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CREATIVE WORK:

POSSIBLE FUTURES

AFTER COVID-19

Lauren England, Federica Viganò,
Roberta Comunian and Jessica Tanghetti

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industries in the mountain Province of South Tyrol. Her research has focused explicitly on wood, one of the most transversal and comprehensive creative sectors, stretching from industrial to design to artistic and sculptural expressions. She is also interested in welfare and social policies concerning creative work. She is currently part of a local research group on creative industries, based in the Province of Bolzano, aimed at developing and supporting local public policies for the sector.

Dr Roberta Comunian is Reader in Creative Economy at the Department for Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London. She is interested in the relationship between public and private investments in the arts, art and cultural regeneration projects, cultural and creative work, careers, and creative social economies. She is internationally recognised for her expertise on the value of creative higher education and creative careers. She has explored in various papers the career opportunities and patterns of creative graduates in the UK and Australia. In the last five years, she has explored the development of creative economies in Africa, establishing research networks and collaboration to support the engagement of the African higher education sector with local creative economies. She is currently involved in the H2020 funded research project DISCE: Developing inclusive and sustainable creative economies (www.disce.eu).

Dr Jessica Tanghetti is a Post-doctoral Research fellow at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where she is involved in a research project on creative clusters in collaboration with Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee. She is interested in cultural and creative work, creative clusters, art markets and the relationships between art and business. She is also a Lecturer in Arts Management, Cultural Economics and Entrepreneurship at NABA Academy of Fine Arts in Milan. Her PhD investigated business investments in the arts in England in collaboration with King's College London and supported by Arts Council England. Currently, she is Principal Investigator for a research project on the impact of Covid-19 on cultural and creative workers in the city of Milan in Italy, developed in collaboration with King's College London. She also works as an art advisor and curator.

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This report summarises findings presented at the international workshop "Creative Work: Possible Futures after Covid-19" (4th -5th November 2021) hosted by the Faculty of Education at the University of Bolzano in collaboration with the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries at King's College London. The workshop was organised by Dr Federica Viganò (Free University of Bolzano), Dr Roberta Comunian (King's College London), Dr Lauren England (King's College London) and Dr Jessica Tanghetti (Ca' Foscari).

The initiative has been financially supported by the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bolzano (event grant) and the Department of Culture, Media and Creative Industries (King's College London)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Covid-19 pandemic has re-shaped the way we live and work. However, for some, including creative and cultural workers, it has exposed issues of precarity (Comunian and England, 2020) and heightened the need to rethink working practices and business models (Banks, 2020). That said, it has also created an opportunity for reflecting on structural intervention, holding open space for hope, new forms of care and new political imaginations (Gross, 2021; Gross, 2020).

The Creative Work: Possible Futures after Covid-19 workshop (4th-5th November 2021), featured 14 papers considering a range of challenges and changes that had taken place during the pandemic. Many contributions to the workshop shone light further onto how the extant dynamics of creative work and employment had in many ways been doubled down on, but they also highlighted opportunities for new approaches and offered practical recommendations to tackle the challenges faced. Learnings were presented from specific sectors (film and TV, visual arts, performing arts, music, games and more) and the experiences of specific groups within industries

(freelancers, self-employed, working mothers), organisations and advocacy groups (representative organisations, associations, unions and co-operatives). Different international perspectives (UK, Italy, Germany, the USA and South Africa and pan-European) were also presented, with papers exploring the dynamics of cities and rural areas, including different policy frameworks, infrastructure, spatial dimensions and networks.

This report presents a series of interviews with most of the authors of papers presented at the workshop, highlighting their key findings and recommendations. The thirteen interviews are grouped under three themes regarding the impact of the pandemic on creative work, although a number of authors address issues that cut across these themes.

The aim of this report is to highlight both similar and different experiences of creative and cultural workers from an international perspective, in order to extract some lessons and suggest policy directions.

Creative working lives and Covid-19: strategies and struggles

Interviews in this section address the impact of the pandemic on the personal and professional lives of creative workers.

Blane Savage (The University of the West of Scotland) discusses the impact of the Covid pandemic on visual artists in Scotland, including limited access to financial

support and the coinciding implications of Brexit. He also presents strategies for developing a sustainable practice during this period, including focusing on online retail and social media as both a new, more direct, marketplace and source of mutual aid.

Rachel Skaggs (The Ohio State University) also addresses the needs and approaches of artists in the USA in sustaining creative life and work after COVID-19. She highlights financial support and time for creativity as key concerns for artists both during and pre-covid, and calls for a better valuing of artists' time, work and contribution to the community as an important direction for future policy and practice.

Fiona Drummond[1] (Rhodes University) discusses the role of festivals in the work adaptation strategies to COVID-19 among South Africa's performing artists. She highlights how extended lockdowns and a slower pace of recovery, while challenging for artists, can also foster more collaborative and innovative formats and technology for creative production and dissemination. A need for upskilling, the challenge of the digital divide, and tackling screen fatigue is also acknowledged.

[1] with co-authors Jen Snowball and Delon Tarentaal (Rhodes University) and Roberta Comunian and Jonathan Gross (King's College London)

Rebecca Florisson (Queen Mary University of London) and Tal Feder (University of Sheffield)[2] discuss parenthood penalties and creative occupations, unpacking how the Covid-19 pandemic compounded employment disadvantages some workers already face in the creative economy, particularly for women, young workers and parents of children under five. They share how workers differ from the wider UK average, both positively and negatively.

Collective perspectives on creative work: mobilisation, care and interconnected impacts

Interviews under this theme discuss interconnected impacts and different forms of collective mobilisation and activism that emerged during the pandemic, highlighting the role of social protection and care in creative and cultural economies.

Silvia Lucciarini and Michele Santurro (Sapienza University of Rome) explore the tendency of creative workers across Europe to move towards collective action and joining associations due to a lack of financial and social security during the pandemic.

Emanuela Naclerio (University of Milan and University of Turin) considers how performing artists in Italy built digital communities with the aim of improving their working conditions and providing emotional care, looking for collective solutions to experiences of precariousnes

[2] with co-authors Dave O'Brien (University of Edinburgh), Mark Taylor (University of Sheffield) and Siobhan McAndrew (University of Bristol)

[3] with co-authors Roberta Comunian (King's College London) and Jessica Tanghetti (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)

Jack Morton (Royal Holloway, University of London) presents how participation in online groups and co-operative or collective working structures could mitigate against negative mental health and loneliness among UK Games industry in the transition to remote, home-working.

Tamsyn Dent[3] (King's College London) asks us "who cares" about creative workers. She explores the work of creative intermediaries across Europe supporting creatives, before and during the pandemic, but also advocating for improved working conditions.

Lauren England (King's College London) adopts an ecosystem approach in understanding the impact of the pandemic and potential recovery mechanisms within the city of Dundee, Scotland. She highlights the critical position of creative workers and how collective action can be fostered to support the recovery of the cultural sector.

Sites of creative work and Covid-19: the urban and the rural

In this section, interviews discuss spatial dimensions of the impacts of Covid-19 on the lives and work of creative and cultural

workers. This includes looking across urban and rural environments with reflections on local, regional and international dynamics.

Janet Merkel (TU Berlin and University of Kassel) reflects on the pandemic responses of five global cities and how these intensified existing spatial struggles and inequalities for creative and cultural workers. She calls for the development of spatial cultural policies- access to affordable housing and workspaces -to enable more resilient, equitable and sustainable futures for cultural work after COVID-19.

Jessica Tanghetti[4] (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) discusses the impact of Covid-19 on creative and cultural workers in Milan, highlighting how the pandemic made the fragility and lack of structural recognition and support for creative workers in Milan visible, and turned the city into a site of public struggle and request for recognition, both virtually and physically.

Federica Viganó[5] (Free University of Bolzano) addresses how the pandemic experience of performing arts workers in South Tyrol was influenced by their working in a European Border Region with multiple cultural identities, policies and languages, particularly when their mobility was impacted.

Fabrizio Panozzo and Angela Nativio (Ca' Foscari University of Venice) draw on a mapping of the Veneto region to highlight how almost half of the area's creative workers live dangerously close to the poverty line.

[4] with co-authors Roberta Comunian and Tamsyn Dent (King's College London)

[5] with co-authors Roberta Comunian, Lauren England (King's College London) and Jessica Tanghetti (University of Venice Ca' Foscari)

They call for cultural work to be better understood – by researchers, the public and policymakers - and properly represented in official statistics.

Conclusions

The report's conclusions highlight the need and potential to support creative workers in their development and employment conditions, reconsider their relationship with cities, localities and their future mobilities. It also calls for greater social and legislative recognition for creative workers, a new worker-centred approach to creative policy making and the development of more collective and care-full strategies for creative employment and creative careers.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has re-shaped the way we live and work. However, for some, like creative and cultural workers, it has exposed issues of precarity (Comunian and England, 2020) and heightened the need to rethink working practices and business models (Banks, 2020). It has also created an opportunity for structural intervention (Culture Action Europe and Dâmaso, 2021), holding open space for hope, new forms of care and new political imaginations (Gross, 2021; Gross, 2020). A range of research from policy and academia has presented immediate evidence of the impact of Covid-19 on culture and the city (Gross et al., 2021). This builds on a wider body of literature critiquing the precarious nature of creative work (Comunian et al., 2021; De Peuter, 2011; McRobbie, 2018; Morgan and Nelligan, 2018; Ross, 2009). It also corresponds with growing academic and public debate on inequalities in creative work (O'Brien et al., 2016; Brook et al., 2020), which preceded the pandemic but have been thrown into sharp relief by the crisis (Comunian and Conor, 2017; Eikhof, 2020; Walmsley et al., 2022). The consequences of this are not yet fully understood.

