

EUROPEAN SOCIOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION  
RN SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARTS

13TH MIDTERM CONFERENCE

# QUESTIONING ARTISTIC HEGEMONY

Old and New Resistances  
in Algorithmic Capitalism

08.09 —  
09.09.2025

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

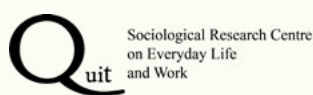


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# Call for Papers

## Questioning Artistic Hegemony: Old and New Resistances in Algorithmic Capitalism

The 13th Midterm Conference of the European Sociological Association (ESA) Research Network Sociology of the Arts

8 - 9 September 2025

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The European Sociological Association's Research Network 02: The Sociology of the Arts invites you to submit an abstract or proposal for a session or workshop for the upcoming Mid-Term Conference to be held at Autonomous University in Barcelona in 8-9 September 2025. RN02 the Sociology of the Arts, promotes our sociological understanding of artistic processes and the roles and places of the arts in society. The conference theme *Questioning Artistic Hegemony: Old and New Resistances in Algorithmic Capitalism* is a Gramscian wink to the conflictual reality of the arts in contemporaneity.

Due to economic, political and social crisis, these are hard times to make art matter. Making art follows a strong individualization process that became a model for the contemporary capitalist mode of production (Boltanski & Chiapello, 1999). The individualism of distinction (Simmel, 1909, Bourdieu, 1979, 1984) is a powerful drive that draws from the myth of creativity (Feyerabend, 1987). And the emergent processes of artification expands to all spheres of production (Shapiro & Heinich, 2012). But in these times of change, the sociology of the arts has a lot to say. The arts and most importantly the sociology of the arts face a crossroads (Alexander & Bowler, 2014) within algorithmic capitalism. Artistic practices increasingly take place at home, so that the *prosumer* becomes a producer and a creator all at once. These new forms of creation and creativity blur the boundaries between the sphere of creation and consumption. The digital platforms available contribute to this shift of paradigm, enhancing the precarity of the artistic careers.

However, artists as a group are increasingly associated with dominant positions in the social structure. Gentrification comes from the fact that their presence in urban neighbourhoods often signals the valorisation of previously accessible areas, resulting in rising housing prices and the displacement of original residents. By becoming symbols of the creative industries (McRobbie, 2015), artists can be seen as indicators of economic changes that, while bringing investment and development, also end up driving social exclusion and inequality in certain urban communities, as well as promoting social hegemony. The concept of 'revitalising' urban areas often ignores the social effects of these changes, which include the loss of affordable housing, a franchising of commercial licenses and the emptying of local communities that can't keep up with rising prices. Artists, although not necessarily the direct agents of gentrification, end up being associated with the economic and social redesign of neighbourhoods.

The idea of artist residencies as spaces of resistance harks back to a long history in which artists and creators have used these environments to challenge repressive regimes or promote values that go against established norms. In authoritarian contexts, these residencies



can become refuges to produce political art, as well as places where collectives and networks are formed to act against oppressive policies. Outside of these exceptional scenarios, most artist residencies adhere to norms that emphasise individual development. Thus, the collective environment is replaced by a more competitive orientation aimed at the artists' careers (Basov, Muntanyola-Saura, Nenko, 2023). The pressure for recognition and personal success often overrides collaborative or politically engaged initiatives, leading to an environment that values individual artistic practices.

With the changes in the art market, the sociology of art has become more interested in mediation, which involves not only artistic production, but also the process of circulation and interpretation of works. Rosenblum (1978) argues that the distribution of art - that is, how and by whom art is presented to the public - is more important than the production itself. This reflects the growing influence of intermediaries and market structures that mould the visibility and value of artistic works. Hennion (2015) and Heinich (2014) emphasise the importance of cultural mediators - critics, curators, gallery owners - who influence how art is received and consumed. Technologies transform the artistic process, expanding access and changing the very essence of art creation and enjoyment. In addition, contemporary artwork plays a significant role in defining lifestyles, a central element of a consumer society. Art not only communicates cultural meanings, but also functions as a marker of social status and consumption practices.

The contemporary dynamics of content production and dissemination, particularly artistic content, is structured by concentrated power relations (Gaupp, Barber-Kersovan & Kirshberg, 2022). Algorithmic capitalism, shaped by large corporations and the logic of the network, visibly favours a few producers while the majority remain invisible. Cultural imperialism, according to Becker (1995), business concentration and corporate dependence have become hallmarks of algorithmic capitalism (Jenkins, 2008). In this model, the logic of permanence favours the big players. The 'power law of networks' (Van Dijk, 2012) concentrates the visibility of content, including works of art, in just 1% of creators, who capture 90% of the attention. At the same time, crowdfunding platforms transfer the responsibility of self-financing their productions to artists, often turning to family and friends, expanding precarious work, the black market and volunteering (Lovink, 2016).

