

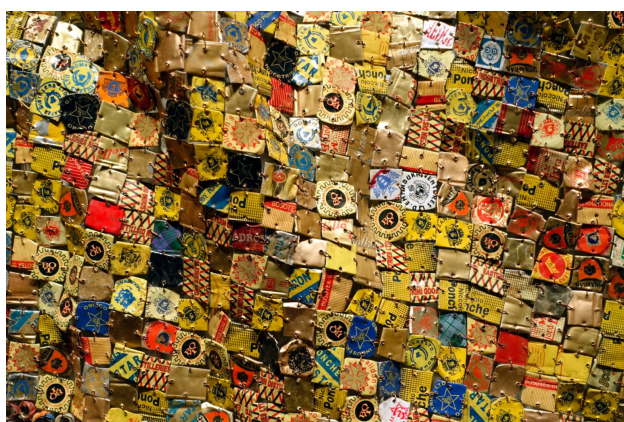
Lateral

Journal of the Cultural Studies Association

Political Economy and the Arts

Edited by Katerina Paramana

Political Economy and the Arts seeks to address how art and political economy might impact, critique, and reflect on one another and their futurity through the staging of conversations across the fields of visual and performing arts, cultural studies, visual cultures, politics, economics, human geography, social theory, and health and well-being. [Contribute a proposal >](#)



"Many Came Back" by El Anatsui (2005). Photo courtesy of Steven Zucker (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0).

Introduction – Space-Making and Practices of Resistance

[< https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/](https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/)

By Katerina Paramana

Here, Katerina Paramana introduces the articles in the "Political Economy and the Arts" special section of this issue. In the current climate of geopolitical upheaval (from Ukraine, to Gaza, Iran, Venezuela, and Greenland), the articles illuminate what arts do to produce resistance at a micro level by re-writing problematic narratives, visibilizing marginalized communities, imagining alternative models and futures, and working towards equitable space-making.



Exterior of the Central Pavilion of the Venice Biennale (2024) in the Giardini, painted by the collective MAHKU (Movimento dos Artistas Huni Kuin). The mural stayed there for the duration of the exhibition. Photo by author.

The Indigenous Turn, or the Spectacle of Otherness: Cultural Political Economies of the 60th Venice Biennale, *Foreigners Everywhere*

[< https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/](https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/)

By Panos Kompatsiaris

The 60th Venice Biennale, *Foreigners Everywhere*, placed the figure of the foreigner at its center, drawing on Adriano

Pedrosa's curatorial idea that foreignness is a pervasive

condition of human existence. Within a broad spectrum of “minoritarian foreigners,” the “Indigenous” emerged as a particularly charged symbolic figure. This article situates the Biennale as a global institution whose strategies of expansion and rarefication sustain its symbolic power, examining four “framing moments” of Indigenous representation in the 60th edition: cosmologies, objects, alternative modernisms, and memory. These framings variously spiritualize, aestheticize, historicize, and politicize Indigeneity, producing visibility around Indigenous cultures in an exclusive environment where viewership is characterized by cultures of speed. The article argues that the institutional framing of Indigenous artists’ biographies and traditions simultaneously validates and commodifies identity, with “authenticity” serving as symbolic and economic capital. While such visibility can create opportunities for recognition and market access, it also may fetishize and flatten heterogeneous Indigenous histories into a universalized category of “the Indigenous.” The article explores how the Biennale’s pursuit of global relevance depends on the spectacular inclusion of difference, a process in which otherness—and, here, Indigeneity—is made visible but also subject to institutional power and gatekeeping logics. Reading the Indigenous not only through the lens of representation but also as a symbolic actor within the exhibition’s cultural-political economy, the article concludes by reflecting on whether alternative curatorial strategies—slower, more focused, and territorially specific—can create space for Indigenous representation beyond spectacle, enabling forms of knowledge production that better acknowledge the diversity and historicity of Indigenous peoples.



EIGHT cultural institute for arts and politics, 2021. Photo by author.

Unsettling Political Economies: Instituting, Blurring, and Monstrous Space-Making

... “ ”



Poster for the 25th of April production. The carnation at the tip of the rifle stands for the revolution that took place in Portugal in 1974.

Affective Economies of Freedom in Paradoxical Times

< <https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/affective-economies-of-freedom-in-paradoxical-times-pais/> >

By Ana Pais

This article proposes the concepts of “brutal” and “gentle” affects as a critical framework to analyze affective economies of freedom in paradoxical times. Drawing on Sara Ahmed’s work on affect, Sruti Bala’s on participation, and Franco Berardi’s on freedom, it argues that freedom emerges not solely as a historical achievement of an inalienable right, but as an embodied experience enhanced by theatrical *dispositifs*. I consider forms of celebrating, performing, and capturing freedom in paradoxical times, including the staging of the fiftieth anniversary of the Carnation Revolution; the production *25th of April 1974* by Portuguese company Mala Voadora; and *The Seagull* by Argentinian director Guillermo Cacace. I begin with a discussion of the relationship between populism and notions of freedom, describing the nuanced usage and political capture of the latter to examine its paradoxes in the present. I then examine how these productions critically engage with the paradoxes of freedom and reset the conditions of experience of its affective-sensorium.