In the first stages of the pandemic there was a sudden rush for data and increased pressure on charting and evaluating the impact of Covid-19 from a range of public, not-for-profit and other types of sectoral institutions (Comunian and England, 2020). While this captured a range of immediate, visible impacts, there were gaps on what was researched and certain impacts remained more invisible, but nevertheless with potentially long-term implications (ibid). Over 18 months on from the first lock-down across many nations, we found a need to share and discuss current and recent work, to map future directions and scenarios for creative and cultural work (Eikhof, 2020; Joffe, 2021; Walmsley et al., 2022; Culture Action Europe and Dâmaso, 2021) and also address some of the previously invisible issues (Comunian and England, 2020) facing creative workers – some of which had come into the spotlight, while other dynamics remained under the radar.

The Creative Work: Possible Futures after Covid-19 workshop (4th-5th November 2021) featured 14 papers considering a range of challenges and changes that had taken place and presenting opportunities to re-think practices and business models in the cultural and creative industries. Contributions to the workshop shone the light further on how the extant dynamics of creative work and employment have in many ways been doubled down on, but they also highlighted opportunities for new approaches and offered practical recommendations to

tackle the challenges faced. Learnings were presented from specific sectors (film and TV, visual arts, performing arts, games and more) and the experiences of certain groups within industries (freelancers, working mothers) organisations and advocacy groups (unions and co-operatives) but also different countries, including cities and rural areas (their policy frameworks, infrastructure, spatial dimensions and networks).

This report presents a series of interviews with the authors of papers presented at the workshop, highlighting their key findings and recommendations.
The interviews are grouped under three themes regarding the impact of the pandemic on creative work, although many authors address issues that cut across these themes: Creative working lives and Covid-19: strategies and struggles; Collective perspectives on creative work: mobilisation, care and interconnected impacts; and Sites of creative work and Covid-19: the urban and the rural.

The conclusions of the report highlight the need and potential to support creative workers in their development and employment conditions, reconsider their relationship with cities, localities and their future mobilities. It also calls for the development of more collective and care-full approaches to creative employment and creative careers.

2

2.1

Creative working lives and Covid-19: strategies and struggles

Blane Savage

› The University of the West of Scotland, UK

IMPACT OF THE COVID PANDEMIC ON VISUAL ARTISTS IN SCOTLAND: STRATEGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE

You have researched artists' strategies during the pandemic. What key strategies did artists use to develop a sustainable practice during this time?

My research study explored the relationship between Scottish visual artists and their supporting networks and highlighted the varied impact of the Covid pandemic on them.

Artists' sales routes to market through traditional gallery exhibitions were severely damaged by the pandemic lockdown, although some artists were successful in transferring their sales activity online, others really struggled to make that transition. Also galleries, just like the artists, had to find alternative strategies to survive, putting a central focus on online and social media activity. Some artists were more successful than others who have failed to adjust to online engagement. Decisions whether to break with long term relations with gallerists and go it alone needed to be considered, whilst others had no interest in developing and sustaining their own

online profiles and preferred to leave it to their supporting networks.

The 'Artist Support Pledge' website was one novel idea which was set up to support the artist community, where artists indirectly financially supported one another, sharing income through sales of their artwork. It was held in high esteem by several of the interviewees and one artist was particularly successful in selling his work through it and engaging directly with customers.

Can you tell us about potential weaknesses you found in Scottish cultural policy support for visual artists during the pandemic?

The research identifies potential weaknesses in the Scottish Government's cultural policy support of visual artists, including its broader lack of responsiveness to the realities of artistic production, its challenging application process, and implicit gender bias. Out with the pandemic, limited funding support was difficult to access, with lack of transparency and poor signposting, especially through local government. During the pandemic supporting interventions were quite limited in the context of the scale of the impact of the pandemic and the artists primarily had to fend for themselves and received very limited support.

Several artists were able to access some funding support whilst others who were primarily self-employed received no support at all.

Creative Scotland managed a range of funding support pathways open to the creative art sector which included a £2m Bridging Bursaries Fund to help freelance artists, opening applications in March 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic. A second round of funding was offered in April 2020 with a further £2m allocated. Many freelance artists were solely dependent on these Bridging Bursaries for income. Eighty percent of applicants were given support by Creative Scotland with an average of £ 1.791 being given to 1.637 successful recipients. Considering the duration of the pandemic and the impact on creative activity, this limited amount solely acted as emergency support for artists. The UK government did not give comparable support to creative artists compared to that of other workers in the economy, many of whom received ongoing 'furlow' support.

How does this connect with the position of artists in Scotland after Brexit?

The research highlights inadequate funding within the arts sector in Scotland relative to comparable EU countries. This situation is likely to get much worse with a major loss of EU sector funding now that Brexit has taken place which,

combined with the Covid pandemic, has had a damaging effect on the creative sector. Brexit has removed EU traditional funding routes and creative networks which were very important particularly to deprived areas of Scotland which had successfully utilised European Development Funding in supporting artistic endeavours.There is currently little sign of any replacement of that loss through the UK government. This will make Scottish artists' lives much harder and it will become much more difficult for them to access funding and sustain any substantive artistic career due to loss of income and support.

These findings underscore the imperative for a holistic overhaul of the Scottish Government's strategic approach and cultural policy decisions regarding funding for the arts.

> Acknowledgements
The research on which the interviews are based was conducted in support of a doctoral thesis submission at UWS.

Rachel Skaggs

› The Ohio State University, USA

ARTISTIC FUTURES: SUSTAINING CREATIVE LIFE AND WORK AFTER COVID-19

You have studied the experiences and needs of artists in the United States in moving forward in their creative and working lives after Covid-19. What were the main concerns for artists that emerged from your research?

In this research, 66 US-based artists identified their biggest needs in terms of supporting their creative life and work after the pandemic. Many of their main concerns had to do with the pandemic itself. Notably artists were concerned with their physical health and safety, particularly in terms of going into collaborative spaces or performing arts in spaces with live audiences. In particular, performing artists and visual artists whose work is highly collaborative had the most challenges in this area. The other two primary concerns, monetary support and time to be creative, were not specific to the pandemic. Artists were really concerned that the level of effort needed to self-manage their entrepreneurial careers was not matched by the outcomes they received from doing this work.

For instance, artists were worried they wouldn't be able to pay collaborators or keep the same types of studio spaces that they need to do their work. Lastly, and probably most concerning, is that artists were concerned that they just needed time and mental space to be creative. It was so surprising to hear artists say that what they needed to be creative was the time to be creative, but this was a frequent and real concern across artistic disciplines and career stages.

Can you tell us more about some of the conditions that led artists to a precarious existence that may have preceded the pandemic and been exacerbated during this time?

Artists were not considered essential workers during the pandemic, and much of their work disappeared, was postponed, or was otherwise disrupted. However, some aspects of artistic and creative work already led artists to precarious existence even before the pandemic. Artists are more likely to be self-employed or have a so-called portfolio career where they bring together incomes and revenues from multiple different projects. This is often a good strategy for artists, allowing them to diversify their work and be flexible in terms of bringing in more work when needed. This strategy gives them the capacity to work at a reduced rate or just to push forward their own artistic vision

without pay while also pursuing other paid projects.
Even if this is an advantageous strategy at times, it is also a precarious working arrangement. Outside of the bounds of formal employment, US-based artists find themselves personally responsible for supporting themselves, finding healthcare coverage, and planning for the future. At the same time, protections that apply to employees in the United States, like anti-discrimination laws, do not necessarily apply to gig workers like artists. This means that the arts can become a place where insidious discrimination goes unchecked, further making work more precarious.

Were there potential supporting practices or resources that could help artists in the future?

Many artists interviewed for this research built or relied on extensive community resources and mutual support networks. However, artists cannot solve all their own problems without intervention.

First in terms of concerns about the pandemic, continued uptake of vaccines and reduction in the number of Covid-19 cases will take care of many of the artists' concerns in this area. In fact, these issues are beginning to come to some resolution as more people are vaccinated and spaces are reopening. However, concerns

about monetary support and needed time to be creative are potentially harder to solve. These problems require innovative approaches to valuing artists' time, their artistic work, and their contributions to local communities.

The complexity and intensity of making a living in the arts means that the work of art consumes the time and mental space that might fruitfully be used for creative practice. It is incumbent upon policymakers and those who support artists to think about how to best facilitate and promote artists use of their creativity and artistic skill efficiently. Given the quick pace and sweeping scope of change in individual artists lives, considering what artists themselves say they need is essential as we continue to think about supporting artists after Covid-19.

Tal Feder

› Sheffield University, UK

Rebecca Florisson

› Queen Mary University of London, UK

PARENTHOOD PENALTIES AND CREATIVE OCCUPATIONS: UNDERSTANDING THE UNEQUAL IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

You have researched the impact of the pandemic on hours worked in the creative economy. What can data on working hours during this period tell us about the experiences of different creative workers?

