and humane schedules that allow for family and leisure time.

And if we did that, more of us could get around to doing what it is we *really* love.

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Ask yourself this… What would the world look like if the internet would have been invented before democracy?

I have long been interested, even obsessed with the idea that open technology could be the great leveler the world needs. That it could bring about accountability through transparency, and Good through a more direct and shared form of democracy. I still believe this, but rather than as a prediction of how the world will be, it is now a hope for how the world could be.

We are at a point in human evolution where we not only have incredible technology at our fingertips, we also have examples of methods of organization which are far more balanced and in line with our fundamental human rights. Ways which are not only fairer, also allow for faster, more direct, decentralized forms of decision making. They allow for more radical change and they are mathematically less risky. In an age where all of this is at our disposal, we now have the possibility to move beyond settling for Churchillian quotes about democracy being the worst form of government except for all others. This is a period in human history that could see us create new models of governance. Maybe a form of uber-democracy? Who knows...

how work works

Unknown consequences

I find this moment in history as scary as I find it exciting. Britain has just voted to leave the EU with consequences which seemingly nobody truly understands. The UK and the EU are increasingly indefinable entities. There is a rise in publicly elected leaders with extreme right wing views, both in the US and across Europe. Conflicts in the Middle East have not only intensified, they have spread and deepened. Revolutions and coups across Northern Africa and the Middle East have become common place. The waves of economic scarcity and abundance seem to be shorter and sharper. Governments of all kinds are either censoring or spying on their citizens, even the 'good guys'. Terrorist groups are more and more prevalent in the media. Companies like Facebook run algorithms which are inevitably shaping important political debates.

As we go on, a 14-year old named Jack Andraka may have found a cure for cancer partly thanks to a Google search. Wikipedia pretty much makes the sum of all human knowledge available freely to anybody in the world, as long as they can get online.

I see no better place to put my energy than into making work work for everybody.

Governments are being forced to be increasingly transparent due to the work of famous leakers such as Edward Snowden. Groups of Anonymous hackers from around the world can stand up for causes they deem worthy... etc. And in some instances trigger not inconsiderable reform.

From hierarchies to #hasthags

So I am not sure if the world is better or worse, but it is definitely different and it is getting increasingly different, more and more quickly. Furthermore, it is not just different on the surface, it is different in the underlying fabric of how humanity is organized, how power is distributed, how we interact, and how information is shared. We now have the evolutionary context to genuinely move from hierarchy to networks, or as I like to say - from *hierarchy to hashtags*. This shift is deeply disruptive not only because of the effect it has on businesses from various industries, or job markets, but also because it puts in question our deeper fundamental human needs. It puts into question the unspoken social norms which still dictate our day to day. We may have almost moved away from kings and queens to elected governments, but the underlying assumptions have not shifted that much. We still have bosses and presidents, hierarchies, status and power. All 'givens' in the social fabric of the past century. The legal, political and organizational systems we are living in were created in a world which is gone. We are running on old software and it's time to upgrade.

From powerful people, to powerful processes

The technological time we find ourselves in, however, now creates a genuine alternative. A context where we would no longer get to vote for a pool of electoral candidates as small as 0.01%. A context where perhaps we no longer need to be at the whim of the few. Or at least a context where we can have more influence over how things are decided. Technology is now there so that everybody can contribute to deciding on how we decide. I believe there is a true power shift happening in the world, and I hope this will go from powerful people to powerful processes, ones that are highly participative. There is of course just cause to be extremely scared of what could come, but I think there is equal cause to focus on the opportunities this gives us to create the kind of society we would like to live in.

The world is changing at a rate of knots, but the way in which we are governed has not changed in a long, long time. One of the biggest shifts we are seeing is that intelligence is in many ways distributed, but power is still centralized with Central Governments and Central Banks. The idea of centralization though largely belongs to the old world. Centralization adds structure, bureaucracy, distance, hierarchy and all of the above are highly fallible. The recent paradigm shift doesn't necessarily require this. In fact, in some circles, the idea of anything centralized is seen as highly dangerous and irresponsible. Here is an example from another field. In IT, the idea of centralization creates what is known as a 'single point of failure'. A single point of failure *"is a part of a system that, if it fails, will stop the entire system from working. SPOFs are undesirable in any system with a goal of high availability or reliability, be it a business practice, software application, or other industrial system."*[1] This is why businesses often diversify, so if one domino falls the others do not all come toppling down.

Decentralization

Decentralized systems tend to be faster-moving. Faster at reaching mass adoption, constantly improving through iteration, and far less volatile as there is no single point of failure. The open source movement is a perfect example of this. Take Linux as an example. It is on more computer hardware platforms than any other operating system and with Android operating systems being based on Linux, this means that the open source operating system is on most of the world's phones. Mad! The idea that a non-profit, freely available piece of work becomes one of the leaders in a world dominated by huge organizations such as Apple, Google or Facebook.

Other incredible examples of decentralized systems growing exponentially and often providing better service are AirBnb, Kickstarter and Uber. But we are just at the very beginning of other peer-to-peer technologies with huge potential, such as driverless cars, blockchains and mesh networking. These models are based

[1] Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Single_point_of_failure

on the principles which underpin the future of our society, and
there are organizations that could be ahead of the curve in terms
of adopting this social technology. Principles that not only provide
the context for a more spiritually prosperous society, but which also
help organizations to be faster, more sustainable and less volatile.

Distributed organizations: an indicator of a future social system

Let us look at some of these principles through the lens of macro-
political events and see how these examples are closely reflected in
evolutionary organizational cultures. Take the actions of WikiLeaks
or Edward Snowden for instance. Whilst there is much debate as to
the moral merit of leaking highly sensitive state documents, there
is little argument as to the need for our governments to be highly
accountable for their behaviors. Information is power, and I believe
the levels of transparency made possible by the web will help us to
rebalance this, and keep individuals true and accountable. While
the examples of this being the case at a governmental level may
be few and far between, there is no shortage of inspiring examples
at an organizational level. Pioneers like Semco and organizations
like Buffer, for instance, have created radically transparent
organizational cultures that enable the entire business to learn
from everybody's activity at a faster rate than would have ever been
possible in a centralized system.

We cannot mention the impact of the technology on a political level
without mentioning examples of events such as the Arab Spring, a
revolution which would not have been possible on its scale or speed
if it were not for smartphones and social networking. Abstracting
from the event itself is perhaps where our lessons for the way we
work lie. Huge numbers of people acting without a central authority,
able to gather around a cause they believe in, in order to create
huge change. This is the same way groups like Anonymous are said
to be operating, gathering around issues they deem worthy. If the
crowd gets behind it, it can happen. While these examples may
seem extremely organic, there are more structured illustrations
within the commercial world with Automatic, Spotify, Holacracy,

Zappos and other self-managed systems. In the words of Frederic Laloux *"the age of the internet has precipitated a new worldview - one that can contemplate the possibility of distributed intelligence instead of top-down hierarchy".*[2] In some ways, organizations are working in such innovative ways, that they could be in fact the test beds for a blueprint of the future of society at large.

## Commercial benefits of distribution: innovation and stability

While the human benefits of self-management, transparency and agility may be easy to grasp, the commercial benefits are often less obvious and for some even dubious. *"Isn't it just chaos?!"* ask those who do not want to lose their control and *"Don't you need to be careful?!"* is a question often asked by those who have something to hide. What are the commercial benefits then? There are many, but in this short article I focus on the two most critical ones, as they link to everything else.

The clearest of benefits is probably innovation. Innovation requires many factors including empowerment (to take initiative), emotional safety (to make mistakes and take risks) and a learning culture (made more likely when all work is made visible). A comparison of dinosaurs and disruptors may help illustrate this best. Take that famous unverified myth that Nokia had created a product very similar to the iPhone long before the iPhone was even launched. It just did not make it through the levels of hierarchy. On the other side of the coin, a friend of mine who works at Facebook says it is a real meritocracy. If you have a good idea, people gather around it and will help you make it happen. Even their building in Palo Alto is 'hackable' so it can be configured for the need of the time. It is no coincidence that a lot of the world's leading innovation is coming from companies that are also experimenting with innovative ways of working. It is not just about bean bags and ping pong tables.

[2] Laloux, Frederic, *Reinventing organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness*, Nelson Parker, 2014

In a world which is moving so rapidly, many say even exponentially, innovation is a premise for success. In fact, I would go as far as saying it is a premise for mere survival and stability, and this is where one of the biggest misconceptions of evolved organizations comes in.