But art is everywhere and with everyone, and despite the social transformations that seem to fragilize and reduce artistic practice to an act of consumption, there is still power for subversion in the social action and collective work through activism(s), social responsibility and professional/amateur art. The concept of artivism is a fusion between art and activism, where artistic practices are no longer just a form of aesthetic expression to become tools for social and political intervention. Artivism is born out of the need to reconfigure the role of art in contexts of crisis, serving as a critical response to dystopian scenarios, where traditional institutions fail to guarantee justice, equality, and freedom. Artivism is a strategy of cultural resistance that goes beyond symbolic production, interacting directly with social struggles and proposing new forms of collective engagement (Guerra, 2023, 2024). Cultural production becomes a radical practice of deconstruction of dominant discourses. By working with languages that are often marginalized or alternative—such as graffiti, public performance, protest music, and other forms of urban art—it makes visible the struggles of oppressed and invisible groups.



## 13<sup>TH</sup> MIDTERM CONFERENCE ESA SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARTS

### ORGANISERS

RN02 The Sociology of the Arts Coordinator **Dafne Muntanyola-Saura**, Centre d'Estudis Sociològics sobre la Vida Quotidiana i el Treball (QUIT), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) [dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat](mailto:dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat)

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The **13<sup>th</sup> Midterm Conference ESA Sociology of the Arts** also invites proposals beyond those related to the main conference theme. The RN 02 understands the arts broadly, as aesthetic expression ranging from established artforms such as literature, visual arts, music, theatre to contemporary circus, digital and performance arts. RN02's interests span from cultural policy and arts management to the production and reception of art. All aspects of artistic practices are included, from conditions for production, artistic creation, distribution, exhibition, marketing, archiving and evaluation are open for analysis, as well as theoretical and methodological approaches to the arts. We welcome perspectives from sociology, philosophy, and arts management practice as well as other perspectives that contribute to scholarly reflection on these issues. We especially invite contributions on, but not limited to, the following topics related to the arts, particular art forms/genres, artistic production, practices and:

1. Activism/artivism
2. Anti-racism, post- and de-colonial perspectives
3. AI: authorship, ownership, provenance
4. Artistic practices in interaction and communication
5. Arts educations and arts in education
6. Arts Management
7. Art markets and consumption in algorithmic capitalism
8. Careers, labour (conflicts)
9. Bodies and emotions
10. Communities, identities and belonging
11. Creativity (and its discontents)
12. Urban space, rurality and politics of place
13. Evaluation, valuation and hierarchies
14. Equity and justice, representation(s) in democracy
15. Intersectionalities and gendered roles
16. Health
17. Methods
18. Transmediality and multisensory approaches
19. Participation, inclusion and diversity
20. Preservation/transformation of art in/through media/digitalization
21. Queer/non-binary perspectives
22. Social movements
23. Sustainabilities
24. Theorising the arts
25. Sociology of music

Specifically, Arts Management Studies Research Stream invites papers for the RN2 midterm conference on the theme: Hegemonic and Counter-Hegemonic Pedagogy in Arts Management Training. Pedagogical norms are one means of disseminating, enforcing and maintaining hegemonic views. Does arts management training perpetuate hegemonic norms? How do they manifest in practices in the field? What are the possibilities for counter-hegemony in arts management pedagogy?

#### GUIDELINES FOR SUBMITTING AUTHORS

Abstracts should be 400 words, written in English. Abstracts should give a clear indication of the content of the research objectives, theory, methods, data, or materials that the study is based on, and findings, results or observations (if known). Submissions in performance or other expressive forms are also welcome and should describe the preconditions and process of the activity. All of the authors submitting an abstract should read the submission guidelines. Authors are not allowed to submit more than two abstracts. All participants need to pay full registration fees to be included in the program.



Please submit your abstract and full contact details not later than February 15th, 2025, as an attached file (PDF) to the conference email address [cg.esarts2025@uab.cat](mailto:cg.esarts2025@uab.cat)

Include the following information in the same document as your abstract:

1. Name(s) of the author(s), institutional affiliation (both university and department), email(s) to authors.
2. Title.
3. Indicative area of presentation (01-25, see the list above)
4. 3–5 keywords.

