

### **Study Group Name: Sociology of Arts**

Number of members: 187 (subscriptions to mailing list)

BSA Members: 25

Account balance: £165.20

### **Aims of study group**

- 1) To provide a space in which academics with a specific interest in the arts can come together and share ideas, thoughts, and arguments.
- 2) To offer the opportunity for critical development and exploration of theory and practice relating to the arts.
- 3) To create opportunities for collaboration and professional networking for those working, and interested, in the sociology of the arts, both within the context of sociology and across other disciplines.
- 4) To foster inter- and trans-disciplinary thinking and research in the sociology of the arts, and to develop new ideas about art which are of international significance.
- 5) To link in productive ways with study groups within the BSA dealing with related areas.
- 6) To work with BSA conference organisers in arranging themed streams at the BSA conference.
- 7) To organise seminars and other events for BSA members interested in the arts.
- 8) To engage with the BSA journal *Cultural Sociology*, and to propose special sections and editions of the journal which come out of the study group's activities.
- 9) To forge links with practitioners in the arts and cultural industries.
- 10) To promote the BSA and sociology within major higher education institutions where the arts are taught.

### **Review of the year**

Over the past year, the Sociology of the Arts Study Group has undergone significant growth and transformation, welcoming new conveners, and a PhD student representative, collaborating with international colleagues, and attracting new audiences. With a fresh perspective and revitalised energy, we have expanded our event portfolio to align with our updated aims and objectives, particularly aim 1, 2, 4 and 7. Laura Harris has been joined by co-convenor Linzhi Zhang, and PGR representative Jiayi Tian. The steering group is made up of leaders in the field: Lisa McCormick, Maria Rovisco, and Victoria Alexander.

In June 2023, the study group collaborated with the BSA Theory study group on an online event 'Theorising with Art and Music.' The event brought together contributors to the book *The Cultural Sociology of Arts and Music: New Directions and New Discoveries*, edited by Lisa McCormick. This spoke to aim 5.

The study group re-launch event took place in November 2023 with a discussion between convenor Linzhi Zhang and art historian Dani Child on their shared interest in artistic labour. The event signalled the study groups' interest in working across disciplinary boundaries. The online event was well attended and generated fruitful discussion.

In January 2024, the study group collaborated with the European Sociological Association's Sociology of Art Research Network to host a well-attended online event on questions of Artificial Intelligence

in the art world. An international panel spoke to questions of how AI is currently disrupting the field of art, and what can be envisioned for the future of AI and art.

Continuing our momentum, in February, the study group hosted an online dialogue featuring American sociologist Larissa Buchholz's new book, *The Global Rules of Art*, hosted by the PGR representative Jiayi Tian. The event attracted audiences from within and beyond the UK, delving into topics on artistic production and valuation in a global context.

The study group has been successful in securing additional funds to support its operations. Jiayi Tian was awarded £1000 from BSA's Postgraduate Forum Regional Event Funding to host an event that will provide a platform for PhD students to engage in dialogues with junior and senior academics, exploring how different art genres influence research practice and outcomes. In addition, Jiayi secured £500 from the School of Social and Political Science of the University of Edinburgh's PGR Student Initiative Fund.

In addition, the group has welcomed £1820 in funding from the BSA journal Cultural Sociology, in support of aim 8. The journal, with further funds from the Bauman Institute, is funding a symposium on June 6<sup>th</sup> at the University of Leeds' Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery called 'The Social Production of Art Today: Revisiting Janet Wolff.' The symposium is the first in-person event of the study group and aims to capitalise on and consolidate the renewed energy and connections within the group. The event will return to the seminal, but often overlooked, sociology of art text by Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art*. We are delighted that Janet Wolff will join us for the day, and other speakers include David Inglis, Lisa McCormick, Austin Harrington, and Nick Crossley, along with PhD candidates. The journal has kindly provided an extra £500 to be used to support ECR attendance on the day.

In addition to the events, we have also started issuing newsletters. The first two issues can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Plans for 2024-25**

Event: The Type of Art Matters: Exploring How Different Arts Inform Sociology Research

When: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May

Where: University of Edinburgh

What: This event is dedicated to reflecting upon how the specific type of art might influence the premise, practice, and outcome of research. While recent decades have witnessed the call to bring the art back into the sociology of the arts research, art is still largely a unitary, abstract research subject in theoretical discussions. This day event invites postgraduate students (Master's or PhD) to explore the above questions with several sociologists of the arts. More information [here](#).

Funding: BSA's Postgraduate Forum Regional Event (£1500)

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Event: The Social Production of Art Today: Revisiting Janet Wolff

When: Thursday June 6<sup>th</sup>

Where: University of Leeds

What: This symposium will showcase contemporary work in the sociology of the arts framed around a return to Janet Wolff's seminal book, *The Social Production of Art* (1981). More broadly, the intention is to foreground work in the sociology of art which is informed by theories and intellectual histories other than the dominant traditions that orient the subfield (Bourdieu, Becker), or which complicate their dominance.

Janet Wolff will join us for the day, offering a talk about the book, its writing, and how it has travelled with her through her career. More information [here](#).

Funding: Cultural Sociology and The Bauman Institute (£1820 + additional £500 for ECR travel)

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Special issue: Following the symposium in June, the study group convenors plan to develop a proposal for a special issue/ section of *Cultural Sociology*. The proposal will be shaped by the discussions of the symposium but will be motivated by a desire to rethink the canons in the sociology of art beyond the gendered and geographical exclusions that currently characterise it.

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Following from the successes of the year 2023-24, we plan to run the following as regular events:

1. Interdisciplinary dialogues (online)
  2. Book lunch/talk (online)
  3. Annual/biennial symposium (in person)
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