



City Research Online

City, University of London Institutional Repository

Citation: Pratt, A.C. (2017). New horizons for culture, creativity and cities. *City, Culture and Society*, doi: 10.1016/j.ccs.2017.01.002

This is the accepted version of the paper.

This version of the publication may differ from the final published version.

Permanent repository link: <http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/16444/>

Link to published version: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ccs.2017.01.002>

Copyright and reuse: City Research Online aims to make research outputs of City, University of London available to a wider audience. Copyright and Moral Rights remain with the author(s) and/or copyright holders. URLs from City Research Online may be freely distributed and linked to.

City Research Online:

<http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/>

publications@city.ac.uk

New horizons for Culture, Creativity and Cities

The New Year, either celebrated in the Gregorian calendar or at the Lunar cycle, is a time for looking backwards, and forwards. Electoral events in Europe and the US in the last year seem likely to reverberate across the world; however, they continue to be overshadowed by more fundamental shifts. This journal was founded in 2010, a moment at which more than half of the world population became urban dwellers for the first time in human history; moreover, that the balance of that population are urban dwellers in the Global South. This should give us pause to reflect on the nature of the transformation of cities, culture and society. The insights and understandings that constituted the first century of urban studies adopted a template based on the bounded experience of the cities of the Global North; the new urban age will be different.

At the turn of the 21st Century globalisation was the watchword, and global cities were a key point of reference. Subsequently, globalisation, always a slippery term, has lost a precision that previously it had held for many commentators; instead our perspectives are being refocused as situated and diverse experiences: globalisations. Academic colleagues keen to avoid extrapolating the Northern hemisphere experience to the South, as well as wanting to highlight multiple differences in the urban experience, have adopted a variety of terms to signal this new focus: 'worlding', comparative urbanism, and planetary urbanism being the most popular. The urban experience, and our knowledge of it, is undergoing a transformation as never before.

2008 was marked by the publication of the UNCTAD Creative Economy report. For the first time an authoritative statement of the scale and scope of the creative economy was laid out. In particular, the urban concentration of the creative economy and its growing importance relative to other 'traditional' urban functions is notable. The academic debates, policy and politics that this report triggered has been an important justification for this journal. Critically, the report and its subsequent editions, highlighted that the creative economy was not simply a Northern hemisphere concern; in fact, it indicated that the role of culture for the Global South was going to be even more significant.

It is this intersection of cities, culture and society that our journal is concerned with. Debates within the covers of the journal have opened up the tensions between existing assumptions and practice about the relationship of economic development, creativity and culture; and, between culture and creativity and urbanisation. Many of the contributors to the journal have pre-emptively taken up the 'post-global city' concerns, as indicated above, with a renewed attention to local difference and situated action. For most researchers in social and urban studies, this is the obvious starting point from which to examine culture. However, the study of culture and the creative economy is a hybrid field constituted by the intersection of economy and culture. Debates about the economy and cities – driving global city analyses – have tended to overshadow those of culture: an issue that this journal has sought to re-balance.

Another commitment of this journal is with policy. Creative Cities, and cities and culture, has had a brief moment as the favourite of politicians and policy makers. In common with other fields the desire of administrators for solutions to present to their political masters has exposed them to what has been called 'fast policy'; the creative city being a rather notable case in point. Fast policy is the export of 'best practice' usually underpinned by neo-liberal economic assumptions. The initial progenitors of the creative city could not have anticipated that their work would be picked up and applied in the ways, and places, that it has been. The first casualties were context and meaning. Whilst the notion of culture, creativity and cities has caught the political and policy imagination; advocates have been less willing to engage with the complexities of local differences, emergent cultural practices, and novel relationships between the formal and informal sectors. Hence, the gap between policy and practice that is commonly observed.

An objective of this journal is to support the development of 'slow policy': a more nuanced and considered reflection on the relationship of cities, culture and society. Never an easy task even within the academic field. We encourage researchers to engage with policies, ideas and civil society and not to be isolated in a singular disciplinary sub-field. In the last decade, a new field of studies has emerged: the cultural and creative economy. It takes its place as a 'post-disciplinary' field, one that overlaps and intersects with (to name but a few) urban studies, urban sociology, and economic geography, cultural studies, cultural economics. Academics have begun to create an epistemic community to give such studies a foundation and coherence; moreover, to establish which skills and knowledge will be needed by the current and following generation of researchers and policy makers. Several academic departments and research centres, as well as degree programmes, of cultural and creative industries have been established globally. We are happy that this journal is a one of a handful that are nurturing a debate, and a field of knowledge.

This new volume of the journal marks a change in the role of Editor-in-Chief; I am very pleased to take over from Francesco Bandarin. I congratulate Francesco on his period as Editor in Chief, continuing the work Prof Masayuki Sasaki who was founding Editor-in-Chief. Francesco has given up his role earlier than anticipated to return to his role as Assistant Director-General of Culture at UNESCO where he has been supporting the Habitat III process, and directing the production of the 'Global report on culture for sustainable urban development'.

The journal is fortunate to have the strong support of Prof Hiroshi Okano as Managing Editor and Dr Shanhai Pan as Editorial Assistant in Osaka. I would like to thank them, and the other members of the editorial board, and all those who have agreed to referee papers for the journal. The success of any journal relies on the quality and insight of the papers published; but it is underpinned by the hidden work of reviewers who contribute their time and insight to the journal.

I am very pleased to welcome a special issue provocatively titled 'Against the creative city' edited by Dr D'Ovidio and Prof Morato. The notion of the Creative City has been subject to considerable critical reception in academic journals; however, this is not always reflected in policy debates. This is especially so in an era of 'fast policy' where simple 'good news' policy prescriptions attract the attention of politicians. However, policy makers and politicians

quickly learn how creative city policies can alienate and marginalise populations; and not achieve the wished-for cohesion, growth and popular support. This special issue opens the debate to those who so often are assumed to benefit, but seldom asked: artists. Beyond artists are social activists who are not always represented in urban politics and policy making. I think that this issue exemplifies some of the important currents in research and policy making on cities, culture and society stressing as it does the (oppositional) role of civil society activists and the challenges that they face, and that they create for policy makers and politicians. The papers help to illustrate the complex and evolving, and conflicted, nature of urban and cultural change; and particularly the importance of questions about politics and representation.