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the UK Government introduced restrictions on social contact, resulting in the reduction of many business and employment activities. Hundreds of thousands of people were not working at all, but received income support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (for employees) or the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme for those who were self-employed.

The creative industries were, quite famously, badly impacted as a result of public health interventions to limit the transmission and impact of the virus. Our work used the Office for National Statistics' UK Labour Force Survey (LFS) data to explore this impact. We looked at hours worked by those in creative occupations, such as artists, writers, or musicians, as well as those

in the creative industries more generally, which include all creative occupations and those in jobs such as working in legal, HR, or financial services, or in retail and hospitality occupations.

In addition to a large number of workers leaving their creative occupation, there was also a significant number of workers who did not leave their profession but still had to reduce, or even completely stop, working. The 'core creative workers', constituting the performing and visual arts, music, film and tv, museums and galleries and publishing, reporting zero work hours per week almost doubled. During the first quarter of 2020 around 18% of these 'core' creative workers reported zero working hours in the week of the LFS survey, by the second quarter, during lockdown, this had risen to 33%, eventually settling around 26% by the end of 2020.

Our analysis also shows that the impact of the pandemic was very unevenly distributed across the creative economy, with the strongest negative impacts falling on women, young workers and parents of young children (aged under 5). This suggests that the pandemic compounded employment disadvantages some workers already face in the creative economy.

What inequalities for parents do you see emerging or being exacerbated by the pandemic?

Already prior to the pandemic, parents of young children, and in particular mothers, were more likely to struggle to access work and at higher risk of experiencing penalties in terms of career progression and wages. What largely drives these outcomes are bias, sexism and the differential rate at which workers accumulate working experience. For instance, whereas fathers work approximately the same number of hours as men without children, mothers work on average 15 hours less than women without children, reflecting the fact that women still often bear the largest share of household and caring duties.

During the pandemic, many schools and childcare facilities closed, requiring parents to juggle work with their caring responsibilities. This reduced the number of hours parents were able to work. The impact on working hours among core creative parents was more severe than the average impact on parents across the economy, suggesting specific difficulties of sustaining creative work during this period. This is highlighted also by the fact that the stronger negative impacts on working hours are

concentrated among younger parents, who are likely less established in the creative economy.

Can you tell us about how the dynamics of the creative economy you observed differ from trends in the wider economy?

The core cultural occupations were among the ones most strongly affected by job losses and reductions in hours. Even where cultural workers were able to remain in work —supported by the furlough scheme or other income support schemes — we witness an impact on working hours that far exceeds the UK average.

Across the UK economy overall, people worked an average 5 hours fewer during the pandemic than before. Those with young children worked an additional 14 hours fewer, reflecting the impact of juggling work with childcare.

However, parents of young children working in core creative occupations worked 21 fewer hours still, in total representing a reduction of 45 working hours per week overall. This decline reflects both workers who stopped working and those who continued to work but at a reduced intensity.

Another contrast between core creative parents and the wider labour market can be seen in

gendered inequalities. The pandemic seemed to reduce gendered inequalities in hours worked. Both young core creative fathers and mothers reduced their hours at the same rate, by about half, during the pandemic.

Finally, and highlighting the unique situation of creative workers, is the way that the impact on younger creative parents was not dependent on the economic sector in which they work. Creative professionals suffered very similar loss of working hours regardless of whether they worked in, or in an economic sector outside, the creative industries. Those workers who were not in creative occupations, but were working in creative industries, did not experience the same degree of this parenting penalty.

› Acknowledgements
The research on which this interview is based was conducted by Tal Feder (Sheffield University), Dave O'Brien (University of Edinburgh), Rebecca Florisson (Queen Mary University of London), Mark Taylor (Sheffield University) and Siobhan McAndrew (Sheffield University)

Fiona Drummond

› Rhodes University,
South Africa

THE ROLE OF FESTIVALS IN THE WORK ADAPTATION STRATEGIES TO COVID-19 OF SOUTH AFRICA'S PERFORMING ARTISTS

Your research focuses on the impact of Covid-19 on festivals in South Africa. Can you give us a brief overview of how festivals responded to the pandemic?

Festivals in South Africa have been hard hit by Covid-19. South Africa entered into a strict lockdown in March 2020 which has periodically eased to allow live events. However, the uncertainty around restrictions and the pace of the vaccination rollout has meant that the sector has been slow to recover and needs to take advantage of "windows of opportunity", while screen fatigue is now hampering virtual events.

The Future Festivals South Africa research found that 214 cultural festivals occurred in 2019, but only 116 took place in 2020. With 28 festivals occurring before the lockdown, adaptation strategies have included having smaller Covid-19 compliant in-person live events (17 festivals), a hybrid (online and live) event (7 festivals)

or moving online to have a "virtual" festival (64 festivals) which was the most popular response.

The seven festivals that we interviewed who adapted to the pandemic and continued, took on the roles of co-creators rather than the "gatekeepers" of curated content that they had been pre-Covid. They determined new formats for artistic works which included virtual festivals through online streaming, television broadcasts and a world first WhatsApp festival as well as a live Covid-compliant drive-in festival. The festivals supported artists to pivot to these formats by providing training workshops for creating, producing and distributing online works.

The "digital divide" is a particular challenge for South Africa and the Global South, and many festivals were concerned about the potential exclusion of artists and audiences who did not have access to technology and data. New virtual festival formats attempted to account for this by offering content and using platforms that were low-tech, low-data or free for artists to create and distribute works as well as for audiences to access those works.

Can you tell us more about how the impact was felt or perceived by festival workers and how they responded to the pandemic?

The pandemic has exposed the precarity of South Africa's performing artists as their work is mainly face-to-face. With the mass cancellation of live events, many artists found themselves without work and were ineligible for government relief due to the freelance or informal nature of their work which is based on short-term contracts. The festivals that adapted to Covid-19 stepped in to help fill this gap. Their motivations to continue included providing work and income for artists, innovating and creating something new and exciting, and inspiring joy and creativity for artists and audiences alike during a difficult time. There was a sense of gratitude amongst artists as without the festivals going ahead, "it would have [been] an absolute lean year for us" (Suidoosterfees artist, 2021).

The festival artists have adapted their working practices to the pandemic and the new festival formats. Since travel was restricted, artists had to learn to make do with what they had or what was readily available such as one location sets and free video editing software. Artists reported becoming a "jack of all trades" as instead of being just an actor, they had to become the director, producer, technical crew, editor and promotor (for which social media presence became critical). Adapting works to the online environment was crucial as what works well for a live audience does not necessarily translate well on screen. The type of content created is also important.

Artists found that content surrounding particular themes or events like cultural heritage or Valentine's Day was able to cut through screen fatigue and compete with a vast amount of online content. In learning these new skills, collaboration became key as artists and festivals supported one another.

What can policy learn about how festivals and festival workers have responded to the pandemic in South Africa?

Relationships between stakeholders have changed, becoming far more collaborative and cooperative than before. This has enabled risks to be taken and has accelerated a digital uptake which was already present within the system. It has also produced new festival formats that use new technologies and have reached new audiences. Though there is "no replacement for live", these new formats, business models and ways of working will continue into the future.

The kinds of support that artists and festival organisers have said would be most useful going forward are not just financial. There is a demand for networking, skills development and knowledge sharing around how to operate successfully in the online environment. With this in mind, what is being funded needs to be reconsidered. Public and private sector

funders could consider facilitating and providing platforms for networking, training, and mentoring alongside the direct funding provided to individual organisers. This is likely to become increasingly important and valuable in the Covid-19 recovery period and will help to set up artists and festivals for the future as "online is here to stay".

› Acknowledgements
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2.2

Collective perspectives on creative work: mobilisation, care and interconnected impacts

Silvia Lucciarini
Michele Santurro
› Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

THE (IM)PERFECT MATCH: CREATIVE WORKERS, UNIONS AND REPRESENTATION CLAIMS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Your research explores the effects of the pandemic on the tendency of creative workers to move towards collective action/associative behaviors. You have conducted a quantitative analysis based on data from the European Social Survey (ESS). What are the main findings emerged at an European level?

Overall, in the period from 2002 to 2018, the proportion of creative workers fell by ten percentage points, dropping from around 31% for the first round of the ESS to 20% for the sixth round and 19% for the ninth round. These figures are understandable if we consider, on the one hand, that creative labour only recently has started a process of professionalization, so that until a few years ago even non-professional or semi-professional workers defined themselves as creative workers, and, on the other hand, that the creative sector has a long tradition of non-standard work, characterized by atypical working hours, project-based work, self-employment (including dependent self-employment), unclear contractual arrangements and

questions over the employment status of its workforce. The global economic recession that followed the 2008 financial crisis contributed to the development of these trends. Descriptive statistics show great differences in unionization levels across countries. The Nordic countries are found at the top, whereas mixed market economies as well as Continental coordinated market economies are at the bottom. A convergence towards decline in unionization rates can actually be recognized taking place across all the models of European capitalism. Creative workers employed without a contract or self-employed are rarely members of trade unions, showing a slight downward trend over time, consistent with the entry into the world of interest representation of other associative and mutual actors playing the role of intermediaries. Across the European countries, the group of mixed market economies stands out in terms of reaching the lowest-low unionization rates for this category of workers, reflecting the strong dualism in their labour market.