Many see distributed organizations as chaotic and unstable. But quite the opposite, it could be a simple matter of framing what is risk and what is not. Somebody far more competent in math might be better suited to make this argument for me. It seems to me that the sayings describing it best are *'having all eggs in one basket'* versus *'spreading your bets'*. Which is the most risky? As discussed earlier, centralized systems are hugely risky and more exposed to volatility. The benefit of a decentralized system is not only that the risk is spread, but also that the system can benefit from both success and stress. When there is a failure in a small pocket of the organization, that lesson can spread throughout the whole organism in the same way that all driverless cars benefit from the lessons of a single car's mistakes. In that sense, the more happening at a micro level - the more the system benefits at a macro level.
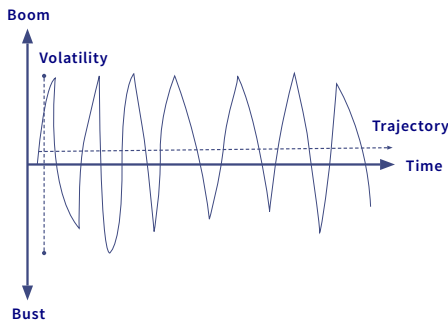
Centralised, fragile system
High and constant volatility, stagnant trajectory
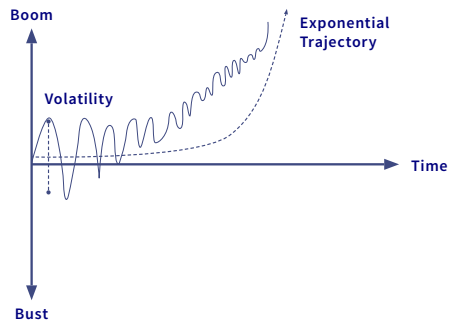
Distributed, anti-fragile system
Low volatility, volatility decreases over time,
trajectory increases exponentially,
gains from disorder

how work works

Graph *extracted from the draft of Jon's upcoming book Democracy Squared*; http://democracysquared.io

Starting small

Finally, let me go back to where I started from. I believe that the time has come to start moving towards far more direct, far more empowered, and far more distributed modes of organization. Both connected and social technologies create a context for new models that allow each individual to have a bigger impact on the world they live in, in a way that also benefits the whole. Cascading, centralized and autocratic systems which were made common practice during the industrial revolution may have been fit for purpose when trying to scale an organization in the analog world, but in the networked world we have new tools. It is time to use them and to prototype with these models so that we can gradually replicate them for the way we organize society at large.

Leaving a better world for future generations relies on us making this a priority. We must carry on the work of past generations who fought for democracy by evolving this for our current context, to shape soulful societies based on freedom and equality. This means working with both the context we live in - i.e. the structures and systems we live and work in - and the cultures we nurture, or the beliefs and behaviors manifested in these contexts. Since *the world of work* has such a huge impact on both these things and takes up so much of our time, I see no better place to put my energy than into making work work for everybody. I invite you to do the same.

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How does work work? Entering the age of profitable community

Community is an essential part of the human experience. As inherently social beings, we rely on each other for support, emotionally and physically. Today, we live in an increasingly privatized and isolated societies, and as a result concepts such as coworking and coliving are suddenly all the rage. Attempting to bring the notion of community back into the mainstream consciousness, these co-trends have grown increasingly popular, and now beg the question: Are these concepts, originally intended to ease the burden of modern capitalism, quickly becoming commodified and sold back to us in a sort of 'communal package deal'? And if so, is this challenging the balance between private and public life, both on micro and macro levels, potentially forcing us to feed the beast we are trying to escape from?

Financial crisis, high-unemployment and depressed workers: Time for change

Time may heal all wounds, but the cuts caused by the 2008 financial collapse are still raw. A handful of crooked financial institutions turned the lives of millions upside down. Unemployment rates skyrocketed, homes were lost and futures shattered, if only to fill a couple of already bulging pockets. It sounds like the plot of a 1970s dystopian sci-fi novel, but unfortunately - it really happened. Although the crisis was felt globally, it is the Millennials, those born in the early 1980s to the mid-2000s, that have become the poster children of institutionalized greed. The highest-educated generation in history is now also the most underpaid[1].

[1] Rattner, Steven. *We're Making Life Too Hard for Millennials*. The New York Times online, July 2015: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/02/opinion/sunday/were-making-life-too-hard-for-millennials.html?src=mv&_r=0

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At one point there were more than 42 million unemployed persons recorded in OECD countries, and many of these the aforementioned Millennials who were now entering the job market. With little to no professional prospects, but more resources and knowledge available to them thanks to technology, there was a major shift towards a growing freelance workforce. For many of these precarious workers, the rise of coworking was a godsend.

Cafe Griendsteidl, Vienna, 1897

The concept of coworking is not new. During the 19th and 20th centuries, artists and philosophers came together in Vienna's ornate coffee houses to work, debate and simply be in the company of others. Around the same time in Italy, workshops offered space for artists, but also apprentices to hone their various skillsets through collaboration. Throughout history, there are countless examples of individuals gathering and utilizing public space to enable community. These gatherings proved to be more than for professional development only, but also majorly influenced local cultures, urban aesthetics and opinions[2].

[2] Formica, Piero, *The Innovative Coworking Spaces of 15th Century Italy*, Harvard Business Review online, April 2016: https://hbr.org/2016/04/the-innovative-coworking-spaces-of-15th-century -italy. Online

Today's coworking movement is cut from the same cloth. Some of the first official spaces to crop up in the mid to late 1990s aimed to provide space for freelancers, entrepreneurs and anyone else who needed to get out of the house, looking for a place where they could "work together as equals"[3]. Even in its early stages, coworking was always a service, but one that came without expectations, promises and slogans, such as "do what you love". Coworking spaces helped support and empower their users, encouraging them to tap into their full potential, whether they loved their work or not.

As a result, people were immediately taken by coworking. It not only caused them to change the way they worked, but also led them to question the concept of work itself. This passion for coworking did not come only from inside the coworking spaces, but also recognized the way that coworking could actively revitalize long forgotten buildings and neighborhoods[4]. The model showed enormous potential both for individuals and greater communities, shining a light not only on the exclusive nature of contemporary company culture, but also on how we could better live together.

Coworking enters the living room

Increasingly unwilling to sit confined in a cubicle for 8 hours a day, today's workforce has fully embraced communal and mobile work culture. And the future does not end there - coworking's popularity has resulted in the creation of new services, such as retreat centric programs, or "coworkations" for digital nomads traversing the globe with their laptops, startup accelerators, creative think tanks, and the latest trend that is taking off - *coliving*. Like coworking spaces, coliving also stems from adversity, as the majority of today's young professionals cannot afford to move out of their parent's homes, causing them to miss out on the chance to build their own lives, both professionally and personally[5].

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[3] Foertsch, Carsten & Cagnol, Remy, *The History Of Coworking In A Timeline*, Deskmag online, September 2013: http://www.deskmag.com/en/the-history-of-coworking-spaces-in-a-timeline.

[4] *Shared Workspaces and the Power of Place*, Project For Public Spaces online, November 2015: http://www.pps.org/blog/shared-work-spaces-and-the-power-of-place/

[5] Smith, Joe. *Running for the hills: young people cannot afford to buy or rent, so they are building their own houses* Newstatesmen online, April 2016: http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2016/04/running-hills-young-people-can-t-afford-buy-or-rent-so-they-are-building-their

Like coworking, communal living is a major part of our human history. From the boarding houses of 19th century America, to the communes of the 1960s and 1970s, each one of these communities served their purpose, allowing people to share resources and relieve financial burdens, while also acting as a stepping-stone for immigrants and those coming to the city from rural areas in search of work.

**Living in communities
not only provides the basic needs,
but it also changes the way
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It makes us more conscious
about how we consume.**

Living in communities not only provides the basic needs, but it also changes the way we interact with one another. It makes us more conscious about how we consume. Yet, a sense of togetherness did not, and still does not go hand in hand with Western ideals of success. There was a time limit on living communally, as it was expected of a successful member of the society to have a job, own a home and support a family. To push this standard, conservative rhetoric came down on communal living as hard in the late 19th as it did in the 20th century, shaming those who chose to live together as immoral and abnormal[6].

[6] Graham, Ruth, *Boardinghouses: where the city was born*, The Boston Globe online, January 2013: https://www.bostonglobe.com/ideas/2013/01/13/boardinghouses-where -city-was-born/Hpstvjt0kj52ZMpjUOM5RJ/story.html

Somewhere, 1960s

But in 2016, community is making a comeback, attempting to smash those negative stereotypes once and for all, and making living in cities like Manhattan a little more doable. The Old Oak Collective in London is tackling the English capital's housing crisis, Common is "transforming residential housing" to meet the needs of Millennials, while the coworking giant WeWork is back with WeLive, creating *home sweet home* for all those lonely entrepreneurs out there.

Similarly to coworking, coliving seems to have drifted far from its roots, no longer the result of organic communities pushing for alternative lifestyles, but rather an easily marketable product. And like the coworking industry, branded coliving actors will have a hard time actually pushing for systematic change, and should be better understood as our future landlords[7].

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[7] Havel, John, *Why Is WeWork Worth so Much*, The Hustle online, March 2016: http://thehustle.co /why-wework-is-worth-so-much.