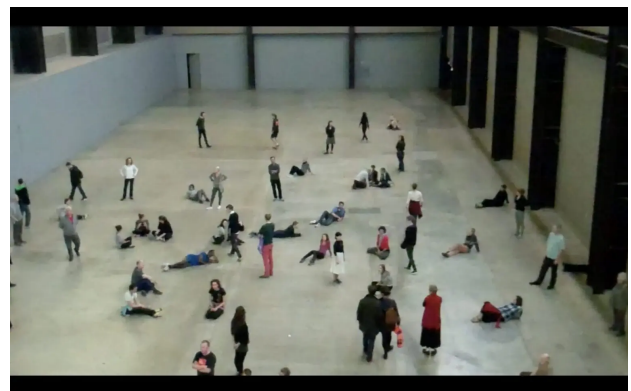
The Ismail Centre, Toronto.

Cultural Space as Resistance: Racialized and Immigrant Communities’ Artistic Practices and

< <https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/affective-economies-of-freedom-in-paradoxical-times-pais/> >

By Gigi Argyropoulou

This article explores the ways in which emergent cultural space-making practices—particularly practices of “instituting,” “blurring,” and “monstrous space-making”—challenge and ephemerally unsettle political and economic systems. It focuses on the history of the cultural space, EIGHT Critical Institute for Arts and Politics, in Athens, Greece. The concept of “instituting” is discussed as a form of space-making that refuses structuralization, while “blurring” signifies a process of unpredictable spaces that resist fixed identities. The notion of “monstrous space-making” is introduced as a method of excess and refusal, capable of disrupting dominant political economies. The article argues that these practices, rooted in modes of “militant curating” and critical spatial interventions, operate as performative acts of reconfiguration—offering ways to produce new relations, economies, and imaginaries within contested landscapes. It suggests modes of continuous, open-ended spatial interventions that do not seek to fix existing systems but to deform and reimagine them from within.



Tino Sehgal’s “These Associations,” Tate Modern, London, UK 2012. Photo by Tom Wagner.

Introduction – Performance and Political Economy: Bodies, Politics, and Well-Being

< <https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/affective-economies-of-freedom-in-paradoxical-times-pais/> >

the Political Economy of Urban Development in Canadian Cities

< <https://csalateral.org/section/political-economy-and-the-arts/cultural-space-resistance-racialized-immigrant-communities>

By Ushnish Sengupta

In Canada, Indigenous, racialized, and immigrant communities face systemic challenges in securing and sustaining cultural spaces due to real estate speculation, funding disparities, and exclusionary urban policies. These barriers not only threaten the continuity of cultural expression but also diminish the visibility and influence of marginalized artistic practices. This article explores how these communities resist spatial erasure through artistic interventions, grassroots activism, and alternative funding models, positioning their creative practices as sites of political-economic critique and creating alternative futures. The article emphasizes the connections between colonialism, anti-Black racism, and Islamophobia in contested cultural space dynamics. By mapping sites of artistic resistance and community-led cultural preservation, this article reveals the transformative potential of art as a tool for reimagining urban futures. It argues that sustainable multicultural urbanism requires policies that protect and invest in culturally significant spaces, recognizing them as vital components of both social infrastructure and political resistance. This article emphasizes the importance of recognizing culture as the fourth bottom line as part of urban development projects. The findings offer insights for policymakers, urban planners, and cultural organizations committed to fostering inclusive and equitable urban environments. Ultimately, this article contributes to the conversation on political economy and the arts by demonstrating how racialized and immigrant communities' creative practices challenge dominant narratives of urban development, asserting their right to cultural sustainability and spatial justice.

By Katerina Paramana

In this article, Katerina Paramana introduces *Lateral's* special section, "Political Economy and the Arts," and its first set of articles, "Performance and Political Economy: Bodies, Politics, and Well-Being," and provides the rationale and context for this section's topic. In the face of a multiplicity of world-wide problems and suffering, this special section aims at a reinvestment in desire for change in order to resuscitate and reinvest in hope. The articles therein provide insights into the current relationship between politics, human and non-human bodies, and their well-being (and why it is necessary we take action to change it) which might help us steer the wheel before we drive off the cliff.



"Girjegumpi: The Sámi Architecture Library" by Joar Nango and collaborators at the Nordic Countries Pavilion (18th International Architecture Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia (2023). Photo by Laurian Ghinițoiu (CC-BY-SA 4.0).



Abstraktes Bild (N° 635) (1987) by Gerhard Richter. Photo Pedro Ribeiro courtesy of [Simões](#) (CC-BY 2.0)

Racial Capitalism Refugee