Do you think that the traditional Trade Union will develop specific services for these typologies of workers?

The pandemic event has raised awareness on the working conditions and the fragility of the protections associated with creative workers, particularly in emerging professions. Our

qualitative analysis illustrates how these workers have approached trade unions, driven by a condition of urgent need, namely the exclusion from subsidies during the Covid-19 emergency. In fact, even though for the first time in Italy the government used substantial funds for social safety nets afforded not only by employees, but also by self-employed workers, some segments of self-employment – often the most fragile ones – remained excluded from these measures. This exclusion pushed some creative workers to seek out unions, not for servicing activities, but in order to lobby and influence institutions. In this sense, rather than providing services, which creative workers in Italy get mainly from cooperatives and mutual actors (i.e. Smart, Doc Servizi), the Italian trade union is going “back to the past”, to its historical role – among those identified by the Webbs in their Industrial Democracy – to obtain legislation through trade union pressure.

Can you tell us about some best practices of social protection schemes in Europe?

Social protection schemes based on formal universalistic principles are better equipped to deal with emergencies, since the benefits are not determined by the position in the labour market, and therefore are less exposed to negative circumstances. For this reason, looking at the Nordic countries in terms of welfare

regime and provision allows us to observe the best practices, in various policy areas, such as health care, income support and assistance.

Emanuela Naclerio

› University of Milan and University Of Turin, Italy

"ATTRICI E ATTORI UNITI": A CASE STUDY OF COLLECTIVE MOBILISATION IN THE ITALIAN THEATRICAL SECTOR DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In your ethnographic field work, you have researched artists' collective mobilisation in the Italian theatrical sector during the pandemic. Can you tell us what key strategies did artists use to highlight their protest during this time?

During the past few years, the artistic sector has been invested, alongside many others, by an unexpected crisis tied to Covid-19 regulations of public life enacted by most countries in the world. In the artists' cases, in Italy and elsewhere, the pandemic has hit on working conditions and life experiences that were already characterised by vulnerabilities and opened novel possibilities of community practice and collective identity building. With the intent to improve their working conditions, artists built open and inclusive online communities where they organised both online and live actions of protest. Digital communication tools proved to be effective in spreading awareness on artists' difficulties during pandemic times, reaching the attention of public opinion and institutions.

Using social media, artists managed to connect and to creatively articulate their contents, starting a dialogue within their working category and with policy makers.

However, the focus on new communication tools do not prevent activists from developing more traditional ties with local and national institutions, renewing relationships with trade unions and political representatives.

Across Europe, many collective actions are taking place trying to support creative and cultural workers. Do you think this Italian association will evolve and consolidate in a stable framework with specific objectives for the theatrical sector?

In April 2020 more than 50 groups, formal and informal, were working on the tutelage of performing arts' workers. The collective activities of the Italian performing arts sector have been particularly relevant, especially if compared to the last years. The growth of digital and virtual relations, alongside with forced unemployment, has allowed artists to engage in online community building and to benefit from the encounter between geographically and politically diverse subjectivities.

Among the multitude of collective experiences, some are suffering from difficulties related with

spontaneous mobilisation processes, reducing their activities online and offline. However, other groups that started as informal collectives are undertaking a process of institutionalisation, assuming a structured position in the frame of performing artists' mobilisation. The work of both formal and informal groups is important for the sector, recomposing a language of solidarity and to opening a dialogue with unions, local and national institutions and policy makers on performing artists' working conditions.

Who, in your opinion, should act concretely to alleviate the problem at the local, national or international level?

Despite the growing attention to culture as a fundamental part of people's physical and psychological wellbeing, during the past twenty years, performers' labour markets and careers have been characterised by an increased vulnerability. While employment opportunities and economic compensations for performing artists were already declining, the outburst of Covid-19 in March 2020 brought to the forefront some structural misfunctionings of the sector, highlighting the absence of social protection and the lack of a clear future perspective for the category of workers.

Considering cultural sectors' relevance for local, national and international innovation, workers'

issues should be taken into account at different institutional levels. From the construction of local support networks and the development of a renewed welfare system for artists to the implementation of European's regulations, the mobilisation that has permeated the performing arts' sector points at the urgency for a renewed attention to issues of labour in the cultural and creative industries. In advocating the need to rethink the position of artistic workers, activists call for a paradigmatic change in the organisation.

> Acknowledgements
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Jack Morton

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University Of London, UK

CO-OP MODE: THE EMANCIPATORY POTENTIAL OF FREELANCER CO-OPERATIVES IN THE UK GAMES INDUSTRY FOLLOWING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

Your research focuses on the UK Games Industry. Can you tell us how the pandemic impacted workers in this sector?

Unlike theatre and other facets of the creative industries, the games industry produces products that can be consumed remotely and, as a result, the production of games didn't grind to a halt during the pandemic. The lockdowns we faced between 2020 and 2021 led many people to purchase both videogames and consoles as an activity to pass the time whilst being house bound. As a result, the games industry had to adapt to home working quickly in order to keep producing content to meet demand. However, the pandemic wasn't the windfall one would expect for the industry, with some studios reporting a 20% drop in productivity due to challenges of remote working.

One of the key findings my study found was that the mental health of freelancers had been

significantly impacted due to the pandemic and remote working practices. Of 26 games industry workers interviewed, 70% highlighted that they had suffered with isolation and mental health issues since the pandemic started. Two contributing factors emphasised by participants were non-disclosure agreements (NDA's) and contractual conditions stating workers cannot work on their own projects whilst working at numerous studios. These restrictions on artist's lives outside of work, preventing them from talking to friends and family about work-based issues or from practicing their crafts as a hobby, significantly added to the mental health issues of games industry workers.

Did you find any examples of best practices in the way Games Industry freelancers addressed the pandemic?

There is a kaleidoscope of possibilities when it comes to the way one can conduct freelance labour. This makes it very difficult to find an example of best practice that will fit for all freelancers. However, in regard to those workers that freelance in the games industry as their main income, there have been a few examples of best practices that have cropped up throughout interviews. The first is utilising the pandemic and transition to working online in order to find contracts not just in the UK, but in the wider international gaming industries.

These individuals found that they did not suffer anxieties over finding contracts due to increasing their contract search radius. Secondly, online groups have been a lifeline for many freelancers which seems to be best practice for the majority throughout the pandemic. These groups, whether on Facebook, Discord or other social media platforms, have provided a social network for freelancers to prevent them feeling isolated. Many groups had Discord or Slack servers, online meetups, and socials so that freelancers could socialise and meet friends in the industry. Lastly, freelancers who utilised co-operatives or collective corporate structures experienced far fewer mental health issues, surrounding isolation and had a community that they could go to for support, mitigating lockdown and pandemic loneliness.

What could policy or employers in the sector do to alleviate the impact of the pandemic on the mental health and loneliness of these workers?

My research indicates that many freelancers experienced mental health issues and loneliness unless they operated in a co-operative or collective working structure. My recommendation to the sector would be to diversify corporate structures to make co-operatives and collectives a societal norm. Many freelancers interviewed commented

on how difficult it was to find information regarding setting up a games industry co-operative, so a further policy recommendation would be for resources surrounding alternative working models to become more common and accessible to those freelancers interested in forming a co-operative.

Currently, information is jargon-filled and isn't user-friendly for those wanting to access it, preventing individuals from branching out into co-operatives and collectives and instead diverting them back to AAA or indie studios. However, I understand this is a big ask due to how deep-rooted current working practices are.

So, I think it's important for some, perhaps, 'easier' suggestions to be made too. One major consideration that employers could make is removing clauses in contracts that specify workers cannot work on their own projects whilst employed. Preventing creative workers from producing their art in their spare time has added to the isolation, boredom, and poor mental health of games industry workers, when the policy itself is unnecessary for game production.

> Acknowledgements
This research was only possible due to the kindness and generosity of the participants whom spoke openly and honestly even with many restrictions existing within the industry. Thank you!

Tamsyn Dent

› King's College London, UK

WHO CARES FOR CREATIVE WORKERS? COVID-19 AND THE ROLE OF CREATIVE INTERMEDIARIES IN MOBILISING SUPPORT FOR THE CREATIVE WORKFORCE.

Your research explores 'who cares?' about creative and cultural workers. Can you tell us a bit more about why the focus is on 'care'?

In the past 20 years, a lot of the research on creative and cultural workers (CCWs) has concentrated on how they contribute to the wider economic growth of the creative and cultural industries alongside a critical interest in precarious and unsustainable working conditions. This work is really important in highlighting the structural shifts in labour conditions that this workforce is part of, however within that body of work there is little consideration on how CCWs are supported, what structures are in place to meet their needs in a changing workplace, i.e. who or what 'cares' for the creative and cultural workforce? Here, I apply a feminist framework of care derived from writers such as Joan Tronto and Virginia Held, thinking about care as a methodological approach that requires research which is based

on paying attention and responding to the needs of its constituents. Shifting the focus of this research to a question of 'who cares' requires a consideration of what the needs are in order to operate within the labour market and who is meeting those needs.

Across Europe, many organisations are trying to support creative and cultural workers, especially concerning the impact of the pandemic. Can you tell us a bit more about the nature and objectives of these organisations?