Coworking - bought and sold?

Today's workforce demands to be connected. Workers are increasingly unwilling to take a job simply in order to have a job, and they want the company they work for to be engaged in something meaningful[8]. It did not take long for more traditional enterprises to pick up fast on the fact that they might be losing the popularity contest. As more and more potential hires opted to go freelance, and were taking their jobs to the nearest coworking space, traditional companies knew they had to make a change.
And do it quickly.

Large enterprises recognized that coworking could help them win back the popularity contest. And make money in the process.

A neatly packaged marketable community was easily adopted by large companies. Without having to spend significant amounts of time building a community bottom-up, large enterprises recognized that coworking could help them win back the popularity contest. And make money in the process. Today, corporate coworking[9] has become an official term, and coworking enthusiasts[10] question if their hard-earned community is now being used to dress-up corporations as socially aware communal spaces, without actually adopting

[8] Jenkin, Matthew, *Millennials want to work for employers committed to values and ethics*, The Guardian online, May 2015 : https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2015/may/05/millennials-employment-employers-values-ethics-jobs

[9] Clark, Patrick, *Co-Working Spaces Are Going Corporate*, Bloomberg online, February2016: http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-19/co-working-spaces-are-going-corporate

[10] Hillman, Alex, *Coworking Core Values 1 of 5: Sustainability*, Dangerously Awesome online, August 2011 http://dangerouslyawesome.com/2011/08/coworking-core-values-1-of-5-sustainability/co-working-spaces-are-going-corporate

the core values needed for genuine change. Asking whether or not coworking has been bought and sold is not to say that these spaces have sold out, but rather asks if the coworking value system, based on human need and growth, has been co-opted for financial gain. Today's most valuable coworking space (WeWork), worth a whopping 16 Billion USD, has propelled coworking into the mainstream. The home page of their website gets straight to the point - *Create Your Life's Work*. Scroll a little further down and you will find WeWork's mission statement, brimming with inspirational lingo, from "inspired", "entrepreneurial", "authentic" and unavoidably "together", promising the full shared workspace experience.

Today's workforce demands to be connected.

While convenient, this ready-made community experience somehow takes the serendipity, one of the favorite buzzwords out of the equation.

The coworking industry leaders like WeWork most likely would not claim that they are not a business, and everybody understands that money is a key element to survival. Yet, while availability of coworking spaces on a mass scale has helped today's professionals grow amongst a more global community, the core values no longer seem to come from within, but rather they feel copied and pasted. Coworking is no longer just a catalyst for change, it is also good for business.

Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining*, 1980

Is all this autonomy making us work more?

Increased mobility is eventually extremely positive, and the rise of coworking and coliving has helped the dream of a more global likeminded community become a reality. Success is being measured by human connection and collaboration now more than ever, which could result in more open-minded, socially aware individuals. Thanks to technology, seeking jobs that allow for remote work has also become easier. But at the end of the day, newly found freedoms have come with new baggage, such as unresolved benefits, insecurity and even more working hours[11].

[11] Hinsliff, Gaby, *We are working harder than ever and it's killing us. We need more chill time*, The Guardian online, November 2014: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/27/working-harder-more-chill-time-long-hours

Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1927

Companies are not only changing their image to be more appealing to workers - sort of like the way big corporations such as Coca Cola now champion coworking - but many also quickly realized that if they hired potential employees on a contractual basis, they would be relieved from having to pay for insurance, benefits and retirement. In exchange for a little wiggle room, like flexible working hours and the chance to work from home, employers could save some serious cash[12].

Looking back, the co-evolution has not turned out the way we expected, yet. It is important to return to the roots of communalism, whether it is at the workplace or at home, to really understand where we are today and what more can be done to ensure we are on the way to a more cooperative world.

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[12] Lacy, Sarah, *Ask any entrepreneur: The freelance economy is a sucker's game*, Pando online, December 2012: https://pando.com/2012/12/09/ask-any-entrepreneur-the-freelance-economy-is-a-suckers-game

Put simply, coworking and coliving are based on values that cannot survive alone within a system that depends and thrives on consumption based on individual needs, wants and desires. Still today, standard institutions are largely based on service and profit, not genuine community[13].

Perhaps part of the "uphill struggle" is to break the stereotypes behind movements like communal living[14], and by allowing coworking and coliving to be coopted, sharing and connection will become more normalized. Perhaps we have yet to enter into a period of real change. It might be it is already happening. Behind every promise to relieve you of your loneliness and undiscovered dreams lies a new movement brewing up, and maybe next time around it might be called *No-working*.

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[13] Brooks, David, *The Great Affluence Fallacy*, The New York Times online, August 2016: http://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/09/opinion/the-great-affluence-fallacy

[14] Jones, Tobias, *The new communes: Why I live with a dozen other people*, Newstatesman online, October 2015: http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2015/10/new-communes-why-i-live-dozen-other-people

The wind of change

Over the past couple of decades the world of work has been going through a thorough reconstruction. On one hand, there has been a steady increase in part-time, short-term and self-employment work arrangements, in other words the proliferation of free and flexible contractual relations and project-driven work cycles. A secure, life-long job is no longer imaginable, nor desired. The 9 to 5 working day seems to have run its course together with the designated workplace. On the other hand, work has come to be inseparable from our cognitive, communicative and even emotional faculties, whereas clear divisions between work and leisure have become increasingly blurred. These assertions are especially valid for the growing knowledge economy sector, or the so-called digital economy[1], wherein access to work as well as the way work itself is organized are increasingly being mediated through the *platform* – from Airbnb and Uber, to UpWork and TaskRabbit. Furthermore, the work itself is becoming increasingly dependent on our capacity to cooperate and on numerous cloud-based software that enable this cooperation. Just think email and Google Drive, or more advanced and specialized Git, Asana or Scrill. The digital worker is a nomadic, networked, and entrepreneurial subject who works when and wherever he or she chooses, for whom or with whomever he/she chooses and on whatever task he/she picks. Or at least that is how the story goes. However, long-term and structural unemployment, labor intensification, personal dependencies, precarity and general life insecurity, as well as the gradual decline in living standards of the middle classes, are also becoming the markers of the new world of work.

[1] Although originating in the IT and creative industry sectors, this type of work organization is gradually being expanded to other sectors as well, including traditional services and even those publically funded such as public administration, education and health.

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In more broader terms, from the stand point of the ways in which material and immaterial commodities are produced and exchanged, and production and work are organized, there is a shift from standardized mass production of the industrial era, to *lean* production, economies of scope, and the emergence of what Italian autonomists call the social factory. In addition to these developments we can also observe a shift in the political narratives that complement them: the compromise of full employment, pioneered by the post-war welfare state, which characterized capitalist societies of the industrial era is gradually giving way to flexicurity welfare schemes that aim at striking the right balance between flexible job arrangements and secure job transitions.

**Our capacity to work
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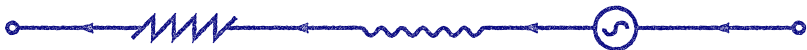
To account for these developments, we will try to give a short overview of changes that took place within the last couple of decades, thereby shaping the way we work today. The shift from fordist to post-fordist production modus will be at the center of our analysis, through which we also touch upon technology-driven and socially enabled relations of production, including the re-composition of work itself.

The changing production paradigm

Before we put forward the analysis of the changing paradigm of production, it is important to stress that the ways we understand and use different concepts - such as fordism as post-fordism for example - shapes the ways we perceive and organize our materiality. These terms and concepts are not separated from the material world we find ourselves in, and are by no means objective interpretations of sorts, but are always constitutive of a general ideological framework under which the material plane of our lives is being structured and recomposed. This is especially the case with neologisms - relatively new terms and phrases that try to describe phenomena as we experience them. Post-fordism is one of those terms.

What immediately comes to our attention is that the prefix *post* constitutes this neologism. We mention this because we believe that this prefix is constitutive for the concept's ideological use. In this sense, the term is directly related to a body of neologisms that have determined and continue to determine our world for almost half a century: post-modernism, post-industrialism, post-ideological era, post-politics... What distinguishes the prefix *post* is its lack of a positive content: post-fordism is the name of absence, not of a positive program. This is one of the reasons why in addition to this term, and associated with it, a number of other neologisms appear, all trying to describe the global transformation of late capitalism, its model of production, exchange and consumption: neoliberalism, immaterial production, cognitive capitalism, knowledge economy, creative economy, sharing economy, gig economy, servant economy, information society, the age of self-employment, toyotism, post-industrial society, network society, liquid modernity, digital economy, communicative capitalism, platform capitalism and so forth.

These concepts, terms and neologisms belong to a heterogeneous terrain of contemporary theory and public policy.

