

Biennial Report of Research Network 02–Sociology of the Arts, 2017-2019

1. Names and email addresses of the Board of RN-02 (2017-2019)

- Coordinator: Valerie Visanich (University of Malta) valerie.visanich@um.edu.mt
- Vice-Coordinator: Sari Karttunen (The Center for Cultural Policy Research CUPORE, Finland) sari.karttunen@cupore.fi

Board Members:

- Sacha Kagan as former coordinator (Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, Germany), sachakagan2@gmail.com
- Anna Lisa Tota (University of Rome 3, Italy) annalisa.tota@uniroma3.it
- Christopher Mathieu (University of Lund, Sweden) christopher.mathieu@soc.lu.se
- Constance DeVereaux (Colorado State University, USA) cdevux@gmail.com
- Aleksandra Nenko (Centre for German and European Studies, University of St. Petersburg, Russian Federation) al.nenko@gmail.com
- Dafne Muntanyola Saura (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain) dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat

2. New board members (2019-2021)

- Coordinator: Sari Karttunen (The Center for Cultural Policy Research CUPORE, Finland) sari.karttunen@cupore.fi
- Vice-Coordinator: Christopher Mathieu (University of Lund, Sweden) christopher.mathieu@soc.lu.se

Board Members:

- Valerie Visanich as former coordinator (University of Malta) valerie.visanich@um.edu.mt
 - Anna Lisa Tota (University of Rome 3, Italy) annalisa.tota@uniroma3.it
 - Constance DeVereaux (Colorado State University, USA) cdevux@gmail.com
 - Aleksandra Nenko (Centre for German and European Studies, University of St. Petersburg, Russian Federation) al.nenko@gmail.com
- Olga Kolokytha (Austria)
- Dafne Muntanyola Saura (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain) dafne.muntanyola@uab.cat

3. Names of the Advisory Board members (2017-2019)

- Victoria Alexander (Goldsmiths, University of London, United Kingdom)
- Volker Kirchberg (Leuphana University Lueneburg, Germany)
- Graciela Trajtenberg (Academic College of Tel Aviv-Yaffo, Israel)
- Tasos Zembylas (University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria)
- Dan-Eugen Ratiu (Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania), daneugen.ratiu@gmail.com

Note: As of September 2016 (Business Meeting of RN02 at the Midterm Conference in Porto), RN02 has an Advisory Board.

4. Activities

4.1. Midterm Conference 2018 in Malta

Between the 4 to 7 September 2018, the ESA research networks Sociology of Arts (RN02) and Sociology of Culture (RN07) held their second joint midterm conference at the University of Malta in Valletta. The theme of the conference was “Creative Locations: Arts, Culture and the City”.

Apart from the three plenary sessions, 12 slots with in total 54 parallel sessions were held to enable a total of 201 presentations. The attendance rate was very high and the discussions were lively, diverse and engaging. Because of the very broad spectrum of thematic and theoretical interests presented at the conference, participants were encouraged to develop their own publication strategies in smaller groups or individually.

Primarily, the conference in Malta offered a terrain for debates on the theoretical development of sociology of culture and of the arts, in particular the role of arts and aesthetics in city life. Specific attention was paid to theoretical paradigms on the arts and cultural regeneration and their implications for sociologists, anthropologists, cultural policy makers and planning practitioners. The conference aimed to stimulate debates on the relationship and/or conflict between the ‘creative class’ who look at creativity as a tool for pursuing socio-economic goals, those who treat creativity either as an end in itself or as a partaking in wider cultural, social and ecological transformations, those who activate creativity in relation to solidarities and urban cultures, and the meanings of everyday creativity for local communities. Researchers on the European Capitals of Culture were invited to contribute to the discussion on the impact of strategic involvements and investments in artistic projects in cities, whether from approaches stipulating a need to invest in the ‘creative economy’ (or critiques of the neoliberalization process involved therein), from approaches aiming to reorient urban development according to goals of e.g. ‘cultural planning’ and/or ‘cultural democracy’, or from transdisciplinary approaches aiming for sustainable urban development.

The conference was successful. Due to the various grants offered by local entities, the financial statement had a surplus of 4,955 euros. This amount was transferred to the next coordinator Sari Karttunen’s university account to be invested for the next midterm conference in Helsinki.

4.2. Students’ seminar: How to get published

Just before the ESA RN02 Midterm conference in Valletta, a half day seminar was organised in collaboration with the Malta Sociological Association. On Monday the 3rd of September, a PhD Workshop was held entitled “How to get published?”. Three speakers (Anna-Lisa Tota, Peter Mayo and Joost van Loon) shared with PhD students, at different stages of their PhD process, their own professional experiences as authors and editors with various aspects of publishing articles in peer-reviewed journals as well as alternative publication strategies.