The approach that drove this research question led to a consideration of the various intermediaries that operate within the wider cultural ecology. The term 'intermediaries' was taken from Doreen Jakob and Bas Van Heur's (2015) work on cultural intermediaries and their role in the creative economy and can apply to all the various organisations from unions, support networks, guilds, grassroots collectives, co-working spaces, festivals, incubators' that provide some form of support for CCWss. Our survey was completed by just under 100 such organisations from across 26 European countries. The type of organisations that responded varied in terms of scope and size from established unions or foundations to small activist groups.

One thing the survey asked was for each organisation to state its mission and from that

we were able to identify a commitment to improving the working conditions faced by the workforce itself. There was a noted application of emancipatory and supportive language across the mission statements with phrases such as 'paying attention to worker's needs', 'supporting best practice for equitable participation' and the use of the term 'trust' to ensure CCWs have access to the support and knowledge needed to develop their professional careers. There was a notable absent discourse on the value of the work itself, either in terms of its cultural or economic value. This has driven our framing of these organisations as 'creative' as opposed to 'cultural intermediaries'.

The term 'creative intermediaries' therefore relates to those organisations who are finding ways to support CCWs' ability to operate within the labour market. What was interesting was a recognition that many of these organisations had been conducting their own research with CCWs for many years and had a clearer insight into how a phenomenon such as the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown would impact their constituents. Many that responded to the survey or who we spoke to in follow up interviews provided some form of initial support ranging from information to small funding grants.

What do you think policy can learn from these organisations or do to support them?

One clear argument that emerged from the survey is that policy makers still don't understand the realities of work within the creative economy. The standardised industrial and occupational classification models that are deployed across Europe do not enable a realistic understanding of the labour market conditions and employment status for many within those related sectors and therefore were not able to sufficiently support them during the lockdown. This was clear when at the start of the 2020 global lockdown, a series of surveys were sent out by different policy-related organisations in order to measure the impact on the CCWs. What we can conclude from this research project is that we still have a lot to learn about the realities of the working conditions faced by the CCWs and that Covid-19 has provided a moment to visibilise their instability. Policy makers could pay more attention to and offer more support to the various creative intermediaries that have evolved to meet the multiple needs of CCWs.

› Acknowledgements
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Lauren England

› King's College London, UK

AN ECOSYSTEM APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING IMPACT AND RECOVERY FROM COVID-19: THE CASE OF DUNDEE

You have researched the impacts of the pandemic on Dundee's cultural economy. What are the main impacts on creative workers you identified and how do these experiences relate to the wider cultural sector?

The research highlighted creative freelancers experienced a dramatic loss of employment and subsequently income, combined with a lack of access to sufficient national or sector level financial support during the pandemic. High levels of uncertainty and unprecedented levels of economic strain on cultural organisations also appeared to filter down to creative freelancers and were reflected in negative relationship management and exploitative contractual arrangements. The ongoing economic and emotional toll on creative freelancers meant they were considering leaving the sector and retraining and/or taking on alternative employment. This then impacts the capacity of cultural organisations to deliver activities, particularly events but also outreach and engagement work, which were both

prominent in Dundee prior to the pandemic. In turn, this damages the contribution of the cultural sector to the city (socially, culturally and economically).

As well as negative impacts, the study also found that support – including funding, peer support and strategy development – could be distributed through the city's existing networks and that some organisations adapted their practices to try and support freelancers. Among Dundee's larger cultural organisations there is also the potential to leverage their fundraising capacity and lobbying power to support with wider sector.

Why is an ecological perspective important in understanding the impact of the pandemic?

An ecological perspective involves understanding and strengthening interrelationships and interdependencies between different actors and cultural resources and the opportunities they present. In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, this is important because precarity in any area of the ecosystem – among creative workers for example – ultimately affects the resilience and vibrancy of the whole.

At the policy level, this requires greater understanding of how the impact of the

pandemic on the cultural ecosystem and its constituent parts affects local employment and economic development but also education, community development and health and wellbeing agendas. The study suggests that particular attention needs to be given to how creative workers can be better supported and their work valued, so that they can in turn support the work of cultural organisations and the contribution of culture to the city and society. This is particularly important in places like Dundee where culture plays a key role in regeneration plans and connecting with local communities.

What recommendations do you make for an ecological approach to cultural recovery in Dundee?

Dundee has potential to become an exemplar by fostering the city's capacity for ideas generation and practices of care among its highly collaborative community and taking advantage of its "Goldilocks" scale. Recommendations include strengthening support networks at different organisational levels, investing in community-based work that can accumulate and spread across the city as well as supporting the large cultural flagship organisations, and developing strategic linkages between the cultural sector and other areas of local development (i.e. hospitality and tourism,

night-time economy, health and wellbeing and education).

The study found that cultural strategy development work in Dundee is a collective effort driven by partnership. It is recommended that valuable learning should continue to be drawn from across diverse stakeholder groups and beyond the city and shared with others. Strong leadership, coordination and adequate resourcing are however needed in order for this work to be effective and sustainable. By developing and implementing a Recovery Strategy – for the cultural strategy and the wider city – that takes an ecological approach, collective action can be fostered and used to support the recovery of a cultural sector and city that is greater than the sum of its parts.

> Acknowledgements
This interview is based on research conducted in partnership with Leisure & Culture Dundee and Dundee City Council Events Team. A public report is available **here**.

2.3

Sites of creative work and Covid-19: the urban and the regional

Janet Merkel

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THE NEED FOR SPATIAL CULTURAL POLICIES TOWARDS MORE EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR CULTURAL WORK AFTER COVID-19

Your research illustrates how spatial struggles and inequalities in cities were barriers for creative and cultural workers even before the pandemic. How has this changed?

While the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing and we are now entering the fourth wave (here in Germany), it is difficult to predict how it will alter cities, urban social life, cultural ecosystems, cultural work, and cultural policy in the long term. Yet, the pandemic clearly shows the vulnerability and precarity of contemporary urban life. For example, many households are one paycheck away from not being able to pay their rents and therefore cities needed to introduce eviction moratoriums. Due to the distancing measures and the closure of cultural venues and programs, artists and cultural workers were explicitly affected, and the Covid-19-pandemic made them even more vulnerable.

For example, a study conducted among artists in Berlin showed that 35 per cent of artists could not hold their studios during 2020. In New

York, a survey administered by Americana for the Arts in July 2021 to 643 community-based arts organisations found that 25 per cent of organisations operating in low-income zip codes lost their physical home while 49 per cent of organisations lost access to some or all physical programming spaces during the pandemic.

There is a long history of spatial struggles for artists and cultural workers in cities in securing affordable and appropriate workspaces. Yet, those struggles have intensified during the last decade due to the increased investments into housing and offices in inner cities after the financial crisis, the disappearance of former industrial sites and the general rise of housing and living costs in cities worldwide. Affordability, availability, and potential displacement are now major concerns for most artists and cultural workers. For example, The People's Cultural Plan for Working Artists and Communities in New York City, published in 2017, considers the rising spatial inequalities for artists and cultural workers the most pressing issue in cultural policy. The World Cities Culture Forum raised these concerns in a 2018 report too. Addressing these spatial inequalities becomes more urgent as we already see that budgets will likely be cut in the future to compensate for the pandemic interventions. In New York City, the cultural budget for 2021 already has a heavy cut in cultural development grants

that will disproportionately affect organisations that primarily serve communities of colour and low-income communities outside of Manhattan. Therefore, access to affordable housing and workspaces is crucial for enhancing equity and inclusion in a city's cultural sector and creating more equitable and sustainable futures for cultural work(ers).

What examples of best practices did you encounter to address some of the spatial challenges created by Covid-19?

Our study interrogated how five cities (Berlin, London, New York, Paris and Toronto) reacted to the Covid-19 challenge in the cultural sector. We aimed to understand what governance capacities they have to act in such a crisis. For example, municipal cultural policies are often embedded into complex forms of multilevel-governance and interwoven with federal or national cultural policies (e.g., when national cultural policies fund big cultural institutions in cities such as Berlin, London, Paris or Toronto). Our research did not focus specifically on measures mitigating spatial inequalities. Yet, we analysed all relevant cultural policy interventions during the first wave of the pandemic and found very few that addressed spatial inequalities. Toronto extended property tax reliefs to 45 live music venues based on a tax relief program for cultural and creative spaces introduced in 2019 (1.7 million

Canadian dollars). The city of Paris suspended rent payments for all city-owned workshops for six months between May and November 2020 to support artists.

And London's GLA, despite their minimal funds for culture, launched the Culture at Risk Business Support Fund with a budget of 2.3 million Pound to support grassroots music venues, LGBTQ+ venues, independent cinemas, and tenants across 200 artist studios workspaces. However, considering the complex problem and the overall sums mobilised for emergency packages in the cultural sector and specific institutions, these targeted interventions were minuscule in comparison. Thus, it is fair to say that those spatial inequalities were no particular concern in the proposed interventions. These findings stand in stark contrast to the fact that many cities already recognised them as a policy concern even before the pandemic.

What lessons can be shared with policymakers aiming to create more resilient structures for creative and cultural workers post-pandemic?