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They are coined by individual authors, they focus on different aspects of contemporary capitalism, often opposing one another, whilst in constant dialogue. What is important for us is that they all work together, both describing and creating the post-fordist context - again keeping in mind that the concepts are not separated from the materiality of social relations of production, exchange and consumption, but are always constitutive of them. Regardless of the differences between these approaches, their recurring central concern is an attempt to grasp and conceptualize the ways in which value and growth are generated (in liberal terms), or capital accumulated (in Marxist terms) in the context of late capitalism. In other words, they analyse how production and thus the work itself were re-composed and transformed, and the ways in which these processes have influenced the entire organization of capitalist societies. Put simply - they all ask what is *new* in late capitalism?

Fordism, the dominant production paradigm from 1920s onwards, was characterized by standardized, industrially-based mass production and consumption, with factory and its assembly lines as its prime productive locus and routinized, prevalently unskilled labor in collusion with machinery for serial production, as its primary productive force. However, fordism should not be understood only as an economic paradigm: a way to organize production - in terms of time, space, labor, available technology - with an aim to generate (surplus) value. It was a social relation as well, which encompasses and enables this exact kind of production, this exact kind of exchange and consumption. In this sense, fordism dependeds on strong class identification that was complemented by higher wages and living standards, all of which prompted consumption within the mass-market. Additionally, fordism was enabled, reinforced and supported with pronounced state interventionism, strong market regulation, welfare state mechanisms, Keynesian economic approaches, stable markets, technology that enabled mass serial production of standardized products and strong class identifications that rested on prescribed lifestyles, such as nuclear family and female domestic labor, to name just a few.

WINDY OUTSIDE

Following the wave of social and class struggles and uprisings of the 1960s, and the profound energy crisis of 1973 and 1979, advanced capitalist societies begin to experience steady economic decline and recession, which marks the beginning of the end of fordist paradigm. Usually situated at the end of 1970s, it coincided and was backed by the increased saturation of national markets with mass-produced commodities, permanent pressure for better wages and living standards on behalf of the workers, slow disintegration of the welfare state and its Keynesian policies, and the rise of the global (labor) market. On more microscopic societal and technological levels, the change of paradigm was propelled by diversification of lifestyles and values, the birth of a personal computer and later on the World Wide Web. This was all followed by the general rise of digital technologies that facilitated comprehensive computerization and automation, as well as the emergence of networked communication and network society, both of which can be said to have permeated all segments and levels of production process as means of production.

In a response to the crisis of the fordist model of social organisation, and its increasingly limited growth, post-fordism introduces several important changes in terms of the ways material production itself is organised; ways that will, over the course of its development, decisively shape the organisation of society as a whole. One is the so-called lean and just-in-time (zero stock) production, in which items are created to meet the demand, and not in surplus or in advance of need. The purpose of JIT production is to avoid the waste associated with overproduction, waiting and excessive inventory. Mass market is increasingly becoming a targeted market, while differentiated marketing strategies and niche marketing take the place of mass marketing.

The second one implies a profound reconstruction of big industries characterized by its relocation from urban to semi-rural areas - and especially overseas, to the underdeveloped global East, or to other places where the price of labor is significantly lower and labor itself has no rights or power whatsoever - and by vertical disintegration of

production through the practices of outsourcing, subcontracting and offshoring. Fragmentation of production was facilitated by massive market deregulations, opening of new markets, and the rise of digital technologies. However, this development simultaneously crucially shaped the distribution, which grew to become a huge industry in its own right. In the words of Kim Moody: "Under increased competitive pressures at home and abroad, relocation and vertical disintegration called forth the reorganization of supply chains along just-in-time metrics, a reduced number of suppliers, and technologically linked and guided systems of commodity movement, all organized around giant logistics 'clusters' that employed tens of thousands of workers in relatively finite geographic areas."[2] In other words, this change in production created and reinforced an entirely new field of distribution and consumption.

The third, increased automation on the one hand, and relocation of industrial sector on the other, as well as the rise of the service sector prompted by the advance of digital technologies, proliferation of immaterial production and the rise of network society meant that the world of work, most prominently in the knowledge and digital economy sectors, was going to be fundamentally transformed as well.

Work in transition

Born within the developing sector of knowledge economy, most notably in the realm of IT and creative industries, post-fordist managerial paradigm implies flexible and fragmented work composition. The work becomes temporary, one-time, project-driven, non-guaranteed and non-secure. Enabled with the rise of digital technologies and networked communication, on-demand work organization gradually becomes a standard. Human labor is itself increasingly being organised with reference to the logic of the logistics revolution, meaning it is mobilized only when and for the limited time it is needed. From the perspective of the worker, the once homogeneous field of assignments based upon determined

2 Moody, Kim, *The State of America Labor*, 2016. Available at: https://www.jacobinmag.com /2016/06/precariat-labor-us-workers-uber-walmart-gig-economy/

procedures and strict hierarchies is now scattered into a series of non-related tasks dependent on horizontal relations of cooperation, and vulnerable to an ever-changing context and demand. With industrial production being automated away or moved to global peripheries, and with the tremendous impact of networked communication and the rise in production and consumption of immaterial commodities, advanced capitalist societies come to experience substantial growth of the service sector that favors on-demand work relations. According to Eurostat[3], the sector alone currently employs over 70% of workforce in the EU, while the knowledge-driven activities account for more than 40% of the total employed workforce.

The spread of services and the emphasis on knowledge and ideas as the prime productive forces of the economy meant that the very nature of work also fundamentally changes, as it comes to involve workers' cognitive, emotional and communicative faculties within the work process itself. Our capacity to work increasingly rests on our capacity to cooperate, to connect and communicate, but also on our ability to be seen within the network we aspire to be engaged in. It is by no means a secret that participation in either online or offline social platforms (or *hubs*) has become an important strategy for acquiring work, as well as maintaining it. The imperative to be there, to be present, to be involved and seen has become a norm. Put differently, reputation-building takes place throughout the social field. As Paolo Virno has argued, "when 'subjective' cooperation[4] becomes the primary productive force, labor activities display a marked linguistic-communicative quality, they entail the presence of others. The monological feature of labor dies away: the relationship with others is a driving, basic element, not something accessory"[5].

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[3] http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=htec_emp_nat2&lang=en

[4] As opposed to the notion of 'objective' cooperation, wherein each individual performs different, particularized activities that relate to each other only by an external act of coordination carried out by the management, and in which cooperation bears no relevance for the individual worker as it does not determine the way in which individual workers function, 'subjective' cooperation implies that a substantial part of individual work consists of developing, refining and intensifying cooperation itself.

[5] Virno, Paolo, *A Grammar of Multitude*, 2004, p.63-64.

These two distinctive new features – the changed nature of work that is the increased mobilization of our cognitive, emotional and communicative faculties within the work process, and the changes in the ways work is being organized and procured – in great deal determine the contemporary composition of labor. Work is in permanent transition, implying both the promise of a constant movement between jobs and careers and our ability to navigate across and within the vast field of networks, to choose the right nodes to connect to, and to capture these relationships to our own individual benefit. However, the question on whether this reality can be made in a way in which it works for the benefit of *all* remains one of the most pressing concerns.

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Reputation online games[1]

As the Summer Olympics in Rio were coming to an end, a top athlete faced probably the toughest challenge of his career. The US swimmer Ryan Lochte's sport results are faultless, and his medals are all in check; as a 12-time Olympic medalist, he is ranked world second in swimming, just behind Michael Phelps.

But when the global media published a security camera video showing someone's bare behind while urinating against a wall, sports came in second. Search of Lochte's name online was now listing hundreds of articles and comments marked by keywords such as 'lie', 'manipulation', 'vandalism', 'false report', 'drunk', and alike.[2] It all started to wear off only after news aggregators showed a title reading that major sponsors have ended endorsement contracts with Lochte.

There is a price to ill fame. In fitness and sports industries, that count on a myth of good physical condition as a reflection of human excellence, such a fame could cost tens of millions of dollars. While we could still argue whether the "clothes make the man" or not, there is obviously a solid ground to the notion that we infer conclusions and make our decisions based on the person's appearance, all that we could know about someone and any associations formed along the way.

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[1] This text is based on doctoral dissertation *Conflict of laws and jurisdiction stemming from reputation infringement on the Internet* by Đorđe Krivokapić, Belgrade, 2016. Conclusions and opinions do not necessarily reflect those made in the thesis. Other sources are listed in footnotes.

[2] After Lochte and three other swimmers from the US national team reported an armed robbery in Rio, it turned out that they in fact stopped at a gas station while „under the influence", where an armed guard made them pay – either for property damage or for 'American insolence', it is still not clear. In any case, *Speedo, Ralph Lauren* and other major sponsors ended their partnerships with Lochte, while the US National Olympic Committee announced sanctions against all four; http://www.wsj.com/articles/speedo-drops-ryan-lochte-1471880743

Our presence, within intimate circles and in front of global audience alike, is directly influenced by subjective opinions, estimates, feelings and habits of people evaluating us. That is how a reputation is built – a sum of attitudes and opinions a community holds of a reputation holder, enabling the social environment to estimate their expected behavior for better or worse.

