



Artistic Lives: A Study of Creativity in Two European Cities

Kirsten Forkert

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Artistic Lives examines cultural production as a non-standard, self-directed, and frequently unpaid activity, which is susceptible to developments that affect the availability of unstructured time. It engages with discourses which have historically had little to do with the arts, including urban sociology and social policy research, to explore the social conditions and identities of ordinary artists, revealing the importance of the cost of living or access to housing, benefits or employment in determining who is able to become an artist or sustain an artistic career.

The book thus challenges recent policy discourses that celebrate the ability of cultural producers to create something from nothing, and, more generally, the myth of creativity as an individual phenomenon, divorced from social context. Presenting rich interview material with artists and arts professionals in London and Berlin, together with ethnographic descriptions, Artistic Lives engages with debates surrounding Post-Fordism, gentrification and the nature of authorship, to raise challenging questions about the function of culture and the role of cultural producers within contemporary capitalism.

An empirically grounded exploration of the identity of the modern artist and his or her ability to make a living in neoliberal societies, Artistic Lives will be of interest to students and scholars researching urban studies, the sociology of art and creative cultures, social stratification and social policy.

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