Workspaces and housing constitute necessary material conditions that enable, facilitate, and shape cultural production. Yet both conditions are increasingly difficult to sustain with cultural work in the contemporary city. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic and

its devastating impacts on the income and work situation of freelance and self-employed cultural workers, there was a rising criticism and protests from artists and cultural organisations about the loss of appropriate workspaces and the fear of being priced out and displaced from cities and the access to their cultural networks and spaces.

These collective protests highlight that the affordability and availability of housing and workplaces and the thread of displacement are the most pressing issues for artists and cultural workers, especially in those cities considered the global cultural hubs. Suppose cities governments are interested in keeping cultural production, then they need to introduce comprehensive spatial cultural policies addressing the issues of availability, affordability, and the increased threads of displacement (e.g., insecure short-term rents, rezoning policies) through legal and planning regulations and in developing targeted funding and tax incentive schemes (e.g., for helping artists and cultural workers to buy land or premises, to develop bottom-up solutions etc.).

Cities need to develop policies and instruments to protect existing spaces and develop new cultural production infrastructures. London, Cologne and Vancouver have begun introducing new cultural planning frameworks that work at

the intersection of cultural policies and urban planning; those could serve as inspirations. Mapping the specific needs for different types of cultural activity is an important starting point. Addressing the increasing spatial inequalities for artists and cultural workers is crucial for inclusion, workforce diversity, and supporting sustainable livelihoods in arts and culture. But it is also necessary to keep a city's rich anddiverse cultural fabric.

Jessica Tanghetti

› Ca’ Foscari University of Venice, Italy

PRECARITY, CONNECTIVITY AND URBAN LIVES: THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MILAN’S CREATIVE AND CULTURAL WORKERS

You have researched the impact of Covid-19 on creative and cultural workers in Milan. What were the key aspects that have emerged from your work?

First of all, our study highlighted the role played by Covid-19 in exposing the precarity of creative and cultural workers in Milan, providing a critical moment to make visible their fragile and almost absent structural recognition and support to policymakers, the wider public audiences and the workers themselves. Also, our data illustrated how the pandemic has turned the city into a site of public struggle and request for recognition, first virtually through online platforms and social media and after lockdown through public manifestations, banners and protests. In this respect, we found of particular interest how Covid-19 triggered a consciousness and collective solidarity that had been previously obstructed due to the fragmentation, individualism and the pressure of creative careers.

Many informal workers' groups emerged during the 2020 lockdown, which have evolved then, in some cases, into formal and legally recognised associations. However, despite the protest and manifestations, creative and cultural workers met very little institutional support and struggled to receive feedback and collaborations from the city and regional institutions. This highlighted the limited reach of regional policies in response to Covid-19 and exposed local institutions and policymakers for not caring enough about creative and cultural workers and not acting fast enough when providing support. Nevertheless, while the dialogue with institutions has presented many challenges, for the first time, the coordination of workers has allowed them to have a voice.

Can you tell us a bit more about how this collective action has manifested itself and what workers have demanded?

The sudden interruption of activities caused by the pandemic granted creative and cultural workers time to pause and reflect and to connect, providing an opportunity to share on common struggles experienced. This created a shared desire to use the standstill and a move towards a collective action purposefully.

Many workers' groups emerged, mainly thanks to the use of social media platforms, together

with an umbrella organisation (Coordinamento Spettacolo Lombardia, CSL), which allowed the shared discussion to take place in relation to future actions but also to create a critical mass to engage with the city and regional policymakers.

The main objective of this collective solidarity was to come together in the moment of emergency but also to consider long-lasting changes not just for creative and cultural workers in Milan but the wider labour force. Thus, this associationism and activism allowed creative and cultural workers to not only gain self-awareness and transform it into public awareness but also to open up the discussion with institutions to create change and dialogue. It is hoped that this will inform the future development of the cultural and creative industries and their workers, starting from the structural problems of the sector, such as the unfair contractual arrangements and the lack of social security and welfare buffers.

What do you think will be the long-term implications of Covid-19 on the image of Milan as a creative city?

Our study highlighted the need for creative and cultural workers to be supported during the pandemic and the failure of the city to do so. It is too early to fully comprehend the impact of this dynamic on the sector, but one potential implication could be the risk of a reduced

workforce due to the necessity of finding other forms of work, potentially leading to a skills shortage in the future.

Also, it is possible to predict that Covid-19 will have an even greater impact at the urban level: the delocalisation following the 2020 lockdown showed that many aspects that were key to Milan as a creative city became less important during the pandemic, while some other elements which were not so important before (communities, quality of life, green spaces) are now valued much more.

Thus, Covid-19 might shift overall the importance of the city in which the concentration has created unhealthy dynamics in the creative economy, creating a shift of cultural opportunities away from the city. Therefore, Milan's institutions and policymakers had a responsibility to improve creative and cultural workers' working conditions if they want them to continue to stay and work in the city: it is important that the city municipality itself takes the lead in the transparency of contracts, rights, and social security, developing an ethics of care that pays attention to and recognises their needs of support.

> Acknowledgements
The research on which this interview is based was developed collaboratively with Dr Roberta Comunian and Dr Tamsyn Dent at King's College London.

Federica Viganò

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CREATIVE AND CULTURAL WORKERS IN SOUTH TYROL

Your research explores the case of a European Border region, South Tyrol, as a region with a multiple cultural identity and languages. What are the characteristics of these kinds of regions in terms of job market, specifically for creative and cultural workers (CCWs)?

South Tyrol is an interesting European case study to explore the impact of Covid-19 on CCWs in European border regions, given the proximity to Austria and Germany and the bilingual leverage. Border studies have today a significant relevance because borderlands are often an interesting field where new movements, new mobilities or also new identities and citizenships can be discovered, bringing the development of hybridized forms of work. Border studies are then particularly interesting for scholars and policy makers because borderlands often bring into sharper relief the changing conditions of the national and international political economy and their impact on certain specific groups, like migrants, cross-border workers, among whom we can recognize CCWs (also called creative migrants).

South Tyrol can be considered a frontier borderland, in which artists and performing arts workers tend to develop international career paths between Italy, Austria or Germany. This allows them to experience a different overall cultural management system and working patterns. One of the consequences is that the attraction of close job markets challenges the locational choice of CCWs, which could experience different ways of living their work.

The experience of different educational, health and social security systems is often reported as an important element leading CCWs to reflect on the differences in the status of creatives in different countries.

If the pre-Covid CCWs' working conditions might have not felt so problematic for these highly mobile workers, in the post-Covid scenario more consideration might be given to the place where support and recognition are mainly based.

The case of performing arts workers in South Tyrol highlights mobility as one of the characteristics of their job. What are the main factors emerged in the fieldwork about the experience of cross borders workers?

The literature shows that the creative class is generally attracted to cities for reasons related to work-related opportunities and the centrality and concentration of creative activities in cities.

Mobility of creative professionals is a key hypothesis in the theory of Florida. Analysing the factors that induce the mobility of creatives, such as soft factors (like quality of the environment, lively cultural scene and a creative atmosphere), hard factors (availability of resources and job opportunities), and personal trajectory ('born here', 'family lives here', 'studied here', 'proximity to friends'), the case of cross border regions and specifically South Tyrol highlights how different factors can explain the mobility of CCWs in relation to personal choices and the cultural and linguistic proximity of the cross-border country.

The cultural and linguistic proximity to cross-border regions like Austria and Germany places South Tyrol closer to the American example, where there is no language barrier and mobility is facilitated, and less close to many other European examples, where constraints like cultural barriers or language differences induce CCWS to opt for a permanent change of residence. The case of cross-border regions, instead, highlights how these workers adopt "short-term" mobility as a working style, which allows them to maintain a regional connectedness.

What are the main aspects of the local governance system about cultural policies, and what can be learned from cross-border regions?

The double identity and linguistic dimension, Italian and German, of South Tyrol is very well reflected into the administrative governance system and the provincial cultural subdivisions, which differ from each other both in the size of the economic resources, greater in the German part, and in the choices of funding and support for local cultural activities. This division has been cited as one of the reasons why there are two local cultural agendas, which can create inequalities in treatment of CCWs.

As in many other Italian and international contexts, the pandemic pushed towards collectivism, unionism or association. In South Tyrol, PERFAS is the most recent association for performing art workers and technicians, born with the aim to represent artists' rights in front of local politics, raising awareness and building a dialogue with local authorities.

The fact that local performing arts workers often move between Italy, Austria and Germany, makes them very familiar with other workings patterns and a different perceived value of culture in the society. While Italy poses the question of the recognition of the status of creative workers and

artists (the new framework law for performing arts workers is currently under evaluation at the Senato), border regions (Austria and, differently, Germany) show a smarter management of the sector and a simplified bureaucracy that can be taken in consideration at least for local cultural policies.

A call for a stronger European framework to protect CCWs might address some of the challenges emerged in this local context.

› Acknowledgements
The research on which this interview is based was developed collaboratively with Dr Roberta Comunian and Lauren England (King's College London) and Dr Jessica Tanghetti.

Fabrizio Panozzo
Angela Nativio
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COMPREHENDING "CULTURAL WORK" A MAPPING EXPERIMENT IN THE VENETO REGION

Your research illustrates a mapping experiment of creative workers in the Veneto Region. Given the difficulties of capturing creatives through the usual statistical filters, what are the main results of your mapping?

One of the most interesting data revealed by the research is probably the high frequency of respondents indicating cultural work as their only form of professional occupation.