As a shared cultural conception of value and a form of individual social capital, reputation extends over digital and non-digital networks in an increasingly freelance-based labour market.[3]

In the old days of public communication, when the news moved at a slower pace and, more importantly, when views and attitudes of the general public changed with no haste, passing through many filters on their way back to the feed, Ryan Lochte would probably have had more time for all the facts to get checked, or at least 'recontextualized'. And before the mass media even emerged, a detail that questions a national hero's word would hardly ever made its way through the rainforests and favelas to the upper circles of the developed world.

The mechanics of forming social relations remained more or less the same, though. Instead of personally getting to know each individual, organization or event within one's own living domain, humans developed a complex system of assessing and associating based on information available within a community. Those data make one's life easier, saving time in making decisions and providing notice of possible risks and gains in advance.

Available information of a community forms some sort of a storage of shared impressions, experiences, and memories, that each member can choose from at his or her convenience. Or, better yet, something similar to a lake, with lots of streams flowing in from above or under the ground, with occasional torrents and droughts, mudflows, pollution and cycles of calm and clarity.

[3] Gandini, Alessandro, *The Reputation Economy*, Palgarve Macmillan UK, 2016

Scoring the rep

Whether aware of the importance of its 'reputation pool' in everyday life or not, each community is interested in having as much clear and correct information that good decisions depend on. The more individuals are content with their decisions in the long run, the quality of life in the community is better. It cannot be more logical than that.

In the age of data economy, reputation is what makes the context of information, what explains them, interconnects them and quantifies their current value.

Personal and business reputations stem from insights and images of a community, its reputation 'pool', and can encompass all the real and imagined data relating to a reputation holder, their background, features, decisions and actions, that are valued against prevailing social norms and possible changes in socially acceptable behavior, as well as against prognoses of probable actions given that a future opportunity or crisis arises.

The largest online freelancer marketplace, Upwork, engaging 12 million freelancers and 5 million clients worldwide[4] operates on those grounds. Reputation of the Upwork clients, visible to all registered users, is called Job Success Score. It "reflects your overall contract history with your clients and is based on your (or your agency's) relationships and feedback". Prospects for deals and overall earnings are directly dependant on reputation score as a periodically calculated value based on public or private feedback from clients.

[4] Upwork, *About Us*: https://www.upwork.com/about/

The fact that online markets make sellers "much more accountable to buyers" through the review systems, allowing buyers to grade the sellers and the items they purchased, was also used by the now shut down darknet market SilkRoad. This gave "buyers a way to assess both the quality, the purity and the potency of the drugs they're getting … [making] these transactions much more safe for the buyers".[5]

Three main factors that influence customers' decisions were recently described as a P-M-O formula of the "influence mix".[6] P stands for prior personal preferences, beliefs, and experiences; M is information given by marketers (such as packaging, pricing, and advertising); and O is input from other people (friends, family, peers). In recent years "O" has taken on an increasing weight in many categories, that authors of the *influence mix* recognized as a consequence of the Internet, "moving us towards an age of nearly perfect information".

It was noted that the rising influence of online reviews and peer-to-peer information creates an environment enabling "people to predict, with great accuracy, what it would be like to own and use a product before they buy it", as much as what it would be like to hire someone or collaborate on a project before the decision is made. In that case, the risk of an embellished CV and exaggerated accomplishments is significantly reduced by personal accounts and ratings other people gave from their own previous experience with a possible employee.

Reputation score thus plays a regulatory role, punishing the bad and rewarding the good deeds, turning traits like honour, respect and alike into the social capital, an investment of personal resources with an expected outcome.

[5] Ingraham, Christofer, *Deep Web*, documentary film, 2015; http://www.deepwebthemovie.com
[6] I. Simonson, E. Rosen, *What Marketers Misunderstand About Online Reviews*, Harvard Business Review, January-February 2014; https://hbr.org/2014/01/what-marketers-misunderstand-about-online-reviews

Analyzing the process of a 'reputation acquisition', a specific kind of sociality is identified as instrumental for the engineering of a reputational capital and the management of relational resources across different offline and online contexts. "Networking practices are perceived as fundamental aspects in the marketability of a worker for the acquisition of a reputational capital. This occurs both offline and online, with no distinction or difference (...) It has to be frequent and recurrent, without significant gaps, breaks or interruptions. This brings visibility and recognition (...) The networking activity of an individual has to be performative since it is not merely an act that communicates, but also one that defines a social and relational identity of a professional (...) Digital media are instrumental for this process insofar as they offer this kind of sociality a milieu to exist in".[7]

Experts and amateurs, celebrities and unknowns — all are equal on the vast public scene as never before in human history.

The same analysis warns of freelance digital workers, or 'knowledge workers', piling up unpaid hours while investing into their online reputation. The new way of working "seems to put aside the unresolved tensions between precariousness, insecurity and the instability of work, to pursue an ideological approach to entrepreneurialism, professionalism and independence."

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[7] Gandini, Alessandro, *The Reputation Economy*, Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016

"Digital trust"

This new approach made the reputation an integral part of the identity; qualifiable and even quantifiable, while overlapping some of the most important issues of public interest like freedom of information, that is human rights to free expression and access to information of public importance. In other words, without freely exchanged data and opinions, an environment of "nearly perfect information" would not be possible.

On the other hand, there are members and organizations whose temporal interests dictate occasional interventions into the communal 'data reservoir' – withholding the truth, promoting lies, relativization and alike, so that other members would make desired decisions.

In an ideal layout of the reputation economy, relationship values and final scores should almost be a spontaneous outcome of self-regulated conflicting interests where, naturally, the common interest prevails. Our experience teaches us that things are never that simple. Social engineering techniques are as old as the society itself. Interests for acquiring material possessions and social status are good enough motives for fraud and manipulation.

Internet changed the ecosystem of information used in establishing social relations forever. Reputation 'pools' turned into overflooding oceans; each *like*, a click on a wrong link even, generates data that within relevant clusters, intertwined with other information, bring about global changes in evaluation every day. Communities are no longer limited by time and geography, but they form on various principles among people that may never meet in person. Reliable information on quality of goods sold just a block away may be obtained from a person on the other side of the world. Here, "reputation functions as a form of currency enabling trust among strangers" particularly in economic and labour interactions, where trust is proved to be an essential feature.[8]

[8] ibid.

Whether users navigate the Internet in the role of a global corporation or a private person, in just a few years of an unprecedented speed of democratization of access to new technologies, they developed a habit to turn to their trusted online communities for information on almost any given subject. Googling, searching through the richest base of indexed information 'freely' available to absolutely anyone with an appropriate device, became a precondition for any final decision, be it choosing a restaurant or a movie, tools, destinations, political or business affiliation.

Changes in communication prospects, and in the very culture of using the technologies, enabled significant changes in the global society, particularly in the market where decisions on social values redistribution are made daily. At last, no one is just another nobody whose thoughts, without the appropriate mass media, resonate only within a close circle of friends. Anyone can add their own opinion to the reputation pool of any community, no matter if it is correct, qualified or even remotely relevant to the subject.

An abundance of easily and freely searchable information is further sorted with the help of reputation systems, likes, stars and grades, where the critics themselves are subject to rating. Experts and amateurs, celebrities and unknowns - all are equal on the vast public scene as never before in human history. Pros and cons of such a system are obvious. In the abstract world of information, where an ultimate credibility check is beyond physical reach, establishing quality of the available information is rarely an easy task.
As the new medium, apparently free and accessible to almost anyone, Internet complicates processes of the information ecosystem daily – it changes rules of redistribution of political influence, expands the public sphere, increases political participation, involves citizens in political processes that used to be off limits, thus challenging the established monopolies of political and economic elites. And indeed, this is still a true description of the global Web, regardless of the fact that the initial enthusiasm for its revolutionary potential weakened in the face of disturbing testimonies of its use as a means of social control.

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Shifting public attention from facts relevant to a subject to personal traits of their proponents and opponents is a global phenomenon affecting both complex and less developed societies alike. After all, the conflict and polarization generate traffic crucially important for business models based on data economy. Truths and rights are rarely of importance for the final outcome.

"Trust hackers" found both in governments and among private competitors or idle trolls, make the new emerging class of digital enemies.
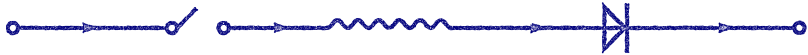
The idea of a reputation score becoming a universal signifier of each individual's personal value does not sound like science fiction anymore.