Please also specify if you would like to participate with a(n):

- Oral presentation of papers (90 minutes sessions with 4 papers)
- Distributed paper or posters
- Artistic performance or exhibition

### IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

- Submission of abstracts deadline: **15 February**
- Notification of acceptance: **31 March**
- Registration for conference opens: **1 April**
- Early Bird registration closes: **1 June**
- Registration Deadline: **31 July**

### REGISTRATION FEES

#### Early (before 1 June):

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Non-ESA members  | <b>190€</b> |
| ESA members  | <b>140€</b> |
| MA, PhD students, unemployed and participants from outside band 1 countries <sup>1</sup> | <b>90€</b>  |

#### Standard (after 1 June):

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Non-ESA members  | <b>240€</b> |
| ESA members  | <b>190€</b> |
| MA, PhD students, unemployed and participants from outside band 1 countries <sup>1</sup> | <b>120€</b> |

Registration fees include conference pack, 1 buffet lunch, 1 lunch bag, 3 coffee breaks, Wifi Access, opening evening mingle and closing evening reception at SGAE.

<sup>1</sup> Band 1: Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belgium, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Cayman Islands, Channel Islands, Chile, Croatia, Curaçao, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Faroe Islands, Finland, France, French Polynesia, Germany, Gibraltar, Greece, Greenland, Guam, Hong Kong SAR/China, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Rep., Kuwait, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macao SAR/China, Malta, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Northern Mariana Islands, Norway, Oman, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Singapore, Sint Maarten (Dutch part), Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Martin (French part), Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Virgin Islands (U.S.).



## PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

|  |  |
|--|--|
| September 7 <sup>th</sup>                  | Evening mingle: Barcelona Reception Wine and nibbles will be served.   |
| September 8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> | Main conference days. Paper presentations and roundtables.   |
| September 8 <sup>th</sup>                  | Opening keynote, semiplenary, morning sessions and buffet lunch. Afternoon sessions and roundtables.   |
| September 8 <sup>th</sup>                  | Evening activity in Barcelona, free and open to all participants   |
| September 9 <sup>th</sup>                  | Morning and afternoon sessions and roundtables. Lunch bag.<br>Closing keynote and evening reception in Barcelona at SGAE<br>Social Dinner (not Included) |
| September 10 <sup>th</sup>                 | Visit to Fundació Joan Miró (Registration needed, not included).   |

## ROUNDTABLES

- I. *Art, IA and Other Discontents*
- II. *Music Sociology*
- III. *After Artistic Hegemony in Cultural Policy*
- IV. *Art-Based Research Methods*
- V. *Artistic and Creative Place-making in the Cities*

## INVITED SPEAKERS

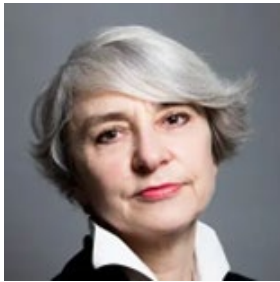
- **OPENING KEYNOTE:** Angela McRobbie (Goldsmiths): **Fashion-Art and Urban Creative Economy: Gender, Work and Cultural Production**



Angela McRobbie, Emeritus Professor at Goldsmiths is a Fellow of the British Academy and has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Glasgow University. Her research expertise is on creative economy and the fashion industry with reference to the small-scale independent sector. Angela is also a feminist social and cultural theorist looking at the gendered dynamics of contemporary neoliberal society.



- **CLOSING KEYNOTE:** Nathalie Heinich (EHESS): **From the Sociology of Art to a Pragmatic Sociology of Valuation**



Nathalie Heinich is Director of Research Emeritus at the CNRS, member of the CRAL (Centre de recherches sur les arts et le langage: EHESS), and LAHIC (Laboratoire d'anthropologie et d'histoire sur l'institution de la culture). Devoted to the social history of the notion of the artist, she has specialized in the sociology of artistic professions and cultural practices while at the same time developing a reflection on identity crises, on the epistemology of the social sciences and on the sociology of values.

- **INVITED SEMIPLINARY:** Dagmar Danko (University of Music Freiburg): **Becker, the Arts, and Sociology**

Dagmar Danko is a sociologist of art and culture, currently working at the University of Music Freiburg where she coordinates cooperative research structures. She completed her doctorate in sociology with a thesis on the significance of contemporary art in social theories. She has published an introduction to the sociology of art (2012) and an analysis of the work of Howard S. Becker (2015), which will appear in a second, revised edition in 2025.



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