



Culture and politics

The debate on Swedish cultural politics has lately been unusually lively. This is mainly due to a large governmental report on cultural policy being issued for the first time in decades, and to the suggested reform of the funding bodies, as well as the removal of the term artistic "quality" in the desired outcomes of the national cultural policy. In the recently presented new cultural policy agenda it becomes more evident that the reorientation of cultural policy making should be understood against the backdrop of underlying changes in the relation of the cultural field to policymaking in areas of labour and industry development.

In issue 31 of *Fronesis*, texts from the international debate on the relationship between culture and politics are introduced. In the whole of the Western hemisphere, the cultural sector has been characterised by an increasing market orientation. This change, which has only been touched upon lightly in the debate on the Swedish governmental report on cultural policy, is the topic for several of the texts in this issue.

Angela McRobbie takes as her starting point the changing conditions for contemporary artists and fashion designers in London during the 1990s and demonstrates that working conditions for cultural workers were far more affected by processes of gentrification, the exploitation of certain parts of the city, and restrictions in support for the unemployed than by changes in cultural policy. Tom O'Regan, a media and cultural studies researcher, discusses the consequences of Australian cultural policy making from time to time merging with other areas of policy making.

In other texts, the specific relationship between culture and economy are brought into focus. We publish the classic text by economist William J Baumol on fundamental structural problems of culture production in a growth economy. As a comment on Baumol's hypothesis, cultural studies researcher Per Möller discusses the contemporary aesthetisation of the economy.

On the basis of some historical snapshots — from eighteenth century street musicians to twentieth century jazz musicians — historian Rasmus Fleishcer (also founder of Piratbyrå, "The Pirate Bureau" of Sweden) discusses conflicts of payment between professional musicians and amateurs introducing novel genres and styles. Felix Stalder and Otto von Busch, researchers in art and design, highlight the nature of cultural production as a process in their respective texts.

In issue 31 of *Fronesis* there are also contributions from Lia Ghilardi, Joseph Heath, Andrew Potter, Johan Söderberg, McKenzie Wark and others.

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