Fwd: Data, context

Rapid advances of the communication technologies are, among other things, driven by a commercial interest for expanding the number of users for the purpose of collecting and processing large amounts of data. "The types, quantity and value of personal data being collected are vast, from our profiles to our bank accounts, from our medical records to our employment data, from our Web searches and sites visited to our likes and dislikes and purchase histories. Data from our tweets, texts, emails, phone calls, photos and videos, as well as the coordinates of our real-world locations, are all being collected and analyzed. The list continues to grow."[9]

[9] Betz, Cathy, *Personal Data: A New Asset Class?*, April 22nd 2011; http://solutions.wolterskluwer.com/blog/2011/04/personal-data-a-new-asset-class

In the age of data economy, reputation is what makes the context of information, what explains them, interconnects them and quantifies their current value.

Collecting data alone is done by various methods: extracting from public records, using specific online tools for gathering data from the Internet, offering services in exchange for data on user behavior without direct consent, purchasing from specialized data traders etc. Furthermore, advances of digital technologies and communication channels, offering a chance for each user to share their thoughts with the entire online population, enabled accumulation of individual experiences and insights whose combining, aggregation and comparison on such a scale have not been possible ever before. Thus the conditions were met for creating profiles of each user, each member of the community, profiles that can be generated automatically and that are available to anyone and that can influence processes of decision making.

Since processing of huge amounts of data is done mechanically, reputation pool became ever more complex, less predictable and seemingly out of reach of a reputation holder. Not only that countless anonymous actors can participate in 'filling' this pool, with no discernible legal, territorial or other connection to the reputation holder, but much of the information of importance to the reputation are actually algorithmic, logical products that sometimes cannot be traced back to their initial cause.

A particular trait of the global Web allows cloning of information and therefore potential risks to reputation in various cultures and jurisdictions. A piece of data that can speak of socially unacceptable behavior in one culture could meet public indifference in another; punishable by law in one country, an infringement can cease to legally exist after a border is crossed.

With the importance of reputation on a sharp rise - be it of individuals, groups or companies - business models developed accordingly in order to manage online reputation.

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The idea of a reputation score becoming a universal signifier of each individual's personal value, does not sound like science fiction anymore. The question is whether it would turn into a dystopia, where citizens bear their 'rep signifier' like a stigma.

Media literacy in a digital environment already became a universal prerequisite of freedom, much like it once carried a feudal serf to a citizen. Mindful attitude towards personal data, one's own and those of others, awareness of massive proliferation of worthless information and constant training in discerning the important and relevant, should be a solid starting ground. It will certainly not fend off human weaknesses nor digital foes, but at least it could open a chance to convert a helpless manufacturer from the vast online data fields into a free citizen of the Internet.

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AESTHETICIZATION OF CAPITAL AND CREATIVITY [1]

In the contemporary constellation of late capitalism, as a precondition for thinking about creativity, two texts written over a 30-year span seem to be inevasible. The first one is Marcel Duchamp's *The Creative Act* written in 1957, while the second one is Gilles Deleuze's *What is the Creative Act?* from 1987, actually a transcript of a lecture held at La Femis film school. Both authors, each in their own ways, mark the edges of a wider picture, or to be more precise - they map the relationship of forces that is unstable and changeable, but also one that makes something become visible or expressible within a certain historical formation.

A question arises: why is capital so obsessed with creativity and innovation at the start of the 21st century? In the current moment of "great acceleration" and technological advancement there are two possible approaches in an attempt to offer a response to this question, at the same time acting as two sides of the same coin. On one hand, it is "normal" that capital, inside of the existing borders, is trying to reach innovations that will bring higher profits and competitiveness in a market that has become global. At the same time, it should not be allowed for any innovation to step over the internal borderline of capital, and to trigger an uncontrolled chain of events that could put in question the existing production relationships, and therefore destabilize the movement of capital itself. In both cases, we see control at work: in the first instance,

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[1] The text was originally published in 2015 as part of the publication *Cultural Transformation of the City*, published by Office for Culture of Vojvodina, Novi Sad. Republished courtesy of the author.

it assures that the world will perform inside of the existing borders, while in the second one, if there is a possibility of stepping over the border, innovation can be "put away" by means of the logic of copyright, and in that way, it can be blocked until further notice. In this situation, mediocre solutions are pronounced as being creative and irrelevant shifts, and movements are closer to the "narcissism of slight differences" than to real innovation. This very much explains the absurd wars around copyright and patents fought by large corporations over the last years. As long as creativity is solely in the function of market and profit, it is not able to step over the borderlines that are immanent to capital.

In this sort of constellation, the subversive moment of creativity as a questioning of the existing limitations of the dominant reality – which is characteristic of art, science or philosophy – is entirely marginalized, while the bulk is dislocated to the fields of advertising and new technologies. Within the arts, creativity is increasingly coming down only to what is in the function of aestheticization of capital that enables unobstructed flow of goods, images and signs. Aestheticization of capital is actually an extension of the line of thought within capitalism that Walter Benjamin, in his famous essay about technical reproduction, called the *aestheticization of politics*, when an uncontrolled application of certain outdated and obsolete notions leads to the "processing of factual material in the fascist sense"[2].

Benjamin's starting point is that with the emergence of photography and film it is no longer possible to use conceptual tools of classical aesthetics in order to interpret the new artistic production. This approach for some theoreticians remains the model of critical thinking until the present day, so in one conversation with Foucault (*Intellectuals and Power*) Deleuze will state that we should not rework the existing theories, but it is necessary to continually invent new ones, because theory is something reminiscent of a toolbox – it needs to be useful, and it needs to function in the given historical

[2] Benjamin, Walter, *Work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction, On photography and art*, KCB, Belgrade, 2006, p. 99

circumstances. This presupposes that each creative act has to also keep in mind the changes that occur in the social field, as well as the limitations that the system is imposing on the machines of visibility and the regimes of expression, in order to stabilize itself in a certain dominant reality. With globalization and hegemony of financial capital, what was for Benjamin aestheticization of politics in the arts at the time of the Cold War, grows into aestheticization of capital that becomes a constitutive moment of the dominant reality of late capitalism.

In the text *The Great Trouble with Art in This Country*[3], Duchamp will detect the first signs of these limitations in Western art, having in mind USA and France in the first place. The great distress with art is, above all, the fact that there is no spirit of rebellion, and that there are no new ideas emerging among the young artists. The problem occurs when they try to do better than what their predecessors have already done, overlooking the fact that there is no such thing as perfection or progress within the arts. The approach can be creative even when something from an earlier era is continued and adapted to one's own work, although the result is not new but just brings a *different approach*. Giving up on rebellion, the lack of new ideas and substantially different approaches, as well as the striving to reach perfection and be at the service of progress, are exactly the signs of aestheticization of capital, actually an implicit acceptance of its axioms inside art as the constitutive moment of establishing a dominant reality.

This process of stabilizing the workings of the machines of visibility, as Duchamp says, starts with Courbet in the 19th century, when the focus is being displaced from intellectual to physical or retinal forms of painting, reaching its peak with Matisse. All of modern art – Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, Abstract Impressionism, with a possible exclusion of Surrealism – was retinal. Thus painting acquires a sensual attraction, and by being increasingly animal it also becomes more and more appreciated. Duchamp was, above all, interested in a new confinement of ideas within the image,

[3]Duchamp, Marcel, *Selection of texts*, Museum of Contemporary Arts Belgrade, 1984

and so he puts his own production as far as possible from "pleasant" and "attractive" physical images. Putting the stress on ideas, and not only on visual products, Duchamp intended to bring the image back into the service of the mind, and in such a way displace his own position out from the dominant reality and aestheticization of capital. His strategy included the experience of Dadaism, which was at the time of chaotic avant-garde production just another one of many *isms*.

To have an idea is not such a common occurrence. On the contrary, it is a very rare event.
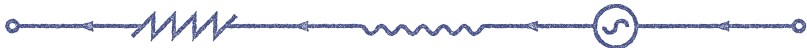
Nevertheless, for Duchamp, Dada was the only real or ultimate rebellion against the hegemony of the physical and retinal aspects of painting. Its subversive strategies destabilize those constitutive moments of aeastheticization of capital, such as "states of mind... influence of the immediate surrounding or past, endless clichés"[4]. Dada, as a "very useful cleaning agent", seems to become a precondition for any creative act for Duchamp because it is, above all, a state of the spirit that does not accept any closing off into the system. Dada does not take the axiomatics of capital too seriously. On the contrary, with each of its gestures it keeps questioning them. Without the rebellious spirit of Dada as a rejection of the codes of dominant reality, each creativity remains closed inside the aestheticization of capital, condemned to enjoy the "narcissism of small differences".

[4] Duchamp, Marcel, *Selection of texts*, Museum of Contemporary Arts Belgrade, 1984, p.35

Duchamp's dictum that an artist needs to have an idea is actually a striving to open the line that evades the aestheticization of capital which keeps closing off the entire artistic production into the physical and the retinal. At the start of the 21st century, the artist once more becomes a nomad, in a double sense. On one hand, he moves unruffled between various media, from traditional artistic materials to photography, moving images or interactive installations. On the other hand, the strategy of presenting his or her works means moving between different institutions, from public and private spaces to the space on the web. But no matter in which of these points the artist is situated, he needs to have the idea.