4.3. 14th ESA-Conference 2017 in Manchester

The RN-02 Sociology of the Arts received 63 submissions for an oral presentation, out of which 59 accepted papers were presented in 10 different sessions during the conference in Manchester from 21st August till the 23rd August 2019.

4.4. PhD-Student Research Award 2017

In 2017, the Research Network for the Sociology of the Arts launched the third edition of its biennial PhD Student Research Award. PhD Students from Europe and Asia responded to the Call for Papers and submitted an unpublished research paper. The jury, consisting of board members of the RN Sociology of the Arts, evaluated the papers in a blind review, considering the conception, methods, references, sociological relevance and readability of the submitted papers. The jury reached a unanimous agreement on the choice of the winning paper.

The winner of the PhD Student Research Award 2017 is Ms. Svetlana Kharchenkova, Universiteit van Amsterdam (Netherlands), whose paper is titled *The art market upside down: valuation practices and the function of auctions in the emerging Chinese market.*

The prize (500 €) was awarded formally at the 13th Conference of the European Sociological Association in Athens, during the Business Meeting of the Research Network Sociology of the Arts on Thursday August 31st 2017.

Only one submission was received for the 2019 PhD Student Research Award. The board unanimously decided not to grant this award this year due to lack of focus on arts sociology. During the board meeting in Manchester, the board and RN02 members decided on the way forward to popularize this award amongst PhD students.

4.5. New Bylaws and creation of an Advisory Board

During the business meeting in Malta, the RN02 Coordinator, on behalf of the RN02 Board, discussed the RN02 Vision Paper prepared by the Advisory Board about the future of RN02. In September 2016, at the Business Meeting during the Midterm Conference in Porto, the members of RN02 voted on new Bylaws for RN02, and created an Advisory Board, the initial members of which were elected for two years (2016-2018).

4.6. Action taken to improve participation of PhD students and early career researchers, and to expand membership

The registration fee for the midterm conference was deliberately kept low, with a significant discount for PhD students and free-lance artists (50%), as well as with discounts for all ESA-members (25%) and for participants from lower wage countries (25%). This decision was taken to encourage wide participation. Delegates were encouraged to join formally ESA and the Research Network, if they were not already members.

4.7. Number and nationality of RN02 Members

During the 2017-2019 period we had around 95 members coming from all over the world including Turkey, Israel, Canada, USA, Japan, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Lebanon, China, Taiwan, and Sri Lanka.

Compared to previous years, we thus see continuation with previous years in the internationalization of RN02's membership base.

4.8. Collaboration within ESA with other RNs

RN02 continues its long-term collaboration with RN07 Sociology of Culture, most especially with the preparation of the Joint Midterm Conference in Malta in 2018, 10 years after the first Joint Midterm Conference.

For the Athens Conference in 2017, RN02 also initiated collaboration with RN23 Sexuality, with the organization of a Joint Session on "Artful Sexualities and Sexualities of Art".

4.9. Communication service to our members ('Sociology of the Arts News' Mailings)

Members of RN02 were kept regularly informed by the RN02 Coordinator, by means of a newsletter-like mailing-format (by email) sent irregularly according to the needs, disseminating own news of RN02 activities as well as news on behalf of our members, for other ESA activities, or about activities by other scientific and academic organizations (conferences, summer schools, job opportunities, publications, etc.).

4.10. Midterm Conferences 2020 and 2022

The 11th Midterm conference of RN02 will be held on September 8-11, 2020 in Helsinki, with Sari Karttunen as local convener. The main organisers of the conference will be the University of Arts (Uniarts) Helsinki and Cupore. The conference will be organised in co-operation with the University of Helsinki (Maaria Linko as member in the local organizing committee) and the Aalto University/School of Art, Design and Architecture (Riikka Haapalainen). The theme is on the Social Effects of Art. The main venue will be the Helsinki Music Centre where part of the Uniarts (Sibelius Academy) is located (<https://www.musiikkitalo.fi/en/viihdy-musiikkitalossa>); some sessions will be organized in the nearby new main central library Oodi (<https://www.oodihelsinki.fi/en/>) as well in other institutions composing the emerging cultural quarter in the heart of Helsinki. The proposed speakers are: Steve Lambert and Stephen Duncombe from the Center for Artistic Activism, New York (<https://c4aa.org/>), Eleanora Belfiore (UK) and Martha Nussbaum (USA) and Laura Beloff (Aalto, Finland; artist & professor).

The pre-conference workshop for doctoral students will be organised, facilitated by means of art-based methods, on the topic of science communication in wider society.

As for the 12th Midterm Conference of RN02 in year 2022, it has already been decided to organize this conference in Sweden, with Chris Mathieu as the local convener.

Dr Valerie Visanich
University of Malta

Coordinator of the Board of RN02 Sociology of the Arts (2017-2019)