

# **Culture at Work: Circulating Critical Practices**

**Barcelona, April 24-25, 2015**

The first workshop organised by the Culture@Work network in Copenhagen identified a substantial background of critical practices. An entire range of activities loosely connected around academic, cultural and political platforms emerge as a powerful thread that challenges the actual institutional map. A new division of labor appears as a consequence of these transformations leading to an increasing circulation of critical practices. Beyond established university departments and cultural institutions, nowadays research demands an innovative model of organization that should be able to exploit collective and heterogeneous agents. Although most of these cross-disciplinary initiatives have been contemplated as being strategic and transitional, they deserve closer examination before they wither away or else get inscribed as new wings of old institutions.

This second workshop will focus on the mutating nature of critical practices in as much as they traverse institutions of all kinds as well as non-institutional spaces. The questions arising will tackle the paradoxes that riddle the economy of these practices –sometimes considered marginal and experimental– as they become integrated in the neoliberal framework. Their rapid assimilation raises doubts as to whether alternative and critical positions can be maintained at all. Is there any chance to expect an antagonistic structure in the sphere of cultural production? Location, temporality and genealogy are to be considered key features of those practices which are contingently referred as research, teaching, curating, activism and more generally speaking, outputs of the creative class. Thus, there is an urgent demand to identify the different forms of knowledge and capital that flow productively, simultaneously creating alliances and interrupting mutual instrumentalisation.

Special emphasis goes to the contextual analysis of cultural policies that more and more are left out of the state administration. In a changing scenario critical practices risk to be dissolved among the vast number of autonomous initiatives of the cultural field. At this particular moment we welcome reports and diagnoses on these transformative trends informed by cultural agents coming from different perspectives. We are interested in contributions either coming from the core of the creative process or from the mediating sphere in any of the disciplines. And we would like to take into account that the two venues chosen to host this conference, the Museum of Contemporary Art Barcelona MACBA and the Universitat de Barcelona UB, invite to consider the affective dimension that brings together institutions of all sizes and colors as well as cultural agents operating in a wide range of fields.

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The conference is the second of two gatherings organised by the Culture@Work network, a joint European project aimed at gauging how contemporary culture is put to work in new contexts. The network is founded by

the School of Human Sciences at the Catholic University of Portugal (The Lisbon Consortium) in collaboration with the Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art (MACBA) and the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The Barcelona workshop is co-organized by MACBA and Universitat de Barcelona (UB) Art, Globalization, Interculturality / AGI Research group <http://artglobalizationinterculturality.com/>

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The conference will feature public lectures and presentations by Maria Lind (Stockholm), Eyal Weizman (London), and Nanna Bonde Thylstrup (Copenhagen) *Program subject to changes*.

On the second day of the conference, a number of parallel working groups will be organised on the backdrop of the input provided by the submitted proposals from the participants. The group sessions will be based on presentations and discussions, but will also involve an aspect of production, as the groups will present their findings in a final plenary discussion, paving way for a concluding debate.

Participants are invited to submit proposals for 20-minute contributions to the working groups on the second day of the conference. In addition to the traditional academic paper format, we welcome performative work, presentation of relevant material for discussion, screenings, etc. Please include a 300 word abstract of your contribution and a short description of your work when applying.

Submission deadline is March 23, 2015. For submissions and queries, send an email to [criticalpractices@macba.cat](mailto:criticalpractices@macba.cat)

There will be a limited number of EU sponsored grants for travel and accommodation costs for participants from the partner institutions, please indicate if you will also apply for the grant.

The workshop is co-funded by the Culture programme of the European Union.

For more information on the Culture@Work project visit [www.cultureatwork.eu](http://www.cultureatwork.eu).

For more information on the conference in Barcelona visit [www.macba.cat](http://www.macba.cat)