If that is not the case, his entire activity and production, whether he wants it or not, remains in the function of aestheticization of capital.

Duchamp's understanding of the creative act and creativity at large (he does not believe that art is the privileged place of creativity) assumes an understanding of art in which art can be *bad*, *good* or *indifferent*. This moment of indifference incorporates various subversive components of Dada's strategy, with the first step being the cleansing from the dominant taste that has been established by aestheticizing the capital inside of the dominant reality. The artist is a being of the medium, and thus all of his decisions are based on pure intuition, which means that his self-analysis or the interpretation of own work is just one of the possible interpretations, but not the crucial one. This implies that artistic creation encompasses two poles: the artist and the spectator, as an external stitching whose judgment is essential for positioning of a work inside the artistic field. This may seem strange, or even offensive for the artists themselves, but if we keep in mind what Duchamp calls the "art coefficient", it all becomes much clearer.

Personal "art coefficient", that is contained within the work itself, represents the difference between what the artist intended to achieve and what he has actually achieved. It is "like an arithmetical relation between the unexpressed but intended and

the unintentionally expressed"[5]. Thanks to this arithmetic relation immanent to the "art coefficient", a space for interpretation is open in which the spectator is inserted, and whose assessment functions much like the principle of reality. By deciphering and interpreting the internal qualifications of a piece of art, the spectator brings the work into contact with the outside world, which is his contribution to the creative act. Still, the spectator is in no way an absolute or transcendent instance. On the contrary, his position as the stitching point with the real is equally under attack of the dominant reality and aestheticization of capital. This became clear to Duchamp when he noticed the dangers coming from non-critical repetitions of the ready-made, and decided to limit their production to a small number within one year. He became aware that for the spectator, more than for the artist, art was a drug that developed addiction (habit), and thus it is important for the artist to save himself from such an infection.

It could be said that the coefficient of art is the potential that creates a crack in the dominant reality of a social machine. However, how will this crack be actualized - either as a possibility of displacement from the aestheticization of capital, or it will settle with "a different approach" that pleases the habits of the spectators - depends primarily on the artist's strategy and intuition. To have an *idea* implies using the Dada cleansing, in order to map out the entire force field that is structuring the dominant reality of a certain historical formation. This means that it takes into account the addiction of the spectator as much as the vanity of the creator.

In a lecture from 1987, Deleuze starts from the question of *what are we actually doing when we are doing 'something'*, or what does it mean to have an idea in art, philosophy or science? To have an idea is not such a common occurrence. On the contrary, it is a very rare event. We also cannot have an idea in general, but the idea always comes form a certain field. "Ideas have to be treated like potentials already *engaged* in one mode of expression or another and inseparable from the mode of expression, such that I cannot say that

[5] Duchamp, Marcel, *Selection of texts*, Museum of Contemporary Arts Belgrade, 1984

I have an idea in general"[6]. Each of the distinct disciplines have their own content, their techniques and ways of expression, so someone can have an idea in relation to the field they are familiar with, and not the idea et large. Philosophy does not have a privileged place, it was not made to produce opinions about everything: it is a discipline that is creative and inventive as much as any other, and consists of creation and invention of notions, or concepts. Science creates functions, art - blocks of sensual impressions, philosophy - concepts (notions), and for each one there is an immanent way of thinking. With Deleuze, there is always something that makes us think, there has to be a necessity that is at the core of each creation or invention, no matter what discipline is in question. In much the same way, there are ideas that may be valuable in other disciplines, but they do not appear in the same way. It seems that there is a certain border that is common for a variety of inventions and creations, one that enables different disciplines to communicate, which is the very constitution of space-time.

If Duchamp's views can be set into the context of the end of World War II and the start of the politics of the Cold War – but also the transition from aestheticization of politics to the aestheticization of capital – Deleuze's views suppose a radical shift in the work mode of the social machine. In his opinion, at the end of the 20th century it becomes clear that we are entering the society that he calls the *society of control*, and we could say that the end of the Cold War is very closely followed by the "war on terror", whose outcome and end cannot be even sensed. Relying on Michel Foucault, who analyzed the transition of society from the sovereign to a disciplined society defined by the constitution of closed environments – prisons, schools, factories, hospitals... – Deleuze concludes that what we have today are just the remains of those institutions which are are irreversibly dissolving. The society of control will no longer need closed environments. Quite the opposite, people can move "freely" and not be confined, although they are perfectly controlled and limited by the *password*.

how work works

[6] Deleuze, Gilles, *What is the Creative Act, Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews*, 1975-1992, Semiotext(e), Columbia University Press, 2007, p.317

As Duchamp states that art should resists the hegemony of physical and retinal, so has Deleuze an almost identical stance in relation to information and communication. This is why, in his view, to have an idea does not belong to the order of communication because communication is, in a trivial sense, all about transfer and spreading of information, while information itself is nothing else than a control system. It could be said that information society and society of control are synonyms. Information is a collection of orders, and when somebody is informed he is actually instructed to believe. The request to believe is not at the basis of communication, it is enough just to act as we do believe. Counter information is not sufficient to accomplish something, apart from when it becomes an act of resistance, which actually moves it away to the other side of the communication process. This is why, for Deleuze, the work of art has nothing to do with communication and does not carry the least of information, but we could rather say that there is a certain mysterious relationship between the work of art and the act of resistance. This relationship is mysterious because there is no model or a formula that we could easily apply in the creative act in order for the work of art to become an act of resistance.

Two lines are continually intersecting inside of the aestheticization of capital: one that keeps on worshiping the physical and retinal in art, highlighted by Duchamp, and the second information one which demands from us to believe, or to at least act as though we believe in such art. In that constellation, to have an idea cannot be brought down solely to the moment of creativity, but it includes in parallel the moment of subversiveness and the act of resistance. Each separation of resistance and subversiveness from creativity is the end result of aestheticization of capital, and it is already common to believe that innovation that does not put in question the current conformation of capitalist system is possible. Aestheticization of capital as the constitutive moment of control not only fails to question the existing system, but quite the contrary - the effect of its functioning is that we believe in a system or at least that, in the Pascal sense, we act as though we believe.

At the start of the 21ˢᵗ century capital is not so obsessed with creativity as much as with the control of creativity.

At the start of the 21ˢᵗ century capital is not so obsessed with creativity as much as with the control of creativity. It seems that there is more and more of those who, exactly because they are "informed", believe less and less and are ceasing to behave as if they believe in the system. This is why the "coefficient of creativity" is, in any field, inseparable from the arising society of control, while the aestheticization of capital is the anesthetization of every subversion and act of rebellion.

| Jovan Čekić | | |

Dr Jovan Čekić graduated from the department of Philosophy at the Philosophical Faculty in Belgrade, and received his Phd degree at the Faculty of Media and Communications at the Singidunum University in Belgrade, where he today teaches on topics at the intersections of art, philosophy, technology and critical theory. He was the editor for theory at *Moment* magazine, while until 1997 he was the director and editor-at-large of the magazine for visual culture *New Moment*. In 1998 he published the book *Cutting Through Chaos* and the monograph *Art Sessions: Era Milivojević* in 2001. He is also the editor of the "Art" edition of the Geopoetika publishing house. He lectured as a guest professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade and Fine Art Academy in Cetinje, Montenegro. His latest book *Horizon Displacement* was published in 2016 by Faculty of Media and Communications in Belgrade.

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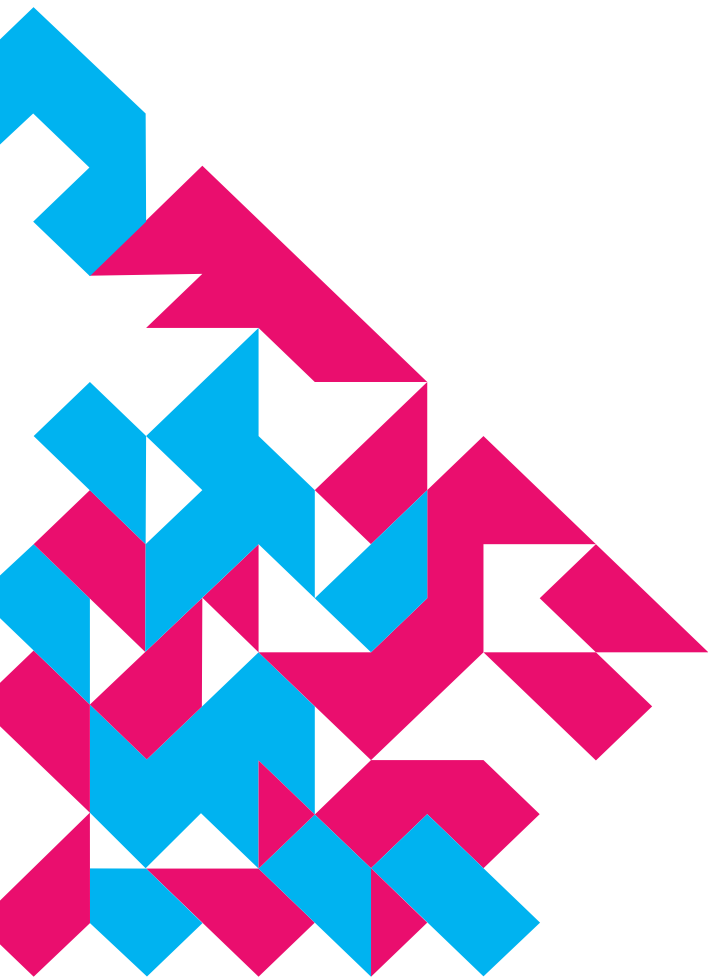
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EUROPEAN
CREATIVE HUBS
NETWORK

Laetitia Manach	**00**
British Council Project Director of European Creative Hubs Network	

Around the world, over the past ten years, we have seen the development of communities of creative people convening in spaces to invent, to collaborate, to make and to create. These communities form what we now call creative hubs and they represent the creative sector in the dawn of the 21st century.