A staggering 77.9% denies having any other job, information that becomes even more interesting if compared with the one concerning income brackets:while almost 8 out of 10 workers declare themselves to be involved exclusively in cultural activities, 48% station themselves between 0 and 10.000 euros/year. Hence, in an apparently paradoxical situation, most cultural workers dedicate themselves to culture as professionals, but almost half of them lives dangerously close to the poverty line. If to this we add that, of the remaining 32%, 24.6% do not exceed the threshold of 20.000 euros/year, the situation does not really appear to be a prosperous one.

When it comes to what cultural workers actually do, we find the management of cultural spaces at the first place (19.2%), testifying the centrality of physical spaces for the sector. We then find theatre (18.3%), at a second place,reflecting the high number of initiatives organized by its workers in 2020. Educational workshops (16.3%), private classes (13.5%), and educational labs within cultural institutions (11.5&) follow. The list finally ends – though with percentages that hint at a certain resistance to self-representation – with music (11.2%), and visual arts (10%).

What are the main differences between the pre-pandemic and the post-pandemic phase?

In the pre-pandemic phase, the issue of cultural work in the Veneto region did not rank high on the social or political agenda. There was indeed, as there still is, an intense celebration of culture and cultural heritage as fundamental elements of regional identity and key driver of tourist attraction. However, such celebration was largely focused on material cultural heritage of which the region is rich. Museums were hailed for the "beauty" they displayed and theaters for the "cultural traditions" they preserved.

Political attention (and funding) was largely directed at established, public institutions such as the Venice Biennale and the Arena Opera

House or the to the heritage cities hosting them. Contemporary artists were entering the public debate mainly as successful individuals expressing themselves as ambassadors of the "excellence" of Venetian culture. The pandemic offered an opportunity to shed some light on other expressions of cultural work that were peripheral to the cultural establishment. The forced closure of theaters sparked the protest of freelance cultural workers and small cultural organizations operating in the supply chain of major institutions.

The public opinion was thus made aware of the existence of forms of independent cultural work with little or no social security. The demand for relief measures for this kind of workers created a new visibility of their fundamental role in the production of cultural services and triggered new forms of associationism and unionization of cultural work.

Do you have main suggestions to share with academia and the policy makers to capture the target from a methodological point of view?

Both academics and policy makers must first deal with the knowledge gap that has been generated, somewhat artificially, by the invention of "cultural and creative industries" (CCIs) in the late 20th century and work conducted outside

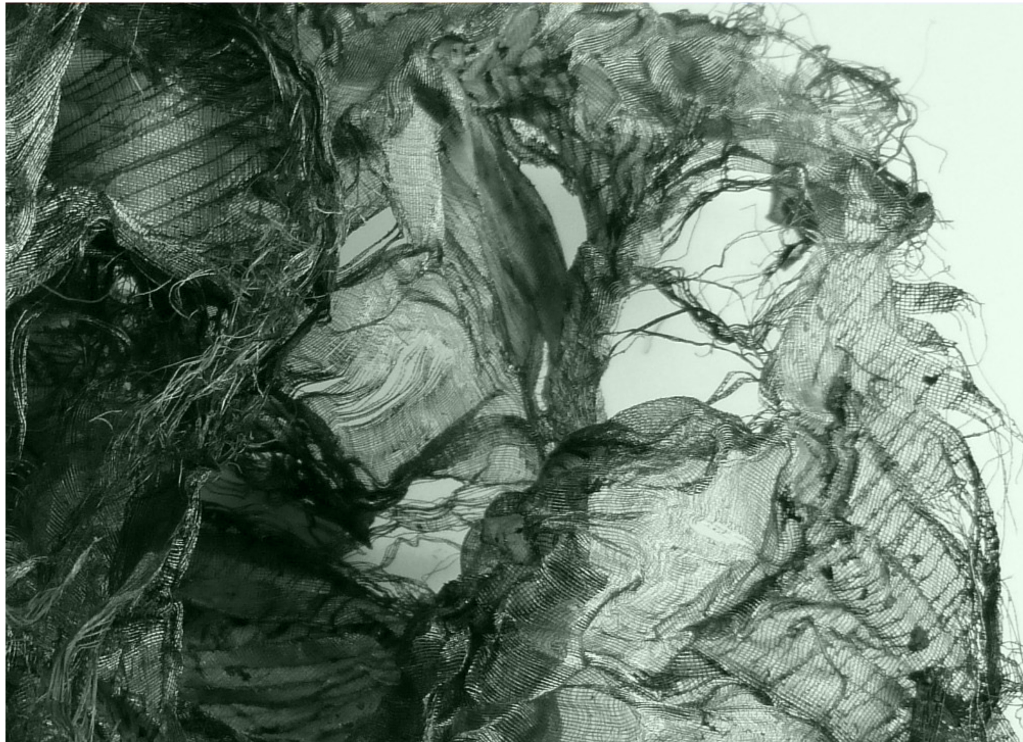
of the conventional perimeter of "industry". Such awareness indeed calls for methodological revisions but primarily interrogates the fundamental relationship between ideological orientations and the creation of visibility for phenomena to be acted upon. The invention of CCIs constitutes a paradigmatic case of policy-led research, generally oblivious of the motivations that sustained the interest for a research area fashioned in a such a manner.

A neoliberal response to de-industrialization can be credited as the most significant force originally driving both the identification of CCIs and the soft injunction to study them. Methodological innovations in the investigation of cultural work must begin from this crucial ontological issue. Our call is for an approach based on the Weberian construct of "verstehen", literally, understanding, or comprehension. "Verstehen" is the use of empathy in the sociological or historical understanding of human action and behavior and refers to understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view.

This is the main suggestion we want to share with academia and the policy makers: to adopt an approach where the observer relates to its subjects from the subjects / cultural world view, and not the researcher's own.

Finally, understanding is the act of bringing back within the economic and statistic representation many professionals, whose work has been obscured by the CCIs configuration. An exploratory survey in the Veneto region reveals that cultural work is often invisible to official statistics. Rather than the entrepreneurial form promoted by European and local public policies, most cultural workers indeed prefer to associate less formally or operate as freelancers. The research signals two possible avenues for a renewed relevance of cultural work: one that insists on making it business-like and the other that tries to capture the multiplicity of its forms.

↑ JESSICA TANGHETTI
Manifestation in Piazza del Duomo di Milano (30th May 2020) with performers and protest banners *[photo courtesy of CSL]*



↑ BLANE SAVAGE
“Work in progress”, artwork by Alison F. Bell (one of the artists interviewed)

→ FIONA DRUMMOND
Artists performing to a ‘steel audience’ at the Suidoosterfees drive-in festival 2020. Flashing lights and hooting car horns replaced applause. *[Photo courtesy of Suidoosterfees and Gys Loubser.]*

3

Through findings and reflections presented in the interviews in this report, we have sought to shed light on the forms and dynamics of creative work and the range of impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic that were previously going under the radar. This helps us to appreciate that creative workers face specific challenges which impact individuals (and their quality of life), but that these also have broader implications as they restrict the accessibility and inclusivity of the sector, making the creative and cultural industries less diverse. This has broader implications that might reshape the cultural life of our cities and societies. As Valli (2017: 4) suggests, another challenge is that often "cultural workers might not have the power to determine the structural boundaries and hierarchies that organise urban society, including their own positioning in it". The commitment and passion of creative workers can therefore also be understood as the downfalls that push producers to accept precarious working conditions (McRobbie, 2018) and to further undervalue their contribution to society (Siebert and Wilson, 2013). The precarious economic conditions of these workers (Comunian et al. 2021) connects them with the worrying phenomenon of the working poor (Lohmann and Marx, 2018). In particular, widespread multiple job holding (Throsby and Zednik, 2011) and informal working arrangements can push these workers outside of the perimeter of creative work (or even legality) and place them within other contexts and sectors, potentially further weakening their access to financial aid when employed on a temporary or informal basis. Also in respect to career traceability, this phenomenon makes it impossible to estimate the overall salary of these workers. It is therefore urgent to address the structural difficulties of entering, sustaining and re-entering employment in creative sectors.

While many of the discussions during the workshop and the interviews presented here have highlighted new and pre-existing struggles and inequalities in creative work associated with Covid-19, they have also provided opportunities to reflect on how to address these issues critically, and opportunities to find sustainable solutions and strategies to re-future the development of the creative and cultural careers. We summarise these under two main headings: collective approaches to creative work/employment and care for creative workers.

In relation to ***collective approaches***, we have discussed practices of solidarity and mutual aid (**Savage; Skaggs; England**), new collaborations and innovations (**Drummond**), collective mobilisation and activism (online and physical) (**Naclerio; Tanghetti**), including the role of unions (**Lucciarini and Santurro; Viganò**) but also organisational forms such as cooperatives (**Morton**), cultural strategy groups (**England**) and the work of cultural intermediaries (**Dent; Drummond**). However, to be effective, collective responses also need to truly be for common gain, rather than groups of individuals working together for individual advancement and self-

actualisation (Lewis, 2020) in a way that continues to promote neoliberal culture. The ongoing pandemic has created further conditions in which "defensive self-interest thrives" (Chatzidakis et al., 2020: 4), and it will therefore be even more important to actively work against individualising tendencies in developing sustainable models for cultural and creative recovery. It is also necessary for collective action to be coordinated and resourced in order to make such modes of work effective and sustainable (**England; Naclerio**).

