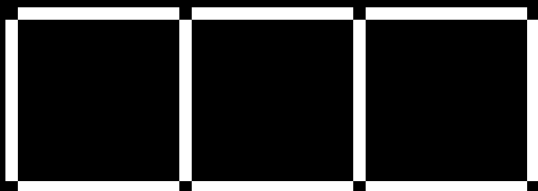


TRADERS



AUTUMN  
SCHOOL  
2015

ON THE ROLE OF  
PARTICIPATORY ART  
AND DESIGN  
IN THE  
RECONFIGURATION  
OF WORK  
(IN GENK)

10TH — 14TH OF NOVEMBER 2015  
GENK, BELGIUM

We would like to invite you to participate in the Autumn School of the TRADERS project, which will take place from Tuesday the 10th to Saturday the 14th of November in Genk (BE).

It will be organized by the research groups of LUCA School of Arts (Campus C-mine), KU Leuven / Planning and Development and the Architecture and Culture Theory research units in collaboration with the TRADERS partners (Design Academy Eindhoven / Readership City and Countryside, Chalmers / Department of Architecture, RCA / School of Architecture and University of Gothenburg / HDK).

The TRADERS Autumn School 2015 examines the crossovers between participatory approaches in art and design and reconfiguring labour in post-Fordist Genk. If, as Hannah Arendt (1958) argues, there is a difference between labour (the biologically necessary efforts for maintaining life and body) and work (the specifically human endeavour to make a lasting and durable cultural world), the questions we pose are the following:

*what, if any, is the (critical) role of participatory art and design in reconfiguring labour and work? How can, and should, work be reinvented? And how can we support a debate concerning contemporary labour, forms of production and new types of creative work?*

We will explore these questions specifically within the context of Genk (Belgium), which, since the recent closure of a Ford manufacturing plant, has ushered in, quite literally, an era of post-Fordism. The development of this small city started in the early 1900s by the establishment of three coalmines. Following the closing of these mines, the city developed new (manufacturing) industries, at the lead of Ford. By the end of the 80s, Genk almost solely relied on its manufacturing industry. By mid 2012 however, Ford Genk announced it would progressively run down its operations, until a definitive closure of the plant in December 2014.

# Post-Fordism and participatory practices in art and design

The transition into Post-Fordism has brought about new modes of production, altering the conditions and configuration of labour. This new context is characterized by the purported 'humanising' of labour through new forms of capitalism such as the 'social economy' but also by normalising precarity as a prevailing condition of labour. The impacts of post-Fordism spread beyond the context of employment and labour, having effects on leisure, private life and culture; this has also seen the working conditions of the (participatory) artist, designer or researcher heavily affected. Moreover, it leads to question what role designers and artists can play in such a context: does creative production benefit from the slimming down of mass production, because now capitalism requires a greater number of designers and artists to work on individual bespoke projects? By increasing the role of 'the creative worker', power relations are drastically affected within art and design practices (Gielen, 2011), raising questions whether if those involved are unwittingly part of a much larger agenda, becoming co-opted into reproducing power relations and social stratification. In a city caught in a transition to post-Fordism (Genk), these questions become extremely relevant, and therefore represent an exceptional context for our inquiries.

This Autumn School wants to contribute to the debate on labour and work in post-Fordist contexts and critically investigate the role that participatory art and design practices play in such situations, specifically in the context of Genk.

# The Autumn School program

Taking this into account, we assume the issues of work and labour in Genk as a public debate and field of practice that we (as artists / designers and researchers) can work, analyze, critique and / or reflect on. For doing so, we have devised a program that combines general perspectives on participatory art and design and on labour and work under post-Fordism, *good practices* related to such topics, local expertise and non-work-related activities.

CARL DISALVO <sup>(BIO)</sup> will reflect on how (agonistic) design can contribute to trigger such public debates and how publics can be involved. PELLE EHN <sup>(BIO)</sup> complements DiSalvo's approach and concretizes this with his experience with co-designing workspaces in Scandinavia in the 70s and more recently of the Malmö living labs. And PASCAL GIELEN <sup>(BIO)</sup> will give insights on the - critical - role of creative practitioners specifically in post-Fordism.

As part of the TRADERS network, three speakers will complement the input on work and post-Fordism. FRANK MOULAERT <sup>(BIO)</sup> will discuss the notion and realities of social innovation, its promise and pitfalls in evolving institutional dynamics. HILDE HEYNEN <sup>(BIO)</sup> will question the links between labour, work and public space from a gender perspective. DAVID HAMERS <sup>(BIO)</sup> will explain how different typologies of work have resulted in different types of urban development.

These lectures will be complemented by input from the TRADERS researchers, local experts and activities connected to local projects, which will root the work of the Autumn School

in the context of Genk, but will also allow the participants to reflect on specific cases. The program of the week will also count with a series of non-work activities.

The program will be updated soon.  
For more news, please check:  
[www.tr-aders.eu](http://www.tr-aders.eu)



'De Andere Markt Genk' by Pablo Calderón Salazar

# Admissions and practicalities

## ABOUT TRADERS

Social, economic and environmental changes ask for a rethinking and repositioning of designers and artists in society. In this line of thought, the TRADERS project questions how designers and artists can engage people to participate in the debate about, and the construction of, public space. The project also aims to develop tools for training future art and design practitioners and researchers in doing so. Six design and art researchers investigate specific participatory approaches in public space (play, intervention, mapping, data-mining and modelling in dialogue), which eventually will result in a framework for training.

## WHO?

The Autumn School is intended for Master- and PhD students, researchers and professionals in art and design, Social Sciences and Humanities, Architecture and Engineering, Urban Studies and Planning, Communication and Media, Computer Sciences, Environmental Studies, Economics and Management and other relevant domains.

## WHEN / WHERE?

Genk (Belgium), from 10th - 14th of November 2015. People are invited to come one day previous to the beginning of the Autumn School (9th), when activities for preparation and contextualization will be organized. They are also invited to stay one day longer (15th), for activities reflecting on the Autumn School.

## HOW?

For application, send expression of interest before the 10th of August 2015 to Evi Donn  (evi.donne@luca-arts.be) with CV (including list of relevant work and/or publications) + a letter (max. 500 words) describing the motivation to participate in the Autumn School and how the Autumn School fits your past, current or future research interests (files should not exceed 5MB). We are on summer leave until the 10th of August, but will inform you about your acceptance by the 1st of September 2015.

## FEE?

For participation in the Autumn School, we ask a fee of 250 euros.

