



**8th Biennial International Interdisciplinary conference, 24th – 26th June, 2014  
Keele University, UK**

**Call for abstracts**

## **Gendering the creative: creative work, creative industries, creative identities**

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‘Creativity’ is the engine of post-industrial ‘creative economies’. This rhetoric encompasses not only specifically designated ‘creative industries’ and ‘creatives’, but also a much wider idea of the ‘creative’ at work in all kinds of organisations and occupations. Contemporary policies – national, regional, industry-driven – have set out to extend, evaluate and monetise the creative. While some of these government initiatives also attempt to address social diversity – including gender - in terms of equal access to work, and of cultural inclusion and exclusion, others do not. Ways of conceptualising creativity may take a wide range of forms, in which both traditional and newer are spliced together. For instance, a romantic framing of ‘arts’ and ‘artists’, based on a distinction between the creative and the industrial, is linked with ideas of art as a vocation, and of the artist as a distinctive kind of individualised genius. A more recent, 21<sup>st</sup> century vision is linked with the idea of innovation as the key to economic success, and so to workplaces specifically designed to attract and affirm creative talent. Here the ideal ‘creative’ may be imagined as a smoothly-functioning team of passionate and diverse talents.

The construction of gender takes varying forms in relation to the creative. In this stream call, we are approaching both as forms of identity intertwined in specific settings and historical contexts. The ‘creative’ is typically constructed so that women do not become the creative stars or geniuses, do not have equal access to creative work, are not equally rewarded, and are subject to various forms of occupational segregation that reinforce these inequalities in both recognition and reward. Processes of gendering the creative are inherent in theories and representations of creativity itself and its relation to the masculine and feminine, and in the industrial, occupation and creative community practices whereby gender influences who has access to which work, and to recognition as creatively successful. Intersecting with gender are constructions of class, race, age and sexuality that complicate and extend privilege and inequality.

In response to the emergence of policy-driven frameworks for mapping the ‘creative economy’, creative work has increasingly been recognised *as* ‘work’, collapsing creative subjects – artists, technicians, entrepreneurs – into data sets where earnings and occupations can be surveyed. In oppositional mode, critical scholars have increasingly paid attention to forms of creative work, or ‘cultural labour’ as aspects of the labour process, and raised questions about the forms of exploitation with which it is associated. Debates about creative work seek to frame it in relation to other kinds of exploitative or precarious work, while maintaining a focus on distinctive features of the ‘creative’. In particular, such research recognises that creative work is not only a type of work of developing economic and political importance, but that struggles over the creative are also struggles over the control of cultural production. However people working in many creative fields often refuse or ignore such analyses, rejecting the notion of creativity as a job. Identifying in various ways as artists with a vocation, they often work in what they see as non-creative jobs, perhaps part-time or intermittent, to fund their creative practice. The distinctions between paid and unpaid work is blurred, and unpaid positions such as ‘internships’ may be institutionalised as a way to get a foot in the door of a creative industry. Or, even if in paid creative work, they may accept low pay, extremely demanding working conditions, and precarious employment. Such patterns are also seen within established professions such as

architecture where members often reflect on architecture as a 'lifestyle' rather than as a job or career. The language of workplace rights is frequently marginalised or silenced altogether, and forms of collective organising such as unionisation are often unavailable or rejected. In such a context, it is very difficult for women to find a forum or space to raise issues of creative work and gender equality, such as pay, status, recognition, or acknowledgment of family responsibilities.

For this stream, we invite empirical, theoretical or methodological papers that explore the ways that creative work is gendered. The gendered construction of 'creativity' can be seen in analyses of women's employment within creative industries, and of ways that creativity is imagined or represented in a range of occupations and practices. Although the stream is open to any discussion of gender and creativity or creative work, we particularly welcome explorations of specific employment settings or contexts, for example, architecture, film and television, comedy, literature (including poetry) and design. We also call for speculative papers which propose innovative theoretical or methodological perspectives that can further open up studies of how the creative is gendered. We encourage writers to specify their own local contexts in which various versions of gender and creativity play out. We also encourage an interdisciplinary approach, acknowledging that the literatures of work in the creative industries, like the sector itself, have developed in and across a range of disciplines, including cultural studies, sociology and geography, as well as organisational studies. The following list is indicative, although not exhaustive, of likely topics in the stream:

- **Distinctive forms of gendering the creative in different creative sectors:** How is gender distinctively constructed in different creative sectors? What are the traditions and organising processes that enable or constrain women in different ways? How are roles within a given sector gendered in terms of status and specific skills? Are there government policies that set goals for gender participation and measure the workforce accordingly?
- **Exceptionalist discourses:** How do some creative professions frame themselves as unlike any other profession, as entirely unique and incomparable? What are the gendered consequences of this framing? How does this exceptionalism deflect critique?
- **Embodying the creative:** How is creativity embodied as gendered? How is creativity performed through dress and demeanour, bodily comportment, and body art such as tattoos, as markers of belonging to a 'creative' sub-culture, of creativity and hipsterism. This question could be addressed by visual methodologies, and other interdisciplinary approaches such as fashion studies and the sociology of clothing.
- **Theorising creativity as gendered:** How is the subject of the artist/ creative gendered? How does the (female) muse relate to the (male) genius? How are inspiration, aspiration and the sources of creative ideas gendered?
- **Methodologies for studying gendered creativity:** How can we explore innovative methods for studying and understanding the creative industries and creative labour? What methods are most appropriate, for example, visual, aesthetic, ethnographic?
- **Claiming the creative:** How are 'creative' identities allocated and recognised? How is the 'super-creative core' constituted in relation to the 'below the line' people, i.e. the 'crew', support workers, and administrators? What systems are there of awards, grants, training, and networks and how are they gendered? Who are the gatekeepers to these resources and who receives them? Who in a profession or occupation actually gets to be creative at all, and why?
- **Authorship, attribution and credit in collaborative work:** What are the gendered implications and effects of these practices? What is the effect of publications, awards and organisations insisting on a single creative figurehead?
- **Intersectionality:** How does gender intersect with class, ethnicity, disability, and sexual orientation for those working in the sector? When and how does 'diversity' signal 'creative difference' as opposed to marginalisation?
- **Against management:** What are the gendered effects of tendencies in creative professions to actually and actively resist management and perceived managerialism, including any kind of equity initiatives? How is the rhetoric of egalitarian sociality exploited to foreclose questions of personal patronage and uneven access to resources?
- **The creative profession as cult:** What are the gendered effects of some creative industries scenarios of intensive work where your colleagues become your only friends, your romantic and business partners, and your family?

- **Creativity and vocation:** What are the effects of the ‘calling’ to the creative professions? How does gender intersect with vocation to intensify sacrifice on the part of women in terms of pay, conditions, status?
- **Imagining and organising gender equality in creative work:** What would decent work in the creative sector look like for women? How do women organise in guilds, professional groups, unions or lobby groups to raise issues of gender equality in this sector? How do women organise creative projects with men or other women that open up new opportunities for women to lead, collaborate and develop skills in spaces of great equality?

**Abstracts of approximately 500 words (ONE page, Word document NOT PDF, single spaced, excluding references, no header, footers or track changes) are invited by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013 with decisions on acceptance to be made by stream leaders within one month.** All abstracts will be peer reviewed. New and young scholars with 'work in progress' papers are welcomed. Papers can be theoretical or theoretically informed empirical work. In the case of co-authored papers, ONE person should be identified as the corresponding author. Due to restrictions of space on the conference schedule, multiple submissions by the same author will not be timetabled. Abstracts should be emailed to: Kate Sang k.sang@hw.ac.uk  
Abstracts should include **FULL** contact details, including your name, department, institutional affiliation, mailing address, and e-mail address. *State the title of the stream to which you are submitting your abstract.* Note that no funding, fee waiver, travel or other bursaries are offered for attendance at GWO2014.

For more information about the conference, including venue, accommodation and registration, see the [GWO2014 Call for Abstracts - All Streams](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-0432) on the *Gender, Work & Organization* site, [http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/\(ISSN\)1468-0432](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/10.1111/(ISSN)1468-0432)