There are also opportunities to recognise new digital innovations emerging across the creative and cultural industries in response to the pandemic. This includes innovative digital formats for content production and dissemination (**Drummond**), artists developing alternative routes to market via social media and online retail (**Savage**) and growth of online support networks (**Morton; Savage; England**). Some of these, we hope, are here to stay and should be celebrated. Still, others arguably reflect a forced diversification (**Drummond**) which may do more damage in the long run without adequate support for upskilling and market development.

In relation to ***care for creative workers*** it is essential to consider interventions that protect workers rights and enable sustainable livelihoods (**Panozzo and Nativio**), but also ones that eliminate barriers in relation to gender, ethnic diversity and other forms of exclusion. This includes the erosion of creative workers' rights when temporary contracts and bulimic careers (Pratt, 2002)

do not allow workers to be able to receive basic social security in case of unemployment or health issues (**Tanghetti**). The pandemic highlighted the fragility of the sector (Comunian and England, 2020), the criticality and discontinuity of employment relationships and contracts, and the inadequacy of protection.

In relation to barriers, it is essential to unpack how the impact of the Covid pandemic does not affect creative workers equally. Some jobs are more protected than others, some places will recover faster than others (**Drummond**), provide greater social security (**Viganò**) or broader access to financial support (**Savage**), but some individuals within those jobs also have more opportunities than others to be resilient. Wider research on barriers for diverse creative (Brook et al., 2018; O'Brien and Dent, 2021) also exposes that the reality of creative work within the knowledge economy is much less diverse than we would like to think. Women have been considered extensively within the literature (Conor et al., 2015; Dent, 2020) on creative workers, as a group often exposed to more pressures and undervalued (Shade and Jacobson, 2015). Research included in this report highlights the need to support parents, particularly mothers and younger creative workers, when barriers in accessing work, and career progression and wage penalties are compounded (**Feder and Florisson**) but also those working across geographical boundaries (**Viganò**). New and existing support networks (online and offline) can offer spaces of solidarity that reduce isolation and offer mental health support (**Morton**). However, it is essential that caring work – in addition

to the work it supports – is adequately rewarded (economically and socially) (**Dent**) and that its implementation and delivery does not continue to be disproportionately assigned to already disadvantaged and marginalised groups (The Care Collective, 2020). These findings put more on pressure on a need for radical rethinking - at local, national and international levels - of the work that needs to happen for practices of care to fully enter the everyday practices of employers and workers within our creative and cultural economies (Alacovska, 2019).

In order to be able to fully capture and understand the experiences and diverse needs of creative workers, value their contributions and address the structural (**Naclerio; Tanghetti**) and spatial (**Merkel; Viganò**) challenges they face, more accurate data on industrial and occupational activities within the creative economy is needed (**Panozzo and Nativio; Dent; Feder and Florisson**). More attention also needs to be placed on how creative workers – as part of the broader gig economy (Friedman, 2014) (**Skaggs**) – become commodities of our societies and are not given basic working rights that allow them to make a sustainable living, particularly in highly competitive cities (**Tanghetti; Merkel**). When re-futuring creative work and creative and cultural industries, local (**England; Tanghetti**), regional (**Viganò; Panozzo and Nativio; Dent**) and national (**Savage; Drummond; Skaggs; Merkel**) differences – in policy, infrastructure, networks and economies as well as Covid-19 infection rates, responses and pace of recovery – are important to take into consideration, but international experiences and practices can nevertheless provide valuable learning opportunities.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: PUTTING CREATIVE WORKERS AT THE CENTRE OF POLICY-MAKING

This report hopes to contribute to a better understanding of the role that policy can play in supporting creative workers in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, but also in addressing the pre-existing structural disfunctions of cultural and creative careers.

Often policy initiatives under broader umbrellas such as the 'creative city', or 'recovery strategies' remain quite superficial in their understanding of creative workers and their needs and are not able to fully consider the breadth of creative employment (including many sectors across the economy) but also the range of values and objectives that drive creative work. However, awareness of the central role of culture and the challenges faced by creative and cultural workers has undoubtedly grown during the pandemic and is starting to be reflected in policy. For example, the European Parliament's resolution for Cultural Recovery in Europe (2020) emphasises the strategic role of culture in economic terms, but also its key role in fostering processes of social change and cohesion and the impact of the pandemic on both of these areas. Importantly, the European framework recognises the importance of addressing challenging

working conditions for creatives for culture to be able to deliver its economic, social and cultural objectives. Here we outline that in order for policy to fully support creative and cultural development, at the local, national or international level, it needs to adopt actions and strategies that are centred on its workers and their aspirations. These all need to contribute equally to sustainable worker-centred policy-making and should not be cherry-picked to focus on specific outputs.

Firstly, it is vital that **creative work is understood, recognised and valued as work**. This involves adequately valuing and compensating the time, knowledge and skills of creative workers and **supporting sustainable livelihoods by developing care-full policies and supporting infrastructure** (economic, spatial and social). This involves acknowledging the key position of creative workers (especially freelancers) in the supply chain for creative economies (Walmsley et al., 2022) and also in generating capacity among creative and cultural organisations and industries to contribute to the economy and society. In part, this requires a cognitive reframing of creative work, but it would also be facilitated by the development of more secure employment contracts and conditions, with provision for social security and fair remuneration (Culture Action Europe and Dâmaso, 2021). Also, further development of inclusive industry and occupation categories and measurements of the contributions of creatives both within and outside of the creative economy are needed to avoid them falling through the gaps in the future. International instruments (i.e. an EU

framework) would be helpful here to establish minimum standards, address structural fragilities and inequities (ibid), alongside local action. Within the sector itself, it is also important for this reframing to take place, and for the examples of (often grassroots) mobilisation, activism, collaboration and mutual aid emerging from the pandemic, to be coordinated and resourced in order to make this work of collectively caring for creative workers both accessible and sustainable in the long term.

Connected with this, policy needs to **support the diversity of creative workers and their diverse value systems, including economic, social and cultural dimensions**. It is tempting for policy-makers to adopt a broader perspective of what creative work is, perhaps ignoring the non-economic driven component of creative work (a neoliberal approach) or focussing solely on the more socially-oriented contribution of creative work. However, the creative economy thrives on diversity – across sectors of the economy, diversity of cultures and career stages and objectives. Therefore, the most valuable interventions would need to be open to the wide range of contributions made by creative workers – whether economic, social or cultural – and to the kind of value-systems that each worker is pursuing. While creative economy actors are definitely aware of the importance that each of these components play in their supply-chains and value-systems, there is an ongoing struggle to articulate this as an interdependent and holistic ecosystem, with the tendency to continue to characterise success in economic terms.

This connects further with the need to allow **creative workers to have a voice in policymaking**, particularly at the local level. The diversity of perspectives that come from a broader understanding of creative work – from experienced professionals to emerging artists – allows for different needs and values to be considered in relation to local environments (urban and rural) and their development. For example, (Romeiro, 2017) highlights that creative activism can have a meaningful role "in policy learning and urban place-making" but also that the same policies and context "can also have a decisive effect on the activation of creative activism practices" (Romeiro, 2017: 27). In the long-term, this openness will add value to creative worker-centred policy-making. Alongside grassroots activism and mobilisation, it would also be important for representative organisations such as trade unions to recognise the specific category of these types of workers, who are typically equated with the general self-employed.

Worker-centred policy making needs to **recognise and value the multiple relationships between creative workers and place (including mobilities)**. Creative and cultural workers, as well as other professionals, will come to value and contribute to a city or region in different ways. This is often in connection with lifecycle needs and career opportunities (Tomaney and Bradley, 2007). In this respect, large centres need to coordinate and cooperate with small centres or regional infrastructure to allow creative workers to develop according to their needs and objectives. The smaller centres might be

essential to provide lower-cost or larger infrastructure or other opportunities that creative workers might not be able to exploit in urban centres. Similarly, commuting or other forms of temporary mobility might be beneficial to individuals, cities and regions alike to support creative workers at different stages of their careers and with different cultural and linguistic resources – without excluding them from the advantages that clustering and or co-location can offer.

Finally, for worker-centred policy-making to work, emphasis needs to be placed on the **care and support offered to creative workers through policies that engage with sustainable and inclusive jobs and careers**. While in neoliberal economies, policy-making has shied away from interventions that regulate careers and jobs, it is crucial that policy indicates forms of best practices. Through interventions in the markets – commissioning, supply-chain relations or administration of quasi-public institutions and similar – urban and regional policies can contribute to collectively defining what "good work" (Moran, 2010) can be for creative workers. This may involve workers engaging with local policy-makers to re-define their working conditions and more broadly to see the value of their work publicly recognised.

These conclusions have attempted to draw a roadmap for research and policy to recognise and care for creative workers (socially and legally) and engage with opportunities to support and reshape the future of cultural and creative industries. We nevertheless

acknowledge that there are significant challenges ahead as the conditions of the pandemic extend and evolve. It is for both academic and policy-makers to address those challenges together, learning from international examples of good practice, making sure that research can add value to policy, and that policy can test and develop academic ideas for the benefit of the citizens, cities and regions at the heart of their work.

› Key components of creative worker-centred policy-making

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