

Swiss Sociological Association (SSA) Congress 2017  
“Common Good and Self Interest”  
University of Zurich, 21-23 June 2017  
<http://www.sgs-kongress2017.uzh.ch/en.html>

### **Call for abstracts**

Workshop organised by the Research Committee Sociology of Arts and Culture  
of the Swiss Sociological Association (SSA)

## **Art collectives, collective art** **“Artistic creation” between self interest and common good**

Sociology of arts has often put the accent on the intrinsically collective dimension of artistic creation, but less to speak of artists’ collectives or collective art works than for extracting, for instance, the “networks of cooperation” – from artists to suppliers, support staff, producers and audiences, not forgetting various intermediaries (editors, gallery owners, experts, etc.) – that characterize a production that, at first sight, seems to be an individual activity. The literature, nowadays abundant, on “the artist as a worker” is certainly concerned with the careers of art professionals, in order to carve out the logic that structures creation, though by generally setting out from the more or less strategist and unequally equipped individual, exposed to the market and more or less engaged in networks. The question of artists’ collectives – that is, associations formed by two or more creators who sign their works under a collective name – or that of collective art forms – works often signed by the head of group, resulting from the collaboration of several individuals – have, however, been studied in different countries and, more seldom, in Switzerland.

Art collectives and various collective forms of art question the “regime of singularity” that has characterized art since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, grounded in the “individuality”, “originality” and “uniqueness” of an artist. If this myth no longer needs to be broken today, to study collective forms of creation is to directly be able to examine what still often remains the black box of sociological analysis: the production of aesthetics and art works, bringing into play individual and collective moments and both autonomous (artistic) and heteronomous (social, managerial, economic, public) criteria.

How does the tension between individual and collective interests materialize in the different fields of artistic creation? What kinds of artists’ collectives and what range of collective forms of art do we find? What types of aesthetic forms do they result in? What specificities and differences can we observe between the sectors where collectives are the rule – such as dance or theatre (troupes, ensembles), cinema (cast and crew), music (orchestras, bands, *ad hoc* collective interpretation or creation, collective writings or signatures, for example the famous “Lennon-McCartney” tandem) – and those more centred on a supposedly solitary individual creator, such as in the visual arts (painter, sculptor, performer) where formal collectives are more rare (Gilbert&George, Fischli/Weiss, Christo and Jeanne-Claude), or in literature? More generally, what kinds of logic and characteristics may be revealed in terms of gender, socio-demographic profiles, capitals or reputations, biographical and/or professional trajectories, but also of the production of aesthetics in these diverse fields? What role do the certification bodies, cultural institutions, politics and legislation (authorship, copyright law) play in regulating this tension between the individual and the collective, between self interest and common good? And what about reception and audiences, be they real, projected or supposedly aimed? According to what individual and/or collective logic are the artist and the

art work “made”, or not, by the audience into a “common good”? Moreover, have the digital technologies of co-creation and reception of art reshaped the modalities of artistic creation in this regard? Finally, are there differences between historical and/or national configurations and, if so, how may these be explained?

The Research Committee Sociology of Arts and Culture (RC-SAC) of the SSA invites proposals that approach this topic from a theoretical, methodological or empirical viewpoint, preferably derived from fieldwork. The proposals as well as the presentations may be in English, French, or German. The authors of the selected proposals will be asked to provide an abstract and, if it be used, a PowerPoint presentation in English.

→ *Please send your proposal by email (one-page Word document) with your research question(s), approach, method and main results on your case study as well as your name, position, institution and email address by **February 12, 2017** to [valerie.rolle@unil.ch](mailto:valerie.rolle@unil.ch).*

*You will be informed by the end of February on the decision regarding your proposal.*

Organising committee: Michael GAUTIER (University of Bern), Olivier MOESCHLER (University of Lausanne), Nuné NIKOGHOSYAN (University of Geneva) and Valérie ROLLE (University of Lausanne)