Beyond their diversity, creative hubs have common characteristics and values that can be examined as the driving forces of the sector today: fostering cross disciplinary working, proposing new forms of leadership, operating with hybrid business models, creating new kinds of social innovation and new kinds of relationships between creative practice, business and audience. Creative hubs have become symbolic of bigger social transformations, exploring movements and processes within the sharing economy, embracing design thinking, fostering the making culture and supporting creative resilience.

The European Creative Hubs Network is a 2-year project run by the British Council in partnership with six European creative hubs: Bios in Greece; Addict in Portugal; Betahaus in Germany; Kulturni Kod/ Nova Iskra in Serbia; Creative Edinburgh in the UK; Factoria Cultural in Spain and the European Business and Innovation Network.

how work works

The project is supported by the European Commission, through the cross-sectoral strand of the Creative Europe programme.

The aim of the project is to help creative hubs to connect and collaborate across Europe, which incorporates a series of people to people encounters and a bespoke training programme adapted to the needs of creative hubs. We want to champion the sector, to share stories about creative hubs, about what they are and how they operate. It is our ambition to demonstrate that creative hubs contribute to the growth and the resilience of the creative sector and to the overall economy as a whole.

We are proud to launch our project with the How Work Works forum by Nova Iskra in Belgrade. Join us and the fast growing community at www.creativehubs.eu and follow us @CreativeHubsEU or via #CreativeHubs.
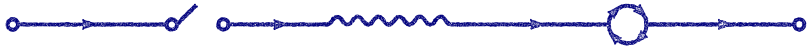
British Council

The British Council works to create international opportunities for and trust between the people of the UK and other countries worldwide. Our arts portfolio in EU lives and breathes the aspiration to inspire, innovate and transform – to offer young people, artists, participants and audiences in the UK and across the EU life-changing and life-enhancing experiences, helping to provide opportunities and constructive approaches to some of the big challenges across countries in the region such as youth unemployment, skills gaps, access to the labour market and talent retention.

The arts and creative industries are central to how we achieve this and our global and regional network places us in a unique position to achieve significant impact and change by finding new ways of connecting and seeing each other through the arts.

British Council is the only UK agency working in the creative industries sector with market intelligence and on-the-ground resources in over one hundred nations, a global network and direct access to international policy makers. Our work in creative industries exists to forge connections between the rapidly growing creative industries sectors in the UK and overseas. It enables international partners to connect with UK expertise, to develop skills and capacity and, in the process, provides opportunities for the UK creative and cultural sectors to learn from and collaborate with overseas CE experts and practitioners.

www.britishcouncil.org/europe
www.creativeconomy.britishcouncil.org
Twitter: @UK_CE , @BritishArts

how work works

Bios

Bios Exploring Urban Culture was founded in 2001 in Athens and has since been working in the contemporary cultural production sector and new entrepreneurship, focusing on new creatives, art and technology today, youth expression, as well as shaping of the urban environment.

Bios is based in two buildings located in central Athens, Bios.Tesla (84 Peiraios st.) and Bios.Romantso (3-5 Anaxagora st., Omonoia). The organization works on the development of networks and foundations of creativity, upholding its vision of creating capacity and improving life in the city, for its people in current times. Bios is solely responsible for producing a vast scope and number of cultural activities, such as performing arts festivals, concerts, theatrical performances, and exhibitions, educational programs, within and outside its physical location. Since 2007 it has ventured toward enterprises related to facilitation of professional training, employability, new entrepreneurship and start-ups in creative industries (cultural industry).

In 2013, Bios established the first creative hub in Greece, housing over 60 up-and-coming creative businesses. Through this initiative, the Organization reactivated the historical Romantso building on 3-5 Anaxagora st, in one of the toughest areas of the Historical Centre, organizing a series of targeted actions aiming to alter the neighbourhood image and to assist its reintegration on the Historical Centre map.

www.bios.gr
www.romantso.gr
Twitter: @biosathens

Kulturni Kod / Nova Iskra

NGO Kulturni Kod (Culture Code) initiated the Nova Iskra incubator and co-working space in late 2012. Kulturni Kod is running the incubator as a unique meeting point for emerging creative professionals and forward-thinking businesses, and promotes and supports entrepreneurship and career development among creative professionals. Nova Iskra helps develop or reposition new and existing businesses, creates jobs for emerging creative professionals and initiates new products and services that are strengthening the local and regional economies, with a focus on the creative and design-thinking approach.

To achieve its mission and vision, Nova Iskra organizes and manages its activities through four key areas: co-working services; education, professional development and training; project incubation and consulting; and creative services for clients via its Nova Iskra Studio offshoot. Nova Iskra also collaborates with a number of private and public institutions locally, regionally and internationally, running an education/innovation platform with local and international collaborative projects, as well as a year-round public program of events, workshops and trainings for creative professionals and entrepreneurs.

www.novaiskra.com
Twitter: @NovaIskra

ADDICT

Established in 2008, ADDICT brings together over 100 members and is recognised by the Portuguese Ministry of Economy as manager of the creative industries cluster in Northern Portugal. Its mission is to promote a favourable environment for the creation, production and distribution in the fields of culture and creativity, defending the interests of organisations and professionals of the sector and acting as a training and events, information and interaction platform.

www.addict.pt
Twitter:@addict_pt

how work works

Creative Edinburgh

Established in 2011 and with a membership of over 1800 creative, cultural and tech practitioners, Creative Edinburgh is one of the largest hubs in Scotland and the largest in Edinburgh.

Creative Edinburgh is a community that increases the capacity of creative individuals and businesses to experiment, innovate and succeed. They enable intergenerational and intercultural dialogue and community building with peer support and advice aimed at igniting working relationships across sectors.

Creative Edinburgh curates and produces a programme of over 50 trainings workshops and events annually. Creative Edinburgh is also part of Creative Networks, a collective which includes the major hubs of Scotland, and works closely with Creative Dundee.

www.creative-edinburgh.com
Twitter: @CreativeEdin

Factoria Cultural

Established in 2014, Factoria Cultural is an incubator and training provider for the creative and cultural industries. It provides training and support to creative individuals in order to contribute to the development of emerging initiatives in the creative and cultural industries, catering for an ecosystem of entrepreneurs and professionals. Their training programmes are made up of both face-to-face and e-learning platforms and cover everything from business plans, digital media, web design and online marketing to financing, innovation and creativity, legalisation and internationalisation.

Within a year, Factoria Cultural had already developed 76 projects; built an incubator of 48 entrepreneurs, and an online community of over 12,000 creative professionals.

www.factoriaculturalmadrid.es
Twitter: @factoriamadrid

betahaus

betahaus is a co-working space for individuals who want to choose and share their ideas of work. Every week Betahaus also hosts over 50 events to connect peers and support the personal and entrepreneurial development of creative practitioners. From learning how to pitch your ideas, presentation skills and tax insights to meet-ups, hacks and data visualisation techniques, betahaus offers a holistic programme of training for creative practitioners. betahaus also runs global acceleration training programmes, their latest being a one-month long programme between Korea and Germany.

www.betahaus.com/berlin
Twitter: @betahaus

European Business and Innovation Centres Network (EBN)

EBN is an international hub made up of smart and specialised organisations that connect and coach innovators, entrepreneurs & SMEs, to start, grow and transform economies. The EBN ecosystem consists of a variety of organisation types, including: government organisations, business support organisations, clusters and innovation hubs, universities and business schools, corporates and investors.

It is a network of over 160 business innovation centres and 100 associate members that support the development and growth of innovative entrepreneurs, start-ups and SMEs. Holding a strong reputation within European government, national/regional public authorities and non-EU agencies, EBN has become a gateway of information between governments and businesses.

www.ebn.be
Twitter: @EUBIC

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