Pleasure at Work? Gender, Consumption and Work-based identities in the Creative Industries

The “creative industries” and the dispositions of creative workers have acquired a new salience and significance within both sociological and business orientated commentaries in recent years. This has included an attention to the apparently hybrid character of “creative work” and the way this informs the ideal of the self-expressive creative worker. Our paper takes these claims as its starting point and seeks to render more concrete discussions of these areas of work which have often been treated in an overly synthetic way. Drawing on our earlier research, we explore how two sets of creative workers in advertising and magazine publishing handled the ideal of the creative worker and the fun and funky image of these areas of work. Foregrounding questions of gender and, specifically, masculinity, we detail the subjective investment of these practitioners within particular forms of masculinity and consider the way, through this, gender was written into the creative cultures of advertising and magazine publishing. In exploring these themes, our aim is to disrupt the progressive narratives into which creative workers have often been inserted and to emphasize the endurance of some rather old productivist ideas of work within these sectors.

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