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The artistic precariat

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Abstract

This article examines how some artists have collectively negotiated precarity in Toronto’s cultural sector during the last 2 decades through two arts experiments: the Waterfront Trail Artists’ Association and Don Blanche. The social scientific scholarly literature on arts funding, precarious

employment and community economies provides an entry point for our critique of the creative class theory for its neglect of grassroots struggles to produce and fund spaces of collective artistic experimentation. We argue, that local, non-capitalist and collectivist spaces, where artists can share resources, collaborate and build an alternative community cultural economy, are essential for sustaining the cultural sector because they assist individual creatives to performatively resist neo-liberal tendencies naturalized in the creative city script.

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